Student learning through work placements

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Glossary

(^ Please note, this is the first page where the abbreviation appears in the thesis)

Acronym	Page No^	Description
AC	(p67)	Abstract Conceptualisation
AE	(p21)	Active Experimentation
AEE	(p70)	Association for Experiential Education
AGCAS	(p238)	The Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services
AHECS	(p16)	Association of Higher Education Career Services
AHRC	(p45)	Arts and Humanities Research Council
ASWB	(p270)	Association of Social Work Boards
ASYE	(p294)	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
BASW	(p270)	The British Association of Social Workers
BERA	(p257)	British Educational Research Association
BIS	(p69)	Department of Business, Innovation and Skills
BMC	(p325)	BioMed Central
BMJ	(p222)	British Medical Journal
BNIM	(p14)	Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method
CBI	(p49)	Confederation of British Industry
CD/EN	(p16)	Curriculum design/employability nexus
CE	(p67)	Concrete Experience
CESR	(p265)	Centre for Employment Studies Research
CHERI	(p33)	Centre for Higher Education and Research Information
CIPD	(p245)	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CLPD	(p93)	Continuous Learning and Professional Development
CRAC	(p192)	Careers Research and Advisory Centre
DfE	(p206)	Department for Education
DoH	(p267)	Department of Health
EC	(p246)	European Commission
ELT	(p67)	Kolb's experiential learning cycle theory
ESECT	(p69)	Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team
EU	(p296)	European Union
GEES	(p18)	Geography or Geology, Earth and Environmental Sciences
GMC	(p258)	General Medical Council
GMP	(p71)	Game making pedagogy
GSCC	(p261)	General Social Care Council
HCPC	(p233)	Health and Care Professions Council
HE	(p10)	Higher Education
HEA	(p10)	Higher Education Academy
HECSU	(p188)	Higher Education Careers Service Unit
HEFCE	(p16)	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	(p20)	Higher Education Institute
HEIPR	(p45)	Higher Education Initial Participation Rate
HEPI	(p28)	Higher Education Policy Institute

Glossary (cont.)

(^ Please note, this is the first page where the abbreviation appears in the thesis)

Acronym	Page No^	Description
HOCL	(p28)	House of Commons Library
HPC	(p272)	Health Professions Council
ILO	(p16)	International Labour Organisation
IMHE	(p242)	OECD Higher Education Programme
KLSI	(p72)	Kolb Learning Styles Inventory
KPIs	(p47)	Key Performance Indicators
LEA	(p261)	Local Education Authority
LGA	(p192)	Local Government Association
LLAKES	(p285)	Centre for Learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies
NACE	(p238)	National Association of Colleges and Employers
NASW	(p101)	National Association of Social Workers
NCCPE	(p222)	National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement
NFER	(p206)	National Federation for Educational Research
NGOs	(p222)	Non-Governmental Organisations
NIHR	(p241)	National Institute for Health Research
NHS	(p67)	National Health Service
NOS	(p293)	National Occupation Standards
NPC	(p261)	New Philanthropy Capital
NSEE	(p69)	National Society for Experiential Education
NVC	(p105)	Non-verbal Communication
OECD	(p242)	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	(p296)	The Office for Standards in Education Children's Services and Skills
Ox-Cam	(p36)	Oxford and Cambridge
PCF	(p16)	Professional Capabilities Framework
QAA	(p16)	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QUANGO	(p48)	Quasi Non-Governmental Organisation
REAP	(p266)	REAP Project: Roadmap for Employment-Academic Partnership
REC	(p155)	Research Ethics Committee
RiP	(p270)	Research in Practice
RO	(p67)	Reflective Observation
SCEPTrE	(p188)	Surrey Centre for Education and Training
SEL	(p251)	social and emotional learning
SepHE	(p239)	Supporting the entrepreneurial potential of Higher Education
SPUR	(p282)	Scholarship Projects for Undergraduate Research
SQUIN	(p23)	Single Question Aimed at Inducing Narrative

Glossary (cont.)

(^ Please note, this is the first page where the abbreviation appears in the thesis)

Acronym	Page No^	Description
SUUG	(p254)	Students Union University of Greenwich
SVA	(p159)	Student Volunteering Agency
SWRB	(p294)	Social Work Reform Board
TCSW	(p290)	The College of Social Work
TLRP	(p111)	Teaching and Learning Research Programme
UCAs	(p13)	University Career Advisers
UGC	(p44)	University Grants Committee
UKCES	(p49)	UK Commission for Employment and Skills
UUK	(p59)	Universities UK
VLE	(p241)	Virtual Learning Environment
WBLIC	(p203)	Work Based Learning as an Integrated Curriculum
WEF	(p223)	World Economic Forum
WW1	(p43)	World War 1 – 1914 to 1918
WWII	(p44)	World War 2 – 1938 to 1944

'Student Learning Through Work Placements'

Acknowledgements

Abstract

'Student Learning Through Work Placements'

The core aim of this research study is to analyse the effects of experiential learning pedagogy on students, received during work based student placements. This study identifies and examines the perceptions held by higher education (HE) stakeholders, regarding the effects of experiential learning work placements on students.

My research is situated in Bourdieusian concepts, which include 'habitus', 'field', and 'cultural reproduction' (Bourdieu, 1977b, p72; 1986a, p60; 1977a, p487). My research found employability is an agency in its own right. Employability had a doxa (a societally embedded opinion) (Bourdieu, 1977b, p169) effect on my research study. Most of the research responses were given in employability terms. The majority of research participants clearly indicated other aspects of experiential learning, e.g. students developing self-efficacy were a secondary consideration. Preparedness for work was the key priority. My research found, all HE stakeholders have been influenced to 'ideologically reproduce' the employability agenda, in order to 'fit in' with the current HE landscape (Bourdieu, 1977a, p490; Bourdieu, 1990, p53; Brady, 2012, p346).

This research study found that Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012, p386) 'reproductive' or 'deconstructive' concepts present in their 'Student Volunteering' study, were replicated by students on unpaid experiential learning work placements, with either a 'Third Sector' organisation or a statutory agency. This study also identified hitherto undiscovered causal factors, absent in Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012) study. These are additional social actors, which significantly influence whether students become 'reproductive' or 'deconstructive' during experiential learning work placements.

This research found the 'wider society' is an existential agency, which has a strategic governance role representing society as a whole. The 'wider society' has a societal remit to coordinate delivery of all society's needs, which includes social care provision and environmental management. Trained people are required to deliver this societal remit, so the 'wider society' is an experiential learning higher education stakeholder.

Chapter 1 – Student Learning Through Work Placements

1.1 Introduction

At the heart of this thesis, is an analysis of the effectiveness of experiential learning as a pedagogical tool that is delivered through work placements. There is an important higher education knowledge gap regarding how experiential learning both teaches and affects students during work placements. Discussion of experiential learning will answer a number of generic, yet critical questions. These are: How do students learning through experiential leaning delivered through work placements. What do students learn on work placements? What if any, is the social purpose of experiential learning? Within this introductory chapter, I will outline the research context of this PhD study and the specific aims and objectives of the research. I will explain why we need to explore the effectiveness of work based experiential learning through student placements. The full structure of this PhD thesis will be provided.

The core aim of this PhD study is to provide an analysis of the effects of experiential learning on students, received during work based student placements. My PhD research focuses on experiential learning in work placements from a learners' perspective. The views of academics, employers and university careers advisers (UCAs) are incorporated. Analysis of what experiential learning does and how it works, revealed a fifth stakeholder, an existential agency the 'wider society'. The 'wider society' is an existential stakeholder, who benefits equally from the complementary dichotomy between statutory agencies and 'third sector' organisations. For the purpose of this study the 'wider society' can be defined as a value driven social concept e.g. improving public welfare, the environment, the health and economic wellbeing for all members of society. For the 'wider society', these values are on an

equal footing with the desire for wealth creation, to make a profit (National Audit Office online, 4 July 2017).

The thesis presents a critical discussion of the role, purpose and effectiveness of student work placements on undergraduate degree programmes. The research took place at 5 different types of universities, these were the core settings for the student, academic and university career adviser interviews. All the employer sub-cohort were interviewed at their place of work. The impact of experiential learning placements was analysed, by conducting semi-structured and biographic-narrative interpretive method interviews (BNIM) (Wengraf, 2013, p53). BNIM fits in with the 'interpretative tradition' of social science research, enabling the discovery of hidden meanings in interview discourse, the psychological and societal aspects of people's lives (Wengraf, 2013, p54). Analysis of BNIM interviews (n=47), will provide a 'thick description' of stakeholder's views of experiential learning during student placements (Geertz, 2003, [orig. 1937], p137).

1.2 Research context

My PhD research uses Bourdieu's theory of cultural transmission (Bourdieu, 1974, p35) to understand how and what students learn through experiential learning delivered via work placements. Bourdieu (1977a, p58) effectively argues that people only really benefit from education and training, if they have an existing predisposition to allow 'the transmission and…inculcation of the culture'. Bourdieu also described the transmission and inculcation of culture as 'societal reproduction' (Bourdieu, 1985, p726). In essence Bourdieu argues, people need to be inclined to 'fit in' to demonstrate expected behaviours. His theoretical position is relevant to a study of work placements

as it suggests a more nuanced interpretation. In particular the recent promotion of work placements beyond professional courses has been very much influenced by the expectation that work placements can advance a student's position in the labour market. That is work placements can bring about a change in students' ability to secure employment through making them more aware of employers' needs and providing them with appropriate work-focused skills. The expectation that work placements can advance employability therefore assumes that work placements are neutral experiences and that all the relevant stakeholders involved can work together to advance students' employability. In contrast the thesis, through engaging with Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction does not consider work placements to be a neutral space, but rather explores the power dimensions that are internal to work placements.

In particular power dimensions of work placements define how the different stakeholders are engaged with the process of delivering work placements, as well as the specific outcomes. The theoretical position of this thesis therefore pays particular attention to how different stakeholders engage with each other through the process of delivering, and taking part in, work placements. This position also assumes that employability benefits will not happen automatically, that is it is not sufficient to provide placement for students, if there are to be demonstrable learning outcomes then these need to be delivered through a programme of experiential learning. The thesis considers the extent to which outcomes for students are delivered through a programme of learning and the extent to which this is co-ordinated through a partnership between the main stakeholders, particularly students, employers and academics.

In developing this theoretical approach my PhD thesis is able to make an important contribution to the field of the effects of experiential learning, in the form of work based placements on students in higher education. In particular through considering the power relations of work placements and how the different stakeholders interact in delivering these, the research demonstrated the need for a functioning curriculum design employability network (CD/EN). Numerous research participants recognised, there needs to be an effective pedagogical partnership between HEIs, employers, students and UCAs (AHECS, 2013b, p3; HEFCE, 2011, p29; ILO, 2012, p17; NUS/QAA, 2012, p15). My research demonstrates that effective delivery of experiential learning through work placements depends on dialogue between university, students and providers. Existing practice tends to develop work placements through dialogue between two parties (e.g. placements are arranged between academic staff and providers) however effective experiential learning depends on a three-way dialogue that involves students. My PhD also analysed the effect of experiential learning on students, during their work placement with either a statutory agency or a third sector organisation. This research study found; the location where students received experiential learning, had little bearing on what students learnt. In particular students were not significantly changed as people, either politically or socially, after receiving experiential learning from either a statutory agency or a third sector organisation.

The Professional Capabilities Framework the PCF, had a substantive affect upon the social work strand of my PhD thesis. My research found the PCF is having a significant effect upon social work students in higher education. Students of social work indicated, they were concerned their university might not be able to provide them with a qualifying

placement with a statutory agency. Interviews with social work academics indicated PCF accreditors were suggesting, it should be a requirement for both experiential learning student placements to be with a statutory agency. During the research period the majority of the cohort agreed uncertainty regarding how the PCF may develop, was having a negative effect upon social work higher education. Third Sector employers of social workers in my study were particularly highly critical of the PCF.

In terms of learning outcomes, my research identified that the most important outcome which both employers and students identified, was the significance of 'fitting in'. This corresponds with Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, in which students with the more appropriate social and cultural capital to enhance this dimension of the work placement have most to gain. Hence rather than work placements bringing about a change in students, i.e. acquiring a new skill, work placements can be more appropriately viewed as quite conservative in that student learn how to adapt to new working environments, hence rather than developing new skills, the most important learning outcome was how to fit into an organisation and assimilate the cultural ethos of specific work environments.

1.3 Aims and objectives

As outlined above, the main aim of this research was to consider the effect of experiential learning student placements, in unpaid work with a statutory agency employer e.g. a local authority social work department, or with a 'Third Sector' organisation e.g. a voluntary group, have on a student's learning, employability and development. The research compared the effect of experiential learning through work placements, on students in social work and geography or geology, earth and

environmental sciences (GEES), to explore differences between students on different types of degree programmes. In order to meet this aim the research considered four overall research questions as detailed below:

What use is made of student's work experience in academic programmes?

Most higher education stakeholders perceive that experiential learning is mainly for the student to become more employable. There is a benefit in establishing if there are any other educational benefits of experiential learning, in addition to employability. Students can choose a work placement facet as a final year dissertation topic. Stakeholders may give indications that experiential learning through student placements, improve educational attainment and academic grades (Brooks, 2012, p4 and p5). Some stakeholders perceive that when students returns to university after work placement, they have become more confident in decision making, a facet of self-efficacy (Druckman and Bjork, 1994, p173). This research question helps to identify the many effects experiential learning can have on student development.

Are there different learning benefits in attending a 'Third Sector' placement compared to a Statutory Agency; Are these benefits recognised and accepted by students, academics and employers?

The higher education community needs to be aware of any differences in the effect of experiential learning, received at different types of placement location. Do students learn more or become more effected by active participation or passively shadowing whilst on placement? Are there any differences between academic disciplines? Higher education will benefit from a comparison of the effect of experiential learning in Social Work courses and GEES (Geography or Geology, Earth and Environmental Sciences)

courses. We need to know if one type of placement location, encourages for example reflective practices, more than another. If indeed this is case, we also need to consider why this phenomenon happens. The second part of this research question resonates in employability. Does successful participation on a work based experiential learning student placement need to be credentialed in some way? This associated theme is especially relevant in GEES courses. For GEES disciplines, the placement is voluntary not mandatory, it does not form part of any 'fitness to practice' type assessment.

How do students articulate their learning and employability, acquired through work-based experience?

This research question indicates the student is required to record their views on their progress on work placement. The question induces a multitude of associated themes. Do students prefer a lone exercise such as filling in a learning journal, or feedback sessions with the employer to demonstrate their work based learning? Have universities identified the tools and strategies students require, to articulate their learning on placement? Do University Career Advisers (UCAs) have a role in assisting students to reflect on their work experiences? Do students develop synergies between experience and learning that provides a basis for their future development of work-based skills? Does the student's ability to reflect, vary from one discipline to another?

How do the providers of student placements the employers, evaluate the experiential work-based learning of students in their organisations?

This research question also introduces a number of additional relevant issues, not directly covered by the four main research questions. Employers use student placements as opportunities for future recruitment. There is a recurring theme. Do

employers hold a student whose placement experience was with a 'Third Sector' organisation in the same regard, as a student whose experiential learning was with a statutory agency? Is there a partnership between employer, placement student and their higher education institute (HEI), which could assist the employer in evaluating the student's experiential learning? Would employers benefit by having a curriculum design input into what the student learns, or pedagogically, how the student learns? The last two questions, establish the need to explore the pros and cons of a curriculum design/employability nexus (CD/EN), a partnership fully discussed in this thesis.

To study work based experiential learning through student placements, I conducted numerous interviews with many higher education stakeholders (n=47). In the process of conducting these research interviews, many other experiential learning associated issues emerged. For example, does being a Bachelor's or a Master's student influence the effectiveness of experiential learning. This issue, which emerged from the data, has pedagogical implications for young and mature students (see also Holmstrom, The SWAP Report, 2010, p10; Lyonette et al, 2015, p4).

1.4 Thesis structure

The thesis begins with a review of the theoretical framing of the research. From their early inception, universities have had a social role beyond wealth accumulation. The university is viewed as a source of higher academic and social knowledge. It appears that in the present day universities are being required to perform a societal balancing act. On the one hand universities are required to meet state objectives of professionalising people, on the other hand they have a civic duty to transform society (Lynch et al, LEAPSE Report, 2013, p4). These competing policy drivers are

encapsulated in the following question: What is the public function of a university? Chapter 2 summarises why the wealth creating, knowledge transfer and transformative nature of universities, via experiential learning should be maintained.

Chapter 3 is a literature review of the pedagogical aspects of experiential learning. The definition of experiential learning is contested. One theme which appears consistently in most definitions, is that knowledge is gained from the transformation of real-life experiences. John Dewey (1859-1952) (1938a, [orig. 1897]) has a very significant role, being referred to as the 'father of experiential learning'. Dewey's (1938a, [1897]) experiential learning model, also encourages students to reflect upon what they have learnt and how they have learnt. David Kolb's (born 1939) (1984) experiential learning cycle theory, is the main conceptual framework which applies to student placements in present day HEIs. Learning by using previous lived experience in a psycho-social context is discussed. 'Learning by doing', alongside active experimentation, demonstrates an affinity with Dewey's (1938a, [1897]) earlier experiential learning model work. Work placements help the student to contextualise their learning transforming experiences, 'learning by doing' (Kolb, 1984, p38). Andragogy theory (Knowles, 1980) is also discussed in chapter 3, as various aspects of andragogy overlap with experiential learning. Knowles's (1980) andragogy theory, overlaps with Dewey's (1938) and Kolb's (1984) experiential learning work on various issues e.g. societal wellbeing. Knowles' (1980) andragogy theory also helps to introduce the issues of employability and citizenship (Pike, 2007a, p473).

Chapter 4 is a discussion of philosophy, epistemology, ontology and critical theory, in relation to research of experiential learning. This thesis is located in the theoretical

framework of Berger and Luckmann (1966), Gergen (1991) and Giddens (1984) as a social constructionist. From a social constructionist standpoint, however the person living an experience, perceives that experience that is their reality. In this sense, my thesis is in alignment with Dewey (1938a, [1897]) and Kolb (1984). Here experiential learning through work placements, allows students to transform experiences and learn from them by active experimentation. The theoretical concepts of Foucault, 2005 (orig. 1966), Bourdieu, (1977b) and how they have informed Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012) study, are discussed in this section. Chapter 4 demonstrates how critical theory induces critical reflection and critical thought, resulting in experiential learning geared towards social justice.

My thesis is situated in the Bourdieusian concepts of 'cultural reproduction', 'habitus' and 'field'. Experiential learning research can help to identify hidden sources of societal inequality in the workplace. The link to Bourdieu's (1977b) 'cultural reproduction' theory, is the student must comply with norms and values whilst on placement to acquire social capital. Holdsworth and Quinn (2012) act to explain the educational benefits of students on placement, being able to challenge perceived inequality during experiential learning. Chapter 4 concludes with discussion on the effect of epistemology and ontology on trying to achieve researcher neutrality. Student development is reaffirmed with the discussion of critical theory, which highlights the transformative nature of reflective practices. Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012) "reproductive" and "deconstructive" student volunteering study is underscored.

Chapter 5 discusses the research methodology by which this research was obtained. The empirical research involved qualitative data collection. The reasons why a

qualitative research model, consisting entirely of interviews (n=47) with participants was chosen is explained (Corbin and Strauss, 2015, p7; Kvale, 1996, page 5 and page 6). The aims, objectives and the four research questions this PhD study considered are presented. The research method used detailing the four aforementioned stakeholders; also the different types of universities involved in the study is discussed. The number of interviews, sample size and characteristics, interview number and pseudonym assigned, are included. The research interviews breakdown, between each sub-cohort and different type of university, where applicable, is presented. How research participants were recruited and selected is discussed. Initial research problems recruiting enough participants, and how that was resolved is discussed. The research design of the semi-structured interview questionnaire; and the biographical-narrative interpretive method (BNIM) single question (designed to) induce narrative (SQUIN), are discussed. The research questions and draft interview schedule notes are present. The university structure in relation to social work and GEES courses student placements, is given. How the research was conducted, implemented, and a brief concluding summary is discussed.

The next three chapters, (6, 7 and 8) form the empirical section. Chapter 6 considers what students learn on a work placement, through the critical lens of a fifth stakeholder, an existential agency called the 'wider society'. This includes an analysis of how experiential learning gives undergraduates an opportunity to engage with employability, in the form of arranging their own work placement. Employers expressed a desire for a 'professionalisation' of the graduate pool. Employers view professionalisation as the acquisition of 'job ready' employability skills (Tomlinson, 2012, p419; Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, p550; Brown et al, 2003, p119). Cohort

members effectively discussed Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, mainly in terms of 'learning by doing', emphasising the 'active experimentation' aspect of Kolb's theory. Chapter 6 concludes by discussing how the majority of the research cohort recognise Dewey's (1938) and Kolb's (1984) present day contribution to higher education. The existential stakeholder the 'wider society', benefits from experiential learning. Most of the professions from other academic disciplines e.g. medicine, train their staff in the same manner. Work based experiential learning through student placements, deliver the pharmacists, food production, legal system, child and elderly people care services our society needs. Experiential learning was said to enhance civic renewal skills.

Chapter 7 considers what constitutes a good placement and the significance of the curriculum design/employability nexus (CD/EN). The cohort describes how the pedagogical effect of experiential learning can change, depending on how a CD/EN has developed in a particular area. Chapter 7 details how various stakeholders perceived an intention to provide employability skills, as an essential constituent of an effective student placement. Stakeholder views that the 'character of the placement organisation', can affect how the student learns. The ethos, the character of an organisation, can affect the propensity to which a placement student might challenge observed practice. There was a strong indication that a student placement should raise people's confidence and be empowering. The placement itself should initially be, a controlled, safe environment, where the student can develop a sense of self-efficacy. The majority of the cohort do not perceive there is any material difference between students who did their placement with a statutory agency, compared to students

whose experiential learning, is with a 'third sector' organisation. Participants did describe different learning journeys, between the two.

The final empirical chapter considers the role of work placement on students' development. Chapter 8 explains why one of the roles of experiential learning is to foster student development. Critical questions are considered: How do stakeholders, specifically the students get a sense that student development is taking place? How do students articulate their views about experiential learning on student placement? This section discusses how experiential learning encourages reflective practices, which is a key constituent of student development. Experiential learning enables the student to attempt tasks in their chosen profession, then reflect on what they have learnt and how they have learnt, whilst on placement. Students need to see at first hand, how their theories learnt at university, worked when applied in practice in the work place. Students then need to be enabled to reflect upon their results, including how they felt, and how they feel they are perceived by others. There is also a perception amongst the cohort, supported by anecdotal evidence that experiential learning contributes to educational attainment, improved academic grades. Participants suggested improved academic ability could be a result of people being able to contextualise taught theory, applying Kolb's (1984) 'learning by doing'. The Professional Capabilities Framework, the PCF, which is only applicable to the social work strand of this research, had a very significant influence on this study. The new PCF requirements, have changed the manner in which experiential learning transforms students. This research establishes, the PCF in tandem with experiential learning, is instrumental in the 'cultural reproduction' of societal norms and values.

Chapter 9 encapsulates all the preceding chapters and research data analysis, which establish that experiential learning is essential for training people in the professions. Preceding chapters are paraphrased to remind the reader of the historical background of universities, likewise their societal purpose. Generically these are knowledge transfer, wealth creation and civic duty. Experiential learning is equally effective not just in providing professional staff, but empowering people in community engagement in their local area. Experiential learning has a pivotal role in bridging the 'town' and 'gown' divide. The experiential learning theory of John Dewey (1938) and David Kolb (1984) is re-examined, to underline key aspects. For example, the importance of people's understanding of the social context where learning takes place, for experiential learning to be meaningful, to become embedded (Dewey, 1938a, p25).

Chapter 2 - What are Universities For?

2.1 Overview

This section begins by considering a critical question: 'What do students learn at University?' Consideration will be from a number of angles, issues which themselves demonstrate how complex the question is. In the discussion we will explore some definitions of a university and how those definitions can set certain agendas. We will consider the concept that knowledge is 'essential in a university' (Shils, 1988, p210). Pedagogical issues of knowledge production and transfer will be explored (Burawoy, 2011, p31). Another member of the concepts constellation is wealth creation, by definition, capitalism and neoliberalism must also be present. We will consider does the societal need for wealth creation influence curriculum design, which subjects are taught at university. There will be similar consideration of what students learn outside of university, during experiential learning on work based student placements. More critical issues emerge: is there a dominant HE stakeholder influencing these extra curricula activities in a particular way? How does the 'wider society' benefit?

The history of universities is discussed, detailing how they develop differently, depending on the influence exerted by various social actors e.g. sovereignty, the church, the state. Also by the local conditions, such as economic recession, epidemic or war, which were prevalent at the time. Special attention is paid to Wilhelm von Humboldt and his influence on modern universities since the early 19th century. Most of the histories of the early universities are chequered with periods of entrenched opposition and fierce debate. There have been numerous incidents of conflict between ecclesiastical, secular, medical and the law fraternities in the history of universities. Conflicts motivated by the university's ability to professionally educate people.

The societal purpose of universities will be considered, in the knowledge that different social actors with different remits will influence people's perceptions. Universities are seats of global intellectual and educational achievement, yet paradoxically, they are politically and economically intimately linked with the local society in which they reside (Shils, 1988, p227; David Willetts, HEPI Conference speech, 15 May 2013). There will be discussion of the causal factors that have changed UK universities policy during their development. For example, the introduction of student tuition fees in Autumn 1998, for academic year 1998/99 (House of Commons Library (HOCL), 2015, Briefing Paper SN00917, p4). The analysis will identify underlying socio-economic-political features that were present in the social policy backdrop, which had an influence on universities (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2012, p643).

2.2 Introduction

The following two quotes give an early indication of the dichotomy that exists regarding two main issues, knowledge transfer and wealth creation. We will focus upon various aspects of these two issues while discussing, what do students learn at university?

> *'...universities are critical agents of regeneration and growth, as well as creators of knowledge.'*

> (Smith(c), 2011, p130)

> *'John Maynard Keynes famously asked 'What is economics for?' ...Keynes' example is pertinent...because any discussion on the place of universities in contemporary society will inevitably be driven to articulate...some sense of human purposes, beyond that of accumulating wealth.'*

> (Collini, 2012, px)

Using Keynes' wisdom, discussion of what students learn at university, should focus not just upon wealth creation and other capitalist ideals. There should be significant emphasis upon learning many of the scientific, cultural, educational and intellectual aspects of social life. Such a social remit would enable universities to demonstrate their importance to our society as a whole. Collini's (2012) use of Keynes, directs the discussion to assess the macro-social factors of university learning content. Collini (2012) has in effect signposted the acquisition of human and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986b, p249), as a societal expectation of what students should be learning at university. Hawkins and Maurer's (2012, p353) study on how social capital can be applied in social work, provides a definition which has the humanistic overtones of Collini (2012) and aligns with Bourdieu's (1986, p242) cultural capital theory.

> *"We define social capital as the by-product of social interactions which are embedded in and accessed via formal and informal social relationships of individuals, communities and institutions."*
>
> (Hawkins and Maurer, 2012, p356)

Collini (2012) essentially argues that universities should condition (with people's consent), students with micro-ideologies. Here, micro-ideologies are human and social capital personal attributes, which enable if not encourage students to think and act in certain ways, conducive to societal needs. Micro-ideologies can act as scaffolding by which students can be informed of the ideal traits of people, who may choose to be involved in social care or environmental protection. In this sense, one can see that the higher education of our students by universities, is actually both a social and public good (Christoforou, 2013, p722; Collini, 2012, px; Holmwood, 2011, p7).

Bourdieu's 'habitus' concept (1977b, p72) is a useful theoretical tool to employ, in the analysis of the effect of experiential learning on students. Bourdieu's 'habitus' helps to explain how systemic social structures, influence the practical action taken by the individual whilst within that social structure (Smith(a), 2011, p657). Bourdieu clearly intended for 'habitus' to be understood as being an objective structure in its own right. Bourdieu effectively describes 'habitus' as having the following property, 'objectivity of the subjective' (Bourdieu, 1990, p135). Here the use of the word objectivity can be interpreted that an individual (the subjective) can make objective choices when interacting in the 'habitus'. People who are able to benefit from the 'habitus' structure, are able to use the products of their practice to produce larger structures (Bourdieu, 2000, p146). For Bourdieu (1998, p71) a proper account of practice is not possible, without fully considering the manner in which practice is being produced in the prevailing social structure. Social activity "cannot be accounted for without considering the nature of the power relations of the members" (Bourdieu, 1998, p70). 'Members' here means people affected by the societal power structures influencing their lives.

Applying Bourdieu's 'habitus' concept, students who are capable of 'fitting in' easily with the 'habitus' surrounding social structures receive greater gains. This also means that students with an existing predisposition which aligns with usual cultural practices, quickly become assimilated into the habitus. Bourdieu's 'habitus' concept explains why students who are naturally inclined to accept existing cultural norms and values, 'fit in' more easily during work placements. Such students do not have to make a conscious attempt to obey existing work practices, they comply with the rules without having to be regulated. Objectivity has become virtually redundant. The effect of habitus is to remove most of the conscious thought from the individual subject. The students

comply without thinking, demonstrating expected behaviours on work placement. One of the later definitions of habitus which Bourdieu developed, is detailed below.

"Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without predisposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery at the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regular' and 'regulated' without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, they can collectively orchestrated without being the product of an organising action of a conductor."

(Bourdieu, 1990, p53)

Bourdieu, also provided society with the concept of cultural capital, which he said can exist in three forms (Bourdieu, 1986b, p242). There is an *'embodied'* state described as embedded 'dispositions of the mind and body'. There is also an *'objectified'* state, which manifests itself in the form of cultural goods, e.g. pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments and machines. Finally there is an *'institutionalised'* state, this is a form of objectification which must be considered separately. 'Institutionalised' cultural capital has its most influence when an individual believes they are guaranteed to receive some form of gain (Bourdieu, 1986b, p242). Cultural capital can be in the form of entrance to a certain club, which in turn guarantees a person's social acceptance. Existential learning can affect the 'embodied state', the nature of the student. Essentially Bourdieu argues higher education is a form of 'institutionalised' cultural capital, as the qualifications obtained are widely recognised as providing a guarantee.

The importance of Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital when analysing the effect of experiential learning on undergraduate students, quickly becomes apparent. Similar to the 'habitus' concept, cultural capital in its primary state is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment. A process of inculcation and assimilation is required to embed cultural capital, so it becomes an integral part of the person, into 'a cultured habitus' (Bourdieu, 1967, p344). Another similarity Bourdieu's 'cultural capital' concept has with his theory of 'habitus', is that cultural capital can also be acquired subconsciously (Nolan, 2012, p204). Equally the mode of transmission for 'habitus' and 'cultural capital' are virtually identical. The level of natural affinity to the social structures the individual has, influences whether the acquisition of cultural capital takes place and/or at what pace (Bourdieu, 1986b, p244).

The social structures which engender the acquisition of cultural capital are disguised, not as immediately obvious as wealth accumulation, economic capital. Cultural capital transmutes to symbolic capital, becoming unrecognisable as economic capital (Giddens, 1979, p105). Instead culture capital becomes a legitimate authority able to recognise, or using 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 1991, p5) not recognise, someone's possessions, skills or abilities. The power of cultural capital can be seen in the manner in which academic qualifications are conferred. Academic qualifications can be said to be '…a certificate of cultural competence which confer on its holders a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture,' (Bourdieu, 1986b, p245). In practice, in order for a student to obtain cultural capital in the form of academic qualifications, they must prove themselves. Applying the theory of 'cultural capital' to experiential learning, students acquire their academic qualifications by replicating expected work practices. The student's need to acquire their academic qualification,

makes obtaining the employers approval essential during their work placement (Brennan et al, CHERI Report April 2009, p20). Cultural capital is able to encourage societal compliance with its ability to impose recognition (Bourdieu 1986b, p247).

Fowler (2004, p150) observed that Bourdieu informed us that with cultural capital, the dominant class had 'changed its mode of legitimation'. Fowler (2004, p150) argued that Bourdieu explained the dominant ideology have moved from conferring religious acceptance, to providing access to cultural capital. Fowler's (2004, p156) study using a Bourdieusian interpretation on the literary memorials associated with obituaries, demonstrates educational attainment is a form of cultural capital (Fowler, 2004, p156).

The preceding discussion on two Bourdieusian concepts 'habitus' and 'cultural capital', informs us of the existence of power structures in society. We can now see that one of the university's main roles, is to teach students how to comply with existing norms and values. In order to fulfil its societal remit, the 'wider society' must produce sufficient numbers of compliant skilled workers. People who can create wealth and/or deliver public goods, a term which has multiple definitions to include social care and environmental protection provision. The 'wider society' remit and Bourdiuesian theories go hand in hand. The 'wider society' needs to have various mechanisms, to deliver societal needs, including being able to exclude people who appear less compliant. One such delivery mechanism is experiential learning accessed through higher education, which in tandem act to transform students into societal compliance. Transformation mainly takes place by successful students receiving cultural capital, manifest as a degree qualification from university which is a key to enter a profession. (Bourdieu, 1986b, p245; Crozier and Reay, 2011, p147; Nolan, 2012, p207).

2.3 The history of universities

Ferruolo (1988) explains that a university (Latin *universitas*) is a form of a corporation, a guild, a group of people who have formed a collective. Effectively students engaging in activity with a common purpose. University in the relevant medieval sense is a legal term for such a collective, which exercises control over its membership, legally recognising such a group to be self-governing (Ferruolo, 1988, p24). The importance of medieval times is reinforced in Calhoun's (2006) description of how universities developed and their social purpose, what universities teach our students.

"The contemporary university, thus, reflects, ancient, medieval, and early modern ideals of knowledge, the 17th- and 18th-century revolutions in science, the 19th-century transformation of higher education pioneered by Humboldt in Germany, the development of the university as a research institution there and especially in the English language countries, massive 20th-century growth, consequent internal differentiation, and transformation in finance."

(Calhoun, 2006, p18)

2.4 From medieval times to modern times

The history of the development of universities is complex. Bender (1988a) argues, universities first emerged '...ten years either side of the year 1200,' (Bender, 1988a, p14). The landed elite, their descendants, the state and church staff trained at these institutions, universities. 'An institution which can trace its origins to the thirteenth and fourteenth century, it has come to be a central part of the modern social order,' (Holmwood, 2011, p13; see also Calhoun, 2006, p11; see also Hyde, 1973, cited in Bender, 1988c, p4). Switzerland's University of Basel was founded in 1454.

Italian universities (circa 1460) have a unique development trajectory. Most of their professors and students were laymen, not from the monastic or civic route, instead chosen by a panel of lawyers, doctors and university professors. "Italian universities were controlled by secular governments, either communal or signorial" (Brucker, 1988, p48). Medieval Dutch universities such as Leiden also have their own particular development history. Grafton (1988) indicates that a local nobleman, Janus Dousa (circa 1580), was able to influence Leiden University's hierarchy, to resist the local cleric's pedagogical demands on schooling. Dousa insisted, the arts faculty educate people for a political and military function. The Dutch clerical fraternity would have preferred Leiden University to concentrate more on teaching professional and secular staff (Grafton, 1988, p66). Dilthey (1964) argues that from a traditional sciences point of view e.g. physics, chemistry and biology, "Leiden became the first university in a modern sense" (Dilthey, 1964, p443, cited in Grafton, 1988, p61).

Universities have proved quite flexible in their development since medieval times, having the ability to cease existence in adverse conditions, to reappear later. One such historical university migration, suggested in January 1460, concerned Florentine Studio, (now called Florence University), possibly moving to Pisa. The proposal was hotly contested, being opposed by some on numerous grounds, including universities make a vital contribution to a city's economy and cultural life. The driving force behind the suggestion was said to be, Pisa was stagnating and needed some form of economic stimulus. The ensuing debate highlighted how important a university can be in urban development or wealth creation. During the controversy, arguments against both the campus model and living in accommodation within easy reach but not

associated with the academic institution, were raised. In 1460, this must have had an influence on knowledge production and transfer, how and what people learnt.

> *"To this political and economic analysis the defenders of the status quo added a pedagogical argument: adolescent students should remain at home, under the watchful eyes of parents and relatives, rather than be exposed to the temptations that would inevitably corrupt them if they lived in a foreign community."*

(Brucker, 1988, p49 and p50)

During the medieval period the UK developed six universities. A Scottish quartet of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and St Andrews, the Ox-Cam double, Oxford and Cambridge. The UK universities provided teaching, research and religious education, setting an intellectual standard without parallel during medieval times.

2.5 Modern universities

The seminal beginning of the modern university, is the establishment of the University of Berlin by Wilhelm von Humboldt in 1810. An event widely regarded as the symbolic founding moment of modern universities (Collini, 2012, p23; McClelland, 1988, p181). These German seats of learning were predominantly ecclesiastical institutions acting in a juridical capacity, teaching the classical sciences, law, medicine and philosophy. The ecclesiastical nature of these institutions became the dominant approach to what we now call higher education, Europe wide until the French Revolution. German universities were closely tied to the state and state objectives (Rothblatt, 1988, p126).

For the next half century German universities set the global benchmark by which scholarship and academic achievement were measured. The United States copied, from the 1830s to 1880, American universities were '...introducing educational ideals imported from Germany' (Stevenson, 1988, p169; see also Shils, 1988, p213). Knowledge creation in the form of research was seen to be the primary purpose of universities. Not just in the traditional sciences, but also in humanities and the social sciences (Bender, 1988c, p4). This latter impetus from the initial German model of universities, would provide the 'higher centres of learning' platform by which universities conduct their research'. Humboldt's University of Berlin is credited as '...being the pioneer of the "research university" model' (McClelland, 1988, p181).

In Switzerland a reform commission in 1813 decided to reconstitute the University of Basel along the modern lines of 'Humboldt's educational countermovement'. The reform commission's intention behind its decision to adopt Humboldtian neohumanism, was to cultivate a citizen of 'moral and aesthetic sensibility'. The student should acquire new human and social capital traits including 'creativity, and sharpened understanding' (Schorske, 1988, p200; see also Coleman, 1988, s101).

Early in the 19th century Scottish universities appeared most advanced, from the capacity building perspective. Scottish universities majored on the importance of democratic traditions, increasing social awareness (Seider et al, 2012, p44; Holmwood, 2011, p14; Calhoun, 2006, p13). Also combined with a strong professional and academic emphasis on law, medicine, health and social care (Collini, 2012, p27). Edinburgh University in particular had a unique pedagogical edifice at this time, on which it built its ethos of religion, commerce and philosophy (Phillipson, 1988, p113).

In more recent times, the first of the two University of London institutions opened in 1828. It was founded as a non-sectarian proprietary company, as opposed to being a charitable endowment, '...presumably to avoid jurisdiction by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England' (Rothblatt, 1988, p120). The first University of London, complete with its emphasis to have a student body from the "middling ranks" (Stevenson, 1988, p154; or "middling classes", Rothblatt, 1988, p122), inspired the opening of The University of the City of New York, now called New York University in 1832 (Stevenson, 1988, p154).

There has been a process of amalgamation with or absorption of rival seats of learning, an evolutionary legacy which lasts to this day. "However, 'the university' has, without question, become the dominant form" (Collini, 2012, p23). An example of such an absorption is the second University of London created by Parliament and royal charter in 1836. The main function of this new entity was mainly administrative and matriculation, with significantly less emphasis on tutorship of students. The 1836 Act relegated the first University of London to college status, a legally separate entity offering non-degree courses and/or preparing students for a qualifying university (Rothblatt, 1988, p121). There was similar absorption with King's College London which opened in 1831, with no royal charter or power to award a degree to students. Kings College had exactly the same relationship as the first University of London, now University College London, to the examining university, the second University of London of 1836, which does have degree-granting status (Rothblatt, 1988, p121). The terms amalgamation and absorption in this context need to be qualified. University College and King's College continue to exist after 1836, they could not directly confer degree themselves. Pre-existing educational institutions elsewhere became

amalgamated, absorbed by the impetus to have universities in London. There were similar complaints against the University of Berlin during the 19th century, frequently accused of causing 'the breakdown of community and communications', along with 'an agglomeration of research institutes' (McClennan, 1988, p194). In practice, students from small provincial German towns had to study a final-semester in Berlin to get their degree. The University of Frankfurt which opened in 1914 was also founded by the amalgamation of several academies and institutes (Jay, 1988, p233).

In England during the early 19th century, two new colleges (now universities) were founded in London, University College and King's College. Durham University was also up and running by the 1830s. These academic institutions comprised the only remotely serious challenge in England to the Ox-Cam monopoly. This status quo was maintained for the best part of a century into the late Victorian era of the 1910s. Universities were then seen as the logical extension of the public-school ideal. Character formation was to take place by the introduction of during the early 20th century, modern subjects such as natural sciences, languages and history. This developmental step change enabled '...educating the governing and administrative class of the future;' (Collini, 2012, p28). For UK universities, an important consideration for selecting candidates who might be so transformed by studying, is to try '...to follow Humboldt's criteria of picking people who lived for learning' (McClennan, 1988, p187). In addition, Ox-Cam had to reform itself by this time, the 1870s and 1880s.

Historically we can see that by the early 19th century effectively there were three different types of British university. Scottish/London universities delivered a professorial metropolitan service on a meritocratic basis, including a scholastic

bridging 'with public life and debate' (Calhoun, 2006, p13). The Ox-Cam approach which focussed upon a boarding-school, residential campus-based model, character building on a homogenous basis, with all students spending lengthy periods of time together, both while being educated in tutorials but also socially. Then there was the civic model, a definition being 'municipal and maintained by local authorities' (Rothblatt, 1988, p137). In the main 'civics', also called redbrick, were local universities in the regions away from the capitals of England and Scotland. There was a matriculation air to these civic universities, as they produced bank and local authority administrative workers. These universities were pragmatic, producing professional and secular staff, identified as being of local needs (Collini, 2012, p28).

By the late 19th century German universities were at their peak, with scholars from the UK and other parts of Europe, queuing up and competing to attend. By the early 20th century sufficient of the Humboldtian model had been imported, that the UK and the rest of Europe were able to establish their own university models. UK and other European universities were able to combine advanced scholarly and scientific research, with the liberal idealism of philosophical learning.

Larger universities with more resources and wider range of courses on offer, grew from the gravitational pull of being in or near a big city e.g. London, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Oxford and Cambridge effectively developed as large satellites of London, specialising in postgraduate work and visiting fellowships (Collini, 2012, p25). There has been a global impetus for the vast acceleration and expansion of university provision in the post war period. This has come about as a result of countries choosing to emulate the 'Anglo-Saxon' model of higher education (Collini, 2012, p25).

The big cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield, had established their own colleges, from the 1840s onwards, as industrialisation was now advanced. These big city academic institutions mainly catered for local needs, teaching practical, some would say vocational subjects such as banking or commerce. This period included the Age of Enlightenment tradition of universities, emphasising the importance of scientific knowledge (Stevenson, 1988, p161) and engineering. The ongoing development constellation identified that a change of culture was needed, either in the geographical location, or the pedagogical direction of universities, at this time. There was a societal need and political impetus that a different kind of university should be developed. New universities, not so aligned to the professionalisation of Church staff remit, who instead would deliver innovative engineers and craftsmen.

The fruits of departure from Humboldt's ideals are clearly visible. Scottish universities reinforced their reputation by producing or going on to deliver key inventions which have transformed the global society. Examples include the steam engine (1829) (George the father and son Robert Stephenson, University of Edinburgh 1820) (BBC History, 2013c), the telephone (1876) (Alexander Graham Bell, University of Edinburgh 1867) (BBC History, 2013b), and the television (1924) (John Logie Baird, University of Glasgow 1914) (BBC History, 2013a). Rothblatt (1988), when describing the two University Colleges of London, details how the educational policies of both at this time were '...conscious departures from the historic model offered by the ancient universities' (Rothblatt, 1988, p130). McClelland (1988) informs that Humboldt's ideals were compromised for reasons of pragmatics, as the University of Berlin developed from its inception to today's modern university. "Then as now, universities had to respond to a variety of forces, including the governments that supported them, the

institutions that hire their graduates, and the students themselves" (McClelland, 1988, p182). These same causal factors, the prevailing political climate of the day, employability and people's ability to attend university, influence how students are taught today. The phrase people's ability to attend needs to be analysed further. Throughout the transitional modern day period, a university's curriculum design and pedagogical approach may have acted to exclude certain groups. A non-traditional person's previous school might not have delivered recognised teaching.

2.6 Present day

The University of London held its first mixed classes for men and women in 1871, becoming in 1878 the first university to admit men and women on equal terms (University of London official website, 2013). It was due to these societal changes that Ox-Cam had to reform, in part to take into account and recognise these different ideas of a university. The prevailing social trends acted as a policy driver for the proliferation of universities. The state, the main backer of universities at this time, extended the use of a 'Royal Charter'. A legal device which recognises and legitimises the big city colleges, 'as qualifying for university status', academic institutions. The 'Royal Charter' gave the recently conferred city colleges, degree-granting status and a larger degree of local autonomy. To this day, the 'Royal Charter' '...has survived as the main legal mechanism by which the state simultaneously controls and liberates the universities' (Collini, 2012, p28). Collini's (2012) analysis supports an important Bourdieusian concept, the education system replicates and legitimises the dominant ideology. Essentially Collini (2012, p28) is saying, universities are not required 'to do anything other than reproduce the legitimate culture as it stands and produce agents capable of manipulating it legitimately' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p59).

In the present day, the campus-based Ox-Cam model is virtually defunct, many students live at home travelling to these colleges to study. Societal change was very slow yet eventually female emancipation progressed, manifest in the form of more women enrolling as students at university. This was something virtually unheard of in Ox-Cam in the 1910s pre WW1. As the early 20th century progressed, hegemonic forces formed a new dialectic, that would be hugely influential on how higher education would develop in the UK; '...a dialectic that was at least partly powered by snobbery:' (Collini, 2012, p28). The paradigmatic dialectic provided an impetus that universities should concentrate on delivering certain subjects, above other more what we would today describe as vocational subjects. Different types of academic institutions felt compelled to ditch their identity and instead, don the clothing of the dominant ideology.

Civic, also known as 'redbrick' universities, lost their pragmatic local character, feeling forced to provide essentially unwanted sports facilities and halls of residence thus conforming to the culturally dominant model; '...the university can be seen as the paradigmatic institution of the public sphere and of modernity more generally' (Delanty, 2005, p530, cited in Calhoun, 2006, p10). More succinctly, in the early 20th century, UK and European universities were encouraged to provide a student learning journey, which complied with national standards. Often at the expense of the loss of the institution's autonomy, no longer able to provide the skilled workers the local economy needs. The availability of public transport improved as the 20th century progressed, many more students lived within easy reach of a university. These students had no real need to leave the parental home. The early 20th century elitist dialectic, that the student learning journey must include the use of university accommodation and recreation facilities is virtually defunct. Universities changed as technology changed.

Alternatively, sports facilities and accommodation provision might be a throwback to Humboldtian tradition, in which students had to attend the 'Gymnasium or its equivalent' as part of their studies (McClennan, 1988, p190). Also for a university to maintain its Royal Charter degree-granting status, it must assist students with housing. This pattern continued into the mid-20th century, accelerating in the post war period, when former local colleges e.g. Hull and Southampton were able to grant external London degrees. The costs of being able confer such a highly regarded certificate, being the loss of some of the institution's local identity, to be replaced by the dominant ideology view of how a university should deliver its service (Brady, 2012, p346). The pattern carried on apace throughout the 20th century, the Colleges of Advanced Technology e.g. Bradford and Surrey, were then allowed to grant London degrees. By the 1980s polytechnics were allowed to call themselves universities. Their successful students were given effectively a London standard degree, pulling such institutions towards being a national entity, rather than being locally run (Collini, 2012, p29).

Universities grew slowly during the first half of the 20th century, less than 2% of the UK population actually attended. One societal factor that influenced this situation was the lack of state funding for higher education. It wasn't until 1919 that the state established a body, the University Grants Committee (UGC), to distribute small grant aid to academic institutions. The situation was different for Scottish universities who since the nineteenth century had been receiving regular parliamentary grants (Rothblatt, 1988, p124). By 1945 after WWII, state support for higher education accelerated. There are three main social policy drivers why this societal change occurred. "The first is the explosion in student numbers; the second is the vast expansion of scientific research; and the third is political ideology" (Collini, 2012, p30).

The statistics on student numbers in the UK are ambiguous (Calhoun, 2006, p14). Collini (2012) informs as follows: In 1939 there were approximately 50,000 students in the 21 officially recognised universities in the UK. Post-war consumerism increased this figure to 113,000 by 1961. Student numbers continued expansion. By 1980, 300,000 in 46 recognised universities. 1992 saw the reclassification of polytechnics into universities, from that point 38 former polytechnics became universities (Further and Higher Education Act 1992, Part II c.13. section 76 part 1, p60). By the year 2000, 30 other institutions, mainly higher education colleges acquired the university charter. The relentless socio-economic-political impetus for academic institutions to become universities increased student numbers, resulting in over 2,250,000 students studying at approximately 130 recognised universities by 2009 (Collini, 2012, p31). Holmwood (2011) informs that in the 1980s, about 15% of the 18 to 24 years of age cohort studied for a degree. This rose to approximately 36% by 2009 (Holmwood, 2011, p8). The most recent figures currently available for academic year 2014/2015, detail that provisionally the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR), has risen to 48% for 17 to 30 year olds (Department for Education, SFR5/2016, 15 Sept 2016, p3).

On scientific research expansion, Collini (2012) informs as follows: In the 1930s half of all UK students were in the arts faculty. For Ox-Cam this figure is more striking, the proportion is 80 and 70% respectively. By comparison with arts, in 2009 only 11% of undergraduates and 9% of postgraduates were studying 'humanities' subjects in UK universities; '...there have been quite remarkable changes in the scale and objects of expenditure by universities above all expenditure on research rather than teaching' (Collini, 2012, p32). 3% of the UK seven research councils £3billion budget is spent by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the bulk of the remainder goes

on scientific research. The prioritisation towards research funding delineates the societal change driving the vast expansion in student numbers studying scientific disciplines (Collini, 2012, p32). In essence, Habermas' (1989, [orig. 1962], p20) 'structural transformation' has occurred in the public sphere of higher education. The preceding discourse could be construed as a problem constellation, which can be encapsulated by asking two critical questions. How inclusive is the public sphere conceived to be, and "Just what is this public culture that the university proposes to serve?" (Bender, 1988b, p294). However further examination of the apparent disparity in HE funding, towards scientific projects compared to arts and humanities research is required. Scientific research is simply more expensive to conduct. Most scientific research requires a team of personnel and expensive equipment. Arts and humanities projects require a fraction of the costs, to produce equally valid research. It is often conducted by examining artefacts in museums, libraries and galleries (this list is not exhaustive), that other institutions or agencies own. That's why there is substantially more HE funding towards scientific research than in the arts and humanities. The apparent disparity is in the main a fallacy, once you take the huge difference of initial capital outlay and continuous day to day science research running costs into account.

The quality of what is taught and just as importantly, who gets the opportunity to learn a curriculum on offer, is decided by a multi-faceted decision making process. Included in this process is government policy, well intentioned philanthropists and other sources of financial support (Shils, 1988, p210). Both openness and rational-critical discourse are challenged by how universities have developed in postmodern times (Habermas, 1989, cited in Calhoun, 2006, p16). As has the tension between excellence and accessibility, including the inequality the very pursuit of excellence imbues upon an

institution (Brady, 2012, p349). Along with the inequality conferred by access to university being decided by for example credentialing elites. Accessibility to university also creates inequality by a different mechanism, artificially inflating the value of learning at certain institutions, compared to others. Ox-Cam as opposed to non-Ox-Cam, creating prestige differentiations between virtually identical credentials (Calhoun, 2006, p9). Glazer (1988) argues the same perennial problem has been manifest in New York's universities, since WWII (Glazer, 1988, p268, p277 and p283).

The UK elected a Conservative Party government in 1979. In 1981 state funding of universities was cut by approximately 11%. Some observers such as Collini (2012) argue that these cuts were introduced due to the political ideology of the Conservative government of the day. A government who felt that universities were in some way subversive (Collini, 2012, p33), essentially a nursery of free thinkers (Antipode, 2012, p1056). Students not societally compliant equipped with a university education, who might challenge the orthodoxy, the hegemonic practices of the state. Students who have entered key societal professions of the state function e.g. education or law.

In 1986 the Conservative government in their second consecutive term in office, introduced what were essentially performance league tables for universities. An audit culture including KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) was introduced, which ranked the quality of a university's research by various subjective scales (Bedggood and Donovan, 2012, p826). Performance monitoring which didn't have widespread consensus amongst the universities, became the order of the day. Some observers argued, the assessment of universities landscape looked like Soviet planning (Burawoy, 2011, p30; Holmwood, 2011, p7). In 1988 the Conservative government in

its third successive term, saw the introduction of the 'Great Education Act', which changed the legal status of academic tenure. In practice as mentioned before, this would enable numerous colleges and other academic institutions to obtain a charter by which to become a University. The aforementioned 1988 Act also heralded the abolition of the UGC, to be replaced by quangos (Quasi Non-Governmental Organisations), who for universities were various funding bodies who were empowered to ensure compliance with government policies. Quangos designed to implement various reforms, in order to meet specific targets as laid down by the state. In practice this meant that universities had to conform to the dominant ideology of the day, or they wouldn't receive as much funding as other academic institutions who did comply. In 1992 the Conservative government in its fourth successive term in office, rolled out the legislation which enabled the polytechnics to achieve university status. Due to the 1988 Education Act, this meant that polytechnics could apply for more funding. University expansion accelerated apace. University education could be based on a lower-cost model of mass education in the postmodernism polytechnics, which sprung up after WWII. These post-1992 universities, were much larger than their traditional older university counterparts, some of which were established pre-WWI.

In 1997 political ideology changed in the UK with the election of a centre left government, this was called New Labour. From the development of the university's point of view, the Blair government's funding provisions to correct the preceding government's years of under-funding were blighted. Any such funding released having strings attached in the form of only being available for strictly earmarked purposes, often scientific, technological and medicine. New Labour university funding was often tied to continuing the reforms, which had been laid down by the previous Conservative

administration (Collini, 2012, p35). In practice New Labour maintained the status quo. The political ideological driver of the development of universities remained constant, regardless of which colour of rosette was in power. Foucault's (1991a) 'Governmentality' work provides theoretical underpinning of Collini's (2012, p35) critique; '…in the art of government the task is to establish a continuity, in both an upward and a downwards direction' (Foucault, 1991a, p91). By 2009, 18 of the UK 25 largest universities by registered student numbers, were former polytechnics. Universities now complete with some vestiges of a former psyche of delivering local services, not catered for by traditional universities (Collini, 2012, p34).

