

Hall of Mirrors: policy, mythology and media practice curriculum development in higher education for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

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I, Stephen John Colwell, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

This research and analysis looks at policy governing Higher Education (H.E.) practices that contribute to the activity of curriculum development for media practice courses. It examines institutional policy regarding practical and theoretical bases for the development of curricula, pedagogy and assessment and government policy regarding H.E. finance and relations between H.E. and media industries. The general theoretical position of this research is that recontextualisation, the translation of practices from one socially distinct context to another, is the primary factor in this empirical field. Social Activity Method (SAM) is used to dismantle and describe curriculum development practice in two H.E. institutions. Research shows that, generally, policy casts a gaze that rationalises H.E. practice so that it conforms to its own principles. However, the convergence of multiple policy regards produces strategies that are, generally, incommensurable. For example, the convergence of academic policies that stabilise assessment of student learning in this field also serve to reify a theoretical split between media practice and theory as conflicting pedagogic strategies. Government policy on consumer rights applied to H.E. potentially annihilates H.E. practice that ensures the integrity of academic awards. Strategies that are evident in the process of curriculum development can be dismantled and described to show how policy shapes practice. The organisational language of SAM allows the strategic relationship between policy and practice in this field to be mapped. This research suggests that opacity regarding the simultaneous activation of multiple policies in the process of developing curricula, risks the introduction of incoherence and instability in pedagogy and assessment of student learning. However, the organisation and description of strategic action using SAM may provide the transparency necessary to achieve stability and coherence in pedagogic and evaluative relations between institutions and students.

Impact Statement

This research looks at curriculum development for media practice in H.E. The empirical setting is constituted by case studies of the development of media practice courses in two universities. The institutions are distinguished by ethos; one is research focused, the other industry facing and both can claim to take a unique approach to curriculum development. This conforms to a commonplace view that the sector is diverse, that no two courses are exactly alike. However, both settings show that strategic action is contingent on the interaction of multiple policy perspectives and that the interplay of forces represented by policy is neither transparent nor coherent.

The recontextualisation of media practice principles by the academy produces a complex system of multi-contextual pedagogies and assessment strategies. When education theory, contingent on its originating social context, is applied in a curriculum development process in this field, it too is recontextualised. Generally, theory is transformed from an explicatory function to a regulatory policy regard of curriculum development practices.

In relation to dominant external governmental policy regulation of H.E. the transformation of theory shifts internal, institutional policy frameworks away from an oppositional, arguably balancing stance, to a position where internal policy exaggerates the effects of external regulation. Recently enacted government policy on H.E finance, regulation by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), are likely to result in increasing incoherence and instability in vocational education for media practice and, possibly, other creative industry education sectors.

The interaction of aligned teaching and learning strategies, with an emphasis on linear progression, is at odds with the recursive learning requirements of media practice. Prior to recent policy changes this contradiction was manageable within a closed assessment system managed by independent institutions. This is no longer possible, indeed established assessment policy potentially exacerbates the destabilising effects of government policy.

This research provides a map of curriculum development which makes the interaction of policy and strategic action transparent. It allows for informed discussion of the relationship between internal and external policy and student learning in the academy and its application in the workplace.

Media practice education in H.E. is a legitimate field of study and learning. The observation that it is untethered to any defensible theoretical regard is not an argument for dismissal; it is a notification that it is time to develop theory, emergent from the empirical setting of media practice education to inform policy action. However, if these issues are unaddressed and students come to question the provenance and theoretical bases of what they are being offered, there is a risk of increasing instability and potential for damage to the standing of the sector.

Introduction:

Media production is constituted by multiple discrete practices, such as directing, writing, cinematography and editing, combined in diverse, overlapping activities that contribute to a collaborative process. It is a complex and highly specialised field that combines appreciation of creative activities and processes with pragmatic organisational and managerial competences. Papers from a variety of research perspectives (Engeström, 2008; Greenhalgh, 2010; Ipsen, 2010; Lotz, 2009; Ortner, 2009) suggest that, as social activity, making media products is inherently unstable, but always seeking stability.

This research looks at forces active in the development of curricula for media practice courses in Higher Education (H.E.). Recontextualisation¹ of practice principles from one sociologically distinct context, professionalised media, to H.E., has a transformational effect on that practice. Recontextualisation, a sociological category denoting the way in which one practice regards and transforms another, furnishes the theoretical basis for research and analysis.

A recontextualising regard might be said to accord with governing, rationalising principles developed in and derived from an originating practice, a discrete social context. It may be a media industry like film-making, a government department, an academic research programme or a commercial business. As people are substantiated within an established practice, a regulated recontextualising regard is part of that substantiation and may be expressed as a rationalisation of what it regards.

Each media production process is unique. It emerges from collaboration and difference between disparate practitioners. Schön (1983, 1987) described the world a creative practitioner inhabits as one of;

...complexity, uncertainty, uniqueness, and instability and value conflict... In real world practice problems do not present themselves to the practitioner as givens they must be constructed from the materials of problematic situations which are puzzling, troubling and uncertain (Schön 1983; 40).

¹ See Methods and methodology, page 17, for reference to theories of recontextualisation developed by Chevallard, Bernstein and Dowling.

Media production practice in action constitutes a process of transition, moving from unknowing to knowing. For Rogers (1961; 1983), openness to experience and an internalised locus for evaluation are essential for engagement in creative activity. The capacity to play with ideas, shape and relationships is conditional;

Two other factors are required; feelings of having ventured into unknown territory and the need to communicate, the necessity of sharing the newly created knowledge of self in relation to the environment with others (Rogers 1961; 354).²

Rogers representation of practice, together with Schön's account of process, point to the importance of the tacit element of participation in making media products. Practitioners comprehend the process of making media through shared principles of recognition. Principles of recognition are established by a regularity of practice that both constitutes and emerges from common, tacit recognition of instances of practice.

Knowledge, regarding making media products, insofar as the collective expertise of all those who practice or have practiced making media can be categorised as such, is largely embodied by the practitioner and substantiated in collaboration. Collaboration is facilitated by shared principles of recognition. Aspects of explicit expertise are mainly constituted by technical competences and external regulation.

There are extensive textual resources about media practice, but they tend to represent an objectification of embodied practice. Outsider interpretations of the work of cinema greats and even books on making by distinguished directors like Dmytryk (1986) and Mackendrick (2004) cannot capture what it means to participate in collaborative, creative action. Tacit expertise, described generally by Polyani (1958, 1966) and in relation to professional practice by Eraut (1994,

² This thesis uses Rogers conception of interior "evaluation" of experience to describe individual student reflection on what they are learning to distinguish it from institutional "assessment" systems and policies. Evaluation is also used to describe appraisal outside the academy, in a media practice workplace.

2000a, 2000b), is elusive. Each individual engaged in making media constructs a practitioner identity, contingent on the social context of their development.

Vocational education for media practice

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is the official gateway for applicants to H.E. courses. Its search engine identifies 669 media production courses, from 149 different H.E. institutions in England and Wales.³ Most institutions offer both media production courses and courses that focus on media as central to forces that shape economic, political, psychological and social life, media studies. The UCAS search engine identifies 977 media studies courses from 159 institutions. The most recent figures from the Higher Education Statistics Association (HESA)⁴ show that, 51,305 students attended courses in the 'Mass Communication and Documentation' sector, which includes media practice and media studies, in 2017 / 2018.

For students learning media practice in H.E. the social context is regulated by a curriculum, pedagogy and assessment of learning. With acknowledgement to Actor Network Theory (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Latour, 2007), media practice courses are perhaps best comprehended as an assemblage of recontextualised practices. H.E. institutions package a variety of related practices under certain banners. This is augmented by administrative and auditing frameworks that ensure theory-based oversight of pedagogy and assessment of learning.

Media practice was once something that was learned on the job but, by the early nineties, the apprenticeship route was closing. Media companies moved from a permanent staffing model to short term freelance contracts.

Hesmondhalgh (2006, 2007; 2011) charts the change in cultural production;

The result... has been a labour market in which most creative workers are under-employed – at least in the creative work that they actually want to do – or underpaid (Hesmondhalgh 2007; 72).

Ellis (2000) noted the adjustment in relation to developing new recruits;

³ The UCAS search engine can be accessed at: <https://digitalucas.com/search>

⁴ HESA statistics can be accessed at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-study>

Technological change has not however eliminated the need to teach the skills of programme-making which are, if anything, being pushed onto the formal education and training sector by the decline of traditional entry-level roles (Ellis 2000; 5).

The task of preparing new entrants to media industries fell to art colleges and polytechnics. The Further Education and Higher Education Reform Act (DfE, 1992) brought media production education into the university system.

MacDonald (2000) addressed the difficulties the move entailed;

...institutions, particularly FE colleges and (former) polytechnics emphasised applied learning. They attempted to bridge the practical versus academic division... The result is a kaleidoscope of qualifications, levels and values. (MacDonald 2000; 13).

Development of curricula for media practice also shifted from a training model for technicians to include narrative development and management of a creative process. This aspect of teaching media was developed in Film Schools established in the 1960's at Columbia and NYU in New York, California Institute for the Arts in Los Angeles and, by the 1970's, the London Film School (Petrie & Stoneman, 2014).

A primary concern for researchers like Ellis was the urgent need for the development of theory emergent from the social context of media practice education to underpin teaching media practice away from its originating context. In *"Cultural Work and Higher Education"* (2013) Ashton and Noonan assert that it is insufficient for an experienced practitioner to stand as an exemplar in a pedagogic setting that claims to simulate the commercial / industrial media context. Comprehending the relationship between a professional media workplace and H.E. requires far more than exposing students to ideas, practices and skills.

The problem for H.E. is, how can students come to embody the explicit and tacit principles of a complex practice in a setting that cannot reproduce the fluid social, political, economic and cultural conditions of its creation? The media

practice that students encounter is constituted by recontextualised principles, detached from the practice they aspire to embody. Assessment of their learning is regulated according to academic, not media practice, principles. Making media is an unstable practice. Its stabilisation is an absolute requirement if assessment is to be regarded as valid in the academy.

To unravel this conundrum we require a new set of questions. Is the transformative effect of recontextualisation of media practice in the academy transparent? Does institutional assessment of student learning enhance or inhibit access to non-pedagogized principles in the workplace? What forces shape the construction of pedagogic settings and the regulation of assessment?

A changing policy landscape

These questions have become increasingly urgent. Since 1998 there has been an increasing policy emphasis on cultural production exemplified by the Blair government's invention of a new category of economic activity, Creative Industries (DCMS, 1998, 2001). My analysis of New Labour policy regarding vocational education for creative industries, *"The Doctrine of Creativity and the Commodification of Identity"* (Colwell, 2012) critiques policy designed to "... detach 'creativity from individual identity and meaning and the articulation of its value as merely commercially contingent..." (Colwell 2012; 112). It describes a conscious policy shift towards institutional appropriation and exploitation of individual creativity.

The voice of the employer has gained significant, though not entirely uncontested, influence in media practice education in H.E. The BIS consultation paper *"A dual mandate for adult vocational education"* (Cable, 2015a) confirms that "...since 2010 the Government has pursued a strategy... to ensure that provision is determined by employers and changes as employers' needs change" (Cable 2015; 6) This, arguably, produces tension between industry demands and students right to expect that the integrity of their learning is defensible and transparent.

There is no doubt that the creative industries sector, of which media production is a significant part, has grown in economic importance since 2000. The most recent Department of Culture, Media and Sport figures (DCMS, 2015) show rapid growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) for creative industries between 2008 and 2014. The creative industries contribution rose from £61.1bn in 2008 to £84.1bn in 2014, a rise from 4.5% to 5.2% of the UK total. Statistical data for media is split between two DCMS designated sectors; Film, TV, video, radio and photography, the primary focus of this research, and Music, performing and visual arts. Film & TV etc. contributed £8.2bn in 2008 rising to £10.8bn in 2014. DCMS statistics (2016) show an increase of 9.9% in employment in Film, TV etc. between 2011 and 2015; 231,000 people were employed in the sector in 2015.

Over the same period the media sector has recruited an increasing proportion of university graduates. The last Skillset workforce survey (2014) shows that 78% of media workers have a degree, 51% in a media related subject; both figures show substantial increases on the previous survey. The Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2018) figures show that Media and Information Studies have the second highest rate of employment by subject of undergraduate degree after Medicine.

However, the social mix of media industries does not reflect wider society in terms of gender balance and displays woeful levels of representation of minorities and people with disabilities. While the sector may be growing work has shifted from permanent jobs to a freelance, short-term contract economy and wages have fallen accordingly. The most recent figures from the ONS show media and information studies graduates receiving the lowest average gross annual earnings.

If wages are low what motivates student investment in a degree? H.E. recruitment policy, for example, is potentially problematic; what is the value of the product being marketed and sold? Is it the job of H.E. to sustain an industry model that is arguably deficient regarding diversity, worker exploitation and its contribution to national political, social, cultural and economic well-being?

The service relationship between education and industry and the relationship of students to H.E. was transformed when the Browne Report (2010) was enacted. Collini (2010, 2012, 2018) observes that Browne's radicalism is destructive in that it introduces a market purity discourse which seeks to establish H.E. as a competitive market together with a conceptualisation of university applicants as fully sensible individual economic agents.

My analysis suggests that an already fragile and incoherent government policy framework for H.E. and vocational education was critically destabilised. One concrete outcome of Browne arrived in 2015 when H.E. became subject to the "*Consumer Rights Act*" (Cable, 2015b) and regulation by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), establishing education as a quasi-market with students reclassified as customers (CMA, 2015a, 2015b). CMA regulations affect the marketing of courses, introducing concerns over miss-selling.

More significantly it effects the administration of assessment for every H.E. course, effectively making closed institutional systems with their own regulations and integrity, open to external scrutiny and control. And, in 2017 the "*Higher Education and Research Act*" (Johnson, 2017) introduced the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) which, in conjunction with CMA regulation, potentially cements employer participation in curriculum development and delivery at a granular level.

The theoretical field

Policy perspectives are not confined to governmental action. Theory recruited to explain and validate teaching, learning and assessment practices appear to offer a benign rationalising regard of media practices. But, when theory is employed as part of a process of recontextualising media practice, it too is recontextualised. Theory, potentially, sheds its explicatory function and becomes regulatory, institutional policy that adds to the mix of conflicting rationalisations and demands.

An example, analysed in chapter three, looks at peer to peer assessment in group work activity where a set of, apparently, professional behaviours are used

to establish assessment criteria. This establishes an additional layer of assessment to a general institutional assessment framework. The criteria, examples of idealised behaviours detached from their originating context, potentially conflict with student's internal reflection and evaluation of their work, practice and learning. This analysis is made possible by the use of Social Activity Method (SAM) (Dowling, 1998, 2009, 2013).

The application of SAM in data analysis allows for the dismantling, description and organisation of strategic relations between policy and practice constituted by curriculum development for media practice. SAM provides a key analytical tool, derived from fundamental theoretical principles that support the identification of subject positions; emergent alliances that determine "... *what may be thought, said or done and by whom*" (Dowling 2009; 43). The result of analysis is a map of the strategic relational space of a complex and, hitherto, opaque empirical setting.

Data is generated by case studies of two, BA (Hons) programmes in the process of development. Practitioner academics and academic managers are interviewed together with administrative staff charged with managing pedagogic and assessment compliance with institutional policy and representatives of external validating organisations that represent industry. Course documents are accessed as a representative sample of the textual structuring of courses. Public domain documents published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and government ministries and agencies are also accessed.

The original research question was designed to investigate how differing institutional ethos regarding academic research and media industry focus emerged in processes of curriculum development. Enquiry was motivated by concern with an apparent fragility in the theoretical foundations of taught media practice in H.E. But, as the research process unfolded, it became apparent that a more pointed question needed to be asked; *how does the interplay between multiple governmental and institutional policy regards contribute to the emergence of strategy in curriculum development for media practice in H.E?*

The research question is broken down to achieve focus on four discrete aspects of the social activity of curriculum development. Questions provide a rationale for each chapter, beginning with chapter two, analysis;

- *How do strategies emergent in curriculum development for media practice, reveal the interaction of multiple policy regards?*
- *How do H.E. policies for assessment of student learning affect media practice curriculum development and delivery?*
- *How might competing discourses contribute to strategic instability in media practice education in H.E.?*
- *How do government policies transform H.E. practices that contribute to media practice curriculum development?*

Methods and methodology are outlined in chapter one. Chapter two, data analysis identifies emergent strategic action in two case study settings. There is no discrete literature review; relevant research is addressed in analysis of theory, discourse and policy. Chapter three, examines the theoretical bases for curriculum development and assessment strategies. Chapter four, identifies competing discourses and illustrates debates relevant to this field of research. Chapter five critiques government policy regarding H.E. practice in three crucial areas; institutional finance, administration of assessment and design of pedagogic structure. Chapter six, findings, dismantles and describes a strategic relational space constituted by curriculum development in the form of an organisational matrix. Chapter seven, a discussion of findings, recommendations and future research in this field, completes the thesis.

One: Methods and methodology

The thesis proposal suggested that there are prima facie grounds for supposing that H.E. institutions that engage in significant academic research activity are oriented differently to those that follow a policy of close engagement with industry in their approach to curriculum development. The aim was to identify and describe strategies, apparent in curriculum development, and to ask how institutional policy shapes practice.

This chapter outlines the rationale for the research and details methods adopted for data collection and the methodological approach to analysis. An examination of theories of recontextualisation constitutes the theoretical basis for this research. SAM, which is used to facilitate the dismantling, description and organisation of data representing strategic action in curriculum development practice, is addressed in detail.

The project adopts a qualitative research approach drawing on guidance from authors such as Cresswell (2009, 2013), Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2007) Crotty (2009) and Robson (2002). Mixed methods were adopted for data collection; interviews with participants, observation of validation meetings and accessing relevant documents, provide three differing perspectives on the empirical settings.

In addition, authors such as Dowling and Brown (2010a) were used to support research and analysis based on SAM. Case study methods drew on Yin (2009, 2012, 2004), Stake (1995), Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013), Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) and Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000). The approach to interviews was informed by specialist guidance from researchers such as Brinkman and Kvale (2007; 2014), Seidman (1998) and Hockey and Forsey (2012). Development of a research strategy focused on course development processes as an empirical setting where strategic responses to policy demands might be revealed in practice.

The primary data source consisted of unstructured interviews with participants in course development. Those directly involved include practitioner academics, H.E. administrators and senior managers together with representatives of

industry stakeholder interest, accreditation agencies.⁵ A primary factor in choosing to conduct unstructured interviews with all participants was mitigation of the risk of projecting a personal perspective on the interviewee. This also reflected Hockey and Forsey's view that interviews have a crucial role in a study of institutional culture. A fixed format with standard questions would be unduly constraining.

The approach to interviews also drew on Dowling and Brown who favour the term, unstructured interviews but with the caveat that "*...there can be no such thing as an unstructured interview. The interviewer will bring some agenda ...and will generally impose some theoretical agenda*" ((Dowling & Brown 2010a; 78). They acknowledge that the prime concern of the interviewer might be to explore the world from the perspective of the interviewee and to construct an understanding of how the interviewee makes sense of their experiences, as is the case here. This method allowed for the identification strategic response to multiple policy actions regulating curriculum development practice.

Selection of Interviewees to represent perspectives on curriculum development included all personnel in both sites of research directly involved in the process of writing the courses. Key staff involved in preliminary discussions and validation were also included. Early data analysis prompted the expansion of research to include Heads of Quality Assurance departments and administrators who manage validation and assessment as courses were developed. Interviews regarding institutional policy were also conducted with the Dean of School or Faculty. Accreditation focused on representatives of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) directly involved in accrediting media courses.

Observation of validation meetings as sites of interaction of multiple stakeholder and policy-oriented perspectives provided a second data source. Observations were conducted at internal validation meetings at both institutions and a combination of detailed note taking during meetings and contemporaneous

⁵ See Appendix 1, page 161, for details of interviewees, their position in their institution and role in curriculum development, wider responsibilities and prior experience together with a short statement regarding the ethical approach to this research.

notes written immediately afterwards constituted field notes. A key benefit to this approach is described by Yin as allowing researchers to “...retain the holistic, and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin 2009; 4). Schofield (2000) highlights the necessity of “describing cultures and institutions as they typically are...” (Schofield 2000; 77) for policy makers if they are to make informed decisions.

Robson speaks about the approach as a way of “getting close to the reality of social phenomena” (Robson 2002; 188). Cohen, Manion and Morrison identify the approach as potentially providing ontological authenticity, “...a fresh and more sophisticated understanding of a situation... making the familiar strange” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007; 136). This ethnographic approach was particularly important given the research focus on the interaction of multiple policies in the process of curriculum development. Field notes recording discussion of the merits and application of multiple institutional policies offered a different perspective on the process than that provided by individual interviewees.

Data for analysis was collated in text form. Due to their duration and number, interviews were recorded and professionally transcribed then checked and amended by hand. Field notes provided a record of observations. Research and development material and course documents presented to validation committees for both courses was accessed. This material provided context to the discussions, particularly regarding internal research on the position in the H.E market the courses occupied and relations to industry. It provided background to internal policy positions on student recruitment, potential pathways to graduate employment and the external accreditation of courses.⁶

Data analysis used techniques drawn from Grounded Theory developed by Glazer and Strauss (1967) and later by others (Charmaz, 2006; Dowling & Brown, 2010a; B. Glaser, 1996, 1998). Charmaz provides a comprehensible guide grounded theory techniques applied including initial and secondary or

⁶ Data regarding the articulation of important policy positions is not quoted directly. To ensure confidentiality, it has been paraphrased. The sense and purport of utterances is maintained.

focused coding, memo writing and, particularly significant for this analysis, theoretical sampling moving to theoretical saturation.

Theoretical sampling entailed making early decisions concerning the expansion of the research plan on the basis of preliminary analysis of data from initial interviews and observations. This facilitated the separation of data into categories. The development of categories that “*crystallize participants experience...*” becomes relevant in an “*...analytic framework that makes implicit processes and structures visible*” (Charmaz 2006; 54).

The research project began with interviews with academics primarily engaged with authoring a new course. Initial analysis prompted interviews with senior media department managers which. The scope then broadened to include the Quality Assurance departments, which had been considered as an option in early planning and rejected as peripheral to the core research into recontextualisation of practice principles. Finally, in terms of research directly associated with the empirical setting, representatives of accreditation agencies were included.

Theoretical sampling was used to elaborate and refine categories in a process of conceptual and theoretical development; “*...it is not about representing a population or increasing statistical generalizability of results*” (Charmaz 2006; 100). Conceptualisation of coding was in accordance with principles that distinguish between the theoretical and empirical domains; “*...statements within the former are abstractions with respect to situations within the latter*” (Dowling & Brown 2010; 151). This distinction is of critical importance in this analysis. The move from the empirical to the abstract in coding and what was learned from that process showed that it was necessary to dismantle and describe the strategic relationship between the empirical setting, curriculum development process and practice, and the realm of policy, the empirical field.

Charmaz notes that “*categories are saturated when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of core theoretical categories*” (Charmaz 2006; 113). Theoretical saturation was achieved when data, in the form of public domain documents, academic

research papers, policy documents and Acts of Parliament together with supporting green papers and guidance, was accessed to facilitate policy analysis.

Government policy regarding H.E. generally, is expressed in a series of Education Acts since 1992 together with supporting policy papers. Documents from the QAA such as the “*Quality Code for Higher Education*” (2017) and the subject benchmark statement for *Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies* (2016), that regulate curricula development and assessment strategies were accessed. Government policy for media education, specifically, is exemplified by the establishment of the creative industries policy framework and the promotion of employer interests through PSRB’s and National Occupational Standards (NOS) adopted by accreditation agencies such as Creative Skillset. This data was organised into three categories, institutional assessment in H.E., the application of theory in the curriculum development process and government policy regarding H.E. finance and accreditation.

The general theoretical basis for analysis

Analysis of case study data focused on the identification of strategies emergent from the development of curricula and the administration of assessment. Coding and analysis involved conceptualisation in dialogue with the organisational language of Social Activity Method (SAM). The general theoretical position of this research argues that recontextualisation is the primary factor in curriculum development for media practice courses.

This general theoretical stance was first applied in this field in “*Scriptwriting as Pedagogy*” (Colwell, 2014) a paper on media practice pedagogy. That study drew on Chevallard (1988) who advanced the philosophically-based Theory of Didactic Transposition which establishes a distinction between curriculum development and the construction and implementation of pedagogic strategies. First, it shows that translating a practice contingent on one social context to something to be taught must result in a transformation of the practice. Chevallard argues that;

...there must be a body of knowledge organised coherently in and of itself and in relation to a process by which people who do not know some knowledge will be made to learn it, and thereby come to know it (Chevallard 1988; 6).

Media practice principles are recontextualised as a corpus of 'knowledge to be taught' to students. However, this knowledge, as it is effectively used by practitioners; "...comes enshrouded in a specific environment, characteristic of the uses made of it, within which it is so to speak entangled in haphazard combinations" (Chevallard 1988, 8). Chevallard identifies a second recontextualising move to 'knowledge that is actually taught' as a separate and distinct aspect of the process.

However, Chevallard's philosophical distinction does not provide a mechanism for showing how political, social and cultural perspectives, deployed in the choices that are made when media practice is translated to education, can be recognised. The study also drew on the work of Bernstein, (1975, 2000) who, with the development of the Pedagogic Device, sought to establish rules of recontextualisation in education. As Bernstein notes, the struggle for domination is evident in government attempts to reduce the relative autonomy of educational institutions over the construction of pedagogic discourse.

Bernstein argues that pedagogic discourse is constructed by recontextualising principles that selectively "*appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to create its own order*" (Bernstein 2000; 33). Pedagogic discourse is generated by a recontextualising discourse and recontextualising functions become means by which pedagogic discourse is created. Bernstein defines pedagogic discourse

...as a rule, which embeds two discourses; a discourse of skills... and a discourse of social order... control establishes legitimate communications and power establishes legitimate relations between categories. Thus, power constructs relations between and control relations within given forms of interaction (Bernstein 2000; 5).

Bernstein moves on to establish recontextualising fields that represent official government policy and a pedagogic field constituted by teachers, managers and administrators in educational institutions, academic researchers and other stakeholders. Bernstein suggests that his pedagogic device provides the “intrinsic grammar” of pedagogic discourse;

...distributive rules regulate the relationships between power and social groups... recontextualising rules regulate the formation of specific pedagogic discourse... evaluative rules constitute any pedagogic practice. Any specific pedagogic practice is there for one purpose: to transmit criteria (Bernstein 2000; 28).

An essential component of Bernstein’s discourse argues that power and control are analytically differentiated and operate at different levels of analysis. Empirically, they are embedded in each other;

Power relations in this perspective create boundaries, legitimise boundaries, reproduce boundaries, between different categories of groups, gender, class, race, different categories of discourse, different categories of agents (Bernstein 2000; 5).

Boundaries, produced by power relations, according to Bernstein, insulate categories of discourse thus maintaining the principles of their social division of labour; *“the dislocation in the potential flow of discourse is crucial to the specialisation of any category”* (Bernstein 1996; 19 – 20). This theoretical conception establishes power relations as walls that can separate discourses.

Dowling disputes Bernstein’s conceptualisation of boundaries in pedagogic and other relations. A classroom wall is a punctuation in physical space, not curricula subjects; *“...a strongly classified curriculum is achieved by strategies that – at any given level of analysis – specialise the various contents”* (Dowling 2009; 79). Dowling focuses on the empirical and the identification of strategies emergent from the interplay of discourses. His general methodology, constructive description, conceives *“...the empirical world as being divided by the analyst to constitute theoretical and empirical texts”* (Dowling 2009; 86).

Dowling describes the fundamental difference between his approach and that of Bernstein who;

...seems to want to produce a theoretical system that is a model of what might metaphorically be described as the consciousness of society. My own project is less ambitious. I am simply trying to manufacture a machine that will help me to organise what I see. In order to move between levels of analysis – say between the analysis of conversation and the analysis of school practices (move 1) and the analysis of state policy (move 2) ... I simply reapply the same conceptual framework, generating indicators that are appropriate to the new level (Dowling 2009; 86).

In other words, the organisational language of SAM has a fractal quality which means that it can be deployed at different levels of analysis.

Recontextualisation, in Dowling's language, is more generalisable than Bernstein's. Its focus is an *“empirical analysis of the productivity of recontextualisation that enables the constructive description of the recontextualising activity”* (Dowling 2009; 87). SAM permits the description of what happens when one socially located practice regards another. It allows the description of a transaction between empirical data and a fundamental theoretical principle that *“...the sociocultural consists of the strategic formation, maintenance, and destabilising of alliances and oppositions which describe emergent regularities of practice”* (Dowling 2009; 43). An activity is always a form of alliance that must establish itself to some degree and in some respects in opposition to any activity that it faces.

“Alliances describe subject positions... what may be thought, said or done and by whom” (Dowling 2009; 43). Alliances and oppositions are emergent on the entirety of social action and are not necessarily the conscious outcomes of individual actions. This approach constitutes the theoretical sensitivity or conceptual regard of this thesis. It is the basis for the organisation of policy as a rationalising regard, recontextualising another strongly institutionalised practice as an instance of itself, observable in an empirical setting.

A study of student acquisition and embodiment of recontextualised practice principles is conditional on being able to dismantle and describe the social construction of a students' learning environment. Emphasis on the empirical means we cannot ignore the key element; the transmitter must constitute discourse that is accessible to an acquirer. This is achieved when the transmitter casts a gaze beyond its practice and recontextualises another practice that is distinct from itself, so that it conforms to its own principles.

The “*Sociology of Mathematics Education*” introduced Social Activity Theory, [later developed as SAM], and the descriptive language of SAM as an analytical tool for dismantling sociocultural, educational settings. The empirical setting for that work was school mathematics and mathematical textbooks but Dowling claimed that constructive description is “... of far more general applicability in sociological work. Their generalisability can... extend beyond the empirical space – school mathematics – and beyond the analysis of pedagogic texts” (Dowling 1998; 2). This general applicability, expressed as schema or organisational matrices, enables the dismantling and description of actions and their relationships within specific sociocultural settings.

SAM organises social activity in terms of a relational space where stabilities and instabilities of social action can be mapped. SAM's language of constructive description, expressed as schema, organisational matrices, allows for a description of actions and their relationships within a specific sociocultural setting. The Domains of Action Schema (DAS) is often the most useful (Fig. 1).

