

Exploring Critical Pedagogy in English Universities: the
relationship between theory and practice

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(Curriculum & Pedagogy)

2020

UCL Institute of Education

Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment

I, Lauren Beth Clark, 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

Higher education in England has become increasingly marketised and bureaucratised over the last 30 years. The economic purpose of higher education put forward by government policy instrumentalises the work being done in universities through league tables and quality frameworks, promoting competition and surveillance. These changes impact on pedagogy, the student experience, and the role of academics.

Aiming to explore the pedagogical practice of self-identifying critical pedagogues in English universities in this era of marketisation, this research focused on the pedagogical practice and decision-making of ten critical pedagogues from eight different universities in England. In an attempt to implement a research approach that was congruent with critical pedagogy, this research was informed by a critical qualitative research approach, which involved participant observations and reflective dialogues with participants focusing on their practice. As a result of thematic analysis, a framework for conceptualising different manifestations of critical pedagogical practice emerged, identifying hegemonic co-investigators, critical co-investigators, and critical experts.

Effects of the marketisation of the university at the macro, meso and micro levels affected self-identifying critical pedagogues' ability to put their pedagogical beliefs and values into practice, often leading to strategic compromise (Skelton, 2012a) and feelings of isolation. Analysis suggests that critical educators often focus on implementing either a critical curriculum or a critical pedagogy and feel that they are isolated and misunderstood by their colleagues. Building a community in the classroom and within their institution was seen as important to implementing a critical pedagogical approach, and while participants practiced critical pedagogy in different ways, the purpose underpinning their practice united them as they push at the boundaries of the university.

Impact Statement

This thesis presents an exploration of pedagogical practice in universities, focusing on the constraints that critical educators face in a university sector that is becoming increasingly marketised, bureaucratic and entrepreneurial, and therefore at odds with their values. Despite these challenges, critical pedagogy is more important than ever as we attempt to tackle global issues around climate change, growing disparities between the rich and poor and the global north and global south, and political polarisation. This thesis contributes to a better understanding of different ways that university educators can implement a critical pedagogical stance in their teaching and research.

Findings from this research are useful for critical pedagogues, as well as other educators working in universities, as they speak to the effects of marketisation, the dissonance between theory and practice, and value conflicts that might occur at different levels of their social reality. Analyses contribute to discussions about the effects of marketisation and neoliberalism on pedagogy in universities, as well as other academic activities in the university, exploring issues such as class size, student engagement, modularisation and expansion. The findings of this research are also valuable in that they suggest that building a community in the university can promote reflection on and development of diverse pedagogical values and practice. By exploring different manifestations of critical pedagogical practice in English universities, this thesis may also offer hope and inspiration to other critical educators who feel isolated or discouraged by the challenges they face in the current context.

Finally, reflections on the challenges of using a critical approach to research contribute to the ongoing dialogue around critical methodologies and how they can contribute to a more socially just and empowering approach to doing research.

Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my grandparents, Oliver and Ethel Clark, who have always supported me and my dreams. Unfortunately, neither of them got to see me finish this thesis, but I know they would be proud of the work I have done.

Thank you to my family, and those in England who have become family, for supporting me throughout the ups and downs of doctoral study. I couldn't have done it without you.

I would also like to thank the academic community at UCL Institute of Education for their support and inspiration throughout my doctoral journey. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Sue Askew, for her support and genuine interest in my research. Thank you to Dr Sue Walters for her constructive feedback from upgrade to final draft. I would also like to thank several student communities for their camaraderie and motivation: my writing group, my philosophy of education group, and the IOE Doctoral Community.

And, of course, I would like to express gratitude to the self-identifying critical pedagogues who let me into their classrooms and shared their practice and experiences with me. I hope that you continue to push at the boundaries to create more space for 'radical' pedagogy and inspire others to do the same.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis explores critical pedagogy in an era of marketisation of higher education in England. It is important to ask how higher education pedagogy is affected as a result of the rise of bureaucracy, quality assurance, student numbers, and the implementation of student fees (Tight, 2000; Mayhew, Deer & Dua, 2004; Barnett, 2011; Williams, 2013;). These changes may affect the roles of staff and students, the physical space of the university, and the wider purpose of the university in society. In light of these changes to higher education, this research aims to explore how self-identifying critical pedagogues navigate these changes and whether they see themselves as capable of challenging the current neoliberal climate. While the marketisation of HE affects all educators in universities, I am specifically interested in the pedagogy of those who might consider themselves to be 'critical' educators because they are more likely to challenge taken for granted assumptions about education and the organisation of society more generally.

Several researchers in the field of higher education have identified that there are critical educators who push against the constraints of the university, and along with highlighting the challenges faced by the sector they may offer a sense of hope that things can be different (Breunig, 2009; Kaufmann, 2010; Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016). This research seeks to explore whether there are still educators within the university itself that are resisting the marketisation of HE and the impact of neoliberalism more widely, and how they cope with these changes and challenges. Although this research focuses on self-identifying critical pedagogues, who are likely a small percentage of educators in universities, I think their pedagogical approaches and strategies are of interest to all working within HE, as a source of knowledge about teaching practice, but

also as an example of how to operate within structures that might make alternative ways of viewing education and teaching seem impossible. The purpose of this thesis is not to offer a guide to university educators about how to 'do' critical pedagogy, but to offer an opportunity for educators to reflect on their own pedagogy through participating in this research, and in so doing explore the practice of a small group of critical educators and how they teach in the current context.

1.1 Aims

This thesis aims to contribute to knowledge about critical pedagogical practice in higher education. Although there has been research about critical pedagogy in universities (see Breunig, 2009; Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016; McArthur, 2010a), the main focus of this body of work is typically around understanding critical pedagogical theory and often does not explore how critical pedagogical theory is actually implemented in practice. Or, if it does explore practice, it is typically discipline specific (see Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016) or focused on an isolated case (see Ellsworth, 1989; Boyd, 1999; Kaufmann, 2010), making comparison across disciplines, universities and pedagogues more difficult (McArthur, 2010b). While there is a large body of literature around critical pedagogy in primary or secondary schools, considering that Paulo Freire developed critical pedagogy as a way to teach adult literacy, it may be that critical pedagogy is more applicable in teaching situations with adults (Freire, 1970); where challenging the dynamic between teacher and student may be more feasible than in the case of younger, primary and secondary age students. Challenging the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students is one of the central tenants of critical pedagogy, along with questioning the concepts of authority and indoctrination, and recognising the political nature of education (McArthur, 2010a; McArthur, 2013). As

such, the practice of critical pedagogues and how they put their critical beliefs into practice is of interest, especially when viewed as a network spanning disciplines and universities. In this sense, my research has some similarities with that of Breunig (2009), who used phone interviews to explore the practice of self-identifying critical pedagogues at various universities in North America. Although her study was helpful in that it revealed some of the constraints that prevented self-identifying critical pedagogues from implementing critical pedagogy, Breunig (2009) was unable to observe their pedagogical practice. Building upon her research design, I collected data by engaging in participant observations followed by a reflective dialogue with self-identifying critical pedagogues to better understand how they make pedagogical decisions and work within the constraints of the university, as well as highlighting how they problematize and challenge the recent changes in HE policy.

Alongside the contribution to the field of critical pedagogy in higher education, this thesis also aims to contribute to the field of critical qualitative research, as I attempt to implement a research approach that is congruent with the values of critical pedagogy. Specifically, I tried to challenge the power dynamic between the researcher and the researched, reflect on the language used to talk about participants and the researcher and the research process, and challenge how knowledge is constructed in research and who constructs it. In order to develop a more critical approach to research, different critical approaches to research will be explored, including Freire's practitioner research and critical feminist methodologies (Lather, 1986a, 1986b, 1988, 1991, 1998). Although Lather (1998) presents the idea of 'praxis of stuck places' in regard to critical feminist pedagogy, I think it can be applied to research, as well. Just as she claims that implementing critical pedagogy in schools is impossible, I posit that

perhaps implementing a critical approach to research (in what Lather (1991) calls a “positivist/postmodern era”) may be impossible, but struggling through this impossibility is what creates the opportunity: a critical research praxis that enables the researcher to reflect on the process of research in order to change it. Although a truly critical research approach may not be achievable, I hope that by engaging in praxis, I can move closer to the critical, and help “make philosophy practical” (Lather, 1991: 11).

Research Questions

There are three different research questions that will be explored in this thesis through the use of participant observations and reflective dialogues with ten self-identifying critical pedagogues:

1. How do self-identifying critical pedagogues put their beliefs about critical pedagogy into practice in the current neoliberal context?
2. What challenges does the current neoliberal/marketised HE system present self-identifying critical pedagogues, and how do they attempt to overcome these challenges?
3. How can research in the current neoliberal context be more congruent with the values of critical pedagogy?

1.2 Research Journey

My journey to critical pedagogy was somewhat unexpected as I started my PhD focusing on cooperative learning in British higher education. However, after reviewing literature on the purpose of higher education, I was drawn to the emancipatory and empowering aim of critical pedagogy through the work of Michael Apple, Peter McLaren, Stanley Aronowitz, Henry Giroux, and Jan MacArthur. In order to narrow my

area of interest I decided to undertake an exploratory study observing my supervisor's class for a term. Although not claiming to use a critical pedagogical approach to her class, my supervisor definitely has an emancipatory and empowering agenda, coupled with a co-constructivist approach to teaching that focused on constructing knowledge and understanding with students through dialogue. While observing the class and taking field notes on my supervisor's teaching practice, I also participated and was interested in how my participation offered the opportunity to experience the pedagogy of the teacher rather than just observing it as an outsider, which further emphasised the importance of using observation when exploring how theory is put into practice.

Since I am American, I am also seeing the British higher education system as an outsider, which potentially provides the opportunity to see aspects that others who have been working in the system for years might not recognise. Comparing my experience of studying for a master's and a doctorate in London to my experience of studying at undergraduate level in the United States provides an interesting lens through which to view the recent marketization of UK higher education. Having studied in the USA, which has had a marketised higher education system for decades, I might also be more sensitive to the changes that are now taking place in the UK system, and how they differ to my previous experience.

Throughout the research, my own role as a researcher has continued to change as I started teaching at my university and became further entrenched in British HE. This change meant that reflecting on the practice and beliefs of other educators was influential for my own teaching practice. Along with developing my practice, I have also gained first-hand experience of the many constraints that keep educators from

teaching in a way that is congruent with their values. This is particularly hard for me as an educator with little experience who is low in the hierarchy of the department.

Although I am lucky enough to be teaching at an education-centred institution where we might have more scope to try different approaches than elsewhere, we are still limited by methods of assessment, class size, space, and time with students.

In light of my unique position as a student-researcher-teacher, as well as my aim to contribute to understanding how to implement a critical research approach, this thesis will also include an analysis of the research process in Chapter 9. This reflective chapter will offer a space to reflect on the process of doing critical research and how I ultimately put my critical beliefs about research and knowledge production into practice throughout the study. Using praxis as a way to constantly question our actions and challenge the story we tell through our research is something that Lather (1991: 13) claims leads to a situation “where we can learn how to turn critical thought into emancipatory action. This entails a reflexivity where we can learn to attend to the politics of what we do and do not do at a practical level” and to discover the epistemologies behind our practices. By reflecting upon and analysing the research process I hope to be able to examine my own practice to see how I negotiate power with my participants. Lather (1991: 10) suggests that this is the only way to account for the fact that critical researchers are, in a way, complicit in what they are critiquing.

1.3 Overview of the Thesis

This introduction chapter presented the aim and rationale of the study, as well as explaining the unique position of the researcher and how this may affect the research. The introduction is followed by a background chapter which describes the current context of universities in England, with particular focus on the recent

marketisation of HE and how it has affected the role of universities in society, pedagogy, student experience and expectations, and the professional identity of academics. In effect, Chapter 2 sets the scene for the research, explaining why research into the practice of critical pedagogues is important and valuable for the wider sector of higher education.

Chapter 3 explores the relevant literature surrounding critical pedagogy in HE, situating my study in the field. This will start with an exploration of pedagogical approaches used in higher education, focusing on the distinction between a transmission approach and more participatory, co-constructive approaches to pedagogy. This is an important foundation to the study, as it will help to better understand the different manifestations of critical pedagogical approaches implemented by participants. Critical pedagogy is not a unilateral approach to education that can be easily defined—there are many different approaches and conceptions of critical pedagogy that are context dependent and sometimes at odds with each other. Therefore, critical pedagogy does not just exist as a separate approach, it incorporates different aspects of approaches and ideologies, making a review of basic pedagogical approaches fundamentally important. This chapter and this thesis will draw mainly on the work of Paulo Freire and his approach to critical pedagogy which not only focused on teaching practice, but also on “questions of power, culture, and oppression within the context of schooling” (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003: 6), as well as other critical theorists such as Giroux, McLaren and Aronowitz. Finally, a review of the relevant research in the area of critical pedagogy in higher education will be presented, identifying the gap in the literature around how critical pedagogical beliefs are put into practice.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology of the study, highlighting the search for a critical approach that is congruent with critical pedagogy. Drawing particularly on Patti Lather's work on critical social research (Lather, 1986a, 1986b, 1988, 1991, 1998), this research aimed to consider the language used in portraying and engaging participants, to reflect on how discussing and analysing the practice of my participants might construct them as objects rather than subjects, and to recognise that since I cannot take values out of my research and the products of my research (nor would I want to) I need to constantly reflect on how these values affect my research practice from design to analysis. The remainder of the chapter outlines the research design, with particular attention paid to the sampling method used to access a hard-to-reach network of critical pedagogues scattered around England. Data collection consisted of participant observations of the teaching practice of seven of the ten participants, followed by reflective dialogues to explore the pedagogical beliefs and practices of self-identifying critical pedagogues. The chapter will also review the ethical issues affecting the research and how they were addressed, followed by a description of the data analysis and the development of a framework to categorise different manifestations of critical pedagogical practice. The framework will help organise the data chapters, as well as frame the discussion chapter.

Chapter 5 presents a descriptive analysis of data collected through the participant observations and reflective dialogues for four participants who were identified as 'critical experts'. Data is explored through cases, and then thematically, identifying common themes between different 'critical experts', whose practice was focused on transmitting a critical curriculum. Some of the themes that emerged were criticality and challenging the status quo, which revealed their focus on critical content.

Themes such as barriers to CP, institutional structure, and engagement reveal some of the constraints that 'critical experts' felt impeded their critical approach to teaching.

Chapter 6 presents an analysis of the data collected with four participants who were categorised as 'hegemonic co-investigators', which are educators who implement a co-constructivist approach to teaching hegemonic or mainstream knowledge. As in chapter 5, data will first be explored through cases that draw on examples from field notes and excerpts from reflective dialogues, and then overarching themes for 'hegemonic co-investigators' will be presented. These themes were: challenging traditional teaching methods, pedagogical decisions, valuing student knowledge, and building relationships with students. Compared with the themes of the 'critical experts', here we see a focus on pedagogy, and the dynamic this creates, rather than curriculum.

Chapter 7, the final data chapter, presents the data from two participants who were classified as 'critical co-investigators'. 'Critical co-investigators' are those whose practice demonstrates both a critical or reconstructivist curriculum as well as a co-constructivist approach to teaching. Despite the fact that participants in this quadrant focused on both aspects, emphasis was placed on either curriculum or pedagogy, suggesting that perhaps all participants tend to concentrate on the critical aspects of either how they teach or what they are teaching. Due to this divide, participants in this quadrant didn't share overarching themes. However, themes from both participants focused on the lived experiences of students, challenging the status quo and traditional teaching methods, neo-liberalisation and building relationships with students.

Following on from the data chapters, Chapter 8 offers a discussion of the data alongside previous research in the field. The chapter begins with a detailed exploration of the emergent framework of different manifestations of critical pedagogy and how the framework can be used to explore the practice of university educators more generally, who might also struggle to implement espoused teaching theories in the current context. Key findings from the study are explored: the focus on critical curriculum or pedagogy, the perceived need to do critical pedagogy 'in secret', the importance of community in both the classroom and educators' institutions, and the importance of the underpinning purpose of critical pedagogy.

Chapter 9 analyses my attempt to implement a critical research approach. Although partially reflective, this chapter also looks at the challenges encountered and considers why doing critical research is difficult in the current neoliberal context. This reflection includes issues around the language used in the research process, challenging the hierarchical relationship between researchers and researched, and how the position of the researcher in the hierarchy of the university affects the ability to challenge research conventions. Of particular interest was the fact that when given the opportunity to share some of the power in the interview process, the majority of participants preferred to let me guide the discussion rather than coming up with topics for discussion themselves. This may suggest that power in research is also a responsibility, one that participants are not always eager to take on themselves. The nature of different methods of data collection will also be critiqued, specifically looking at the difference between intentions and how these played out in reality.

Chapter 10, the final chapter, looks forward to explore spaces where critical pedagogy might flourish, both inside and outside the university. The implications of

the research are discussed, particularly in reference to the critical pedagogy community and others teaching in universities. Suggestions for further research in this area will also be considered, looking at new avenues that have opened up as a result of this research.

The contribution this thesis makes to knowledge is divided into two parts, with one focusing on its contribution to the field of critical pedagogy and teaching in universities, and the other being its contribution to conceptualisations of critical research practice. The work of Patti Lather (1991, 1998) was particularly influential in helping me to work through the 'stuck places' through engaging in continual praxis to guide the research.

Chapter 2: Context of English HE

Before examining the practice of critical pedagogues in the university, it is important to understand the context in which they are working—English universities. Approaching this research from a critical perspective means that attention to the social, historical and economic context of the participants is essential to understanding how they shape their experience and actions. Indeed, Ledwith (2009: 604) claims it is “impossible to ‘be critical’ without situating ourselves and the lives of those with whom we research in socio-cultural-political times.” Further, in order to challenge the idea that we are in control of all our actions and have the autonomy to choose how to behave, we must look at how the contexts we operate in constrain and often dictate our actions. For example, in the case of my research, it could be that participants have every intention of implementing the critical pedagogic beliefs they hold in their practice, but the context in which they work makes that very difficult or impossible. In order to understand the context in which my participants live and work, the following chapter will focus on the marketisation of the HE sector in England, which influences both the role that HE plays in society as well as the changing purpose behind it. Although I did not intend to limit my sample to universities in England, I will be focusing on the context of English universities, since the policy surrounding HEIs is different in these countries (Deem & Lucas, 2007). This chapter will also look at the changing role of the academic, in terms of the work they are expected to do in the university and how this is evaluated and measured. This chapter not only serves to set the scene for the research, but also hopes to illuminate the constraints that self-identifying critical pedagogues and their colleagues work within.

The move from elite to mass educational institutions, although enabling more students to get a higher education, has had a negative impact on universities (Stromquist, 2007). The massive increase in students has led to demand for more universities, but with the lowering of government funding, these institutions exist in a market in which competition for students and their tuition has led universities to act more like businesses than knowledge centres (Enders & de Weert, 2009), compelling universities to implement new business strategies such as competition, quality-control, marketing, and accountability measures (Stromquist, 2007). Although some believe that existing in a market state will force universities to be more efficient and innovative (Brown, 2011) to attract students, others feel that this will actually lead to social institutions of varying levels of quality (Stromquist, 2007) due to lax requirements for universities entering the higher education market, which also influences the quality of graduates. A further outcome of massification of higher education is that students from a wider range of backgrounds are entering universities seeking different outcomes, such as developing and enhancing skills, knowledge or employability. This engages with one of the most significant outcomes of marketisation—changing the way society views the purpose of education (Brown & Carasso, 2013; Williams, 2013), and therefore, its role in society. The next sections will explore the changing role of higher education in society, by looking at governmental policy in the UK, followed by an exploration of the diverse purposes of higher education held by different stakeholders.

2.1 The Purpose of HE

To better understand what society needs higher education to teach students, we should first understand the desired outcome of this education. Once we understand the destination, we can focus on the journey. In order to achieve this, looking at the purpose of higher education allows the values and knowledge that will ultimately enable students to be successful, be it economically, social, morally, or emotionally, to become clearer. There are many opinions about the values that underpin education; Walsh (1993) identifies four such values: economic, experiential, ethical and ecstatic. In Walsh's (1993: 102) conceptualisation of educational value, the economic focuses on the need to educate to support the national economy and innovation, while the experiential value of education lies in the "opportunities it thereby provides for the development and stretching of minds for intellectual challenge and adventure". The ethical value of education lies in the ethical qualities it instils in its students, like "precision of thought, objectivity, a commitment to truth, and perhaps international mindedness" (ibid: 102). Finally, there is a fundamental value of education—ecstatic—which stresses the capability of education to instil a love of and for the world and all its 'awesome' parts.

Reflecting on Walsh's values of education (which are about education in general, not just higher education), it becomes evident that higher education plays a combination of roles within society, and often these roles cannot be fulfilled without the others (McArthur, 2013). Indeed, thinking of higher education as only fulfilling one purpose or role is perhaps detrimental, as seeing HE solely as a utopian ideal where everyone is attending for the sake of gaining knowledge or as instrumentalised to vocational training would be limiting (McArthur, 2013), and inaccurate (Barnett, 2011).

This raises a question about whether universities should be returned to their 'golden age' versions when they were solely interested in the creation and dissemination of knowledge—could they address issues around widening access and social justice if this was their purpose? After all, it is likely that different roles, purposes, and values are held by different stakeholders, making a discussion about the purposes of HE even more pertinent and challenging.

Barnett (2011) conceptualised four different versions of the university, which he terms the ivory tower, the professionalised university, the entrepreneurial university and the developmental university, which are loosely congruent to Walsh's (1993) values of education. However, instead of looking at the values that underpin these versions of the university, Barnett (2011) focuses on the epistemological positioning which affects what they do and how. In Barnett's (2011: 31) conceptualisation, the ivory tower might be considered the 'golden age' version of the university, associated with Walsh's (1993) ecstatic value, which is "intent on producing pure knowledge, irrespective of its utility in the world. The knowledge is produced apart from the world and is held apart from the world". This view of the university preserves the idea that knowledge (and its benefits) is for the few, not the many.

Barnett's (2011) professionalised university is concerned with the professions and knowledge that is created in the world, however the work that is done is mostly to benefit the university itself, not the world. The entrepreneurial university, on the other hand, produces knowledge apart from the world, in the university, but then attempts to apply these knowledge products to the world for economic gain. Both the professionalised university and the entrepreneurial university relate to Walsh's

economic value of education, as the knowledge products of the university are seen to benefit the students of the university and the university itself.

The final form of the university identified by Barnett (2011: 32) is the developmental university, which is “both active in the world and in generating knowledge through those activities in the world. It is intent on helping to improve the world—its knowledges are put to work for-the-world”. This form might coincide with Walsh’s experiential and ethical values of education, as it focuses on developing the ability to cope with intellectual challenge, as well as a civic commitment to improving the world. This version of the university might be seen as most associated with social justice issues as it is outward facing, yet altruistic. While Barnett (2011: 32) claims there are not many modern universities that would fall into this category, “there are definite signs of universities moving in that direction”. These ideas of the university demonstrate the underpinning epistemological positions of different versions of the university, as well as their associated aims or purposes. In further work, Barnett (2016) expands these concepts by looking at the university as an institution, and how this further impacts the realisation of the university’s aims and knowledge activities ‘in the world’.

Barnett (2016) argues that the ‘liberal’ university has been transformed over the past 50 years in two spheres—the university as an *idea* and the university as an *institution*. Barnett (2016: 17) continues:

The university has changed as an institution in society, but so too have ideas in circulation about the university. While in the past, the university was understood to exist in its own space (with its own integrity), now it is readily considered that the university as an idea has connections with society, the economy and the wider world (and

so the university's integrity is partly a matter of its good standing in and through those extra-mural connections).

Instead of the liberal university, associated with “ideas of freedom, liberty, critical reason and critical dialogue, independence of mind, consensus building, mutual understanding and respect for persons as equal participants in a conversation,” we are currently living with the bureaucratic and entrepreneurial university (Barnett, 2016: 17-18). While Barnett (2016) argues that both versions of the modern university ‘assault’ the liberal university, they do so in different ways. The entrepreneurial university focuses on changing the way knowledge production is evaluated and valued (in terms of economic criteria), while the bureaucratic university is more concerned with monitoring and controlling the knowledge production and dissemination done in universities.

The entrepreneurial university (Barnett, 2016), due to its focus on economic self-reliance, rather than reliance on government support, fundamentally changes the purpose of the university because all activities are judged in terms of their economic contribution. According to Williams (2013) ‘constructing consumerism’, has been an ongoing process in universities for at least the last 30 years, while outside the university more and more aspects of our lives are privatised and run like a business which only serves to legitimise the marketization of HE. For example, in the UK services such as healthcare, transport, telecommunications, and other utilities have been privatised (Brown & Carasso, 2013). Although increased competition and other market strategies may ensure a better product in some areas (Brant & Panjwani, 2015), this has yet to be seen in higher education, where an increase in quality control and focus on student satisfaction has led to changes in the structure of HE, as well as the roles of

academics (Brown & Carasso, 2013; Williams, 2013; Brown, 2010; Deem & Lucas, 2007).

Barnett (2016) argues that the bureaucratic university, on the other hand, focuses on the measurement of educational performance, which affects pedagogy, curriculum, research, and academic autonomy and identity. Baldrige (1971: 2) describes the bureaucratic university by drawing on Max Weber, who saw them as “networks of social groups dedicated to limited goals, organized for maximum efficiency, and regulated according to the principles of ‘legal-rationality’ (rules, regulations, and careful procedures)”. While this might seem like a more efficient way to run a university, the bureaucratic model of the university changes the nature of all academic activity by making it explicit and measured rather than implicit (Barnett, 2016). This has effects on staff and students alike, as the number of papers published in respected journals is measured just as ‘student engagement’ is measured through learning analytics and attendance monitoring. Academics are forced to become ‘rule-followers’, which likely has impacts on innovation and engagement in activities that cannot be measured, such as reading, thinking, and voluntary academic commitments such as reviewing papers or being an external examiner. As Baldrige (1971: 4) argues, “the bureaucratic paradigm explains much about the formal structure but very little about the processes that give it dynamism... it does little to explain the institution in action”. Therefore, while the bureaucratic university might contribute to a better understanding of measurable aspects and outcomes of the university, it does little in terms of representing what the university actually does, and thus presents a narrow picture of the university to society (Barnett, 2016).

Currently, the widely held governmental view is that higher education is essential to building an economically stable and innovative society (McArthur, 2011). This belief is expressed in policy documents concerning higher education, at least as far back as 1985 with the Green Paper *The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s*, which put pressure on universities to serve the economy and separated the funding for teaching and research (Brown & Carasso, 2013), and more recently in the 2009 White Paper *Higher Ambitions: The Future of Universities in a Knowledge Economy (DBIS, 2009: 7)*, which encouraged collaboration between universities and industry to help ensure students learn the necessary skills to participate in the global knowledge economy:

We will give new priority to the programmes that meet the need for high level skills, especially for key sectors including those identified in the New Industries New Jobs strategy of April. This will mean enhanced support for 'STEM' subjects – degrees in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics – and other skills that underwrite this country's competitive advantages.

The economic purpose of HE is further expressed in the name of the government department for higher education, which is now called the Department for Business, Innovation and Skill (McArthur, 2011; Williams, 2013). However, foregrounding the economic purpose of education does not necessarily mean that government and policy makers do not also value the other important roles that higher education plays in shaping our society. To this end, McArthur (2013) calls for a redefinition of what society considers 'the economy' and what promotes it in order to assimilate social justice into the widely supported economic purpose of education. However, Williams (2013) argues the government's economic motives are not only expressed explicitly in mission statements and department names, but also in the way

that students are constructed as consumers, and higher education, therefore, as a commodity. For example, on UCL's website for prospective students, in addition to citing the university's ranking and history of teaching excellence, the employability of UCL graduates is stated as a key reason for studying at UCL: "Around 90% of UCL graduates enter work or further study within six months of graduating" (UCL, 2018). However, looking at the mission statement of the university tells a different story, with a focus on how UCL is "engaged with the wider world and committed to changing it for the better; recognised for our radical and critical thinking and its widespread influence; with an outstanding ability to integrate our education, research, innovation and enterprise for the long-term benefit of humanity" (UCL, 2018). This highlights the tension between the economic and social justice purposes of higher education referred to be McArthur (2013), as well as the need for the university to position themselves in relation to different discourses about higher education (Chapleo, 2011). In terms of Barnett's (2011) forms of the university, the statistics focusing on graduate employment suggest a 'professionalised university', while the mission statement of the institution aligns with the 'developmental university'. While Barnett (2011) does state that his categorisations are porous and there is overlap and movement from one to the other, the incongruence between these purposes and values might also be representative of a conflict of values within the institution (Skelton, 2012a) as a result of the evolving policy landscape in HE.

The Changing Role of HE in England

This section will focus on the changing policy landscape of higher education in the UK to demonstrate the impact policy has had on the role of higher education in society. The changing role of HE in England is visible in policy documents and

education acts (see Figure 1 for a timeline of HE policy in England over the past forty years), highlighting government priorities in the sector as well as changes to funding structures. According to Brown & Carasso (2013), the lowering of government funding for higher education teaching demonstrates how the sector is moving increasingly into a private market, meant for private investment, driven by the idea that higher education ultimately benefits the individual rather than society due to access to well-paying employment after graduation. Until 1998, university education was subsidised by the government, when the fees were raised to a maximum of £1000 based on parental income, then raised to £3000 in 2004, and finally to £9000 in 2012. Marginson (2011) claims that as students and their parents are expected to pay for more and more of their education, university is positioned as a 'private good' as opposed to a 'public good' since it is for the benefit of and financial responsibility of individuals. Williams (2013) maintains this shift is a relatively recent development considering the long history of the university, and results from the application of Adam Smith's human capital theory to thinking about higher education, as well as the focus on the knowledge economy. In addition to the financial responsibility placed on students for their education, new funding structures and the limiting of government investment has also encouraged the evolution of the bureaucratic and entrepreneurial university (Barnett, 2016), as universities are required to maximise efficiency and earn money through enterprise to be financially sustainable.

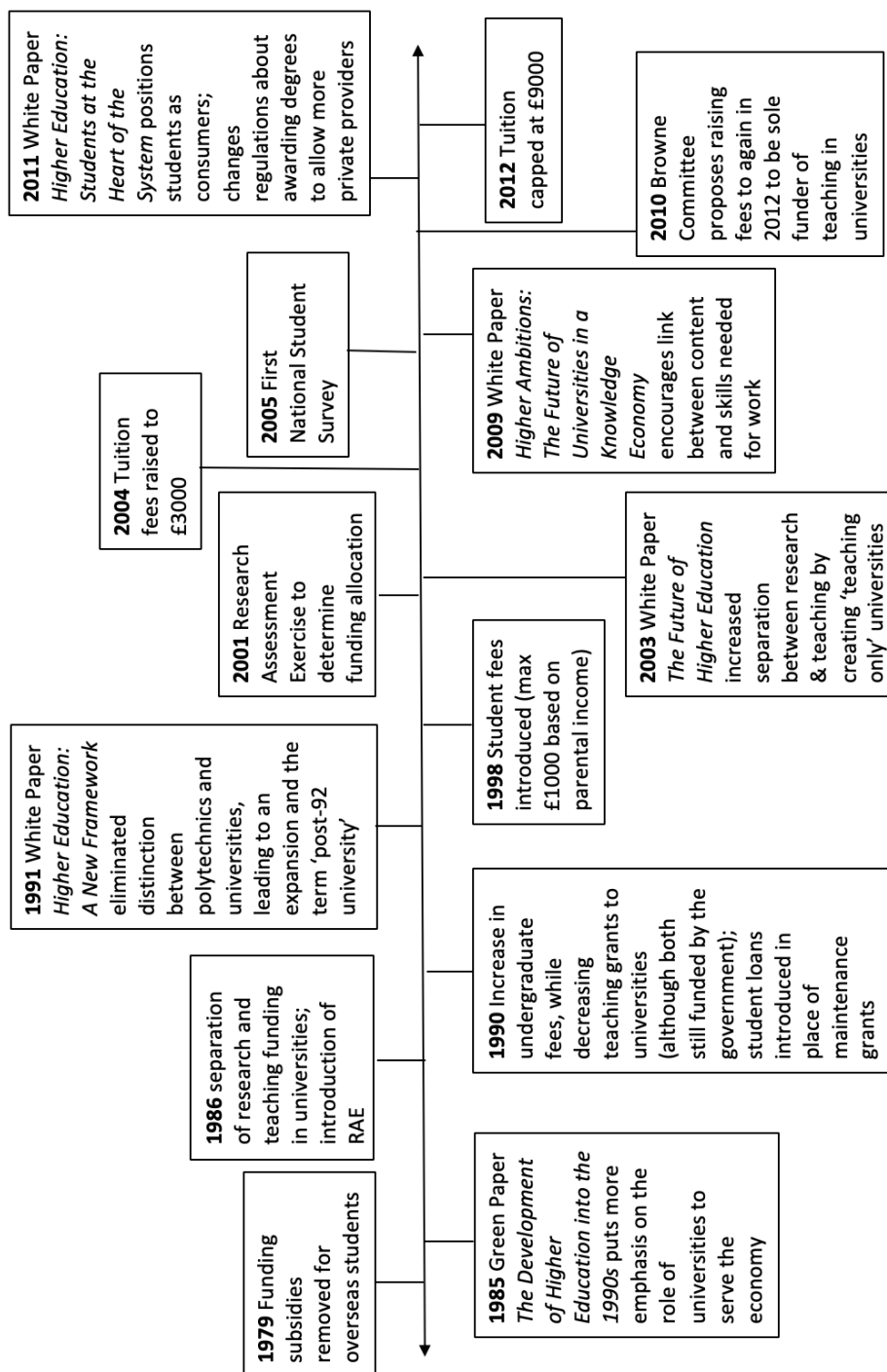


Figure 1: Timeline of HE Policy in the UK (based on Brown & Carasso (2013: 8-10))

The Knowledge Economy

After World War II in the UK, many industries were being shut down, and opportunity for innovation and economic success was seen in the knowledge held by individuals, creating a 'knowledge economy' (Temple, 2012). According to Temple (2012: 1), the move to a knowledge economy demonstrated a shift away from an economy "in which physical resources, human and material, are the main inputs to production, to one in which the most significant and financially valuable activities are knowledge-based or 'symbolic'". This is central to the changes occurring in regard to the funding and perception of the purpose of universities, as the knowledge that is created in universities moved from the ivory tower perception of Barnett (2011) toward professionalised and entrepreneurial universities, which benefit the capitalist economy, and not just the individual. Therefore, Temple (2012) argues, it has repercussions on the kind of education that is seen as valuable—in a knowledge economy, the intellectual development of students should be highly valued, however the current focus on partnerships with industry suggests that the university seems to be engaged in vocational education (or professionalised, in Barnett's terms) rather than producing contributors to the knowledge economy for social purposes.

In Adam Smith's (1776) conception of Human Capital Theory, which Williams (2013) claims underpinned the move toward a knowledge economy, the capabilities of the individual indirectly benefited society, and were therefore perceived as being beneficial to both the individual and the public. This understanding is adopted by Marginson (2011) who highlights both the public (knowledge production, contribution to and induction into common culture and opportunity, increased social justice) and private (benefit of scarce credentials) good of universities. However, Williams (2013)

argues that current discourse around the funding of higher education suggests that since the present socially constructed value of education is seen in the increased earning potential of the graduate, they should be the ones to take on the brunt of the cost. For example, the 2016 White Paper (DBIS, 2016: 7) states “the majority of funding for tuition now comes from those who benefit the most from it”. This idea not only encourages the perception of HE as a commodity, but also assesses its value in its ability to provide a return on investment, rather than the benefit of receiving or producing knowledge or contributing to social justice. Putting such an emphasis on the economic value of education while neglecting the ecstatic, ethical and experiential value of education (Walsh, 1993) impacts how society and students perceive the purpose of universities, which in turn sets certain expectations for curriculum and pedagogy to address economic aims.

Brown & Carasso (2013) present a different conception of the public/private good debate than Marginson (2011). Drawing on Samuelson (1954), they posit that public goods are those that can be consumed by any member of the public and are inexhaustible (so there is no competition for resources), while private goods are those that are exhaustible and access to these goods is limited to certain members. This further complicates whether HE is a private or public good because instead of focusing on who benefits from it (as in the argument presented by Marginson (2011)), the issue becomes whether it is available to all, connecting back to the widening participation agenda. Marginson (2011: 426) claims that teaching in HE is both a public and private good “depending on which aspects of teaching and learning are uppermost in its social organisation”. The knowledge that is learned is a public good, since it is available to all, and the access it affords to opportunity and common understanding. However,

universities can also be a private good in that they are exhaustible (not everyone can attend university and the varying prestige of different universities), and they are typically limited to those who are 'worthy' to attend. This is complicated, as the line between public and private becomes blurred, as even public goods can offer unequal private benefits--this relates to the prestige of certain universities, and even different courses of study at the same institution.

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s an emphasis was put on studying degrees that could guarantee a return on investment for students (Williams, 2013), signalling further movement toward the professionalised and entrepreneurial university (Barnett, 2011). These economically rewarding degrees were primarily those in STEM related fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), as well as medicine and law, which were seen to lead to jobs in well-paying industries. Scientific and innovative subject areas have historically been promoted by government, since they lead to scientific advancement, and being competitive in the global economy (Coffield & Williamson, 1997; Apple, Kenway & Singh, 2005; Williams, 2013).

Massification and Marketisation

The next period is characterised by a massive expansion in terms of the number of universities, number of students attending university and the number of international students studying in the UK (Mayhew, Deer & Dua, 2004). According to Foskett (2011) in the mid-1980s there were still less than 60 universities, with only 6 per cent of 18 year olds going to university. By the mid-2000s, there were "140 universities and university colleges providing undergraduate programmes for 42 per cent (and rising) of all 18-year-olds" (Foskett, 2011: 25). Similarly, in the mid-1980s there were approximately 20,000 international students studying in the UK, compared with

350,000 in 2008 (ibid, 2011). This widening of participation in university education was heavily influenced by the 1991 White Paper *Higher Education: A New Framework*, which reconceptualised what it meant to be a university by eliminating the distinction between different institutions (Mayhew, Deer & Dua, 2004). The expansion of the sector and increase in choice for students led to more competition between institutions for funding and students. While governments have cited the role of HE in promoting the national economy and encouraging social change in various policy documents as the impetus for widening participation, the focus on the knowledge economy and the need for skilled 'knowledge workers' (Allais, 2014: 723), and the individual benefit they promise, suggests an instrumental view of higher education that neglects its social justice role. This creates a focus on credentialism and competition for places at elite and prestigious universities that will lead to more return on student investment (Brown & Carasso, 2013). This dynamic was promoted by the 2009 White Paper *Higher Ambitions: The Future of Universities in a Knowledge Economy* (DBIS, 2009: 7), which highlights the contribution of universities:

This process of knowledge generation and stewardship is a public trust and important in its own right. However, it is vital that universities use it to contribute to economic growth, both through the commercial application of the knowledge they generate and through preparing our people for the world of modern work.

Here, we can see a focus on the entrepreneurial and professionalised role of the university (Barnett, 2011), which speaks to the university's economic role. The White Paper (DBIS, 2009: 8) also instates a way to monitor universities' economic contributions by requiring universities to "publish a statement on how they promote student employability" since "it is a top concern for business that students should leave university better equipped with a wide range of employability skills". The 2009

White Paper (DBIS, 2009: 10) also introduced the new Research Excellence Framework (REF), which would “for the first time explicitly assess the impact of research on the economy and society”, rewarding those institutions “that can demonstrate a track record of delivering impact”, the effects of which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

The expansion of university provision encouraged competition for both students and universities, as students compete for spaces at universities that will give them the best education for their future and universities compete for students and positions in the league tables. The 2016 White Paper *Success as a Knowledge Economy* (DBIS, 2016: 3) further embedded market discourse by focusing on ‘creating a competitive market’, ‘choice for students’ and ‘updating the regulatory architecture’. A key outcome of the 2016 White paper (DBIS, 2016: 13) is the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which aimed to raise the quality of teaching in universities:

To provide clear information to students about where the best provision can be found and to drive up the standard of teaching in all universities. The TEF will provide clear, understandable information to students about where teaching quality is outstanding. It will send powerful signals to prospective students and their future employers, and inform the competitive market.

