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Supporting Academics' Full-time Transition from Professional Practice to University. A Qualitative Study.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Oxford Brookes University for the Degree of Doctor of Education.

2020

Acknowledgements

I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of support and encouragement I have received through the years of doctoral study. If it takes a whole village to raise a child, it takes all of these wonderful people to submit a thesis. This thesis is dedicated to all who have been there encouraging and believing in me.

Firstly, I would like to express deep appreciation to my supervisors. To Dr Roger Dalrymple and Dr Ian Summerscales, a duo of support, advice and kindness. I was blessed and you were both cursed! Your collective faith in me was what kept me on the journey, particularly during dark days and literature reviews. Thank you.

To the wider Brookes EdD team, I would like to thank Dr Linet Arthur for her support and encouragement. Since my days as an FE teacher studying for my Masters on a cold Tuesday evening in Oxford, you have kept inspiring me.

To the EdD cohort, colleagues, friends and fellow researchers, I will miss our Saturdays and Ian's strong coffee. To Dr Jane Spiro, maybe one day I will get to Hawaii!

Many thanks for all the participants, fellow practitioner academics, who contributed their time and experiences to make this research possible. I hope you found the conversations beneficial to your own journey as academics.

To my mum and dad, your eagle-eyed swift proofing was so extremely helpful. I am not forgetting the sleeping 'Tank' on my proof-reading. You have a very judgmental beagle! I hope I have made you, although maybe not Harvey, proud.

To all my family and friends, thank you for your continued support and understanding. To the A team at Swindon college, for your catch ups and encouragement, to Lisa for believing in Dr Kitch since 2014, when even I did not.

To all my colleagues at OCSLD, to Simon for helping me set up the blog and for answering all those pesky questions my 'friend' kept asking. To Cat, have I earnt the cheese stars now?

To my beautiful children, Rufus, Seren and Rowan, how proud I am. I have been so blessed. From the days studying at the side of paddocks when you were horse-riding or pool side when swimming, I hope I have inspired you towards your own lifelong achievements. I will now be bored so I think I will be a helicopter mum now…

For my husband, Gareth, for your endless support. You have been with me through-out offering advice and encouragement, reading drafts and proof-reading, as well as company on writing retreats, long walks, and 'Breaking Bad'. Yes, I think you have a point, it is Bourdieu and not Billy Crudup in Alien: Covenant, it really is uncanny! Thank you for always making me laugh even in the darkest of places. Team Kitchener always.

Abstract

Higher education (HE) has a long association with many professions and industries yet the demand for professional-facing HE provision has never been greater with public services, such as nursing and policing, now requiring mandatory HE qualifications (Bekhradnia and Beech, 2018) in parallel with a rapid growth in degree apprenticeships (Universities UK, 2019). Consequently, there has been an expanding need for experience-rich professionals to transition into full-time academic roles.

These practitioner academics (PAs) are not in themselves a homogenous group as they span a range of professions that may not have been traditionally associated with HE. This thesis adopts an ethnographic, narrative, interpretivist approach to capture the experiences of sixteen full-time neophyte and established PAs from multiple UK based higher education institutions (HEIs) from a diversity of professional backgrounds. Through conversational-expository methods – blog posts and comments, semi-structured interviews, and conversations on the model of the BBC's *Listening Project (*BBC, 2017) – the narrative accounts draw upon 'thinking tools' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989:50), predominantly of *field*, *habitus,* and *symbolic capital*, as a framework of inquiry. This thesis adds to the theoretical understanding of, and practical approaches to, the limited body of research on the experiences of this diverse workforce in crossing disciplines and boundaries and entering an academic role.

Findings revealed that PAs experience a distinctive transition of *field, habitus,* and *symbolic capital*. Yet it emerged that this unique experience of change is often overlooked by HEIs in their induction support. This thesis makes the argument that recognition of the rich diversity of backgrounds to an academic role is required to frame effective induction support and makes recommendations for implementation. Furthermore, this research demonstrates this sample of PAs' previous involvement of working predominantly in public service or industry bringing a familiarity of working within a neo-liberal ideology operationalised through new public managerialism. PAs are uniquely situated to benefit HEIs as a resource to harmonise discourses and practices through determined government reform, such as the Higher Education and

Research Act (Great Britain, 2017), blending state and market involvement in the sector.

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List of Abbreviations

College of Advanced Technology (CAT)

Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA)

Degree Apprenticeships (DA)

Degree Awarding Powers (DAP)

Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE)

Doctor of Education (EdD)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Educational Developer (ED)

Framework for Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ)

The Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS)

Higher Education (HE)

Higher Education Academy (HEA)

Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE)

Higher Education Institution (HEI)

Higher Education in Further Education (HE in FE)

Human Resources (HR)

Joint Academic Coding System (JACS)

Key Information Sets (KIS)

Listening Project (LP)

National Students Survey (NSS)

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

Office for Fair Access (OFFA)

Office for Students (OfS)

Practitioner Academics (PAs)

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)

Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (PgCert)

Research Excellence Framework (REF)

Teaching Excellence and student outcome Framework (TEF)

UK Inter-professional Group (UKIPG)

United Kingdom (UK)

United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC)

Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Overview

Universities have long been allied to professional-vocational education yet the demand for such affiliation has rapidly increased over recent years. With a public service drive towards graduate entry (Collini, 2012; Bekhradnia & Beech, 2018; Guild HE, 2019) and growth in degree apprenticeships (Universities UK, 2019), there has been an escalation in professionalisation. Higher Education (HE) is pivotal for credentialing the development of occupations into professions (Moloney, 1992; Neal and Morgan, 2000). Resultantly, the demand for professional, practical, work-based knowledge and skills in HE is essential as demonstrated by the inflow of academic staff starters in 2018/19 of whom more than half came from a professional or public sector background (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2020).

This thesis explores the experiences of transition from a professional-vocational career into a full-time academic role in HE in the United Kingdom (UK). This first chapter will present the context for this study and how my own encounter with HE as a neophyte Practitioner Academic (PA) shaped the imperative for the study. I will discuss what is meant by 'professional, vocational education and HE'. I will define the nomenclature - academic role, vocational education, professional - as well as broadly explore how knowledge is being understood and used in the context of HE. This chapter will also explore the setting and sample, the research approach, and how the study aims to contribute to knowledge.

1.2 The Context: Situation of Self

In April 2016 I started my new role as an educational developer (ED) in a post-1992 university in the UK. While in some literature, such as Whitchurch (2009), the role of an educational developer is considered to be that of a blended professional, my own role was clearly defined as an academic position with a focus on enhancing pedagogical practices in the institution. From being a teacher in Further Education (FE), I was now transitioning into an academic, with my first role at a Higher Education Institution (HEI). It was this career transition that guided my choice of research topic.

I was instantly struck by the difference in culture between HE and my previous roles. I had worked in various sectors: private, corporate, educational and charitable and, in each setting, I felt able to infer the cultural rules when working in a new role. HE (or my specific HE setting at least), I found to be very different.

I was not unfamiliar with HE as I had experienced HEIs both as a full-time undergraduate student and part-time post-graduate student (in two different institutions: one post-1992 and one Russell Group). Furthermore, for a number of years, I had experiences in liaising with a post-1992 university as a programme lead in my previous role in delivering Higher Education in Further Education (HE in FE). Nonetheless, these experiences did not prepare me for the culture shock of working full-time as an academic.

I completed my induction schedule over the first few weeks, followed by a long-term plan of support over three years, expecting to recognise processes that I would assimilate. But every day was like entering another country. There was another language to learn; a language of acronyms with no ready source of translation equivalent to *Babelfish* (a free online translation site) available to me. It felt like I was in another time-zone, where work seemed to slow time. Furthermore, my physical attendance seemed more about my own personal choice rather than any necessity. I could define my own role and research interests. HE was like no other place I had worked; at once I felt bewildered, indignant yet, concurrently, excited and liberated. This range of feelings triggered my interest.

I decided to use my position working in an HEI, where my experiences and impressions were fresh, to begin to inquire into whether my feelings were unique. Was I the only one who encountered the role of a full-time academic, following a professional career, culturally perplexing?

'The majority of students at a large number of British universities now study vocational or professional subjects' (Collini, 2012: 36), particularly in post-1992 universities. Consequently, the employment of many lecturers is dependent upon their former professional experience (Wood et al., 2016). Therefore, it seemed that

there would be a significant number of colleagues with similar paths entering into an academic role. Observation and anecdotal conversations with colleagues from practice-based backgrounds indicated that they were having similar feelings and perceptions as mine.

1.3 Career transition studies of academics from practice-based, professional backgrounds

Academics from practice-based, professional backgrounds are referred to by several terms. There is an absolute distinction to be made between joint post-holders, who are holding a practice role and an academic role concurrently, and those whose substantive role is exclusively in academia but who have joined the profession from a practice background.

Two prominent terms for joint post-holders are 'dual professionals' (Andalo, 2011; Bradley, 2019) and 'pracademic' (Nalbandian, 1994; Posner, 2009; Huey and Mitchell, 2016; Collins and Collins, 2019; Dickinson et al., 2020; Mosier and Opp, 2020). Similar terms are 'inbetweeners' (Gates and Green, 2013); 'practitioner-academics' (Wilson et al., 2014), 'practitioner-teacher' (Bradley, 2019); 'practice-based professional practitioner' (Gourlay, 2011a) or similarly, 'practice-based academic' (Shreeve, 2011) and 'practice academics' (Wolfenden et al., 2019). There are specific discipline terms to refer to a joint post-holder in a specific profession, such as in nursing, where the term 'lecturer practitioners' (Fairbrother and Mathers, 2004) is typically associated with a joint role comprising both clinical and educational duties. These generic terms signify someone who is both an academic and in active practice in a professional area, usually as two part-time positions. These joint post-holders reflect the experience of simultaneously 'being in two camps' (Shreeve, 2011: 79) and 'serving two masters' (Fairbrother and Mathers, 2004: 539).

Similarly, terms used can reflect the specific discipline where an academic is based. One term, specifically coined by Murray (2002), differentiates teacher educators in HE as 'second order practitioners', with the first order being school teachers, while Boyd et al. (2007) refer to 'new teacher educators'. By contrast the generic term 'second-career academics' (Dash, 2018) refers to those who have left their

profession to work as academics. Yet this term does not differentiate between a part-time or a full-time academic role. Furthermore, with no explicitly defined generic term for academics from a professional background, particularly one for those who commit to a full-time academic role, this can lead to confusion when gaining an overall picture of their experiences.

Research on academics from practice-based, professional backgrounds has a similar variance of either being focused on a single professional group or a specific discipline. Significantly, research does not always differentiate between those whose substantive role is exclusively in academia but who have joined the profession from a practice background. Examples of this are Fairbrother and Ford (1998) and Hurst (2010) which focussed on a single professional group and a range of employment contracts. An exception has been Fairbrother and Mathers (2004) who undertook a multi-professional study investigating the similarities and differences between lecturer practitioners from a range of disciplines (such as law, medicine and social work). Yet in this study, the participants were still engaged in practice in their disciplines and so, rather than fully engaging an academic role, they were dual practitioners, negotiating two cultures.

Similarly, Wood et al. (2016) and Dickinson et al. (2020) investigated multi-professional practitioners fully immersed in academia. However, participants were from only one university with substantial HE experiences offering reflective accounts of their transition. There are no multi-professional studies from UK-based HEIs, recording experiences of practitioners who are currently transitioning from professional practice to a full-time academic role merged with the experiences of established academics who have transitioned into academic posts.

Furthermore, as outlined, there were a number of different terms deployed to refer to academics employed on the basis of their previous knowledge and experience, yet I could not specifically locate a generic term for full-time academics from professional backgrounds who, like me, had ended their professional career one week to start a new career as an academic the next. For the purposes of the research, a term was required that reflected this unique transition. Yet the term 'academic professional', in the literature, related to apprenticeship programmes for new academics to deliver HE

teaching and research (Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, 2019). A term was required for this research that differentiated between the postdoctoral route into an academic role, the presumed traditional, career academic, and one that recognised the significance of moving from a professional background into an academic role. Therefore, Practitioner Academic (PA) was a term that foregrounds a generic professional status and merged the two roles thoughtfully. Consequently, the term PA in this study refers to full-time academics from professional backgrounds.

This thesis aims to highlight the experience of PAs from a professional-vocational role and context entering into HE as academics. It is therefore relevant to outline the context in which an academic role is understood in this research.

1.4 The Academic Role

Academic work is the creating and sharing of knowledge by individuals or teams with a prominent level of expertise or skills (Coates and Goedegebuure, 2010). The academic role holds a number of key duties namely planning, designing and delivery of teaching and/or research (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2014) overlapping with other roles, such as managing, writing and networking which shapes the role over time (Blaxter et al.,1998). It is worth noting that there has been scant substantive study of the figure of the academic as a professional. Such attention as has been paid to the topic is more concerned with professional formation of the individual, such as Lucas and Murray (2002) and Harland (2012), rather than with mapping the field of practice.

A new academic, Kamler and Thompson (2006) contend, is prepared through the process of writing and defending a piece of original academic work to gain Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), while situated within the scholarly community. In this apprenticeship position, Barnacle and Mewburn (2010) assert that the PhD thus demonstrates expertise within a particular field but significantly involves socialisation into the academic role, seen as a career academic pathway. However, the notion of the PhD as an apprenticeship for academic life seems increasing redundant now as the majority of PhD graduates now go into industry (Vitae, 2020). This indicates a

porous boundary between universities and industry that suggests the two areas as somewhat interdependent with one another.

The growth in professional doctorates over the last two decades (Drake and Heath, 2008) is significant for this study. This indicates the rise in academic qualifications related to industry posts and likewise highlights the porous boundary between HEIs and industry. A professional doctorate can also accommodate PAs who would have been unlikely to have completed a PhD as their academic formation. This is significant as full-time PAs are unlikely to have the apprenticeship into the scholarly community of that of a career academic. Instead PAs' equivalent socialisation would have been in their profession-vocation. It is worth noting that by the 1970s the majority of academic posts in universities required a PhD, except for entry via professional practice (Bogle, 2017). Professional doctorates indicate recognition that universities specify different entry points into an academic role. Thus, the combination of career academics and PAs gives HEIs the required expertise in the academic role to pursue, produce and disseminate knowledge in the academic disciplines and to prepare students for the professions.

1.5 Professional-Vocational Education

Universities UK (2016:11) states vocational education in HE is: 'designed to offer a pathway to a specific career or profession – by deploying specific, technical skills used in that career'. This definition casts a broad net around the acknowledgement of HE as a seat for professional education. In point of fact, The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) recognises nine principal subject areas of vocational education: Social Work and Care; Veterinary, Agriculture and Environment; Education and Training; Computer Science and Information and Communications Technology; Subjects Allied to Medicine; Engineering; Architecture, Building and Planning; Medicine and Dentistry; Law and Legal Studies (HESA as cited Universities UK (2016:11). Vocational and non-vocational data sets are further classified into academic subjects in the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS), replaced by The Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) in Autumn 2019.

Within HE many of these subjects of vocational education programmes will be regulated by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB), such as Architects Registration Board, General Medical Council, and Nursing and Midwifery Council. These bodies may have a varying degree of involvement and expectations for programmes to gain accreditation. Some bodies, such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) have the authority to set the educational standards for all nursing and midwifery programmes, to give institutions programme approval and to quality assure the provision. This is to ensure professional standards are met on completion of the qualification yet, surprisingly, the NMC do not stipulate the qualifications or clinical practice requirements of the programme teams in HE (Nursing Midwifery Council, 2019).

The nine recognised subjects of vocational education at HE account for 42% of all undergraduate and postgraduate provision in all HEIs which is categorised as vocational (Universities UK, 2016). Arguably, most students studying business, representing a significant amount of 14% of all provision in 2016 (Universities UK, 2016), will be entering occupations that have a high degree of vocationalism (e.g. marketing) but will be classed as a non-vocational provision within this data set.

Moreover, the Higher Education Statistics Agency's Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE) for 2010 collected data through Standard Occupational Classification. The survey, taken six months after the end of a postgraduate or undergraduate degree, measures whether the graduate is in employment (and, if so, which category of employment), training or further study. The DHLE survey used the aggregated terms 'professional' and 'non-professional occupations' to categorise employment. All 'professional' high-skilled employment categories were characterised as: managers, directors and senior officials (group one), professional occupations (group two), associate professional and technical occupations (group three). Out of nine categories, these three were all associated with higher-level qualifications (vocational and non-vocational).

Therefore, it follows, by the time students have left university, if they are in employment, they are either classified in a professional or occupational role with high

level education. In light of these points, it seems that the relationship between higher education and professional-vocational roles is significant and increasing.

1.5.1 Professional

Throughout this research, the overarching term 'professional' is defined as 'any type of work that needs special training or a particular skill, often one that is respected because it involves a high level of education' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020:1) and will relate to work for a specific profession, occupation or industry as well as vocationalism and vocational education. This term recognises post-secondary academic, advanced vocational, and professional education on the International Standard Classification of Education 5-8 as defined by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2019). What is significant is the assertion that HE is symbiotic with professions and later, in the literature review, I will demonstrate why this relationship has been fostered.

1.6 The Study

This study will investigate how PA's experience their transition from a professional career to a full-time academic role in their specialist field in HE. This thesis is informed by three related elements. Firstly, as demonstrated in 1.3, the range of definitions indicates PA literature can inform the development of neophyte academic identity, the transition from practice to academia and how this can be supported. Secondly, as an insider researcher exploring this area of career transition, an understanding of the wider cultural context and function of professions is required. This links to the final element, in order to understand the scaffolding on which today's HE is built, particularly in the context of post 1992 HEIs, historical changes that have contributed to professionally focused education into HEIs will be reviewed.

1.7 The Research Field

This research will be situated within universities in the UK. There is no clear definition of Higher Education in British legislation. In the 1988 Education Reform Act (legislation.gov.uk, 2020a) it is suggested that HE is above Advanced level (or equivalent), indicating above level 3 on the Framework for Higher Education

Qualification (FHEQ). The Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE), a not-for-profit charity owned by GuildHE and Universities UK for the advancement of HE practice (Charity Commission, 2019), recognises HE as level 4 or above.

However, HE might not invariably take place in a university as it could equally as well be situated in a college. There are distinctive genres within HE that may have different practices and 'HE in FE' is an example of this. HE in FE institutions may not have Degree Awarding Powers but are in partnership with a university to confer degrees. Whilst some providers of HE in FE have been granted powers to award their own degrees (for example, Hartpury College (Camden, 2017)), the majority of HE in FE providers do not have autonomy. For this inquiry, I am particularly interested in the experience of campus-based PAs in HEIs that exclusively provide HE as opposed to a mixed economy of HE in FE. I am also keen to inquire into those who commit to a full-time academic role, thus some HE providers are outside the scope of this study as, in the case of HE in FE, the role is predominantly one of teacher. Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, the term Higher Education (HE) and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) will refer specifically to universities in the UK. The terms university, HE and HEI are used interchangeably in the research.

1.8 Purpose Statement

Drawing upon ethnographic narrative inquiry, the purpose of this interpretivist study is to capture narrative accounts of what it is like to transition from a professional-vocational career into an academic position in HE in the UK. This inquiry will examine those experiences to critically review current HEI induction processes and consider the need for any improvements to support PAs in their initial professional development.

At the centre of this research are the relationships between people and wider social structures. The study adopts conversational-expository methods with the aim to build on narrative contributions within conversations as a means to gather insight into this period of transition. This is a process through which people describe their experiences and what can be learned to support academics successfully making the transition into HE. Consequently, this investigation will draw upon the experiences of

participants (both neophyte and established PAs, from a diversity of professional backgrounds and disciplines) to contribute to, and extend knowledge of, PA transition.

Furthermore, earlier studies sometimes assume a dualism between professions and academics. Firstly, I argue that this is increasingly untenable given that historically professions have had a long and increasingly close association with academia. Secondly, I call for a convergence of professional and academic discourses in order to gain a consensus of understanding for HE to flourish and to ensure better student outcomes in a period of socio-political HE policy change.

1.9 Significance of the Study

The study findings can inform several stakeholders. Firstly, Human Resource (HR) departments can gain a better understanding of the initial professional development provision for new practitioner academics transitioning into an academic role. Secondly, Educational Developers (ED), many like myself working within HR departments in HE whose remit involves enhancing teaching and learning and fostering capacity in others (Liebowitz, 2016), may benefit from the research outcomes. One of the key roles for an ED is to support neophyte academics through their threshold lecturer preparation programme. The awareness of the diversity of backgrounds to an academic career can aid effective support and provision in initial professional development. Thirdly, future PAs could use analysis of the findings to gain an insight into the experiences of others to manage their own expectations of the transition in HE. Finally, this study can increase my own knowledge of a sector about which I had limited understanding when I was first employed as an ED in 2016. Furthermore, the methods can act as a catalyst for reflection during transition into HE to give a better insight into, not only my own, but importantly, the needs of early career PAs when they embark on their new role in an HEI.

1.10 The Objectives for the Inquiry

The objectives for the inquiry are set out as follows:

1. To design a conceptual framework for theorising practitioner academics' transitions into Higher Education institutions in the UK.
2. To record, using conversational-expository methods, practitioner academics' experiences of transition.
3. To synthesise data sets and critically review current practice of academy support, particularly for practitioner academics.
4. To contribute to the theoretical understanding and practical approaches to the transition from a professional career into an academic role.

1.11 Chapter Summary

Chapter one has presented the context for this inquiry, including the researcher's own background as a source of motivation for the inquiry. The nature and scope of the research has been outlined. The paucity of inquiries on how neophyte and established full-time PAs in HEs in the UK was indicated. This contrasted with studies focused on part-time PAs' experiences in an academic role from a number of different professions. The aim of the study, context field, purpose, objectives and significance have been introduced as well as the nomenclature.

The next chapter will present a literature review which aims to inquire into why PAs are employed as academics in HE. Therefore, the role and nature of a profession will be examined. This will be followed by an investigation into key historical, political, and cultural factors that have shaped professionally focused education into HEIs. Literature concerning professionals entering academic careers will also be examined. Finally, through the synthesis of this literature, this chapter concludes with the specific research questions identified for investigation.

Chapter Three, methodology, will expound the research paradigm with justifications, approach taken, and methods used to engage in conversations with practitioner academics. The case for applying Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989:50), predominantly those of *field*, *habitus,* and *symbolic capital*, as the framework of inquiry, will be made.

Chapter Four, findings and analysis, will present the data set from the 16 participants and will offer concomitant analysis and synthesis.

Chapter Five, discussion, will further examine the findings of the inquiry, synthesised with the academic literature evaluated in Chapter Two, to draw out the key themes that the findings of the research questions have highlighted - namely, a dissonance between the expectations of PAs on arriving and settling into their academic role and the assumptions made by HEIs of PAs' understanding of the role and the value placed on professional knowledge in higher education. The chapter concludes with practical applications that HEI could adopt to ameliorate the dissonance between PA experiences and HEI expectations.

Finally, Chapter Six, conclusion, will draw together the findings and recommendations from the inquiry and outline the contribution to knowledge to the current literature. This chapter will also reflect on the limitations of the inquiry and will consider further avenues for research. The thesis will close with a reflective account of the researcher's own transition into an academic role.

Chapter Two Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As established in the previous chapter, practitioner academics' (PA) experiences of transitioning into higher education (HE) is the initial trigger for this doctoral investigation. To understand the role of PAs' in HE it is important first to examine the relationship between professions and HE. Initial exploration suggests there are three routes for examination: firstly, to consider the role of professions in society; secondly, to consider the crossover between professions and HE; thirdly, to consider the need for PAs to be employed in HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) as academics.

Accordingly, this chapter organises the relevant literature into three sections, each of which offers a different perspective on the issue of transition from industry to the academy.

In **Part one,** I investigate the notion, significance and cultural function of professions and show the intention of gaining professional recognition for occupations. I will briefly explore professional identity.

In **Part two,** I will discuss the importance of key historical, political, and cultural factors that have contributed to shaping professionally focused education into HEIs in the UK. I will briefly explore academic identity and role.

In **Part three**, I will review recent literature concerning professionals entering academic careers and indicate that few studies have looked at professionals who enter a full-time academic role.

Finally, through the synthesis of this literature, this chapter concludes with the specific research questions identified for investigation.

2.2 Part one: Professions

This section will review how professions have come to be understood through the years, outline the rationale for professional recognition and how scholarship in professional status aligns to HE. This section will progress to analysing and evaluating views on knowledge moving on to initially explore the position of knowledge situated at the core of professional work.

Professions are recognised as experts in an occupational role with specific specialist functions in one aspect of life (Parsons, 1939/1954; Wilensky, 1964; Susskind and Susskind, 2017) and supported by a body of knowledge and skills associated with a profession (United Kingdom Inter-professional Group, 2008). A professional works as an advocate, holding an office or function, for public interest (UK Inter-professional Group, 2008), to act and advise on behalf of others (Parsons, 1939/1954). The literature indicates that a profession seems situated between societal commonweal and the individual client interest, in an interstitial, independent position between public and private spheres of society. Although independence varies between professions, allegiance to upholding professional ethics (Conze and Kocka, 1985 in Burrage et al., 1990) gives conviction to professional judgment. Parsons (1939/1954) saw this independence as a distinctive feature that sets professions apart from occupations.

Furthermore, there are a number of esteem indicators that delineate a profession from an occupation. These include faculty to obtain a fee with a higher financial reward (Parsons, 1939/1954), societal recognition as an expert as well as a monopoly of services to that of an occupation (Conze and Kocka, 1985 in Burrage et al., 1990). There is also generally an autonomy available in a profession that enables self-regulation (Parsons, 1939/1954). This enables freedom to conduct the role (Conze and Kocka, 1985 in Burrage et al., 1990) and permits 'independent judgement' (UK Inter-professional Group, 2008:1). The esteem indicators represent the *Grand Bargain,* a term outlined by Susskind and Susskind (2017) to recognise established arrangements that professionals are given on account of their status as well as their exclusivity over specific areas of human action.

Parsons (1939/1954) emphasised the highly practical nature of a profession, a role that involved service based on subject, theoretical knowledge and practical, applied knowledge: knowing the why and the how. While this professional knowledge is significant there is, notably, knowledge of how to conduct the role that signifies a commitment to a particular ethos, a way of working in a particular profession. This knowledge is based on how to establish oneself as an expert enacted through day-to-day interactions within the chosen professional field (Dingwall, 1976). Therefore, three elements to the professional body of knowledge - theoretical, applied and behaviours - need to be taken into consideration when examining professions.

As seen in the last chapter, a key mechanism to gatekeep and preserve professional knowledge, reputation and privileges are Professional, Statutory and Regulating Bodies (PSRBs). PSRBs represent a variety of professional and employer bodies as well as stakeholders who hold statutory power to oversee professions. There are similarities to a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in that PSRBs are experts established within the profession who interpret, develop and update professional beliefs, principles, knowledge, values and actions. PSRBs self-regulate access to professional knowledge and skills, as well as safeguarding entry and promotion to the profession (Conze and Kocka, 1985 in Burrage et al.,1990). This can include titles and diplomas that develop 'Intellectual skill' (UK Inter-professional Group, 2008: 1). It is this 'intellectual skill' built upon systematic, specialised scholarly instruction that forms one of the distinctions between a profession and an occupation. While it seems that PSRBs are situated between society and their professional body of knowledge, they are also within that society and thus vulnerable to social and political pressures.

So, there seems to be advantages for having and maintaining professional status. Society places a confidence in professionals that is rewarded through exclusivity associated with professions, the holding of a certain standing within the community, rising social status and societal expectation, autonomy, and a greater financial reward. Respectively, professions need to maintain this level of confidence through a responsive PSRB upholding ethical practice, entry and promotion, and the continual development of professional knowledge reflecting the prevailing socio-political context.

Conversely, professions have been criticised as a means for excluding competitors, to ensure public dependency and to maximise power and influence and market closure (Johnson, 1972; Larson, 1977; Abbott, 1988; and Murphy, 1988). Yet these criticisms, as well as the advantages of professional status, could also be viewed as a possible rationale for professionalisation where an occupation pursues professional status.

Occupations focus on the competence of an associated activity. Lester (2014) argues that competence is finite so, once achieved, improvements focus on quality and efficiency of the task. Lester (2014) continues that this utilitarian perspective stands in contrast to a profession notably on two points. Firstly, a professional competency has no restriction on the space for practice to develop and evolve through theoretical and applied knowledge, as empirical research as well as continued professional development. Secondly, where occupations are based on a role performance, professions are based on this plus a value commitment to a particular ethos, a way of being as a professional. Thus, foregrounded in a profession is the value of knowledge, not only theoretical and applied but enacted as behaviours. These differences, combined with the notion of autonomy, esteem and increased remunerations, may show the rationale for pursuing professionalisation.

2.2.1 Professionalisation of Occupations

The professionalisation of occupations has been characterised as following a pattern from occupational to professional (Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933). Caplow (1954: 139-140), later echoed by Hughes (1963), developed this further into a sequence of steps that occupations had taken to establish professional recognition, namely: 'establishment of a professional association; change in the name of the occupation; development of a code of ethics; prolonged agitation to obtain the support of public power; and the concurrent development of training facilities'. It is particularly notable that professionalisation of an occupation requires additional investment in training, reflecting Lester's (2014) aforementioned point that unbounded training and education is a fundamental characteristic of a profession.

Moreover, professional development is central to what Harries-Jenkins (1970) and, latterly, Neal and Morgan (2000) discerned as a specific 'bottom up' approach to professionalisation taken in the UK. This approach suggests evolutionary stages. The first stage was the introduction of apprenticeships, learning by doing; the second, the introduction of professional exams to enhance the apprenticeship; and the third, the introduction of graduate entry. This model is pertinent as it draws in apprenticeships, long associated with trade, acknowledging that originally all professions would have originated from a form of apprenticeship. Wilensky (1964) asserted that, even if training schools were not associated with universities (such as in the early days of nursing or accountancy), there was a drive for professions to seek contact with them for recognition and extension of their knowledge base. As Lester (2014) stated earlier, a professional body of knowledge – theoretical, applied and enacted as behaviours – should not be restricted. Therefore, critically, the development of professions has necessitated higher level education (Neil and Morgan (2000).

The example of nursing illustrates the link between professional knowledge and the role of HE. An apprenticeship model of nursing was developed through links to training schools within hospitals and continued for a significant amount of time (Gale Thomas, 2016). However, medical techniques and procedures throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries required advanced knowledge and skills. Project 2000 (United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing Midwifery and Health Visiting, 1986) recognised the need to move beyond the apprenticeship model of nursing and to supplement hospital-based training with a theoretical preparation in universities. Following a gradual shift to educating nurses in HEIs, with the award of a diploma, the 2000s saw a proportion of diploma programmes moving towards degree only. In 2008, the Nursing and Midwifery Council ruled that all nursing qualifications henceforth must be at Bachelor's degree level. Endorsed by the UK Government in 2009 and, following the Willis Commission review of nursing (Royal College of Nursing, 2012), the ruling was implemented in 2013.

Significantly, the strategy for implementing professionalisation in nursing has been based around HE education. The move to a graduate entry profession permits research by members of the nursing community as a means of generating

professional knowledge. Yet some have contended (e.g. Collini, 2012) that this can lead to a professional academic subject retreating from the practical domain – something for which nursing has indeed been criticised in some quarters (e.g. Greenwood, 2000). Rather, it could be seen as enhancing practice by developing and extending professional knowledge and skills. Research can focus on immediate, local issues to implement change swiftly (such as through action research) as well as contributing to the wider development of knowledge and theory. Research within a professional group can extend and strengthen professional credibility and identity.