	Content (signifieds)	
Expression (signifiers)	I+	I-
I+	Esoteric Domain	Descriptive Domain
I-	Expressive Domain	Public Domain

I+/- represents strong/weak institutionalisation

Fig. 1. Domains of Action (Dowling 2009; 206)

Strength of institutionalisation in expression and content, the regularity of sense-making practice, is used to establish the four domains. The Esoteric Domain represents strongly institutionalised practice. It generates a Public

domain, weakly institutionalised practice. The Expressive Domain, deploying metaphor for example, and Descriptive Domain, subject specific content pointing outside the practice, provide discursive pathways between the public and the esoteric domains. This is simply a form of organising discourse represented by data according to evident governing principles. If the activity is associated with teaching and learning it becomes a pedagogic domain of action.

Practices may also be distinguished in terms of “...*the extent to which strategies are deployed that establish or tend to establish discursively available principles*” (Dowling 2009; 270). Here, classification of aspects of a practice accords with the degree to which its principles are linguistically accessible. High discursive saturation principles (DS+) tend to be explicit, readily and textually articulated. Low discursive saturation principles (DS-) tend to be tacit and associated with personal or propositional knowledge or expertise. A distinction might be made between principles of practice and learning the rules of the game in which those principles are applied. For example, all media competencies are a combination of explicit and tacitly expressed principles that are acquired in practice over time and integrated or embodied by the practitioner.

This research looks at a number of discrete practices that contribute to curriculum development; recontextualisation of media practice principles, administration of assessment policy, institutional governance regarding finance and recruitment of students. The realm of social action for these practices constitutes, in a DAS, a public domain. The principles of constructing an assessment framework, for example, will be strongly institutionalised according to policy applied to H.E. generally and interpreted locally. Institutional assessment policy constructs an esoteric domain that constitutes a public domain of assessment administration practice. Compliance with or dissent from esoteric domain principles are apparent in expressive and / or descriptive domain action.

Mythologization

The DAS schema assists in organising the relationship between policy and practice so that it becomes more transparent. It also allows us to interrogate the

integrity of esoteric domain principles in relation to public domain action which brings us to mythologization. One of the most significant modes of mythologization, for this research, is the myth of participation.

In the *“Sociology of Mathematics Education”* (1998) Dowling examines the myth of participation in relation to school mathematics. It makes claims to a unity of culture which is incomplete without mathematics. Settings must exhibit a strong non-mathematical utility modality, that is, *“...they must make a strong claim to a non-mathematical reality which they faithfully represent. Failure in this regard would negate the claim to non-mathematical utility”* (Dowling 1998; 16).

A curriculum should seek to allow for student differences in experience, outlook and purpose when constructing pathways to learning and in assessment. SAM's descriptive language defines this mode of accommodation as exchange values in exchange action;

Pedagogic action constructs an author, an audience and privileged content in respect of which the principles of evaluation of texts or performances resides with the author. In exchange action evaluation resides with the audience (Dowling 2009; 84).

Exchange action accommodates internal, individual evaluation of learning within pedagogic activities, exchange values. In *“Scriptwriting as Pedagogy;”* I looked at a media practice course that incorporated the terms professionalism and commercialism in criteria for assessment of student learning. I argued that these terms were both undefined in relation to and not emergent from taught practice. Students were being required to regard their learning, contingent on recontextualised practice principles, through a lens that represented a subject position emergent from a different social context.

In this case the lack of definition of professionalism and the impossibility of replicating a commercial environment in an education setting suggested that the terms reflected policy demands rather than the assessment of learning contingent on recontextualised media practice. The myth of participation casts the novice or those not yet schooled as aberrant. The remedy is the provision of use values; *“Unlike exchange, the principle of use value is not differentiation but*

unification; tools must fit their purpose, any claim that the tools are generalizable is simply an extension of the domain..." (Dowling 1998; 16).

In "*Scriptwriting...*" I argued that the importation of the term commercialism as an assessment criterion made a claim to a unity of culture that is incomplete unless student learning is subject to its regard. I suggested that the descriptive domain of pedagogic activity was subject to the "*...mythologizing gaze of 'participation'; you must see the world 'like this'...*" (Colwell 2014; 120), in terms of an ideology. The myth of participation represents a policy regard that seeks to deny and supplant exchange values. Dowling describes his conception of the way in which one ideology 'views' another. He uses the term 'gaze';

... to refer to a mechanism, which de-locates and relocates, that is, recontextualises ideological expression and content. The result of such recontextualising is to subordinate the recontextualised ideology to the regulating principles of the recontextualising ideology. In other words, the recontextualised ideology is constituted as a virtual ideology and its subjects as virtual subjects, which is to say, as objects. This gaze is the device that produces myths... (Dowling 1998; 121).

Additional Schema

I use Dowling's "*Modes of Recontextualisation*" schema (Fig. 2), below, to look at competing regards in the relational interface between policy and H.E. practice;

	Recontextualised Practice	
Recontextualising Strategy	DS-	DS+
DS-	improvising	de-principling
DS+	rationalising	re-principling

Fig. 2. Modes of Recontextualisation (Dowling 2013; 329)

The schema "*...enables the analysis of the ways in which one activity – which might be school mathematics or social research or any empirically observed regularity of practice – recontextualises the practice of another...*" (Dowling 2013; 317). The "*Modes of Recontextualisation*" schema aids in dismantling and

describing a space where a recontextualising gaze is actualised. This move requires categorisation of the practices involved; that which regards and that which is regarded. Practices are described in terms of the degree to which its principles are available within the discourse. DS+ and DS- are used to categorise practices in relation to the social context from which they emerge and the social context that they regard.

SAM asserts a claim to a high degree of discursive saturation. The recontextualising strategy of this analysis is, therefore, doing one of two things; either it is a DS+ practice regarding a DS- practice in which case its mode is rationalising, the most common evidenced in this research, or it is a DS+ practice regarding another DS+ practice, re-principling. Dowling describes the category of a DS- regard of a DS- practice as improvising as “...*recruiting what is at hand in a semiotic or material construction or production*” (Dowling 2013; 330). SAM is different in its recontextualising gaze in that it claims that everything it sees is an instance of itself. It is this that enables its research subjectivity to re-map things relationally. SAM distances analysis from the mythologization being critiqued. It is explicitly rationalising or re-principling objects.

Lastly, I deploy Dowling’s *Modes of Authority Action* (Fig. 3.) schema to dismantle and describe instances of institutional claims to authority.

	Field of Practice	
Category of Author	Open	Closed
Closed	Charismatic	Traditional
Open	Liberal	Bureaucratic

Fig 3. (Fig 3.2. Modes of Authority Action (Dowling 2009; 53)

Authority is maintained by or ascribed to the authorial voice in pedagogic relations. This schema shows authority to be maintained / ascribed in terms of closure of the category of author and / or a closure of the category of practice. Charismatic authority strategies close the category of author, but the category of practice is open; only the self-appointed may speak. A traditional authority

closes both categories; only those qualified may speak on that for which they are qualified. Bureaucratic authority strategies open the category of author but close the category of practice: a holder of an office may speak in respect of the responsibility of that office. *“Liberal authority strategies leave both categories open, thus locating authority with the audience; this constitutes exchange relations”* (Dowling 2009; 268).

SAM helps to organise strategic action evident in empirical data and to facilitate movement between levels of analysis. Central to the utility of SAM is that it has the capacity to show a recontextualising gaze in relation to a practice. It allows for the description of empirical settings that prompt new ways of looking at them. In this case it dissolves the distinction between academic and governmental strategic action when we examine the regulation of H.E. practice. It is important to acknowledge that this analysis also represents a recontextualisation strategy: there is a principle of symmetry between this approach and those I critique. SAM schemas allow for the dismantling, description and organisation of a complex and, hitherto, opaque relational space.

Two: Analysis

How do strategies emergent in curriculum development for media practice, reveal the interaction of multiple policy regards?

This chapter presents data analysis from two case studies. Each, was considered separately and is reported sequentially. Analysis identifies strategic responses, as part of curriculum development practice, to institutional policy by academics, administrators and managers. It illustrates strategic relationships between multiple policy regards and curriculum development and assessment practices.

H.E. institutional policy regulates curriculum development and administration of assessment. Curricula are required to represent contemporary industry practice and facilitate student access to practice principles and skills and pathways to employment. Curricula must conform to academic evaluation requirements. Government policy regulating institutional participation in a H.E. market generates strategic responses in recruitment and marketing practices. Government policy also regulates relationships between H.E. and media industries.

Statements included in analysis are chosen because they represent perspectives, commentaries on curriculum development from the position of participants. Analysis is concerned with identification of strategic positioning within the process of curriculum development. It does not make any claim to reveal the reality of practice and process nor is it concerned with micro-political relationships.

Case Study X (CSX)

Case study X concerns the revalidation of an existing and successful BA (hons) practice-based course, identified, to ensure anonymity, as Media Production. It is part of a wider re-validation of existing courses in the faculty including, again anonymised, Media Studies course. The Head of Media and the Programme Leader collaborated on authorship. Oversight was provided by the institutions' validation system in compliance with its quality code. A wider authorial group

included faculty management and administrators from the Quality Assurance department who monitor institutional policy regarding pedagogy and assessment in course development. The Head of Media provided context for the work undertaken

...at the moment I'm working on a revalidation of an existing [media production] course, and media studies course. ...what I'm trying to do is to take a course which is very traditionally [media studies], and is quite suspicious of practice and, in terms of growing the numbers ...making it attractive to the market, looking at how professional practice and the ability for students to make films can be brought into that (IX3).

While this analysis focuses on the revalidation of the media production course the relationship with media studies is important. In the social context of media practiced outside the academy theory is emergent from and integrated in practice. The text highlights the strategy of detaching media theory, media or cultural studies, from media practice, the production course, applied to the recontextualisation of media practice principles in the academy.⁷ The separation of theory and practice appears quite profound; media studies is suspicious of practice.

A process recontextualisation, at faculty level or above, appears to have resulted in an institutional policy that requires a decoupling of media theory and practice in curriculum development. A theoretical construct that, ideally, assists efforts to comprehend media practice at different levels of analysis, appears to be reified as a strict separation. The term decoupling is applied, in this analysis, to describe an apparent rationalisation of media practice and its subordination to a cultural theory perspective in assessment of learning.

The strategic relationship described in the text can be dismantled and described using a DAS (Fig. 1). The public domain of curriculum development practice is, apparently, constituted by esoteric domain principles that require the detachment of theory and practice. To sustain and expand the media studies

⁷ See The theory / practice split and cultural studies page 102

course, injecting an element of practice is seen as making it attractive to potential applicants in the marketplace. This move establishes a new esoteric domain, augmented by two additional rationalising regards; recruitment policy and marketing policy.

Within the overarching context of the separation of theory and practice the strategic response to the problem is not to integrate theory and practice, which would require pedagogic action in the descriptive domain, but to add an element of media practice as an inducement in the expressive domain. Recruitment is, apparently, enhanced by the allure of making but what effect does this have on the pedagogic structure? Is media studies untouched by the introduction of an external, arguably dominant, strategic perspective, marketisation of H.E?

The application of a DAS allows for the dismantling and, crucially, provides an alternative vocabulary to describe and make transparent, a strategic relationship. Since the introduction of fees and their increase after the Browne Report (2010) institutional financial requirements as well as academic suitability is a major factor in recruitment policy.⁸ This is apparent in the new curriculum for media studies. A senior manager describes the position;

Universities now are mostly delegated financial responsibility in terms of money in and money out ...this is how many students you've got, how much money you've got, and you recruit... you let staff go. It is very, very focused around the money in, money out which it didn't use to be. ...I can see month by month whether each division is operating and balancing its spreadsheet. It's a very different kind of style of financial management, very much more business, a strong business headed approach. (IX1)

The effect of government policy on H.E. finance which in turn effects institutional recruitment strategy is apparent. The increase in fees matched by the removal of centrally regulated grants has a transformative effect on H.E. institutional practice. One outcome of this change is the increased focus on the establishment and maintenance of a revenue stream expressed in an emphasis on recruitment in course development;

⁸ See Mythologization, regulation and market purity page 122

...it is driven by applied vocational agenda and... [a] quite in-depth skills agenda... You can specialise very early on in the cycle. Philosophically I recognise the dangers of that, I think anyone who has got their eyes open does but in terms of the practicalities of it, the business, the £27,000... what is markedly attractive are those more vocational and applied courses, at least in terms of the profile of this university (IX1).

An applied vocational approach suggests that it provides an environment for individual learning that is directly, if not immediately, applicable in an industry setting. Also, applied vocationalism has the benefit of seeming an unambiguous pathway to employment, at least in terms of marketing. Caveats are clearly articulated but the counter-argument is not educational, but financial. Vocational and applied courses are attractive and come with a £27k per year price tag.

Media studies sits within the overarching applied vocational strategic framework, but it retains its core, academic perspective, reclassifying media production so that its reality accords with the rationalising regard of cultural studies. The breach in the, supposed, boundary by elements of practice, described above, evidences, I suggest, tension between different policy perspectives; pedagogic and financial. They shape strategy emergent in recontextualisation of media practice in the department.

The media production course also inhabits the public domain of departmental curriculum development. In this case practice is dominant. Again, we see that the theory / practice split is, potentially, problematic.

... [media production], which is far and away our biggest course, what we're doing with that is, we're deciding to run pathways, rather than just have the one size fits all degree. ...there is a real demand out there for students, particularly if you've got the budget for some high-end gear to focus on being pretty proficient in that. We thought, okay, we're going to get a new facility, we can't just refresh the programme, updating modules, we need to look at a completely different way of delivering it. (IX3).

The outgoing media production course was organised according to genre; drama, factual, studio multi-camera production or single camera location filming

provides a rationale for selecting and distributing practice principles to be taught. The concept of pathways, selecting aspects of media practice to form a category of skill, is presented as a response to industry change, an apparent industry desire for specialists, and the emergence of a new kind of technologically adept applicant.

...if a student comes to us and they're posting on YouTube and Vimeo, they're effectively developing an idea, writing, editing, shooting. They do the pre-production, the editing. They're working with some second screens... they're not even thinking, necessarily, purely of film, they're thinking of some sort of artefact they can do on multi-modal platforms (IX3).

This text articulates a conceptualisation of a media active student. It cites the spread of affordable technology outside professionalised media and constructs an ideal prospective student, comfortable with new media techniques and innovative in practice. This rationale regards media practice as ubiquitous and, ostensibly, open to all.

...they come already knowing how to make a film, but they don't really. So, we need to harness that, because we like to take people who are writers and photographers, because it's a rich seam to mine, you know... they may need some more work with editing, they may need some more work with some technology. Once we've got them all to a similar level, then the second year, they all make choices, so there will be a pathway in cinematography, a pathway in writing / directing / producing. This will be our main strand, we reckon most students will do that. But, the third strand is editing and post-production... (IX3)

Applicants are cast as virtually adept, people who lack vital experience that can be provided by recontextualised media practice in the academy. They are categorised according to an idealised model of technological and creative aptitude. This accords with a reading of industry development that favours technical specialism that establishes clear boundaries between areas of practice.

We are getting new staff, people who are responsible for the individual pathways, so we'll be having a completely different way of working. We're also talking to Skillset, because we want to go for Skillset accreditation, and we're talking to industry partners as well, to see what they think. The feedback we're getting is good... (IX3)

Using a DAS, the strategic organisation of curricula at course level, can be dismantled and described. Esoteric domain principles for both outgoing and new courses represent an applied vocational rationale for recontextualising media production practice. The approval of industry partners is noted, and Skillset accreditation is actively encouraged. Skillset represents an important policy perspective, which accords with overarching government policy regarding relations between media industries and the academy.⁹

An applied vocational policy shapes the formation of esoteric domain principles. It is arguable that departmental, pedagogic, esoteric domain principles are unchanged even though the prior course adopted a genre-based approach. Adoption of a pathway format moves away from recontextualisation according to genre and substitutes technical specialisation as a dominant rationalising perspective. The difference is that the validity of recontextualised practice is now associated with technology; the prior ethos is abandoned. However, the move initiates potential disjunction in student learning and assessment.

So, the nightmare that we have, although it's a good nightmare, you know, is how do these pathways work, to give students the basics, and the grounding that they all need, but to allow them operationality, collaboration in the pathways (IX3).

Difficulty arising from establishing boundaries between aspects of practice is acknowledged. Media practices, even those that might be considered most technically specialised, are contingent on tacit as well as explicit principles of practice and shared principles of recognition across multiple aspects of media

⁹ See Mythologization and learning page 127.

practice. Delineation of function in media practice pedagogy does not establish boundaries in the workplace.

The pathway strategy appears to favour proximity to industry, but its social construction produces potential dislocation in students' creative / learning practice; a nightmare to be managed by academics. The action is pedagogic, not exchange. Exchange action accommodates internal, individual evaluation of learning within pedagogic activities; principles of evaluation reside with the audience. However, strategic action to promote exchange action is constrained, I suggest, by the dominance of a decoupling strategy at faculty level which produces a delimiting strategy at curriculum development level.

The specialism pathway illustrates not only the complexity of the process of recontextualising media practice as pedagogy but also the need to provide institutional procedures to address disjunctions when they occur. What, apart from an applied vocational agenda, lies behind the emergence of this strategy? Interpretation of industry labour power needs and, indeed, industry culture seems clear in the development of the course.

The media production course reflects government policy which, effectively, seeks to maintain the current organisation of media businesses and hierarchies. This is contingent on a view of future development of media industries located in technological change and concomitant effects on business models and media practices. The characterisation of the ideal applicant as a digital native, also contributes to the sense of conceptual stability. However, difficulties with identifying industry labour power requirements and their interpretation in relation to the needs and rights of students produces a degree of tension;

I was ...with a guy who worked in design, and I said, what do you require?
And, he actually said, team work, ...that stereotype of the, sort of... we need team work, and all of this. Of course, that isn't really what universities are about, I mean, we're not just churning out people ready for employment. I mean, obviously, that is a key thing that we do ...but it can't be our reason for being (IX3)

A vague position on what industry needs from H.E. accords with employer representative commentary in supporting documents for the establishment of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).¹⁰ It is answered by an observation that the primary function of Universities is not solely “*churning out people ready for employment.*” Here, policy for industry requirements is opposed by an assertion of academic independence. It implies concern for student needs and rights.

...people are making decisions about university now... it's going to cost me so much money, maybe I should just get a job, because I'll have three years earning potential. It seems to me a dreadful decision to have to make... But, let's assume that university is something that a lot of people over 18 aspire to, what are we giving them, other than training them, and are we training them in what they need? (IX3).

Tensions in the relationship between academics, university applicants, industry and government are expressed as anxiety regarding the appropriateness of what H.E. offers students. The question as to whether opting for a university education is viable in financial terms is qualified by the academic as “*dreadful.*” The question as to whether education should be regarded as a commodity is implicit. Does adherence to industry and government policy demands provide students with what they need to prosper in their post-graduation work?

...it's actually a conundrum, that I don't think we've really addressed ...you know one of the fashionable statements floating around in universities at the moment is, we need ... to lead industry. This idea that, I mean, we've always effectively followed industry, in a way, or thought, are we offering what industry wants, but now we're meant to be leading industry. (IX3).

The description of the academy / media business service relationship produces a counteracting position; leading rather than following industry. But, how does this fit with an applied vocational approach to curriculum development and the financial requirements of the institution?

¹⁰ See Mythologization and Learning page 127

It [media production] used to be a cheap course... Teaching happened in the classroom... Film making typically involved a short documentary... competition increases around that sort of thing. ...students start to get 'bickery;' you haven't even got a studio, so I don't want to come here. Your only kind of half practice, at best, so they'd rather go somewhere with more process (IX4).

Student perceptions of a course and its negative implications for recruitment and retention drive institutional responses. Here, an interpretation of the practical dimension of industry labour power needs, delineated practitioner function and technology, is strongly reflected in recontextualisation of practice. The previous view on curricula clearly held that media practice courses could, should, accord with genre, not technical specialism, and, although concerned with a technologically rich industry, need not be expensive. But, institutional finance / recruitment policy has led to significant capital investment in state-of-the-art facilities.

So, we recently got a studio and expensive flash cameras... that in itself produced the impetus for this because you need courses that can make use of those facilities... Now, you have to teach colour grading, because the camera is shooting in this, kind of, flat format, and if you don't colour grade it's no good to you. And, that just, sort of, provides another impetus to become more industry, in the delivery and the skill sets" (IX4)

Institutional capital investment is focused on hardware and sustaining recruitment in defence of its financial position. New, expensive kit provides impetus to closely follow industry in delivery and skill base. It accords with an applied vocational strategy and it introduces an additional set of policy principles to the esoteric domain that constitutes the public domain of curriculum development. It also raises questions about the status of academic structures and financial investment underpinning curriculum development.

CSX data shows that there is strong agreement among staff and management regarding the structuring of the new course. This does not mean that there are no concerns. Accommodation of the theory / practice split in course

development is one; unification implied by the specialism pathway strategy is another.

...in about 2008, we made a really big leap, and we, basically, decided we would get rid of the big lectures, we were doing nobody any favours, and that we would use our own theoretical input. But, that created some issues, which we're still dealing with, which was, where do we put the theory, do we distribute it, and if it's distributed, where is it really being taught... and, this validation is dealing with this last conundrum... we do have specific theory modules in there, not many of them (IX3).

Mirroring the revalidation of Media Studies which requires a practice element to recruit, Media Practice struggles to incorporate theory in the curriculum. Crucially, it is seen as separate to, not emergent from, practice. A decoupling strategy activated at executive level establishes a delimiting strategy at faculty level. However, even though CSX data shows that technical specialisation in delineated pathways define the course, an expansion strategy emerges from attempts to ameliorate difficulties that are associated with specialisation;

...we're offering them a research project, and they still have to do a written piece of work, but they'll do much more practical research, a case study, you know, something in the industry (IX3).

Inserting case study research into the programme is of a different order to representing theory as a separate discourse in a practice curriculum. It draws on academic, empirical research practice to provide a foundation for the development of theory. The promise of vocational media practice education is that will allow access to principles of recognition despite the impossibility of reproducing the social context of their emergence. Social research practice might facilitate individual student access to complex media practice principles. Arguably it represents the creation of a small space where exchange action can be accommodated.

Multiple policies are activated simultaneously and, potentially, produce instability in the curriculum. Development strategy favours proximity to industry but to what extent is the degree of commitment contingent on financial and

recruitment policy and the applied vocational agenda? Theory and practice are detached but a suture is attempted using practice from a different social context. Specialisation disturbs pedagogic requirements for student collaboration. Accreditation is strongly favoured, but not without misgivings;

... the new Vice Chancellor is very keen on it ...I didn't think we had anything to lose, I think it's a lack that we have. I'm aware that there's all sorts of intrusions that happen. But, by involving Skillset at the point where we're developing the course that seems to make sense to me. Because, if they're interested in what we're doing, you know, it seems to me it's a win/win. ...they're not saying to me, oh you've got to get rid of that, you've got to get rid of this, they're not saying, we don't like it. So, I'm thinking, okay, that sounds good to me... of course, if they came back and said, you can't do this, you can't do that, that might be more of an issue because, actually, we believe in what we're doing. (IX3).

The interest of the accreditation agency is regarded as benign but there is no clear analysis of the strategic regard that would be imported into the curriculum development process until the end of the statement. However, support is qualified; the limit of accreditation is reached if it impinges on decisions regarding selection and distribution. A sharper critique is articulated by a senior manager;

I'm keen to engage and I will have conversations with Creative Skillset, BJTC [Broadcast Journalism Training Council] for example but I wouldn't let them dictate. I am not convinced that I need them as much as they need me. ...I am uncomfortable with trying to fit my course into what I think is pretty backwards looking, potentially quite backwards looking accreditation so I think we need to lead. ...employers don't know what they want in five years-time. It's our job to take a step back and actually look at the way things are going and visualise what the skills are (IX1)

Accreditation represents a backward-looking viewpoint seeking to maintain the status quo. Forward thinking and visualisation of what industry labour power needs will be, is reserved for the academy. This is an argument about competing strategies to control what constitutes legitimate media practice in the

academy and the purpose of student learning. I suggest that these texts represent a tacit acknowledgement that accreditation, as a manifestation of a governmental policy regard of curricula and pedagogy, represents an appropriation strategy.¹¹

Tension between competing strategic viewpoints is also apparent to those charged with administering institutional policy on assessment of student learning;

...the new corporate strategy ... was about keeping the stakeholders happy... to produce graduates that went out and supported their sector... but they also took the next step. They moved that sector on by being more creative.... I thought, well those two things are in tension ...if you're trying to develop these people to go over and beyond what those employers want, because they're breaking ground, they're doing the next new thing and everything else, then it might be that the employers look at your course and think bloody hell why are you doing that? ...there's a massive tension, isn't there? (IX6).

Strategic regards of accreditation agencies are consistent with attitudes deemed outmoded and unhelpful by IX1, but, institutional policy is set at an executive level and that favours compliance with government policy regarding the level and status of employer involvement. But actualisation of accreditation policy must be regulated by institutional policy on assessment of student learning, which is where discord and tension, not only that identified by IX6, emerges.

Departments in H.E. institutions that interpret and administer the QAA "*Quality Code for Higher Education*" (2017) come under a variety of titles but generally Quality will be part of it. Student learning measured in terms of progression within a degree award structure is central to assessment policy; "*Degree awarding bodies state clearly the level of achievement required in order for students to progress from one stage to another within their programme of study...*" (QAA 2017; B 23). Guidelines insist that how assessment results are

¹¹ See Mythologization and Learning page 127

used in progression should be made clear. Part of that clarity comes with the application of subject benchmark statements which form the basis for establishing learning outcomes.

...you look to your subject benchmark statements from the QAA, you look to your field, you look to your stakeholders, you look to peer group, around what other courses are the same as yours, and then when you design your course, you look at level. ... you've got pitch your modules accordingly, you've got to get your curriculum right. That's sector-led any way, what a course should look like. I don't think we are overly prescriptive, and we are flexible where we can be (IX6).

However, flexibility in assessment strategy is constrained by further institutional policy requirements. In addition to QAA guidance and benchmarking, teaching, learning and assessment is structured according to a system of Outcome Based Teaching and Learning (OBTL).¹² In this system an Intended Learning Outcome (ILO) provides the basis for alignment of teaching and learning. While administrators strive to achieve flexibility, it may not seem that way to others involved in the process.

They're so rigid these documents that, in adhering to them, you are forced into a model that you might not even... I mean, they're not telling you how to teach it, but you're forced to argue something, which actually you would rather argue in a completely different way... (IX3)

The goal of the curriculum is to assist student access, acquisition and embodiment of principles of practice. Flexibility may be desirable but delimiting and decoupling strategies, arguably, represent academic priorities, to sustain a split between theory and practice in course development. Space for flexibility is carved out by pedagogic initiatives outside institutional frameworks and in strategic approaches to working within the framework.

...when you start, relatively junior people doing validations might get a little bit unhinged with the idea that they have to do XY and Z and sometimes ...commit in terms of the new paperwork when they don't need to. The real

¹² See Theory page 72.

work is done at modular level where the module brief is put together but the validation that will ... if you are smart you under commit, you make bold outcomes for the course and statements around what you want the students to be and how they need to work but you don't over commit each module.... (IX1).

Negotiation of this apparent discord is, data suggests, the lubricant that allows a degree of flexibility in the public domain of curriculum development practice. There is an apparent tacit recognition that policy principles that constitute the esoteric domain are not commensurable. The process of selection, sequencing, distribution and pacing already constrained by the theory / practice split is subject to multiple strategic demands that address executive level concerns.

However, the most powerful internal institutional strategic interest concerns assessment of student learning. Sustainability of the curriculum framework and its subject community is paramount; hence, I suggest, the general inflexibility of internal administration of assessment policy. The organisational language of SAM helps to describe the complexity of the empirical setting. A separate set of practices that regulate the assessment of student learning are constituted by an esoteric domain that is detached from curriculum development.

The QAA, as an institution, serves to establish esoteric domain principles that constitute the public domain practice of administering the assessment of student learning. The priority for a quality department, regarding curricula, is maintaining coherence and stability in an inherently unstable world. Its primary responsibility is not for pedagogy emergent from the recontextualisation of media practice or any other course content, but to preserve the integrity of academic awards.

However, the legislative basis for Quality administration of assessment as practice is not robust. It gives responsibility for quality assessment to funding councils who set up the QAA as an independent agency. It is independent from government and specific H.E. institutions, but it is owned by the sector; A senior administrator describes the structure, established under Section 70 of the 1992

Act and the tensions caused by recent government policy changes regarding the QAA;

...it is part of the sector and that's where the co-regulatory aspect comes in... it's their main function and from that function build other bits that it sits on and the role of the quality code, which was developed by QAA, its ownership is under debate as to where that sits because QAA have said they own it but if that's used for review what's that relationship? So, there are tensions around that, but the landscape is probably going through as many changes as it has, you know, these are potential changes that are probably as influential as say the 1992 thing (IX5).

The QAA is constituted under collective ownership by H.E. institutions. It promotes collective regulation of assessment policy and institutional administrative frameworks, but these are not guaranteed by statute. H.E. assessment as practice is central to the integrity of awards and therefore to the legitimacy and stability of every university. In effect, H.E. represents an agreement to operate under collectively established guidelines and a regulatory system that affords scope for independent institutional interpretation monitored by QAA.

... This is a fairly fundamental point in higher education's history what's going on at the moment because of so many different tensions. It's running in tandem to the work ...around the teaching excellence framework but there's clearly a crossover between what will be looked at in the two procedures and that's where the tensions are if you go to meetings (IX5)

Putting QAA oversight of university administration of quality guidelines out to competitive tender potentially produces instability throughout the system. Curriculum development is doubly affected by the parallel introduction of the TEF. However, a third policy strand is also operationalised.

Interviewer: The introduction of the Competition and Market Authority is a significant shift.

Respondent: "Yes. ...and how you interpret that and what that means and how much change you can make, it's restricting university businesses, people understand what the consequences are of that. I think there's quite a

lot of discussion about what that term 'customer' means. I think there's also quite a lot of research to say that students are quite savvy in that they understand those different relationships, I've worked quite a lot with the NUS, and they actually understand those different relationships, they understand a customer dimension to some of it and a partnership dimension and a co-creator and they can move across those relationships more easily that we give them credit for (IX5).

This text describes a fundamental change in government policy regarding H.E. The change in the relationship between universities and students as customers for services is acknowledged. The TEF, representing largely, employer perspectives and interests also produces tensions. However, this is set with the context of policy that destabilises the academic framework established under the auspices of the QAA, a system that is contingent on collaboration and agreement to abide by collectively established criteria.

...because there isn't this statutory basis... universities are autonomous, that means the award that they give is their award and they are responsible for that award, but as I just said, at QAA they don't do that in a vacuum, they have to do that within a framework, the UK quality code provides that framework... ((IX5).

Interviewee IX5 describes an intricate system of social interaction between QAA and universities that allows institutional autonomy and ensures the integrity of awards and policies that materially affect institutional practice regarding curricula, assessment and pedagogy. While this allows some room for flexibility and interpretation according to the requirements and ethos of each institution, some of this accommodation is evident and some is clandestine. Practitioners function according to actual and tacit agreements that seek to create a stable relational space for curriculum development in media courses.