Foskett (2011: 26) argues that “at the heart of this has been a perspective that the key route to expanding higher education effectively and efficiently is the use of market mechanisms”. This brings us back to Barnett’s (2011, 2016) discussion of the bureaucratic university, which values knowledge activities and products that can be easily measured in the name of quality and accountability. However, the troubling outcome of the bureaucratic university is that it often becomes the surveillance

university (Barnett, 2011). In 2016, the Office for Students (OfS) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding body were put in place to “ensure that teaching and research remain coherent and coordinated at the national as well as the institutional level, including recognising the value of research led teaching through TEF” (DBIS, 2016: 15). According to Barnett (2011), surveillance and monitoring of past, present, and future activities within the university have various explanations, including government regulations, funding considerations (like the REF and TEF), efficient and effective management, precarious market positions; however, he suggests that this surveillance goes deeper and is actually concerned with power and control to limit and dictate the actions of academic staff. This could have particular repercussions for educators that are attempting to implement an approach to teaching that is overtly political and not mainstream. Ball (2003) argues that the performativity of many of the bureaucratic elements of the university promotes an environment where the performance, or outputs, of academic life become more important than the values that underpin them. This could result in a clash of values that makes it hard for critical pedagogues and other radical educators to put their pedagogical values into practice.

2.1 The Changing Role of the Academic: Concerns with Quality and Competition

The bureaucratic university (Barnett, 2011) discussed above changes the role of academics, as it strips them of their autonomy to teach and research what they judge to be valuable for the university and society (Jones-Devitt & Samiei, 2013), as well as controlling other academic activities. According to Stromquist (2007: 12):

professors are losing their autonomy on several fronts: governance of their institutions and even their own programmes, decisions about current and new programmes, course development and delivery,

student selection at the graduate level, evaluation of their work, and selection in the hiring of other academicians.

Harris (2005: 424) argues that academics have long been considered to hold a significant amount of academic freedom to research and teach what they think is important in their discipline, however the marketization of higher education has challenged this autonomy, as “professional expertise and intellectual property are increasingly based on market definitions”. With the increased focus on the economic value of HE, as well as the marketised and bureaucratised model of HE, the university ranking in the league tables is becoming the priority (Harris, 2005). Rather than producing knowledge that academics judge to be valuable, universities favour and prioritise research that secures funding and has high impact values (Canella & Lincoln, 2009). The teaching practice of academics is also affected by the marketized system, with student satisfaction becoming an important indicator of the student learning and experience (Barnett, 2011; DBIS, 2016), which has become further regulated by the advent of the TEF. However, Harris (2005: 425) suggests these measures of regulation and professional accountability are “changing the culture and ethos of the university” toward a system “based on a discourse of targets, audits and outcomes”.

The rest of this chapter will focus on how the marketization of HE and the surveillance and measurement culture in the university affect the practice of academics, which is particularly relevant to those whose work is explicitly ideological and social justice-oriented, as their values may clash with those of their institution and the wider discourse around higher education (Skelton, 2012a).

While universities have long been involved in knowledge production and research (Harris, 2005), the recent marketisation of higher education has arguably changed what society expects of the university (Coffield & Williamson, 1997; Barnett, 2011), which has also caused a shift in the kind of knowledge that universities are expected to contribute to society. Citing the shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge proposed by Gibbons, Coffield & Williamson (1997:91) claim there has been “a decline in the supremacy of knowledge defined by the judgments of academic *producers* and a rise in socio-commercial interests which define knowledge in terms of its application and utility for knowledge *consumers*”. This means that not only is there a focus on research over teaching in universities, but also the focus of that research is increasingly driven by external funders who control what is researched, further stripping academics of their professional autonomy (Cannella & Lincoln, 2009). While the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was introduced in 2016 to raise the quality of teaching provision, many within the sector have critiqued the method of the TEF as well as the implications for perpetuating the commodification of university education (Neary, 2016).

According to Brown & Carasso (2013), research in universities pre-1980 was generally seen as a secondary activity, suggesting that government-led changes during this time were influential in changing the focus of universities from teaching to research. Brown & Carasso (2013) suggest that key to this transformation was an increase in competition amongst institutions in the quasi-market coupled with a reduction in government funding for universities, which meant that universities had to seek money elsewhere, as suggested by Barnett’s (2011) entrepreneurial university.

Student tuition fees don't cover all the costs, so research has emerged as a way to secure funds, as well as a way to demonstrate 'institutional value' (Brown & Carasso, 2013). On the contrary, Chalmers (2011) suggests that the focus on research over teaching has been pervasive in universities throughout much of the 20th century in the prioritisation of disciplinary research over pedagogical research. Chalmers (2011: 25) claims that disciplinary research has been privileged over research into teaching and learning scholarship to the extent that "academics choosing to pursue research into teaching and learning and directing their attention to the learning of their students risked career progression".

In order to address this 'widely acknowledged' imbalance between research and teaching, Chalmers (2011) cites two different movements within academia to improve the status of teaching within the university: the Scholarship of Teaching in North America and Teaching Quality in the UK and Australia. Essentially, these two movements recognised that the university needed to reward excellence in different areas of scholarship that are important to the missions of universities, including both research *and* teaching. In the UK, this was supported by the 2003 White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003: 51), which stated that

In the past, rewards in higher education—particularly promotion—have been linked much more closely to research than teaching. Indeed, teaching has been seen by some as an extra source of income to support the main business of research, rather than recognised as a valuable and high-status career in its own right.

To address these claims, the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) gave funding to universities to enhance their teaching quality through professional development opportunities and training initiatives (DfES, 2003). For example, some funding streams encouraged universities to develop and implement a Learning and

Teaching Strategy (Chalmers, 2011: 27), which was meant to “prompt universities to pay attention to the quality of their teaching and learning and to implement reward and recognition processes and practices that were comparable or equivalent to those in research”. However, despite all these changes to professional development and institutional strategy planning, the status of teaching is still not equivalent to that of research (HEA, 2009), which has implications for those in academia who invest their time in developing their teaching or on conducting pedagogical research.

For example, Trowler, Fanghanel & Wareham (2005) point out that pedagogical research was not eligible for consideration in the early RAE assessments, which implies that it was not valued by funding bodies. Although it is now eligible in many disciplines, “the message from the disciplinary communities that determine what counts and what does not, is that pedagogical research is not ‘real’ or ‘equal’ to disciplinary research” (Chalmers, 2011: 33). Potentially at the core of this clash between disciplinary and pedagogical research is the fear that a focus on teaching and learning moves the focus more toward the service delivered to students rather than the role universities play in producing and disseminating research. Indeed, Chalmers (2011: 34) suggests that perhaps the “concern that raising the status of teaching might lower the status of disciplinary research may lie at the heart of many academic’s resistance to changing the status quo”.

The under-valuing of pedagogical research continues to be an issue in more recent REF assessments. The research of Cotton, Miller & Kneale (2018) revealed that pedagogical research in HE is still considered to be of lower quality and therefore less ‘REF-able’. Cotton, Miller & Kneale (2018) identified several reasons contributing to this perception which centred on quality, lack of understanding of the purpose and

form of pedagogical research on the part of co-ordinators and reviewers, and political issues around pedagogical research. According to Cotton, Miller & Kneale's (2018) participants, which consisted of co-ordinators, REF assessors, and pedagogical researchers, often pedagogical research was on a small scale and only focused on the local context of the university in which the research was being done and was not theory-driven. Pedagogical researchers in the sample claimed that they were not adequately supported by their institutions to be able to deliver high-quality research, "thus the idea that such research is not REF-able becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy since it does not receive the same institutional support and funding as other research areas" (Cotton, Miller & Kneale, 2018: 1629). Political issues around pedagogical research centred on the value of this work in comparison to disciplinary research. Cotton, Miller & Kneale (2018: 1626) propose pedagogical researchers in HE could simultaneously align themselves with both teaching and research, bridging the gap between the two areas and creating an "opportunity to cement research-informed teaching as an important principle in HE more widely". However, this does put pedagogical researchers in a vulnerable, liminal space, especially now that teaching or research-only positions are increasingly polarising these two areas.

The focus of research over teaching was further acknowledged in the White Paper *Students at the Heart of the System* (DBIS, 2011: 27), in which it was suggested that the reforms to the system centring on the student experience would "restore teaching to its proper position, at the centre of every higher education institution's mission". However, Chalmers (2011) points out that often despite the encouragement of government or external agencies to change the priority given to research, many of their policies (such as the REF) are at 'cross-purposes' with this aim and therefore

create tension between teaching and research in the academy. Seemingly in response to these concerns, recent government policy has increased the focus on teaching quality through implementation of further funding incentives, such as the TEF. In the subsequent White Paper *Success as a knowledge economy: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice* (DBIS, 2016: 49), the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was established to encourage HEIs to provide quality teaching to students by “generat[ing] reputational as well as financial incentives”. While this might raise the value of ‘quality’ teaching, there have been many critiques of the new quality framework, especially in terms of constructing how higher education is perceived and limiting pedagogical practice, which will be discussed in the next section.

Measuring Teaching ‘Excellence’?

Recent interest in research on teaching and learning in HE seems to be a result of the focus on teaching quality in universities dictated by the introduction of internal and external measures of quality and assurance (Malcolm & Zukas, 2001). Although quality measures have tended to focus on research quality over teaching, there has been a recent shift toward teaching quality due to governmental policy, such as the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

Although many academics welcomed more reward and recognition for quality teaching (Chalmers, 2011), there has also been considerable backlash at the introduction of the TEF. While Neary (2016: 690) agrees there is need for reform, however, “the question becomes the nature of this realignment, as something that should involve public debate, particularly among academics who have been almost entirely excluded from the current reframing process”. According to the Higher Education Bill, the TEF aims to raise the status and quality of teaching in HEIs, which is

currently masked by the flat £9000 fees paid by students (Ashwin, 2017). According to Hubble et al. (2016: 74), the TEF will measure excellence using

employment/destination data, retention/continuation data, and results from the National Student Satisfaction Survey. The TEF assessment will additionally take into account qualitative evidence supplied by HEIs on areas such as teaching intensity, contact time, training of staff and diversity of students

It has been proposed that those with higher TEF awards will eventually be able to charge more for their programmes (Ashwin, 2017).

Although the TEF seems to be quite comprehensive in that it utilises multiple sources, including quantitative and qualitative data, there have been concerns raised. Ashwin (2017) points out that none of the metrics used actually measure the quality of teaching, instead they are measuring the assumed effects of teaching, which can also be influenced by other factors. Concerns about the TEF, and in particular the term 'excellence,' were also explored in a study by Wood & Su (2017), who examined the perspectives of 16 HE educators at teaching-centred post-92 institutions. Although some of the participants had positive views of 'excellence', others were concerned about what the word implied. One participant felt that the term was overused to the point of becoming meaningless and asked, "how can we all be excellent?" (ibid, 2017: 457). Wood & Su (2017) also found that the idea of 'teaching excellence' was contested within the academic community, in that it was often difficult for academics to describe what it might look like in practice. While some participants focused on the practice of teaching (giving an engaging lecture), others focused on particular approaches to pedagogy (like problem-based learning), and others focused on the classroom environment and how it could be designed to optimise learning. Connected to these different understandings of what excellence actually looks like, "almost all

participants believed it difficult or impossible to measure ‘teaching excellence’” (ibid, 2017: 459). Several participants commented that the ‘proxies of teaching excellence’ might fail to recognise the complexity of teaching and learning. Despite the flaws of the TEF, some were still hopeful that it might raise the status of teaching and reward those that were dedicated to teaching rather than research. However, many of them also “worried that a genuine commitment to excellence in teaching may be reduced potentially to an evidence gathering quality assurance process” (ibid, 2017: 460). To address these concerns, Wood and Su (2017) suggest more discussion about what excellence really means is needed. Further, they suggest that ‘excellence’ should be situated in the pedagogical relationship between teacher and learners and should connect to the purpose of universities and their relationship with society, key aspects which are presented by Nixon (2008): relationship, purpose and connectedness.

These critiques are echoed by others in academia. In a special issue dedicated to the TEF, Moore (2017) voiced his opinion that not only does the TEF not measure what it claims to measure, it also misrepresents HE as homogenous and further perpetuates a hierarchy within the HE system. One of the metrics used to evaluate teaching excellence is graduate employment. The problem with using this metric is that it is influenced by several other factors that cannot be influenced by teaching, even if it is high quality. Social and financial capital, for example, can influence graduate jobs regardless of the quality of teaching the graduate experienced at university. In this sense, the TEF, “like other metrics, will perpetuate society’s existing structural inequalities by rewarding the universities which recruit the most privileged students” (Moore, 2017: 2). Moore (2017) calls for academics to move beyond critique to develop a counter-discourse that reclaims the language co-opted by policy makers and

recognises the values behind educational quality and excellence. Moore (2017: 2) argues that instead of trying to homogenise universities, we should allow universities to differentiate themselves by offering their “own distinct mission, philosophy and purpose”. This highlights the contradictory aims of TEF by pointing out that instead of offering students information to choose between universities, the framework actually narrows the field of choice. Further, in order to make university accessible to all students, universities and those that work in them need to be able to get to know students. This means changing the way HE is approached—smaller class sizes, changes to staffing that allows consistency across programmes, and changes to pedagogy used in classes. Finally, Moore (2017: 2) suggests enacting a critical pedagogy to enable quality learning:

How we teach and how students learn should be negotiated with students. Students must realise that higher education should challenge them and teaching staff must sharpen their awareness of their students’ learning needs. It is incumbent upon us to welcome the experiences our students bring with them and take seriously their critiques of the curriculum.

Moore (2017) argues that instead of promoting teaching excellence, the TEF will negatively impact on teaching quality as universities strive to game the metrics used to ‘measure’ it. The universities that have prestige and a spot in the top 10 on the league tables will likely remain, continuing to promote social inequality. Figure 2 shows the top ten universities from the Times Higher Education Supplement’s 2019 league table alongside their TEF 2019 awards, demonstrating that many of the most prestigious universities perform well in terms of teaching ‘excellence’. Of course, this may be due to the fact that institutions with more prestige are likely to attract highly qualified staff, as well as having access to more funds to improve and reward quality teaching.

University Ranking based on THES 2019 (only England & Wales)	TEF 2019
1. Oxford	Gold
2. Cambridge	Gold
3. Imperial College	Gold
4. UCL	Silver
5. LSE	Bronze
6. Kings College London	Silver
7. Manchester	Silver
8. Bristol	Silver
9. Warwick	Silver
10. Sheffield	Silver

Figure 2: League Table and TEF Awards

While this may support the argument of Moore (2017) and others (Neary, 2016; Ashwin, 2017) who are concerned about the TEF perpetuating an educational hierarchy, there were many other institutions that received Gold awards that were not high up in the league table, for example ‘new’ universities like Liverpool Hope that might be more teaching-focused.

Across much of the literature on the TEF, the consensus seems to be that although it is important to reward and prioritise teaching in universities, the Teaching Excellence Framework is not the best way to achieve this. Several academics (Moore, 2017; Ashwin, 2017; Neary, 2016) have mentioned the instrumentalised and reductionist approach of the TEF which underplays the complexities of teaching and learning in HE and focuses on the outcomes of teaching rather than the process. This points to a framework that not only doesn’t measure what it claims to measure but does so without taking into account “over forty years of research evidence about what leads to high quality teaching in higher education” (Ashwin, 2017: 11). Others, like Heaney & Mackenzie (2017: 1) go further and claim that the TEF is creating a situation in which “the market will become a regulator of pedagogical possibilities” by closing

down pedagogical exploration and empowerment of staff and students. Again, this would potentially be even more limiting on pedagogical approaches that are already located outside the mainstream.

2.3 Concluding Thoughts

This chapter endeavoured to present the context in which university educators are currently situated, as well as providing insight into some of the recent historical developments in higher education and higher education policy. Of course, this is not an exhaustive account of all recent developments in English higher education, and it is undoubtedly influenced and shaped by my views on the marketization of higher education, as well as others in the field of critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2004b, 2010; Kreber, 2005, 2010; McArthur, 2010a, 2011, 2013; Neary, 2016). In addition to revealing the mechanisms of bureaucracy and competition at play in the current discourse around higher education in England, this chapter has explored the effects of these mechanisms on university educators in terms of the diverse academic activities they are expected to perform, including research and teaching (Barnett, 2016).

While this chapter has focused on both research and teaching and how these academic activities are affected by policy and different values and purposes of universities, the next chapter will look more specifically at the literature around pedagogy in universities in an effort to better conceptualise manifestations of critical pedagogical practice in the current era of marketization.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

In order to better understand the teaching approaches of the participants, and the theories that underpin them, it will be helpful to explore 'mainstream' pedagogical theories and their aims. Therefore, this literature review will begin by exploring three core pedagogical approaches used in higher education. In light of research drawing attention to the disconnect between espoused theories and those put into practice (Argyris, 1976; Taylor, 1990; Breunig, 2009), I will also discuss professional identities and values in higher education teaching, and how these may be related to the pedagogy put into practice. Pedagogical research in HE tends to construct an unpoliticised view of universities (Malcolm & Zukas, 2001), which can conflict with the values of educators, whether they identify as critical pedagogues or not. In order to explore RQ2, other values at the macro, meso and micro level of the university that can both constrain practice and cause conflicts (Skelton, 2012a) for openly ideological educators will also be explored. I will conclude the chapter by examining literature on critical pedagogy, first focusing on the theory itself, and then on research done on critical pedagogy in universities with a particular focus on how theory is translated into practice.

3.1 Pedagogy in UK Universities

According to Lusted (1986: 2) pedagogy does not only refer to the practice of teaching or even teaching approaches, rather the reason pedagogy is so important to study is that "it draws attention to the *process* through which knowledge is produced". In this way, pedagogy is involved in the transmission, reproduction, and production of knowledge, making it essential to education studies, and critical theories of education in particular, which are interested in understanding the conditions which create and

perpetuate inequality in society. McInnes (2013: 54), on the other hand, defines pedagogy as “the enactment of social relations in and through which knowledge is ‘distributed’”, drawing attention to the role of the teacher and the important influence of epistemology on pedagogy. Although there are many different approaches to teaching in higher education, and in education more generally, this section (3.1) will focus mainly on three different overarching categories of pedagogy: traditional or transmission pedagogy, constructivist pedagogy, and co-constructivist pedagogy. Of course, there are other pedagogies, which can be discipline specific or political in nature, but these three general categories seem to underpin much of the pedagogical practice covered in a range of different disciplines and contexts. These three pedagogical approaches were also chosen because they are directly linked to cognitive theories of how people learn (Moore, 2012). It is also worth noting that despite epistemological beliefs of educators, educators often use a combination of different pedagogical approaches in their teaching practice, which are influenced by a number of complex factors that contribute to their pedagogical knowledge and practice (Morine-Dersheimer & Kent, 1999; Skelton, 2012a). According to Morine-Dersheimer & Kent (1999), these factors can include knowledge of the context in which they are teaching, knowledge of the students in their classroom, content knowledge, and the educational aims and values that are connected to the curriculum and assessment. Because of the influence of teacher training, previous experience in education, and the expectations of students and universities, HE educators may use a variety of pedagogical ‘tools’ to achieve retention and learning outcomes, as well as higher student satisfaction feedback (Lea, Stephenson & Troy, 2003).

Lusted's (1986) article asks why pedagogy is so under-theorised and concludes that theories of pedagogy, or teaching, are under-developed because teaching is not prioritised in the minds of academics. He posits that "theorists theorise, produce; teachers teach, reproduce" (Lusted, 1986: 4). In this disjointed depiction of educational theory and practice, the power and autonomy are given to the theorists or academics, while teachers are instrumentalised. When applying this to higher education, the relationship gets more complicated as many academics are engaged in both teaching and research yet fail to research their own practice. This has been highlighted by many academics (Stromquist, 2007; Brown & Carasso, 2013; Temple, 2012), who have drawn attention to the prioritisation of research over teaching (as discussed in the previous chapter). Therefore, following on from a review of the three approaches to teaching, this section will also explore the dissonance between theory and practice, as well as some of the challenges that constrain the use of certain pedagogies in universities.

Pedagogical Research & Practice

According to Malcolm & Zukas (2001: 36), pedagogical research and theory in HE have been used more as a guide for teaching practice, rather than "critical engagement with and understandings of practice". Interestingly, this means that although universities are uniquely placed to research their own teaching practice, the focus seems to be more geared toward professional development or skills training than a dialogue between practitioners about the theory and rationale behind certain pedagogical practices.

With the current focus on preparing students for work, as stated in policy documents (DBIS, 2009, 2016) or to acquire disciplinary knowledge, Malcolm and

Zukas (2001) suggest that pedagogy is viewed as a toolkit for educators rather than practice that is driven by theory or ideology. That's not to say that everyone who works in higher education is driven by measurable student progress or graduate outcomes—there are educators and academics within HE that are critical of the technicist approach to teaching (e.g. Phillips, 2005; Watkins, 2005). However, current critique seems to be centred on the curriculum rather than the pedagogy used, again suggesting that perhaps in HE pedagogy is seen as functional and de-politicised. Malcolm & Zukas (2001: 34) posit this is a result of the psychological emphasis that is put on the process of learning:

psychology and psychological method tend to determine how we understand who the learner is, what 'outcomes' the teacher is supposed to be bringing about, how we research what is happening and how we understand what is supposed to be going on in higher education.

Looking at pedagogy in this way limits education to a kind of transaction between the teacher and the learner, an idea present in Freire's (1970) 'banking education'.

According to Lusted (1986), technicist views of pedagogy and education also tend to remove teaching from its social context and in the process depersonalise the social experience of teaching and learning. Malcolm and Zukas (2001:36) agree that this is quite common in the literature on teaching and learning in HE, which often present the relationship between theory and practice as "trying out recipes to see if they work". This strips pedagogy and teaching of all the ideology and passion that is behind them, implying instead that any teacher can apply these pedagogic theories to any situation and get the same results. The scientific nature of this pedagogical research also overlooks the fact that theory and values have shaped the research through the

research design and approach, instead presenting pedagogy as something that is value-free (Malcolm & Zukas, 2001).

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) has certainly added to the literature around teaching in HE over the past 30 years (see Kreber, 2005; Chalmers, 2011; Cotton, Miller & Kneale, 2018). However, Kreber (2005) worries that instead of encouraging educators to critically reflect on their practice with their peers, SoTL scholarship may instead encourage people to fit into the system rather than trying to change it. Kreber (2005: 391) asks:

To what extent, however, have the various initiatives that were launched with the intent of increasing professionalism in teaching made any attempts to push the boundaries in terms of what we consider good teaching, and, by extension, the scholarship thereof?

Kreber (2005) argues that the lack of critical engagement in the scholarship of teaching may be due to the fact that few research projects consider the purpose of higher education that should underpin their practice. This echoes the view of Bligh (1972), who pointed out that just because certain types of pedagogies have long been used in the university (lectures), this doesn't mean we should continue to use these methods without reflection on whether they are addressing the aims and purposes of higher education. Kreber (2005: 396) argues that focusing on the instrumental aims of higher education and scholarship might prevent educators from working toward the emancipatory aspects of their practice and student learning. Instead, Kreber (2005: 400) calls for educators in HE to create conditions where students can "empower and emancipate themselves as [they] help to promote in them a sense of personal autonomy". Instead, we are left with what Giroux (2010: 185) identifies as 'bare pedagogy', which:

strips education of its public values, critical contents, and civic responsibilities as part of its broader goal of creating new subjects wedded to the logic of privatisation, efficiency, flexibility, the accumulation of capital, and the destruction of the social state.

In response, Giroux (2010: 191) calls upon HE educators to implement a pedagogy that would prepare students to participate in democracy in an attempt to “engage and transform”. He argues this can be achieved by implementing Freire’s critical pedagogy in the university, which views education as a political project to promote self-reflection and critical agency amongst students. Freire, according to Giroux (2010: 192), sees pedagogy not as a simplified method of instruction, but as “a political and moral practice that provides the knowledge, skills, and social relations that enable students to expand the possibilities of what it means to be critical citizens”. Further, Freire sees all pedagogies as political, since they “represent a particular way of understanding society and a specific commitment to the future” (Giroux, 2010: 193), whether this is a more socially just future or not.

While teaching at university is perhaps stereotypically thought to rely heavily on lectures, pedagogy in UK higher education has been influenced by the recent policy focus on ‘student-centred’ approaches, exemplified by the White Paper putting *Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011), through the promotion of student satisfaction and student voice initiatives. Despite the apparent focus on individual learners, in policy and research, students are often seen as “anonymous, decontextualised, degendered” (Malcolm & Zukas, 2001: 38) and ultimately separated from their social identity. This connects back to the psychological construction of the learner and the process of learning in research, which often portrays ‘the student’ as a universal category or learning as a one size fits all approach. While a move to a more

student-centred approach might be considered a positive change, there are some within the field of education that feel this development has been detrimental to the learning and teaching experience (e.g. Biesta 2012, 2015). Biesta's (2012) argument is that the move toward more 'student-centred' learning has come as an extreme reaction to the perceived authoritarian nature of traditional education that became more about control than about learning, highlighting the false dichotomy between progressive and conservative education. With the promotion of more student-centred approaches to learning, Biesta (2012) argues the role of the teacher is disappearing as they become a facilitator rather than an expert that imparts knowledge and experience in the classroom. This also comes as a result of increased government involvement and control over educational policy, which further strips teachers of their professional autonomy over curriculum and pedagogy. The discourse around teaching and learning that Biesta critiques is backed up by neoliberal policies that promote the view that individuals are in charge of their own learning, and in HE at least, should also be responsible for its cost. However, despite this move toward a constructivist approach to learning, Biesta (2012: 38) points out that what actually happens "in most cases is actually very directed". As such, what happens in the classroom becomes hidden, as teachers might not be doing what they say they are—leading to a misalignment that conceals the ideological underpinnings of their practice. This is supported by Mackintosh-Franklin (2016), who found that when pedagogical approaches were explicitly referenced in course handbooks (only 42% of the time), they had little to no impact on the "teaching, learning and assessment strategies" of the modules, meaning that lecturers rejected the espoused theory in favour of theory-in-use. While there is evidence to support the impact of student-centred learning on

deep learning and student engagement, this can be difficult when considering the constraints of the current system, such as large class sizes (Mackintosh-Franklin, 2016; Hockings, 2009), which may explain why many who claim to be using a student-centred approach end up reverting to a teacher-centred one. The next section will focus on three different pedagogical approaches that are often used in universities, along with the theory that underpins them.

Three Approaches to Teaching

As previously mentioned, the literature around pedagogy in universities is diverse, but often focuses on theory and pedagogy in a particular discipline (e.g. arts, nursing or physical education). However, looking closer at many of these discipline-specific pedagogical approaches will reveal that they are typically drawing on one of three main teaching approaches: transmission, constructivist, or co-constructivist.

For example, Trigwell, Prosser & Taylor (1994) identified five qualitatively different approaches to teaching in the university using a phenomenographic approach.

Interviews with 24 physical science lecturers focused on three aspects: their approach to teaching, conceptions of learning, and conceptions of teaching. Through this study, they identified five different approaches to teaching in universities, which were made up of a combination of four intentions and three strategies, which related to four different epistemological approaches (Trigwell, Prosser & Taylor, 1994: 78).

Intention	Strategy	Approach	Epistemological Approach
Transmit information	Teacher-centred	A	Transmission
Acquire disciplinary knowledge	Teacher-centred	B	Transmission

Acquire disciplinary knowledge	Teacher-student interaction	C	Constructivist
Developing conception	Student-centred	D	Co-constructivist
Students changing their conceptions	Student-centred	E	Transformative

Figure 3: Conceptualisation of Trigwell et al.'s (1994) Five Approaches

Although Trigwell et al. (1994) focused on the physical sciences in their study, and so the results should not be generalised to all of HE, they do highlight the relationship between ‘intentions’ and ‘strategies’, which could be related to pedagogical values (about what and how students should learn) and how these are put into practice. It is also useful to see that the three teaching approaches I have chosen to focus on overlap with the five approaches identified by Trigwell et al. (1994): approaches A and B are related to a transmission approach; while C, D and E may be more aligned with constructivist or co-constructivist approaches to teaching and learning. Since these three pedagogical approaches are pervasive in the literature, I will begin by describing the theory and practice that is inherent in these approaches, as well as how they construct a particular image of the student and teacher.

Transmission Approach

Transmission is associated with a teacher-centred approach to teaching (Phillips, 2005), which focuses on transmission of content. At its core, it is concerned with knowledge acquisition, through memorisation and reproduction of information (Carnell & Lodge, 2002). Freire’s (1970) banking model of education metaphor is commonly used to illustrate this teaching approach, where knowledge or information is offered by the teacher as a ‘deposit’ in the account, or mind, of the student without

any change or transformation in its form. Carnell & Lodge (2002: 11-12) highlight another problem with this approach—it forces the student to be dependent on the teacher for knowledge: “to continue with Freire’s metaphor, it is other people’s knowledge that is being deposited, and the learner is not being encouraged to think critically”. This approach to teaching often portrays knowledge as objective and abstract, rather than subjective and contextualised (Phillips, 2005), and ignores the political and ideological nature of education.

Perceiving teaching and learning as transmission positions the student as passive rather than active and does not acknowledge that the student has valuable knowledge to share in the learning process, nor does it provide an opportunity for students to shape their understanding through engaging with others (Tynjälä, 1999). This creates a divide between the roles of the teacher and the student, as well as promoting a power dynamic in which the teacher holds most, if not all, of the power in the classroom (Trigwell et al., 1994). However, some researchers defend the lecture (McInnes, 2013; Webster, 2015) as inducting students into the academy through modelling what it is to think and speak as an academic. For example, McInnes (2013: 62) claims that those who oppose transmission style teaching wrongly (and perhaps simplistically) view the approach as passive:

A more rigorous, pedagogically attuned understanding of the lecture as a device for the distribution of knowledge (not just information or content) is vital and given that lectures from different disciplines can be assumed to do different kinds of work pedagogically, a pedagogically attuned, rigorous understanding of lecture discourse should be further developed in a discipline-specific way.

Similarly, Webster (2015: 88) defends the lecture by claiming that the lecture is not always a monologue and that lecturers model higher order thinking for students

through lecturing. Responding to critiques of the transmission approach, Webster (2015) draws attention to a common 'misunderstanding' of Freire's banking education metaphor, using a passage from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalised, and predictable. Or else he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students. His task is to 'fill' the students with the content of his narration... The outstanding characteristic of this narrative education, then, is the sonority of words, not their transforming power... The student records, memorizes, and repeats these phrases... (Freire, 1970: 71).

Webster (2015) explains that in this quote, Freire is drawing attention not to the lecture specifically, but the way in which reality and knowledge are presented as unchangeable facts that are disconnected from the students' personal experience. Perhaps when critiquing the lecture we may have a very extreme vision in mind: of a huge lecture theatre with one speaker at the front delivering a presentation about a topic. In a lecture like the one described above, how can the student actively voice their critique of the information and practice of the lecturer? They are not empowered to do so because of the pedagogy being used. Others (e.g. Carnell & Lodge, 2002; Phillips, 2005) have questioned whether teaching in this way could encourage students to actively engage in critique. Webster (2015: 92) claims that students "ought to be encouraged to listen in such a way that they constantly scrutinize and challenge the speaker's assertions" and attempt to fit it in with their existing knowledge and experience. However, the power dynamic that is present in the lecture may not allow students to reject something a lecturer said just because it didn't fit in with their previous experience and knowledge—after all, in this method of teaching, the teacher is seen as the expert and the student as the novice. In this sense, the lecturer

maintains control over the content of the lecture, but the responsibility to learn it lies with the student (Phillips, 2005).

The work of McInnes (2013) and Webster (2015) defend the lecture and hope to highlight that like any approach to teaching, it can be done 'poorly'. However, particularly in the work of McInnes (2013), you can see that perhaps the lecture as an approach is redeemable, as long as knowledge is not presented as static and something to be memorised and regurgitated for an exam. McInnes (2013: 61-62) suggests that "the lecturer is an agent of knowledge 'transformation' and that the lecture exposes students to the workings of the scholarly mind" through the process of recontextualising. Webster (2015) and McInnes (2013), seem to be suggesting that if the lecture is done 'well' it can be an opportunity for students to be inducted into the discipline and learn how to engage with knowledge as an academic due to the modelling of the lecturer. A transmission approach corresponds to Trigwell et al. (1994)'s Approaches A & B (see Figure 3), which both implement a teacher-centred strategy to transmit information (A) and help students acquire disciplinary knowledge (B), underpinned by a transmission epistemological approach.

Constructivist Approach

Constructivism is an approach to teaching and learning that posits that learners construct new ideas about the world, which they obtain largely through experience, building on existing knowledge (Moore, 2012). There are several theorists that are associated with constructivism, most notably Piaget, who argued that learners construct their understanding and knowledge of the world rather than just receiving it. Specifically, learning takes place through the processes of assimilation and accommodation: assimilation occurs when the learner is able to sort the new

information into their existing understandings of the world, whereas accommodation occurs when learners adapt their categories or ways of thinking in the light of new information or experience (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, 2008). Piaget thought that the learning process “begins with the learner’s existing understandings and experience, helping them to build upon and develop these” (Moore, 2012: 7). Teaching that draws on a constructivist approach would then be student-centred, using active learning to encourage learners to engage with their environment and other learners to build on their existing knowledge (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, 2008).

The teacher’s role in constructivist pedagogy is more that of a facilitator who sets up “appropriate learning activities whereby the [student] can actively engage with new, more complex thinking and concept development” (Moore, 2012: 7). Pedagogical methods that reflect this approach are research projects, in which students might have the opportunity to decide the topic of study, what they need to find out, and where they can build on previous knowledge and experiences to achieve these tasks. With the teacher acting as a facilitator to support students in learning, the dynamic between teacher and student is different from the transmission model and allows for power to be shared by teachers and students (Carnell & Lodge, 2002). However, in this model, the teacher is still the expert who can be relied on to guide students if needed. Although this approach moves toward a more equitable power dynamic, typically the main purpose of using this approach is to enhance cognitive development by integrating both social and emotional factors to influence the learning process, making content relevant and interesting to students (Carnell & Lodge 2002).

According to Tynjälä (1999), despite its popularity in primary and secondary schools, constructivist learning and teaching approaches may be more suited to

advanced learners, like those in HE. This is because advanced students have more knowledge to build on, and also because the university as an institution is engaged in knowledge production, and offers many opportunities for constructivist teaching, such as lab work or research through staff-student partnership (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, 2008). The typical staff-student relationship that exists between masters and doctoral students completing a dissertation or thesis offers an example of a constructivist method, where students identify a topic that interests them and typically research this topic with the guidance of supervisors. Despite their benefits to student learning, teachers are sometimes hesitant to change their practice because designing and facilitating a constructivist course is much more demanding than using a traditional approach (Tynjälä, 1999), which may explain why many educators in HE still rely on a transmission approach. This would involve a shift from “the presentation of information to guiding students’ learning process” (Tynjälä, 1999: 429), which might require more specialist pedagogical or teacher training, rather than simply subject knowledge which academics have already.

Biesta’s (2012) critique of constructivist approaches to learning highlights the false dichotomy between progressive (constructivist) and conservative (transmission) models of teaching and learning. Biesta (2012) presents a helpful analogy that demonstrates the consequences of going to one extreme or the other: without the resistance or interruption of the teacher, learning becomes a monologue of the student, without resistance or push back from the students, education becomes a monologue of the teacher. This is where the dichotomy between transmission and constructivism becomes so problematic—one way or the other there is only a monologue, when education should be a dialogue or exchange.

Co-constructivist Approach

Vygotsky built on the work of Piaget and addressed constructivism's individualistic approach to learning by placing more focus on how knowledge and understanding are co-constructed with others. Vygotsky saw learning and teaching as "essentially social activities that take place *between* social actors in socially constructed situations" (Moore, 2012: 14). Because of the social focus of Vygotsky's theory, he was interested in understanding the link between thought and language, since language is how social situations are mediated—through shared understanding. As such, Carnell & Lodge (2002: 14) claim that "the essential features of this model are that it relies on dialogue and that the responsibility for learning shifts from individuals to emphasise the collaboration in the construction of knowledge". Co-constructivists view dialogue as more than just a conversation—instead it encourages a deeper understanding of how students learn by prompting meta-cognitive awareness.

Highlighting the importance of dialogue, but also the kind of learning environment that encourages genuine dialogue, Moore (2012: 14) calls for "teachers to adopt strategies that are not only 'student centred' but that create spaces for students to verbally elaborate developing concepts, and that involve the teacher in something approaching a partnership model of teaching with the student". Based on the epistemological position of co-constructivism, one can see how approaches such as problem-based learning (PBL) and inquiry-based learning (IBL) as well as some methods of peer instruction or flipped classrooms, could fit in with this theory. These are examples of pedagogical approaches that utilise connections between the course content and the lived experiences of students, they encourage social construction of knowledge as students work in groups to complete projects, and they challenge the

traditional hierarchical position of the teacher by giving more power to students and valuing the knowledge they possess and create (Reusser, 2001). For example, according to Reusser (2001), problem-based learning focuses on a particular problem identified by students from course content that allows students to integrate theoretical materials and practical experiences to solve the problem as a group.

There are several aspects of co-constructivism that differentiate it from transmission and constructivist approaches to education. First, unlike transmission approaches, constructivist and co-constructivist classrooms require that students be actively engaged in learning through making connections, rather than passively receiving knowledge from the teacher. Second, both constructivist and co-constructivist approaches see knowledge as something that is constantly changing as it is constructed by and with learners—rather than fixed and objective as is suggested by the epistemological underpinnings of a transmission approach. Third, constructivist and co-constructivist approaches recognise the social and emotional aspects of learning, and therefore tend to focus more on the process of learning as well as the outcome, as opposed to transmission approaches where the main focus is the outcome, which might be reproducing knowledge for assessment. The last aspect that separates co-constructivist teaching from both constructivist and transmission approaches is the more equal power dynamic between teachers and students, which allows students to be more active and autonomous in the learning process and helps students develop important critical thinking skills. Although Carnell (2007) argues that even in co-constructivist approaches power is shared not for political or social justice reasons, but to improve student ownership of learning to enhance learning outcomes.

Theory & Practice: Dissonance and Alignment

In addition to constructing the lecturer as provider and the student as consumer (Williams, 2013), marketisation and other factors also have an impact on the extent to which lecturers can put their pedagogical values into their practice. Some of these factors are practical considerations, like larger class sizes or assessment regulations, while others are more ideological and are tied to professional autonomy and academic freedom (Stromquist, 2007). Setting aside the impact of marketisation, there are several factors that impact the pedagogical beliefs and practices of HE educators that should be considered when examining pedagogical practice. According to Taylor (1990), there is sometimes a dissonance between what teachers are told to do, what they think they should do, and their actual practice. This is often a result of the clash between explicit and implicit teacher beliefs (Taylor, 1990). For example, Phillips (2005) alleges that even after learning about research that demonstrates the impact of constructivist approaches to teaching and learning, many HE educators may struggle to implement a constructivist approach due to their implicit beliefs about knowledge and learning.

In order to address the dissonance between theory and practice in universities, Phillips (2005: 2) suggests a “re-examination of fundamental assumptions about how universities function and consideration of empirical research about how students learn”. First reviewing the history of universities through three phases: the pre-modern, modern, and post-modern, Phillips (2005) connects the purpose of the university during these periods with society’s epistemological beliefs. Because knowledge was “understood to be revealed in a metaphysical sense through faith in God, and the Church and universities were the ‘holders’ and controllers of knowledge”

(ibid: 3), it made sense that students learned from the experts and guardians of knowledge, something which continues in the model of education we have today. With the age of Enlightenment came the idea that knowledge was something that one arrived at through reason. In this 'modern phase', knowledge was seen as something that existed out in the world to be discovered and learned, "leading to the notions of neutrality, objectivity and detachment underlying much of present day scientific research" (Phillips, 2005: 3). The 'post-modern period' challenged the idea of the objective scientist and instead viewed knowledge as being socially constructed and therefore implied new understandings about how people learn and construct knowledge. According to Phillips (2005), these three different stages of the university influence practice in different ways, often causing a dissonance between different aspects. For example, Phillips (2005) argues that the dominant teaching approach seems to be rooted in the modern phase—which emphasises an objectivist epistemology presenting knowledge as facts to be learned and memorised and knowledge production to be detached and objective. However, research on how people learn suggests that deeper understandings of the material demands a more active learning approach that is more in line with constructivist epistemologies (Bransford et al., 2000) and the post-modern phase. Despite what is understood about constructivist learning,

the analysis of what actually happens in common teaching and learning practice ... indicates that the system which supports teaching, and some teaching practice, is based on an instructivist pedagogical philosophy, which is well-acknowledged as leading to a surface learning approach to learning, arising from a teacher-centred approach to teaching a subject which is designed around content (Phillips, 2005: 7).