Returning to the synthesis of the definitions of profession considered earlier, these did not make immediately visible the significant role HE plays with professions. However, as has been seen, HE, guided by PSRBs, provides initial and continual professional development. Moreover, HE is critical in advancing research and development to inform action and contribute to a body of professional knowledge, skills and behaviours (Goodlad, 1984; Willetts, 2017). As HE is recognised as being proficient in specialist knowledge (Lorenz, 2012), with autonomy given for 'subject-directed power' (Olssen and Peters, 2005: 325), the alliance between HE and the professions seems prudent. As such it is significant that the HE sector is pivotal for credentialing occupations into professions (Moloney, 1992; Neil and Morgan, 2000; Green and Gates, 2014). Therefore, it stands to reason that a profession would have a relationship with HE for the management, distribution and improvements to professional knowledge.

2.2.2 Professional Knowledge

As has been identified, a critical merit of a profession is the position of knowledge situated at the core of professional work. Moreover, it is the imbalance of knowledge between professional and client that is at the heart of a profession (Susskind and Susskind, 2017). Discussions of professionalism have engaged with broader epistemological questions on the nature of knowledge. It seems Western society traditionally positioned knowledge into two broad camps, that of propositional (theoretical 'knowing that') and non-propositional (practical 'knowing how') (Ryle, 1949). This perspective represents a Cartesian dualism that traditionally favoured propositional over non-propositional knowledge. This was based on an assumption

that 'knowing how' to do something required applying 'knowing that' to select information to inform actions and judgments. Ryle (1949) argued that this was not the case and it was non-propositional knowledge that drove the need for propositional knowledge. Furthermore, Barnett (1990) states that a society that privileges theoretical knowledge over practical knowledge does not recognise the messiness of real-world problems that require complex solutions. What seems to be emerging is that knowledge converges and intersects between categories. To restrict knowledge to 'either or' categories seems to lead towards a bifurcation of knowledge. Rather, knowing 'who', 'what', 'why', 'where' and 'when' could be viewed as extensions to knowing 'that' (Boër and Lycan, 1975; Ginet, 1975). If knowledge is viewed within this perspective it represents a continuum rather than being specifically determined. This representation of knowledge recognises the dynamic interplay between internalised knowledge, the external environment and the representation of justifiable truth claims in knowledge.

For professional knowledge, recognition of knowledge is often difficult to articulate directly with words as often it has become tacit knowledge, unconscious and difficult to communicate (Polyani, 1958) which Polanyi (1966) later referred to as intuitive and inarticulate knowledge. To acquire tacit knowledge is to transform explicit knowledge through either the frequent repetition of an activity or total submersion in it (Cohen et al., 1996). For example, when learning to drive, individuals are explicitly learning through driving lessons and learning the highway code until driving becomes automatic or tacit. So, if tacit knowledge is, as Polanyi (1966) argues, inarticulate knowledge, it is difficult to quantify into externalised codified forms as it is hidden and often not recognised by individuals. Tacit knowledge often comes to be recognised through dialogue, reflections and questions or as a response to an external event. Here it then can be codified into explicit information such as books, papers, and other resources (Martensson, 2000).

Nonaka (1994) offers a theoretical continuum based on the assumption of two types of knowledge: tacit (situated within a context, unspoken and implied) and explicit (usually formal, written and overt) which explicitly echoes Polyani's distinction. Taking these two types of knowledge, Nonaka (1994) suggests new organisational knowledge is created through social interactions between explicit and tacit

knowledge. Nonaka postulates a knowledge spiral of socialisation to externalisation which is then converted into internalised knowledge. Unfortunately, Nonaka's (1994) theoretical continuum of knowledge is assumed to be decided upon by organisational management and does not consider the social construction of knowledge. However, it does highlight the importance of talking as a method of converting tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Furthermore, it recognises knowledge as situated between knowing 'who', 'what', 'why', 'where' and 'when' as extensions to knowing 'that' in a professional environment. However, as stated earlier, knowledge is not value free and one particularly contentious aspect of knowledge is the value placed on the different types of knowledge.

Returning to the HE environment, there are two significant points to consider with regard to tacit and explicit knowledge. Firstly, the requirement to transition from a profession into an academic role is generated by the value HE institutions place on existing professional experience and knowledge. This knowledge is seemingly highly valued by HE as demonstrated by the inflow of academic staff starters in 2018/19 of whom over half have come from a professional or public sector background (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2020). Paradoxically, being in an academic role may involve making explicit the implicit knowledge of professional experience. In other words, from applying this within a profession, an academic role involves translating tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (Chugh, 2013). Furthermore, this can mean adapting prior knowledge within an often-unfamiliar environment, highlighting the need for practitioners to be able to act in a range of new and uncertain situations. It seems that it is not always clear how knowledge is valued.

Secondly, for early career academics, explicit knowledge, such as initial and continued professional development, manuals, journal submission guidance and policies, offers codified processes explicitly outlining the knowledge, albeit from externalising tacit knowledge. An important mechanism for conveying tacit knowledge is through a community of practice (Clarke et al., 2004), whereby cultural expectations can be transmitted, often unknowingly, through mentoring, team-meetings, interpersonal discussions and communication. Similarly, a literature review conducted by Beijaard et al. (2004) argued that professional identity is a continual interplay between the self and the environment in a structuring, restructuring and

reformulating way. This interactionist perspective views identity as a dynamic concept, latterly referred to by Clegg (2008:329) as 'lived complexity of a person's project'. In other words, identity is a dialogic process shaped between the interaction of the individual in his/her social world with the socio-historic context. What these definitions of professional identity show is how, through socialisation into a profession where competence - judged by the self, professional community, and client community – professionalism is recognised.

This connection between an individual and his/her environment is particularly distinctive in that professional identity is a 'self-image which permits feelings of personal adequacy and satisfaction in the performance of the expected role' (Ewan, 1988: 85). This definition recognises the expected quality of a representative of that profession reflecting how a professional identity is socially constructed (Paterson et al., 2002), or as Hunter et al. (2007: 67) state: 'Identity development and professional socialization are framed as a process of negotiated meaning-making within a community of practice'.

Yet it seems that HEIs, knowledge institutions employing knowledge workers, are not always spending enough effort on internal tacit knowledge transfer (Chugh, 2013). Although the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) process is widely valued as socialisation to an academic role (Collini, 2012), the issue at stake for early career academics joining HE from a professional background is that they are unlikely to have a PhD. What is starting to emerge from the literature is the disparity between the need for PAs in HE and their socialisation into an academic role.

In summary, this section indicates that the advancement of technology and the demands of a diverse society have created an increasingly complex society which has led to, and increased the need for, professionals, such as the example of qualified and experienced nurses, to enter with higher academic levels of professional education. It seems that in the modern context of HE is the position of profession and professional knowledge. HE is fundamental in the credentialing process of these expectations where qualifications act as an assurance to wider society (Collini, 2012) as well as the continual advancements to move with the socio-historical context in which it is situated. In the next section, I will turn first to how

professional education is situated within HE and then onto the notion of the role of an academic.

2.3 Part Two: Key Historical, Political, and Cultural Factors that have Contributed to Shaping Professionally-focused Education into HEIs.

In **Part two**, I seek to examine key historical, political, and cultural factors that have contributed to shaping professionally-focused education in HE to the present day. Throughout I will draw out key governmental legislation and its implications on the ontology of academics. An outline of how the role of an academic has been influenced by political and cultural changes will help inform this inquiry into the nature of being an academic today. Firstly, I will briefly outline the historical contexts that have had a significant impact on the professions in HE.

From the outset universities have consistently been allied to practical, vocational education (Collini, 2012; Guild HE, 2019). From a medieval inheritance the notion of professional preparation at the UK's first university, Oxford, was initially to educate clergy (Engel, 1983). Ever since, this desire for vocational education has been intrinsic to liberal education as a significant driver for the need for universities (Dunbabin, 1999). Liberal education has been defined as: a character forming process (Rothblatt, 1990) developing the moral, intellectual and personal (Barnett, 1988; Duke, 1990) with academic freedom (Bagnell, 1991), impartiality (Glass and Johnson (1991), tolerance (Shils, 1989) as well as a programme of study (Dean, 1988).

During the nineteenth century this medieval inheritance, combined with the Humboldtian model of scholarly endeavour, advanced higher learning through research and a liberal education (Collini, 2012). Yet the rise of the Humboldtian model in Europe, with a focus on the pursuit for open-ended inquiry, could be viewed as creating role conflict for universities between meeting the immediate needs of society through vocationally preparing students and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. However, in comparison to Germany, the full weight of the Humboltian

model was not fully realised in the UK and what was transferred into the universities was the emphasis on research as a main activity (Willetts, 2017). Furthermore, influence in the UK during the Victorian era came from John Henry Newman's writings about a new idea of a university that focused on teaching and the diffusion of knowledge (Willetts, 2017). In the UK universities were supplemented (or possibly challenged) in the mid-1820s by colleges of HE (such as University College London), significantly with a secular liberal admissions policy inviting all scholars regardless of background. This was a noteworthy move towards the onset of widening participation in HE, which will be returned to later in this section. So, from a medieval beginning, HE in the UK seems situated between a vocational and liberal education with the Humboldtian model focusing predominantly on research and Newman's on teaching.

However, the impact of the industrial revolution and ensuing needs of industry drove the demand for a professionally skilled workforce. Originally Mechanic Institutions in key industrial sites of Victorian England supplied technical education (Tight, 2013). This need for professions in HE was augmented by the transfer of training from apprenticeships 'on the job' or in private vocational courses into university such as that witnessed in 1858 by the medical profession (Perkins, 1989) and teacher training in 1902 (National Archive, 2019). However, financing for expanding HE, with the creation of civic redbrick universities (Scott, 1995), was heavily reliant on funding tied to local commercial business (Truscott, 1948). Moreover, this expansion significantly increased the need for professionally relevant education in universities and HE colleges, throughout the Victorian era and into the twentieth century, that required vocational staff to be employed to teach technical subjects.

Accompanying these advancements was the increasing delineation of academic rank and thus career progression. To enter this profession involved universities effectively recruiting their scholars. Postgraduate programmes, such as Master's and PhDs were created to act as a form of academic apprenticeship (Collini, 2012). However, in the UK PhDs were not initially taken up by universities. It was not until 1917 onwards, with pressure from scholars leaving the UK to gain a doctorate overseas as well as demand from commonwealth countries to provide this for their students in the UK, that PhDs were introduced (Bogle, 2017).

Early twentieth-century changes to funding are also illustrative of the development of the professions in HE. The University Grants Committee (UGC) was established in 1919 with the remit of distributing grant funding (Shattock and Berdahl, 1984). By moving towards a path of government subsidy of university education, universities were starting to break from industry (Willetts, 2017).

What can be understood from the literature is that the central governmental funding for professions to move into HE freed them from the constraints of industry. This caused many professions to begin to create boundaries to segregate themselves through access, control and entrance tariffs to increase their reputation, prestige admiration and, notably, separate the profession from lay persons (Perkins, 1989).This was widespread practice, not too dissimilar to the practices of the guilds (associations formed to oversee the practices of a specific trade or craft), protecting the interests of master craftsmen as well as acting as gatekeeper to the admission of apprentices. To take over the instruction of professions some specialist universities had professional representation on university boards. This enabled the universities to negotiate in partnership with professional bodies to manage, distribute and improve professional knowledge.

As was seen in Part one, these PSRBs are a key mechanism to gatekeep and preserve professional knowledge, reputation and privileges. It seems that PSRBs have taken a bridging role between HE and industry to represent the professions and their stakeholders. As well as setting the professional benchmark statements, PSRBs can also regulate access into the profession. One significant role of PSRBs is to ensure that accredited professional education programmes in HE will be sufficiently rigorous to meet any statutory and regulatory requirements. Thus, PSRBs can be instrumental in authorising HE professional provision (Harvey, 2020).

To further ensure the freedoms of a university were not compromised by undue reliance upon support from industry, complete nationalisation of HE funding came after World War Two (Moberley, 1948). This led to unique university freedoms on micro and macro levels: autonomy with degree awarding powers (DAP) as well as freedom from commercial funding. This cleared the way for universities to be

independent corporations situated at the frontiers of knowledge with academic freedom and autonomy to pursue this knowledge. Yet many civic and redbrick universities were built upon the needs of industry. Now that university funding was no longer connected to commercial enterprise, concerns were raised regarding whether the needs of industry were to be met (Halsey, 1992). While PSRBs provided a link, it was the 1944 Education Act that was enacted to balance the needs of society with those of industry.

The 1944 Education Act was part of a governmental programme of post-war social reform for education and firmly situated the needs of industry and commerce at its heart (Butler, 1944). The impact of the implementation of the Act, as well as the increased post war birth rate, culminated in the subsequent need to expand provision for university education. Eight universities were established and were immediately given DAP (Barr, 2014). This augmentation of the sector was remarkably swift. In contrast the University of Bradford took 134 years from inauguration as a Mechanics Institute to the granting of the Royal Charter in 1966 (University of Bradford, 2018). The urgency in the development, construction and immediate powers given to these universities underlined the increased demand for university provision 'to oil the wheels of industry' (Butler, 1944: 15).

Demand was only to increase with the widening of access to tertiary secondary education (with the tripartite school systems - Grammar, Secondary Modern and Technical Schools – established as part of the 1944 Education Act) which caused an ensuing increase in the requirement for higher education. Furthermore, the increased trajectory in the birth rate (until a peak in 1964 with 875,972 live births (Office for National Statistics, 2014)) implied an unremitting need for this provision. The effect was the commissioning of the Robbins Report in 1961.

2.3.1 The Robbins Report

The Robbins Report (1963) had the remit to investigate the current provision of full-time HE in Britain, to identify any modifications required, to establish whether any type of new institutions were necessary and to report on the projected demand for

HE. Among its many outcomes, the report revealed the need to widen participation in HE.

The Robbins Report (1963) was key in furthering the expansion of the HE sector, promoting greater growth in vocational - professional courses within HE that already accounted for a large proportion of undergraduates (Hughes, 1963). Thus the 1944 Education Act and the subsequent Robbins Report (1963) marked the start of the change from an elite model of education which Ainley (1994: 185) referred to as an 'elite cultural apprenticeship'. The Report was thought by some to legitimise the rapid increase in university expansion that had already commenced (Booth, 1999).

The Robbins Report (1963) asserted that anyone with the aptitude to go to university should have the opportunity to benefit from a higher education, expressing that this was not only beneficial for society but for the individual as well. Robbins, using evidence based around a longitudinal study by Halsey and Floud, (as cited in Barr, 2014), outlined the link between socio-economic background and class through the 11 plus exam results. The Robbins Report (1963) exemplified the argument that societal structures, such as the schooling system, reinforce the dominating class structure. Since many children from working class backgrounds found their culture did not align to the culturally defined competencies of academia, Robbins articulated that this was effectively preventing a large pool of talent from entering into HE. With an over-representation of the middle-class in universities, Robbins declared there was an untapped group of school-leavers that could benefit from a university education (with the ability and the aptitude to achieve in HE).

To further understand the place of the professions in HE, I will look briefly at the different interventions in the sector by successive Conservative and Labour administrations since the Second World War. Broadly speaking Conservative policy, as represented in the landmark Robbins report of 1963, emphasised an instrumental and highly practical view of an expanded HE system as the servant of the economy. By contrast the Labour administrations of 1964 adhered to a more traditional view of the role of the university in providing a broad liberal education. However, a landmark development in these two competing views of HE was the 1965 Woolwich speech by

Crosland, the then Secretary of State for Education and Science, outlining the intentions in the form of a binary system of HE with the subsequent White paper (Department for Education and Science, 1966).

2.3.2 Polytechnics

This binary system had universities as *'autonomous sectors'* (Crosland, 1965:1) focusing on scholarship, teaching and research to further knowledge and culture along with the polytechnic sector for 'an ever-increasing need and demand for vocational, professional and industrially-based courses in higher education' (Crosland, 1965:1).

The significance of this binary division was a separation of vocational higher education from that of elite education (Stewart, 1989). Yet this did not seem to be what Crosland intended. Crosland's thinking was for education as a change mechanism to promote equality in a socialist society (Finn, 2015). Furthermore, the intention to set a binary system into HE seemed incongruent with Crosland's drive to abolish the three-tier secondary school system. Rather than a binary system, Crosland was quoted as wanting to develop a varied, plural and diverse HE (Simon 1991).

Perhaps this was perceived as the next step towards equality to enable non-traditional students' access to HE. Furthermore, the nature of service traditions often opened HE to a diverse group of students many of whom would have been excluded by the autonomous tradition (Pratt, 1997). Polytechnics had continuities with the further education (FE) sector, with some converting into polytechnics (Robinson, 1968). Polytechnics were developed to meet the needs of local industry with students gaining a professional training. PSRBs were significantly influential on technical education within polytechnics, often leaving little academic autonomy to the programme teams (Venables, 1955). While the government perceived this binary system as being 'different, but of equal status' (Walford, 1991:167), the two types of HE institutions were significantly different in terms of funding and autonomy.

Universities were autonomous, free to recruit and appoint their own Vice-Chancellor, staff and to select their students. Their funding was a grant received through the UGC based on student numbers with a certain percentage of funding for research. In contrast polytechnics, as a public sector organisation, were funded through the Local Education Authority, funding allocations being based on student numbers to provide the cost of teaching. Without degree awarding powers (DAP) the polytechnics were beholden to the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) for conferral of their awards.

Furthermore, the binary system reflected the two distinctive traditions that Crosland (1965) stated had already developed within HE. There was the autonomous tradition of knowledge for itself, the '*academic ideal*' (Ainley, 1994: 86). The autonomous tradition reflected the aims, values and principles of a university tradition where academics stood apart from the needs of society in the pursuit of free inquiry and knowledge and would spend half of their time on research in the quest for this (Halsey, 1992). These autonomous institutions could be viewed as self-justifying, foregrounding the priority of the discipline.

In comparison the polytechnic service tradition of knowledge for a purpose, with its practical, higher cognitive skills, positioned knowledge in relation to how it can service society. Rather than being set apart from society, the polytechnic was to respond to individual and societal needs. It was acknowledged that there will be cross-over between the two traditions and institutions. However, Britain was the first to articulate the binary division and establish two different administration systems (Pratt, 1997). In comparison the service institutions were required to utilise and advance knowledge through practical application. There was an addition to focus foremost on teaching (Whitburn et al., 1980) and on education that was professional and vocational (Robinson, 1968). It seems polytechnics were the property of government, governed by the needs of industry. While there were exceptions to this dichotomy (such as Aston university) and professions already associated with universities, the binary system had effectively delineated HE institutions: one research-led which focused on knowledge for its own sake and one teaching-led which focused on knowledge for purpose.

Key to the implementation of polytechnic programmes was the need for further professionally-qualified staff, competent and experienced in specific occupations, to teach. The literature bearing on the development of the early polytechnic workforce is particularly apposite to this study. For vocationally-orientated programmes of study within a polytechnic, there was a requirement for staff with backgrounds in industry, professions or commerce. At the inception of polytechnics many of the staff fulfilled this requirement as most of these institutions had originally been further education colleges. Additionally, the 'Crombie scheme' for premature retirement was introduced to facilitate a recalibration of staff to the needs of the new polytechnics (Pratt, 1997). Whitburn et al. (1980) surveyed the profile of staff in polytechnics between 1972-3 and found 46% of teaching staff had more than ten years' service in a related vocational industry. Moreover, twenty percent of the staff surveyed stated that they chose to work in a polytechnic as their qualifications were not adequate to get them into a university post. Whitburn et al. (1980) identified polytechnic academics as being less well academically qualified than their university counterparts. This is not a surprise as this was originally a body of FE lecturers who were now expected to transform into academics comparable to their colleagues in universities (Robinson, 1968).

However, over the coming years, with staff changes, the original 1966 White Paper (Department of Education and Science, 1966) anticipated that there would be industry-rich academics in polytechnics. What actually happened was a move towards employing better-qualified staff although not comparable to the levels of university academics (Halsey, 1992), with fewer years of industry experience and professional qualifications. This reflects the term 'academic drift' (Whitburn et al.,1980) where knowledge loses connection with practice.

As stated earlier, the role of academics within polytechnics was orientated towards teaching duties. This is in contrast to their university colleagues who, with relatively light teaching duties, were described as living a 'gentlemanly way of life' (Halsey et al, 1971: 169), as an elite and privileged group. Fox (1981) found that some staff, in a survey of one polytechnic, referred to their primary role as that of a teacher with the others seeing their role as professional practitioners with teaching responsibilities. In fact, there was a noticeable difference between the number of

polytechnic academic staff who were formally teacher trained in comparison to university academics and there were three times more qualified staff in polytechnics (Department for Education and Science, 1973). At this time in HE professional development was mainly through 'the cult of amateurism' i.e. learning by doing with no training in basic academic work (Blaxter et al, 1998: 282). Ainley (1994) found that polytechnic staff's first loyalty was to their students rather than to research. However, there seemed to be one driver that may have shaped this attitude: the difference in role of research for polytechnic and university academics.

The majority of polytechnic academics delivering degree-level programmes were involved in research mainly to meet validation requirements set by the CNAA. However, there were differences between the length of service within a polytechnic and age, with the less experienced and younger staff more likely to be involved in research (Whitburn et al., 1980). However, this seemed to be in addition to their daily duties as it was not in accordance with the Burnham rules that stipulated the pay and conditions for polytechnic staff (Pratt, 1997).

Furthermore, 'The Great Debate Speech' by Prime Minister, James Callaghan, at Ruskin College in 1976 further positioned stakeholders, such as industry, sharply within the debate about the purpose of HE education. This moment may be pivotal in formally acknowledging the opening of education to being aligned to the needs of the economy. The Robbins Report (1963), Crosland's binary system of HE from 1965 and the subsequent 'Great Debate Speech' by Callaghan in 1976 (as cited in Gillard, 2010) shifted the sense of the purpose of HE and the stakeholders involved from an underlying ideology of traditionalism (discipline driven) towards instrumentalism, arguably towards the system of marketisation (Fox, 2002) that is seen today.

Moving to the 1980s, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher asserted that all public expenditure must demonstrate '*economy, efficiency and effectiveness*' (Rhodes, 1994: 144). The 'Research Selectivity Exercise', latterly renamed 'Research Assessment Exercise' and 'Research Excellence Framework' (Martin 2011), was introduced to measure the quality of research in the UK in 1986 although the origins of measuring the impact of research trace back to the 1970s (Martin, 2011). By 1992 Halsey had found a two-fold increase in the proportion of time devoted to research

by polytechnic academics. Undoubtedly this was a result of the increase in public accountability to assess the impact of research that would, in turn, influence the level of future public funding.

Halsey (1992) drew attention to the changing aspirations of polytechnic academic staff who wanted more time to spend on research thereby narrowing the margins of their contemporaries' experience as academics at universities. As mentioned earlier, this could be another example of 'academic drift' (Whitburn et al.,1980) from polytechnic academic staff. Polytechnics were imitative of universities increasingly in the subjects taught, such as history or philosophy, but without the status and conditions (Halsey, 1992), level of staff qualification and function (Pratt, 1997). It seems that the intentions of the Department for Education and Science (1966) White Paper for polytechnics to have a closer relationship with, and support the needs of, industry and commerce were only partially realised. Yet the impact of polytechnics was significant.

Polytechnics made substantial gains in HE after their creation in 1965 and, by 1992, polytechnics were the largest providers of HE in the UK (Pratt, 1997). A distinctive feature of the thirty-four new polytechnics were course offerings geared towards 'vocational, professional and industrially-based courses in higher education' (Crosland, 1965:1). Many of the curriculum offers were innovative such as developing a subject area with professional qualifications. Examples of this were the BA Sociology with Professional Studies from North East London Polytechnic (McDougall, 1973 as cited in Pratt, 1997) or the use of Human Biology to underpin the newly developed sports science degrees. Furthermore, there were significantly more enrolments for Business and Administration degrees than any other subject in polytechnics by 1991 (Pratt, 1997), reflecting the emerging neo-liberalist ideology in Britain that had emerged since the 1980s.

However, some critics argued that this distinctive focus on vocational education that polytechnics aimed to offer was not fully realised even though it was clearly recognised that polytechnics were a successful HE innovation (Booth, 1999). Polytechnics made substantial gains in terms of access to HE, having more undergraduate students in 1992 than universities, having varied students in terms of

class and ethnicity and drawing strongly on recruiting students from the local community. However, whether there was an actual binary division in practice between different categories of HEI was always contested. One of the directors of the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics listed the degree programmes in both polytechnics and universities and questioned whether it was possible to delineate which programmes were offered at a polytechnic or a university (Silver, 1983). Yet early educationalists had already observed the need to bind learning for life and work together. Whitehead (1949: 74) argued it was misleading to delineate between technical and liberal education as 'technique and intellectual vision' *is* education.

2.3.3 End of Binary Division?

The binary division was about to end. In 1988 The Education Reform Act (as cited in legislation.gov.uk, 2020a) gave polytechnics independent corporate status, followed by the White Paper: Higher Education: A New Framework (Department for Education and Science, 1991) which effectively gave polytechnics the same powers as universities. The binary system ended with the implementation of the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) giving polytechnics DAP and thus independence as well as the title of university. Furthermore, the 1988 Educational Reform Act (as cited in legislation.gov.uk, 2020a) included a move towards motivating students to make informed choices in terms of HE, commencing the move to position HE in a competitive market. Thatcher and Major governments oversaw the drive towards efficiency in HE: more students and less money.

However, from 1992 onwards, rather than universities being recognised as a homogenous group, HEIs were frequently referred to as 'established', 'charter', 'old' or pre-1992 universities (established in their own right as universities with DAP) and ex-polytechnics (and HE colleges) as 'statute', 'new' or post-1992 universities (Ashwin, 2006). However, as documented earlier in this section, the provenance of many universities which notionally fell into discrete categories was in fact similar e.g. technical colleges or Mechanics Institutes. While the binary division had ended, the distinction between the two sectors persisted.

With the abolition of the University Grants Committee, the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) was established for the integrated sector, resulting in a levelling out of HE activities with post-1992 universities now able to participate in research activity. In 1994 The Russell Group, an association of 24 established, research-intensive universities, was set up to ensure continued impact of research and teaching (Russell Group, 2019). Established so soon after The Further and Higher Education Act in 1992 suggests a protectionist agenda to ensure funding for research is directed towards members (Stanfield, 2010). Since 1994, more universities have joined the group (Russell Group, 2012) but notably no post-1992 universities. It seems that the HE landscape was moving towards being nominally unitary yet persisting to be differentiated.

2.3.4 Differentiated HE

The newly established, nominally unitary HE system created boom years for students. The numbers who studied at HE level substantially increased, rising from 3.4% in 1950 to 8.4% in 1970 and 19.3% in 1990 (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997, Report 6, Table 1). This significant increase in student numbers represented what Trow (1973) had anticipated as a move towards a mass system of HE from an elite one. The HE educational reforms outlined had progressively led to a rise in the need for applied and practical knowledge (Gibbons et al., 1994).

With the substantial increase in numbers since the Robbins Report (1963), the cost to government of subsidising HE had subsequently increased, impacting the system of financial grants to support students through their HE studies (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997). Although government spending on HE between 1976 and 1995 had increased by 45% (National Committee of Inquiry Into Higher Education, 1997) this was an overall decrease in funding to HE in relation to the gross domestic product, from 1.2% in 1976 (National Committee of Inquiry Into Higher Education, 1997) to 0.8% in 2003 (Department for Education and Skills, 2003), as well as the overall funding per student decreasing in real terms by 40% between 1976-1995 (National Committee of Inquiry Into Higher Education, 1997: Paragraph 3.95). The result was a substantial increase in student numbers with a

significant decline in funding. With bipartisan support the Dearing Inquiry was established to make recommendations, amongst other things, on the purpose and funding of HE.

2.3.5 The Dearing Report

The Dearing Report (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997) emphasised the value of partnerships between the stakeholders in HE by opening with the phrase: 'interdependence between student, institutions, the economy, employers and the state' (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997 Introduction, section 9). One of the most quoted recommendations from the report was for students to contribute to the cost of their education, highlighting the link between gaining a degree and improved employment prospects. The Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 (as cited in legislation.gov.uk, 2019: Chapter 1: 26) implemented a £1000 up-front fee per year of undergraduate study.

To ensure students were given value for money the new funding system would align to market force metrics with regulatory bodies (such as the Quality Assurance Agency, an independent body with the remit to oversee standards and quality in HE in the UK and HEFCE) to support this. In 1997 HE was embarking on a nascent culture led by market principles to meet the needs of the individual student, HE providers, government and wider society thus broadening the move towards a consumer model and the marketisation of HE (Fox, 2002).

The Dearing Report (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997: 8 sec. 35), extending the 1988 and 1992 Educational Reforms, envisaged 'students at the centre of the process of learning and teaching'. This marked a key change towards a student-centred philosophy as to what a university education represented, continuous with the Robbins Report (1963) where the aim of HE education was towards economic growth, personal enrichment, and intellectual development.

Moreover, the Dearing Report (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education,1997) was one of several that outlined the need to combine academic and vocational education as a mechanism for social mobility through vocational

progression into HE. This led to an increase in HE provision for vocations not usually associated with HE such as learning support through the introduction of Foundation degrees (sub degree pathways that must have a top up qualification to a Bachelor's degree).

2.3.6 White Paper: The Future of Higher Education (2003)

A further policy intervention that is addressed in the literature having a bearing on this topic is the 2003 White Paper: *The Future of Higher Education* (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). This paper strongly emphasised that the nature of HE education was: '*Equipping the labour force with appropriate and relevant skills*' (Department for Education and Skills, 2003: paragraph 1.3:10) and that universities could request up to £3000 per year from undergraduate students (paid through a loan to be repaid when earning). While previous policy interventions had equivocated around HE supplying industry needs, and thus the needs of the economy, the 2003 paper tended to suggest that HE was designed to meet the needs of employers and the economy rather than the student (Jones and Thomas (2005).

The White paper was followed by widening participation (WP) initiatives in HE with the creation of the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) to oversee the universities' commitment to WP from under-represented groups in HE which was a key requirement to allow universities to charge variable fees. The rise in WP in HE was led by the then Secretary of State for Education and Employment David Blunkett in his Greenwich speech in 2000 (Department for Employment and Education, 2000) which characterised HE as a means to achieve social justice (or, arguably, social engineering).

Furthermore, the paper highlighted the intention to improve teaching in HE, setting standards in teaching quality, promoting teaching excellence and encouraging all university teachers to gain a teaching qualification. Since the 1960s onwards there has been increased attention on professional development for academic staff (Liebowitz, 2016). Until 1980 the responsibility for professional development of teachers in HE was seen to redound upon the staff themselves (Gibbs et al., 2000), as we saw earlier referred to as 'the cult of amateurism' (Blaxter et al., 1998: 282).