Industry has been quite clear about the importance of having enough skilled people in the employment pool. Industry recognises the benefits of students receiving experiential learning during placements, as reinforcing the knowledge transfer and wealth creation remit of universities. Industry welcome the transformational effects of experiential learning in employability terms, as work placements prepare the students for the world of work. The government benefits by increasing the 'knowledge economy' ([1]Holloway et al, 2010, p590; [2]Munro and Livingston, 2012, p1680). The business sector have carried out government commissioned reports, which underline the point (Leitch Report 2006; Sainsbury Report 2007). The UKCES (UK Commission for Employment and Skills) Skills Audit 2010 and the CBI (Confederation of British Industry, 2011) also echo calls for increased public funding of universities; "both argue for substantial increase in rate of participation in HE in order for the UK to remain globally competitive as a knowledge economy" (Smith(c), 2011, p131).

The history of how universities developed through the medieval period, to modern times, to the present day in the UK and Europe, acts to demonstrate the university's role in wealth creation. Initially the property owning elite used universities to produce the people with the skills they needed. An apt example is manifest in the form of the church, who often made pedagogical demands on how their professional staff were taught at university. We have seen how as early as the 13th century, different stakeholders realised their university could influence the 'wider society', with the subjects people were taught. Universities could focus upon military functions, philosophy or medicine, alternatively they could emphasise democratic issues, helping to transform student's characters. Historically, universities have developed a dual role of being transformational, empowering both the individual and the 'wider society'. Knowledge transfer is key to that success (QAA, 2012a, p7; Wells, 2016, p6).

2.7 The Societal Purpose of Universities

Let's constructively problematise the initial critical question: 'What do students learn at university?' Earlier discussion indicates that amongst other remits, universities are a tool for the production and transfer of knowledge. Universities are used for the purpose of wealth creation by business community stakeholders, for employability by students and as a resource by the 'wider society' (Brady, 2012, p348; QAA, 2012c, p9). This could be defined as a means to someone else's end. In this context, the university tool is subject to two sources of pressure in delivering its service of higher education, the production and transfer of knowledge. These sources are commodification and regulation (Burawoy, 2011, p27). With this analysis, we now have two other broad questions: knowledge for whom and knowledge for which societal needs. Universities must be able to produce people who can invent new

products or services e.g. digital aids or nanotechnology. Also to be innovative in how services are delivered e.g. alternative energy sources, which will influence urban planning for public transport and housing provision. Table 1 below graphically describes the pedagogy of knowledge produced and then transferred to all HE stakeholders, including the 'wider society'.

Table 1 – The functions of the public university

	Autonomy	Heteronomy
	Academic Audience	Extra-Academic Audience
Instrumental Knowledge	PROFESSIONAL	POLICY
Reflexive Knowledge	CRITICAL	PUBLIC

(Burawoy, 2011, p32)

Burawoy (2011) is fearful for universities, arguing they '...must counter the twin pressures of regulation and commodification to which the university is now subjected' (Buroway, 2011, p40). Such hegemonic forces are divisive, leading to a greater concentration of resources in universities which comply with the KPIs and audit culture, jumping through the paradigmatic hoops in order to obtain and retain funding. At the expense of not so conforming academic institutions, who on the one hand retain more of their individual identity, but who are perhaps given a less favourable portion of Research Council funding. The effect of regulation and commodification of universities is startling (Antipode, 2012, p1055; Brady, 2012, p347). Not only do these

forces affect the capacity of universities to disseminate knowledge, they effect students in other more subtle ways. There is little in the way of alternative learning.

It could be argued that the commercialisation of policy knowledge is having a deleterious effect upon our students, who are not as free thinking as would otherwise be the case. Students are less likely to challenge current practices, which can result in bad practice becoming embedded. Commodification of the degree, could make students more likely to comply with the socio-political-economic order of the day (Temple et al, HEA 2014, p10). This is Bourdieu's (1977a, p490) cultural and/or ideological reproduction theory in operation. Societal inequalities result in being reinforced, as students have no contact with sufficient alternative thinking by which to consider issues, due to fewer experiential learning opportunities. Such alternatives having being dumbed down by the emphasis to comply with the regulations. The four types of pedagogic knowledge production and transfer, being themselves subject to commodification (Burawoy, 2011, p40; Calhoun, 2006, p11/p12; QAA, 2013c, p22).

Collini (2012) provides a useful insight into what students learn at university. Present, is an indication of the societal expectation of the acquisition of human capital. An expectation manifest as '…something more than professional training'.

> *"As an absolute minimum, the modern university might be said to possess at least the following four characteristics:*
>
> > *1. That it provides some form of post-secondary-school education, where 'education' signals something more than professional training.*

2. That it furthers some form of advanced scholarship or research whose character is not wholly dictated by the need to solve immediate practical problems.

3. That these activities are pursued in more than just one single discipline or very tightly defined cluster of disciplines

4. That it enjoys some form of institutional autonomy as far as its intellectual activities are concerned."

(Collini, 2012, p7)

We need to recognise that other observers, have a different view of what students learn at university, also the function of a university. Calhoun (2006) advises caution.

"It needs to be made clear, against some academic presumptions, that the university is not the only possible support for the generation of knowledge for the public good or for critical intellectual analysis."

(Calhoun, 2006, p13)

Collini's (2012) basic description of a university, elucidates what students learn at university. One area is the production of new staff, all society's professional workers e.g. lecturers, researchers and teachers. "Universities are among the very few institutions whose rationale includes selecting and shaping their own future staff" (Collini, 2012, p8). Collini's (2012) work includes a critique of universities, for having a remit of essentially, embedding the observations and practices of previous generations in new students. This critique is an expansion of Bourdieu's 'cultural reproduction' theory (Bourdieu, 1977a, p487). In effect, universities are a hegemonic force who have

the means to reproduce and perpetuate higher education practice, provided it fits in with their ideology. Part of that remit is to propagate the extensive cultural infrastructure that legitimises the university's place in society (Bender, 1988b, p292).

Work-based experiential learning via student placements has a pivotal role in producing compliant new professionals. Learning acquired whilst participating on a student placement, which reproduces cultural and/or ideological practices, is rewarded by educational attainment in the form of graduation. In the process, societal structural inequalities are reinforced, perpetuated by new staff, students on placements, who legitimise the dominant ideology of the day by replicating its practice (Bourdieu, 1977a, p496). Analysis of the initial critical question, what do students learn at university, is now seen to include replicating societal inequalities, in the basket of responses.

When discussing the societal purpose of universities, we should consider alternatives. Is it beneficial for universities to culturally reproduce certain ideological norms and values? There is a community cohesion danger to the social fabric of our community. What if perpetuating norms and values results in the total exclusion of a strata in society? A further indication that the 'wider society' is itself an existential agency, is manifest in the necessity of the societal remit that no member of society should be left behind. It is clear that in order for the 'wider society' to be able to deliver its future societal remit, people should not be excluded from the benefits of a university education. With this policy driver in mind the 'wider society' needs an agency, the university to continue to deliver its knowledge transfer and wealth creation remit. The Humboldtian tradition of a university, is supported as a resource utilised by the 'wider society', to deliver its societal remit of facilitating student and social development.

The Dearing Report (1997) helps to briefly recap the main points of the discussion to date, in light of the initial critical question: 'What do students learn at universities?' The 1997 Dearing Report describes university education as necessary to:

'…sustain a culture which demands disciplined thinking, encourages curiosity, challenges existing ideas and generates new ones; [and to] be part of conscience of a democratic society, founded on respect for the rights of the individual and the responsibilities of the individual to society as a whole...'

(Dearing Report, 1997, para5, cited in Holmwood, 2011, p9)

Collini (2012) continues on a similar note, harmonising with Dearing (1997) underlining that university education should have a social purpose. I argue that Collini's (2012) '…inculcating civic values…' is best delivered, by students initially attending university to learn the academia behind civic values. Followed by a period of experiential learning in work-based student placements, to learn the rudiments of civic values on hand, applied in real life situations. Essentially this is Kolb's (1984) 'Experiential learning theory', learning by doing, skills acquisition which can only be gained by contextualising work placement experiences in situ (Kolb, 1981, p289; Kolb, 1984, p3).

Dearing (1997) and Collini (2012) both provide an interpretation of university education, which includes students realising they may need to consider and possibly challenge their own personal beliefs. One aspect students learn at university and subsequently on work placement, is the ability to critically evaluate observed behaviour and practices. Experiential learning enables students to consider in real life

situations, if their professional practice is affected by any particular views they may have as an individual. Given this aspect of experiential learning, an inquiry considering does any type of work placement affect the student's disposition, appears germane.

"These institutions serve several important social functions, from vocational training to technology transfer, just as they further several admirable social goals, from inculcating civic values to enabling social mobility."

(Collini, 2012, p4)

Universities are in the main pragmatic, providing staff for places of worship, mainly the Christian churches and local authority professionals. Universities assist in supplying some social needs in the locality where they deliver their service. Some universities have an independently funded hospital within their boundary, or private enterprises which use the latest technology, or are engaged in their own research. Universities by nature can be withdrawn from non-academics in the rest of society, for example they 'credentialise' (Calhoun, 2006, p9) certain professional qualifications. Qualifications which can only be obtained by attending a university, thus cementing their place in society, conferring cultural prestige and respectability upon themselves. In essence, a form of bureaucratic gate-keeping occurs, due to universities being in control of the keys to enter various professions. The 'wider society' needs a mechanism to control, how many people will become educated and what type of roles they will be able to deliver. This is why both the curriculum content and the pedagogical method use to transfer knowledge in degree programmes are so vital. The 'wider society' needs experiential learning, so people with desirable skills and personality traits can develop.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue, the prestige and cultural respectability bestowed by graduation, enables universities to inveigle there societal remit onto students who attend (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p22). Miller and Sabapathy (2011, p51) answer one of the two broad questions succinctly, bolstering Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) critique. "It is universities' final responsibility to challenge society itself." I argue that Miller and Sabapathy's (2011) comment, equally applies to student learning on work placement. Experiential learning, in the form of being able to appropriately challenge organisational practice, or their own professional or personal beliefs, is an essential aspect of the student placement. The discussion has identified there is consensus that universities are an essential societal tool in advancing democracy, alongside knowledge transfer and wealth creation (Dearing, 1997; Miller and Sabapathy, 2011; Collini, 2012). However this view is not held universally.

> *"Contrary to the consensus view, the rapid expansion of higher education does not reflect the demand for high-skilled jobs but credential inflation, as students extend their education in an attempt to improve their job prospects."*

> (Brown et al, 2003, p115)

Brown et al (2003) informs the debate that what universities are for includes an employability remit. Students attend universities to become part of a more skilled educated workforce, promoting innovation in technology, medicine and research. "Universities are the engine rooms of the modern global economy" (Smith(c), 2011, p130). All students, both home and international benefit from university education, which in most cases capacity builds, empowering them to think about what is being

taught and where that fits in with society's expectations. [2]Wells (2016, p16) presents in his 'Quality and Students' study, an argument which underlines both key points. Higher education is a duality, providing both an 'academic' and a 'pastoral' experience.

> *"This whole experience can be divided into two interrelated experiences: <u>the Academic Experience,</u> involving teaching, learning and research endeavours, and <u>the Pastoral Experience,</u> addressing personal and social development and support."*

> (Wells, 2016, p15)

Brewis and Holdsworth (2011, p166) argue learning 'in broader social context through studying social problems', is part of a student's university education. Students are changed by voluntary work experiences that develop human and social skills, which enhance their employability (Darwen and Rannard, 2011, p179). Volunteer Now's (2013, p3) 'Unblurring the Boundaries?' paper, discusses the transformative benefits of volunteering to people in employability terms.

> *"Volunteering provide skills and learning which can be transferred to the workplace and that can increase people's employability. In today's economically depressed times, where unemployment is high, it is important to find the widest range of ways to build employability skills and mitigate against the negative consequences for individuals, families and communities."*

> (Volunteer Now, 2013, p1)

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[2] Peter J. Wells became Chief of Higher Education – UNESCO, in February 2016.

Experiential learning generates a graduate pool of students who are ready to work in their chosen profession. This pool of graduates are able to apply, any paid or unpaid student placement or volunteering experience they might have gained as part of their course (Brewis and Holdsworth, 2011, p165; Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012, p388).

New professional roles have developed in society over time. This fits in with a description given by Clark Kerr, President of the University of California during his Godkin lectures 1963. 1963 also happens to be the year that Lord Robbins delivered his report to the UK Parliament. Kerr (1963) used a phrase called 'multiversity' to convey his view that universities served a number of functions at different levels within society (Kerr, 2002, (1963), cited in Calhoun, 2006, p17). Multiversity, explained Kerr, involved a shift away from academic teaching towards research. Multiversity also meant higher education should not be elitist, it should be a right for all, made available by a process of publicly funded mass education (Holmwood, 2011, p16). The 1963 Robbins Report and the 1997 Dearing Report make similar conclusions.

The new professions which have proliferated in the postmodern era are a result of what Kerr, (1963) referred to as 'knowledge industries'. These maybe professions such as forensic scientists and investment analysis, which require a degree in order to enter. Universities are required to fulfil the demand for an educated workforce, partly due to the societal need for research and development. "Universities transform people's lives through education and through the wider impact of their research" (Universities UK, 2015, p4). Research which increasingly, is being performed on university premises (Holmwood, 2011, p16). The rationale for work-based experiential learning is clear, the majority of new postmodern professions, require extensive hands

on experience. The new professions fulfil the classic modern university remit of knowledge transfer and wealth creation. Most of the new professions are societally transformational, e.g. provision of digital aids, which prolong and maintain a good quality of life for our ageing populations. Designing hybrid fuels, as CO^2 emitting fossilised fuel cease to be economically or socially viable (Universities UK, 2015, p7). Postmodernism has heralded fundamental changes in work practices, to include an increase in lone working and hot desking (Sarfarti and Ghellab, 2012, ILO Working Paper 37, p9). New technology in the form of mobile phone and laptop computers has enabled modern workforces to perform a high percentage of their work at home (Diamond et al, 2011, p5; Dixon-Roman and Gergen, 2013, p3). Popkewitz and Brennan (1998, p5) identify the need for experiential learning, due to how the workplace and workforce have fragmented. Postmodernism requires a new form of control at work, more staff with soft skills who are less likely to need constant supervision (Bauman, 2000, p121; Beck, 1992, p99; Lippman et al, USAID 2015, p4).

> *"The modernisation, however, was not only in the physical landscape in which one worked and lived as a social being. It also included forms of individualisation which segmented the person into discreet attributes and behaviours that could be supervised and observed to ensure progress."*

> (Popkewitz and Brennan, 1998, p5 and p6)

Universities are an essential tool in supplying people with the skills society needs at any particular moment in time. Tacit in the social remit of what students learn at university, is a degree of social assimilation (Burke et al, 2013, p159; Delanty, 2011, p645). This is a process students go through by which they are inculcated with civic values, which reflect the culturally dominant ideology of the day (Collini, 2012, p6;

Calhoun, 2006, p10). Social assimilation is beneficial to all parties providing, as in the main happens in our UK universities, students are given alternative points of view to consider in their learning (See also [4]Brady, 2012, p348, 'moral reconstruction'). Students should be equipped by universities to strike a balance between reinforcing certain values to protect society. Equally students should be enabled to conduct free thought and empowered to challenge concepts and traditions (Fuller, 2003, [orig. 2002], p434). We must remember that the university's main remit is to educate students to deliver societal needs in a manner where the vast majority benefit (Bennett et al, 2013, p145; Robbins Report, 1963, para25-8, cited in Holmwood, 2011, p7).

There are far more graduates than appropriate level employment opportunities. This results in 'serious market congestion'. A facet of knowledge is 'talent', an issue of increasing importance, with the impetus we have seen in the structural transformation of universities being developed. As we have seen in the history of universities, their public function a key part of their remit, is to be flexible in delivering state objectives. In the present day there is a lack of graduate opportunities. Universities should be able to identify and create employment opportunities with their innovative research, which has an emphasis upon technological advances. 'Talent' can be demonstrated by a placement student, discovering an untapped need for a particular product or service. Such an approach, would help to alleviate the problem of 'serious market congestion'. The placement student shines by demonstrating innovation and self-efficacy (Michaels et al, 2001, p3, cited in Brown et al, 2003, p113; Munro and Livingston, 2012, p1679; see also 'business communication', Crews and Stitt-Gohdes, 2012, p77).

An effect of demand for talented individuals in a knowledge-based economy, is that inequalities in the employment market and in education, are not consistent with recruitment decisions based upon the meritocratic ideals of ability and effort. "This is what Talcott Parsons (1959) described as the 'axis of achievement' and what Daniel Bell (1973) viewed as a key feature of post-industrial societies" (Brown et al, 2003, p113). From the employability perspective, recent graduates who have been on a student placement, are more able to demonstrate they have the 'talent' employers seek. Some of the talents employers look for, are the employability personality traits of being able to work without supervision. Employers also recognise the talent of constantly complying with all policies and procedure (Lippman et al, USAID 2015, p4).

There is less employer enthusiasm for students with community cohesion or civic renewal skills, which are not often recognised as talents. Graduates who can demonstrate they have experiential learning student placement experience, are less likely to be disadvantaged by 'serious market congestion'. 'Serious market congestion' is often manifest as a pool of other recent graduated students with similar general skills, but no relevant work experience. 'Serious market congestion' acts to demonstrate that experiential learning student placements are essential in most professions that need a degree (Mason, 2002, cited in Brown et al, 2003, p110).

2.8 Conclusion

It's important that society is informed, when discussing the societal remit of universities that the emphasis should not be upon how a university is administered and financed. Important as those issues are, the primary focus should be on issues such as, does the university benefit the local area? Similarly, how does receiving a university

education affect the free thinking ability, attitude and nature of the student? (Collini, 2012, p38). There should be more focus upon providing students with opportunities to consider alternative ways of looking at people's lived experiences? These are the issues which societally should carry the most weight. That's what universities are for. There should be emphasis on the societal transformation aspects of what a university does. Is there a sense of 'town' working alongside 'gown' in the university's sphere of influence? The university should empower their community with critical evaluation skills, to be able to design its own democratic processes. Clearly the university needs to be able to supply its area, with sufficient numbers of the appropriate type of skilled professional workers the community needs. Identification of which skills the area needs, should be achieved by consultation with local representatives. This is why the university's role in enabling people to acquire human capital is crucial. Local people need to develop the capacity, either directly through academic study or by support from the university, to assess information then make decisions (Wells, 2016, p17). However in recent years much of a local area's social infrastructure is controlled by national agencies. The case for the social function of universities is receding, but not extinguished altogether. An individual's higher education, research and societal transformation roles are all still prevalent, that's what universities are for. The following chapter looks at the pedagogical aspects of experiential learning, which is delivered initially in universities and contextualised in work based settings. The next chapter discusses a literature review, which details the experiential learning ideal.

Chapter 3 – Pedagogical Aspects of Experiential Learning: A Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Educational researchers and philosophers have clearly identified experiential learning as a source of best practice in higher education settings. Kros and Watson (2004) argue experiential learning is "a process through which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kros and Watson, 2004, p283). In practice, experiential learning is a method that links "academic knowledge and practical skills" (Ruhaneu, 2005, p34). Another definition is experiential learning "stresses practical application of knowledge to real-life situations" (Hawkins and Weiss, 2004, p3).

3.2 Dewey's role in experiential learning

The seminal works of John Dewey (1938a) and David Kolb (1976, 1981 and 1984), provide the most influential reference sources on the subject of experiential learning (McCaslin and Flora, 2014, p9; Bower, 2013, p33; Smith(b), 2013b). The roots of experiential learning can be traced back to the Chinese civilisation in the fifth century. Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu wrote "If you tell me, I will listen. If you show me, I will see. But, if you let me experience, I will learn" (Kohn, 2000, p22, cited in Van Genderen, 2013, p3). One of the first mentions of the phrase experiential is by Dewey (1938a, p28). Dewey also made the comment "all genuine education comes through experience" (Dewey, 1938a, p25). John Dewey's (1897) famous declaration describing education, in essence gives an early definition of experiential learning by which the concept is understood today. "I believe that the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself" (Dewey, 1897, p77). Dewey's experiential learning model consists of four distinct strands of education (Bower, 2013, p33; Smith(b), 2013b).

- *The relationships amongst teachers, learning, the curriculum and the community*

- *The manner in which learning occurs*

- *Preparing for life as citizens and individuals*

- *Thinking about what is learning and how*

(Bower, 2013, p33; Smith(b), 2013b)

Dewey' experiential learning model begins with knowledge transfer, organised by the lecturer, in higher education terms, into logical pieces which students are able to absorb. Real life experiences are then provided by the lecturer, by which the student can then apply the theoretical knowledge they have learnt in lecture theatres. In our study this is student placements. The outcome of the real-life experiences on an internship or work based learning or student placement, contributes to the student' knowledge and preparedness. The process is repeated by more exposure to real-life events in the workplace, experiential learning. A student placement of typically 9 months to a year, gives the student continuous opportunities to apply their knowledge, transferred in the classroom, to a work-based setting (Bower, 2013, p33).

The final part of Dewey's (1938a) experiential learning model invites the student to reflect upon what they have been learning and how they have learnt (Westin et al, 2015, p2). This is a separate pedagogical tool that has stemmed from the pedagogy of experiential learning. The encouragement to participate in what are currently called reflective practices, requires the student to critical evaluate what they have learnt via a teaching method, pedagogy, in this thesis, experiential learning (Tuff, 2013, p38).

This particular reflective practice is known as 'criticality', which can be defined as students discussing their academic experiences with their tutor, mentor and/or peers. Criticality employs constructive elements of critical thinking, e.g. evaluation and debating skills, coupled with critical pedagogy, being reflective of different learning strategies (Abbey et al, 2014, p3; Tyreman, 2000, p118; Burbules and Berk, 1999, p45). Criticality is fully discussed in the Research Methodology and Findings sections.

3.3 Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory in student placements

David Kolb's (1981; 1984) Experiential Learning model, is the seminal work providing the conceptual framework for experiential learning in the classroom (McCaslin and Flora, 2014, p9; Bower, 2013, p33). The Higher Education community continue to use Kolb (1981; 1984) as the professional education model of experiential learning (HEA, 2014a, online website). This is important because Kolb's (1981; 1984) experiential learning theory defines learning as, "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (Kolb, 1984, p41).

Kolb (1984) emphasises education as "generating an action theory from your own experiences, and then continually modifying it to improve your effectiveness" (Kolb, 1984, p53). When applied in practice, Kolb's (1984) seminal work involves a student going to a work site and performing tasks as part of delivering a profession. The student then applies that experience to repeat the task, or as scaffolding to complete a different task. The placement student has created knowledge 'through the transformation of experience', and generated 'an action theory' from the student's recent experiential learning. Student builds up their knowledge with more experiences.

Kolb's (1984; Kolb and Kolb, 2009) experiential learning cycle theory (ELT) is presented diagrammatically in Figure 1 (p69). The model consists of two dialectically related modes of grasping experience, Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualisation (AC). Also two dialectically related modes of transforming experience, Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE) (Kolb and Kolb, 2009, p46). Learning can be described as the praxis of arriving at correct knowledge, by consideration, discussion and analysis of logical arguments, put succinctly, learning how to learn. In this model, experiential learning is the process of constructing knowledge, using the four dialectical learning modes, which themselves are responsive to contextual lived experiences, e.g. student placements.

Kolb's (1984; Kolb and Kolb, 2009) experiential learning model is presented as a cycle (Figure 2, p69), where the student "touches all the bases". Starting with anyone of the four dialectical modes, the student goes through a recursive process of experiencing, reflecting, (critical) thinking and acting, which themselves are responsive to the social context of what is being learnt (Kolb and Kolb, 2009, p46). Figure 2, Kolb's (1984) original learning cycle is included for comparative purposes (Kolb, 1984, p21). The literature review now informs the reader that Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory can and has been adapted for modern day purposes, whilst the original concept remains intact. (Anglia Ruskin University NHS Nurses Training, 2014, p3).

The literature details that a student in the concrete experience mode is an *"activist"* (DeCiantis and Kirton, 1996, p811), who perceives by "intuition" (Smith and Kolb, 1986, p28), "in the immediacy of the moment" (Atkinson and Murrell, 1988, p375).
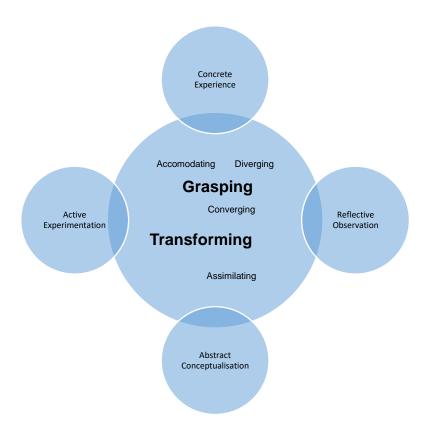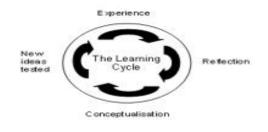
Figure 2 – Kolb (1984, p21) Original Experiential Learning Cycle Diagram

Kolb's Learning Cycle Applied to
Student Experiential Learning

Kolb's Learning Cycle

Experience

New
ideas
tested

The Learning
Cycle

Reflection

Conceptualisation

(Kolb, D. 1984. Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, p. 21)

At the opposite end of the understanding continuum is the abstract conceptualisation mode. These learners use logical analysis and they solve problems systematically (Kolb, 1985). They are "theorists" (DeCiantis and Kirton, 1996, p811), who learn by "thinking" (Smith and Kolb, 1986, p28). Students in the active experimentation mode learn "by doing" (Smith and Kolb, 1986, p28). They appreciate opportunities to work actively on well-defined tasks (Felder, 1996), and "value getting things done" (Kolb, 1985, p5, taken from Terry and Di Muro, 2007, p55). One of the purposes of this thesis is to articulate and examine pedagogical practices that focus upon student engagement. There are numerous modes of experiential learning such as volunteering, civic engagement, activism, service learning and internships (National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE), 2014, online website). This thesis will critically analyse work-based experiential learning, accessed by means of a student placement. Previous international research on student learning reveals, students learn most when their undergraduate degree programme involves experiential learning (Jordan et al, 2014, p4; Rhodes College USA, 2013, p3).

Kolb's (1976, 1981, 1984) 'experiential learning' theory is one of the best known educational theories in higher education. Kolb's (1984) work introduced new ways of structuring a curriculum, which enables the inclusion of different pedagogical approaches e.g. problem-based learning or roleplay (Pegg et al, 2012, p45). In experiential learning, social knowledge is created and recreated, by the personal interpretation of experiences by the learner (Kolb and Kolb, 2009, p47). Kolb's (1984) theory made a significant contribution to education, establishing the rationale for work based experiential learning in student placements in higher education (Healey and Jenkins, 2000, p186; Little and ESECT Colleagues, 2006, p2; BIS, 2011a, p43).

Experiential learning is a pedagogy that emphasises student engagement outside the lecture theatre (HEA, 2014b, online website; Exley, 2013, p2). The work of both the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) (2014) and the NSEE (2014) is underpinned by Dewey (1938a) and Kolb (1981; 1984). Both the AEE and the NSEE (2014) argue that experiential learning should have a focus upon acquiring long-term knowledge and practical understanding. In the present day, Smith(d) (2012, online article) expresses similar sentiments. The reader is then asked to consider, what type of knowledge and understanding (Field learning: Papouli, 2014, p3; Self-reflection: Toros and Medar, 2015, p90). Sattelberger (Global Focus, 2014, p13), wants universities to break away from the socialisation and knowledge transfer remit. Liu (GHELC, e-newsletter 9, 2014) views experiential learning as a necessity to acquire sufficient 'social impact' understanding, to manage a non-profit third sector organisation (Garner and Rouse, 2016, p26; Leonard et al, 2015, p4; Nicholas, 2016, p2). Here the literature becomes not so much contested, but multi-divergent, branching into several separate spheres. One of those branches describes the type of learning undertaken by students, given the opportunity to apply knowledge in an 'immediate and relevant setting' (Smith(b), 2013b). The literature supports skills acquisition in a safe secure environment, which emphasises practice and reflection (Kolb and Kolb, 2009, p43; Hayes, 2014, p6; Stocker et al, 2014, p15).

> *"This sort of learning is sponsored by an institution and might be used on training programs for professions, such as social work and teaching or in field study programmes, such as those for social administration or geography courses."*
>
> (Smith(b), 2013b)

Smith's(b) (2013b) definition of experiential learning, including how it is applied in present day settings, perfectly encapsulates my PhD thesis. My research investigates student placements and their transformative effects upon social work and geography or geology, earth and environmental sciences (GEES) undergraduates. Student placements, a training program for a profession, are often sponsored by an employer who pay the student a salary while on placement. A facet of employability has begun.

Another branch of experiential learning is education which occurs by participation with life itself. Essentially life skills learned from interacting with people and agencies along the way in the course of living. Here, education and learning is not sponsored by an academic institution or employer, it is sponsored by the people themselves. This is acquisition of life skills, soft skills, and human capital, acquired by thought, reflection and learning from recent lived experiences (Westin et al, 2015, p2). This participatory branch of experiential learning, is more likely to be the educational source to obtain civic engagement and community building knowledge (Megheirkouni, 2016, p239). Sattelberger (2014, p13) and others, want to dispense with this type of experiential learning, which they view as anti-competitive. Learning which is transformative or supportive of civic duty, is not in keeping with their vision of a 'corporate university'. Other stakeholders e.g. Higher Education Academy (HEA) (2014a, online article), CMI (2016, p6) and the CBI/NUS (2011, p9), disagree with the 'corporate university' ethos.

Experiential learning of interest in this thesis, goes beyond the limited definition of constructivist learning and teaching. Here, practical knowledge is obtained and applied in an intensive way, perhaps by collaborative group work, creating websites, or videos or digital 'game making pedagogy' (GMP) (Cheng, 2009, p207). Experiential learning

is an instructional teaching strategy, which is considered to be a "high impact educational practice" (Rhodes College USA, 2013, p1). Experiential learning enables students to apply what they have learnt on their undergraduate courses, beyond their lecture theatres, to deliver the 'wider society's' societal remit. Peter Jarvis (born 1959) (2010, p76-79) indicates, the discourse used in the experiential learning literature features numerous assumptions. Parry et al (2013) indicate the literature dumbs down the acquisition of human capital aspect of experiential learning, in favour of the 'employability' discourse. Jones and McIntyre (2009, p159) give a low key warning, regarding the background preparation of people for social and healthcare employment.

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle theory has been adopted for use in many Western Liberal democracies in mainstream education systems. However Kolb's (1984) theory and the Kolb Learning Styles Inventory (KLSI) (Kolb and Kolb, 2013, p9) are widely critiqued (see for example DeCiantis and Kirton, 1996, p809). The following is a brief summary reminder of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, presented as a four stage model. Concrete Experience (CE), Abstract Conceptualisation (AC), Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE) (Kolb and Kolb, 2009, p46). A brief description of Kolb's four basic learning styles are as follows; Diverging, Assimilating, Converging and Accommodating, they are four different approaches to learning (Clark et al, 2010, p51; Kolb and Kolb, 2013, p10).

Coffield et al (2004a) describe how numerous research studies question the validity of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory. The following question helps to summarise one strand of the wide critique. 'How is someone classified as an assimilator to know whether the classification is due to personal characteristics, situational factors or

measurement error?' (Stumpf and Freeman, 1981, p298, cited in Coffield et al, 2004a, p64 and p65). Stumpf and Freeman (1981) effectively argue, experiential learning is influenced by various factors including the nature of the student and the organisation. Kolb and Kolb (2013) confirm in their research 'that learning styles are influenced by culture, personality type, educational specialisation, career choice, and current job role and tasks' (Kolb and Kolb, 2013; Kolb, 1984, cited in Kolb and Kolb, 2013, p10). Kolb's observations demonstrate an awareness of valid critique.

Another strand in the constellation of experiential learning critique, is that people's perception of what they feel is the best learning style for them changes over time. Ruble and Stout's (1992), Lam's (1997) and Loo's (1997) studies, all found that a small proportion of their research cohort changed learning styles for no apparent reason. These findings replicated across several studies, question the reliability and validity of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory and the KLSI (Coffield et al, 2004a, p64/65).

Kolb's own work in recognising that 'educational specialisation' and 'career choice' affects learning styles, can be interpreted as underlining the following critique. Experiential learning is said to be affected by personality, which matches a particular learning style, suitable for grasping a particular career. Research is contradictory on this subject, with studies equally finding learning was effective, when there had been both learning style match and mismatch (Smith, Sekar and Townsend, 2002, p411, cited in Coffield et al 2004b, p38 and p39). This level of uncertainty demonstrates the issue of matching must be considered, when using experiential learning pedagogy.

Honey and Mumford (2000, Foreword) considered Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle and agreed with most of Kolb's learning styles. Honey and Mumford (2000) were critical of the lack of certainty regarding the learning starting point. Kolb's (1984) theory allows entry at any of the four stages, but learning must then proceed in the order of the learning cycle. They were also critical of Kolb's (1984) theory for its failure to recognise, different people spend more time on some facets of his learning theory than others. Honey and Mumford (2000) designed their own set of four learning styles which in part compliment Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory. Honey and Mumford's (2000) four learning styles consist of activist, pragmatist, reflector and theorist.

In summary applying Honey and Mumford's (2000) theory; activists are aligned with Kolb's (1984) 'learning by doing', 'you pick it up as you go along' approach; pragmatist are more cautious, they first consider how a suggestion will work in practice; reflectors are more studied thinkers, they like to plan ahead, before carrying out any suggested activity; theorists like confirmation a suggestion fits in with their existing knowledge, or has the endorsement of a significant other (Coffield et al, 2004a, p72 and p73).

Both the effect on students and the effectiveness of experiential learning are usually measured by qualitative methods, mainly interviews which ask participants their views. It's not possible to use a quantitative baseline to measure a stakeholder's perception of the effect of experiential learning on students (Coffield et al 2004b, p44 and p45). The following quote is a generic description of pedagogy, which is particularly apt in this discussion analysing the pedagogical effects of experiential learning. The quote also underscores the need for HEI partnership work, manifest as a working CD/EN. Clearly students are to be part of the decision-making process on HE curricula content.

'…a critical understanding of the social, policy and institutional context, as well as a critical approach to the content and process of the educational/training transaction…the most important parts of pedagogy are the relations between educator, student and institution, the social context, purpose and ethical implications of educational work, and the nature and social role of educational knowledge.'

(Zukas and Malcolm, 2002, p215, cited in Coffield et al, 2004b, p46 and p47)

Experiential learning will also falter, if it fails to take account of the power relationships which exist at the location where the work placement takes place. Also within different educational institutions, some students are treated as being more valued than others. Students where the main language is not their own language are disadvantaged. Societal powers affect students by legitimising certain actions and excluding others, by providing a non-challenging curriculum content (Coffield et al, 2004b, p48 and p49).

'[the] classroom researchers' habit of detaching teacher-pupil interactions from structures of power and control in which they are embedded. In his model, pedagogy was much more than the transmission of a curriculum. It covered the structure and categories of school knowledge, what can be said and written legitimately under its various headings, how specifically or diffusely, the required learning outcomes are assessed, and how different education codes relate to modes of production and to pupils' anticipated occupational futures.'

(Edwards, 2002, p530, cited in Coffield et al, 2004b, p48 and p49)

Basil Bernstein (2000) argues, different knowledges are differentially distributed to different social groups (Bernstein, 2000, p11; Crozier and Reay, 2011, p146). Bernstein (2000) is critical of pedagogical approaches, which do not recognise societal power structures within education. Bernstein's (2000) critique harmonises with the Edwards (2002, p530, cited in Coffield et al, 2004b, p48 and p49) critique.

"In the educational field one for is sometimes referred to as school (ed) knowledge and the other as everyday common sense knowledge, or 'official' & 'local' knowledge'. These contrasts are often ideologically positioned and receive different evaluations. One form becomes the means by which the dominant form is said to impose itself upon a dominated group and functions to silence and exclude the voice of this group. The excluded voice is then transformed into a latent pedagogic voice of unrecognised potential."

(Bernstein, 2000, p156)

Experiential learning in work placements is a very complex process. Individual students and work sites are different, so the effect of experiential learning will differ from student to student. This means there is a fundamental problem in accurately measuring the effect or effectiveness of experiential learning. Some outgoing students could be quite confident in new surroundings, whereas a self-conscious student might become withdrawn in unfamiliar surroundings. A small tight knit open plan office, or a large segregated, silo type workplace might act to reduce the confidence of a student. Similarly either of these two types of work settings, could act to mask or raise the student's awareness of their fit with the professional requirements (Barrett, 2014, p57).

Experiential learning is generally acknowledged as being an effective pedagogical tool in knowledge transfer (Anglia Ruskin University, 2016, p6). The effectiveness of experiential learning is dependent upon a number of factors, all of which can significantly influence the effect of this pedagogy on students. For example, work placement duration, mentor engagement, relevancy of assignments and the student's level of self-motivation (this list is not exhaustive). All these issues can have a positive or negative impact, on the effect and effectiveness of experiential learning (Abbas et al, 2013, p13; Burke et al, 2013, p158. See also mobility and internationalisation - European Students Union, 2014, p2; ILO, 2015, p18; Sage et al, 2012, p598).

In pragmatic operational terms, some students could find their learning objectives intended to be achieved on placement, might not be aligned with workplace functions (Bonesso et al, 2015, p3; Chatterton and Rebbeck, 2015, p6). This state of affairs often results in relevant work based learning not being achieved, coupled with student and the HEI possibly being viewed as a burden by the employer. Mentor engagement needs to include some form of baseline of what was meant to be learnt during the work placement. Without an agreed baseline, students are not able to self-learn or reflect on their work based experiences. Students will not be able to determine if the feedback they have received is particularly valid or beneficial or not (Abbas et al, 2013, p10). Agreeing a baseline is best done in partnership with the HEI, the students and the university career advisers. This indicates there needs to be a forum, where employers can make suggestions regarding the curriculum content of a degree programme (Banga and Lancaster, 2013, p4). This critique of experiential learning underscores the need for the curriculum design employability nexus (CD/EN) to be fully functioning in all HEIs (Birtwistle et al, 2016, p431; QAA, 2012d, p10).

Students can find themselves in a geographically spread environment, requiring lots of travel between work sites. Students may not experience all the rudiments of a profession due to time constraints. Alternatively the student's experiential learning may be in a busy work environment. The student might not receive sufficient opportunity to participate in all the processes, so has an unduly limited understanding of their chosen profession. This situation is exacerbated if the mentor is under heavy workload pressure, the student could feel undermined, even unwanted by the placement organisation (Abbas et al, 2013, p10; Kaphagawani and Useh, 2013, p183).

The nature of the organisation, can influence how experiential learning delivered at a particular workplace effects the student (Yorke, 1998a, p189). Some organisations choose to deliver experiential learning to students mainly on a passive and/or observational basis. In a significant number of workplaces, the student can be required to watch from the side lines, while various aspects of their profession is carried out. Some workplaces occasionally leave their placement students without mentoring or supervision. Such students are effectively being forced into self-directed learning, or no work based learning at all for inappropriately long periods. Crozier and Reay (2011, p152) are very critical of unsupportive learning environments at universities. Voluntary self-directed learning in isolation can be beneficial. Experiential learning delivered in this manner, does not provide the safe, secure environment, where a student's personal opinions and beliefs can be challenged (Beacom and Golder, 2015, p13).

In summary work placements are essentially putting experiential learning into practice. However any analysis of how this is done also has to contend with some of the criticisms of experiential learning. As my review highlights one of the main challenges

is that they principles of experiential learning are generic, yet how this is put into practice will be very context specific, that is no two placements will be the same. In particular analysis of experiential learning cannot just assume that outcomes simply happen, but rather need to attend to the practices in place and in particular the relationships between the different stakeholders that will influence the efficacy of individual placements. In other words experiential leaning cannot assume that learning experiences take part in a power vacuum, but rather how outcomes will be shaped by power relations between stakeholders.

3.4 Introduction to Andragogy

The study of andragogy develops some of the more generic critiques of experiential learning through considering adults' learning processes and practices. Andragogy theory (Knowles, 1980, p40), could assist in the design of a new tutor or student directed academic learning profile teaching aid (Hagen and Park, 2016, p175). The pedagogical aspects of andragogy adult learning need to be analysed, as most undergraduates are aged 18 plus at the beginning of their degree course. It is important to discuss andragogy because various characteristics of this learning process, overlap with experiential learning (Gewurtz et al, 2016, p60). Both andragogy and experiential learning work as educational processes, by encouraging the learner to identify knowledge they need to acquire (de Groot et al, 2015, p124). This encourages the adult to reflect on themselves as learners, so both learning approaches act as a conduit for reflective practices (Harvey, 2016, p2). There is also an element of curriculum design in both processes, due to the adult being given the opportunity to identify what they need to learn (Jackson, 2015, p353). Andragogy and experiential learning focus upon the adults existing lived experiences, ideally

identifying any previous history, which has produced a schism, blocking development. In turn there needs to be a preparedness to learn (Merriam, 2011, p6).

Andragogy and experiential learning are more effective, when the adult has pre-existing knowledge to inform them they need to learn more. Motivation acts in a similar way to preparedness to learn. Learner buy in increases with motivation in either andragogy or experiential learning, if the adult believes there is some form of positional or intrinsic gain by becoming educated. In this sense motivation has a circular property, acting to trigger the 'need to know' aspect of andragogy or experiential learning educational processes. Andragogy considers the 'orientation of the learner', adults learn in different ways, especially as they have different lived experiences (Knowles, 1980, p44). This has curriculum design implications. Learning modules may have to be re-orientated in a manner certain adults can understand. Andragogy necessitates the need for some form of student academic learning styles profile. The 'orientation of the learner' aspect of andragogy, could herald a new form of blended learning in universities. Different pedagogical approaches, identified by individual academic learning profiles could be employed by students, while remaining in one tutorial group (Poon, 2013, p274; Holley and Oliver, 2010, p693). Experiential learning could be one of those pedagogical responses, giving students in the tutorial group, real life concrete experiences to learn from. Students will be able to transform experiences into action, which they will then learn by active experimentation, modifying each previous attempt until they learn a new skill (Kolb, 1976, 1981 and 1984, p38).

3.5 Andragogy (Elements of Plato's education theory)

Andragogy can be defined as 'the discipline which studies the adult education process or the science of adult education' (Nottingham Andragogy Group, 1983, v). The leading exponent of andragogy as an educational science is Malcolm Knowles (1913-1997) "(aka the 'father of modern andragogy')" (Van Genderen, 2013, p5).

Knowles defines andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1980, p43). According to Knowles ([1]1980), andragogy is based upon four critical assumptions about adult learners, which makes their education different to that of children, traditional pedagogy. A fifth and sixth characteristics of andragogical educational practice, have subsequently been added to the original blueprint (Knowles, 1984, p12; Knowles, 1989 and 1990, cited in Knowles et al, 2005, p69). The six critical assumptions of Knowles (1980) andragogy adult education process are:

1 <u>The need to know.</u> "Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it" (Knowles et al, 2005, p64). People are more motivated and likely to learn, if they know why they must learn. Dewey's (1938a) and Kolb's (1981, 1984) experiential learning approach, in practice are enhanced, when the student realises there is so much to learn in their chosen profession. Experiential learning is reinforced as a practical, relatively inexpensive pedagogical tool. Once the student and other higher education stakeholders accept, the only way they can obtain the prerequisite skills is via a student placement.

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[1] The first edition of this book is from 10 years earlier, 1970. The original title of the 1970 version is 'The Modern Practice of Adult Education. Andragogy verses pedagogy'. In the second edition dated 1980 which is referenced, Malcolm Knowles changed the second part of the title. The subtitle of the second edition (1980), reads: 'From pedagogy to andragogy.

The issue of 'the need to know', manifests itself in other ways. Paolo Freire (2000 [orig. 1970]) mentions in his seminal book, 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', that people need 'consciousness-raising'. Here, disadvantaged people become aware of issues that affect their lives in their communities. Oppressed people need to be educated to know how to obtain the social and physical infrastructure they need, to affect change. This could be in the form of ensuring they can access education in their choice of language.

Without such 'consciousness-raising', oppressed people's minds are essentially in neutral, a no 'need to know' limbo state. "One of the gravest obstacles to achieving liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings consciousness" (Freire, 2000, [1970], p51). Without education, such minds cannot challenge institutional classifications, blindly consenting to class restructure, which legitimises the power relationships around them (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p141).

2 The learner's self-concept. "Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives" (Knowles et al, 2005, p65). This facet of andragogy provides the rationale for self-directed learning. Educational psychological studies have shown that people have a subconscious need to be self-sufficient in how they learn. If these needs are not met, people will disengage from the learning process, lowering student retention. Andragogical learning practice might fill an educational gap not being fulfilled by experiential learning. This is a policy indication that a contemporary form of andragogy needs to be present in current higher education curriculums, blended with experiential learning.

3 The role of the learner's experiences. "Adults come into an educational activity with both greater volume and a different quality of experience from that of youths" (Knowles et al, 2005, p65). Once again elements of Dewey (1938a) and Kolb (1981, 1984) experiential learning theory come into play. Knowles et al (2005) explanation informs the reader that people with differing experiences, will have a different learning experience with andragogical educational practice. What students conceptualise with, experiment with and reflect on, is shaped by their lived experiences. How students process information received, is similarly influenced. An adult learner may have positive knowledge from past experiences e.g. voluntary work as a crèche worker or gardener for a community group. There could be negative aspects to an adult's early life. The effect of differences in people's life skills, is they could have developed some opinion or bias, which impedes their education attainment (Hanson, 2014, p103).

The andragogy learning approach would be for tutors to establish the source of values held by people, preventing education. Innovative curriculum design solutions should provide opportunities to work with the student to devise person centred, self-directed learning action plans, agreed with students to meet learning objectives. Experiential learning would not be so disrupted by the 'role of the learner's experience' issue. Here the assumption is made the student has little experience to start with, the whole purpose of the exercise being to obtain that experience. In this sense, experiential learning appears blinkered. If a student held some deeply rooted negative views e.g. on gay people or asylum-seekers, they could be in student placement situ before this educational problem is discovered. Andragogical learning practice should discover this much sooner, devising an intervention with the student, appropriate for the student's chosen career path. The intervention may require a 'whole person' experiential

learning approach, encompassing intellectual, emotional, behavioural and spiritual actualisation. Here the students basic values are changed (Jerbi et al, 2015, p29/p30).

4 <u>Readiness to learn.</u> "Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and to be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations" (Knowles et al, 2005, p67). In essence this is a return to Paola Freire's (2000 [1970]) 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' work. In order for andragogy, or experiential learning, or any other pedagogical tool to be most effective, the learner, our students, must be equipped with the knowledge they need to learn certain information and acquire certain skills. If there is no 'readiness to learn', there are a number of causal factors why this can be the case. There could be a lack of motivation by the would-be learner. However in some oppressed people's case, they are blissfully unaware they are being disadvantaged by the social system the live in. Symbolic violence and cultural reproduction having taken place without their knowledge, so there is no challenge to the societal inequality (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p31). An educational response to combat a lack of 'readiness to learn', would be experiential learning opportunities. Here the adult learner will see at first hand, the issues our teachers, social workers (WhatUni?, 2016) and GEES professional have to address. One of the many critiques of andragogy learning practice is that in isolation, it is unable to engender motivation. Operationally it would appears that andragogy needs a spark from a third party source, in order to deliver its educational practice. Adult group work can provide the required motivation.

5 <u>Orientation to learning.</u> "In contrast to both children's and youths' subject-centred orientation to learning (at least in school), adults are life-centred (or task-centred or problem-centred) in their orientation to learning" (Knowles et al, 2005, p67).

Andragogical learning practice recognises that people learn in different ways and respond to educational stimuli differently. Although the learning outcomes remain the same, curriculum design could re-orientate educational activities, more akin to the academic profile of the learner presenting themselves to be educated. In this critical assumption regarding andragogy, Dewey (1938a) and Kolb (1981, 1984) experiential learning theory has relevance. Learning modules have been re-oriented, to include words and phrases the learner can presently understand. The learner can now conceptualise what has been said and interpret concrete evidence, reflecting upon what they have observed. In this sense, 'orientation to learning', dovetails with experiential learning. 'Orientation to learning' also helps to reinforce the andragogy theory, as the issue assists with students being aware they 'need to know'. If learning outcomes had not been re-phrased, re-oriented, the student would not have known they need to learn the teaching being offered. There is further assistance in student preparedness, andragogical educational practice calls this 'readiness to learn.'

6 Motivation. "Adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries and the like) but the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desired for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, and the like) (Knowles et al, 2005, p68). Dewey (1938a) and Kolb (1981, 1984) experiential learning theory helps to underpin this facet of andragogy. Engaging with a student placement, will provide a constant reminder of what can be achieved after higher education attainment. Andragogy' emphasis on 'motivation', added by Knowles in 1984 (cited in Knowles et al, 2005, p69), is heavily laden with what today we call employability. There is also focus as part of andragogy education, of what can be understood to be individual and societal well-being. My position is at variance with

Hanson (2014, p102), who argues that the 'motivation' critical assumption (Knowles, 1984, p12, cited in Knowles et al, p69), does not address the question of the learner's purpose. Hanson (2014, p102) also argues that Knowles' (1984, p12) addition of 'motivation' to andragogy educational practice, is at the expense of relationships between the individual and society. In the seminal stages of contemporary higher education, Knowles' (1980) andragogy, acted as a precursor to current educational between the individual and society. In the seminal stages of contemporary higher education, Knowles' (1980) andragogy, acted as a precursor to current educational issues e.g. employability, student retention and citizenship (Pike, 2007b, p216). Malcolm Knowles' (1980) theory of andragogy, significantly influences modern day adult learning styles and curriculum design (Knowles et al, 2005, p60).

Schaap et al' (2012, p99) 'students' learning processes and work place learning in vocational education' study discusses student motivation. Analysis of Schaap et al' (2012, p109) literature review informs us that the 'nature of the student', can create 'large differences in students' learning'. Motivated students with high expectations and endurance, are more able to shape how and what they learn. Less motivated students can demonstrate resistance to learning, their attitude changing to that of ambivalence. Apathy occurs when 'students do not perceive the learning content to be relevant.' When students recognise they lack relevant prior knowledge, 'they can transform this awareness into a high motivation to learn' (Schaap et al, 2012, p109).

> *"Low motivated and passivity are problematic for learning because they can decrease students' self-efficacy, while they can simultaneously increase resistance regarding learning."*

(Schaap et al, 2012, p109)

The following extensive quote of Knowles' (1980) educational approach, illustrates how andragogy overlaps with both Dewey's (1938a) and Kolb's (1981, 1984) experiential learning theories. Knowles (1980) has an emphasis upon not just employability, but also the acquisition of human and social capital, to fulfil individual and societal wellbeing. In passing, during andragogy, people must have received and processed information, reflected upon that information and then made an informed decision as to which direction educationally they wanted to head in. This provides the impetus to the self-directed learning tenet of andragogy, when applied in contemporary settings. Students can choose experiential learning in the form of a student placement opportunity, as part of their self-directed learning (Kelly, 2013, p83).

> *"One of the misconceptions in our cultural heritage is the notion that organisations exist purely to get things done. This is only one of their purposes; it is their **work purpose.** But every organisation is also a social system that serves as an instrumentality for helping people meet human needs and meet human goals. In fact this is the primary purpose for which people take part in organisations-to meet their needs-and achieve their goals-and when an organisation does not serve this purpose for them they tend to withdraw from it."*

(Knowles, 1980, p59, cited in Harper and Ross, 2011, p161)

Curriculum design is enhanced by introducing learning menus, where fee paying students, have a greater choice of how they will learn their chosen discipline. The person centred ethos of andragogy, in the form of self-directed learning can also be used in curriculum design, when teaching core subjects. (See also US Army Learning

Concept 2015, 2011, p16). Students choose how they learn these core subjects, not the subject itself, which is mandatory. The activity described involves concrete experience, abstract conceptualisation, reflective observation and active experimentation. With andragogy that applies not just to the learner, the student, but also to the practitioner as well. This is where the concept of andragogy can complement the praxis of the higher education community (Jones et al, 2015, p4). Andragogy can reinforce experiential learning, by being a pedagogical choice a student can make on a self-directed learning basis (Merriam, 2011, p11).

There is substantial literature on the contestation regarding andragogy, and between andragogy and pedagogy (Brookfield, 1986, p93 and p98-99; Jarvis, 2012c, [orig. 1985], p51; Jarvis, 2000, [orig. 1983], p93; Tennant, 1998, p21-23, cited in Smith(b), 2013a). All of the debates are encapsulated by Kidd's (1978, p17, cited in Smith(b), 2013a) argument, that to view andragogy as a separate entity to pedagogy is flawed.

The basic methods of educating, teaching and learning apply, regardless of the age of the learner. Jarvis (2012a), a constant critic of andragogy since 1977, (before Knowles' seminal second edition), argues that Knowles did not concentrate on how learners learn (Jarvis, 2012a, p135). Jarvis, (1995, p93, cited in Smith(b), 2013a, online article), essentially argues that andragogy was a late 20th century educational fad, contributing little to the understanding of learning processes. Jarvis (2012a) supports his 1995 critique in more recent analysis of andragogy. Jarvis (2012a) is complementary, saying that Knowles hinted at a very valid differentiation of people's learning experiences. However, Jarvis (2012a) also goes on to be critical of Knowles'

andragogy theory saying, '…but he was unable to substantiate his feelings because they were not clearly conceptualised' (Jarvis, 2012a, p142).

Jarvis (2012a) is not the only source of critique of the andragogy theory. Andragogical educational practices are also critiqued by feminist pedagogy and critical pedagogy.

> *"Critical pedagogy posits that knowledge is not statutory and unitary but rather results from an open-ended process of negotiation and interaction between teacher and student. Feminist pedagogy as an offshoot of critical pedagogy, further holds that gender plays a critical role in the classroom, influencing not only what is taught, but how it is taught."*
>
> (McClure, 2000, p53)

Sandlin's (2005, p26) 'Andragogy and its Discontents' study, informs us that andragogy is critiqued for imposing its own worldview of adult education. Sandlin (2005, p27) identifies five critical issues to describe how contextually, the theory of andragogy is flawed as an educational practice. The fifth critical issue Sandlin (2005, p25) raises in her 'critique of andragogy' study, harmonises with Bourdieu's 'cultural reproduction' theory (Bourdieu, 1993, p30; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p31).

1. *Andragogy assumes wrongly that education in value neutral and apolitical.*
2. *Andragogy promotes the general adult learner as universal with White middle-class values.*
3. *Andragogy ignores other ways of knowing and silences other voices.*
4. *Andragogy ignores the relationship between self and society.*

5. *Andragogy is reproductive of inequalities; it supports the status quo.*

<div align="right">(Sandlin, 2005, p27)</div>

The feminist pedagogy critique of andragogy features strongly in Sandlin's (2005, p25) five main critical issues to consider. In practice, women become marginalised in how adult learning classes are delivered, males are allowed more airtime to discuss their views. Andragogy is not politically neutral, it sits back without challenging existing societal power structures, this results in gender inequalities being reproduced. Andragogy does not recognise cultural or gender differences, as well as social and historic differences. Andragogy does not recognise different ways of knowing (Sandlin, 2005, p32). Operationally, if an adult learner has made an educational achievement, andragogy does not consider the social relational reasons why this achievement has happened. A particular learner might have access to human, social or cultural capital, manifest in the form of free childcare or transport. This would create extra time for academic study. Other equally able learners, might have an unsupportive chaotic domestic background (Bourdieu, 1986b, p249; Hawkins and Maurer, 2012, p356).