However, this is contradictory to the recent push toward a more student-centred approach that has been promoted through policy documents (e.g. *Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011)) as well as HE teacher training schemes like the Higher Education Academy's Fellowship programme, or staff development programmes provided by individual universities. For example, Morss & Murray's (2015) book *Teaching at Universities: a guide for postgraduates and researchers*, a book distributed by UCL's Teaching Associate Programme, only puts forward two theories that explain how adults learn: experiential learning and constructivism. Both of these learning theories put the student at the centre of the learning process by building on their existing knowledge to understand new concepts. Interestingly, there is no theory presented about lecturing or transmission styles of teaching, suggesting that those who lecture in their classes might do this based on their own experience of teaching and learning in higher education. As stated previously, the purpose of lecturing is usually to transmit content in order for students to acquire knowledge by reproducing the information taught in the lecture, or by memorising information from a textbook (Carnell & Lodge, 2002), which is further enforced by an assessment culture that rewards those who can memorise and reproduce what was learned in the lecture. Therefore, we can see there may be a disconnect between what is encouraged by institutions like the HEA, individual universities, and policy discourse and what is done in practice, and what is assessed.

The dissonance between research, theory and practice is discussed in the work of Argyris (1976: 367) who theorised the distinction between Espoused Theory and Theory-in-Use:

Espoused theories of action are those that people report as a basis for actions. Theories-in-use are the theories of action inferred from how people actually behave (taken from video or audio tapes, or other instruments that focus on collecting relatively directly observable behaviour).

Argyris (1976) hypothesised that human beings tend to associate most with the behaviours that align with their values, thus they often unconsciously choose pedagogies that put these values into practice, even while claiming to use the espoused theory. Further, there are other people, structures, and values that also contribute to the practice and theory of individual educators. This is not because the educators do not understand the espoused theory, as in the cases mentioned by Biggs (1999) or Davis & Sumara (2003) where educators implement a 'naïve' or instrumentalised version of the theory, but instead they simply revert back to the more comfortable theory-in-use. While Argyris (1976) offers a behaviourist explanation for this phenomenon, relating it to an overarching theory about human action and decision making, I think it also relates to teachers' values and the way that teaching is often presented as something that should be value-free or un-politicised. Although Argyris (1976) is referring to the dissonance between the theory teachers say they are using and the theory they actually enact in practice, it occurs to me that this distinction would apply to the dissonance between educational policy and teaching practice as well. This dissonance is highlighted by Phillips (2005: 9) who claims that:

while aspects of the deep learning, student-centred approach can be witnessed in the rhetoric of university plans and policies, and in the rhetoric of individual staff as they invoke the theories of 'deep learning', there is little evidence of their implementation.

This led Phillips (2005: 6) to ask why teaching practice in universities is not more informed by research and "what are the personal, cultural and institutional barriers to

practising the Espoused Theory?” These questions, although helpful and thought provoking, present a simplified understanding of teaching and learning that perhaps underplays the complex and context specific nature of pedagogical practice.

Challenges to Teaching Practice in HE

Despite the changing role of HE discussed in Chapter 2, Phillips (2005) claims the way that HE educators approach teaching has changed very little, as a result of several different issues, such as class sizes, space, time, and the culture of accountability and measurement that is now pervasive in HE. Although some of these topics have already been discussed in Chapter 2 where I introduced the current context of universities in the UK, here I would like to focus more on how these changes are directly affecting the teaching approach of HE educators.

Despite the government encouraging the expansion of HE provision, they have provided little in the way of funding to maintain the quality of provision for the large increase in the amount of students enrolled (Phillips, 2005; Allais, 2014). This typically results in large classes (more than 600 students in some disciplines and universities), fewer contact hours with staff members, and the introduction of more technology-based instruction or independent study (Laurillard, 2002; Allais, 2014; Dean & Wright, 2016). According to Allais (2014: 722) the problem is that:

the current discourse on large class teaching, which suggests that lecturers must accept ever increasing class sizes in the name of access and development, is unrealistic, both in terms of the political and economic imperatives, and also in terms of the nature of education and knowledge, and the conditions [of] its development and acquisition.

In other words, expanding class sizes not only leads to an educational product that is of lesser quality (leading to surface learning), but educators are also providing an

education that will not achieve the economic and social goals the widening participation agenda set out to achieve in the first place. Allais (2014: 730) further argues that large group lectures may particularly disadvantage students “who have little experience in engaging in complex ideas, reading and critiquing texts, and mastering concepts”, meaning that students from working class backgrounds may be at more of a disadvantage than those that have had a more privileged education in the past. Further extrapolating from Allais (2014), large group lectures might also disadvantage students who are new to university—which is why it is surprising that large group lectures are often used in the first year of university to provide background knowledge and foundational content for the following years (Trigwell et al., 1994). However, student-centred learning might not be effective for all students either (Hockings, 2009). The idea that ‘good’ teaching is impossible in large group lectures is something that can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as teachers may simply revert to the lecture as the perceived only option (Dean & Wright, 2017). When thinking about the implications of marketisation and massification on pedagogy, it is also important to think about the many factors that influence the pedagogical decisions and practices of educators, which can include practical concerns in the classrooms, student expectations, departmental regulations, and academic integrity.

The effects of these constraints might be even more severe for an educator whose pedagogical values are incongruent with those of the marketised university. Central to exploring my second research question about constraints on the practice of critical pedagogues is understanding the context in which they practice and how it can be conceptualised to better understand the challenges they face, as well as how they overcome them. Skelton (2012a) offers a useful framework for investigating conflicts at

different levels of lived experience that will be particularly useful when analysing the data collected in the current study. In Skelton's (2012a: 258) paper *Value conflicts in higher education teaching*, he claims that educators in universities bring their own values to teaching and then "we confront a social reality that precedes us, where our values meet those operating at micro, meso and macro levels of the system". In a sense, these conflicting values act as challenges to their own values, which can lead educators to adapt or transform their values or prevent them from teaching in a way that is consistent with them. Using a critical interpretive research approach, Skelton (2012a: 259) used semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 11 people from a research-intensive university in the UK in an attempt to understand how the lived experiences of university educators fit into the broader "social, economic and political context". Figure 4 demonstrates three layers of the social reality of HE proposed by Skelton (2012a): the *micro level*, which consists of the physical environment of the classroom; the *meso level*, which consists of the department or institution in which academics work and the values that are dominant in those spaces; and the *macro level*, which refers to government policy on teaching and learning in HE or the dominant discourse that is used in HE research.

Skelton's (2012a) framework demonstrates how values are pervasive and inescapable at all levels of the academic's reality, demonstrating how important it is for academics engaged in both teaching and research to reflect about their values and how they can put them into practice. While Skelton's sample is small, his aim was not to make generalisations about all academics, but rather to start a discussion about some of the conflicts educators might encounter in the university.

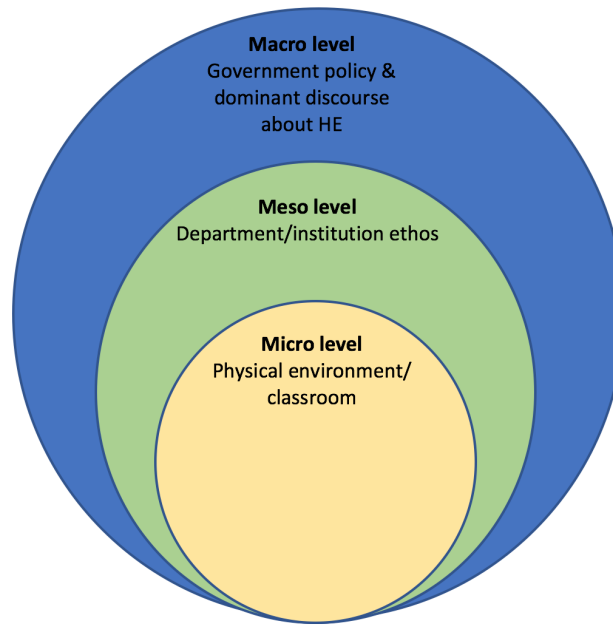


Figure 4: Different levels of social reality in HE context (adapted from Skelton, 2012a)

Micro Level Conflicts

Skelton (2012a) identifies a number of challenges in the classroom that can influence how educators want to teach and how they can implement this in practice. These include challenges with the physical space of the classroom and whether it is conducive to the desired pedagogical approach. Classrooms with fixed seating, for example, can make doing group work difficult (Savin-Baden, 2008). Other resources such as faulty computers or heating can influence the experience at the micro level. Beyond resources, the students themselves can be a challenge to certain pedagogies, as some may resist innovative approaches or engaging in group work or discussions (Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten, Millard & Moore-Cherry, 2015). Preconceptions or skills of teachers can also impact pedagogy at the micro level, as inexperienced or anxious teachers may be more likely to rely on pedagogies they are more familiar with (Cook-Sather, 2014).

Meso Level Constraints

Meso level constraints, according to Skelton (2012a), are those that occur in the department or institution educators work in. Although some of the resourcing issues identified at the micro level may actually be a result of issues at the meso level, constraints identified by Skelton (2012a) in this area seem to mostly be related to the institutional or departmental ethos or strategy. For example, if one teacher wants to implement a different teaching and learning approach they might feel that those with more power in the department might not approve of the innovations, or that others in their department don't share the same priorities. Protocol about assessment and module design also inhabit the meso level and can constrain pedagogical decision-making (Hockings, 2005). Conflicts at this level might extend outside the local department and refer to common practice within your discipline. According to McNaughton & Billot (2016), a conflict between disciplinary and institutional values can fragment the professional identity of academics resulting in insecurity around pedagogical decision-making in terms of either resisting change or being motivated to innovate.

Macro Level Conflicts

Value conflicts at the macro level might include disagreement with government policy or discourse about higher education (Skelton, 2012a). Using a previous example, an educator might agree with widening participation agendas as a way to improve educational equality and social mobility, but at the same time they might not agree that large classes of 200 students is the way to achieve these goals (Allais, 2014). They may believe in student voice and inviting students to play a role in the decision making about their education, but at the same time they might be against positioning the

student as a consumer (Brooman, Darwent & Pimor, 2015). Or, to cite an example given by Skelton (2012a: 259) which relates to the previous section on Teaching Excellence, “they may agree that university teaching should be subject to external accountability whilst finding the implicit values and assumptions underpinning quality assurance models to be problematic”.

Skelton’s (2012a: 266) study revealed that when the participants confronted different values at the three levels, they tended to engage in ‘strategic compromise,’ or accepting structural constraints beyond one’s control whilst holding private reservations about their pedagogical impact. Working within these constraints, people appeared to be focusing on aspects of practice where they felt values could be realised. Skelton (2012a) found six possible reactions to value conflicts: (1) conform and assimilate dominant values, (2) resist different values, (3) strategically compromise, (4) focus attention to practice where values can be implemented, (5) protecting the psyche by joining supportive networks, and (6) leave the situation if it does not conform to your values.

Looking at how educators handle value conflicts and how they think values impact their practice is very important for several reasons. First, although encountering others with different values can be threatening, it provides an opportunity to reflect on your own values in order to examine how you are able to put them into practice or what is preventing you from doing so, and can potentially lead to a change of values (see Cook-Sather (2014) on threshold concepts and how they can transform pedagogical practice). Second, a misalignment between values and practice can result in educators feeling like they are letting students down, which may lead to them abandoning hope (Skelton, 2012a). And, finally, it demonstrates how values and

ideology permeate all three levels of social reality, which further justifies reflection on professional values and how they can be translated into practice (Skelton, 2012a; McNaughton & Billot, 2016). To this end, Skelton (2012a: 267) recommends a deliberative approach which involves engaging with questions such as: “What educational values should underpin my practice? How might these values be translated into action within the classroom? Why are some of my values being denied? What might I do next?” This approach might help educators think about how to uphold their values in complex circumstances, and might be especially relevant to the educators who are attempting to implement an overtly ideological pedagogical approach that will often put them at odds with the neoliberal agenda that is pervasive in HE (Giroux, 2004b, 2010; Giroux & Giroux, 2006).

Pedagogy in a Super Complex HE

Barnett and Hallam (1999: 138) claim that we are living in a ‘super complex’ world, one in which “one is faced with alternative frameworks of interpretation through which to make sense of one’s world and to act purposively in it”. In the case of lecturers in universities, Barnett & Hallam (1999) suggest they must ask what their purposes are—are they to induct students into an academic discipline, or teach them skills so they can get a job when they graduate, or are they emancipating students from false consciousness? On the surface these questions relate to professional identity, but they also link to pedagogical beliefs and ideological positions of lecturers about the value and purpose of education, as well as their practice (Skelton, 2012a), linking back to research by Trigwell et al. (1994) concerning the five different approaches to teaching in universities (see Figure 3).

Lecturers' conceptions of pedagogy could likely be placed on a continuum that ranges from teacher-centred to student-centred approaches. However, their conceptions of teaching and learning often don't match up with their practice (Murray & Macdonald, 1997). For example, many course syllabi mention the development of critical thinking skills, and yet educators continue to use lectures to transmit information, despite the fact that this technique may "limit students' pedagogical space, deny their own voice, or place students in hock to their lecturers' own frames of thinking" (Barnett & Hallam, 1999: 146). In order to move away from a passive, transmissive style of teaching and learning in higher education, Barnett & Hallam (1999: 147) recommend moving from knowing to doing, which would allow individuals to develop their capacity "to act purposively in the world". This relates to Biggs' (1996) well-known concept of constructive alignment, in that if we want students to learn certain content or skills, then we need to teach them in a way that aligns with that content and even models it.

Although Biggs (1996) is specifically talking about constructivist methods of teaching, and how decision-making about instructional design should be informed by the constructivist approach, I think that the idea behind this can be applied to different approaches and methods, as well, mainly because his argument centres on congruency between epistemology, learning theory, and practice. If one thinks in this way, constructive alignment can also be applied to other approaches, such as co-constructivism. In the case of constructively aligned co-constructivism, learning objectives would be constructed with students, content would be co-constructed and learned through co-constructivist methods, such as peer teaching and project-based learning, and assessment practices would be co-designed with students and might

involve alternative assessment methods such as peer assessment of portfolios. The main element of constructive alignment that goes beyond the 'instructional alignment' of Cohen (1970, cited in Biggs, 1996), is that the focus goes beyond aligning content and assessment to improve learning outcomes, and focuses on alignment on a more ideological level that relates to the earlier discussion of value conflicts. If you were to have value conflicts between your teaching practice and your own pedagogical beliefs, the curriculum being taught, pedagogical practice, or the mode of assessment, there would be a constructive misalignment which might adversely affect learning outcomes and cause teaching staff to become disillusioned (Skelton, 2012a) or implement naïve versions of approaches (Biggs, 1996; Davis & Sumara, 2003).

This section has focused on theory and practice of three main teaching approaches: transmission, constructivist, and co-constructivist, as well as some of the challenges and value conflicts that educators might encounter at the micro, meso, and macro levels of the HE context (Skelton, 2012a), and the constructive misalignment that often results (Biggs, 1996). In addition to exploring mainstream teaching approaches in universities, this section supports a better understanding of different manifestations of critical pedagogical practice, as critical pedagogy is not a simple, unified teaching approach, but is instead underpinned by various perspectives of curriculum and pedagogy. In the next section, I will review literature on critical pedagogical theory and some of the research on implementing this pedagogical approach in the current context of British HE.

3.2 Critical Pedagogy: Pedagogy for Challenging the Status Quo

“Far from innocent, pedagogical practices operate within institutional contexts that carry great power in determining what knowledge is of most worth, what it means for students to know something, and how such knowledge relates to a particular understanding of the self and its relationship to both others and the future” (Giroux, 2011: 123).

In the quote above, Giroux (2011) highlights how both the pedagogical approach and the content taught in classes demonstrate to students what is worth knowing and how knowledge shapes how we understand ourselves and others. Here, he draws attention to the political and ideological nature of pedagogy, which is one of the underpinning beliefs of critical pedagogy. However, in the current period of neoliberal consumerism, it seems that many have decided to simply give in to the global market system and allow it to invade all aspects of our lives (Giroux, 2004b). Critical theorists fight against these market tendencies and hope to challenge the status quo in order to promote social justice in society (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003). Critical pedagogy aims to use critical theory and other radical theories to question and change what is taught in the classroom and how it is taught to further these aims of social justice. The counter-hegemonic aims of critical pedagogy seek to challenge neoliberalism and capitalism in favour of a ‘democratic socialism’ (Giroux, 2004a: 32) in order to promote “freedom, equality, liberty, self-determination, and civic agency”. The aim of this section is to explore the theory behind critical pedagogy and how it is put into practice in higher education. I will begin with a brief review of critical theory, which underpins and

informs critical pedagogy, followed by a discussion of some of the key concepts in Freire's critical pedagogy. I will then discuss the epistemological approach that underpins critical pedagogy, and how the work of Freire can be recontextualised in English universities. Finally, I will explore what critical pedagogy looks like when applied to higher education to promote critical thought and social justice.

What is critical theory?

Critical theory was established by the Frankfurt School and was founded on the basis of critique (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003). Critique involves the questioning or analysis of culture and society in an effort to recognise the systems in society that impede equality and freedom. Critical theory developed from the ideas of Karl Marx and is considered to be a neo-Marxist philosophy. One considerable difference between Marxism and critical theory is that critical theory does not rely so heavily on the economic system as a way to understand society, but instead focuses more on the political and cultural structure of society and how power relationships within society reinforce inequalities (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003). Or, as Giroux (2011: 4) puts it, "critique focuses largely on how domination manifests as both a symbolic and an institutional force and the ways in which it impacts on all levels of society". One of the most important aspects of critical theory that distinguishes it from other philosophical theories is that it not only focuses on critiquing society, but also on changing it (Apple, Au, & Gandin, 2009). "One important notion in their brand of critical theory is that education, consciousness raising, and the critique of ideology can eliminate 'false consciousness' and allow individuals and groups to unmask and resist oppressive regimes of power" (Baker & Brown, 2007: 57). In addition to identifying problems within society, critical theory develops a 'language of possibility' (Giroux, 2011) in

which there is the possibility of change, and a hope for a better future, rather than simply identifying the oppressive aspects of power.

When considering critical theory, the historical context in which it was developed needs to be taken into account, especially considering critical theory's view on historicity (McLaren, 2003a). Critical theory maintains that all knowledge is socially created in a particular context, which should always be considered when engaging with ideas and information (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003). Critical theory was established in the 1920s at the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany and continued during the rise of Fascism. The original group consisted of five notable intellectuals: Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, and Mark Horkheimer, all of them extremely 'liberal' and many of them Jewish. Therefore, it is no surprise that these Marxist philosophers sought to question the status quo and the political and cultural systems that were put into place to oppress certain groups and ways of thinking in society during the reign of Nazi Germany (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003). When they moved to the United States to escape Fascism, they were strongly influenced by the rise of capitalism in the West, confirming the need to create a critical theory from Marxist tradition to critique the neoliberal developments in society (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003).

What is critical pedagogy?

Critical pedagogy involves applying critical theory to education in a way that enables educators to help students become aware of how the systems that exist within society (including the school) promote injustice and how they can use awareness of these inadequacies to make positive change (Apple, Au, & Gandin, 2009). In making a distinction between critical theory and critical pedagogy it is important to note that

while critical theory could manifest in the classroom in a variety of different approaches—including transmission, constructivism, and co-constructivism; this is not the case with critical pedagogy (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). In the case of transmission, lecturers can draw attention to the inequalities in society or present multiple ways of viewing a taken-for-granted ‘truth’ about society; educators using a constructivist approach could ask students to identify a problem in their community and then ask them to do research on this area; and co-constructivist educators might ask students to work in a group to identify an issue, research it, and then feedback to the class about their project and process. Critical pedagogy is different from critical theory in that it aims to empower students to be critical not only of society, but also how traditional schooling and the knowledge that is selected for them to learn has certain values and power dynamics embedded in them (Apple, 2014). An example of this is what Giroux (1978) refers to as the hidden curriculum—which highlights what is taught in school beyond the national or explicit curriculum. This includes “unstated norms, values and beliefs transmitted to students through the underlying structure of schooling” (Giroux, 1978: 148). Critical pedagogy seeks to reveal the hidden curriculum by challenging the structure of traditional schooling, through minimising the power difference between teachers and students, rethinking methods of assessment that champion a single ‘right’ answer, and empowering students to develop their own critical capacity and autonomy by challenging the knowledge being taught.

Although there are many theorists that have contributed to critical pedagogical theory, such as Giroux, Aronowitz, Apple, Greene, McLaren, and hooks; Paulo Freire is “considered by many to be the most influential educational philosopher in the development of critical pedagogical thought and practice” (Darder, Baltodano &

Torres, 2003: 5). Growing up in Brazil in the 1920s, Freire experienced both wealth and poverty and saw how education played an important role in changing one's circumstances (Gadotti, 1994). Despite his fame for contributing to educational theory, in his adolescence he struggled due to hunger and disinterest in his studies (Schugurensky, 2014). Much of his philosophy of education comes from a passion for reaching out to those who were illiterate and poor and therefore had little power over their own lives. Context is very important in critical theory and critical pedagogy, and it is clear how Freire's own personal experience drove the work he did in communities in and beyond Brazil. In addition to his own personal journey with education, Freire's work was driven by the historical and political context in Brazil, which was characterised by massive inequality and a gap between the rich and the poor, which only got worse as things became increasingly marketized and less democratic (Freire, 1974; Gadotti, 1994). This context inspired Freire to raise the critical consciousness of his fellow citizens through adult literacy programmes that built on the lived experiences of his students.

Critical pedagogy involves questioning who chooses what students learn and how it is taught to give students the opportunity to see how the political and cultural systems in society influence their development and their lives. This is also manifested by enacting an empowering pedagogy in the classroom that challenges the power dynamics between teachers and students and engages students in decision making to model what it means to be a part of a democracy. These are both examples of critical pedagogy that demonstrate how it moves beyond critical theory and applies societal critique to the realm of education. These examples demonstrate "a belief that education and society are intrinsically inter-related and that the fundamental purpose

of education is the improvement of social justice for all” (McArthur, 2010a: 493). Like critical theory, critical pedagogy “also provides tools to unsettle common-sense assumptions, theorize matters of self and social agency, and engage the ever-changing demands and promises of a democratic polity” (Giroux, 2011: 3). For example, in the HE classroom, students could be asked to lead a seminar about one of the readings, putting them into a position of authority that might challenge the taken-for-granted position of the teacher, at the same time demonstrating that students also have valuable insights and knowledge relevant to the class to teach and share with their peers.

The ability of students to recognise and think critically about the power relationships in education allows them to become more aware of the hegemony that is present in many aspects of society (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003). For example, a critical pedagogue might ask students to think about and discuss what they think makes a ‘good’ essay. After discussing student ideas with the whole class, a new rubric for marking assignments could then be made based on these co-constructed criteria, rather than a rubric that was made by the teacher. This activity would engage students in decision-making about their own learning and would also challenge the traditional hierarchical power dynamic that gives teachers the authority to decide upon marking criteria. Therefore, critical pedagogy aims to model equality in the classroom by using a more democratic and co-constructivist approach to teaching and learning, uniting the teachers’ political and pedagogical beliefs with their practice in the classroom. Freire (1970) thought that all education is always political, and therefore, one of the aims of critical pedagogy according to Giroux (2016: 68-69), especially in this era of neoliberalisation, is to counteract the “efforts to reduce pedagogical practice to

nothing more than a commercial transaction” which in turn leads to “radical depoliticization, one that kills the radical imagination and hope for a world that is more just, equal and democratic”. Critical pedagogical practice, therefore, does not shy away from the political beliefs of educators, but is instead explicit about the political nature of education.

Critical pedagogy seeks to provide theoretical tools for educators to bring justice, values, ethics, and power back to the classroom, rather than simply seeing pedagogy as a set of skills needed to deliver a predetermined curriculum (Giroux, 2011). It is important to understand that critical pedagogy is not a set of strategies for instruction—instead it is context specific and “draws attention to the ways in which knowledge, power, desire, and experience are produced under specific basic conditions of learning and illuminates the role that pedagogy plays” (Giroux, 2011: 4) in understanding the role of the self in society. McArthur (2010: 501) explains this is because:

The broad ideas and ideals of critical pedagogy need to be challenged, interpreted and reinterpreted within each context. For individual academics within the classroom, critical pedagogy should be a way of approaching what they do, not the detail of the particular choices made. Ideas cannot tell you what to do; but nor can you eventually do much without them.

Critically educating students is essential to creating citizens that will be active in creating and maintaining a democratic society (Giroux, 2011; Apple, 2014).

Furthermore, critical pedagogy opposes how the classroom is often used to reproduce educational and societal goals of economic prosperity through a focus on vocational skills and subjects that will contribute to economic growth (Giroux, 2011) and reproduce social inequality (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003). Instead, Freire

proposes the use of dialogue in the classroom as a means of “challenging the dominant educational discourse and illuminating the right and freedom of students to become subjects of their world” (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003: 15). Dialogue helps students develop critical social consciousness, but dialogue is not simply for the benefit of students, but also teaches educators about the experiences of their students (inside and outside the classroom). This reciprocal relationship, in which both students and teachers teach each other, is another way that critical pedagogy seeks to resist the authoritarian structure of the traditional student-teacher relationship (Freire, 1970; Apple, 2014), and also relates to the relationship between theory and action. Praxis, or the idea that all human activity is a result of reflection and dialogue put into action, plays an important role in critical pedagogy by revealing how society came to be the way it is and considering how it can ultimately be changed (Darder, Boltodano & Torres, 2003; Mayo, 2013).

The Work of Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire’s philosophy of education was largely inspired by his work with illiterate adults in Brazil. When Freire began his work in Northeast Brazil in the early 1950s, “half of the inhabitants lived in the *culture of silence*—they were illiterate” (Gadotti, 1994 15). The work he did in teaching literacy was a political act that led to Freire’s exile in 1964. Freire’s aim was to give the illiterate a voice so that they could participate in making decisions about their country and their lives. Indeed, in Brazil at that time literacy was a condition for voting, making Freire’s movement even more political (Schugurensky, 2014). After the success of Freire’s method teaching rural farmers how to read, the Minister of Education at the time invited Freire to roll out his programme to the larger population—before the programme was stopped due to the military coup

in 1964, there was a plan for “twenty thousand cultural circles ... for two million illiterate people” (Gadotti, 1994: 15). Freire’s educational philosophy relied on the knowledge and lived experience of those he was trying to teach—the programme in each instance was designed based on spending time with and researching the community he was working with. This work would then generate themes for discussion and exploration, which would be the basis for the literacy programme, which he called ‘culture circles’ (Gadotti, 1994). Freire found that teaching in this way led to more political involvement, understanding and critical reading for his students. Key to his educational theory was the realisation that what he was teaching needed to be congruent with how he was teaching it—“it was not possible, for example, to learn how to be a democrat with authoritarian methods” (Gadotti, 1994: 18).

Essentially, Freire’s approach relied on the use of ‘generative words’ which emerged from the research he did with the community before teaching. These words would be themes that were important to the social reality of the participants of the culture circle, which would then be discussed by the group in order to challenge and critique the role of this word in the community. For example, Gadotti (1994) uses the word ‘wages’ to characterise Freire’s method, which would lead to questions about the value of work, who decides what wage you earn, what would be a fair wage, how they could go about demanding a fair wage. The talk would often start with an image of the word in a concrete situation, which would contextualise the word and its meaning in the lived reality of participants. In addition to this method for teaching literacy, Freire’s distinct contribution is the view that education is a process which leads to humanisation and freedom, something that results from the connections

made between the social and political reality of those being educated and what they are learning (Gadotti, 1994).

Freire's dependence on the lived experience of pupils was not just due to the social and political impact this would have, but was also based on his experience teaching with traditional language resources that used examples that were not relevant to the pupils, as well as his own experience of learning to read with his parents (Freire, 1976 in Schugurensky, 2014: 13):

The words that my parents used to introduce me to the literacy process were my words. It is very interesting to note that many years after that, when I started working in adult literacy, I started precisely with the words of the illiterates and not with my own words.

Freire maintained that one of the most important aspects of teaching is to make the content interesting to students—without interest, teachers had to rely on more authoritarian ways of teaching (Gadotti, 1994). If learners were instead engaged in actively constructing understanding and knowledge about topics that were relevant and interesting, the dynamic between teachers and students could be different.

Although Freire's early versions of culture circles relied solely on discussion and instruction, he did later develop his own literacy materials that replaced the resources that simply presented content to students to be memorised, instead providing different 'cultural primers' about relevant social issues such as health or economics.

Essential to his process was that content discussed in both the culture circles and the resources was relevant to the "concrete reality to be transformed" (Gadotti, 1994: 26).

In light of Freire's approach to adult literacy, the following sections will explore dialogue, problem-posing education, and conscientization as key concepts within

critical pedagogical theory to illustrate the 'ideas' that underpin critical pedagogical practice.

Dialogue

One of the fundamental aspects of critical pedagogy is dialogue (Darder, Boltodano & Torres, 2003). The use of dialogue in the classroom aims to engage students in the process of challenging the status quo and the knowledge that reproduces it. Dialogue also positions students as actors in their education and as co-constructors of understanding and knowledge with their peers and the teacher. Dialogue is fundamental to Freire's problem-posing approach to education, and is in opposition to the 'narration' common in banking education (Freire, 1970). Narration, or banking education, leads to a "lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge" (Freire, 1970: 53), whereas dialogue leads to the emergence of knowledge that is made in conversation with each other and the world. Indeed, "the capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students' creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed" (Freire, 1970: 54). In this sense, the banking model is preferred by those in power because it keeps students from developing critical consciousness, which they achieve through engaging in dialogue with their peers, the teacher, and the world.

Another important characteristic of dialogue is its ability to minimise the power distance between teachers and students. According to Freire (1970: 61):

...through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-

teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach.

This new conceptualisation of the teacher-student and student-teachers demonstrates how engaging in dialogue leads to the co-construction of understanding between all involved, with everyone's knowledge and experience being valued. Darder (2014: 92) suggests that "through engaging new possibilities in the process of teaching and learning, students are involved in potentially reconfiguring asymmetrical power relations, in order to enact greater horizontal relationships within the classroom and beyond". An essential aspect of dialogue is its ability to create a relationship built on trust and openness between those that are engaging in it (Freire, 2000). According to Dale & Hyslop-Marginson (2012: 99):

the dialogic classroom becomes a place of reciprocal learning by co-investigators based on their cognitive capacity to develop critical consciousness. By problematizing their collective experiences, they employ the uniquely human capacity to be contemplative and have in-depth discussion to encourage reflection and eventual transformation.

However, it is worth noting that some have challenged the emancipatory potential of dialogue (see Ellsworth, 1989), pointing out that engaging in dialogue does not give equal power or voice to all members of the dialogue, although it is potentially moving toward a more horizontal relationship. For example, Kaufmann (2010: 460) points out that "who speaks, how to speak, what to speak, and where to speak are all rule-governed activities," most of which are constructed around white, middle class, Western ideals that force minority students to conform if they want to participate in the dialogue. Feminist critiques of dialogue not only challenge how diverse voices could come together, but also how critical dialogue could be transformed into action. While there is little evidence of dialogue leading to action, feminist critical pedagogues

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have found story-telling and dialogue valuable in terms of raising critical consciousness about structural inequalities (Kaufmann, 2010). However, it is important to note that balancing the power dynamic between students and teachers is not the sole aim of dialogue, rather it is the idea that “discovery is a social process, and dialogue is the cement of this process” (Gadotti, 1994: 29). Through dialogue we construct understanding, which does mean that who is able to speak makes a difference, but it is not the sole objective of the process.

Problem-posing Education

According to Schugurensky (2014: 104), problem-posing education builds on progressive pedagogies and “affirms learners as subjects and as active beings in the process of becoming”. This is achieved through a pedagogy that utilises dialogue and praxis, with students as active participants who are both co-investigators and co-producers of knowledge. Freire (1970: 33) describes praxis as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it”. Critical education needs to focus on both reflection and action, because solely focusing on one or the other can never result in true praxis (Freire, 1970). If education only focuses on reflection, neglecting action, then we engage in what Freire called verbalism—chatter that separates us from the world. On the other hand, focusing on just action can lead to a sort of activism that involves action for its own sake and closes down opportunities for dialogue and reflection that can lead to transformative action.

Important to the implementation of critical pedagogical theory is the notion that problem-posing education is based on constant reflection and action that leads to critical consciousness (Schugurensky, 2014). Therefore, praxis should underpin both teaching practice and the learning process in order to facilitate development of a

critical consciousness that would lead students to transform the world. Education as problem-posing was seen in opposition to a banking model of education where students are positioned as passive receivers of knowledge rather than active co-investigators (Freire, 1970; Schugurensky, 2014). This position is fundamental to critical pedagogy because Freire thought that banking education was being used as a way to dominate the oppressed and maintain the status quo. Therefore, Schugurensky (2014: 72) proposed that Freire's concern about banking education went beyond concerns about pedagogical practice and was also about "its long-term implications for the development of human agency and ultimately for social transformation". Freire (1970: 62) argued that banking education aims to keep students unaware of their situation and how it could be changed, while problem-posing "strives for the *emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality*". Therefore, the longer students experience a banking education, the less likely they are to be interested in and capable of challenging the status quo (Schugurensky, 2014). According to Freire (1970: 64), in problem-posing education, on the other hand:

people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation.

There has been some confusion amongst readers of Freire about what a problem-posing education actually looks like. Some perceive the direct contrast with banking education, which many associate with a lecture (Webster, 2015), to mean that problem-posing education cannot occur in the form of a lecture. However, Webster (2015) challenges this idea and claims that Freire was more concerned about the

ability of the teaching to inspire critique and transformation of thought, both of which can happen in a lecture. Indeed, Schugurensky (2014: 100) agrees that Freire's real concern was the kind of learning that occurred when the teacher relied on a transmission style approach in which students were seen solely as recipients of information, a dynamic which "negated the possibility of dialogue and critical thinking". In this sense, the content of the teaching seems important, as perhaps a lecture that is engaging and dynamic and integrates discussion and activities can be considered emancipatory. However, Dale & Hyslop-Margison (2012: 103) state that at the core of problem-posing education is critical understanding, which "is the product of examining power relationships", and simply learning knowledge is not enough. Instead, "the added value of experiential learning comes from the interchange of ideas and knowledge... By incorporating student knowledge into the learning environment, they become full participants in a unique learning experience with transformative possibilities" (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2012: 103). This unique learning experience doesn't seem to be compatible with a traditional lecture, which ultimately makes it hard to see how a lecture could ever be critical pedagogy (Clark, 2018).

Conscientization

Critical social consciousness, which Freire (1970) referred to as conscientizacao, is "the process by which students, as empowered subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities that shape their lives and discover their own capacities to re-create them" (Darder, Boltodano & Torres, 2003: 15). This awareness is developed by engaging in reflection and action about their oppression, a process which is achieved through dialogue and problem-posing education. Critical consciousness is a dialectical process that is never finished—it "develops and evolves, as we each contend, through

theory and practice, with the actual social conditions we find before us and in relationship with others” (Darder, 2014: 81). In a sense, critical consciousness is a journey where you don’t know the way, or the particular destination, but you “make the road by walking” (Horton & Freire, 1990).

Freire (1974) proposed that consciousness developed through three phases: semi-intransitive, transitive and critical transitive consciousness. In the first phase, semi-intransitive, the oppressed are focused on survival and themselves, without seeing themselves as actors in society, or indeed how society has created their situation. Transitive consciousness occurs when the oppressed become more aware of the world and the systems that are at work. It is characterised by “a permeability that increases our capacity to enter into dialogue with others and extend ourselves beyond merely a preoccupation with our immediate survival” (Darder, 2014: 83). The final stage, critical transitive consciousness is, according to Freire (1976: 18):

characterised by depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations; by the testing of one’s ‘findings’ and by openness to revision; ... by rejecting passive positions; by soundness of argumentation; by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics...

Most importantly, Freire didn’t see critical consciousness as something that developed automatically or in a particular way, instead it “requires critical pedagogical interactions that nurture the dialectical relationship of human beings with the world” (Darder, 2014: 83). This dialectic involves balancing the needs and empowerment of the individual and society, and for this reason is something that must be done with others. Along with a transformation of understanding comes a transformation from “passive information processors to reflective and active subjects in knowledge creation and political change” (Dale & Hyslop-Marginson, 2012: 154).

Epistemology

Critical pedagogy views knowledge as uncertain and emphasizes the connection between knowledge and cultural norms and values of the society in which it is created (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003). Social constructivist approaches to knowledge stress the subjectivity of knowledge and focus on the inconsistencies and conflicts between ideas, encouraging criticality (McLaren, 2003a). Critical theorists and critical pedagogues, along with other interpretivist researchers, argue that a positivistic approach to knowledge tends to eliminate the possibility for critique, meaning that knowledge is simply accepted rather than evaluated. This means that the status quo remains the same. This right-wrong approach to knowledge is typically delivered in a traditional lecture or transmission approach and accompanied by a test that does not allow for critique or engagement in a dialogue about ideas. In contrast, McArthur (2013) stresses the importance of discussing the 'why' as well as the 'what' in the classroom. Like all co-constructivist approaches to learning, critical pedagogy stresses the importance of asking 'why?' In doing so, "one moves beyond acceptance of what simply is and thus opens a door beyond the status quo" (McArthur, 2013: 57). By doing this, students actually engage with knowledge and question it, rather than just accepting it as the truth (McArthur, 2013; McLaren, 2003a). When students think about why they are learning something, they also learn to "recognize the *social function of particular forms of knowledge*" (McLaren, 2003a: 72, original emphasis). While other co-constructivist approaches might also challenge what is being learned and why, the reasons behind this questioning are different. In the co-constructivist approach, knowledge is seen as being socially constructed and negotiated through interactions with others and other ideas in order to develop understanding. In a purely

co-constructivist approach, like that advocated by Vygotsky, the question of why relates more to making learning more effective through metacognition using more innovative and active approaches to teaching and learning. However, the reason behind this approach is not to critique society or highlight inequalities in education that mirror those in society—the purpose behind this approach to teaching, and by extension the epistemological position supporting it, is not inherently emancipatory.

This distinction between critical pedagogy and co-constructivist pedagogy highlights another fundamental principle of critical pedagogy—all education is political (Giroux & Giroux, 2006). However, the school and policy makers attempt to portray knowledge as objective and un-politicised in order to solidify their position as the dominant ideology. McLaren (2003: 83) claims that “[t]he dominant curriculum separates knowledge from the issue of power and treats it in an unabashedly technical manner; knowledge is seen in overwhelmingly instrumental terms as something to be mastered”. This view of curriculum then influences the pedagogy that is used in schools and institutions of higher learning, focusing on knowledge transmission rather than pedagogy that could lead to critique or challenge of dominant ideas.

Recontextualising the Work of Paulo Freire

The work of Paulo Freire remains influential all over the world in different levels of education. According to Gadotti (1994: 41-42), although the educational ideas that Freire presents in his numerous publications “may be valid for other societies at other times, [they] are marked by the special conditions of Brazilian society”. That is to say that we should be wary of transplanting solutions from other cultures to fix our unique problems. Freire (1974: 10) claims that “since these borrowed solutions are neither generated by a critical analysis of the context itself, nor adequately adapted to the

context, they prove inoperative and unfruitful". However, this doesn't mean that one cannot learn from solutions in other contexts, simply that they need to be adapted for the specific political, cultural and social context.

Parallels between the period of transition in which Freire developed many of his original educational theories and the current political context in the USA and UK indicates that Freire's critical pedagogy is pertinent to the current context. Key to many of the ideas presented by Freire, particularly in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, was the extreme inequity between the elite and the poor. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) addresses this power imbalance by focusing on the liberating potential of conscientization through education. While there were many other political and social factors that influenced the work of Freire in Brazil, social and economic inequity is unfortunately a reality for many societies around the world, which may explain why Freire's work has been adopted and adapted by many educationalists around the world.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire (1970) also explores the oppressive nature of capitalist education (Gadotti, 1994), which is something that is particularly relevant in the current context of neoliberalisation and commodification of education. Connecting to the idea of oppressive education is the possibility for liberation and the promotion of democratic values through education. In *Education as the Practice of Freedom*, Freire (1974: 6) begins by characterising a 'Society in Transition' that sounds surprisingly familiar to the situation in which we find ourselves today:

...men cannot perceive the marked contradictions which occur in society as emerging values in search of affirmation and fulfilment clash with earlier values seeking self-preservation. ... Contradictions increase between the ways of being, understanding, behaving, and

valuing which belong to yesterday and other ways of perceiving and valuing which announce the future. As the contradictions deepen, the 'tidal wave' becomes stronger and its climate increasingly emotional.

The push and pull of past and future can lead to clashes between the progressive and conservative groups within society, leading to alienation and conflict. Freire (1974) explains that in the Brazilian transition in the 1960s, the conservatives dominated and this led to fanaticism and hatred. There are obvious parallels between the period of which Freire writes and the current context, with nationalism and conservatism making an alarming comeback in many societies in the Western world. The presidency of Donald Trump provides a prime example of this, as he incites violence, racism and hatred amongst his followers who are clinging on to an outdated way of living in a world that is trying to move forward. Current social projects such as the #metoo movement and Black Lives Matter demonstrate the move to overturn an old way of being in favour of a new order. Social media and other technologies have perhaps helped to reveal new truths, which Freire (1974: 10-11) suggests can

...provoke the first attempts of self-awareness, whereupon a new cultural climate begins to form. Some previously alienated intellectual groups begin to integrate themselves with their cultural reality. Entering the world, they perceive the old themes anew and grasp the tasks of their time. Bit by bit, these groups begin to see themselves and their society from their own perspective; they become aware of their own potentialities... Society now reveals itself as something unfinished, not as something inexorably given...it cannot mean simply letting things go on.