There was no requirement for academics to gain a qualification for teaching in HE. Their expert subject knowledge was seen as sufficient. With the implementation of the Dearing Report's (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997) recommendations, that ran in parallel with the governmental aim to recruit 50% of young people into HE by 2010 (Higher Education Funding Council England, 2002), the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund was allocated approximately £30 million each year between 2002-05 amongst HEIs with the specific remit to improve teaching provision. This fund provided for such activities as the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, the Teaching and Learning Research Programme, the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme and a professional body (Higher Education Academy, 2013), as well as establishing educational development units in HE to support these initiatives. Threshold lecturer preparation programmes, such as postgraduate certificates in teaching in higher education, were developed by institutions. Many such programmes are mapped to the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) which confers professional recognition for teachers in HE in the form of Fellowships (Advance HE, 2019). While there is no mandatory requirement to achieve this, there has been an increased widening reach of such programmes (Smith, 2011)

2.3.7 Higher Education in the twenty-first century.

By the early 2000s HE found itself in a place where an academic life was dominated by notions of performativity and accountability. The resultant 2004 *Higher Education Act* (as cited in legislation.gov.uk, 2020b) effectively transformed HE towards the dominant discourse of a free-market ideology (Delucci and Korgen, 2002) with an economic agenda and a driver for inclusion and social mobility (Collini, 2012) resulting in the marketisation of HE (Fox, 2002). Furthermore, the Act reflected a move towards the government treating students as consumers with 'degrees as ready-made saleable commodities' (Fox, 2002: 130), which accords with Fairclough's (2001) argument that governments might tenably be seen as corporations and the public as consumers. What was starting to become significant was the diminishing authority of the academic role in a time of consumerism. This represented a neo-liberalist takeover of HE, further reinforced in 2010 with The Browne Review articulation that competition in HE will raise quality. The

consequence is the dominance of neo-liberal ideology operationalised through a new public managerialism in HE (Archer, 2008).

With this heightened significance placed on student satisfaction, one of the most far-reaching changes in the current formation of HE has been the establishment in 2018 of the Office for Students (OfS). In 2018 this new regulator of HE came into operation as part of the Higher Education and Research Act (Great Britain, 2017). The OfS replaced HEFCE and Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and holds power to revoke the university status of an HEI, the first ever regulatory reform of HE. The remit of the OfS is to ensure positive outcomes for all students through high-quality HE experience, progression to further study or graduate employment and to ensure value for money (Office for Students, 2019a). One function of the OfS is the administration of the National Student Survey (NSS). Since 2005 the NSS has assessed comparable data gathered from final-year undergraduate students at HEIs concerning satisfaction and the student experience.

Moreover, NSS metrics feed into the OfS-managed Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), the assessment of teaching quality in HEIs. Although the TEF is a voluntary exercise, the outcome, measured in a rating from provisional to gold, grades HEIs on national quality standards. Success outcome data is also published in the TEF, originally as **'Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education'**, then the **'Longitudinal Educational Outcome'**, and now the 'Graduate Outcomes Survey'. These data sets indicate the level of highly skilled employment at different time markers after graduation (Universities UK, 2016). TEF rhetoric states that the scores can indicate to students the value for money of an institution when said students apply to study (Office for Students, 2020). However, the TEF has the potential for so called 'publicly funded' HEIs (Office for Students, 2020) to raise tuition fees.

2.3.8 Present Day and Future Forecast

Recent developments have increased HEI engagement with professional, vocational and occupational stakeholders. For example, Degree Apprenticeships (DAs) were specifically introduced in 2015 as a response to the Wolf Report (Wolf and Great

Britain, 2011), an independent review of 14-19 vocational education, which recommended the provision of sufficient entry points to HE from vocational education (National Centre for Universities and Business, 2019). In 2015 DAs involved blending vocational and HE level learning together into a training programme for apprentices to show occupational competencies (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2015). DAs are by definition at level 6 (Bachelor's degree) or 7 (Master's degree). Furthermore, an Apprenticeship Levy for larger businesses, introduced in 2017, has helped fund improvements and expansion of apprenticeships and thus the need for higher level professional relevant education (Education and Skills Funding Agency (2019).

What this has meant is an increase in HEI engagement with professional, vocational and occupational stakeholders. DAs involve either a fully-integrated bespoke programme designed by employers, professional bodies and HE or through an existing provision attached to an apprenticeship with an end point assessment (Skills Funding Agency, 2015). Either pathway for a DA involves HEI involvement and, notably, the take-up in DA has been significant. In 2016-17 '2,580 degree apprentices registered in higher education' (Office for Students, 2019:1b), increasing in 2017/18 to 11,000 level 6 and 7 starts (Powell, 2019). DAs have been recognised for widening participation into HE by under-represented groups (Powell, 2019). With the increase in DA participation, it follows that the need for professional academic staff is increasing.

A review of trends in the UK labour market (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2016) has predicted that between 2014-24 there will be an increase in the number of people holding HE qualifications. Whilst demand emanates from multiple needs, such as industry and the growth in middle-class households, the rise is particularly associated with an increase in the need for professionals and associate professions. In fact, Macdonald (1999) noted the increase in professions with the rise of capitalism and neo-liberalism, which similarly accords with a rise in professions in industrial nations (Yee, 2001).

What seems patent from this review of the history of HE is that it has always been significant in providing professional training in Britain. Significantly, as recognised in Part one through the professionalisation of occupations, HE is fundamental in the credentialing process (Collini, 2012). Nursing, as discussed earlier in this chapter, is now a graduate profession and this, in part, raised its status in the Standard Occupation Classification from associate professional occupation category two to professional category three (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2016). The growing trend toward the professionalisation of occupations would suggest there will be a proportionally higher demand for academics from professional backgrounds in the future. Furthermore, as Part two has now highlighted, driven by government policies, there has been a continuous advancement on the part of HE to meet the needs of industry. Thus, it is unsurprising that the greater number of HE programmes are vocational and applied subjects (Universities UK, 2016). We are in a position now where experience-rich professions are vital for academic practice. In the following section, I will discuss the notion of academic identity. I will scope out the impact of the prevailing neo-liberal position, where HE seems situated, on the academic role.

2.3.9 Academic Identity

Academic identity definitions call into question what it means to be an academic. An academic identity involves elements of individual, discipline, institution and the wider HE community (Kuh and Whitt, 1988; Becher, 1989; Henkel, 2005). However, academic identity is a term that is contested (Henkel, 2000). One perspective could represent the apprenticeship model that outlines a set of practices, procedures and skills that can be applied for someone to become an academic, as outlined in the recently developed Academic Professional Apprenticeship (Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education, 2019). This seems a top-down approach which suggests being an academic represents a systematic set of competencies. Conversely, academic identity could represent a bottom-up approach whereby collective norms and values are constructed through engagement, interaction and participation in social groups (McAlpine et al., 2010) situated within a certain socio-historical time (Hunter et al., 2007: 67). Thus, expertise is measured by socially-constructed standards set within the territory of the discipline (Becher, 1989). This

notion of academic identity being dynamic is reflected in the literature such as Sfard and Prusak (2005) and Gale (2011). Clegg (2008: 336) goes further referring to it as a 'moving goal' charged with ambiguity while Locke (2012) proposes that rather than viewing the role of the academic as a homogeneous one, it should instead be viewed as differentiated.

Building upon this extant work on academic identity, it is tenable to claim that there are two communalities that can help situate the academic identity from other professional identities. These are the distinctive features of academic freedoms and autonomy.

Academic freedom is inherent in the right to question received wisdom, to challenge knowledge and posit opinion (Equality Challenge Unit (2013). Autonomy corresponds to the 'ability and capacity to self-rule, and the governance and/or constraints, which limit such a capacity' (Wermke and Salokangas (2015:1). It is recognised that academic freedoms and autonomy are themselves contested concepts (Wermke and Salokangas (2015) but this lies outside the scope of this research. Often an academic is associated with working in an 'ivory tower' (Shapin, 2012) reflecting the exclusive level of autonomy granted to academics that is not afforded to other state institutions or citizens (Williams, 2016). The impervious nature of academic freedom and autonomy permitted to academics was in recognition of them being the experts in their field of knowledge and their having the role to question knowledge. The Robbins Report (1963) warned of the need to ensure academic freedoms were unrestricted and transcended contractual obligations. However, as has been seen, HE is currently situated within a neo-liberal socio-economic climate which seems ideologically at odds with academic freedoms and autonomy. This is combined with the government policies outlined that have situated HE to respond to meet the needs of employers and the economy (Jones and Thomas, 2005) and driving an instrumentalist agenda. The consequence is increasingly to position the role of an academic, particularly those working outside of the Russell Group, as one governed by student satisfaction, retention and employment outcomes.

What appears to be happening is a gradual erosion of academic freedoms and autonomy. This has had a bearing on academic identity as a form of self-censorship responding to consumer demand (Williams, 2016), for example, not saying things that might be deemed controversial and not going off topic while teaching to ensure the published learning outcomes are covered (can contribute to the erosion of academic freedom and autonomy). Pressure to provide a consistent student experience has impacted the academic role into one where there is a pursuit of students by HEIs with lecturers 'selling their wares' (Fox: 2002: 130).

This is not restricted to the teaching dimension of the academic role: a drive towards economic accountability for research (measured by the Research Excellence Framework) has equally led to pressure on the academic role towards gaining recognition for high-impact research (University and College Union, 2009). Ball (2003) argues that this performativity, how individuals organise their work to align with how they are measured, is leading to the neglect of those features of academic practice which cannot be measured including individuals' professional values, beliefs, judgment and expertise. In other words, their identity.

University and College Union (2010) argued that the culture of complaint amongst students in HE has led to an erosion of academic freedoms through the instigation of a top-down managerialist, corporate culture of quality improvement. This has led to strategies that seek to improve the 'student experience', with the locus of control being through the external force of accountability. The University and College Union (2016) workload survey of lecturers showed that the pace and the intensity of work had increased over the three years prior to the reporting period with a working average of 50.9 hours per week. The main reasons for the increase in working hours were increased administration, rising student expectations, increase in student numbers, organisational restructuring, a widening of duties and a decrease in professional career development including networking. Logically, the greater the gap between the lecturer's expectations and experiences, the more likely the lecturer was to leave.

These examples demonstrate the increasing impact on the academic role from the redesign of HE through neo-liberal ideology being operationalised through new

public managerialist (Archer, 2008) and new managerialist (Deem and Brehony, 2005) styles of governance. New managerialism is more inclined towards underpinning managerialist ideology of power and promoting institutional stakeholders involved in the outcome of HE (government, industry and wider society). By contrast new public managerialism is seen as a method for institutional efficiencies. While these concepts are often muddled (Quigley, 2011), they represent the focus on the outcome of HE on market forces which consequently shapes HE into a mass market. This changed the HE environment and reshaped the academic role (Billot, 2010) to create a different working environment than that seen in the past.

What seems equally to be emerging is the value placed on HE for employability to ensure: '...that graduates continue to meet employers' needs' (Universities UK, 2016:2). As demonstrated above, HE has always been significant in providing professional training resulting in the greater number of contemporary HE programmes being vocational and applied subjects (Universities UK, 2016). However, the power and dominance of a neo-liberal ideology, measured through a performative culture, can have an impact on academic practice. The conventional notions of the academic role - teaching, research, and service – are being challenged through the commodification of academic work (Stilwell (2003) thus changing what it means to be an academic.

However, Clegg (2008) argues that, rather than the academic role being under threat by new and public managerialism, a new type of hybrid academic identity based on different epistemological assumptions is appearing. What emerges in Clegg's study is that certain academics are creating a self-directed and increasingly hybrid academic role based on professional background rather than being affected by a seemingly nostalgic academic past (Clegg, 2008). This leads us to consider McAlpine et al.'s (2010) notion of the academic role as being socially constructed through the day-to-day interactions experienced by the individual, situated in a specific socio-historical context (Sfard and Prasak, 2005).

Recognising the socially situated nature and the agentic interpretation of the academic role is significant for PAs entering HE. Firstly, PAs are experiencing a

second professional socialisation. Secondly, in the light of what has been reported, the academic role reflects the changing nature of HE towards an increasingly neo-liberalist agenda, yet PAs are negotiating the academic role afresh. Transitioning into the academy offers a contemporary perspective on the experience of holding an academic role situated within the current HE context in the UK. Furthermore, the review has illuminated how vocational and professional education has always been associated within HE and indications suggest this is set to increase. Apposite to this investigation is literature on these experiences of PAs entering HE as early career academics.

2.4 Part three: Entering HE as an Early Career Academic from a Professional Background.

As stated in the introduction, literature on the full-time academic transition from a professional background into HE is limited. Nevertheless, the literature on the transition into HE from a professional background, whether part-time or full-time, can contribute to an understanding of experiences. Therefore, in the following paragraphs, the review of PA literature reflects multiple pathways into HE.

2.4.1 Entry points into HE as a PA

There are multiple routes of entry into an academic career from a professional background. Posner (2009), who popularised the somewhat inelegant term 'pracademic', named three different pathways of engagement between professional and academic practice. For practitioners the first pathway is a short-term engagement as an academic (in addition to their usual role), usually in the form of a teaching post. The second pathway is a sabbatical to an academic post and the last is moving to a permanent academic role. Posner (2009) remarks on the uncertainty of a career change and particularly highlights the issue of the distinctive academic culture and 'boundary protection' (Posner, 2009: 19) controlling entry requirements and legitimate performance within the culture and the 'rules of the game'.

One theme that emerges from the literature on moving from a practitioner role to an academic one is that of a challenge (Simendinger et al., 2000; Diekelmann (2004), Blenkinsopp and Stalker (2004); Hurst (2010); Wilson et al., 2014) that can be

associated with negative experiences (Shreeve, 2011). Therefore, the complete transition into an academic role from a professional background could be interpreted as a high-risk venture (Wilson et al., 2014). This would justify the multiple pathways into HE from a professional background that Posner (2009) advocates and explains why the majority of literature addresses part-time, dual professionals rather than full-time PAs. Wilson et al. (2014) advocate a staged migration from industry to academia in order to acclimatise to the transitional changes. Many PAs do make this gradual transition but some jump straight into a full-time academic career, as this research attests.

The experience of *Sophie,* a full-time PA (Gourlay, 2011b), can demonstrate the impact of a full-time career change. Moving from practice to an academic career *Sophie* considered that she had 'landed on the moon' and paradoxically she felt 'lucky to be here, but at the same time unworthy...I am in mourning for my previous clinical life' (Gourlay (2011b: 598). *Sophie* felt a sense of 'loss' with the change in her status from that of an experienced clinician to an academic who lacked experience and was unfamiliar with postgraduate study and research. She compared her skills and experiences to having different 'tools of the trade' in that she felt she spoke in practical, clinical terms whilst her colleagues spoke in theoretical, abstract terms (Gourlay (2011b: 598).

Gourlay (2011b) appears to suggest that *Sophie* was not prepared to change her values set, particularly from one which centred upon the emotional aspect of 'care' towards one which was more individualistic in nature. *Sophie's* diminished sense of status had an impact on her confidence and identity. Her perceived mismatch of values resulted in a feeling of isolation and invisibility. What underpins *Sophie's* experiences is her lack of a sense of belonging. Where her strengths lie are not clearly visible to her at the time, which unpicks her self-confidence and sense of identity. Sophie left the academy, returned to clinical practice and is critical about her experience of transferring across to academia. Potentially it takes time to embed and feel part of a new organisational culture. This study draws out the liminal space between two careers and the importance of support and consideration while a PA moves through them. Shreeve (2011: 79) spoke of her data set, notably part-time PAs having the feeling of '...being in both camps'; *Sophie* expounds feelings of not

being in any. Yet, as Gourlay's (2011b) paper is based on one participant, it is important to establish if *Sophie's* experiences resonate with others.

What *Sophie's* example could have been illustrating is that the casting off of a professional role in place of an academic one may be significantly challenging if the initial socialisation in the former role is strong. Another study on health care professionals in their first five years in academic post documented similar experiences (Smith and Boyd, 2012). The authors indicate that practitioners proved unenthusiastic to shake off their former clinical identity and to shed their former, prominent status to replace it with one of a seemingly limited significance. Some reported feelings of grief towards the loss of their status and a small number were even planning to return to their original roles.

However, since this transition is a major career change it might be expected to be uncomfortable. It involves the move into a different role (academic), a different set of skills (teaching, research and service), a different sector as well as into a different organisational culture that has, arguably, 'many different quirks' (Simendinger et al., 2000). This is a complete career change into an HE activity system that fundamentally differs from the social world of practitioners (Shreeve, 2011). It is unsurprising that Wilson et al. (2014) identified culture shock as a signature experience for those individuals who are crossing from industry to a career as an academic in HE. Citing the first six months to a year as being the most challenging period of transition, they identified career change challenges such as workload, stress and pace of work as explicit examples of transitioning from industry to HE. Equally, van Lankveld et al. (2017) found that even new lecturers from a teaching background had widespread anxiety, self-doubt and inadequacy during the early years in post.

Myers (2017) likened the transition to the switching of identifying from one tribe to another – the respective tribes being professional practice and academia. These feelings can foster a strong sense of 'belonging' to the tribe but the opposite can also be true. It is possible that a feeling of alienation will be experienced. Identifying with the professional practice tribe can create a feeling of '*otherness'* when new to HE (Myers, 2017: 42). Furthermore, Shreeve (2011) argued that, when new to the

academic role, the lack of understanding in how professional experience was valued in HE diminished PAs' status and security. This was further undermined by new and unfamiliar academic practices with widespread presumed knowledge related to the systems and processes in HE. This suggests that many practices in HE are tacit.

What is cumulatively evident in these studies is the gap between experienced practice-rich professionals entering into a relatively unknown academic role with feasibly inadequate consideration to the transfer of knowledge and skills. Additionally, there may be a sense of loss for previous professional status and recognition as Gourlay (2011a and b), Shreeve (2011), and Smith and Boyd (2012) identified. However, Simendinger et al. (2000: 106) highlighted how the change from professional status to that of an early career academic, possibly on a decreased salary band, can cause tensions as well as loss of power and prestige, as the transitioning professionals come to recognise that they will need to 'prove themselves again in a new cultural environment'. Thus, it is not surprising that van Lankveld et al. (2017) found that lecturers felt compelled to cite their professional status for credibility within teaching.

The process that PAs go through when they are new to HE is subject to different viewpoints. Gates and Green (2013) propose a three-stage process. The first stage involves confusion and the loss of identity, then the PA reacts by adapting to the culture and, finally, the PA gains a sense of development as well as fulfilment. Yet Wilson et al. (2014) highlight that the move from practice to an academic career should be not be viewed in linear terms of development and enculturation but rather as an organic state moving forwards and backwards through challenges and triumphs. Shreeve (2011) makes the point of arguing that academics are effectively in a liminal state between two cultural worlds. However, Shreeve's participants were part-time and time spent in the academic role would have been limited. It may be that full-time PAs are either moving through this liminal space at a greater pace or they may not leave this in-between space. It would be worthwhile considering the factors that might impact on PAs' enculturation into HE.

Several studies have called into question the role of knowledge as a tension affecting PAs in their new role (Shreeve, 2011; Wood et al., 2016). It seems that

some PAs struggle with legitimacy of professional knowledge. There are a number of studies that have raised similar yet differing accounts of how this has manifested itself. For example, Boyd and Harris (2010) found there was tension between PAs and the espoused knowledge currently being valued in HE, similar to what Ryle (1949) would have termed 'knowing that', and the PAs' own experience of professional practice requirements. Similarly, Wood et al. (2016) argued that HE still held more value to research than professional practice. Furthermore, Posner (2009) argued that legitimate types of knowledge differ between the two domains. For example, academic journals were valued in HE and professional publications in industry. This may give reasons as to why PAs feel their practice knowledge feels illegitimate.

This suggests a curious paradox in that it is precisely this professional knowledge and expertise that enabled the PA to be employed in an academic role. As already seen earlier in the chapter, this also seems incongruent with the prevailing socio-political position in which HE is currently situated and which seems to value employability. Wilson et al. (2014) argued that professional practice is equal to that of abstract knowledge as it is a vital part of the curriculum for students entering the world of work and is, as has been seen, a key driver for HE from governmental policy. Similarly, Simendinger et al. (2000) went further and asserted that professional knowledge is more contemporary. In other words, an academic transitioning to industry may well find that professional knowledge seems not to be as valued as abstract knowledge. However, it might be that the value of practitioner knowledge is not as recognised by academics and faculty as much as it is by PSRBs or government employability measures. It is surely more plausible to suggest that the distinctive types of knowledge - intellectual and practical - are still holding different value in HE.

Myers (2017: 45) suggests that, with the rise in the REF and TEF as measures of impact and reach in HE in the UK, an 'intellectual cross-training' between practitioners and academics could 'strengthen all composite parts', essentially leading to better outcomes for all.

Although Smith and Boyd (2012) also noted that PAs' support for students and teaching was of foremost importance to them with a limited desire to develop a research portfolio it could be contended that, due to a narrow exposure to research practices, these lecturers felt a comfort in teaching and supportive roles as this was more akin to their former clinical practice. Likewise, in their former role, they may have viewed research as something to consume rather than produce.

PAs can also bring progressive aspects to teaching (Simendinger et al., 2000) by bringing a fresh perspective into the learning space. Similarly, Runkle (2014) illustrates how PAs were influencing established pedagogical practice through focusing on the application of knowledge and skills within their teaching practices. This would accord with the government agenda of employability (Universities UK, 2016:2) ensuring opportunities for students to acquire skills to improve employability outcomes. This also suggests that PAs may approach their teaching through a different logic, seeing HE as preparation for employment. Particularly in the first years PAs would have a strong association with their earlier career, as earlier seen with Smith and Boyd (2012) and would use this as source of knowledge (van Lankveld et al., 2017; Posner, 2009).

A number of theorists, Simendinger et al. (2000) and, latterly, Stoten (2018), argued that PAs' professional insights, based on their experiences and socialisation in industry, can holistically inform curriculum design making learning outcomes more relevant and bringing the learning environment to life. Furthermore, Myers (2017) states that practitioners bring a wealth of networks from industry that can create organic and symbiotic relationships between industry and HE. Indeed, Gates and Green (2013) argued that PAs are uniquely situated to be able to bridge the cultural gap between academia and industry, recognising the tensions and disconnects between the two that acculturated colleagues may not always recognise or appreciate. Furthermore, Posner (2009) recognised that the diversity of backgrounds and value systems that practitioners bring into HE can help draw in students from a diversity of backgrounds as well as offering a rich learning environment by incorporating stories from industry to theoretical points in their teaching. As Diekelmann (2004) suggested, new PAs can be closer to the students' experience than established academics and this fresh perspective can inform and improve the

provision of teaching and the wider HE provision. Similarly, Meyers et al. (2006) argue that PAs were now reporting that their academic role was better aligned to their values. This offered autonomy for them to focus on individual projects of interest that their previous role may not have permitted.

These examples represent the value that PAs draw into HE and could potentially counterbalance any ambiguity that PAs may experience within the liminal space between previous professional career and academic role.

The literature thus firmly suggests that the experience of transitioning to an academic role from a professional background seems dissimilar to the initial experiences of a career academic. PAs' experiences, where these have been researched, suggest the transition is experienced as a total and radical career change when entering HE yet it seems that HEI support for this transition is not always proportionate. There is a case to be made that extant provision seems not to meet the requirements of PAs.

While the research has given insight into PAs' experiences, the majority of PAs in the aggregated literature has been based around: a single profession or allied professions (e.g. Simendinger et al., 2000; LaRocco and Bruns, 2006; Boyd and Lawley, 2009; Boyd and Harris, 2010; Smith and Boyd, 2012); dual professions or cross-discipline dual professions (e.g. Fairbrother and Mathers, 2004; Shreeve, 2011); multi-discipline PAs (e.g. Goulay, 2011b); from one university (e.g. Wood et al, 2016); a case study (e.g. Gourlay, 2011b); international perspective (e.g. Santoro and Snead, 2013). There are no inquiries into the experiences of full-time multi-discipline PAs in HE in the UK. As seen in this chapter there is an increase in professionalisation of occupations that require mandatory HE qualifications (Bekhradnia and Beech, 2018), a rapid growth in degree apprenticeships (Universities UK, 2019), an increase in student numbers, as well as a rise in the importance of employability on graduate outcomes. Thus, there is a significant need for full-time PAs to settle in and want to remain in HE. Yet these are not in themselves a homogenous group. Their backgrounds are diverse. Therefore, an effective transition requires an understanding of their experiences, skills, knowledge

and aspirations which should, in turn, foster effective support to aid an effective transition between professions and academia.

2.5 Research Questions

The review of the literature has resulted in the following questions that aim to further investigate PAs' transition into an academic role:

1. How do practitioner academics experience the change from their professional practice to the role of full-time academic in HEI in the UK?
2. What recommendations can be made for induction support and guidance for newly appointed practitioner academics in Higher Education in the UK?

2.6 Chapter Summary

The review of the literature on professions and historical, political, and cultural factors that have contributed to shaping professionally-focused education into HEIs along with entering HE as an early career academic from a professional background has been critically considered to support this research inquiry. Key themes include the rise of the professionalisation of occupations and the significance of HE as pivotal for credentialing occupations (Moloney, 1992; Neal and Morgan, 2000; Green and Gates, 2014). HE has always had a relationship with the professions yet there seems to be an imbalance between the esteem of theoretical knowledge and that of practical knowledge which was further reinforced by the binary division of HE in the twentieth century. With the end of the binary division between categories of HEI, rather than blending HE, the distinction of the two sectors seems to have persisted. With the prevailing neo-liberalist takeover, the rise of employability as a metric for accountability, and a widening participation in HE, the direction of HE is set to meet the needs of industry. This has impacted both the academic role (Billot, 2010) and academic practice (Stilwell, 2003). However, as demonstrated, the need for PAs has risen. Furthermore, PAs had no basis of comparison between a previous academic role and the current one. For them, their comparison is between their profession, arguably situated within a market economy or public service which may already

assimilate a neo-liberal ideology, and their new academic role. So, while HE seems to be facing a neo-liberal ideological takeover, it is also employing industry-rich PAs who have experiences of working within such a culture.

It seems that PA experiences of transition have highlighted a challenge representing a change to role, skills, and sector (Shreeve, 2011). Yet the diversity of backgrounds for early career academics does not seem to be identified in their initial professional development. Furthermore, the value of PAs to HE, with a background in working in a neo-liberal ideology, does not seem to be fully recognised.

In the next chapter, methodology, the research paradigm with justifications, the approach taken, and methods used to engage in conversations with practitioner academics, will be outlined.

Chapter Three Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Having reviewed the extant literature on practitioner academics' (PAs') experiences, this chapter will set out the methodology by which the present research aims to investigate the issue further.

The inquiry has three aims. Firstly, as a practitioner researcher, to explore my own experience of the change from my professional practice to a full-time academic role in a higher education institution (HEI) in the United Kingdom (UK). Secondly, to record and document the narratives of full-time PAs currently in transition as well as established PAs in HEIs in the UK. Finally, to synthesise my account with these other stories to co-construct what it means to experience transition to the role of an academic from a professional background and to offer recommendations for induction support. From these three aims the overall outcome is to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding transitioning from a professional role to an academic role in HEIs in the UK. As identified in the last chapter, the following research questions aim to further investigate this:

1. How do practitioner academics experience the change from their professional practice to the role of a full-time academic in HEIs in the UK?
2. What recommendations can be made for induction support and guidance for newly appointed practitioner academics in Higher Education (HE) in the UK?

In this chapter, firstly I set out the research paradigm within which this study is situated, then the methodological approach selected and finally describe the methods applied to inquire into the chosen participant groups: neophyte (with fewer than three years in post) and established practitioner academics (over three years in post). I explain how the participants were recruited, the criteria for selection, and the ethical considerations adopted. Finally, I describe how the research was conducted and provide a rationale for decisions made.

3.2 Paradigm and Approach

Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 91) remind us that the basic elements of a research paradigm are ontology (the nature of the reality and social reality that is being researched), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), methodology (how the researcher gathers knowledge), and ethics (how the researcher ensures a just and ethical collection of data). These are all interconnected components of the research paradigm that must correspond to the research questions (Lincoln, 1995).

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

Underpinning this research is a constructivist understanding that experience is a subjective, human construct, that is value-laden (Mutch, 2005). From this viewpoint, there are shared social factors by which individuals map themselves and others which shape an individual 'construction' of self. Consensus upon the interpretation of experiences leads to intersubjective or shared realities being constructed by individuals through interactions with their social group (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Bogdan and Birklen, 1992; Maxwell, 2006). From this perspective reality is viewed as fluid and constantly changing. Granting the subjective and intersubjective nature of reality represents the ontological assumption guiding this inquiry.

If this view of multiple perspectives is acceded to, the way in which knowledge is constructed will be based upon an interpretation of the world through lived experiences. Understanding is constructed through detailed examination of these experiences accessed through shared meanings, language and consciousness. It seems that the construction of knowledge is also filtered through this process. Knowledge is 'situated' (Haraway, 1988) within terms of space, time and context and co-created through these shared experiences and findings (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Thus, knowledge is recognised as dynamic and living. While this may be problematic in that it is constantly shifting, it does recognise how knowledge is constituted within shared experiences between individuals and articulated through a dialogue between a community.

Furthermore, as a practitioner researcher, I am situated within the research as an 'insider'. I interact, collaborate and co-construct knowledge with participants then interpret the data, rather than acting as an independent observer. Therefore, the epistemological assumption guiding this inquiry is that social knowledge and collective information is experiential and context-bound.

Assuming that social reality is constructed within and between others and that knowledge is created by the interpretation of meaning of these realities, gathering such knowledge would require a research process that applies a suitable methodology that reflects the subjective and situated nature of knowledge. A dialectic approach with an inductive logic, comparing and contrasting perspectives, which will include my own, offers a means to acquire such knowledge. Thus, methodological procedures that favour individual accounts, dialogue and hermeneutics (Waring, 2012) are suitable. For the assumptions outlined, I adopt an interpretivist paradigm for the research.

3.2.2 Interpretivist Paradigm

Out of the main interpretivist approaches (Creswell, 1998), three are suitable for this inquiry: phenomenology, narrative inquiry and ethnography. I identified the most appropriate of these approaches for the purposes of this study as follows.

I firstly considered phenomenology as a research approach for the narratives. Phenomenology is a philosophy (Heidegger, 1927/1962; Merleau-Ponty, 1949/1962) that can be adopted as a research approach, hermeneutic phenomenology, for inquiries into the meaning of lived experience (Van Manen, 1990). I particularly valued the concept of *dasein* (Heidegger, 1927/1962) in that we are always being, existing, in the world. How we comport ourselves within the world is based upon the past and present narratives of lived experience in a temporal world.

My first research question seeks to explore the lived experiences of PAs and how they describe and interpret their experiences of academic practice, for example living in the world of an academic. The Heideggerian philosophical approach argues to allow things the space to appear as they are. However, in distinction to Heidegger's

approach to phenomenology is Husserl who advocates the need for researchers to 'bracket,' or suspend, their viewpoint of the phenomenon in hand whilst interpreting the data (Merriam, 2002). As a researcher who is also a new PA, this would not be possible.

As I hold an insider position the Heideggerian approach is an advantage. However, I rejected phenomenology as my research focus is how PAs experience the change from their professional practice to a full-time academic role, rather than the meaning or feeling of transition. I aim to collect narrative accounts which highlight the situated character of PAs in a socio-historical cultural context. While this aim does not preclude a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, this research is primarily concerned with epistemology rather than the ontology that phenomenology requires. A more nuanced focus on narratives and culture was required. A methodology which hybridised narrative enquiry and ethnography was thus indicated.

3.2.3 Research Approach: Narrative inquiry and Ethnography

The use of narrative inquiry was preferred for the following reasons. Human life is storied (Smith and Sparkes, 2008) and story has perpetually been a means to communicate and establish ways of 'knowing'. Narrative inquiry harnesses this to understand experiences (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) and has been developed into a research methodology (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). This research is a study into storied experiences.