There have been earlier indications concerning reflexivity and reflective practices in this literature review (Giddens, 1984, p5). Anthony Giddens (1998) theorises the importance of information in guiding decision making and reflection. That process is similar to Dewey's (1897) description of true education mentioned earlier, which highlights the importance of considerations of the 'social situations' a person finds themselves in (Dewey, 1897, p77). Giddens' (1998) theory is also underpinned by Kolb's (1981, 1984) experiential learning cycle, including the dialectic mode of being

educated by transforming experiences, using reflective observation (Kolb and Kolb, 2009, p46). The importance of reflective practices can't be underestimated. Current students have to constantly reflect upon information they have received and make decisions, as part of their learning in both professional and informal situations.

"Reflexivity has two senses, one general and the other more directly relevant to modern social life. All human beings are reflective in the sense in which thinking about what one does is part of doing it, whether consciously, or on the level of practical consciousness. Social reflexivity refers to a world increasingly constituted by information rather than pre-given modes of conduct. It is how we live after the retreat of tradition and nature, because we have to make so many forward orientated decisions. In that sense, we live in a much more reflexive way than previous generations have done."

(Giddens, 1998, p115)

I have included this expansive quote from Giddens (1998) in this literature review, because it touches on so many bases in higher education. Giddens' (1998) theory on reflexivity expands upon the notion. The student has to be aware of the social context in which interaction, here defined as experiential learning takes place (Nicholas, 2016, p3). Students need to be enabled to make informed decisions. The student must be critically alert, at the 'practical consciousness' level (Giddens, 1998, p115), able to reflect upon activity around them. This is reflexivity followed by forward planning to make progress (Brigden and Purcell, 2014, HEA online article).

The activity described involves concrete experience, abstract conceptualisation, reflective observation and active experimentation. As such, Giddens (1998) theorising of the role of reflexivity is complementary with Kolb's (1981, 1984) experiential learning cycle model. Giddens (1998) and Kolb (1981, 1984) act to reinforce the widely held view, some form of reflective practice will enhance experiential learning including student placements. A process of 'self-reflexivity' would also be beneficial, especially for working-class students learning on placement with an elite organisation e.g. Dr Barnardo or the Woodland Trust (Reay et al, 2009, p1105). [3a]Skeggs (2004, p21) describes a benefit of Bourdieusian concepts as being an 'explanatory power', able to identify and locate societal power relationships. Skeggs (2004) essentially argues Bourdieu's approach requires reflexivity, people's critical understanding of their own position regarding surrounding power structures. 'Thirdly, his methodological insights, in which reflexivity as a prerequisite to knowledge provides us with a way of examining the positions from which we speak' ([3b]Adkins and Skeggs, 2004, p21).

3.6 Conclusion

The contestation and similarities between andragogy, adult learning, and experiential learning, serves to demonstrate that a blend of both educational processes, can be beneficial in higher education (O' Bannon and McFadden, 2008, p25; Taylor and Hamdy, AMEE Guide No. 83, 2013, page e1562). This discussion has highlighted how for andragogy and experiential learning to be fully effective, the adult must have existing life experience to act as a benchmark, with which to contextualise information. The learner must be able to reflect upon information in order to assess what they need to know. In turn the adult learner can now self-direct their education, to tailor their

[3a and 3b] This section is taken from an individual paper written by Beverly Skeggs, which forms part of the introductory chapter jointly written with Lisa Adkins.

learning towards the skills and knowledge they have assessed they need. The transformational, curriculum design, acquisition of human capital and encourage reflective practices aspects of andragogy and experiential learning, again come to the fore (Harvey, 2016, p2; WHO, 2016, p11; Passmore and Morgan-Beedy, 2013, p335).

The calls for a return to the 'sandwich course' for undergraduates, prevalent in the 1980s grow ever louder. Undergraduate sandwich courses are university degree courses which have been identified as being 4 years in duration at the outset. Typically, the first two years of a sandwich course are spent in the classroom, followed by a year out on student placement, finishing with a final year of academia. We are at a critical juncture in the higher education community, with increasing numbers of stakeholders, identifying a need for more experiential learning via student placements. Experiential learning bridges the gap between theoretical learning and praxis. It also assists with many of the components which assist with employability, soft skills and the acquisition of human and social capital (Becker, 1993, p203). These components are to be found in most version of continuous learning and professional development policy documents (CLPD). They include leadership, communication and complex problem solving skills, heightened curiosity and self-confidence, so able to deal with new situations better. Research has also shown that experiential learning improves both information retention and the decision making skills of undergraduates.

The next chapter discusses some philosophical issues which have a substantive effect on how the various aspects of experiential learning can be examined. These issues affect how social interaction, lived experiences are interpreted by the researcher. People may have different perceptions of the same event, different interpretations. A

third person may have a different view, of what a first or second person said. Succinctly, this introduces two philosophical concepts to the thesis, that of epistemology and ontology. Epistemology, which can very simply be defined as how a person perceives the truth, has a significant affect upon how research can be carried out. Similarly, ontology which can be defined simply as, is there a single truth to be discovered, is also important. The following chapter will fully discuss, epistemology, ontology and other different epistemological ways in which educational research can be conducted. The next chapter will also discuss the theoretical aspects of a reflective practice called critical reflection. Critical reflection can help to identify societal inequality, which can then be challenged thus benefitting the wider society.

Chapter 4 – The Importance of Philosophy, Epistemology and Ontology in the Educational Research of Student Placements: A Theoretical Framework

4.1 Introduction

Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) informs us (2003, [orig. 1937], p51), research aims to produce new knowledge from social action observed than interpreted to provide new facts. Observation can be in the form of analysing research interview discourse.

> *'There is, more often implicit than explicit, a deep-rooted view that the progress of scientific knowledge consists essentially in the cumulative piling up of "discoveries" or "facts"…The one important thing is to have observed what had not been observed before.'*

(Talcott Parsons, 2003, [1937], p51)

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) proceeds along a similar vein, using discourse which harmonises with Talcott Parsons (2003, [1937]). Applying Foucault's definition of critical theory, knowledge is power (Foucault, 1995 [orig. 1977], p194). The situation where people who have knowledge and can influence the content, the nature of what knowledge is transferred to other people is a societal power structure. The intention of this research is to analyse the effect of experiential learning pedagogy, in terms of how do higher education stakeholders articulate their views of placements. The research needs to consider any power structures in operation during student placements, also each stakeholder's position relative to those power relationships. In Foucault's (1991b, p28 and p29) view, social research should consider evidence, free from pre-existing paradigmatic forces. Research data should be analysed with an open mind, able to

appreciate evidence from multiple perspectives, old entrenched ideas need to be discarded. Different ways of interpreting, of understanding, of knowing, taking into account cultural, social background and gender differences need to be considered.

'…of interrogating anew the evidence and the postulates, of shaking up habits, ways of acting and thinking, of dispelling commonplace beliefs, of taking anew measure of rules and institutions.'

(Foucault, 1991b, p12)

This theoretical framework chapter acts as a pre-cursor to the research methodological design discussion. This chapter serves to identify the philosophical and pragmatic issues the researcher is likely to encounter when embarking on the research journey (Corbin and Strauss, 2015, p17). The conceptual theoretical frameworks of terms such as epistemology and ontology, will be fully discussed in this chapter (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p11).

Karl Popper (1902-1994) (2003, [orig. 1934], p42) effectively warns of the danger of accidentally misinterpreting the causes of an 'observed reality', due to induction. A working definition of induction is to theorise an 'observed reality', without properly investigating any causal factors which could be influencing the social reality. The problem with induction is that it can lead to the design of flawed thinking, essentially a 'theory of falsification' (Popper, 2003, [1934], p43). I need to be fully aware of the danger and problems which can be caused by induction. Instead I shall be using a deductive approach, correctly interpreting research participant interview discourse and then devising any appropriate theories from deduction (Popper, 2003, [1934], p46).

Max Weber (1864-1920) (2003, [orig. 1904], p107) conducted a research analysis of ''Objectivity' in social science'. This paper provides a substantive theoretical framework with which to discuss and consider, can we ever truly establish reality. Weber (2003, [1904]) effectively argues, hidden powers reside in a multitude of social, historical, cultural, linguistic and other relationships which exist between social actors. Weber's (2003, [1904], p113) study reveals that 'objectivity' the discovery of reality, involves analysing changeable individual social factors, which affect people differently.

"The real reason is that the analysis of reality is concerned with the configuration into which those (hypothetical!) "factors" are arranged to form a cultural phenomenon which is historically significant to us."

(Weber, 2003, [1904], p114)

Epistemologically, the theoretical framework of my priori position is captured in Dewey' (1897) 'My Pedagogic Creed', which contains his famous declaration regarding education. "I believe that the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself" (Dewey, 1897, p77). In my opinion, the most accurate knowledge that can be obtained regarding the educational effects of experiential learning, is to analyse whether people who have participated in this pedagogy have been affected, and in what ways. That analysis would include accurately interpreting what people said and what people meant during interviews. Weber (2003, [1904]) informed us that culture and language form part of social relationships. There could be hidden meanings in people's interviews, whereby the discourse is being affected by surrounding power structures.

Bergmann and Luckmann (1966) argue in their seminal book, 'The Social Construction of Reality' that, "the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p3). Generically, Gergen's (1991, p16), Giddens' (1984, p2) and Berger and Luckmann's (1966, p3) view, that reality is socially constructed, represents my position on how to obtain knowledge and see reality. My views as a social constructionist, will have invariably influenced how I have interpreted the discourse from the interviews I conducted. I have had to interpret someone else' psychological thought processes, regarding how a certain social interaction is affecting their perception. Latent values and assumptions the researcher has, will have influenced that process to some degree. My research approach follows in the footsteps of Dewey's (1938b) 'Logic: The Theory of Inquiry' work.

"Inquiry in order to be inquiry in the complete sense has to satisfy certain demands that are capable of formal statement…This conception of them is the ultimate ground of an idea that they are completely and inherently a priori and are disclosed to a faculty called pure reason."

(Dewey, 1938b, p16)

Savery and Duffy's (1996, p31) 'problem based learning' study discusses the theoretical principles of constructivism. Savery and Duffy (1996, p31) argue "Knowledge is in our interactions with the environment." Thus Savery and Duffy (1996) align themselves with the positions of Gergen (1991, p16), Giddens (1984, p2) and Berger and Luckmann (1966, p3) as social constructionists. Analysis of Savery and Duffy (1996), reveals 'the nature of the student' is an important factor in constructivist learning environments. To correctly interpret people's understanding of their

experiences, there must be a consideration of context and underlying social factors. People and researchers situate their knowledge and understanding in the social environment which they interact with, learning from experiences. People then correctly interpret the true meaning of social activity observed or their learning, in their social environment. (See also Schaap et al, 'School-based learning and workplace learning', 2012, p100). It is by this process that people's knowledge is socially constructed. Because all people are individual, with different social backgrounds, the perceptions people form will be different. Similarly the same experience of social activity, for example experiential learning during work placement, will affect students differently.

"This is the core concept of constructivism. Knowledge is not an entity out there to be acquired. We cannot separate a knowledge domain from the interactions in that domain; nor can we talk about what is acquired separately from how it is acquired as if a variety of experiences all lead to the same understanding…Since understanding is an individual construction, we cannot share understandings but rather we can test the degree to which are individual understandings are compatible."

(Savery and Duffy, 1996, p31)

Guba and Lincoln (1994), themselves fellow constructionists, inform the reader that the researcher's epistemological approach, is more important than methodological design, when conducting a research study. Guba and Lincoln (1994) also introduce the research concept and offer a working definition of paradigm into the discussion. There will be further explanation of paradigm, its affect when developing a theoretical framework and research design, later in this chapter (Hammersley, 2012b, p397).

"Questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choice of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways."

(Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p105)

The discussion on epistemological and ontological beliefs, helps to explore the psycho-societal tenet in my study (Wengraf, 2013, p53). How does the researcher accurately assess the extent to which a social action or actor, is influencing how the research subject acts and feels. The closing section also acts as a pre-cursor in introducing my epistemological approach to this study. I believe that most social interaction and a person's interpretation of such action, is socially constructed by a process of negotiation with that someone's personal framework of their perception of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p3; Gergen, 1991, p16; Giddens, 1984, p2).

A person's view of the world is heavily influenced by external forces; for example, the use of certain linguistic metaphors, credentialises certain ways of thinking and observing (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p22; Gergen and Dixon-Roman, 2013, p6). Accepted paradigms can be so deeply entrenched, they decide how social interaction should be understood. Kuhn's (1970, [orig. 1962]) seminal work, underlines the point.

"The new paradigm implies a new and rigid definition of the field. Those unwilling or unable to accommodate their work to it must proceed in isolation or attach themselves to some other group."

(Kuhn, 1970, [1962], p19)

At this juncture, it becomes apparent that it won't be possible to accurately contextualise, all people's individual experiences that might be encountered during research. There is also a strong indication that people interpret and attach meaning to their social activities, and then communicate their experiences using language. This could be said to be an early indicator that people socially construct their experience, and then narrate their perception. Furthermore, as people's situation, lived experience, change over time, how they describe their experience changes, as their new way of living present different experiences. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), place a substantial emphasis on social workers having appropriate 'cultural and linguistic competence' to understand their service users (NASW, 2013, p4).

Foucault (2005 [orig. 1966], p44) informs us, knowledge involves relating one language to another, on the basis that knowledge can be pictorial, poetic and symbolic. A pivotal role of language is to enable people to understand what they have heard and seen, and how knowledge can be interpreted. Language helps to gather together a whole host of signs, which help to convey meaning after interpretation of social activity. The role of interpretation is crucial in language. The connection to knowledge and power is apparent. People must be able to understand language cognitively and socially. People need to be able to communicate, so they can interpret signs, cues and coded language from accepted behaviour observed[4]. The people who can understand language including cultural practices and nuances, have a societal advantage over people who haven't yet adapted to the language. Using the right language is key to 'fitting in' (Bourdieu, 1967, p344). It is now clear to see that being able to interpret language is essential, in education, work or to conduct research.

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[4] See also a socio-cultural constructivist approach to education focussing upon language, in Mascolo's (2009, p3) 'guided participation' study.

'…language sets itself the task of restoring an absolutely primal discourse, but it can express that discourse only by trying to approximate to it, by attempting to say things about it that are similar to it, thereby bringing into existence the infinity of adjacent and similar fidelities of interpretation.'

(Foucault, 2005, [orig. 1966], p46)

Lillis (2009, p169) confirms the view, there needs to be special focus on the language people use to convey their perceptions. Lillis' (2009, p172) study considers a critical ideology of pedagogy when writing academic research in education. Lillis (2009, p173) informs us of the importance of critical language awareness for people to be able to learn and socially participate. Here socially participate and learning is an adaptation of experiential learning, students are able to understand the cultural norms in a new environment and learn. Critical language awareness also enables students to be better understood, so tutors are able to assess true student progress. Student learning and teacher research are enhanced, when critical language awareness is applied.

Lillis (2009, p174) uses Freire's (2000, [1970]) 'critical pedagogy' and Fairclough's (2001, p2) 'critical discourse analysis' concepts, alongside critical language awareness. This approach helps to highlight the presence of nuanced meanings in people's language. Critical language awareness can bring to the surface subconscious hidden meanings in people's discourse, which they themselves didn't know they had. Health, social care and educational practitioners could have hidden assumptions, which includes critical language awareness, such assumptions could be discovered and the student informed. The accidental bias can then be appropriately addressed.

Simola et al' (1998, p69) 'Catalogue of Possibilities' study, describes how truth and reality can be found, by utilising Foucault's knowledge-subject-power (KSP) triangle (Simola et al, 1998, p69-71). The Foucaultian KSP triangle provides a "catalogue of possibilities", which acts to demonstrate social activity should be considered from multiple angles. Different research questions could be formulated, which would investigate different aspects of the social activity, e.g. type of workplace or profession. There needs to be consideration, have all the stakeholders been correctly identified to be approached to participate in the study (Poon, 2013, p273). Similarly, which is the best way to analyse the effect of experiential learning on students, covert observation, online simulations, semi-structured surveys or tutor's notes (Au et al, 2016, p17). Some could say, people might question either the validity or appropriateness of such methodological choices to analyse experiential learning (Fielding, 2010, p130). For any number of reasons, it might not be possible to carry out the generic definition of the research ideal which follows. "An alternative is to draw appropriately from a range of sources to support judgement making" (Bamber et al, 2012, p37). Pragmatically, if all the stakeholder's perceptions, their views of social activity are to be fully understood, research method choice could be limited. In reality the "catalogue of possibilities" (Simola et al, 1998, p70), might only provide one operationally feasible solution, critical discourse analysis of research participants' interviews.

A further pause is required. Jay, (2005, p6) argues that experience is often discussed on a blasé, presupposed basis, without giving due regard to the possibility that only insiders might understands the language being used. In epistemological, ontological and operational terms, the researcher must be certain they correctly interpret the meanings given, when participants express their views (Kvale, 2007, p11).

The reader is informed that the researcher's own epistemological values, played a part in how the research was conducted. "To advance an agenda of social critique, social justice, and opportunity through educational research is no small task. Nor is it a neutral pursuit" (Luttrell, 2010, p1). This gives an insight into how the researcher considers knowledge and knowing, the role individual values have on interpretation, and how they would conduct research, the latter being the focus of the following chapter, research methodology. "Every research tradition makes four key assumptions: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological" (Wahl and Prause, 2013, p72). From Wahl and Prause's (2013) observation about research, for the purpose of this study, two of the four key concepts mentioned, epistemology and ontology, need to be defined. The concepts of epistemology and ontology are themselves highly contested, axiomatically, a number of their definitions overlap.

4.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is a philosophical approach, which considers the theory of knowledge, the nature, scope, and in a sense, the manner of knowledge. Epistemology can be said to be different forms of knowledge of reality (Bamber et al, 2012, p47). Epistemology analyses the concept of knowledge, asking critical questions about various components and aspects of knowledge itself. As examples, philosophically epistemology asks: Can knowledge of reality be established by some form of empirical evidence? What are the presuppositions of knowledge? What are the methodological problems of knowledge? What are the problems of validating truth? (Delanty and Strydom, 2003, p2). These questions can be expressed more succinctly as, 'what is knowledge', 'how is knowledge acquired', 'what do people know' and 'how do people know, that what they know, is reality, is valid, is truth'. The latter point carries an

assumption, which induces another philosophical question: Can there be a truth? Epistemology can be defined as all of one's explicit and implicit beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about the acquisition, structure, representation, and application of knowledge. More simply, what values a person has used to differentiate a defensible belief from a subjective opinion (Hofer and Pintrich, 1997, p88; Tsai, 2012, p310).

Using this definition, the researcher would be constantly asking questions, mainly regarding the potential for an accidental introduction of bias into the proceedings. This epistemological approach would ask, what is the nature of the relationship that exists between the researcher and the participant? How do we come to understand a unique person's worldview? These critical questions help to identify the methodological problems which need to be addressed. Crucial when designing a research study to investigate, what are the causal factors which are most influential in how people form their opinions of student placements (Antwi and Hamza, 2015, p219). Epistemological beliefs can help the researcher to understand repressed and/or subconscious views, which have remained hidden from the research participant and perhaps a significant other's attention (Krauss and Turpin, 2013, p7). For example a researcher's epistemological position could be, they view people's non-verbal communication (NVC), in the form of hand gestures or head shaking, as an indication that a person, is for or against a new piece of legislation. Others might say, epistemologically, it's the analysis of people's interaction with any number of the socio-economic causal factors listed earlier, which should be used to interpret people' subconscious and/or repressed views (Gergen and Dixon-Roman, 2013, p3). Furthermore, verstehen, cognitive behavioural or recovered-memory therapy, are valid, reliable research tools, which could be used, dependent upon the researcher's epistemological view of reality.

4.3 Ontology

Similar to epistemology, ontology has a number of aspects, which can be readily identified and considered by asking some critical questions. For instance is there a single, unitary, valid reality which can be discovered. Alternatively, are there as many different realities as there are individuals and groups of people? These two previous questions now generate a third. If a presumption is made that there are multiple realities, does such an assumption mean that all research results are unfinished. In addition, does an ontological acceptance of multi-realities mean that by definition, researchers can only produce partial, tentative, relativist accounts of social phenomenon? (Seamon and Gill, 2016, p117).

Like epistemology, ontology can be influenced by the specific time, place or location in which a person is located, which in turn affects someone's view of what can exist. Like epistemology, ontology has a number of philosophical assumptions which can be said to be in positivist terms, reality, validity, truth can be said to pre-exist, be understood and measured via scientific techniques. Alternatively, in critical theorist terms: reality, validity and truth are multivalent concepts, which are shifting, beneath a constantly changing state of flux. The concept of reality constantly change, marking out non-contingent dimensions of human experience. Peoples lived experiences change, people themselves change, psychologically and socially, people get older, people' health and sensory perceptions change, usually deteriorating with the ageing process. Ontologically, how people perceive reality changes over time. From a social constructionist philosophical view, there is no reality, validity or truth, apart from the human beings experiencing a social phenomenon and giving it their meaning at that moment in time (Seamon and Gill, 2016, p118; Luttrell, 2010, p22 and p26).

Ontology involves consideration of what exists, what it looks like, what constitutes it's make up and how do its components parts interact with each other. In one interpretation of ontology, reality is created by individuals and groups. In this interpretation, ontology is an individual's collective beliefs about the nature of reality and being. Developing deductively, ontology would mean the world and knowledge is created by social and contextual understanding. This interpretation borrows heavily from the leanings of ancient Greek philosophy, heralded by Socratism (See also Jay, 2005, p4). Socrates made a radical epistemological and ontological shift, recognising that knowledge was not just about physical explanation, but that moral and practical meaning is key to knowledge. Reality exists and has been created on a directed social basis. There is an objective reality and we can understand it through the laws by which it is governed. Reality is the practical effects of ideas (Ritchie et al, 2013, p4). Applying Socratism and Ritchie et al (2013), the HE stakeholders who make the rules could decide that experiential learning should focus on jobs skills acquisition. In addition, HE stakeholders could make transforming the student to adopt compliant personal attributes a priority. The HE stakeholders would apply their interpretation of reality, to an ideal work based experiential learning student placement in practice. Experiential learning's role in student development, is fully discussed in chapter eight of this study. A definition of ontological belief, is the researcher accepts the origin, permanence and changeability of reality and being. Put simply, ontology is identifying the reality of "how things really are" and "how things really work" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p201). This fits in with the social constructionist perspective, who would favour research design methodology which is qualitative in nature. A research approach which is most effective at interpreting human social action from the insider perspective (Brundrett and Rhodes, 2013, p15). Luttrell (2010) provides a lengthy yet apt quote, which

harmonises with Brundett and Rhodes' (2013) and Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) strong

emphasis. Luttrell's (2010) rationale, provides theoretical underpinning and pragmatic

justification, that a qualitative research study is a very effective methodological design.

As a social constructionist, qualitative research is in my opinion, the best method by

which to analyse people' perceptions of the educational benefits of student

placements. Qualitative research would enable the use of an interpretivist approach

to analyse people's discourse, interpret comments and the context of what was said.

This is why critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001, p2) and biographic-narrative

interpretation method (BNIM) (Wengraf, 2013, p53) are effective research tools to use

with interview data. They both focus on surrounding social structures which are

influencing people, in the discovery of HE stakeholders' true perceptions of

experiential learning. Luttrell's (2010) approach, acts to underscore Dewey's (2007,

[1910], p74) position. Also the transformative, pedagogical aspects of experiential

learning, present in Dewey (1938a, p28) 'Experience and Education' work[5].

> *"I take its central features to be the following: qualitative research is defined*
>
> *by an effort to highlight the meanings people make and the actions they*
>
> *take, and to offer interpretations of how and why. Qualitative research is*
>
> *committed to participants using their own words to make sense of their*
>
> *lives; it places an importance on context and process; it rests on a dialectic*
>
> *between inductive and deductive reasoning; and uses iterative strategies*
>
> *to comprehend the reasoning between social life and individual*

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[5] Dewey, (1938b, p138) in his book Logic: the Theory of Inquiry, has a similar yet separate discussion on politics or public policy. Dewey (1938a, p108) emphasised how talking and asking questions, inquiring, helped formulate interdeterminacy, also intermediate propositions. Judgement was then required to convert intervening settlements discussed earlier so a finalised settlement is constructed. Paradigmatic practices can be changed by a similar process.

subjectivities. Doing qualitative research involves a healthy scepticism about whether "to see is to know", and instead calls upon us to look at people (including ourselves as investigators), places, and events, through multiple and critical lenses."

(Luttrell, 2010, p1 and p2)

In simple terms, ontology is simply identifying and/or describing something that exists, which may be significant. Luttrell's (2010) quote acts as a signpost to verstehen (in German: to understand), which can be defined as obtaining understanding, by situating oneself in the other person's position. Verstehen involves treating the person as an actor, then using empathy to attribute meanings to their actions. Verstehen is associated with Weberian interpretive and Habermas' (1971, [orig. 1968], p142) hermeneutics, manifest in identifying both the meaning and the cause of social phenomenon (Adler, 1997, p326).

'…we recreate the unity, vitality, and individuality of other' experiences, by both 'investing our own life-experiences', and critically comparing our manner of expressing this experience with other's symbolic framework.'

(Dilthey, 1924, cited in Harrington, 2001, p319)

Verstehen has theoretical relevance in my study. The process relies upon interpreting another party's social interaction, so there's a theoretical fit with social constructionism. Verstehen works by the researcher sharing the experiences of the participant, then putting themselves in the other party's shoes. It's by such a close,

almost intimate association, that greater understanding, verstehen, takes place. As such, verstehen could be considered as a possible research solution. Schutz (1977, cited in Adler, 1997) discusses how constructivism, how people interpret social action around them links with verstehen, how people understand the world around them.

"Constructivism does not build on the relative implications of interpretive epistemology, but on the ontological implications of **Verstehen.** *To understand ontological implications of* **Verstehen***, we must start with the notion that social scientist want to know, interpret or explain has already been interpreted in the social world.* **Verstehen***, is, thus, not just a method used by the social scientist, but also the collective interpretations, practices and institutions of the actors themselves."*

(Schutz, 1977, p231, cited in Adler, 1997, p326)

Verstehen involves a deep understanding of what a person meant in their discourse, and their views of social interaction around them. Paradoxically, the discussion is introduced to the concept of a person-independent approach to ontology, what can be known from the "insider's perspective" (Antwi and Hamza, 2015, p221). Here ontologically, unlike verstehen, what can exist and whether it is significant to people would be analysed. Theoretically an 'insider's perspective' approach can focus on the relations the person has with other social actors and individuals. There would be no consideration of the socio-demographic characteristics of the person. Neither would there be an analysis of whether their perception of lived life, is being influenced by their social-demographic profile, so this approach would not be person-centred.

4.4 Epistemology: Four philosophical sub-types in educational research

This section briefly discusses three categories of epistemology in social science research. These are, positivism, interpretivism or hermeneutics, and critical theory. These are not the only methodological approaches available, they do however represent three of the four most common sub-types discovered in my literature search, regarding conducting educational research. The fourth philosophical sub-type is called constructionism, which is my epistemological choice in approaching this research. Constructionism is discussed in more detail in a separate section, later in this theoretical framework chapter. The typology is generic, thus it is not able to capture all the individualistic, methodological orientations at present which could be employed. Discussion on these four sub-types act to delineate as follows.

'…many of the important dimensions on which educational research currently varies in methodological terms. These relate to differences in ontological and epistemological assumptions-about the nature of the phenomena being investigated- and how they can be understood-and about what the product of research is or should be.'

(Hammersley, 2015, TLRP online resource)

4.5 Positivism and educational research design

Positivism is a research paradigm associated with scientific theories. Positivism is concerned with experience and scientific knowledge. The term positivism was invented by the early nineteenth century philosopher August Compte (Hammersley, 2012a, p9). Positivism developed as an alternative research method whose

investigatory approach was free from non-intrinsic, philosophical concepts, ideological or theological value based aspects, which could not be verified. Here, positivism overlaps with the term empiricism. Only 'objective' phenomena which could be observed and then measured, can be recognised in positivism. "Non-sensory or 'intangible' information, such as beliefs, values or intentions, were strictly (if disparagingly) 'nonsense'. (Webb, 1991, p121). This is of crucial importance in my study of people's views regarding the educational effectiveness of experiential learning in student placements (Kolb and Fry, 1975, p33; Kolb, 1976, 1981 and 1984, p38). By definition, my research study analysing people's perceptions, which is qualitative, interpretive, not able to be measured in any 'scientific', empirical manner, would be excluded. This is why the ethos of the philosophy of positivism is crucial. It explains why my research simply could not be conducted, while having a positivist epistemological approach to knowledge creation.

4.6 Interpretivism or hermeneutics in educational research design

Interpretivism ontological approach is able to establish knowledge by interpreting people's text or discourse. Webb (1991) provides a narrative of the benefits of using interpretivist methods in educational research, which also act to discover pedagogical differences, which students perceived of their learning. (See also Gage, 1989, p7 – Teacher's pedagogical content knowledge).

> *"During the 1970s and1980s, interpretive research into higher education in the UK and Sweden particularly, focussed on processes of student learning as discerned from interviews with students and textual examination of their work."*

> (Webb, 1991, p122/123)

From the results of this interpretive study, educational researchers devised a framework, using the concepts of 'surface' and 'deep learning'. Knowledge was obtained from students who chose the pedagogical method of surface learning, where they memorised as best they could the learning materials. Compared with students who applied the pedagogy of deep approach to their learning, preferring to consider underlying issues, located below the immediate surface of the learning material. There is a parallel with experiential learning here. The students have to pause and reflect upon the information received, then use their past lived experiences to interpret the material. Using 'deep learning', students identify any subsurface issues that are present, which may be relevant to their area of study. The context in which the learning is said to have taken place, was identified as a significant factor (Webb, 1991, p123). Webb's (1991) work is quite old, however there is something of a return to educational research studies, which involve analysing student responses during interviews, and then interpreting their discourse afterwards. This qualitative research study does exactly that, applying Stewart's (2011, p282) transactional analysis in the interviews. The following long quote from Stewart's (2011) transactional study, illuminates the ethos of qualitative research study intended to accurately interpret people's views. The quote also provides an explanation why a research study, based entirely on the analysis of interview discourse is reliable and valid (Kvale, 2007, p21).

> *"Understanding the nuances of the way meaning is constructed becomes even more complicated when the words we use to articulate our perspectives are studied. Our context and social exchanges govern the construction of the meanings we hope to communicate. The realities of historical and social change will cause those meanings to have a dynamic quality. Our constructed*

meanings will evolve as our experiences are shaped by our transactions with others and the texts we read. Researchers, then, cannot understand participants' experiences without attending to the ways that language is constantly shaping and reshaping their worldviews."

(Stewart, 2011, p283)

I have also included a lengthy quote from Weber's (1978b, [orig. 1922]) 'The Nature of Social Action', as it serves two purposes. Weber (1978b, [1922]) acts to reinforce the importance of the researcher accurately interpreting, the meaning people have taken of their lived experiences with other social actors. Furthermore, Weber (1978b, [1922]) provides critical analysis of the conflict between positivism and interpretivism, demonstrating that contrary to positivism, the social historic background substantially influences how people interpret their social interaction. Weber (1978b, [1922]) also indicates that in practice the research methodological design, must enable the researcher to accurately interpret what a person understood and/or meant, when they observed, participated in or withdrew from some activity in their social landscape.

"1. Methodological Foundations

(1) The meaning to which we refer maybe either (a) the meaning actually intended by an individual agent on a particular historical occasion or by a number of agents on an approximate average in a given set of cases, or (b) the meaning attributed to agent, agents as types, in a pure type constructed in the abstract. In neither case is the 'meaning' thought of objectively as 'correct' or 'true' by some metaphysical criterion. This is the difference

between empirical science of action, such as sociology or history, and any

kind of <u>priori</u> discipline, such as jurisprudence, logic, ethics, or aesthetics

whose aim is to extract from their subject-matter, 'correct' or 'valid'

meaning."

<div align="right">(Weber, 1978b, [1922], p7)</div>

The opening section analysing interpretivism is important in laying the foundations for the following discussion of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics can be defined as the philosophy and science of interpretation, including the interpretation of communication. The term hermeneutics refers to a methodological approach, which originated over several centuries to interpret biblical text. Nineteenth century hermeneutics was the dawn of a new kind of epistemological and ontological approach for interpreting human social interaction, in the context of historiography. By definition, the social landscape in which people lived their lives, clearly forms a part of their history (Hammersley, 2012a, p22). Webb's (1991) description of hermeneutics, demonstrates the development trajectory of this humanistic epistemology. From hermeneutics' initial beginning as a mechanism to interpret biblical scripts, to a research method constructing knowledge, by correctly interpreting how a person understands their social relationships.

"Hermeneutics, the method for achieving such understanding, originated in

the Protestant quest for a direct extraction of the individual meanings from

the Bible, but was later applied to the interpretation of texts in law, history,

literature and later to any form of human interaction."

<div align="right">(Webb, 1991, p122)</div>

As an epistemological approach, interpetivism has two broad based critiques. Interpretivism focuses upon all the socio-demographic factors that might be present in the background. With interpetivist research, it is often not possible to identify with any real authority, which causal factors have produced which social phenomena. In this sense interpretivism is research blind, unable to consider any social relations at play. Interpretivist research is not able to distinguish with any certainty, the degree to which any combination of someone's race, gender or class is influencing their responses.

"That the sort of descriptions it encourages are too vague or variable to provide a sound basis for comparing the orientation of different people, the character of different situations or institutions, and so on."

(Hammersley, 2012a, p23)

In addition, interpretivism and hermeneutics give the impression of being objective and value neutral, which to an extent is misleading. Interpretivism and hermeneutics rely heavily on the researcher's subjective opinion of both the social interaction observed, and how other social actors have interpreted that activity. In this sense, both interpetivism and positivism have numerous inbuilt assumptions of true reality.

"In the final analysis the qualitative and hermeneutic methods employed by interpretative researchers assume an objective or observational detachment similar to that of the positivist."

(Webb, 1991, p123 and page 124)

4.7 Critical theory and educational research design

Marx (1975, [orig. 1843] provides the earliest definition of critical theory. "We are therefore able to sum up the credo of our journal in a single word: the self-clarification (critical philosophy) of the struggles and the wishes of the age" (Marx, 1975, [1843], p209). Discussion of critical theory, introduces Foucault's (2005 [1966]) 'Theory of Power' and (1972) 'Archaeology of Knowledge' theory. The latter acts to underpin the authority given to people who can use the recognised discourse, the accepted language as decided by the dominant ideology of the day (Foucault (2005 [1966], p26). Foucault's archaeological approach, is based upon the interpretation of subconscious, undiscerned aspects of language and discourse. Foucault sets out an area, marked with a boundary, situated in a concept that language and discourse are an invisible structural artefact, forming part of a power relationship. In Foucault's 'Archaeology of Knowledge' theory, language and discourse are a currency, only accessible to those advantaged by the power relationship. The ability to recognise or not recognise certain language and discourse, means this invisible artefact has 'bureaucratic gatekeeping' properties. This manifests itself as language being in the area between the situated invisible structure, and specific discourse, a language that can only ever be recognised, or layered over our thought, as "a dust of facts" (Foucault, 1972, p28).

In my present day interpretation of Foucault's (1972) archaeological approach, 'our thought' is in essence the dominant ideology, benefitting from surrounding power relationships. This is how Foucault' archaeological approach, with its emphasis on people's language and discourse, decides what is fact or knowledge, and whether it should be recognised or not. Furthermore, Foucault's (1972) theory, that who controls language acceptance, has similar properties epistemologically on knowledge, or

ontologically, on what is recognised as significant, requires further attention. The interpretation of language and discourse aspects of Foucault's (1972) 'Archaeology of Knowledge', has theoretical relevance with this study, analysing how students might articulate their student placement experiences. Foucault's (2005 [1966]) 'Theory of Power' and (1972) 'Archaeology of Knowledge', both operate in tandem with each other. This can clearly be seen in the societal power relationships which exist, some of which are reinforced by the users of certain types of language and discourse. Foucault (2005 [1966]) argues, these power relations,

'…are not univocal; they define numerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each of which has its own risks of conflict, of struggles, and of at least temporary inversion, of the power relationships.'

(Foucault, 1995 [1977], p27)

Foucault's (2005 [1966]) 'Theory of Power', and (1972) 'Archaeology of Knowledge' also helps to explain why some people's perception of their reality, is shaped the way that it is. Paradigmatic forces, in the form of certain behaviours being rewarded, whilst others are side-lined, influence people to comply with traditional norms and values. This threat of such isolation, actual or perceived, leads to affected parties feeling disenfranchised, being denied what Foucault called 'accorded primacy' (2005 [1966], p72). The realisation of this phenomenon, which can be described as comply with the new mainstream or become self-excluded is profound. Research study recognition, acts to underline the duality characteristics of Foucault's (2005, [1966]) 'Theory of Power' and Foucault's (1972) 'Archaeology of Knowledge' working in tandem.

At this juncture, Foucault's (2005 [1966], p68) 'ideological control' resonates with Bourdieu's (1991, p5) 'symbolic violence'. Jenkins (2002) offers an explanation of 'symbolic violence', as being legitimised by the 'power relations' which exist between parties (Jenkins, 2002, p104). In both instances, people and/or their ideas, have either been supressed or removed by either Foucault's (2005 [1966]) 'Theory of Power', and/or Foucault's (1972) 'Archaeology of Knowledge' and/or Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990, p3) 'Cultural Reproduction' theory (See earlier work, Bourdieu, 1986a, p3).

Cultural reproduction can be said to be the transmission of existing norms and values, from one person or society to another. Individuals or groups interact with various social actors and institutions in the environment, resulting in cultural reproduction or culturally arbitrary transmission. Culturally arbitrary transmission or cultural reproduction, the terms are interchangeable, is quite complex (Bourdieu, 1974, p35; Nash, 1990, p431).

The transfer of accepted norms, values and information provided by the dominant ideology of the day, is a form of socialisation process. Cultural reproduction is mainly carried out by the family or the education system. Bourdieu (1993, p30) essentially argues, cultural reproduction acts to replicate existing inequalities in most Western liberal democracies social systems. Individuals and groups have their own unique socio-demographic background, which interact with, Bourdieu (1991, p37) argues, social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital, in different ways (Sullivan, 2002, p146). Only social groups and individuals who culturally reproduce and mirror the dominant ideology of the day become accepted members. Further arbitrariness comes from the reality that cultural reproduction takes places by individuals having a 'habitus', and interacting in 'fields' or 'social spaces' (Bourdieu, 1986a, p95 and 1991, p38).

'The sociological theory of pedagogic action between the arbitrariness of the imposition and the arbitrariness of the content imposed, only so as to bring out the sociological implications of the relationship between two logical factions, namely a pure power relationship as the objective truth of the imposition, and a totally arbitrary culture as the objective truth of the meanings imposed…There is no pedagogic actions, which does not inculcate some meanings not deducible from a universal principle (logical reason or biological nature…)'

(Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p9)

An interpretation of critical social theory offers a focus upon praxis during teaching, as an educational response to avoid the potential for social injustice in the classroom. Praxis is said to be an Aristotelean idea, linking theory and practice together, developing in unison, which is itself is a working definition of reflective practice. Praxis would be subject to evaluation in critical social theorist, epistemological and ontological terms, of reducing educational inequality. The inclusion of praxis enables reflective discussion on educational outcomes, and practical amendments required. There can also be educational research on what the student, teacher practitioner or the researcher feels they have learnt from praxis. "Praxis is thus learning adapting one's educational theories and practices in the light of critical reflection of action taken to serve educational and social purposes" (Webb, 1991, p124).

The inclusion of praxis, demonstrates that Freire' (2000, [1970]) seminal text 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' introducing critical pedagogy, harmonises with critical social theory. In context, being appropriately and professionally critical, encourages people to be sceptical, to challenge existing work practices and policies. Critical social

theory enables students to demonstrate a Holdsworth and Quinn (2012, p388) 'deconstructive' incident, criticising work practices which legitimise inequality. Practices which reinforce Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990, p3) 'cultural reproduction', are described by Holdsworth and Quinn (2012, p391) as 'reproductive'.

Navarro's (2006, p10) 'In search of a cultural interpretation of power' study, delivers a detailed explanation of many of Bourdieu's critical social theory of power concepts. Navarro's (2006, p12) research study, alerts the reader that the main facets of power structures are hidden. To be able to research power structures, there must be broader consideration of social life as a whole. Bourdieu describes various components of societal power in the following terms: '[(Habitus) (Capital)] + field = practice' (Bourdieu, 1986a, p101). Here practice is social life or cultural practice. Definitions of Bourdieusian power structures in relation to experiential learning, e.g. habitus, appear in this study. Navarro's (2006, p10) study, acts to demonstrate the importance of culture and language in societal power relationships. "Culture, in the form of dispositions, objects, institutions, language and so on, mediates social practices by connecting people and groups to institutionalised hierarchies" (Navarro, 2006, p15).

Mills and Gale's (2007, p433) 'Bourdieuan methodology' study, provides important theoretical underpinning of what to consider in an educational research study. My research study, analysing the effects of experiential learning on students fits within this category, using critical pedagogy and a socially critical understanding of society. The university should enable the student with critical evaluation skills, to be able to see discrimination and deliver social justice. Students who can design locally based democratic processes, which empower communities the university serves. Mills and

Gale's (2007, p438) study, including 'A Bourdieuan method: producing knowledge about social inequalities', ask two questions which feature in my research approach

"First, what is the focus of and justification for Bourdieuan research, which makes Bourdieu's work particularly valuable for this kind or research agenda. And second, how do Bourdieuan researchers produce knowledge?"

(Mills and Gale, 2007, p434)

18th century philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) essentially argued that reflection was a logical and rational approach to encourage reasoned thinking, as opposed to dogma (Kant, 1982, [orig. 1787], p15). In praxis, if a student were to query a work practice which had a negative effect on certain people, this would be classed as a 'deconstructive' workplace experience (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012, p393). Thus critical social theory, with praxis and reflection applied, can be said to provide theoretical underpinning to Bourdieu's (1986a) 'field' concept, Foucault's (2005 [1966]) 'Theory of Power' and Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012) 'student volunteering' study.

Influential educationalist Dewey's (2007, [orig. 1910]) analysis in 'How we think', also supports praxis and reflective practices. The phrase sceptical or challenging, has been paraphrased with "suspended judgement". The full quote contextualises the phrasing.

"The essence of critical thinking is suspended judgement; and the essence of this suspense is inquiry to determine the nature of the problem before proceeding to attempts at its solution. This, more than any other thing,

transforms mere inference into tested inference, suggested conclusions

into proof."

<div align="right">(Dewey, 2007, [1910], p74)</div>

There is philosophical harmony on the role of educational institutions have in societal power relationships, which effectively, Gage (2007, p124) described as the 'cultural reproduction' of social reality (Bourdieu, 1986a, p81; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p3). Webb (1991) informs the reader that praxis involves reflective practices. This is similar to another aspect of my study called criticality (Burbules and Berk, 1999, p45). Here people in my study students, critically reflected upon what they had learnt, and how they had learnt, devising their own educational changes. Lawrence-Wilkes and Ashmore (2014, p3) argue that epistemologically, reflective practices and criticality should be analysed in educational research, as a way of discovering knowledge. "The theoretical coverage will seek to answer whether reflective practice is viewed as subjective, or seen as a developmental process of emancipated teaching and learning for truth seeking in education" (Lawrence-Wilkes and Ashmore, 2014, p4).

Discussion on criticality is reinforced by Dewey's (2007, [1910], p74) quote, detailed earlier. Dewey (2007, [1910], p26) gives an indication that critical thinking has a transformative nature on people, especially when applied during work practices and/or learning processes. In this context, critical thinking harmonises with criticality. As such, Dewey (2007, [1910], p29) provides an epistemological justification for educational research design, intended to accurately measure if students are in some way transformed, changed by student placements. Experiential learning will provide students with opportunities to apply critical thinking to resolve unique problems that

present themselves during person-centred work. Dewey's work is supportive of criticality, as an educative tool, which enables the questioning of blind compliance with existing norms and values. Hence the theoretical resonance with Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012, p392) 'Reproductive and Deconstructive' experiential learning study. After much consideration I decided not to use positivism, interpretivism or critical social theory in my methodology, I chose the philosophy of constructionism instead. A critique of the epistemological and ontological aspects of constructionism, are discussed later in this theoretical framework chapter. A full account of how I conducted this research study, is discussed in the following research methodology chapter.

4.8 Constructionism

I view knowledge, 'social fact' (Durkheim, 2003, [orig. 1985], p26) and the reality of observed life, from a structuralist or constructionist view. Social action takes place in a situation, a context, which is then interpreted by the observer and given meaning. By this process, what has been seen by the observer has been 'socially constructed' (Gergen, 1991, p16). The following lengthy quote helps to fully explain why social constructionism, is particularly conducive with qualitative research methods. Seamon and Gill's (2016, p118) description, underlines social constructionism as being an ideal choice to discover people's perceptions of experiential learning student placements. Social constructionism relies on the interpretation of people's discourse and language.

> *"Social constructionists contend that, because of diverse values, preferences, beliefs, and world views, researchers cannot establish clear-cut procedures to identify unitary truth or to evaluate which modes of knowledge are more accurate or <u>"better"</u> than others. The social-*

constructionist position assumes that the most appropriate means by which to represent and understand the world is discourse and language, which become a main focus of research. If truths are multiple and only exist in the form of varying representations, then the researcher must give these representations direct research attention and recognise their dependence on language and discourse. In the end there are no immutable facts or solid truths; rather human understanding of the world constantly shifts, and all knowledge is thus tentative, partial and relative."

(Seamon and Gill, 2016, p118)

Seamon and Gill's (2016, p118) definition underscores the view that essentially, constructionism is epistemologically about the social construction of knowledge, and ontologically about the construction of social reality. In this epistemological and ontological approach, constructionists make an assumption that empirical, scientific and common sense knowledge is socially produced (Mutekwe et al, 2013, p54). There is growing recognition there should be consideration of all the social demographic factors, regarding all the individuals and agencies interacting with each other. Human discourse and actions can only be accurately interpreted, once the observer is aware of the nature of any societal relationships between actors. Dewey (2003, [orig. 1938], p290) is of the view social activity should be considered in numerous ways, not just limiting analysis in keeping with existing traditions (Dewey, 2003, [1938], p292). Bourdieu (2003b) effectively argues, new knowledge is constructed by reconfiguring existing beliefs and accepted interpretations.

'The construction of a scientific object requires first and foremost a break with common sense, that is, with the representations shared by all, whether they may be the mere commonplaces of ordinary existence or official representations,…'

(Bourdieu, 2003b, p388)

Representation plays a key role in Seamon and Gill's (2016) explanation of social construction, and the importance of interpreting language correctly in research. Given the importance of representation, consideration of societal forces which may influence how whether an idea suggested is valid representation requires further discussion.

Weber (1978a, [orig. 1922]) essentially argues the power to authorise representation, lies with the dominant ideology of the day. Representation can be delivered in three ways; by appropriation, using self-appointed authority; conferred in accordance with specific attributes, these can be cultural; or conferred by being given authority with "derived" or "delegated" powers (Weber, 1978b, [1922], p47). Applying Weber's (1978a, [1922]) view on representation, research based on the social construction of interview discourse, can only be validated by societal hierarchical interests. "The power of representation is conferred according to characteristics when it goes by seniority or some other such rule" (Weber, 1978a, [1922], p48).

Foucault (2005, [1966]) has a different approach to representation than Weber (1978a, [1922]). Foucault (2005, [1966], p71) argues there is a 'duplicated representation', which effectively can take many forms, e.g. the language in signs or visually in statues. Foucault (2005, [1966]) discusses 'duplicated representation' further, providing

another understanding which has profound significance on how research data can be interpreted. Foucault's (2005, [1966]) quote below reveals, there must be a thorough analysis of any social relationships between social actors. There must be consideration of the language used in representation to describe social activity. People affected by a social activity, could face a language barrier preventing challenge. There is an additional interpretation to consider, can the sample be truly representative.

*'…because representation in its peculiar essence is always perpendicular to itself: it is at the same time **indication** and **appearance**; a relation to an object and a manifestation of itself. '…the sign is the **representativity** of the representation in so far as it is **representable.'***

(Foucault, 2005, [1966], p72)

Constructionism can be defined as all knowledge is a compilation of human made negotiations with social interactions, actors and agencies to construct beliefs. Constructionism focuses upon how we construct knowledge and/or our beliefs. Constructionism contends there are new definitions of knowledge and truth that form a new paradigm, based on inter-subjectivity not on objectivity, on feasibility instead of truth. Constructionist epistemology is pragmatic. "The norm of the truth is to have made it" ([6]Vico, 1710, DA 52) (SEP). In practical terms, this means that a phenomena observed becomes reality, valid belief and knowledge, all on the basis the person has seen some social interaction unfold and chosen to recognise the outcome as the truth.

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[6] This is a quote from the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668-1744). It can be found in a book whose shortened title is called 'De Antiquissima' (Vico, 1710/1988, DA 52). In the literature review I conducted, two other writers have used this quote, accessing Vico's (1710) work, using the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (SEP). Please note, I have only read the quote online in SEP. The book 'De Antiquissima', which I have not read, is fully referenced in the bibliography.

Constructionism can be undermined by instances of misunderstanding or imperfect information. For instance, a person observing a group of feral children, might think hooliganism, not being aware, they were running home to report the appearance of a wanted man, or a gas leak. Thus we can now see that there has to be an existing understanding of the social context of what has been observed, in order to subsequently negotiate with the interaction to construct true knowledge and belief. This analogy is reinforced by Giddens (1979, p5), Durkheim (2003, [1985], p26), Gergen (1991, p16), with their views on structuration, social fact and constructionism respectively. The epistemology of constructionism, enabled me to interpret my data in the correct context. Constructionism, my personal view of how I perceive the reality of my surroundings, does have some valid critique. Constructionism is influenced by the person constructing some knowledge, the knower, having some existing norms and values prior to the negotiation process, by which to form knowledge, their beliefs (Salter and Kothari, 2016, p2 and p3). Put succinctly, people may have existing views on 'obedience', 'altruism', 'intelligence', concepts which are to a degree value-laden.

Similarly, another critique is before any constructionism takes place to produce research acquired knowledge, a number of presuppositions are often initially in place. A person has a priori or posteriori position of what is reality, before negotiations begin to interpret data to construct knowledge (Procyshyn, 2013, p656; Kant, 1963, [c1775]).

4.9 Priori, posteriori and knowledge

A priori can be defined as knowledge which is known independently of experience. This is knowledge that is non-empirical, not deductively arrived at by a thought process of reason. (Clatterbuck, 2013, p311). Posteriori is straightforward, reality is knowledge,

which is known by direct experience, so it is empirical. Knowledge is obtained by experiencing social interaction, followed by processing the action observed into belief (Kant, 1982, [1787], p19). The role of priori and posteriori experience are important in attempts to discover knowledge by research (Tahko, 2011, p151).

> *"What we are interested in is on how scientific and philosophical knowledge, assuming that they involve both a priori and posteriori knowledge, are structured, and how knowledge accumulates."*

<div align="right">(Tahko, 2011, p152)</div>

Dewey and Bentley's (1949) epistemological approach to what can be known, differs to Kant's (1982, [1787]) priori and posteriori theory in two key aspects. For Dewey and Bentley (1949), knowledge is obtained by a process of transaction. The second difference is, in Kant's (1982, [1787]) philosophical approach, knowledge is virtually fixed between priori and posteriori. In Dewey and Bentley's (1949) contemporary epistemological position, knowledge is located either within the observer's memory, or in the item itself to be learnt. This is a small pedagogical difference between the two. For both Kant (1982, [1787]) and Dewey and Bentley (1949), contextual understanding must take place, for the learner to grasp the subject matter being taught.

> *'The "transaction" as an object along and among along other objects, is to be understood to be unfractured observation—just as it stands, at this era of the world's history, with the respect to the observer, the observing, and the observed—and as it is affected by whatever merits or defects it may prove to have when it is judged, as it surely will be in later times,…'*

<div align="right">(Dewey and Bentley, 1949, p104)</div>

Dewey and Bentley (1949) argue knowledge changes over time contextually, even if the issue being taught the observed, and the learner, the observer are identical. Learners can re-contextualise with the teaching at the work place, experiential learning. The learner's stance can change situationally, choosing to repeat educational exercises in new innovative ways, hitherto not thought of (Paulson, 2003, p5). During experiential learning, once the student learns to understand the culture and the language in their particular workplace where they are training, they develop quicker.

> "_Transaction_ is inquiry of a type in which existing descriptions of events are accepted only as tentative and preliminary, so that new descriptions of the aspects and phases of events, whether in widened or narrow form, may freely be made at any and all stages of the inquiry."

> (Dewey and Bentley, 1949, p122)

4.10 Transaction and transactional constructivism

Dewey and Bentley (1949, p142) define "widened" and "narrow" as social and individual, respectively, thus asserting that transaction may have a social dimension, outside of the observer and the observed (Paulson, 2003, p5). Dewey did not use the word constructionism in his work. However, '…his work anticipates, if not explicitly articulates, much of what is important and interesting about constructivist epistemology and constructivist pedagogy' (Vanderstraeten, 2002, p234). Dewey (1896) wrote a ground breaking article called 'The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology'. Vanderstraeten (2002, p234) argues, this article can be paraphrased to produce the concept of transactional constructivism. I will provide a short precis of the key points of transactional constructivism, to demonstrate its theoretical relevance to my study.

People, students, interact with stimuli, which cause a change in their environment. Students then respond to that change. Dewey describes the process of the interaction as the 'the process all the way round', or alternatively, as 'the transaction of organism and environment' (Dewey and Bentley, 1949, cited in Vanderstraeten, 2002, p234). The theory of transactional constructivism requires some consideration, because students on placement, are subject to numerous stimuli during experiential learning. "The stimulus is something 'to be discovered', something 'to be made out', and it is 'the motor response which assists in discovering and constituting the stimulus'" (Dewey, 1896, p370). The entire process is essentially transactional. The organism, a student on placement, consciously or subconsciously, seeks to respond appropriately to the stimulus, a construction, present in the workplace. The behaviour demonstrated by the student, be that the acquisition of human capital, or compliance with norms and values, has been stimulated by experiential learning. The resulting interaction produces transactional constructivism (Vanderstraeten, 2002, p236). The nature of the student becomes an issue. The nature of the organisation would have an effect as well, a healthcare student might have an ideological issue with a tobacco company. Some students might have an existing inclination towards a particular profession e.g. bookkeeping which is often solitary, or teaching which is person-centred.