According to Freire (1974), the transitional period in Brazil was typified by a 'naïve transivity', which he identifies as the initial phase of transitive consciousness. Naïve transivity is "characterised by an over-simplification of problems; by a nostalgia for the past; by underestimation of the common man; ...by a lack of interest in investigation,

accompanied by an accentuated taste for fanciful explanations; ...by the practice of polemics rather than dialogue; by magical explanations” (Freire, 1974: 14). Here we can see parallels with the recent phenomenon of ‘alternative facts’ and ‘fake news’ in relation to Trump and Brexit, which has led to the naming of the post-truth era (Rose, 2017; Peters, 2017).

The post-truth era has important implications for education, as well as politics. According to Peters (2017: 564), alternative facts and the prevalence of lying in both politics and the media has led many to devalue the truth, instead relying on “emotion without any detailed policy specifics, delivered through video and social media, especially Twitter, that are not ideal media for argumentation, disputation, reflection and fact-checking”. This is made worse by the “‘bubble world’ where algorithmically selected news sources simply reinforce existing prejudices thus compromising the capacity for moral thinking” (Peters, 2017: 564). This is true for both sides of the political spectrum, leading to a deep divide between conservatives and liberals which seems to undermine any chance of a true dialogue about the issues (Rose, 2017).

Although the context in which Freire developed his critical pedagogy and the current post-truth era are not the same, and there are cultural differences as well as economic differences between Brazil in the global south and the position of the UK in the global north, there do seem to be some striking parallels between the two contexts. This suggests that although Freire’s critical pedagogy should not be seen as a comprehensive solution to the lack of participation in democracy and lack of critical dialogue around political and social issues, it can act as an inspiration and example of a way to go about developing a critical analysis of our context through education.

Critical Pedagogy in Higher Education

McArthur (2013) argues that higher education is in a unique position to promote social justice because universities require students to engage with complex and dynamic knowledge, they are a space for students to engage with knowledge that is uncertain and outside of dominant discourse, and they highlight the complex relationship between theory and action. Applying critical pedagogy to higher education research and teaching would encourage students to be critical of the dominant discourse, and question things that are taken-for-granted, like why certain disciplines are more valued than others (McArthur, 2010b). However, McArthur (2013: 18) argues that currently, "the forces that increasingly appear to hold sway over higher education policies and practices seem if anything to be taking it further from this social justice role rather than towards it". For example, despite the so-called 'massification' of higher education, there is still a huge gap in attendance between social classes (Mayhew, Deer & Dua, 2004). This gap is widened by universities promoting privilege by admissions standards or the raising of tuition fees (McArthur, 2013). By critiquing these practices through dialogue in the higher education classroom, students can begin to recognize the inequalities present in the system and the political policies that dictate it (Apple, 2014).

Giroux (2011: 112) argues that due to consumerism and the marketization of society, "the university is gradually being transformed into the training ground for the corporate workforce". For example, getting good value for money for students means taking courses that are seen as relevant to the market, rather than courses in the humanities and social sciences that may not translate directly into commercial value (Giroux, 2011; Williams, 2013; McArthur, 2013). Giroux (2011: 121) argues that

educators must “resurrect a language of resistance and possibility” in the face of the corporatization of higher education and instill a sense of hope in students and the wider public. Giroux’s (2011: 121) ‘educated hope’ is an “attempt to make a difference by being able to imagine otherwise in order to act in other ways”. Although thinking about a utopian future for higher education may seem a little naïve, it does however, mean that other futures are possible. Furthermore, just because something seems out of reach does not mean we should not strive toward it. Thinking in this way can also highlight how pedagogy can become more political, and how higher education can play a role in instilling a desire for change and social justice in students and showing how power and institutional organization have come to have such an impact on higher education and its purpose (Giroux, 2011; McArthur, 2013). Giroux (2011: 124) identifies the most essential role of critical pedagogy in higher education when he says, “its foremost responsibility is to provide a space where the complexity of knowledge, culture, values, and social issues can be explored in open and critical dialogue”. This echoes the views of Adorno, who championed the indeterminate method of critical pedagogy and thought that it was the endless possibility for change that made it such an important and dynamic philosophical approach (McArthur, 2013). Leaving critical pedagogy up to interpretation based on context makes room for the necessity to improve on the current state of affairs—it acknowledges that social justice is not some perfect world that is achievable, but that it needs to adapt to the historical and social context of that time (McArthur, 2013).

Another way that higher education can benefit from the application of critical pedagogy is in the ongoing dichotomization of practice and theory present in the sector (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003; McArthur, 2013), which was discussed in

Chapter 2. Critical pedagogy's view of knowledge rejects the dichotomy of theory and application and maintains that all action involves theory, and all theory is developed with action in mind. Adorno takes it further by claiming that "theory is itself always a form of practice and practice always requires the input of thought or theory (Adorno, 2000b, 2005a, 2008)" (McArthur, 2013: 44). By challenging the dichotomy between theory and practice in universities we can move away from the separation of research and teaching (Chalmers, 2011), instead moving toward a situation in which "the relationship between ideas (theory) and action (practice) should be two-way and travel across level" (McArthur, 2013: 46).

In the current climate, knowledge and education are being seen in instrumentalist terms (Mayhew, Deer & Dua, 2004). And although it may be naïve to see knowledge as strictly for its own sake (McArthur, 2013), knowledges for a more democratic citizenry focused on social justice are not out of reach. McArthur (2013: 2) suggests that when policy makers speak of the economic purposes of higher education, they see it in narrow terms, and should instead realize that "the true economic purpose of higher education should be to improve the economic and social welfare of all members of society, not just the few". Critical pedagogy seeks to teach students to be critical of the knowledge that is being presented to them, to question the 'why' as well as the 'what', to recognize the systems in society that are influencing their education (McArthur, 2013; Giroux, 2011; Apple, 2014). Engaging with knowledge in this way opens a dialogue between educators and students that allows for the opportunity to not only recognize the inequalities that are reproduced by the current system of education, but change the way that students and society act in response to these injustices (Giroux, 2011).

Considering that there are many understandings and definitions of critical pedagogy (Canaan, 2013; McArthur, 2012; Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003), it is not surprising that there are debates around what constitutes critical pedagogy and critical pedagogical theory. As such, it is difficult to describe what critical pedagogical practice might look like in the university, since it is contested, but also because it is context specific, and should be adapted depending on the setting and the content of the course. However, Canaan (2013) and others (see Ellsworth, 1989; Boyd, 1999; Gore, 1993) have called for a clearer understanding of critical pedagogy in order to help critical educators put it into practice, especially in the current neoliberal context and the co-opting of the language of critical pedagogy to serve neoliberal ends. A focus on student voice is one example, or sharing decision-making with students, which may seem 'critical, no matter how tokenistic they may be in the way they are implemented (Dunne & Zandstra, 2011).

Presenting an understanding of critical pedagogy developed by the Critical Pedagogy Collective, Canaan (2013: 34) outlines four key ideas that underpin critical pedagogy: (1) "critical pedagogy assumes that education is an inherently political practice produced within and against wider politicising structures", (2) the teacher should work with and against the students' understandings of the world, (3) "critical pedagogy seeks to transcend participants' present thinking and doing" (ibid: 37), and (4) critical pedagogy models revolutionary praxis in the classroom. The first underpinning principle of critical pedagogy identified by Canaan (2013) connects with Freire's view that education reproduces the status quo by working in the interest of the dominant class. Because education can never be neutral, according to Freire, the fact that the dominant class tries to convince us it should be is in itself a political act

(Freire, 2003). Higher education, as well as other forms of education, has the potential to unmask the power of the dominant class, making it dialectical since it simultaneously reproduces and challenges the status quo (Canaan, 2013).

The second principle put forward by Canaan (2013) is that the teacher should work with and against the worldviews of students in order to encourage them to critically reflect on their own understandings. Because students come to university with experiences and knowledge, teachers should acknowledge the knowledge and experience of students and help students use this to reflect and interrogate their own understandings. This of course denies the traditional, 'banking model' in which teachers are the experts that present knowledge for the students to passively receive. Instead, Freire (2001) presents the problem-posing model as a way to engage teachers and students in a reciprocal teaching and learning process. Through dialogue, students and teachers are co-investigators who co-construct understandings about the world that move beyond the dominant or hegemonic understanding, a point Canaan (2013) illustrated with a quote from Freire (1996: 106):

As students come to name the world more fully in their own terms, they can see themselves as actors in and transformers of the world who have an agency that can be differently realised in the future. Students come to recognise, that is, that their speech fuses 'action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world'.

It is important to note that teaching and learning are seen as reciprocal processes that both the 'teacher' and 'students' engage in. Canaan (2013) explains that students teach the teacher about their own understanding of the world, while the teachers are only able to teach because they have learned methods of understanding that will help the students develop their own understandings. This relates to a key aspect of Freire's problem-posing method, which he offers as an antidote to the banking model of

education, which transforms the role of the teacher: “the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach” (Freire, 1970: 61).

The third principle presented by Canaan (2013) is that critical pedagogy seeks to move students beyond their current understanding and action. By helping students to realise their agency, they can see that they are still in the process of becoming and learning about the world. This implies that everything is open to question, and therefore we should be open to forming new understandings (Canaan, 2013).

“Imagining the world being possibly other than it currently is thus an integral part of thinking about and acting in the world” (Canaan, 2013). Canaan suggests this is particularly important in the current context of neoliberalisation, in which the world is seen fatalistically as static and unchangeable. Critical pedagogy, then, offers an opportunity for students and teachers in higher education to imagine a world that is different than the one we currently inhabit, as well as providing opportunities to learn about how to change it. This relates to the fourth and final underpinning principle identified by Canaan (2013), which is that critical pedagogy offers an example of revolutionary praxis. By reflecting on how and what they learn, critically reflecting on the current state of the world, both students and teachers can “together work towards building a better world” (Canaan, 2013: 41).

Although Canaan’s (2013) underpinning principles of critical pedagogy are helpful in that they more clearly set out the aims of critical pedagogy, they fail to illuminate what this might look like in practice. A further aim of the Critical Pedagogy Collective is to collaborate to create and disseminate more work on “socially just alternatives to the neoliberal status quo (Amsler et al, 2010: 11)” (Canaan, 2013: 41).

While I am not disputing that they may be providing readers with a deeper understanding of the theory of Freirean critical pedagogy, in this article at least, they have continued to leave the practice of critical pedagogy vague, which might be off-putting to educators interested in pursuing a more critical approach to teaching. While I understand that a guidebook of how to do critical pedagogy is also not the answer, some examples of what critical pedagogy looks like in the classroom would be helpful. Indeed, this may be why several educators who have attempted to implement a critical pedagogy in their classrooms have claimed it didn't 'work' (Ellsworth, 1989; Boyd, 1999).

Critiques of Critical Pedagogy

One of the main critiques of critical pedagogy centres on the fact that it often avoids classroom practice and how it relates to the theory behind critical pedagogy (McArthur, 2010a). Although this critique is often responded to with the need to avoid a guidebook to critical pedagogical practice (see Darder et al., 2009; Giroux, 2011; McArthur, 2013), this seems to be a way to sidestep the wider problem, which is the difficulty of translating theory into practice. While writing and research around critical pedagogies tends to focus on the social or macro level, this often means ignoring the micro level "where students and academics actually learn and teach" (McArthur 2010: 499), where critical pedagogy is put into practice. McArthur (2010: 499) argues that these "criticisms tend to reveal misunderstandings about the multi-levelled, multi-dimensional aspect of complex change". This misunderstanding is perhaps due to the emphasis put on individuals as change agents—although individuals can make a difference, they can rarely effect large-scale change on their own. This isn't meant to discourage educators from using a critical or emancipatory approach, rather it should

encourage them to attempt to work with others to make changes in their institutions or departments.

There have been several critiques of the implementation of critical pedagogy, the most well-known being Ellsworth (1989), which will be reviewed in more depth in the next section. Along with claiming that critical pedagogy didn't 'work' in her classroom and instead made things worse, Ellsworth (1989: 297) also critiqued it's "highly abstract and utopian line," which made it difficult to implement in the classroom. This criticism has been echoed by others who have tried to implement critical pedagogy in their classrooms, such as Boyd (1999), although it is worth noting that this may not be a challenge that is unique to critical or radical pedagogies, but is true of making any changes to pedagogical approaches at the micro level without support from the meso and macro levels of the context (McArthur, 2010a). This was the key message of Boyd's (1999: 378) article about attempting to implement a transformative pedagogy in his university teaching practice, which he describes as his "largely unhappy struggles to enact [his] political and ethical ideals within a university system that often seems inhospitable to these goals and aspirations".

Other critiques have claimed that critical pedagogy simply replaces one dominant ideology with another. Indeed, Ellsworth (1989) focuses much of her critique on the contradictions in critical pedagogy surrounding theoretical and epistemological inconsistencies, such as the contradiction between critical consciousness raising and promoting knowledge for social justice, which might suggest that there is a 'better' knowledge to be learned. Gur-Ze'ev (1998: 463) argues that critical pedagogy in its various forms "function as part and parcel of normalizing education and its violence". Instead, he calls for a counter-education which would create "possibilities for

identifying, criticizing, and resisting violent practices of normalization, control, and reproduction practices” (ibid: 463). Gur-Ze’ev (1998) claims that the main fault of critical pedagogy is that it holds a positive utopian perspective on social reality. This utopian vision, according to Gur-Ze’ev (1998), takes form in a general theory that hopes to serve the interests of all those who are oppressed. However, this is at odds with the context specific nature of critical pedagogy and critical theory. Further, Gur-Ze’ev (1998: 466) points out that Freire’s interest in language or ‘the word’ “relates to his concept of ‘truth’ and a class struggle that will allow the marginalized and repressed an authentic ‘voice,’ as if their self-evident knowledge is less false than that which their oppressors hold as valid”. This suggests that despite Freire’s attack on positivism, he does believe there is a truth to be found, and that some knowledge is more valid than others. In a sense, by preferring one group’s knowledge (in this case the oppressed) over that of another (oppressors), Freire is simply turning the tables and asserting a new hegemony. Despite his attempts to do otherwise, the oppressed have become the oppressors (Freire 1970).

However, Gur-Ze’ev (1998: 469-470) identifies some positive aspects of Freirean critical pedagogy, one of which is that “to a certain degree, this pedagogy even incubates a potential refusal of and resistance to the inner logic of capitalism and current technological progress” however, “because of its central problems it will never develop into anything more than a futile revolt standing on precarious foundations”. Gur-Ze’ev (1998) concludes by pointing out that critical pedagogy’s inability to articulate the critical ‘experience’ leaves it open to being co-opted by the very neoliberal institutions it aims to challenge, echoing McArthur (2010) and Canaan (2013) who call for more clarity surrounding critical practice. In an effort to better

understand what critical pedagogical practice might look like in the university classroom or lecture hall, the next section will review some of the research that has been published on critical pedagogy in higher education.

Research on Critical Pedagogy

According to Cooper (2015: 39) due to “the increasingly detrimental impact of neo-liberal restructuring on academia, there is an urgent need for more radical approaches to teaching and learning in HE, approaches better able to generate more insightful critical appreciations of the imposed ‘order of things’ in contemporary times”. This call for more radical approaches to teaching comes in a time when much of instruction is transmissive (Laurillard, 2002). However, for those seeking to implement a more critical approach to their teaching practice, it may be hard to find relevant research on how to implement critical pedagogy because the majority of work on critical pedagogy is theory-based. This may be due to the fact that critical pedagogy is not a set of distinct practices that can be collected into a ‘how to’ checklist, making research on critical pedagogical practice difficult since there is no consensus about what it actually looks like. Critical pedagogy is context dependent, and therefore changes depending on the geographical, social, and temporal location of the classroom, students, and teacher. As such, it’s important to research critical pedagogy in a way that highlights the similarities between critical approaches, while avoiding a general overarching theory about how it should be put into practice.

These challenges might explain why the majority of research done on critical pedagogical practice in higher education tends to favour a reflective or case study approach that looks at the practice of a singular educator or a small group of educators. This section will review recent and influential research on critical pedagogy

in the university, focusing on their key findings, as well as their approach to the research.

Breunig (2009) Teaching for and About Critical Pedagogy in the Post-Secondary Classroom

Breunig's (2009) study focused on both using and teaching about critical pedagogy in the university. Her study arose from reflections about her own practice—she realised that although the content of her course was critical, the pedagogical approach was mostly didactic, leading her to “become increasingly concerned about the gap between *what* I teach and believe and my pedagogical practice, *how* I teach” (Breunig, 2009: 247). This led her to conduct a study to investigate the pedagogical approaches implemented by other critical pedagogues. Breunig (2009) aimed to identify critical classroom practices of self-identifying critical pedagogues (SICPs), specifically focusing on the justice-oriented nature of these practices. Breunig (2009: 250) is careful to avoid making a recipe for critical practice, as “classroom practices need to be shaped around the lives of students, the classroom context, the educative aims of the practice, and the institution to construct learning experiences that articulate these”. Instead, her aim was to understand how SICPs engage in critical pedagogical practices in their university classrooms. Her study involved 17 SICPs, ten of which were female, from a wide range of ages and positions within universities. Breunig (2009) utilised semi-structured, hour-long phone interviews with participants to explore not only their pedagogical practice, but also the participants' understanding of definitions and purposes of critical pedagogy. Her study revealed that while eight participants explicitly mentioned teaching for social justice, five participants “responded to interview queries related to definition and central aims of critical

pedagogy using terms that suggested a more student-centred or constructivist orientation” (ibid: 252). Three of the remaining four participants identified themselves as Freirean pedagogues, with one identifying as a social reconstructionist. Although Breunig (2009) used a semi-structured approach to the interview, in order to allow the opportunity to follow up on unexpected information, she did use guiding questions that were asked of everyone, suggesting that the interview was mainly led by the researcher. The participants were asked whether they felt their practice reflected critical pedagogical theory and if they could give examples of these practices.

The results were coded thematically, with the following themes emerging from the data: classroom community and group work, dialogue, negotiating the curriculum, assessment, experiential activities, and traditional classroom practices. According to Breunig (2009), many of her participants espoused the benefits of both creating a classroom community that created a space for dialogue and critique, as well as co-construction of knowledge. Although these practices may be more active and less didactic, Breunig (2009: 255) still questions whether these are examples of critical pedagogy:

If students are engaged with content and are motivated to learn through constructivist approaches (Felder & Brent, 1996; Meyers & Jones, 1993), but there is no explicit communication of the ways in which these practices can be used as a means to bring about a more socially just world, then critical pedagogues (at least those participants in this study) may not be fulfilling the goals of the justice-oriented and liberatory nature of critical pedagogical practice per se.

At the same time, Breunig suggests it is important to realise that constructivist classroom practices can be a helpful way to model more democratic ways of

approaching schooling, which challenge the traditional way of teaching and work toward a more equitable power dynamic in the classroom.

Dialogue was another central theme that came out of the data, as participants felt that it helped students reflect on their learning and experiences while also challenging traditional hierarchies within the classroom. However, Breunig (2009) was careful about the justice-oriented nature of dialogue, as several academics have written about the repressive myth of liberatory dialogue (see Ellsworth, 1992; Gore, 1993). Power dynamics play a significant role in dialogue, which often go unseen. Therefore, critical pedagogues should reflect on implicit power in dialogues and discussions by considering who has authority in the discussion and who is being heard. In the case of Breunig's study, the participants mainly talked about dialogue as a way to improve student learning and create a student-centred learning experience for students. Another theme was negotiating the curriculum and assessment practices, which was reported by twelve of the seventeen participants. Some of the methods mentioned by participants included co-designing assignments and syllabi, self and peer assessment, and the use of portfolios rather than summative assessment. It's unclear whether participants engaged in these practices explicitly to challenge traditional hierarchical dynamics in the classroom, as Breunig (2009: 256) only mentioned that as a result of these practices, "[a]ccording to participants, students felt more engaged with the learning process and thus attended classes more often and produced work that was of a higher quality". Although these are all 'counterhegemonic' practices since they challenge the traditional power of the teacher as the one in control of curriculum and assessment, in the case of Breunig's participants, these practices were evidence of constructivist practices rather than social justice oriented.

Another key theme was that of experiential learning, whether through in-class activities or external activities like community work or action research. Breunig (2009: 259) was particularly positive about this form of critical practice, as it “provide[s] both an activity and the appropriate facilitation, reflection, and justice-oriented content to help students consider and/or modify some of their previous prejudices”. However, Breunig urges that perhaps the experience is not enough, meaning that students should be encouraged to reflect on their experiences to fully realise how the experience affected them. For activities that take place in the classroom, Breunig (2009) encourages explicit links between what goes on in the classroom with what happens in society.

Breunig concludes that perhaps critical pedagogical praxis is something that implicitly informs the teaching practice of SICPs, while not being explicit in their approach. However, she does question whether this can be called critical pedagogy, seeming to lean toward a need for more explicit declarations of purpose within the classroom. She calls for further research into critical pedagogical practice that would encourage participants to reflect on how their practice addresses social justice issues, to explore the literature in this area more to strengthen their understanding of the theory behind it, and to be more explicit about the values that underpin their practice. Breunig (2009) felt that a major limitation of her study was that there was no follow up interview with participants to explore their beliefs and practices in more depth. However, in my opinion a substantial limitation is that although she was interested in pedagogical practice, she did not observe the practice of those in her study. Observation would not only help to minimise the effects of response bias, it would also

provide the opportunity for the observer to identify practices that the pedagogue may not be aware of (Becker & Geer, 1957; Ashwin, 2008).

Jeyaraj & Harland (2016) Teaching with critical pedagogy in ELT: The problems of indoctrination and risk

Jeyaraj & Harland (2016) studied the challenges and constraints of implementing critical pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT). Part of the reason they were interested in researching critical pedagogues in this area is that ELT has historically avoided controversial issues and tried to use a 'neutral' approach. Jeyaraj and Harland (2016) are somewhat preoccupied with the risk of indoctrination that comes with using a critical pedagogical approach. Drawing on the critiques of others, they form a description of CP that separates it from other pedagogies on the account that it is ideological in nature (Burbules & Berk, 1999). However, this seems irrelevant for two reasons: (1) education is always political, it is always value laden and ideological, critical pedagogy is just more explicit about these values, which if anything gives students more of an opportunity to come to their own decision on its value, and (2) critical pedagogy is counterhegemonic in order to encourage and model critique and the challenging of taken-for-granted assumptions about our world—this doesn't mean you have to agree with it, but you at least begin to understand that things can be challenged and can be thought of otherwise. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that Breunig (2009) called for making the purposes behind pedagogy more explicit. This aligns with Kincheloe (2008: 11), who states that:

the argument that any position opposing the actions of the dominant power wielders represents an imposition of one's views on somebody else is problematic. It is tantamount to saying that one who admits her oppositional political sentiments and makes them

known to students is guilty of indoctrination, while one who hides her consent to dominant power and the status quo it has produced from her students is operating in an objective and neutral manner.

Further, Jeyaraj & Harland (2016) point out that even if educators try to remain neutral, their approach to teaching or the content they choose to cover might reveal certain attitudes they hold toward equality and social justice. Often in ELT, teachers select 'neutral' content, ignoring the history, culture and societal implications that are inherent in language (ibid, 2016), making ELT teaching more technical and less political.

Jeyaraj & Harland utilised Skype, telephone and face-to-face interviews to collect data from thirteen ELT teachers from around the world. Because of their international sample, they were forced to rely solely on open, exploratory interviews. The aim of the study was to better understand ELT teachers' teaching practice, student learning, and the impact of critical pedagogy on their practice. An interesting aspect of their study design is that they had two participants who were interested in critical pedagogy but did not implement it in their practice for various reasons. Using inductive analysis, the researchers identified two main themes: understanding indoctrination and coping with diverse risks. Participants struggled with indoctrination but also presented ways to avoid it, like not sharing their own positions and instead presenting a range of opinions for students to think about. In some ways this is contrary to what Jeyaraj & Harland (2016) called 'best practice' in critical pedagogy, as many might agree that the best way to avoid indoctrinating students is to be very clear about your position from the start, so they are aware of where you are coming from and that you are not presenting the only way of thinking about the issue at hand. Jeyaraj & Harland (2016) posit that students might need help to critique different

perspectives, especially when students in the class might hold views that are supportive of various forms of oppression. One of the participants who chose not to implement critical pedagogy in the classroom still felt the need to teach students to critique how they thought about the world. The main difference between their approach to teaching and those who explicitly apply a critical approach was that they did not seek to make their teaching political, and did not tell students what to think. Instead, he asked that the students interrogate their own beliefs and ask why they hold those beliefs. In this way he felt he could encourage students to think critically without indoctrinating them to believe what he thinks is right. Closely linked with indoctrination, authority and power were also important to the participants, who often reflected about how they could avoid abusing their power in the classroom.

It was interesting that despite the political nature of ELT and the critical pedagogical beliefs of the educators in the study, the critical pedagogical practice of educators “appeared to be a private pursuit with respect to departments and institutions” (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016: 6). In fact, the critical educators in the study didn’t even share their practice with colleagues, suggesting that they felt it was something they needed to keep private. The second theme that came out of the research was coping with uncertainty and risk, which was something the participants felt was inherent in critical pedagogical work because they were encouraging students to challenge the status quo. Because of the risks involved in using critical pedagogy in the classroom (like losing their jobs), participants lived in a constant state of uncertainty about how their practice would affect their lives. They were also concerned about the safety of their students who were inspired to engage in activism and critique—especially those in countries that limit freedom of speech. Jeyaraj &

Harland (2016) suggest that the best way for critical educators to avoid indoctrination and risks is to engage in self-reflection about their practice and its implications for students and themselves. To this end, Jeyaraj & Harland (2016) asked participants to write up and publish their reflections on their practice. By engaging in action research, their practice was legitimated by the peer review process, as well as allowing “the development of new theoretical and practical ideas, provid[ing] a space for discussing and interrogating new perspectives” (ibid: 6).

Kaufmann (2010) The Practice of Dialogue in Critical Pedagogy

Kaufmann’s (2010) research was inspired by her reflections on dialogue in her own university classroom. Like Breunig (2009), the impetus for her study was a result of observing a phenomenon in her own setting that she wanted to explore further in the practice of others. Kaufmann’s study is quite unique in that she ‘re-examined’ ethnographic data that she had collected in 1996 for her master’s dissertation to explore the use of dialogue in the critical pedagogical classroom. Like Breunig (2009) and others, part of the reason for Kaufmann’s research was to address the lack of empirical research on critical pedagogy in the university context. Kaufmann’s study (2010: 458) focuses on the “dialogical experiences and practices of the participants—the instructor and students” in a course about Chicano/a Autobiography. Dialogue is at the centre of the research because it is also at the centre of critical pedagogical practice, especially in the Freirean tradition, which is informed by Freire’s interest in Hegelian dialectics, Marxism and Catholicism (Kaufmann, 2010: 458). Freire sees dialogue as fundamental to revolutionary action, offering the oppressed the power to change the world. However, there have been critiques of the power of dialogue, specifically from feminists who highlighted the cultural nature of dialogue and the fact

that the process through which dialogue is transformed into action was under theorised and unclear (Kaufmann, 2010). These two themes were also picked up in Kaufmann's study, where she examined dialogue in the classroom, group discussions, and a small study group that were working on a group presentation for the course. Her study consisted of 'participant observation' of most of the sessions of the class during one semester, as well as the study group who met on four occasions outside of class. Although Kaufmann (2010: 463) calls her method participant observation, she states that both in and outside of class she was more of an observer than a participant in that she "was seen but did not speak". She then conducted semi-structured interviews with the teacher, the five members of the study group that she shadowed, and four other students from the class.

Examining her field notes and interview transcripts, it was clear that dialogue was a central aspect of the course, which was explicitly spoken about but on a superficial level that failed to acknowledge the power dynamics inherent in dialogue and the potential for dialogue to contribute to critical action. As is common, there were several people in the class that tended to dominate the conversation, which Kaufmann determined by counting utterances during the discussions. Kaufmann (2010: 465) found that the two students that dominated the discussions were a White working-class woman and a 'light skinned' middle-class Chicano. She thus deduced that "who spoke and in what context were influenced by the interconnecting factors of race, class, and gender". There were several factors that influenced why students felt they could contribute or should remain silent—often these were cultural factors, or the lack of teacher intervention in facilitating or guiding dialogue. In addition to students from certain backgrounds not feeling comfortable engaging in discussion

because they had been raised to keep personal issues and opinions to themselves, they also mentioned that the White students knew how to engage in debate in a way that silenced others (Kaufmann, 2010). “Along with blatantly dismissing a student of colour’s dialogical contribution, many White female students were observed immediately accepting a student of colour’s personal experience with, ‘Oh yeah, me, too’ followed by an elaboration of their own story” (ibid: 465). This kind of behaviour, along with talking over others or cutting in, were commonly used by White students to draw attention to their own narrative while pushing the other students to the margins of the class. Interestingly, in the interviews the White students who were engaging in these practices did not realise them or think they were an issue, while the students who were being silenced “were reflective of their role in the construction of speech and silence in the classroom” (ibid: 466). Kaufmann (2010: 466) posits that in this classroom, “dialogue functioned here as a means for power to continue to centre itself through the rules of its own practice while operating under the guise of an emancipatory endeavour”.

The second theme identified by Kaufmann (2010: 467) was that of the relationship between dialogue and critical democracy, which she defined as “ideologically demystifying oppressive discourses or materially altering oppressive relations”. Kaufmann determined that the dialogue in the class focused mainly on talking about the required texts for the class, opinions, and statements of truth or fact about what they had read. Surprisingly, none of these threads were used to interrogate the others, meaning that the texts were not used to inform the dialogue about people’s opinions or beliefs, and nor were they used to challenge facts.

Therefore, Kaufmann determined that in this class there was no potential for dialogue

to challenge power or dominant ideologies. However, there were a couple of examples from the small study group that led Kaufmann to conclude that the solidarity that had developed between group members helped them challenge cultural practices and their own responses to the text through dialogue. Interestingly, the small group seemed to offer the opportunity for scaffolding of ideological critique—meaning that group members could go further together than they might have on their own, however this does have its limitations because “it appeared that the group could go only where at least one of the members had been before” (Kaufmann, 2010: 469). Although the group solidarity may have helped them engage in critical dialogue about the text and their own reality, at the same time it perpetuated an ‘us versus them mentality’ without challenging how these roles came to be. Kaufmann’s (2010) findings suggest that dialogue in the classroom doesn’t always contribute to the emancipatory aims that it aspires, and often ends up perpetuating inequality in the classroom. Similar to Jeyaraj & Harland (2016), Kaufmann’s research seems to reveal a greater need for facilitation from the critical educator to guide dialogue so that it is able to go beyond the telling of stories to something deeper that connects the texts, narratives, and social conditions of students in a way that allows them to ‘demystify oppressive discourses’. Although further facilitation of dialogue would inevitably lead the discussion in certain ways, contributing to the risk for indoctrination mentioned by Jeyaraj & Harland (2016), it would allow for a “critical dialogue on language and discourse” and how they can influence the dynamics in the classroom, which might help students reflect on how they manage their position in the classroom, whether it is in the centre or on the margins.

Ellsworth (1989) Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy

Ellsworth's (1989) article is likely one of the most cited critiques of critical pedagogy. The power of her critique lies in the fact that it is anchored in her own experience of attempting to implement a critical pedagogical approach in her teaching, while still drawing heavily on critical and feminist theory to challenge issues of empowerment, student voice, dialogue, and critical reflection, as well as "provocative issues about the nature of action for social change and knowledge" (Ellsworth, 1989: 297). Partly in response to "the increased visibility of racist acts and structures on campus", Ellsworth (1989) facilitated a special course called 'Media and Anti-Racist Pedagogies' which aimed to examine the recent instances of campus racism and the traditional pedagogy at her university, which became the focus of her research.

Ellsworth's (1989) first explicit critique of critical pedagogy in her paper is the illusion of equality that critical pedagogues try to promote in their classrooms. Although critical pedagogues do acknowledge the authority that teachers have over students in the classroom, and identify it as problematic, Ellsworth (1989: 306) argues that theorists have failed to reconceptualise the unequal power dynamic in the classroom, instead "trying to transform negative effects of power imbalances within the classroom into positive ones". Ellsworth claims that using dialogue in the classroom and other strategies that attempt to 'empower' students give the illusion that there is a more equal power dynamic, when in fact the relationship has not changed. Ellsworth (1989) uses an example discussed by Freire and Shor as they re-imagine the teacher as a student, learning more about the students' worlds through their engagement with the material. Although this might sound as if dialogic inquiry is

challenging the hierarchy in the classroom, Ellsworth (1989: 306) is quick to point out inconsistencies:

The literature explores only one reason for expecting the teacher to 're-learn' an object of study through the student's less adequate understanding, and that is to enable the teacher to devise more effective strategies for bringing the student 'up' to the teacher's level of understanding.

Another way around the power imbalance in the classroom, according to Ellsworth (1989), is to recognize that 'directiveness' in education is inevitable, but that some imbalances are acceptable, mainly those that provide information, promote discussion, and are a result of the trust and respect of students. Ellsworth (1989: 308) struggled with this issue in particular because in her situation there were often things that she was not the more knowledgeable 'authority' on:

Yet I did not understand racism better than my students did, especially those students of color coming into class after six months (or more) of campus activism and whole lives of experience and struggle against racism—nor could I ever hope to.

Possibly unique to Ellsworth's situation (and certainly in contrast with the narrative presented by Freire and others about the role of critical pedagogy) is that many of her students were coming to the class with their 'oppositional voices' already formulated—they didn't need a teacher to raise their consciousness about structural injustice or to help them construct their identity and voice through dialogue. In the case of Ellsworth's students, they had been part of social movements that had already done this work, and often without the help of an intellectual.

Ellsworth's (1989) class, who renamed themselves 'Coalition 607' (607 was the module code), highlighted another difficulty when it came to enacting the theory of critical pedagogy in the classroom—dialogue didn't seem to be empowering in a

situation where there were multiple 'voices'. The diverse nature of Coalition 607 meant that when engaging in dialogue, at any point some groups were silenced and others were given more privilege to speak or engage than others. Ellsworth (1989: 315) identifies this as one of the myths of critical pedagogy— 'democratic' dialogue isn't always possible, and in fact it often creates a situation where members of the class are forced to take positions of 'us' versus 'them':

Acting as if our classroom were a safe space in which democratic dialogic was possible and happening did not make it so. If we were to respond to our context and the social identities of the people in our classroom in ways that did not reproduce the oppressive formations we were trying to work against, we needed classroom practices that confronted the power dynamics inside and outside of our classroom that made democratic dialogue impossible.

Upon reflection, Ellsworth and Coalition 607 realised that to create a safer space they needed to cultivate trust, partially through genuine interest and investment in the cause, but also through social interactions outside of the classroom. This provided the opportunity to get to know people on a more human level; their histories, their motivations. In addition to 'whole class' social activities, Ellsworth also noted that some of the students in the class that felt silenced or marginalised by the topic of the course (specifically international students and women) started to form their own smaller groups outside of the class to discuss shared experiences of discrimination, political movements, or interests. These groups, Ellsworth (1989: 317) argues, "were necessary for working against the way current historical configurations of oppressions were reproduced in the class". In particular, there was an issue around intersectionality, where students of color felt they had to undercut their gender or sexuality in order to engage in challenging racism. In response to this, Ellsworth (1989:

318) and Coalition 607 worked toward building connections between the aspects that were shared amongst members, but also the elements that they did not:

These positions gave us different stakes in, experiences of, and perspectives on, racism. These differences meant that each strategy we considered for fighting racism on campus had to be interrogated for the implications it held for struggles against sexism, ableism, elitism, fat oppression, and so forth.

In order to evaluate the acceptability of their interventions on campus, the class asked whether the strategies would help to alleviate racism on campus while at the same time not undercutting the efforts of other social groups on campus. This relates to McArthur's (2010) criticism of the 'splintering' of different radical pedagogies to address the needs of disparate groups. McArthur (2010: 496) argues instead that difference and disagreement are necessary within any movement that aims to enact social change, and that breaking off into different groups with distinct pedagogies "has weakened the possibilities for emancipatory change", and instead the different groups should work together toward a more just society. Although McArthur (2010) does not explain how this could be achieved, Ellsworth's (1989) experience working with Coalition 607 may provide an example of how different groups can work together toward social justice.

Coalition 607 planned and engaged in three different events to draw attention to the social injustices occurring on campus by 'interrupting business-as-usual' in the public spaces of the campus. The three events were each planned by three different 'affinity' groups with the support of other members of the class. Although the groups had different priorities and had different ideas about social action, "they were 'unified' through their activity of mutual critique, support, and participation, as each group

worked through, as much as possible, ways in which the other supported or undercut its own understandings and objectives” (ibid: 320).

Ellsworth’s class encouraged the students to engage in critique and action against the power relations on campus that reproduced inequality and racism. Through the support of their classmates, who often had different intersectional identities, they were able to make connections across difference to engage in discussion and critique of unjust social structures and behaviours on campus, as well as in their own ‘critical’ classroom. Ellsworth questions what kind of education project could allow students to engage in a truly emancipatory pedagogy that completely reimagines ‘knowing’ so that it is not defined by those in power, resulting in the understanding that some things are unknowable. In answer to this question, Ellsworth (1989) suggests a classroom practice that allows teachers and students to ‘move about’. This process would involve recognising and knowing the Other while at the same time understanding that you can never completely know the Other (and nor can they know you or themselves completely). This would highlight that identity is something that is not fixed, it is historically and politically situated. Ellsworth’s (1989: 322) classroom “was the site of dispersed, shifting, and contradictory contexts of knowing that coalesced differently in different moments of student/professor speech, action, and emotion”. This means that everyone has to constantly reflect on their identity and their place within the group/class, including (and maybe especially) the professor, paying particular attention to how others construct and understand the identities of others.

Ellsworth’s (1989) research and reflection on her university classroom highlight her difficulties in practicing critical pedagogy in a diverse and divided context. Her

critique of critical pedagogy begins with a struggle to put the abstract theory into practice in a helpful way, but in the process reveals other problems surrounding what she refers to as the 'repressive myths' of critical pedagogy. These include the illusion of power balance through the implantation of dialogue or the privileging of student voice, which Ellsworth (1989) claims silence some while giving others more space to have their say. She also challenges the purpose behind student voice and the sharing of student knowledge, which she argues is instrumentalised to gauging the level of the student to inform more effective learning. Ellsworth's (1989) reflection suggested that critical pedagogy might be simplifying or generalising the image of the oppressed into an easily united homogenous group, when in reality everyone's identity is fluid and an intersection of multiple identities, which sometimes makes dialogue and action challenging.

Implications

From the selection of research reviewed above, it is clear that there is an interest in critical pedagogy in universities, but that it is not without its challenges. The overarching themes discussed in the research reviewed in this section were the importance of creating a community in the classroom (Breunig, 2009; Ellsworth, 1989), rethinking and challenging the power dynamics that operate in the practice of dialogue (Kaufmann, 2010; Ellsworth, 1989; Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016), and issues around authority, power and directiveness in teaching (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016; Kaufmann, 2010; Ellsworth, 1989). All of the studies reviewed here drew attention to the scarcity of literature about critical pedagogical practice, especially at university level (Ellsworth, 1989; Breunig, 2009; Kaufmann, 2010; Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016), suggesting there is a gap in the literature that needs to be filled. Although Jeyaraj & Harland's (2016)

research was unique in that it used an international sample from various countries, much of the research into critical pedagogy in the university seems to be conducted in North America, mainly Canada and the US. The lack of research conducted in universities in the UK also implies a gap in critical pedagogical research that I hope to address with my study.

The studies reviewed above mostly relied on interviews (Breunig, 2009; Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016) or self-reflection (Ellsworth, 1989) to collect data, neglecting the importance of observing pedagogical practice as well as the context in which educators are attempting to implement critical pedagogy. Despite the researchers' interest in critical pedagogies and their emancipatory and empowering aims, none of the researchers discuss using a critical approach to their research. While the review of these studies reinforced the importance of utilising different data collection methods to better understand pedagogical decision-making and practice, they did not offer examples of how to make the research process more congruent with critical pedagogical theory (RQ3).