Although a precise definition of narrative inquiry is not clear in the literature (Reissman and Speedy, 2007) and can be seen as complex to explain (Clandinin et al., 2006), narrative inquiry is concerned with representing lived experience as story (Leggo, 2004) in a responsive and flexible form of inquiry (Connelly and Clandinnin, 2005). Narrative inquiry uses stories as data (Savin-Baden and van Niekerk, 2007) and consists of accounts that reflect personal and shared meanings (Bamberg, 2012). It is important to recognise the distinction between narrative research and narrative inquiry as the terms are often used synonymously but refer to different research approaches. Narrative research is an umbrella term reflecting the use of

storytelling as a method. This research will be using narrative inquiry, that is using stories told as a means to experience.

The intention of using narrative inquiry is to gain an in-depth description of experience from the individuals experiencing it (Georgakopoulou, 2006) as well as providing an opportunity to express feelings, responses and emotions related to these experiences (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). The approach is congruent with a view of multiple realities of experience (Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002) as well as offering an anonymous outlet to disclose personal perspectives and, exceptionally, life-changing experiences (Charon, 2006). Furthermore, narrative inquiry favours relational aspects of human engagement, such as other people, places and objects privileging experience as a phenomenon that is shaped by both individual and society (Craig, 2010). A narrative approach offers multiple methods for data collection (such as interviews, texts or focus groups) utilising textual and oral narratives to capture the process of identity construction (Riessman, 2008).

For this research narrative inquiry offers an approach that can raise awareness of the process of interpreting and integrating from one setting to another while there is novelty in experiences. Clark (2013) suggests that a fundamental strategy for successful transition involves creating a narrative between the old role and the new one. It is in this metaphorical 'in between' space that narrative accounts can connect with 'the intellectual territory of another way of thinking' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 21). This space can be interpreted as a boundary-crossing between roles where variance between the past and the new is visible as it is novel.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 49) offer a 'three-dimensional narrative inquiry space' as a research framework: 'personal and social (interaction); past, present and future (continuity); combined with the notion of place (situation)' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 50). The framework involves looking at experience through these three dimensions: personal, social and place whilst questioning from four different positions: 'inward, outward, backward, forward' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 49). The notion of culture infuses all three dimensions and while Clandinin and Connelly (2000) encourage research on experience through these three dimensions, I argue

that culture pervades all the dimensions and directions within narratives and should be emphasised within narrative inquiry.

3.2.4 Ethnography

It is this recognition of the importance of culture in the narrative enquiry space that has prompted this study's adoption of a distinct ethnographic lens as part of the research apparatus. Furthermore, my use of ethnography is for the following reasons. I am an insider researcher, in that I am also a participant (neophyte PA) who is immersed in an HEI within the UK. I experience the everyday living world that I am inquiring into. As I am new to the HEI, I am experiencing HE culture as a stranger, entering an institution to which I am not yet acculturated and in an academic role that I am similarly unfamiliar with. Essentially, I am an outsider on the inside immersed in a novel culture with space to think critically about the situation I am in.

From this perspective, social processes and taken-for-granted cultural assumptions and notions can be brought to notice (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Ethnography involves telling narratives about individuals or groups of people in their own context to gain a rich or 'thick' description of their experiences (Fetterman, 2010: 1). It involves the immersion of the researcher into the culture (Creswell, 2009; Fetterman, 2010) and the explanation of meanings related to a specific culture (Van Manen, 1990:11). Culture itself, of course, is an abstract concept that is highly disputed. There are two opposing views on the concept of culture: constructivist and essentialist. While I recognise there are clearly familiarities in cultural settings, I support a constructivist concept of culture which accords with the epistemological assumptions of this research.

The constructivist ontology, as outlined in section 3.2.1, proposes there is not one single reality, only socially constructed multiple realities (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Therefore, the constructivist epistemology holds that reality about the world is created through interactions between human minds which socially construct and co-create categories and concepts to represent and explain the world (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This is in contrast to the essentialist perspective of culture that is

explicitly defined and stable with values and beliefs shared by the community (Carpenter-Song et al., 2007).

Following a constructivist perspective, Geertz (1973) states that culture forms through the interactions and discussions between people. This can represent a form of construction of culture as people make meaning of their experiences through their narratives (Chang, 2016). So, if we view culture as being co-constructed through interaction it indicates the temporality of cultural objects, values and beliefs. Narrative accounts can aid making cultural knowledge visible. For example, through written narrative accounts writers can exhibit how they are interpreting the new culture through their ongoing interactions with others in the community. PAs' narrative accounts may assist in managing the shift in culture between their professional role and their new role as an academic.

Gray and Thomas (2006) recognise that it will take individual and social practices together to outline, identify, characterise and manage the cultural identity of a group. However, as a dynamic process, this suggests the constant adapting of a cultural identity to the changing circumstances and surroundings within and between communities. Highlighting culture, particularly through a new, unacculturated perspective, may highlight cultural processes and practices that have remained unquestioned (Gray and Thomas, 2006) and this may well lead to change, reflecting the socially constructed dynamic nature of culture.

Recognising culture as socially constructed means it must be explained in context. Mitchell (2000) offers a list of what might be termed culture: the opposite of nature, a way of life, processes and patterns that develop culture, patterns represented or recreated by others to create meaning and a hierarchical structure to guide the process. However, Michell's (2000) assertion of a dualism between nature and culture does not recognise how interdependent they are with one another. Rather, taking a position that culture is a mutual adaptation of humans within their environment, gives consideration to the dynamic nature of culture. Thus, this viewpoint assumes there to be an interactive link between the researcher and the researched as findings are being co-created through the investigation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

3.2.5 Autoethnography

While the ethnographic approach suits my research questions, and I am immersed into the culture of one specific institution, I am keen to inquire into the experiences of fellow PAs in a variety of HEI settings in the UK. However, an autoethnographic approach, one where the researcher would use the self in narrative accounts of engaging in academic practices as they themselves transition into the role of PA positioned within the wider socio-political HE landscapes, would be congruent with my research questions. By recording my thoughts through autoethnography, my interpretations of the everyday are charted and readers, considering the written encounters, can act as a magnifying glass to these contemplations. I am aware that my research intention does not strictly fit into the autoethnographic notion of the self being the primary focus of the research (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000); however, it is an autoethnographic-inspired approach.

Furthermore, I recognise that at times there will be elements of autobiography, descriptions of my experiences when discussing my past life history (Freeman, 2004), yet my primary aim is to write accounts of my experiences of working within an academic role in an HEI in the UK with a critically reflective stance. Whilst Walsham (1993) contended that there are no right or wrong theories in the interpretivist tradition, my autoethnographic accounts are legitimised by how they may appeal to those in the same area of research. It is recognised that there are some links with Whitehead's Living Theory Research (1989) although the main intention of the research question is not to improve one's own practice but to gain insight into the academic role and surrounding culture.

3.2.6 Positionality

As a new practitioner researcher, in a noteworthy position as participant and researcher, I feel situated in liminal space between teacher and academic and I am curious to explore this space. Narratives offer a method for asking myself 'who' I am during an intersection of 'who' I was and 'who' I am becoming between two different roles. Whilst this offers a useful perspective, I must be aware of my subjectivity. I need to be aware that I do not draw upon meanings based solely on my own value

system from my own experiences and apply them without explicating other perspectives of 'mutually shaping influences' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 42). However, narrative inquiry and autoethnography do make unique, positive use of positionality and subjectivity.

As a narrative inquirer I am connected to my stories and the ones that I will encounter in the data collection. Firstly, in the 'narrative shaping' (Riessman, 2008: 5), I am preselecting the materials to present to an audience, presenting a pattern, an order onto the oral narratives. Secondly, as part of writing up the research, I decide which stories are conveyed, how they are told and retold. Therefore, I am within the research both as a participant and as an interpreter of the data through identifying categories and determining the shaping of the reality under investigation.

3.2.7 Narrative inquiry and Ethnography

Thus, by interweaving narrative inquiry with ethnographic approaches, the focus on the process of narrative accounts functions not only as a way of making sense of experience to create meaning but also as a way to give prominence to HEI culture viewed from an unfamiliar professional rather than an academic's perspective (research question 1). Additionally, documenting the narratives of neophyte and established PAs can help highlight potential factors that may impact transition to an academic role and further inform the academic community (research question 2).

3.3 Theoretical Framework

While the research paradigm set out above specifies the need for qualitative data to be encountered in its unique context, it is clear that exploring the transition from being professionals to becoming academics requires a relevant theoretical framework to elaborate such a transition and reflect the constructivist perspective of the research. One such is the work of French social philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu.

Bourdieu's concern was to uncover the workings of society (Grenfell, 2012) with a particular emphasis on how the practical logic of everyday practices was maintained. Bourdieu argued that every structure and condition within a social context was held within a system of power and relations of meanings. Maintenance of this power

required a socialisation process surrounded by a competitive hierarchy to mobilise individual action to perpetuate the existing social structure. From this viewpoint, it would seem there is no place for agency (freedom to consciously choose behaviour by an individual) as it is subsumed by structure (accustomed patterns of how to behave in a community). This was not Bourdieu's view. Rather than viewing the social world as a set of binary divisions - structure/agency; public/private; empirical/theoretical; objective/subjective - Bourdieu recognised the social world as a middle ground between two opposing conditions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Bourdieu's structuralist allegiances are evident in his acceptance of communication systems having symbolic meaning as a form of structured power (Bourdieu, 1971). For example, Bourdieu (1971) asserted that social structure was perpetuated through individuals internalising normative structures and enacting them through their everyday activities. In other words, society consists of individual relationships with structure. As we are socialised, engaging with the world through communicating with others, our consciousness develops through our experiences with the existing social structures. Socialisation can act to regulate thoughts and behaviours to maintain a consensual meaning as an individual engages within society. The result can be the reproduction of the existing social structure and power. This power is not knowingly recognised by members of a community as socialisation into the practices makes them appear as normalised behaviours and practices. This power is then expressed as the culture of a particular social grouping. Thus, everyday practices reflect the position of power within a social group. Bourdieu proposed that the more aligned an individual's behaviours and actions were towards the culture in which they were situated, the more success and acceptance the individual would have within that community (Swartz, 2013).

We therefore need to take into consideration the fact that Bourdieu built upon his structuralist allegiance towards a post-structuralist perspective. That is, he saw the relation between things in everyday social arrangement (structuralist) while also recognising that nothing was definitively universal or predictable but rather there was also fluidity in the everyday (post-structuralist). Foucault (1980) held a similar position to Bourdieu in that they both adopted elements of a post-structuralist perspective. It also seems that Foucault and Bourdieu were correspondingly social

constructivists in that they viewed knowledge as socially situated and created between individuals who have been shaped through processes of socialisation.

However, Bourdieu (2000a) departed from Foucault (1980) in his view that the use of language, in such activities as negotiating, interacting, arguing, debating, activated agents to produce and reproduce structure. Although Foucault (1980) did not keep this position later in life, as demonstrated in his posthumously published lectures on 'Fearless Speech' (Foucault, 2000), in his earlier work he argued that historic processes produced a specific way of thinking. However, Bourdieu (2000a) viewed thinking as actively situated in a particular context that was relational between the individual and the environment.

In this respect, Bourdieu (1989) characterised his work through a constructive structuralist viewpoint. This holds that structure is co-constructed through the intersubjectivity between structure and agent; the individual engaging with the structure, but also, significantly, always part of the structure. Bourdieu's theory of practice was based in a middle ground between structure and agent, rather than specifically structure or agent. Bourdieu's structural constructivist theory of practice merged these two traditions as a way of viewing society.

Thus, in summary, Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the social world assumed that the structure (the power) of the external world is internalised, through socialisation, into the internal world of the individual resulting in 'taken for granted' assumptions about how the social structure of a society functions. However, individuals have agency in that they act independently within social structure so that there is interplay between individual and structure in society. If social structures are maintained the status quo of society is perpetuated resulting in the reproduction of the existing society. Bourdieu (1992) articulated that, as a function of this context, preconstruction surrounded everything and encouraged a view that the supposed *truths* of society, rather than being 'common sense', should instead be viewed as being part of a socially constructed reality. Change comes about in structures by the conscious recognition of what is unconsciously assumed by members of the social group.

If this so-called reality of society functioned for the good of the established, dominant culture and its social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1992), then recognising how it manifests in the actions and behaviours of agents is challenging. Thus Bourdieu (1992) argued that to study structure required the direct study of agents, that is individuals in a social structure. Through viewing everyday practices insight could be raised as to the relation of power within a community.

Consequently, Bourdieu's viewpoint particularly clearly resonates with this study which specifically inquires into the experiences of PAs where transitions, perceptions and assimilation are key concepts. A theoretical framework based around the work of Bourdieu was selected for the following reasons. Firstly, Bourdieu placed significant value on speech and language to highlight how structure has been internalised by individuals in a social group. Thus, conversations should aid uncovering the space between professional and academic socialisation in which a PA would be situated. Secondly, this inquiry required a framework that could focus on the everyday experiences of PAs. Thirdly, Bourdieu (1988) was keen to defend the autonomy of the academy from politics or the economy. Yet, as demonstrated in the last chapter, the autonomy of the academy is being challenged by the prevailing neo-liberal ideology and new public managerialism. While his writing reflected a different socio-historic period, Bourdieu's *'thinking tools'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989:50) are highly applicable as analytical concepts to illuminate experiences of PAs to reveal academic *doxa.* These tools are compelling as they give a language and definition, and thus structure, that can give inroads into exploring and getting to the core of PAs' experiences. Therefore Bourdieu, reflecting his perspective of the social world as non-binary, combined a theoretical and empirical approach which offers a cogent framework, as well as tools, to employ in this inquiry.

Thinking Tools

To help draw out PAs' experiences, selection of the *thinking tools* needs to take into consideration the notion of how social space, and the functions and activities that occur within it, holds specific meaning, as these will be particularly relevant for the present study. This social space is elemental as it binds activities together following Bourdieu's notion of the relation between structure and agency, internal and external

world, individual and social. Therefore, the concepts of *habitus, field,* and *symbolic capital* work interdependently. These concepts can be put to work as analytical concepts on a social space, and what happens within it, taking it further than just looking to report but moving towards unearthing any underlying structuring principles. Furthermore, these concepts are pertinent when applied during the process of transition when agents are on the fringes of an unknown culture and where the nature of a socially constructed reality that is usually subsumed by existing employees is visible to new employees. The tools, therefore, act as schema as a means to focus attention on structure for investigating the experiences of PAs and are relevant for analysing the phenomenon at hand. Drawn together, the Bourdieusian key concepts of *habitus, field, symbolic capital* will be put to work as analytical tools to explore experiences of PAs' transition into HEIs. Additionally, the explicatory concepts of *doxa, hysteresis, metanomia, connaissance*, and *reconnaissance* will further aid understanding.

3.3.1. *Habitus*

Habitus is a difficult concept to define (Bourdieu, 1990a), is often contested (Maton, 2014), but is nonetheless *one* of the central elements that Bourdieu used to analyse the social world. Broadly, it is the embodied way of being that becomes *habitus*: 'a set of dispositions, reflexes and forms of behaviour that people acquire through acting in society' (Bourdieu, 2000a:19). Simply, it is how we, as agents, think, feel, act, and relate.

Many of our everyday practices are based around the regularity of behaviours and dispositions (Bourdieu, 1990b). The dominant discourse, what is accepted as constituting the rules within structured societal space, is reinforced through socialisation. This discourse seems to be the basis of the *habitus* that becomes internalised and gathers into itself taken for granted assumptions, behaviours, and ways of being to become embodied (Bourdieu, 1985). In turn, this is enacted within the practices applied in the social space, for example in an individual's vocabulary, grammar, register, etiquette and body language. Furthermore, the dominant discourse is strengthened through acceptance of an individual displaying the recognised *habitus* for a specific social space. Conversely, if an individual's *habitus*

does not reflect that which is appreciated within the social space, it indicates that the individual's dispositions and practices are not part of what is valued by that dominant discourse of a specific social world. That is: they do not belong.

Individuals have agency within *habitus* based upon an interplay between past and present experiences of an individual engaging in society (Bourdieu, 1990c). Bourdieu's influential concept has been further refined by Di Maggio (1979) who argues that *habitus* is in a process of continual restructuring as an individual engages with society and similarly by Reay (2004) who views *habitus* as an internal core surrounded by many matrices built up and restructured over time. This suggests a dynamic, permeable nature to *habitus* in which engagement with society and practice is generated.

Habitus offers a tool to understand practice in HE. When new PAs transition into HE they are exposed to an academic *habitus* where, significantly, their perception or awareness of this new *habitus* can uncover accepted, taken for granted, protocol. Notably, PAs' exposure to new experiences may also highlight their past professional *habitus* leading to a unique position between roles.

Bourdieu (1992) viewed the *habitus* within a *field* as a circular loop whereby the new members learned the 'rules of the game' from established members of the field. However, this suggests the social reproduction of *habitus* rather than a dynamic adaption of *habitus* through the interaction between the field and wider social structures. Although in his later works, *Pascalian Meditations (*Bourdieu, 2000b), he alludes to the generative potential of the *habitus*, this perspective obfuscates the perspectives that individuals' experiences bring into the field and which may influence social practices. This state offers an opportunity for PAs to influence existing *habitus* as cultures merge.

3.3.2 *Field, Doxa, Metanomia, and Hysteresis*

Of particular resonance for this study is Bourdieu's suggestion that the concept of *habitus* takes place within a certain *field,* a social and cultural space consisting of a network of relations between individuals. In this thesis the *field* is on-campus Higher Education in exclusively HE providers. *Fields* can exist in any form of social space and can be formally or informally established with flexible boundaries adapting to the relations between the individuals within a *field*, and wider social forces (Bathmaker, 2015).

Bourdieu likened individuals being engaged in social practice to taking part in a game (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Participants, involved in a specific *field* (the game), follow rules that regulate their behaviour (the expected *habitus*) to a certain expected standard for practice within that *field*. Yet, there are a number of assumptions here when using the simile of a game as it suggests that individuals have the motivation, or autonomy, to participate as well as the ability to play.

Furthermore, this suggests a deterministic cast to this theory (e.g. Jenkins, 2002) that could be misplaced. Bourdieu saw *field,* like *habitus,* in a constant state of flux reflecting the dynamic nature of society and the individuals and groups within it. Being within the *field* entails a certain logic within the practices where the more dominant aspects of the *field* engage with each other in holding their position within the field. Intrinsically, struggle was part of engagement within a *field* (Grenfell, 2012), reflecting the competitive nature of the game simile used by Bourdieu.

Rather than being a struggle, there is space for agency (behavioural choices selected by an individual) to work interdependently with the *field.* This indicates that struggle could be interpreted as a disconnect between an individual's *habitus* and *field.*

The issue of *field* switching particularly resonates with this study. When an individual's *habitus* is aligned to the logic of the *field*, the *habitus* works undetected as the individual feels like 'a fish in water' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 127). This represents *doxa*, where social and mental structures are in harmony that represents

logic of practice, within a given *field*. Yet these '…*fundamental beliefs which does not even need to be asserted in the form of explicit, self-conscious dogma'* (Bourdieu, 2000a: 16) may obscure the relation of power, as well as taken-for-granted practices, of a *field*. However, if an agent relocates into another *field* they are unlikely to be familiar with the *habitus* and feel like a 'fish out of water'. Here opens a period of disjuncture where the *habitus* and *doxa* of that *field* are exposed. To experience an extreme response to a change in *field*, '*metanomia' (*Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 251), akin to a cognitive paradigm shift, is where a cognitive revolution is required to transform an individual's conception of the *field* being experienced.

Confirming the assumption that HE might constitute a *field* in its own right, Ritzer (2003) referred to HE as a semi-autonomous *field* in that it is self-determined and acts in isolation from wider social forces. Yet, as Part two of the previous chapter established, there is now considerable regulation and market intervention in the HE sector. Thus, it is not only the individual who cognitively needs to change to fit in with the orthodoxy. A *field* has '*dynamic borders'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 105) situated in a socio-historical context. External change may lead to a challenge of the assumed *doxa* resulting in the structures of a *field.* Furthermore, as new agents enter the *field* over time, this can alter the logic of practice - the *habitus and doxa* - morphing the established *field*. At an extreme level change can lead to *'hysteresis'* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: 78-9) whereby the *habitus* of the existing *field* members is out of pace with the contemporary *field*. This can lead to practices that are aligned to earlier outcomes rather than the current *habitus* of a *field.*

Being unfamiliar with a *field* involves exposure to the expected and accepted regularities of practices, the *habitus* and *doxa.* This period of disjuncture when a PA is between *fields* is significant in that there is a chance to highlight the internalised tacit *habitus* and *doxa* of the existing HE *field* that may be obscured to established *field* members. Social membership of a *field* may not automatically confer the *habitus*. However, as established earlier, *fields* are dynamic and the established *habitus* and *symbolic capital*, to which I will now turn, can be re-evaluated and contested particularly in relation to changing socio-economic factors which can shape what is valued in a *field*.

3.3.3 *Symbolic Capital*, *Connaissance* and *Reconnaissance*

Bourdieu defined *capital* as '*accumulated labor'* (Bourdieu, 1986: 241) as well as '*energy of social physics'* (1990b: 122). Established members hold power within their position in a *field* based upon the accumulation of *symbolic capital*, the appreciated and valued *capital* within a specific *field*. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 119) refer to '*symbolic capital'* to represent the dynamic nature of capital in that its only worth is through the value that others put upon it. Indeed, Swartz (2013:112) argues that *symbolic capital* forms an overarching 'metacapital' of what is valued as power in a given *field.* For example, money is merely paper with a number on it until a *field* recognises it to represent a value that can be used in exchange for goods or services. Likewise, *capital* only has value when the *doxa* of a *field* recognises it as such. This concept resonates with my initial experiences of entering the *field* of HE as a PA. I felt that there was an indication that my professional *symbolic capital* did not hold as much value once within an academic *field.* Bourdieu (1984/1979) recognised this as the value placed on energy; this *capital,* was governed by the social *field* in which it was situated. Therefore, *capital* holds power and value - *symbolic capital* - in different *fields.* However, my professional *symbolic capital* had effectively given me access to the HE *field* and yet I registered the incongruity that this was not valued once I had moved within the academic *field* itself.

Bourdieu (1986) proposed that *symbolic capital* can apprehend three significant forms: *social*, *economic*, and *cultural*. *Social Capital* (SC), refers to the value of the network of contacts accessible to a person or group, *economic capital* (EC) refers to the value of financial wealth, whilst *cultural capital* (CC), which is particularly relevant to this inquiry, refers to the level of engagement with education and the dominant culture of a specific *field*. CC can moreover be divided into three types: *'embodied, objectified* and *institutionalized'* (Richardson, 1986:17). Embodiment involves enacting certain dispositions that reflect the culture and educational background. These could be recognised through, for example, how an individual holds their body, their facial expressions, the tone of their voice, their accent, their use of language or their gait. Objectified capital refers to an individual's use of material objects to signify their capital. Such objects could be style of mobile phone, laptop, musical

instrument, watch or car. Institutionalized capital refers to culture that is embodied into a specific institution, such as a university.

These capital concepts are beneficial as they can help illuminate places of disadvantage that may lie undetected under a promise of equality from a meritocratic society whereby merit and talent are believed to be rewarded rather than social origin. Bourdieu (1973) argued that CC was entrenched in privilege by class structure; parents/carers transmit CC to children through socialisation that is embodied as dispositions reflecting the cultural background of an individual's heritage. Bourdieu (1973) further argued that middle-class and elite culture dominated society and could promote certain forms of CC within the social structures such as schooling. Consequently, a child socialised into the dispositions of the dominant culture will hold an advantage as they progress within an educational system already aligned to their primary culture, with capital to supply energy to progress within it. *Capital* can further accumulate through inheritance or economic capital can purchase other forms of capital such as entrance to private education which in turn gives advantage to access SC as well as CC in the form of embodied capital. The point is that entrance to, and progression within, a *field* are not equitable.

If an individual's primary socialisation aligns to the dominant culture, they will already be at an advantage. Accumulation of these forms of *capital* in a *field* determines an individual's social position: more capital, more power within a *field.* In other words, the *doxa* of the *field* being internalised and taken for granted is justified and legitimised practice within a *field*. By contrast, someone socialised in a non-dominant culture will already be at a significant disadvantage before they even engage in society and this will aggregate through the educational experiences resulting in a continual, significant disadvantage within social practices. For example, individuals from a non-dominant CC background may find their capital is excluded and considered unacceptable as it does not align to the culturally defined competencies of academia. An example of this in HE could be publications in academic journals. This recognises the capital of academic writing as a means of *symbolic capital* rather than, for example, writing for trade journals.

Furthermore, the nature of the specific capital required for the '*admission fee*' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 107) into a certain field is obscured. Indeed, identifying the specific capital required in itself acts as a form of gatekeeping over entry into the field. Having an understanding as to the *logic of practice* - how a *field* works - is fundamental to gaining access. It also works as a barrier "to keep to their common place", and the others to "keep their distance," to "maintain their rank", and to "not get familiar" (Bourdieu, 1989: 17).

CC can be categorised into known (*connaissance*) and recognised, acknowledged (*reconnaissance*) capital. In other words, certain forms of CC are regarded as holding value within a *field.* For example, an individual may not hold a specific aspect of CC, such as a private education, yet they know what it represents as a certain form of CC and may give it a certain appreciation and respect based on what it represents in that *field.* Similarly, an individual may hold CC that is recognised as such in one *field*, but that is not valued as *capital* in another. Crucially for the current study, an individual may hold *CC* in one's professional *field* that may not be recognised as *symbolic capital* in an academic *field.* In other words, a PA's practical knowledge might not be acclaimed as an esteem indicator, whereas a published journal article in a peer-reviewed journal may well be.

Moreover, as established earlier, *fields* are dynamic and the established *doxa* can be re-evaluated and contested particularly in relation to changing socio-economic factors which can shape the value of capital within a certain *field.* When there is an alignment between the objective, external structures and subjective agency, *symbolic capital* is silent and taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1986). However, disruption to this equilibrium can come from the wider socio-political field. For example, widening participation in HE in the UK, which has been explored in the literature review, has been a key governmental drive to encourage students from under-represented groups to attend university. Plausibly a form of social engineering, this initiative assumes that HE is an opportunity to progress into postgraduate study and degree-level employment. This strategy, built upon a rationale of economic development and social justice, assumes that access to HE is preferable to other educational or employment activities, possibly as the strategies are created by governments over-represented by individuals with degrees (Erikson and Joseffson,

2019). However, social reform of a *field* from external stakeholders can still lead to non-acceptance. This can be illustrated in the case of a PhD student from a working-class background who tragically took her own life after being tormented as "not being posh enough" (Lowe, 2020:1) by her university peers. Whilst this is arguably an isolated incident, individuals influence structural change and challenge to the *doxa* can come from wider external sources.

However, Lanier (2013) also warns society that whilst digital technology has the power to open the *field* for contributors, the rise of peer production has also led to a reduction in the perceived authority of experts. By contrast access to SC, in the form of engaging with networks of contacts by a person or group, has particularly widened with digital technology. The social reproduction mechanism of education and, therefore, the traditional hierarchy of society that Bourdieu would have recognised, has been disrupted and transformed. Accessibility of platforms for the creation and engagement of virtual *fields*, as well as knowledge once associated with autonomous *fields*, is easily available to all online. This has the effect of opening access to CC via digital media. Furthermore, with the rise of social media, this has expanded the range of networks, and thus *fields*, for individuals to network within. In other words, access and engagement for individuals into different *fields* has widened. However, the *logic of practice* held within a *field* could be being diluted.

Therefore, together '(habitus) (capital) + field = practice' (Bourdieu, 1984/1979: 101) are illuminating concepts to investigate the experiences of transition into HE from a professional background. I have outlined a broad definition of *field, habitus*, and the aggregated term *symbolic capital* that represents social, economic, *cultural* (embodied, objectified and institutionalised) *capital*. The associated terms of *doxa, metanomia, connaissance*, *reconnaissance,* and *hysteresis* have also been defined*. Deployed as thinking tools, these concepts not only offer a utility to structure analysis of this critical transition time but also to recognise the integration and interaction of structure and agency, acknowledging reality as subjective and context bound. This reflects the research paradigm. The use of language as a means to make sense of experiences can help reveal the reality of transitioning into HE from a professional background. This reflects the research approach. Bourdieu's *thinking tools* were to be used in empirical research rather than to be tied to one specific context as

theoretical concepts open for debate (Reay, 2004). He saw them as concepts to open and view the world and so they were open for reworking. Therefore, the *thinking tool* terms will be used organically and sensitively within the analysis of the data in order to put the concepts into practice, rather than the practice into the concept. Bourdieu's tools will represent a framework to analyse the social world, incorporating the micro with the macro, the individual with the social structure and surrounding socio-political climate.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1 Study Design

This study will pursue a qualitative design to obtain insiders' accounts. The aim is to complete a description (as far as that is possible) of the experiences of PAs in order to make a contribution to knowledge. Therefore, the methodology needs to be orientated towards meaning and how PAs make sense of their experiences.

Fundamental to the research design is the adoption of a conversational model to enable co-construction of narratives from PAs across a range of professional backgrounds to explore the nature of transition into HE (Research questions 1 and 2). These conversations are aimed towards a meeting of minds, drawing experiences together to find a common ground so that participant and researcher harvest new insights and possibly 'emerge a slightly different person' (Zeldin, 1998: 3). Consequently, the focus of a conversation is a joint enterprise aimed at opening new trains of thought as well as challenging and probing thoughts. My aim for this research is to give accounts of experiences when transitioning from one profession to another, recognising truth claims as socially situated and consequently being open to subsequent dialogue.

The study design is divided into two stages. **Stage One** focuses on engaging in conversations with neophyte PAs and **Stage Two** focuses on engaging in conversations with established PAs. I will outline the participants, recruitment procedure, and the methods selected to co-construct narratives for **Stage One** and then **Stage Two**.

3.4.2 Stage One: Engaging in Conversations with Recently Appointed PAs

My intention was to recruit a broad range of professionals. As outlined in the Introduction chapter, there are no multi-professional studies from UK-based HEIs recording the experiences of PAs currently transitioning from professional practice to a full-time academic role combined with the experiences of established academics who have transitioned into academic posts. Consequently, the call for Stage One participants had the following criteria:

- To be employed in a full-time academic post (thus excluding dual-practitioners)
- To have held the academic post for less than three years having previously held a non-academic professional post in the discipline in which they have become lecturers.

The purpose of the time criterion was to reflect the length of training and support packages for newly appointed lecturers in many HE institutions, such as the one at my own university.

The initial target was to engage between 8-15 participants whose background matched (Patton, 2002) the criteria outlined above. Participants were recruited through a combination of sampling methods outlined by Robson (2001) to maximise recruitment. Firstly, a purposive sample was adopted to locate participants. At times, a snowball sample was used when recruited participants passed on my details to colleagues matching the criteria. As I was already a member of networks that would reach these individuals, convenience sampling assisted in gaining access to prospective participants. Criticism of using such methods is usually voiced towards issues of bias and representativeness (Thomas, 2010).

The participants were identified through existing professional channels (e.g. Staff and Educational Development Association (with a mailing list of 1600), Educational Doctorate network, academic gatherings and professional networks). An email was sent via those channels to help publicise the research (Appendix A). Additionally, an expression of interest email was sent to the Oxford Research Activity group network,

along with a flyer given out at two research conferences, as well as a Tweet from my professional Twitter account. From the email requests, it was suggested that I contact the Chartered Association of Business Schools Bridge Programme (for executives seeking to teach in business schools) to request that the call for participants be sent to their alumni list. It was also suggested that I send a request to the College of Paramedics to cascade to their trustees. I contacted both institutions and sent details of the research proposal and a letter from the research ethics committee.