A decoupling strategy is apparent in the separation of media studies and production courses. A delimiting strategy constitutes pedagogic pathways based on an interpretation of industry labour power needs located in technical and production specialism. However, the decoupling strategy operates at a

higher, managerial level in the institutional hierarchy and therefore shapes strategy emergent in curriculum development for media practice.

The complexity of strategic interplay, the difficulty in accommodating multiple, sometimes conflicting, demands is evidenced by tension regarding institutional policy on recruitment and accreditation. Executive level concern for financial security and industry stakeholder demands is evident in the university's capital investment strategy and promotion of external certification of courses.

At faculty level strategic approaches are more nuanced. Staff appear sensitive to the imposition of strategies that are not commensurable with established pedagogic and assessment practices. Attempts to reduce tension are evident in the attachment of a practice element to the film studies course to make it more marketable and academic research to address difficulties with student collaboration regarding specialism pathways. The overarching structure that guarantees the integrity of degree awards is, I suggest, fragile but effective. However, government policy, potentially, entails un-picking the stitches that hold everything in place.

CSX is clearly an industry facing institution. Does a more academic, research-based ethos provide a more defensible strategic response to policies that shape the practice of curriculum development? The outcome of curriculum development in the second case study is very different. The question is whether a different outcome is contingent on different strategies.

Case Study Y (CSY)

Case study Y concerns the development of a new BA (hons) Film course, an addition to an extensive portfolio of media practice and theory programmes. Management of the development process is open; a core group is formed around a single, lead author, but active participation was sought from interested parties, academics and leaders of other courses within the school.

Interpretation of industry labour power needs is central to the process. Conceptualisation of a likely applicant recognises recent technological

development. What has previously been the province of specialists is now open to a vastly increased sector of the population.

I think more and more students are coming in with a maturity that production is kind of... they do it, they're native to it. They've been doing it anyway. The idea of upscaling it and making it professional is kind of a bit ludicrous really, because they've got 3,000 followers on YouTube and in actual fact what they're here to do is to get a sense of positioning within the world... and where does their work sit within everything else? (IY3).

The conception of the media active student echoes the construction articulated in CSX data. The new course articulates the role of the academy as a provider of a sense of positioning for their work. It represents a pedagogic strategy that turns away from sustaining current media industry requirements and places emphasis on future industry development and leadership;

We quite clearly said that not only to work within industry but have an active role in shaping the look of the industry in the future and that isn't, this is how industry works and we must do it. It's having an open dialogue straightaway of two elements; this being how industry works as a roles and responsibilities, organisational structure, and film business is the idea of property. This is the story and then property (IY3).

Within this conceptualisation a new set of strategic perspectives and relationships begin to emerge. The interpretation of media industry labour power needs appears to be distanced from current government policy regarding the relationship between education and industry. Here, graduates are explicitly viewed as undertaking a transformative function. Emphasis is on business practices and their relationship to managing a creative process and marketing a product. Property, in media, refers to intellectual property (IP) and its commercial exploitation.

Its philosophy is actually more of a culture of testing and a culture of enquiry, a culture of empowering people through using these tools as self-expression to discover themselves, as opposed to, "This is where you come and learn everything that you need in order to get a job in industry (IY3).

The new course seeks to create a pathway for student access to media practice principles via a “*culture of enquiry and testing*.” It draws on academic research practices, specifically the concept of individual researcher reflection on their positioning regarding that which is studied. However, in the context of the film course its application is not focused on a dissertation or even the exercise of subject specific research skills. It focused, I suggest, on identifying principles of recognition associated with specific aspects of media practice.

This is a consequence of the emergent ethos; it follows from designing a course that seeks to produce graduates that “...*have an active role in shaping the look of the industry in the future...*” is a focus on aspects of media practice derived from an interpretation of “*how industry works*.” It is explicitly opposed to, “*This is where you come and learn everything that you need in order to get a job in industry*.” A contrast is made between the development of the film course and a large and successful, existing course identified, to ensure anonymity, as general media production (GMP).

Applying a DAS helps to clarify the shift in departmental level policy on the establishment of esoteric domain principles. GMP, the flagship course for the media school is a genre based, practical, general production course. It represents a delimiting strategy, familiar from CSX data. With the new film course, emphasis in selection, sequencing and distribution, is placed on aspects of media practice that are distanced from the practical.

One of the things we put very centrally in it is understand the business of film.... A strong business strand in it that is quite explicit... It has got a strong academic research base, because there is a great tendency for people to say it is almost all practical. Well that is not true... it has got a lower practical component than GMP. ...there are a couple of things on the film course, as it is currently conceived, including craft a specialisation as an option, and it is optional, they don't have to do any of that. Both of those features could equally sit in GMP. The point is they don't (IY1).

This represents a significant change in departmental strategy that appears to reject a long-standing orthodoxy. A delimiting strategy in curriculum development is associated, closely, with the theory / practice split and the

actualisation of a decoupling strategy at faculty level. Differentiation would, should according to my model, result in the development of a media studies course. Plainly it does not.

Emphasis on classification of aspects of practice associated with promoting commerce might be regarded as the antithesis of media and cultural studies. Nevertheless, although perspective and rationalisation are altered, the strategic regard is comparable. The association is apparent in the history of its emergence. The ethos of the Film course might suggest a considered departure from what has gone before. However, while that may be the case in comparison to existing courses on the faculty roster, the process of development is also subject to institutional financial policy.

So, the university was looking at expansion. The film thing comes back, they have having the film conversation again. I initially looked, when it first came in, because I knew they were looking at film, I looked at the numbers and looked at what was elsewhere... So, I came to the conclusion that we can recruit to this without overly cannibalising what we have got" (IY1)

"...it is numbers, but it's like why aren't we doing Film? ... All of a sudden someone in marketing or the executive team turned 'round and said, "There's a demand here, so why aren't we doing it?" So, the conversation starts" (IY3).

Financial policy at CSY is directed at increasing student numbers. A critical aspect of the expansion strategy is to develop a new course that would not attract applicants from the pool already well served by existing courses, in particular GMP. Initial discussion focused on differentiation;

...there were ...philosophical concerns about what do we mean by film and what is the distinction between film and television? There was the school of thought that said there isn't any, and one of the options on the table was to extend [GMP] into a film and television course. And at the other extreme there was the view that said on some quite fundamental levels around working practices there are big differences between people who would see themselves working in film and see themselves working in television... (IY1).

Data indicates multiple lines of demarcation. Focus on audience behaviour emerges as an updated version of rationalisation of media practice according to genre. A line is drawn between Film and TV according to practitioners' perception of modes of working distinguished by different forms of digital distribution. A distinction emerged between what might be termed an employer perspective, the business of media and its labour power needs, and an employee perspective, what it takes to get and hold on to a job in media.

Prior experience and a sense of identity located in professional practice appeared as important factors in imagining pathways for students to access and learn practice principles;

...staff who work on this floor have that shared identity of professional practice ... so it's almost as if we have translated into these offices, into this environment, a department from a television company or a film company. So, we have a shared understanding, a shared knowledge of a habitus ...the language that we would commonly share with the students as well (IY4).

The variety of perspectives evident in discussion does not indicate a high degree of agreement regarding what might reliably constitute a body of knowledge that can be recontextualised as media practice pedagogy. Perhaps most significant is the line defending GMP and arguing for Film to be promoted as a simple extension of the existing course. However, defining the practice from which principles can be recontextualised as a pedagogic structure becomes an exercise in describing a negative space.

...discussion was just kind of negotiation that went on by loads of different people just sitting saying, "Why is it not this? Why is it not like that? Why would it be more like this or that? ...so that was kind of like, how will it fit in with that framework and yet distinguish itself enough to not be [GMP], but to take some pressure off [GMP]? So, you're going, "Well, we won't have a multi-cam studio, but then it'll be location shooting", in other words, it's not really enough and then if you've got a bit of script writing, how do you stop script writing from being cannibalised? (IY3).

Quantifying potential for the new course to draw from the recruitment pool of existing courses is a critical factor. Strategic discontinuity, I suggest, emerges from denial of access to a delimiting strategy; such a course is already operating successfully. Distinctions emerge as rationalisations dictating what space the new course can occupy and the offer to potential applicants. They all contribute to complex social interactions that constitute a strategic relational space.

...the problem isn't identifying film in relation to a media production framework, it's that pedagogically it would be more interesting to actually turn around and say, "Well, we're going to do something else and the reason you'd come here is it's not going to be based around industry focus, straight into the job, learning this piece of technology and everything else, it's slightly broader than that and so it won't fit within the framework (IY3).

The social activity of curriculum development comprises several regards that recontextualise media practice principles according to the perspective they represent. Differentiation requires that theory and practice are constituted as distinct aspects of pedagogized media practice. Existing frameworks cannot accommodate the new course, but it cannot cannibalise courses that operate within that framework. Strategic considerations emerge in exclusion of certain aspects of media practice from consideration.

Slowly but surely, you're shaping it and going, "Okay, well this is defining the position by saying how do we create something that isn't going to cannibalise something in its entirety, but is actually going to be quite clearly distinguishably different on an open day? (IY3)

The new course must be clearly differentiated from existing courses in terms of marketing. The executive promotes a Film course as an aid to expansion; faculty is focused on defence against cannibalisation and contraction. The Film course occupies a space where theory and practice are, notionally, subject to integration through experiment and reflection. It offers a different perspective on what is relevant in terms of current industry practice and what changes might occur. But, acceptance of the new course is predicated on setting limits to claims to represent an industry focus;

I think the way that it's emerging is that it's very specifically been called 'Film' rather than film production or film making and which I think is a good move. It does provide a distinction from television production, work production being very distinct and different in the thinking behind it. So, it's perhaps opening up spaces for a course which is not so clearly focused on industry but is much more open to reflection and the integration of theory and practice in a more reflective way and more experimental way (IY4).

The Film course emerges not only from discussion of what it cannot be in relation to existing courses but also in relation to interpretations of cultural, commercial and practical fluidity apparent in media industries. Market research for the new course is comprehensive and detailed. The main questions researchers seek to address are; will the new course be sustainable, will it attract the required numbers, what kind of applicant might it appeal to, what impact will it have on existing courses, what is its place in the H.E. market?

However, the reach of quantitative research is limited. While lacking supporting data and analysis, researchers' view on likely graduate employment asserts that media industry expansion would provide opportunities for employment and placement and that the entrepreneurial emphasis and global view the course represents would be attractive to potential employers. Globalisation discourse, highlighting entrepreneurship, and knowledge economy discourse,¹³ arguably, provides the rationale. Market research appears to reflect the aspirations of course designers;

...business circumstances are always changing and critically what we want to do is we want to deal with the global market, the global context, which means that situations are going to be different. We want to be able to attract students who come from different circumstances and have slightly different ideas of entrepreneurship. These things can influence each other. So, it's very much about being able to critically apply yourself in these different contexts and respond to these different contexts."

Interviewer: You are saying we don't need these bits for this particular course.

¹³ See globalisation and the knowledge economy page 111.

Yes. There is a clear divide between [GMP] and this new course. There is, both in structure, philosophy and ... I suspect this is going to impact because they have to review [GMP] at some point. I suspect it is going to be impacted. I mean at the end of the day its recruitment (IY2).

Comparison between GMP and the new course is articulated in terms of competition between differing structures and philosophies in a future review. However, lacking supporting data and definitive analysis, differentiation between industry proximity and distancing in pedagogic perspectives appears to be reflected in reliance on experience and collective knowledge and perceptions of media industry;

...if we're talking about the full program, we started from our own experience. ...It's not about the film itself, it's about the knowledge and the experience and all of these other things. ...the other is that the industry has changed. ...people are always talking about the most important thing they want out of our graduates are things like courage, independent thinking, creativity. You know? Just those kinds of core qualities. And the program is really designed to encourage those core qualities using film as the method to do it.

Interviewer: So, there is no actual empirical research....

"...this is based ...not on sort of hard science but on anecdotal... You know, there's no shortage of applicants for philosophy and history and English and all these subjects that don't lead directly to jobs. But they produce some cracking candidates who will get work pretty quickly (IY2).

Participants in the process seek to define Film in relation to GMP.

Rationalisation of subject positions, subjectivities, expressed as delimiting strategies, differentiate between old, GMP, and new, Film. This is also expressed in shifting approaches to separation of media theory and practice;

...students do practice and then they do theory on the subject. They are separate units. One's the chalk and talk, everyone from the framework... will end up in one lecture theatre doing media and transition and then they break off and they do their practice. ...where our degree's quite different is that there's a fusion, which is the reason we can't sit in the framework,

because our students won't be leaving our stuff and then going and sitting in with everyone else (IY3).

Distinctiveness is achieved by disassociation from the faculty theory framework. However, fusion is itself a product of a process of recontextualisation; the make-up of the course defines aspects of practice, and the concomitant exclusion of others, that are collected under a new banner. Differential distribution is also apparent in addressing technological change in industry. The new course places less emphasis on practice but it is not entirely absent.

The course will have a dedicated, but basic kit package, a DSLR camera with interchangeable lenses that can be inexpensively scaled up as recruitment increases. The rationale is not just that the same kit is regarded as appropriate for most industry requirements but that expensive equipment, used for high-end productions is inappropriate for student use;

...students learn bad habits ...because of the super-abundance of kit... and they get to write on their CV, "Oh, I've worked with an Ari XLR which is meaningless, because most people if they wanted to train you on it would train you on it anyway ...then on open days you say, "You get to use it" ...even though it's making everything hideously static and theatrical ...the film course isn't like that (IY3).

An important differentiation occurs here; it is not simply a preference for simple technological solutions to teaching media practice but the expression of a view on graduate employment. The contrast is exemplified by an interpretation of industry attitudes; one side says employers want graduates with up-to-date technical training, the other is confident firms would rather manage day-to-day training themselves. One sees technical specialisation as an appropriate response, the other emphasises business, politics and research. One maintains a service model, the other a leadership function.

Both adhere to commonplace concepts of division of labour and business structures in relation to acquisition of principles of recognition. This is a matter of demarcation; which aspect of media practice is accorded higher status in the process of selection, distribution, sequencing and pacing. The perspective that

informs the new course is, in part, defined by opposition to the GMP approach. This might be characterised as a struggle regarding claims to legitimacy and providing pathways to employment between delimiting and decoupling strategies;

...some members of staff ...are concerned that students should be aware of that when they arrive and that the course shouldn't be marketed as a route to employment in the film industry, so that would be perhaps disingenuous because that's not the offer. So, I think there is a clear sense that in terms of the way the course is resourced, and the ethos of the course needs to be made very clear to students or applicants (IY4).

I suggest that there is an echo of CSX film studies suspicion of media practice in this statement. A claim that one form of recontextualised media practice principles and the assessment of learning within its organisation is superior, in terms of establishing a pathway to employment to another, is significant. GMP claims that coming as close to authentic media practice through participation in multiple media production processes, over an extended period, is the only legitimate preparation for students to enter the workplace. The counter-claim is that shifting focus away from practice and process to a research-based encounter with industrial / commercial media will fit a graduate for work in a rapidly changing social environment that demands a high degree of adaptability that will also inculcate leadership qualities.

Data shows a tendency to create a boundary between the two views regarding efficacy as a route to employment. However, there is a unifying anxiety around the transaction between students and H.E. Staff registered concern regarding what is being offered by H.E., the provenance of applicants' own expectations, the capacity of media industries to provide meaningful employment and institutional recruitment policy;

I think it's a big ask for students to understand that and that there are issues around recruitment, ethical issues for our staff that we need to be very highly attuned to and to ensure that the corporate demands of the university don't overwhelm that. We know that the word film in a course title is a touchstone to a large number of applicants and we've not been unaware of

that ...the university is very aware of that and is using that perhaps for other reasons, for recruitment (IY4).

Interviewee Y4 associated this comment strongly with previously articulated concerns over pathways to employment and the new course. There is also recognition that the university knows that it is not in its long-term interests to have dissatisfied graduates. This may be a constraint on marketing, but it is seen as a “business-critical issue.” But, Interviewee Y4 is explicit in concern that the new course should not pretend that it is geared to a vocational professional outcome.

We, as staff, need to make sure that those who have come on to the course are aware of what the course is, which is not film production, it's film, that it is not geared towards a vocational professional outcome and it remains to be seen how that's held on to (IY4).

While marked differences regarding development of the new course within the contributing group are apparent, everyone is concerned to chart the right course to ensure a successful outcome for students in terms of employment and a career. But, when evidence-based research support runs out, subjective positions provide a rationalising framework; student attributes and dispositions are matched with interpretations of industry labour power needs and globalisation and knowledge economy discourses. Anxieties surround these subject positions and rationalisations. Is the marketing of a course fair to students or is it a cynical money-making exercise for the academy? Are claimed pathways to employment viable and is the work aspired to worthwhile?

Generally, industry practice is interpreted and recontextualised by media practitioner academics. Working in media industries, potentially, represents an employee perspective to comprehending and inculcating a sense of habitus. An unofficial conduit to principles of recognition in media practice may be construed by contacts between former and current practitioners and students although measurement of levels of acquisition and competence is unattainable.

In CSX data, accreditation agency perspectives were characterised as backward-looking. Here, again, critiques accreditation agency / employer

interest as merely sustaining the current industry model and uninterested in change.

Their entire modus operandi is to support an industry that, were they not to be there, they would perceive it as falling on its own arse and failing... I don't really see much of a vested interest in them trying to generate the sustainable intellectual property rights market within the UK; they've just kind of given up and said, 'Well, that's Hollywood, unfortunately, but we'd be happy to do their spadework'. ...and you think, is that all we've got to work towards? But, you say, 'Well, yes, okay, fine, but you just do it in a way in which they can come and see, are you working on Avid?' Yes. 'Are you covering certain protocol around call sheets, risk assessment or whatever?' Yes. Okay ...that's how they're doing it. The, kind of, criteria of stuff (IY3).

This critique adds a further dimension to the thinking behind the development of the film course. It identifies the accreditation perspective as limited, focusing on skills, producing technicians. It might be argued that an accreditation agency regard represents a delimiting strategy. Here, the accreditation process is seen as a box ticking exercise, identifying criteria that highlight explicit aspects of expertise.

The filling in the sandwich identifies sustainable intellectual property rights, where the real money is made in contemporary media business, and this is seen as the focus of the Film course. This is also a critique of media industry priorities; it occupies the same position in the strategic relational space of curriculum development as media studies in CSX but articulates a different perspective.

Here, it is the operation of a market that is critiqued; practitioners in commercial media are not cast as unwitting servants of anti-democratic forces. Critique focuses on exclusion of enterprising graduates who may aspire to establishing an alternative media industry model. Again, there are echoes of views expressed in CSX data regarding the academy leading industry and graduate aspiration.

But accreditation is a significant aspect of institutional policy regarding curriculum development from an administrative standpoint. Agencies like Creative Skillset represent a government supported, external expression of industry labour power needs. QAA benchmarks for media practice courses are formal, part of institutional systematisation of knowledge to be learned within an institutional wide framework of assessment.

QAA benchmarks form part of guidance that is intrinsic to institutional policy and administration. It is embedded in a system of Intended Learning Outcome (ILO) that forms part of a pedagogic and evaluative structure, aligned teaching and learning.

...educations got it modules; it's got its learning structures... You've got to make do with what you're got... The QAA accept the learning outcomes. It's a framework that all of our paperwork must meet the learning outcomes. So, we're only ever really playing within a very, very thin slice of an area. ...the lines are already on the playground and we're only going to be able to play within the little square boxes (IY3).

Benchmarks and standards are part of the process of recontextualisation. ILO's in media production conform to QAA benchmarks. Their inclusion can be witnessed most clearly in formal validation processes, a system whereby new courses and re-worked courses are tested to ensure compliance with institutional policies and QAA regulation. The formal benchmarking system is embedded in the overarching institutional policy regarding assessment of learning through progression.

A set number of credits acquired over a three-year programme adds up to a completed degree. Levels of comprehension are expressed in language that is deemed appropriate to a level of anticipated attainment. Also, a course is expected to comply with institutional policy on equivalence. All students, regardless of course, are subject to the same system of assessment. Validation requires extensive and detailed documentation that is scrutinised in a series of meetings.

Recommendations and requirements taken from the penultimate pre-validation meeting are incorporated into documentation which is then scrutinised further, prior to the new course achieving validation. External examiners, experts in the field from other H.E. institutions, representing the subject community, participate at this stage. It is a system that ensures uniformity of standards across a sector. The schedule can vary according to institutional preference, but the format is common to universities and course development processes.

A scrutiny group is typically made up of representatives from the department developing the course, academics drawn from the faculty within which the department sits and from other faculties with related interests. The chair represents the university and the vice chancellor and officers from Quality and Marketing departments attend. The description below is taken from contemporaneous, verbatim field notes of the pre-validation meeting for the Film course. Notes have been paraphrased to ensure institutional and individual anonymity.

The general tone of the meeting is friendly, collaborative, positive and accommodating. Two passages in the field notes show instances of discord between faculty and the validation team. The first concerned institutional policy on assessment and use of language to designate progression across levels – terms and years – of a degree. In accordance with the QAA quality code, validity of attainment is organised by linear progression.

The Chair brought the attention of the meeting to progression of student learning stating that it was doubtful whether this was sufficiently clear between levels. The representative of the Quality department endorsed this view, citing a level one unit that comes early in the course that requires students to engage critically with major directors and writers. *“This type of unit should come much later, level [year] three, possibly late in level two.”* The question is posed as to whether any eighteen-year-old is capable of engaging with critical thinking required by the unit.

The response from the faculty representative is that this is a new course trying to do things in a new way. It recognises that students need to be pro-actively

moved on from the kind of assessment they are used to at 'A' level in schools. The course is also trying to move away from trying to reproduce industry practice in the academy; In the first year "*...it's about mediation and explanation. Second year they specialise. Third year they return to critical questioning.*" Chair questions the clarity of the documentation again and recommends that the ILO's are rewritten. Faculty maintains that the document takes ILO's from the QAA benchmarks.

Quality observes that benchmarks need to be contextualised by progression requirements and that language should correspond to expected levels of learning. Critically is not a term to be used with first years. Appropriate words are, "*normally, typically, exceptionally*" and there are documents to assist with choosing the correct language. Closing the discussion, Chair, points out that this is a common problem, but that revision and compliance is required. Using the organisational language of SAM, this represents a bureaucratic authority strategy (see Fig. 3). Only the representative of the office regulating assessment may speak in relation to the remit of that office.

An authority strategy, in this instance, represents an alliance that coalesces around assessment policy, that determines "*... what may be thought, said or done and by whom*" (Dowling 2009; 43). Positions articulated in the meeting illustrate strategic regards; "*...this unit should be year three...*" or moving students away from "*...'A' Level assessment.*" Institutional assessment policy is supported by theory that privileges linear construction of learning. However, tension is evident in equivalence policy, the requirement that all students, across the institution, are assessed equally.

The policy acknowledges the institutional requirement to assure the integrity of its awards. In the course documentation a unit that required making a short film is assessed through a 3000-word production / event diary. It is pointed out that a unit that awards, in this case, 20 credits towards a final degree, would normally require a minimum of 5000 words. A Quality Administrative Officer describes how the issue is addressed;

...it's very difficult for media school. It's just really, really difficult... We've got [unrelated social] programmes... they have practical exams, so it's pass or fail. That's fine for them, 5,000 words, great, same with business. They have to write reports.... When you're producing a film or a radio programme, how do you provide an equivalent? But, then we kind of feel like we have to try, because we have to be fair to the students in that faculty as well as the others. It's difficult ...so radio can contact film and say, 'Well, how do you assess that?' and discuss it and come up with something themselves, but we still don't really have a definitive answer. It's very difficult, so then you have to kind of leave it to academic judgement to a certain extent... (IY7).

The bid to establish an equivalence policy suggests an affinity between the two case studies in terms of flexibility. Certain aspects of assessment are shifted outside the institutional framework and left to academic judgement.

Endorsement from the subject community through the involvement of external examiners provides academic cover for management of a complicated system.

External examiners are drawn from a sector wide pool of senior practitioner academics. Practice, emergent from any discrete social setting such as H.E., requires embodiment of principles, explicit and tacit. How do former and current media practitioners as agents in the process of recontextualisation comprehend the theoretical and administrative structures that support their practices? A senior manager, familiar with theory underpinning assessment of student learning refers to their own experience;

Bloom's Taxonomy is a fundamental part of my teacher training I undertook ...when I did a certificate of education. I remember coming across it and thinking, oh, God, this is useful (IY8).

Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom, 1956) provided a framework for assessment of student learning. The intent of Bloom and his team was to

"...establish a standard vocabulary for indicating what an item was intended to measure. Such regularised meanings were to result from a set of carefully

defined categories and subcategories into which any educational objective... could be classified" (Anderson et.al 2001; Forward XXV11).

Bloom underpinned guidance for a departmental team writing a set of new courses that complied with Quality requirements regarding descriptions of progression in learning;

...although I didn't refer to it explicitly, I did end up with a very specific set of signifiers for each level in the programme. So, if ...you're working in a unit or a module on the first years, I want you to have, at the forefront of your mind, what you're assessing, our students' understanding and ability to demonstrate. But, if they're second years, I want you to think about the words 'practice', 'apply', and if you're teaching final years, I want you to think about the words 'create', 'critique' and 'collaborate (IY8).

Emphasis is on language that conforms to QAA guidelines that are interpreted by Quality and recontextualised as an institutional framework for assessment. The circle is closed, satisfactorily. The interviewee demonstrates the theoretical underpinning of classification of learning expressed in specificity in language.

The team have completely embraced it, because I think it has simplified things for them, but I think they've also bought into the idea that that consistency, that reassurance of, okay, we know where we are now; we know where we stand; we know what we want these students to demonstrate, and the students say, right, I just need to know stuff and be able to demonstrate I know it in the first year. Obviously, there's other things we want to do, but this is the core; this is the heart of the matter (IY8).

Application of theory confers a sense of confidence in practitioners because it has simplified something complex; the recontextualisation of media practice principles as pedagogy. An unstable system is, apparently, stabilised, but the stabilising factor is not theoretical but, with reference to the *Modes of Strategic Action* schema (Fig. 3), a bureaucratic authority strategy. The team does not have direct access to theory or an opportunity to interrogate its provenance or the rationale for its recontextualisation as a basis for assessment. The category of practice is closed.

Esoteric domain principles regulate the public domain of assessment administration. However, it is apparent that policy for assessment, which constitutes the esoteric domain, is not singular but consists of multiple strands. Three distinct sets of principles have been identified; OBTL provides an overarching structure where ILO's provide the basis for alignment of teaching and learning. ILO's must conform to QAA benchmarks, but they must also comply with assessment policy regarding progression.

The pre-validation meeting also provides an example of a single policy regard of curriculum development practice, informal benchmarking through course accreditation by an external agency. The subject is introduced with regard to the marketing of the new course. Institutional evaluative strategies are, I suggest, inward facing; accreditation is outward facing. The Chair is explicit; the course needs to be articulated through and by the marketing department to claim, "*extra credibility*." The favoured accreditation agency is Creative Skillset.

Faculty is resistant; its representative suggests that certification "*speaks more to parents*," indicating concern that accreditation may be viewed as an assertion of value that cannot be substantiated. Faculty argues that accreditation represents a traditional view of industry, a strategic perspective that the new course is designed to replace. However, marketing is keen on accreditation. The consensus of the meeting is that accreditation is necessary and a requirement for the course to be moved to the next stage of validation.

This research does not focus on specific effects of accreditation at course or unit level but on its relationship with other strategic regards active in curriculum development practice. Proximity to a particular industry perspective, certified by Creative Skillset, is regarded as conferring extra credibility. However, accreditation in this field does not claim any theoretical basis. QAA benchmarking is supported by academic structures. National Occupational Standards (NOS) are not but appear to be assigned higher status. Here, a traditional authority strategy is evident, categories of authorship and practice are closed; only those qualified may speak on that for which they are qualified.

This strategy represents an alliance that coalesces around two governmental policy regards of H.E. practices; finance and recruitment and relations between education and the wider economy. Institutional accreditation policy facilitates the entry of an appropriation strategy into the strategic relational space constituted by curriculum development. Field notes echo concerns expressed in CSX data where tensions were identified but could not be addressed because policy originated at an executive level. Accreditation is a marketing, not a pedagogic or assessment, strategy and conveys the authority of executive concern for recruitment and financial stability.

Emergent authority strategies indicate tension between policy and curriculum development practice. For example, an intended learning outcome, a recontextualisation of practice constituted according to QAA benchmarks, is an expression not only of what is legitimate knowledge but of legitimate practice. This regard establishes potential for conflict between assessment policy and what a student may experience as an interior interpretation of what she has learned in relation to industry practices and institutional regulation of assessment of learning.

...one of the things students can get aerated about is assessment because they feel that I am fine with the things that that have been written down that [they need] to comply with X, Y and Z. I think well it was X, Y and Z. And you are aware that colleagues are looking and going no it is not. It is because they are looking for you to reproduce something... it is one of the reasons why some students have got it, and some students have not got it, and you are looking for them to grasp this less tangible thing... (IY1).

There is an apparent disjunction between institutional assessment frameworks and practitioner / academic interpretations of what is required to facilitate student access to practice principles.

...ILOs are very instrumental, I think. You will know how to interpret a creative brief, but what the guys who teach on it are doing, they're getting them to think bigger, broader, different ways of solving a problem, lateral thinking... I've done it ...when I was very frustrated with the structure that I was working in, and I thought, well, okay, I'm going to tick off the ILOs, but

I'm going to do this the way I think these poor students need to be introduced to advertising... [I] developed an entirely new task called the Heroes of Advertising, because they weren't doing any history. None of that was laid down in the unit specification, and yet it did the thing that I think was the intent of the unit... (IY8).

The interviewee seeks to compensate for a perceived lack by inventing a task that provides a potential pathway to what they regard as essential practice principles. Students were required to research, collect data, analyse and present findings. It echoes the ethos of the Film course that represents an effort to break away from established modes of thinking about teaching and learning media production. However, the space available for a new approach is constrained to the extent that the stability and durability of the development process relies on the personnel available to deliver it.

...you've got this bloody document, but in actual fact, the mentality, the ideology, and the pedagogic approach, it doesn't get articulated in these documents... the idea of, say, a culture of testing, culture of experimentation, a culture of open-mindedness and curiosity and questioning... If I go somewhere else, and someone comes in and says, 'Actually, this can reflect industry', it can all of a sudden, within the same framework, same pieces of paper, flip over to being very dry and arid...with all of this excitement taken out. But, what can you do? The documents...don't really capture that element of it. They can't do that (IY3).