Despite the contributions of the literature reviewed in this section, there is still a need to explore the links between theory and practice in more detail, drawing on particular examples of critical pedagogical practice to develop a deeper understanding of what critical pedagogical practice looks like in the university. Therefore, the current study aims to explore how educators who self-identity as critical pedagogues in English universities perceive critical pedagogical theory and practice and how they attempt to implement it in their classrooms. Like much of the research reviewed above, there will likely be systems that constrain the implementation of innovative or untraditional pedagogies or contexts that make critical pedagogy difficult or impossible (Ellsworth,

1989), which is another area of interest addressed by RQ2. This thesis aims to contribute to knowledge in two key areas through research on self-identifying critical pedagogues in English HE: first, understanding how SICPs put their pedagogical beliefs into practice in the current context of marketisation (RQ1), and second, conceptualising the challenges that SICPs face to implementing critical pedagogical practice at the micro, meso and macro levels of their lives and how they go about overcoming these (RQ2). By addressing these two areas, this thesis hopes to contribute to a more nuanced and context specific understanding of critical pedagogical practice in English universities, which could lead to further development of critical pedagogical practice as well as an understanding of how critical pedagogy can be better utilised to challenge the current era of neoliberalisation which is manifested in the marketization of the HE sector.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter I intend to contribute to the field of critical research by presenting my attempt to develop a more critical and coherent method that is congruent with the values of my research area (which I reflect upon in more detail in Chapter 9). Specifically, I am interested in the role of power in research and how this is manifested in several ways: how the language commonly used in research creates a power imbalance (see Gitlin & Russell, 1994; Cannella & Lincoln, 2009; Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009), how the design of studies often places the needs of the researcher above those of the researched (Kvale, 2006), and how participants are often portrayed as powerless to understand or change their current situation (Lather 1988). Instead, I attempt a critical approach to research that aims to empower participants as well as challenge the hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched. Drawing particularly on the work of Patti Lather (1986, 1988, 1991), who champions a critical feminist methodology, in this chapter I will begin by exploring what a critical approach to research might look like, focusing on values and power. Following the section on critical research, I will outline the design of the current study; how I selected my sample, the methods used to collect and analyse data, as well as a discussion of ethical issues.

Critical research is driven by social justice. In describing research for social justice, Griffiths (1998: 13) defines social justice as “concerned both with individual empowerment and also with structural injustices.” To this end, Griffiths (1998) posits that research can be considered to be for social justice if it is focused on justice issues, if the research is done using a framework that is informed by the researcher’s orientation to justice issues, or if the methodology or epistemology that underpins the

research constitutes social justice. While these three categories often overlap, the suggestion that critical research can manifest in various ways is important in highlighting different aspects of the research that can champion social justice, as well as revealing the many possible approaches to critical research. This thesis contributes to critical research because it not only focuses on critical pedagogy and educators who feel marginalised in English HE, but it also attempts to challenge issues of power and empowerment in the research process through reflection and the design of the study.

4.1 What is Critical Research?

Like critical pedagogy, there isn't a simple definition of critical research or a comprehensive guide to what constitutes critical inquiry. This is likely due to the variety of critical perspectives that inform critical methodologies (Cannella & Lincoln, 2009). However, at the core of what many consider to be critical research is challenging or transforming dominant and mainstream structures and discourses, which can happen as a result of or through the research process (Griffiths, 1998). Further, Cannella & Lincoln (2009) claim that critical research should focus on the role of power in perpetuating and reifying taken-for-granted perspectives that create 'unjust and oppressive social conditions'. Often, critical projects focus on the historical origins of these conditions, as well as the discourses that are used to maintain these imbalances (Cannella & Lincoln, 2009). Coming from the feminist tradition, Patti Lather (1992: 87) considers 'critical' inquiry as "inquiry that takes into account how our lives are mediated by systems of inequality such as classism, racism, and sexism". Further, Lather (1992) posits that research should empower individuals to not only understand the social world they operate in, but also inspire them to get involved in changing it. Using a critical approach to research implies use of an interpretivist approach, "where

the focus is on *constructed* versus *found* worlds” (Lather, 1992: 89, emphasis in original). Building on interpretivist research, which aims to understand and explore the lives of the participants or a certain context, critical or praxis-oriented research is interested in emancipating participants and researchers as a result of the improved understanding gained through the research process (Lather, 1992). According to Freire (1970: 88), research as “thematic investigation thus becomes a common striving towards awareness of reality and towards self-awareness, which makes this investigation a starting point for the educational process or for cultural action of a liberating character”.

Critical inquiry is often in response to or interested in the needs of marginalised and oppressed people (Fay, 1977), and as such it begins with an exploration of the participants’ world in order to build an understanding of their lived experience. This has two purposes: to use this understanding to develop theory and to correct any misunderstandings on the part of the researcher about the lives of participants (Lather, 1986b) and to help participants engage in reflexivity in order to better understand their own situation. To be considered critical inquiry, the project should inspire participants to engage in the process of transformation through dialogue and reciprocal engagement with the researcher. Therefore, Freire (1970: 87) thought participants should be engaged as co-investigators, for “the more active an attitude men and women take in regard to the exploration of their thematics, the more they deepen their critical awareness of reality and, in spelling out those thematics, take possession of that reality”. The concept of reciprocity is important in critical research, as it hopes to portray that both participants and researchers learn from each other, co-constructing understanding through dialogue, thereby challenging the traditional

hierarchy of research (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2017). This dynamic is similar to Freire's (1970) reconceptualization of the student-teacher dynamic as one where both student and teacher learn from each other.

In an effort to avoid rehashing of the paradigm wars in research, I will briefly cover some of the key moves that specifically affected critical inquiry that were reviewed by Denzin (2015) drawing on the work of Teddlie & Tashakkori's (2003) history of what they identify as the three paradigm wars. According to Denzin (2015: 37), these three paradigm wars consisted of: "the postpositivist-constructivist war against positivism (1970-1990); the conflict between competing postpositivist, constructivist, and critical theory paradigms (1990-2005); and the current conflict between evidence-based methodologists and the mixed-methods, interpretative, and critical theory schools (2005-present)". These debates centred on epistemological issues, but also brought up questions about power and how participants were viewed and treated. Positivist research tends to focus on measuring an objective reality, while qualitative research "is a moral, allegorical and therapeutic project" (Denzin, 2015: 36). Most relevant for the current research, as well as the research climate in HE (which was discussed in more detail in Chapter 2), are the two latter 'periods of conflict', which centre on strategic compromises made to make research more practical. The emergence of mixed methods is an example of this, as the epistemological underpinnings that make quantitative and qualitative research incompatible are ignored in order to 'triangulate' findings to account for the weaknesses of each approach. This strategic compromise in the name of pragmatism (Howe, 2004) leads on to the next phase, in which evidence-based research reigns supreme and abstracted empiricism becomes the mainstream paradigm (Denzin,

2015). This is particularly important in that this signals a disconnection between research and politics, as well as the negation of historically and context situated research.

Critical qualitative research is perhaps even more important in the current context of neoliberalism that affects all aspects of our lives. In this context, Denzin (2015: 32) calls the interpretive community to commit to research that makes a difference in the lives of the oppressed, “to change the world and to change it in ways that resist injustice while celebrating freedom and full, inclusive, participatory democracy”. This mission becomes even more essential in our numbers dominated world. The neoliberal models of excellence and quality attempt to limit the kind of research that is valued (discussed in more detail in Chapter 2), instead, Denzin (2015: 33) encourages critical researchers to “create our own standards of evaluation, our own measures of quality, influence, excellence, and social justice impact”.

The following sections will explore values and power in research in order to demonstrate the principles that underpin a critical methodology and how they might be put into practice to conduct empowering and critical research. In particular, issues of reciprocity and language will be explored in relation to power.

Values in Research

Critical methodologies do not try to remain neutral or objective, instead they have a clear ideological purpose. This purpose is connected to the epistemological underpinnings of these approaches, which were discussed in Chapter 3 (section 3.3). Lather (1992) highlights the connection between this notion and Freire’s statement that education is never neutral. By doing this, Lather draws a connection between teaching practice and the theories used to research them. If education itself is not

neutral, why should the methodologies used to research education be objective and 'scientific'? By privileging scientific methods of research, we imply that the only important questions are those that can be answered by those means (Carr, 1986), and therefore, that education is something that can be quantified and measured. A move toward a more interpretive approach to social research promotes research as a way toward "understanding, meaning and action" (Carr, 1986: 83), to further critical research's aims of emancipation and deconstruction (Lather, 1992). Further, by challenging traditional modes of research, critical researchers challenge the way that knowledge created through traditional methods often ignores issues of power, perpetuating the status quo (Lather, 1992).

However, with a move toward more 'subjective' approaches to empirical research, there is a risk that researchers will instead engage in "rampant subjectivity" where they only find what they are looking for, which could result in research that is just as questionable as overly objective research that ignores the values that underpin it. A possible solution is to instead be explicit about the values that underpin the knowledge being produced, rather than pretending that they are absent, in a sense owning up to biases so they cannot be questioned later. Griffiths (1998) posits that the researcher's values are present in their interest in the research topic, which invariably biases them at the beginning of the project, but it should not close-down their research or imply that the entire project is biased. According to Griffiths (1998) bias can occur at three different levels: within the research process, in relation to the values of the researcher and how they impact the research, and in the wider context of the research. In regard to the values of the researcher and how they impact the

research itself, Griffiths (1998: 134) advises declaring a clear stance in terms of the values that underpin the research, because “bias comes precisely from... hiding, not eliminating, partiality.” Of course, this in itself is dependent on the fact that Griffiths adopts a feminist-postmodernist perspective in which there is no objective truth. Lather (1986: 260), also a feminist researcher, suggests praxis as a way to address accountability issues, as reflection on the impact of values on the process of data collection and analysis helps to demonstrate the “trustworthiness of data”. I will reflect on the process of data collection and analysis in Chapter 9, as well as how my values and my position affect these processes.

Power in Research

A key aspect of critical research is its focus on power structures, both in the context under study and the research process. The challenge is that, according to Cannella & Lincoln (2009: 57), critical researchers often get “caught up in the paradox of attempting to investigate and deconstruct power relations even as we are ourselves engaged in a project that creates and re-creates power accruing primarily to us.” This is partially due to the language used to discuss research processes that “maintain power relations, that appear to prevent transformative action” (Cannella & Lincoln, 2009: 55). The language that is used affects the dynamic between the researcher and the researched, giving more power to the researcher as expert, designer of the research, analyser of data, and disseminator of findings (Kvale, 2006). Power is negotiated at several levels throughout the research process, ranging from more explicit and overt forms of power, such as the participant refusing to answer a question or leaving the interview, to the more hidden forms of power, such as when the researcher encourages certain narratives that support their beliefs (Hoffman,

2007). Power can also be mediated by external factors that are outside of the researcher's control, such as gender, race, and professional position (Anyan, 2013).

Power is present throughout the research process, from design to analysis and dissemination (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). How researchers navigate the power dynamic between the researcher and the researched is connected to their epistemological, ontological and ethical positions. For example, if I believed that social research could be done objectively without my own position as the researcher influencing data collection, then I might construct a more authoritative role in the research process—I might believe that by conducting the study in a certain way I could create an objective truth about critical pedagogues, which would need to remain unsullied by the values of the researcher and the influence of participants (Anyan, 2013). On the contrary, I think it is impossible to create objective accounts of pedagogical practice, and therefore I am concerned about power for a very different reason—I want to minimise the power imbalance between the researcher and the participants in order to empower participants by asking them to co-construct an understanding of critical pedagogical practice through reflection and dialogue. According to Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach (2009) this perspective on power dynamics is representative of either a feminist or co-constructivist approach to research. This section will explore power dynamics in the research process and how they are particularly shaped by the language used in the research process.

Power throughout the Research Process

The balancing act of power dynamics between the researcher and participants begins with the design of the study, which is influenced by the epistemological and ontological beliefs of the researcher. How the researcher designs the study sets the

stage for the rest of the research, and can give participants an active, collaborative role in the research or resign them to the role of informant (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). The next stage that influences the power balance is recruitment—how much information participants are given about the study before agreeing to participate is dictated by the researcher (as well as ethical committees), and often participants might feel pressured or obligated to participate for a variety of reasons, like being referred by a colleague or friend. However, Swaminathan & Mulvihill (2017) highlight the participants also have the power to decline to participate, as well as to question the researcher and their methods and intentions. On the other hand, deciding whether to participate can be complex; in the area of critical or constructivist research, in particular, there might be the sense of responsibility to contribute to an area or cause that you are passionate about, or one that directly impacts your working life (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). This also relates to the idea of reciprocity in research—if researchers are unaware of the expectations or desired outcomes of the participants, how can they design a study that is truly reciprocal? Although it seems that the researcher has most of the control in the beginning stages of the research, participants do still have some power—they have information and experience that the researchers want to learn more about, which can be especially powerful in the case of research on groups that might be hard to reach or find. In a sense, they are gatekeepers of their own experience, and that gives them power. However, Hoffman (2007) points out that despite the power the participant has over their story, participants often perceive that researchers possess a great deal of power. Often, there is a perception that researchers might unveil thoughts the participant would

rather not share, and considering the researcher's role in dissemination of the findings, they may not respect the privacy of participants.

According to Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach (2009), during the data collection phase, where power lies is slightly harder to identify, and is dependent on the method being used. For example, in the case of participant observations, the participant controls the access to the environment and their own behaviour. However, the researcher is in control of what they are attending to in the environment, the way they take field notes or record what is occurring, and their own behaviour as they participate in the environment (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). Much of the power dynamic in this phase is dependent on the relationship that develops between the researcher and the participants, as well as external factors such as professional standing or gender. Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach (2009:282) discuss this in relation to interviews: "one measure of the interviewer's success is the ability to retrieve and receive the participant's story and permission to use it in the research," which they claim is accomplished by building rapport with participants. Whether this rapport is genuine or manipulative is an ethical concern, as it may cause the participants to disclose information they wanted to keep private and may cause distress. Building rapport can sometimes make the interview feel less like an interview and more like a social conversation, which can sometimes lead researchers and participants alike to forget the role that power plays in this dynamic (Swmainathan & Mulvihill, 2017). Although the participants ultimately have control over the information they choose to share with researchers, in most interviews the researcher maintains power by remaining in control of the research topic and the flow of the conversation (Kvale, 2006). However, this could be mediated by using a more semi-structured or

unstructured approach to the interview, which would give participants more say in guiding the discussion (Swmainathan & Mulvihill, 2017). Even in interviews that are structured and controlled by the researcher, participants can exert power by ‘testing’ (Hoffman, 2007: 322), which occurs “when the interviewee exposes the researcher’s inferiority or lack of knowledge in areas in which the informant has expertise”. In this sense, the interviewee can highlight the fact that in this situation, the researcher is the student and the interviewee, as possessor of valuable knowledge, is placed in the traditional role of the teacher (Hoffman, 2007).

While an unstructured interview may move toward more equal control of the discussion, there is a risk that the participants might go in a direction that isn’t relevant. This is also a manifestation of their power in the interview—“through which stories the interviewee shares, in what way she told them, and by what she decided not to say, the interviewee affected my understanding as well as the particular slant and flavour of that understanding” (Hoffman, 2007: 336). However, Mason (2002: 68-69) questions whether unstructured interviews are truly unled by researchers stating that: “all researchers *do* have ontological and epistemological positions which get activated or expressed in their research decisions and judgements” which “give some form of structure and purpose to the data generation process” (emphasis in original). Despite these modifications on the structured interview, the main topic for discussion is still controlled by the researcher, aside from participatory action research or community research, which puts the needs and interests of the community engaged in the research at the fore (Reason, 1994). Hoffman (2007) also highlights the pressure that the open-ended interview puts on the researcher in the form of emotional labour, referring to the way researchers are required to manage their emotions in the

'performance' of the interview. This draws attention to the complex nature of roles both the researcher and participant play over the period of the research. For example, Hoffman (2007) describes several different roles the researcher can perform with corresponding roles for the participant, ranging from the 'student' (which I already referred to in the previous paragraph) to the 'therapist'. This is important because the expected role of participants might affect their behaviour even if the researcher tries to construct a situation that repositions their roles to be less hierarchical.

The data analysis phase of the research typically gives the power back to the researcher, as they become "the 'storyteller' who recasts the story into a 'new' historical, political and cultural context" (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009: 283). Efforts can be made to involve participants in the analysis of data by various methods depending on the research paradigm of the researcher. For example, Participatory Action Research or narrative inquiry often involve participants in the analysis of data to empower the participants and also aid in the mitigating of the power dynamics at play in data analysis (Ride, 2015). However, Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach (2009) question what can be gained by involving the participants in data analysis, as well as identifying the risks associated with this practice. In some cases, involving participants in analysis might risk confidentiality or anonymity of the data, especially when comparisons across participants are being made. There may also be an ethical concern when using triangulation or other methods to improve reliability of qualitative data—how the participant sees their contribution and the relationship with the researcher may be affected negatively by exposure to data (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). There is also a practical barrier to involving participants in data analysis, as group analysis can be challenging on many levels (Ride, 2015).

Despite their use of narrative styles of inquiry, feminist researchers within the critical research tradition have published little specifically on the process of data analysis; Maynard (2009) posits this may be to avoid a sort of textbook guide to analysis, but also because in a method characterised by reflexivity, analysis is an ongoing process that permeates all levels of the research process, making it difficult to articulate. Central to analysis in feminist research, and other critical approaches, are issues related to the use of participant voice, empowering participants rather than exploiting them, and accurate representations of participants (Maynard, 2009). Even if researchers allow participants to engage in the analysis phase of the research, they still determine the parameters for this engagement and are ultimately responsible for the writing up and dissemination of the results. Hoffman (2007: 334), reflecting on her experience of conducting open-ended interviews, stated “through my decisions about where to focus my research, I determined which stories were heard; and through my choices about which quotations to include, I could affect the flavor of those stories”.

The Power of Language

Central to framing the power dynamic between the researcher and the researched is the language used to talk about the research process and those who are a part of it (Cannella & Lincoln, 2009). In Karnieli-Miller et al.'s (2009: 281) paper *Power Relations in Qualitative Research*, they discuss how the language used shapes the research process, as well as how the epistemological underpinning of the methodology affects how participants are constructed. For example, Karineli-Miller et al. (2009) highlight that in anthropological studies, participants would be called informants to fieldworkers, demonstrating a more hierarchical power relationship than in feminist or constructivist research, where the ‘participants’ have a less hierarchical

relationship with 'researchers'. The power distance is even smaller in cooperative research, where both the data collector and the participant are called 'coresearcher'.

The importance of language and discourse in shaping the research process is echoed by educational philosophers Fulford & Hodgson (2016: 15), who highlight "the relationship between language and thought, and between language and action, i.e. the idea that how we speak about a thing changes the nature of that thing and what we do". The language used to describe the research process often reveals to participants the dynamic that can be expected: structured interviews are heavily influenced by the researcher, while unstructured or semi-structured are less controlled and planned. Knight and Saunders (1999: 148) highlight this in relation to the language used to describe interviews: "interview conventions, the discourse of which often speaks of 'probe' or 'prompt', imply a subjective truth somehow 'contained' or hidden away by the interviewee and that the task of the interviewer is to uncover or discover this reality". Therefore, language not only reveals the power dynamics at play in the research process, but also suggests particular epistemological and ontological underpinnings.

Alternative methods of data collection have become more common, as researchers attempt to break away from traditional methods of conducting research. For example, Devault (1990) attempted to move away from the traditional form and hierarchical structure of the interview by developing the reciprocal interview, which was seen more as a conversation between the researcher and the participant, similar to the open interview discussed by Hoffman (2007). There are many other techniques that attempt to restructure the interview and challenge the traditional power distance of the research process by changing the way we talk about and talk during research,

such as drawing concept maps, pictures, or diagrams to guide discussion (Brown, 2019). While this is often done in an attempt to give more power and control to participants, it does not get away from the fact that the purpose and focus of the research are most often driven by the researcher (except in the cases of community and participatory-action research).

Empowering Research: Engaging in praxis

Critical inquiry, according to Fay (1977), is research that addresses the experiences and needs of those being researched. In order to better understand the lived experiences of participants it is essential that research be a dialogic process that allows participants to participate in the “construction and validation of meaning” (Lather, 1968: 268). Through dialogue, participants and researchers alike can come to a better understanding of the structures and ideologies that have shaped their experience and perceptions, leading to a transformation in the way that participants and researchers think about their situation and ways in which they can change it (Ashwin, 2008). This is a move beyond constructivist research methodologies which, Anyan (2013: 2) claims emphasise “the construction of knowledge as involving an active process by the researcher rather than a capture of social reality”, toward a more co-constructivist approach in which participants and researchers produce knowledge and understanding together. According to Tierney (1994: 98-99), critical research “is meant to be transformative; we do not merely analyse or study an object to gain greater understanding, but instead struggle to investigate how individuals and groups might be better able to change their situations.” Key to transformative research is engaging participants in praxis about their lived experience, while simultaneously attempting to conduct research in a way that is also empowering and not oppressive.

An essential element in this project is the concept of reciprocity, which is often associated with feminist approaches to research.

Lather (1986: 265) believes that using a more interactive, or dialectical approach to research “invites reciprocal reflexivity and critique, both of which guard against the central dangers to praxis-oriented empirical work: imposition and reification on the part of the researcher”. If research does not contain this element that allows participants to understand their situation themselves, then the participant becomes an object that is being described and explained by the researcher, who is expert or interpreter. Without being able to understand their own position in the world and the conditions in which they live, how can participants be expected to make changes to their situation? In this sense, without the empowering aspect of research which requires dialogue and reflexivity about the situation under study and the way that it is researched, Lather (1986b) claims that research often merely uses the participants and then does nothing to empower them, despite their potential aim to do so.

The power of dialogic interviews is echoed by Knight and Saunders (1999: 144), who argue that “if we are to understand complex and taken-for-granted situations, beliefs and behaviours, the interviewer and the informant need to collaborate to construct explicit accounts on the basis of the informant’s experience and tacit knowledge”. While questioning the hierarchical relationship between the participant and the researcher that is implied by the word ‘informant’, this might be a reflection of the period of publication, as Knight and Saunders are explicit about using a constructivist approach. Knight and Sanders (1999: 147) attempt to construct meaning with the participants to unveil diverse meanings in order to “make the tacit explicit”.

The difference, however, between what Lather (1986b) was depicting as an empowering dialectical interview and the dialogic interview as presented by Knight and Saunders (1999) is the purpose behind the dialogue. In the case of Lather it is to empower participants to transform their situation, for Knight and Saunders it is to engage participants in reflexivity to better understand and construct the diverse experiences of participants.

Portraying interviews and 'dialogues' as non-hierarchical has been challenged by Kvale (2006) as presenting participants with the illusion of equality when this is often not the case. The conceptualisation of the interview as creating a liberating and empowering research dynamic has also been challenged by feminist researchers, such as Burman (1997), who called into question why researchers were trying to create a more personal dynamic, claiming that it often led to manipulation and exploitation as participants might feel more comfortable to divulge details they would rather keep private. This relates to the distinction between rapport and reciprocity. Building rapport with participants can lead to richer data, as they might feel more inclined to share personal information with people they see as caring and friendly. However, Lather (1986b) argues that in critical research there is a need to go beyond manipulating participants to get more data and move toward a reciprocity that is grounded in genuine concern for participants by helping them use the research experience to better understand their own situation and figure out how to change it for the better. Reciprocity is a complex concept that has many meanings. Ben-Ari and Enosh (2012: 426) argue that reciprocity in research:

stems from the common interest of both research parties to understand in depth the phenomenon in question ... as a process

whereby each research party believes that he or she contributes necessarily to the other party, but to a matter of common interest, an issue of concern, a social phenomenon, or a personal matter.

Therefore, reciprocity can take the form of “interactive self-disclosure,” (Lather, 1968: 264) where both participants and researchers share relevant experiences from their own lives in the interview. This self-disclosure can extend beyond personal experience to discussing the design of the study or methods of analysis, depending on how interactive the research is. Reciprocity can also be egoistic, in that the benefits derived are gratifying for the researcher or participant (Ben-Ari and Enosh, 2012), which relate to the different roles mentioned by Hoffman (2007)—sometimes participants just want someone to listen to their story (therapist-patient) or they want to share their knowledge of a phenomenon (teacher-student). Often in critical research, which highlights social and political issues, participants and researchers are both interested in reflecting on and voicing the experiences of marginalised communities (Ben-Ari and Enosh, 2012). Reciprocity, although based on exchange, does not necessarily mean that this exchange is equal—however, Ben-Ari & Enosh (2012: 426) claim that “the reciprocity norm has lessened the abuse of power even if not totally preventing it”. Instead, Ben-Ari and Enosh (2012) suggest recognising the different contributions the researcher and participants bring to the project. In this situation, “reciprocity allows for asymmetrical relations, be they static or dynamic, while enabling each research party to gain from them” (Ben-Ari & Enosh, 2012: 427).

In her article *Research as Praxis*, Lather (1986: 266) provides some suggestions about how researchers can build more reciprocity into their research design, such as interactive and dialogic interviews where researchers and participants alike disclose information about their lives; sequential interviews of participants to develop a more

in-depth understanding; negotiating meaning with participants, which can be “recycling description, emerging analysis” and sharing preliminary conclusions with participants; and creating opportunities to discuss and challenge taken-for-granted beliefs or false consciousness. Although writing 32 years ago, Lather (1986b) claimed there were few research approaches that go beyond involving participants in descriptive meaning making, which often takes place in the interview with a possible follow up with transcripts and analysis to make sure there weren’t any glaring misunderstandings. Involving participants as co-researchers to interpret data or build theories is even rarer and, at least at that time, remained a dream for empowering researchers (Lather, 1986b), although it has become more common in the last couple decades which have seen more participatory community-based research (Lather, 2013). One example of this kind of co-construction and validation of knowledge are the feminist consciousness-raising groups of the 1960s and 1970s. These groups started as a way for women to share thoughts and experiences, but through this process “[w]hat were once thought to be individual problems were redefined as social problems that require political solutions” (Lather, 1986b: 265). According to Fay (1977), what made these groups unique was that instead of starting by reading theory or imposing ‘scholarly’ understandings on the women in the groups, they learned from the experiences of others which were often shared experiences. Talking in these groups helped the members to share in a safe environment in a way that let them think through and articulate their experiences and feelings to make them more understandable for the listeners, but also for themselves.

There is a diverse tradition of critical scholarship and methodologies that has been developing over the last 50 years (Canella, 2015; Denzin, 2015), through the

development of constructivist, critical and post-structural paradigms. Examples of methodologies that are considered to be 'critical research' are critical discourse analysis, critical narrative analysis, critical ethnography, and situational analysis (Pasque & Salazar Perez, 2015). However, despite numerous calls to put social justice issues at the centre of research, critical methodologies have yet to become mainstream (Canella, 2015). One reason for the marginalising of critical research is the change in funding of research and the prioritisation of research that produces measurable and impactful results (Canella & Lincoln, 2009). Lather (2013: 635) argues, more recently, that we are now in a post-qualitative stage, in which researchers "imagine and accomplish an inquiry that might produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently. This inquiry cannot be tidily described in textbooks or handbooks. There is no methodological instrumentality to be unproblematically learned."

Validity and Reliability in Critical Research

Thinking about validity and reliability of data in critical qualitative research is challenging due to the paradigmatic underpinnings of qualitative research (Lather, 1986a). In quantitative research, validity can be calculated and is therefore easier to demonstrate, whereas research validity needed to be reconceptualised for the interpretivist paradigm (Lather, 1968a). Dallimore (2000: 161) highlights the differences between the underpinning aims of positivistic and interpretivist approaches, arguing that they should not be held to the same standards—research that aims to "predict and control" cannot be evaluated in the same way as research that "aims to explain and enhance understanding of phenomena or that seeks emancipation and change". While there have been a range of suggestions on how to

establish the validity and authenticity of data including triangulation, reflexivity and member checks (Guba, 1981), Lather (1968a) suggests categories of construct validity, face validity, and catalytic validity for critical interpretivist research. Lincoln, Lynham & Guba (2011) have also made a distinction between methodological and interpretative validity, which they claim are often conflated. Methodological validity pertains to “rigor in the application of method”, while interpretative validity focuses more on how researchers can demonstrate how interpretations and reasoning about the data are rigorous. Lincoln, Lynham & Guba (2011: 120) suggest that interpretative validity involves questions such as: “Can our co-created constructions be trusted to provide some purchase on some important human phenomenon? Do our findings point to action that can be taken on the part of research participants to benefit themselves or their particular contexts?”

In her paper *Issues of Validity in Openly Ideological Research*, Lather (1986a) explores four main criteria for validity in critical research that address both method and interpretation. Through presenting three different research projects, Lather (1986a) develops a reconceptualised validity for social justice-orientated research. Lather argues that triangulation of multiple data sources, methods or theoretical schemes is essential for demonstrating that the data presented is trustworthy. This could be achieved by combining interview and observation methods, or interviewing multiple parties from a given context (e.g. teachers and students). While construct validity often refers to whether or not a particular method or measure tests or quantifies what it claims to, Lather (1986a) identifies construct validity in a more theoretical sense. Her focus is on whether the study has demonstrated that the theory being applied to or developed from a certain phenomenon is authentic (Lincoln,

Lynham & Guba, 2011). One example of how this could be achieved is by examining the phenomenon in different settings to see how other factors play a role, which could help the researcher assess whether they are imposing a theory on to a situation rather than using the theory to better understand the phenomenon. A focus on how the data are compatible and inconsistent with theories being explored would demonstrate reflexivity and construct validity:

A systemised reflexivity, which gives some indication of how a priori theory has been changed by the logic of the data, becomes essential in establishing construct validity in ways that will contribute to the growth of illuminating and change-enhancing social theory (Lather, 1986a: 67).

Face validity relates more to interpretation of the data, and evaluates whether the research has reliably represented the phenomenon under study. An important aspect of face validity is member checking, which not only enhances the credibility of data, but also is congruent with a more collaborative research design that allows participants to feedback and influence data analysis (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). In addition to asking participants to read transcripts or field notes, researchers might also discuss trends or theories with them in “an effort to assess validity through participant reaction to the results of the research” (Lather, 1986a: 74). And finally, perhaps the most important in critical research, is catalytic validity, which refers to “the degree to which the research process re-orient, focusses, and energizes participants in what Freire (1973) terms ‘conscientization,’ knowing reality in order to better transform it” (Lather, 1986a: 67). Lather claims catalytic validity should demonstrate not only that the outcome of the research contributes to self-understanding, but also that engaging in the research process itself aids the participants in developing self-awareness and heightened awareness of societal

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influences. An example of this is conducting interviews in order to better understand participants' decision-making processes—in the process of engaging in the research, participants might benefit from reflecting on and analysing their decisions and actions, and might become more aware of the structural aspects that influence their decisions.

So far, this chapter has reviewed some of the developments in the field of critical interpretivist research, focusing on aspects that distinguish it from traditional interpretivist work. Attention to issues around power, language, and empowerment are key to underpinning the emancipatory aims of critical research. The rest of this chapter will focus on the design of the current study, and my attempt to implement a critical approach to research. The extent to which I achieved this will be reflected on in more detail in Chapter 9.

4.2 Method

Keeping issues of power, and indeed empowerment, in mind, the current study started with participant observations of self-identifying critical pedagogues (SICPs) in their classrooms. Building on the field notes recorded during these sessions, unstructured interviews were conducted one-on-one with participants. These interviews, which were called 'reflective dialogues' were an opportunity to better understand and clarify the teaching practice of the participants. In this way, the interview was framed by my observation of each participants' practice, and not a set of predetermined questions. While the reflective dialogue was purposefully left open so that participants could also guide the discussion (Swmainathan & Mulvihill, 2017), the dialogue was invariably also affected by my interests and the aspects of the observation I chose to ask about (Reason, 1994). Of course, there is no way to completely remove the values and preconceptions of the researcher from the design and analysis but engaging in praxis throughout the research process can help researchers understand how beliefs and values shape their research practice (Lather, 1986b).

As stated in Chapter 1, this research aimed to explore: (1) how critical pedagogues in the university perceive critical pedagogy and (2) how critical pedagogues translate theory into practice. These questions were addressed through participant observation and dialogues with lecturers who self-identified as critical pedagogues. This chapter covers the design of the research, starting with a discussion of the sample, which consisted of ten self-identifying critical pedagogues in English universities. I then describe how I collected data, starting with participant observations

followed by a reflective dialogue. I will also discuss ethical concerns around the study, particularly in reference to a critical/feminist approach to research.

Research Design

In order to explore the practice and beliefs of self-identifying critical pedagogues teaching and researching in universities in England, I used both observations and unstructured interviews. I became interested in the gap between the values and practice of critical pedagogues after reading the research of Breunig (2009), which was discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Reflecting on her own practice allowed Breunig (2009) to identify that it was difficult for her to put her own critical beliefs into practice, which inspired her to do research with other self-identifying critical pedagogues (SICPs), which revealed that many of them struggled to implement their pedagogical beliefs, as well. However, Breunig (2009) utilised phone interviews to collect data about the practice of SICPs, leaving her unable to explore influences on her participants' practice that they might not be aware of (or cognitive unconscious) and how this affects their practice (Ashwin, 2008), as well as neglecting the importance of context in relation to teaching practice. Therefore, I aimed to observe all the self-identifying critical pedagogues in my sample, followed by a reflective dialogue in which we would discuss our shared experience in the classroom. Based on my own experience as a tutor and student in higher education, I hypothesised that there were a variety of factors effecting SICPs' ability to implement a critical approach including increasing student numbers, methods of assessment, and amount of time spent with students. I hoped that the observations would also enable me to witness some of the challenges that the SICPs encountered, and that I could experience the strategies they use to overcome or work around some of these challenges.

In keeping with the epistemological underpinnings of critical pedagogy, I believed that employing an interpretivist approach would allow for a deeper understanding of how beliefs about knowledge and culture are constructed within the university context, allowing for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of critical pedagogues (Maxwell, 2009). Using a critical approach to research also affected how I managed the power dynamic in the project—having dialogues with pedagogues and participating in their classes were strategies used to minimise the power distance between the researcher and the researched. My goal in using participant observations and reflective dialogues was to explore and describe the practice of critical pedagogues lecturing in universities, but also to engage in praxis in my research. Encouraging the pedagogues to influence the research direction and process through their actions in the classroom and the topics they chose to discuss in the reflective dialogue would allow both the participant and researcher to engage in reflection about critical pedagogy and its place in the university classroom, thus engaging in praxis. For this reason, the reflective dialogue following observations remained open and focused on discussion of my perceptions and experiences, as well as the participants' reflection on practice and intentions. My aim in using the reflective dialogue was to explore shared understandings of critical pedagogy and reflections on practice, as well as challenges that might restrict their practice, providing the opportunity to “investigate people’s thinking about reality and people’s action upon reality, which is their praxis” (Freire, 1970: 87). In this way, the researcher and participants become co-investigators, not only creating a richer understanding, but also allowing all involved to deepen their critical awareness of that reality (Freire, 1970).

Sampling Method

According to Noy (2008: 328), sampling techniques are often overlooked in the literature around critical research methods, despite the fact that they are a crucial aspect of study design “where the type of contact between researcher(s) and informant is conceptualised—to be later embodied”. Typically, one might start with a larger population of possible participants, which is then narrowed down to a smaller subpopulation. In my research, I wanted to focus on the phenomenon of critical educators in English universities. This might seem like a wide net to start with, but the problem of identifying critical pedagogues in universities quickly narrowed my sample down to those who I knew and who they knew. Therefore, my main method of finding participants was snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a helpful method for finding participants when they are hard to find, hidden, or operate in the margins of the system (Noy, 2008), and can also be referred to as chain sampling. I was looking for *critical* educators in higher education, not just any educators, and therefore I started by inviting people who I knew used a critical approach to participate in my research, and then they would typically recommend people for me to contact. The problem was that I didn’t want to limit my sample by only including people who used what I considered to be a critical approach—I wanted to include people who might have a different idea of what a critical approach was. I first tried to recruit participants from a critical pedagogy reading group that I had joined, but it turned out that many of the participants were not self-identifying critical pedagogues but were instead interested in learning more about critical pedagogy, so this did not work as a place to start my sampling.

Aside from a few people that I knew from my own institution, I struggled to find participants for my research until I had a breakthrough when attending a critical pedagogy conference in 2016. At the conference, which was mostly attended by education studies and philosophy of education academics, I met Jane who gave me a list of ten people she thought would be interested in participating. After contacting them, the sample pool continued to grow, although not all who were contacted wanted to participate for various reasons. From that group of ten, I got four participants, but then from one of the participants I got three more. When that chain broke, I started being more proactive about sampling by presenting about my research at conferences. Through two conferences in 2017 I recruited three more participants. Even after using the snowball sampling approach, there were further glitches, like scheduling and self-identification that further narrowed my sample. In the end I was able to observe eight critical educators and interview ten. I wasn't able to observe all of the people that I interviewed because some of them were retired, and while others were not teaching at the time of data collection. In cases where I couldn't observe teaching, part of the interview focused on them describing their practice.

The fact that I needed to use snowball sampling to gain participants says something about the group of educators that I was studying. It means that although they might not be easy to find, they operate within a social network where they are, to a certain extent, aware of each other's work (Noy, 2008). It may also mean that in a sense, some of them want to be hidden—the majority of participants work in education or philosophy departments and try to operate in the mainstream of their university, secretly pushing at the boundaries and limits. Therefore, looking at the social network of critical pedagogues might provide a richer description of how they

operate within the university and through the use of conferences and other kinds of networking.

Using snowball sampling has other implications, one of which is around verification of eligibility (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). This was less of a problem in my research because I was trying to avoid making a judgment about whether people were critical pedagogues/educators or not, letting them use their own judgment to self-identify. However, I did have some problems with this early on as several of the first ten people I contacted based on the referral of Jane replied saying that they did not consider themselves critical pedagogues and did not use a critical approach in their practice. Snowball sampling gives some of the responsibility for recruitment to the participants, which is an interesting dynamic to add in this critical piece of research (Noy, 2008). However, Biernaki & Waldorf (1981) disagree that snowball sampling is a 'self-propelled' phenomenon, since the researcher plays an active role in controlling the accumulation of the sample. Often, meeting people who can start the snowball or referral-chain seems completely up to chance (Biernaki & Waldorf, 1981), as when I met Jane at the conference.

Participant Information

The ten self-identified critical educators that participated in my research all work in universities in England and participated because they identified with the phenomena that I am interested in: critical pedagogy. Therefore, they are not representative of educators in England. They come from a range of different universities, including three universities in London, two in the east, one in the south, one in the north, and one from central England. Potential participants were contacted via email with an information sheet and an introduction to the study. In some cases,

the name of the person who referred them was provided with permission. If they expressed further interest in participating, they were contacted with more information about scheduling and information for students. A total of twenty people were contacted with invitations to participate, and ten participated, which is a response rate of 50 per cent. I did hear back from all twenty people that I contacted, but some were unable to participate due to scheduling or because they did not identify as a critical educator. This was an interesting dynamic that I hadn't anticipated, as I was relying on others' judgment of whether people were critical pedagogues or not. Another interesting outcome of the snowball sampling method is that the majority of participants were from education or philosophy of education backgrounds (see Figure 5). This is likely a result of the networking that takes place between academics—because my snowball started with someone working in education, the majority of participants worked in this area. The only two participants that are outside the field of education were recruited through other means (Jeremy at an HE centred education conference and Claire at a multi-disciplinary critical pedagogy reading group). I will reflect more on these issues and other issues relating to sampling in Chapter 9.

I aimed to participate in two to three class sessions of each of the ten critical pedagogues to ensure that I would be exposed to different pedagogical practices, but also so that I could gain an understanding of the context for the discipline, department, or university the critical pedagogue was situated in (Hatch, 2002). Unfortunately, not all of the participants could be observed, resulting in seven participants being observed and three only being interviewed, with a total of 14 observations (for a breakdown of observations please see Figure 5). When participants were first contacted about the study, they were asked about their teaching schedule and which classes they taught

that could be observed. Participants were asked if I could participate in classes and informed that I would be taking field notes about my experience in the class and their pedagogical approach. One educator, Christine, responded that she would need to ask her students how they felt about my research, while the others simply asked me to explain my presence in the classroom the first time I observed. Students in the classes were also given an information sheet which assured them I would not be taking notes about what they said or did, that the focus was on the approach to teaching.