From the recruitment drive, prospective participants contacted me via email outlining their years as an academic and their previous profession. Those meeting the criteria were sent a participant information leaflet (Appendix B). Following the British Educational Research Association's (2011) guidelines for educational research, the leaflet informed them about the nature of the research, that participation was voluntary, confidentiality and anonymity would be adhered to, that harm would be avoided, and about their right to withdraw. Participant recruitment was monitored to check there was no conflict of interest (e.g. to ensure the participants did not attend the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (PCTHE) for which, at the time, I was acting subject co-ordinator). Although the research was not publicised to the PCTHE cohort, the other means of publicity may have caught their attention.

One key area of ethics which I needed to be cognizant was the relational aspect of the research. Creating the conditions for conversations meant building a swift rapport. I needed to consider my duty of care to the participants, as in one respect they were potential colleagues working in similar institutions, where friendship and networking could occur, yet I was also a researcher. Being mindful of the boundary between colleagues and researcher was paramount.

All participants were requested to complete, sign and return a consent form (Appendix C) which was recorded securely on the university's approved data management system. Those who did not meet the criteria for Stage one, but met the criteria for Stage two (e.g. had over three years of experience as an academic and were from a professional background), were informed that I was very interested in contacting them again once I was ready to conduct this part of the research project.

Anyone who made contact and did not meet the criteria for Stage one or Stage two was thanked for their interest and informed that the research was specifically looking for participants that met certain criteria. If a prospective participant met the criteria for Stage one but did not send back the consent form, I sent one polite email reminder. If this did not achieve a response, I made no further contact. Anyone who met the criteria but represented a conflict of interest was thanked for their interest and advised as to the reasons why they could not participate. Table 1 illustrates the responses to the recruitment drive.

Table 1: Responses to the recruitment drive for Stage One

	Number of Responses
Total number of expressions of interest	22
Expressions of interest that met criteria for stage one, completed and returned consent form	9
Expressions of interest that met criteria for stage one, completed and returned consent form but later withdrew	1
Met criteria for stage one but did not complete or return consent form	2
Expressions of interest that met criteria for stage two	7
Expressions of interest that did not meet criteria for stage one or two	3
Total number of recruited participants	8

The following table (Table 2) emphasises the range of professional-vocational backgrounds of the participants in the field. The length of service in a profession ranged from five to thirty years.

Table 2: Participants recruited

Participant	Profession	Length of service in Profession	Length of service in Academic Role
A	History Teacher	13 years	9 months
B	Nurse	27 years	1 year
C	Clinical Psychologist	>5 Years	9 months
D	Maths Teacher	30 years	2.5 years
E	Social Worker	5 years	1 year
F	Accountant	>5 years	6 months
G	Financial Risk Consultant	15 years	6 months
H	Withdrew	Withdrew	Withdrew
I	Maths Teacher	>5 years	< 1 year

Research Ethics Approval was gained prior to the research commencing (see Appendix D).

3.4.3 Stage One: Methods

The methods were selected to promote negotiated co-construction of meaning, enabling emerging themes to be generated when drawing on experiences situated in a diversity of settings and disciplines. Originally, the aim of the first data collection method, a blog called 'Academiculture,' was to generate conversations about the period of transitioning into an academic role. The intention was for blog conversations to inform the content and discussions of the second method, a conversational-expository method of data collection on analogy, modelled on the

BBC Radio 4 programme known as *The Listening Project* (BBC, 2017). This programme is a series of recorded, unstructured conversations between two individuals constructing a story based on a shared life event. Each edited conversation lasts between 3-5 minutes. The research design demonstrates the researcher-as-bricoleur (Becker,1989) in that this approach represents a deployment or creation of methods to gain insight into the inquiry.

In the event, for reasons detailed below, this initial study design was adapted to centre instead upon the methods of blogging, semi-structured interviews and spontaneously occurring *Listening Projects* (LP).

3.4.4 Blogging

A blog, a Web 2.0 social media platform, is an interactive virtual space where content, in the form of a post, is created by an author and readers can leave comments (Hookway, 2008). The use of blogs within research projects is well documented (e.g. O'Reilly, 2005; Goldman et al., 2008; Snee, 2008; Chenail, 2011; Wilson et al., 2015). Blogging offers space for descriptive, reflective, exploratory and interpretative writing thus representing an appropriate qualitative method (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). A blog is an example of a research platform that offers space for asynchronous conversations and merges the oral and written characteristics of language into a hybrid form (Mann and Stewart, 2004). Blogging enables swift contact with previously hard-to-reach participants (Hookway, 2008), anonymity in contributions as well as capturing authentic, naturalistic written account**s** to be used as data (Wilson et al., 2015), which further offers transparency to the data with published dates (Tracy, 2010). Conversely, issues with using a blog as a method for collecting research data include such ethical concerns as authenticity, privacy, and anonymity (Ackland, 2013). Furthermore, for some participants, the platform of a blog may be unfamiliar and could be time-consuming to navigate (Hookway, 2008).

The 'Academiculture' blog aimed**,** through dialogue**,** to develop individual and collective understanding (for both researcher and participants) and to raise consciousness of engaging in the academic world and the cultural forces that surround it. To this end, a blog platform was ideally placed to sensitively facilitate

multiple dialogues of experiences, thoughts, feelings, values and intentions of practitioners currently in the transition from a professional background to an academic role and to record this process in action.

Although writing as a research tool has been criticised for having little reach to the wider audience (Peseta, 2007), it recognises that the process of writing affords the time to reflect and scrutinise the self, particularly within the socio-cultural context of their workplace (Bocher, 2000). Writing can be an effective method to study professional development within the cultural landscape within which the individual is working (Stronach et al., 2002). Moreover, writing for communication has an established place as a proficiency that is fundamental to the practice of an academic (Grant and Knowles, 2000).

3.4.5 Stage One, Method One: Blog

The researcher, who meets the participant criteria as a PA, maintained 'Academiculture' **-** an autoethnographic, reflective, analytical blog - to establish a conversation about PAs' experiences of transitioning into HE.

The purpose of selecting a blog was three-fold. Initially, the platform afforded space to create a self-narrative to gain an understanding of the period of transition to an academic role. Secondly, the personal insights on the blog offered a platform to share and discuss the experiences with other PAs and facilitate dialogue through the 'comment' section. Finally, the blog served as a means to reach similar practitioners in a diversity of settings in HEIs in the UK. As a research method, a blog has the capacity to extend the scope of research, as well as being a convenient method. Research is bound by the practicalities of expense, yet a blog platform affords access to a wider scope of participants for minimal cost.

Writing the blog opened an avenue for exploring how I was feeling about my own career transition. The process of writing the blog as autoethnography could represent what hooks (2000) calls a process of 'repositioning' and offered a medium to express what might not be easy to articulate (Tsalach, 2013). Furthermore, with critical self-reflection, I considered how events shaped my thinking and

demonstrated a deeper understanding of the *habitus* while in the process of *field* transition to an academic role. Reflecting on Junker's (1960) theoretical roles for fieldwork (as cited in Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), my ethnographic practice of participation would run within the category of 'complete participation', in that I am a PA.

Furthermore, the blog adds a distinctive dimension to the narratives being told as autoethnography, as the blog represents selections of cultural analysis and interpretations. I have aligned myself to an analytical approach rather than the evocative autoethnography, usually associated with Ellis and Bochner (2006), such as poetry and art. The analytic approach suited the critical reflective approach I wanted to create to open up my thoughts to both scholarly literature and participants' comments.

To be an analytic autoethnographer, Anderson (2006: 379) advocates that specific conditions are maintained and I sought to foster these in the blog. Firstly, the autoethnographer must be 'a complete member in the social world under study': I am a new full-time academic from a professional background. Secondly, 'engages reflexivity to analyse data on self': published blog posts offered the opportunity for me to look at myself. Thirdly, 'visibly and actively present in the text': I wrote in the first person and make reference to my own experiences. Fourthly, 'Other informants in similar situations involved in the data collection': I encouraged the participants to engage within the blog through the comment section; thus both the blog posts and comments section are primary data. Finally, 'Committed to theoretical analysis': The blog posts and comments form part of the raw data for analysis.

The blog represents a cultural narrative of a transition into an academic career. It represents reflective narrative and analysis. Through the engagement with others, who can compare and contrast their experiences with my own and those of peers, the blog can act as a platform for self-discovery and self-learning as well as providing opportunities to question and validate stories, learn from others and, fundamentally, feel part of a community.

I used Chang's (2016: 54) checklist of potential pitfalls for autoethnographers to foster truth value, consistency, neutrality, and applicability, following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for rigour and trustworthiness in qualitative methods. To avoid what Chang (2016: 54) referred to as 'excessive focus on self in isolation from others', interconnectivity was built into the method through the 'comment' section for the blog that encouraged dialogue between writer and reader, and indeed between readers. Furthermore, the blog posts reached into wider practice and reflected on the socio-cultural HE environment. To ensure there was not what Chang (2016:54) referred to as an 'overemphasis on narration rather than analysis and cultural interpretation', each blog post included commentary on the interpretation of the academic *habitus* as well as the wider socio-cultural HE environment. To prevent 'exclusive reliance on personal memory and recalling as a data source' (Chang, 2016: 54), the blog was a single source for primary data as there were multiple methods in the research design. Participants were encouraged to leave comments. As outlined in section 3.3.3, ethical considerations were in place to avoid what Chang (2016:54) referred to as 'negligence of ethical standards regarding others in self-narratives'. All participants on the blog had anonymity and were issued with a username to protect their identity. Finally, in accordance with Chang's (2016: 54) need to avoid 'inappropriate application of the label autoethnography', Wolcott (2004), encourages the researcher to operationalise how they are interpreting autoethnography in their study to ensure clarity. This term has been defined for use in this study in section 3.2.5. However, while I have attempted to create the ideal research conditions to conduct this research effectively, Ellis and Bochner (2000) highlight that autoethnography can fall in varying places along a continuum of three axes of process (graphy), culture (ethno) and the self (auto). Recognising this, I aim for the blog method to strive for an autoethnographic quality, to reflect on how this has been achieved and how this could be improved for subsequent research projects.

3.4.6 The Blog Procedure

The blog platform name 'Academiculture' was registered with WordPress, a recognised blog-hosting platform, for less than £10, from May 2018 until May 2019. Recognising the concerns regarding the ethics of using blogs in research (e.g.

Wakeford and Cohen, 2008; Ackland, 2013), before the site went live, I ensured there were strict ethical safeguards in place for the welfare of participants, and myself.

Figure 1: Screenshot of home page for *Academiculture*
(removed graphic)

Firstly, *Academiculture* was not searchable on the internet; a link was needed for participants to locate it. Secondly, entry to the site was password protected. All participants required a username and password generated by the researcher for secure entry. This was particularly important as social media in the form of blogging has the potential risk of 'trolls': individuals whose intent is to provoke an emotional response by posting provocative messages on a site. Therefore, *Academiculture* was set to notify me when posts were uploaded. Every post could then be moderated for appropriateness and thus action could be taken before any possibly defamatory comments were published and viewed by other participants.

Once access was gained to *Academiculture* the participants were given a pseudonym for their posts in the comment section. In addition, participants were reminded on the 'Welcome' page to adopt a pseudonym for their institution.

I set up a protocol to signpost suitable support if participants divulged or discussed sensitive issues that may indicate distress when they added their own narratives to the comments section of the blog. This involved contacting a mentor or suitable 'buddy' in their department or the Human Resources/Occupational Health services at their institutions.

Once a completed consent form had been received, I sent out an email with the web address for the blog. The participants' username and password were sent directly from the WordPress site so, in addition, I sent an email to the participants giving step-by-step instructions on how to log on to ensure a simple log on, to avoid confusion and possible attrition.

When each blog post was published I sent an individual email to the participants informing them of a new blog post and encouraging them to log on to the site, read and make comments. Through dialogue, via the comment box, the aim was for participants to explore, challenge, dismantle, and negotiate consensus or disagreement regarding my experiences recorded in the blog post. Where there was a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1975: 143), the aim was space for cultural understandings to emerge, making the implicit *habitus* and *symbolic capital* of an academic role noticeable.

It was intended that each blog post would take approximately five minutes to read. I initially aimed to send out the blog on a Friday afternoon, when academics may have a moment to read it before the weekend. I asked questions to encourage a response and wrote in an informal, approachable tone that included pictures, to break up the text, as well as to encourage a relaxed and welcoming online environment. This may have been risky in that participants may have perceived a trivial tone to the blog, but my aim was to create a distinctive space that balanced the informal nature of a blog with the serious intent of a research inquiry, through synthesising my written account with academic literature.

My use of the aforementioned automatic alerts to new comments helped build momentum and reflected a conversation through online engagement. To effectively engage in the dialogue, I aimed to promote the following during my responses to the comments: concern, trust, respect, appreciation, affection and hope (Burbules,1993:10). I aimed to leave each response with a question to encourage a dialogue. Participants were encouraged to respond to each other's comments.

I composed four blog posts over a 6-month period in 2018:

Figure 2: Blog Post One: *The Minnow in Higher Education*. **Published 23rd May 2018**

(Removed graphic)

The first blog post was based on my initial observations on transitioning to a university and into an academic role. I divulged reasons behind the *field* move and compared differences I experienced, such as pace, academic freedoms and the limits to this, language used and acronyms, presenteeism and the rhythm of academic life, finances and funding, referring to myself as feeling *'Acanaemic'*.

Figure 3: Blog Post Two: *Academic Outlook and Pink Floyd*. Published 18th June 2018

(removed graphic)

Sparked by a paper by Shen and Tian (2012), this post explored the academic *habitus* and the aims of HE. I reflected on my experiences as an undergraduate in 1992 and considered whether they would have been better or worse than today's undergraduate. I drew upon the Robbins Report (1963) and the vision for HE described then and now with the Higher Education and Research Act (Great Britain, 2017). Finally, I questioned 'whether HE is becoming a puppet for industry wrapped up in the notion of student choice' (Kitchener, 2018).

Figure 4: Blog Post Three: *Sense of Academic Identity.* Published 31st July 2018

(removed graphic)

For this post I explored my sense of academic identity with the meaning and purpose of academic work. I probed into how I was feeling regarding academic self-work and made further comparisons with regard to teamwork with my former role. Finally, I considered the academic role inside HE and the wider academic *habitus.*

Figure 5 Blog Post Four: *Initial Analysis and A-Cat-A-Demic*. Published: 9th November 2018

(removed graphic)

With this blog post, published after the second method for data collection had been conducted, I shared the initial analysis of themes to encourage discussion.

3.4.7 Stage One: Method Two: *Listening Projects*

This method was inspired by LP conversations on Radio 4 (BBC, 2017), where two people participate in a conversation about an experience. As a method for data collection, the aim was to have a co-constructed conversation with a participant

about experiences of change from professional practice to a full-time academic role in HE.

Each audio recorded conversation was to take between 10 and 25 minutes in a quiet environment (or via Skype if the participant preferred). Due to the reach of the research around the UK, it was not logistically feasible to facilitate LP conversations between participants. This method aimed to promote an ethical means of data collection with regard to the researcher-participant power dynamic. It aimed to involve an open exchange of ideas; a democratic conversation rather than an unstructured interview, reflecting the constructivist approach to the research design. As I am also a fellow PA, engaged in co-constructive conversations through the blog, this method aimed to take an emerging theme from the blog contributions and probe deeper into the experiences to capture a naturalistic, unedited conversation that a blog may not facilitate (Objective 2). LPs, by their unstructured nature, offer a channel for spontaneous responses allowing voices to be heard and a space for unarticulated needs to surface.

I was inspired to use this method as I had used this approach as a data collection method for an earlier piece of research. Furthermore, LPs were recently applied to an experimental learning and teaching innovation project at the University of Keele (2018). Thus, after piloting the LPs, there were indications that this was a feasible research method to use.

3.4.8 Contingency Method

In hindsight, the LPs on Radio 4 (BBC, 2017) along with my previous research and the pilot study, had been conversations between two (or more) people who had already established a familiarity with each other. For this inquiry, I had only previously had very brief communication with participants. This meant that I swiftly had to guide the conversation to a position of familiarity. So, starting with a familiar structure of a semi-structured interview helped facilitate the conditions for any LP to occur spontaneously.

The main variance between the interview and the LP was structure. Interview questions are framed to guide the dialogue rather than a spontaneous conversation

in an LP. Furthermore, there is an 'asymmetry of power' (Kvale, 1996:20) as an interview is led and conversing partners are not of equal status. However, an interview can identify viewpoints in a prompt manner and construct stories of participants' experiences. Additionally, the interview reflects a professional interview, where the participant can anticipate the expectations that their role as an interviewee will entail. These factors are valuable to gain a swift rapport with the participants and was a useful approach as I had had limited contact with the participants prior to the conversations. Thus, conversations based around a semi-structured interview were conducted. However, the co-constructed conversations element of an LP was not disregarded and, where there were spontaneous, naturally occurring unedited conversations taking place within the semi-structured interviews, these were given space and time to develop. Due to the nature of this, the period for each interview ranged from between 20 and 55 minutes. These semi-structured interviews and naturally occurring LP conversations will be known herein as 'conversations'. The original aim was to conduct at least five conversations with existing participants who had commented on emerging themes from the blog. Although the blog did collect data, the augmentation of Method 2 (LP) into a semi-structured interview ensured sufficient data for the project. Research ethics approval for the semi-structured interviews as a contingency method was included in the original application. The safeguarding strategies already in place for Method 1, were the same strategies adopted for this method.

3.4.9 Stage Two: Engaging in Conversations with Established PAs.

As part of the research I was keen to learn from PAs who had established themselves in their academic career. By having conversations with established PAs, I aimed to gain insight into the experience of the transition by PAs in HE in the UK. Furthermore, as an educational developer, I wanted to inform the wider community and make recommendations for effective transitions into HE for PAs (research question 2).

3.4.10 Recruitment of Established PA Participants

Participants were selected based on the following criteria:

- To be currently employed in an academic post held for more than three years
- To have previously held a non-academic professional post in the discipline in which they now lecture.

The recruitment process was similar to the process used for Stage One. These participants, recruited through the same sampling methods, were sourced through existing professional channels (e.g. Staff and Educational Development Association, Educational Doctorate network, academic gatherings and academic colleagues based in UK HE institutions).

An email was sent to relevant networks to publicise the research (Appendix A). The email outlined the research aims, the criteria for participant recruitment and the methods of data collection. The participant information sheet (Appendix B), attached to the email, gave further information about the research. Anyone who was considering taking part in the study was asked to email the researcher to express an interest stating their current role and duration and previous professional career.

Additionally, there was direct email contact with prospective participants who had expressed an initial interest in the Stage One research but had not meet the criteria (e.g. had been a lecturer for more than three years). These colleagues were informed at that stage that they met the criteria for Stage Two and had expressed that they were happy to be contacted once this part of the research was to be conducted.

The aim was to recruit 8-15 participants. The initial response to the expression of interest was significantly more than for Stage One and, unlike Stage One, other recruitment avenues were not necessary.

All respondents to the email were contacted with a consent form and the participant information sheet. If they were happy to proceed, they were asked to send back a completed consent form and to state availability that would suit them to meet. There were nine responses.

The following table (Table 3) outlines the established academics recruited. Similar to the neophyte academics, there is a range of professional-vocational backgrounds of the participants. The length of service in a profession ranged from ten to thirty-five years. The length of service in a full-time academic role ranged from four to eighteen years with the majority from post-1992 institutions around the UK.

Table 3: Recruited Established Practitioner Academics

Participant	Years in HE	Former occupation	Institution type
1	5	Software Engineer (12 years)	Civic university
2	10	Accountancy (20 years)	Post 1992 (Modern University)
3	4 years	Teacher and Head teacher secondary education (35 years)	Post-1992
4	5 years	Games Designer and CEO	Post-1992
5	5 years	Probation Officer (10 years)	Post-1992
6	10 years	Marketing (20 years)	Post-1992
7	10 years	Marketing (music Industry)	Post-1992
8	18 years	Nursing (30 years)	Post-1992
9	5 years	Social work/ learning support nurse	Post -1992

3.5 Chapter Summary

Through this methodology chapter (and accompanying appendices A-E), I have outlined my ontological, epistemological and methodological approach. I have justified the choice of Bourdieu's *thinking tools* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989:50) which will be put to work as analytical concepts. I have outlined the multiple methods of blog, semi-structured interviews and, where appropriate, *Listening Project*-inspired conversations to offer data triangulation. These methods used conversations to foster dialogic intersubjectivity by developing discourse to co-construct an interpretation of experiences (or the phenomena under discussion). This combination of conversational-expository methods, as well as recording the experiences drawn from multiple professional backgrounds and working in various HEIs is part of the unique contribution of the thesis. I aimed to foster truthfulness through reflection and

reflexivity on my own perspective – left open for participants to make comments. Finally, to ensure consistency, there was a clear description of the research process, decisions taken, and issues addressed.

In the next chapter, the participants and themes of the inquiry are presented. The findings and analysis of the data sets are compared and contrasted to so that the experience of transitioning from a professional into an academic role can be better understood.

Chapter Four Findings and Analysis

The objective of this ethnographic, narrative, interpretivist study was to capture accounts of what it is like to transition from a professional-vocational career into an academic position in Higher Education (HE) in the UK. I wanted to find out about the relationship between the social structures in which these co-constructed narrative accounts of transition take place. Accordingly, this chapter will present the analysis of the data using *'thinking tools'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989:50), particularly *field*, *habitus,* and *symbolic capital,* as a framework. The experiences of new practitioner academics (PAs), unfamiliar with an academic role, offer an insight into the *field, habitus* and *symbolic capital* to which career academics may already be accustomed.

Quotes from the data collected from the participants are provided to illustrate the themes and sub-themes that evolved from the conversations. The conversation data used are blog posts and comments, interviews and *Listening Project*-inspired conversations.

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Conversations with Neophyte Academics (NAs)

Blog participants were emailed to see if they would consent to having a conversation with me for the research. As a result four PAs were willing to take part: participants B, E, F, and I (see Table 4). The conversations took place in a quiet location and, depending on the PAs' preference, either face to face, via Skype or telephone. All were audio recorded, with consent, and the recordings were stored on Google Drive. To ensure 'freedom from bias' (Kvale, 1996: 64-65) all the conversation transcriptions were sent to the participant for verification. To instigate the conversation, I was guided by the semi-structured interview questions (Appendix E) that, at times, facilitated *Listening Project*-inspired conversations. I aimed for a collaboration between participant and researcher, 'intersubjective interaction' (Kvale, 1996:66), to ensure a consensus between the researcher and participant with regard to the topic under discussion.

The questions related to factors which had affected their career change, the role before their academic career, the type of HE institution where they are employed, their initial experiences of the transition and their initial professional development.

4.1.2 Conversations with Existing Academics (EA)

For this part of the research I conducted nine conversations. Similar to Stage One, the conversations were guided by the semi-structured interview questions (Appendix E) that, at times, facilitated *Listening Project*-inspired conversations, and took place in a quiet location and depending on the participants' preference, either face to face, via Skype or telephone. All were audio recorded, with consent, and uploaded to a Google Drive. One recording failed (Participant 2) but I took extensive notes. Each transcribed conversation was sent to the participant for scrutiny, allowing them to make comments and check the validity of the transcript. All but one participant responded and, where appropriate, changes were made to the transcripts.

4.1.3 Participants

The following tables (4 and 5) outline the participants whose data has informed the study. All participants had a background in a previous professional-vocational career. There were six active participants, either engaging with the blog and/or a conversation, with less than three years in their full-time academic post (NAs), and nine active participants with more than three years in their full-time academic post (EAs). The tables emphasise the range of professional-vocational backgrounds of the participants. In total there were sixteen active participants in the study including the researcher.

4.1.4 Data Handling Process

To ensure immediate scrutiny of the data, I transcribed each conversation using Dragon Software. Transcriptions were uploaded to NVivo 12 to enable a review of the data between conversations. I gathered the material by topic to identify any emerging patterns and ideas that were emerging. I continually shared the data sets initially with a critical friend and then with my supervisors. Supervisory meetings followed a discussion regarding emergent themes we had identified individually as

well as any outliers and differences we had found. Thus, there was a constant comparison of the data from the outset that systematically guided the research process through engagement with analysis of the data, identifying codes and themes. When there were no new emergent themes in the data set, in agreement with my supervisors, we established that saturation point of the data had been reached and thus no more participants were required. From initial analysis of the data the research aimed to contribute to the theoretical understanding and practical approaches to the transition from a professional career into an academic role.

Table 4: Summary of Neophyte Academic (NA) participants

Note: Blog post contributors by participant letter and pseudonym for Interview; greyed out participants either withdrew or did not contribute.

Participant	Former Profession	Length of service in profession	Length of service as an HE Lecturer	Institution Type	Pseudonym
Researcher	Teacher	13 years	2 years	Post-1992	Not applicable
A	History Teacher	13 years	9 months	Post -1992	Blog only
B	Nurse	27 years	1 year	Post-1992	Richard
C	Psychologist	>5 Years	9 months		
D	Maths Teacher	30 years	30 months	Post-1992	Blog only
E	Social Worker	5 years	1 year	Post-1992	Simeon
F	Accountant	>5 years	6 months	Post-1992	Maya
G	Financial Risk Consultant	15 years	6 months		
H	Withdrew	Withdrew	Withdrew		
I	Maths Teacher	>5 years	< 1 year	Post-1992	Pritya

Table 5: Summary of Established Academic (EA) participants

Participant	Years in HE	Former Profession	Length of service in profession	Institution type	Pseudonym
1	5	Software Engineer	12 years	Civic university	Dave
2	10	Accountancy	20 years	Post 1992 (Modern University)	Sandra
3	4 years	Teacher and Head teacher secondary education	35 years	Post-1992	Mohammed
4	5 years	Games Designer and CEO	Did not respond	Post-1992	Jane
5	5 years	Probation Officer	10 years	Post-1992	Jackson
6	10 years	Marketing	20 years	Post-1992 and previously Russell Group university	Keith
7	10 years	Marketing (music Industry)	Did not respond	Post-1992 universities (two posts in two different Post-1992 universities)	Miguel
8	18 years	Nursing	30 years	Post-1992	Amanda
9	5 years	Social work/ learning support nurse	Did not respond	Post-1992	Tara

4.1.5 Previous Field: Background Experiences in Teaching, Profession, and Academic Experience

Their background experiences gave insight into how prepared the participants were for the transition to an academic role. The range of teaching, industry and academic experience was considerable. The majority of participants mentioned they had experiences of teaching in some form prior to taking on an academic role in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and remarked on this as being a positive experience. The range of experience in industry ranged from 5 years to 30 years. Most had experiences of being a student in HE. The majority held a Master's degree prior to a new role in HE, with one gaining a Master's following appointment and one holding a PhD prior to a career in industry. Conversely, one participant had no experience of being a student in HE as he gained all his qualifications whilst in industry 'on the job' and did not have any teaching experiences: 'It literally was the case of jumping in with two feet' (Richard, NA). Similarly, one participant with a nursing background completed her qualification when the School of Nursing was situated within a hospital, '...so that's how I entered through a back door but then a front door into the world of universities and studying' (Tara, EA).

4.1.6 The Drivers for Change to Academic Field

The motivational reasons behind transition to an academic role gave an insight into why the change of role was wanted. There were three significant drivers for change identified by the participants: change to their professional sector, change of pace of work, and career progression.

Table 6: Drivers for change by participant	
Driver for change	**Participant's comment**
Changes to professional sector	"I knew as an organisation the NHS trust we were going to be changing and I was thinking Oh okay, I need to get to get my Masters now... I could really like the idea of being able to step into academic shoes so to speak". Tara (EA)
	"...mainly it was to do with my work in the local authority and it looked like I was moving towards a job that I wouldn't be happy in, is very fixed in an office managing staff, on duty role and I didn't feel that there would be any opportunities for me to develop" Simeon (NA)
	[Had been offered teaching hours in current role and enjoyed teaching]…"I was then asked whether I was interested in working at the university because there was a lecturer post. It is probably worth mentioning that I also got into it at a time that was also political reform in probation that did not sit well with me" Jackson (EA)
	"...would like training teachers for a while but not necessarily working in schools". Mohammed (EA)
Change of Pace	"Had my career." [Wanted a change of pace from an industry where] ... "you need to have boundless enthusiasm". Sandra (EA)

	"I'm over 50 now you know, [I] really don't want to start commuting again to London" Keith (EA)
	"...part of the appeal of a university is the pace is so much slower, people may agree or disagree with that but they have very predictable calendars at the university and you know that this thing is going to happen at this time every year" Dave (EA)
Career Progression	"...fantastic opportunity to work with the preservice teachers because that was the one missing bit". Pritya (NA)
	"I had worked 27 years in the NHS and theoretically I could work another 25-30 in higher education depending on things so I'm very much trying to build a career in this" Richard (NA)
	"...my friends were like 'Yeah we knew you would finish teaching in a university because you are always like a small Professor" Maya (NA)
	"...it was time to do something different and wanted to see if what I could do if I could take my skills elsewhere and had a really developed a portfolio that was worthwhile" Miguel (EA)
	"I was a large fish, a large fish that needed to swish my fins...I looked for a bigger challenge....So, HE to me was now a feast of a challenge. It was a new sector, new opportunities...it was a place where I could teach, learn and develop. I was now a minnow. I could flap my fins" Researcher (NA) Blog Post 1.

4.2 Research Question 1

How do practitioner academics experience the change from their professional practice to the role of full-time academic in Higher Education in the United Kingdom?

The following themes evolved through the conversations about how PAs experienced the change from a professional-vocational field to an academic one.

4.2.1 Transitioning into the Field: Induction and Orientation activities

> "...it is like being a fish out of water really you know." Sandra (EA)

Induction

Most participants attended an induction event as part of their introduction and acclimatisation. There was one exception, *Jane* (EA) who had no formalised training or support at the start of her new role: "Really that was the summary of my training, it was being told I need to be in this classroom at this time and the name of the module and that was it".

There were mixed responses to the accessibility and effectiveness of induction and orientation events. Some referred to the induction as something "you've just got to do" (Pritya, NA) such as health and safety for the university to cover their due diligence. Pritya (NA) felt that the induction process lacked discussion about the academic role, such as: responsibility in fulfilling duties in HE, dissertation marking, mitigating circumstances, and supporting students through academic advising. She was unclear as to what she would encounter over the year. This was echoed by Mohammed's experiences:

> "I sort of did all the things that I had to do on the induction dutifully but again, I think a lot of those management type processes, you know, you're ticking the boxes you've got to know how to do this or that and the other sorts of things, whereas actually this simple obvious one. What does it mean to work in a higher education institute?" (Mohammed, EA)

Similarly, Richard (NA), responding to the first blog post, stated:

> "After the micromanaged world I left, this seemed induction by osmosis. Everything was on the portal somewhere."

Mentoring

Generally, participants mentioned the value of having a mentor or buddy, an experienced colleague in their department, who helped them to transition and acclimatise themselves to the new role. What was interesting was the use of words such as 'luck' when referring to their mentor, suggesting the impact of working with a mentor was brought on by chance rather than as a part of standard procedures (emphasis by researcher):

> "I was **actually really, really lucky** in that I was, I was allocated a mentor, one of the other academics within the team who had been in her role about six years or so, and this she was like my, my guide, I really don't know what I would've done without her particularly early days because it's mind blowing that, you think the NHS and got systems and processes! [laughing] and then you come to the world of university, virtual learning environments and platforms [sic] sites and module sites, oh I don't know!" (Amanda, EA).

> "Well I had a line manager and actually they came from a practice background, so they were helpful, and supportive. **I was lucky there** I think...it's mentoring by someone who has similar entry point to the institution" (Jackson, EA).