Sutinen (2008) provides a definition of transactional constructivism, which acts to underpin Vanderstraeten's (2002) earlier work. Analysis of Sutinen's (2008) quote, paraphrases that interaction, Dewey and Bentley (1949, cited in Vanderstraeten, 2002, p234) 'the process all the way round', stimulates learning of a growing organism, the student in the environment. Both Vanderstraeten (2002) and Sutinen (2008)

harmonise, that both the individual's thinking and their conception of the reality of their surroundings, the nature of the organisation, are in operation as the individual learns.

> *"Unlike other forms of constructivism, transactional constructivism makes it possible to discuss the relation between the educator and individual growth, because the social interaction between the educator and the growing person takes place in a medium that is common to both."*

(Sutinen, 2008, p2)

4.11 Bourdieusian concepts: their role in analysing experiential learning

The discussion on theoretical framework, has segued into another key part of my study. My research is situated in Bourdieu's social theory concepts of power, which include 'habitus', 'field', 'social space' and 'societal inculcation' (Bourdieu, 1985, p726; 1986a, p60; 1986b, p205). My study is qualitative, relying heavily upon my own epistemological and ontological interpretation, of what I feel research participants told me during their interviews. That interpretation is subject to all manner of other external forces, some were overt, whilst others operated in a covert fashion at the nascent level. For example overt, participants saying what the researchers wanted to hear, and covert, the employability narrative, which has affected data collection and analysis.

Let's discuss in more detail the key concepts of Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). Bourdieu's (1977b, p72) habitus concept, links individual actions and social structures as perceived by social interacting with them and each other. Habitus can be said to be an internalised set of beliefs, preferences, that subconsciously influences how an

individual will behave or be affected by, a social landscape they interact with. As such, habitus provides some of the theoretical framework of my study, interpreting HE stakeholders' perceptions of experiential learning in a work based setting. Habitus can be defined as the product of a person's socio-historical background, which have created a person's opinions and preferences, a set of individual and collective practices (Bourdieu, 2003a, [orig. 1992], p360). I've provided the following truncated excerpt of Bourdieu's (1977b, p82) habitus. Analysis of Bourdieu's quote highlights two issues, a person's habitus can change when their social surroundings change. Often students will receive experiential learning in a new to them environment. Habitus operates in all social settings where interaction, paraphrased as disposition occurs.

'…the strategy generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever changing situations…a system of lasting and transferable disposition which, integrating past experience functions at every moment, as a matrix of perception, appreciations and actions make possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks...'

(Bourdieu, 1977b, p72 and p82)

In the context of my research Bourdieu's (1991, p14) 'field', is a concept for expressing the profile of the environment in which individual and social relations are formed. Bourdieu (1991) explains habitus a person's nature, interacts with the social relations in the location, the 'field' where the person is situated. The work place is such a 'field'.

'Hence particular practices or perceptions should be seen, not of the product of the habitus as such, but as the product of the relation with the habitus, on the one hand, and the specific social contexts or fields in which individuals act,'

<div align="right">(Bourdieu, 1991, p14)</div>

'Field' consists of the nature of particular learning sites, educational institutions and the norms and values of the workplace. 'Field' is a conceptual area where structural power relationships reside, which keep various institutions, societal expectations and social values, as decided by the dominant ideology in place. Bourdieu (1991) argues that in between those fields are 'social spaces'. People can use 'social spaces' to travel from one 'field' to another. Bourdieu (1991) defines 'social spaces' as follows.

'a multi-dimensional space constructed on the principles of differentiation or distribution constituted by the set of properties active in the social universe under consideration, that is, able to confer force or power on their possessor in that universe.'

<div align="right">(Bourdieu, 1991, p229)</div>

Here each student, with their own socio-demographic background, interacts with the occupational workplace, which itself has its own individual identity and nature. The student is 'becoming', due their experiential learning, whilst on placement in the 'field'. Bourdieu (in Wacquant, 1989) explains how habitus and field are inextricably linked.

'…the relation between habitus and field operate in two ways. One the one side, it is a relation of conditioning: The field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of immanent necessity of a field… On the other side it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction: habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaning world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's practice.'

(Bourdieu, quoted in Waquant, 1989, p41)

When students are on placement they are living in the same social landscape, with either their peers or people they would like to emulate. The work-based setting acts as a stable social structure in which practices can be harmonised, without conscious reference to norms and values. There is no conscious forethought, students practice and/or acquire their set of common sense beliefs and preferences, reproducing habitus in the process. Students may not be aware of causal factors, which might be influencing their perceptions and/or their choice to accept and therefore replicate, certain behaviours and practices. Thus Bourdieu's (1977b, p72) 'habitus' and 'field' (Bourdieu, 1991, p14) are in place. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990, p9) 'cultural reproduction' occurs undetected, unchallenged societal inequalities being reinforced.

"The formative process, the Bildung, in the full sense, which brings about this social construction of the body only very partially takes the form of explicit and express pedagogic action. It is too a large extent the automatic, agentless effect of a physical and social order entirely organised in accordance with the androcentric principle (which explains the extreme strength of its hold)."

(Bourdieu, 2001, p24)

4.12 Experiential learning and the acquisition of human and social capital

Human and social capital draws upon the writings of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) (2003, [1895], p26), investigating the effects of common obligations on individuals in order to regulate social life and to generate a sense of belonging and consensus. In this sense Durkheim (2003, [1895], p29) has sociological modal points with Bourdieu's (1986a, p5) 'cultural reproduction' theory and his (1986, p249 'social capital' concept.

Putnam (1995b, p664), widely recognised as being a leading exponent of social capital, defines social capital as 'networks, norms, and trusts that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives' (Putnam, 1995b, p664 and p665). The links to Bourdieusian concepts e.g. 'cultural reproduction', 'societal inculcation' and 'habitus' are clarified. Putnam's work (2000, p19), also explains how to acquire social capital requires fitting in with the majority, supporting civic duty in line with norms and values. The act of delivering compliant behaviour, helps to build the 'field', a network of social relationships in an environment, a student placement. Putnam (2000) informs how social capital has relational and transmutable properties.

> *"Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals. Social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called "civic virtue." The difference is "social capital" calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous and isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital."*

(Putnam, 2000, p19)

It was from his writings, that Putnam (1995a, p66; 1995b, p665; 1996, p62; 2000, p19) gained inspiration for the importance of civic engagement, in the concept of social capital. In social science, there is some convergence towards definitions, which emphasise social networks and civil norms as key features of social capital (Coleman, 1998, s98). Bourdieu (1986b, p251) differs, placing an emphasis on individual relationships, interpreting social capital to be; 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the durable possession of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition' (Bourdieu, 1986b, p249).

The empirical measurement of experiential learning, akin with the acquisition of human and social capital, is fraught with difficulties. The links between Putnam's (1996; 2000) social capital work and Bourdieu's (1986a, 1986b and 1990) 'field', 'habitus', 'cultural reproduction' and 'societal inculcation' work, are complementary. Putnam (1995b; 2000) mentions that social capital has the potential to transform into human, economic and other forms of capital. Putnam's (1995b, 2000) synthesis, indicates that social capital can be transformed into employability. Bourdieu (1986b, p250) explains, financial resources can be used to access social capital in all its various guises.

> *'…economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital and that these transformed, disguised forms of economic capital, never entirely reducible to that definition, produce their most specific effects only to the extent that they conceal (not least from their possessor) the fact that economic capital is at their root.'*
>
> (Bourdieu, 1986b, p252)

A brief word about cultural capital, this concept is similar, but separate from social capital. A working definition of cultural capital, is people who have the skill and familiarity to understand the cultural codes and practices of the dominant ideology of the day (Kalmijn and Kraaykamp, 1996, p23). Cultural capital can be developed in a person through a socialisation process, such as the education system e.g. work-based experiential learning. In context, cultural capital is then subsumed into the student's habitus, an individual's nature, attitude and disposition (Lamont and Lareau, 1988, p158). The educational system allows the dominant ideology of the day to "maintain the pre-existing order, that is, the gap between pupils endowed with unequal amounts of cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1998a, p20). Once recognition and valuation has been given, the cultural capital is converted into economic capital through gaining employment. In addition, for the purpose of my study, cultural capital, can enhance or be converted into human capital as well. Cultural capital can be said to be the final product, received by students, after completing their degree (Becker, 1993, p135). The Higher Education system works on the assumption that all students start with the same cultural resources (Shilliam, 2015, p32). This belief is reinforced by the recent introduction of tuition fees. Currently it costs all students the same amount, to attend the same university course, regardless of background or social class. The state recognises that students with cultural capital, which is closely aligned to the dominant ideology of the day, receive social status more often than others (BIS, 2011b, p6). Similarly, due to education and employability disparities, people with human and economic capital deficiencies cannot utilise what social capital they have, as well as people preferred by the dominant ideology of the day (Crozier and Reay, 2011, p146; Edgerton and Roberts, 2014, p196). The habitus, the disposition of the person at the outset transforming human, social and cultural capital is crucial, if this person, in this

study students is to succeed (Elmes, 2015, p12). Especially important in the present day, when the marketisation and the 'commodification of higher education' is in full swing (European Students' Union, BM70 – Bergen, 2016, p3).

Holdsworth and Quinn' (2012, p392) 'reproductive or deconstructive volunteering' work, offers an alternative approach to social capital, that has theoretical relevance to my study. Students whilst on placement acquire human and social capital, through various interactions with social actors alongside internalised values and beliefs debates, to reconcile the opinions they form. Reconciliation is enacted by subconsciously conforming to the norms of others, reproducing their collective habitus. However this is not always a non-cognitive process, a student might have their own nature, attitude or disposition, habitus, which is at variance with the dominant ideology.

This can have two main affects. Bourdieu (1990, [orig. 1980], p136) argues individuals from the lower classes, won't be able to make best use of economic opportunities, due to class boundaries. The other affect is quite different. Holdsworth and Quinn (2012, p393) effectively argue that variance with the dominant culture, manifests itself in what can be described as a 'deconstructive' work based incident. Here, a student observes some work based practice and chooses to challenge this normalised behaviour, possibly placing themselves at odds with their placement organisation.

The opposite to 'deconstructive', according to Holdsworth and Quinn (2012, p393) would be a 'reproductive' experience. Here, the student sees the same practice, but this time supports the behaviour, thus reinforcing the effect of the practice. In essence, the student has adopted the ethos of the organisation, their principles and beliefs. The

student has adopted, either consciously or subconsciously, the same value system and disposition of the organisation, which have now become the student's habitus. The issue of historical background and experiences interacts in another way in habitus. Bourdieu (1990, [1980], p55) argues that due to habitus, people will only aspire outcomes, which they believe to be feasible and within reach. People' past experiences influence how they assess the likelihood of achieving a desired outcome within, what they would perceive as a reasonable timeframe.

The concepts of Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012) '"Reproductive" or "Deconstructive" Volunteering?' study are utilised extensively throughout this thesis. This research provides a substantive theoretical framework of what issues to consider when analysing the effects of experiential learning upon students. To briefly recap, Holdsworth and Quinn (2012) argue a 'reproductive' student volunteering experience, is when the student fails to appropriately challenge socially unjust work practice. A 'deconstructive' workplace incident, is when a student observes inequality and is enabled to understand power structures and appropriately challenge the inequality.

> *"Reproductive volunteering characterises that do not challenge but rather reproduce and re-enforce existing power relations and inequalities. Deconstructive volunteering allows for volunteering that reveal power structures and inequalities and thus potentially create the conditions of their own critique, thus making their innocent performance impossible."*

> (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012, p393)

Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012) 'Reproductive' and 'Deconstructive' student volunteering concepts apply to my study in a number of ways. Research participants' interview discourse was analysed for any indication that students perceived consciously or subconsciously, they had observed social inequality during placements. My research also considered, were students enabled to identify structural power relationships and social injustice, during their experiential learning placements. My study measures all incidents of 'reproductive' or 'deconstructive' working, as indicated mainly by the student sub-cohort in my research cohort. There is a significant difference between the two types of work incident, far more 'reproductive' experiences are recorded than 'deconstructive' incidents. My research identifies two significant causal factors why this proved to be the case, employability and power relationships.

Employability was by far the biggest reason few students recalled a 'deconstructive' work incident experience. Some of the students interviewed were acutely aware they did not feel able to raise concerns of work practices, due to the need to find employment after graduation. Students were concerned if they were critical of their placement organisation, they may not be allowed to finish their work based experiential learning. This is a hugely significant issue, especially for the social work students. For the social work student sub-cohort strand attending and passing both work placements is mandatory in order to obtain the academic social work qualification. Similarly students were put off raising policy and practice issues, for fear of possibly experiencing difficulties in obtaining a suitable work placement reference afterwards. On this issue employability clearly had a doxa (societally embedded opinion) effect on my research. All the higher education stakeholders in the cohort indicated, the student becoming employable was the main reason for participating on a work placement.

Power relationships during student placements was the second biggest factor. Students indicated in their interviews that as student social workers or GEES officers, they were far too junior to be able to risk not complying with expected work practices. Students indicated power relationships in the workplace prevented even appropriate challenges, which did not fit in with norms and values. Students 'reproduced' existing work practices instead, even when through HE learning they were consciously aware of various forms of social inequality (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012, p392).

There are some limitations in how I applied the 'reproductive' and 'deconstructive' concepts of Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012) study in my research. In particular I cannot demonstrate the outcomes of work placements as my research is cross-sectional. Indeed this is a criticism of their work on student volunteering, which makes claims about students' outcomes but cannot substantiate this with a detailed causal analysis. Using a biographical approach (which I describe in more detail in the methodology chapter) does encourage students to reflect on their experiences, but students are looking back with the value of hindsight and hence their view on their work placement experience will be influenced by subsequent experiences. This is a consistent problem in applying theories of change, it is difficult to identify a clear causal pathway. A second limitation is that the distinction between reproductive and deconstructive outcomes may be less relevant for work placements compared to volunteering. The point about the latter is that it is meant to bring about social change, hence deconstructive outcomes might be regarded as desirable. In contrast the reproductive outcome of work placements, essentially fitting in, can be a beneficial outcome of placements.

My epistemological approach to my educational research on the socio-educational benefits of experiential learning applied to higher education students, on work-based placements with employers, is a multi-headed being. I argue that knowledge of how students articulate their views of their student placement learning, is best obtained by some form of interpretation of their language and discourse. Such an approach would enable students to be encouraged to think about, what they have learnt on student placement. Social constructionism acts to give such capabilities.

The research design should create experiences that engage students in actively making sense of concepts for themselves. In my opinion, an intrinsic part of my study is to accurately establish student perceptions about themselves. Do students who participated in experiential learning, on a student placement, feel they have changed in anyway? I argue that issues which needed to be explored included: Does the student feel they have become more socially and politically aware. Does the student feel they have acquired human and social capital e.g. empathetic or listening skills?

Epistemologically, I argue that qualitative research of this nature, studying this subject should be approached from a social constructionist philosophical viewpoint. To my mind, this is the most certain way to pay due regard to any social, economic, political, (this list is not exhaustive) potential causal factors, which might be present. Student's views might be shaped by any number of socio-demographic factors, which differ in nature and intensity over time. Social constructionism enables people's perception of social interaction to be interpreted, in the widest set of social circumstances, which themselves are constantly shifting for various reasons (Endres and Weibler, 2016, p4).

Ontologically, I argue the epistemic community needs to know, what affect does participating on a student placement, have on our students. This fits with the ontological consideration criteria of: What is the nature of the knowledge being discussed? Is the knowledge of sufficient significant potential, that it should be further explored? ([7]EC, Healthy Ageing Speech, Vytenis Andriukaitis, 17 March 2016).

There are other stakeholders to consider. Epistemologically, those stakeholders should be identified by considering the numerous causal factors previously mentioned. There also needs to be an appraisal of the social remit of student placements. Paradoxically, this links in to a key question discussed in an earlier chapter: What are Universities For? The epistemic community need to be informed who the HE stakeholders are and what their views are, regarding the use of experiential learning. Society needs to know of any ontological assumptions the researcher considered, during identification of causal factors that might be influencing HE stakeholder's views. We need to know in what ways does experiential learning on work based student placements, affect UK, European and international students (Attrill et al, 2016, p3).

[7] Vytenis Andriukaitis, is European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, which has a clear remit to promote ageing populations health research. This is a transcript of his speech at the SHARE ERIC (Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe – European Research Infrastructure Consortium) Conference, 17 March 2016.

4.13 Conclusion

This theoretical framework chapter has highlighted the importance of the main issues which affect researcher neutrality. My epistemological position, is that what I believe, what I consider to be knowledge, is affected by my pre-existing lived experiences. My ontological position is that reality, validity, truth of someone's life, is decided by how that person themselves perceive their relationships, their situation to be at that time (Seamon and Gill, 2016, p117).

My position as a social constructionist, a research approach contested, clearly affected my choice of research methodological design. I recognise that my belief that how people perceive their social activity, the relationships around them might not be constructed from a person's past experiences. As a social constructionist I kept this possibility in mind, whilst I conducted my PhD study. Being consciously aware of this possibility, helped me maintain a functioning level of researcher neutrality.

This chapter has informed us that epistemology in educational research can be split four ways, constructionism, positivism, interpretivism or hermeuneutics and critical theory. There are other methodological orientations which could also be considered, but generically most approaches belong in one of the aforementioned four subtypes. Discussion of critical discourse analysis, has underlined the importance of language in educational research and societal power structures, where people work and live. Discussion on the validity of interview only research informed us, the most likely way to discover HE stakeholder's perceptions of experiential learning is by interviews.

Constructionism and interpretivism have significant overlap, especially when often a social constructionism researcher needs to interpret the words and actions of others. Verstehen could be used to research the effect of experiential learning on students. Verstehen has elements of both the interpretivist and constructionist approaches. Verstehen can be useful in educational research, to establish an understanding of how a person perceives themselves in the world and the social relations around them. There would be clear benefits in conducting educational research using transactional constructivism, where the student has developed an affinity to their placement. A comparative study with students who have no inclination towards any particular profession or work base, alongside students who do have a close association. The operational mechanics of transactional constructivism, provides some underpinning knowledge of Bourdieusian concepts. Bourdieu's 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977b, p72) and 'field' (Bourdieu, 1991, p14), are applicable in the research of student placements.

Students both interact with and are often part of Bourdieu's 'habitus' and 'field', whilst on work placement. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990, p9) 'cultural reproduction' also takes place, transforming the student, in the 'habitus' and 'field', during experiential learning on work placement. Adkins (2004, p9) is critical of Bourdieu's 'cultural reproduction' theory and the concepts of 'habitus' and 'field'. Adkins (2004, p4) effectively argues, most Bourdieusian concepts are flawed for being too deterministic and for ignoring the issue of social change. Adkins (2004, p6) does support the view gender is part of a social field, also that there are numerous points of conjunction between Bourdieusian and feminist theories (Adkins, 2004, p5).

Transforming the student, features in Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012) "Reproductive" and "Deconstructive" Student Volunteering work. The study recognises, it is important 'to avoid normalising students to social inequalities and reinforcing social injustices' (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012, p390). In keeping with Dewey's (2007, [1910], p74) work, Holdsworth and Quinn (2012, p390 and p402) support critical reflection. Critical reflection is seen to be a key educational tool, with which students can understand unequal social relationships. Critical reflection has '…the ability to unearth, examine and change very deeply held or fundamental assumptions' (Mezirow, 1991, cited in Fook, 2015, p441). The regular focus on social justice, illustrates the critical theory aspects of Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012, p386) Student Volunteering study.

The research methodology chapter which follows, details the process by which this study was conducted, to analyse how experiential learning affects students. As the researcher I was fully aware of my existing epistemological and ontological beliefs at the start of the research study. A full explanation is provided of what steps were taken to fully capture people's views about themselves, other social structures and relationships they observed (Corbin and Strauss, 2015, p3; Silverman, 2014, p9).

I was aware that different research participants might use different language in communicating their views. Wherton et al (2012) 'cultural probe methodology' study, would have reduced the possibility of missing some vital data. The use of cultural probe tools e.g. a life map, diary or photo album, would enable research participants to narrate their views on social activity (Wherton et al, 2012, p2).

I am aware that in trying to establish other people's views regarding experiential learning on student placements, some people might not understand this phrase. I am also aware there is the possibility that what issues I have become informed of due to my extensive literature review, might not feature in research participant's responses. The research methodology I design must be able to cater for all these possibilities. An important factor I need to address is being aware I need to allow people to express their views in their way, in their own time, then accurately interpret what they have said. Open interview techniques are clearly required, which allows people to feel at ease, so they are encouraged to say how they feel about student placements. The manner in which I conducted this research, was influenced by my epistemological position and 'standpoint' (Homfray, 2008, para2.1) as a student placement 'insider'.

Chapter 5 - Research Methodology

5.1 Positionality statement

Before becoming a PhD candidate I was formerly a BA Honours student on a four year sandwich course. After two years at university, I went on a one year paid student placement, receiving work based experiential learning with an employer. As such I have 'insider' status in relation to my PhD research study, looking at various aspects of experiential learning (Ganga and Scott, May 2006, para3; Merriam et al, 2001, p405 and p406). I do not profess to say I arrived at this research with no prior knowledge of experiential learning during student placements in higher education. As a former placement student, I can apply 'strong objectivity', to socially situated knowledge from a marginalised person perspective (Harding, 1993, p69). I need to counter the danger of "…the non-neutrality of the researcher and the power relationships involved in the research process" (Madge et al, 2013, [orig. 1997], p88). I appreciate that the issue of 'standpoint' (Homfray, 2008) was "important in terms of understanding how I constructed and appreciated the ethos of 'insider research'" (Homfray, 2008, para2.1).

My positionality in part incorporates that of 'situated learning' as described by Lave and Wenger (1991, p42). Here learning takes place in a 'situation of coparticipation' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p14). I also agree with Lave and Wenger's (1991, p18) concept of 'legitimate peripheral participation'. With legitimate peripheral participation, learners, or for my positionality researchers, design their own structure, a framework of relationships, which they then observe. Positionality provides the self-reflection necessary to explain the perspectives brought to my PhD research study, or the social structures used to frame my inquiry (Drake with Heath, 2011, p19).

Table 2 -

Label and description of research instruments used, listed in the appendices

Appendix Label	Description of Appendix Item
BDSP-ERP	Copy of the ERP ethical research approval letter
BDSP-INTLIST	Interview Number, Participant Profile, Pseudonym Used and Pen Portrait Details
BDSP-RGO	Copy of Generic Letter to RGOs
BDSP-UEAC	A University Ethical Approval Confirmation
BDSP-PD1	Letter of Invitation to Programme Directors
BDSP-PD2	Information Sheet to Programme Directors
BDSP-SIS	Copy of Student Information Sheet
BDSP-STUCONFORM1	Student Consent Form; Student Consent Form - Anonymised quotes can be used
BDSP-INTSCHEDULES	Semi-structured interview schedules for all four sub-cohorts
BDSP-SIS2	Later additions to a Student Interview Schedule
BDSP-SQUIN	The SQUIN Used in all the BNIM Interviews
BDSP-NVivo10	NVivo10 Coding Notes - Excerpts from labelled interviews, one each with members from all four research sub-cohorts

5.2 Overview

In consultation with my PhD Supervisors, it was decided to study the effect of experiential learning on students enrolled at all types of university in England. The rationale being, this would identify any differences that may exist between different types of university on how experiential learning effects their students. I conducted research with three post-1992 universities which were formerly a polytechnic; two

ancient universities; a civic university; a post-1992 university which was not formerly a polytechnic; a pre-1992 campus university. The selection of different types of universities is not intended to be representative of all university experiences in England. Rather the diversity of these different universities is intended to provide a perspective of the different types of work placements offered in the HE sector. For practical reasons there are limitations on the number of HEIs involved in the research. For each HEI I sought to interview representatives from each of the four stakeholders and replicating these interviews over a larger sample size would not have been feasible within the time and resource constraint of this PhD research.

This research also focused on two subject areas and social work and GEES disciplines were chosen for empirical research. Initially we were going to analyse the effect of experiential learning on student teachers. However mainly due to the volatile nature of UK education policy at the time (September 2012), we decided against using the teaching profession as a critical lens. The rationale for these two subject areas was to compare a professional-based subject for which a work placement is mandatory (Social work) with a non-vocational subject for which a placement was optional. GEES subjects have though embraced work placements in recent years as a way of promoting student employability. Moreover specific disciplines within the GEES profession, do have a mandatory requirement to attend a student work placement. These GEES disciplines include planning, environmental health and public health, areas which are all GEES specialist subjects.

At the outset of this PhD study, I intended to use grounded theory method, mixed-methods research, triangulation and secondary data sets in the research methodology

(Fielding, 2010, p134; Gordon, 2014, p6). I intended to organise user focus groups and case studies for each of the four research sub-cohorts; academics, students, employers and UCAs, at each different type of university (n=5) (Hammersley, 2012b, p398). When I first drafted the Request for Ethical Approval application, it was soon apparent that there may be difficulty in being granted ethical approval for the intended design (Fielding, 2004, p99). There were also operational considerations, as a single researcher we agreed there simply would not be enough time to use all the research methods envisaged. The original research methodology was ambitious to begin with, the window of opportunity was closing all the time, due to a moderate delay in finally obtaining ethical approval. The research could have adopted more ethnographic research methodologies such as observing students on work placements. However this would have raised particular ethical issues, particularly for the Social Work students and I decided not to develop a more ethnographic approach for this particular research project. The advantage of using ethnographic methods is that it could have provided more direct evidence as to the power relations inherent in work placements that this research sought to interrogate. One way of developing this research in the future could be through the use of ethnographic methods to research work placements in situ. This though would require agreement from three main stakeholders: students, employers and academics and would require more time in negotiating access than was available to me for this PhD project.

Pragmatically by the time any underlying issues had been resolved, the only way the study could be completed was to restrict the research design to interviews only. This is not too big a limitation. From the original PhD scholarship application, it was clearly intended to establish the perceptions of Higher Education stakeholders, regarding how

experiential learning affects students. To summarise, the research needed to establish amongst others – How do students articulate their views of work based learning. How effective were UCAs in brokering experiential learning student work placements? How well do HEIs integrate work based learning into undergraduate degree programmes? To what extent do placement providers the employers, use student experiential learning in work placements in the recruitment process? What are the causal factors influencing each HE stakeholder's views on student placements? How effective is partnership engagement between HEIs and employers? Should students and UCAs also be involved in such partnership work? Research is required to accurately interpret people's perceptions of experiential learning, which is best established during interviews. There are studies which are critical of research based on an over reliance upon interview data, due to questions of reliability and validity e.g. Hawe and Browne (2012, p281). There are an equal number of studies which are supportive of research based entirely on interviews e.g. Crozier and Reay, 2011, p145; Eden, 2014, p266.

This chapter will describe the qualitative research methodology that was used in conducting this study. Table 2 (p151) details the research instruments used, the items listed are present in the appendices. A qualitative research model is the most appropriate to explore this project. Silverman (2014) argues, qualitative data produces a greater understanding of why individuals have acted in certain manner. "On the other hand if you are concerned with people's life histories or everyday behaviour, than qualitative methods maybe favoured" (Silverman, 2014, p9). Qualitative data collected using various techniques such as interviews are ideal, as they allow people to express their lived experiences as perceived by the individual. Interviews enable researchers to use complex interviewing strategies that produce rich contextual data,

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regarding an individual perception of their social interaction. Kvale (1996) provides a working definition of the qualitative research interview. "An interview whose purpose is to obtain description of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 1996, p5 and p6).

The purpose of this study is to find out what affects work based experiential learning experiences, in the form of student placements, have on students. Interviews are a very useful tool in providing the opportunity to receive people's conscious and sub-conscious thoughts, feelings and emotions of lived experiences (Corbin and Strauss, 2015, p7). This makes interviews an appropriate choice in qualitative research to explore the discourse and meanings people attached to any work based experiential learning they have experienced. Thus interviews provide a source of rich qualitative data from any individual, commenting on student placements. With interview data, a rich contextual bricolage is produced, much more than would be possible through some form of survey, with the researcher not present (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p4). Ritchie et al (2013, p8) argue that the greater interaction between the researcher and researched participants, can influence qualitative data in numerous ways, leading to biased data. There are clear benefits in using prompts and probes during semi-structured interviews to try to encourage more responses from research participants (See Appendix item 9). This is because interview data can be descriptive and is subject to interpretation by the researcher, after the interview has completed and participant is not present. Bias can happen accidentally, due to the researcher's epistemological and ontological position of what they believe to be true, what they believe to be knowledge, at the outset of the research inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p12).

These risks are important in any social science research study, of people interacting with other social actors. However, in this particular study, conducting interviews was the only way to obtain people's views regarding the effect and educational value of experiential learning on students and other stakeholders. It is for this reason, coupled with the opportunity to obtain rich, contextual data from more complex questioning, which demonstrates why qualitative research is the most appropriate method for this study (Corbin and Strauss, 2015, p3; Creswell, 2014, p4; Silverman, 2014, p7).

My research journey formally began when I submitted my multi-drafted Request for Ethical Approval application with Keele University Research Ethics Committee (REC). My ethical approval letter, along with all the other research instruments I used to conduct my research, are attached in the appendices labelled BDSP (Ben Duke Student Placements). Each individual research instrument referred to, has been given a number for identification purposes. A copy of my ethical research approval letter (appendix item 1) is present in the appendices, it is labelled BDSP-ERP.

5.3 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this research was to consider, what effect if any, does a student placement, either in voluntary or paid work, with employers from the statutory agencies e.g. a local authority social work department, or with a 'Third Sector' organisation e.g. a voluntary or community group, have on a student's learning, employability, personal and professional development. The research intends to analyse and identify any effects experiential learning pedagogy has on students. The research was also designed to consider, would Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012, p392) "Reproductive" and "Deconstructive" concepts be replicated by students participating on unpaid work

placements. The research compared the learning outcomes of students in social work and geography/geology, environmental and earth sciences (GEES) disciplines, to explore if and how they differ. The choice of these two disciplines ensured compliance with the HEA funded studentship. The following four research questions, are designed to explore various aspects of experiential learning student work based placements.

- What use is made of student's work experience in academic programs?
- Are there different learning benefits in attending a 'Third Sector' placement compared to a Statutory Agency; are these benefits recognised and accepted by students, academics and employers?
- How do students articulate their learning and employability, acquired through work-based experience?
- How do the providers of student placements the employers, evaluate the experiential work-based learning of students in their organisations?

5.4 Method

There are 4 separate sub-cohorts in my study, these are – Academics, University Career Advisers (UCAs), Employers and Students. The research participants are associated with the two main branches of my study, the Social Work and GEES disciplines. The research methodology took place at 5 different types of universities, to reflect the differing history and ethos of each individual English academic institution. These were the core settings and relevant peripheral data sources for the student, academic and university career adviser sub-cohorts. I conducted research with three post-1992 universities, which were formerly a polytechnic (3-Alpha); two ancient universities (2); a civic university (1); a post-1992 university, not formerly a polytechnic

(1-Beta); a pre-1992 campus university (1). The academic and UCAs sub-cohorts were interviewed at their university. All the employer sub-cohort were interviewed on their own premises. All the student sub-cohort interviews, were conducted either at their work, university, home, or in one instance, at a location they were familiar with e.g. a café. The research method was deliberately designed to obtain different stakeholders views of the same social activity, experiential learning's effect upon students. Bergold and Thomas (2012) effectively argue, different agencies have differing remits, which will affect their interview responses. In short, stakeholders can have entirely contrasting views of the same sociological phenomena.

"In this case, the perspectives of the various partners and their differences of opinion are important for the process of discovery; objectivity and neutrality must be replaced by reflective subjectivity."

(Bergold and Thomas, 2012, p11 para39)

5.4.1 Number of interviews – each university, cohort and discipline

5.4.2 Sample size and characteristics

The full profile of each research interview is present in the appendix as item 2, labelled BDSP-INTLIST. Participant names have been withheld to maintain their confidentiality. Appendix item 2 is a summary table, an anonymised list, which acts as pen portraits of all my research participants. The 10 digit number in bold is the unique digital code, the electronic voice recorder assigned to each individual interview. Fig 5.4.3 details the pseudonym which has been assigned to each interview (n=47).

Fig 5.4.3 Table 3 - Interview number and pseudonym assigned

Interview 1	**Interview 2**	**Interview 3**	**Interview 4**	**Interview 5**
Abigail	Jenny	Polly	Helen	Karen
Interview 6	**Interview 7**	**Interview 8**	**Interview 9**	**Interview 10**
Ian	Warren	Glenda	Yvonne	Gerald
Interview 11	**Interview 12**	**Interview 13**	**Interview 14**	**Interview 15**
Stella	Sheila	Rhona	Julie	Harriet
Interview 16	**Interview 17**	**Interview 18**	**Interview 19**	**Interview 20**
Florence	Leanne	Chris	Eleanor	Trevor
Interview 21	**Interview 22**	**Interview 23**	**Interview 24**	**Interview 25**
Leslie	Clive	Nancy	Hugh	Andy
Interview 26	**Interview 27**	**Interview 28**	**Interview 29**	**Interview 30**
Carol	Heidi	Heidi	Barry	Mary
Interview 31	**Interview 32**	**Interview 33**	**Interview 34**	**Interview 35**
Noel	Megan	Wendy	Megan	Emily
Interview 36	**Interview 37**	**Interview 38**	**Interview 39**	**Interview 40**
Roisin	Roisin	Freda	Brian	Bryony
Interview 41	**Interview 42**	**Interview 43**	**Interview 44**	**Interview 45**
Malcolm	Karl	Bryony	Gordon	Karl
Interview 46	**Interview 47**			
Amy	Gordon			

5.4.4 Academics

I conducted 15 Academic interviews in total, these consisted of 8 Social Work and 7 GEES interviews (n=15). (See 5.4.4.1 Table 4). All 5 types of universities identified in my study were represented. The 15 academics interviews are divided as follows: Ancient: 1 Social Work and 1 GEES; Civic or redbrick university: 2 Social Work and 2 GEES; Post-1992 university, not formerly a polytechnic (1 – beta): 2 Social Work and 1 GEES; A Post-1992 university, formerly a polytechnic (3 –alpha): 1 Social Work and no GEES; Pre-1992 campus university: 2 Social Work and 3 GEES.

5.4.4.1 Table 4 – Academics Interviews (n=15)

University Type → Sub-Cohort Type: Academics ↓	Ancient	Civic or Redbrick	Post-1992 (1 - Beta)	Post-1992 (3 - Alpha)	Pre-1992 Campus
Social Work	1	2	2	1	2
GEES	1	2	1	-	3

5.4.5 University Careers Advisers (UCAs)

I conducted 6 UACs interviews in total with all of the 5 types of universities, except for ancient (n=6). (See 5.4.5.1 Table 5). The 6 UCAs interviews are divided as follows: Ancient: None; 2 at a civic or redbrick university; 1 at a post-1992 university, formerly a polytechnic (1-Beta); 1 at a post-1992 university, not formerly a polytechnic (3-Alpha); 2 at a pre-1992 campus university.

5.4.5.1 Table 5 - University Career Advisers (UCAs) Interviews (n=6)

University Type → Sub-Cohort Type: UCAs ↓	Ancient	Civic or Redbrick	Post-1992 (1 - Beta)	Post-1992 (3 - Alpha)	Pre-1992 Campus
	-	2	1	1	2

5.4.6 Employers

I conducted 12 interviews with employers, who are student placement providers for social work or GEES course students (n=12). (See 5.4.6.1 Table 6). The 12 employer interviews were divided as follows. There were 5 social work employers. 4 were with 'Third Sector' organisations, 1 social work employer was a statutory agency. There were also 5 GEES employers. 3 were with a statutory agency, 1 with a 'Third Sector' organisation and 1 was with a private sector organisation. There were 2 employer interviews with a *student volunteering agency (SVA), which accepted both social work and GEES students. ^^One SVA interview has been apportioned to each discipline.

5.4.6.1 Table 6 - Employer Interviews (n=12)

Employer Type → Sub-Cohort Type: Employers ↓	Statutory	'Third Sector'	Private Sector	*Student Volunteering Agency
Social Work	1	4	-	^^1
GEES	3	1	1	^^1

5.4.7 Students

I conducted 14 Student interviews in total. These were from 8 student research participants (n=8). There were 3 former and 2 current social work students. There were 3 former GEES students. 6 students participated in 2 BNIM interviews, total 12. 1 social work and one GEES student participated in 1 BNIM interview only^, total 2. This is represented in the student interview figures for both social work (9) and GEES sub-cohorts (5) being one short. (See 5.4.8 Table 7 (9^) and 5.4.9 Table 8 (5^)). 14 student interviews took place from the 8 student research participants. The student cohort (n=8) represented all of the 5 types of universities, except for ancient. The 8 students are divided as follows: 1 social work students at a redbrick or civic university, no GEES students. 1 social work student at a pre-1992 campus university, no GEES students. 3 social work students at a post-1992 university, formerly a polytechnic, no GEES students. 3 GEES students at a post-1992 university, not formerly a polytechnic, no social work students. It was not possible to predict how many students from each type of university would choose to participate.

Tables 5.4.8 Table 7 and 5.4.9 Table 8, depict the number of interviews conducted by research participants in each social work and GEES sub-cohort, for each type of university. The 12 employer interviews do not appear in tables 5.4.8 and 5.4.9. The employer's interviews were concerning their perception of the effect of experiential

learning on students from either the social work or GEES disciplines. Employer interviews were not analysed as regards a particular university type in this study.

5.4.8 Table 7 - Social work interviews

University Type → Cohort Type ↓	Ancient	Post-1992 (3 - Alpha)	Civic or Redbrick	Post-1992 (1 - Beta)	Pre-1992 Campus
Academic (8)	1	1	2	2	2
UCAs* (6)	-	1	2	1	2
Students (9^)	-	3	1	-	1

5.4.9 Table 8 - GEES course interviews

University Type → Cohort Type ↓	Ancient	Post-1992 (3 - Alpha)	Civic or Redbrick	Post-1992 (1 - Beta)	Pre-1992 Campus
Academic (7)	1	-	2	1	3
UCAs* (6)	-	1	2	1	2
Students (5^)	-	-	-	3	-

* Please note, the University Career Advisers, did not advocate for either the social work or the GEES disciplines exclusively in my study. For this reason the UCAs details are identical, being recorded twice in both tables. There are 35 interviews, plus 12 employer interviews not tabled, making a total of 47 interviews. The 6 UCAs interviews indicated have been double counted, appearing in both disciplines.

5.5 Recruitment and Selection of Research Participants

Once Keele University ethical approval had been granted, I logged onto the internet and accessed the official websites of each University of interest, to identify the Research Governance Ethical Approval Officer (RGO) for each institution (University of Keele, 2017a, p4). On two occasions this information was not available on the University website, so I made a telephone call to the main switchboard, asking for the Research Governance Officer. I then sent a letter to the contact name obtained (Appendix item 3 - BDSP-RGO), introducing myself and asked for advice. This letter to the Research Governance Officer (RGO) of each institution I engaged with asked; is confirmation of Keele Ethical Approval to carry out my research, by contacting staff

and students at your university acceptable? Or do I need to go through your own University's Ethical Approval policy, procedure and practice first, before being allowed to proceed with my project?

Of the twelve universities I contacted, two universities compelled me to put in a Request for Ethical Approval type application. I conducted my research with 8 different universities. Once I had confirmation of a university's ethical approval and permission to approach their staff and students, I could progress. (See Appendix item 4 - University Ethical Approval Confirmations, labelled BDSP-UEAC). The next stage in my research was to identify the Director of the relevant academic Programme/s in my study, Social Work and GEES courses. I sent each Programme Director or similar, a Letter of Invitation inviting themselves and their Department/School to take part in the research and an Information Sheet. (A specimen example of both these documents are items 5 and 6 in the appendices, marked BDSP-PD1 and BDSP-PD2 respectively).

Programme Directors had a gatekeeping role in my study. I made sure I was polite and met expected professional standards when approaching any potential participant. I applied knowledge from McAreavey and Das (2013, p113) study on gatekeepers.

> 'Gatekeepers control access to a particular community or institution and as a result researchers are reliant on their input. It is generally recognised that gatekeepers play an important role in social research… They have the power to deny access to the researcher and they may also influence whether people opt in and out of a process.'

(McAreavey and Das, 2013, p117)

Programme Directors were asked if they would agree to take part in an interview. During their interview, Programme Directors were also asked if they would be willing to assist in recruiting undergraduate students, who have completed a student placement, in either social work, or a GEES course, as relevant to their position. Similarly, Programme Directors were asked during interview, would they be happy to arrange to have send a Student Letter of Invitation by email to all relevant undergraduate students. Programme Directors were also informed that students will be invited to take part in an interview to talk about their experiences of placements. Similarly Programme Directors were also informed that their academic staff and University Career Advisers (UCAs) or their equivalent, would also be invited to interview. I also asked any of the academics I interviewed, could they put me in touch with any employers who are student placement providers for interview purposes. A few of the academic sub-cohort members chose to participate in this manner. All 12 employers and 8 students in my research study were recruited by this method.

Typically a number of interviews took place lasting for between 1 and 2 hours. The appropriate consent forms were signed by student research participants who agreed to participate in one-to-one interviews, on each and every occasion where new interview data was taken. Once again this was to confirm that informed consent was still in place, throughout the course of the research data being collected. Student research participants were required to tick each statement, to confirm their informed consent as well as providing a signature. The Student consent forms for participation and for anonymised quotes are sent to both GEES and social work students as part of the Student Information Sheet (Appendix item 7: BDSP-SIS). The actual Student

Consent Form is present as Appendix item 8 labelled BDSP-STUCONFORM1. Appendix items 7 and 8 were sent together to students.

5.6 Problems recruiting academics, UCAs, employers and students

I described earlier in the 'Recruitment and Selection' section of this research methods chapter, how generically, I approached this research. In this section I'm going to discuss the problems I encountered in recruiting the university academics, UCAs, employers and students, the four cohorts in my study, after I had been given the necessary ethical approval. I felt the best way to be able to contact members from all four cohorts, was to contact the University cohort first. There was an uneven level of participation between the five types of university involved in my research. I contacted approximately twenty universities in total. I conducted research with eight different universities (n=8). Some universities I approached did not respond, even when I emailed a letter of introduction to their Research Governance Officer or Department (Appendix item 3 - BDSP-RGO). Some HEIs decided my research proposal, complete with written confirmation I had University of Keele Ethical Approval, had to go through their own internal ethical approval procedures first. Other universities were very slow to respond to initial requests for contact. Eventually when such HEIs did respond, they only gave permission to put an advertisement asking for research participants on their university blackboard. This was passive participation which bore no fruit at all, as regards generating research participants from the social work and GEES disciplines.

At the end of the research interviews I had with the academics, I made a request. I asked the academic cohort members, would they contact employers who had taken their students on placement, to introduce them to my study, and also any students. All

of the universities said yes. I explained, better for them to speak to people first, then for people to choose to be contacted, as opposed to receiving an initial cold call. My research having now already been given ethical approval by the academic's concerned home institution. In one sense this was collaborative research (Qadir, 2009, p236). Although only a sole researcher conducted the research and wrote up the study, the author was heavily reliant on referrals from the university sub-cohort.

Two other universities who didn't provide any research participants in the end, were a lot more proactive. Two network contacts I had made from earlier academia, after ethical approval clarification, contacted qualifying groups of students on my behalf at their university. Their activity did not lead to any research interviews, but these two HEIs academics were very supportive of myself and my research proposal.

Only one university supplied any GEES employers or student contacts. This was from the one post-1992 university, not formerly a polytechnic. This academic recognised the value of student placements and was extremely supportive of my research. This university academic also supplied all the GEES employers, who agreed to be interviewed in my research. This has also been a problem in recruiting research participants. All the GEES student placement employers and students in my study, have come from this one academic sub-cohort source. All three GEES students interviewed in my study had graduated in 2014, and were in work on date of interview. My research study has been affected by only being able to contact three sub-cohorts after pre-contact with the university. The university was the over-arching sub-cohort, due to their existing formal links with the other three sub-cohorts. This has led to

unavoidable sample and gate keeper bias (Bonevski et al, 2014, p4; Sydor, 2013, p33; see also Bergold and Thomas, 2012, p8 para24).

The University of Derby and my home institution the University of Keele, were by far the most productive in providing social work and GEES higher education stakeholders. For the social work discipline, at the University of Keele I had the great pleasure to liaise with a highly motivated member of academic staff. This member of staff volunteered to contact all the social work employers who are experiential learning placement providers with Keele and introduce my research proposal. Subsequently the bulk of my social work research originated from the University of Keele. The support from the GEES academics at the University of Keele although valuable, was much less productive with fewer GEES courses employers and no GEES students.

The University of Derby were very helpful, especially on the GEES strand of my research. Once again, I benefitted from liaison with a highly motivated member of staff, this time being a GEES academic at the University of Derby. This GEES academic introduced my research proposal to employers, who were University of Derby, GEES student work placement providers. This academic member of staff also contacted other GEES academics at the University of Derby introducing my research proposal. All three GEES students who participated in my research came from this source, as did a number of the GEES employer interviews. This University of Derby GEES academic also contacted the institutions' School of Social Work to introduce my study.

Engagement with the two ancient universities I approached was limited. They both supplied one academic interview each, from the 47 interviews I conducted. Neither

offered social work courses. Both ancient universities provided social policy course modules, which could be used towards a social work qualification. I conducted an interview with an academic who taught on the Sociology course, and with an academic who taught on a GEES course. Both the ancient universities offered GEES courses. As with all the universities, GEES course student placements were not mandatory and for the most part, had to be arranged by the student themselves. The effect this issue had on my research study, is discussed in more detail in later chapters of my thesis. Neither of the ancient university academics gave me any employers who take their students on placement, or students who have been on work experience contact details. I approached the University Careers Advisers (UCAs) or institution equivalent for each ancient university, both declined to arrange to give me an interview. So apart from the two senior academics I interviewed, there is no other contribution from the ancient universities in my research study.

The varying levels of participation between some universities compared to others had an impact on my research findings. As detailed earlier all three GEES students were from the one HEI. Access to most of the social work students, was via a 'Third Sector' organisation who had been initially referred by the University of Keele. This 'Third Sector' organisation, always takes a large number of year one and year two social work students from the district where it delivers its service. This 'Third Sector' organisation also provided two social work employer interviews as well.

The pre-1992 campus university was very supportive on the social work side of my research. The pre-1992 contributed two academic interviews and provided 6 social work employers who take their social work students on placements contact details.

After a pre-1992 campus university academic had contacted these employers on my behalf, I was able to arrange 4 research interviews. They also assisted as best as possible in providing social work students, who had been on placement for research. One social work student contacted me for interview, after she had been approached by one of the academic research participants. The pre-1992 campus university also provided 3 GEES course academics interviews. Disappointingly, there were no GEES employers or student contact details, supplied by the pre-1992 campus university.

Recruiting social work students who had been on a student placement was the most problematical part of the research. The academics I interviewed were quite supportive of my research. They said they had spoken to social work students and passed on my contact details, however only one student interview was obtained by this route. Some academics, at contacted but not participating institutions, told me they had put my details on their university web page and/or had sent an invite email to students. No student or other stakeholder interviews were obtained by such contact. One interview was obtained from a 3 – alpha institution advertisement, which had been emailed. Three social work students were recruited in the most fortuitous circumstances.

A staff member of a 'Third Sector' employer who take social work students on placement, responded to the online advertisement regarding being interviewed. I contacted him to make arrangements. As it transpired, he didn't qualify for the study himself, as he had no former or current contact with a social work course. However he did give me the name of his manager and confirmed, the organisation does take social work students. Subsequently I contacted his manager and arranged to see her. Coincidentally, I had conducted an employer research interview, with another branch

of this organisation in a different part of the country. The organisation in question takes numerous social work students on placement every year. The organisation also employs numerous former social work students, a number of whom had already previously been on placement with the organisation.

After her interview, the employer manager introduced me to most of the social work students currently on placement. The manager also introduced me to current workers, who had recently graduated as social workers in 2014. With the support of this employer sub-cohort manager, I was able to arrange 3 social work student interviews, all from three different institutions. In total, I conducted research interviews with 5 social work students, from 4 different universities, representing 3 different types of university. 3 of those social work students had qualified and were in work on their interview date. Had the pre-1992 university on the social work side, not supplied me with a large social worker employer; Coupled with the accidental contact by a non-qualifying party; In all likelihood, the whole social work sub-cohort, would have consisted of just 2 students. As mentioned earlier it has been a similar picture, for differing reasons for the GEES sub-cohort. Due to how the universities I approached chose to respond, with hardly any students coming through the, ask an academic for a referral route; It would not have been possible to conduct the student interviews, without allowing former students who had recently qualified from social work or a GEES course to participate. Recruiting student participants proved problematical.

Without the contributions from the University of Keele Social Work department and the University of Derby, School of GEES, this research would not have been completed. A substantial number of new lines of inquiry, came as a result of research interviews

from these two primary sources. For example does being a young student or mature student (see Chapman, 2013, p45; million+/NUS, 2012, p19; Yorke, 1998a, p181), influence the effect of experiential learning whilst on work placement? Do students who organised their own work placement, perform better than students who didn't? (Curtis et al, 2010, p32). The latter issue is very important, especially for social work students where attendance on a work placement is mandatory.

HEIs whose students participate in experiential learning need to be aware of any differences perceived by employers, on the effect of work based learning on students. The two new lines of inquiry detailed above, were of more concern to 'Third Sector' employers of social work students than for statutory agencies in my research cohort. This has admission policy implications for the higher education sector as a whole. HEIs need to know what factors are causing any differences. Is it the race, age or gender of the student (Hockings et al, 2008, p191); or is it an issue specific to a particular discipline like the PCF. Are any differences more acute in person-centred disciplines or non-person centred professions? HEIs wanting to maintain their multidisciplinary credentials, would benefit by knowing if experiential learning effects students in entirely different disciplines e.g. arts or engineering, in the same way.

Only one civic, one pre-1992 not formerly a polytechnic and one pre-1992 campus institution feature in this research. Had more of these specific types of university participated, it may have been possible to analyse experiential learning more widely. Interviews from GEES or social work academics could indicate if being enrolled at a specific type of university, influences how experiential learning effects students. The uneven level of participation of universities have made it difficult to address this issue.

5.7 Interview design

Qualitative research interviews are in essence, a deliberate conversation with people who have been given prior notification of what the research is about. The remit of my interviews was to discover people's perception regarding, did participating on a student placement change the student in any way. Also what people thought students gained from experiential learning on student placements? I devised a semi-structured questionnaire for three of the four sub-cohorts in my study: Academics, University Career Advisers (UCAs) and Employers. The fourth sub-cohort: Students, were the subject of a different type of qualitative intense interview technique called biographic-narrative interpretive method (BNIM) (Wengraf, 2001, 2006 and 2013, p53).

I came across a number of other deep research interview techniques in my literature review. E.g. 'narrative co-construction' interview method, which can be particularly useful for jointly constructing detailed thematic narratives of someone's life story (Warham, 2012, p77). 'Narrative co-construction' can also be beneficial in research interviews with people who currently, or had previously been living a stressful chaotic lifestyle. A typical example would be interviews with adults who had previously been excluded from school and/or had been a young offender (Warham, 2012, p78).

BNIM is intended to give research participants a much longer time to consider their views about their social relationships with people and agencies they interact with. BNIM would reveal if the student had been subject to some form of 'morphological phenomenon', which transformed the pedagogical effect of experiential learning (Bourdieu, 1988, p164). Students have been surprised by BNIM, as they have

discovered things about their perception of themselves in relation to certain lived experiences. Views which prior to participating in a BNIM interview, they themselves weren't aware they had, regarding e.g. relationships at work. BNIM enabled me to pinpoint any 'deconstructive' or 'reproductive' (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012, p392) incidents, which the student experienced on placement. BNIM delivered, '...elicitation of detailed Particular Incident Narratives (known as PINs) arising from or lurking behind events or generalisations and feelings mentioned…' (Wengraf, 2013, p54).

The semi-structured questionnaires were designed with a dual purpose in mind. They provided an aide memoir of the main issues identified in the literature review. They also acted as a prompt to illicit responses regarding the four research questions, this study is designed to answer (See Appendix item 9: BDSP-INTSCHEDULES). The interview design was sufficiently generic to fulfil another function. Prompts and probes could be added to extract additional information as interviews develop. Any emerging themes not prevalent in my literature search could be added to future interview schedules, as the data collection phase progresses (See Gill, 2011, p1-4, for an Interview Schedule Sample Template including Topic Guide). The interview schedule continually developed as new themes e.g. concerns regarding the effect of the PCF were added. The advantage of designing open semi-structured questionnaires, is that they nurture discussion on new lines of inquiry during research interviews.

5.8 Research questions

The semi-structured questionnaires consisted of interviews schedules, which were designed to examine the **research questions** and associated issues, detailed below.

What use is made of student's work experience in academic programs?

Pedagogical aspects; curriculum design; marketisation of the degree.

Work related situated knowledge helps to grasp subsequent academic theory.

Identifies under-researched important knowledge gaps in current understanding.

Are there different learning benefits in attending a 'Third Sector' placement compared to a Statutory Agency; are these benefits recognised and accepted by the wider epistemic community?

Students becoming more socially and politically aware.

The acquisition of human, social and cultural capital.

How do students articulate their learning and employability acquired through work-based experience? (Brown et al, 2003, p107)

Reflective pieces in portfolio; criticality; peer learning; mentoring.

Increased reflection sessions, put results in a reflective practice learning journal.

How do the providers of student placements the employers, evaluate the experiential work-based learning of our students in their organisations?

Employability; professionalization; 'fitting in' – Bourdieu's 'cultural reproduction'.

Reliability; time management; group work; emotional intelligence – soft skills.

Student well motivated; shared work values; able to work with minimal supervision.

The initial draft of semi-structured questionnaires for all four research cohorts is present in the appendices as Appendix item 9 – BDSP-INTSCHEDULES. The questionnaire was not released to research participants before use. However all respondents received an Information Sheet and Letter of Invitation, which fully

informed people what my research study was about. The semi-structure questionnaires became more focussed, designed to encourage respondents to speak more about their views on student placements. Interview schedules which forms the content of the questionnaires, were modified by an inductive approach, during the data collection period. What were initially general questions on people's perceptions of student placements, became much more incisive, exploring a vast array of associated issues (Creswell, 2014, p8). E.g. did employers provide opportunities for reflection?

5.9 University structure in relation to student placements

All the universities, who had granted me ethical approval, who provided social work courses, had separated their social work department from the rest of their institution. In practice that was also the case for the GEES courses, which were available from all 5 types of university in my research study (Yorke, 1998b, p190).

5.9.1 Ancient universities

Neither of the two ancient universities involved in my study, offered social work courses. Both offered GEES courses but there was no particular impetus to encourage for students to participate on a student placement. Attending a student placement was not a mandatory requirement, on GEES courses taught at the ancient universities in my study. At the ancient universities, on certain GEES modules, students had the option to arrange their own student placement opportunity as part of their learning. For other modules there were international field trips that were mandatory. However these student placement type opportunities are not with a third party such as an employer, who the university did not control. Student placements could also be obtained, but students had to liaise with the University Careers Service, or arrange their own.