Pseudonym	University Location	Level of Classes	Subject	# of Observations	Date of Observation/ Interview
Arthur	London	MA	Int'l Dev.	2	Autumn 2016
Louisa	London	BA	Philosophy of Education	3	Autumn 2016
James	Midlands	N/A	Education	0	Winter 2017
Christine	Northeast	BA & MA	Education	2	Spring 2017
Rajesh	London	BA	Education	0	Summer 2017
Alesandro	Northeast	MA	Education	2	Autumn 2017
Jeremy	Manchester	BA	Psychology	2	Autumn 2017
Lena	London	MA	Education	1 (5 hrs)	Autumn 2017
Claire	London	N/A	Gender Studies	0	Autumn 2017
Paul	Southwest	BA	Philosophy of Education	2	Autumn 2017

Figure 5: Participant Information

Participant Observation

The aim of using participant observation was to allow for the potential to see how self-identifying critical pedagogues implement critical pedagogical ideologies in their teaching practice, but also for me to experience the pedagogy as a student rather than just as an outsider observing and judging them. Of course, in practice this is hard to achieve with limited time spent in each class. In my field notes I tried to reflect on

my experience of being in the class as well as things that stood out to me as a student. In addition to making field notes, I participated in group activities and discussions, did the assigned reading for the class, and often took notes on the engaging and interesting content of the classes. In some classes I even raised my hand and contributed to the plenary discussion or asked questions. My hope was that this approach to observation would contribute to research on the application of critical pedagogy in HE by identifying interesting practices of critical pedagogues which may highlight certain behaviours that they can justify or explain with theory—ideas that might develop as we engaged in dialogue about practice. Furthermore, according to Hatch (2002: 72) participating in the class as well as engaging in a dialogue with the pedagogue about their practice “allows the researcher to add his or her own experience in the setting to the analysis of what is happening”. Therefore, I planned to use myself as a source of data, using reflections on my experience in the classroom to engage in a reflective dialogue with the pedagogues, hoping that it might also provide a useful perspective on the affect the critical pedagogy might have on a classroom participant. I think this is particularly important because I am currently a doctoral student at UCL, so it is impossible for me to separate my own experience as a student from my research. Experiencing the environment of the pedagogue also allowed me to have context specific perceptions of being in their classroom and provided insights into my own values and how they might be challenged by the pedagogy employed. The extent to which I was observing or participating is open to debate, and will be discussed in Chapter 9.

According to Jorgensen (1989), participant observations typically aim to explore a concept based on involvement in a particular setting in order to develop a theory or

understanding that is grounded in that particular setting. As such, participant observation typically “requires a flexible, open-ended process for identifying and defining a problem or problems for study” (Jorgensen, 1989: 10). Building on a more ethnographic approach to research, participant observation often starts with experience in a particular setting and builds on what is found there. Jorgensen (1989: 10) explains how this works in the field:

While the researcher may have a theoretical interest in being there, exactly what concepts are important, how they are or are not related, and what, therefore, is problematic should remain open and subject to refinement and definition based on what the researcher is able to uncover and observe.

Therefore, my observations were relatively unstructured, aside from the fact that I was interested in the pedagogical practice of educators. Because I assumed that teaching practice would differ depending on the educator, the students, the context, and their understanding of critical pedagogical practice, I did not think a structured observation schedule would be beneficial for the kind of data I hoped to collect.

There are several reasons for using participant observation in conjunction with interviews (Becker & Geer, 1957). First, participating in the classes of the participants helped me better understand the situation in which they live and work, which helped me ask better questions in the interview and better understand their responses. There were also some issues that participants might not have brought up on their own, whether because they didn’t find them relevant or important, or they were uncomfortable. It is also possible that participants might see things in a different way because of what Becker & Geer (1957) refer to as ‘distorting lenses’. By using participant observation, I was better placed to understand the meanings of behaviours and concepts that might be discussed in the interview, thereby ‘learning the native

language' of the critical pedagogue. This is important because learning the language of the group under study often leads to other discoveries that may not have happened otherwise.

This points to another benefit of using participant observation, as there may be things that the participant might not think to share in an interview. This isn't always because they don't want to share, it may also be that they don't know that a common behaviour or thought is something of importance to the researcher (Becker & Geer, 1957). These unnoticed actions might be simple things, like arranging the classroom in a certain way before the class starts, or making connections between materials from previous classes, which are so ingrained in the behaviour of teachers that they wouldn't think to mention them. To some extent, participant observation also lets the researcher check what the participants says against the actual situation (Becker & Geer, 1957). This isn't to suggest that participants might purposefully distort what happened, but they might have a different perception of a series of events or might leave out commonplace behaviours. Such a situation, a disagreement about an event, might be a good opportunity for clarifying or discussing the topic. For example, if a participant were to mention that student engagement in their class was a big problem, the participant observer might be able to report that they felt that the students were engaged even if they weren't raising their hands or asking questions. This would allow the researcher and the participant to discuss what engagement looks like, or whether engagement from the teacher's perspective may vary from that of the students.

Ashwin (2008) also draws attention to an important shortcoming of much of the research conducted on teaching and learning in higher education: it relies solely on teachers' and students' perceptions of practice. Again, this isn't an issue of trusting

students and teachers to give an authentic representation of their experience, it is concerned with the issue of 'cognitive unconscious', or the idea that "as well as affecting them in ways of which they are conscious, these factors [social structures] can influence agents in ways of which they are unaware including the categories and concepts that they use to structure their interpretation of particular situations" (Ashwin, 2008: 152). Therefore, Ashwin (2008) claims that a reflective dialogue with participants can raise awareness of the effects of structural factors. However, one issue with this kind of work is that Ashwin (2008) claims researchers and participants often reflect on practice at the general level, rather than looking at specific situations. The current research, therefore, aimed to provide an opportunity for participants to engage in a reflective dialogue about particular examples or teaching practice in an effort to explore the structural and social factors that influence and constrain practice.

The issue of judgment during participant observation is something that I was particularly sensitive to, as I did not seek to judge the practice of lecturers and I did not want them to feel that I was doing so. In an effort to avoid this, I framed my participation as an opportunity to experience how participants teach and identify practice that might be interesting to explore later in the reflective dialogue. Involving the pedagogue in the exploration of practice and asking them to discuss examples of critical pedagogy in their own practice may have eased worries about researcher judgment, as well as deepening my own understanding of their practice (Hatch, 2002). There were several reasons that I wanted to avoid judging participants. First, I felt that if participants thought I was judging their practice on the grounds of whether it was critical pedagogy or not, they might be more likely to change their behaviour. Response bias is a common problem in both qualitative and quantitative research and is hard to

avoid. However, even after assuring participants that I wasn't judging their pedagogy but instead was interested in exploring how they approached teaching in the classroom, several of them asked me if I thought it was a 'good' class or whether it was critical pedagogy. The other reason I wanted to avoid judgment comes down to the ability to effectively judge whether something is in fact critical pedagogy. There is a slight dilemma here, as simply describing one's practice might not be seen as particularly empowering. This dilemma and the balance between being respectful and empowering through critique will be explored more in Chapter 9. Seeing as I am not an expert in critical pedagogy, nor do I have considerable experience teaching in higher education, it felt wrong for me to assume that I had the authority or knowledge necessary to judge whether these SICPs were engaged in critical pedagogy. Not to mention the fact that there are many different approaches to critical pedagogy, and it seemed naïve to assume that all of my participants would (or should) enact critical pedagogy in the same way. Despite the fact that I have had the opportunity to study critical pedagogical theory, as well as learn from the research done in this area, I am still relatively inexperienced in how to put these theories into practice and how to work within a system that might make this approach to pedagogy challenging. Judgment also isn't the aim of my research—if there is any judgment occurring it might be reflexive judgment in which the participants are given the opportunity to reflect on their own practice and decide for themselves whether it matches up with their critical beliefs about education and pedagogy.

Field Notes

While participating in the classes I took field notes, jotting down general information about the class: whether it was crowded or not, the layout, the general

schedule. I also took notes on the content being discussed, how the teacher talked about the content, whether they used PowerPoint or discussed the readings, if they used video or audio clips, and if they talked about other resources like Moodle. I took notes about the activities I did in small groups, brainstorming ideas or answering questions. I occasionally jotted down quotes from the lecturers if I thought they were important or phrases they commonly used in the class. Because each class was different, and I wasn't using an observation schedule or list to guide my observations, the technique I used was more spontaneous and something that developed and changed over time. It also varied between classes, as the pedagogical approaches varied significantly across the classes, even with the same participants. Some were lectures, with little engagement between the teacher and the students or in groups of students. In these classes I tended to focus more on the content of the course and how it was presented (i.e., as fixed or changeable) as opposed to the pedagogical approach. In other classes that were more participatory the focus was often more on the process, and how it related to content (e.g., participating in democratic decision making in a class on democratic education).

Although I wasn't following a particular approach to field notes, as I was conducting an unstructured observation, I tried to strike a balance between participating and taking notes. Mulhall (2003) contends that how researchers intend to use field notes in their study should dictate their approach. I saw field notes as a way for me to remember what had happened in each class, in a way that was more accurate than relying on my memory. I also saw field notes as source of information to guide the reflective dialogue with participants. In this sense, I was interested in recording a general idea of what the classes were like, but I was also interested in

particular aspects of practice or behaviour that developed over time and across observations. For example, I particularly attended to strategies participants used when engaging in discussions with their students, like thanking them for contributing, as well as paying attention to the use of images and videos rather than text to present ideas. If a pattern emerged I continued to look for those aspects in other classes and observations, both with the same participants and across participants. I was, therefore, analysing my data as I was collecting it. In this way, my 'field' narrowed by what I chose to include in the field notes, and by what I chose to omit. Of course, I could not write everything down, even if I could see everything. There are different opinions about the use of field notes, whether having detailed descriptions of everything are useful for data collection to whether this kind of detailed note taking gets in the way of 'becoming immersed in a culture' (Mulhall, 2003). Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (2011) refer to these approaches as either 'participating-to-write' or 'go with the flow'. As stated above, I used both of these approaches at different times throughout the research depending on the style of the class. For example, there were classes that were extremely participatory, full of activities and discussion, and during these classes I tended to go with the flow, rather than risk missing out by attempting to write down everything that was going on. On some level this is unfortunate because those may have been the richest class observations. Since observations were mainly used as a springboard for discussion in the reflective dialogue, as well as an opportunity to better understand the context in which participants worked, the fact that different approaches to field notes were taken in different contexts should not affect the validity of the data collected (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011). Furthermore, since participant observation is experiential in nature, this calls into question the importance of

validity—in some sense, validity could be taken to mean the accurate recording of my observations and thoughts about the phenomena under study, since there is no hope of an ‘objective’ representation of what happened (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011). Coming from an interpretivist position, I am not attempting to provide an objective representation of what happened in the classes, indeed I am using my reflections as a source of data. However, the use of the reflective dialogue may add some sense of validity to the data, as well as the member checking that occurred before thematic analysis to ensure that participants felt both field notes and transcripts accurately portrayed our shared experiences.

Reflective Dialogue

I decided to use the term ‘reflective dialogue’ to refer to the interview/discussion with participants as an attempt to use more power-neutral language in the research. Language is important because it shapes our perceptions about the world, but by using different language we can also shape our experience (Fulford & Hodgson, 2016). I decided to call the discussion with participants a reflective dialogue instead of an interview because I realised that using the word ‘interview’ has a specific connotation and that people might then make assumptions about how it would work. By calling it a dialogue I hoped that participants would think of it more as a conversation between two people rather than the researcher extracting data from the participant. According to Freire (1970), to truly engage in dialogue, there must be equality amongst those involved. I hoped by calling it a dialogue, participants might realise they could contribute to the direction or focus as much as I could (the extent to which there was or could be equality between the researcher and the researched will be discussed in Chapter 9). I chose to use the word reflective because it implies that the participants

could reflect on themselves and their practice, but also to convey to them that I would also be reflecting on my own experience in their classes.

Although I tried to use different language when referring to the reflective dialogue/interview in an effort to challenge the hierarchical relationship between the researcher and participants, it did feel awkward at times and a little artificial to think that by calling it something else the dynamic would change. I realised that it might be hard for me to change the language I was using to talk about research because I am affected by the power of the dominant discourse. By calling the interview something else, I worried that it lost its credibility as a method. Because of this internal struggle, there were times during the research when I referred to the reflective dialogue as an interview, which might have minimised the effect of the change—this was not only a result of my doubting the power of language, but it was also simpler, since everyone knows what an interview is. I will reflect further on this issue and the power implied in language in Chapter 9, as well as how the power dynamic played out in the reflective dialogue.

After experiencing the practice of the pedagogues, and taking field notes, I had an hour-long reflective dialogue with them about specific practices they implemented, providing an opportunity for both of us to reflect on our experience in the observed class. This method was based on a technique used in a paper by Bills & Husbands (2004), in which they aimed to identify values embedded in the practice of teachers. After observing the teachers, Bills & Husbands (2004) described certain 'gambits' they had identified that were unique to the teacher and asked them to comment on these practices. While using this technique as a starting point, others have also written about the use of dialogic interviewing or reflective dialogues (Knight & Saunders, 1999;

Ashwin, 2008). Specifically, Knight and Saunders (1999) used dialogic interviews to help their participants become more aware of factors that influenced their practice, which they claim “can only be fairly explored through the use of constructivist methods” (Knight & Saunders, 1999: 144). Ashwin (2008), as discussed in the previous section, focused on the use of a reflective dialogue to raise awareness of the effects of structure and agency on practice. In the current study, I identified certain instances or situations that occurred in the classes I observed, using them as examples to invite the pedagogues to explain their behaviour or reflect on their practice in certain situations.

The majority of the reflective dialogues were conducted face-to-face, with only two online via Skype. Often, I was able to schedule in the reflective dialogue for directly after the last observation, but there were several occasions when I had to make an extra trip back to the participant’s university to have the reflective dialogue. There were positives and negatives associated with the different scheduling of the dialogue—if we were able to talk right after the class, the events were fresh in our minds, however it meant that I didn’t have as much time to look over my field notes and reflect about my own experience in the class. The reflective dialogues that were arranged at another time did allow for more time to think, but they also demanded more time and money. I felt that doing the reflective dialogues in person was preferable to a conversation on the phone or on video chat, as they make the whole interaction a little more human, in that it’s easier to pick up on the expressions and feelings of the participants in person. It also portrays to the participants that I value their time and their input, which constructed different roles for me and the participants (Hoffman, 2007) with a different power dynamic. Although the two reflective dialogues that were done on video chat were not drastically different from

those that were conducted face-to-face, aside from technological glitches like slow internet connections. Despite this, when there were further opportunities for video interviews rather than face-to-face, I chose to meet participants in person if they were willing and available.

Before each reflective dialogue, I emailed the participants inviting them to come up with questions or topics for discussion. Although I wanted us to reflect on the classes I had participated in, I also wanted the reflective dialogue to be a space where the participants could share responsibility for guiding the conversation and for drawing my attention to issues they found important. This connects with my attempt to bring a more equitable power dynamic to the research; however, it didn't work very well in practice. I found it interesting that although I invited all ten participants to identify themes or questions, only one actually did so (Christine). The remaining nine were happy to let me start and guide the conversation, although they obviously influenced the conversation with the answers they gave. Two participants, Paul and James, gave me chapters they had written about their teaching practice to read before the reflective dialogue, which was particularly helpful in the case of James, who I was unable to observe since he was retired. In addition to reflecting on the classes that I participated in, I was interested in why participants think critical pedagogy is a valid pedagogical approach, what they thought critical pedagogy could change in their social context, and any challenges they face in implementing a critical pedagogical approach in their teaching. The reflective dialogue was unstructured, in that I based most of the questions off of my experience in the classes, but I didn't have any questions planned going in and spontaneously let participants' answers to the questions guide the flow of the conversation, meaning that I had to 'think on my feet' in order to strike a balance

between letting the participants say what they thought was important while insuring we didn't go too off topic (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2017). However, since my aim was to explore their beliefs and practice, the conversation could go in many different ways.

Name	Length of RD	Mode	Co-lead
Arthur	1:04:45	Face-to-face	Declined
Louisa	44:31	Face-to-face	Declined
James	1:11:51	Face-to-face	Chapter
Christine	1:30:00	Skype	Accepted
Rajesh	59:04	Face-to-face	Declined
Alesandro	49:33	Face-to-face	Declined
Jeremy	53:10	Face-to-face	Declined
Lena	59:26	Skype	Declined
Claire	1:07:18	Face-to-face	Declined
Paul	55:42	Face-to-face	Chapter

Figure 6: Reflective Dialogue Information

The dialogues I had with participants I could not observe were different—in these cases I could not reflect on my experience of their pedagogy, and so instead I started the reflective dialogue by asking them to describe their practice. In an effort to make this a more guided reflection on practice, I asked them to think of a particular class and describe what it would be like. Two of the participants that only did the reflective dialogue were still working in universities, they were just not teaching at the time of the study. Claire had recently moved to a different university and wasn't teaching yet, while Rajesh, was simply not teaching during that term. The third, James, was retired and although still active in academia was no longer teaching. Although this change to my method wasn't ideal, since I struggled to recruit participants I needed to be more flexible. This does bring up some issues around triangulation—with the majority of participants I was able to collect data about their practice via the participants' observation and the reflective dialogue, which increased validity. However, this inconsistency in the method also offered an interesting insight into the dynamics of the

reflective dialogue by revealing how getting to know the participants through the observation changed the dynamic. Originally, I thought that not observing some of the participants would only affect the content of the dialogue, but I found that it also affected the process of doing the reflective dialogue because we did not have rapport or shared experience to build on. This was possibly more important and apparent due to the casual nature of the conversation that was not dictated by a list of questions and instead evolved naturally through conversation.

Ethical Issues

Agreement from pedagogues was obtained for exploratory participant observations and reflective dialogues, as well as ethical approval from the Ethics Review Board. Ethical approval had been received for a previous study design, but since I felt had made a significant change to the design, I re-submitted for ethical approval, which was approved. Risks or potential harm to students was limited but potentially included inconvenience and disruption of their class time, although this was limited, as I was participating in the class as a student. To avoid any confusion about my study, I provided students and lecturers with an information sheet, which contained clear and in-depth information about what I was researching and how they may be affected by my research (see Appendices). As I mentioned previously, one of my concerns was that lecturers might feel that their practice was being evaluated or judged, which might change the way they taught the classes I observed. I hope that my information sheet and ongoing dialogue with the lecturers helped to reassure them that I was not evaluating them, simply exploring and experiencing their practice. I was also concerned about response bias, as since the lecturers knew that I was interested in critical pedagogy, they may have felt under pressure to utilise a critical pedagogical approach

in their classes. Another mitigating factor was that I had informed teachers that I was interested in certain issues, especially the marketisation of HE, and how it might affect their ability to implement a critical approach. In some regard, this may have made SICPs feel less pressured to change their behaviour for the observation, although it could have also led them to answer questions in a certain way.

The reflective dialogue with lecturers was more time demanding and also had more potential risks, as information revealed by participants could contain criticisms of their university or department, which could be potentially damaging for their career. In an effort to minimise this risk, the reflective dialogue was confidential and was kept private until names and identifying details were altered to protect anonymity. My supervisor does not know the names of interviewees either, although some are from our university and therefore she may be able to recognise her colleagues. In an effort to ensure that participants felt safe disclosing information to me, I offered them the opportunity to review transcripts and field notes. If they felt uncomfortable with anything they disclosed, I removed it from the record. This procedure also helped to reduce misunderstandings or misinterpretations on my part and is a way to include participants in the data analysis, as mentioned in the section on Critical Research (4.1). Although the reflective dialogue could be considered more demanding on participants due to the sharing of information about their experience working in universities, it also offered an opportunity for participants to benefit from engaging in genuine reflection about their practice. This can benefit participants as it asks that they consider how their beliefs about the purpose and potential of critical pedagogy, and higher education more generally, are implemented in or affect their teaching practice. In this sense, both the researcher and the participant are benefitting from the dialogue.

Another possible ethical issue regarding this study is that dissemination of the findings may have an impact on how the universities involved in the research might be perceived in regard to changing practices as a result of the marketisation of higher education, which could be damaging to their reputation. In order to avoid identification, I do not refer to the universities by name, only revealing their geographical region. Specifics about their context will be explained, but in a way that will preserve anonymity.

Approach to Data Analysis

My approach to data analysis was iterative, meaning that I engaged in analysis while collecting data, and also revisited data that had already been analysed early on in the research (Grbich, 2007). Maxwell (2012) suggests that this approach allows you to focus your data collection and also allows for the testing of emerging hypotheses. In addition to implementing an ongoing, iterative analysis, I also used both categorizing and connecting strategies, analysing data through coding and thematic analysis at both a case level and across cases (Maxwell, 2012). This enabled me to explore themes that were important across critical pedagogical practice without ignoring those that might be context (and case) specific. As you will see in the next three chapters, I tried to present the data in a way that allows the reader to get a sense of each participant, rather than trying to present a simplified or generalised picture of critical practice, by developing a framework to conceptualise different manifestations of critical pedagogy. This framework allows for exploration of the specific as well as the general.

Coding

I coded and analysed data throughout the data collection process. As soon as I conducted observations I would type up my field notes and make further notes, which

were then uploaded to NVivo to be coded. As soon as reflective dialogues were transcribed, I started to go through them individually, identifying codes that emerged from the data (i.e. topics that were brought up by participants or practices that I had observed in their teaching) as well as codes that emerged from theory. According to Maxwell (2012), grounded codes that emerged from the data itself “develop a general understanding of what is going on”. Emic codes that emerged from theory and previous research were those that I was expecting to find in the data; drawing on previous work allowed me to articulate and name certain practices in both the field notes and the reflective dialogue transcripts. For example, ‘student choice’ was a code that emerged after observing Lena but was then identified in several other participants’ data. Other codes like ‘barriers to CP’ and ‘links between theory and practice’ were codes that I started with based on their inclusion as common themes in previous research. As I went through the process of coding all the data, I would often go back and code transcripts I had already read again, as another code or common theme emerged that would remind me of another participant. Once I had finished coding all the data sources, I looked through the codes to see if there were any that I could merge, or codes that were not relevant. If codes appeared in fewer than three transcripts, I would review them to see where they were. One such code was ‘action’, which I ended up combining with either social change or social movements. If codes only showed up in one transcript but were very important for that case, I kept the code. This is because although I wanted to be able to make connections across the different cases, I also wanted to preserve their individuality and context specific nature. For example, in James’s reflective dialogue he spoke a lot about the history of the education system in the UK and how that had changed and also influenced the

current situation. While this wasn't mentioned by any other participants, it was an important aspect of our conversation and so it remained a code.

Most prevalent codes

Not surprisingly, since I was interested in how critical pedagogical beliefs affected practice and I observed many of my participants in their classrooms, 'pedagogical decisions' was the most commonly identified code, with 89 instances. The next most frequent code was challenging traditional teaching methods, with 74 instances.

Code	Number of times coded	Number of participants
Pedagogical decisions	89	10
Challenging traditional teaching methods	74	10
Critical pedagogy	63	10
Engagement	62	10
Dialogue	56	10
Curriculum decision	54	10
Barriers to CP	50	10
Institutional structure	46	10
Student freedom or choice	45	8
Authority	44	10

Figure 7: Most prevalent codes

Figure 7 illustrates the most prevalent codes and also shows how many participants mentioned them, highlighting that the ten most common codes were also present in almost all of the transcripts, aside from 'student freedom or choice' which was only coded in eight of the ten transcripts. Although these ten codes are just a snapshot, I think it does highlight that most of the self-identifying critical pedagogues had similar concerns and there were shared elements that were important to their identity as critical pedagogues or when speaking about critical pedagogical practice.

Participant Data Analysis

In addition to asking participants to contribute to guiding the reflective dialogue, participants were also asked if they would be willing to identify themes that emerged from field notes and transcripts of reflective dialogues during member checking. This attempt to engage participants in the research process was more successful than the previous attempt (see Figure 6), with four out of ten participants agreeing to identify themes from transcripts. While all participants were given this opportunity only Rajesh, Lena, Jeremy and Louisa contributed. My aim in asking participants to participate in the analyzing of their own data was to provide another opportunity for them to engage in reflection about their practice. By asking participants to pick out themes or important issues in their data, I was hoping that they could engage in praxis by evaluating their practice through a theoretical lens. It was interesting that the themes identified by these four participants aligned with those I had already identified in the ongoing waves of analysis, which will be discussed in the data chapters.

Emergent Framework

During the process of data analysis, a framework emerged that helped me think about how I might begin to categorise my observations in a way that would contribute something new to how critical pedagogical practice is conceptualised. This followed on from the starting point for my participant observations, with the two elements I thought were essential to critical pedagogy: curriculum and pedagogy. Because my focus was on the critical nature of curriculum and pedagogy, this served as a way to align these elements in a field or grid, with 'critical' and 'hegemonic' providing a spectrum for both curriculum and pedagogy. Curriculum was conceived as either focusing on knowledge that perpetuates the status quo or promotes social justice and

consciencization (Freire 1970), while pedagogy was on a spectrum from teacher as expert to teacher as co-investigator.

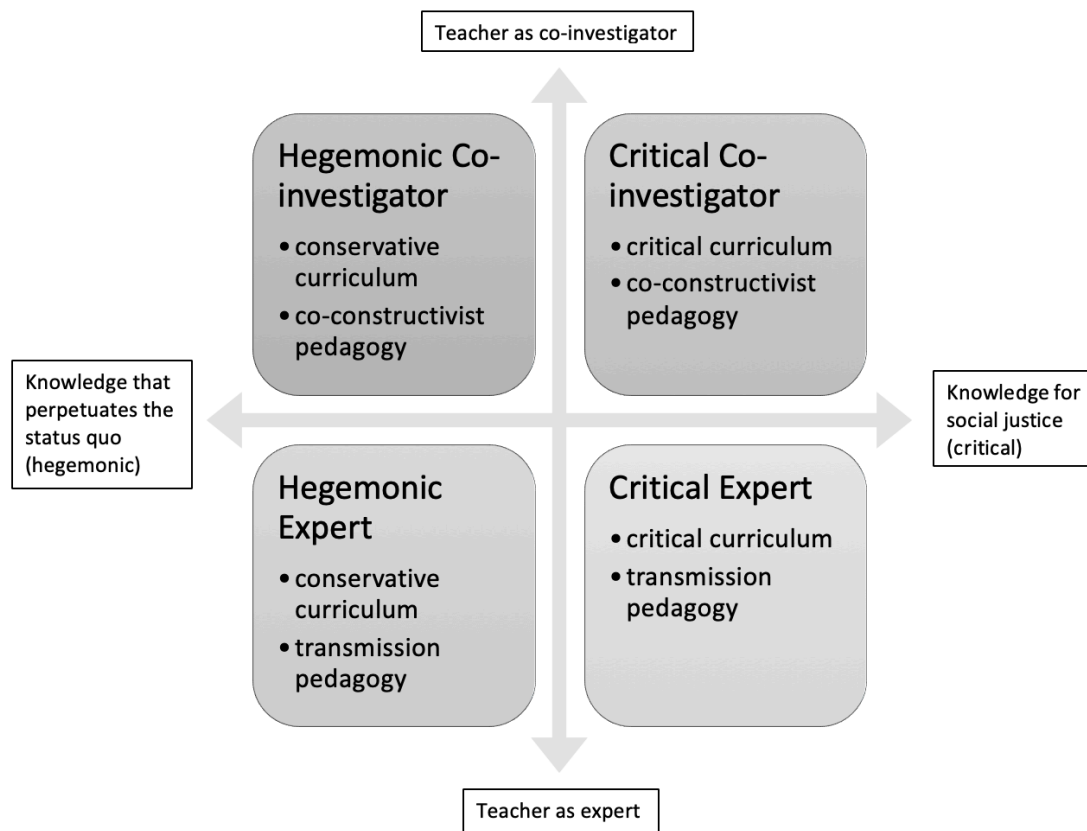


Figure 8: Identifying Four Main Approaches to Classroom Practice

While pedagogical practice is often fluid and can't easily be labelled, Figure 8 helps illustrate different approaches to classroom practice and will help to categorise the practice of participants. Although it's hard to firmly situate participants in one quadrant, especially since in reality it is probably more of a spectrum, I have attempted to associate each SICP with an identity that is based both on my observation of their practice (if possible) and our reflective dialogue. One important reason for using both of these data sources is that I realise that by observing two of their classes I cannot get a complete picture of their pedagogical practice. The characteristics of each quadrant

will become clearer through the excerpts from field notes and reflective dialogues presented in the next three chapters which are organized by quadrant, and will be explored in detail in Chapter 8.

Chapter 5: Exploring the Practice of Critical Experts

Case studies in this quadrant focus on critical curriculum while using a more traditional, transmission based pedagogical style. Notably, they may explicitly challenge inequality or oppressive structures in society, but they do not challenge how power operates in their own classroom by sharing power or decision-making responsibilities with students. Almost half of participants were situated in this quadrant, suggesting that it might be a common representation of critical practice. However, as you will see in the following case studies, institutional constraints on teaching practice were often cited as hindering critical pedagogical practice.

Each case study will be organized around themes that emerged from the data, sometimes with the contribution of participants' own thematic analysis. In this chapter, case studies for Arthur, Louisa, Paul and Alesandro will be presented through the use of quotes and excerpts from my field notes, which are placed in boxes. Amongst this cohort of SICPs the key overarching themes were criticality, institutional structure, and links between theory and practice, which demonstrates their focus on theory and the barriers to implementing critical pedagogy in practice.

5.1 Case Study: Arthur

Arthur teaches on an MA module about development and education at a university in London. The first class I attended was about international development and education, and the second class was about social transformation and focused on educational movements that differed from mainstream education. After participating in two of Arthur's MA level classes, several themes which emerged that seemed central to my experience guided the reflective dialogue. As with the other participants, I gave Arthur the opportunity to identify topics to discuss, but he said he preferred to see where the conversation took us based on my reflections. Key themes that emerged from the reflective dialogue with Arthur included helping students to engage critically with the content being taught, institutional constraints and how they impacted on pedagogy, differences between radical and mainstream education (both in terms of teaching content and pedagogy), the disconnect between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, creating space for change, and making explicit links between theory and practice in teaching and assessment.

The first constraint was the size of the class, which Arthur first mentioned in an email, and clearly had an impact on the way he approached the module. In the email, Arthur stated that he was concerned that I might not see very much critical pedagogy in his module because of the large group of students. The class had approximately one-hundred students and was held in two connected classrooms. This space was not ideal for a group of this size, because there weren't enough tables for all the students, and those at the back of the class had difficulty hearing those at the front. In the first observation, which was several weeks into the module, Arthur reported back to the students on the options they had to address the problem—they could move to a larger

room, a tiered lecture hall with fixed seating, but Arthur was concerned that might change the dynamic of the class. He asked the students to post suggestions on the Moodle forum for the course, which instead resulted in them having seminars after the lecture.

The whole pedagogy of the course is developed, ideally, for a group of 20-30 students—most people teach in that way. So, they'll give a... lecture format of maybe 20, maximum 30 minutes and then they'd split into different groups or sometimes a plenary discussion. And that simply doesn't work with the numbers, and it ended up being even more difficult than we imagined having that number, because they couldn't even hear at the back or see the slides...

Example 1 demonstrates how Arthur attempted to break up the lecture by involving students in discussion that aimed to apply the theory from the lecture to their previous knowledge and lived experience. These group activities were used several times either to discuss pictures that were presented to us, or to allow students to construct and share their own understanding of the content.

Example 1: Group Activity in Large Group Lecture

After introducing education for social change as schooling that critiques mainstream education and sees education as a way to transform society for the better, Arthur asks us to talk in groups about an inspiring educator and what makes them unique—this could be a famous educator or someone from our own lives. I talk about Maria Montessori, an influential Italian educator who developed early years education for poor children in Rome that focused on giving more autonomy to students to pick what they wanted to learn, as well as facilitating the acquisition of both academic and everyday skills and knowledge. After sharing in our groups about the inspiring educators, Arthur asks us to think about things they have in common, which we then share with the large group by passing around a microphone so the whole class can hear. (Field notes 13/12/2016)

In an effort to give students more time to discuss the ideas presented in the lecture, part of the session was a seminar in which students were in groups of about 15, led by PhD students or module leaders. Arthur was concerned about how the size of the class

not only affected the pedagogical possibilities, but also in turn affected the engagement of students in the class:

...as the group gets larger you gradually get a smaller and smaller proportion of students who actively engage in a plenary situation. So, you'll still get a critical dialogue with a few students, but the number of students who participate paradoxically gets smaller and smaller as the class gets bigger... a few students, who are probably the most confident, will have a rich experience, and the others will have a passive one.

Despite this, I got the sense of an engaged, active classroom community when participating in group discussions and activities. The diversity of the student group, in terms of nationality and experience, meant that Arthur was able to draw on the experiences of students, perhaps contributing to the sense of community.

Example 2: Break-out Group and Using Student Input

After presenting some information about current Freirean projects in South America, Arthur shows us a video about Culture Circles and how they can be used to empower people through learning how to read and write. Arthur then mentions that a similar technique is a programme called REFLECT Circle. In our seminar group, there happens to be someone who had used REFLECT circles in his job; Arthur asks them to tell us about how it worked in practice and his experience of using this technique. Both Arthur and other students ask him questions and much of the remaining discussion time centres on this student's expertise. Later, when evaluating theories presented on the course as a group, there is some confusion around one of the theories. Instead of explaining it himself, Arthur asks if anyone else would like to explain. A student volunteers and explains the theory to the group. Arthur expands upon this explanation and thanks the student for contributing. (Field notes 13/12/2016)

Example 2 demonstrates how Arthur utilised student knowledge and experience in his classroom. When a student had experience of using the approach or theory being discussed, Arthur was keen to let students share this with the class. He also asked students to clarify their understanding of the theories and approaches presented in the module, in both the seminar and the large group. Arthur said this was an opportunity to get students actively engaged in dialogue with others, as well as a way

to incorporate the lived experiences and knowledge of students, which helped to demonstrate the link between theory and practice.

Sometimes people are experts on something because of their background experience and then they can speak out about that. A lot of the time it's a necessary thing about contextualising the abstract material that we're dealing with...because it's a course about theory, so in some ways they're required to make that concrete in a different place than they're working.

By drawing on student knowledge and experience, Arthur also challenged the traditional hierarchical role of the teacher as expert, acknowledging that the students had valuable knowledge that was relevant to the module, and that he can also learn from the students.

Although Arthur seemed comfortable with challenging the power dynamic in terms of reconceptualising his role as the expert, he did acknowledge that there were some practices he felt he was less able to challenge:

...a student raised a question of assessment at the university, and the existence of a single set of criteria evaluating and grading student work. And you know, it was clearly obvious that we don't practice what we preach in that regard. Because we don't actually acknowledge that there might be different ways of writing an essay and that there might be, you know, that you could give credit for different ways of approaching things.

Arthur is aware that sometimes he can't put his beliefs into practice within the university—he can't always practice what he preaches. Perhaps in his course, which focuses more on alternative modes of education and different epistemological perspectives, there is more space to openly critique these issues with students by drawing attention to the disconnect between the content taught and the pedagogy being used. Drawing attention to the assessment practices and advice that students receive about writing essays, and adhering to criteria, could provide an opportunity for

Arthur to make these issues more visible to students, encouraging them to question and challenge the status quo in the university. Although Arthur highlights in this example that there are some things that he feels he cannot change to align with his pedagogical beliefs, he did think that there was some space for doing things differently:

You have some very radical lecturers who view education in emancipatory terms, but all of them are working within the constraints of the institution that are not completely oppressive, by any means, and they provide quite a lot of liberty, but not complete liberty in that there are some definite constraints, particularly in relation to assessment... There's a lot of flexibility in terms of content of teaching and style of teaching, I'd say.

Having the liberty to teach the content you want in the way you want does seem to suggest that educators might have space to do things differently, however, the reality of Arthur's classroom tells a different story—while in theory he had freedom to decide how to address the problems raised by the large number of students, ultimately the institution constrained his teaching style because of the number of students that are allowed to enrol in his module as well as the space allocated for it.

Related to the content of teaching, Arthur said that students on his module were exposed to different ideas and ways of thinking, and asked to engage in a critique of the material that was presented to them. Arthur suggested that one way to help students become more critical of authoritative sources of knowledge was to allow himself to be challenged in the lecture, something he thought that not all lecturers are comfortable with:

Although, lecturers...personally respond to that in different ways and students very rarely do question what you say as a lecturer... Sometimes students will put forward an alternative point, so 'but isn't this also true,' the more confident students will say that sort of

thing. It's very rare that a student will directly contradict something you're saying, sometimes they'll provide extra information on a point, which can be extremely useful. And again, I think it's important to present the position, as a lecturer, that you are not a vessel for all knowledge on the issue. It does take quite a lot of confidence as a lecturer to do that, though.

This excerpt speaks to the role of the lecturer from the perspective of both the lecturer and the students. The problem with the conceptualisation of the lecturer as the 'expert' source of all knowledge is that it undervalues the knowledge and experiences of the students, a classic example of Freire's banking model of education (Freire 1970). Instead, Arthur aims to teach students to evaluate and critique the knowledge they are being presented with, even if he feels like he must deliver a lecture due to certain constraints. This sort of academic critique, as well as political critique, might be easier on a module like Arthur's because the content is naturally more critical, which may not be the case in other modules:

Whether the university provides them with the more political conception of critical, I don't know...I doubt it. We certainly try to do it in our particular course, but that's because it's a highly politicised course. And there are a few others around the institution that are kind of intrinsically like that, because the actual subject matter is about questioning inequalities in education and society...

This speaks to the dynamic relationship between curriculum and pedagogy, which suggests that perhaps certain disciplines or subjects may be more suited to a critical pedagogical approach. However, I suggest that any subject matter can be taught in a critical way. And, indeed, that a reconstructivist curriculum can be transmitted without attention to power in the classroom. This was something that Arthur echoed in the reflective dialogue:

It's amazing how often those two things don't go together... you often get some lecturers, completely sort of alienating, one-way

lectures around neo-Marxist perspectives on some of these things. But equally, it does sometimes happen, you know, you can get entirely objective sort of factual type content ... taught in a way that is very empowering for students and does encourage them to question... I mean this sort of comes back to a Freirean perspective, really, that when we talk about education, that education can never be neutral, it's always political. It's intrinsically political, it's not just because of the sort of issues, the content is political, but it's about the formation of subjects. Whether the actual interaction between teachers and students is either encouraging a passivity and a fatalistic view that learners are not able to shape their learning, therefore their destinies. Or the opposite of that and actually empowering them as agents and subjects of history. So, I firmly believe and have experience that those two things don't always go together, although they often do. And I think ideally there should be a consonance between those things.

Arthur draws attention to the potential disconnect between curriculum and pedagogy which can result in academics delivering critical content in a traditional transmission style. While he thinks there should be a consonance between *how* we organise learning and our beliefs about *what* students should learn, often these don't match up. A contributing factor seems to be the institutional constraints that limit and dictate not only the educational experience of the students, but the way this shapes their own conceptualisation as students. Governmental policies around funding and tuition fees have also contributed to the situation, pushing universities away from a social justice agenda toward an agenda driven by market competition:

So, they're not easy times, and in some ways the constraints on education institutions are becoming greater because of increasing control. ...but I don't see it as an entirely doom and gloom scenario, I mean I think our universities are partly marketized, but they're not entirely marketized and we still have extraordinary amounts of liberty. I mean, compare the sphere in which we work to almost any other sphere in society. So, while there are some very worrying signs, we're not living in a completely nightmarish scenario. We still have a lot of space. We have space to be doing a lot more than we are doing, in fact. And sometimes I think we use it as a bit of an excuse. We could be doing so much more—there are spaces there. And it's important that they are used even in small ways.

While acknowledging the constraints on practice, Arthur remains somewhat optimistic that there is still space for us to challenge traditional teaching methods and teach critical content. However, it seems that perhaps due to the constraints on Arthur's teaching practice, he feels that the only way to approach such a large group is through a lecture, which limits his ability to enact critical pedagogy in his teaching. When asked how Arthur thinks he puts critical pedagogy into practice, he focused mostly on the content of his teaching and what he hoped the students learned to do as a result of being in his class:

I try to shake up people's assumptions... I'm not sure I always succeed, but I try to get people to question things... Particularly because our students have a real mission, because they believe that all children need to go to school. And maybe they haven't questioned very much before... whether school is appropriate, is that the best form of education? What are the different ways that schools might be organised and what kind of negative consequences might they have in some circumstances? I think another thing that's valuable is for people to be able to express their views on something and then to see their views in a situation that they're presented with. I suppose this is a classic deliberation context, but...for a group of people to all put forward their views and then to find a way between themselves for coming to kind of, not necessarily a consensus, but finding a way of putting those diverse views together. And creating something from it...so that's another thing that I try and practice.

While Arthur's critical beliefs seemed to mostly influence the content he was teaching, he did have a view about how he would prefer to teach, which was evidenced by the discomfort of having to change his typical approach of lectures integrated with discussions and activities, to one with a long lecture followed by a seminar. Arthur seems to feel that there is more freedom within the university to teach the content that he wants as opposed to changing the way in which it is delivered, which he sees as fairly rigid. This is strongly linked to modes of assessment, which he also feels are limited by academic conventions. However, these conventions were up for critique,

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and although he encourages students to realise that they are arbitrary, he also thinks that it is important that they still function within these constraints in order to be successful. Arthur himself points out that this could just be a way to rationalise his behaviour, but he hopes “it’s possible to play the game of the form and still maintain the awareness that we mustn’t assume this is the only way or even necessarily a better way of doing things”. Perhaps by presenting critical content and valuing the knowledge and experiences of students, Arthur feels that students will be better equipped to work within the parameters to challenge ideas and practices.