For some, the mentor/buddy did not have a similar background, and this was recognised in the effectiveness of the relationship:

> "I had a buddy, theoretically, in the system but my buddy was a senior lecturer but not a nurse so there were some distances [sic] but it was a bit like 'here you are these are the things you can do go off and find some things to do" (Richard, NA).

"...but there wasn't that kind of support to talk about those differences and what they might be, I kind of worked them out for myself. I think there was not a lot of direction in terms of how to develop my career in higher education. They sort of assumed that you knew" (Jackson, EA).

Arguably, the similarity of background to the mentor was an important factor in navigating the space and understanding the regularities of working in HE as an academic. When mentoring was not effective participants mentioned seeking this out informally:

"...you know you are allocated mentors and people to help whatever but in reality, often the person who becomes your mentor or your buddy is somebody you just [sic] able to identify with, most people would say that.... So, you find an informal coach or mentor and it's often somebody who is on a similar level as you; they may have had a few more months' experience but they have sort of been there and already had to try and work out how things operate or not, you know" (Sandra, EA).

Threshold Lecturer Preparation Programmes

The majority of the participants had attended, or were attending, a threshold lecturer preparation programme, such as a Post-Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PgCert). This was in order to develop strategies and skills in teaching and to facilitate learning and assessment. It also formed part of their contract and, for some, was important in building self-esteem:

"I felt like I need to start it straightaway so that I could be credible" (Sandra, EA).

There were mixed views as to the helpfulness of such courses. Dave (EA) felt that his course was too theoretical and, whilst he acknowledged there was a place for this, "they would be better off taking a more practical view" to reflect the immediate need of day-to-day teaching. This was also reflected in Keith's comment:

"I was never given any formal instruction on how to go into a lecture theatre to stand in front of a group of 50 students... Going into the lecture theatre and delivering in front of 50 students, you know, it's not like teacher training, you know, like when you go into a school and you actually shadow a teacher" (Keith EA).

Amanda (EA) felt that she had "acquired pieces of paper" and felt that there were assumptions made by the teaching staff of a baseline knowledge of pedagogy amongst their audience. She had no knowledge of teaching and this made her feel a sense of not belonging in HE. Similarly, Miguel (EA) spoke about how "this was the first time I had ever heard words like 'pedagogy' and suddenly I was entering a different kind of world and the ways in the system and the language". Mohammed (EA) found that his course was not a platform for discussing academic role and responsibilities:

"... let's just talk about who you are, what the role is as somebody who is teaching graduates and undergraduates and postgraduates, what does it mean to actually be that, and the [PgCert] didn't cover... I think it could be very clearly expressed to give people a chance to talk about it" (Mohammed, EA).

Mohammed's comments on the lack of discussion about what an academic role actually entailed reflected those of several other participants. This also reflected my own feelings at the start of my new role:

"I wanted to ask questions and found the answers were rather vague... It was as if everything to do with working practices were tacit and to a certain degree localised. Yet, I was from an institution that was rather hierarchical in structure" (Researcher (NA) responding to Blog Post 1 Comment from Richard NA).

Both Dave and Sandra (EAs) identified that their PgCert offered an opportunity to network further than their faculty and to meet others from similar backgrounds. This reflects the earlier point regarding mentoring. When formalised programmes do not meet the needs of the participants, the participants sought informal forms of support.

Networking

> "...yes it's always about building relationships, it is about 95% about building relationships" (Pritya, NA).

The value of networking, either formally, through PgCert or induction, or informally, was highly valued. Miguel valued speaking to people to ask questions and to create contacts in the department and beyond:

> "...[I] took the opportunity of being the new boy...otherwise there is a risk that you'll be left alone because people will assume you know what's going on and by the time they find out you don't, it can take twice the work to put it back again" (Miguel, EA).

4.2.2 Recognising the *Habitus*

Academic first Impressions

The novelty of first impressions provides an opportunity to view the socially constructed, established culture before it becomes embodied and internalised through the socialisation process. I anticipated that the NAs with less than three years of experience were likely to make the most remarks regarding their first impressions as they would still be relatively fresh. However, this was not the case:

> "... a very different working environment that I had ever experienced before" (Dave, EA).

Many EA participants commented on how different the working environment was in comparison to their professional background. To many it was a positive experience, summarised in the comment left by Participant D (NA) on Blog Post 1:

"I love the freedoms and sometimes have to check that I'm not dreaming!"

The following aspects (Table 7) were remarked upon:

Table 7: Academic First Impressions: Comparisons to previous role

Comment	Participant's reaction
Interactions with others	"[I]t is possible that you could spend a week where you turn up to work, you work in your office and then do your teaching and you never really interact with any of your colleagues or work with people, that was erm.. that was odd" (Dave, EA).
Flexibility of work	"I didn't need to put my 'out of office' on detailing which room I'm in each session of the day. I didn't need to tell people if I was off to use the facilities either! Very different from clinical practice there" (Richard (NA) responding to Blog Post 1).
	"HE is very much in the Twilight Zone. It seems to be the norm that colleagues don't routinely reply to emails, hold meetings to discuss rather than decide, a distinct lack of urgency. This is not necessarily 'bad', just very different, a different rhythm to working on the 'frontline' of a hospital ward or classroom" (Participant A (NA) Blog Post 1). (Participant A is an example of a NA who contributed to the Blog but not to the interviews)
Ethos of academic freedoms and autonomy	"They either use it to not go to things they ought to have been going to. You know, how

	can you not go to a meeting and not get into trouble?" (Mohammed, EA). "[T]he sense of freedom and flexibility, because the strength that comes with that is people pursuing passions and specialisms and really being in love with what they do which is what causes the greatest benefit to the students and makes a job you want to do so in the end" (Mohammed, EA).
Paperwork/ Administration	"I suppose the real shellshock is with the amount of admin that is needed for an academic, the amount of quality initiatives which a lot of the time I failed to see the purpose [sic] because really they are paperwork initiatives; they are not quality initiatives per se" (Jane, EA).
Rhythm of working pattern	"..working in probation, you could go in on a Monday and you might find out that someone has committed a serious further offence, so, the rhythms of your year are dictated by the people that you are supervising, so, it is very different in nature" (Jackson, EA).
	"Planning work commitments is done months in advance, difficult when you've been living for the next 10 minutes and what emergency will fly through the door for the last 12 years" (Richard (NA) responding to Blog Post One).
	"I started work in late spring. I wondered how the place functioned as there did not seem to be many people around" (Simeon (NA) responding to Blog Post One).

	"I love to manage my own time, work on tasks rather than within office hours" (Maya (NA) responding to Blog Post One).
Language	"HEIs seem worse than the NHS for jargon and technobabble" (Richard (NA) responding to Blog Post One).
Impact	"Teaching is fun and working with students is fun and for my part seeing my students produce games and actually playing those games and then them getting jobs in the gaming industry, it's extremely rewarding so those are the real positives sides" (Jane, EA)

Pace of work

"[I was] told to slow down" Sandra (EA).

"I still find it hard to believe such a large organisation can function when change happens so slowly and through so many people. As a teacher everything was about getting things done, usually yesterday, and there was no spare time for tangents or debate".
(Participant D Comment on Blog Post 1).

(Participant D is an example of a NA who contributed to the Blog but not to the interviews).

A large number of comments were made about the pace of work in an HEI, usually comparing it with their previous professional role. Overall, the comments reflected HEI having a slower pace of work than the participants' professional background:

"[U]niversities move very slowly and you know in business you move very quickly so actually my manager at - university said 'succeed and fail in the

shortest possible time'. It was kind of his mantra and he totally accepted the fact that I was going to make mistakes and that his point was if you have not made a mistake, you are not pushing the envelope hard enough and at universities it's really all about not making mistakes and having, having everything sort of being perfect" (Jane, EA).

The change in pace was often viewed as positive. However, the new pace required gaining a different set of competencies:

"Having the change [chance] to read research again was exciting, but getting focused and finding a starting point took time" (Simeon (NA) responding to Blog Post One).

Responding to this comment, I recognised having a similar feeling:

"Reflecting on the comment about getting into research and getting focused, I found that in my previous teaching role, there was so much to do that cognitively my mind was wired to short blasts rather than long periods of concentration. For example, where I used to work it was in an open planned office space with distractions from colleagues, distractions from students, distractions from email and distractions from me! Whereby [sic] here, I can find space to close off from the world and allow myself time to fully concentrate and engage in my activities. Not always but because, as you have also referred to, at times in the year there are not many colleagues or students around, there is space for this. Now I am just rewiring my mind to this pace" (Researcher (NA) commenting on Simeon's (NA) comment on Blog Post 1).

However, a recollection by Jane illustrated how her experiences of the socially constructed expectation of pace in her HEI evoked behaviour to systematically reinforce the status quo of the dominant culture:

"I was part of the - project which involved a pitch, I was trying to build my research profile as an academic which again is something you do as an academic, and we got encouraged to put in for, for this pitch and we had the

first meeting I looked at the package of work which had been assigned to us and in the meeting, I said 'Well okay that looks like, like three month's work' or thereabouts. One of the other people said 'You better be kidding, it's at least four years', (laughter) and I said 'Well it is only really three months' work, this isn't a huge amount of work' yes, yes but his point was it was going to take four years because we've got four years funding, right, and that was a real kind of wow moment for me because in business you'd never do this" (Jane, EA).

Furthermore, the perceived pace of work was reflected in a comment made by Dave regarding an experience he had when he first started work as an academic:

"...one of the members of staff when I first joined, she said 'why on earth would you come and work at the university? Why don't you want to have a job that is just 9-5 and you could go home and you don't need to worry about it' she couldn't understand, I sort of laughed, that is not how work is, and whether it was just her or whether it was general impression outside of academia that people roll up to work at 9 o'clock, work eight hours and then go home and then don't think about it until 9 o'clock the next morning."
(Dave, EA)

However, as outlined in Table 6, the pace of work was, for several of the participants, a rationale for moving into HE.

Self-Identifying with an Academic Identity

There were a number of comments related to the theme of academic identity. One particular point of interest was with regard to self-identifying with being an academic. The following *Listening Project* (Table 8 and 9) examples demonstrate the uncertainty in PAs calling themselves academics and explores the idea of a 'middle ground' between the terms 'professional' and 'academic'.

Table 8: Researcher and Tara discussing self-identifying with being an academic

Interviewer: What do you see an academic being?

Tara: I knew you would ask me that question! I really don't know what I would perceive as being academic because if anything, it may be [in] a meeting I might refer to myself as a nurse academic, it is almost as if that is my identity, or a nurse lecturer, because if you start saying I work in a university and it's like 'Okay'. I wouldn't say I am an academic I would say I'm a lecturer in learning disability.

Interviewer: That's really interesting.

Tara: I wouldn't refer to myself as an academic.

Interviewer: No, I don't either. I find the term uncomfortable.

Tara: And it's really interesting because about a month or six weeks ago, before that there was an email that went around about a professional staff conference, and I thought okay great, now you see because I have a professional qualification, I thought it was professionals.

Interviewer: I know where this is going!

Tara: Yes, so I looked at the content of the day and the sessions about conflict management… And I thought 'Oh great!' so I signed up...I was sat on the table and that all, they are all from the same, like HR, they all knew each other, so I couldn't quite grasp the nature of the day if you like because I wasn't the intended audience to say, say it that way...

Interviewer: It's interesting because what you've identified in this is where professional services, for example, the administration and the in-house services every university has. But actually, you are defining yourself as a professional but actually the institution doesn't perceive you as being that, they define you as an academic and it is this bit in the middle and I'm not sure...

Tara: Yes, it's this bit in the middle

Interviewer: I'm not sure what it looks like and how we cross this boundary. Whether we want to cross the boundary. Whether or not we are happy but then... I think it very interesting, insofar as if we were sat here and were talking about our experiences into academia. If we started here when we were 18 and we did an undergrad and postgrad, would we be identifying this mid-ground?

Tara: Yes, yes absolutely!

Interviewer: This mid-ground

Tara: Yeah, yeah, yeah it is my career journey, it started at the tender age of 18 as a student nurse and did that and it's only very much later, much, much later that I've come to education as one can call it! It is not [whispers] 'academia!' I don't know it just seems quite grandiose and I don't see myself in that at all.

Interviewer: Yes, [laughs] I know you mean!

Table 9: Researcher and Mohammed talking about self-identifying as an academic

Mohammed: Well that's really interesting because some people do call themselves academics. I don't call myself an academic and it's quite an issue actually for myself on some level or another because I feel I don't think, think of myself like that and I wonder when I've done my thesis, will I? What is an academic anyway? So, it is quite an issue that one really you know trying to think of, am I an academic because, because one of my colleagues, he always calls himself an academic and chooses to do that deliberately and I, I see it as a very interesting thing, yeah.

Interviewer: Yes, that's an interesting thing. I don't call myself an academic.

Mohammed: No but why shouldn't you really because you are, so why don't you yet? I don't know if that's like imposter syndrome or something or something like that I'm not Stephen Hawkings [sic] so therefore I'm not an academic.

Interviewer: Yes, I suppose for me it is how it is how you identify or define yourself. For me I would define myself as a teacher.

Mohammed: Yes

Interviewer: and when you are saying about the EdD and you were saying you might be different after you finish again is my question to myself reflectively will I feel any different?

Mohammed: Yes, yes. And my experience in life is it won't. (Both laugh) So then I think to myself, maybe I should make myself. Maybe I should identify you know how, how as people say 'I identify as whatever'... So I am identifying as this because, because actually in terms of you know well you know...I haven't really thought about but if you did a sort of a statement of intent but is also a message out there isn't it....and everybody else would say 'oh yes that's right you are' so why aren't you? And perhaps you should do that as a point of principle really because that's valuing what you're doing and valuing the change...I've got a lot of experience and wisdom and knowledge, I'm using, that's the way I see...There is a thing of saying that, 'Yes I'm an academic!' and, and then not giggle every time I say it!

(Both laugh)

Mohammed: It's kind of like I'm saying no not really, not really! (Both laughing). I think it's a very important question that one, I think.

Concerns as to whether participants felt like academics, suggest that the *habitus* of an academic is not internalised and embodied as part of a PA. One intense example came from Jackson (EA), who was the first in his family to go to university, and subsequently, first in family (and social group) to become an academic:

"Well my mum and dad didn't go to university so, I did go to university but when I went to university, when I first went, I had that feeling of 'oh, I don't really belong here, I shouldn't really be here, how did I get in?' So, it was like they must have read my application wrong, you know, I did have the grades to get there I'd worked and got lots of experience you know and yet it was a, and you know 15 years since I first started my degree but walking into university I still had that sense of 'Oh, what am I doing in the university?' I have friends in the north-east and they all do like different jobs none of them work in the university in any capacity and they were like 'What you're [a] lecturer? What are you doing working there!' so that kind of didn't help! So, I really had that feeling that I shouldn't really be here" (Jackson, EA).

However, all these examples demonstrated that the PAs held the title, the role, the responsibilities as well as the institutionalised *capital*, in the form of undergraduate and Master's degrees as well as experience to bear upon their new role. However, the lack of embodied *cultural capital* reflected PAs' *reconnaissance* in that, somehow on the journey from profession to an academic role, PAs had recognised that they were not a 'traditional academic':

"I think the thing universities are in some ways quite self-serving in terms of producing a certain type of academic, they sort of like, have the students, the best students get groomed towards academia and encouraged to do Masters and PhD and then take temporary teaching jobs. So, a lot of them, my colleagues - not so much at this university but other universities - have really followed that track which I see means they have no practical experience..." (Jane, EA).

Jane's comment could reflect the perception that professional background and experience is not as valued as *symbolic capital* in HE as, for example, a PhD. However, professional *cultural capital* is seen as having a temporal value:

"I think some universities realise that it is quite useful to have practical experience, to, to have published games for example. Making games is not like physics, there's new developments but the basic physics that we use

every day has not changed for hundreds of years and it's the same really for chemistry (laughter) but the computer games change a lot" (Jane, EA).

Furthermore, by taking Jane's comments regarding students being prepared for an academic post, then academics from the PhD route are unlikely to have a basis to compare experiences between different working sectors or to have constructed another professional identify apart from that of an academic. In contrast, during their formative years, the goal of the participants of this study was likely to be aiming for success in their chosen professional, rather than academic, career. At this time, the *cultural capital* surrounding embodiment, objectification and institutionalisation would be centred around the *symbolic capital* of their professional career, rather than that of an academic. So, PAs have *connaissance* in that they recognise their *symbolic capital* is only valued in their previous *field* and that it will need to be aligned to the academic *doxa* in their new *field*. They need to convert their *capital*.

4.2.3 *Symbolic Capital*

Change in knowledge capital

While academic posts were offered based on industrial experience, some participants perceived that once they began in an HEI their experience was not valued any longer. Sandra (EA) likened this change in *capital* to the loss of prestige she felt when she first started as a PA. She mentioned that the usual markers of success (*economic capital*, such as car and clothes) that she was accustomed to in her professional accountancy role were not necessarily the same markers of success in the academy.

A number of established academics wanted to highlight this:

> "Get over being an accountant, learn to be an academic...It is okay not to feel you do not know anything as industry knowledge transfers - just not right away" (Sandra, EA).

"...if you want to be as good at it as you were in the industry you were previously then you have to work and you have to set yourself some challenges in the time..." (Miguel, EA).

"...you lose your industry credentials quickly" (Jane, EA).

"I suppose I had felt that I had gone from being really highly competent, experienced, knowledgeable common senior member of the profession into a team of people who were from the same profession but perhaps not seeing me for the knowledge and expertise that I had" (Amanda, EA).

Amanda's comment could reflect how her academic colleagues had embodied HEI *cultural capital.*

Jane (EA) refers to how academics in HEIs value the social reproduction of academic processes that regulates social behaviour. Whether this is effective practice or not is questioned.

"You know, you realise academics value different things. If, for example, if you're in business, I think this is the real crux of it, in business you would value, you know a real insight without having evidence, without having evidence without, you know having to base it on some previous insights and the reality is in business you don't have time to do this type of research that you have in academia. On the other hand in academia unless you got five or six references that support your point of view then [it] is not deemed as being weightier as a genuine insight into something. I suppose that's a big disconnect coming from the outside, because reality is there's enough research out there, I could find whatever I want to support my point of view (laughing), but sorry that's the reality" (Jane, EA).

Research as Knowledge Capital

One specific area that many participants mentioned was the emphasis in HE on research capital. However, for PA, this was usually with regard to the absence of a research portfolio:

> "I was quite intimidated by the research and everybody kept asking me what was my area? I was like I do not really know" (Jackson, EA).

> "I hadn't done proper research, so I had students who are doing that and I had to really read about all the methods and everything about, just keep a few steps ahead of them, to support them properly" (Simeon, NA).

Keith (EA) also spoke about feeling not well prepared to come into the higher education sector. He mentioned that now he is doing a PhD, it is helping him understand the structures of academic research.

I reflect on a comment from the first blog post on the changes to value of certain tasks within an academic role:

> "[T]he expectations have changed now. There is a whole academic community that I am expected to contribute, to have academic interests, to attend symposiums and colloquiums, to present my work to contribute to knowledge. In FE I was a consumer of knowledge, whilst in HE I am expected to be a contributor. In FE my focus was on the students and the impact effective teaching had on their learning. Whilst, in HE it is not only the student that is the focus, it is me as well. Me as the academic, me as the producer of knowledge. Me. This felt uncomfortable, this 'Me work'. So now 'Me work' has taken over the space of marking. It feels very outward looking like Cinderella is finally allowed to go to the ball" Researcher responding to Participant E (NA) on Blog post 1.

This 'Me work', in the form of contributing to knowledge, suggests research as objectified *cultural capital.* Contributing to knowledge, such as publishing journal

articles and presenting conference papers, represents the *symbolic capital* valued within academia.

Employment Capital

Through all my conversations with the participants, one of the key points we all considered was whether we would return to our original profession. Most participants mentioned that the more time they had spent out of industry, the more unlikely they were to be able to return: "you lose your industry credentials quickly" (Jane, EA). Some, particularly those from a clinical position in the National Health Service, still undertook practice hours and continuing professional development to keep registered and, effectively, have the *symbolic capital* to work in two fields.

Some recalled the business pressures from industry and did not want to return to them considering the role of an academic as a hybrid between two sectors:

> "[Y]ou're doing something that you really like but you don't necessarily want the day-in-day-out commercial pressures" (Jane, EA).

> "I would say that the business world is more like a jungle, hostile environment where you have to learn how to survive when, in contrast, the academic world is sort of a combination between infirmary, nursery and the monastery to provide the back up of people and knowledge. And I like it"
> (Maya (NA) comment responding to Blog Post One).

Changing HE Field

However, these comments drew together some inconsistency between the *field* I had entered and the wider changes to the HE climate. In my response to Participant D (NA) on Blog Post One, her comment gave me an opportunity to reflect on what I had always considered one of FE's key strengths:

> "[R]esourcefulness, doing a lot with a little. But then doing a lot meant a lot from staff" (Researchers' response to Participant D, Blog Post One).

The resource of 'me' was going on the work of supporting students in FE. For the first time, this work, I felt, was not part of the expected primary social practices where I was employed. Yet, this felt inconsistent with the HE climate that I was now working within. I felt there was a disjuncture between the changing political HE landscape, expectations of students and current HE practices. This was also reflected in comments made by the participants:

> "HE is badly managed and does not understand students...we all need to be student-centred" (Sandra, EA).

However, it must be recognised that such a categorical statement as this about such a diverse and extensive sector as HE, as highlighted in Chapter Two, is itself a likely indication of neophyte status.

I had compared the change in HE climate in Blog Post Two to my own experiences when I was an undergraduate. It felt like the *doxa* of the *field* had changed in HE towards a market economy. However, being a new academic to the HE *field*, it felt that the ideology of a market economy had not replaced established *symbolic capital* in HE. Participant E, Simeon, (NA), comments on his impression of HE and students' expectations on Blog Post 2:

> "Fellow lecturers are accustomed to talking about students as consumers. I often hear about complaints, where students have challenging marking or when things do not work out students advance on their fee-paying rights. I heard a student say that each lecture cost them £150. In preparing my lectures I was mindful of this huge figure. Was I delivering effective learning opportunities worth this value? ... There is a constant drive to ensure that the course meets expectations and is innovative. Not sure everyone has everyone has heard this message...".

Furthermore, student expectations were mentioned particularly in light of the increase in student fees and metrics for measuring student satisfaction, such as the National Student Survey (NSS):

"…our job is frequently to please students and what students want and what we think students need are completely at odds. So, students, our students, speak to us really rudely and we can't really or shouldn't be rude back. I think that is a common thing academics feel, having working in a professional, more professional environment where yes, customers can be rude but they are mature grown-ups most of the time and who are at least, we want the same outcomes usually, whatever it is that we are producing for them to work for them to be happy. Going from that to an environment where sometimes you feel you are dealing with children who are throwing tantrums" (Dave, EA).

It felt that there was a disjuncture between the *symbolic capital* perceived by the *field* and the changing HE socio-political climate that had triggered a challenge to the domination and power structure of the conventional academic *Doxa*. In between are academics whose *habitus* had been perceived by PAs in this study (who have had experiences of faster, adaptable *fields*) as being slow paced:

"[I]f you don't have customer satisfaction in your business it hurts your bottom line very quickly, really quickly" (Jane, EA).

4.2.4 Summary of Findings of Research Question One

The participants' experiences of transition raised the exceptional nature of moving from a professional background into an academic career in HE. They stated their experiences of the change in identity, the expectations associated with the new role, the perceived devaluation of the very skills and knowledge that secured employment as well as the distinctive nature of working in HE. Essentially, they experience a move of *field, habitus* and *symbolic capital.* This unfamiliarity, however, is generally met with a fondness for being in an academic role in HE. Support to recognise the unique challenges associated with transitioning from a professional career to an academic role can help and sustain the transition.

4.3 Research Question 2

What recommendations can be made for induction support and guidance for newly-appointed practitioner academics in Higher Education in the UK?

Approaches to recognise the unique challenges associated with transitioning from a professional career to an academic role can help the transition, ensuring PAs are supported. The following suggestions were made by the PAs in the data set.

4.3.1 Suggestions

Suggestion: Engage in Conversations and Networks

All participants recommended colleagues and/or mentors/buddies as a significant support mechanism. On a pragmatic level, they were helpful in navigating and orientating PAs around an unfamiliar organisation as well as the unaccustomed roles and responsibilities.

As seen in Research Question One, participants specifically valued support networks and recommended these to support newly-appointed PAs:

> "[H]unt out other people in my university who are passionate about teaching" (Dave, EA).

> "Talk to others" (Maya, NA).

> "You need a network" (Sandra, EA).

Suggestion: Time to Grow

Many of the participants referred to ensuring that there was sufficient time given to processing the scale of transition:

> "[T]he space to think about who you are as an academic what does it mean to you" Amanda (EA).

"[A]ccept that period of time when it just will feel very, very strange like you are on a different planet and just to embrace that as being what it is and that changing identity and have the time to do it" Richard (EA).

Suggestion: Employ Intrapersonal Communication Strategies

To gain an understanding and to process the adjustment to an academic role, some participants mentioned the use of reflective practice and internalised self-dialogue. For example, Sandra (EA) used the metaphor of *'hooks'* that she could identify with and that she valued within her new role*:*

"[Y]ou know, that inspired me you know, that flame if you like."

She mentioned reflective practice as a means of identifying why she had moved into an academic role and the difference between her expert nursing role and the new academic one as well as shared philosophical values between the HE and herself. She found the transition to HE was eased by journal writing and identifying these *'hooks'.* She felt that without this she would have "really struggled to remain in that place of work" (Sandra, EA).

Suggestions Based on Improving Communication of *Symbolic Capital*

There were three aspects that represent *symbolic capital* related to knowledge that are suggested to boost PAs' transition into HE.

Suggestion One: Making the Tacit Knowledge Explicit

One strategy to help transition was to represent some of the *taken for granted* knowledge that surrounds working in HE:

"Need a help sheet: tacit knowledge and how things work around here" (Sandra, NA).

"Simple obvious one, what does it mean to work in a higher education institute, 'this is this', this 'these are the words that we use', 'these are the systems that we have here', 'this is why we do', 'these are the strengths and

weaknesses of this process' 'this is how the year pans out you know... this is how this is what you should be doing when this is..' 'how you can make the most all of the things that you've got', you know" (Mohammed, EA).

"[H]ere's all the things that you have to do' and what is best practice doing those things and what is the way that we do it here given our role and function in society as this university" (Mohammed, EA).

Pritya (NA) suggested having a range of inductions that would highlight some tacit knowledge, such as:

"[An] induction to do with your specialism, what will I encounter over the year?"

This would be beneficial to Tara, who gave an example:

"He [mentor] assigned me to be a module leader. I was thinking 'Okay what does that mean?" Tara (EA).

This would assist in what Miguel expresses as to the concerns surrounding addressing the knowledge gaps:

"[S]o the assumptions people already know what they are doing are the dangerous ones and we should be supported in some of the most basic elements because if you get that grounding solid then I think people can grow quite quickly from that" Miguel (EA).

Similarly, Keith (EA) echoed these concerns:

"I don't think how you can take somebody off the street, albeit with business experience, and put them into a higher education institution and tell them just go ahead and do it. I think people have... I don't think they are prepared to do it" (Keith, EA).

The examples given by the participants for Research Question One regarding 'Academic First Impressions' (see section 4.2.2) such as: working patterns, academic freedoms, language and pace of work can help highlight the areas of tacit knowledge in HE.

Suggestion Two: Convert Subject Knowledge

Specifically, for PAs, a discussion at the start of employment would be helpful to recognise the different skill set required to transform professional subject knowledge into knowledge for students to learn. Miguel (EA) suggests that this is acknowledged at induction:

> "[W]ould be helpful in transitioning from sitting around with all your colleagues in a - company for example to actually standing up and trying to tell them how it works, that's quite a big thing so the assumptions people already know what they are doing" Miguel (EA).

Suggestion Three: Procedural Knowledge

Some participants mentioned that the skills required in their new role were unfamiliar and support for these at the early stages was beneficial. Pritya (NA) spoke about how her training for academic advising came after she had started to meet with students. She felt that she had professional skills she could draw on but lacked an understanding of the university systems to ensure due diligence to the student's needs. Miguel (EA), following on from his comment regarding assuming knowledge in the section above, went on to mention that skills such as using the technology in the lecture theatres or recording sessions were necessary in order to meet students' expectations.

The data also suggested that a restructure to the induction and orientation programmes with input surrounding the tacit knowledge within HE could further support the transition.

Suggestion to Enhance HE from Professional Knowledge

> "We [the academic community] need to say we value you, your experiences
> and what you bring. You might not feel this" (Sandra, EA).

Outlined in 'Changes to the HE Field' in Research Question One (see section 4.2.3), the participants highlighted a perceived disjuncture between HE and the tension with the changing socio-political field in which HE is situated. The PAs within this study had background in either a market economy (such as accountancy, games designing, marketing, and software engineering) or in a public service (such as nursing, teaching, probation, and social work). Both sectors involve a range of skills such as customer service, innovation and development, communication, time-management, teamwork and problem-solving that could inform practices to aid alignment to the changing nature of HE. That is not to say that these skills are not represented in HE, but it is true to say that they are not informed by experiences with different sectors and, I have argued, sector culture is permeating HE culture. So, in effect, where PAs can assimilate and enculturate HE practices, current practitioners in HE could benefit further from how to assimilate and enculturate into the changing field of HE from PAs.

4.3.2 Summary of Findings of Research Question Two

Support to recognise the unique challenges associated with transitioning from a professional career to an academic role can help and sustain the transition. The following participant suggestions were made for support and guidance for newly-appointed practitioner academics into the *field* and *habitus* of Higher Education in the UK. These were: to engage in conversations and networks with other PAs as well as established colleagues, and to be given space and time to grow into the role, as well as intrapersonal communication strategies to support the transition. Suggestions based on improving communication of *symbolic capital* recognised and valued within HE include: making tacit knowledge explicit, recognition of the need to transform professional subject knowledge into subject knowledge, and clarity on procedural knowledge of the day to day activities of an academic. Finally, it was highlighted that

HE could be enhanced through the professional knowledge of PAs who have a familiarity with the *doxa* of a market economy.

Chapter Summary

Based on conversations with five neophyte and nine established academics employed full time in HEIs in the UK, this chapter presented the findings and analysis of their experiences of changing from a professional *field* to an academic one and their recommendations for future support and guidance.

The next chapter (Chapter Five: Discussion) will review, in greater detail, the two research questions in relation to the wider field examined in Chapter Two (Literature Review) and will consider the tenability of the emerging participant suggestions as to how the PA transition might be supported and scaffolded.

Chapter Five Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The thesis aims to inquire into how practitioner academics (PAs) experience the transition from their professional practice to a full-time academic role in Higher Education (HE) in the United Kingdom (UK), using the data sets from blog posts and comments, interviews and *Listening Project*-inspired conversations. Having analysed the data sets through a framework inspired by Bourdieu's *'thinking tools'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989:50), particularly *field, habitus* and *symbolic capital*, this chapter will discuss the participants' emerging suggestions for further support and guidance for newly appointed PAs in HE in the UK.

This chapter will discuss the research questions, connect to relevant literature and demonstrate how the findings sit with existing research and debate. While the research questions will be considered separately, it is acknowledged that the findings have inextricable links between them. I will conclude the chapter with a reflection on the specific methodological choices applied in this thesis and consider as to how they have addressed the research questions.