Curricula, in this field, are subject to interpretation and change contingent on the subjectivities of those able to exert most influence on a daily, even hourly basis. Generally, as former practitioners, academics in this field embody principles of recognition and seek to open pathways for students to acquire them. We are looking at the recontextualisation of complex creative practices and it is, perhaps, inevitable, that agents in the social activity will try to create space to accommodate exchange action and exchange values.

Heroes of Advertising, a research project, bears some similarity to case study research, identified in CSX data, that was used for the same purpose. Linking strategies appear to be necessary in this field. Strategic incoherence is

obscured by rigid administrative structures supporting assessment policy. Problems tend to be resolved clandestinely;

I think there are different types of undeclared curriculum; there is the thing you are not telling them what it is because they will run away, a deliberate, teaching things by stealth. But there is also ... it is to do with professional competencies that when people are teaching... a digital unit called editing, you are teaching the art and science, but you are teaching a certain type of professionalism and a certain type of culture, and that is the undeclared (IY1).

Accommodating the tacit, attempts to facilitate student acquisition and embodiment of know-how and rules of the game in curriculum design marks the fault line in vocational education for media practice. It is an admission that, while principles of recognition cannot be reproduced in the academy, academics will try to fulfil the promise of an authentic learning experience. Tensions within the system are evidenced by clandestine linking strategies. But the capacity of academics to develop linking strategies outside institutional frameworks is curtailed by recent legislation.

... we've had an edict come out down from high saying, 'You must follow this template for your unit guide, and it must be in this order, and you must have this, that and the other,' and of course, everybody has kicked off, academic autonomy and all the rest of it. It's such a difficult one, because you understand where that's coming from, but at the same time you think, creative industries, communications, these brilliant, professional people who all know what they do, and if you really want to clip an academic's, or even a practitioner's wings is you say, 'No' to them, 'you have to do it like somebody else', then you're destroying all that innovation, and all of that... that passion will come through in the classroom and the students will be better for it. So, yes, there is a lot of subversion going on, and I have to manage my own feelings about that, as well as actually having to put my hand up as being completely guilty of it (IY8).

The edict represents executive level efforts to reinforce a delimiting strategy, contingent on the operationalization of a decoupling strategy. Efforts to create opportunities for students to access principles of recognition indicate a

response to strategic action elsewhere in the relational space. In this case it is likely to be the introduction of regulation by the CMA.¹⁴

CSY data shows an emergent decoupling strategy, albeit one that is contingent on the identification of the business of film-making as the focus for the new course. However, a primary motivating factor in this development appears to be distancing the new course from an existing course that represents a delimiting strategy. Other factors include characterisation of applicants in relation to interpretations of change in media industry.

Data shows activation of multiple policy strands, organising and regulating practice in the relational space constituted by curriculum development. One significant strategic regard appears to rely on globalisation and entrepreneurship discourse for its rationalisation of curriculum development practice. Others emanate from general H.E. policy on pedagogy and assessment constituted by the QAA code of practice and benchmark statement. The difficulty in accommodating multiple, sometimes conflicting demands is evidenced by tension between curriculum development practice and institutional policy on recruitment and accreditation.

Summary

In terms of the original premise for this study, CSY can be categorised as a research-intensive institution and CSX as industry facing. Both course development processes represent strategic departures from generalised media practice courses, one an addition to the roster of courses, the other a replacement. However, they contrast in their approach. Divergence is apparent in interpretation of rapid change in media industries with regard to graduate employment. One emphasises a regime of enquiry and testing, the other specialisation through technical and production pathways.

While this is a notable outcome, it is open to question whether it can be directly attributed to an institution being research focused or industry facing or merely conforms to commonplace conceptions of worth and status; academic versus

¹⁴ See Mythologization and assessment page 124.

non-academic; leadership contrasted with service. Data analysis does not show that exhibiting a research bias creates an impulse to distance an institution from media industry influence.

Common strategies that emerge from the recontextualisation of practice in the case studies are, I argue, of greater significance. I suggest that the pattern of institutional and governmental policy interaction, evident in data, drives strategic action at a fundamental level, at both institutions. Practices that contribute to the development of curricula are subject to multiple policy demands and the action of participants constitutes a strategic response that can be dismantled and described.

The question for this chapter asked, *how do strategies emergent in curriculum development for media practice, reveal the interaction of multiple policy regards?* Analysis has clearly identified two categories of action in curriculum development practice; delimiting and decoupling strategies. These strategies are evident in curriculum development practice in both case studies.

In CSY they are deployed in opposition; the development of the Film course is contingent on boundaries established by delimiting strategic dominance of curriculum development at faculty level represented by GMP. The resultant course represents a decoupling strategy. A process of recontextualisation results in reclassification aspects of practice, such as media business acumen and research skills as pedagogy, in opposition to practical skills. In CSX there is less apparent conflict; the course seeks to reproduce conditions of professionalised media practice by establishing pathways contingent on specialist aspects of practice; a delimiting strategy.

Emergence strategies associated with recontextualisation of media practice principles results from the interplay of several strategic regards of the process. Analysis shows that H.E. practice is recontextualised by government policy regarding H.E. institutional finance and relations with media industry employers. Curriculum development is also shaped by positioning of an institution in the H.E. marketplace and recruitment strategy rather than research focus or industry bias. In the case of CSY the adoption of Film involves a claim to higher

status in the sector and fits with an expansionist recruitment policy. In the case of CSX, the ethos emphasises an applied vocational approach and privileging an employer stakeholder voice.

Tensions regarding the relationship between the institutions and employer perspectives actualised in accreditation strategies are common to both case studies. Accreditation as a marketing tool is welcomed by some but the questionable provenance and contemporaneity of its certification troubles others. Relations between media practice courses and the media workplace appear to constitute two categories of strategic action common to both case studies. Appropriating strategies are evident in data showing the interaction of institutional policy on accreditation interacting with curriculum development practice.

In both institutions opposition to accreditation is apparent to a greater or lesser degree. However, the site of conflict in both cases is not pedagogic, how practice principles are taught, but the legitimacy of what is learned in terms of meeting industry requirements. Linking strategies represent an opposition to the constraints of appropriation strategies; the emergence of alternative pathways to student comprehension of the practice outside the policy framework. In terms of alliances and oppositions it denotes a struggle to define what is and what is not legitimate learned media practice.

The shape of a strategic relationship, common to both studies, begins to emerge from data analysis. Decoupling and delimiting strategies define curriculum development practice. Regulation of curriculum development derives from policy regarding what is or what is not legitimate taught media practice, and assessment of learned pedagogized media practice. However, this is merely a first step in dismantling a describing the depth and complexity of these strategic relations. The provenance and strategic significance of policy regulating relations between H.E. and media industries is discussed in chapter five. The next chapter examines policies that constitute assessment of student learning in this field.

Three: Theory

How do H.E. policies for assessment of student learning affect media practice curriculum development and delivery?

This chapter looks at Outcome Based Teaching and Learning (OBTL) and “QAA benchmarks for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies” (2016). The former provides a regulatory framework for curriculum development in both case studies and the latter regulates the production of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO). The chapter also examines how theory is recontextualised as institutional regulatory policy and applied to curriculum development and assessment practice.

Analysis suggests that both strands of policy represent mythologizing strategies regarding media practice education in H.E. Papers that illustrate the use of theory in comprehending and constructing curricula, pedagogy and assessment frameworks are critiqued. The chapter concludes with a review of H.E. regulatory policies within the strategic relational space constituted by curriculum development for media practice.

Theory recontextualised as policy

Data shows that in both institutions administration of assessment operates an OBTL system of aligned teaching and learning and use QAA benchmarks to underpin the development of ILO’s for media practice. Assessment according to rules of learning progression completes the assessment policy trinity. However, application of theory may be inconsistent. Tight’s investigation of the adoption and provenance of theory in H.E; “*Research into higher education: an a-theoretical community of practice?*” (Tight 2004) produced two key findings. First, while the theoretical perspective underlying higher education can be identified;

“...these perspectives are mainly implicit. Higher education researchers, for the most part, do not appear to feel the need to make their theoretical perspectives explicit, or to engage in a broader sense in theoretical debate” (Tight 2004; 409).

Second, Tight produced a typology of differential application of theory. The first category required identified theory to be explicitly, identified, discussed and applied, the second required identification and application of theory but academic language need not be explicitly used. The third category, which provides no evidence of presentation and discussion “...*while theories are inevitably implicit - is wholly a-theoretical*” (Tight 2004; 409). Tight’s argument is that H.E. does not represent a coherent community of practice with regard to the explicit application of theory. Rather it is formed by a number of overlapping communities, the majority of which are a-theoretical.

Whether the provenance of theory and its application in processes of recontextualisation of media practice in the academy are explicit and transparent or a-theoretical and, potentially, obscure has implications for curriculum development and assessment. Access to theory is likely to be limited to what is encountered in study for a Post-graduate Certificate of Education but media practitioner academics recognise the constraints of assessment policy.

“*Teaching for Quality Learning at University*” (J. B. Biggs & Tang, 2011), is an influential text, widely used to introduce practitioners from creative industries to established H.E. theory and practice. Curriculum design is central to Biggs and Tang’s exposition. They advocate OBTL; the system is widely, if not exclusively employed for structuring curricula in this field. Biggs & Tang provide a helpful description of curriculum design in terms of structural requirements and sequencing within the activity;

In OBTL, the concern is not so much a matter of what topics to teach, but what outcomes students are supposed to have achieved after having been taught. Defining those intended learning outcomes becomes the important issue, and assessment is criterion-referenced to see how well the outcomes have been attained. Constructive alignment goes one step further than most outcomes-based approaches in that, as well as assessment tasks, teaching and learning activities are also aligned to the outcomes, in order that students are helped to achieve those outcomes more effectively (Biggs & Tang 2011; 13).

On Tight's scale of theoretical engagement OBTL appears to show some evidence of theory [that is] effectively identified, discussed and applied. However, OBTL represents theory originally emergent from the Portfolio Project for psychology students. That research focused on a crucial, personal revelation that knowledge;

“...did not draw from the students' experience, while the knowledge that was to drive their teaching led to action by the students that was very much within their experience. That gap, between a static body of declarative knowledge and personal action, had to be bridged” (Biggs and Tang 2011; 96).

OBTL locates this bridging action, internal individual evaluation, in the academy, as assessment. The claim for the portfolio scheme's success was based on apparent alignment between theory and practice;

In the portfolio, the learning activities indicated in the intended outcomes were mirrored both in the teaching / learning activities the students undertook, and in the assessment tasks, so that the learning activities the students engaged were those that directly addressed what it was they were supposed to be learning” (Biggs and Tang 2011; 97).

OBTL appears to be a legitimate practice supported by theory; *“Alignment suggests that assessment tasks should be aligned to what it is intended to be learned, as in criterion-referenced assessment”* (Biggs and Tang 2011; 97). However, when applied to assessment of learned media practice in the academy, what we are looking at is a series of strategic moves. The system is wholly reliant on criteria against which student learning is assessed. When applied to media practice in H.E. explicit definition of categories and subcategories of what is supposed to be learned risks draining media practice of its unstable, tacit, elements. The provenance of ILO's is of critical importance.

Spady (1994), is a sociologist prominent in the development of Outcome Based Education (OBE), a precursor of OBTL which shares its fundamental principles. Spady admitted to concern regarding the tendency for ILO's to acquire a behavioural hierarchy in assessment and potential for values, unrelated to the

learning in question, to be imported into the system of outcome / assessment. Theory is detached both from the social context from which it is derived and from the practice it seeks to rationalise. Desired outcomes are recontextualised as assessment criteria which define a pedagogic activity.

This produces a self-referential system which is vulnerable, as Spady notes, to a behavioural hierarchy in assessment and values, unrelated to the learning in question. OBTL, does not stand alone as a system regulating assessment of learning associated with a body of knowledge. It is contingent on the methodology adopted for the production of ILO's which is derived from a different, and not necessarily commensurate, theoretical tradition which, in turn, is also detached from the practice it seeks to rationalise.

Making media products is an unstable practice largely contingent on tacit expertise. A production process is contingent on collaboration and difference between disparate practitioners contextualised by commercial and aesthetic concerns. With reference to Rogers (1961; 347) a creative process is one of discovery and change; it might also be described as a learning process. The mode of evaluation in making media products might be characterised, using the language of SAM, as an exchange relation (Dowling 2009), where authority is located with the audience. The mode of assessment in the academy is pedagogic, where authority is located with the author.

When reference is made to media in the academy some aspects of practice will be selected, and some won't. But, while aesthetic evaluation may be a common feature of practice in both settings, weighing commercial risk cannot be selected in the academy. There is an a priori difference in the action and what you get is something other than the originating practice. However, a claim that media practice constitutes a body of knowledge that the transmitter, the academy, can constitute as discourse that is accessible to an acquirer, a student, and open to assessment must be substantiated in order to establish the stability of media practice in the academy.

An OBTL system for the assessment of student learning is contingent on the integrity of ILO's. The development of ILO's is regulated by Quality Assurance

Agency (QAA) guidance, the “*Quality Code for Higher Education*” (2017).¹⁵ Institutions are expected to use “*QAA benchmarks for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies*” (2016). Benchmarks emphasise the centrality of media to a healthy public sphere;

As fields of study, Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies are distinguished by their focus on cultural and communicative activities as central forces in shaping economic, political, psychological and social life (QAA 2016; 8).

While this may appear to be a commonplace observation it represents the recontextualizing gaze that the academy casts beyond its practice. It rationalises another practice, media production, that is distinct from itself, so that it conforms to its own principles.

Theory, policy and the myth of certainty

Cultural theory¹⁶ constitutes a critique of the decline of pluralism in U.K media and concomitant threats to the democratic public sphere. Many researchers study media from a variety of perspectives, including Croteau and Hoynes (2006) who chart the development of global corporate media structures and risks that untrammelled ownership poses to the public sphere. Curran and Seaton (2002; 2005; 1981) critique changes in U.K. media regulation and ownership and the decline of pluralism and its consequences. Hallin and Mancini (2004) compare different media systems in Europe and North America in relation to national and international political discourse and communication. Schudson (1978, 1995, 1999, 2003) has developed a vital critique of news journalism and its impact on political discourse.

However, the choice of theoretical regard used and recontextualised for this process should also be considered in relation to OBTL, because it regulates the development of ILO’s for assessment. The QAA benchmark statement is

¹⁵ The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education is due to be published in late 2018 and is out for consultation (UKSCQA, 2018)

¹⁶ See The theory / practice split and cultural theory page 102.

comprehensive; it comprises 78 separate clauses. It is not claimed that they represent commercial industry needs although they do reference and support a commercial, industrial sector intrinsic to vocational education and subsequent graduate employment. The benchmark statement is promoted as “...*enabling, rather than regulatory*” (QAA 2016; 7). However, as interviewee IX5 explained, strict compliance in support of the integrity of awards is essential. Participants in both studies comment on the degree of constraint they experience.

QAA benchmarks recontextualise media practice principles that emerge from the social context of the workplace as outcomes for learned media practice in the academy. The benchmark statement claims to depict; “*what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their programme of study*” (QAA 2016; 2). This does not acknowledge that curricula, pedagogy and outcomes are the result of recontextualization of embodied practice principles. It depicts benchmarks as knowledge that graduates are expected to acquire, as if learning outcomes represent real media practice.

A second statement reinforces the status accorded to benchmarks as the basis for assessment of student learning.

The following sections give an indication of the areas of knowledge, the subject specific and generic skills which will be appropriate within these fields of study... Graduates of programmes in these fields demonstrate knowledge and understanding of some of the following” (QAA 2016; 11).

This statement ties media practice in the workplace to a recontextualised version in the academy. But it cannot define the nature of academized knowledge and consequent understanding in relation to industry practice.

It might be argued that definition occurs in individual institutions in the process of curriculum development. However, analysis suggest that the basis for localised recontextualisation of practice is generally subjective, reliant on unsubstantiated interpretations of industry labour power needs, characterisations of ideal applicants and unspecified pathways to employment.

The process is also subject to significant policy influence regarding recruitment and accreditation that feeds into curriculum development.

Nevertheless, benchmarks form part of an administrative structure that requires that they broadly constitute ILO in an aligned teaching and learning system. The section on Processes and Practices, arguably, refers to core competences in media practice. In this section the academy recontextualises media practice principles and theory as learning outcomes.

Clause 1; ...processes linking pre-production, production, distribution, circulation, reception and use.”

Clause 10, ...the material conditions of media and cultural consumption, and of the cultural contexts in which people appropriate, use and make sense of media and cultural products (QAA 2016; 12).

Cultural theory casts a rationalising gaze on media practice so that it conforms to its own principles when recontextualised as pedagogy. In clause 1, pre-production, production and distribution are demonstrably part of media practice from idea development to completed product and its sale. The statement does not specify what circulation, reception and use might refer to. Clause 10 does specify context; distribution and use are constituted in terms of examination of the material conditions of their emergence.

Clause 10 focuses the attention of the student on external factors that can be observed and incorporated consciously into developing practice. Clause 1 requires assessment of student media production skills through unspecified linking processes. The specification that practice should be interpreted in terms of “*circulation, reception and use*” represents a rationalisation of media practice from a cultural studies perspective.

Apart from illustrating the difficulty in establishing defined categories for an educational objective it also shows that cultural studies and media practice do not merely share the same benchmark statement. The former recontextualises the latter and must split integrated theory and practice to do it. This may or may not be the intent of the statement’s authors but its actualisation in an OBTL

system of assessment makes the detachment of theory and practice unavoidable.

Difficulty with defining learning objectives is general. Clause 4 cites “...*key production processes and professional practices relevant to media, film, cultural and communicative industries, and of ways of conceptualising creativity and authorship...*” (QAA 2016; 12), as bases for assessment. The scope of practice available for assessment of is, understandably, very broadly represented – key production processes etc. – but students are expected to conceptualise their practice in terms of creativity and authorship. I suggest that this clause should be regarded as a-theoretical.

The application of theory is clearly implicit in the invitation to conceptualise practice, but can conceptualisation of creativity furnish a reliable analytical framework regarding individual acquisition of recontextualised practice principles in relation to professional practices? Authorship suggests a more stable site for investigation. However, this would require transparency, regarding provenance of theory used in academic administrative frameworks for assessment of learning, that is lacking. The invitation is not to investigate embodiment of theory emergent ‘in’ practice but to demonstrate theory ‘of’ practice in relation to an external and ambiguous rationalisation; ‘creativity.’

The argument may be made that academics are able to select from the list when constructing ILO’s, that not all clauses apply in all circumstances. However, I argue that the problem with constructing an explicit definition of learning objectives is not confined to QAA benchmark statements; it infects the entire process of recontextualisation of media practice. Before any institutional process of curriculum development can be initiated it is rationalised by QAA benchmarks; they claim to provide “...*a picture of what graduates [should] know, do and understand...*” Media practice is recontextualised as a canon of objectified knowledge, established according to an academic rationalisation.

This represents the myth of certainty. Dowling observed this mythologizing action in his study of mathematics text books;

...the myth of certainty conceals the constructive subjectivity of mathematics and so the operation of its power in its and as its (re)production. By affiliating to a transcendental truth, the myth of certainty is exchanging faith for a constructed reality. Mathematics simulates its own regime of truth (Dowling 1998; 295).

Substitute cultural studies for mathematics as a dominant, rationalising regard then benchmark authoring, as practice, “...*exchanges faith for constructed rationality.*” The benchmark statement represents a process of detachment; its purpose is to establish a stable regulatory framework for assessment across all media related courses in the UK. “*Subject Benchmark Statements form part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) which sets out the expectations that all providers of UK higher education reviewed by QAA are required to meet*” (QAA 2016: 2). Immediately following the establishment of its legal basis, its regulatory status and its assertion of relevance, the authors insert a disclaimer;

Subject Benchmark Statements are used as reference points in the design, delivery and review of academic programmes. They provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the programme but are not intended to represent a national curriculum in a subject or to prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment (QAA 2016; 2).

A further assertion is that “...*they allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design within a framework agreed by the subject community*” (QAA 2016; 2). But, can QAA benchmarks be regarded either as a reliable representation of media practice principles recognisable to industry practitioners or recontextualised practice principles recognisable as pedagogy? They may be used as a basis for a subject community assessment framework but general compliance with a system does not eliminate its weakness.

Can benchmarks, contingent on claims to represent recontextualised media practice as a body of knowledge, simultaneously allow for flexibility in assessment of learning within an OBTL regulatory system? Case study data shows both the rigidity of the system and its subversion in the face of

incommensurable demands. Administrators struggle to be flexible in the application of assessment policy to media practice courses. But the bureaucratisation of assessment policy imposes considerable constraint; “...*the lines are already on the playground and we’re only going to be able to play within the little square boxes*” (IY3). The playground, in this description, is the strategic relational space constituted by curriculum development.

The strategic relationship is between the practice of recontextualising media practice principles as pedagogy and institutional policy regarding assessment and curriculum development. Three discrete discourses, of questionable provenance in relation to media practice, interact to rationalise and stabilise an unstable practice in assessment. The result of this interaction is, I suggest, policy that is simultaneously inflexible and chaotic. I suggest that assessment strategies appear to fulfil a stabilising function because shortcomings are obscured by substituting “...*faith for constructed rationality.*”

Theory as policy and regulation of practice

It might be claimed that benchmarks represent categories of practice as resources that can be situated. It might also be argued that generalised principles can be situated as a form of discourse which competes with other discourses in a pedagogic public domain, a site of learning activity. However, in media practice education commensurability is contingent on transparency in processes of recontextualisation;

“...the public domains of competing discourses are never incommensurable (insofar as incommensurability is an operationalizable term) if they are understood as ways into the discourses...” (Dowling 2009; 237).

When we approach analysis of potentially competing discourses in this empirical setting, we must consider how theory is employed in developing curricula, contributing to the process of selection, sequencing and distribution in units of learning, as well as assessment. The recontextualisation of media practice as pedagogy uses theory and practices drawn from many different social contexts and activities to support the constitution of pedagogic activities and their assessment. Collaborative learning activities, for example, are

ubiquitous in media production education and access to relevant theory supporting collaborative learning is facilitated by authors providing a comprehensive overview.

“Learning in Groups” (Jaques & Salmon, 2007), provides a compendium of standard constructivist taxonomies such as Bloom (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom, 1956) and SOLO (J. Biggs, 1987; J. Biggs & Collis, 1982; J. Biggs & Tang, 2007). It also provides digests of learning theories including Gardner’s (1983) Multiple Intelligences, Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning and Rogers’ (1983; 1961) Principles of Learning. This is supported by an array of research and theory on group dynamics and group behaviour and structure.

Jaques and Salmon (2007) cite Bion’s (2007, 2010) early research at the Tavistock Clinic as a basis for interpretation of group interaction. Focus on the inner psychological working of groups addresses group dynamics and group analysis. ‘T’ groups (Lewin, 1997) and Theme Centred Interaction (Cohn, 2016) are discussed along with Interaction Analysis (Jordan & Henderson, 1995) and studies of group behaviour and group development. Race (2006) and Connolly (2008) provide useful summaries of theory and historical trends in approaches to adult learning in groups together with practical advice on managing group based learning.

In the classroom, activities are structured, isolating elements and ascribing value, creating a menu of group work options. While Biggs & Tangs’ inventory of group work activities (2011; 165 - 168) can be elaborated upon there is considerable agreement on approaches to social interaction and learning. Jacques and Salmon and Connolly also focus on institutional facilitation, group forming and lecturer function, structuring activities and alignment with assessment regimes, management of interaction and exterior and interior communication and exterior and interior assessment. A more recent publication *“Thematic review of approaches to design group learning activities in higher education”* (de Hei, Strijbos, Sjoer, & Admiraal, 2016) offers a similar distillation of approaches that evidences a continuing and general focus on group structure.

The small group is a preferred site for constructing a multitude of learning activities. However, the complexity of the task is acknowledged by Brown, Collins and Duguid in their paper "*Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning*" (1989). Situated Learning Theory is based on research into learning in activity based groups and includes significant contributions by Lave (1988), Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998). It situates cognition in a meaning making system of the cognitive, affective, physical and social; learning is rooted within activity, context and culture.

I suggest that situated social interaction, its value for working effectively and as a site of learning in media provides a vivid image for practitioner academics to aspire to in creating pedagogies and units of learning. We seek to reproduce the media workplace within learning activities; "*staff ... have that shared identity of professional practice ...the language that we would commonly share with the students as well*" (IY4). But the academic practice of recontextualising media practice as pedagogy should also require the application a theoretical rationale to developing curricula.

It would seem to fall within the sphere of Situated Learning Theory (J. S. Brown et al., 1989; Chaiklin & Lave, 1996; Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991; Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991) but can situated learning fully explain what happens when practices are translated from one socially distinct context to another? Lave and Wenger's contribution, "*Situated Learning: legitimate peripheral participation*" (1991) identified initiation and legitimate peripheral participation within groups and set the framework for a powerful heuristic focusing on continuing change derived from members' participation in practice communities.

Wenger expanded on this work in "*Communities of Practice; Learning, Meaning and Identity*" (1998) and cites multiple benefits of Communities of Practice (COP); collective problem solving that gives rise synergistically to insights and solutions, confronting ineffective strategies and misconceptions and the acquisition of team working skills. However, the purpose that generated the settings researched by Lave and Wenger is production of goods or services. Learning within that setting is contextualised by the activity which is authentic in

its relationship to production. In teaching and learning media production practice the purpose of the activity is not production but pedagogic.

It may be appropriate that the collaborative model is employed in learning, but, comprehension of learning contingent on recontextualised practice principles must be emergent from the empirical setting. Authenticity cannot be substantively reproduced outside an activity's originating context. Lave and Wenger are speaking about embodiment of tacit and explicit principles when they refer to internalisation and identity of the participant. However, while conceptions that emerge from their ethnographies may be factors in a recontextualised pedagogic framework it is essential to dismantle and describe the setting in front of us if we are to allow the actual process of vocational learning in H.E. to emerge.

In "*Understanding Practice*" (1995) Chiaklin and Lave and others investigate the heuristic as necessarily situating the activity culturally and historically together with meaning making for the participant. Sense of context becomes deeply held and embodied and thus;

“...to de-contextualise knowledge is to formalise it (to contain it, to pour it into forms). To formalise is to contain more forms. It follows that abstraction from and generalisation across ‘contexts’ are mechanisms that are supposed to produce decontextualized (valuable, general) knowledge” (Chiaklin and Lave 1995; 23).

When theory is applied to media practice in a process of recontextualisation we witness Chiaklin and Lave's de-contextualisation and formalisation of knowledge on a grand scale. Teaching and learning theory are legitimized by the social context of its formulation. When applied in a process of recontextualisation of media practice it represents a rationalising regard but removed from the originating practice. They critique proponents of de-contextualisation who claim that general knowledge;

...is a movement away from the world that ‘frees’ knowers from peculiarities of time, place and on-going activity, that language can contain and express

literal meaning and the assumption that we live in an objective monistic world (Chiaklin and Lave 1995; 23).

Chiaklin and Lave identify de-contextualising strategies as active, interested denials of contextual interconnections, processes of erasure, collusion and domination.

So far, the focus of this chapter has been on competing conceptions of how collaborative learning activities can or should be structured and managed. But, a substantial body of literature on work-based practice that provides a popular basis for structuring pedagogic spaces and activities is recruited from industry and commerce. However, the trend in business organisational literature has shifted from focus on comprehension of what happens in workplace teams to managing groups in the pursuit of commercial priorities.

This trend was most clearly expressed by the “*Cox Review of Creativity in Business*” (2005a) that can now be seen not as an outlier of government policy but a forerunner. Analysis of the report in “*The Doctrine of Creativity and the Commodification of Identity*” (Colwell, 2012) shows that the recruitment of “creatives” is a means of injecting creativity into business in pursuit of increased productivity and views H.E. as a source of this specialised human capital.

The application of team management techniques in business and commerce is widespread and the imposition of private enterprise management practices in education is well documented and critiqued (S. Ball, J, 2001, 2007, 2008; Hatcher, 2001; Hirtt, 2000; Jessop, 1993; Newman, 2000; Whitfield, 1999). This process is not restricted to institutional education administration but reaches the level of the composition and evaluation of pedagogic settings.

Tusting (2012), writing about education workplaces, expresses concern that commodification, the transformation of goods, services and labour power into commodities that can be traded, is increasingly apparent in education;

...characterised by attempts to transform the complex and unpredictable social processes involved in teaching and learning into products with

exchange value, which can be used for comparison and competition (Tusting 2012; 122).

A Community of Practice is often used as a model for collaborative learning, but its application can be problematic. Hanney (2016) notes that when a COP is used as a model for collaborative learning the general absence of experienced mentors, surely an essential component, renders the exercise meaningless, at best, and dangerous when it ignores the actual level of student expertise.

In, "*What are communities of practice?*" (2005) Cox critiques "*Cultivating Communities of Practice*" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) as:

...a popularization and a simplification but also a commodification of the idea of community of practice. It now both focuses on the value of the community of practice as a management tool and abandons the early example of routine office work to refocus on innovation and problem-solving potential in large, blue chip, multinational corporations (Cox 2005; 533).

This represents a recasting of COP's, by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, as managerialism in which we are guided not by empirical evidence but by anecdote. There is a compulsion to change in the face of urgent environmental factors such as globalisation while choice regarding that change is denied.

The dominant usage of the term community of practice, at least in the organizational literature, is now to refer to a relatively informal, intra-organizational group specifically facilitated by management to increase learning or creativity. There is little point in attempting to prescribe other usage (Cox 2005; 534).

In, "*Communities of Practice in Higher Education*" (2005) Lea highlights the ubiquity of the use of COP's and critiques its recruitment into learning activities as ignoring the social complexities of the heuristic.

What is evident is that the concept is most frequently being used as a top down education model in which practitioners are encouraged to follow some guidelines for developing their own COP's in their own teaching context; this is in contrast to its use as a heuristic (Lea 2005; 186).

These researchers represent a critical view of just one theoretical approach, albeit an important and popular one. They illustrate the potential pitfalls of recontextualising practices or theories contingent on one social context and applying them elsewhere.

Theory, policy and the myth of reference

Research papers have been accessed as exemplars of theory recontextualised and applied to recontextualised media practice curricula, pedagogy and assessment. They examine four key aspects of vocational education in this field; establishing criteria for peer to peer assessment in group work; an examination of pedagogy that reifies a split between theory and practice; a joint project where students work with media companies and professional practitioners; a case study examining Peer Assisted Learning (PAL).

The first looks at commonly used peer assessment criteria for media practice learning activities. The second applies Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) to analyse the different status accorded to academic and media practice-based theory on a journalism course. The third examines the application of COP in constructing a 'live project' involving students working with industry. The fourth examines the use of peer assisted learning (PAL) in a media production course.