Based on the lessons I observed and the reflective dialogue, I have placed Arthur in the critical expert quadrant because although he teaches a reconstructivist curriculum, he teaches using a more traditional or transmission style pedagogy. Arthur’s pedagogical style is influenced by the constraints that he faces in the university, particularly at the micro and meso level. The number of students that the university has allowed on the course has had a drastic impact on the way Arthur can teach the module, although he has tried to mediate these by forming seminar groups and making changes to the physical space of the classroom and how it functions. While Arthur may want to implement a more ‘critical’ pedagogy which uses a more co-constructivist or problem-based learning approach, that wasn’t observed in the sessions I attended, although the seminar did have more similarities with these approaches. Despite relying on a traditional lecture-style delivery, Arthur did work in opportunities for students to discuss ideas with their colleagues, as well as sharing their personal experiences with the class. This pedagogical technique is rooted in a Freirean approach to sharing power and valuing student knowledge, moving away from the banking model of education (Freire, 1970).

5.2 Case Study: Louisa

In an effort to let Louisa share some of the power in deciding what we would discuss, I had invited her via email to identify topics for us to discuss in relation to critical pedagogy, her teaching practice, or the experience of having me in the class. Although she didn't come up with topics to discuss at the start, she had a considerable amount of influence over the reflective dialogue through the way in which she interpreted and responded to questions or anecdotes. The five key themes that emerged from Louisa's reflective dialogue were: engagement, curriculum and pedagogical decisions, barriers to critical pedagogy, criticality, and political. These themes highlight both the constraints that Louisa felt limited her practice, as well as how she might get around them in order to bring criticality and the political into her classroom.

Louisa teaches on an optional module about radical education on a bachelor's level education programme at a university in London. There were approximately 30 students enrolled on the module, who were seated in groups of 6. The module drew attention to forms of education that differed from the mainstream in order to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about education and schooling. I attended three sessions of Louisa's module, and was present for the first session when she set out the parameters of the module and the approach she would like to take in the class. Louisa had decided to explore the question 'what is radical education?' throughout the term: a topic she is both passionate about and interested in. We began the session by unpicking the language used to talk about alternative forms of education.

Example 3: Group Activity in Lecture

Louisa asks us to discuss in groups to come up with both negative and positive connotations of the word 'radical'. In my group, we discuss negative connotations around the idea of radicalization, meaning extremist or subversive. This was also associated with ideas like dogmatism or indoctrination and being closed-minded. Positive connotations were that it might be challenging the norm, cool or different, and political (as in radical political perspectives). Louisa asks the different groups to share and asks challenging questions of those who do. After most of the tables have shared, Louisa puts up two dictionary definitions—one from the US and one from the UK—to show how there are even different 'official' definitions of radical in the same language. (Field notes 10/1/2017)

Example 3 illustrates how Louisa puts students in small groups to encourage dialogue.

Although the remainder of the class was a lecture, getting students to unpick the language around radical education appeared to be an effective way to model the kinds of questions that philosophers might ask. Thinking about what the words meant helped me to understand how the discourse around radicalization shapes the way we perceive things, even when we might not have a shared understanding about what they mean. I felt that sharing the two definitions of radical from the United States and the United Kingdom was an interesting technique to show how political contexts shape the way we use and understand language.

Another key element of Louisa's class was the critique of knowledge or 'taken-for-granted-assumptions'. She did this several times throughout her classes, with activities like the one described in Example 3—encouraging students to deconstruct the meanings of words and how they may be used to shape the discourse around particular people or structures in society. While this might explicitly be about the curriculum, or content of the class, the deconstruction of terms was also a pedagogical tool to engage students. However, there were other times where students were less

engaged in the act of deconstruction, and thus content was delivered in a more didactic manner.

Another theme from Louisa's data was 'political', which she discussed in reference to social movements, which were discussed in all of Louisa's classes. For the majority of Louisa's classes that I participated in, the students were relatively reserved and quiet. However, when Louisa talked about Black Lives Matter as an example of educative social movements, the students seemed to be more animated compared to when she taught about historical social movements like the Chartists or the fight for women's suffrage, which is captured in this excerpt from my field notes:

Example 4: Teaching About Social Action

Louisa begins the class by telling us about informal radical education, which takes place outside mainstream schooling. These 'schools' are often community-led, and the content and form of schooling is influenced by the ethos of the movement. Because social movements and education have occurred throughout history, it is important to look back at different examples that occurred at different times and in different contexts. Louisa then tells us about the Chartists, who fought for rights for the poor and more involvement in politics. Even if the poor had been able to vote, the government wanted them to be uneducated so that they wouldn't be able or want to participate in changing the status quo. Despite the fact that the Chartists were fighting for equal rights to education in the late 1800s, Louisa argues that this movement is still relevant to us today, as we still have inequality in education. After drawing on several other movements that used informal community education, Louisa shows us a video about the Black Lives Matter movement. In groups she asks us to discuss the educative value of BLM. When students share their thoughts, Louisa builds on them, often adding in connections to other theories or social movements. Connections are made between the consciousness raising of BLM and the work of Freire, as some students feel that even if you aren't involved in the movement itself, the pervasiveness of social media in our lives means that BLM may encourage you to question things you took for granted as being true or right, particularly calling into question the power of authority in our lives. (Field notes 7/2/2017)

Example 4 demonstrates how Louisa made connections between social action and education, not just in cases where education (or schooling) is part of the movement or organization itself. This excerpt also shows how Louisa made connections between

social movements of the past with those of the present, drawing attention to some of the fundamental issues that run through society at different times in history. Here she explains why she chose to use BLM as an example:

I've self-consciously in the last few years made more of an effort to integrate content that has a more specific focus on race into my teaching. ... And actually, my first thought was to use the Occupy movement. ... But then I actually thought, 'no, let's do something that *might* be more relevant to their lives.' So, it was kind of a conscious decision to do something that (a) was contemporary, but (b) was talking about issues that they might feel more personally engaged with.

Louisa was quick to point out that just bringing up these topics in class isn't enough—there has to be a feeling that it is safe to talk about these issues. Louisa said that creating a safe space in which to discuss sensitive topics can be a challenge, especially if it isn't prioritised by other lecturers on the programme. Students also may be uncomfortable to engage with sensitive or controversial ideas because they have never done so in the past:

partly I think it's the sort of schooling they've had. I don't think that many of them have had the kind of schooling where they're encouraged to express their own views, to be critical.

The students' previous educational experience, which might have conditioned them to learn in a particular way, can hinder them from developing the skills needed to present their own opinions critically. Louisa suggested that if students are more familiar with what Freire (1970) referred to as the banking concept of education, they might struggle when they are put in a situation where they are expected to learn and engage with the material in a different way, whether in class or on their assignments. This uncritical method of information delivery is something that also influences what the

students have learned in previous educational experiences—Louisa cited their level of knowledge as a key barrier to implementing a critical approach in the classroom:

A very basic barrier, I feel, is a lack of what I would just describe as general knowledge. I don't mean that the students are stupid, because I really don't think they are. I think this is an indictment of the education system. I find every year I come up against things that I would expect people to know. And either they haven't been taught these things, or they haven't read them, or they haven't been taught them in a way that would actually make sense. On the subject of race, for example, on the two occasions on which I've brought in issues of critical race theory or critical philosophy of race, I've had to spend about half an hour at the beginning giving a basic history of European imperialism and the science of race. And it's been clear to me that this is completely new to them. ... And that's a problem. That is a barrier. Because you can't be critical about contemporary issues to do with racism in education if you don't have some basic historical understanding of the construct of race.

One of the main issues, according to Louisa, is that this lack of background knowledge means that she has to “spend a lot of the class just delivering factual information, as opposed to having a dialogue.” It is important to note that Louisa perceives that it is her role to ‘deliver’ factual information in class, rather than, for example, students watching a video or reading an article at home that contains factual information and discussing it in class or asking a group of students to research specific aspects of factual information and presenting their findings in class. In relation to this particular example, it is also important to reflect on power issues. Many students in the class are from ethnic minority groups and appear interested in the Black Lives Matter movement, yet the factual information about the histories of these students is delivered by a white lecturer. This highlights the importance of engaging students in building an understanding of the material together rather than receiving it from the lecturer. While Louisa attempted to do this by showing a video of an interview with the

founders of BLM and asking students to discuss it, it didn't seem like the class dynamics supported the kind of engagement Louisa was hoping for.

Louisa herself drew attention to the different dynamics in the class by contrasting her experience teaching at master's level with the class that I observed, which was bachelor's level. Key to the difference between teaching at these levels are the students, who Louisa feels are more motivated when they return to do a master's level degree.

... it is a very new experience for me to have to go into a class of BA students, where it seems like the requirement is much more...to deliver a particular content. And I have to think about how I'm going to deliver it, and how I'm going to get them to engage with it, and all sorts of pedagogical strategies to get them to be, you know, on task and... this is all totally foreign to me. So, it's only in the past 3 years that I've had to figure out how to do this, with no training or anything like that. So I think the problem is that my ideal scenario is kind of what my good MA seminars have been in the past years, which is...you have at most 20 people in a room, they've all read some literature beforehand, and you've got a topic for debate, and you introduce some kind of philosophical distinctions or conceptual frameworks and you just have a discussion about it.

While explaining that she has limited experience with pedagogical planning for BA level education, it's interesting that Louisa makes such a strong distinction between the two groups of students. Her aversion to having to plan in a more detailed way could stem from her inexperience at BA level, but it also seems to suggest that she thinks that BA students need to be taught using a distinctive approach:

That's clearly not going to work on the BA. I think there is more of an obligation on my part to introduce them to things in a way that will be accessible and helpful for them as they move forward. I mean, it's not just that they're coming with stuff that they've read and we can engage in discussion. I really feel like my job is to make them aware of things that they're not aware of. And break down material for them that might be difficult, in a way that is accessible and makes sense to them. And that's a very difficult thing. So...I'm not sure if I

can do that in a way that also leaves room for actually hearing their voices.

This relates to the earlier example of the Black Lives Matter lesson—while in that session the students seemed more willing to participate than usual, Louisa still felt the need to ‘deliver material’ even when the students in the class might have lived experience and previous knowledge they could bring to a discussion on the topic. In the quote above, Louisa seems to suggest that BA level students will not or are not capable of reading materials before class for discussion, despite this being common practice in both BA and MA level education. Perhaps the issue is that students realised they didn’t need to read the materials beforehand to participate in the class, and therefore didn’t make this a priority, instead relying on Louisa to deliver necessary content through her lectures.

When talking about the kind of approach she would like to take, there seems to be a misalignment between what Louisa would like to do and what she thinks that she needs to do. While Louisa may want to engage her BA students in a dialogue around the assigned reading or a particular theory, she feels that in order for that to be useful or even accessible to students she has to first teach them about it in a way that makes sense to them in order for them to engage in critique or debate. This disconnect between how she would like to manage her classroom and how she thinks that she has to might lead to situations which may explain her discomfort with this kind of teaching. It may have also led to reverting back to theory-in-use (Argyris, 1976), in this case being a more didactic approach.

Example 5: Lecturing About Freire

Louisa asks us to reflect on Chapter 2 of Pedagogy of the Oppressed in a whole-class discussion, however not many students get involved. Louisa tells us that radical isn't just about the method, but it can also refer to the reason or approach behind the method or action. She then asks us why Freire felt he should use these methods to teach literacy, again there are no responses. She presents a quote on the PP: "For Freire, the purpose of education is to enable people to become more fully human, to act to change the world, together with others". Louisa then moves on to a PP presentation about the context in which Freire was working, which focused on adult literacy education in Brazil. Previous methods of adult literacy education treated students as ignorant, passive subjects (hence the banking model), Freire wanted to make learning context specific and relevant to his students in order to encourage engagement and understanding. In order to do this, he had to learn about their context and existing knowledge. At that time in Brazil, Louisa tells us, there was a strong link between education and politics, because you had to be literate to be allowed to vote. In this sense, educating the oppressed was an explicitly political act, as it provided them with the means to participate in politics. By discussing things relevant to their own lives, Freire was able to raise his students' political consciousness by revealing oppressive structures and practices in society. (Field notes 17/1/2017)

Example 5 shows how despite the best intentions, sometimes what you envision as a dialogue can become a monologue. Louisa stated at the beginning of the class that she did not want to lecture on Freire, as it would be antithetical to his approach. However, due to the lack of student response, Louisa ended up relying on slides that she had prepared about Freire's context and approach. Students had been asked to read chapter 2 of Pedagogy of the Oppressed before class, which offers a critique of the banking model and an introduction to Freire's thoughts on the dynamic between students and teachers. However, the way the discussion was set up may have made it difficult for them to engage. This example raises the issue of how students are helped to participate in discussions and whether asking questions in the whole class is the most effective way. For example, students may need a clearly structured task for homework that focuses on what they find interesting or do not understand to help start discussions in small groups. It is also interesting to notice that while Louisa

recognizes that students have gaps in their understanding of theory and knowledge, she does not seem to recognize that they may also have gaps in their understanding of how to discuss texts and ideas and therefore may need to be supported in developing these skills.

Louisa continued to try to get students involved later in the class by asking them if they have ever experienced banking education (they all had), and why they think the book is *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* rather than *Pedagogy for the Oppressed*, but she was met with silence. While Louisa attempted to get students to speak out in class and discuss the reading, I noticed that I felt torn— I was participating in the class, but also felt that if I answered questions or made comments, I might be taking away opportunities for other students to do so and drawing attention to myself too much. On the other hand, I felt that I had some sense of what Louisa was trying to do and noticed my sympathy for her struggles. Although I did contribute once or twice by raising my hand, I decided that my researcher role meant that I should not intervene too much. The problems Louisa identified around engagement and attendance made creating a scholarly community in the classroom difficult. At Louisa's university attendance is not required and therefore does not influence the assessment for the module or the grade students receive. Clearly the policy does not recognise that the absence of some students severely impacts on the learning experience of all students, if one takes other than a 'banking' approach to learning. Presumably the university assumes that 'banking' will be the norm and that in a group of students of 100 or more, if a few are missing this is not problematic for those remaining, or indeed for those missing out due to the use of lecture capture or reliance on PowerPoint slides that will later be uploaded. In a small co-constructive group, on the other hand,

attendance becomes vital as student learning relies on their peers' presence, having done the reading and preparatory work, as well as sharing their lived experiences. The matter of attendance was particularly pertinent in our conversation as Louisa did seem to have low attendance in her class. Louisa made a connection between attendance and marking, as she pointed out that it seemed unfair that students could still pass the class even when they don't attend the lectures. For Louisa, marking and assessment presented another problem, as it did with Arthur, when it came to her identity as a critical pedagogue and radical educator:

I mean, that is a problem, right? When you're trying to do something critical and radical but you're in this framework that is very standard and traditional, and you're awarding grades... And of course, that undermines my ability to be a real critical pedagogue. Because I'm in the role of someone with huge authority in the sense that I'm the one who decides what grade they get, and that could be the difference between, you know, a first-class degree and a second class, or failing the course. So...it's a bit artificial to think we can create this little space of critical pedagogy within a...but I think we're all living with those tensions in universities...

Here, Louisa brings up a commonly raised issue in the interviews: that implementing critical or democratic education within a traditional educational system raises a contradiction between a less hierarchical dynamic in the classroom and the teacher having the power to award grades and design assessments. Louisa highlights this when she mentions her role as someone with huge authority - this is something that is hard to get around, especially when it comes to assessment. Louisa felt that this traditional framework that she worked within was limiting her ability to facilitate a 'real critical pedagogy'. When asked about the cause of this framework—whether it was a result of recent changes within her university—she felt that it was a larger trend:

I think the main change was with the shift in funding, and the hike in tuition fees, and the gradual move toward the sense that we are...providing a service...and that students have a very strong sense of entitlement because they're paying a lot of money...or at least someone is paying it. There is less sense of the university as a space for, you know, mutual intellectual exploration and commitment to some kind of community...freedom of, all those kinds of old-fashioned ideas of the university. I think they're kind of just becoming more anachronistic. For the students who are paying these kinds of fees, it seems normal.

Here Louisa is referring to the recent raising of student fees in the UK, which was discussed in Chapter 2. As the conversation continued, it seemed that the students' acceptance of higher tuition fees as the new normal disappointed Louisa on a deeper level, not just because it suggested they accepted being constructed as consumers. Her distaste for this related to earlier parts of our dialogue that centred on attendance and what students saw to be the purpose of their university studies. For Louisa the purpose of a university education goes beyond credentialism and seeing university as a way to a better job, and seemed to be about taking advantage of the experience and opportunities that are available to them at university in terms of self-transformation:

You're paying all this money, you've got, really, top people in their discipline. I mean, this is a world class institution. You'd think that people would want to take advantage of that, and kind of, milk us for as much as possible! (both laugh) I mean, I feel like I'm giving my time to this, I'm...you know I don't have any pretensions of being some sort of font of all wisdom, but I think I have something to give these students, as do a lot of my programme team members.

Alongside the experiential aspect of the university, we talked again about engagement, and how this can be demonstrated in different ways. For Louisa, part of going to university is about the dialogue you have with others about the content you are learning—and sometimes a lack of verbal participation can make it seem like students aren't getting much from the class (Gourlay, 2017). Despite Louisa's focus on self-

transformation through the experience of attending university and engaging in dialogue, this discussion did not extend to the idea that a university education could transform students so that they would in turn become transformative citizens (Nagda, Gurin & Lopez, 2003) who have a passion to change the world for the better, an aim shared by Freire when he called on humans to read the world in order to act upon the world (Shor & Freire, 1987).

To finish the reflective dialogue, I asked Louisa if she felt critical pedagogy is relevant to university teaching in the current context.

I'm totally with critical pedagogical theorists in the sense that unless you're really engaging in the underlying values and assumptions of the ideas that you're working with, then you're just possibly reinforcing existing ideological patterns. I'm totally, you know, on board with that politically. But in terms of actual pedagogical approaches and methods, I think they're so constrained by the structures. By, you know, the expectations of the students, of the other teachers. I mean, but I do think that criticality has to be at the heart of what we do. ...But how you actually do that is...something else.

This excerpt summarises the key themes covered in the reflective dialogue, both those that I identified through coding and those that Louisa herself identified after reading the transcript. Louisa picked out two tensions: the drive to deliver content (banking education) rather than starting with student knowledge, and the tension between institutional constraints and creating a critical space. The first could be seen as Louisa felt conflicted between engaging her BA level students in critique and delivering the background knowledge that would help them understand why ideas should be critiqued in the first place. The second tension presented itself as we discussed more practical concerns around attendance and assessment which may constrict the type of engagement that Louisa wanted in the classroom.

Although Louisa may have struggled to implement a co-constructivist pedagogy, she encouraged students to develop criticality through exposing them to political and social movements that challenged the status quo. Based on the sessions I observed, I have positioned Louisa in the critical expert quadrant because of her focus on trying to develop a critical lens to study social and political movements related to education. While Louisa made it clear in the reflective dialogue that she would like to teach in a different way, more akin to her practice on master's level courses, Louisa lectured throughout the classes I observed. Louisa mentioned several occasions where she tried to deliver content that students might find more engaging in an effort to encourage more participation in the discussion, for example through her use of a video about the Black Lives Matter movement. Although this did lead to more active discussion, this was not a common occurrence for the module, which meant that the classroom became a one-way space that was decidedly teacher-led.

5.3 Case Study: Alesandro

Alesandro teaches a master's level module on pedagogies in international education at a research university in the northeast of England. The module aims to explore different perspectives and examples of pedagogy in the UK and abroad. The module is eleven weeks long and covers a range of topics, from basic theory about teaching and learning to more specific examples of pedagogical approaches in diverse contexts, such as critical pedagogy and democratic schools. I attended two of Alesandro's sessions, one that focused on critical pedagogy, and the other on Illich's *Deschooling Society*. The key themes that emerged through analysis included breaking down barriers, student engagement, building a relationship with students, institutional structures, and pedagogical themes, like risk, creating a safe space for students, group work and dialogue.

In both sessions there were approximately 30 students in attendance, who sat in their assigned groups at 6 tables. The first session I attended on critical pedagogy was unique because there were guest speakers who told us about their research and the community outreach work they do at their university in Brazil. Alesandro started the session by introducing the guests (including me). He asked me to tell the students about my research (I also passed out an information sheet), and then the Brazilian professors introduced themselves. This was slightly more involved since neither of them were confident English speakers, so Alesandro ended up translating what they said to English for the students. He then told us what we would do in the session—he would start by giving a small presentation about Freire's work and context, followed by a short presentation of his own work using critical pedagogy. At the end of the session, the Brazilian professors would give a short presentation about their work using Freire

in the Brazilian context. Alesandro's presentation begins by reviewing the basic models of pedagogy, which he identifies as: transmission, generative and transformative. He tells us that critical pedagogy is a method for identifying problems and acting to change them.

Example 6: Reading Freire

Alesandro asks if any of us had heard of Freire before doing the assigned reading (Chapters 1 & 2 of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*). I am the only person that raises their hand. He then asks if any of us had thoughts about the reading, did we like it? What did we think? None of the students answer, so he tells us that it is okay if we didn't like it, he just wants to know what we thought. Finally, someone volunteers and says that they found the writing style difficult to understand. He agrees, but also shared his first experience of reading Freire's work—he thought it was great and that Freire “was saying all the things he wanted to hear”. He asks for other people's thoughts about the reading, and when no one shares, he tells us to talk about this on our tables for a few minutes and then we can share back with the class. Most of the students agree that they found the way Freire writes to be challenging—why can't he just say what he means? Alesandro then asks if the students thought there might be a reason for his writing in this way. I raise my hand and say that I think reading Freire is a journey of discovery—you have to do the work to understand what he means and how you understand his approach. Alesandro points out that we are reading a translated version, so he asks the Brazilian professors if their students find Freire difficult to read in his native Portuguese, and they confirm that Freire is a challenge for everyone, possibly because he does not offer a plan of how to do critical pedagogy in the classroom—you have to interpret it and apply it to your own context. (Field notes 19/10/2017)

Example 6 demonstrates a common problem in most of the classes I observed—lack of responding to questions in a whole class discussion. It also provides an example of how students and teachers engage with the work of Freire in the classroom. Alesandro tries to get the students talking about their experience reading Freire but they seem to find it difficult to do so—this might be because it is clear that Alesandro and the guest speakers see *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as a landmark text, preventing them from feeling comfortable voicing their own ambivalence about the text. By allowing the students to talk amongst themselves at their tables, Alesandro

provides a 'safe space' for them to air their concerns or feelings about the text, while also potentially validating their own experience through discussion with other students. When the students reported back to the large group, they seemed a little more comfortable sharing their thoughts. Alesandro also thanks the students for their contributions and responds to all of them, perhaps to demonstrate to the students that their opinions and contributions are valued. While the Brazilian guests added an interesting power dynamic to the class, it was an opportunity for the students to hear about how Freire's ideas still influence the Brazilian education system. Here, Alesandro explains why he felt this was an opportunity he couldn't pass up, despite the potential risk:

I mean, this is the beauty, I think, of openness that critical education is premised upon. You don't foreclose opportunities because you know of translation barriers. And then again, we're talking about linguistic barriers with students. And here we were practicing, you know, transgression of barriers. What do you do when somebody is practising what you are preaching? Somebody who has done critical pedagogy in testing places and times such as Brazil. Do you send them away because they don't speak English, or do you try to find ways to break down these barriers?

Breaking down barriers and creating a safe space for students to engage in dialogue seemed to be an opportunity for Alesandro to address issues with engagement in the classroom, which he attempted through the use of group-based problem-posing projects:

This year, I have been more proactive in terms of dealing with [engagement]. I designed what we call Projects, which are student-led inquiries which aim to encourage students to use some of the literature and some of the other elements we deal with in the sessions and through the readings. So, in a way I don't want to impose this, to make this a problem, but it kind of organically rears its head. So, we have three out of the eight groups identifying [engagement] as an issue. Now, I'm not entirely sure about the next

steps because rather than being formulated, it's co-formulated by all the participants. ...I see my role as creating the space for these different voices and experiences to come forward, and then working with them rather than for them. I don't see it as a problem that needs to be addressed, I see this as a key element, as a key feature of our interaction. I don't even want to call it a challenge, because we tend to label things in relation to our own understanding of them. So, it's there to be worked with, not to be addressed or rectified.

Alongside the element of engagement is the resistance to have every moment of the class planned or accounted for, which would remove any space for spontaneous interaction, in a way limiting what the students could bring to the class from their own experience. Alesandro mentions how the university would like him to predetermine how he will manage the class to address concerns around student engagement, however as a critical educator he feels that it is important to get to know his students and better understand how he can tailor the class and the learning experience to their needs, making it relevant to them.

Example 7: Cultural Connections

After discussing a quote from Illich's work about the relationship between teaching and learning, Alesandro puts a quote on the screen—"Nothing can be taught, everything can be learnt". Many of the students were surprised that this was a quote from Confucius! They found it very amusing that this idea was very ancient and also found in their own context. Alesandro explained that Confucius argued against a formalised method of schooling. After connecting this idea to the Chinese context, he went on to talk about Illich's context—he came from Western Europe and then moved to America, where a lot of his radical ideas about schooling came to him. He was also writing in the 1970s, when there were a lot of anti-establishment movements. However, Alesandro also pointed out that the idea of compulsory schooling is quite modern—this is something we have only been doing for a little over 100 years—so the fact that we think it is so normal is interesting in itself. (Field notes 2/11/2017)

Example 7 demonstrates several different things I would associate with a critical approach—first, Alesandro drew attention to the importance of context, and how that shaped both Confucius and Illich's work; second, he brought in something that was

relevant and familiar to the students as a way to help them engage with the material; and third, he challenged things we take for granted, like compulsory schooling, by pointing out that it has not always been this way and therefore could be otherwise. This is perhaps a situation where the theory or curriculum was more critical, while the pedagogy and teaching approach were more traditional. Although Alesandro did ask the students to contribute to the discussion around Confucius, and by bringing him into the lesson in the first place he demonstrated that he valued the experiences and culture of the students in the class. When asked why he chose to use this quote, Alesandro explained:

I was trying to put myself in their shoes and thinking, 'well, you might go on endlessly talking about the importance of experience and respect to diversity and different cultures, but how do you actually practice that?' And I do write about epistemologies of the South and challenging dominant discourse in epistemologies, but if you keep constantly putting the question 'and how do you actually implement that?' Then you realise that, you know, you have to walk the walk, more often than you have to talk the talk. So, it took me a lot of time, you know, spending time with my students and asking them what is relevant to them.

After discussing quotes from Illich's book, we went on to work in groups on the Project, which is their formative assessment for the module and is presented to the class in week 9 of the module. In assigned groups of 3-4 students, the students were asked to identify an educational problem that is relevant to them. I joined the group that I was sitting with, since one of their group members was absent that day.

Example 8: Problem-posing Projects

Despite the fact that I am not a real member of the group, the students are looking to me to figure out how to approach the assignment. They have already identified a problem relevant to all of them as international students—language barriers. The next step in the project is to figure out how to explore this issue and research how they might attempt to ‘solve’ the problem, or at least do something about it. They are interested in how language barriers affect them on their course. We talk about how they might go about doing research about this problem at their university (through questionnaires and interviews with fellow students), and in a more general sense (literature review about language barriers and how they affect international students). I am finding it difficult to remain semi-removed from the project, as I don’t want to tell them what to do since it is their assignment. While we are working in our groups, Alesandro walks around the room and checks in on all the groups, asking how the process is going. (Field notes 2/11/2017)

This example of engaging students in group projects is interesting because it shows how group work can be made relevant to students, rather than as a way to cultivate teamwork or project management skills. Although those skills are important, they can also be cultivated through projects that are of genuine interest and importance to students and their daily lives, demonstrating that we all have the power to make changes or to challenge the way things are. The freedom around the focus of the Project also allows students more say in what they will be assessed on.

The Projects were intended to make the connection between the content on the module and the students’ own experience more explicit, something which the students did as they picked out issues such as motivation, language barriers, participation, and power dynamics in the classroom. While all of these topics related to the course content, they were also things the students were experiencing on the MA or had experienced in other levels of education. However, despite recognising these topics as issues they were encountering, students still refrained from answering questions or sharing their ideas with the class. At one point in my observation,

Alesandro had to call on tables and ask them to answer questions rather than asking for volunteers, something which he doesn't find effective or ideal:

If you do force them, then you change the nature of the interaction and you move away from the critical approach to the interaction that you want to foster, right? And as a matter of principle I'm trying not to force too much content, not to force too much structure upon my students. There is some structure, we are bounded by institutional and pedagogical and other constraints. Some of them are liberating, and some of them are not so liberating constraints. And the students themselves, you remember in the discussion they identified some of these boundaries as necessary elements in the process of engaging with knowledge, acquiring new knowledge, and so on.

One of the main ways that Alesandro tries to address this imbalance between structure and freedom is to limit the amount of time spent in direct instruction, instead relying more on group work and small-group discussion to help students co-construct their own understandings of the material. Alesandro explains that he hopes this creates a space in which the students can feel comfortable to express their ideas and build understanding through discussions with their group. Based on my own experience working in a group for two weeks, it did seem like the students were comfortable speaking out in their group. The students are placed into groups by Alesandro, so people were not working with their friends, but instead had the opportunity to meet other people on the module, encouraging interaction with students from different backgrounds.

Another factor that Alesandro felt was contributing to 'disengagement', or an imbalance in the classroom, was the content of the module, which is often jargon heavy and completely new to students. This was apparent when we discussed Chapter 2 of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and the students seemed to struggle to extract Freire's meaning from the text. Although on some level this might have to do with the

English language abilities of the students, Alesandro considered it to be mainly an epistemological issue.

You may have noticed the reactions in relation to Freire's text the week before last, and Illich's text this week. So, this is another issue, and if you wish, it's an epistemological consideration. You know, what body of knowledge do we get to approach, and why should it be a requirement that they have to treat this body of knowledge as, you know, the wisdom that is revered in a place like [his university]? So, what kind of epistemological boundaries do we create and how are we willing to let them be encroached by other bodies of knowledge, by other epistemologies? So, you have to go out and meet these epistemologies and bring them into the class and let them shape their interactions.

Throughout our reflective dialogue I was struck by Alesandro's constant critical reflection on how and what he teaches in the module as well as how it fits into the larger context of his university. Reflecting back on the sessions I observed, but in particular the first session about Freire, there seemed to be a focus on practice or the practical elements of the theory being learned. This was demonstrated through the presentation from Alesandro about his own work using critical pedagogy, as well as the presentation from the professors visiting from Brazil. I thought perhaps this was another way that Alesandro was trying to make the reading and theory more accessible to students through providing examples of it in practice, in a way providing access to the body of knowledge that might be unfamiliar.

I tried to bring in elements of practice because practice is very important in order to engage with the world. And this, I think is at the heart of the Freirean approach, at the heart of critical pedagogy. I might have liked a more theoretical engagement with critical pedagogy and with key texts, like *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. But then, I think that it would fly in the face of what critical pedagogy is trying to do. Now it's not really modelling critical pedagogy, you might have noticed. So, there's a huge, if you wish, mismatch between the theory and the content. But I'm very happy about this because I wouldn't have liked the more formalistic approach to

critical pedagogy. 'These are the core texts, and this is how you do it.' It's not a methodology, it's not neat, even. So I think if you don't practice it, and if you don't bring in elements of practice and practical applications, then you lose the wild beauty of critical pedagogy, the adventure that it is.

Although Alesandro highlights the mismatch between his practice and critical pedagogical theory, it is worth noting that he was one of the few participants that made a direct connection between critical pedagogy and action for social justice, something that is at the heart of critical pedagogy. However, despite Alesandro's respect for the 'wild beauty of critical pedagogy' he does acknowledge that it is not something that is easy or neat to implement—it is an adventure that doesn't always end up the way you intended it to. This element of risk is a common fear of those new to the critical approach, since there is no set way of doing things it might seem that more is uncertain and precarious.

And if you're serious about it you've got to be prepared for failure. Failure to engage with participants, failure to fulfil objectives, you know, various other kinds of small failures. But I think if you look at it as a journey in the process of changing your conception about what a module should be about, what universities should be doing, what society should be expecting from universities, from schools, and educational settings in general, I think then it goes a long way into offering students these different perspectives.

Here we see Alesandro making a connection between his pedagogical practice and changing how students see the purpose of universities and educational settings in general, something that few participants did explicitly. Instilling a different way of thinking about critical pedagogy and other 'radical' approaches to education seemed to be enough motivation for Alesandro to persevere despite small failures and other constraints. Although he did report to feeling constrained by the university in terms of the mainstream approach to teaching as well as the size of the class, he attempts to

work around these barriers by not allowing them to dictate how he interacts with students. Alesandro gave several examples of how he engages with students outside the classroom, inviting them to seminars and conferences and arranging funding for social activities. In this regard, the institution helped him by supporting activities to create a sense of community by bring students together to fight off isolation, something he was particularly concerned about with international students. These situations, whether they were academic or entertaining, also provided an opportunity to alter the dynamic between Alesandro and his students, taking them away from the hierarchical nature of the classroom.

I don't think that injections of transformation come every two weeks and you inject them with, you know, passion, enthusiasm, and transformation. You have to have many more elements. You have to create the possibility, the conditions of sustaining dialogue, and dialogue means opportunities for them to talk to me. I dominate the session less and less as the programme progresses, but I'm in control, I'm in charge, and I speak more, so we have not equalised positions, and that comes increasingly as the year progresses. ...breaking them into smaller groups is one way of going about it, then offering snippets of interaction mainly after the class, as you saw, many of them come up to me, they talk to me about different things. It's my way of knowing them, not just as participants in the session, but as human beings, knowing their circumstances as well.

Like many other participants, Alesandro stressed the importance of small class size.

Throughout the classes I observed, Alesandro attempted to bring in a human, personal aspect to his teaching. He did this by talking with the small groups as he walked around the room, asking students to share about their own experiences in education, trying to make connections to their context, and sharing his own research. In particular, when he was sharing his work using a Freirean approach when working with educators, he talked about the importance of making learning relevant and personal to the

students/participants. It seemed that Alesandro saw building a relationship as important to creating a dynamic where he could implement a critical pedagogy.

Due to the relatively radical content of the module I was interested in how the module was designed originally. The aim of the module is to “understand some key issues around pedagogy as a concept and practice,” the sessions mainly focused on radical education, looking at transformative and critical pedagogy, Illich’s de-schooling, learning and social movements, and democratic education. There were several more general sessions, like the introductory session on teaching and learning and a session on pedagogies in different contexts. The reading list featured Freire, Illich, Fielding, Apple, Giroux, McLaren, and Marcuse amongst others, demonstrating a critical/radical lean.

It was never designed to be a radical module. It was never designed to be a module of critical pedagogy. So, I came into the institution four years ago ...and they said, ‘Here you are. We have *this* module, the tutor left.’ You know what happens, I said, “Okay, thanks.’ I relish the opportunity to work with such a module. I could see the potential for bringing in critical elements and radical elements into it. I just didn’t know how far it could go. So, little by little I started, you know, inserting my own preferences. And now it has developed into the module that you see. I think there will come a point when the institution will want to know why, you know, its content is in its place, and why do you need so much of Freire and Illich and so on. So, I’m looking forward to that discussion with the institution, but yeah, it kind of grew organically, it was never designed to be a module on critical, radical education, and it’s not even formally advertised as such.

Although Alesandro has been able to change the module he was given into something that corresponded with his pedagogical values, he does identify, like other research participants, that there may be some resistance or concern associated with this approach from both the institution and the students. He also talks about being unsure

about how far he can push it or how far he can go with these changes before there are consequences.

Based on the data, I placed Alesandro in the critical expert quadrant of the diagram because although he presented a critical curriculum which focused on the work of critical educators and theorists, the main method of instruction in the class was lecturing, aside from occasional time set aside for group work. It seems that the focus on theory may have contributed to the need for transmission, as the materials may have been challenging for students to engage with on their own or as a small group. Similar to Louisa's class, Alesandro may have benefitted from spending more time teaching students how to learn in using a co-constructivist approach. Learning in this way is foreign to most students who have gone through mainstream schooling, especially those who might come from a culture where critique is seen as disrespectful. The kind of pedagogy used in the classroom created a power dynamic in which students might have felt they couldn't speak up—for example, when Alesandro asked them what they thought of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. However, focusing on texts such as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Deschooling Society* meant that although power dynamics and mainstream pedagogies were challenged in theory, this didn't always translate through into practice.

5.4 Case Study: Paul

Paul teaches at a university in the south of England. The two modules I observed were a master's level course on ecology and education and a bachelor's level module on education and politics. I observed different modules at different levels because I was interested to see how Paul's pedagogy might differ in these contexts. The master's group was quite small, about 6-8 students were in attendance, while the bachelor's level class had about 50 students. The reflective dialogue with Paul was unique, in that in addition to reflecting on what I had observed in his classes, we also discussed a chapter from a book he had published. He had given me the book the first time we met, and recommended I read a chapter which was about how he approaches teaching on his BA education studies module. Like the other participants, Paul was given the opportunity to come up with themes to guide our discussion but preferred to let me start the conversation with my reflections upon my experience in his classrooms. Key themes that emerged from our discussion were connections between theory and practice, comparisons between radical and mainstream, how education can encourage students to challenge the status quo, the importance of dialogue and Marx.

The first class that I observed was the master's level course on ecology and education. Before the class started, Paul told me a little about the programme and how it was quite unique in that it was interdisciplinary. The module itself was also unique because although it looked at education it focused much more on the physical world and less on theory due to the ecological focus. When we started the class, Paul asked the students if any of them would like to explain the module to me and how it fit into their degree programme. Several of the students shared their perspectives and

also gave me an idea about what their other classes might be like. Paul went into more detail in the reflective dialogue:

The idea of the module was to invite the students to consider whether it was possible to reconceive of the relationship between Humans and Nature, and to do so in such a way that they considered things not only in terms of first principles and abstractions but also to consider the application of these, the re-theorization or re-orientation to lived experience. So, it starts with a set of political and psychological imperatives around climate change, inviting them to ask whether capitalism is compatible with sustainability, however defined. And also asks them at a psychological level whether humans are able to conceive of the scale and nature of climate change and then invite them to think about whether that leads into discussion about whether we can conceive our relationship with Nature more generally. Then we go into a more philosophical phase in the middle, then we turn to the more political at the end. That's the shape of the module, and it's intended to both invite constant and fairly unremitting critical engagement with the ideas around our relationship with Nature, and our lived experience of Nature, you know, ordinary everyday interactions. There's a kind of arc from the grounded into the more theoretical and back into the applied, thinking through what this might mean for them as they leave the module, as they walk out the door at the end of week twelve.

Here, Paul highlights how the theoretical and practical groundings of the module ask the students to reflect upon and reconsider their own relationship with nature and how it may be changed as a result of engaging with theory about sustainability and capitalism. Like Alesandro and Louisa, Paul used a question to guide the module, asking students whether capitalism is compatible with sustainability, but also how exploring this area could lead to a reconfiguring of the relationship between humans and nature. Paul describes this pedagogical decision:

The choice of the question is of course the really interesting thing. And in relation to the critical you'd have to ask, 'Well, where is this question coming from?' For me, the questions which are posed are always questions which arise as a result of the tensions, the contradictions, the difficulties of living now in whichever countries we live in. And I certainly don't presume to have an answer to those

questions which are asked at the beginning of the module, but rather to explore ways in which, through the interaction between various philosophical positions and their political implications, students may decide and actively engage with the meaning of the answers to those questions for themselves.

Paul explains that he uses questions as a way to highlight the contradictions or interactions between different philosophies or arguments to encourage students to actively engage with these theories and questions themselves, rather than seeking a 'right' answer.

The class was held in a small 'seminar' room, with the tables arranged in a large square with a gap in the middle, allowing us to see everyone in the class.