5.2 Research Question One

> **How do practitioner academics experience the change from their professional practice to the role of full-time academic in Higher Education in the UK?**

Analysis using the '*thinking tools'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989:50) of *field, habitus and symbolic capital* as a framework of inquiry revealed PAs have a unique experience when they make the transition into an HE context which is unlike that of career academics. There is good evidence from the data that PAs transition into a new *field* and *habitus* and with this there is also a requirement to accrue a new source of *symbolic capital*. As the data sets identify, this may be a revelation to PAs as the *symbolic capital* initially recognised in securing employment as an academic, their professional knowledge, apparently lacked comparable recognition on commencing work in the HE *field.*

The participants in this data set experienced an entire career transition, which seemed to reflect what Simedinger et al. (2000), Diekelmann (2004), and Blenkinsopp and Stalker (2004) viewed as challenging. This is unremarkable in itself recognising the enormity of the move. What is remarkable is that PAs seem unaware of the shape and size of the change. This seems to expose a dissonance between expectations of PAs on arriving and settling into their academic role and the assumptions made by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of PAs' understanding of the academic *habitus* and recognition of *symbolic capital.* The following themes emerged from the data sets from participants in a diversity of professional backgrounds and HEIs that exposes this gap between assumptions and expectations.

5.2.1 Assumption about the *Field* and *Habitus*

Assumptions of HE Background Knowledge and Experience

The backgrounds of the PAs in this study were significantly diverse and did not follow a traditional - career academic - route into HE as earlier outlined by Collini, (2012). While most had experiences of being a student in HE, it is notable that for the majority this may have preceded significant governmental restructure to HE, such as the implementation of the Further and Higher Education Act (1992). However, it could be reasoned that even this partial experience of HE gained by PAs as students may bear little relation to the reality as this is largely outdated. Furthermore, the assumption that PAs will have experience of HE as students cannot be presupposed. This data set revealed an example of a PA having no experience of being a student in a university (e.g. Richard, NA). While this example could be an exception, it does highlight the disparate lived experiences of PAs that the data set reflects. Consequently, when PAs enter into their academic role in HE, they find there are assumptions made about their prior knowledge and experiences of the HE *field.*

Despite this non-standard route into an academic role, the data showed PAs' experiences of initial professional development further highlighted HEIs' assumptions

of PAs' understanding of the academic *habitus.* This data set revealed experiences of homogenised support for induction, mentoring and teaching skills. Underpinning these support mechanisms was this implicit norm that PAs had existing knowledge and experience of the sector. This assertion is further reinforced by how participants tended to view induction support when worked effectively as luck rather than as a function and expectation of the initial professional development processes. While PAs, on their journey from profession to their new role as academics, had recognised that they were not a 'traditional academic', there seemed to be a lack of recognition of this within the induction support mechanisms offered by HEIs. It is not denied that HEIs have legitimate demands to make on PAs with regard to the expectations of their academic role. As the data considered in the previous chapter indicated, the difficulty with transitioning into a *field* where significant assumptions are routinely made about the background knowledge and skills of new PAs, was that there was no explicit discussion surrounding the differences between the expectations of an academic role in HE in comparison to previous professional role in industry. What emerged for the data set was that these support mechanisms did not recognise their background and their need for academic preparation that career academics had usually already gained from post-graduate study.

It could be considered that what PAs were experiencing was the unofficial notion of 'boundary protection' (Posner, 2009) whereby academics were faced with having to learn the *habitus* of the *field* on their own initiative. Rather than a boundary protection, what could have been occurring was boundary expectation on arrival into an academic role with the assumption of prior knowledge of understanding of the *habitus* of the *field*. Similar to the findings of Gilpin, 2003, Trowler and Knight, 2000, Boyd, 2010, Smith, 2011, and Smith and Boyd, 2012, PAs in this data set showed initiative in using induction provision to informally network both as a support structure and also to deduce elements of the tacit knowledge about the role, discipline, institution, and sector that they were now working within.

While creating networks with similar entry points to HE was a useful strategy to navigate the transition, concern is raised here that PAs were engaging with each other and not with established social groups of academics. The value of such informal networking did not represent workplace learning as participation in

legitimate peripheral practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991), shaped by the influence of socially constructed shared norms and values within the territory of the discipline (Becher, 1989) and moulded by the individual, institution and the broader HE community (Kuh and Whitt, 1988, Henkel, 2005, Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). Consequently, PAs were essentially entering into a so-called 'echo chamber' in which their confusion could be amplified.

What would appear to be absent from PAs' socialisation, based upon this research sample, is supportive engagement and interaction with the broader community of HE and its discipline. Academic role construction develops through engagement, interaction, and participation within these social groups (McAlpine et al., 2010). What the data set revealed accorded with Hunter et al. (2007) who argues that what is valued by PAs is a form of socialisation to negotiate the meaning between the individual and this existing academic community, signifying the dynamic nature of role formation (Rappoport et al., 1999:99). This also represents what Beijaard et al. (2004) consider as a process of structuring, restructuring and reformulating. Ideally such engagement would stretch beyond the PA's own institution. This suggests that HE is not spending enough effort on internal tacit knowledge transfer (Chugh, 2013) and that this is impeding PAs' ability to gain some sense of clarity about the academic role. What can be understood from this literature and the data set is the fluid nature of academic role construction in collaboration with the existing community and the limited value of informal support networks.

It seems that this unique experience of change from professional practice to full-time academic role is often overlooked by HEIs in their induction support. Although PAs' experiences of initial professional development was regarded as somewhat useful and did not reflect 'the cult of amateurism' (Blaxter et al.,1998: 282), what seems indicated by the sample is that sources of support focus on teaching and the mechanisms of delivering teaching to the neglect of the processes and procedures involved in an academic role and the context of HE (Harland, 2012). This would be a concern for PAs who may not be familiar with an academic culture. If initial professional development does not focus on the academic role and HE context, then this highlights that support is based upon a traditional university system, the support needs of career academics, and the diversity of backgrounds of academics not

considered in induction support (Bandow et al., 2007). This is alarming when a 2018/19 data report from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (2020) stated that the majority of academic staff inflow (UK and overseas) had come from a professional background.

5.2.2 *Habitus* Freedom

The accepted normalised practice, assumptions and behaviours that represent the academic *habitus* may be embodied and unobserved by career academics but are likely to be novel to PAs. The first impressions of a PA to these facets of the HE culture can reveal what is valued in the academic field. Rather, the lack of reference to the concepts, could indicate assumptions made of a PA's knowledge and understanding of the academic *habitus.*

The data set showed that there was a strong theme of freedom. Notably, this was not recognised as the concepts of freedom and autonomy usually associated with the academic role as outlined in Part two of the Literature Review. One reason for this could indicate an assumption made that PAs already know about these. For PAs, freedoms were related to the day-to-day activities permitted to an academic that were distinctive in comparison to their former careers. These were positively received. Where Wilson et al. (2014) cited workload stress and pace of work as negative examples of the transition into an academic career, as we have seen, a number of research participants remarked on a perceived reduction in workload stress and slower pace of work for the participants when compared to their previous roles. This may be that the role offered more freedom than their previous role. PAs have characterised the rhythm and pace of academic work as planned rather than responsive-reactive work, slow rather than fast-paced, challenging, contributing rather than just consuming knowledge, individualistic rather than collegiate, with the freedom to decide on the location of their work.

While it is acknowledged that first impressions are not always reliable, these remarks are reinforced by all the participants (ranging from nine months to over three years in post) expressing that they would not return to their former profession. This contrasted with Fairbrother and Mathers' (2004) findings where the majority of their

data set returned to practice, as well as Gourlay's (2011a) case study of 'Sophie'. However, these differing results could reflect the differences between Posner's (2009) three different pathways of engagement between profession and academic role. The thesis data participants were all employed in HE with full-time permanent academic roles, representing Posner's (2009) pathway three, while Fairbrother and Mathers' (2004) and Gourlay's (2011a) participants represented dual professionals situated between two social practices on either Posner's (2009) pathway one or two. These PAs were "serving two masters'' (Fairbrother and Mathers, 2004: 539) and "in both camps" (Shreeve, 2011:79). While Wilson et al. (2014) advocated a staged migration from industry to academia to acclimatise to the transition change, many PAs do jump straight into a full-time academic career, as this data set evidences. The drivers for pursuing an academic career were due to changes in their professional sector, professional development or requirement for a change in work pace. These motivating factors, coupled with having the relative security of a permanent full-time academic role, seem to have had a significant impact on these data sets' commitment to remain in HE. Furthermore, while Wilson et al. (2014) argued that moving to an academic career from a professional background was a high-risk venture, the motivating factors and perceived financial security act as incentives for being fully committed to the transition. The complete manoeuvre into a new *field* may leave limited opportunity for vacillation in comparison to that of a dual-professional as observed in Fairbrother and Mathers' (2004) and Gourlay's (2011a) studies. It seems that a full-time academic role entails commitment to the post.

Changing *Field* Expectations

As discussed in Part Two of the Literature Chapter, where Sharpin (2012) reflected that academics were usually associated with working in a so called 'ivory tower', this phrase did not reflect the current socio-political context of HE. The academic role has been affected by the systematic move to a mass system from an elite model (Trow, 1973). Thus, the UK economy is the significant influencer of the prevailing socio-political climate within HE. This has shifted the dominant discourse of government interventions towards a free-market ideology (Delucci and Korgen, 2002) with an economic agenda (Collini, 2012) resulting in the marketisation of HE (Fox, 2002). The consequence is the dominance of neo-liberal ideology

operationalised through a new public managerialism (Archer, 2008). The impact has been to transform the academic role to one in which academics are measured by teaching performance, and retention and employment outcomes of students, with a need to gain recognition for high-impact research (University and College Union, 2009). Such government interventions outlined, such as the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), have increasingly positioned the student as a customer with countervailing pressure to provide a consistent student experience. Consequently, there has been a change in the self-understanding of academics (Billot, 2010) and, significantly, suggests the *habitus* in HEIs as currently being situated between two opposing forces: academic freedom and autonomy and the wider socio-political field. However, this study highlighted the nature and aims of HE education which seem to reflect the tension between the current socio-political context and the role of HE in society. Conceivably, this could explain why PAs in this data set remarked on having no direct guidance on the academic role and *habitus* in HE, as the academic role is undergoing a transition.

A significant tension in HE seems to be that the majority of institutions, particularly since the Higher Education Act 2004 (legislation.gov.uk, 2020b), have been transformed into quasi-autonomous organisations, regulated by market conditions. The trends seem directed towards combining academic and vocational pathways and more vocational progression into HE (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2016) as success data is measured by high-level employment outcomes. The participants for this research were mostly drawn from post-1992 universities which hints that post-1992 universities may have never left their polytechnic traditions. Yet, this seems to contradict why PAs recognised the tension between their experiences of the current academic *habitus* with the broader neo-liberal ideology. The polytechnic association with professional and vocational provision (Whitburn et al., 1980; Robinson, 1968) seems to accord with the dominant rhetoric of this agenda for HE. Now that HE in the UK is a mixture of polytechnic and older university traditions, with a neo-liberal ideology operationalised through a new public managerialism (Archer, 2008), it is now focused on measuring employability impact. This raises the question as to whether post-1992 universities although they have taken on the role and responsibilities of a university, to avoid losing market share, have heavily competed for students for both academic and vocational programmes. This seems to

suggest that HE providers are increasingly conflicted as to where they situate themselves within the HE 'market'. This may well challenge the dominance of vocationally relevant programmes being offered in the post-1992 sector as the pre-1992 sector and Russell Group procure market share. This is in contrast to how professional education would have sometimes been seen in the past - as poor relations to academic programmes.

However, this recognises that the need for professional, practical, work-based knowledge and skills in HE will intensify across the sector. As seen, HE is recognised as fundamental in the credentialing process for entry into certain professions (Collini, 2012; GuildHE, 2019). This ideological direction is fuelled by the rise in the number of professions (Macdonald, 1999), particularly in industrial, capitalist nations (Yee, 2001), and an increase in the number of people anticipated to hold HE qualifications between 2014-2024 (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2016). Finally, the introduction of a new regulator for the sector – the Office for Students (OfS) – in the Higher Education and Research Act (Great Britain, 2017) has set one of the critical metrics for success as being improved employability (Universities UK, 2016).

However, an emergent theme in the data set was the suggestion of a disconnection between the *doxa* of the current academic *habitus* and the prevailing socio-political climate. This was particularly evident with regard to the recognition of *symbolic capital*. The market conditions seemed to place value on professional experience, knowledge, skills and expertise yet this was not invariably experienced by PAs in HE. An example of such was where a participant experiences *connaissance* that their professional knowledge was not recognised as a form of s*ymbolic capital* in HE as much as having a PhD.

Furthermore, this suggests a paradox. Arguably it is a PA's professional knowledge which has enabled them to be employed in HE, yet it seems that, once in the field, the value of this knowledge rapidly decreases as evidenced by the comments from PAs regarding rapid loss of industry credentials (section 4.2.5). Compounding this loss of professional knowledge is the fact that, as full-time academics, PAs are not holding a substantive position that reinforces and updates the *symbolic capital* within

their previous *field*. However, the data set seems to recognise that there is a period of time that necessitates the adaptation of their professional knowledge to gain recognition in an academic role.

What this data set brings to light is an apparent disconnect between experiences of PAs in the *field* of HE and the *symbolic capital* of knowledge in HEIs. Nevertheless, from this data set it has been evident that the PAs seem to recognise that the *symbolic capital* that is currently valued in HE, even in post-1992 HEIs, is not professional knowledge. While some, such as Wilson et al. (2014), assert that professional practice is equal to that of academic knowledge, as it is a vital part of the curriculum for students entering the world of work, the value - the *capital* - of such knowledge seems to be lost in HE.

Yet, as the literature outlined, a dualism between professions and academia is a misconception. HE and industry have a porous boundary and have always been interdependent. PAs are significantly well placed with a background in an interstitial position between public and private spheres to be a resource to harmonise discourses and practices. So, what needs to be questioned is whether the *symbolic capital* that is currently valued in HE is reflecting the current HE *field* and thus, rather than PAs changing their *symbolic capital,* it should be the *habitus* of HE to adapt to the prevailing conditions recognising the knowledge that PAs bring into HE as authentic *symbolic capital*.

In conclusion, the data sets have highlighted themes from the experiences of PAs: assumptions made regarding PAs' HE knowledge and experience, lack of specific support for *field* transition leading to PAs seeking out informal routes of support, clarity about the academic role, freedom, slower pace of work, tension between experienced *doxa,* prevailing social-political climate in HE and practical knowledge. It seems that the HE must face, or is already undergoing, a similar acculturation process to that which a professional undergoes when transitioning into an academic *field.* Furthermore, the increase in the value of professions and employability has caused vocationally relevant qualifications to rise in significance in HEI's portfolios of programmes. Thus successful integration of PAs into HE is vital.

However, what the findings of this research seem to indicate is that current support mechanisms for early career academics do not recognise and, moreover, are not effective for supporting, the unique transition from professional background to the demands of an academic role. Furthermore, the experiences of PAs as they change *field* from their professional practice to a full-time academic has highlighted the disconnection between the *doxa* of the current academic *habitus* with the prevailing socio-political climate. The study seems to support the argument for a change in the support and guidance for PAs. Research Question two will now outline how PAs can be further supported.

5.3 Research Question Two

What recommendations can be made for induction support and guidance for newly-appointed practitioner academics in Higher Education in the UK?

As shown in the previous section of this chapter, practitioners entering an academic career uniquely experience a reorientation of *field, habitus* and *symbolic capital*. The evidence gathered in this thesis suggests that the induction programmes and support processes that PAs have experienced would do well to consider the unique nature of PAs to ensure an effective transition as well as to reflect the current socio-political climate in which HE is situated.

5.3.1 Support for Practitioner Academics

Since the Dearing Report (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997) emphasised the need for induction support for academics, particularly formal induction, processes have tended not to recognise the diversity of backgrounds on entry to an academic role. Even in 2020 this data set concurs with the earlier work of both Scott (1995) and Bandow et al. (2007) on career transitions from industry to academia, both of which highlighted that the diversity of backgrounds of academics is rarely given consideration in induction support. Yet, as we have seen, 2018/19 data demonstrated the majority of academic staff inflow (UK and overseas) had come from a professional background (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2020).

What seems remarkable is that, based upon the evidence of the research sample at least, homogenous induction processes seem to continue and the needs of PAs' have still not been effectively addressed.

Furthermore, as discussion in Research Question One highlighted, there has been a discernible change in the purpose and function of HE through a free-market, economic agenda (Delucci and Korgan, 2002; Collini, 2012). If the dominant discourse prevailing in HE has changed, it would be reasonable to assume that the induction support should reflect this for all academics. By valuing diversity, induction programmes for all new academics could highlight a range of perspectives from distinct backgrounds that could further inform and enhance HE practices. However, this seems not to have had a significant impact on support for acculturation into the academic role.

From this data set, the research suggests the following support strategies to enhance PAs' transition to an academic role. These support strategies are: drawing upon established PAs as mentors, developing a dynamic academic handbook to help PAs into their new *field*, and emphasising the practical craft of teaching within threshold lecturer preparation programmes. These interventions may serve to better acknowledge the diversity of backgrounds of those making the transition into an academic role and to recognise possible assumptions embedded within the prevailing *habitus* and *doxa* in HEIs. Finally, this data set reinforced the worth that PAs can bring to HE as experts and emphasises the need for HE to value this as HEIs increasingly reinvent their *symbolic capital* to meet the challenges of working within a market-driven economy.

Established PAs as Mentors

A consensus emerged from the participants regarding the desirability of allocating mentors from a similar background to support new PAs. Used frequently within HE, initial professional development often involves the formal support of a mentor (Baume and Kahn, 2004). A mentor is often seen as a role model; however the approach for allocating a mentor can be indiscriminate, as well as confusing, for mentor and mentee, which consequently leads to anxiety (Baume and Kahn, 2004).

Yet the value of a mentor lies in not only being able to familiarise PAs with the academic role also work as a role model to aid shaping their provisional academic self (Ibarra, 1999). However, comments in the data set suggested that their collective experiences of mentor support were haphazard and, when it was good, this was often based on luck. Having in place systematic support for all PAs, particularly with a mentor from a similar background, offers opportunity to discuss the academic role and responsibilities. This would help in comprehending the number of quirks that Simendinger et al. (2000) identified which professionals entering into an academic role, found with working in HE. Furthermore, as Martensson (2000) recognised, conversations could be utilised to deconstruct the tacit knowledge that PAs in this data set felt they were assumed to already know. For example, PAs recognise novelty in practices that established academics take for granted. Mentors who have a similar background can help PAs decode these practices. Smith and Boyd (2012: 71) suggested space to trial out a range of '...permissible academic identities that are valued within the institution and the professional field'. This is particularly pertinent as PAs' original professional identity situated within clinical practice might be deep seated within them.

Dynamic Academic Handbook

Recognising the spiral of socialisation, where social interactions act as a means to draw out organisational tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge (Nonaka, 1994), by unpacking tacit knowledge with an experienced mentor, a PA could then make this knowledge explicit and share this through a dynamic academic handbook. This dynamic handbook would be issued to each department. The ownership of the document would be held by the department for both established and Neophyte Academics (NA) to add contributions. For example; this would enable each NA to contribute their observations and experiences while they are new to the role. NAs could add validity to existing information on the document or add to or challenge the information. This could be a substantial active guide to aid NAs unpack the academic role as well as contribute to the continual development of the department by drawing on prior experiences that have developed through non-traditional academic routes. This handbook could act as an asynchronous tool for new and existing academics to learn from. To ensure prominence of the dynamic handbook, it could be raised as a

standing item for discussion during regular programme team meetings to foster a sense of belonging and highlight the value that new and existing academics jointly bring to HE. This handbook would further assist what Bandow et al. (2007) and Simendinger et al. (2000) recommended for finding the benchmarks of expectations in each HE institution. As LaRocco and Bruns (2006) and this data set identified, new academics were unclear as to the expectations of the university systems, faculty and the academic role.

Adaptions to Threshold Lecturer Preparation Programmes

Threshold lecturer preparation programmes, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education qualification, were seen to be a useful route for gaining credibility in HE teaching. These programmes were stated as being helpful as they offered an informal meeting place for discussing the processes and procedures involved in an academic role and the context of HE, which accords with Harland's (2012) findings. This may also explain why Smith (2011) found that academic teaching staff did not initially recognise such programmes as a formal tool in their socialisation. As this data set revealed, PAs saw the value in networking during the programmes, rather than professional development.

However, this data set raised concerns regarding the relevance of threshold lecturer preparation programmes. One of the main concerns was the perceived priority given to HE pedagogical research over the practical craft of teaching by the programme facilitators. This accords with Trowler and Cooper (2002) who highlighted a mismatch between what was promoted on the threshold lecturer preparation programmes and the experiences of neophyte academic teaching staff suggesting a disconnect between the immediate needs of lecturers' practice and the programme content.

Furthermore, some comments were raised as to the knowledge that the facilitators assumed PAs had on arrival to the programme with an expectation that all participants were familiar with pedagogical terms. These observations by PAs who have not had a background in HE, unlike a post-doctoral academic, seem justifiable.

This assumption that theoretical knowledge is not as valued as practical strategies for facilitating teaching seems unwise. While it would be good to increase the quotient of craft knowledge training in threshold lecturer preparation programmes it is also crucial that new lecturers develop rich conceptions of teaching, along with an understanding of HE pedagogy and language and, particularly, skills for challenging didactic models and notions of knowledge transmission. As Prosser and Trigwell (1999) argue, good teaching involves lecturers commanding a well-articulated view of the rationale for their teaching practices, an understanding of the variation in how students learn, and how they can guide and shape the teaching context to ensure effective learning. What this data set has suggested is an immediate need for practical teaching skills. This approach is not unlike a teaching equivalent to surface and deep approaches to learning (Marton and Säljö, 1976). That is, PAs are requesting a low cognitive load for their teaching engagement (the equivalent to a surface learning approach) as an immediate need. This low cognitive load should be seen in the context of the numerous changes that PAs are handling as outlined with the change in their *field, habitus* and *symbolic capital.* As Biggs (1999) highlights in relation to students, surface approaches are applied when there is limited prior knowledge of the topic and where there are time pressures. Yet the result of PAs' experiences of threshold lecturer preparation programmes was to develop a deep approach to teaching, situated in Prosser and Trigwell's (1999) conception of HE pedagogy. This required a high cognitive load.

These findings highlight the disparity in perception of the value of such programmes. For example, it seems such programmes are applying a deep approach to teaching, the 'what works' and 'why it works' approach proffered by Prosser and Trigwell (1999) requiring a deep approach to neophyte academics' learning (Marton and Säljö, 1976). However, it could be seen that this was meeting a surface approach to learning (Biggs, 1999) reflecting the time pressure that some might be experiencing.

It is important to contextualise PAs' cognitive load to appreciate why this data set reported the disconnection between their immediate needs and the learning outcomes of their threshold lecturer preparation programmes. The danger by acquiescing a surface approach to teaching, the meaningful nature of being an

effective and confident HE teacher commanding a professional judgment in day- to-day pedagogical activities will be missed.

Consequently, the primary focus of attention on threshold lecturer preparation programmes still needs to be a deep approach to teaching, similar to that highlighted by Prosser and Trigwell (1999). This is of particular relevance with the assessment of teaching quality in HEIs being judged by such measures as the National Student Survey, which feeds outcomes into the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework. Having a deeper grasp of pedagogical practices through understanding the 'why' of what works can help build confidence in PAs' role.

While these approaches are helpful in that they are contextualised to the *habitus* of the faculty, this 'on the job' approach to initial professional development can lead to the reproduction of established practices without challenge or development. However, as was recognised earlier, informal processes lend themselves to reinforcing established *habitus* and can be too reliant on the preferred practices of individuals rather than reflecting ideal procedures. What threshold lecturer preparation programmes offer is time and space to develop neophyte academics' range of pedagogical practices based upon the scholarship of teaching and learning. These fresh perspectives, drawn from previous professional *habitus*, that individuals bring to the *field*, can offer constructive challenge to the *doxa* of established practices within faculty, contributing to practices that reflect the dynamic nature of the socio-political sphere in which HE is situated.

The literature illustrates the 'pros and cons' that are experienced between formal and informal initial professional development. In a new role, an individual needs to adapt to not only the new skills that teaching requires but also to learn and assimilate the social norms (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). The aligned data and literature suggest that 'how things are actually done' remains a helpful tool to initial professional development when complimented by the 'doing things well' implicit in threshold lecturer preparation programmes. Therefore, the suggestion, from this data set, to convert threshold lecturer preparation programmes into 'craft knowledge' courses rather than 'conceptions of teaching' courses will not be presented as a recommendation, for the reasons given.

However, there is a case for being mindful when developing the curriculum to ensure that basic 'HE teaching skills' are developed at the start of threshold lecturer preparation programmes. Adapting the curriculum towards practical skills, such as using classroom technology, the method of teaching in lectures and seminars, effective academic advising, and questioning techniques to facilitate learning, for example, could be considered. However, it needs to be highlighted that this would be the pedagogical equivalent of fast food; it will cure an immediate need but it will not sustain.

Academic Literacy support

A specific concern raised by some PAs within the data set was the assumptions that colleagues made about the knowledge of academic literacy that they had gained through previous qualifications. It is important to recall here that, in this data set, out of sixteen active participants, two had completed their professional qualifications in industry and had not attended an HEI. Therefore, there is a case for support mechanisms to make available space for developing and enhancing specific academic skills, such as academic writing conventions, critical thinking, and digital skills. The use of online platforms, similar to student study skill sites, often available for students in HE, could be available as information portals to encourage self-directed 'pick and mix' engagement or one to one bespoke support sessions.

Conversations about the Academic Role

This data set articulated the need to consider the role of an academic through conversation. However, the conversations PAs engaged in were with fellow PAs in their institutions. To reflect the dynamic nature of an academic role, a useful strategy advocated by Dickinson et al. (2020) could be to connect PAs into a wider community of fellow academics. This could be to a national field of HE through a network of notably new PAs who are experiencing, or who have experienced, a transition from practice into HE.

It can be seen that the case for support mechanisms for PAs reveals that the *symbolic capital* of HEIs still reflects traditional HE social practices and that the

needs of PAs are going unnoticed. For example, the dominant discourse of what is still valued and reinforced by socialisation into the role, through such activities as the threshold lecturer preparation programmes, assumes that a NA has prior knowledge and experience of HE.

A useful strategy that can bridge engagement and comprehension of the new culture is for a neophyte PA to spend time with established academics (Simendinger et al., 2000). Whether these are experienced academics from the same or a different discipline, this approach can help to tune into the academic role and expectations. This would avoid comparing the new role to the old one and missing the unique nature of an academic career: 'the new culture cannot be fully appreciated through the old lens' (Simendinger et al., 2000:110).

Likewise, Shreeve (2011) recommends the provision of more time for colleagues to adjust to the tacit ways of academia and to enable PAs to recognise the distinctive aspects of an academic role. One of these aspects is recognising the shift in understanding regarding professional applied knowledge and theoretical knowledge. Shreeve's study recommends the induction period be recognised as a critical period to help align identities between the two case studies of colleagues and stories about individuals who have successfully negotiated the change in culture.

It is plausible to suggest that the two distinctive types of knowledge - intellectual and practical - still hold different values in HE. Myers (2017: 45) suggests that, with the rise in the Research Excellence Framework and Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework as measures of impact and reach in HE in the UK, an 'intellectual cross-training' between practitioners and academics should 'strengthen all composite parts', necessarily leading to better outcomes for all. Furthermore, PAs can support the merging of tacit (role) knowledge, subject knowledge and procedural knowledge that could update the *symbolic capital* now required in HE. The bottom line for the sector are the metrics used by the Office for Students to gauge the quality of educational provision measured through graduate outcomes via Longitudinal Educational Outcome (LEO) data. While the LEO data sets are not a performance indicator, the implication of measuring how much a student earns in one, three and five years after graduation implies the need to ensure employability, practical

knowledge and skills as well as theory, and so features highly on HE curricula. Through the policymaking of successive administrations of government applying a free-market ideology, the purpose and function of HE has changed the value of professional and employability knowledge.

Moreover, rather than having different *capital* value on knowledge, the current neo-liberal ideology driving HEIs potentially offers space for knowledge convergence. Rather than viewing knowledge as a hierarchy spread across domains, a dialogue, between professional and theoretical knowledge, HE and society, needs to view knowledge as boundaryless and interdependent.

However, the idea that PAs are well placed to help HEIs accommodate to the increasingly market-driven dominant orthodoxy needs to be distinguished from the idea that this perspective constitutes the appropriate direction of travel for the sector. Yet this current socio-political climate is threatening to reduce academics, students and education into instruments for the economy. Treating the HE sector as a business can have philosophical and moral implications, such as the erosion of non-profit making disciplines in favour of those programmes that are aligned to the market conditions of employability or student satisfaction. Indeed, Nixon (2012) subsequently argues that there has been no demonstrable benefit from applying a market economy to HE. So the literature suggests that HE in the UK is transitioning into a market economy that has been recognised as flawed. Yet this call for bureaucratic efficiency, as Barnett (2000) states, is laid upon the strata of previous functions and heritage of HE.

However, taking a Bourdieusian perspective recognises a middle ground. For example, the majority of the HE sector increasingly finds itself positioned on a continuum between free-market private and public orientations that, since the Robbins Report (1963), seems directed towards a free-market. However, onto this continuum can be placed an intersection of agency and structure. With this intersection academics can play a part in creating an ongoing dialogue on the values and practices of HE that could raise and challenge discussion on normative structures. As Bourdieu (1971) argued, social structure is perpetuated through socialisation. Rather than assuming a view that the sector will continue down a path

towards a free-market economy, dialogue between academics, students and wider society can highlight and challenge this. PAs are uniquely experienced in an interstitial position between industry and HE to help adapt the current *habitus* of HE to this middle ground.

Recommendation to enhance HE from PAs

Another aspect is to recognise what PAs bring to the academy, learning from each other as part of community of practice to help foster a sense of legitimacy to their skills and knowledge. PAs, with this distinctive interstitial position between public and private spheres, could act as a resource to harmonise discourses and practices. PAs from this data set seem to indicate that they already possess some of the *symbolic capital* from employment in their previous *field* that HE could benefit from in order to meet the requirements of the current socio-political climate. For example, as demonstrated within the data, PAs had experiences of working for clients in a manner which recognises the demands of a market economy, such as the expectations of pace and the importance of promptness. In parallel, PAs also have an extensive experience of working within a profession and, as identified in Part one of the literature review, are characterised by being situated to act and advise on behalf of others (Parsons, 1939/54) as well as demonstrating allegiance to ethics and the societal commonweal. Moreover, this research highlighted how some PAs have transferred into academia because of changes being implemented to their profession (such as nursing, probation and teaching) due to the dominance of a neo-liberal orthodoxy. Thus, PAs may not have placed all-embracing value on this economic ideology recognising, through their professional experiences, possible moral and political consequences. Thus, PAs enter HE with lived experiences of upholding an autonomous position within a neo-liberal ideology that could help the HE *habitus* adjust to the prevailing changes to the *field*.

This finding accords with the argument of Dickinson et al. (2020) that HEIs could benefit by further recognising the extent of PAs as experts. However, what is notable about my research is the value for space for HEIs and PAs to effectively have a '*swap shop'*. That is, PAs learn from HEIs and HEIs learn from PAs, as HE need PAs and PAs, as demonstrated in this data set, are fully committed to the transition to

HE. Further support and guidance, as has been outlined: mentoring, dynamic academic handbook, amendments to the threshold lecturer preparation programmes, support for academic literacy, conversations about the academic role, can help PAs in their transition to HE. Further enrichment of sector practice and pedagogy can be through PAs bringing into the sector not only professional knowledge to the classroom but also a resource to support and negotiate changes to the HE *field.*

5.4 Reflection on the Methodological Approach and Methods Applied in this Thesis.

This section will reflect on the methodological approaches and methods applied to collect data, and on the approach taken to analyse the data.