"Group Work and Assessment in Media Production," (Ireland, 2004) records academic approaches to evaluating group work in media practice education. It comprises contributions from twenty H.E.I. media production courses with the aim of evaluating "...current practice in the assessment of group-based student work in media production and to establish the criteria for best practice" (Ireland 2004; 6). It itemises seven common assessment criteria for peer to peer assessment from group work policy documents supplied by participating institutions.

Contribution to group discussions; Reliability to carry out allocated roles / tasks; Possession of project management / technical skills appropriate to role; The level of effectiveness of the member in the group; The level to

which the member accepts and acts upon advice and criticism; Punctuality and reliability; Professional attitude and approach (Ireland 2004; 9).

A unit of learning can be described using a Domain of Action schema (DAS) (Fig. 1). Students are trying to access, acquire and embody explicit and tacit principles of practice. Strongly institutionalised (I+), recontextualised media practice principles constitute an esoteric domain. Students will engage in an activity, usually collaborative, which constitutes a public domain (I-) designed to facilitate access to esoteric domain principles. Students cannot access the esoteric domain directly but their reflection and self-evaluation, contingent on cognitive, affective, social and physical action in a public domain activity can be tested, via expressive and descriptive domains, against esoteric domain principles.

A learning activity is constituted by recontextualised media practice principles and student reflexive evaluation is emergent from the public domain activity. The learning they achieve is authentic in relation to the activity as experienced by each student. But, assessment establishes a second esoteric domain regarding public domain learning activity illustrated by the “*Competing Discourses*” graphic (Fig. 5).

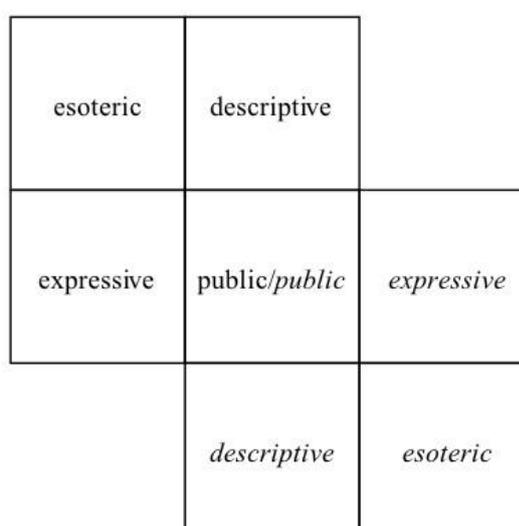


Fig. 4. Competing Discourses (Dowling 2009; 237)

Administration of assessment is strongly institutionalised; its claim to authority is bureaucratic with regard to assuring the stability of learned practice.

Assessment is, I suggest, effectively, detached from recontextualised media practice principles that constitute the esoteric domain of a learning activity. When peer assessment criteria, representing an additional list of required performances, are applied they constitute a second set of organising principles in a second esoteric domain. Student learning and institutional assessment apparently cohere but that coherence is, as we have seen, contingent on the mythologization of recontextualised media practice principles. Myth-making obscures the complexity and, I suggest, the instability of relations between multiple strands of assessment policy and curricula and pedagogy.

Each criterion represents a rationalising regard. For example, in professional media practice, any interaction concerning a task is likely to be between people who comprehend the inter-relationship of functions they are performing and the sign system they operate within; principles of recognition. It is fair to ask how “*Effectiveness*” and “*Attitude*” and the concept of “*Professionalism*,” all contingent on tacit principles of recognition, are measured in this system of assessment. “*Contribution to Discussion*”, cannot encompass the social complexity of media practice. It cannot reproduce principles of recognition so locates assessment in formal, structured settings.

Peer assessment criteria represent idealised interpretations of social interaction and a composite individual. Good practice is consistent with amicable working relationships, shared workload, individual and collective responsibility and a successful outcome, whereas poor practice is its opposite. The uniqueness of each project, the messiness of any creative process and the distinctiveness of every group and individual participant are denied. This action represents an actualisation of the myth of reference. Dowling notes the tendency in social and educational research;

...to promote what I have called the myth of reference (Dowling 1998), which is to say, to present itself as if it were about something other than itself, as if the language of the research represents objects and activities that the research has uncovered, but that, in principle, are accessible to all of us. Having represented the world, the mechanisms articulating the

representation are pushed into the represented world and represented as causal structures (Dowling 2013; 318).

Dowling's illustration of the myth of reference in "*the Sociology of Mathematics Education*" draws on mathematics textbooks and cites a tendency for mathematics to annex domestic activity, such as shopping, that entails differentiation. "*That mathematics can be exchanged for shopping is contingent on mathematics incorporating recognition and realisation principles that facilitate the exchange...*" (Dowling 1998; 16). However, the principles that regulate mathematics and those that regulate shopping constitute distinct systems. The myth is constituted by a self-referential system; "*...its utterances are not references but simulacra*" (Dowling 1998; 16). The assessment criteria for peer assessment establish a self-referential system detached from the emergent practice of students.

The myth of reference sustains claims to measure student learning in a predictable form. Comprehension of official knowledge and expression of its legitimate acquisition is classified temporally; learning progresses over a specified time frame. It constructs the individual as an unproblematic unit of analysis and knowledge as essentially intellectual. Peer assessment criteria represent a recontextualising regard of student practice which is constituted as a public domain by recontextualised media practice principles. It is clear that the strategic relationship between learned practice and multiple strands of assessment policy is extremely complex.

However, using the "*Modes of Recontextualisation*" schema, (Fig. 2), we can organise the relationship between the regarding practice, assessment, and that which it regards. Assessment represents the coalition of multiple mythologizing strategies in relation to media practice recontextualised as pedagogy. It represents a DS- practice, weakly discursively saturated. The practice it regards, a student learning activity constituted by recontextualised practice principles, is, by definition, also DS-. The Modes of Recontextualisation schema locates the recontextualising strategy in the improvising category "*...recruiting what is at hand in a semiotic or material construction or production*" (Dowling 2013; 330). I suggest that 'improvising' is an inadequate description of the

strategic relationship between student practice and peer group assessment. However, it illustrates the effectiveness of mythologizing strategies in masking the level of detachment and instability.

A second paper reports on a multi-disciplinary group work project involving media, interior design and creative multimedia students. *“Students as Producers: An ‘X’ Disciplinary Client-Based Approach to Collaborative Art, Design and Media Pedagogy”* by Cocchiarella and Booth (2015) aims to;

explore approaches to cross-disciplinary design study, but also differentiated experiences within subject disciplines and how students adapt to external working environments and negotiate team-working ethics through tutor and client relationships (Cocchiarella and Booth 2015; 327).

A constructivist paradigm informs the approach with students learning through participation in the activity, designing a public installation. Four tutor-assigned artistic directors take responsibility for;

...setting the working methods and ethics of the group, articulating ideas between the team and the client, as they would in a studio system... [students will] guide each other and shape their own identity, free of academic institutional constraint, to “search for meaning... through the process of professional engagement.” (Cocchiarella and Booth 2015; 327).

The authors assert that; students’ creative identity is informed by discovering vocational pride and motivated by a sense of autonomy, supported by peers, collaborators and stakeholders engaging within real-world design scenarios. Student learning activity is construed as real, focused on production, and, simultaneously, pedagogic, inviting internal referential evaluation.

While noting researchers’ identification of the central issue, developing a practice identity or acquiring principles of recognition, the project eschewed a strategic approach; *“teaching was fluid, with no notes, lesson plans or fixed ideas of aims or outcomes. It also lacked any predetermined structure.”* (Cocchiarella and Booth 2015; 329). The construction of pedagogy, for this project, clearly represents a DS- practice. It establishes a public domain practice undertaken by students, also, by definition, DS-. Reference to the

modes of recontextualisation schema places this interaction in the improvising quadrant.

The aptness of this diagnosis is evidenced by the text. The project encountered difficulties when industry based, professional practitioners got involved. It was acknowledged that management of the group by external agents was crucial to the success of the project but the working relationship between students and client was not managed effectively.

An easy working relationship and relaxed attitude would seem like a recipe for success, but the data repeatedly highlighted that the working ethic of each group quickly broke down when the client was relaxed, lacked a clear aim or allowed increased freedom (Cocchiarella and Booth 2015; 327).

However, the researchers claimed success in establishing “...*new methods for teaching creative autonomy*,” having placed responsibility for failures on the shoulders of the external clients “...*who were less challenging and did not set a clear outcome and failed to make students set the tone early in the task, ultimately failing in their ambition*” (Cocchiarella and Booth 2015; 332). They also claim that the project represents;

...a contribution to knowledge that demonstrates that although students learn to work autonomously, it is not without the meticulous planning and facilitation of the academic team... Autonomy needs structure; realisations need to be staged by the facilitators to be perceived through emotional engagement” (Cocchiarella and Booth 2015; 333).

However, no mechanisms, theoretical or practical, are available to students to help them to disentangle multiple, competing recontextualising regards of the practice they are notionally learning.

The construction of the activity relied heavily on Wenger’s Communities of Practice (COP). Here, the recontextualisation of a COP as a container for a multi-disciplinary activity imagines that a COP is a provider of social context rather than contingent on context specific social interaction predicated on production rather than pedagogy. This error is amplified by the claim that the activity produces good behaviours which lead to emotional attachment followed

by cognitive engagement inside which students can find their vocational pride. Sticking a label saying COP on this tin should not disguise the, a-theoretical, slipperiness of its contents.

That said, elements of the project are worth consideration. The failure to define the differing perspectives on the project by participants should not obscure the fact that they exist. I suggest that problems are rooted in a lack of resources devoted to negotiating the differential status of industry and education participants. The intent of the project was to disrupt pedagogy in the academy through contact with 'real world' practices. The aim was potentially beneficial with regard to developing student criticality. What this paper represents, but fails to recognise, is an appropriating strategy that must emerge when the academy and media industry participants attempt to collaborate on a project.

A third paper looks at Peer Assisted Learning (PAL). In, "*Course specific learning in Peer Assisted Learning schemes: a case study of creative media production courses*," Court and Molesworth (2008) looked at second year students mentoring first year students on a film production module. The limits of the pedagogic method are well argued; risks associated with assumptions about the application of professional models managed by novices, whose understanding of complex interactions must be limited, are acknowledged. Of most concern was the use of PAL as means to reduce costs, improve retention and provide an uplift to grades.

The rationale for PAL, cited by the authors, is dependent on a series of conjectures and recontextualisations; Vygotskian observation of children gaining mastery over cultural tools and signs while interacting with others in their environment, becomes "*...interaction with others is essential for learning to take place.*" Perhaps the most extraordinary claim is that "*...because they have only recently acquired skills, student peers may be better able to provide appropriate explanations than experienced staff*" (Court and Molesworth 2008; 125). The provenance and efficacy of PAL, cited in the paper, is questionable. The primary, destabilising factor, I suggest, is that PAL recontextualises practice developed for "*...historically difficult courses... history, law,*

engineering, and medicine ...[that] have an extensive corpus of factual content that is hard to master” (Court and Molesworth 2008; 124).

What emerges from Court and Molesworth’s research is a critique of PAL. Unless fully supported by and integrated into an established tutor led and taught system, it is not an appropriate method for managing complex, media production pedagogies. Why is this the case? In part, I suggest, principles of recontextualisation are not acknowledged as intrinsic to the production of media production pedagogies. Rationalisations, introduced by PAL Leaders, are inevitably located either in their prior learning based on recontextualised principles or individual interpretations. The application of a PAL system assisted in institutional student induction, but other effects were problematic.

PAL is emergent from learning a highly specialised practice primarily contingent on factual content. It is recontextualised and applied to a pedagogic setting, where the acquisition of tacit principles in an unstable practice is central. The PAL discourse constitutes an esoteric domain of its own principles that regards a public domain, experiential pedagogic activity. However, the esoteric domain of PAL does not constitute the public domain. As with assessment criteria for group work it establishes a competing discourse, a second esoteric domain (Fig. 4). In this case it is not available to all participants; its pedagogic function is reserved for the PAL Leader.

What is significant about this strategy is that it is discriminatory. Court and Molesworth note the efficacy of the programme for PAL Leaders. Of course, this position entails receiving specialised tutoring in both the practice to be learned and in the objectification of those skills as an aid to mentoring other students. This, together with opportunities to apply expertise both inside and outside practical work and encouragement to reflect on those experiences results, in SAM terms, to the creation of a bespoke public domain.

Pathways to the esoteric, expressive and descriptive domains, acquire unusual depth and opportunities for experimentation. This does not apply to those being mentored. In fact, the opposite occurs but the degree of disjunction for first year students is likely to be difficult to recognise and to manage. Pathways to

esoteric domain principles are obstructed. Potentially, it introduces profound instability in the public domain for taught first year students, regarding the validity of esoteric domain principles.

PAL, in this paper, represents an actualisation of a reproducing strategy that is hard to identify because it distinguishes between levels of learning, not aspects of practice. Learning progression is reified in privileging those who have advanced in an academic hierarchy. Detrimental consequences for those lower on the ladder are not recognised because, I suggest, principles of recontextualisation are denied. It constitutes a DS- practice in relation to both media practice and curriculum development practice, the target of its regard, which in this context is DS+. It sits in the de-principling category, losing principled discourse.

Finally, in *“Theory and Practice in Journalism Education”* Greenberg (2007) looks at *“...how journalism educators see the role of theory and how they assess the relation between theory and practice in their own classrooms”* (Greenberg 2007; 289). Greenberg’s interest focused on the disconnect journalist practitioners feel when they took up teaching posts in universities and the belittling of their trade they encountered. Analysis was based on Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC), which is *“...promoted as best practice in higher education and is now put forward as a solution to the theory–practice divide in journalism education”* (Greenberg 2007; 289).

Kolb’s cycle, which assumes a two-way flow between theory and practice, has four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation or theory-building and active experimentation followed by repetition of concrete experience. *“In this way, concepts are continuously modified by experience (how does this affect talking / writing about doing it?)”* (Greenberg 2007; 290). Greenberg is interested in how journalism students perceive the relation between theory and practice in the classroom, how reflective practice was used and whether attitudes to theory and practice effect the way journalism was taught.

Greenberg uses ECL to support an investigation to ascertain the presence, or otherwise, of a dialogue between practice and theory as opposed to a one-way flow of theory from the academy to journalism students. Findings suggested scepticism about engagement with theory from lecturers on the basis, first, of;

...who 'owns' the theory? People can mean very different things by theory depending on their starting point and the power they hold in higher education institutions. Journalism studies currently needs more theory not less and it needs theory that is embedded in the field and in journalism departments rather than brought in from outside (Greenberg 2007; 302).

Greenberg's findings describe the problem, but Kolb cannot provide the solution. Reflexive practice in the academy cannot be the same as reflexive practice in the workplace. Media practice principles of recognition cannot be reproduced in the academy; the theory / practice split is integral to recontextualisation of media practice. I suggest that Greenberg, could not find meaningful, discursive interchange because the *"one-way flow of theory from the academy to practice"* is strategic. It actualises the myth of certainty; the academy claims to reproduce journalism practice and regards it as if it is real.

She identifies the difficulty, also apparent in the authorship of QAA benchmarks; *"Cultural studies ...has historically defined itself against journalism, setting itself the task of deconstructing practices and the tacit theories that lie behind them..."* (Greenberg 2007; 293). Suspicion regarding the corporate and commercial demands on journalists in the workplace often results in journalists being cast as tools of malevolent forces. Journalistic objectivity is undermined; theory 'in' practice is superseded by theory 'of' practice. Academic theory displaces theory emergent in journalism practice, an actualisation of the myth of reference.

The *"Modes of Recontextualisation"* schema helps to visualise the relational space between journalism practiced in a commercial setting and its recontextualised, pedagogized version in the academy. Journalism as practice, in its originating social setting may, despite the caveats of cultural theorists, be categorised as a DS+ practice. The institutional regard that rationalises that

practice in the process of recontextualisation must be categorised as DS- in relation to media practice principles. The result is a de-principling of the regarded practice. Greenberg reports;

...a growing allegiance to reflective practice as an explicit paradigm in journalism education. ...instead of assessing how programmes balance theory and practice, we are advised to judge how well they teach critical self-reflection.” However, Greenberg doubts that “...on its own the reflective practice model can make the problem disappear. After all, according to the model, reflection is done within an explicit theoretical framework. The question remains: which framework, and defined by whom? (Greenberg 2007; 295).

Summary

The question this chapter asked was, *how does H.E. policy for assessment of student learning mythologize media practice curriculum development and delivery?* Policies that regulate assessment seek to stabilise an unstable practice. They represent an actualisation of the myth of certainty. The actualisation of the myth of reference establishes a self-referential system that sustains claims to measure student learning in a predictable form. It constructs the individual as an unproblematic unit of analysis and knowledge as, essentially, intellectual.

Theory, apparently explicatory in its original social setting, becomes regulatory. So, for example, cultural theory, recontextualised as policy, when operationalised in an OBTL / ILO / progression assessment framework, is reified as a theory / practice split in media practice pedagogy. Strategic responses that emerge from the interaction of multiple policies and curriculum development vary in form, but each illustrates the significance of mythologization of practice.

Greenberg’s account describes defence of the status of the academy against claims for the legitimacy of theory in practice by journalism students. Ireland collates a list of idealised performances as assessment criteria for group work assessment when the conditions of their application must, in each case, be

different. Court and Molesworth describe the imposition of a discriminatory pedagogic structure. Cocchiarella and Booth concoct a heady mixture of invented behaviours and business team management techniques in an attempt to claim that recontextualised practice is authentic.

QAA benchmarks must mythologize recontextualised media practice, to treat it as if it is real, if it is to be considered valid. Without recourse to the myth of certainty the academy cannot confer stability or authenticity on recontextualised practice principles in H.E. The myth of reference denies integrated, emergent theory in media practice and allows for the substitution of theory that legitimizes curricula, pedagogic and assessment structures. Greenberg and Court and Molesworth are, I suggest, aware of the contradiction but do not dispel the veil of myth-making that obscures the relationship between the empirical field and the empirical settings they study.

The organisational language of SAM allows for the dismantling and description of a social space. Case study data shows a common approach to selection, sequencing and distribution as either a delimiting / reproducing or a decoupling / reclassifying strategy. They regulate the practice of curriculum development in relation to multiple policy strands that interact in the development of curricula. This interaction can be categorised according to whether policy regards of curriculum development practice are operationalised to assure stability in assessment or regulate the legitimacy of learned practice.

Analysis suggests that for curricula contingent on a delimiting strategy the actualisation of the myth of certainty, effectively an assertion that the reality of professional media practice is reproduced in an H.E. context, can be discerned in the emergence of a reproducing strategy. In CSY data, specialist pathways, served by specialist tutors, claim to provide what virtual adepts lack; the conditions of authentic media practice. The genre-based course it replaced and GMP in CSX data also represent a reproducing strategy, required to assure stability in assessment.

Actualisation of the myth of certainty for a decoupling strategy can be discerned in the emergence of a reclassifying strategy. In CSX data, where a reproducing

strategy is unavailable to the developers of the new Film course, their only recourse is to a reclassifying strategy. Reclassifying strategies, I suggest, are normally associated with media and cultural studies courses critique of media corporatism. The focus by authors of the Film course on innovation and entrepreneurship and the selection of media business practices as a core pedagogy suggests that reclassification is not contingent on the rationalising regard of cultural theory. It is also available to the corporate alliance it opposes.

The Film course establishes a critique of media industries but in terms of market inefficiency and stagnation. Its pathway to employment for graduates is explicitly linked to authority and status in industry. It does not seek to reproduce current media practices but to supplant them. It represents a reclassifying strategy, but not media and cultural studies orthodoxy. Appropriating and linking strategies, identified earlier, emerge from external policy regards concerning H.E. finance and its relationship to industry. Discourse that underpins strategic perspectives that constitute the empirical field is examined in the next chapter.

Four: Discourse

How might competing discourses contribute to strategic instability in media practice education in H.E.?

This chapter opens with an examination of critical perspectives on curriculum development for art, design and media in relation to teaching in the academy and the disjunction of theory and practice. These disputes are contextualised by discourses concerning the marketisation of H.E. and an appraisal of globalisation and knowledge economy discourses, as contributors to external, governmental policy regards of H.E.

While curriculum development cannot be separated from contemporary political discourse, its practice should, ideally, be transparent and facilitate open, critical engagement. In *"Ideology and Curriculum"* (2004), Apple highlights three aspects a programme that need to be articulated; "...the school as an institution, knowledge forms and the educator. Each of these must be situated within the larger nexus or relations of which it is a part" (Apple 2004; 3). Apple's concern, together with theorists like Williams (1976), Bernstein (2000), Bourdieu (1990, 1993), Bowles and Gintis (1999) is the social reproduction of values, norms and dispositions. This raises the question of legitimacy. Apple echoes Bernstein and acknowledges Williams when he says;

...education... must be seen as a selection and organisation from all available social knowledge... it means that ... one does not take it for granted that curricular knowledge is neutral. Instead one looks for social interests embodied in the knowledge form itself (Apple 2004; 15).

He concludes that to do this the researcher must think structurally or relationally, linking the process of cultural distribution to questions of power and control outside the school. Critical analyses of curriculum development practices also draws attention to faculty's beliefs and conceptions of society deployed as doctrine casting those with differing views as heretics (M. Apple, W, 1995, 2006; Buras, 2006; McCarthy, Pitton, Kim, & Monje, 2009; Olssen, 1996; Robertson & Dale, 2009; Saltman, 2009; Santome, 2009). Klein, in *"A Conceptual Framework for Curriculum Decision Making"* (1991), outlined issues

associated with doctrinaire approaches particularly with regard to close institutional alignment with government policy objectives.

A major concern is the increase in aspects of curriculum design mandated by government and the concomitant decline in areas of authority and decision making available to teachers. Klein identified the implicit curriculum which;

...consists of those messages which students learn, often affective in nature, but which may not be deliberately intended or examined. They are typically communicated through the values of the educators who run the school, rules and regulations, the way schools are structured and organised and the quality of interactions with adults and other students (Klein 1991; 220).

A report on a curriculum development workshop, devised by the Change Academy, an initiative sponsored by the UK Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation, highlighted several areas of good practice. It emphasised transparency, collaboration and democratisation as essential to the process (Healey, Bradford, Roberts, & Knight, 2013). This is an instructive report which sets out what is considered desirable or good practice.

However, Carey (2013) looked at student engagement in curriculum design in relation to marketization in H.E. Economic discourses dominate, with students seen as customers rather than learners. Free-market logic dictates that customers make purchasing decisions based on how content they are with services. Commitment to student engagement is merely cosmetic. Genuine engagement was not facilitated and institutional structures disempowered students by categorising them as consumers with complaints rather than participants in a creative collaborative process.

Barriers to inclusion of prior, individual student theory and practice within curriculum design, across courses for creative industries, is highlighted by Cooper and Harris (2013). Many researchers see curriculum design as a contested space where autonomous action is increasingly constrained by government policy and institutional control (G. Bell, 2000; Duncam, 2006; Hardy, 2006) Cultural commodification, increasingly evident in the Art

curriculum, is criticised by Siegesmund (2013) as both anti-democratic and counter-productive in terms of both cultural and industry needs.

Evident constraint on what counts as valid knowledge in a curriculum is accompanied by concern for pedagogy and assessment. Jagodzinski (2015) is critical of the complicity of design education in advancing and sustaining commodification of the individual through data mining and behavioural marketing. Hardy (2012) critiques institutional requirements to measure attainment in art and design education that are expressed in strictly delineated exercises and assessment criteria and argues that the consequence is a detachment of pedagogy from the practice.

Anxieties associated with ethical stances in relation to governmental economic and social policy are linked to various concerns regarding who controls what can be regarded as valid knowledge, its pedagogy and assessment. De-contextualisation expressed in approaches to teaching in settings that address creativity and its assessment concerns Steers (2009; Swift & Steers, 1999) Clarke and Cripps (2012) and Atkinson (2003, 2006). This seems to confirm Atkinson's observation that individual agency may be left out of the equation all together;

“If subjectivity in art practice is understood as shaped entirely by a network of discourses and practices then this ignores the fact that discourses and practices are operated, reviewed and changed by human agents” (Atkinson 2006; 143).

The theory / practice split and cultural theory

Student agency needs to be respected. Their activity needs to be comprehended both as a construction of discourse and as a site of emergent discourse in practice. However, what is striking in papers regarding media practice education is that the primary focus is on the separation of theory and practice. It emerges in thinking about how media practice can or should be transformed into pedagogy.

Scaffolding, drawing on Vygotskian approaches, places pedagogic attainment beyond the reach of the learner but offers assistance in achieving success

contingent on conformity with a regulating discourse. Seeking clarity in defining theoretical bases for action is often a justification for separating theory and practice. When dealing with complex, unstable practices that are contingent on embodiment of integrated theory and practice, their separation, can, potentially, become problematic, particularly if the division is assimilated by political discourse.

Post 1992, the inclusion of production practice, developing and making narrative products, alongside technical vocational education, brought media production practice teaching within the orbit of cultural studies. Many researchers and authors such as Giroux (1989a; 1989b) and Freire (1998; 2009), Apple (1995; 2004; 2006), Bowles and Gintis (1999) and others, set out a rationale for the place of cultural studies as an essential contextualising factor in the study of media practice.

Its critique of media industry commercial activity and its social and political rationale identifies media effects in political agenda setting, as illustrated by Combs and Shaw (1972): *“The press may not be successful... in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about”* (Combs & Shaw 1972; 177). This critical stance implies a cult of professionalism that instigates a producer / consumer divide that potentially inhibits wider student identification of an individual political, ethical stance regarding their practice.

However, the apparent remedy is to use cultural signifiers identified with a young audience to first connect with students and then move them on to serious cultural concerns. Sholle and Denski (1994) produced an influential manifesto for critical pedagogy drawing on the work of the Frankfurt School and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. It claimed to offer a pedagogy of hope that would;

...disrupt a spiralling series of distancing dichotomies such as teacher versus student; scholar versus teacher; teaching versus research; research versus production, the theoretical versus the practical and the real world versus the ivory tower (Sholle & Denski 1994; 8).

Sholle and Denski provide a detailed tool kit of cultural / political categories that would inoculate students against the professional production model that excludes critical discourses. Alternatively, media production could be eliminated as a discrete practice course, its activities distributed through other courses and classes. They even propose the invention of “...*a miniature public sphere... where students would be responsible for airing issues of importance to diverse groups of the student body...*” (Sholle & Denski; 1994; 173). However, the discourse, I suggest, cannot escape that which it opposes.

The miniature public sphere, arguably, represents a public domain constituted by esoteric domain principles, the identification of and critical engagement with culturally significant forms in relation to media production practice. This strategic, recontextualising regard, not only detaches theory from practice it also represents a reclassifying strategy exhibited as a marked differentiation in status. It moralises media practice on the assumption that the commercial setting of professional practice inhibits the acknowledgement and embodiment of critical discourse. The remedy is to educate future generations of practitioners in cultural theory.

Buckingham (1996) argues that critical pedagogy is a synthesis of perspectives drawn from multiple struggles against paternalistic hegemony and economic and social oppression. His first criticism is that, in education, the embodiment of this stance ignores institutional complicity in power relations. The second concern is with its unwillingness to address power relationships that are enacted through its own discourse; there are many injunctions about what to do but no suggestions on how to do it. There is no specific curriculum on offer. Buckingham rejects instrumentalist pedagogies of criticism and ideology and representation.

While many of these issues are also raised in teaching older students, it is the relationship between theory and practice which has become one of the most problematic concerns for media educators in higher education (Buckingham 1998; 646).

The critical pedagogy regard, can, I suggest, be conceptualised as a rationalisation of a legitimate theoretical construct, cultural theory, which

detaches it from its originating social context. This recontextualisation constitutes cultural theory as a subjectivity, contingent on an ideological convergence, that is misrepresented as a practice. It regards a second practice, curriculum development, that itself regards a third, media practice, emergent from a different social activity.

This process of sequential rationalisations contributes to the reification of the theory / practice divide which is addressed by many researchers. McLuskie (2000) writes about a case study of a skills, culture and media training course that highlights concerns of insufficient focus on theory. Geraghty (2002), highlights the relative status of theory and practice in the academy, with the latter seen as an afterthought in academic recruitment. She acknowledges the argument for integration of theory and practice; theoretical work should motivate the development of a critical approach to student practice. Geraghty also posts a warning;

...it is important also to realize the effects on theory teaching and learning of a strong practice element in a programme, particularly one which emphasizes creativity and alternative practices (Geraghty 2002; 30).

Assumptions about the relative status of theory in vocational education ignore the implicit integration of theory in practice in other contexts but this tension attracts the attention of other researchers such as Wayne (2001), Maras (2005), Bell (2016) and Greenberg's (2007) paper on journalist practitioners and the denigration of their practice in universities. Watling (2001) is concerned that curricula that downgrades the importance of practical work does so at the expense of student's critical autonomy and critical action. He argues that;

Without the notion of critical action practical media work soon regresses into education about the media, and denies students the opportunity to use knowledge and criticism as tools for their own ends... practical media work has the potential to encourage students to adopt critical positions on the theme of their texts, on the media in general, and on their own subjective positions (Watling 2001; 220).

Ellis (2000), says that practice teaching urgently needs to incorporate theoretical approaches. The motivation for this call is changes in media technology and employment practices;

...the industry has changed. Craft skills are no longer enough to sustain a career within it. Indeed, however good a person's programme-making skills might be, they will encounter a glass ceiling in the new media industries, a glass ceiling not experienced by those with intellectual formations remote from those of programme-makers (Ellis 2000; 5).

Ellis' remedy anticipates course development in CSY. His solution is to develop a tangential theoretical approach using “...*an uneasy combination of aesthetics, sociology and business studies is currently required: a new variant on the habitual theoretical heterodoxy of media studies*” (Ellis 2000; 6). He identifies specific areas to be addressed; finance and editorial, media industry culture, audience studies, scheduling and marketing, wider issues surrounding technological change including political and societal effects and ownership and control, globalisation and freedom of speech and expression. This represents a reclassifying strategy, privileging audience studies and media industry culture but with no sense of how they might be transformed by the academy.

Chanan (2000) responds to Ellis by arguing that while there may be need for new theoretical thinking in the teaching of media practice this, and existing media practice education, is imperilled by the advance of managerialism in H.E. Chanan describes Managerialism as “...*a form of ideology in practice. Management is never neutral, but normative. It imposes its own programme and obliges obeisance to its own concepts and methods*” (Chanan 2000; 140). He goes on to argue that H.E. and media education are not areas that would naturally respond to market mechanisms and so they must be introduced and operated. However, the operation of market mechanisms is based on a fallacy;

Neither health care nor pedagogy are like the production of commodities, where improvements in productivity can be easily quantified - and the more a worker can produce in a day, the more profit you can make (Chanan 2000; 141).