5.9.2 Civic or Redbrick University

One civic university gave me ethical approval and engaged in my research study. This civic university had an academic who taught various modules, who was also a multidisciplinary placement officer. I interviewed this civic university academic. There was no mandatory requirement to participate on a student placement for GEES courses, unless it was study abroad course. (University of Exeter, 2017; University of Keele, 2017b). The civic university did have a dedicated GEES academic, who fulfilled this role, who I also interviewed. This academic encouraged and assisted GEES course students by arranging placements. However, this academic did this work voluntarily, it was not officially recognised.

5.9.3 Post-1992 Universities (3–alpha)

There were three post-1992 universities, formerly a polytechnic in my study. I have used the tag 3-alpha to describe them, in this research methodology chapter. One post-1992 3-alpha member who gave me ethical approval, displayed my online advertisement on their email system. There were no responses. I got one social work student interview by a different route, the employer manager referral, earlier described. Another post-1992 3-alpha member was virtually identical, emailing my online advert. There were three ineligible responses, one of which led to providing 3 social work student interviews. There was a fourth qualifying response who provided a social work interview, the student was in work. The third post-1992 3-alpha member provided a UCAs interview, also an interview with an academic who teaches social work. Despite lots of email contact after their interviews, no social work or GEES employer or student contact details were forwarded onto me, from this post-1992 university. None of the

three post-1992 universities, formerly a polytechnic (3-alpha), produced any GEES or social work, employer or student interviews.

5.9.4 Post-1992 University (1–beta)

One of the universities who granted me ethical approval was a post-1992 university, who were not formerly a polytechnic. I have labelled this institution 1-beta. The GEES discipline is in a separate department. They had a separate University Careers Team, I interviewed the department manager. This UCAs sub-cohort member's team does not participate in social work student placements at all, and has hardly any input with GEES placements. The UCAs team manager was very supportive of experiential learning, all the discourse was regarding employability. The post-1992 1-beta university has a GEES department which runs an optional module. GEES students choosing this option, are required to arrange their own 20 working days placement.

The post-1992 1-beta university GEES module convenor, is a dedicated academic who monitors the process. He does not assist students to arrange their placement, partly because one of the module's assessment criteria is partnership work. This approach by the post-1992 1-beta university, was highly regarded by all the GEES student employers I interviewed. This GEES academic gave me all the GEES employers who were interviewed and the three GEES students who participated in my study. The Social Work department is a separate School within this post-1992 1-beta university. They have a dedicated social work student placement officer, who is an academic who teaches social work. I interviewed this social work academic, and one other social work academic at this 1-beta institution.

5.9.5 Pre-1992 campus university

A pre-1992 campus university also granted me ethical approval and agreed to participate in my research. The structure of the pre-1992 university was very similar to the other universities. The GEES department is in a separate School. They have a separate University Careers Service, which does not get involved with social work placements, and has little contact with GEES course student placements. The pre-1992 campus has a dedicated academic who arranges most of the GEES course student placements. I interviewed this and another two GEES academics at this university. As part of the interviews, I asked each of the three academics if they could assist me by introducing my research to employers who take their students on placement, also to any students returning from a placement. None of the three pre-1992 campus university academics produced any employers or students I could contact. As with another university, there is an optional module, on which completing a student placement is mandatory. For the rest of the GEES courses, there is no such requirement. There is similar encouragement for students who choose to go on a student placement, to make their own arrangements.

The social work course arrangements at the pre-1992 campus university are virtually identical, reflecting what appears to be a good practice industry norm. The pre-1992 campus university has its own dedicated social work department. Similarly, they have an academic on the social work course, who is also responsible for making the mandatory social work student placement arrangements. I interviewed this social work academic and another, at the pre-1992 campus university. Both harmonised that experiential learning was prerequisite for good social work training. These two

academic sub-cohort interviews introduced me to some of the concerns being raised, regarding the PCF's potential affect upon the higher education of social work students. The structure of most of the different types of university's structures are very similar. That suggests that a university's structure, had little influence in the selection of participants in my study. The most significant factor that informed how participants were recruited, was the nature and level of access, permitted by institutional gate keepers to their staff and students. For some universities this was minimal, for others it was mixed. Only one institution directly assisted in the social work side, by providing details of employers and a student, who subsequently participated in my study. It was a similar picture on the GEES side with again, just one university from the cohort, giving employers and students contact details.

5.10 Research Implementation

The research was designed to interview 4 separate cohorts. As mentioned earlier 47 interviews took place. A summary table of my research participants' profiles, anonymised using pseudonyms, is present in the appendices marked BDSP-INTLIST.

5.10.1 Academics

After being given ethical approval from the university concerned, I contacted numerous academics at eight different universities. I attached two documents to the initial email. These were the Letter of Invitation (BDSP-PD1) and Information Sheet (BDSP-PD2), with appropriate minor amendments to suit the individual recipient.

I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with these key stakeholders, academics at six different universities. The interviews were delivered using a semi-structured interview schedule/topic guide for academics. This was a living document, which I updated as the research study progressed, as new issues were discovered. A copy of the first draft I used is present as Appendix item 9: BDSP-INTSCHEDULES. The interview schedule began to change immediately as new themes e.g. computer-based assessments were being introduced. I was informed of the possible effects of the PCF, on the availability of statutory student placements in early interviews. All 15 academic sub-cohort interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed for NVivo10 qualitative research analysis. In keeping with the Keele University Ethical Approval granted, I contacted all the academics by telephone or email to offer a debriefing session.

5.10.2 University Career Advisers (UCAs)

Having been given the appropriate ethical approval, I contacted various University Career Advisers (UCAs) to arrange an interview. Once again, as with the academic and employers sub-cohorts, I attached two documents to the initial email, these were a University Career Adviser (UCAs) Letter of Invitation and Information Sheet. As with the academic sub-cohort, these were the generic Letter of Invitation (BDSP-PD1) and Information Sheet (BDSP-PD2), which were amended to suit individual recipients.

I conducted 6 semi-structured interviews with the university career adviser sub-cohort. The UCAs interviews were delivered using a semi-structured interview schedule/topic guide, which is in the aforementioned Appendix item 9: BDSP-INTSCHEDULES – employers section. This document changed in content over time to incorporate discourse from earlier interviews, which I updated as the research study progressed.

All 6 UCAs cohort interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed for NVivo10 qualitative research analysis. In keeping with the Keele University Ethical Approval, I contacted all the UCAs people by telephone or email offering a debriefing session.

5.10.3 Employers

In liaison with the Programme Directors, Placement Tutors, Course Leaders, and Senior Lecturers, I interviewed. I asked for appropriate student placement providers contact details from statutory agencies, private enterprises and 'Third Sector' organisations. I invited recommended Employer organisations to participate in an interview in an email, which had a copy of an Employer's Letter of Invitation and Information Sheet attached. As with the academic and UCAs sub-cohorts, these were the generic Letter of Invitation (BDSP-PD1) and Information Sheet (BDSP-PD2), which could be amended to suit individual employers.

I conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with these key stakeholders, employers who are student placement providers for social work or GEES course students. The 12 employer interviews were divided as follows: There were 5 employers on the social work side, of which 4 were with a 'Third Sector' organisation and 1 with a statutory agency. There were also 5 employers on the GEES branch of my study. 3 were with a statutory agency, 1 with a 'Third Sector' organisation and 1 was with a private sector organisation. There were 2 employer interviews with a student volunteering agency.

These interviews followed the same process as the academic sub-cohort interviews. I conducted the 12 semi-structured interviews with nine different employers. The employer interviews were delivered using a semi-structured interview schedule/topic

guide for employers. A copy of the first draft I used is in the aforementioned Appendix item 9: BDSP-INTSCHEDULES – employers section. All 12 employer cohort interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed for NVivo10 qualitative research analysis. In keeping with the Keele University Ethical Approval granted, I contacted all the employers by telephone or email to offer a debriefing session.

5.10.4 Students

I obtained student research participants by one of two routes. Firstly, after being given ethical approval from the university concerned, to be able to approach their students and staff. The other more common route was after an employer who provides student placements research interview, who I asked to introduce me to their student, current or former employee. Once permission was granted, I was given the student's email address. I sent the current or former student an email, attaching the Student Letter of Invitation and Information Sheet. As with the academic, employer and UCAs sub-cohort, these were the generic Letter of Invitation (BDSP-PD1) and Information Sheet (BDSP-PD2), which were amended to suite each individual student approached.

I have used the theoretical framework of Wengraf (2001, p111) biographic-narrative interpretive method (BNIM) to conduct BNIM (Wengraf, 2013, p53) type interviews. In my interpretation of BNIM, I conducted an open style interview for the first interview using prompt sheets (see Appendix 10 – BDSP-INTSCHEDULES: STUDENTS). Within one working day, I used the digital voice recorder to transcribe the first BNIM type interview. I synthesised all the issues the student had indicated in their initial BNIM type interview, making notes of 'narratable items' (Wengraf, 2013, p132). I then conducted the second BNIM type interview using a SQUIN, a single question aimed

at inducing narrative (Wengraf, 2013, p21). Contrary to Wengraf (2013, p136), each student received a copy of the SQUIN at the start of their second BNIM type interview. This was for operational and pragmatic reasons, most students I conducted research with were unable to express their views of their student placement without a guide.

By this process of adapting BNIM as described, I was able to obtain, analyse and understand student's perceptions regarding their participation on a student placement. I want to understand student views not just on the educational aspects of a student placement, but also psycho-societal facets as well. A student placement is about social interaction in the workplace, with other people and agencies. This means that a student placement's affect upon the student, needs to be considered as part of the whole, including the student's overall life and personal experiences. I am therefore interested in exploring student's perception of placements in the context, mainly of how they view their future perspectives (Wengraf, 2013, p74; Rosenthal, 2006, p3).

Wengraf's (2013) BNIM study, supports my argument that analysis of the psycho-societal aspects of student placement, must include facets of the student's past, present and their view of the future. This is critical to establish if personal experiences, are influencing their perception of student placements. I also need to consider that other factors might have influenced student interview discourse, as they discussed their views about the student placement they completed. Biographic-narrative interpretive method is increasingly recognised as an appropriate interview technique within the social sciences. BNIM enables a researcher to explore a person's psycho-societal perceptions about their lived experiences, and the causal factors shaping those views. Wengraf (2013) underpins my research approach.

"Assuming that "biographic narrative expression, is expressive both of conscious concerns and also of unconscious cultural, societal and individual presuppositions and processes, BNIM supports research into the complexities of the lived experience of individual and collectives, and their transmission over time."

(Wengraf, 2013, p54)

There are 5 people in the social work cohort. There are 3 people in the GEES student cohort. I conducted 9 BNIM type interviews with 1 current and 4 former, now graduated social work students. I also conducted 5 BNIM type interviews, with 3 former, now graduated GEES course students. All the former social work and GEES course students had graduated from their university, within two years of their interview date.

The BNIM type interviews were conducted over two sessions with 6 of the 8 research participants in the student sub-cohort. With 2 of the 8 students, one BNIM type interview took place. I designed a Student Interview Schedule (SIS) with which I could assist the student, to give an account of the effect of their r work placement. The SIS is in the previously mentioned Appendix item 9: BDSP-INTSCHEDULES – student section. An excerpt of a later student interview schedule (SIS), Appendix item 10 labelled BDSP-SIS2, is present in the appendices. I asked questions as detailed in the updated SIS applicable at the time and took notes. I typed up my student interview research notes the very next day at the latest. This was for two reasons. One reason was while the student perceptions were fresh in my mind, so I could design a SQUIN, (single question aimed at inducing narrative) based on the notes (Wengraf, 2013, p21).

A SQIUN (see Appendix item 11 - BDSP-SQUIN in the appendices) is needed for second session BNIM type interviews. I second interviewed two different students, less than a week after they're first BNIM type interview. The second reason was the notes provided the raw material, which I used to help design the themes, subthemes, ordinates, subordinates and nodes. Ready for analysing the student discourse spoken and signals given from non-verbal communication (NVC), during the BNIM type interviews I conducted, using NVivo10 computer software (See Appendix item 16).

We arranged the second BNIM type interview at the end of the first session, usually no more than 1 week later. During the second BNIM type interview, where I used a SQUIN, I used keywords and phrases picked up from earlier interviews with all three of the other sub-cohorts. As with all the other three sub-cohorts, all 8 student BNIM type interviews, sessions 1 and 2 were digitally recorded and transcribed, ready for NVivo10 qualitative research analysis. In keeping with the Keele University Ethical Approval granted, I contacted all the students by email to offer a debriefing session.

The aims of the research have more than been met. I have managed to obtain a broad spectrum of views about student placements, from the academics, UCAs, employers and students. The 'wider society' is established as an existential entity, an agency with a societal remit. Several new lines of enquiry have been generated as a result of my research study, covering a diverse range e.g. the CD/EN and admissions policies. The problems I encountered in recruiting research participants have produced gaps in the research study, compared to what was intended at the outset of the inquiry. Due to the lack of engagement from a number of the university types identified in this study, there are some knowledge gaps regarding experiential learning's effect on students.

We have very little understanding, of whether ancient universities are aware of experiential learning's ability to transform the student. Neither have we discovered if ancient universities are proactive in promoting placements, internments or short taster courses, as an opportunity for students to receive experiential learning pedagogy.

It is a similar story for civic or redbrick universities. Information is limited because only one university of this type from the several I contacted, chose to participate in my study. The two social work, one GEES academic, one UCAs and one student interviews from the civic university are analysed in this study. My research is limited by not being able to compare sub-cohort views from one civic university, with sub-cohort views from a second redbrick institution. Due to this study limitation, I have not been able to establish, are civic or redbrick sub-cohort views on various aspects of experiential learning broadly similar? Neither was I able to investigate, were civic or redbrick sub-cohort views widely divergent in a few areas or on several issues? Similarly I could not investigate what are the causes of homogeneity or sharp contrast? This same aspect of critique applies to the post-1992 university, not previously a polytechnic (1-beta), where again only one institution contacted chose to participate. The 3 post-1992 universities, who were previously a polytechnic (3-alpha), were mixed with some being more helpful than others. The 3-alpha universities did not provide any employer or student research participants. It has not been possible to compare sub-cohort views between the same and differing university types in several key areas.

Chapter 6 - What do Students Learn on Work Placements? An Analysis

6.1 Introduction

The four research questions are presented. They act as the necessary backdrop in this first analysis chapter, asking the question: What do students learn on placements?

- What use is made of student's work experience in academic programs?

- Are there different learning benefits in attending a 'Third Sector' placement compared to a Statutory Agency; are these benefits recognised and accepted by students, academics and employers?

- How do students articulate their learning and employability, acquired through work-based experience?

- How do the providers of student placements the employers, evaluate the experiential work-based learning of students in their organisations?

This first research analysis chapter is divided in to eight sections. The first section describes the higher education landscape in which student placements takes place, introducing my study. The second section discusses various aspects of employability, a factor which had a profound affect upon research participants' responses in my study. The third section is a discussion of Kolb's (1976, 1981 and 1984) 'Experiential Learning' theory. The discussion describes how Kolb's (1984) learning theory appears in various parts of my research data. Also present is analysis of any other learning that has taken place during work placements. Examples are used from the four sub-cohorts studied, to delineate the presence of Kolb's (1984) 'experiential learning' theory in operation. This includes interview discourse analysed from students, who have been on a work based learning placement. The third section concludes with a brief

explanation of Kolb's contribution to higher education. The next four sections, each represent the research sub-cohorts in my study, students, academics, UCAs and the employers. They each have been identified as the four main higher education stakeholders regarding experiential learning. The chapter title question is analysed from the perspective of the each sub-cohort. This first research analysis chapter concludes, by considering the critical question through the lens of a fifth higher education stakeholder, the existential agency the 'wider society'.

6.2 Why student placements are essential to the four main stakeholders

McLaughlin et al', (2014, p1469) 'Non-Traditional Social Work Placements' study, details how important the pedagogical approach of experiential learning is to students on work based placements. The McLaughlin et al, (2014) study although based on research with social work students, is equally applicable to GEES and other person-centred professions. The specific mention of where theory and practice intersect, reinforces the abstract experimentation stage of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle. The notion that 'placement learning' is transformational is evident. Practice based and community based action learning are clearly visible in Mclaughlin et al' (2014) study. The quote helps to demonstrate that in many professions, Kolb's (1984, p38) 'learning by doing' is the best way to develop key skills including self-efficacy.

> '…placement learning has become the 'signature pedagogy' in social work through which students learn what it means to become a social worker and where theory and practice intersect. Practice learning placements are thus of critical importance to the development of the social work profession.'

> (McLaughlin et al, 2014, p1470)

Work based learning during undergraduate degree courses, have been an educational feature of England's higher education landscape since the 1950s. On some courses, both industrial and social science based, the student placement has been delivered as a 39 week plus programme, a sandwich course (Gomez et al, 2004, p375). The term sandwich course is derived from the content of a student placement taking place, in between substantial periods of traditional lecture theatre and tutorial based passive learning (Jackson, SCEPTrE, 2010, p2). For courses studying the professions e.g. teaching or nursing, shorter placements have been introduced, which are mandatory, typically 26 to 39 weeks (Little and Harvey, HECSU 2006, p1).

More recently in the post-1992 era of HE, work based units have developed, these learning modules consist of much shorter placements (BIS, 2011a, p5). There is an additional pedagogical aspect to these learning modules. All the GEES students in my study had to arrange their own work placement. The GEES employer sub-cohort indicated they felt this was an important part of experiential learning. The initial contact providing an opportunity for the student to make a first impression with the employer. The UCAs sub-cohort also supported this approach. At this juncture, GEES academic tutors are introducing the employability agenda into the student learning journey.

Student placements provide short, medium and long term benefits to the five main stakeholders. Experiential learning offers undergraduates an early opportunity for arranging their work placement in anticipation of entering their choice of profession. The work placement can act as a vehicle for the 'wider society', orientating students to share widespread societal values, whilst shaping the student's professional identity. This shaping of the student works in one of two ways. The student after experiential

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learning can become more community minded, prioritising civic duty wanting to improve the general wellbeing of people. GEES students may well choose to focus on environmentally oriented projects. The other branch to consider is after participating on a work placement, many students have found they no longer want to enter their original choice of profession. Experiential learning has duality. The student now having had an early insight of practice in their profession, may well decide they need a change in direction to try a different profession after graduation (Gerken et al, 2012, p12).

Students benefit from experiential learning by being able to demonstrate competence, productivity and independence. This chapter will provide examples of employers who indicate they prefer people in the graduate pool who are 'job ready'. In practice this means employers value undergraduates who have been on a student placement, above potential recruits who haven't. This is especially beneficial for mature students, who have a mechanism, a student placement where they can apply existing work and life skills whilst also learning new skills (Nicholas, 2016, p1; QAA, 2013a, p16).

McManus' (2008) online information resource on 'active learning', resonates with the issue of mature students re-entering academia. Analysis of McManus' (2008) information, demonstrates how people returning to academia, perhaps after a long period away due to child rearing responsibilities can benefit from 'active learning'. McManus (2008) argues, 'Active learning requires the learner to make sense of knowledge through an experience'. As such McManus (2008) feels that experiential learning belongs in the same family of pedagogical approaches as active learning.

Megheirkouni's (2016, p237) 'Leadership development methods and activities' study, makes a more robust connection between experiential learning and active (replaced by action) learning. "*Action learning.* It is seen as a pragmatic notion that stems from the humanistic view of the individual via experiential learning to address the difficult and complex problems of organisation" (Megheirkouni, 2016, p239). McManus' (2008) focus on the process of 'active learning', introduces elements of reflective practices, criticality and self-directed learning, in keeping with experiential learning pedagogy.

> *"The way for ideas to be re-experienced is through techniques such as co-operative learning and experiential learning. These techniques are recognised as being part of the active learning process - and it is a process; students need to assume responsibility for the knowledge that they are going to acquire, or the skills that they need to develop, through their own actions, own decisions, life choices, methods of study, methods of learning and learning style."*

> (McManus, 2008, online resource)

6.3 Employability, 'try before you buy', professionalisation of the graduate pool

As the literature reveals, employability has multiple definitions. In Yorke and Knight's (HEA, 2006) working definition, employability clearly has a work skills acquisition function, along with a civic duty remit. The stipulation that the economy must benefit is important. Agencies contributing towards the 'wider society', must make a profit.

> *"A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and to be successful in their*

chosen occupations, which benefit themselves, the workforce, the community

and the economy."

<div align="right">(Yorke and Knight, HEA 2006, p3)</div>

UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) (2009) provide an alternative definition of employability. UKCES (2009) argue that employability is a set of generic skills, which act to underpin specialised skills. Employability skills e.g. problem solving, literacy and numeracy are crucial, they must be in place so people with specialisms, can maximise their skills to their full potential. "Employability skills are the skills almost everyone needs to do almost any job. They are the skills which make specific knowledge and technical skills fully productive" UKCES (2009, p9).

There is a clear interconnectedness between several themes which appear in the definitions and observations regarding employability. There has been a coalescence around similar factors, as those identified in Lowden et al' (2011) taxonomy of graduate employability. Lowden et al' (2011, p8) taxonomy classifications, which include essential and functional skills, have been reinforced by BIS (2015b). The following empirical analysis of the selected interview discourse from each of the four cohorts, details their interpretation of employability. The analysis includes a description, of each cohorts' perception of experiential learning and employability.

Most recent research studies investigating the impact participating on a work based placement have on students, approached the subject through the lens of employability (See Tholen, 2015, p767; Huq and Gilbert, 2013, p550; Lowden et al, 2011, p2). The context being, job skills enhancement, oriented for the workplace. Employability driven

research on the effect of student placements, mainly focussed on the following skills, organisational, communication and creativity skills. However employability research also greatly valued social and personal skills, such as problem solving in a team (Little and Harvey, 2006, p2). There are a number of studies which focus upon personal development, the holistic nature of work based learning, the acquisition of human and social capital. These work based studies resonate in the 'civic duty', 'volunteering' and 'wider society' realm of student placement stakeholders (See Birdwell et al, DEMOS, 2015, p12; British Council, 2015, p8; LGA, 2014, p7). There are studies which in part discuss whether work based learning can increase or decrease, the likelihood of students complying with societal norms and values (Costley and Abukari, 2015, p5; CRAC Vitae, 2011, p2). This research study, investigating the effect of work based learning in student placements, belongs in this latter category of student development.

On analysis the employability narrative was dominant in the discourse of all four strands of my research cohort. As mentioned earlier the research data consist of 47 transcribed interviews. I used NVivo10 software and coded the data recording ordinates, subordinates, common themes and subthemes present in participant's interview discourse. Excerpts from one labelled interview from each of all four strands of the research cohort are detailed in Appendix 16 - NVivo10 Coding Notes, present at the end of this study. The Appendix 16 labelling information demonstrates how NVivo10 coding was used to analyse the overriding feature of employability in research interview discourse. In various shapes and forms either consciously or subconsciously, the employability agenda appeared in most people's interviews. Employability subthemes that occurred regularly included 'try before you buy', 'professionalisation' and 'fitting in'. Examples follow overleaf.

<u>'Fitting in' – GEES Employer Example</u>

BD: How important is the potential candidate fitting in, an issue to you as an employer?

Int23: Well, fitting in, the context of their skills set do you mean? Or their personality?

BD: Both really.

Int23: Well I suppose that's a kind of. There can be few benefits for an employer in recruiting somebody who's not going to fit in, either academically or from a personality perspective. And that's really exactly what a recruitment process seeks to discover. [19:14 NVivo10 Private Sector employer – emphasis on 'fitting in'; employability]. Coz you know, you don't want somebody who can't work in a team, when it's a team role.

(Private sector employer, GEES course, interview 25, 19:14)

<u>'Fitting in' – Social Work Academic Example</u>

BD: But actually I'll go back to that. - How important do you feel issues such as personal attributes are, too an employer?

Int7: Certainly in some cases this is absolutely crucial. Say again when working with the women in the women's refuge, it was very sensitive because of a rule that no man was allowed to go and see it. I wasn't allowed to go. Only the women were allowed to go so these sorts of things. Needed a lot of discretionary working when working alongside professionals, who've experienced domestic violence. And getting them to supervise the interviewing. In other, yeah it comes back to this idea of not behaving like a student. Realising that they needed, how they came across, how they present

themselves, conduct themselves, when they're having meetings and so on was very important, so. *(35m NVivo10 Bourdieu 'cultural reproduction' reqd from placement).*

(Social work academic, interview 7, 35:42, ancient university)

'Fitting in' – GEES Student Example

BD: How important is say the issue of 'fitting in' to an employer, do you think?

Int38: It's quite a nice employee to work for. Everyone's quite friendly, although we have targets, it's quite male oriented company. But I think you don't feel bad by being a woman, in the same industry if that makes sense *[24:40 NVivo10 - GEES student viewed 'fitting in' very differently to social work students. The discourse is in employability terms].* It's just that people have worked here all their life. People have come here at 16 and worked here until they retire.

(Student cohort (GEES course), interview 38 24:40, 1-Beta)

'Fitting in' – Social Work Student Example

BD: How important do you feel 'fitting in' is, as an issue to employers?
Bryony: Very important I would say. Yeah very important I would say. I think it was on, I think the reason I am back here. Is because and I know they shouldn't have, they knew me previously I think. You know it's good, I think it's really important to fit into a team and work well together. It's difficult on the person if they don't fit in, and difficult on the rest of the team as well *[32:50 NVivo10 Social Work Student – Indicated that 'fitting in' Bourdieu 'cultural', is crucial in employability terms].*

(Student cohort (in practice), interview 40, 32:50, civic university)

‘Professionalisation’ – Social Work Student Example

BD: Right. My goodness. What personal attributes do you feel someone should have in your profession?

Int25: As a social worker? **BD: Yes.** Int25: You’ve got to be understanding. You’ve got to be patient. You’ve got to be able to work well under pressure. You’ve got to be able to work with other professionals. Be a team worker, but also be able to work by yourself quite well. Report writing, you’ve got to be able write reports. I understand you’ve got to be able to present them now at panel. [7:25 NVivo10 – Social work Student - Professionalisation discourse, with a view to increasing employability]. That wasn’t the case when I started. You’ve got to be a good listener now as well.

(Former social work student, currently in practice, interview 28, 7:25, 3-Alpha)

‘Professionalisation’ – Social Work Academic Example

BD: What skills and/or attributes do you feel students gain from a work placement?

Int23: I think probably the biggest skill is managing your own time and prioritisation and the work. And I think the other thing they get from it is confidence.

[10:05 NVivo10 Social Work Academic - Professionalisation mainly for employability].

(Social work academic, interview 23, 10:05, civic)

<u>'Professionalisation' – University Careers Adviser (UCAs) Example</u>

BD: What skills and/or attributes do you feel students gain from a work placement?

Int33: I think it's so vast. They get commercial awareness, self-awareness. They'll get some time keeping, prioritising. Hopefully they'll get some real life working skills. It's all around the fact of professionalisation, presenting yourself, dealing with people, interpersonal skills. You know having to understand you've got to deliver, you also got to. And in a way, not like being subservient, but you do have somebody who you report to, who is your manager, which students, often till they go to a work placement, they've not experienced that. *[5m NVivo10 UCAs – Professionalisation; Employability].*

(UCAs, interview 33, 5:00, post-1992 university, 1-Beta)

'Try Before You Buy' – Social Work Academic Example

BD: What benefits do you feel a student gains by going on a student placement?

Int8: Right OK. I think it has to be a given really for social work training, that students go into some form of practice. I think the benefits are they have the opportunity to try out the theory and apply the theory, knowledge, the skills and values that they gain already on the programme, or already have some. Because, depending on whether we're talking about a graduate student or not. There will be different levels of learning depending upon a particular time. I think they need to experience practice in the sense knowing if social work is what they want to do as well. I think it's very easy to stand in a classroom and tell them the idealistic situation that we would hope they would be in. We all know that's very different form the realistic situation in social work in today. So

I think it's, you know, giving them opportunities, to learn things about themselves, learn things about social work. To learn things about the political status of social work. And really also checking out for themselves, is it something they want to do and also, is it something they think they're going to be good at.

BD: Right so there's a sort of try before you buy in there. Int8: Yeah.

[2:24 NVivo10 – Social work academic – 'Try before you buy' as part of employability].

(Social work academic, interview 8 1:43, 1-Beta)

'Try Before You Buy' – University Careers Adviser (UCAs) Example

BD: How do you feel employers benefit?

Int26: Again I think a range of different ways. Probably the most obvious one, is they get the opportunity to see undergraduates, screen them as perspective employers. *[2:34 NVivo10 theme – 'Try before you buy'; employability].* You know very large employers have sophisticated well-established ways of doing that. So they have large student placement programmes. Quite often at the end of that placement program or a significant way through, they'll offer the student the opportunity to apply for the graduate scheme. Or to have a fast track into that. So for employers it's a really good way of seeing candidates, checking them out, seeing if they can do the job. If their confident, if they'll fit nicely into the company. I think, obviously there are other benefits as well.

(UCAs (2), interview 26, 2:34, pre-1992 campus university)

<u>'Try Before You Buy' – Third Sector Social Work Employer Example</u>

BD: What do you think your organisation gains by having students on placement?

Int12: We gain in various ways in having a student on placement. One because we have limited funding to run our services. It actually increases our capacity in running the service. It's basically an extra pair of hands. Which means we can visit more people and provide a better service during the time there with us. But it also helps the staff that I manage because the student that comes to us, all their learning is fresh, all their theory is fresh. And they very often share their knowledge and skills with the paid staff as well as the other way round. [*4:03 NVivo10 - 'Try before you buy'; employability*].

(Third sector social work employer, interview 14, 3:40)

<u>'Try Before You Buy' – GEES Student Example</u>

BD: Please tell me in general, what do you think about student placements?

Int44: I think I would encourage anybody at university to do one. I think it increases your employability a lot, to have that experience and also to build those contacts up. And also if you don't have an inkling about something, it gives you the opportunity to try it out. And if you don't like it, then after university you can go and do something different, perhaps get you into something that you want to do *[24:50 NVivo10 - GEES Student – 'Try before you buy' - applies to both the student and employer as well]*.

(Former GEES student, graduated 2014, interview 44, 24:50, 1-Beta)

Subconsciously people indicated they viewed the student placement as some form of sifting process. Academics and students subconsciously used the phrase 'filter' or 'filtering' in their research interviews. The employers and UCAs participants were far more overt, mainly describing the benefits of experiential learning during work placements using the employability narrative. These two sub-cohort mainly focussed upon the work placement being an essential tool to get the student 'to enhance their CV'. As the following excerpt illustrates, the employability outcomes of work placements were practical (they gave students the opportunity to gain graduate experience) as well as developing specific work-orientated skills.

> *Gerald: Right so the idea is as far as we're concerned, it's about giving graduates the opportunity to graduate, with graduate level employment experience on their CV…This is about saying, the placement must be related to your programme of study. And it must be really graduate type level of work that you're doing. So when they graduate, if nothing else they've got that graduate experience they can put on rather than nothing. The second side of it is, letting them develop the sort of graduate style skills that employers expect. So the ten key skills you want to talk about, you know communication skills, oral skills, presentation skills, basic maths, working with other people. The sort of general key skills, that employers expect, the soft skills, the transferable skills.*

<div align="center">(GEES academic, interview 10 1:45, post-1992 university, 1-Beta)</div>

The enhancement of CV was not just associated with having completed an activity but was assumed to provide some tangible skills. The employers and UCAs employees

emphasised how important it was that students develop time management and organisational skills. Yet skills were not just related to objective tasks. Other important skills were associated with learning 'expected behaviours' in how students should liaise with colleagues and dress code. Frequent use of phrases such as 'job ready' and 'fitting in' during interviews, demonstrates that employability was the dominant discourse in the research data. From this perspective it is clear that students acquired cultural capital through engaging in work placements. By acquiring 'cultural capital' students have been able to assimilate employability, subconsciously embodying job market readiness. Here employability has acted as a tool to transform power structures, allowing admission of people with recognised cultural qualifications. The 'cultural capital' acquisition of employability acts as a key with which placement students gain entry to societal cultural acceptance (Bourdieu, 1967, p347; Bourdieu, 1988, p149).

The universal promotion of employability, and the assumption that it would automatically benefit students responded to external policy drivers about the need for HE to enhance the skills base of the graduate labour market. BIS (2015b) make the following observations when discussing 'Employer demands for graduates'. 'Concerns have been raised concerning graduates exiting without the necessary vocational or generic skills and competencies for work...Employers attach great importance to generic transferable skills...Often employers have been more concerned with competencies than qualifications, when recruiting graduates, valuing communicating, teamwork and personal attributes…Complaints from graduate recruiters have been concerning graduates lack of work readiness and workplace experience'. "There is a perceived need to bridge the gap between the attributes and specialisms which

students develop in higher education and the actual requirements of the world of work" (BIS, 2015b, p58-59). This emphasis on readiness and experience corresponds with how respondents articulate the employability dimension of work placements. It also reveals the inherent reproductive character of work placements: they are locations for students to be assimilated to work cultures rather than to foster personal development. Hence the emancipatory potential of work placements is played down through this policy discourse: students do not learn about the kinds of employment or working environments that they would like to work in, but rather learn to assimilate to prevailing work cultures.

6.4 Kolb's 'Experiential Learning Cycle' theory

David Kolb's 'Experiential Learning Cycle' theory (1976, 1981 and 1984) was a significant feature, in all four sub-cohorts of my empirical research. Kolb (1984) argues "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p38). Kolb's (1984) theory was mainly identified in the interview discourse of research participants, as 'learning by doing'. There is substantial discussion of Kolb's 'Experiential learning' theory (1976, 1981 and 1984) in the theoretical framework chapter of this thesis. A brief precis of Kolb's (1984) 'experiential learning cycle' is as follows. People learn by using 'concrete' experiences to test new ideas. People use feedback to reinterpret practices and theories, until they learn a task, and/or acquire a new skill (Kolb, 1984, p21). Below are examples from each of the four strands, of interview discourse describing Kolb's (1984) 'Experiential learning' theory when applied in practice. Non-academics mentioned Kolb directly, recognising the importance of experiential learning, 'learning by doing' during student placements (Mary, Social work employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 30, time 61:27).

Stella delineates the employability aspects of experiential learning. The strong emphasis on the practical application of 'learning by doing', is quite clear. Beard (2010, p12) argues there are five different dimensions to experiencing 'doing'. So the 'learning by doing' has to be situated in a context which is understood by learner, for skills acquisition to become embedded. Stella's view harmonises with feminist standpoint theory that "all knowledge attempts are socially situated" (Harding, 1993, p56).

> *Stella: But one student was able to say they had a work placement and they were able to reflect on that, and could highlight what they've done. I think probably they would have the edge if everything else was equal, within that. You know I think it just helps. You know you can sit in a classroom and you can read things and you can learn things, but you really only learn things when you do it.*
>
> (GEES academic (2), interview 11 3:08, pre-1992 campus university)

Harriet describes how experiential learning can be obtained from opportunities away from the placement location. Harriet informs how experiential learning can be gained by students being given responsibility for a small project. There's also an indication that students gain skills by personal development away from formal training, whilst on placement. Harriet's discourse, echoes various aspects of Brown's (2009, p4) TLRP commentary which argues, students achieve professionalisation by developing higher skills. Harriet supports Kolb's (1984) 'learning by doing', putting theory into practice.

> *Harriet: They need to obviously. I mean student placements give you a lot of practice, and practical experience and theories and legislation that you learn in the classroom. I think students need to, to take on responsibility as do*

practitioners, about their own learning and development outside of formal training, reading around subjects, having that interests to learn a bit more. You can learn as much sometimes by meeting with individuals that receive services, not necessarily on placement.

(Social work employer, statutory agency, interview 15, 43:38)

Clive indicated the nature of the placement, effects the educational value of the placement. Clive thus chimes with numerous recent student placement studies (Devins, WBLIC, 2013, p28; Abbas et al, 2013, p10). Clive explains how months in a section, not a short period, is beneficial to students. Students may need additional exposure before they make a career choice. However that educational benefit has to be balanced with gaining experiences, from other departments within the organisation. By definition the student placement needs to be longer. Clive provides critical underpinning to the argument, there needs to be an increase in sandwich course provision (Blackwell et al, 2001, p272). The discourse describing apprenticeships resonates with Kolb's 'experiential learning' theory (1976, 1981 and 1984). Also present is pragmatic support of an increase in day release provision. For example, a new starter works four days a week, and studies a recognised qualification of value to the organisation, at college or university, one day a week (McLinden, HEA, 2013, p11). Clive represented a 'Third sector' organisation who accepted both social work and GEES profession students. Clive was the only employer who made this connection with experiential learning, in my research study.

Clive: We've got apprenticeships here and again you know, the equality there is as you'd expect, that's human nature, But the, I think the reason for that is

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that they get a variety…Another thing is, it's not just a week here, a week there,

they get months, everywhere. So they get a good idea. One, for their own

benefit, which direction they want to go in. But two, you know they gain a lot of

skills from that, quite early doors. Coz I mean you're talking what, 17 or 18 year

old I suppose. So, that's certainly the route, I would have preferred to take.

(GEES course workers employer, statutory agency, interview 22, 19:58)

Hugh supported the concept of 'try before you buy'. Hugh reinforced the view that Kolb's (1984, p38) 'learning by doing' is a different learning experience to lecture theatres, and both should be equally valued. An individual specific regarding Hugh, is that he was closely involved on a day to day basis with all aspects of the student placement. This is clearly a factor in how closely Hugh's discourse, mirrors the summary of benefits given by Lemanski et al, HEA 2011, p28.

Hugh: A lot. [Laughs]. I think it's really important. I think it should form part of

most studies and most degree courses and things like that. There should be an

element. Whether its short term or long term, I think it's got a huge amount of

value to the students. They learn so much even from such a short placement

of 50 hours. From the employers, and it would give them a much better insight

into the actual work that they're going to deliver on the ground. If that's a field

that they were looking to go into. They'll be lectured to and things like that and

they'll perhaps they'll know people in the industry. But they can be part of the

team and feel as a valued member of the workforce, during this short period I

think, I think they'll glean a lot, I'm sure they will. I think it's highly valuable. And

I did it when I was a student.

(GEES course workers employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 24, 18:44)

Heidi is a former student, who had been on social work placements. Heidi has now graduated and was in post with a statutory agency on the date of interview. Heidi's placement experiences encapsulates Kolb's (1976, 1981 and 1984) 'experiential learning' theory. There is a strong emphasis on putting theory into practice. The discourse describes how Kolb's (1984) 'learning by doing', was used to acquire new skills. Heidi describes how she received case study experiential learning, which she used to complete her dissertation. Heidi's discourse reflects a definition of work based learning as being 'designed to meet the learning needs of employees and the aims of the organisation' (Sodiechowska and Maisch, 2006, cited in Lemanski et al, 2011, p5).

Heidi: Ah. That was quite challenging. That placement, because of my previous experience as a social worker. Like I say I was given a caseload and it was basically, get on with it, you're a third year now. I did put into practice a lot of the social work theories. I remember them like crisis theory and attachment theory. I remember the day it all came into play during that particular placement. I actually did my dissertation, based on one of the cases I had during that placement, so it was good for that. So that affected my social work education in that aspect. I had a very broad range of cases, working with lots of varied people. It wasn't just people with learning disability, it wasn't just older people. In fact I had a young person who was blind on that caseload. So when you think

of social work, you think of children and families immediately, but that opened

my eyes a lot, very useful.

(Former social work student, currently in practice, interview 28, 1:24, 3-Alpha)

Gordon, a former GEES student who graduated July 2014 now in work, indicated the issue of placement matching (Sims et al, NFER DfE, 2013, p10). Gordon's interview describes how student placements are beneficial to all parties in identifying compatibility, which is a facet of employability (Little and Harvey, HECSU 2006, p8). Gordon confirms the student develops a better understanding of the nature and type of work involved, via Kolb's (1984) experiential learning. The student becomes better equipped to make key decisions on their professional future (Blewitt et al, 2016, p2).

Gordon: I think I would encourage anybody at university to do one. I think it
increases your employability a lot, to have that experience and also to build
those contacts up. And also if you don't have an inkling about something, it
gives you the opportunity to try it out. And if you don't like it, then after university
you can go and do something different, perhaps get you into something that
you want to do.

(Former GEES student, graduated 2014, interview 44, 24:17, 1-Beta)

The discussion of Kolb's 'experiential learning' theory (1976, 1981 and 1984) concludes with Florence's interview. Florence is a 'Third Sector' employer, a student volunteering enterprise, who engage with students from all disciplines, including social

work and GEES courses. This organisation has a unique structure and ethos, which differs from all the other employers in the study. However on analysis, their research interview discourse was very similar to other employer cohort members. Florence indicated, the effectiveness of experiential learning as a pedagogical tool during placements, depends on the nature of the student. Florence's description of how students learn on placement, closely mirrors Kolb's (1984) 'learning by doing, approach. Florence's discourse also resonates with Mitussis and Sheehan's (2013, p46) discussion, regarding experiential learning and emotional engagement.

> *Florence: I think it varies depending on the student. As an organisation we talk a lot, internally at least about how you learn. And some people would rather read a book about the theory of how to work in a workplace. Some people would rather go and, you know, they have to have done it themselves. I think that's a stage of progression. I think that for a lot of students' experiential learning, volunteering is really good. And then for other students, they would rather have the theory and then test it out a little more.*

('Third Sector' employer (1), student volunteering enterprise, interview 16, 11:48)

6.4.1 The academics' perspective

Employability featured prominently in the interview discourse from the academic cohort (n=14). I explored the issue of employer's perception of student placements, by asking all members of the academic cohort the following question. How do you feel employers benefit by placements? Abigail mirrors the main higher education reference points, given by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, 2012b, p5).

Abigail: I think the employers don't, they benefit in that they, obviously new recruits, new graduates coming through. But I don't think the employers have any sense whatsoever that that has to be a joint enterprise. We can also only able to produce good thoughtful critical students, if we get placements. And the employers have to provide the placements, so the employers can be very reticent, to say the least. In providing those placements, and yet will criticise from time to time social work students coming through, without adequate experience, but they need the placement, so it's a very chicken and egg situation.

(Social work academic, interview 1, 3:28, pre-1992 campus university)

Karen harmonised with the main aspects of work based learning, argued by Yorke and Knight (HEA, 2006, p3). Karen introduced some crucial elements of my research study. Student placements are vital in higher education and employability. This academic interview encapsulates the majority of the other academic sub-cohort's view in my empirical research. Karen's interview strongly indicated, the student placement is the most effective pedagogical learning tool for ensuring societal inculcation and compliance with norms and values. Karen's discourse resonated with the 'wider society' remit. Karen's interview illustrates that one of the main roles of a university, is to prepare trained workers to deliver societal needs. Karen was also clear, university enabled people to develop suitable personality attributes for their choice of profession. Bourdieu's social, ideological and 'cultural reproduction' theory (1985, 1986a, 1986b; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p3) were also reinforced in Karen's interview.

Karen: So to me if you took placements out of social work you'd be doing something risky and foolish. Placements and social work are not just about experiential learning. It's not just about seeing what it's like to practice social work…So it's not only a form of learning for a student, it's crucial that that we know that this student is the right kind of people to become social workers. **(Bourdieu's 'cultural reproduction' theory).** *So it's about their learning from experience, learning on the job, but it's also making sure that they, they can deliver, what we need.* **(Employability)***.* **(Kolb's (1984) 'Experiential learning' theory).** *So it's beneficial to placement officers, as it is to the student. It's a reciprocal, a mutual learning relationship really isn't it.*

(Social work academic (1), interview 5, 5:14, civic, emphasis added)

For GEES academics Yvonne and Helen respectively, the student placement was mainly an employability tool, for employers to 'try before you buy'. This is presented in a positive light by Sims et al (NFER DfE, 2013, p9). In the main, the GEES academics supported work based learning, for its 'professionalisation of the graduate pool' and staff recruitment utility. One GEES academic indicated they had reservations that some student placements, could be exploitative ([8]Perlin, 2011, p3). In their full interview, this GEES academic indicated they could see how a placement could change a student to view things from an environmental conservation perspective.

Yvonne: For the kind of things our students do, which are more internship, umm I think employers are using it as a form of recruitment. So they're using it to

[8] Ross Perlin's (2011) study is on internships.

attract students to be interested in their firm and then the ones they take on. It

gives them a chance to almost kind of vet them, prior to offering them a job.

<div align="right">(GEES academic, interview 9, 6:41, ancient university)</div>

Helen: Interesting, well I mean have you know, some of the, some of the

employers that we've worked with have been sort of very positive, they've they

sort of want to continue that relationship. It depends exactly what the placement

is. But you know ultimately you do have another pair of hands so, you know if

there's piece of work or you know that could easily be sort of given to a student

on a placement, then you've got those sorts of benefits.

<div align="right">(GEES academic, interview 4, 9:02, pre-1992 campus university)</div>

6.4.2 The employer's perspective

The employers cohort (n=10) research interview data supports the majority of the academic cohort's perceptions, regarding student placements. The following six employer's quotes, detail how what students learn whilst on work based placement, contribute towards professionalisation of the graduate pool (Burke et al, 2013, p160). The first quote detailed overleaf from Julie, serves to underscore how experiential learning helps employers to upskill their existing workforce (Beard, 2010, p207).

Julie: It actually increases our capacity in running the service…Which means

we can visit more people and provide a better service during the time they're

with us. But it also helps the staff that I manage because the student that comes

to us, all their learning is fresh, all their theory is fresh. And they very often share

their knowledge and skills with the paid staff as well as the other way round.

(Social work employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 14, 3:42)

Andy's interview identified the employer benefits when the placement student upskills

the existing workforce (Lemanski et al, HEA, 2011, p3). Andy prioritised employability

by recognising the graduate pool is professionalised by student learning on placement

(Pool and Sewell, 2007, p279). Andy described a value added aspect of experiential

learning, which echoed earlier interviews. CV's are enhanced when they demonstrate

student placement experience (AHECS, 2013a, p4; Volunteer Now, 2013, p4).

Andy: I think it brings more to their application, in the terms it adds value to their

CV. And I think an employer gets the benefit of knowing he's recruiting

somebody, who has a greater understanding of what it is he is letting himself in

for…And also a lot of companies…not so much this company, will preferentially

select graduates who have been through the company's placement scheme.

And that's a point not to be underestimated from a graduate's point of view.

(Private sector employer, GEES course, interview 25, 20:27)

Harriet describes a work based learning scenario, which acts to professionalise the

graduate pool. During work based learning, they conduct more case work, they acquire

more skills and knowledge, 'learning by doing'. Here Harriet's discourse is

underscored by Kettle's (HEA, 2013, p5) discussion of employer engagement in work

based learning. Students are introduced to alternative pedagogy, some students had never done group work in a work based setting until their student placement (Lindsay, 2005, p64). Harriet details how students also get to experience interdepartmental or interagency rivalry, mainly caused by competing priorities (Wright et al, 2012, p6).

> *Harriet: I think there's a lot of opportunities that you get from the statutory, which obviously sometimes, there's not that many statutory placements out there…Sometimes health and social care disagree or, there's a health authority and social care looking at different lines. So they see quite a positive approach and still challenges to it, like different systems and different paperwork...And we have a mix of quite straightforward cases to very complex, so we can build the student up naturally, with their progression to prepare them for when they go into the real workforce.*
>
> (Social work employer, statutory agency, interview 15, 5:39)

Hugh had a strong emphasis on employability and professionalisation of the graduate pool. (Eden, 2014, p268; Andrews and Higson, 2008, p411). Here it is manifest as reliability. Hugh indicated they valued compliance with societal norms and values. Here it is manifest in the Hugh's interview discourse, as team member. Hugh aligns with Wilton's (2012) work placements study, by focussing on teamwork. Hugh valued 'interpersonal skills and an awareness of workplace culture' (Wilton, 2012, p605).

> *Hugh: Yeah a placement. The ideal candidate would, reliability, reliability. We rely on volunteer teams, along with the student placement…So reliability is probably the main thing. The ability to work as a team member. That's very*

important. And in this line of practical conservation of work, an element of

physical fitness. Which is perhaps more relevant to us because its practical

work.

(GEES course workers employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 24, 5:54)

Brian gave a contrasting description of what students gain from work based learning. However there was harmony with some key aspects of student placements. Brian indicated that students recognise volunteering as a vehicle, with which to enhance their employability (Darwen and Rannard, 2011, p179). This student employer is a conduit, providing experiential learning and the infrastructure for students to gain work in 'Third Sector' organisations (Volunteer Now, 2013, p2). In this sense, the student volunteering enterprise has subscribed to the employability, professionalisation of the graduate pool narrative, albeit for social wellbeing purposes.

Brian: It depends on the job, if you want to work in the 'Third Sector', then it's

probably quite a good experience. And a lot of our students who come to us do

want to work in the 'Third Sector', and it's something its part of what we do. It's

something we do on 'Third Sector' careers…There's a huge demand to do

meaningful work and work which is aligned to people's values in society.

('Third Sector' employer (2), student volunteering enterprise, interview 39, 16:04)

Amy indicated the organisation valued having a student on placement to fulfil a specific need. Amy's practical experience of student placements supports an earlier Skills Commission (2014) policy document, which identified a need 'to create work-based

routes and apprenticeships' (Skills Commission, 2014, p11). In the process, Amy acknowledges that Kolb's (1984) 'learning by doing' took place. Amy clearly indicates that employability, 'try before you buy' and professionalisation of the graduate pool had taken place. This is manifest by the organisation's confidence and willingness to allow the student placement to manage a project. The organisation benefitted, by effectively having a student resource who could provide a critical overview of their project (Carmichael and Farrell, 2012, p2). Amy acknowledged the organisation benefitted by the student being prepared to appropriately challenge existing work practices. Amy thus indicated that a 'deconstructive' work based incident had taken place, during the student placement (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012, p362).

Amy: In this particular placement, we had a particular objective need, which we wanted fulfilling while they were here. I sat with them, I went through exactly what was required. Because it was like an ongoing project because it had been done previously, this was like the follow up for this particular year...But also there were things that she'd actually brought to the project as well. Oh we'd not really thought about that here. So she actually added to the project.

(GEES course employer, statutory agency, interview 46, 4:39)

6.4.3 The student's perspective

The majority of the student sub-cohort (n=8), strongly indicated they perceived employability as the key gain from participating in a student placement. Student research interview discourse also detailed academic benefits, with students indicating they felt academic grades improve after work based learning. The views of the student

sub-cohort in my study chime with earlier studies, investigating whether there is a correlation between student placements and improved degree results (Tanaka and Carlson, 2012, p77; Mendez, 2008, p3; Gomez et al, 2004, p373). Students also mentioned they were able to write a dissertation in their final year after placement. Students indicated dissertations had both been better due to practice, and that also they had been able to access new ideas (Hepworth et al, HEA 2015, p6).

The student sub-cohort were much more critical of work based learning than the other non-practicing sub-cohorts. Students raised issues of feeling exploited (Gerken et al, 2012, p11), also the placement not being relevant, either to their current learning or future plans. Students who are at the centre of work based learning, are affected in different ways. Students identified issues of placement matching and admissions policies, far more frequently than the other sub-cohorts who are not directly involved in service delivery (Sims et al, NFER DfE, 2013, p10).

Megan indicated how experiential learning changed the way she put theory into practice (Kolb, 1984, 'learning by doing'). Megan recognised she had acquired human capital in the form of confidence and counselling skills, whilst on student placement. Megan's interview discourse acknowledges she felt professionalised, employable, by her work based learning experiences. Megan's reflection is supported by numerous previous studies (Brewis and Holdsworth, 2011, p60; Darwen and Rannard, 2011, p180; Lowden et al, 2011, p17; Brewis et al, 2010, p1; Pool and Sewell, 2007, p278).

Megan: I know I've already said it, but it's made me be more aware of being a professional...There's a lot of counselling skills there to. And I've found that's

been good, because it enabled me to work better with people. I think main thing is the confidence, to get on with it, and to do it, to know you've got this qualification and profession behind you, and what it stands for.

(Student cohort (current social work practitioner), interview 32 18:48, 3-Alpha)

Gordon's interview discourse identifies he has become more confident, able to act independently, he feels he has learnt how to work unsupervised. These particular jobs skills are important, as identified by the NHS Cavendish Review (2013, p22). Gordon described the benefits of work based learning in the form of being able to demonstrate professionalisation, by work skills acquisition. Gordon detailed being able to produce a reference from the Council, which enhanced his CV by being able to demonstrate he'd been on a student placement ([8]Braime and Ruohonen, 2011, p10).

Gordon: There's more definitely, coz I want to work in the transport industry, having all that extra knowledge, was some use to me and the benefit of working was a great boost to my CV. And I went and saw Careers Centres. And the university said that was definitely something to put on your CV. Helped me to stand out definitely when I went to job interviews…I can definitely say to them, as well as doing a dissertation, oh I worked for the Council, I did this, I worked very independently. And I had like a finished report to show them. You know proof that I had gone and done this, you know like a good reference from the Council, as well as you know their happy if someone wanted to contact them.

(Student cohort (GEES course), interview 47, 26:52, 1-Beta)

[8] The Braime and Ruohonen (2011) study is regarding the impact of volunteering.

Briony's interview has a significantly smaller emphasis on employability. Briony received substantial educational benefits in the form of developing soft skills. Briony has acquired human capital, manifest as being able to develop a good relationship with people, whilst keeping a professional distance (Faraday et al, 2011, p11).

Briony's interview discourse demonstrates that experiential learning had given her a balance, between employability and the acquisition of human capital. Professionally and socially, people value other people who can establish and maintain good functioning professional relationships, which are both friendly and productive. Briony's description mirrors various aspects of Brewis and Holdsworth's (2011) study on student volunteering. Essentially, Brewis and Holdsworth (2011) argue, university support during a student placement, will enhance the educational value of the work based learning (Brewis and Holdsworth, 2011, p60).

Briony: I think that, like I said, the confidence that I've got. And I've developed active listening skills, assessment skills, how to complete a holistic assessment. How to probe into somebody's life without appearing to nosy. I mean you've got to be nosy in the job that we do, but doing it in a sensitive way, which I think takes time to perfect. My report writing has got a lot better, my database work. Attention to detail has got a lot better because, purely for the fact that at the end of the quarter we get a report to fill in of any missing data, you have to fill in at the end of the quarter and it's a nightmare. So I just do it as a I go along now {laugh}. Yeah, you know, just general skills related to social work, like I say that are transferable, because you know, I'm not practicing social work at the

moment. But the work that we do I think is very similar to the sort of traditional

social work as it was decades ago, which is great.