The first methodological approach of narrative inquiry was selected to gain accounts of transition by those experiencing it (Georgakopoulou, 2006). Ethnography, with an autoethnographic inspired approach, aimed to open out these experiences to represent interpretations of HE culture. The methods of blogging and semi-structured interviews, with *Listening Project*-inspired conversations, were adopted.

5.4.1 Reflections on Blogging

I was keenly aware that each blog post represented thoughts and feelings about my experiences that were to become a permanent record (albeit behind security features) in a public domain that was open to scrutiny. While unlikely, a participant could, if they so wished, take a copy of the post (even with the 'copy' function disabled, participants could take a screenshot). Thus, it was important that each blog was sense-checked by a critical friend prior to posting to ensure my writing was suitable and, importantly, that I did not to write anything that could implicate others (e.g. my place of work or colleagues).

I monitored the data sets collected to identify frequency of visits (of an individual participant who visits the site) and hits (participants who leave a comment). This data was used to establish whether the material on the blog was engaging the

participants. I collected this data after each blog post. These census points reflected a deficit in data.

Table 10: Blog site activity data

Blog Post	Visit to the site	Comments made by participants	Replies by researcher
Blog Post 1	7	7	8
Blog Post 2	1	1	1
Blog Post 3	1	1	1
Blog Post 4	1	0	0

It is apparent from Table 10 that there was a decline in engagement with the blog. Some possible factors for this could be the following. Firstly, the timing of the blog launch; I published the blog around the end of the academic year at a time when participants were busy with exams, marking and turning their thoughts to annual leave. The blog would have been another commitment impacting upon a limited supply of spare time. Secondly, blogs usually involve an open access link that users can access immediately with two clicks of a mouse. In contrast, due to ethical restrictions, there were many stages to security in this blog: ID and password plus a password to enter. This was necessary but did hamper access. Additionally, access to the blog involved several emails, consent forms as well as the logon details. With the first blog post, the details for login were sent rapidly after the consent form was submitted to encourage engagement, which could reflect the number of comments for blog post 1. With the subsequent blogs, the details were not re-sent unless requested to avoid overload. This factor in tandem with the first factor may have contributed to the decline in engagement with subsequent blogs. Thirdly, the content of the blog might not have been meaningful to the participants. This is difficult to ascertain, however. In the subsequent conversations, I informally asked the participants how they found the blog. One participant commented:

> *"[I]t's [Academiculture blog] been really interesting from my point of view*
> *because I felt it was just me and it was just my circumstances that made me*

feel so alien and I think it is, I think it is just quite strange really! It has helped me a lot to articulate how I was feeling and focus it which was good."
Richard (NA)

Fourthly, when the blog was active, I was still building up a rapport with the participants and although I had sent individual emails to build a relationship them, I was still unknown to them. Through a digital platform, I was remote and could be 'ignored' as another email that was demanding time. Additionally, one participant remarked that the initial emails with access details went directly to his 'spam' mail box. Together these factors highlighted that the blog was not sufficiently engaging for the participants.

After the third blog post only mustered one response, I took advice from my supervisory team as to whether to continue the blog. One further post was constructed and published in November 2018. A new email went out encouraging the participant to go to the post and leave a comment. One participant got in touch as their username had been blocked due to too many failed attempts to log on. This was rectified within an hour. Yet records show there was no further log on from this participant. Subsequently, with no log on attempted from any participants, the decision was made to cease creating blog posts. If I were to have continued the blog without any engagement with the participants this would have represented a reflective diary not open to the intersubjectivity, dialogue and collective understanding that this research aims to represent.

5.4.2 Reflections on Semi-structured Interviews, with *Listening Project-* Inspired Conversations

The original aim of the research design was to collect data through co-constructed conversations inspired by the *Listening Project* programme (BBC, 2017). However, it became apparent that participants preferred a typical semi-structured interview design whereby I took on the role of interviewer and they responded to the questions. Similar to the blog, I was still building up a rapport with the participants and was still unknown to them. On reflection, although I had piloted the design, I had not recognised that the original design of the BBC (2017) *Listening Projects* were

based around two people's interpretation of a shared experience rather than, as I was trying to achieve, two people's interpretation of a comparable experience. While I was an insider researcher with a similar background to the participants, I had not recognised that to fully utilise these methods required having built a bond with the participant. In both the pilot and in an earlier application of the method in my studies, I knew the participants well so rapport was established before data collection.

However, for this piece of research participants were unknown to me before they had consented to taking part in the research and were employed in a total of ten different HEIs. Clearly, we all had common ground in that we were all employed in an academic role and from a professional background, but this seemed insufficient. A certain rapport needed to have been developed prior to utilising these two research methods to develop effective discourse and to co-construct an interpretation of experiences.

Nevertheless, these two methods proved effective in two ways. Firstly, the blog offered a reflective narrative on my experiences of transition (Anderson, 2006). This writing space helped unpack and interpret the socio-cultural HE environment that I was now working within and that was at times difficult to articulate (Tsalach, 2013) so as to voice the differences I was experiencing between my previous and existing roles (Bocher, 2000). Where the blog received comments, this helped explore my original analysis further and to question assumptions. Where there was a consensus, it added validity to the experiences through a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1975: 143). Moreover, out of eight participants, four went on to be involved in the second data collection method which enabled detailed conversations to develop.

The second method, *Listening Project*-inspired conversations, was effective when it was nested in a semi-structured interview protocol. This gave structure to the platform to foster sufficient rapport for conversations. Once these had developed, the method allowed for a channel to open for spontaneous, naturally occurring conversations to take place within a semi-structured interview. With the consent for these conversations to be given space to develop, deeper understandings were gathered (see Table 8 and 9).

5.4.3 Reflections on the Methodological Approach

The methodological approaches of narrative inquiry coupled with ethnography, with an autoethnographic inspired approach, is exposed to several epistemological problems around the nature of storytelling. Storytelling relies on reconstruction of events that relies on memories. The data collected was thus open to interpretation by participants. Rather than data, such as recorded verbatim conversations, accounts were heavily recounted. However, Research Question One's focus is on PAs' experiences and how they convey accounts of these experiences. It is this process of reflecting on their experience that exposes what is relevant and striking to them. It is this which is significant to the research. Thus, credence was given to a narrative by an individual about themselves in a particular place and time. Where the data was insufficient (such as with the blog accounts), semi-structured interviews, with *Listening Project*-inspired conversations, gave a fuller picture of experiences and accordingly permitted data triangulation. These methodological approaches make a unique and positive use of positionality and subjectivity that permits a collective response through 'mutually shaping influences' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 42) by methods that open up and value conversations. This contribution to methodological knowledge is further expanded in the following chapter.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the two research questions, summarising the findings and linking to relevant research. The methodological approach has been reflected upon. The multi-method approach and how this presented triangulation of data has been reviewed. The impact of this on the research questions and avenues for further research will be drawn out in the following, final, chapter.

Chapter Six Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to summarise the main findings and conclusions of this research. Firstly, the original contribution to the field will be outlined with links to the existing literature on professionals entering an academic career as well as contributions to methodology. Secondly, any research limitations will be highlighted. Thirdly, potential future research projects will be outlined. Finally, I will reflect on my autoethnographic inspired journey as a professional transitioning into an academic role and how engaging in this research aided me in processing the experience.

6.2 Original Contribution to the Field

6.2.1 Aims and design of the research

The title of this thesis is:

> ***Supporting Academics' Full-time Transition from Professional Practice to University. A Qualitative Study.***

The aim of the research was to inquire into how Practitioner Academics (PAs) experienced the transition from their previous professional career to a full-time academic role in Higher Education (HE) in the United Kingdom (UK). The research set out to explore this through conversations with current full-time PAs from a range of disciplines and HEIs in the UK. By exploring these experiences, the aim was to gain a richer understanding of the process of transition and to offer recommendations for induction support and guidance. The study also aimed to give prominence to the culture of parts of the HE sector viewed from an unfamiliar professional, rather than an academic, perspective.

The research set out to explore how PAs experienced the transition from their previous profession to that of an academic role through a mixed method approach using blogging, semi-structured interviews and *Listening Project*-inspired

conversations. These narrative accounts of transition were analysed using 'thinking tools' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989:50) - predominantly of *field, habitus,* and *symbolic capital* - as a framework of inquiry.

6.2.2 Main Research Findings

Research Question One:

How do practitioner academics experience the change from their professional practice to the role of a full-time academic in Higher Education in the UK?

Challenging

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, full-time PAs' experience of the change from their professional practice to an academic role is challenging, according with the findings of Simedinger et al. (2000); Diekelmann (2004) and Blenkinsopp and Stalker (2004). While this would seem unremarkable, what is striking, as the findings revealed, is that PAs experience a unique transition of change to *field, habitus* and *symbolic capital*. This poses something of a paradox as the uniqueness of an entire career transition is not recognised as that by either PAs or their employing HEIs. The data sets revealed a key insight into why PAs did not acknowledge this. Their initial employment as an academic was predicated on their professional knowledge, yet once they had commenced their role in the HE *field*, this was not comparably recognised as *symbolic capital*. This is in addition to experiencing a change in *field* and *habitus*, which is expected in a career move. However, it is now clear that this unique experience of change from professional practice to full-time academic role is often overlooked by HEIs in their induction support. There were assumptions made regarding their prior knowledge of the conventions of HE and an academic role. This was highlighted by the initial professional development that seemed pitched for career academics with a familiarity with HE. These experiences were further compounded through a wide range of academic practices and procedures which were tacitly understood within the *field.* Thus, it would seem reasonable that PAs would, as highlighted in the findings and analysis chapter, find the transition a challenge.

Research Question Two:

What recommendations can be made for induction support and guidance for newly appointed practitioner academics in Higher Education in the UK?

Heterogenous Support

While full-time PAs' experience of the change from their professional practice to an academic role was challenging, as seen, all participants expressed the desire to stay in an academic role and not return to professional practice. These findings, which contradicted those of Fairbrother and Mathers (2004) and Gourlay (2011a), highlight the vital need for enhanced induction support and guidance for PAs as they had already made a significant commitment to the role.

As the last chapter outlined suggestions for induction support and guidance, the following recommendations should be adopted within the sector to serve to better acknowledge the diversity of backgrounds of PAs as well as mechanisms to highlight tacit knowledge embedded within the prevailing *habitus* and *doxa* in HEIs. Firstly, to ensure all neophyte PAs have an established PA as a mentor. Secondly, to maintain a dynamic academic handbook within departments and, relatedly, to facilitate opportunities for a '*swap shop'* through conversations to illuminate the value of what PAs can learn from academic colleagues and colleagues can learn from practice-rich PAs, as HE need PAs and PAs want to remain in the sector. Thirdly, for programme leaders and lecturers to be mindful of the immediate teaching needs of PAs when commencing threshold lecturer preparation programmes and to question assumptions made about participants' prior knowledge and experience of the sector. Finally, to make available access to academic literacy support for PAs to recognise and support the diversity of backgrounds to a PA role.

Coda

As outlined in the previous chapter, the value of PAs, who as neophyte academics are situated within an interstitial position between industry and HE, lies in the fact that they can help adapt the current *habitus* of HE, which to some extent seems

discordant to the neo-liberal ideology, operationalised through new public managerialism, currently within HE.

However, rather than assuming that HE will passively continue down this path, as Bourdieu (1971) argued, social structure is perpetuated through socialisation, rather than ascribing different *capital* value to knowledge, the current neo-liberal ideology driving HEIs potentially offers space for knowledge convergence. Rather than viewing knowledge as a hierarchy spread across *fields* of HE and industry, this opens an opportunity to view knowledge as boundaryless and interdependent. PAs with experience in both domains are well situated to nurture this. It is clearly a misconception that academic and professional are divided. Thus, there is a need for a convergence of professional and academic discourses in order to gain a consensus of understanding for HE to flourish and challenge socio-political HE policy change. The heterogenous support recommendations that this research has illuminated can foster the conditions to undertake this.

6.2.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This research offers several contributions to the current literature. Firstly, there is the use of narrative accounts of transition to an academic role using 'thinking tools' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989:50) - predominantly of *field, habitus,* and *symbolic capital* - as a framework of inquiry for full-time PAs' experiences. Secondly, insight into full-time neophyte and established PAs' experiences in an academic role from a range of HEIs and a diversity of professional backgrounds highlighted an entire career transition that is not fully recognised as that by either PAs or HEIs. One of the main causes attributed to this was the wealth of tacit knowledge that is not acknowledged by HEIs but drives all processes and engagements. Thirdly, this research also highlighted the commitment of full-time PAs to remain in their new academic role in comparison to some of the part-time PAs outlined in earlier studies (such as Fairbrother and Mathers, 2004 and Gourlay 2011a and b).

Finally, the use of a combination of conversational-expository methods represents a methodological contribution to knowledge. The use of blogging, semi-structured interviews and *Listening Project*-inspired conversations as methods were used to co-

construct narratives from PAs across a range of professional backgrounds to explore experiences of transition. These methods together enabled the experiences of PAs to be recorded, analysed and themes identified. The approach raised awareness of the process of interpreting and integrating from one *field* to another while experiences were still novel. The methods promoted conversations for deeper co-constructed dialogue and collaboration between participant and researcher fostering 'intersubjective interaction' espoused by Kvale (1996:66). While there were limitations to these methods, as outlined in section 5.4, these are insights that can be considered when using these methods for other research projects. This thesis adds to the theoretical understanding and limited body of research and multi-disciplinary inquiries on this diverse workforce entering an academic role. With the increasing rise in the number of vocationally based qualifications situated within HE, this is a significant area for educational developers to be able to advise faculty.

6.3 Reflections

6.3.1 Autoethnographic Inspired Approach.

As a PA myself this research has illuminated my understanding of the sector and transformed me from an unsettled new PA to one that feels rejuvenated by the world of academia. When I first started writing the blog I felt isolated in my thoughts and experiences of transitioning into HE. Through engaging with PAs in similar situations - through the blog, semi-structured interviews, and *Listening Project*-inspired conversations - I was able to validate or challenge these experiences. The research has made me consider a unique culture with challenges and affordances unlike any found in other sectors. One particular example is the challenge of tacit knowledge that is not acknowledged by HEIs but which drives all processes and engagements. If PAs are to be successfully employed in the sector, it must be recognised that the current tendency towards 'one size fits all' modes of induction and support is not fit for PAs.

As a PA bringing my experiences to the research, I have been aware that my insider knowledge could influence the analysis. Recognising this, I approached the analysis of the research with the help of critical friends. After the initial coding I shared my anonymised data with colleagues and my supervisors to critique my initial

observations. One of the key outcomes of this was to challenge my interpretations. For example, I was advised to view the data through less of a deficit model and, rather, to consider how the merging of cultures could inform the academic community. The re-reading of the data helped establish where PAs could add further value to HE.

6.3.2 Reflections on Research Design

The use of multiple methods (blog, semi-structured interviews and, where appropriate, *Listening Project*-inspired conversations) offered data triangulation. Through these methods it has been possible for PAs to describe and further explore their experiences through fostering dialogic intersubjectivity to co-construct an interpretation of experiences.

Within the blog posts I aimed to foster truthfulness through reflection and reflexivity on my own perspective – left open for participants to validate or question further through their comments. To ensure consistency and trustworthiness, I have offered a transparent description of the research process, decisions taken, and issues addressed with ethical considerations duly recognised throughout (British Educational Research Association, 2011).

The research set out to investigate how PAs experience the change from their professional practice to a full-time academic role in HEIs in the UK. These experiences have been analysed through Bourdieu's *thinking tools* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989:50) predominantly *field, habitus* and *symbolic capital*. One of the main criticisms for using the tools for research is that the concepts are being detached from the original setting of Bourdieu's research, that of children's educational attainment and social class in France. It is true that Bourdieu wrote in a different time and space and it is acknowledged that there is the possibility of anachronism in applications of Bourdieu's work. However, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1989) make the point that the concepts are themselves *thinking tools* that can be applied to offer a perspective on society.

Recommendations for induction support and guidance for newly appointed PAs have been outlined. Through the triangulation of the three research methods, this research has given an authentic response to ensure integrity to the research answers.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study can be related to the issues with the methodological approach that transpired as the research progressed, as outlined in the previous chapter (section 5.41- 5.4.3). Where issues occurred, such as limitations on recruitment of full-time neophyte professional academics, a strategy was put in place to offset the impact, in this instance, the recruitment of experienced PAs. What this highlighted was the limited number of PAs who fully immerse into an academic role and pointed to why the majority of previous studies focused on dual practitioners. Yet it also highlighted that there were academic voices that were being overlooked.

This study used multiple methods as well as an autoethnographic-inspired approach. The numerous pathways into the data could be indicative of a superficial approach. However, in this research the numerous methods gave different opportunities to inquire into the journey of a transitioning PA, reflecting the constructivist ontology that there are only socially constructed multiple realities (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Moreover, the research design demonstrates the researcher-as-bricoleur (Becker, 1989) in that this approach represents a deployment or creation of methods that gained insight into the inquiry.

The research aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding transitioning from a professional role to that of an academic. Upon reflection this assumes that individuals transition into different roles. Another available perspective could be that individuals possess layers and that, rather than transition, they increase the layers of their personal and professional growth.

6.5 Areas for Potential Further Research

Positivist Research Study

This research, as well as previous research outlined in the literature review (Chapter Two), were interpretative studies. Subsequent investigations might consider conducting research to acquire quantitative data across the UK (and further afield as research has been conducted in both the USA and Australia, for instance). The undertaking of studies within a positivist research paradigm, alongside the extant interpretivist-based studies, can help close the limitations of each of the paradigms offering greater validity and reliability to the findings.

Expanding Range of PAs

While the research did recruit from HE institutions from around the UK and from a range of practice-based disciplines, it did not focus on the experiences in other parts of the sector (such as Further Education colleges delivering 'HE in FE'). It would be useful to compare and contrast experiences to see if there are differences or similarities in academic role experiences and the support mechanisms on offer. This study could inform challenger-institutions as well as HEIs of further insights into the period of transition and settling into the academic role. Similarly, there could be a comparison study on the perceptions of being an aspirant PA before leaving professional practice and comparing this to his/her experience of the academic role. This may give insights into whether there is a mismatch, or not, between PAs' expectations and realities. It must also be noted that it is in the nature of the PA role that the majority of such PAs will be based at post-1992 institutions, as demonstrated by this research data set and that the often-categorical pronouncements some of the participants have made about 'HE' as a whole are actually based on partial knowledge of an increasingly variegated sector.

Replication of this Study with Career Academics

Research on the experiences of career academics as they move into their first academic post can further inform initial professional development. Such a study could be expanded to compare experiences between PAs. Having another

perspective, from a different background with cross-referenced findings, can help to illuminate aspects of HE culture further.

Implications for Future Practice

Subsequent research could measure the impact of applying the recommendations, suggested in research question two, on neophyte PAs' experiences of the change from their professional practice to a full-time academic role in an HEI in the UK. Responses could be compared with this, or similar, data sets.

6.6 Autoethnographic reflections

I have been in post as an educational developer (ED) for four years. From being a teacher in further education, I would say that I am now transitioning into an academic. This inquiry has been invaluable in my learning about HE and PAs in HEIs. Through employing a qualitative research design, I and fellow PAs have had an opportunity to come together and discuss our experiences. I have realized the value of using methods that featured co-construction through conversation to offer an equality in research for participants to gain further insight into their own transition. As the results indicate, the unique transition of *field, habitus* and *symbolic capital* could explain why I and fellow participants encountered the role of a full-time academic following a professional career, as both challenging and culturally perplexing.

After every conversation with a fellow PA, I would always finish on the question as to whether they would go back to their professional career. Now, as my small-scale inquiry draws to a close, it is time to ask myself this very question. The answer is no. Firstly, on a practical point, this is because, as many PAs in this data set realised, professional *symbolic capital* has a finite shelf life. To return to my profession after a number of years out from practice would itself be difficult. Secondly, while I may occupy an academic role, my journey to an academic is ongoing and a work in progress. While I have a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, HE and the role of an academic, I am still acculturating. Now that I have more of an understanding of HE's *habitus and symbolic capital,* particularly the Post-1992 part of the sector, I am able to negotiate a path through, which is the critical point. As this

research inquiry has identified, professional knowledge is highly valued by the sector, as demonstrated by the inflow of academic staff starters in 2018/19 of whom over half have come from a professional or public sector background (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2020). In addition, the greater number of HE programmes are vocational and applied subjects (Universities UK, 2016). The sector as currently configured is thus now in a position where experience-rich professions are vital for academic practice.

Yet, as this research revealed, PAs' experiences have been challenging. As the recommendations (research question two) have outlined there are a number of strategies that HE can employ to support PAs. As an Educational Developer, I have a pivotal role in being able to promote these strategies to foster better transition experiences for PAs. Consequently, I will not be returning to practice as the value of PAs to HEIs is evident and the need to illuminate the path pointing out the metaphorical 'bumps in the road', as well as 'freewheeling' downhill, is vital for both the sector and PAs. Supporting PAs with the transition from *field,* negotiating and contributing to the dynamic *habitus* and *symbolic capital* can help facilitate an effective transition.

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Appendix A

Emails to Publicise the Research

Call for academics from a professional background   aaaaaaa ×   Aacculturation ×

Mary Kitchener <m.kitchener@brookes.ac.uk>   Wed, 1 Aug 2018, 13:58
to SEDA

Dear Colleagues

As part of my EdD research, I am inquiring into the experiences of academics from professional backgrounds as they negotiate their new career as an academic in higher education in the UK. Thank you to all in the SEDA community for responding to my first request for new academic from professional backgrounds. I am now seeking participants who:

- Have held a **professional** career (for example nursing, teaching, engineering, finance)
- Now employed in an **academic lecturing** role for **more than 3 years**

The research aims to increase the understanding into the period of transition between professional career and academic career to inform the educational development community.

Information is included in the attached participant information sheet, but please do contact me directly if you have any further questions: 14091335@brookes.ac.uk .

If you would like to participate, please email outlining your current role and previous profession.

Please do cascade to any of your contacts who may be interested in participating.

The study has been approved by the Oxford Brookes University Research Ethics Committee
UREC Registration No: 181187

Kindest regards

Mary

Mary Kitchener SFHEA

Educational Development Consultant

Appendix B

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Participant Information Sheets

You are being invited to take part in a research study, Transitioning Borders: Cross-Discipline Neophyte Lecturers' Engagement and Alignment with the Landscape of Practice in Higher Education. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to inquire into the experiences of new academics from professional backgrounds as they negotiate their new career in higher education. The study will run for no more than two semesters. The research is designed to engage new academics from professional backgrounds in conversations.

Stage 1
The first conversation will be through the comment section of an online blog in which the researcher has outlined their own experiences.

Stage 2
The second conversation, which will be informed by a discussion topic arising from the blog, is face to face (or via Skype) with the researcher. The research design aims to interpret and analyse the findings to offer insight into the period of transition between professional career and academic career.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate as you have previously held a professional career for at least 5 years and have recently gained a position as an academic in a British Higher Education institution. At least eight other people will be asked to participate (maximum 15).

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Please notify the researcher using the details below.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Stage 1

If you agree to participate in the blog, to protect and preserve your anonymity and confidentiality, you will be supported to create a pseudonym. You will then be given password protected access to the researcher's blog website. The blog posts will be based on the researchers own observations on being a neophyte academic. You will be asked to read the posts and to leave a comment based on your own experiences. The decision is yours with regard to the length of contributions. You are under no obligation to comment on every post. The blog site will be updated every other week. Each post will take approx. 5 minutes to read. The time to write your contribution will vary dependent on the length of the comment. You can make comment on other contributions. You will receive an email when a new post goes live.

Stage 2

Additionally, you may be asked to participate in an informal conversation (Listening Project) with the researcher regarding an aspect of a blog post or your blog contribution based on your experience of being a neophyte lecturer. You are under no obligation to participate.
The conversation will take approximately 10-25 minutes and can take place at a mutually convenient time and place (either face to face or via Skype). If you agree, the conversation will be audio recorded.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The possible disadvantage may be the time involved to participate.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You may find engaging with the blog fosters a community of practice with other academics from professional backgrounds. The outcomes of the study may contribute to furthering our understanding of experiences of academic culture. The outcomes may promote additional support and guidance for educational developers and higher education institutes to consider. Furthermore, you may be able to use your engagement with the project as evidence of reflective practice to support your professional development.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). All comments on the blog site and the face to face conversations will be anonymised in the publication of the research material. Access to the blog site is protected by a password only given to participants who have agreed to participate in the study. The site is closed for general viewing or comments. The blog site is monitored by the researcher for any inappropriate content. Any inappropriate comments will be removed and blocked by the researcher. For monitoring purposes, the blog posts may be accessed by the supervisory team.

The research data will be kept securely at all times. Laptops and other devices are encrypted. Data will be stored in Google Drive, for which the University has a security agreement. Data generated by the study will be retained in accordance with the University's policy on Academic Integrity and will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of ten years after the completion of a research project.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you would like to take part in this study. Please email me at: 14091335@brookes.ac.uk

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results of the research will be used in my thesis submission for the Doctor of Education programme. The research will also be used to write an academic journal paper. You can obtain a copy of the published research. Please contact me at 14091335@brookes.ac.uk requesting the research article.

Who is organising and funding the research?
I am conducting the research as a student on the Oxford Brookes Doctor of Education programme.

Who has reviewed the study?
The research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University UREC Registration No: 181187

Contact for Further Information
If you require any further information please contact the researcher on 14091335@brookes.ac.uk. If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

Mary Kitchener
EdD Doctoral student
Oxford Brookes University

Date: 13th March 2018

Participant Information Sheet for Established Lecturers in Higher Education

You are being invited to take part in a research study, *Transitioning Borders: Cross-Discipline Lecturers' Engagement and Alignment with the Landscape of Practice in Higher Education.*
Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of the study is to inquire into the experiences of academics from professional backgrounds as they negotiate their career in higher education. The study will run for two semesters. The research is designed to engage academics from professional backgrounds in conversations. The conversation is face to face (or via Skype) with the researcher. The research design aims to interpret and analyse the findings to offer insight into the period of transition between professional career and academic career.

Why have I been invited to participate?
You have been invited to participate as you have previously held a professional career for at least 5 years and hold a position as an academic in a British Higher Education institution. At least five other people will be asked to participate (maximum 10).

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Please notify the researcher using the details below.

What will happen to me if I take part?
You will be asked to participate in an informal conversation about a theme regarding your role (for example, discussing initial impressions of HE) with the researcher. Based on Radio 4 'Listening Projects', the conversation will take approximately 10-25 minutes and can take place at a mutually convenient time and place. If you agree, the conversation will be audio recorded.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
The possible disadvantage may be the time involved to participate.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
The outcomes of the study may contribute to furthering our understanding of experiences of academic culture. The outcomes may promote additional support and guidance for educational developers and higher education institutes to consider. Furthermore, you may be able to use your engagement with the project as evidence of reflective practice to support your professional development.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?
All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations).
All comments made will be anonymised in the publication of the research material.
The research data will be kept securely at all times. Laptops and other devices are encrypted.
Data will be stored in Google Drive, for which the University has a security agreement.
Data generated by the study will be retained in accordance with the University's policy on
Academic Integrity and will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of ten
years after the completion of a research project.

What should I do if I want to take part?
If you would like to take part in this study. Please email me at: 14091335@brookes.ac.uk

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results of the research will be used in my thesis submission for the Doctor of Education
programme. The research will also be used to write an academic journal paper. You can
obtain a copy of the published research. Please contact me at 14091335@brookes.ac.uk
requesting the research article.

Who is organising and funding the research?
I am conducting the research as a student on the Oxford Brookes Doctor of Education
programme.

Who has reviewed the study?
The research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford
Brookes University.

Contact for Further Information
If you require any further information please contact the researcher on
14091335@brookes.ac.uk. If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has
been conducted, you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee
on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

Mary Kitchener
EdD Doctoral student
Oxford Brookes University

Date
1st August 2018

Appendix C

Consent Form

Full title of Project: **Transitioning Borders: Cross-Discipline Neophyte Lecturers' Engagement and Alignment with the Landscape of Practice in Higher Education.**

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:

Mary Kitchener, EdD Researcher
Oxford Brookes University
Wheatley Campus
OX33 1HX
14091335@brookes.ac.uk

Name, Position and Contact Address of Supervisory Team

Dr Ian Summerscales iansummerscales@brookes.ac.uk
01865 488532

Dr Roger Dalrymple rdalrymple@brookes.ac.uk
01865 485523
Oxford Brookes University
Harcourt Hill Campus
OX2 9AT

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood 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, without giving reason.

3. *I agree to take part in the above study.*

Please initial box

Yes   No

4. *I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being audio recorded* ☐ ☐

5. *I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications* ☐ ☐

6. *I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after it has been anonymised) in a specialist data centre and may be used for future research.* ☐ ☐

_____ _____ _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____ _____ _____

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Appendix D

Ethical Approval

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

Dr Ian Summerscales
Director of Studies
School of Education
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Oxford Brookes University
Headington Campus

4 May 2018

Dear Dr Summerscales

UREC Registration No: 181187
Transitioning Borders: cross-discipline neophyte lecturer practitioners' engagement and alignment with the landscape of practice in Higher Education

Thank you for the email of 27 April 2018 outlining the response to the points raised in my previous letter about the EdD study of your research student Mary Kitchener and attaching the revised documents. I am pleased to inform you that, on this basis, I have given Chair's Approval for the study to begin.

The UREC approval period for the data collection phase of the study is two years from the date of this letter, so 4 May 2020. If you need the approval to be extended please do contact me nearer the time of expiry.

Should the recruitment, methodology or data storage change from your original plans, or should any study participants experience adverse physical, psychological, social, legal or economic effects from the research, please inform me with full details as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sarah Quinton
Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee

cc Roger Dalrymple, Supervisory Team
    Mary Kitchener, Research Student
    Carol Brown, Research Ethics Officer
    Jill Organ, Research Degrees Team
    Louise Wood, UREC Administrator

Appendix E

Contingency Method: Semi Structured Interview Questions

Procedure

Length: around 45 minutes

Interviewer: Researcher Mary Kitchener

1 to 1 in quiet space

Audio recorded and uploaded to Brookes account Google Docs

Aim: to allow the interviewee to tell their experiences transitioning from professional role to academic practice in HE.

Part 1: The background

1.a Could you tell me a little about your background and how you came to be an academic working in an HEI?

1.b Could you describe a typical day in your previous role?

　　　Probe: Why did you change career?

Part 2: Experiences of joining an HEI in an academic role

2.a. What were your first impressions on joining an HEI?

2.b. Could you describe your typical working structures involved in your HEI role?

Prompt: Liaison and networking, teamwork, motivation and colleagues.

2.c. Could you describe your typical day in HEI?

2.d. Are, what you have described (2c) similar or different to those in your previous role?

2.e. How have you managed any differences?

Prompt: What have been the biggest differences between your new role as an academic and your old role as a (state profession)?

2.f. Have there been any experiences where you have found the expectations of the new academic role challenging?

If Yes to follow response:

2.g. How did you overcome this?

Part 3: Support for transition into academic role

3.a. What support have you accessed since you started your academic role?

Prompt: teacher educational courses e.g. PgCertEd; Buddy; mentor; mandatory training sessions

3.b. How effective was the support in aiding your transition into your new role?

3.c What support do you recommend to further aid transition for lecturers from a professional background into HE?