Chanan's argument is robust when it comes to the tension between managerialism and aesthetics which adds a new dimension to the practice / theory divide. He defines aesthetics as a product of imagination, of active reflection on a creative process. Chanan recognises a need

...for an aesthetics from below, an aesthetics in which theoretical concepts will be constantly informed and tested by practice. Nothing else corresponds to the pedagogical imperative which says that the purpose of education is to enable the student to think for themselves and discover their own voice and sense of identity (Chanan 2000; 142).

Here, Chanan identifies action that renders the splitting of theory and practice superfluous. Integration of theory and practice requires embodiment of explicit and tacit practice principles, critical reflection and artistry. Chanan questions whether falsely keeping them apart is productive for students and employers. He develops a critique of employers who may be deterred from hiring people who think theoretically and critically about media as essential to their practice.

What they can't cope with so easily is creatives, still less mere technicians, who insist on the primacy of their own aesthetic judgement, as if they wanted to speak to the audience on their own terms instead of those of the schedulers (Chanan 2000; 142).

And yet, even if they feel threatened, media companies need creative practitioners to create new programming that will capture an audience. Attempts have been made to integrate theory and practice in curricula. Berkeley (2009) looked at changes in approaches to curriculum design prompted by technological changes in media industries, A popular media practice degree had been running for over thirty years. Its structure incorporated a split between study in traditional academic disciplines and vocational training in practical media production.

The course claimed to prepare students for work in an industry that was stable and structured, with clearly defined professional standards and career paths. Berkeley's critique highlighted industry change incorporating technological and economic shifts that produced new ways of working and new employment

models. The new degree adopted a methodology where process was emphasised, and students were encouraged to exercise agency in their learning, defining learning tasks and assessment criteria.

Considerable time was devoted to addressing individual student comprehension of their own learning. Participating staff felt that while the student-centred approach developed knowledge and skills broadly relevant to students' futures as media practitioners;

... that desirable capabilities, such as creative and collaborative skills, were only implicitly being developed within the degree. It was as though we expected students to learn these themselves, through some osmotic process while they were making films... (Berkeley 2009; 192).

Integration of many features that had previously been kept separate was a fundamental underlying principle of the curriculum change. Within media industry and vocational education that serves it, *"divisions between theory / practice, expert / novice, creative / critical and professional / amateur have all become problematic"* (Berkeley 2009; 192). Berkeley argued for the merits of combining the study of academic theory in areas such as media practice courses. For students to understand the value of both, they had to understand the connections between them and the potential they had for enhancing each other.

These papers address common themes in this field; institutional concerns regarding student engagement, participation, autonomy and agency appear to be significant but merit only strategic disregard or manipulation; fears around what counts as legitimate knowledge and who controls its designation are mixed with anxiety over detachment, de-contextualisation and general confusion engendered by too much influence exerted by too many external stakeholders.

The theory / practice divide might be regarded as a proxy for other disputes concerning student independence and voice, contextualised by changes in media industry employment patterns. However, these papers have something in common. None of them acknowledges that the object of research is contingent

on the recontextualisation of media practice. There are two exceptions; Hanney (2016) and Lindahl Elliot (2000). Both look to Bernstein to provide a theoretical basis for investigation of media practice curricula.

Hanney focuses on Project Based Learning (PBL) and questions whether recontextualisation is sufficiently acknowledged in the construction of projects. He cites Dowling in his critique and considers the potential of a subject position to be activated in a pedagogic space. His focus is on the likelihood for decoupling within projects “...to occur in situations where the perceived aims of external policies do not align with the shared goals of the project participants” (Hanney 2016; 15). Hanney’s theoretical focus is on alignment (OBTL) in curricula and pedagogy and group management applying behavioural theory. Hanney identifies a third category of difficulty;

Decoupling may equally be an act of resistance to a perceived regulatory system that seeks to impose identities, behaviours and values upon those within a project space – whose existing personal identities may already be in conflict with the idea of *doing-things-a certain-way* (Hanney 2016; 15).

Hanney identifies potential for the structuring of the pedagogic setting to generate dissonance. However, Hanney does not use the organisational language of SAM to dismantle and describe what is happening in the empirical setting. He uses a psychological approach to examine alienation not the strategic and relational lens that SAM offers.

Lindahl Elliot’s focus is on the theory / practice divide. His paper stands out because he explicitly recognises principles of recontextualisation. He distinguishes between courses that teach media practice to prepare students for work in the media production market and those which teach them to develop a critical disposition towards the media and popular culture. The first modality is described as vocational, and the second, autonomous. He makes a second distinction between courses that advance criticality as an essential component of vocational education and those that focus on commerce and the market.

The market-oriented modality focuses on employment and employability; an H.E. setting that is distanced from the workplace creates a barrier to be

overcome. He notes the recruitment of professional practitioners who organise pedagogy based on;

...realist theories of instruction ...forms of teaching and learning which are structured in ways that attempt to reproduce within the university classroom the conditions found in media production workplaces ...the educator attempts to exert a strong and relatively visible framing, a visible control over the process of learning, and does so in a manner that is meant to emulate what the lecturer believes to be professional relations in the workplace (Lindahll Elliot 2000; 20).

He goes on to identify recontextualisation as a significant factor; *“Even the most realist forms of teaching, these simulacra inevitably entail a number of transformations”* (Lindahll Elliot 2000; 21). He argues that university education cannot reproduce professionally contextualised practice, the ethos of communication, the pressures implicit in practice or implied or explicit audiences; *“...what is learned at university cannot be exactly the same as what would be learned by an apprentice working within a media organization”* (ibid). The paper articulates a crucial argument regarding the theory / practice split in media practice education;

Media production discourses undergo an analogous recontextualisation. The different forms of media production are not themselves theory-less or thoughtless forms of practice. Although the various practices of media production tend to be based on relatively unselfconscious, or craft, forms of reasoning, they nevertheless embody discursive orders which are constitutive of professional identity, relation, and order (Lindahll Elliot 2000; 27).

Practitioners adhere to principles of representation which are embodied, contextualised by time, place and modes of identification.

The discursive transformations - theory as practice-less theory, practice as theory-less practice - are the result of an empiricist reduction that has a long history in western culture, one that suggests that theory is to do with the mind and practice with the hands (Lindahll Elliot 2000; 27).

He argues that the dichotomy is invalid and goes further, singling out media production as an activity that has never been effectively colonised by Fordism or Taylorism. The argument is that the dichotomy is typical of policy science; a theory that is a discursive regime, applied to a practice in a way that disregards the culturally embedded nature of the practice-to-be-transformed, characterises this regard as tantamount to promoting a false principle of subordination, a false principle of recontextualisation.

Far from promoting integration, course description phrases like media theory and practice actually conceal discursive ellipses or silences which treat media production as so many skills - that is, as an instructional discourse - that can be embedded in the discourses of Media Studies, which are themselves silently articulated as if they were the regulative discourses (Lindahll Elliot 2000; 27).

Lindahll Elliot is describing the operation of the myth of certainty. It conceals the constructive subjectivity behind the theory / practice split and in doing so the operation of its power in its (re)production.

Globalisation and the knowledge economy

Since 1998, government policy,¹⁷ has sought to position H.E. as a driver of national economic productivity, to establish a knowledge-based economy in a globalised marketplace. H.E. is increasingly subject to critical accounts of commodification both of learning and the learner in a commercialised culture. Rizvi and Lingard, in *“Globalising Education Policy”* (2009) are clear about the main components of the trend.

Globalisation refers not only to shifts in transnational patterns of economic activities, especially with respect to the movement of capital and finance, but also to ways in which contemporary political and cultural configurations have been reshaped by major advances in information technologies (Rizvi & Lingard 2009; 23).

¹⁷ See Policy, page 116.

Powell and Snellman (2004) define the knowledge economy in terms of production and services emergent from 'knowledge-intensive activities,' rapid technological advance and concomitant obsolescence. It infers;

...greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources, combined with efforts to integrate improvements in every stage of the production process... These changes are reflected in the increasing relative share of the gross domestic product that is attributable to "intangible" capital... (Powell & Snellman 2004; 201).

Key to the social construction of a knowledge economy as a zone of commercial activity is identification of expertise with attributable practices unique to that sector. The UK's designation of creative industries by the DCMS in 1998 is part of that trend. In "*The Education Debate*" (2013) Ball identifies the knowledge economy as elusive and misleading;

It derives from the idea that knowledge and education can be treated as a business product, and that educational and innovative intellectual products and services, as productive assets, can be exported for a high-value return (Ball 2013; 23).

However, the idea gained traction. Fetishizing creativity and creatives by writers such as Florida (2002) and policy makers such as Cox (2005a) feeds the notion that recent technological developments have transformed productivity, in the sense of transferring wealth creation from physical to knowledge-based work. The Cox Review is explicit in advocating the detachment of concepts of creativity from context and practice and their appropriation by managements to boost productivity; "*creativity, properly employed, carefully evaluated, skilfully managed, and soundly implemented is a key to future success – and to national prosperity*" (Cox 2005a; 3) Ball describes how technology and knowledge are now regarded as the key factors of production;

...processes of innovation – combining market and technology know-how with the creative talents of knowledge workers to solve a constant stream of competitive problems – and its ability to derive value from information provide a competitive advantage to business and nations... The

development of the knowledge economy can be understood in terms of the increasing role of knowledge as a factor of production and its impact on skills, learning, organisation and innovation (Ball 2013; 24).

F.E and H.E. figure prominently in this conceptualisation, providing high-level skills and functioning as the focus of applied research. Media practice education is, potentially, significant as a field of experimentation in service of this trend. It aims to achieve the acquisition and embodiment of explicit and, particularly, tacit expertise (Eraut, 1994, 2000a; Polyani, 1958, 1966) away from the social setting where it will be employed. The question is whether policy supports or inhibits its declared aim.

The major issue facing academics in these field, and other sectors that serve creative industries, is that of appropriation. Cox was explicit in stating that business should constrain and harness the talent of the creative individual and that the duty of the specialist is to accept exploitation. Evans (2005), presaging this concern, highlights the problem; *“The so-called knowledge based economy raises fundamental questions about what counts as knowledge, who owns, manages and controls it”* (Evans 2005; 81). The shift is;

...from a focus on democracy and equality to the values of efficiency and accountability, with a greater emphasis on human capital formation allegedly demanded by the new knowledge industries and required by nation-states to participate and compete successfully in the global economy (Rizvi and Lingard 2009; 73).

The social values of equality and democracy have not been abandoned, but rather they have been subordinated to dominant economic concerns. Policy does not merely articulate a certain value but brings many values together to organise and enact them to establish an intended relationship. This trend can be discerned in attitudes towards learning, employability and employment. When looking at conceptualisations of lifelong learning, Rizvi and Lingard identify a new focus for education, to develop capacities to realize the potential of the;

...global information economy and to contribute to employment, culture, democracy and, above all, social cohesion... Ultimately, the dominant ideas of both knowledge economy and lifelong learning are predicated on the assumptions of social efficiency, viewed largely in terms of economic efficiency" (Rizvi and Lingard 2009; 85).

Policy is predicated on education being regarded as a private good, providing benefits to the individual. As such, education is categorised as a commodity that endows an individual with an advantage over others in or seeking to join the workforce. Education can also be used to differentiate people in terms of their economic value. Educational systems that do not meet explicit functional economic goals are dismissed as inefficient and ineffective. Now, education is directed towards fulfilling the needs of the media market rather than those of a wider society.

This tendency can be illustrated by looking at policy on widening participation (WP) in education and creative industries. WP has been a core tenet of these sectors since the early 2000's when greater political attention paid to creative industries exposed their lack of diversity. Archer (2007) writes about New Labour policy discourse regarding WP and H.E.;

diversity is mobilized in two key ways: it is elided with choice in the context of institutions (institutional diversity) and is used to signify equality and / or social inclusion in relation to students (student diversity) (Archer 2007; 635).

The symbolic authority of this policy is derived from notions of democratization, equality and fairness. However, the rhetoric of diversity and equality is undermined by New Labour's overarching commitment to the pursuit of a market-driven agenda. Archer argues that these dispositions connect in the sense that a diversity of institutional and course provision is promoted as a condition for building a more diverse student population and meeting their needs as consumers. She identifies the value-laden language of the market and consumer in this context and argues that we need to be alert to ways that equality language is being hijacked;

These discussions highlight a fundamental and irreconcilable tension within New Labour's dual commitment to both economic (neoliberal) and equality agendas. This tension generates a paradox within HE policy, in that the WP policy project (as it is currently configured) actually threatens to undermine the very purpose that it (purportedly) seeks to promote (Archer 2007; 649).

A decade on from Archer's critique, an article in the Guardian newspaper cites a British Film Institute (BFI) report on diversity in the film industry;

...3% of the film production workforce is from a minority ethnic background, compared with 12.5% nationally; 12% of the workforce is from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds; 5% of screen workers consider themselves disabled; women make up 40% of the workforce and are paid £3,000 less on average than male counterparts (M. Brown, 2017).

The BFI report marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of media practice education in H.E.

Summary

This chapter asked, *how might competing discourses contribute to strategic instability in media practice education in H.E.?* There is apparent conflict between cultural theory and critical pedagogy and globalisation and the knowledge economy discourses, but it is also possible that they actually cohere in their regard of curriculum development for media practice. While, cultural theory is contextualised by its critique of corporate media, its rationalising gaze falls on media curricula and assessment.

I suggest that, as a pedagogic strategy, cultural theory casts a gaze beyond its practice and recontextualises curriculum development for media practice so that it conforms to its own principles, apparent in the emergence of delimiting / reproducing and decoupling / reclassifying strategies. Emphasis on the empirical means we cannot ignore the key element; the transmitter must constitute discourse that is accessible to an acquirer and that curriculum should seek to establish exchange action.

But, as Lindahl Elliot observes, cultural theory represents a silent, regulating discourse which treats media production “...as so many skills - that is, as an instructional discourse - that can be embedded in the discourses of Media Studies” (Lindahl Elliot 2000; 27). Lack of transparency, I suggest, means that discourse is not available to the acquirer. The theory / practice split is an aspect of a mythologizing regard that seeks to stabilise curricula, pedagogy and assessment in vocational media practice education.

Globalisation and the knowledge economy discourses also cast a gaze on H.E. practices, but the purpose is not to establish boundaries but to destabilise those erected by the academy. These discourses are not confined to recontextualising practices directly constituted by curriculum development but all H.E. practices including the executive, managerial and administrative practices that contextualise and regulate curricula, pedagogy and assessment. The next chapter examines the possibility that the theory / practice split actually facilitates rather than inhibits the dominance of government policy discourse.

Five: Policy

How do government policies transform H.E. practices that contribute to media practice curriculum development?

In September 2015 the then Minister of State for Universities and Science, Jo Johnson, delivered a speech on teaching and learning in H.E, in which he stated;

...we need a simpler, less bureaucratic and less expensive system of regulation, a system that explicitly champions the student, employer and taxpayer interest in ensuring value for their investment in education and requires transparency from providers so that they can be held accountable for it (Johnson 2015a; 7).

The statement contains four key words that constitute a rationalising regard. First, regulation indicates that what follows constitutes rules governing H.E. practices being regarded. Second, value, is associated with financial investment indicating that education is a transaction and that the object of that transaction should have demonstrable worth. Third, transparency, indicates a requirement that the object subject to the transaction must be verifiable by warrant independent of the provider. Fourth, accountable, assigns responsibility for the quality of the object with the supplier but its appraisal and certification are, again, located elsewhere.

Guided by Johnson's speech, this chapter explores government policy as a rationalising regard of H.E. policies and practices. Policy regards do not rationalise H.E. practices selectively but holistically, over time. The Dearing Report (1997), established two policy strands regarding, first, H.E's role in the wider economy and the development of a market in H.E, and second the regulation of relations between H.E. and industry.

The chapter examines how these policy strands first lost coherence and ultimately produced significant policy conflict in H.E. It offers a critical analysis of the legislative outcome represented by the policy paper "*Securing Sustainable Higher Education*" (Browne, 2010), the "*Higher Education and Research Act*" (Johnson, 2017) and application of the "*Consumer Rights Act*"

(BIS, 2015) to H.E. The chapter examines their strategic interaction with institutional policies and practices concerning curriculum development and assessment.

Discourse and mythologization

“Higher Education in the Learning Society,” Dearing’s report, established new criteria for appraisal of education. Under the sub-heading, *“The Learning Society,”* the report states;

...looking twenty years ahead, the UK must progress further and faster in the creation of such a society to sustain a competitive economy... When capital, manufacturing processes and service bases can be transferred internationally, the only stable source of competitive advantage (other than natural resources) is a nation's people. Education and training must enable people in an advanced society to compete with the best in the world (Dearing 1997; 10).

Government reads universities as a public domain of its own principles using its own language. Using a DAS, the policy position can be described as strongly institutionalised in content and expression. It establishes an esoteric domain which generates a public domain of H.E. practices which are regarded as just part of the economy. The regard represents a rationalisation of H.E. practices, activated in the descriptive domain. Universities are good because they constitute a mechanism for supplying innovation and increased productivity in a globalised economy. This represents the myth of participation; H.E. must act as an economic growth engine to warrant optimal participation in the public domain.

The myth of participation sustains the rationalisation that government knows better how universities can be made to be more efficiently organised to enable people to be effective in business or more productive as workers. Globalisation and knowledge economy discourse, I suggest, provide a primary, overarching policy framework. One may voice concerns about its ideological provenance and its effect, but, arguably, it represents a coherent position promoting H.E. as

a major player in a national economic strategy. However, Dearing, in a later paragraph, introduces a second policy strand regarding quantifiable benefit.

There is overwhelming evidence that those with higher education qualifications are the main beneficiaries from higher education in the form of improved employment prospects and pay ...graduates in employment should make a greater contribution to the costs of higher education in the future. While we believe the economy as a whole and those who employ graduates, are also substantial beneficiaries, even though these benefits have proved elusive to quantify, the greatest benefit accrues to graduates themselves (Dearing 1997; 283).

This text appears, in terms of policy focus, to be detached from the primary policy goal. The dominant policy aim is to raise productivity by providing industry and commerce with a workforce educated to meet national strategic economic needs. However, Dearing dismisses these larger and arguably more coherent economic benefits as elusive to quantify, effectively removing them from policy action. The burden of financing the education growth machine is placed on the shoulders of the smallest unit of potential economic activity, the individual student.

To sustain the myth of participation, Dearing establishes an idealised and generalised conception of a student as an economic beneficiary, but divorced from social, economic, cultural and political context. The consequence of this action has taken time to play out but, I suggest, this marks the establishment of the twin pillars of policy we enjoy today. However, what is more significant, recalling the competing discourses graphic (Fig. 4), is the establishment of two esoteric domains representing contradictory principles constituting a single public domain, H.E. governance.

Dearing's graduate premium policy effectively establishes a commercial market in H.E. The dichotomy is well documented by Collini in his chapter on the influence of advocates of marketization of education policy in chapter four, *"From Robbins to McKinsey"* in *"Speaking of Universities"*; (2018). His critique of H.E. policy and departmental musical chairs from the 1970's to the present exposes the colonization of governmental discourse by;

...an economic idiom, one that is not strictly derived from the language of economic theory proper, but rather the language of management schools, business consultants and financial journalism” (Collini 2017; 93).

The intent, Collini notes, is to displace prior discourse focused on intellectual enquiry and the social and cultural conditions that support it. However, the H.E. market is not only based on the commodification of teaching and learning. Ultimately it results in the commodification of applicants for university education. The problem was not immediately apparent because the block grant for H.E. was left untouched although a fee based system was established under the “*Teaching and Higher Education Act*” (Blunkett, 1998). Obligation to pay fees was means tested and the act also introduced the concept of loans in place of maintenance grants.

The graduate premium was not fully activated until 2003. “*The Future of Higher Education*” (2003) precursor to the 2004 “*Higher Education Act*” (DFES, 2004), restates the globalisation narrative and stress is placed on quantifiable benefit to the economy. Education minister, Clarke, leans heavily on a report from the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS), “*The Returns to Education: a review of macro-economic literature*” (Sianesi & Van Reenen, 2002). In the white paper, Clarke claims that the review represents compelling evidence that H.E. is a most significant contributor to economic growth in developed countries;

...with increases in HE found to be positively and significantly related to per capita income growth... The review also found that education is highly likely to give rise to further indirect effects on growth, by stimulating more effective use of resources, and more physical capital investment and technology adoption (Clark 2003; 58).

Unfortunately, the IFS report does not support the guiding principles of Dearing or the striking claims of Clarke. Sianesi and Van Reenen question both the methodology and data of the publications they reviewed. They accept that it may give some guidance to policy makers and that there are effects of education on economic growth.

We are less confident that the effects of education on growth are as large as it is claimed by the new growth literature. A more policy-oriented approach would attempt to open up the black box of education by trying to explore the mechanisms through which human capital affects growth, for instance by looking at more disaggregated issues in more detail and in a more satisfactory way than done to date (Sianesi & Van Reenen 2002; 42).

Sianesi & Van Reenen suggest that exploration of “*mechanisms through which human capital affects growth*” should establish a basis of policy. They introduce a note scepticism that invites ministers to pause and consider the direction of policy. Clarke chooses this moment to activate the dormant graduate premium with the introduction of tuition fees of around £3000 per annum. However, Clarke, despite his endorsement of the graduate premium, sustains the principle that public funding should provide the main source of institutional income, acknowledging the actual, though, apparently, elusive benefit to businesses and the national economy.

This mitigated the moralising of H.E. funding to an extent, but in 2010 this cautious approach was decisively repudiated in “*Securing Sustainable Higher Education*,” the Browne Report which states;

The current system incorporates a hidden blanket subsidy to institutions. Institutions do not compete for this funding – they get it automatically. Our proposals will shift the balance towards a more dynamic system of funding, with students having more choice about where they study and directing the greater share of resources for teaching through the student finance plan (Browne 2010; 47).

Here, the empirical is abandoned and rationalisation is, essentially, doctrinal. Dearing’s two competing discourses are not superseded but bound to two additional, incommensurable, discourses.

Mythologization and market purity

It may appear that Browne builds on Dearing, but this is not the case. First, Browne articulates a clear moral conflict - subsidy v competition - which join globalisation, knowledge economy and graduate premium discourses in

recontextualising the public domain of H.E. practices. He introduces a market purity discourse which alters the conditions of the myth of participation. H.E. legitimacy is now contingent on participation in a fully competitive education market. Second, in addition to the characterisation of students as economic beneficiaries, applicants are now cast as fully sensible individual economic agents. To rationalise market purity as an effective as well as moral way of organising H.E. finance, applicants must be regarded as universally qualified to make their needs known in the H.E. market and of acting in their own interests.

Perhaps these discourses appeared to be coherent and contiguous with Dearing and Clarke in the minds of Browne and his colleagues, but they are clearly divergent from and compete with prior policies which remain active. Browne's rationalisation requires that public finance of H.E. cannot be considered virtuous because it denies competition as a primary motivator of social action; it renders the market impure. The block grant is recast as clandestine, furtive and undeserved as it is indiscriminate; there is no competition or struggle for resources. It is characterised as a subsidy, implying unjustified support for something that would otherwise fail, not as investment, the description, apparently without irony, applied to student payment of tuition fees.

Private finance is embodied by the sole quantifiable beneficiary. To preserve the virtue of the transaction, its value must be substantiated. Individual provision of H.E. funding establishes a market contingent on competition for resources regulated by private contractual obligation. The myth of participation appears to cast the student as economic beneficiary certifying their optimal involvement. University applicants are expected to assert powerful autonomous agency. However, it is H.E. governance expressed in finance and recruitment practices that is transformed. Student agency is not autonomous but heteronomous as s/he takes on a function within the education market; the student becomes a resource for which H.E. institutions compete.

Participation in the market for students is contingent on rationalising curriculum development practice according to recruitment requirements and marketing strategies. It is important to place this strategic shift in its historical context.

Student numbers have always been part of course / institution viability tests. It is part of a complex practice which encompasses principles of governance developed over many years of contested discourse across H.E. and internally in each university.

Institutional recruitment practice is readily and textually articulated, a DS+ practice with clearly expressed criteria in relation to applicant potential to successfully complete a course of study. Recruitment policy equates to academic integrity; acceptance of students is contingent on prior assessment of ability to complete a course. An implicit principle governing the practice is the possibility that no applicant will fulfil prior acceptance criteria for a course of study. The recontextualisation strategy, actuated by Browne is tacitly principled, DS- in relation to the DS+ principles of H.E. governance. The outcome is the de-principling of the regarded practice; stabilisation and maintenance of an institution is now contingent on success in a competition for resources.

The Browne doctrine, I suggest, is the dominant policy regard of H.E. Optimal participation in the public domain is now contingent on embracing market purity. Effects of this strategic shift are evident in H.E. assessment policy administration. If a course of study is the product, its value is defined by its regulation. The depiction of teaching and learning as, primarily, a financial transaction requires statutory accoutrements that define an object as a tradable product. Accordingly, H.E. is now subject to regulatory authority conferred by the Consumer Rights Act of 2015. Section 50 of the Act details information about the trader deemed to be binding;

Every contract to supply a service is to be treated as including as a term of the contract anything that is said or written to the consumer, by or on behalf of the trader, about the trader or the service... if it is taken into account by the consumer when deciding to enter into the contract... when making a decision about the service after entering into the contract (BIS 2015; 32).

Mythologization and assessment

The authority of each H.E. institution rests on its freedom to define what qualifies as legitimate knowledge, the form of its transmission and, in particular,

what counts as valid realization of what is transmitted on the part of a student. Under the provision of the Consumer Rights Act, H.E. practice is regulated by the CMA. The CMA has issued advice for H.E. providers (CMA, 2015) which sets out its ethos and its field of action;

H.E. providers play a crucial role in the UK economy. They contribute directly to economic growth, employment and local economic activity, delivering skilled workers into the wider economy, and contributing to export earnings. Compliance with consumer protection law is important not only in protecting students but also in maintaining student confidence and the reputation of the HE sector and in supporting competition... (CMA 2015; 4).

The text represents an esoteric domain discourse that constitutes the practice of curriculum development and administration of assessment as its public domain. The practice of regulating course content, to ensure compliance with institutional policy and QAA guidance, is administered by Quality departments. The primary document that constitutes a course is the programme specification, which, together with assessment policy, becomes the focus for regulation.

I argue that the strategic intent is to enforce compliance with government policy by insisting that student autonomous economic agency is the primary factor in the transaction. The CMA policy document "*An Effective Regulatory Framework for Higher Education*" (CMA, 2015a) is explicit about its derivation;

'Students at the heart of the system' voiced concerns about discrepancies and gaps in the regulatory landscape and advocated a single, transparent regulatory framework for all providers in the HE system (including further education colleges and alternative providers) in order to provide a level playing field for all providers (BIS 2015; 14).

The policy document sustains Browne's focus on market purity, the chimera of a level playing field, and individual economic agency. The esoteric language of policy (regulatory discrepancies, gaps, transparency, level playing field) is applied in the descriptive domain to refer to H.E. The regard mythologizes H.E. practice as an instance of itself. It represents an actualization of the myth of participation which must generate dual settings to represent the cultural domain

as unitary and so deny the divisions and hierarchies constructed by the duality of government and H.E.

It re-describes H.E. assessment policy and unit specifications in its own terms and asserts that the two describe the same object. Actualization of this regard destabilizes the integrity of strongly institutionalized practices in relation to curriculum development, pedagogy and assessment. The documents are explicit regarding how a course of study, or the product, must be configured in terms of compliance with consumer rights legislation and its enforcement.

Problems associated with detachment of institutional assessment from student learning contingent on recontextualised media practice principles have been examined in both case study data analysis and the chapter on theory. However, data analysis also shows that autonomous institutional regulation provides some degree of flexibility regarding vocational courses like media practice and space where conflicting strategic action may be managed.

A critical aspect of assessment administration practice has been the negotiation of structures that can accommodate wildly disparate courses under one regulatory umbrella. But, when government policy demands transparency, what is required is specificity. The main focus of legislation and guidance is on action taken prior to enrollment. Compliance is, I suggest, likely to involve a degree of precision in description and rigidity in enforcement that is potentially destructive.

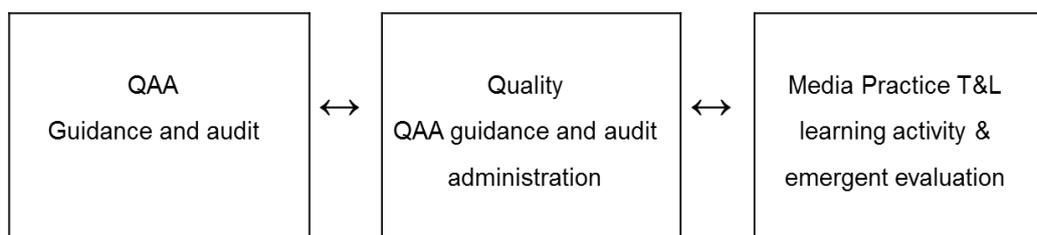


Fig. 6. QAA / H.E. regulation of curricula and assessment

Every University recontextualises the same QAA guidance and each operates its own closed system; Quality departments are in open dialogue with the course team and QAA but at either end the system is closed (Fig. 6). Some

courses are in dialogue with external accreditation agencies such as Creative Skillset, but the system, at the point of writing, is voluntary.

Internal regulation allows for contradictions in assessment to be managed. There is a tacit acceptance that both administration of assessment and curriculum development and delivery are DS+ practices. The outcome is re-principling, in this case negotiating conformity of recontextualised media practice with institutional assessment policy, which is understood and agreed internally. Under CMA regulation Consumer Protection, Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) are applied to Quality administration. Regulations list eleven clauses that apply to course content including;

...information about the composition of the course and how it will be delivered, and the balance between the various elements, such as the number and type of contact hours that students can expect (for example, lectures, seminars, work placements, feedback on assignments), the expected workload of students (for example the expected self-study time), and details about the general level of experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the different elements of the course; the overall method(s) of assessment for the course, for example by exams, coursework or practical assessments etc. (or a combination of these) (CMA 2015: 24).

This list is comprehensive; it conforms to what is expected to be core information in a programme specification. However, the CMA reads H.E. regulation of curricula and assessment as a public domain of its own principles using its own language. External regulation of the H.E. sector transforms every discrete institutional assessment practice into an open system, subject to externally generated, potentially conflicting criteria.