(Student cohort (in practice), interview 40 20:24, civic university)

6.4.4 The University Career Advisers (UCAs) perspective

The university career advisers (UCAs) cohort (n=5) were able to articulate their views extensively on issues concerning employability, 'try before you buy' and professionalisation of the graduate pool. Due to their remit of assisting students to find work, either paid or unpaid, the UCAs position has a 'subject benchmarking statements' dimension attached. The role of subject benchmarking statements can be said to 'articulate the attributes and capabilities' of holders of a qualifying award (QAA, 2004, p3). They also include a requirement 'to secure threshold academic standards' (QAA, 2015, p2). Yorke and Knight (2006, p14) recognise that all components of a university including its non-teaching staff, contribute towards employability. The QAA stipulation on reinforcing academic standards has resonance elsewhere. UCAs identified position in subject benchmarking, acts to illustrate that careers staff should be members of a higher education partnership with employers. The following quotes illuminate key aspects of student placements identified by UCAs sub-cohort members.

Polly, an academic who has a formal graduate recruitment UCAs remit, focussed predominantly upon student employability. Polly's interview discourse placed a strong emphasis on how the student placement benefitted the employer e.g. lowering their operating costs in recruiting (Smith et al, HEA 2013, p2). Student benefits came in a

distinct second, other than addressing the issue of 'serious market congestion' (Michaels et al, 2001, p3, cited in Brown et al, 2003, p113; Allen et al, 2013, p437).

For Polly, the main emphasis is clearly that of the student becoming more marketable, competitive, prepared for the world of work (Munro and Livingston, 2012, p1679).

> *Polly: In terms of professional development and enhancing their employability skills to make them more competitive in the graduate market place. So you know, a third of vacancies aren't advertised, employers convert their placement students…Also it allows you to develop employability skills, skills that make you marketable, and those are the skills such as communication, working within a team, project management, organisation. And I think it adds to what you've learnt at academia in terms of you can put the theory that you've learnt into practice, into the placement…(BD: Yeah)…I think it will fast track them, it makes them more competitive, they learn skills that employers are looking for, they understand the workplace, and the culture of work.*
>
> (UCAs, interview 3, 1:35, civic university)

The second and third UCAs quotes in this section are two excerpts from Wendy's research interview. Wendy in excerpt 1, describes how a graduate who has completed a student placement, is viewed by employers as being more employable. As opposed to a graduate who is academically stronger, but has no work based learning experience (Lowden, 2011, p8). Wendy's interview discourse in excerpt 2, explores the professionalisation of the graduate pool aspects of student placements. The

acquisition of job skills and an expectation of compliance with norms and values, in the form of professional standards is also indicated by Wendy (CRAC Vitae, 2011, p7).

Excerpt 1

Wendy: I think it's really important. I don't think students realise the value of it. It's really important. From my background as a graduate recruiter, a student with work experience, whether that be through placements or other things. Usually they'll have a lot more chances, than even the most academic of candidates.

<div align="right">(UCAs, interview 33, 5:10, post-1992 university, 1-Beta)</div>

Excerpt 2

Wendy: I think it's so vast. They get commercial awareness, self-awareness. They'll get some time keeping, prioritising. Hopefully they'll get some real life working skills. It's all around the fact of professionalisation, presenting yourself, dealing with people, interpersonal skills. You know having to understand you've got to deliver, you also got to. And in a way, not like being subservient, but you do have somebody who you report to, who is your manager, which students, often till they go to a work placement, they've not experienced that.

<div align="right">(UCAs, interview 33, 7:24, post-1992 university, 1-Beta)</div>

Carol echoed earlier UCAs interviews regarding student learning by shadowing, observing then practicing work in the real world (Wright et al, 2012, p3). Carol identified that soft skills e.g. active listening, should develop during work based learning, in addition to job skills (Eden, 2014, p267). Carol indicated, the student can develop

specialist knowledge. This can be done by gaining access to certain instruments (BIS, 2012, p4), or repeated exposure during work based learning to recognised best practice (Jones and Warnock, HEA 2014, p18). A student placement can act as a catalyst to encourage academic study. Experiential learning could inform the student of the existence of an important knowledge gap, in a key section of the literature. A relevant Master's dissertation or PhD study could be proposed, which would benefit both the placement organisation and the 'wider society'. This could result in new discoveries of commercial benefit (CRAC Vitae, 2011, p5; Universities UK, 2010, p45).

Carol: They might get to use instruments that perhaps they don't get to use in the institution. And certainly they will learn and develop their knowledge of a particular academic subject. But I think the softer skills are just as important as development in the academic skills and interest that they have. For some student as well I suppose, doing a student placement might give them some ideas for third year dissertations. Or even ask them to repeat the level of study which sparked an interest, or an academic curiosity that they proximately had. They see a task or a job or a project as being done in the real world. And they want to delve a little deeper in there, which inspires Master's or a PhD.

(UCAs (2), interview 26, 4:13, pre-1992 campus university)

6.5 Work placements and the 'wider society'

A definition of the existential 'wider society', is a stakeholder which must ensure appropriate resources are delivered to meet societal needs. In context the existential 'wider society' must produce, sufficient skilled workers to deliver social care for its

vulnerable people and the environment. One of those resources is access to and use of experiential learning, which the 'wider society' needs to skill it's professional people. Thus the existential agency the 'wider society', is a fifth higher education stakeholder. The 'wider society' is an existential stakeholder who represents the public interest. The 'wider society has a strategic oversight governance role, tasked to deliver societal needs. Examples of societal needs clearly in the public interest, are the provision of skilled people to deliver health and environmental care. 'Wider society' agents, employed to deliver these 'public goods', must answer these generic yet critical questions. What skills are needed and how can they be obtained? (British Council, 2014, p9; BMJ: Quince et al, 2014, p3; Brown et al, 2013, p208; Hutton, 2011, p39).

There is a complementary dichotomy between statutory agencies and 'third sector' organisations, both of whom are agents of the 'wider society'. Nobel laureate Josef Stiglitz (2003) said 'many of the best health and education delivery mechanisms have been through NGOs' (Stiglitz, 2003, p39). The policy drivers recently providing impetus for joint closer working, were initially from New Labour's 'third way', followed in 2010 by the coalition's 'Big Society' (Buchs et al, 2012, p3). In the context of various societal challenges, 'third sector' organisations can have a role in service provision which can deliver behavioural change (Kendall, 2011, p3; Lynch et al, LEAPSE Report, 2013, p9; Squirrell, NCCPE 2009, p10). Other examples of changing people's behaviour projects include; promoting how to live in urban areas in an environmentally friendly manner; or developing niche practices and infrastructures (Buchs et al, 2012, p4). Successive governments have pursued increased joint working between 'third sector' organisations and public bodies, wanting to reduce the role of the state overall.

Giddens and Pierson (1998, p173) had a similar view, when they were in conversation with each other discussing various concepts of modernity to include democracy.

> *"A greater emphasis on 'voluntary' behaviour change initiatives can therefore be linked to a more general shift of responsibility for a range of issues, including tackling environmental degradation and climate change."*

(Buchs et al, 2012, p3)

The nature of the 'wider society' has changed dramatically since the turn of the century (European Commission, 2013a, p12). Higher education needs to be agile, able to adapt to the future societal need for community based workers. Higher education must be able to reposition itself, to provide the 'wider society' requirements of key services being delivered at the local level. Melling and Khan's (2013, p191) 'Crossing the road' study is recognised as being a beacon for social and educational community integration. Melling and Khan's (2013, p190) 'inclusive pedagogical practice' research, describes a widening participation initiative to increase access to higher education. The main beneficiaries of the study were a difficult to reach South Asian women minority group. The University of Central Lancaster delivered peer-led community education, producing a 'flagship example of inclusivity' Melling and Khan (2013, p191).

The existential stakeholder the 'wider society' clearly does exist, this is clearly established by the numerous literature sources referenced (See for example: Tholen, 2015, p776; Universities UK, 2015; WEF, 2016, p5). The 'wider society' was not the most prominent feature of the research data (Florian and Pantic, 2013, p8). That

accolade belongs to employability. A number of academics and the employers' sub-cohort mentioned either 'social good' or 'public good'. Community was mentioned, the word society on its own featured, as did general wellbeing.

6.5.1 Stakeholder Perception of the 'Wider Society'

Consciously or subconsciously, approximately 40% of the research cohort indicated the 'wider society'. Tables 9 to 12 detail that during the NVivo10 coding and labelling of the 47 research interviews; Eight from fourteen academics (57%); Three from eight students (37.5%; Four from ten employers (40%); Two from five University Careers Advisers (UCAs) (40%), indicated or mentioned the 'wider society' in their interviews.

Table 9 - Academics (n=14) – Interview Discourse Indicating the 'Wider Society'

Noel – Interview 31 –GEES Academic – Civic University   *[5:45 NVivo10 – This interview connected employability with the 'wider society'].*
Sheila – Interview 12 - Social Work Academic - Pre-1992 Campus University   *[22:32 NVivo10 – the PCF; Professionalisation; Employability; the 'Wider Society'].*
Chris – Interview 18 - Social Work Academic - Pre-1992 University - 1-Beta   *[13:22 NVivo10 – Interview discourse indicating the 'Wider Society'].*
Malcolm – Interview 41 - Social Work Academic - 3-Alpha   *[8:03 NVivo10 – In this interview service users equate to the 'wider society'].*
Abigail – Interview 1 - Social Work Academic - Pre-1992 Campus University

[5:05 NVivo10 – Interview discourse identifies the 'wider society'].
Karen – Interview 5 - Social Work Academic - Civic University (1)
[36:05 NVivo10 – Interview discourse explains the 'wider society' concept].

Table 9 - Academics cont. – Interview Discourse Indicating the 'Wider Society'

Stella – Interview 11 - GEES Academic - Pre-1992 Campus University (2)
[6:57 NVivo10 – Able to state all the stakeholders including the 'wider society' as defined in this study].
Leslie – Interview 21 - Social Work Academic - Civic University
[13:41 NVivo10 – Interview discourse indicates the participant views service users and carers as the 'wider society'].

Table 10 - Students (n=8) – Interview Discourse Indicating the 'Wider Society'

Briony – Interview 40 – Social Work Student – Civic University
[34:50 NVivo10 – To this social work student, service users are the 'wider society'].
Freda – Interview 38 – GEES Student – 1-Beta
[42:10 NVivo10 – Interview discourse acknowledged the 'wider society' stakeholder in Employability terms only].
Gordon – Interview 44 - *GEES Student – 1-Beta*
[18:50 NVivo10 – Identified all 4 stakeholders including 'wider society' as defined by this study. The student verbally described the 'wider society' as 'public'].

Table 11 - Employers (n=10) – Interview Discourse Indicating the 'Wider Society'

Harriet - Social Worker Employer - Statutory Agency - Interview 15

[49:31 NVivo10 – Recognised the wider society stakeholder, which this employer described as the 'wider public benefit']. |
| |
| Florence - 'Third Sector' Employer of both GEES and Social Work Students - Student Volunteering Enterprise (1) - Interview 16

[13:56 NVivo10 – This Third Sector employer identified the 'Wider Society' as a student placement stakeholder]. |
| |
| Mary – 'Third Sector' Organisation - Social Work Employer - Interview 30

[38:09 NVivo10 – This third sector employer of social workers recognised 4 stakeholders as defined by this study, including the 'wider society']. |
| |
| Rhona - 'Third Sector' Organisation - Social Worker Employer - Interview 13

(37:47 NVivo10 – Third sector s/wkr employer viewed 'clients' as the 'wider society']. |

Table 12 - UCAs (n=5) – Interview Discourse Indicating the 'Wider Society'

Polly - University Careers Advisers - Interview 3 - Civic University

[29:52 NVivo10 – This UCAs' interview discourse use of the phrase 'educated workforce', indicates the 'wider society']. |
| |
| Carol – University Careers Advisers - Interview 26 - Pre-1992 campus university (2)

[28:53 NVivo10 - UCAs participant recognised the 'wider society' stakeholder]. |

As examples, two quotes from each of the research sub-cohorts - Academic, Student, Employer and UCAs, which indicate or mention the 'wider society' now follow. The interview discourse present in the empirical data, which indicate stakeholders perceived and/or were discussing the 'wider society', is underlined in each quote.

The 'Wider Society' – GEES Academic Example (civic university)

BD: How do you rate work based experiential learning, for example in student placements?

Noel: You mean - how do I formally assess it. Or do you mean, what value do you place on it?

BD: Either way, it's actually both definitions. It's a bit of a double question really.

Noel: Right. Well I suppose the value I would place on it, would mostly belong in the issue of employability, I think. *[5:45 NVivo10 Employability and the 'wider society'].* So I think it's. If you see the role of education as simply teaching people things. Then it's probably not the best way to further their studies. If you see the role of education as producing a more rounded person. With improved intellectual skills and flexibility, and able to make a contribution to society, then it does that benefit. I feel it does that both making them both potential employees. But also it provides them with set of skills and experiences that you just can't get in the degree. And the educational benefits we're talking about is adaptability, lifetime skills. That learning to work with people and all these kind of things. So that's the value I would place on it. It's kind of contributing to the kind of development of people.

(GEES academic, interview 31 5:45, civic university)

<u>The 'Wider Society' – Social Work Academic Example (pre-1992 campus university)</u>

BD: Are there any other stakeholders you can think of who are affected by students going on student placements? Experiential learning.

Sheila: Ermh, other stakeholders? Well obviously there's the placement itself. So whoever that might be VAS, Futures, MIND, Assist, and obviously statutory sector. So there's so many people really there so it would have potentially have an impact on. So it would be social workers in the team, or the workers in the voluntary sector…It obviously has an impact on service users and carers, because they're interacting with service users and carers. So one of the PCFs is about students behaving in a professional way. So again we expect students at **(redacted)** to be good representatives of the university, and good representatives of the social work profession. So it has an impact on service users in that way, but hopefully they're affecting change in people's lives, or empowering people to affect change themselves. So that hopefully is, you know ultimately what you would wish for. They're interacting with other agencies, you know, again presenting the face of social work to other voluntary sector members and statutory sector representatives, whether it's health, housing, the Police. <u>So across the community really</u>, they have potentially have that ability to influence people and to be good representatives of the profession.

BD: So that's the wider society?

Sheila: <u>Wider society, definitely yeah.</u>

[22:32 NVivo10 – Social Work Academic – the PCF; Emphasis on professionalisation; Employability; the 'Wider Society'].

(Social work academic, interview 12, 22:32, pre-1992 campus university)

<u>The 'Wider Society' – Statutory Employer Social Workers Example</u>

BD: Who do you think benefits from student placements as a whole?

Harriet: Well I think obviously the student benefits, so that's the first one. Coz it's all about their student learning. The placements themselves where they are through us, like I say the team benefits. We have physios, social workers, nurses, occupational therapists, they all benefit for having students, as do support workers. I think, you can expand it further, obviously the university needs to do it, because they benefit, needs to make sure their student has the right learning opportunities. <u>You've obviously got</u> <u>the wider public benefit</u> them benefitting, because you're training a service user, students to become social workers to help the bigger picture. The taxpayers, the fund holders, you know, the stakeholders can go on for quite some time really. If you train the student properly, and if their lucky enough to be in the right field, then the benefits, the ripple effect can be massive. Then if you don't have social workers trained up properly to go out into the field, then a whole service is lost really.

(50m NVivo10 – Social Worker Statutory Employer - Recognised the wider society stakeholder, which they described as the 'wider public benefit').

(Social work employer, statutory agency, interview 15, 49:31)

<u>The 'Wider Society' – GEES and Social Worker Third Sector Employer Example</u>

BD: Who do you think benefits from student placements or student volunteers?

Florence: The students who do the learning, they benefit by volunteering. People with whom they're volunteering with, so the local community they benefit hugely [*13:56 NVivo10 – This Third Sector employer identified 'Wider society' as a stakeholder*]. I

think hopefully <u>the broader society</u>, so not just hopefully the children whom their tutoring, hopefully the fact their working with these children will lead them to engage more with the local community. And we find that in quite a lot of things, they'll come in doing one thing. And they'll come because they're interested in tutoring at one of the schools and then they'll find out about another project and do that. Then they'll find out about another project and do that, and then they'll go on and do something else, so. We have a fine record on that.

('Third Sector' employer, student volunteering enterprise (1), interview 16, 13:56)

<u>The 'Wider Society' – Social Worker Student Example</u>

BD: Who else do you think benefits from student placements?

Briony: Oh what do you mean apart from the students themselves?

BD: Well all the people that benefit.

Briony: <u>Well the service users I guess.</u> Particularly at a time when there's increased referral rates and there's not enough workers to go around in statutory.

[34:50 NVivo10 – To this student, service users are the 'wider society'].

(Social work student (now in practice), interview 40, 34:50, civic university)

<u>The 'Wider Society' – GEES Student Example</u>

BD: Might there be any other stakeholders who might benefit from student placements?
Freda: I mean they do offer apprenticeships, apprenticeships just to ensure that people are coming who are aware of what they're going to be doing. And that we get quite a

high number of apprentices here each year, over 100 every year, through the business, so we get quite a lot of the school. You know work experience, you know the two weeks at the end of the summer, and we get quite a lot of those. Because a lot of work there going to see, for the safety aspect they can't take part, if you know what I mean. So really it doesn't really do anything for the company, I'd say, not in the short term aspect. Maybe in the long term, if you end up employing people maybe. But it's not always going to go down that route *[42:10 NVivo10 – Interview discourse acknowledged the 'wider society' stakeholder in Employability terms only]*.

(GEES Student, (now in practice), interview 38, 42:10, 1-Beta)

The 'Wider Society' – UCAs Example (pre-1992 campus university)

BD: I'm asking a list of questions which have come up elsewhere as well. Who do you think benefits, generally from student placements?

Carol: Well obviously the students do? That's the obvious one. But I think we discussed them at the beginning of the interview, I think employers benefit. The E N T's benefit.

BD: (E N T) Whose that?

Carol: The institutions.

BD: That's three of them. There's one more.

Carol: I guess there's a general society type thing.

[28:53 NVivo10 - UCAs pre-1992 campus recognised the 'wider society' stakeholder].

(UCAs, interview 26, 28:53, pre-1992 campus university (2))

<u>The 'Wider Society' – University Careers Advisers' (UCAs) Example (civic university)</u>

Polly: Well you get a skilled workforce I would have thought. Erm you urr hopefully improve the unemployment figures of the country. You are building a generation fit for purpose. <u>You have an educated workforce.</u>

(29:52 NVivo10 – UCAs, Civic – 'educated workforce' indicates the 'wider society').

(UCAs, interview 3, 29:52, civic university)

A significant proportion of research interviewees clearly view the 'wider society' as all around everyone, all of the time. This is why a majority of people did not indicate or directly mention the 'wider society' in their interviews. There was no inclination too because the 'wider society' is always there. This is particularly true with the social work student strand. Most of their interviews were spent discussing generically, the types of issues they were dealing with and how various situations had arisen. For the social work students and to a lesser extent their academics and employers, they perceived their discourse during work as 'the wider society'.

Employers might view their need to make a profit as the main priority of society, so for them profit motive is the 'wider society'. UCAs could interpret internships, taster sessions or long or short experiential learning work placements as the 'wider society'. A majority of the research cohort indicated, the employability aspect of experiential learning is the most valued part of student placements. I argue that for many people employability, with its unique powers of cultural reproduction is itself the 'wider society' (Burke et al, 2013, p157; Coleman, 1988, s117; Crozier and Reay, 2011, p146).

6.6 Conclusion

The analysis of the research data has revealed a rich tapestry of information, regarding what students learn on work placement, away from university. Data analysis has established that Kolb's (1976, 1981 and 1984) 'experiential learning' theory, is clearly prevalent in higher education. Kolb's (1984, p41) 'learning theory', was acknowledged, by all four of the main stakeholders in my study – universities; employers; UCAs and our students. The interviews conducted establish that the four key higher education stakeholders recognise the existence of the additional existential stakeholder. This is a fifth stakeholder, who has an interest in experiential learning and its effect upon students participating in work placements. They are 'the wider society'.

The academics interview discourse recognised that experiential learning benefits the wider society in a multitude of ways. Experiential learning equips our students with the skills and knowledge required for the education, environmental, health and social care professions (BIS, 2015a, p11; HCPC, 2014, p4). These are essential components in delivering a 'wider society' remit, a social service infrastructure. The focus of the employers on employability is entirely justified. The employers are pivotal, they provide the locations where experiential learning takes place (Kettle, HEA 2013, p5). The 'wider society's' remit of producing enough people with the skills to produce societal needs is being delivered. For example, the 'wider society' needs electrical and chemical engineers in industry, banking and insurance assessors in finances, nurses and teachers in social services. This research has established that experiential learning is at use across multiple disciplines, which are not person-centred professions (Engineering: Blicblau et al, 2016, p31; Computers: Hockings et al, 2008, p193). Many such none person-centred professions also have an important role in civic renewal.

The employers provide the work based learning student placements, where the human resources are produced, which deliver societal needs (Devins, WBLIC 2013, p3). Given the critical importance of the employer's role, they are entitled to make a profit in return for their essential educative contribution. The employers deliver 'work-ready', professionalised workers the 'wider society' needs (QAA, 2014a, p4; Overell et al, 2010, p8). None of the other higher educational stakeholders in this study, perform this societal function. The work place is where students apply what they have learnt at university in practice. Thus employers should receive additional benefits for providing student placements. Students recognised that experiential work based learning placements, are where they acquire the skills they need to become professionalised, employable, so they can deliver 'wider society' needs (Pegg et al, 2012, p6). The UCAs cohort indicated a placement's ability to transform the whole of the student, not just in employability terms, is a societal asset. Work based learning can then produce certain types of workers to perform particular job functions, that society feels should be performed by people with certain attributes. (BBSRC, 2015, p4; Costley and Abukari, 2015, p3; Jones and Warnock, HEA 2014, p11).

Chapter 7 – What are the Constituents of a Good Student Placement?

7.1 Overview

Experiential learning is assumed to develop certain competencies, by allowing the student to observe professional practice being carried out. The student becomes equipped to carry out professional duties, complying with taught practice, 'learning by doing' (Kolb, 1984, p38) requiring less supervision over time. This is a working definition of experiential learning. (DfE, 2016a[9]; Fry et al, 2009, p15). Experiential learning develops skills and personal attributes including self-confidence, which is critical in enabling the student to appropriately question and challenge practice (QAA, 2012c, p16; Fleming et al, 2009, p190; Fry et al, 2009, p16). Student placements often involve interaction with other actors and agencies, mainly people, whilst learning at work. Experiential learning is taking place in a realm where there is constant social interaction with other actors. In essence, student placements has the potential to provide psycho-societal experiential learning in a work based environment

(HCPC - Chambers et al, 2015, p21[10]).

This second analysis chapter considers how all stakeholders consider the CD/EN relationship. There are studies on teaching-research higher education nexus. These are different relationships, geared towards conducting research on pedagogies to improve teaching (Healey et al, HEA 2014a, p20; Annala and Makinen, 2011, p3; Wareham, HEA 2008, p4; Jenkins, 2003, p3; see also [11]White, 2012, p6 - ERS).

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[9] The DfE 'Get into Teaching' campaign is the latest central government initiative to encourage people to join the teaching profession. The bulk of the process is online.

[10] The HCPC regulates 16 health and social care professions including social workers. 'Preparation for Practice', is a research report commissioned by the HCPC, conducted by a research team based at Kingston University and St George's, University of London. The report's main objective is to assist the HCPC, by establishing the national assessment criteria to use, when deciding a professional worker's fitness to practice.

[11] White's (2012) study is regarding various aspects of employer responsive provision (ERP). ERP has a similar approach, both in ethos and operationally, to a locally owned curriculum design/employability nexus (CD/EN).

My description of a CD/EN relationship, focusses on improving the academia and personal development of the student. These are student benefits generated by collaboration between higher education institutes (HEIs) and employers, an emphasis not so prevalent in the literature search. Here the university, the student and the employer interact with each other, along various points of a student learning journey continuum. This chapter will fully discuss the curriculum design/employability nexus, detailing how the relationship is perceived across the research cohort. In this chapter I explore the critical question, what are the constituents which make a good effective student placement. What factors should be present on the learning landscape, so experiential learning educates our students in practice. In essence, what makes a good student placement?

7.2 Introduction

This second analysis chapter is presented in six sections. The chapter begins by discussing the pedagogical aspects of experiential learning, using student placements as a learning mechanism. The first section provides critical analysis of the infrastructure, the constituents which need to be present so experiential learning can take place effectively e.g. prior preparation. The second section explores the makeup, the character of the placement organisation. The third section details how an emphasis on the employability agenda, is perceived by all the study's stakeholders as an essential constituent of student placements. The fourth section explores relationships between HEIs, employers and students, which I would describe as a curriculum design/employability nexus. Section four provides description from numerous research participants of the existence of a curriculum design/employability nexus (Jenkins and Healey, HEA 2005, p10). The fourth section provides an analysis of research interviews, which detail how people felt a curriculum design/employability

nexus relationship should work. A number of research participants indicated, there would be educational benefits from increased employer contribution in what and how the student learns (Lemanski et al, 2011, p4). Interview discourse suggests the relationship is incomplete, not fully operational in delivering its remit. Section four will establish that the curriculum design/employability nexus, is at various stages of development at different universities (Healey et al, HEA 2014a, p9). The fifth section discusses whether the effect of experiential learning changes, if the student placement locations differ. The sixth section summarises key aspects of my research, identifying the main constituents of effective work based experiential learning placements.

7.3 Student placements as a learning mechanism

7.3.1 Professional interests

Lemanski et al (2011, p7) argue that the student's professional interests should be considered, when finalising a work based experiential learning plan. The student and employers' cohort recognised, when placements had their shared interests, work and learning outcomes were more likely to be met. Academics were also aware that the 'nature of the student' could influence people's perception of experiential learning pedagogy. Brennan and Little's (1996, p2) CHERI report remains relevant today, in identifying there has to be a closer integration between higher education and work. This suggest that where possible, work placements should try to match the student's professional interests, identified by their course of study (Kettle, HEA 2013, p8). Brennan and Little (1996) also argue there should be negotiation between the higher education institutes (HEI), the employer and the student, which is the basis definition of a CD/EN (CHERI Report, 1996, p6). The UCAs cohort also support a policy of a student centred learning approach to work placements (Healey et al, HEA 2014b, p8).

Lowden et al (2011, p19), Pegg et al (HEA, 2012, p13), [12]NACE (2014, p5) and [13]AGCAS (2016) all indicate that career services policies should be tailored towards delivering placement opportunities, which include the student's professional interests. They act to underscore the need for placement fit. These numerous complementary sources act to remind us of a perennial policy debate; what should students learn at university and subsequently on work placements. Trevor is a statutory agency employer, his interview discourse provides a useful indicator, from his previous experience of experiential learning of placement matching. Student placements will run more effectively if the HEI learning module outcomes and the student's professional and personal interests, have been fully taken into account.

*Trevor: I really do. From the point of view of giving them, hopefully a bit more of an insight, into what we want to do. When I, when I, I go back again, to when I was 16 or 17 and I did a week's work experience, that decided me on my career. So that was it for me. So I thought, no I like this, I'll do that. So it gave me the impetus to then go in the direction I followed and again. Hopefully with **(redacted),** because of his area of interest, which was the area of interest that we were following. Hopefully, that doesn't, that encourages him to follow that path. Because as I say, I can also imagine a situation where someone might say well actually no, that's not for me.*

(Statutory sector employer, GEES courses, interview 20, 31:02)

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[12] NACE, the National Association of Colleges and Employers, are the American equivalent of a guild of University Career Advisors. NACE has a similar role to HECSU.
[13] AGCAS, The Association of Graduate Advisory Services, is the professional body for careers and employability professionals working with higher education students, graduates and prospective entrants to higher education.

Trevor's interview discourse acts to capture some important key points regarding student placements. There might be a match between a project the placement organisation is working on, and a subject the placement student would like to research. The placement experience helps to inform the student if they would be happy to remain in this particular line of work, or should they consider a different career choice (Graduate Recruitment Bureau online, 2016). Often this can be done without the student having to change their undergraduate degree course. This is particularly important, especially when there can be administrative difficulties with some HEIs, if the student want to change their degree (UCAS Official Website, 2016). There are also ramifications regarding tuition fees, which are applicable in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Experiential learning enables students to learn about themselves. Trevor suggests that the 'try before you buy' aspect of experiential learning, benefits the student, the HEIs and employers equally (Quirke, AHEAD April 2016, p19).

7.3.2 Student level of commitment and motivation

The employer cohort recognised that a student's level of commitment to the placement, had a substantial influence on the extent to which the student learnt (Lilischkis, SepHE 2015, p21). Employers indicated students who were keen had sponge like learning properties, able to absorb new ideas on a subject. This appeared to be more so with the three GEES students, all of whom had to arrange their own work based learning placement. Although the sample size is very small, there appears to be substantial pedagogical benefits in undergraduates organising their own placements. Some of those benefits are unequally distributed, with non-traditional students not reaping all the rewards of having completed a student placement (Allen et al, 2013, p432; Eden, 2014, p268; Jung, 2011, p156; Lowden et al, 2011, p18).

Gordon: They've got to be a self-starter. They've got to be motivated to go out and do the work themselves. And there's not a lot of people who can do that at the moment, communication. You could have somebody go in there and it's quite easy to be kind of lazy, and not, you know, do the work. You have to motivate yourself, to get this done today, research this find out that.

(GEES course student now in work, interview 44, 6:25, post-1992 university, 1-Beta)

Trevor: And I suppose that comes down to personality as well doesn't it. Because if they don't see it or engage with the process of the organisation. They're going to find the process quite hard. I think it's a willingness isn't it just to sort of soak it in really, soak it up and take the benefit out of it.

(Statutory sector employer GEES course, interview 20, 11:07)

7.3.3 Prior Preparation

Participants indicated the importance of student preparedness, so students have some basic skills at the outset of the placement. One approach to preparation is in the form of using the pedagogical approach of peer learning to solve lack of self-belief, prior to students going on placement (Keenan, HEA 2014, p8). The placement attaches great importance to developing good communicative skills and also networking, indicating that a student needs to engage with people. Essentially this is 'the nature of the student', which is manifest as a student who is more open, more sociable, will benefit earlier from a student placement. In comparison a student who is more reticent, less likely due to their disposition, to venture out into the unknown, may be assumed to be

less likely to learn; a student who may need more support and encouragement on placement, to come out of their comfort zone and engage with new ideas (Eden, 2014, p266). Various participants indicated, universities would benefit by preparing students for work based placements. Students are going to receive active learning, not the passive learning they have become accustomed to at university. Experiential learning work placements will remain valid, even when increased active learning e.g. virtual learning environment (VLE), role play and simulation have become the norm in HE.

Barry: So I think the key factors are, preparation prior to the placement. So is the university in question just sending the student out randomly, to various employers, with no preparation? Preparation in regards to, how they conduct themselves in the workplace. Preparation in how it dovetails back into the assignment or they module they are working on…preparation, that's key.

(UCAs, interview 29, 8:17, pre-1992 campus university)

7.3.4 The character of the student placement organisation

The placement can provide experiences, which inform the student of aspects of their chosen profession which they previously weren't aware of. In turn, this new knowledge can precipitate a change in direction or a decision to leave the profession altogether. This is similar to a process of 'unlearning' (Argyris, 1990, p4), or 'antilearning' (Argyris, 1994, p349), where people adopt 'defensive routines' (Argyris, 1994, p344), not being able to abandon certain values, despite current changing circumstances. Not being willing to question organisational norms and beliefs, resulting in 'competency traps', because outdated practices are not being discarded (Coombs et al, NIHR 2013, p1).

Heidi: Because it was such a poor placement. I didn't get anything out of it. I was used as a support worker basically. It wasn't a social work placement, students shouldn't have gone from a social work background there. The first one was borderline good…Even though it wasn't as good as my final placement, I still did get something out of it, so I wouldn't really change the first one. The third one was fine. Maybe could have been supported a little bit more. I was thrown in the deep end a little bit, but I coped. And I was given some really complex cases that I don't think a student should have had. But I still managed.

(Former social work student, currently in practice, interview 28 26:03, 3-Alpha)

For work placements to be effective it is essential that the work-based environment is supportive. This is especially so, if the student perceives they have observed bad practice, which the organisation normalises as a matter of routine (Williams et al, 2011, p17). Karl's experience highlights this different aspect of 'the nature of the placement'. Karl was surprised by what he perceived as a lackadaisical approach, during his placement, with the acceptance of inefficient working practices. In a different part of his interview, [14]Karl complained of being exploited on placement (Hammersley et al, HEA 2013, p18; OECD IMHE: Henard et al, 2012, p35). Karl's perception of a certain amount of exploitation is echoed by Perlin's (2011, p3) 'Intern Nation' work. Perlin (2011, p4) indicates how some organisations exploit placement students, by giving them non experiential learning tasks to do, such as driving the boss around.

[14] Karl perceived his student placement to have been unnecessarily prolonged. Karl felt the placement organisation wanted him to complete some GEES course valuable I/T work, without paying a worker a salary, or a contractor a consultancy fee.

The reality of that placement experience is the student did not receive any experiences of their chosen profession, or opportunities for 'learning by doing' (Kolb, 1984, p41).

> *Karl: So people used to put the ^apostrophes there, and knew that people weren't actually doing any work. But it did sort of frustrate me because I found, within the local government things seemed to take a long time, because that's almost because there's less work being done, in terms of a private employer.* **(^BD: The research participant indicated, the apostrophes were used to indicate on some form of attendance register, that someone was working from home. It was felt, they weren't actually doing any work).**

(GEES student, interview 45, 15:40, 1-Beta)

7.4 Employability as perceived by participants

In the interviews I conducted, apart from the academic cohort, there was little distinction between 'soft' skills, employability, or human and/or social capital. For the three remaining cohorts, these concepts became blurred. Soft skills referred to empathy, active listening, people and life skills. Team work, diplomacy, tact and 'fitting in' also feature strongly. In practice, in the perception of the majority of research participants, soft skills and social capital were one and the same thing. This means that the acquisition of social capital and 'soft skills', are interchangeable as terms, for most of the participants in my cohort. This has affected social capital or 'soft skills' NVivo10 coding interpretation (Appendix item 16). There have been similar findings in recent studies elsewhere, where participants discussed soft skills e.g. team work, but described in employability terms (British Council, 2014, p13; Brewer, ILO 2013, p6).

As discussed earlier, social capital is the network of relationships different people have, and the level of support they give and receive (Coleman, 1988, s102). On the other hand, soft skills are people's personal attributes, individual competencies, for example listening skills, or being able to motivate a team. As such, human capital, people's direct skills and knowledge, or social capital, people's support networks with other people, are both differing concepts. The following quotes illustrate how respondents defined 'soft skills':

Megan: See, so you've got to be very empathic, look at things from the other person's point of view, and don't take things personally. Because sometimes people say and do things, they don't normally mean.

(Social work student, in practice, interview 32, 10:50, pre-1992 university 3-Alpha)

Ian: There are the softer skills around verbal communication, starred communication and body language, and interacting with other people who are more senior or junior to you. Team working, there's all that activity around that.

(UCAs, interview 6, 41:46, pre-1992 university, 3-Alpha)

Trevor: It's always been a positive I'd say. The negative side I wouldn't say, and that's a skill, another skill that they develop, to make sure that they don't embarrass people.

(Statutory agency GEES courses employer, interview 20, 44:23)

Employability skills were manifest in all responses, and particularly dominated the students' accounts. Jenny, a UCAs, succinctly encapsulates discourse, which is interchangeable between terms. *"Jenny: Oh emotional intelligence **BD: Yeah.** Jenny: Yeah, yeah. **BD: Yeah.** Jenny: Yeah. Ah that. That to me comes under employability skills"* (UCAs, interview 2 14:53, civic university). When the acquisition of skills and/or soft skills was mentioned during interviews, it was often bound up in employability terms. Earlier discussion establishes employability means having or acquiring the job and/or soft skills, to work productively in most business organisations (CIPD, 2015, p7; Yorke and Knight, HEA, 2006, p6). Experiential learning, 'learning by doing' is confirmed as an appropriate pedagogical tool, with which to acquire 'job ready' skills (Bonesso et al, 2015, p2: Kettle, HEA 2013, p7).

My research indicates that due to the causal factor of employability, mention of student development, or either human or social capital is minimal. Employability can be defined as people with skills, knowledge, competencies and personal attributes with which they can obtain, transfer and maintain employment (El Mansour and Dean, 2016, p41; CIPD, 2015, p10). Employers indicated they were hardly interested in other factors. If someone had the job skills to perform well, other aspects might feature but were secondary. These sentiments mirror findings in the CIPD (2013, p13) 'jobs mismatch' study. This ethos is understandable from the employers and to a lesser extent the UCAs. What was striking in my research was that a majority within the academic and student cohorts, were equally focussed upon employability. Employability was pervasive in my study, having a marked affect upon all the research cohort. The main causal factors appear to be, universities must be seen to perform well on employability type key indicators e.g. student destination after graduation.

Cruikshank (2016, p9) argues of the existence of an 'audit culture' in higher education and provides a critique. This 'audit culture' appears to promote employability, above student development, becoming more socially aware, benefitting the 'wider society'. Cruikshank (2016) also indicates that neoliberalism in the form of 'audit culture', acts to stifle innovative projects which promote community engagement, without direct profit. The academics also recognised that experiential learning has pedagogical benefits, in personal development and reflective practices. Analysis of academic's discourse revealed a degree of alignment with European Commission's (EC) 'non-formal learning' study (EC, 2014, p11 and p12). An EC (2014, p12) study, which demonstrates that knowledge can be gained in non-traditional ways.

Stella a GEES course academic, interprets an international placement as 'non-traditional' and very beneficial. Stella's interview discourse underlines the main thrust of Passarelli and Kolb's (2012, p137) 'promote student learning and development in programs of education abroad' study. Stella valued employability and student development equally, indicating both these learning outcomes were achieved as a result of experiential learning on student work placements.

> *Stella: OK. I think student placements are absolutely critical in terms of student's future employability…We're also for example very encouraging for our students doing something like studying abroad, and that comes into the broad remit of placements…Firstly I think they learn much more from them, I'm thinking in terms of their own personal development.*

> (GEES academic, interview 11 1:45, pre-1992 campus university)

For the student cohort, it was equally clear from their interviews, their primary objective was employability, being able to find work after completing their degree. Even for the students who understood and valued the acquisition of human and social capital, (not all the student cohort did), the student placement was predominantly about becoming employable (Barrett, 2014, p57; Kamerade and Paine, 2014, p259). Some students did detail acquiring skills which overlap with competencies and personality traits, which experiential learning helps to develop (NACE, 2013, p8: Gillis, 2011, p6).

The University Career Advisers (UCAs) sub-cohort further reinforced how employability is the predominant consideration of student placements. The UCAs cohort explained the importance of soft skills as part of the student's personal development. UCAs also recognised that employability had a key role in the 'marketisation' of degree courses. The UCAs discourse reflects recommendations from Tomlinson's (HEA 2014, p7 and p8) 'student attitudes to higher education' study.

Carol: My feeling is courses with placements will have better employability outcomes. In the sense that, more students will get graduate jobs. And I think there's probably a fair amount of evidence around to support that.

(UCAs, interview 26, 27:06, pre-1992 campus university)

A student placement can be defined as an assessed, integral part of an academic programme, where the tasks undertaken relate to the undergraduate degree course (Jones and Warnock, HEA 2014, p3). Placements are planned, structured to deliver desired learning outcomes, which involves the student in on the job training,

experiential learning (Lowden et al, 2011, p2). There should be a composite level of supervisory management, to ensure the student placement works well for the organisation, and the university. This would be delivered by a fully functioning area wide CD/EN, as indicated by research participants in this study. The placement is intended to be an opportunity for the student to discover what skills are required when working in a particular trade or profession. These issues would be delivered by prior preparation and consideration of placement fit. These are two associated themes indicated by a substantial proportion of the cohort in their interviews (European Commission, 2013b, p6). Whether the student placement is with a 'Third Sector' organisation, a private for profit enterprise, or a public body, this generic description applies ([15]Brown et al, 2013, p204). I argue that with this approach, 'not for profit' voluntary 'Third Sector' placements and statutory agency work placements are virtually identical. Especially when both types of work based experiential learning locations are unpaid. A significant minority of the research cohort, did not know what a 'Third Sector' organisation was.

BD: Do you actually know what a 'Third Sector' organisation is?

Carol: Is it sort of charities?

BD: Yes.

Carol: Yes, that kind of. To be completely honest Ben I have no sense of that at all. I can't think of, yeah I can't think of any. I've no experience of any, where students have come back and been noticeably different.

(UCAs, interview 26, 13:35, pre-1992 campus university)

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[15] Brown et al' (2013, p202) study was with adult learner-workers based at a 'third sector' social enterprise.

Chris: 'Third Sector' I don't use it. The reason I don't use 'Third Sector' is the basis. To me it makes an assumption they are down the pecking order, whereas actually the local authority, private and voluntary sectors are equal. That's why I never use it, so they're up there. And actually as providers of service, are in some areas a higher provider now then the statutory organisation. Once they start on placement, they recognise, what I said was I'll use as an example what I said earlier, fostering and adoption.

(Academic, social work, interview 18, 40:25, pre-1992 university, 1-Beta)

There is another policy driver encouraging a shift from experiential learning received from voluntary organisations, now to be delivered by the private sector (CIPD, 2014, p10; Kettle, HEA 2013, p13). The state's policy makers have indicated a clear intention to reduce the state's size, in all but the most acute critical cases. This includes state provision of criminal justice, education, youth services, health and social care, the privatisation of which, is already in full swing (Canavan, 2009, p53). The state and the 'wider society', must continue to deliver people with the skills to perform these societal functions. Sheila overleaf, a social work academic describes the effect of the current landscape of a receding state (Brewis and Holdsworth, 2011, p167). Higher education students must receive work based experiential learning, with the agencies who have the remit to deliver social infrastructure. The 'wider society' (Bracken and Bryan, 2010, p23) needs to know, how various societal needs e.g. elderly people care or energy efficient housing, will be delivered in the advent of the shrinking state. Julie overleaf, a national 'Third Sector' organisation employer, indicates how her organisation delivers a social remit, and is an experiential learning work placement provider.

Julie's interview informs us of one of the reasons behind the recent national impetus, to increase private sector work based student placement provision.

> *Sheila: So that gives them experience of working both in the voluntary and the statutory sector. And now I think that that is important, partly because the statutory sector is shrinking, and a lot of the contracts are going out to the private and voluntary sector.*

> (Social work academic, interview 12 3:06, pre-1992 campus university)

> *Julie: Not only do they get experience of our organisation, but also the companies we work in partnership with. And they learn a lot more about the relationships between the partnership and the local authority as well. Because our service is funded by the local authority, so I would say 90% of our referrals come from a local authority social worker. So the student gets to see the other side of the referrals to what happens. Once it comes over, they get to see both sides of it.*

> (Third sector social work employer, interview 14, 5:22)

The current impetus towards employability, is a policy driver which necessitates student placements in the work place, as opposed to with the voluntary sector. Not only are there more work based opportunities, the experiences are meaningful, the student learns of societal considerations regarding their chosen profession. There is contestation of this analysis as the voluntary sector argue, volunteering work is also meaningful. Lowering student engagement with the voluntary sector, reduces the

possibility of encountering deconstructive work experience, intentionally carried out by a radical 'Third Sector' organisation. Pedagogically, work based learning focusses upon how a service is delivered, with the student learning, by experiencing what skills are required to produce the service (Ezer and Overall, 2013, p61; Annette, 2010, p45). Reflective skills are developed to enable the student to critically evaluate service delivery ([16]Doucet - The Education Partners online, June 2016; see also SEL - social and emotional learning, WEF, March 2016, p4 and p7). Also how to effectively challenge the effects of various organisational policies or working practices (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012, p388; Mac Dermott and Campbell, 2016, p32).

> *Gordon: I think there was a meeting set up at the start, with the university and employer. It was up to me then if I wanted to be involved in…Then they said this is the kind of general area, where looking into we need someone to help with it, so.*

(GEES course former student, in work, interview 44, 21:50, post-1992, 1-Beta)

> *Bryony: And again you learn a lot about yourself through doing that, and how you perceive things. How you work through doing that reflection really. So yeah it's a big thing for universities they're always saying reflect. We've got to, you can't just reflect you've got to critically reflect so think you know about how, you're not just saying well this happened, you've got to get into the nitty gritty.*

(Student, (working in social work practice), interview 43, 1:19:10, civic)

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[16] Armand Doucet received the Canadian Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence in 2015.

There is a civic premium, the university is working with the community to benefit the 'wider society'. Universities via experiential learning contribute towards civic renewal and economic growth in the local community, helping to bridge 'town' and 'gown'. Students also experience a difference in emphasis between working for a statutory agency and working for a 'third sector' organisation on a community project. Learning by service provision is an educational experience, which helps the student to contextualise and gain further understanding of their degree course content (Birtwistle et al, 2016, p434; Garner and Rouse, 2016, p27; QAA, 2014b, p2).

Malcom: Some students privileged above the academic learning. I think we need to work more closely with employers, about what's included in there…And I think tensions very often with local authorities, who think there is only one way of doing social work, is that kind of statutory role…But lots also end up on 'Third Sector', NGOs, voluntary sector, Women's Refuge. Where educating not just on statutory social work, where educating for that but also for a range of other professions. So yep, I think that's the important bit.

(Social work academic, interview 41, 39:08, 3-Alpha)

A work place environment, with an ethos of delivering more for less and efficiency savings, enables students to develop employability personal attributes (CIPD, 2012, p4). Students are less likely to encounter this organisational approach, common in 'not for profit' statutory agencies, with a voluntary organisation (CBI, 2015, p9). University graduates who can demonstrate they have relevant work experience, are highly valued by employers (Yiend et al, 2016, p2).

Roisin: And that this organisation gets to work in partnership with the university and the council and things like that. It makes them a better university to be honest, because it's something you look for when you're applying. Do a 100% of the students get a placement? If the university can say that every single student for the past 10 years had a placement, you want to go there. Which increases the profits for the university coz more people want to join the course.

(Student, (currently on social work placement), interview 36, 38:47, 3-Alpha)

7.5 The curriculum design/employability nexus and student placements

My research has reaffirmed the existence of a relationship between higher education institutes (HEIs), employers and students, which I would describe as a curriculum design/employability nexus (CD/EN) (Jones et al, 2015, p1). The research interviews identified a number of actual and potential operational mechanics and learning benefits that a CD/EN would bring to the student learning journey (QAA, 2012a, p11). Interview discourse from across all four sub-cohorts, indicate that a CD/EN exists or should exist in their area regarding student placements. Operationally, CD/EN initiatives are at varying stages of development (Lowden et al, 2011, p15).

The research cohort identified a number of benefits that would be obtained, when a CD/EN was up and running in their area (BIS, 2015a, p14). These ranged from operational mechanics such as public liability certificates and induction course, to learning benefits e.g. placement fit. Participants identified there were benefits if all people knew how the placement would run, what would be included, the nature of the student or the organisation, what people expected (Yorke and Knight, HEA 2006, p14).

The employer cohort were the most vocal in support of the CD/EN. The employers wanted to have more influence over what students learnt, curriculum design (QAA, 2012d, p10). Also how students learnt, the pedagogical aspects of the student placement (Burke et al, 2013, p157; Healey, 2013, p2). The employers were very keen for some form of CD/EN initiative to come to fruition, especially if there were problems on placement (Murphy et al, 2016, p26). Employers also mentioned how research opportunities could be created which helped all three parties, in partnership work (Healey et al, 2014a, p23 and p30).

The UCAs cohort were also very supportive of the CD/EN concept. The UCAs discourse indicated that CD/EN initiatives were at a more advance stage, then the other cohorts. This suggest that some of the universities have got a CD/EN in some academic disciplines but not others. Also that there are regional differences in how CD/EN initiatives are interpreted and developing (BIS, 2015a, p125 and p126). Only the UCAs cohort showed such positivity, one causal factor being they have access to such information. The student cohort are very supportive of a CD/EN, like the employers and the UCAs, they recognised the relationship would help increase their employability. The students also recognised that the employer's desire for the professionalisation of the graduate pool, would be enhanced by a CD/EN (Blair and Manda, 2016, p47). A number of students mentioned they wanted more three way meetings, with the university and employers during their placement ([16]SUUG: Brooks, 2015). This was to receive placement feedback and to discuss potential research dissertation projects (Bamber, 2012, p9; BIS, 2011a, p18; QAA, 2013b, p5).

[17] SUUG is the Students Union University of Greenwich submission to the QAA 2015 Higher Education Review. Alex Brooks was President of University of Greenwich Student Union (2013-2015) and the Lead Student Representative, when SUUG was liaising with the QAA.

Warren is a social work academic at an ancient university. Warren values the partnership building aspect of a CD/EN, for research opportunities and employability. Warren's discourse harmonises with earlier studies, which indicate a CD/EN is a valuable resource to utilise when addressing difficulties which can arise during student placements (Brennan and Little, 1996, p128; Little and Harvey, HECSU 2006, p32; TLRP: Brown, 2009, p8).

> *Warren: But it could all go wrong, if we get some incompetent students getting some half-baked ideas going off and doing unreliable things…And again in my experience have that good relationship where you've got a supervisor and a cohort working alongside on the students, as well as their industry, their link.*

(Social work academic, interview 7, 30:11, ancient university)

Gerald is very supportive of the CD/EN relationship, which to him is quite well advanced at his university, although not fully operational. Gerald gave a full description of numerous educational benefits of a CD/EN, mainly in module validation terms. For Gerald, experiential learning enabled students to acquire key competencies towards employability. A CD/EN is used as a conduit to keep several employers informed as to how the graduate pool will be skilled ([18]The Green Program, 2016; ILO, 2014, p3). Gerald discusses how employers are regularly consulted, as are the UCAs. However Gerald does not mention students as a nexus partner. Gerald's interpretation of a CD/EN focusses on employers having an input in curriculum design. The university benefit by employer validation of a taught module (Costley and Abukari, 2015, p11).

[18] The Green Program is an experiential education program. The Green Program intends to embed a 'green educational model' in HE curricula with partner universities.

Gerald: The other side of it is, in terms of validating a programme. Obviously, the key skill sets do evolve over time, and the benefit of working with employers, is when you can build up a list of employers you work with. Next time you come to validate your programme…I make sure that they're developing the right sort of skills that they expect as an employer…We involve the career development specialist from the Careers Centre.

(GEES course academic, interview 10 16:15, 1-beta)

Carol is a UCAs cohort member. Carol talked about the haphazard nature of CD/EN development at some universities (Kolb, 2015, p6). Carol concurs with Gerald that is it necessary to liaise with employers to discuss curriculum design. Carol's interview informs us that at her HEI, Employer Boards have been established in some disciplines. However Carol indicates there is uncertainty as to how much if any input, employers have on curriculum design. In Carol's description of a CD/EN, facets of curriculum design and employability were being addressed, with little happening on student development (Helyer, 2015, p18; [19]The Edge Foundation: Baker, 2014, p22; Watts, HEA 2006, p10).

Carol: Colleagues from Management School will meet with employers and discuss curriculum content, discuss what students have done, and then what they weren't able to do. So my feeling is, some of those discussion go on informally. Management also have an employer board, but I'm not sure what kind of influence those employers would have within the curriculum.

(UCAs, interview 26 24:35, pre-1992 campus university)

[19] The Edge Foundation is an educational charity who are chaired by Lord Baker of Dorking, who is Kenneth Baker formerly UK Secretary of State for Education.

Wendy's interview emphasised the employability aspects of a CD/EN. The focus being the university needs to deliver professionalisation of the graduate pool, by linking employers to the academic courses, allowing input for curriculum design (Tholen et al, BERA 2016, p511). Wendy was critical of her university, for essentially living in a bubble, not being aware what was going on in the real world. Wendy indicated that some successful graduates with the prerequisite skills, didn't have the 'skills of graduates' employers' desired (Tholen et al, 2016, p508). There was little emphasis for a CD/EN to provide opportunities for student development (UKCES, 2015, p118).

Wendy: I think they should in a broader sense. To us to have an understanding what employers want. And how it links to our courses. And I think sometimes institutions can be slightly behind what's going on, in the real world. Whereas if they linked in with employers, then they would understand what's going on.

(UCAs, interview 33 26:35, 1-Beta)

Amy is a statutory agency employer of GEES course workers, whose experience of engaging with a CD/EN is very positive. Amy's interview discourse describes how a CD/EN should work for all three parties concerned. Amy clearly has a different emphasis to the Academic and the UCAs, the university and the student as the priority, not the employer (Purcell et al, [20]FUTURETRACK, 2013, p3; Watts, HEA 2006, p7; Harvey and Knight, HEA 2003, p6). Amy's interview supports the earlier indication, the nature of the organisation substantially influences the success of work based learning (BIS, 2014b, p8; European Commission (EC), 2013b, p4: Nixon et al, HEA 2006, p10).

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[20] The FUTURETRACK project is a longitudinal study looking at the process of higher education (HE) in the UK. FUTURETRACK considers full time HE applicants from 2006, studying various aspects of their undergraduate transition post-graduation.

Amy: Yeah we had. We give them like a spec of what we would be doing, what would be achieved by that. For them to approve, to make sure it was the type of thing they want it to be involved.

BD: Did you liaise with the student prior to the placement, to be sure we knew what should happen?

Amy: Yes she was happy with that, she knew about the project anyway. So she was able to work with it and she was happy with that. **BD: That's working well.** *Amy: It was very good.*

(GEES course employer, statutory agency, interview 46, 23:30)

Julie a social work employer, experience of a CD/EN is somewhat different to Amy's, not being as positive. Julie indicates there is a CD/EN in the area where her agency delivers its service, but it's not fully operational. Julie is critical of universities for not being proactive in working with employers to deliver a CD/EN. Julie feels the university is the agency who should makes first contact. Julie gives no indication of the wider educational benefits of a functioning CD/EN, e.g. increased research (General Medical Council (GMC), 2015, p6: Shaari and Lee, 2012, p365; Lowden et al, 2011, p18).

Julie: And that would, I think, social work and universities in particular need to push that because we've, we're quite keen to take on students…But they haven't been in touch with us, to see if we can take any on. It tends to be us chasing them rather than the other way round.

(Social work employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 14, 3:42)

Briony is a former social work student, now working in practice for a 'third sector' organisation. Briony's interview discourse reveals some disappointment with the current development of the CD/EN, which is present in her area. Briony expresses a vision of how a CD/EN should work, which enhances the learning experience of the student, so they can apply theory to practice (Healey et al, 2014b, p48; OECD: Puukka et al, 2013, p18; Basseh et al, 2014, p8). Briony was clearly wearing two hats during her research interview, November 2014. Briony has the dichotomy of being a former social work student who graduated in July 2014, alongside her current employer role in social work practice, line managing staff. Briony's twin perspective is evident in her interview, wanting increased liaison between placement organisations and universities, for the purpose of student development.