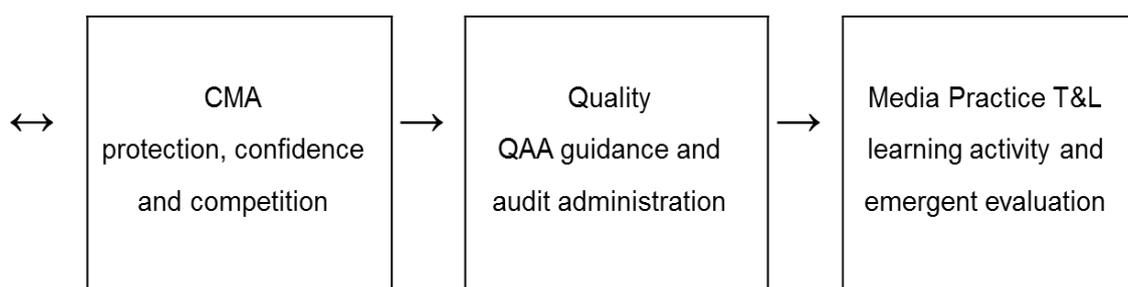


Fig. 7. CMA / H.E. regulation of curricula and assessment

CMA regulates assessment administration but there is no mechanism for dialogue; a Quality dept. cannot alter sector wide policy or guidance (Fig. 7). Media practice courses cannot access or be accessed by CMA regulation directly. A course is regulated by institutional assessment policy, but this is now subject to CMA guidance that recontextualises assessment administration practice as an instance of itself. However, the CMA is in conversation with government, employer organisations and accredited employer agencies, an external, self-referential system.

Assessment administration practice, regulated by the CMA, is denied status as a strongly institutionalized practice. This transforms not only its designation, to DS-, but, in the absence of the tacit agreement described earlier, the pedagogized media practice, effectively regulated according to CMA principles, is also recontextualised as DS-. This places the administration of evaluating student learning in the improvising category; explicit principles are absent and tacit principles of practice become the sole support for administration of assessment.

Mythologization and pedagogy

The source of regulation of H.E. by the CMA can be traced to Dearing's graduate premium, later destabilized and drained of residual coherence by Browne. The globalization / knowledge economy strand was sustained by Clarke as the privileging of employer perspectives in education. In 2004, he established Sector Skills Council's (SSC's) as a vehicle for a general promotion of employer views.

Clarke introduced policy regarding employer interest in H.E. Academia and industry were explicitly linked in a strategic partnership through knowledge exchanges. Sector skills councils were to have a key role in bringing together universities and employers to encourage the development and marketing of courses that would serve the needs of employers. Clarke made the function of SSC's explicit. Agencies would create alliances between business sectors and relevant departments in H.E. institutions;

...to develop and market courses and involve employers in the delivery of learning” (Clarke 2003; 37).

Sector skills councils will also engage employers with institutions on curriculum development, placements for students in industry, and exchange of staff. To support the work of sector skills councils, it will be important for universities to adopt a more strategic approach to the design and assessment of courses (Clarke 2003; 42).

While QAA benchmarks attempt a broad interpretation of media practices accreditation agencies validate courses, generally from an employer perspective. This is valued by many institutions, allowing them to claim legitimacy based on external, industry scrutiny and certification. Some of these organisations have long histories; technical and engineering bodies were set up in the 1930's and journalism courses have been accredited since the early 1950's. They are influential contributors to the curriculum development process.

The media production accreditation agency, Creative Skillset, is a more recent addition. Its guidelines for TV and Film production (2013) are constituted by a National Occupation Standard (NOS) published by Skillset (2005). Like QAA benchmarks Skillset guidelines are comprehensive, running to 89 pages, and NOS standards to 93 pages. Unlike QAA benchmarks, NOS standards provide a parallel list of what to do to demonstrate competence. For example, NOS standards for managing a scriptwriting process involves;

...ensuring that commissioned scripts are of the required standard, and that they conform to the editorial brief... [which in part means knowing] ...the extent of your financial and purchasing authority...” and ensuring that script writers are “...sufficiently aware of the financial implications of editorial decisions (Skillset 2005; 24).

The overview, knowledge and understanding and performance statement for this section alone comprises an opening clause, 8 sub-clauses and 10 sub-sub clauses. However, they cannot express how aspects of skill are embodied and applied or in what circumstances and to what purpose. The focus of

accreditation when looking at media production courses is outlined by a representative of an accreditation agency;

“...how was the employer’s voice embedded from a teacher point of view and from the curriculum development point of view and then also in terms of delivering it, and then also in terms of outcomes... Are they actually... measuring their [students] potential for a career in that subject?” (IZ1).

This list of requirements goes on to include regular employer monitoring of relevance, contemporaneity of course ethos and practitioner academic qualification. How high is the percentage of practical content; “...*are they replicating practice, are they using live briefs, are they using kind of pitching competitions with employers, all of these kind of measurements...*” (IZ1) Emphasis is on ensuring employer involvement in development, delivery and outcome.

The level of assessment is deep; the list is presented as a system of measurement of industry relevance. Neither Skillset guidelines nor NOS standards offer a metric for measuring relevance, but they present as powerful bases for interpreting industry labour power needs in curriculum development. As with QAA benchmarks, there is a disclaimer;

... the accreditation process ...is supposed to provide a navigational tool through a very complicated and very complex education and training landscape. ... we do not claim to have any pedagogic authority. ...our accreditation isn’t coming at it from the point of view of claiming any understanding of the teaching process. ...we are providing a statement and providing a benchmark of employer expectations of applicants... (IZ1).

Caveats do not alter the effect. Accreditation actualises the myth of participation; media practice education must represent an employer regard to warrant optimal participation. The text denying a claim to authority in developing pedagogy and teaching as practice contrasts with the statement from IZ1 that describes in-depth involvement expected in many practices that are central to development of curricula. The earlier text suggests an appropriation of curriculum development at a granular level, promoting employer requirements. I

suggest that disassociation stems from a lack of transparency surrounding curriculum development in this field.

Guidance issued by the CMA, established by the Department for Business and Innovation (BIS), addresses employer involvement in H.E. courses. Section five deals with terms and conditions and fairness; it reiterates the stringency of the guidance about changes to documents that constitute a contract but does acknowledge that while there may be some need for variation the guiding principle must be fairness regarding its scope; *“It is important that students receive what they expected, rather than something different”* (CMA 2015; 43).

The requirement to deliver what is expected is a denial of the transformative function of learning; *“the paradox of real learning is that you don’t get what you want – and you certainly can’t buy it”* (Collini 2018; 107). Collini’s observation that the model of the student as consumer is inimical to the purposes of education is neatly illustrated by the limits of approval, set out in clause 5.18, which shows who has purchased, though not paid for, student learning;

A term that allows you to change aspects of the educational service is more likely to be considered fair if it is restricted to allowing minor adjustments that are unlikely to negatively impact students, or changes that are required by necessity. For example, a term that allows for changes to a course to be made as a result of a commissioning or accrediting body requiring certain course content to be added or changed (such as requiring that a particular module is included on a course) is more likely to be considered fair than a term allowing for any changes to be made, for any reason, to the course content (CMA 2015; 44).

Under CMA regulation SSC’s are accorded a defined, quasi-statutory role in curriculum development. This is endorsed by Johnson’s white paper, *“Success as a Knowledge Economy”* (Johnson, 2016). Alongside the white paper two independent reports were published which *“...in particular highlighted the importance of... employers and HE providers working together on curriculum design”* (Johnson 2016; 42). Employers are also being handed a critical role in the evaluation of H.E. teaching.

However, research, such as “*A Manifesto for the Creative Economy*” (Bakhshi, Hargreaves, & Mateos-Garcia, 2013) suggests that there is no agreement between politicians and business organisations on what educational practices might deliver and what constitutes industry needs beyond a list of elusive aspirations. Case study data provides examples of academic scepticism about the provenance of employer perspectives on pedagogy. Rikowski (2001) found no consensus among employers on specifics of what they want the education system to deliver;

Employers’ needs (as labour power needs) cannot be stated in any straightforward way... Employers are necessarily confused about their labour-power needs. The consideration and characterisation of employers’ labour-power needs [is] complex but it rests on a form of technicism. This technicism has expunged contradiction; it has yielded a part of social reality up as manageable but only within fantasy (Rikowski 2001; 45).

Nevertheless, panels making judgements on teaching performance will include employer representation. Most significantly, legislation likely to flow from the white paper puts SSC participation in curriculum design and administering TEF on a statutory footing. The “*TEF Year Two specification*” is explicit; “*The TEF will help to drive UK productivity by ensuring a better match of graduate skills with the needs of employers and the economy...*” (BIS 2016c; 5); criteria against which institutions will be judged includes evidence of “*...input measures such as employer engagement in the curriculum, course accreditation by professional regulatory or statutory bodies...*” (BIS, 2016c; 16). The technical review (BIS, 2016b) that accompanies the white paper gives clear indications of the dominant perspective in the responses;

Business groups were positive about the direction of travel of TEF as they felt it provides an opportunity to give employers greater transparency and to help address the current mismatch in the graduate labour market. They would like to see the TEF developed in a way that will allow employers to ascertain the employability or work-readiness of graduates ideally taking into account the amount of industry experience and exposure of students to

employers... Many also believe that the TEF could help to further encourage employers and higher education providers to work together on the curriculum and course design to match the needs of students and businesses” (BIS 2016; 9)

The demand is for transparency, but the text is not exploratory; it is specific about what it expects to find. The view is contextualized by the “*current mismatch in the graduate labour market,*” and the way to address this is clearly articulated. “*Employers will ascertain the employability or work readiness of graduates*” and this evaluation is contingent on demonstrable exposure of students’ to employer discourse and industry experience mediated by employers.

There was broad support that TEF should eventually be extended to discipline level... Many respondents were positive about the introduction of subject level assessment and recognised the importance of this for both students and employers (BIS 2016; 18).

A course, under this constraint regarding assessment of student learning, would be constituted not by exchange values but, potentially, by use values. The process of curriculum design and development and its pedagogic and assessment components should represent systematic knowledge; an acknowledgement that all students are not identical. A curriculum that can accommodate differences between students must articulate legitimate exchange values.

A practice that seeks to demonstrate that it legitimates participation in media production, must make a strong claim to a reality that is not rationalised by employer subjectivity. This is evident in case study data regarding accreditation and pathways to employment. Media practice courses are multi-contextual both in terms of the media practice they draw on and the pedagogic relationships they generate. They involve the deployment of pedagogic strategies which may conflict with strategies emergent from industry practice. Learning activities comprise complex networks of pedagogic authority particularly when applying destabilising strategies such as work placements and projects conducted with industry partners.

The move, potentially actuated by the TEF, denies the authority of student subjectivity; their learning must be comprehended in terms of principles that they cannot access. Use values are more than strictly utilitarian; “...*the principle of use value is not differentiation but unification: tools must fit their purpose*” (Dowling 1998; 16). A claim that tools are generalizable is merely an expansion of the unified domain. It represents a claim to a unity of culture; an employer perspective on media practice is the only legitimate pedagogic reification of media practice in the academy, which is delegitimized if this is not the case.

The self-referential system, hitherto concealed, is now openly acknowledged in the TEF. The strategy outlined in “*Success as a Knowledge Economy*” and accompanying documents purports to champion the student, but employment and personal development pathways are defined almost exclusively in terms of employer interest. But this strategy needs to be appraised in the social context of its activation. I argue that actualisation of the myth of certainty, evident in H.E. policy for assessment, means that there is no defence against the actualisation of the myth of participation in policy regarding the legitimacy of student learning.

The theory / practice split represents a de-contextualizing strategy. It elevates the status of recontextualised theory over individual and collective critical evaluation emergent from public domain action. This potentially opens the system of outcome / assessment for media practice education to the importation of values, unrelated to the learning in question. It facilitates denial of the authority of student subjectivity; their learning must be comprehended in terms of principles that they cannot access.

Despite obvious problems with articulating specific employer labour power needs a consistent refrain in the white paper, ancillary documents to *Success in the Knowledge Economy* and the Browne Report highlight supposed failure and inadequacy in education regarding employer demands; “*Employers in the UK frequently report that some graduates lack communication, entrepreneurial and networking skills...*” (Browne 2010; 16). “*Employers report a growing mismatch between the skills they need and the skills that graduates offer...*” (Johnson

2016; 42). The rhetoric is not endorsed by those who are active in representing an employer perspective in this field.

Our job is to talk the employers down when they start saying, graduates never had the skills that we need, we want them up and ready... and we have to say, no, you have been saying that since the dawn of time." If you go back to Guilds ...centuries ago, employers were saying exactly the same things and you can't expect education to produce cookie cutter graduates that's are going to just be like a sausage factory into your company because the fact is, they are supposed to be the leaders of the future, they are not supposed to be fodder for your kind of commercialism (IZ1).

The strategy evident in these texts and utterances produced to support policy cannot acknowledge that recontextualisation of practices is central to this field. Concern is expressed in terms of failure to acknowledge the relative status of employer focused rationalisation of curriculum development within a very large and complex process. Government criticism of H.E. is contextualised by focus on universities proving worth based on graduate employment statistics;

...government is viewing, not only vocational higher education but higher education as a whole as this kind of cog in an industry kind of productivity machine. I think all of our learning that we took years of doing and trying to be the translator between employer needs and higher education processes. They just take the headlines of it and we are associated with it... I think there is a real danger ... of accreditation as being seen as a market differentiator and a kind of tool of student's choice in terms of where they invest their money... (IZ1).

The employer perspective, as represented by government policy, can clearly be categorised as an appropriating strategy. Accreditation is recontextualised as a tool for measuring worth. Accession to statutory status by accreditation agencies, thus transformed, compounds the level of influence apparent in this field. In practical terms the regard, might appear to be DS+, exhibiting strong discursive saturation within its social context. However, it is a subject position, rationalising vocational education for media practice as an inferior instance of itself; a DS- practice.

The construction of systematic knowledge, emergent from and contingent on its own distinct social context, vocational education for media practice, is DS+. Employer interpretation of industry labour power need in relation to H.E. as provider is, DS-. But, because it is supported by the authority of policy, dominance of the employer view is assured. The outcome is a DS- strategy regarding and transforming a DS+ practice; the schema shows that it is de-principling. The result for H.E. practice in this field is, potentially, losing the principled discourse, a denial of the recontextualised practice principles that underpin curriculum development and delivery as practice.

Summary

This chapter asked, *how do government policies transform H.E. practices that contribute to media practice curriculum development?* Government policy contributes to an empirical field, for media practice education, that is characterised by multiple mythologizing strategies. They cohere in emergent strategies evident in curriculum development for media practice and assessment.

The myth of participation, evident in government policy and legislation, is actualised in aspects of H.E. practice. First, it regulates what constitutes legitimate participation in the H.E. marketplace, a rationalisation of H.E. governance regarding finance and recruitment. Second, it seeks to control what is regarded as legitimate learned media practice.

This chapter has detailed the transformation, from instability to incoherence, of policy regarding H.E. since Dearing. However, its effect is contingent on the actualisation of myths of certainty and reference in internal, academic policy regarding curriculum development and assessment. The interaction of internal and external policy regards is examined in the next chapter.

Six: Findings

The organisational language of SAM facilitates the development of a theoretical representation of a relational space for curriculum development practice across the two sites of research. Strategies emergent from curriculum development indicate how the interplay of multiple strands of H.E. and government policy shape curricula, pedagogy and assessment strategies.

The multiple strategic regards operationalised in H.E. can be organised, using SAM's language of constructive description, as a schema, "*Modes of Strategic Action in Curriculum Development*," (Fig. 8).

Field of Curriculum Development Practice		
Field of H.E. Policy	Delimiting	Decoupling
Stabilising	reproducing	reclassifying
Destabilising	appropriating	linking

Fig. 8. Modes of Strategic Action in Curriculum Development for Media Practice

Stabilising, reproducing and classifying

Assessment policy emerges as an assemblage of rationalising regards, actualised in curriculum development practice. The upper section of the vertical axis, the field of policy, is constituted by several distinct policy regards; OBTL, a sector specific system of benchmarking for ILO's and regulation of assessment according to linear progression. The unifying purpose, I maintain, is to assure organisational stability in the assessment of a recontextualised version of media practice. However, because making media products is an unstable practice, assessment policy is contingent on the actualisation of a mythologizing strategy, the myth of certainty. Media practice is treated as if its reality is reproduced the social context of H.E.

The theoretical basis of H.E. regulation of curriculum development since 1992, necessitates a split between media theory and media practice. I argue that the division represents a legitimate, theoretical dehiscence in the field of media research and cultural theory development. However, when actualised within an

H.E. assessment policy framework, the theory / practice split constitutes a rationalising regard of curriculum development practice. This results in the emergence of distinct strategic approaches to media studies and practice-based courses. The horizontal axis, the field of curriculum development, is defined by a decoupling and a delimiting strategy.

Recontextualisation of media practice principles in the upper-right quadrant organises theory of media practice and cultural forms. Professional media practice is reclassified so that its depiction conforms to a rationalisation of its reality from the perspective of cultural studies. However, the application of a reclassifying strategy is not contingent on a cultural studies perspective. In CSY data, reclassification reflects a rationalisation of the reality of media practice to accord with knowledge economy, globalisation and entrepreneurship discourses.

Analysis shows that interior curricula differentiation is most conspicuous in the recontextualisation of cognitive and social, or cultural, aspects of media practice. This aspect of curriculum design, examined in chapter four, is characterised by fierce battles over the separation or integration of theory and practice and the level of proximity and, perceived, compliance with or distancing from a commercial media ethos. A reclassifying strategy has its roots in the separation of theory from practice.

A reproducing strategy, the upper-left quadrant, is represented as non-separation, a claim that real media practice is actualised in the academy, away from the workplace. A reclassifying strategy might be labelled non-non-separation as the originating practice represents integrated theory and practice. Unlike a reproducing strategy where multiple policy regards must not recognise one another if mythologizing strategies are to be sustained, a reclassifying strategy is articulated in relation to its perceived opposite. The CSX film studies course “...is quite suspicious of practice...” (IX3). In CSY; “*It has got a strong academic research base, because there is a great tendency for people to say it is almost all practical. Well that is not true... it has got a lower practical component than GMP*” (IY1).

In both sites of research data showed oppositional strategic regards. CSX data evidenced the division between theory and practice-based media courses within a faculty. In CSY data the division was marked by the development of the new Film course which was shaped by repudiation of a delimiting strategy. The theory / practice split, I suggest, represents a hierarchy; a decoupling strategy is regarded, by the academy, as superior to a delimiting strategy that emerges as its opposite. However, it relies on the operationalisation of the myth of certainty to maintain its status.

The assessment of learned practice is rationalised and validated by a second mythologizing strategy, the myth of reference. Social and education theory, drawn from a variety of contexts, displaces theory emergent from media practice in the workplace and, I argue, asserts a claim to reveal the reality of media practice in accordance with reproducing and reclassifying strategies. Thus, student learning and its assessment is not directed at participation in the media workplace, but in the academy.

Course development in both case studies sought differentiation from delimiting strategies for media practice courses that promoted a generalist approach. One favoured a focus on technical specialisation and proximity to media industry; a reiteration of a reproducing strategy. The other promoted a strategy that was distanced from reproducing strategies and focused on the business of film. However, the latter was primarily contingent on identifying aspects of curricula in the faculty that were not already served by existing courses. The new course could not occupy the same space established by a delimiting strategy, so a reclassifying strategy emerged from the process.

Proponents of each camp appear to hold tightly to their seemingly incompatible stances, but they are both shaped by mythologizing strategies required to create a sense of stability in assessment. I do not claim that courses contingent on either strategy lack validity. However, do I suggest that the salient feature of strategic action in the horizontal axis is that it provides an impression of significant agency in the process while it has a marginal effect on institutional pedagogic and assessment frameworks. This misconception is apparent in strongly held beliefs about pathways to graduate employment.

Destabilising, appropriating and linking

A clear accounting of industry labour power needs is a chimera masquerading as a reproducing strategy. It makes the strongest demands but couched in the vaguest terms. Data is, of course, available on graduate employment,¹⁸ but it represents a policy not a pedagogic perspective, properly categorised as integral to an appropriating strategy. It tells us nothing about multi-contextual pedagogies and their interior evaluation by students, or how they draw on what they have learned and apply their expertise in the different social context of the workplace.

Policies that seek to destabilise or disrupt curricula and assessment strategies occupy the lower section of the vertical axis. Disruption is necessary for the development of criticality. Internal destabilising strategies occur in unofficial and unofficial forms. Internal destabilising strategies have the potential to provide a corrective to stabilising strategies through student contact with the workplace and academic linking strategies.

The lower right quadrant constitutes a space for organising relations between institutional policies regarding pedagogy, assessment and relations between the academy and the workplace, differently. On the practice side constraint is weakened allowing scope for localised interpretation. This is exemplified by linking strategies identified by many interviewees at all levels in H.E. hierarchy. This is facilitated by quality administration officers in both case studies who call upon academic judgement and reliance on the collective regard of a subject community to introduce a degree of flexibility.

Unofficial, internal efforts to destabilise the policy framework also emerge as linking strategies. Data showed that a senior figure constructed a research project outside a unit brief to address perceived impediments to student access to and embodiment of principles of recognition. Another admits that subversion

¹⁸ Up to September 2017 DHLE (Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/30-06-2016/sfr237-destinations-of-leavers>). Since September 2017 LEO (Graduate outcomes: longitudinal education outcomes: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/graduate-outcomes-longitudinal-education-outcomes-leo-data>). Creative Skillset's "Hiive," a self-referral graduate employment website. (http://creativeskillset.org/who_we_help/creative_professionals/join_the_hiive_community)

of regulatory systems is endemic. They represent local responses to perceived obstacles, thrown up by strategic action elsewhere in the relational space, that potentially inhibits student learning and criticality.

Two examples of official disruption policy regarding overt strategic responses to difficulties occasioned by the theory / practice split are evident in data. One site identified problems with structuring pedagogic relations but the other concerned recruitment and marketing. While both examples appear to challenge the orthodoxy of curriculum structure they are in fact in alliance with, not opposition to institutional policy.

Official disruption policy also takes the form of live project collaborations with industry, student work placements or internships. Industry perspectives are, ideally, in alliance with official curriculum development practice. This represents an appropriating strategy on the part of the academy, which occupies the lower-left quadrant. An appropriating strategy seeks to capture non-recontextualised practice principles as a means of disrupting official pedagogy. Ideally, potentially, this may develop student criticality regarding their learning.

The study by Cocchiarella and Booth, illustrates what can happen if potential for activating an appropriating strategy is unrecognised. However, an emergent appropriating strategy was identified in analysis. It shows potential for cross-institutional, strategic accommodation if made transparent. This does not necessarily mean, in contrast to the upper quadrant, that they are compatible or coherent, but that there may be potential for the emergence of stability and coherence in their interaction if negotiation in collaboration is open.

However, the lower left quadrant of the schema also represents external policy regards that seek to destabilise official, institutional policy and practice. H.E. policy is dominated by the requirement to stabilise curricula, pedagogy and assessment in order to sustain the integrity of academic awards. Internal destabilisation strategies, I maintain, have always been a critical aspect of strategic relations in media practice education in the academy. They tend to moderate the effects of myth making in academic policy. But, government

policy, regarding H.E. practices also represents a mythologizing strategy; the myth of participation.

Destabilising strategies and government legislation

The lower-left quadrant, which represents appropriating strategies, has been colonised by external government policies which rationalise three aspects of H.E. practice. First, case study data shows that recruitment policy is tailored to its economic needs by each institution, either expansionist or defensive, and generates a specific strategic regard of each course reflected in curriculum development. In CSX, recruitment policy allied to an applied vocational agenda emerged as an appropriating strategy in the direction of capital investment. It may not be a planned outcome, but data shows that investment in expensive technology influenced the recontextualisation of media practice as pathways contingent on specialisation.

Similarly, In CSY, an executive decision to establish a Film course in the service of an expansionist strategy, initiated disruption of established curricula. A delimiting strategy could not supply sufficient differentiation between new and existing courses in the H.E. marketplace and risked cannibalisation of existing courses. A contest between alternative strategic perspectives resulted in the emergence of a decoupling strategy discernible in a focus on business and a downgrading of practice in the new course.

Second, administration of assessment and maintenance of the integrity of awards, is disrupted, indeed displaced, by bringing H.E. under the regulatory remit of the CMA. This policy strand, regarding a graduate premium, had, prior to the Browne Report, had little effect on academic practices. By casting applicants as fully sensible individual economic agents, consumers of education products, and the introduction of market purity discourse this policy was transformed and has become, I argue, highly destabilising. Regulation by the CMA disrupts the administration of assessment policy and undermines independent H.E. institutions authority to validate their own academic awards.

Third, curriculum development practice is rationalised by the provisions of the TEF. It fosters the establishment of use values at the expense of exchange values in the development of curricula. This strand of government policy is exemplified by promotion of a partisan account of industry labour power needs as a sole criterion of legitimacy. In this quadrant curriculum development as practice represents a delimiting strategy. It is constrained in its ability to interpret or repel industry claims by the theory / practice split. A delimiting strategy is defined, in relation to a decoupling strategy, by use values.

Until recently, voluntary acceptance of accreditation retained authority with academics. The myth of participation is actualised here by placing universities under the regulatory authority of the CMA and the shift to a statutory basis for accreditation. Consumer protection law opens the door for external regulation according to employer interests. Interpretation of industry labour power needs, activated as an accreditation regard, for example, constitutes a strategic relationship with the development of multiple aspects of a course of study, but established at unit level.

The space where internal destabilisation of curricula, pedagogy and assessment is managed has become a site of appropriation for government policy. Institutional insistence on accreditation to confer more credibility in CSX is an example. Internal accreditation policy focused on marketing courses, can be regarded as a response to demands of recruitment policy which in turn responds to governmental imposition of a competitive H.E. market. In both data sets, executive direction allows administration of recruitment and marketing to press claims to authority; faculty must acquiesce.

Summary

Analysis of internal H.E. and external government policy exposed mythologizing regards in institutional recontextualisation of media practice as curricula. The constitution of the empirical field pointed to interaction of practice and policy that can be categorised as areas of strategic action. It is this move that illuminates the strategic relationship between policy regards and H.E. practices. The case studies represent differing approaches and ethos but the strategic relational

space each process of curriculum development constitutes is, effectively, the same. Identification of categories of emergent strategy in the two empirical settings allowed mythologizing regards to be identified.

The integrity of an education product in this field is contingent on regarding recontextualised practice as if it is real. Institutional theory-based regulation establishes recontextualised media practice principles as valid in terms of pedagogy and assessment of learning. Policy regulating the relationship of the product, learning contextualised by curricula, to its point of use, media industries, certifies its value.

Analysis identified policy that constitutes mythologizing regards of H.E. practice. Myths of certainty and reference are associated strongly with regulation of what constitutes media practice knowledge and assessment of student learning. The myth of participation is associated with government policy regulating H.E. finance and relations with media industries including pathways to employment.

The consequence of this arrangement is the emergence of an unstable system of curriculum development and assessment. Reclassifying and appropriating strategies exemplify differing cultural, social, economic and political stances regarding the development of media practice curricula. However, the actualisation of multiple mythologizing strategies in the process of recontextualising media practice principles, establishes the dominant feature of this practice, a reproducing strategy contingent on wholesale mythologization of assessment. Its binary opposite is a linking strategy, constituted by attempts to fulfil the promise made by every H.E. course in media practice; to make principles of recognition for media practice accessible to students.

7. Discussion, recommendations & future research

Any discussion of future research or response to apparent problems raises the issue of theoretical generalisability. Coding and analysis for this thesis was in accordance with principles that distinguish between the theoretical and empirical domains; “...*statements within the former are abstractions with respect to situations within the latter. In particular, the problem stands in a relation of abstraction or context independence with respect to findings*” (Dowling & Brown 2010; 151). The problem may be construed as preconceptualising findings of research conducted in alternative empirical settings.

On this basis the problem imposes bias on future research. It defines the theoretical generalisability of the research. This is an important relationship; “...*no piece of research is of any value unless it does impose upon the way in which you interpret the world on subsequent occasions*” (Dowling & Brown 2010; 151). However, it is important to be clear that adopting SAM as a metatheoretical position does not impose any particular bias on the research or analysis. SAM assists in dismantling and organising strategic action and describing the relational space. It does not disturb strategic action; it helps to identify problems that define theoretical generalisability.

The thesis chronicles two narratives. It examines the process of curriculum development for undergraduate media practice courses in two universities. It also tells the story of the evolution of government policy that regulates H.E. pedagogy and curriculum development practice and administration of assessment, since 1992. Over the same period, academic policy, that regulates the same field of practice, has remained, effectively, unchanged.

The most recent QAA benchmarks for communication, media, film and cultural studies, published in 2016, records that the authoring group saw no need to substantively alter what had been published 8 years before. That iteration, from 2008, saw no need to change the 2002 document, which marked a decade of media practice in the academy. A quarter of a century with no significant

change while government policy regarding H.E. and vocational education has been utterly transformed.

Analysis suggests that assessment practice and the recontextualisation of theory as a basis for curriculum development and pedagogy for media practice is contingent on the actualisation of mythologizing strategies. All H.E. institutions are subject to government policies such as regulation by the CMA and the provisions of the “*Higher Education and Research Act.*” However, these policies also represent a mythologizing strategy.

Data shows that there is continuity in strategic responses by academics, administrators, managers and executives, in critical areas; recruitment and marketing strategies; the development of curricula and pedagogic structures; management of relations between the academy and industry; regulation and administration of assessment. What is in question is the transparency of a strategic relational space, constituted by the interaction of H.E. and governmental policies that shapes curriculum development for media practice.

Are students provided with the information that would allow them to make an informed judgement about the provenance and reliability of the strategic interests active in the development of curricula, pedagogy and the assessment of their learning? I suggest that students need clarity, regarding the constitution of their courses, if they are to navigate the relationship between what they learn in the academy and the workplace.

This study began with an investigation as to whether differing institutional approaches regarding research or industry focus materially affected curriculum development. At a local level, the emergence of a common strategic framework suggested that institutional ethos makes little material difference and that government policy is dominant. However, institutional discontinuities at course development level are apparent and can be described using the *Modes of Strategic Action in Curriculum Development* organisational matrix. Data is insufficient to support a definitive analysis but supposition in discussion may be productive.

If strength of institutionalisation in expression and content, the regularity of sense-making practice, is ascribed to the course represented in CSX data, it can be organised as a schema. The strategic organisation of a course where a delimiting strategy is dominant (Fig. 8) suggests that the field of stabilising, assessment, policy at an institutional level is strongly institutionalised (I+). The field of practice is also strongly institutionalised (I+); the outcome of the interaction of policy and practice is course based on technical specialisation that represents a reproducing strategy.