> *Briony: So it would be worthwhile I guess in having the organisations who take placements and go in. And may be explain a little bit about how the law works on the ground, how theory works on the ground and things like that. I think we should definitely have more, like I say more conversations with the Universities, and link up with them a bit better.*

> (Student cohort (in practice), interview 40, 40:10, civic university)

Karl did not understand issues such as the acquisition of human capital, or the concept of a CD/EN, yet his interview is quite profound. Karl provides a pragmatic description of how a CD/EN should work, from the student perspective (BMJ: Quince et al, 2014, p4; Kettle, HEA 2013, p11). Karl valued the placement fit activity, which happened at the beginning of his placement, but is critical of no further contact. Karl indicates he

felt academically disadvantaged as regards his learning, because there was no CD/EN in place. Karl wanted access to recent placement reports. A learning instruments which would be obtainable from the cohort's generic interpretation of a CD/EN.

> *Karl: No the only time I met the person in charge of the module was at the beginning, when we were given the list of criteria. And at the end when I handed the paperwork in.*
>
> **BD: Right do you think you benefitted from that. A three way meeting.**
>
> *Karl: I did at the beginning. It would have been nice to meet in the middle. There was no structured meeting, so I went to him, I sourced it myself. I went to him I said, can I have some past material so I can see, what gets good marks and what doesn't.*

<div align="right">(Student cohort (GEES course), interview 42 28:05, 1-Beta)</div>

7.6 Student placements with a statutory agency or a 'third sector' organisation: Different experiential learning benefits compared

My research study on the educational aspects of experiential learning during work based student placements, was conducted at two loci; the work placements being either with a statutory agency or a 'third sector' organisation. This section of the second analysis chapter will consider if there are any differences in the learning between the two loci. Due to the nature of this research question, this analysis chapter features more contributions from the employer sub-cohort, than any of the other sub-cohort. The student cohort contribution is minimal. Most of the students in my study, did not have experience of work based experiential learning at both types of placement location. People indicated learning differs between a large and a small organisation.

A statutory agency can be described as an actor whose remit it is, to carry out a state function of delivering an essential aspect of the social infrastructure (Chalmers et al, 2016, p3). Statutory agencies have a statutory duty to discharge certain duties. Examples of a statutory agency are schools in a local education authority (LEA), who conduct the state responsibility for educating people. The National Health Service (NHS) who deliver the state's responsibility of providing healthcare to people who are sick or injured. The Police service, who carry out the state's responsibility to maintain law and order ([21]McKinsey & Company, 2015, p15; LGA, 2015, p4). 'Third Sector' organisations are non-governmental organisations (NGOs), who provide various services, often complementary to the state's social infrastructure. Examples of 'third sector' organisations are Shelter, a homeless charity, or Greenpeace, an environmental charity. Examples of local 'third sector' organisations are advice centres and foodbanks (Bagwell, NPC Briefing April 2015, p1).

Stella's discourse mirror 'Employers' views' findings by the [21]GSCC (Clapton, 2012, p36). Here learning from statutory and non-statutory are valuable and different. Stella indicated statutory agency placement students deliver more of a tick box service. 'Third sector' organisation placement students were able to establish effective working relations with individuals. Stella also supports an earlier view that how students learn on placement, depends on either the nature of the student, or the work based organisation, or both. *"Stella: Yeah I would. There would be a difference, depends on the student, depends on what they were doing, depends on which organisations they're with"* (GEES course academic, interview 11 3:08, pre-1992 campus university).

[21] McKinsey & Company's discussion paper came about, after cross-party initiative called GovernUp convened a meeting February 2015, to consider Whitehall reforms.

[22] The General Social Care Council, GSCC, was responsible for the registration and regulation of all social workers in England. The GSCC was abolished 31 July 2012, it's role being taken over by the HCPC, the Health and Care Professions Council.

In Nancy's view, how the student is taught and what the student learns is different, dependent upon the placement type. Nancy's discourse is underpinned by Papouli's (2014) 'field learning' study. Papouli (2014, p4) suggests that some student placements teach by a cognitive process, whilst others use experiential learning for skills acquisition. Nancy suggests 'third sector' placements provide a more discretionary approach to professional practice. Whereas statutory agency placements, focus on formal report writing and critical thinking skills.

Nancy: I think the 'Third Sector' placements, give people more skills to be creative, and to do face-to-face work. And personally, I think they're better. But the local authority type of work, which is where most social workers are employed, demand a higher level of critical reason, report writing…It tends to be less dangerous works as well in the 'Third Sector' to be fair…But the local authority work quite often involves things like that. In many ways you do need that critical analysis, ability to defend your decisions really.

(Social work academic, interview 23 17:16, redbrick university)

Eleanor focussed upon how a service user might engage with a third sector organisation, but not with a statutory agency. Eleanor indicated, the amount of red tape in statutory agencies is burdensome, it can act to prevent experiential learning from having its full affect. Mac Dermott and Campbell (2016, p46) found little evidence to support a suggestion that voluntary sector placements, were less professional than a statutory agency. Eleanor's 2014 view was reflected in Lacey and Murray's (2015) study, looking at competency-based education. Effectively, Lacey and Murray (2015,

p2) discuss formal and non-formal placement locations, comparing how regulations affects learning from one placement type to another.

Eleanor: I don't know they'd get that in the statutory. You'd be working very much from your rulebooks, because obviously it would have to be very much procedure led, because of red tape that's wrapped, that you sort of have to go through. And with statutory, and I know because I've worked with statutory agencies, there's sometimes the thing of I only tell you what I think you want to hear. And may not be entirely honest, but people are honest with us. And I think it gives the options to see that.

(Social work employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 19, 22:17)

Harriet informs us, much of the social worker function overlaps between statutory and the 'third sector'. Students learn, social work practice is subject to virtually the same guidance, on issues such as children, adoption, fostering or pregnancy, in either placement type. This is confirmed by the Home Office (2013) who also indicate, statutory agencies and 'third sector' organisations are equal partners who should work together (Home Office, 2013, p12). Harriet indicates, there is no experiential learning difference between the two types of work bases.

Harriet: And where people might not have had statutory, we might need to do their induction differently. So for example we have just recruited an individual who was previously working in a voluntary sector so, they're not aware…I know that's a bit stereotypical, but generally they're not involved with the same

capacity issues that we have, or the same deprivation of liberties. They're not aware of that side of legislation, so these are new things, but that's not a problem if we support them to learn. So long as, when we support them they take it up, otherwise it will become a problem for their professional development as a social worker longer term. I think you can have, just as good an experience in voluntary as in statutory with a student placement.

(Social work employer, statutory agency, interview 15, 23:02)

In Hugh's view, a third sector placement is more hands on, giving the student more one-to-one time, than a statutory agency (Leonard et al, 2015, p2; Little and Harvey, HECSU 2006, p8). Hugh's discourse indicates that regular access to supervision, influences how the student learns during work based placement.

Hugh: I suppose the advantages of students that come with us. Would be working in site offering on a wider range than a local authority or a statutory undertaker…I don't think there'll be a great amount of difference Ben. I think that's the only difference that would apply in this case.

(GEES course workers employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 24, 8:38)

Yvonne feels there's no difference between placement types. Yvonne confirmed what the GEES students had indicated earlier, a student placement looks good on a CV. Yvonne's discourse supports earlier discussion, employability could be a factor influencing student perceptions of experiential learning (Leonard et al, 2015, p3).

*Yvonne: Yeah, yeah, I think the answer's no. **BD: No! Oh right.** Yvonne:*
Because students are seeing a placement in a sort of instrumental way, i.e. you
know, it's something for their CV. Then I don't think there concerned whether
it's with an NGO or whether it's a business corporation.

(GEES academic, interview 9, 30:53, ancient university)

7.7 Conclusion

The nature of the organisation and/or the placement opportunity is clearly influential in how students learn during work based placements (HEA, 2014, p4). A couple of students made negative comments to the effect that they felt exploited on placement, that they weren't really learning anything (Neugebauer, CESR December 2009, p7). Ross Perlin (2011, p3) in his book *'Intern Nation',* offers a thoughtfully constructed critique of how the intern or student placement system is abused, especially by large corporations. *'Intern Nation'* provides a descriptor of undergraduates being required to perform non-degree related tasks. Exploitation of internships is manifest as the student receiving a cloak of credibility of having worked for a corporation, but not actually receiving any educational benefits. The intern can now put on their CV, they have worked for such and such a large organisation even though for example, a history, engineering or an accountancy placement was in reality scrubbing the floors (Neugebauer, CESR December 2009, p4; Perlin, 2011, p4).

Issues such as placement suitability or fit, with the student's professional and/or academic interest, were indicated by stakeholders as important constituents in experiential learning. Equally there was widespread recognition across the whole

cohort of the importance of prior preparation before, and appropriate supervision during student placements. Research participants gave numerous reasons as to why they felt these issues were crucial. Responses ranged from 'better to learn in a controlled safe environment', to 'having realistic expectations on placement'.

The CD/EN has a pivotal role in student development, being able to temper the employability aspects of a work placement, to ensure personal skills are acquired. The nexus has a key role in experiential learning, being a vehicle by which three HE stakeholders communicate, to ensure the student gets the best out of their work placement. The university and employers can discuss how to ensure the student will develop the key competencies and learning outcomes desired. The student would be enabled by CD/EN meetings, being given feedback and guidance on their current ability to deliver professional practice (Roth (Ed), 2013, p12; Faraday et al, 2011, p50).

The CD/EN is able to provide opportunities for reflective practice and criticality. It could be possible that any one of the three parties are not aware of these educational benefits. The CD/EN can help to identify learning needs and devise action plans to address them. Research proposals could be discussed, identifying suggestions not feasible. The three way regular contact provided by the CD/EN, enables discussion of potential or actual problems regarding the student placement, leading to early resolution ([23]REAP Project: Sheridan and Linehan (Eds.), HEA 2011, p11).

This selection of research participants has demonstrated the benefits of a CD/EN, when it's fully operational. We have also been informed of learning problems, which

[23] The REAP Project was a consortium of Irish based higher education stakeholders.

could have been alleviated had a CD/EN being present. A number of participant's interviews recognised the HEIs Careers Service should be part of a CD/EN. This second research chapter indicates, work based experiential learning will be enhanced by having some form of CD/EN in place (Jackson, 2015, p351; Eden, 2014, p274).

Work based experiential learning with a statutory agency, or with a 'third sector' organisation, can affect how the student learns on placement. Both 'Depends on the nature of the student', and the character, the 'character of the placement organisation', were identified in research interviews as causal factors (EC, 2013a, p12). A minority of participants perceived that students learnt more about formal report writing on statutory agency placements. Whereas 'third sector' organisation placements, allowed students to be more creative, hands on.

The Department of Health (DoH) consulted with both placement destinations, when writing a 'knowledge and skills statement for social workers' (DoH, 2015, p18). The DfE recognises that both statutory agency and 'third sector' placements provide valid and varied social work training (DfE, 2014, p25). The majority of research participants, do not perceive any difference between students who did a work placement with a statutory agency, as opposed to students whose work based experiential learning is with a 'third sector' organisation. Interview discourse from various sources added the caveats, it depends on the 'nature of the student' and/or 'the organisation'. Research analysis of interview discourse, reveals that statutory agency and 'third sector' organisation placements, offer different but equally valid learning journeys. The HE stakeholder the 'wider society', benefits from the complementary dichotomy between statutory agencies and 'third sector' organisations (Kamerade and Paine, 2014, p260).

This preceding second research chapter inform us that a focus on employability was the most important constituent of a student placement. Issues such as the acquisition of human or social capital were discussed in employability terms. The research cohort consensus for a CD/EN to support student placements was for reasons of employability. The majority of the cohort indicated experiential learning should build and develop decision making and self-efficacy, after an initial period shadowing, then 'learning by doing'. The following chapter discusses stakeholder views on how experiential learning, enables students to develop on work placement.

Chapter 8 – The Role of Experiential Learning in Student Development

8.1 Overview

One of the main purposes of work based experiential learning is student development, academically, professionally and on a personal level (Kettle, HEA 2013, p15). Higher education needs to consider, have students become more confident on placement? Has experiential learning developed decision making skills and self-efficacy? There needs to be a mechanism in place to capture student work based student development. The most efficient approach identified in the literature, is to provide students with different opportunities to articulate their views (Eden, 2014, p268; Pegg et al, HEA 2012, p9). This can be in the form of reflective practices, including criticality, a specialised form of reflection, which will be fully defined and discussed in later in this chapter. Alternatively, after reflective practice sessions, students can use reflective journals and portfolios, to record their views of what and how they have learnt and developed (Chatterton and Rebbeck, 2015, p15; McLeod et al, 2015, p440).

8.2 Introduction

This third analysis chapter consists of five sections. The first section will provide a description of the importance that students develop decision-making and self-efficacy skills, whilst on student placement. Section one will demonstrate why self-efficacy is needed for resource allocation, knowledge transfer and wealth creation. Issues as mentioned earlier, which are all within the remit of universities, all societal needs. Section one helps to illustrate why experiential learning in a safe controlled environment is essential to enable students to develop self-efficacy. The first section will explain how students who have developed the ability to be decisive, coupled with good judgement are really valued by employers (Westin et al, 2015, p5).

The second section will provide a description of how students feel they have developed on student placement, using reflective practices (Oelofsen, 2012, p24). Section two will discuss criticality, a reflective practice pedagogical tool. Criticality equips students to identify the skills they need, then self-direct their learning to acquire new competencies (QAA, 2014b, p10; Jarvis, 2012b, p7). Here students discuss their experiences on placement and how that might have changed their outlook, also what they have gained from their work based learning journey (Hughes et al, 2013, p265).

The third section of this research analysis chapter, explores how experiential learning assists students, returning to university after work placement. The cohort indicated, students had developed in subtle ways, now critically aware of resource allocation (Sheth et al, 2013, p3: Martin and Hughes, 2009, p31; 'Tuning Project', 2005, p40). The third section also discusses the perception that participating on work based experiential learning, increases academic grades and improves educational attainment (Tanaka and Carlson, 2012, p77; Mendez and Rona, 2010, p47).

Section four features the PCF, the Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW, 2012, p3). The PCF had a substantive and material affect upon my research study. This chapter analyses research interviews, which discussed the PCF, (Skills for Care: Woodham, 2014, p2) and its current and likely future affect upon social work education. My research indicates, the nine domains of the PCF, are changing the emphasis of social work education, from a person-centred approach to computer based assessments (ASWB, 2013, p4; RiP: Ruch, 2015, p18). The PCF practice curriculum being implemented in all the universities who participated in my study for the first time, academic school year September 2013 (Jasper and Field, 2015, p1).

The fifth section concludes this chapter, critically summarising: how students' reflect and then articulate their learning; the perception that participating on a student placement improves academic grades; the effect of the PCF. There will be discussion of suggested policy formulation, which will ameliorate various work based experiential learning issues identified by research participants.

8.3 Student placements help to develop self-efficacy

Like a CD/EN, efficacy also has dual presence, initially as an essential constituent supporting work based experiential learning, then subsequently, enhancing capacity building by providing a vehicle by which the student can develop self-efficacy. Efficacy and self-efficacy have multiple definitions and are contested (Bandura, 1977, p193; Elstad, 1998, p605; Vignoles et al, 2006, p310 and p311; Rostosky et al, 2008, p278). Efficacy is the capability to produce an effect. Which is distinct from self-efficacy, which can be defined as a person, in our case a student, developing a belief in their ability to accomplish a challenging task (Nilsen, 2009, p547; Artino Jr, 2012, p78). During experiential learning, those challenges can often be manifest as negotiating various social relationships whilst on student placement; the successful completion of which, will often involve the use of problem solving, active listening and diplomatic skills (Curtis and Blair, 2010, p8). These are soft skills, which are very useful for establishing and maintaining, long term functioning, working relationships. Bandura (1982) argues 'A capability is only as good as its execution' (Bandura, 1982, p122). Bandura's (1982) observation provides further underpinning evidence that experiential learning helps to develop self-efficacy. Students need a period in a fluid professional environment, to develop critical judgement and prioritisation skills. Bandura (1982) describes this as 'multiple subskills to manage ever-changing circumstances' (Bandura, 1982, p122).

The issue of self-efficacy, was hardly mentioned by any research sub-cohort in my study. However it is clear, self-efficacy can significantly influence how a student viewed their profession or deliver their service whilst on placement. On placement, self-efficacy can involve a certain level of autonomous decision making (Artino, Jr, 2012, p78). Here, a student with the capacity to produce a desired effect, can develop their own parameters, as to how and when, a certain service should be offered. Similarly the student's self-efficacy would also affect their decision making, on whether an existing service should be withdrawn from certain service users (Chambers and Hickey, HPC 2012, p16; Reddan, 2015, p292; Mau, 2000, p367). Thus both the 'nature of the student', also the 'character of the organisation', are again identified as significant aspects of experiential learning. In practice, self-efficacy involves developing critical resource allocation skills, also potentially delivering a bureaucratic gatekeeping role (Su et al, 2016, p2). Placement supervision is again underscored as an important issue, due to the potential for reputational damage to the employer and/or the institution. It is clear that self-efficacy is a constituent, a key component of effective work based experiential learning programs (Bandura, 1977, p192; de Groot et al, 2015, p123). In experiential learning terms, student placements must provide sufficient pragmatic experiences, so the student can develop self-efficacy to be become empowered (Girvan et al, 2016, p130). We can now see that certain aspects of student placements such as CD/EN and self-efficacy, belong in two camps. They are both essential constituents of experiential learning, key components that an effective student placements should have. Once established, the workings of a CD/EN and self-efficacy, both have transformational properties, helping to shape the student towards delivering societal needs. Being able to communication effectively is a must in a CD/EN and self-efficacy. The 'wider society' now has the skilled workers she needs.

8.4 Reflective practices including criticality assists in student articulation

An essential part of work based experiential learning is for the student to consider what they have learnt and how they have learnt, during work placements (Fry et al, 2009, p15). Essential, because an important part of the student learning journey, is enabling the student to think about themselves and how they have developed at the work place. Students should also be able to assess how they can acquire certain competencies and attributes, devising a strategy to gain key skills. We can now see that students need to be taught to think about work practices they observed on placement (Little and Harvey, HECSU 2006, p29). In turn students need to be assisted, to consider what happened when they applied learned theory from university, to copy observed practice on placement (Brigden and Purcell, 2014, p21; Kolb, 'learning by doing', 1984, p14).

Essentially this is reflective practice (Moon, 2013, p5). Students should be given the opportunity to articulate their views of what they have learnt, how they have learnt and how their placement experiences have affected them (Moon, 2013, p60; McClure, 2005, p3). On reflection, students should be equipped to apply criticality, which will enable students to identify what knowledge and skills they need to acquire. Criticality can be defined as a pedagogical approach, where students devise leaning plans to acquire skills and knowledge, recognised as being needed after a period of reflection (Abbey et al, 2014, p12; Tyreman, 2000, p118; Burbules and Berk, 1999, p45).

Essentially the student needs to be enabled to assess who they are and where they fit as regards their chosen profession. The student should be equipped to see their place within the wider society, being able to change direction, due to their work based placement experiences, if need be (DoH, 2014, p13; Havig, 2013, p3; HEA, 2012, p6).

The following quotes featuring all four higher education research sub-cohorts, act to demonstrate the role of reflective practices within work based experiential learning. Noel is an academic from the GEES courses strand of my study. Noel's interview reveals that reflective practices do not necessarily feature in GEES courses education, at their particular institution. Noel demonstrates what should happen from reflection, how the student will develop from the exercise, identifying strengths and weaknesses (Schon, 1987, p4). Noel indicated in his interview that reflection for issues like identifying hidden stakeholders, or service users who have underlying competing priorities. Noel's interview inadvertently acknowledged that students can become aware of structural power relationships, after a period of reflection. Noel's discourse details how for many students, their work placement will often be the first time they will have experienced reflective practices. Here students are given an opportunity to receive or give feedback, describing what they feel they have gained on placement (Moon, 2013, p4; Fade, 2005, p7 and p8; Somerville and Keeling, 2004, p43).

Noel: The, reflective practice is one of those things that students do almost nothing on at the moment. And it's one of the things that we would like to get them to do more of. But they don't cover them…You've heard of a thing called PDP, Personal Development Plan, which is supposed to be that process. But what you don't do is have an hour with every student, to talk about what they've done last year, how they might do next year. We have very brief meetings actually…So I think for the first time the student experience that kind of reflective practice is in that placement.

(GEES academic, interview 31 37:54, civic university)

Chris is a social work academic, who encourages his students to write a reflective article prior to going on placement (Exley, 2013, p2; Little and Harvey, HECSU 2006, p15). Chris's interview demonstrates how students can find out about themselves, by talking about their past experiences (McClure, 2005, p6). This reflection can then identify how a student might approach a certain aspect of their work, how they might react in certain situations (Oelofsen, 2012, p23). Analysis of Chris's discourse reinforces the pedagogical benefits of criticality, which is manifest in the form of self-directed learning ([24]Atkinson, SOLE Model, 2011; Faraday et al, 2011, p14).

Chris highlights a key difference between the GEES courses and the social work strand of my research. Chris describes producing a lesson plan to deliver reflective practices for social work students, prior to going on experiential learning work based placement (MacSporran, 2014, p46). There is less impetus for placement preparation activity with the GEES sub-cohort in my study. For GEES degree programmes, the successful completion of a student placement is not a mandatory requirement (Two GEES academics, 2014: Leanne, interview 17, 59:35, pre-1992 campus university; Yvonne, interview 9, 33:22, ancient university). Due to not being required to pass a placement on many GEES courses, academics and students don't have the same motivation for extensive pre-placement preparation. This would suggest that GEES students get less opportunity to find out about themselves, their suitability for their chosen profession, or develop self-efficacy. GEES students are less likely to be aware of issues of labelling or 'subconscious forgetting' (Kirkwood et al, 2016, p484). The latter being a student development issue which is discussed later in this study.

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[24] Atkinson's (2011) SOLE model, is similar to criticality in that it allows the student to choose a pedagogical approach to develop a skill. So the process is 'student owned'. Atkinson's article has no page numbers, either on the online or hard copy version.

Chris: I do it in a session with them, before they go on their first placement. I get them to think about everything they've done in their lives. That they feel is an experience which is valuable to them, and that has helped develop them to where they are now…Usually in engaging, conversations come out of it, even though it's not guided to that, it's a self-reflective piece. That's the joys of being able to teach whatever I want to, do whatever I want to, to a limit, to a limit.

(Social work academic, interview 18 32:13, 1-Beta)

Barry a UCA, reinforces the importance of reflective practices. Barry talked about the need for planning, to get the best benefits from reflection, and the placement as a whole (Helyer, 2015, p16; CIPD, 2012, p4; Martin and Hughes, 2009, p14). Barry's interview clearly supports students being given the opportunity to articulate their views. Barry's discourse can be interpreted as being supportive of a learning portfolio of student reflective pieces. Barry also suggests that placement fit is prerequisite, to ensure that student reflection and development take place (Lemanski et al, 2011, p7).

Barry: As well, has the student been contacted, has it been evidenced, they have reflected upon that placement experience, what have they gained from it? If there's doing a placement for placement's sake, and there's no kind of reflection, then actually you're limiting the benefits. So I think all those issues are essential, if all those factors are factored in, then I think the placement experience is very good, or can be very good.

(UCAs, interview 29 9:03, pre-1992 campus university)

Wendy is a UCA who explains the pedagogical and employability aspects of reflective practices. Wendy details how reflection can help a student to understand themselves better (Wong, 2016, p2 and p3). Ian is also a UCA. Ian is firmly of the view that work based experiential learning helps to improve academic grades, by contextualising theory into practice (Faraday et al, 2011, p10; Tuning Project, 2005, p30).

Wendy: Here we encourage our students to do reflective accounts and we encourage them to do both reflective accounts from their personal experience on the placement. And also on kind of their placement in a wider commercial setting.

(UCAs, interview 33 23:30, post-1992 university, 1-Beta)

Ian: We believe, which sort of makes sense, that it's the student making sense of why they're studying. Going on to a work experience, it makes sense of their degree and they can see what their future may be. And therefore that works as a motivator, enables them to contextualise the theory they might have done on the course, with how it actually plays out in practice in the world of work.

(UCAs, interview 6, post-1992 university, 5:28, 3-Alpha)

Mary a social worker employer, detailed some of the pedagogical aspects of reflective practices (Kettle, 2013, p23; Moon, 2013, p3). Mary describes criticality taking place, manifest as students conducting a learning evaluation (HEA, 2014, p5/6; Adriansen, 2010, p68). Here students can articulate any changes to the student placement, they suggest could be made, to assist in their development. Students are using what they

have learnt after reflection, to decide which pedagogical approach works for them to learn a certain skill (REAP Project: Sheridan and Linehan (Eds.), HEA 2011, p39).

Mary: Yeah. But by means, I substitute that by asking them to write a review of what we can do and how we can do better...It's definitely in there that is learning evaluation. 'Evaluation and Practice Learning'. But I do ask them to do one using the one I would use, to consider any changes that maybe we should do.

(Social work employer, 'third sector' organisation, interview 30, 57:24)

Student Roisin had a different perspective which serves to demonstrate there are learning risks involved in reflection (Fook, 2015, p443). Roisin practiced reflection using knowledge she had obtained from university. Reflection was quite difficult for Roisin, but her interview indicates a realisation that reflective practice develops naturally (Bracken and Bryan, 2010, p24). Roisin's first interview suggests that Bourdieusian concepts are at play, manifest in the form of 'social reproduction' (1977a, p487). Rosin's discourse underscores Bourdieu, manifest as daily exposure to the workplace ('field', 1991, p14) and her social relationships ('habitus', 1986a, p170).

Roisin's interview discourse suggests, the workplace and her relationships are the driving force which motivated her delivery of a compliant social work service. In Roisin's case, social inequalities are reproduced in her drive towards compliance to meet national safeguarding standards (NHS England, 2014, p7). A learning risk from an absence of conscious reflection, is manifest by Roisin's recognition she's not really conscious she's applying reflection. Without conscious reflection, there is an increased

risk of a student blindly delivering a social work service which conforms to the prevailing dominant ideology (Toros and Medar, 2015, p93).

Poor working practices observed, which are damaging to service users, are left largely unchallenged as effectively, 'subconscious forgetting' takes place (Kirkwood et al, 2016, p484). In turn, 'subconscious forgetting', the effect of which is in part offset by the student focussing upon developing effective working relationships, act to increase the likelihood of the status quo being maintained, as conscious reflection is not in operation. Students choose to 'fit in', comply with norms and values, not taking risks on placement (Mackay and Tymon, 2015, p333). Kirkwood et al (2016) are concerned, reflection can reinforce inequality by prioritising 'the ideological interests of practitioners/analysts' (Kirkwood et al, 2016, p487). Normative social work practice, which alleviates people's social problems so they become self-determined, continues to be delivered (BASW, 2016; HCPC, 2015, p3; Shardlow, 2015, p32).

> *Roisin: And I only did because we had to do it. Because I didn't have to do it in everything. It was just one particular module, we had to do it in I hated it. I felt so fake, because none of what I was saying, really I didn't really mean any of this. But I think I've struggle with reflection without a doubt, to fully understand what it is. I've got the brief overview, but don't ask me to define reflection. Think is it's skill that you've got to develop, you've got to use it on your placement, you've got to use it on your placement, and then you think, I don't know if I'm doing it or not.*

(Student, (a social work student on placement), interview 36 28:40, 3-Alpha)

Roisin: Definitely. If you're working as a student placement, you put yourself there with some responsibility, you're going to develop a student, to reach the level of the PCF that they need to be at. By the end of the first placement, so you've got a responsibility to monitor, and make sure they're achieving what they should be achieving. And the best way to monitor that is through reflection and supervision, and making sure… And, so everybody who sees me, in the work setting, or on a personal level who have actually had one-to-ones with me, will be here to share the progress that I've made. I'll be able to share the progress that I've made, with the university, to make sure that they're happy that what I'm doing is enough to reach any level of safeguarding. If you don't have management of people's progress, you not going to know if they've done it right.

(Student, (a social work student on placement), interview 36 41:48, 3-Alpha)

Karl a GEES course student with a different interpretation of reflection. For Karl, reflection was from the commercial business oriented perspective, dealing with issues which can affect company profitability such as health and safety (Olsson, 2007, p46). In Karl's case, participating on a student placement was for the sole purpose of employability. Analysis of Karl's interview reveals that facets of the learning journey such as the acquisition of human capital or student development, were absent from his placement. Karl had no sense of the presence of the 'wider society'. Karl's discourse clearly demonstrates, he does not understand that reflection is a learning tool, where the student can articulate their views about what and how they have learnt. How Karl has been transformed by his experiential learning, is in part captured by Li

et al' 'Hospitality Industry' study (2013, p554). Karl's interview discourse suggests a career fit with corporate business, as opposed to social work, or his academic discipline of geography a GEES course.

> *Karl: I'll give you an example, we were deciding the name of the website, at university, deciding the name of a project should be reasonably quick and easy, it shouldn't be something that takes weeks. So we decided the name I expected it was going to be something as simple as. Then it was obviously sent up and the work was sent higher up for people to check over, they sent it back saying no, we're going to change the name of it. Of which we'd spent weeks sort of trying to decide a name, where I think resources could have been spent elsewhere, than deciding a name, which is something I do, petty but that was something I picked up and would reflect on.*

(GEES courses student, interview 45, 26:05, 1-Beta)

8.5 Experiential learning's dual role: Improving academic grades and enhancing student development

A number of research participants from all the cohorts suggested, students who participate in work based experiential learning receive improved academic grades (Blicblau et al, 2016, p31; Tanaka and Carlson, 2012, p77; Green, 2011, p49). However members of the UCAs cohort indicated that might not be the case, the subject required further study (Mendez and Rona, 2010, p49). Kidron and Lindsay's (2014) study on the effects of increased learning time on student outcomes, considered experiential learning style. Kidron and Lindsay's (2014, p7) study found '…no evidence

that this instruction style led to improved academic outcomes'. This mirrors a recent healthcare study, which details many benefits mentioned by students of their placement, but not improved academic grades (Yiend et al, 2016, p11).

Helen is a GEES course academic. Helen perceives that when students participate in work based experiential learning, they return to university with increased motivation for their academic studies. Holmes et al ([25]The Conversation, 21 August 2015), discuss how many students often find work after graduation, which does not utilise their degree. Helen indicates an expectation of improved educational attainment by the student, after work placement (Littke and Thang, 2015, p3; Merritt, 2008, p2).

> *Helen: But say when students, students do a work placement year, we've just set up a work placement year. Ermh, if they do a work placement year then they come back, to university to do their final year, very very different…I think you have you know ultimately will have a significant impact upon their academic performance as well.*

> (GEES academic, interview 4 4:30, pre-1992 campus university)

Yvonne is also a GEES academic. Yvonne has a different view regarding experiential learning improving education attainment, not in keeping with the rest of the research cohort. For Yvonne, attending a student placement was not as beneficial to the learning process, as academic theory learned during a lecture or tutorial. Helen and Yvonne's differing views are confirmed by Poon's (2013, p273) blended learning study, incorporating the [26]SPUR project with Nottingham Trent University. Here Poon (2013)

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[25] The Conversation is a not for profit educational entity.
[26] Poon used research from the SPUR project, a paper called 'An Evaluation of Good Practice in Blended Learning', for part of her research.

details how in a minority of circumstances, online learning can produce equally as good results as a student placement. Online learning includes VLE and simulation.

> *Yvonne: Because our courses are highly academic, so there anything they get out of the student placement, is you know it might enrich their understanding of something relating to politics or economics. But, it's without the core academic knowledge from the literature you know, from all those academic sources. That's what makes a difference in terms of the grades, I would say.*

> (GEES academic, interview 9 10:32, ancient university)

Ian a UCA, is unequivocal in his view that students who have done a work placement see their educational attainment improve. Ian suggests that Kolb's (1984, p21) 'learning by doing', delivers a better understanding of theory when the student returns to university. Ian acknowledges he doesn't have any definitive data to support student placements get higher academic grades, but the anecdotal evidence is there (Blicblau et al, 2016, p33; Tanaka and Carlson, 2012, p79; Mendez and Rona, 2010, p48).

> *Ian: I'll just structure my thoughts. There's two observations mainly. We notice that not only does it assist with their employment credentials, but it also assist with their academic syllabus. So we've looked, we've done some analysis, I can't provide you with the data I'm afraid, some analysis that indicates, there is a statistically significant improvement in study outcomes following placements. That's not to be taken as an absolute, typically, the 2:2 student becomes a 2:1 student, post placement. Now we don't entirely know the reasons for that.*

> (UCAs, interview 6, post-1992 university, 5:08, 3-Alpha)

Barry is also a UCAs cohort member. Barry along with Ian share the widely held view, participating on a student placement improves educational attainment. Barry informs us, he attaches importance to two external studies on the subject, acknowledging the research is suggestive not definitive. For Barry and Ian, both UCAs, work based experiential learning leads to better academic grades (Jones et al, 2015, p2).

> *Barry: And also something about academic skills, there's been studies done by people like Dr Tanaka, at Kyoto Sanjoy University. And then Dr Green, University of Ulster. They have done comprehensive statistical studies that would suggest students going on a credible one year placement, actually come out with a better academic result when factoring for basically their A level results prior to the placement.*

> (UCAs, interview 29 2:46, pre-1992 campus university)

Carol, also a UCA, mirrors the position of Barry and Ian. For Carol student placements are the learning ideal, they equip the student with employability skills. Carol's discourse indicates that students become more professionally minded, blending into the workplace by complying with expected professional behaviour. Carol suggests students become much more motivated regarding their academic studies when they return to university, after placement. Carol's interview provides further anecdotal evidence that experiential learning, appears to increase educational attainment (HECSU: McCulloch et al, 2014, p3; BIS, 2014a, p11; FUTURETRACK 4: Purcell et al, 2013, p6). Carol also indicates, there is no direct evidence linking attending a student placement to higher academic grades (Blicblau et al, 2016, p32).

Carol: I think they gain motivation from it. Lots of students come back feeling very highly motivated. Often because they're seeing how skills they have learnt on the degree can be applied to the work place…They learn how to speak to clients, to customers, how to interact with colleagues in a professional way…I think it increases motivation of them. But I'm not sure of any practice that it increases grades.

(UCAs, interview 26 10:07, pre-1992 campus university)

Andy is a GEES courses employer. Andy had a substantively different view regarding the suggestion, do student placements increase academic grades. Andy thought that the nature of the university could also be a factor (Mandilaras, 2004, p45), as is whether someone is academically or vocationally oriented, so the nature of the student is reaffirmed (Green and Henseke, 2014, LLAKES Research Paper 50, p3). Andy's interview could also be interpreted to suggest that choice of university discipline, also influences experiential learning and educational attainment afterwards (REAP Project: Sheridan and Linehan (Eds.); HEA 2011, p10). Bonesso et al (2015, p2) have a related discussion focussing on where different types of experiential learning has most impact. Bonesso et al (2015) does not identify any particular academic discipline.

Andy: I think its key. Unless, I suppose it's what the university' and the student's ambition is. If the ambition is to turn out students who are focussed predominantly on academic excellence, than placements are of less benefit. But if universities are looking to turn out rounded students, who are more high-

powered in the work place, then I think a placement year, or period in the degree, is very beneficial.

BD: Right, well that's interesting.

Andy: I mean for example, if you're doing a degree in classics, then I'm not sure what benefit to the degree a work placement would bring. Whereas if you're doing a more practical based degree, a vocational based degree, than that placement has got to be a key part of it.

(Private sector employer, GEES course, interview 25, 27:32)

In the main, HE stakeholders, academics and UCAs have differing views and perspectives of experiential learning's effect on students regarding educational attainment. Operationally, experiential learning placements helps academics to develop longer term relationships working in collaboration with employer providers. The UCAs mainly value the employability enhancing aspects of experiential learning.

8.6 The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF): The PCF's effect on experiential learning during student placements

My research cohort contains two general groups, a social work and a GEES courses sub-cohort. My research was substantively affected by a new facet of social work education called the PCF, the Professional Capabilities Framework. This section of the third analysis chapter will discuss the PCF, its effect on work based experiential learning and student development (BASW, 2015b, p2; HCPC, 2015, p19; Jasper and Field, 2015, p2). The PCF only affected the social work sub-cohort in my research, the GEES courses sub-cohort, will not feature in this particular section. The UCAs sub-cohort as a whole also make no contribution. All the universities I liaised with in my

research study who taught social work, had their own student social worker placement tutor, officer or team (**redacted,** 2016, BA (Hons) Applied Social Work). They did not engage with their own University Careers Service (UCAs) to find their students social work placements (**redacted,** 2016, Careers and Employability Team).

The PCF influences the student experiential learning journey in numerous ways. The way social work is delivered has changed with the introduction of 9 new PCF domains, in which practitioners are required to demonstrate competency (Burton, 2016, p22). The new PCF requirements have changed the nature of the work based supervisor, university placement tutor and the Practice Educator roles ([27]HCPC Executive Recommendation 7, 2015, p11). Subsequently, compliance with the PCF means the 'nature of the organisation' has changed. Discussion from earlier analysis chapters, establishes the 'nature of the organisation' significantly influences how and in what ways students develop and learn. Social work providers both statutory and 'third sector', could be adversely affected by how the PCF is intended to operate.

Whilst conducting my research, I noticed that the PC has provided added impetus to the social work service being delivered using computer based assessments (ASWB, 2015, p3; BASW, 2015a, p10). Face-to-face one-to-one assessments, are being increasingly side lined. When social work students arrive at the work base, they are experiencing computer based training. The students are getting fewer opportunities to develop the personal skills required to engage with and build up good effective working relationships with people (Grant et al, HEA 2013, p4).

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[27] The HCPC recommendation (7) referred to, is in Appendix 1 of a HCPC Professional Liaison Group Review, which is a prefix to HCPC: Chambers et al' (2015) main report. Appendix 1 is called 'Executive's response to research recommendations'.

Without regular oversight, there is a potential danger the PCF may take away key skills the profession needs for adoption services. Also similarly for bereavement counselling type care services, partly due to a propensity towards computer based assessments (Community Care: Stephenson, 10 October 2014). Social work stakeholders envisaged they would have great difficulty in being able to obtain enough statutory placements to fulfil the PCF requirements (DfE: The Narey Report January 2014, Recommendation 7, p27). The operational mechanics of delivering work based experiential learning, featured prominently in the social work employer discourse.

Glenda, a social work academic, identified the importance of statutory placements, which are critical for graduate social worker employability (Burton, 2016, p9). Glenda's use of the word 'debilitates', underscores how the potential for PCF motivated rationing of statutory work placements is corrosive. The increased possibility of not being able to experience social work practice in a statutory setting, can have an adverse effect on student development in terms of motivation (DoH: Croisdale-Appleby, 2014, p29; Jasper et al, 2013, p22). Due to the PCF, participants suggested students who did not get a placement with a statutory agency may be viewed either by potential employers, or themselves as having lower employability. This can act to undermine the student's confidence or motivation, when they return to university for their final year.

> *Glenda: I mean they have to have one in the third year anyway, or they have to do statutory work, which is a slightly different angle to doing a statutory placement. But students who don't get a statutory placement in their second year are very disappointed. And I feel that debilitates them and actually*

disadvantages them for applying for jobs in there, once they've qualified, and it's probably true, if they want to work in the statutory.

(Social work academic, interview 8 38:54, 1-Beta)

Malcolm is a social work academic who is supportive of the PCF, having no real concerns in the foreseeable future. Malcolm supported the overall intention of the PCF, being a long-term method for assessing a social worker's 'fitness to practice' (HCPC, 2015, p9). Malcolm focussed on the potential capabilities aspect of the PCF, less so on the competencies a social work practitioner or student social worker actually has, or might need to acquire. This is the 'skills of the graduate' shortcoming, that Tholen et al (2016, p508) want to address. Malcolm's interpretation of the PCF had aspects which chime with Dewey's (1938a, p25) and Kolb's (1984, p38) work on experiential learning. Malcolm indicates how the PCF is contextual in enabling the practitioner to demonstrate their capabilities in the situation which presents itself (Burton, 2016, p2; RiP: Ruch, 2015, p5). Briony a former social work student, indicates how the PCF can be an effective mechanism identifying competencies achieved or being absent.

Briony: So let's say I was going out for an assessment of such and such a person, well that would be intervention skills. So it was a reflection, but it was a way of evidencing how, I was showing how I was hitting the competencies. And I have asked my student now, so I've done this I've evidenced that, and this is how I've reflected on it and that's domain 6 or something.

(Student, (currently working in practice), interview 43 1:32:43, civic university)

Malcolm suggests ongoing consultation with stakeholders could result in recognition of different competencies being of value to social work practice (TCSW: Allan, 2013, p10). Students benefit in Malcolm's interpretation of the PCF, when they enhance their skills and knowledge in a discipline, beyond basic competence (Trevithick, 2012, p4).

> **BD: Supplemental question, what are your views about the PCF?**
>
> *Malcolm: Oh really you know, really good question. I think it's a really useful framework for social work. And it clearly delineates the areas we need to work on. And the fact that it's about capability not competence means that students can over perform…I think the PCF does that, really really well. It's more contextual about what's within each domain…So we need to hang onto the PCF as a framework for professional development, and we need to negotiate a bit more carefully what is going to be the content of each domain.*
>
> (Social work academic, interview 41 33:10, 3-Alpha)

Megan, a former social work student indicates how meeting the 9 PCF domains, requires practitioners to demonstrate competence in a wide range of tasks.

> *Megan: And I know now what I need to do my assessment of first year in employment…It's just fits because you know you've got you're HCPC, you've got your professional capabilities framework…I've got to keep up with my knowledge, I've got to show how well my skills are developing.*
>
> (Student, (current working in practice), interview 32 50:07, 3-Alpha)

Harriet is a statutory agency employer of social workers. Harriet is supportive of the PCF, but suggests caution as the PCF is in an early embryonic state, which began September 2012 (Skills for Care, 2015, p1). Harriet details how changes in the Practice Educator role, who under the new PCF have to fill in more of the portfolio, effects student development (Jasper and Field, 2015, p3). Under the PCF there is less of an emphasis on group work. One effect of the reduction in group work, is social work students on placement are not learning key negotiating skills such as group dynamics (Burton, 2016, introduction pxv). Harriet indicates that due to the PCF, there will be fewer opportunities for students to acquire tact, self-efficacy and active listening skills. Student social workers won't be able to develop person-centred counselling skills e.g. verstehen or unconditional positive regard. These skills are really valuable in social work and in student personal development (Moriarty et al, 2015, p6).

BD: That's interesting, supplemental question here then really. What are your views about the PCF?

Harriet: It makes sense PCF, and I think it's good that we're moving away from some things like group work tasks. That were very much a different social work time. It's very hard to get, in a lot of statutory and voluntary sectors. Because you generally work with individuals now, there's only a few organisations that particularly do group work as such, you know it's quite specific and if they're doing group work, they're probably not doing something individual key roles in there. I need to learn more I suppose when I get a student I will understand the PCF a lot more.

(Social work employer, statutory agency, interview 15, 28:38)

Mary is a social worker employer and a Practice Educator. Mary is supportive, but has concerns regarding the PCF in its current state, especially the pragmatics of evidencing student reading. Mary's discourse indicates the PCF structure can introduce placement assessment difficulties penalising students. Mary is cautiously optimistic for the future regarding the PCF. Mary suggests that students and experienced practitioners will continue to develop with the PCF (TCSW, 2015, p6).

> *Mary: And now 8, no 9 students, using the PCF. So I've probably got more experience of using the PCF then anyone. But I think it still is early days. And I think that the way we ask students to prove it. I'm not convinced that at the moment they've got the right balance. I think that certainly what I've found when I was doing my reports in the summer. There was a lot more work on my part, and less work really in students then when we were doing the units. And having to research the work, 10 units for each placement. Because they were having to evidence the reading, I know they have to do one or two bigger pieces of work. But it can be in a narrower field. And although I might be sending them lots of things to read, they're not necessarily showing me the evidence that they're doing that wider reading. So, so I think what's good about it, is that it can now be used throughout a person's social work career. You know to keep developing it. I quite like the fact there's a framework you can use. At the very start of year one, right through to being Director of Social Work. But I don't think, I'm not a hundred percent, I don't think it's all been ironed out yet, you know. I think we're learning to develop with it.*

(Social work employer, 'third sector' organisation, interview 30, 39:54)

Megan, a former social work student who graduated July 2014, was working in practice on date of her interview. Megan is very supportive, preferring the PCF to its predecessor, the National Occupation Standards (NOS) (University of Bedfordshire, 2016). Megan suggests that the PCF gave students the opportunity to engage with new pedagogy (OECD IMHE: Henard et al, 2012, p7). Megan clearly valued the manner in which the PCF had a broader, more generic approach to recording new or extended capabilities. For Megan, the PCF had been transformational, as a student she had learnt how to perform reflective practices, including criticality (Skills for Care: Woodham, 2014, p4). Megan identified that the PCF had given her an ethical consciousness in her social work practice (Shardlow, 2015, p35). Megan's interview demonstrates how the PCF is an effective tool, for facilitating student personal and professional development, especially when the student has practiced reflection.

Excerpt 1 (44:17)

BD: What do you think to the PCF?

Megan: The Professional Capabilities Framework?

BD: Yes.

Megan: They're, it's good. I prefer it to NOS the National Occupation Standards. I like the Professional Capabilities Framework because it's simpler. You've just got the 9 domains, it's very broad, which initially was very difficult to get your head round. Because we'd been used to these very tidy boxes with the NOS. With the NOS, you know it's kind of more specific and you'd look at it and you'd go yeah, easy to recognise, what it's referring to. With the PCF more broader, so there was more to get your head round. But once you did, I found it really useful. It made it easier for your portfolio as well.

Excerpt 2 (51:43)

Megan: And again being reflective, some people find being reflective easy, some people don't. And I think another thing about professional capabilities and that's why it's made me the person I am, is even remembering the ethics. You know I've got this ethical way of working now, I've got an ethical consciousness in a way that makes me, that's because of the PCF.

(Student, (current social work practitioner), interview 32, 3-Alpha)

Emily is a social work student, who had just returned to university to finish her degree after completing a work placement. Emily feels that she has benefitted from the PCF, but it was quite repetitive in evidencing various capabilities in the 9 domains. Skills for Care (2013, p3) received similar feedback at an ASYE Best Practice Forum and other consultation events. Emily voiced concerns regarding the Practice Educator role, indicating inconsistency in how the PCF is implemented at different universities (SWRB, 2012, p13). Emily gave no indication the PCF had changed her as a student or developed her in any way, either professionally or personally.

Emily: I think it's actually the portfolio you've got to produce here. It's actually very repetitive. There's quite a lot, I don't know quite what it is. Lots of emphasis that you must have all of the signatures lots and lots of papers with signatures, which seems at time unnecessary, or, I'm sure there's reasons. That was not so much the PCF itself but the paper work that underpins it is I suppose.

(Social work student, final year, interview 35 44:20, pre-1992 campus university)

8.7 Conclusion

The discussion on reflective practices and criticality revealed some real differences between research participants in my study. In the main, reflection is recognised as a way of looking at work performance and then considering ways that practice could be improved (McGregor, 2011, p3). Numerous interviews mentioned learning journals and portfolios, however these were virtually non-existent in the GEES course strand. The social work sub-cohort had much more knowledge of reflective practices, as reflection formed part of their curriculum and is assessed (McLeod et al, 2015, p441).

Some social work students discussed how they were required to produce reflective 'pieces', written pieces of work, as evidence in a portfolio. Discourse was mixed, with some students indicating they found it difficult to engage with reflective practices, whilst others said they found it beneficial. The research sub-cohorts described how students could find out more about themselves, using reflection to learn how to learn (Bolton, 2014, p2). There was also interview discourse that students could discover they were not suited to a particular profession and move on. This issue was viewed as a significant benefit of reflective practices by most of the research cohort.

There was little mention of criticality directly, which suggests it's an academic term, not commonly used elsewhere. Criticality was present in some interview discourse, manifest as initially people reflecting and identifying a skill they wish to acquire (Drew et al, 2016, p93). The reflective practice subsequently being followed by people devising their own learning strategies, by which to acquire the skill or knowledge they need. My research suggests that the educational benefits of reflective practices and criticality, need to be promoted more widely in the curricula of many disciplines.

The relationship between the university, student and employer, a curriculum design/employability nexus (CD/EN) exists (BIS, 2011b, p8/9; Drucquer et al, HEA 2011, p55; Lowden et al, 2011, p7). Research participants had different visions as to what the CD/EN should do, how the CD/EN should operate. Interview discourse demonstrated, the CD/EN can be university, employer or student-centred. This suggests that how a CD/EN operates, will depend upon the nature of the CD/EN itself (Tallantyre, in Tallantyre and Kettle (Eds.), HEA 2011, p3; Pegg et al, HEA 2012, p30).

My research suggest that most of the sub-cohorts feel that attending work based learning improves academic grades (Blicblau, 2016, p35). The UCAs sub-cohort were the most consistent, all saying improved academic grades happened, but not being absolutely sure why. In my study the academic sub-cohort revealed that why grades might improve after placement is very complex, possibly involving choice of academic study or reflection (Jones et al, 2015, p3). The employer and student sub-cohorts barely featured in this section. However the minority of research participants from these sub-cohorts who did pass comment, gave a different view to the UCAs sub-cohort. For most employers their two main issues were, will the new recruit fit in with the existing team also, did they have the work skills which got the job done. For a significant minority of employers, it was a much lower a priority how well qualified the graduate was ([28]European Union (EU): Humburg et al, 2013, p13). For the student, issues such as placement fit, along with prior preparation of the placement, ideally with a CD/EN, were more relevant (Bamber, 2012, p7). Students indicated poorly managed placements can lead to poor attendance, lack of motivation and stifle the chance of increased educational attainment (Ofsted Report, Ref No 150129, October 2015, p7).

[28] This final report (Humburg et al, 2013) was commissioned by the EU and carried out by the Maastricht University, Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market, in the Netherlands.

The PCF, the Professional Capabilities Framework, has had a profound affect upon my research study, being pivotal in the education of social workers (Jasper and Field, 2015, p4). The academics, employers and student sub-cohorts gave interviews mentioning different aspects of the PCF, not discovered in the literature search. The role of the Practice Educator was viewed as key by the three participating sub-cohorts. There were concerns regarding the direction of this role, also there appeared to be regional inconsistencies in how the role should be interpreted (DoH: Croisdale-Appleby, 2014, p27). This could have an effect on experiential learning, accessed nationally by students. There were concerns indicated during interviews that some key people skills could be lost, due to an increase in computer based assessments.

The PCF was welcomed by some for providing opportunities for reflective practice, and for increasing understanding of ethics and confidentiality (Skills for Care, 2013, p6). For these research participants the PCF was instrumental in student development, acting as a tool to acquire human and social capital. The PCF was also supported for helping to assist in compliance and 'fitting in'. A number of research participants indicated in their interviews, that in order to satisfy the PCF domains, students and experienced practitioners have to comply with societal expectations (DfE: The Narey Report 2014, p6). Interview discourse also described the PCF as a tool for assessing the continued 'fitness to practice' of social work practitioners long term. The majority of the research cohort indicated the PCF can be utilised for societal compliance purposes. The PCF can be described as being instrumental in the 'cultural reproduction' of norms and values of society (Bourdieu, 1977a, p487). The following chapter recaps all the main points raised in the literature review, and from the interviews with the four main higher education stakeholders in the research cohort.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The core aim of this research study was to analyse the effects of experiential learning on students, received during work based student placements. My PhD research focused on experiential learning in work placements from a learners' perspective. This study sought to establish the perceptions held by various higher education stakeholders, regarding the effects of experiential learning work placements on students. This research intended to demonstrate that Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012, p386) study, where students experience 'reproductive' or 'deconstructive' work incidents; will be replicated by students on unpaid experiential learning work placements, with either a 'Third Sector' organisation or a statutory agency. This research is situated in Bourdieusian concepts, which include 'habitus', 'field', and 'cultural reproduction' (Bourdieu, 1977b, p72; 1986a, p60; 1977a, p487). My PhD research sought to establish that many of Bourdieu's key concepts e.g. cultural transmission (Bourdieu, 1974, p35) influence students, when they receive experiential learning during work placements.

As an aide memoir, the four research questions that frame this thesis are as follows: The four research questions are:

- What use is made of student's work experience in academic programs?
- Are there different learning benefits in attending a 'Third Sector' placement compared to a Statutory Agency; are these benefits recognised and accepted by students, academics and employers?

- How do students articulate their learning and employability, acquired through work-based experience?

- How do the providers of student placements the employers, evaluate the experiential work-based learning of students in their organisations?

In order to address these research questions numerous interviews were conducted, which generated a multitude of associated relevant themes (n=47). This concluding chapter will reflect on preceding chapters detailing what we have learnt, regarding the effectiveness of experiential learning through student placements. The rich data, present in research analysis chapters 6, 7 and 8, has been interrogated, to demonstrate where existing literature has been supported. The data is summarised, providing a critical account of how the research questions and other relevant associated themes have been addressed (Hall, 2010, p206). My research study provides an insight into the role of experiential learning pedagogy during student placements. This research details how student placements are fundamental to social work and other person-centred professions. Student placements have also become increasingly more important in GEES courses. This study details the main issues and associated relevant themes discovered in the discourse from 47 research interview transcriptions. The interview transcriptions were then analysed using NVivo10 qualitative research software to analyse their content.

9.2 What use is made of student's work experience in academic programs?

Approximately two thirds of the UCAs sub-cohort, half the academics and employers, indicated that participating on a student placement improved academic learning. Both

social work and GEES course academics during interviews, gave an indication that student placements lead to better grades. It was also suggested that students achieve better grades due to experiencing work towards civic duty and employability on student placement. However it should be noted that the achieved impact of work placements on students' performance cannot be confirmed by this study. There is no empirical evidence to support the subjective claim that student placements lead to better grades. However this thesis confirms the overall view detailed in the majority of existing literature, student placements are educationally and societally beneficial, a good thing to do (Burton, 2016, p3; Fook, 2015, p442).

The academic sub-cohort reaffirmed experiential learning is fundamental to the student learning journey, especially in the professions. The academic sub-cohort informed us that students only remember 10% of a lecture or seminar, but 70% of learning by doing on placement. The academics also indicated that social work and GEES placements also develop problem solving. The themes, 'students putting theory into practice', 'learning by doing' (Kolb, 1984, p38) were mentioned regularly in interview discourse. There were similar comments that belonged in the employability agenda e.g. 'try before you buy' and 'the longest interview a student has'.

The UCAs sub-cohort placed a lot of emphasis on 'the real world' and 'real world experiences', along with recognising the importance of soft skills. To the UCAs sub-cohort the student placement is vital. The bulk of the UCAs sub-cohort had an employability standpoint regarding experiential learning. A social work student said she now understood the practice of social work, not just the law as taught at university. Another indicated how she was learning about 'safeguarding' in practice, finding it

quite different to university learning and what the textbooks tell her. The same social work student also discussed how incidents of agenda setting affect social work, and this cannot be learnt in class. This research interviewee also said of her student placement, it "Solidified all the knowledge that I get from university".