Field of Practice		
Field of Policy	Delimiting I+	Decoupling I-
Stabilising I+	reproducing	reclassifying
Destabilising I-	appropriating	linking

Fig. 8. Modes of Strategic Action in Curriculum Development (delimiting)

The Destabilising quadrant is weakly institutionalised (I-). Internal, official disruption strategy is represented by a limited recourse to academic research practice to disrupt a strongly institutionalised reproducing strategy. Creative Skillset accreditation, which represents an external appropriating strategy, does not appear to be problematic for the executive though there are some misgivings at faculty level. There is some evidence for a linking strategy, but this sits in the weakly institutionalised category in both axes. In CSY data, the decoupling strategy occupies the strongly institutionalised quadrant in the field of practice (Fig. 9). The rearranged schema illustrates how tensions within the strategic relational space might emerge.

Field of Practice		
Field of Policy	Decoupling I+	Delimiting I-
Stabilising I+	Reclassifying	Reproducing
Destabilising I-	Linking	Appropriating

Fig. 9. Modes of Strategic Action in Curriculum Development (decoupling)

The delimiting schema (Fig. 8) cannot accommodate the Film course. Strongly institutionalised assessment policy is unchanged. However, the strategic perspective articulated by the main author of the course sets it apart; “...*our degree’s quite different ... we can’t sit in the framework*” (IY3). It retains a significant, though downgraded, practice component but it rejects the orthodoxy of a reproducing strategy; “...*it’s not going to be based around industry focus, straight into the job ... so it won’t fit within the framework*” (IY3). We know that the course is predicated on the elevation of an official destabilising strategy through the introduction of social research skills into the curriculum. But assessment policy is, arguably, not in tune with the emergent reclassifying strategy.

Ordinarily, assessment policy applied to a course contingent on a reclassifying strategy would regulate learning in media or cultural studies courses. However, the Film course marks a move away from classification strategies associated with a critique of media corporatism. Its recontextualisation of media practice selects media business practices as the basis of its core pedagogy. The Film course maintains a critique of media industries, not in accord with cultural theory orthodoxy, but in terms of opposition to market inefficiency and stagnation. Criticality is central to the ethos, but assessment policy prevents its actualisation until year three.

The new approach focuses on innovation and entrepreneurship and represents an injection of globalism and knowledge economy discourse directly into curricula; “...*business circumstances are always changing and critically what we want to do is we want to deal with the global market, the global context*” (IY2).

Tensions between different policy regards of practice are apparent.

Accreditation, regarding the university’s recruitment and marketing policy appears to be unchanged according to field notes but the strategic shift, arguably, results in the demotion of appropriating strategies despite executive level policy emphasis.

Accreditation in this field is primarily the province of Creative Skillset which is based on a reproducing strategic perspective represented by the NOS framework. Tacit recognition of disruption this move represents is articulated in

terms of notional graduate employability; “...*the course shouldn't be marketed as a route to employment in the film industry*” (IY4). Also, depiction of disruption is articulated in terms of difference from practice-based orthodoxy. It remains to be seen whether the course can accommodate changes wrought by CMA regulation and the promotion of accreditation agencies and the employer voice in curriculum development.

The salient point is that strategies emergent from the development of both courses can be identified, organised and described using the organisational language of SAM. It provides a perspective on approaches to curriculum development in this field that makes the strategic relationships, contingent on policy interaction, transparent. It, hopefully, facilitates informed discussion regarding the process and outcome of recontextualisation of media practice in relation to institutional and governmental policy that is accessible to all involved, including students. It may provide a basis for research within H.E. institutions to identify locally applied degrees of institutionalisation of policy.

The organisation of the strategic relational space also allows for critique at a more general level. The bases for maintaining an alliance between academic stabilising and destabilising policy regarding the process of curriculum development are, I suggest, not robust. H.E. assessment policy seeks to ensure the integrity of awards but offers little defence against government appropriation of academic practices concerning assessment, curricula and pedagogy.

Assessment policy relies on two mythologizing strategies. A claim that the reality of media practice in the workplace can be reproduced in an H.E. context is contingent on actualisation of the myth of certainty. The myth of reference establishes a self-referential system that validates the reality of recontextualised media practice. However, in a post Browne policy landscape, academic mythologization strategies clearly undermine theoretical foundations of curriculum development practice. H.E. governance, curriculum development practice and administration of assessment policy are defenceless when they too are subject to a mythologizing strategy, intrinsic to multiple government policies rationalising H.E., the myth of participation.

Taught media practice in H.E, according to this analysis, cannot be anchored. It floats, buffeted by forces that squeeze and extrude its shape according to which policy regard is currently dominant. The observation that it is untethered from any defensible theoretical basis is not an argument for dismissal; it is a notification that it is time to develop theory, emergent from the empirical setting of media practice education. This is an urgent requirement.

Institutional assessment of student learning has, until recently, maintained a significant degree of freedom to manage the development of curricula and pedagogic structures. However, the interaction of multiple policy regards, emanating from separate government departments, with existing institutional policy, reduces H.E.'s capacity to maintain institutional control over the development of curricula and sustain integrity in assessment.

Recommendations

Myth-making is a dominant theme of this thesis; the myth of participation represents, I suggest, the most powerful force shaping the strategic relational space. It transforms all levels of institutional practice from university governance to assessment to curriculum development. I suggest that the academy has lost the battle to maintain independent control over the integrity of academic awards.

H. E's vulnerability is located, primarily, in its own mythologizing strategies, and the rationale is, I argue, obsolete. A review of its efficacy is overdue. This may provide an opportunity to shield curriculum development, pedagogy and assessment practices from governments destabilising, mythologizing gaze. Despite evident legislative constraints on executives, managers and academics, space is still available for autonomous action.

It is appropriate to ask, what is the core purpose of vocational education for media practice in the 21st century? In *Scriptwriting as Pedagogy...* I suggested that the aim of vocational teaching and learning is;

...to enable students to ultimately acquire sufficient expertise from which to recruit when making claims to authority in their chosen practice (Colwell 2014; 108).

Authority in media production collaborations customarily transcends institutional hierarchy. Developing a capacity to make claims to authority in a chosen field of practice is necessary to sustain graduate aspiration for a career that lasts and has meaning. The definition supports exchange values in education and individual and collective autonomy. It represents opposition to an alliance that coalesces around the promotion of use values to support globalisation, knowledge economy and, even, cultural theory discourse.

The acquisition of principles of recognition by students and their ultimate application, interpretation and development in the workplace is central to claims made for media practice education. However, I suggest that systemic reluctance to acknowledge principles of recontextualisation makes what should be a dynamic learning environment, occupying the space between the academy and the workplace, virtually inert.

Aligned teaching and learning, with an emphasis on linear progression, is at odds with the recursive learning requirements of media practice, characterized by recurrence or repetition of a processes of making, common to both professional and undergraduate practice. Prior to recent policy changes this contradiction was, arguably, manageable within a closed system of assessment administered by independent institutions. This is no longer sustainable. There is, I suggest, an alternative.

Recommendation one: Assessment

- **Assessment for media practice vocational education should be predicated on movement between levels of learning.**

In response to an external system of regulation that prohibits necessary flexibility, the administration of assessment has to become less rigid. Space must be created for the emergence of strategies that can accommodate curricula based on exchange values and pedagogy that respects the recursive

learning characteristics of media practice. I suggest that assessment according to levels of learning attained by students meets those requirements.

An example is offered by Brockbank and McGill (1998) who provide a useful typology of three levels of learning developed by Bateson (1973) and others.

Level 1: First order learning is confined learning, where facts or skills are defined by context, e.g. the classroom.

Level 2: Second order learning takes the learner outside a confining frame, enabling comparisons and connections to be made so that decisions are based on richer data, encompassing subjective factors as well as objective material. Learning by doing offers the opportunity for second level order learning.

Level 3: Third order learning involves discovering the ability to doubt the validity of previously held preconceptions, the learning being about learning itself.

Level one should, I suggest, be seen as the likely base-line level of attainment for applicants from secondary education. Movement between levels two and three of the typology places emphasis on critical engagement with pedagogized practice principles from the beginning of an undergraduate media practice course. It eliminates the requirement for measuring linear progression in assessment. It places emphasis on a model of recursive learning. It encourages student's critical reflection in and on their taught practice and analysis of their learning in relation to industry practice.

Potentially, it makes the acquisition of principles of recognition by students and their ultimate development, interpretation and application in the workplace an explicit aim of media practice education. It allows space for the development of individual theoretical positions regarding students' own practice that can be tested against academic and 'professional' orthodoxy central to their learning.

Learning, managed by each student, requires that administration of assessment focuses on individual student critical analysis of taught and learned practice and process. This model meets the requirements for an assessment regime that supports exchange values in the development of curricula.

It locates the site of assessment, away from the academy and outside the workplace, in the interpretation of what is learned by each student. However, it requires a different approach to the development and delivery of pedagogy. The 'Linking' quadrant in the Modes of Strategic Action in Curriculum Development, schema is, I suggest, the most important with regard to addressing the issues this thesis identifies.

Recommendation two: Pedagogy

- **Media practice undergraduate programmes should be reconfigured as research degrees.**

In both case studies academic practitioners reach for 'research skills' and empirical research projects to provide pathways to student engagement with shared principles of practice. They are examples of official destabilising strategies designed to disrupt the rigid orthodoxy of OBTL and linear progression in assessment.

Integrating data collection and analysis as part of a programme of teaching and learning, together with the acquisition of relevant, recontextualised research skills can facilitate movement between levels two and three in the assessment model proposed in recommendation one. I suggest that 'academic' elements of vocational education for media practice should reside in research practice that underpins the entire curriculum, not an add-on confined to a single unit or a dissertation.

All, engagement with employers and the 'world of work' through institutionally located activities such as work placements, internships and live projects are opportunities for research activity. Often students are asked to undertake menial tasks but as an accredited Researcher, each student will be expected to observe and conduct informal interviews and, hopefully, to access other relevant data.

It is desirable, in my view, that students who will be required to move between the academy, as learners, and the workplace, as potential practitioners, are accorded a transitional identity that elevates their status in the negotiation they

will necessarily undertake. An appropriate level of researcher competence and expertise that does not encroach on higher levels of expertise required for Masters or Doctoral study can be devised. The purpose of research activity, here, is pedagogic, not publication.

Employers should expect to facilitate student research activity. Employer influence on curriculum development at a granular level, clearly an aspiration, will be critically exposed if it is actualised as part of an appropriation strategy. Students will have the skills and the space to interrogate the provenance, the motivation and the quality of expertise represented by employer demands on their curriculum. A research based curriculum will help to restore balance between the rights and requirements of students and other stakeholders.

A move to a research centred pedagogic strategy within a curriculum and assessment structure based on moving between levels of learning has the potential to integrate the interests of multiple stakeholders. It represents a *quid pro quo* between students and the industry they aspire to join that should underpin the relationship between the academy and employers. In particular, employer participation through accreditation agencies and the TEF may be accommodated on the basis of negotiation, collaboration and learning about and engaging with the complexities of multi-contextual pedagogies.

A move to a research focused curriculum assessed according to levels of learning facilitates the abandonment of the myth of certainty in constituting assessment policy. This removes the need for its validation by the myth of reference when recontextualising and applying theory in assessment and pedagogy.

Recommendation three: Theory

- **Provenance and modes of recontextualisation and deployment of theory must be transparent.**
- **Articulation of recontextualised theory used in the development and delivery of curricula, pedagogy and assessment must be clear and accessible to all students.**

My critique of the recontextualisation and application of theory, neither intends to question the validity of theory derived from social contexts other than media practice education nor to deny the usefulness of recontextualised theory. My intent is to highlight difficulties that arise from a lack of transparency regarding the provenance of theory and a rationale for its recontextualisation and mode of application.

My recommendation regarding the use of theory in this field conform to the first two levels of Tight's typology of differential application of theory. The first speaks to the level of theoretical precision in recontextualisation required at faculty level; the second requirement is to make the local application of theory clear, articulated in language accessible to students.

For example, reference to Communities of Practice should be clear about its provenance as an outcome from an ethnographic study, in particular the identification of the concept of legitimate peripheral participation. Interrogation of the methodology and its outcomes will, I suggest, benefit students in a research based system, adding to their catalogue of expertise and providing a theoretical context for work experience projects. Openness about Situated Learning Theory may assist in explaining rationales behind recontextualisation of media practice as pedagogy. The same openness is likely to preclude the application of behavioural theory in the assessment of group work.

The split between media theory and practice, a dehiscence operationalised in cultural theory, is legitimate and productive. However, when recontextualised as a basis for the development of curricula and pedagogy its operation inhibits student access to the full range of practice principles and emergent theory. Freed from its mythologizing and regulatory function within an OBTL system, and as part of a research based curriculum, recontextualised theory, including cultural theory, can contribute to the array of critical perspectives available to students interrogating their own learning as they consciously investigate what shared principles of recognition might mean for them.

Benchmarking is not necessarily contingent on the operation of an OBTL system in assessment. OBTL tends, I argue, to exaggerate faults in any

benchmarking system whether it is administered by the QAA or is utilised by Creative Skillset. However, if benchmarking is to be retained as tool in curriculum development it is clear that the QAA system needs to be reviewed before the next due date; 2024.

Future Research

The organisational matrix that describes the strategic relational space shared by the case study institutions establishes a new perspective on the effect of multiple policies in the development of curricula for multi-contextual pedagogies. However, more research and analysis using Social Activity Method is required to refine the model. The experiment in differential application of the matrix to develop schema that describe local variations within the overarching policy framework will benefit from further research involving more institutions.

The 'Linking' quadrant in the organisational matrix provides focus for future research in curriculum development, pedagogy and assessment, to inform policy development. Two key research projects look at the dynamic learning environment occupying the space between the academy and the workplace

The first concerns how students interpret the recontextualised practice they encounter at university in relation to the practice they observe in the workplace. The study is contextualised by an analysis of the policy framework apparent in the construction of the curricula, pedagogy and assessment within which work experience projects are constituted. This would be the first of three linked research programmes. The second looks at how student interpretations and reflections on media practice identity changes over a course of study. The third looks at how graduates draw on and reinterpret their learned practice as their career develops.

A second project looks at Degree Apprenticeships. *'The complete guide to higher and degree apprenticeships'*,¹⁹ a government publication, lists 121 courses. Only two relate to media practice; both are for Broadcast Engineering.

¹⁹ 'The complete guide to higher and degree apprenticeships,
'https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781848/Uni_Appr_guide2019_web2.pdf

Media production practice does not appear on this list despite the fact that a degree apprenticeship, a bespoke pathway linking academic study and workplace experience, would appear to be an ideal learning environment. However, this is unsurprising as the full list of apprenticeships is deficient in jobs that require a high degree of tacit expertise. I propose, in the light of the findings and recommendations of this study, to look at what impediments might be identified in the policy framework for the degree apprenticeship scheme.

Teaching media practice in the academy has been called into existence by powerful political, social, economic and cultural interests. Curricula are shaped by competing strategic regards and demands. I suggest that curriculum development in this field requires a theoretical sensitivity that recognises recontextualisation as central to taught practice and acknowledges the significance of the interplay of multiple policy regards in its construction. Transparency is essential to facilitate research into student response to pedagogic and assessment strategies and the wider strategic relational space they inhabit.

This thesis represents a tentative first word in a narrative that offers an alternative lens through which to view curriculum development as practice. I suggest that the *“Modes of Strategic Action in Curriculum Development,”* schema is a first step in developing an organising structure and language that can be used to dismantle and describe strategic action in the construction of curricula, units of learning and regulation of assessment. The lexicon may be small, but it represents a departure from the language of professional media production that can be used to describe media practice in education separately from media practice as practice.

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Appendices

One: ethics statement and schedule of interviewees

Research was conducted in accordance with the statement of ethical practice for the British Sociological Association. All research access has been on the basis of obtaining informed written consent in line with UCL / IOE policy. Anonymity for individuals and institutions will be respected and are fundamental to the management of the project. Data is held securely in encrypted folders in stand-alone hard drives in the case of digital data or in a locked file or filing cabinet in the case of paper-based data. Data will not be kept at either participating institutions or UCL / IOE but at a secure location. The primary concern was ensuring no harm comes to participating individuals and institutions. I have considered whether there are any risks specific to this area of research. The primary focus is on adult, professional practitioners in education; no students are included in this study. However, the impact of questions and the research process on individual participants, those that may evoke strong emotional reactions were carefully considered. The tone throughout was calm, non-confrontational, responsive and informal. None of the participants expressed any concern or discomfort during or after interview. Permission from every participant was sought. No-one approached declined. The research process was conducted on an equitable basis with respect for participant's autonomy and rights to participate or decline the invitation ensuring that no-one is discriminated against. It was made clear to all participants that if they should decide to withdraw their consent then data provided by them will not be used in the study.

Case Study X

X1	Head of School; overall manager of departmental policy within an institutional framework.	Considerable experience as a media practitioner, primarily in journalism, before moving into academic work. Significant executive experience in media and the academy.
X2	Head of Department; overall manager of course development within a departmental policy framework.	Long-term experience as a producer across media. Specialism in new technology and digital

		communications. Significant experience as an academic researcher.
X3	Head of Media specialising in mainstream production; responsibility for day to day management of course development and authorship.	Long-term media practitioner in mainstream media with extensive experience of course development and teaching in the field.
X4	Programme leader specialising in mainstream production; responsibility for day to day management of course development strands and authorship in collaboration with the Head of Media.	Long-term media practitioner in experimental and independent production. Extensive experience in course development and teaching in the field.
X5	Head of Quality; responsible for institutional administration of course development and evaluation.	Long-term academic administrator and academic researcher with extensive experience in managing and developing institutional administrative structures.
X6	Senior Quality Officer: responsible for day to day management of institutional course development and evaluation.	Long-term academic administrator with extensive experience of managing institutional administrative regulations and programmes.

Case Study Y

Y1	Head of School; overall manager of departmental policy within an institutional framework.	Significant experience as a media practitioner, before moving into academic work. Considerable
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		executive experience in the academy.
Y2	Visiting Professor: consultant in course development and institutional change	Media practitioner in experimental and independent production. Long-term experience as an academic manager. Specialism in institutional restructuring and management of change. Significant experience in curriculum development.
Y3	Course Leader new film course; responsibility for day to day management of new course development and authorship.	Media practitioner in mainstream media with extensive experience of course development and teaching in the field.
Y4	Course Leader specialising in mainstream production; responsibility for day to day degree course management and a participant in the new course development group.	Long-term media practitioner in mainstream media with extensive experience of course development and teaching in the field.
Y5	Course Leader specialising in factual; a participant in the new course development group.	Long-term media practitioner in mainstream media with extensive experience of course development and teaching in the field.
Y6	Senior Lecturer specialising in drama; a participant in the new course development group.	Long-term media practitioner in film with extensive experience of course development and teaching in the field.

Y7	Senior Quality Officer: responsible for day to day management of institutional course development and evaluation.	Long-term academic administrator with extensive experience of managing institutional administrative regulations and programmes.
Y8	Course Leader specialising in advertising; participant in new course validation	Long-term media practitioner in mainstream media with extensive experience of course development and teaching in the field.

Course Accreditation Z

Z1	Senior manager accreditation agency specialising in production practice	Extensive experience in media and arts administration and management of H.E. course accreditation.
Z2	Senior manager accreditation agency specialising in technical practice	Extensive experience in media practice and management of H.E. course accreditation.
Z3	Senior manager accreditation agency	Extensive experience in media practice and administration and management of H.E. course accreditation.

Two: QAA benchmark statement for communication, media and cultural studies 2016:**4: Knowledge, understanding and skills**

4.1 As programmes differ in their focus and degree of specialisation it is neither possible nor desirable to define a prescriptive knowledge or skills base. The following sections give an indication of the areas of knowledge, the subject specific and generic skills which will be appropriate within these fields of study; they are not intended as a checklist.

Processes and practices

4.4 Graduates of programmes in these fields demonstrate knowledge and understanding of some of the following:

- i the processes linking pre-production, production, distribution, circulation, reception and use
- ii the ways in which individuals and groups express their identity and communicate such identities culturally
- iii the processes of cultural and subcultural formations and their dynamics
- iv key production processes and professional practices relevant to media, film, cultural and communicative industries, and ways of conceptualising creativity and authorship
- v professional and occupational codes and practices in cultural production, distribution and reception.
- vi the legal, ethical and other regulatory frameworks, including the intellectual property framework, that are relevant to media and cultural production, manipulation, distribution, circulation, and reception
- vii how media, film, cultural and creative organisations operate, communicate and are managed
- viii how work is organised in the 'creative industries' whether individually or collaboratively
- ix the material conditions of media and cultural consumption, and of the cultural contexts in which people appropriate, use and make sense of media and cultural products
- x how media products and platforms might be understood within broader concepts of culture
- xi the ways in which data are stored, organised and used and the social and political implications thereof. (QAA 2016; 14).

5 Subject-specific skills

5.1 The specific focus and breadth of range of individual degree programmes determines not only the knowledge bases on which they draw, but also the balance of skills and approaches developed within them. Graduates will demonstrate, as appropriate, some of the following subject-specific skills:

Research

5.3 Graduates demonstrate the ability to:

- i carry out various forms of research for essays, projects, creative productions or dissertations involving sustained independent and critical enquiry
- ii formulate appropriate research questions and employ appropriate methods and resources for exploring those questions
- iii locate, retrieve, evaluate and draw upon the range of sources and the conceptual frameworks appropriate to research in the chosen area
- iv draw on the strengths and understand the limits of the major quantitative and/or qualitative research methods, and be able to apply this knowledge critically in their own work
- v draw on and evaluate and apply research enabled by established and emergent technologies
- vi draw and reflect upon the relevance and impact of their own cultural commitments and positioning to the practice of research
- vii collate, critically evaluate and understand a variety of research material within and beyond academic literature.

Personal Statement

In the final chapter of the thesis I stated that it represented two narratives, the process of curriculum development and the relevant policy developments of the past 25 years. Of course, it also represents a third narrative, the path taken to make a field of academic practice comprehensible to this researcher.

As a very late-comer to the academy I recognised my lack of a theoretical background and academic expertise necessary to comprehend the institutional bases for my teaching and curriculum development practice. I acquired a post-graduate certificate in teaching and learning and completed a masters' degree in political communication at Goldsmiths College which allowed me to take on a full-time post of senior lecturer. I did not need a doctorate but I chose to apply for the EdD programme at the Institute of Education. It offered an option to study education policy, providing a more specialised focus to augment my interest in policy analysis in relation to pedagogy.

Academic friends told me that the IOE was very demanding and theory based and certainly too challenging for an academic neophyte. But, I needed to embrace theory to balance my practical expertise and wanted to see if I could do it. My friends were right; the doctorate proved to be the hardest task I have ever undertaken. My application statement was sketchy; I thought there might be something not quite right with my institutions approach to collaborative learning. I was particularly worried about student exclusion, isolation and withdrawal from group work. As the practice was ubiquitous in the media practice sector I thought I might start there.

I used two units of the EdD programme, Methods of Enquiry one and two, to look at collaborative learning. The learning environment was clearly a complex social construction but my private conclusion was that I couldn't advance my research without being able to identify what it was students were isolated or withdrawing or being excluded from. Before I could come at the question, 'what is happening here?' in relation to student engagement with group work, I had to ask the same question of the social activity of curriculum development. I asked whether what we do as academics might contribute to student problems with working in groups.

This prompted two lines of enquiry. First, what forces were operationalised at a strategic level to constitute the learning environment. Second, how might their strategic interplay be made transparent? I addressed the initial question in the third taught unit on the programme; Contemporary Education Policy. The outcome of this research led to my first academic publication, *“The Doctrine of Creativity and the Commodification of Identity”* (Colwell, 2012) a chapter in *“Policy, Discourse and Rhetoric”* (Lall, 2012) The chapter critiques government policy designed to “... detach ‘creativity from individual identity and meaning and the articulation of its value as merely commercially contingent...” (Colwell 2012; 112). The question this raised was how policy shaped the relationship between H.E and industry as expressed in curriculum development and assessment strategies.

In retrospect, my first, tentative steps towards making the strategic interplay of policy and curriculum development practice transparent emerged in my Institution Focused Study (IFS). It was the first time that I used Social Activity Method (SAM) in my analysis. I also marked the point at which the recontextualization of practice principles emerged as a key factor in the development of media practice curricula and pedagogy. The outcome of the IFS led to my second academic publication, *“Scriptwriting as pedagogy: vocational education for media production and the recontextualisation of practice;”* (Colwell, 2014).

The paper looked at recontextualisation of media practice in the academy. Analysis of a scriptwriting unit evidenced the importation of assessment criteria detached from the recontextualised practice students encountered. I argued that criteria represented “...neglect of principles of recontextualisation and that importing these criteria undermines and potentially inhibits student integration of practice principles (Colwell 2014; 120). Denial of principles of recontextualisation, in this field, potentially inhibits student access to media practice principles and their comprehension of those principles in relation to media practice in the workplace.

These publications illustrate the twin strands of research focus brought together in my thesis. Together the papers exemplify the tension evident in policy that

regulates curriculum development for media practice. "*The doctrine of creativity...*" examines efforts to assert a macro-economic strategy incorporating a dominant utilitarian media industry / employer approach to H.E.

"*Scriptwriting...*" focuses on academic principles and practices applied to the recontextualisation of media practice in H.E. However, my thesis research, while acknowledging prior research and analysis, represents an attempt to look at the process of curriculum development with a fresh eye.

Over a ten year period in H.E. I participated in ten course development and validation programmes and two QAA institutional audits. This, arguably, brought advantages in acquiring significant experience and comprehension of a process that brings together multiple, influential stakeholders. It also made the empirical setting for research very familiar and brought a risk of over-identification with those engaged with developing the courses being studied.

One of the most problematic aspects of this research has been achieving detachment, recognising my own stance, my strong attachment to a media practice identity, and the potential for the lens through which I regard other practices to reproduce them as versions of my own. I have been the epitome of an insider researcher, not in the sense that I owe allegiance to an institution or to colleagues, but in strong empathy with interviewees who have contributed to the research. I ask to see their world through their eyes but it is my world too. I seek to make the familiar strange; that has been the hardest task.

As a social researcher my practice is perhaps best described as the sum of multiple sets of expertise acquired in very different social contexts. For thirty five years, I made my living as a film editor, a writer, a researcher, a television producer and director and in senior management and executive positions. I have exercised agency and a significant degree of autonomy in hierarchical institutions, whether being managed or managing others. I developed, managed and taught media production degrees in Higher Education (H.E) for over a decade, initially part-time and subsequently as a full-time senior lecturer.

In one sense this thesis draws on my expertise as a documentary film maker. Documentarists look at an aspect of societal interaction and draw on their wider

knowledge to contextualise and explain it in the form of a narrative. It opens with a brief description of a world of media practice learned through apprenticeship that is disrupted by an inciting dramatic incident; rapid technological change allied to challenges to traditional education discourse exemplified by the Dearing Report.

A long second act reports on inertia in academia that inhibits response to a rapid and dramatically shifting policy environment which closes with a crisis from which emerges resolution and a depiction of an altered landscape. However, in this tale, the crisis does not bring resolution and the possibility of a new, hopeful direction. In this story the crisis is exemplified by the Browne Report; the altered landscape is chaotic and unstable and the prospects for a happy ending look dim.

The construction of this narrative was extremely difficult because of the complex interplay of forces that shape strategic action. Its presentation as a thesis resembles a documentary in that it is thematic, albeit the themes are addressed sequentially, not concurrently. The obfuscation produced by the interweaving of mythologizing strategies required their separation to establish some semblance of clarity. The narrative represents a particular view but how it is interpreted is a matter for the reader. The thesis describes the route I have taken in discovering and uncovering what, I argue, is the precarious standing of academia in regard to vocational education for media practice.

There are two important questions that I would ask of this research and the researcher; how has your stance influenced your enquiry and doesn't the breadth of the enquiry overwhelm the capacity of an EdD thesis to contain it?

Strong advice on how to approach a thesis was regularly offered at support seminars. Don't be overly ambitious, find something small that will make a genuine contribution to knowledge and focus on that. It's only forty-five thousand words; be sensible. I took all of this advice to heart. I found my small area of significant interest, group work. I picked away at it for some time and then I asked the question about how the pedagogy and its assessment is constituted. That's when the ground fell away, and a chasm opened up; I have

been exploring it ever since. At first, I moved in total darkness, but my eyes grew used to the gloom and SAM has provided an increasingly powerful source of illumination.

This thesis asks some difficult questions about the autonomous status and ultimately the legitimacy of institutional practice of curriculum development in this field. The academic hole I fell into lies under the H.E institutional policy foundations for vocational education for media practice and, possibly, other creative industries. I suggest that forty-five thousand words is ample to report the problem. As for my stance regarding this research this thesis is, I maintain, a legitimate piece of research and analysis that conforms to the requirements of a programme of doctoral study. It also strongly resembles a piece of investigative journalism. Perhaps it is necessary that it represents both traditions. As a factual film-maker, a significant aspect of my role is to be a professional sceptic.

When I entered H.E. as a part-time lecturer I struggled to shed my practice identity as a media 'professional.' My doctoral studies represent an attempt to access and embody the principles of practice of an academic researcher. The development of my research over the course of the EdD programme evidences the clarity and robustness of its design by academics at the IOE. However, while I intend to pursue academic research in this field I have come to re-evaluate the worth of my former profession as well as the new. The abandonment of the education policy unit on the EdD programme soon after I completed it, was, in my view an unfortunate and retrograde step. It indicates a troubling lack of institutional curiosity regarding how practice is shaped by policy in H.E. which is both problematic and emblematic.

As I write this personal statement, prior to submission, the "*Post-18 review of education and funding*" (Hinds, 2019), the Auger Report, has just been published. I suggest that even a cursory reading shows that the authors are as blind to the actual, rather than mythic, strategic relationships apparent in H.E. policy making as Bowne, Dearing, and the authorial teams recruited by the QAA. Apparently, nothing has been learned from the crisis in H.E. I suggest that

Auger and his team are bound by the mythologizing regards described in the thesis.

The terms of reference (Greening, 2018) focus on maintaining “*Choice and competition across a joined-up post-18 education and training sector... How we can support a more dynamic market in provision... maintaining the financial sustainability of a world-class higher education and research sector... How to ensure the market provides choice with higher-level degree apprenticeships and shorter and more flexible courses ...supporting innovative new institutions that can drive competition...*” (Greening 2019; 2). The list goes on; it aims to support disadvantaged learners while delivering the skills our country needs and supporting our industrial strategy ambitions while offering value for money for students and taxpayers. At the same time it must maintain the principle that students should contribute to the cost of their studies but place no cap on recruitment.

I hesitate to say that the efforts of the Auger group are a waste of time... but, of course, without the resources required to comprehend the strategic landscape they inhabit as they do their work, they are, in my view, merely rearranging deckchairs on a sinking ship. I thank the Dept. for Education for providing this demonstration of the power of myth-making in H.E. in such a timely manner.

Stephen Colwell