The social work students made numerous comments, which indicated that they received 'different learning benefits' whilst on placement. Various social work students described the benefits of various forms of 'collaborative learning' (Tusting, 2009, p128), which they participated in on placement. Students experienced role play, peer learning, self-directed learning, 'Living Library', group work and practice group play via an 'Academy' 'collaborative learning' (Tusting, 2009, p127; [29]Westin et al, 2015, p4; Burton, 2016, p16). The social work academics and employer sub-cohorts were equally supportive. They indicated 'interactive' contextual simulation type learning for students on placement, was often more valuable than traditional learning in lectures.

For the GEES courses students, there was little mention of anything to suggest they received alternative learning whilst they were on placement. GEES students were more likely to suggest that teaching during student placements is for on the job purposes only. Work towards the 'wider society' was barely mentioned. The teaching is driven, predominantly by the employability agenda, delivered by traditional, passive, methods. One GEES 'Third Sector' employer indicated an awareness of this limitation.

Some GEES courses benefit substantially from experiential learning in the form of student work based placements. Nationally on a number of GEES courses a student

[29] The Westin et al study, focuses on using didactic strategies with undergraduate nursing students on clinical placement.

placement is mandatory, examples include Environmental Health. To be deemed fit for professional practice in planning also requires the successful completion of a student placement. This means the GEES disciplines themselves are aware of the benefits of experiential learning. The future of GEES HE is positive, the GEES sub-cohort recognise student placements should be mandatory on all GEES courses.

9.3 Are there different learning benefits in attending a 'Third Sector' placement compared to a Statutory Agency; Are these benefits recognised and accepted by students, academics and employers?

Analysis of this issue was evenly split, with a third of all the research cohort saying there was strong difference, another third saying little difference, and a third not sure. Chapter 7 revealed, the majority of the research cohort indicated that there is no significant difference between students who did their placements with a statutory agency; compared to students who had a placement with a 'third sector' organisation. There are however different learning benefits and experiences between the two (Robinson and Hudson, 2011, p518: Buck, 2007, p9; Burton, 2016, introduction pxvi).

A few respondents suggested that generally, 'third sector' placements allowed more creative thinking in how their service was delivered, whereas a statutory agency concentrated more on critical evaluation skills and formal report writing. There was little indication from any research participant, to suggest that 'third sector' organisation placements were less professional than statutory agency placements. Participants indicated, the 'nature of the student' and the 'character of the placement organisation' influenced the effect and effectiveness of experiential learning at these sites.

The majority of social work academics indicated that students do become more politically and socially aware. For example social work students were more aware of issues such as the bedroom tax and the complications of adoptions. One academic sub-cohort member, placed significant emphasis on social workers being an agent of the state and as such, should be socially and politically aware. One Third Sector organisation employer indicated volunteering opportunities assisted students with the acquisition of human capital, manifest as social awareness (Coleman, 1988, s108). Both the social work and GEES courses academics and employers, placed a significant amount of emphasis on 'fitting in'. A social work academic indicated that potential applicants to the social work course would be 'weeded out' at the selection stage. Hence the student placement can be used for 'societal inculcation' and 'cultural reproduction' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p487). In contrast, GEES course academics in the main had a different view on the educational and societal inculcation value of student placements, than social work academics. Their main priority was employability.

Acquisition of skills is an important aspect of work placements. There was a strong emphasis upon soft skills being more important than theoretical ability. All social work students who participated in the study indicated, they had acquired various attributes. These varied from increased awareness, motivation, active listening skills and empathy, directly due to being on student placement. The majority of the UCAs sub-cohort indicated that 'interpersonal skills' (soft skills), were often valued above academic ability, in employability terms. Moreover, for the social work sub-cohort, approximately half the academics, three quarters of the employers and half the students indicated a 'deconstructive' student placement incident, raised by a student. (See Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012, p392).

For the GEES sub-cohort the results were markedly different. Most of the GEES sub-cohort didn't understand the issue. For the minority who did comprehend this concept, it was either an irrelevance or possibly troublesome, posing a danger to employability, which was the issue the majority of the GEES sub-cohort focussed on. For most of the GEES courses academics, employers and students sub-cohorts, the student development aspects of experiential learning barely featured in their interviews.

For the GEES courses sub-cohort, 'fitting in' and complying with norms and values was paramount. The main reason was the employability factor. Nearly all the GEES academics interviews were geared towards, do a placement to increase the student's chances of getting a job. Virtually all the GEES employers indicated they wanted the student to be able to 'fit in', to be a team player. One GEES employer openly said, be academic competence was of less importance. Two GEES employers were positively hostile to the notion of a student becoming more 'politically or socially aware'. They were attuned to the potential for disruption, if someone was to openly challenge existing work practices. As a profession, the GEES employers were more disappointed with their graduate pool than the social worker employers. This suggest GEES employers expected their graduates to be able to hit the ground running, immediately having the job skills required. Whereas social worker employers, aware that reflection will identify training needs, had lower expectations of a new starter in their profession.

The GEES students predominantly chose a placement for employability reasons. Like the GEES employers, they too hardly understood, becoming more politically and socially aware', or the 'acquisition of human and social capital'. There was one GEES course student exception, who did challenge work practice, however this was purely

for the profit motive. This student felt they were being exploited on placement (Karl, GEES student, 1-Beta, interview 45). The UCAs sub-cohort's responses regarding 'challenging incidents' were very useful. One UCAs member confirmed that 'deconstructive' incidents were a good thing, provided the student challenged work practices "In the right way, for the right reasons". The UCAs sub-cohort interview discourse was also mainly driven by the employability agenda. The UCAs strand did acknowledge that experiential learning via student placements, teaches other skills and attributes, one mentioned 'civic duty'.

9.4 How do the providers of student placements the employers, evaluate the experiential work-based learning of students in their organisations?

Kolb's (1984, p38) 'experiential learning theory' formed a key part of this thesis. A significant number of respondents understood the phrase 'learning by doing'. A minority of participants recognised the student must understand the social context for learning to take place. A small number of interviewees appreciated learning takes place by transforming experiences. The student modifies previous activity, before making another attempt, 'learning by doing' putting theory into practice. Employers realised that professionalisation could be increased, if they gave the student responsibility for a small project, whilst on placement (Fairbrother et al, 2016, p54). A minority of employers indicated, they recognised the 'nature of the organisation' could change the student's attitude on certain issues. This sub-cohort indicated, the length of placement effected 'learning by doing', the majority favoured longer placements so deeper learning could take place, for more sophisticated, nuanced work.

On social work courses, student feedback and reflective practices are identified as a core component of the social work student placement (BASW, 2015a, p6). It is often assessed by means of a reflective diary (Eden, 2014, p269), where the social work student has to record an activity they participated in, whilst they were on student placement. The student is required to detail, what issue was being addressed and what they learnt from the activity (Helyer, 2015, p18). They are sometimes asked to design a strategy, to learn how to deal with the issue a different way (Harvey, 2016, p3). Social work students indicated they found these opportunities to reflect beneficial. They could receive and give feedback on what they had learnt and discuss progress. In short on the social work courses, students are given lots of opportunities to learn from reflective practices and criticality (Toros and Medar, 2015, p92).

For GEES course students, feedback, reflective practices and criticality hardly featured. One such student did mention, not getting feedback had been a concern whilst on student placement. Student feedback, reflective practices and criticality, were barely mentioned by the GEES course academics. There appears to be little impetus to regularly offer students feedback on their placement. There was one exception to this, a GEES academic who was extremely enthusiastic about all aspects of student placements. This academic recognised the importance of reflective practices during student placements, far more than the other GEES course academics did. I suggest that although GEES courses are a different discipline to social work, they would benefit by significantly increasing the opportunity for reflective practices. My research study finds that both the social work and GEES disciplines will benefit from student feedback, reflective practices, including criticality in numerous different ways.

Reflective practices in GEES disciplines might improve critical thinking skills, for every problem encountered a different solution is devised, reflecting on past experiences. Robinson and McDonalds's (2014, p42) 'Developing skills in second year biological science undergraduates' study, evidences the relevance of critical thinking in GEES courses. Robinson and McDonald (2014, p43) suggests that critical thinking practiced during experiential learning, changes students so they become more reflective. The Robinson and McDonald (2014) also indicated, utilising critical thinking enabled students to acquire skills not directly taught in the module. Students '…were encouraged to be creative, and with increased confidence to question accepted wisdom' (Robinson and McDonald (2014, p44). This reaffirms the earlier established view that students who have engaged with critical thinking, are more likely to participate in a 'deconstructive' (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012, p362) work incident.

GEES courses students, are required to write a Personal Development portfolio, after their optional student placement. The portfolio was prepared after liaison with the University's Careers Service. This helps to reinforce earlier findings, which strongly indicate that GEES courses student placements are predominantly focussed on the employability agenda. Social work students do have a portfolio to prepare. But the social work student placement is clearly more about developing the student as a whole, not just preparing them for work. The employability agenda is a key part of that. There is recognition amongst stakeholders, which indicate that non-employability factors must also be delivered in social work education. The recognition is in the form of social work placements, which focus on increasing understanding on marginalised groups. Social work manifest in the form of support work for asylum-seekers, or advocacy work in employment or welfare tribunal cases. GEES placement students

would benefit from working in low income urban areas, to sees if there's any public health disparity with more affluent areas of the city. GEES students could work with overseas aid groups, to observe the effect international CO_2 emissions trading has on the environment of impoverished countries. Both social work and GEES students need to participate in reflective practices with tutors, mentors, the employer and their peers, to develop both professionally and personally as students. Reflection can avoid students 'subconsciously forgetting' (Kirkwood et al, 2016, p484).

Experiential learning enables students develop into a "whole-person", academically, professionally and personally (Eden, 2014, p266). During and after a period of work based experiential learning, the student needs opportunities to articulate their views. The majority of the research cohort recognised that students should reflect upon their work placement, the 'social situations' they find themselves in (Dewey, 1897, p77).

9.5 How do the providers of student placements the employers, evaluate the experiential work-based learning of students in their organisations?

My PhD research has discovered a number of underlying higher education constituencies, which when they interact, have a substantive affect upon student placements. Most of these higher education constituencies are perceived by the employer stakeholder. They consist of the employer's desire, detailing what skills they want the pool of potential graduate recruits to have. Another employer desire is to have a say in what students are taught at universities. Similarly some employers would like to make a pedagogical contribution, to influence how students are taught at university. Some GEES courses employers in my research study, indicated they would like to participate in the student's formal assessment. Here the GEES course employer would mark the student's work performance, on completing their placement. A GEES

student suggested this idea during interview. The latter point is especially important because effectively, that is how social work students are assessed. If a social work student fails their placement a second time, they fail the BA course. I argue that when these higher education constituencies are considered together, they can be defined as a curriculum design/employability nexus (CD/EN).

Both social work and GEES courses employers indicated during my study, that they did not have sufficient formal meetings with the universities to discuss student placements. A 'Third Sector' employer indicated, they would appreciate any assistance universities could give in the form of timetabling. This can act to restrict some students from experiential learning through placements. The research interviews with academics from both strands confirmed this. Responses ranged from indicating no current plans to deliver such a forum, to, they had met with employers twice in the past year. A social work academic indicated 'I think we need to work closely with employers'. This research interview described 'tensions within the social work profession', regarding the direction of social work placements. Work placements are not therefore being used to generate effective partnerships between different stakeholders. The issue of partnership development needs to be considered if work placements become more mainstream beyond subjects such as social work, as they potentially may put considerable strain on university/employer/community relations.

The PCF, the Professional Capabilities Framework, has had a substantive effect upon the Social Work sub-cohort of my PhD research study. Chapter 8 discussed how the new PCF requirements, have changed the nature of liaison between employers, the student placement providers, the HEIs and the students. Academics and students

were very concerned operationally, with delivering the PCF requirements. The PCF now requires that a student social worker's second experiential learning placement is with a statutory agency. Potentially, there might not be sufficient social work 2nd student placements with a statutory agency, to meet expected demands. The GSCC (2012) now the HPC, voiced similar concerns regarding student placement provision, prior to the start of the PCF (GSCC, 2012, p6). 'Third sector' employers, were equally concerned with the PCF for different reasons. These employers felt they were more likely to be offered 1st placement students, who would be less experienced, than 2nd placement social work undergraduates.

I argue the PCF in its current form, is having a profound affect upon the education of social workers. The statutory sector, might not be able to deliver all the provision required by universities, to satisfy the PCF requirement, that one student placement must be with a statutory agency. My research found that the universities themselves are experiencing growing criticism from students, 'Third Sector' organisations and statutory agency employers, regarding the PCF. Critique included a 'lack of direction' and how it appeared to be applied 'massively differently' from one university to another. Students indicated in their interviews, they were concerned that under the current PCF, they might not be given two qualifying, accredited, social work student placements. I suggest that the PCF policy is amended, to allow both 1st and 2nd student placements to be delivered by 'Third Sector' organisations.

9.6 Limitations of study

My PhD research study did not develop as envisaged when I embarked on the research journey. As part of that process, four research questions were drafted and

approved by my PhD Supervision team. We could not have foreseen in September 2012, when my PhD began, that some issue would come along and substantially affect my research study. The Professional Capabilities Framework, the PCF, had a significant effect on my study, influencing research participant responses on numerous issues to include employability, reflective practices and computer based assessments.

The social work sub-cohort spoke of experiential learning in terms of how the current interpretation of the PCF (July 2014-Feb 2015), was affecting student social worker's education; with little discussion on the effect of experiential learning on students. Issues were raised of regional inconsistencies, also students not being able to experience all the rudiments indicated in the 9 PCF domains within a suitable time frame. The PCF was pervasive during the research data collection period July 2014 to February 2015. Academics indicated (July 2014), they might not be able to get their students fully prepared for the PCF experiential learning placement periods.

Another limitation of study were the initial substantial difficulties in recruiting research participants, both from my home institution at Keele University and with other external institutions elsewhere. This took up a substantive amount of my 3 years HEA scholarship funded time. One effect of the length of time it took to resolve ethical approval with several different HEIs, is the small number of students in my research (n=8), of which there were only three GEES students (n=3) in the cohort.

Another limitation of study was the societally embedded doxa effect of employability, an issue that was pervasive, substantially influencing many research cohort interviews (Bourdieu, 1977b, p169; Nolan (2012, p205). The majority of participants gave their

views about the effect of experiential learning on students in employability terms. Responses ignored the student development remit of experiential learning.

With the benefit of hindsight, another person-centred profession where a work placement is mandatory such as teaching, should also have been included. Similarly, it would have been beneficial to include GEES courses where a student placement is required. For example planning, environmental health and public health undergraduate degree programmes. These GEES students may well have had more of an understanding of social concepts, such as the 'wider society'. Alternatively they could have shown an interest in civic renewal. My research would have benefitted by including parents as one of the initial key stakeholders. Very early in the data collection phase, parents were identified in research interview discourse, as being an important experiential learning stakeholder. By the time this became apparent, it was too late to formally approach parents, to get their views on the effect of experiential learning pedagogy on students, or the educational effectiveness of student placements.

9.7 Findings

9.7.1 Experiential learning through student placements

The majority of the research cohort were supportive of student placements, including the GEES course strand.

9.7.2 Deconstructive and Reproductive Student Placement experiences

The main concepts of Holdsworth and Quinn's (2012, p392) 'Student Volunteering' study were supported. "Reproductive" and "Deconstructive" work incidents were replicated, by students receiving experiential learning through social work and GEES student placements. Two new hitherto undiscovered causal factors, which influence

whether 'reproductive' or 'deconstructive' incidents take place were revealed, these were employability and power relationships.

9.7.3 The 'wider society' is an existential agency and a HE stakeholder

The social work sub-cohort directly used the phrase the 'wider society', more often than the GEES sub-cohort during their research interviews.

9.7.4 The PCF - The Professional Capabilities Framework

The PCF, the Professional Capabilities Framework in its current form, is having a profound affect upon social work education. It appears increasingly likely that nationally, the statutory sector won't be able to satisfy the PCF mandatory requirement, that one social work student placement must be with a statutory agency.

9.7.5 Employability is an agency in its own right

As an agency, employability is a framework around which power structures can form.

9.7.6 Experiential learning: a statutory agency, or 'Third Sector' organisation

There were no discernible experiential learning differences between a student placement with a statutory agency, or a 'Third sector' organisation, as regards the student becoming more or less socially or politically aware.

9.7.7 Experiential learning encourages using reflective practices

Both social work and GEES course disciplines, would benefit from student feedback and reflective practices including criticality, during experiential learning on placement.

9.7.8 Curriculum design/employability nexus (CD/EN)

The HEIs, the employers and placement students, should meet regularly in a joint partnership, a forum defined as a curriculum design/employability nexus (CD/EN).

9.8 Policy recommendations

9.8.1 Experiential learning through student placements

All students on work placements should receive increased opportunities to reflect about their work and choice of profession.

9.8.2 Curriculum design/employability nexus (CD/EN)

A regional CD/EN should be established for social work and GEES courses.

9.8.3 The PCF - The Professional Capabilities Framework

The PCF policy indication that it is mandatory that the 2nd social work undergraduate student placement is with a statutory agency, should be changed. The new PCF policy, should allow all student placements to be with a 'Third sector' organisation.

9.9 New Lines of Inquiry

9.9.1 Introduction

Numerous new lines of inquiry have resulted from my study. Below are examples of possible new PhD research studies, derived from research participants' interviews. Many issues were raised including the shrinking state and what difference to social work would there be if we had an EU Referendum and the UK chose to leave. My research study also revealed a basket of other new lines of inquiries that were overlapping, which came from different research interviews. The following potential research questions help to delineate key points to consider, regarding experiential

learning. The range of research questions, help to identify important knowledge gaps in the operation of work based student placements. The list overleaf is not exhaustive.

9.9.2 Do Student Placements Improve Academic Grades?

Many participants in the research cohort indicated to some degree that students who participated in a work placement, demonstrated improved academic performance. There is a paucity of literature which can definitively answer this critical question.

9.9.3 What Affect will the PCF, the Professional Capabilities Framework Have upon Work Based Experiential Learning Student Placements?

The social worker sub-cohort were concerned regarding the PCF and its likely affect upon the access to, quality and nature of student placements.

9.9.4 How can HEIs Maintain a Curriculum Design/Employability Nexus?

A significant number of academics and UCAs interview discourse raised this issue.

9.9.5 Does being a 1st or 2nd year student on placement affect their learning?

Students and employers perceived differences, comparing a yr1 with a yr2 student.

9.9.6 Does work based experiential learning affect undergraduate and post graduate students differently?

A few employers indicated an interest in this issue during their interviews.

9.10 Conclusion

This PhD research study on work based experiential learning, helps to illustrate the many issues to consider when students are on work placements. In particular experiential learning is enhanced when students participate in reflective practices on placement. During reflection, the student becomes enabled to consider what they have learnt on work placement, and crucially identify further learning they still require.

Experiential learning, underpinned by reflective practices, performs a dual pedagogical function. Experiential learning will reveal the presence of knowledge and skills gaps, where a new learning strategy needs to be devised. Experiential learning enables students to become aware of societal inequalities in operation. In order for the latter benefit to be realised, all higher education stakeholders need to develop effective partnerships and codes of practice, which do not simply assume that work placements enhance employability. This necessity, underlines the need for a locally owned CD/EN.

This research study has helped to demonstrate that experiential learning is particularly useful in 'person-centred' professions such as teaching, nursing or youth work. People skills such as active listening, counselling, empowering or self-efficacy are developed in the student. Skills that have to be learnt from the experience of doing. My thesis has helped confirm the existing literature that experiential learning pedagogy, is the most effective way to transfer person-centred skills and knowledge.

Reflective practices were indicated by the social work sub-cohort as being particularly useful. When some of the students talked of reflection in their interviews, they either consciously or subconsciously indicated they had become more socially and politically

aware. This is an indication that reflective practices are enhanced, when undertaken as part of experiential learning, becoming more embedded than when taught in lectures. Students who were not consciously aware of reflection, indicated they had developed critical thinking skills, from discussing how issues that had arisen had been resolved. Such students also indicated they had become more confident in decision making, thus confirming the literature that reflection (albeit subconsciously) helps develop self-efficacy. The HE sector will benefit by delivering more reflective practice curricula, especially for students of person-centred disciplines e.g. teaching. Work placements should increase the number of opportunities for reflective practices, as they assist in the knowledge transfer of soft skills e.g. critical thinking.

This research study has revealed that a fifth higher education stakeholder does exist, an existential agency called the 'wider society'. The 'wider society' intends to represent the societal interests of all. To fulfil its remit, the 'wider society' must produce sufficient skilled workers to deliver the prevailing social interests at any given point in time. We are reliably informed our society needs skilled workers for social care and environmental management. Experiential learning is an essential tool the 'wider society' can utilise to prepare people, to deliver its societal remit. The phrase 'prepare people' is meant to be interpreted as producing people who for example are keenly attuned towards social care or public health management. Thus the existential agency the 'wider society', is a fifth experiential learning higher education stakeholder.

Numerous people from all four sub-cohorts, the academics, the students, the employers and the UCAs confirmed the existence of the 'wider society'. This was in terms of enabling people to deliver a public or social good. There was also mention of

protecting society, manifest as environmental or child protection. There was recognition from the GEES sub-cohort of the benefits of traffic management, in terms of reducing stress, environmental damage and assisting in work/life balance. The social work stakeholders mentioned how recent changes in adoption procedures benefitted Family and Children's Services. They indicated how reducing adoption breakdowns protects the 'wider society', by reducing the need for an alternative solution, which might prove more costly in terms of stress. The social work sub-cohort recognised experiential learning was essential, to develop the person-centred skills required to assist people to regain more control of their lives. This benefits the 'wider society' in terms of critical resource allocation. Current social policy has decided, social work intervention is to be reduced in all but the most critical of cases.

The use of Bourdieusian concepts has helped to delineate the importance of awareness of power structures in operation during work placements. The research has revealed that most HE stakeholders view the effects of experiential learning in employability terms. The UCAs sub-cohort were clearly perceived as the junior member of the HE stakeholders. Apart from a few minor exceptions, the other HE stakeholders spoke of UCAs in instrumental terms, as a tool to be used to advance employability. Employers wanted graduates with job skills who were most likely to comply with existing norms and values. 'Fitting in' was the most important issue, not academic ability. The academic sub-cohort were equally as vocal as the other stakeholders in indicating, the main purpose of experiential learning was to get the student job ready. Issues such as student development, self-efficacy and learning to be able to deliver the societal remit of the 'wider society', were given a cursory mention.

The academics provided the most impetus regarding 'fitting in', a phrase which appeared in the majority of the academic sub-cohort interview discourse. They were very assertive, regarding students being required to demonstrate expected behaviours and comply with existing norms and values whilst on placement. The academic sub-cohort were very keen to maintain the reputation of their university and good relations with employers, who provide them with placements year on year. The position of the majority of academics, reinforced many of Bourdieu's concepts, primarily the 'cultural reproduction' theory (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p3). I argue that for many people, employability with its unique powers of cultural reproduction, is itself the 'wider society' (Burke et al, 2013, p157; Coleman, 1988, s117; Crozier and Reay, 2011, p146).

My research demonstrates, employability has a doxa effect upon higher education. The HEIs and the academics are subject to the push and pull of a number of policy drivers, which are geared towards employability. There is the commodification of the degree. HEIs need to attract students to make a three year commitment to study. One of the key marketing tools utilised by HEIs, is the increased certainty that graduating students will gain well paid employment afterwards. At this juncture, Bourdieu's social capital has been transformed into employment (Bourdieu, 1986b, p249).

Another facet of the employability agenda within a university context is student destinations after graduation. HEIs use graduate testimonials in their prospectus and/or admissions literature, to demonstrate the type of employment students gained after graduation. My research illustrates, the pervasive nature of the employability agenda in higher education put HEI academics in an impossible position. On the one hand, academics do want to focus upon the student development side of higher

education. However faced with the employability agenda, manifest for example as student destination unofficial (or not so unofficial) league tables, academics find they have little choice. The pervasive all powerful doxa effect of employability, is an agency which provides a framework from which Bourdiuesian power concepts operate in higher education. Academics have been influenced to 'ideologically reproduce' the employability agenda, in order to 'fit in' within today's higher education sector (Bourdieu, 1977a, p490; Bourdieu, 1990, p53).

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Appendices

Table 13 - Label and description of items in the appendix

Appendix Label	Description of Appendix Item
BDSP-ERP	Copy of Keele ERP ethical research approval letter
BDSP-INTLIST	Interview Number, Participant Profile, Pseudonym Used and Pen Portrait Details
BDSP-RGO	Copy of Generic Letter to RGOs
BDSP-UEAC	A University Ethical Approval Emailed Confirmation
BDSP-PD1	Letter of Invitation to Programme Directors
BDSP-PD2	Information Sheet to Programme Directors
BDSP-SIS	Copy of Student Information Sheet
BDSP-STUCONFORM1/2	Student Consent Form x 2 - General Student Consent Form (1); Anonymised quotes can be used (2)
BDSP-INTSCHEDULES	Initial semi-structured interview schedules for all four cohorts: Academics, Students, Employers and UCAs (10, 11, 12 and 13)
BDSP-SIS2	Later additions to a Student Interview Schedule
BDSP-SQUIN	The SQUIN Used in All the BNIM Interviews
BDSP-NVivo10	NVivo10 Coding Notes - Excerpts from one labelled interview

Keele University

RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES

22nd April 2014

Ben Duke
125 Washington Road
Sheffield
S11 8DP

Dear Ben,

Re: Student learning through work placements

Thank you for submitting your application for review. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved by the Ethics Review Panel. The following documents have been reviewed and approved by the panel as follows:

Document	Version	Date
Summary of Proposal	3	03/04/14
Letters of Invitation	3	03/04/14
Information Sheets	3	03/04/14
Consent Forms	3	03/04/14

If the fieldwork goes beyond the date stated in your application, you must notify the Ethical Review Panel via the ERP administrator at uso.erps@keele.ac.uk stating ERP1 in the subject line of the e-mail.

If there are any other amendments to your study you must submit an 'application to amend study' form to the ERP administrator stating ERP1 in the subject line of the e-mail. This form is available via http://www.keele.ac.uk/researchsupport/researchethics/

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me via the ERP administrator on uso.erps@keele.ac.uk stating ERP1 in the subject line of the e-mail.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jackie Waterfield
Chair – Ethical Review Panel

CC   RI Manager
        Supervisor

Interview 1 – (Int1: 140714_0003 and 140714_0004 – 14 July 2014)
18m 50s and 4m 55s
Abigail: (Social work academic, interview 1, pre-1992 campus university)

Interview 2 - (Int2: 140714_0005 - 50m 50s - 14 July 2014)
Jenny: (UCAs, interview 2, redbrick university)

Interview 3 - (Int3: 149722_0006 – 39m3s - 16 July 2014)
Polly: (GEES courses academic, interview 3, redbrick university)

Interview 4 - (Int4: 149722_0007 – 47m 12s - 18 July 2014)
Helen: (GEES courses academic, interview 4, pre-1992 campus university)

Interview 5 - (Int5: 140722_0008 – 56m 24s - 22 July 2014)
Karen: (Social work academic, interview 5, redbrick university)

Interview 6 - (Int6: 140731_0009 – 56m 11s - 1 August 2014)
Ian: (UCAs, interview 6, post-1992 university, 3-Alpha)

Interview 7 - (Int7: 140806_0010 – 45m 33s 6 August 2014)
Warren: (Social work academic, interview 7, ancient university)

Interview 8 - (Int8: 140807_0011 – 49m 47s - 7 August 2014)
Glenda: (Social work academic, interview 8 38:54, 1-Beta)

Interview 9 - (Int9: 140811_0016 – 51m 14s - 11 August 2014)
Yvonne: (GEES academic, interview 9, ancient university)

Interview 10 - (Int10: 140817_0017 – 50m 20s - 18 August 2014)
Gerald: (GEES course academic, interview 10, 1-beta)

Interview 11 - (Int11: 140817_0018 – 34m 46s - 18 August 2014)
Stella: (GEES academic, interview 11, pre-1992 campus university)

Interview 12 - (Int12: 140819_0019 – 1 hour and 10s - 20 August 2014)
Sheila: (Social work academic, interview 12, pre-1992 campus university)

Interview 13 - (Int13: 140828_0021 – 40m 45s - 28 August 2014)
Rhona: (Social work employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 13)

Interview 14 - (Int14: 140827_0020 – 45m 47s - 28 August 2014)
Julie: (Social work employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 14)

Interview 15 - (Int15: 140828_0024 – 57m 59s - 29 August 2014)
Harriet: (Social work employer, statutory agency, interview 15)

Interview 16 - (Int16: 140902-0025 – 21m 47s - 2 September 2014)

Florence: (Social work and GEES courses employer, statutory agency, interview 15)

Interview 17 - (Int17: 140903-0026 - 1h 2m 31s - 3 September 2014)
Leanne: (GEES academic, interview 17, pre-1992 campus university)

Interview 18 - (Int18: 140903-0027 – 1h 12m 45s - 3 September 2014)
Chris: (Social work academic, interview 18 32:13, 1-Beta)

Interview 19 - (Int19: 140910-0028 – 23m 20s - 11 September 2014)
Eleanor: (Social work employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 19)

Interview 20 - (Int20: 140930-0030 – 1h 53s - 30 September 2014)
Trevor: (GEES courses employer, statutory agency, interview 20)

Interview 21 - (Int21: 141002-0031 – 35m 4s - 3 October 2014)
Leslie: (Social work academic, interview 21, redbrick university)

Interview 22 - (Int22: 141002-0032 – 38m 37s - 3 October 2014)
Clive: (GEES courses employer, statutory agency, interview 22)

Interview 23 - (Int23: 141009-0033 – 43m 4s - 9 October 2014)
Nancy: (Social work academic, interview 23 redbrick university).

Interview 24 - (Int24: 141016-0034 – 21m 13s - 17 October 2014)
Hugh: (GEES course workers employer, 'Third Sector' organisation, interview 24)

Interview 25 - (Int25: 141020-0035 – 29m 35s - 21 October 2014)
Andy: (Private sector employer, GEES courses, interview 25)

Interview 26 - (Int26: 141022_0036 – 32m 53s - 23 October 2014)
Carol: (UCAs, interview 26, pre-1992 campus university)

Interview 27 - (Int27: 141028_0037 – 35m 13s – 1st interview - 29 October 2014)
Heidi: (Former social work student, currently in practice, interview 27, 3-Alpha)

Interview 28 - (Int28: 141028_0038 – 29m 26s – 2nd interview - 29 October 2014)
Heidi: (Former social work student, currently in practice, interview 28, 3-Alpha)

Interview 29 - (Int29: 141030_0039 - 48 minutes 21 seconds - 30 October 2014)
Barry: UCAs, interview 29, 33:44, pre-1992 campus university

Interview 30 - (Int30: 141104_0040 – 1h 20m 55s - 4 November 2014)
Mary: (Social work employer, 'third sector' organisation, interview 30, 57:24)

Interview 31 - (Int31: 141104_0041 – 39m 57s - 5 November 2014)
Noel: (GEES academic, interview 31, redbrick university)

Interview 32 - (Int32: 141107_0043 – 1h 10m 18s – 1st interview 7 Nov 2014)
Megan: (Student (current social work practitioner), interview 32, 3-Alpha)

Interview 33 - (Int33: 141110_0044 – 32m 50s - 11 November 2014)
Wendy: (UCAs, interview 33 17:40, 1-Beta)

Interview 34 - (Int34: 1411014_0045 – 2h 13m 17s – 2nd interview - 14 Nov 2014)
Megan: (Student (current social work practitioner), interview 32, 3-Alpha)

Interview 35 - (Int35: 141120_0046 – 1h 49m 14s - 20 November 2014)
Emily: (Social work student, final year, interview 35, pre-1992 campus university)

Interview 36 - (Int36: 141123_0047 – 57m 16s – 1st interview 24 November 2014)
Roisin: (Roisin, (a social work student on placement), interview 36 28:40, 3-Alpha)

Interview 37 - (Int37: 141124_0048 – 2nd interview - 25 November 2014)
Roisin: (Roisin, (a social work student on placement), interview 36 28:40, 3-Alpha)

Interview 38 - (Int38: 141126_0049 – 47m - 26 November 2014)
Freda: (Student cohort (GEES course), interview 38, 1-Beta)

Interview 39 - (Int39: 141127_0050 – 118m 58s - 27 November 2014)
Brian: (Social work and GEES courses employer, statutory agency, interview 39)

Interview 40 - (Int40: 141128-0051 – 48m 2s – 1st interview - 28 November 2014)
Briony: (Student cohort (in practice), interview 40, redbrick university)

Interview 41 - (Int41: 141130_0052 – 40m 37s - 1 December 2014)
Malcolm: (Social work academic, interview 41, post-1992 university, 3-Alpha)

Interview 42 - (Int42: 141203_0053 – 33m 37s – 1st interview - 4 December 2014)
Karl: (Student cohort (GEES course), interview 42, 1-Beta)

Interview 43 - (Int43: 141205_0054 – 1h 39m 25s – 2nd interview - 5 Dec 2014)
Briony: (Student cohort (in practice), interview 43, redbrick university)

Interview 44 - (Int44: 141205_0055 – 26m 8s – 1st interview - 6 December 2014)
Gordon: (Student cohort (GEES course), interview 44, 1-Beta)

Interview 45 - (Int45: 141210_0056 – 36m 48s – 2nd interview - 11 Dec 2014)
Karl: (Student cohort (GEES course), interview 42, 1-Beta)

Interview 46 - (Int46: 141217_0057 – 35m 49s - 17 December 2014)
Amy: (GEES course employer, statutory agency, interview 46)

Interview 47 - (Int47: 160113_0060 – 40m 11s – 2nd interview 14 February 2015)
Gordon: (Student cohort (GEES course), interview 47, 1-Beta)

University Address:
Ben Duke
c/o Professor Clare Holdsworth
Keele University
Room WS 1.30
William Smith Building
Staffordshire
ST5 5BG

(Date redacted)

(Redacted – Name given on the original)
(Redacted – The letter that went out had the full institution's address on)

Dear **(Redacted – Name given on the original)**,

A Letter of Invitation to Research Governance Officers

My name is Ben Duke and I am a PhD student at Keele University.

I'm contacting you in your role as Research Governance Officer for your institution on the recommendation of my own institution. My research project explores undergraduate students' experiences of work placements and is funded by the Higher Education Academy. I would like to carry out interviews at your institution, which would involve interviewing academic staff, career advisers and students about their experiences of student placements. My research has been approved by Keele University Research Ethics committee but I need to check if I would also need your own institution's approval before I can proceed.

I would be very grateful if you could advise on this matter and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Ben Duke
Email: b.duke@keele.ac.uk Mobile: Research Mobile Number **(redacted)**
PhD Candidate Keele University, Human Geography Department

Appendix Item 4 – BDSP-UEAC: A University Ethical Approval Confirmation

(Redacted copy of an emailed ethical approval from an institution, granting permission to approach their staff and students)

University of Keele Ethics Review

Dear Ben

Having investigated the research process at Keele University, I can confirm that it is an acceptable alternative procedure to ours here at the University, and therefore you are free, from our point of view, to commence the research with our students and staff.

Good luck with your project.

Many Thanks

(Redacted)

--

(Redacted – address details)

(Redacted – address details)

(Redacted – address details)

Voted number one for student experience
Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey 2014-2015

Research and Innovation Services
(Redacted – The full name address and email contact details were supplied on the original email that they sent)

University Address:
Ben Duke
c/o Professor Clare Holdsworth
Keele University
Room WS 1.30
ST5 5BG

(Redacted - date)

(Redacted – Name given on the original)
Programme Leader, Undergraduate Programmes in Geography
Assistant Subject Manager in Geographical, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES)
(Redacted – Full address of institution given)

Dear **(Redacted),**
Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES) Disciplines

A Letter of Invitation to Programme Directors - GEES

My name is Ben Duke and I am a PhD student at Keele University. I am contacting you in your roles as Programme Leader, Undergraduate Programmes in Geography and as Assistant Subject Manager in Geographical, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES), in your institution, to invite you and your Department to participate in research on student learning experiences. This research is funded by the Higher Education Academy. I have been given ethical approval by **(Redacted)** Research Governance Officer to contact **(Redacted)** University Staff and Students for this purpose.

Please find attached an Information Sheet giving you full details of what is involved in my intended research. For this research I would like to interview both programme directors and/or academic staff involved in student placements and students who have taken part in these activities. I would be very grateful if you could consider this request

If you are willing to take part I would like to interview yourself, or if appropriate other staff members who are involved in student placements. These placements may take part with a range of organisations, but I am particularly interested in comparing student experiences in third sector organisations against those in private enterprises or statutory authorities. Following this interview I would also like to carry out a small number of interviews with undergraduate students (approximately 4-6). In order to do this I would be very grateful if you could send out an email to students inviting them to take part in the research. Further information on these interviews is provided in the enclosed Invitation to Students letter. The invitation will be sent to students who have recently completed a student placement.

I would be very grateful if you could consider my request. My contact details are provided below and I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Ben Duke
Email: b.duke@keele.ac.uk Mobile: Research Mobile Number **(Redacted)**
PhD Candidate Keele University, Human Geography Department

(Redacted – date)

Social Work Programme Director Information Sheet

Study Title: **'**Student Learning through Work Placements'

Aims of the Research

The main aim of this research is to explore what undergraduate students learn through work placements. The research will compare students who undertake placements with third sector organisations with other providers, such as local authority or private enterprises. The project will compare student experiences in two broad subject areas: social work and geography/environmental sciences.

Invitation

You are being invited to consider taking part in the research study **'**Student Learning through Work Placements'. This project is being undertaken by Ben Duke, PhD Candidate, Keele University. Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish.

Why have I been chosen?

As part of the research I will interview Programme Directors GEES discipline/s like yourself to get their views of the benefits of student placements as part of students' academic studies. It is the intention that between 4 and 8 Programme Directors, will take part in the research study.

Do I have to take part?

You are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign two consent forms, one is for you to keep and the other is for our records. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reasons.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be asked about what your views on the educational benefits of student placements, how students engage in the process, and how their learning is assessed. The research will also explore how placements contribute to students' employability, self-motivation and confidence. This will involve a semi-structured interview which last for a maximum of one hour. It will take place at your location of choice usually your institution. You will be asked to talk about the student placement experience and asked questions about these experiences. All interviews will be digitally recorded and stored on a password protected computer. The interviews will be transcribed and you will have the opportunity to review the interview transcript.

If I take part, what do I have to do?

You will be asked to participate in an interview that will last for a maximum of one hour, during which you will be asked to give your views on student placements.

What are the benefits (if any) of taking part?

You benefit by making a contribution to the under-researched field of experiential learning.

How will information about me be used?

Your interview data will be stored on a password-protected computer. Your interview data will be transcribed either by the researcher, or an approved experienced contractor, who is fully conversant with the Data Protection Act legislation. All your personal information in the interview transcripts will be remove or changed. Your data will only ever be used as part of my PhD research. Where appropriate, quotes will be used to illustrate research findings in the PhD thesis, and in any subsequent publications. Any quotes used are subject to your consent.

Who will have access to information about me?

The data will only be accessed by the researcher and my PhD Supervisors. The data will be stored and retained by myself, the principal investigator for a five year period on an electronic hard drive, password protected device, after the end of the study. All data will be anonymised and no personal information will be retained. At the end of the five year period, the data will be securely disposed of.

Who is funding and organising the research?

The research is being funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to the researcher(s) who will do their best to answer your questions. You should contact Ben Duke on b.duke@keele.ac.uk Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact the researcher, you may contact his Lead PhD Supervisor, Professor Clare Holdsworth, Keele University, email c.m.holdsworth@keele.ac.uk telephone number 01782 733 167; Or his second PhD Supervisor, Dr Damian Breen, Keele University, email d.breen@keele.ac.uk telephone number 01782 733 556. They can be contacted to discuss any aspect of his PhD.

If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study please write to Nicola Leighton who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address:-

Nicola Leighton

Research Governance Officer

Research & Enterprise Services

Dorothy Hodgkin Building

Keele University

ST5 5BG

E-mail: n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk

Tel: 01782 733306

Copy of Student Information Sheet, Student Consent Form and Student Consent Form for Anonymised Quotes to be used

Information Sheet

Study Title: **'**Student Learning through Work Placements'

Aims of the Research

The main aim of this research is to explore what undergraduate students learn through work placements. The research will compare students who undertake placements with third sector organisations with other providers, such as local authority or private enterprises. The project will compare student experiences in two broad subject areas: social work and geography/environmental sciences.

Invitation

You are being invited to consider taking part in the research study **'**Student Learning through Work Placements'. This project is being undertaken by Ben Duke, PhD Candidate, Keele University. Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information.

Why have I been chosen?

As part of the research I will interview students about their work placement experiences.

Do I have to take part?

You are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign two consent forms, one is for you to keep and the other is for our records. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reasons.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be asked about what your experiences of organising student placements, how students engage in the process, and how their learning is assessed. The research will also explore how placements contribute to students' employability, self-motivation and confidence. This will involve an **OPEN interview** which last a maximum of 1 hour. It will take place at your location of choice usually your institution. You will be asked to talk about the student placement experience and asked questions about these experiences. All interviews will be digitally recorded and stored on a password protected computer. The interviews will be transcribed and you will have the opportunity to review the interview transcript.

If I take part, what do I have to do?

You will be asked to participate in a maximum 1 hour semi-structured interview, where you will be asked to give your views on student placements.

What are the benefits (if any) of taking part?

You will have the opportunity to reflect on your experiences of student placements and how it has contributed to student learning.

How will information about me be used?

The interview data will be stored on a password-protected computer. The interview data will be transcribed either by myself, or an approved experienced contractor, who is fully conversant with the Data Protection Act legislation. All personal information in the interview transcripts will be remove or changed. The data will only ever be used as part of my PhD research. Where appropriate, quotes will be used to illustrate research findings in the PhD thesis, and in any subsequent publications.

Who will have access to information about me?

The data will only be accessed by myself and my PhD Supervisors. The data will be stored and retained by myself the principal investigator for at least five years on an electronic hard drive, password protected device, after the end of the study. All data will be anonymised and no personal information will be retained. At the end of the minimum five year period, the data will be securely disposed of.

Who is funding and organising the research?

The research is being funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to the researcher(s) who will do their best to answer your questions. You should contact Ben Duke on b.duke@keele.ac.uk Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact the researcher, you may contact his Lead PhD Supervisor, Professor Clare Holdsworth, Keele University, email c.m.holdsworth@keele.ac.uk telephone number 01782 733 167; Or his second PhD Supervisor, Dr Damian Breen, Keele University, email d.breen@keele.ac.uk telephone number 01782 733 556. They can be contacted to discuss any aspect of his PhD.

If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study please write to Nicola Leighton who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address:-

Nicola Leighton

Research Governance Officer

Research & Enterprise Services

Dorothy Hodgkin Building

Keele University

ST5 5BG

E-mail: n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk

Tel: 01782 733306

Contact for further information

Normally only Keele telephone numbers and e-mail addresses should be used in all study documentation. If there are reasons to depart from this then these must be explained in your Ethical Review Panel documentation.

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: 'Student Learning through Work Placements'

Name and contact details of Principal Investigator: Ben Duke, Keele University, b.duke@keele.ac.uk Research SIM card mobile number

Please tick box if you agree with the statement

1	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	☐
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.	☐
3	I agree to take part in this study.	☐
4	I understand that data collected about me during this study will be anonymised before it is submitted for publication.	☐
5	I agree to the interview being audio recorded	☐
6	I agree to allow the dataset collected to be used for future research projects	☐
7	I agree to be contacted about possible participation in future research projects.	☐
8	I agree for anonymised quotes to be used in research publications	☐

_____ _____ _____
Name of participant   Date   Signature

_____ _____ _____
Researcher   Date   Signature

CONSENT FORM

(for use of quotes)

Title of Project: 'Student Learning through Work Placements'

Name and contact details of Principal Investigator: Ben Duke, Keele University, b.duke@keele.ac.uk Research SIM card mobile number

Please tick box if you agree with the statement

1   I agree for any quotes to be used   ☐

2   I do not agree for any quotes to be used   ☐

_____   _____   _____
Name of participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Researcher   Date   Signature

Copy of the initial semi-structured interview schedules for all four cohorts

University Address:
Ben Duke
c/o Professor Clare Holdsworth
Keele University
Room WS 1.30
William Smith Building
Staffordshire
ST5 5BG

Interview date:

PhD Thesis title
'Student Learning through Work Placements'

Research Instrument - Interview Schedules - Students

Students

What do you feel you have gained from your student placement?
(Prompts: experience; feel more employable; more socio-politically-culturally aware)

What activities did you take part in?
(Prompts: supportive; empowering; protecting)

What were the reasons why you chose to enter the social work profession?
(Prompts: reduce inequality; social justice)

What personal attributes do you feel someone should have in your profession?
(Prompts: empathy, cultural awareness; reflective)

Why do you feel those attributes are important?
(Prompts: Consider a clarification probe)

What do you think you have gained by completing a student placement?
(Prompts: more employable, increased awareness; Use a reflective/empathic probe)

Do you think you have gained or increased any skills, compared to before you went on student placement?
(Prompts: employable; group work; problem solving)

Do you think you have changed in any other ways, due to student placement completion?
(Prompts: reflective; prepared to professionally challenge practice; identify inequality)

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Interview date:

PhD Thesis title
'Student Learning through Work Placements'

Research Instrument - Interview Schedules - Employers

Employers – Statutory Agencies and 'Third Sector' organisations

What do you think your organisation gains by having students on placement?
(Prompts: equip potential future employees; promote the organisation)

What do you think students gain by being completing a student placement with your organisation?
(Prompt: in-house learning; work experience; increased employability)

What training and support do you provide students while they're on placement?
(Prompts: Group work; partnership working; opportunities to reflect on practice)

Can you give an example of a direct positive contribution a student has made whilst on placement with yourselves?
(Prompts: promoted the organisation; innovative; increased service take up)

When the organisation were recruiting for this student placement, what were you looking for in an ideal candidate?
(Prompts: Conform to norms and values, team player; time management; empathy)

Looking further into the future, do you feel there are any differences between candidates who did their student placement with a statutory agency, compared with candidates whose experiential learning is with a 'Third Sector' organisation?
(Prompts: statutory - more compliant; more risk awareness;

Why do you feel there's differences between the two placement types?
(Prompts: Use probing techniques e.g. if/then funnelling and/or hint probe)

Do you feel that there are other forms of learning that are equally as good in preparing our students for the workplace?
(Prompts: virtual learning environment (VLE); problem-based learning (PBL)
(Probe: Reflective/Empathy so what you're saying is, paraphrase response to clarify)

In general, as an employer how much emphasis should universities place upon student placements?
(Prompts: experience is best; role-play and simulation are good alternatives)
(Use if/then funnelling probe – what type of learning do you feel is best for students?)

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Research Instrument - Interview Schedules – Academics

Academics, who develop and deliver pedagogic policy for student placements

What benefits do you feel students gain by going on student placement?
(Prompts: increase their awareness of non-mainstream groups of people)

How do you feel employers benefit?
(Prompts: increased recruitment pool; test potential recruits for compliance)

What do you feel are the educational benefits of student placements?
(Prompts: Critical thinking put into practice; real life application of academic learning; opportunity for the reflective practice of criticality on work performance)

How do you rate work-based experiential learning e.g. in student placements?
(Prompts: useful, students prepared for the real world; not representative)

Are there any other forms of teaching or learning that could, if not replace, compliment the student placement?
(Prompts: Role play, simulation, VLE, PBL)

What skills and/or attributes do you feel students gain from a work placement?
(Prompts: social/political awareness; human/social capital; employability)

How important do you think issues such as personal attributes, human and social capital, potential recruits who are socially and politically aware are to employers?
(Prompts: how do employers measure employability; compliancy; team worker?)

Please tell me in general what you think about student placements?
(Prompts: beneficial, student gets a taster; employer's recruitment pool replenished; student/employer feedback steers the direction of academic learning after placement)

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Research Instrument - Interview Schedules – University Career Advisers (UCAs)

    <u>University Career Advisers – (UCAs)</u>

What benefits do you feel students gain by going on student placement?
(Prompts: experience in the student's chosen profession; increase employability)

How do you feel employers benefit?
(Prompts: employers get to try before they buy; student aware of organisation's ethos)

What do you feel are the educational benefits of student placements?
(Prompts: only source of real life learning; students get the chance to shine)

How do you rate work-based experiential learning e.g. in student placements?
(Prompts: employer and students are asking for more real life projects)
(Clarification probe: You've mentioned…please tell me why you feel that's an issue)

Are there any other forms of teaching or learning that could, if not replace, compliment the student placement?
(Prompts: Could PBL, VLE, role play or simulation fulfil the role of placements)
(If/then funnelling probe: would xyz come above abc in providing work experience)

What skills and/or attributes do you feel students gain from a work placement?
(Prompts: social/political awareness; human/social capital; employability)

Looking further into the future, do you feel there are any differences between candidates who did their student placement with a statutory agency, compared with candidates whose experiential learning is with a 'Third Sector' organisation?
(Prompts: Some employers regard the two routes differently; attributes; disposition)

Why do you feel there's differences between the two placement types?
(Prompts: Statutory appears to focus on conformity and compliance; Third Sector appears to allow people to be more innovative in service delivery)

(Clarification probe: Please give examples of these differences)

How important do you think issues such as personal attributes, human and social capital, social and political awareness are to employers?
(Prompts: How do employers assess employability; do they consider such factors)
(If/then funnelling probe: Use to establish the UCAs view on employer's priorities)

Please tell me in general what you think about student placements?
(Prompts: applies university learning in work; provides an opportunity for students to reflect on practice; essential learning which can't be done by any other method)
(If/then funnelling probe: Establish UCAs priorities regarding student placements)

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Later additions to a Student Interview Schedule

Q9 Do you feel that a student placement changes the nature, attitude and disposition of a student? (Prompts: Do you feel a student becomes more socially or politically aware, due to participating on a student placement)

Q10 How important do you feel that 'fitting in' is as an issue to employers.
(Prompts: Existing compliance with norms and values; the acquisition of human and social capital; societal inculcation; 'ideological reproduction')

Q11 Who else do you think benefits from student placements?
(Prompts: The employer, the institution, the student, the wider society)

Q12 Do you feel that employers and/or the institutions provide or should provide opportunities for student feedback and reflection? (Criticality; reflective practices)

Q13 Do you feel that employers and/or the institutions provide or should provide opportunities to an input in the student placement, as regards how the student learns? (Pedagogy question)

Q14 Do you feel that employers and/or the institutions provide or should provide opportunities to have an input into what students are taught at their university?
(The curriculum design/employability nexus)

Q15 Please tell me in general what you think about student placements?
(Prompts: applies university learning in work; provides an opportunity for students to reflect on practice; essential learning which can't be done by any other method)
(If/then funnelling probe: Establish UCAs priorities regarding student placements)

The SQUIN Used in All the BNIM Interviews

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Research Instrument – SQUIN – Students

Student Interviews using Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM)

SQUIN (Single Question aimed at Inducing Narrative)

Did any of the incidents you were involved in or came across whilst working on student placement, affect your social or political awareness of various issues faced by different types of service users, to the extent that your social work education was affected?

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Excerpts from one labelled interview each, from all four sub-cohorts of the research cohort. Academics – Students – Employers – University Career Advisers (UCAs).

Interview 18 – Academic Cohort (n = 14) (Social Work and GEES)

[5:10 NVivo10 - Civic university social work academic 1 - Employability agenda; Accreditation].

[5:20 NVivo10 - Civic university social work academic 1 - Pedagogical tool – 'rites of passage learning if you like'].

[5:25 NVivo10 - Civic university social work academic 1 - Societal inculcation, Bourdieu 'Cultural reproduction' 'it's crucial that we know this student is the right kind of people to become social workers'].

[5:40 NVivo10 - Civic university social work academic 1 - Employability, 'touchy feely emotional skills'].

[6:34 NVivo10 - Civic university social work academic 1 – 'Employability' discussion].

[10:28 NVivo10 - Civic university social work academic 1 – 'Employability' narrative - Employability subthemes - 'Graduate pool' and 'Try before you buy'].

[10:46 NVivo10 - Civic university social work academic 1 - Student placements; described reciprocal benefits for the student, the institution and the employer].

[11:00 NVivo10 - Civic university social work academic 1 - 'Employability' – Employer and University links].

Interview 10 – Student Cohort (n = 8) (Social Work and GEES)

[3:10 NVivo10 - GEES Student - Employability main factor].

[10:30 NVivo10 - GEES Student - is speaking in Employability terms, no other issue].

[14:25 NVivo10 - GEES Student - Not socially aware, comment is profit motive].

[15:35 NVivo10 - GEES Student – Not socially or politically changed or aware, instead comments are the Employability narrative and the profit motive].

[37:35 NVivo10 - GEES Student - Student indicated Employability was aided by articulating reflection].

[41:05 NVivo10 - GEES Student – 'Employability' – Stakeholders from the employability perspective only].

[42:10 NVivo10 - GEES Student – Discourse 'Employability' terms only. Did not identify the 'Wider society' stakeholder].

Interview 35 – Employers Cohort (n = 10) (Statutory Agency or GEES employer)

[2m26s NVivo10 - GEES employer statutory agency – 'Employability' subtheme - Main focus - Employability agenda - 'Try before you buy'].

[2m55s NVivo10 - GEES employer statutory agency – 'Employability' subtheme - Student gains some real experience, we get good outputs - 'Try before you buy'].

[4m NVivo10 - GEES employer statutory agency –
This Statutory employer's main priority was 'Employability'].

[16m40s NVivo10 - GEES employer statutory agency – 'Employability' agenda - 'Shocks students when they come to a real world situation'].

[18m34s NVivo10 - GEES employer statutory agency – 'New Line of Inquiry' - Does being a 1st or 2nd year student on placement' affect the learning journey].

[20m NVivo10 - GEES employer statutory agency – For 'employability' – Experiential learning the preferred option].

[21m36s NVivo10 - GEES employer statutory agency – 'Employability' – Student placements are good as the student can build relationships with employers, very good for networking].

[21m40s NVivo10 - GEES employer statutory agency –
Employers repeat placements to filter students through that process. Indicates 'Bourdieu 'cultural reproduction'].

[22m NVivo10 - GEES employer statutory agency – Curriculum Design/Employability Nexus. This employer explained some educational benefits – develop a CD/EN].

Interview 45 – University Career Advisers (UCAs) Cohort (n = 5)

[2:45 NVivo10 - UCAs – Predominantly the 'Employability' agenda discourse].

[5m NVivo10 - UCAs – Focus on Professionalisation; 'Employability' discourse].

[14m NVivo10 - UCAs – Personal attributes are extremely important to employers].

[15m NVivo10 - UCAs - Depends on the nature of the Placement or Employer].

[17:40 NVivo10 - UCAs – 'Employability' subtheme - 'Fitting in' is important. Bourdieu' 'cultural reproduction', also 'societal inculcation' indicated].

[20:55 NVivo10 - UCAs – 'Employability' sub-theme – 'Graduate Pool' - Student placements contribute towards a better graduate pool].

[26:50 NVivo10 - UCAs – 'Institutions lagging behind in employability' indicated].