Example 9: Connections between the Text and Lived Experience

We start reading the first text, which all the students have brought with them. Paul has printed out an extra copy for me so I can participate. It appears that many of the students have not read the text before coming to class, and as time goes on, I wonder if perhaps they were not expected to. We go through the text, with Paul identifying the important parts for us to discuss, often skipping over large portions of the text. He asks questions as he reads aloud, connecting the text to real life. "If your house was burning down, what would you save?" We all go around and share, most of the people say their pets or photos, Paul mentions a fluffy toy he has had since he was a child. They all seem to know each other quite well, as they already know a lot about each other's lives. After, he draws a connection between our conversation and other philosophers and their conceptions of the self—often the line between 'me' and 'mine' is blurred, and we identify heavily with our possessions. Often, we think that losing a prized possession is a bit like losing a part of ourselves. In his discussion of this idea, he draws on the examples that we gave earlier on, which made me feel like he is really listening and values our contributions. (Field notes 22/11/2017)

In Example 9, we see Paul using a pedagogical technique that was new to me—reading the text together in class as a group. I found this really interesting because typically, in my experience as a student and teacher, students are expected to read the text on their own outside of class and try to make some sense of it before discussing it in a class or seminar. There are many reasons for using this approach, the most obvious of which is the amount of time it takes to read an entire text in class. Although Paul

avoids this constraint by skipping over large sections of the text, this also means that perhaps some of the context or other parts that speaks to individual students might be skipped over or ignored. Reflecting on my own experience of this style of reading, I recall wondering why he had picked those parts and not others. By choosing which parts to read he was, in a way, steering the students to interpret or focus on certain elements of the text, while if he had asked the students to read the text on their own before class, they could have discussed portions of the text that the students found interesting or relevant. Contrary to my own experience, Paul explained the process thus:

The experience of reading together ensures that we have shared parts of the text, the process of when to interrupt, when to intervene, what to speak about is not mine, it's the students', so they all say, "Well, how about we stop at this point and talk about this?" It's not me dictating which are the key moments in text at which to stop, and how to interpret them. The meanings of and the interpretations are coming from all over the room, from different angles and prioritizing parts of the text that I might not have prioritized in a reading, and of course, doing so together, there's a sense of showing the workings that would be going on secretly in people's bedrooms if they were hiding.

Part of 'showing the workings that would be going on secretly' also included struggling with the text—at one point, Paul stumbled over a sentence and read it back a second time, emphasizing different words this time. He then asked the students what they thought the author meant—he was having trouble understanding this section.

Although Paul did select which part of the text we should read and discuss, he also demonstrated that he doesn't always understand what is being said. By showing students that he sometimes struggles with some of the ideas being presented, Paul shows them that this is normal and often provides an opportunity to wrestle with a text—to try and understand things in a different way. By asking the students for their

perspective and understanding, he invites them to encounter the text as more of an equal, rather than positioning himself as the expert.

I'm going through the same process as they are, and although it necessarily [has a] power relation where they expect certain things of me and I have to deliver on those things, which both places a degree of power/responsibility in their hands to demand something of me, but also a degree of power in my hands in terms of determining the texts and so on. In going through that process with them, yes absolutely, I wouldn't say modelling, even that supposes that they might want to emulate what I'm doing. It's not that. It's we are reading together.

Here we see Paul's unawareness of the way that his pedagogical decisions influence the class, despite the fact that he seems to have given this a considerable amount of thought, even being opposed to my referring to reading together as a kind of modelling. Yet, he seems unaware that by choosing which part of the texts to discuss and which to skip over entirely he is also guiding the students toward particular content and understanding. Another way that Paul influenced the direction of the class was through the questions he used. In addition to asking the students questions that were explicitly linked to the text, like 'what do you think the author means by...' Paul also used questions to link the text to the students' lived experiences. These questions were often quite personal and encouraged students to talk about other aspects of their life, like their families or their work, building a sense of openness in the classroom.

At that level those kinds of questions are essential because there will be people who will contribute in relation to those questions but won't contribute in relation to a textual analysis. But in order for their voices to be heard, the register of the questions is really important. You have to come up with questions in a whole range of different registers, so that everybody will be able to engage with that text, engage with the conversation as much as the text.

Paul sees questions as an important tool to get students engaged with the text and in the dialogue around the text. He also used it as a way to get to know the interests and experiences of students so that he could invite them to share their expertise with the class. For example, in the session we talked about ecology and man's relationship with nature, there happened to be a student who worked at a Forest School, so Paul was able to bring a practical element to the theory we were exploring through the text by asking her to share about her work.

The second class of Paul's that I attended couldn't have been more different—it was a large bachelor's level class that was loud and packed into a lecture hall with chairs that had a writing ledge attached. The chairs were in rows facing the front of the class where there was a large screen to project PowerPoint. I found a space near the back of the hall, coincidentally sitting next to a girl who had helped me find my way earlier as I wandered around the unfamiliar campus, clearly looking lost. The session built on the previous week's session, in which they talked about the problem identified by Karl Marx, and focused on the solution he put forward. Paul uses a PowerPoint presentation, but the slides only contain very basic information or quotes from the assigned reading. He wanders around the front of the classroom, talking to the slides, bringing to mind a performer on the stage. He reviews the problem identified by Marx that they covered last week, and says "you left the lecture with your head full of Marx, but did you change the world? No."

I think the importance, for me, of an education studies degree is that which you have acquired through the process lends you a responsibility, and the responsibility is a serious one, about whether you want to do anything with that knowledge or not. You are in a position of possibility, of potential, which you weren't in the beginning of that. Now, that potential might never become actuality,

but the potential is created through the process of the interaction between the lived reality of experience and the theory with which you engage during that degree, because there are tensions and there are conflict and there are ways in which the theory so obviously tears apart what you assumed to be natural reality before.

Here Paul is talking about the transformative potential of education. Although it is up to the students whether or not they act on the new knowledge and way of seeing the world that they have been exposed to during their studies, Paul seems optimistic about the fact that there is a potential for students to change their practice or change how they engage with the world. Paul mentioned that after taking some of the modules on the education studies programme, some students decide they don't want to be teachers, or might decide to engage in education in different ways, through further education or alternative provision. Paul sees this as a change in their path, something that might come as a result of engaging with different educational theories that reveal other ways of practising education; the aim of several different modules on the programme.

Individual classes probably make no difference. But I think that overall the experience of the degree is such that it offers you the potential or capacity to change course, to move in different directions, to do different things, to consume differently, to live differently, whatever.

This sentiment was echoed in the book chapter that Paul had given to me, which was about the programme that he works on. The chapter described the potentially transformative experience that was open to students, if they chose to engage with it. In the book he claimed that although personal transformation would be a positive outcome of engagement with the course, he would feel disappointed if no one did anything as a result. So, although the programme itself is not a call to arms, nor does it explicitly teach about activism, the hope is that through engaging with the programme

students will be transformed to act differently in the world. With these lofty goals in mind, I was curious how Paul felt he achieved this educational transformation—how he felt that his practice was critical or radical or different to achieve this result.

Well, you saw two very different sessions, and in the spirit of starting with the material reality of where you are, finding a way within a classroom to establish criticality to bring about forms of dialogue which are going to enable participants to be open to potential is very much dependent on the material reality of the environment in which one finds themselves. So, inevitably, what pedagogical strategies are, and should not be ossified, they should not be set in stone, they should not be something which is, which I say, 'this is what I do'.

Perhaps it was the wording of my question, but Paul seemed to be hedging his answer.

This could be because he was insecure about whether or not he was demonstrating a critical pedagogical approach, or that he was unclear about what I consider a critical pedagogical approach to be. However, his answer does align with previous theoretical and empirical research that has been done on critical pedagogy which emphasises the context dependent nature of pedagogy. Paul continued to give examples of how he makes pedagogical decisions in his practice:

Rather it is the case, that faced with a particular circumstance and a particular group of people, you question yourself and say 'what, under these circumstances, are the best ways in which I can bring about the end of opening potential?' With a small group that may involve open readings of texts in a particular kind of way. That would be really difficult to do with 90 people. So, with 90 people, it's really about, for me, finding a balance between exposing those students to ideas or theory with which they have not previously engaged, and giving them the opportunity both through the assessment, but crucially also in the session, even when it's a big session, to stop and think actively for themselves about what the theory means in their lives, in relation to their work, in relation to their families, in relation to how they feel about the government, how they feel about how they voted, or whatever it might be in their own experience.

A particularly good example of this was when Paul had asked us to discuss with our neighbour whether we thought that Marx's communism could work in practice. This was towards the end of the lecture, so we had already heard Paul talk about the theory behind communism, and how many of the communist governments were not actually implementing it as Marx had intended. After we had discussed with our neighbour, Paul asked if anyone would like to share with the large group what they had discussed. In particular, the students seemed to be hung up on the issue of not being paid for work, or not owning property, as aspects of communism that Paul had presented that just seemed completely unimaginable. This example demonstrates how Paul feels that his large group lectures can still be transformative for students, in that they get them to think about how their lives could be different, or indeed, why they are that way at all. By exposing them to alternative ways of being, Paul creates an opportunity for them to engage in critiquing their current situation. This opportunity is created by making connections between abstract theory and their own lived experience and by asking them to think outside of their taken-for-granted assumptions about the world.

Example 10: Provocative Questions

Paul then asks the class "can state education ever be in the interest of the working class?" This is quite a provocative question, as many of the students feel that the current education system does benefit the working class, referring to social mobility. Other students then countered, saying that social mobility through education is a myth, and that education only serves to perpetuate the status quo. Paul simply says "well, that certainly is *a* view", implying that there may be more than one way of seeing things? We then talk about the concept of education (or schooling) as a factory, churning out workers. The process of state/formal education often makes us conform to a certain way of behaving and thinking. (Field notes 28/11/2017)

This example shows the power of asking provocative questions to get students to engage in a dialogue about a controversial issue without the educator revealing what

they think. Although some might think that educators shouldn't attempt to remain neutral since students come to class already having been inducted into dominant ways of thinking through the media and other ideological institutions, others might feel that by asking questions that engage the students themselves in debates might prevent indoctrination or a one-sided view on a particular issue and may offer an alternative view to the dominant perspective.

Another interesting aspect that came out of the book chapter that Paul had asked me to read was the idea of doing critical education in secret. This was something that was also mentioned by other participants, including Christine, Lena and Alessandro, who talked about the isolation they feel as a result of teaching in a different way. In contrast to many of the other participants, Paul worked in a university department that encouraged a critical approach and made it an important part of the ethos of the programme, resulting in different experience:

I'm subversive along with quite a number of other colleagues who, although they subvert in various and quite distinct, different ways, are relatively free and enabled to do that subversion. Well, does that mean it's still subversion if you're free to do it within your institution? Well, given how rare it is, in HE now, I think that speaks volumes.

Despite the relatively 'easy' situation that Paul finds himself working in, he still feels a tension between HE as a system, along with its funding regime, and the research and teaching that he wants to do as a critical educator. Although he admits that this tension is relatively safe, in comparison to universities in other countries like Brazil or Turkey, it still influences the work he can do, and he still has to work within a system that he is trying to undermine. This tension is not without its problems:

...it's very easy for me, but that shouldn't lead me to forget the potential costs of that challenge if you push it too far. The barriers against which that challenge will come if you push it too far in any country, and the price that colleagues in other countries are paying for just that. So, in all of those senses it's subterfuge and there is a secretive element to it, whatever institution you're working in, whatever country you're working in, at least in the world in which we live.

Connected with this topic of 'doing it in secret' was also how educators talk about their critical practice to people outside of the circle of critical educators; how we pitch research to HEFCE, how we get approval to run a course on radical education, or how we explain the purpose of our teaching practice to others.

Perhaps due to the highly theoretical nature of the two modules that I attended, the majority of our reflective dialogue focused on the relationship between theory and practice. Despite the theory-heavy nature of Paul's modules, he emphasised the application or connection between the theories learned in class with the students' lived experiences. The relationship between the students and the world was another topic that we discussed, focusing on the dialectical relationship between individual and society, and how education could mediate this interaction to influence both the individual and society.

I think, it is necessary before changing society to change oneself, but the means by which you change yourself is through particular kinds of activity and work, without saying 'I'm going to change myself.' It's actually doing stuff, work of one kind, for us it's mostly brain work, but it's not exclusively brain work. ...By working differently with our kids, in classrooms, by working differently with our kids at home, we produce the possibility of producing a different form of 'I', which can then have an impact on wider society. So, there is a constant back and forth between them.

This also related to other key themes from the reflective dialogue, social action and change, which were highlighted in both modules through discussions of human

relationships with nature and the history of Marxism. Although it wasn't a major theme, due to the 'subversive' nature of the programme that Paul works on, we did discuss the systems, which can constrain what he does, in terms of research and teaching. As a result of his context, Paul situated these restrictions outside the university with the system of HE more generally. In particular he referenced research funding and the demands of external stakeholders and how they force him to reframe the critical work he is doing.

Paul's focus on challenging the status quo through his modules by looking at lived experiences of students and how they could be otherwise places him firmly in the critical expert quadrant. Although he pushed students to question the status quo and become more critically conscious, in both the seminar-style class and the lecture, Paul relied heavily on a transmission-based pedagogy that placed him at the centre of the classroom. Even in the seminar, he selected which parts of the text would be read and asked all the questions, rather than allowing students to pick out parts of the text that were challenging or of interest to them. The lecture, while focusing on Marxist theory, was very didactic and focused on the transmission of information rather than a co-construction of understanding.

5.5 Overarching Themes for Critical Experts

Four out of ten participants were classified as critical experts, due to their focus on a reconstructivist curriculum, which focuses on transmitting knowledge, skills and values to help improve society (Schiro, 2012; McGregor, 2019), whether these were supported by a pedagogy that demonstrated challenging power in the classroom or not. Arthur, Louisa, Alesandro and Paul all taught on modules that were inherently political in nature, perhaps making the critical curriculum aspect less problematic. A common theme amongst all participants was the focus on criticality and challenging the status quo. These themes were easily visible in their content: educational development, radical education, and Marxism.

However, other overarching themes for this section of the framework were barriers to CP, institutional structures, and issues like engagement and student satisfaction. These aspects of the pedagogues' context often made a critical pedagogy difficult to implement in terms of how they were teaching. Arthur was constrained by large class sizes, Louisa struggled with engaging her students in a more participatory pedagogy, Alesandro found it difficult to take pedagogical risks when the institution expected him to have everything planned, and while Paul worked in an institution where he had more freedom to be 'subversive', he was also constrained by large classes and programme guidelines. These constraints meant that they often relied on a more traditional, transmission-based pedagogy, which was more teacher-centred.

Chapter 6: Exploring the Practice of Hegemonic Co-investigators

The case studies categorised in this quadrant are those that focus more on enacting a co-constructivist pedagogy than on a critical curriculum. That is not to say that they don't cover some critical content, but the distinguishing feature of their practice is the use of a more student-centred or student-led approach that aims to share power with students and engage them in the shaping of their learning experience. As with the critical expert quadrant, this quadrant contains almost half the participants, suggesting that the implementation of a co-constructivist approach is central to the practice of critical pedagogy. The fact that this approach to pedagogy seems to rarely coincide with a reconstructivist curriculum will be explored in the discussion chapter.

Themes for each case study will be presented and explored through data from both the observations and reflective dialogues, alongside two participants' themes. This chapter presents case studies of Lena, James, Claire and Jeremy. Key overarching themes for these participants included: challenging traditional teaching methods, pedagogical decisions, valuing student contributions and choice, and community. These themes highlight this cohort's focus on pedagogy and creating a certain kind of learning environment in their classrooms.

6.1 Case Study: Lena

Lena teaches a course on a master's in teaching and learning at a university in London. Lena's class had about 30 students, all of whom are teachers. She has designed her module so that classes meet once during the week for three hours with occasional intensive days on weekends, when the class lasts five hours. I observed an intensive, five-hour class part way through the term, and therefore only observed her once. Each session of the module is carefully planned to allow for input from all the students in the class, presentations from researchers outside the programme and time to reflect on learning. These elements played a major role in the session I observed, which included two presentations from Lena's past students, a presentation from a current student on the assigned reading for that class, peer feedback and assessment of work, and the opportunity to work on their meta-learning journals. Because of the highly structured nature of the module, and in particular this session which involved peer assessment, Lena requested that I observe without participating in the class. Throughout the class, there was very little direct instruction, instead the learning activities were carefully curated and built on students' prior experience and knowledge, as well as a co-constructivist approach that valued group discussion, work, and feedback. Key themes that emerged from the transcript for both Lena and me were student choice, community, sharing power, challenging the status quo, and engagement.

Example 11: Collaborative Classroom

Following a presentation from prior students, Lena thanks them for their presentation and then segues into the next part of the session, which is on dialogue and collaborative learning. She uses the assigned readings to highlight practices in their classroom—modeling reflective practice. She shows slides with quotes from the Wells (2000) reading on Vygotsky to show how their classroom models these characteristics: she says that the classroom is a collaborative community, all participants are valued equally, she hopes that the activities have real meaning and purpose for participants, the posing of questions is encouraged, dialogue plays a central role in common understanding, and activities must allow for diversity and originality. While she is talking about all these characteristics, she gives examples from her own practice, but also about going to train others about her techniques. She also talks about the students' contexts, she points out that some of these things might seem hard to implement in the current context with the national curriculum or in schools where there doesn't seem to be much diversity. (Field notes 11/11/2017)

Example 11 illustrates the only time in the five-hour class that Lena 'taught' information to the students in a traditional manner. The rest of the time was spent engaged in group activities or listening to the presentations of prior students. Even in this example of 'direct instruction', Lena focuses on how they embody dialogic and collaborative learning in their classroom by drawing on specific characteristics identified in the literature. As well as reflecting on her own practice in front of the students, Lena also explicitly connects the theory presented in the reading to how the students might be able to implement it in their own practice as teachers. Due to the highly structured nature of the module, I was interested in how she had made decisions about how to design the module and how it had changed over the years. I was also interested in whether this was relatively representative of her other sessions, since I had only observed one session.

Yes, that was a normal session. I don't necessarily have a visiting author every week, and to have two in one session was just unfortunate. ... I mean, the Peer Assessment, obviously you do that once in the module, but that approach and way of working is completely normal. That's what we do all the time, so they're very

used to working in small groups, and I change those constantly, but they always, which is part of the whole approach, they always have a choice. I would never put them in a group and say 'Right, that's it.' So, I gave them the criteria for the groups, but then they chose within that.

One of the elements of Lena's class that I was particularly interested in was Distributed Expertise, which is an opportunity for the students to become an expert in a text and then share that with the group. I thought this was a good example of how students could take on responsibility for teaching each other and sharing power in the classroom. Lena explained the rationale behind using this approach:

During the first session, I ask them to choose one of the readings that they would like to be an expert in. The aspect of choice is important because I think if people have chosen a topic that they're interested in, they'll learn much better and that's fundamental to my whole approach. ...then they write a fifteen-hundred-word critique of that paper, and that goes on Moodle for everyone to read a week in advance of the session where we're addressing the reading. And my thinking behind that is: firstly, it gives them a real purpose for writing it, as I think we mentioned in the session, that's also another real motivation for learning is when there's actual purpose for it, not just academic purpose. ... And then the idea is that in the actual session I will draw on that person as the expert. And it's all part of the idea of distributed expertise.

According to Lena, distributed expertise relies on the idea that although the teacher might be more of an expert than the student, due to their familiarity with the text or the subject area, the student still has a different perspective to share about the text by drawing on their own professional practice or their experience in a different context. Lena became familiar with this idea through the work of Brown & Campione (1993), and the more she taught "the more it just made so much sense".

In the next part of the class, students were encouraged to give ‘provocative’ feedback to their peers on a 1200-word assignment on a learning lens of their own choosing, which was a chance for them to get some formative feedback on their work before submitting it for a grade.

Example 12: Provocative Feedback

Lena asks the students to put themselves into groups of 3 or 4, where there are: 2 people from outside the UK, 1 UK person, 1 man, and at least 2 different ‘lenses’. This takes a little while, but they manage it—they all seem to know each other well. Before she gives them the instructions for the activity, she gives them a little theory on feedback. She sets this up by saying this is a way of practicing assessment for learning that they can use with their students. Lena presents 3 purposes of assessment: (1) to provide evaluation or judgment of whether it is good or bad; (2) to reference how they have met the criteria which involves judgment; and (3) to provoke further thought. They are supposed to focus on the 3rd purpose of assessment, which provokes the learner to think more deeply or critically about the topic. The activity starts with the author of the paper telling the others how they think they have met the criteria with their assignment, after reading the paper the others will ask them provocative questions. The author of the paper can then make changes or add things to their paper in pen before handing it in to Lena—in fact she said she likes seeing when people have added things or taken things on board after being provoked. Before they all start working, Lena asks if they “understand what they are meant to be doing, why, and what they will learn from it”. Then they all get to work! Lena goes around and joins different groups throughout the 2 hours, and listens to what people are saying, and asks them provocative questions too. (Field notes 11/11/2017)

Example 12 is another illustration of how Lena links the theoretical content of the course to the pedagogy of the course, demonstrating how students can use these techniques in their own teaching practice. Allowing the students the freedom to choose their own groups, within parameters, encourages the formation of different groups, which encourages dialogue across different cultures and contexts, which was the focus of that week’s session. The structure of the activity allows the students to see the importance of the three purposes of assessment presented by Lena—first, the authors of the papers themselves were asked to address the second purpose of assessment (how they met the criteria) and then their peers were asked to address the

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third purpose of assessment by providing provocative feedback in order to encourage deep thought about the topic/their paper in the author. By asking the students if they “understand what they are meant to be doing, why, and what they will learn from it”, Lena was not only making sure that the students understood the activity, but that they had thought about how this activity would benefit their learning and why it was structured in this particular way. It also highlighted the reason behind giving feedback in the first place—is it just to justify a grade or is it to help the student improve and grow in their understanding?

And the essays that you saw in that session, they won't like it very much, but I'm not going to say whether they're good or bad. I'm just going to pick up on ideas in them, and ask some more questions about it, suggest other readings, perhaps, make links. And then next week when we meet, they're going to share my comments in their lens group, the topic group, and discuss them. So, it's entirely about learning rather than a judgment.

Here Lena is also picking up on a tension between students' previous learning experiences and the experience they will have in her class. By not grading every contribution and not praising students for “an excellent performance,” Lena is trying to move students away from focusing solely on extrinsic rewards for their work, towards intrinsic motivation. This can be difficult for some students, as they have been educated in a system that is very exam and grade-centred.

I'm deliberately being slightly perverse in saying, I'm not doing that at all. Of course, we are, because ultimately, I'm going to mark their essays, so it's all feeding into that assessment process. But I try not to make that an explicit focus in the sessions because that isn't actually what I'm interested in. I know it's what they're interested in, some of them. But I'm trying to show that you can get excellent grades *and* become an expert *and* learn a lot. And I think that's a really useful message for teachers who are so constrained by getting good results.

Another element of Lena's class was the use of what she called 'lens groups'. These groups are another opportunity for students to take control over their own learning and make a choice based on their interests. Groups are formed based on their interests, and then as a group they decide how to divide up the recommended reading for their topic, and then use a jigsaw method to teach each other about the readings. Lena explained that her reason for having topic groups is two-fold: students seem to be more motivated when they are passionate about a topic, but also it offers a more supportive way to approach the assignment. Many of the students in the class are mature students, returning to university after many years, others may be coming from different contexts with different expectations. Lena also challenges the traditional assessment process and shares power with students by developing the assessment criteria with students:

We developed [the criteria] ourselves, in the second or third session. So again, it's like getting them to tell me rather than me telling them, what a good bit of academic writing would be. I didn't tell them they were developing assessment criteria, I just asked them to describe a really good bit of writing. In groups, they...do you know the Diamond 9 activity? It's rather a wonderful activity, but anyway, they used that to develop their group's top nine criteria. And then I went away and took everybody's and made them into more structured criteria, if you like. But I tried to include everything that had been said. I always do this and I find that they inevitably cover everything that's written in the university handbook, and then some. Then I put that on Moodle and ask for any comments or changes. And then I say okay, that's what we're going with, that's what I'll use when I assess your final essays. That's what you will use when you self-assess your essay in the group, which is what they were doing when you saw them.

Developing marking criteria with students is a way to share authority with students, giving them ownership over their learning and how it is assessed. However, Lena seems more focused on another benefit of sharing this responsibility—that it helps them understand the criteria because they came up with them and know the rationale

behind them. This makes doing the assignment easier, as students already have the criteria and objectives in mind. This awareness about the learning process was something that was woven throughout Lena's class, and was further embedded as students were asked to reflect on their meta-learning journals at the end of class. In the reflective dialogue, Lena explained the meta-learning journals:

The first session of the module is focused on meta-learning. So, we explore that and they pre-read before they come to the module about meta-learning: what it is, why we do it. And then I give them each a nice notebook and present it to them and that's the meta-learning journal. Then I develop some prompts, which actually address the seven lenses that the module addresses. ... So, for example, one of the lenses is the role of class culture and poverty on learning. The prompts might be in this learning session, how did the role of class culture affect your learning? And in that I'm thinking about the fact that you've got people from all different cultures, different kinds of positions in life, and I'm interested to know ... or it's partly about raising their awareness of the role it might play. Or another one would be: what role did dialogue play in your learning today in this session? Another one is authority and authoritarianism, so then I'd say something like, 'where did you see the authority lying in this session?' So that is part of the distributed expertise idea, it is distributed authority. So, I'm hoping they won't say it was all with me! And I'm hoping they won't say it's authoritarian, but in some ways obviously it is.

The meta-learning journal is not only a way for the students to reflect on what they have learned in the class and how, it also provides a jumping off point for discussions with their peers. Although they never hand in the journal to Lena, she does ask them to informally share with partners or small groups and then asks for volunteers to share with the whole class. In this sense, the students in the class model for each other what reflection on learning might look like, helping those who are not used to such an exercise. In the class I observed, Lena was sure to leave time at the end of the session for the students to reflect on their experience engaging in peer assessment.

Building a sense of community was another key aim of Lena's activities. This aim also influenced the scheduling of the module, as longer sessions seem to encourage a sense of community. Students are also encouraged to bring food to share in the longer weekend sessions, which contribute to the sense of community. Lena had considered so many aspects of the learning environment, from using name cards to help students get to know each other, to how the desks were arranged, so that everyone can see everyone in the class. I was interested to learn more about how the module had developed over time, since it seemed that the majority of the activities were either driven by research or personal experience, rather than traditional expectations of what a university classroom might look like.

I've learnt a lot by doing sessions with [her mentor] because we used to co-teach or he used to teach and I used to sit there feeling like a bit of a spare part, but I learned a lot because it was all about how people learn best on his module, which I then inherited when he left. And so, I thought actually, it's not morally justifiable to teach in a way that isn't backed up by the research. ... Why doesn't everyone think that? But you know, I'd read, you know, people don't learn from this, and they do learn if this, and I think, 'right, okay, how can we embody that?' And I suppose I've carried on doing that, and then I actually found what works with this group and what doesn't work so well and built on that, so it did start with reading the research and trying to implement it. The only thing is that I get asked if I could, you know, teach this module another time or could someone else take it? And because of the nature of it, the answer is 'no', really. ...It's a big emotional investment, which is right. I mean, I think that's how it should be, but the way things are going, that is not the emphasis, the emphasis is on *en masse*, it's on churning out masses of people. And I'm being forced, coerced on a daily basis to do that. I had to fight not to have 20 MA students on this module who are not teachers and who do not have very good English... Well that would completely destroy the module, but that isn't the point.

Here Lena is describing the evolution of her module over the years, and how that is beginning to be influenced more and more by university demands on student numbers. Lena is critical of the expansion occurring at her university - she doesn't want

her module to be co-opted by larger, more general programmes that don't share her ethos, as this would affect the success of the module, nor does she want a larger class since this would affect the kind of approach she could use. Lena thinks that her way of doing things is no longer valued in the university, which focuses more on getting as many students in the classes as possible, sacrificing effective learning and student well-being in the process.

The thing is, and this might be relevant to your research, that it becomes normal. That's the problem here [at her university]. So, I feel like me and [her colleague], we're made to feel like we're eccentric or strange, you know. But actually, what we're saying is completely common sense and it's what the research shows. It's them who are the mavericks, actually, but because everyone is talking like that, not just in [her department], not just [her university], but in the whole country and beyond. It's just it turns us into the weird ones and that is the danger.

Lena feels that she is being forced to the margins by her practice, which is backed up by research and common sense. Particularly damaging is the feeling that she is being branded as being 'the weird one', instead of those that are going along with the 'flavour of the day', which is moving toward a de-personalised massified higher education. This categorization as 'out of the ordinary' would seem to put Lena and like-minded colleagues in an isolating and precarious position, as like Christine, Arthur and Louisa, her university is interested in classes that can accommodate larger numbers of students, while cutting those that insist on keeping student numbers to a level where relationships can be fostered. Although Lena was quite critical of the recent developments in UK higher education during our conversation, I was interested to learn more about how she felt her class could encourage more critical engagement with these ideas, or with education in general.

Well, the content of my module is not perhaps as critical as I think it should be. I would like it to be more critical. Actually, last year was the first year I looked at ability grouping, and I think that's got a very critical dimension to it, and I'm building on that. But in terms of practice, the idea is that everybody's voice is valued and valuable. And I think that's what makes it critical. But also, everybody values everybody else's voice and perspective. ... I mean, that's my definition of democracy when even minorities are nurtured and listened to and supported. And, it's important because in my class people don't learn if they don't feel valued.

Lena's description of her practice demonstrates a critical pedagogical approach in relation to how she teaches and how she views learning, rather than a critical reconstructivist curriculum that introduces a social justice agenda – although some aspects of her curriculum do relate to social injustice; streaming for example, clearly relates to social class issues. However, it was not clear whether it is the social justice aspects of streaming that were highlighted by Lena or the research that indicates that streaming is less effective for motivating student learning. Lena thought that she wasn't doing enough in terms of the critical content of her module, yet the amount of planning that went into the pedagogy of the module seemed to create a space where the voicing of experience and opinions were welcomed, perhaps allowing for more critical discussions around the content of the module.

Lena identified five themes after reading the transcript of our reflective dialogue, which are reflected in the themes and excerpts shared above: (1) the importance of choice for learning, (2) the importance of knowing each other for meaningful learning, (3) distributed expertise, (4) fighting against the grain, and (5) how to be 'engaging'. It's interesting to see how these themes stood out to both Lena and me, as I also highlighted these five themes in the interviews before she sent me her themes based on my coding in NVivo. Open coding of the transcript highlighted the

significance of pedagogical decisions, challenging traditional teaching methods, student contributions to class, assessment, community, student choice and valuing student knowledge as the most frequent codes. Pedagogical decisions about allowing learners to share control over their learning through enabling them to make choices was demonstrated through the lens groups and the selection of distributed expertise topics. Repeated references to the sense of community and the closeness of the group relates to Lena's theme of knowing each other and how this can foster more meaningful learning. The description of Lena's struggle against the regulations and expectations of the university show how she is fighting against the grain, doing all she can to be 'engaging' despite the demands this makes on her emotionally and mentally as she challenges more traditional methods of teaching: all these themes are examples of a critical approach to teaching and learning and it could be argued that this in itself is a critical curriculum. On the other hand, it could be argued that a critical curriculum must specifically engage with social justice issues relating to, for example, class, race and gender issues in learning, or neoliberalism and its impact on learning. Therefore, I have situated Lena in the hegemonic co-investigator quadrant, as her decision making and practice centre around creating a co-constructivist learning experience for her students to make learning more effective.

6.2 Case Study: James

James is a retired teacher-educator that used to work at a redbrick university in the Midlands. After agreeing to participate in the research, James suggested that I read several chapters that he had published on democratic education, educational development, and teacher training. James had quite a lot of experience teaching in schools and as a teacher-educator, and also shared insights into the changes to education and education policy over the last 40 years. Amongst the most commonly coded themes from our discussion were challenging traditional teaching methods and critical pedagogy, which James discussed through examples of his own practice and how it had been affected over the years by government policy and control, which were two other key themes.

This case study focuses on his comments that pertain to higher education, but much of our conversation focused on his experience teaching social sciences in secondary schools, which shaped his pedagogical beliefs and practice when working at university. It was during his role as a secondary school teacher that he noticed a glaring difference between the seemingly progressive discourse around education and what was actually practised in the classroom. In order to attempt to remedy what James saw as the disconnect between what teachers say and do, he and his teacher-educator colleagues developed a module that implemented a more typical 'tutor-led course' and a more democratic version that would be led by students. They allowed the students to choose at the beginning of the term which way they would take the module. In this sense, they had to be prepared for all eventualities since they weren't sure which version of the module students would choose.

...critical pedagogy and democratic learning are bloody hard work. The thing is, and this is true of any critical pedagogy in the classroom or in the university, you never know what's coming. You open it up, you've lost control. I mean, that, in a sense, is the point. And I think this is probably why teachers are afraid of teaching critical pedagogy, not just they're scared, they lack confidence, because they don't always know where it's going to go. They're afraid of saying, 'I don't know'.

James mentioned several challenges that educators might face in teaching their students using a critical pedagogical approach or a more democratic approach to learning that is student-led. First of all, time is an issue. Due to the short amount of time that educators have with students, teaching them about democratic learning using a democratic approach can be like 'shock therapy'. James insisted that "we can't do this gently because we haven't time, so we have to shock [them] in the first place, and then when [they've] experienced it, [they] see what [they] can do". The other challenge is that the educator using this approach really needs to know what they're doing, especially when they are opening up the classroom and giving power to the students. They need to have the proper resources to be able to enable students to direct their own learning, but also the students needed to feel like they had the confidence to handle an un-planned and un-guided discussion.

However, the narrowing of the national curriculum and the exam culture of schools meant that students at university were not prepared to engage independently and critically with the materials presented to them at university, which then also affected how they were prepared to be teachers. Reflecting on his own experience of lecturing on different courses across different levels of the university, James told me about the students using words like 'absorbent' and 'noddors'; students that simply listened and nodded rather than giving anything back. Instead, James favours a more

dialogic approach to teaching and learning: “it’s got to be two ways, a dialogue between the two of you, otherwise it’s just bloody hopeless”. However, he felt this wasn’t happening at the university, and certainly not in teacher education:

Teacher education doesn’t say what it’s supposed to be. It does not do critical pedagogy. There are some brave souls that are trying their best. I know some of them, they couldn’t possibly do what [his colleague] and I did, because you’re not allowed. You can’t do the taking apart of ‘what is knowledge? And how do we know? And who owns it?’ All that kind of stuff. You can’t do it.

When James delivered his teacher training module with his colleague, they offered the students several choices: a completely student-led course, an individualised and completely independent course, a teacher-led course, or a mixture of the above.

While the majority of years students chose to do the student-led, collaborative version of the course, there was some resistance at first because students thought they would be abandoned or that the teachers were just being lazy.

Little did they know it’s exactly the opposite. But you had to sort of reassure them, no we’re not going anywhere. In fact, we called ourselves senior learners, because there’s still things I don’t know, lots of things I don’t know, everyone has things they don’t know. ... We said, ‘no we’re senior learners here, we don’t know, and we don’t know what you need to know all the time, we can make some guesses and we’re probably better informed, we are. But we still don’t know everything. So, we’re learning ourselves the whole time!

By calling themselves ‘senior learners’, James and his colleague were attempting to challenge the traditional hierarchy of the classroom, which was often difficult for students. However, the ultimate aim of sharing responsibility and power in the classroom was to help students develop as independent learners and to help them see that they had knowledge worth sharing with the class. By modelling this type of classroom in teacher training, these newly trained teachers might feel more

comfortable implementing this approach in their own classrooms. However, according to James, this approach to teaching and learning would have been more important back when teachers were making decisions about the curriculum independently, now that teachers are expected to deliver the national curriculum, their autonomy and responsibility to choose what to teach has diminished: “Now, the best that I think people can do is sort of tinker, try and provide a little bit of freedom and decision-making at the edges.”

While James had spoken a lot about the constraints of teachers working within the system, and how education has changed over the course of his career, I was interested in learning more about his beliefs about critical pedagogy and about how he would put these into practice. In order to do so, I asked him what his practice would look like if there were no constraints.

I would do a mixture of, which I think some schools have tried to do in the past, where the teacher decides certain things and the students decide certain things. But you discuss it all, you're open about it. If I'm telling you what to do, I've got to justify it. If you want to do it, you can justify it to me.

Here we see some similarities between James' ideal classroom and Lena's practice, where students are given a lot of choice within parameters set by the teacher. Both James and Lena also have similar reasons for making their decision-making about the classroom explicit—if students can understand why they are being told to do something, they are more likely to see the relevance and take it seriously.

Understanding the reasoning behind activities and content being taught can influence student engagement and motivation. Because James taught social science before becoming a teacher educator, he situated his ideal classroom in this subject area:

I think I would probably start off any course with... 'okay, what kind of society do you want?' Okay, let's start at the top. What is the most important? All of a sudden, they've come up with a peaceful society. ... Now let's look at the curriculum in your country. So, you start with, okay what kind of people do we want in the society, and then you say right, okay then, let's now design a school, not just a curriculum, but the processes and methods as well, and there's a complete and utter mis-match between what we have now. And that's the reality.

This exercise would help students to look at their education in a different way—perhaps it is an idea that we take for granted that needs to be re-examined. Of course, an exercise like this might make more sense in a social science class, or even on a teacher training course. However, James thought this exercise could be adapted to help learners reflect on how they want to learn in the classroom by asking them the purpose of education and how this class could support them in fulfilling that purpose. In addition to allowing students to have a say in the decision-making that takes place in the classroom and asking them to think about how education could contribute to the type of society they want, James also claimed it would be important to use a variety of teaching and learning approaches since everyone learns differently, and one approach should not be favoured over another.

Although James seemed optimistic about the changes he would make in his own classroom, and he did give examples of how he had tried some of these approaches in his own practice, like project-based learning and negotiating the curriculum with students, he was less optimistic about large-scale changes to education:

I have ended up rather pessimistic at the end of my career because, I mean, I've been promised change for forty or fifty years. And I've tried to do it myself. And I know it can be done on a small scale and we can do it. But the critical mass isn't there. Just is not there. And that critical mass is harder and harder to put together because all of the things we talked about. I am slightly pessimistic about it; it's not

that it can't be done, it can be done, so that's the good news, the bad news is that it isn't being done and it's not being done on anything like the scale that would be necessary for any kind of real change.

Fundamental to James's drive to implement a critical pedagogy to challenge traditional methods of teaching and learning was providing students with more freedom and choice so they could develop into critical and autonomous citizens. Despite the numerous barriers to critical pedagogy that James discussed, he seemed determined that through changes to curriculum and pedagogy we could encourage change through education, specifically by focusing on controversial topics and congruent teacher training. I placed James in the hegemonic co-investigator quadrant because implementing a co-constructivist approach to the classroom seemed to be at the centre of his practice, more so than teaching a critical curriculum. This may have been influenced by the fact that James felt that the deconstructing of ideas and critique of knowledge was something couldn't be done in the university anymore.

6.3 Case Study: Jeremy

Jeremy teaches psychology at a university in the north of England. The course that I observed was a second year bachelor's module that focused on different methods used in psychology to study culture, society, and the self. The module had 300 students enrolled, but because the university didn't have a lecture hall big enough for 300 students, they were split into two cohorts of 150. In the two sessions I observed, there were probably about 30-50 students in attendance, spread out in a tiered lecture hall with fixed seating, facing a giant screen for the PowerPoint. The first three-hour session was on discourse analysis (DA), the second was on the psychoanalytic approach, with the reflective dialogue directly after the second session. I met Jeremy at a conference in 2017 where I presented about my research. He was very interested in critical pedagogy as he had recently started to learn more about it and attempt to implement it in his practice.

The following excerpts from my field notes and the reflective dialogue highlight several themes that I feel are representative of my time in Jeremy's class. These themes were student engagement, challenging traditional teaching methods, dialogue, valuing student knowledge, and spontaneity. Jeremy aimed to create 'gaps' in the class so that students could engage in discussion with their peers to construct understanding based on their existing knowledge as well as the knowledge they learned in the class. Part of creating gaps and letting students learn by doing activities was to help students develop autonomy and control over their learning, challenging traditional hierarchical methods of teaching in the university, which Jeremy referred to as 'death by PowerPoint'. After reading the transcript of our reflective dialogue, Jeremy identified five themes, which interrelate with the themes I identified through

coding: (1) dialogue and debate brings knowledge, (2) learn by doing, from data to theory, (3) against top-down master-slave relationship, (4) modelling not knowing, but showing curiosity and (5) encouraging student contributions and discussion.

Throughout the sessions, I had noticed that the students were often reluctant to answer or ask questions, something which Jeremy regularly encouraged. Students seemed to be fine talking in small groups, but students had to be pushed to answer individual questions or share with the whole class. Jeremy shares his thoughts about student engagement:

I know they want to talk, especially with psychology, they come to university expecting to talk, and then the situation prohibits them. The situation of a big lecture theatre, such a formal situation, they find it very inhibiting. And I do think it's important to talk because psychology is a negotiable subject, certainly debatable, its facts are debatable, and its methods are debatable. And we have to debate about it in order to get anywhere with it.

This excerpt seems to suggest that Jeremy views the classroom as a space for students to construct knowledge and understanding together, through dialogue and activities.

This certainly matches the kind of approach Jeremy used in the classroom, which involved a combination of short lectures, videos, photos, activities and small group discussions. Part of encouraging students to speak is acknowledging that their contributions are important, which Jeremy feels might make them more likely to contribute in the future. This connects with the Freirean concept of valuing student knowledge instead of assuming that the teacher is the only person in the classroom who has something valuable to share. In fact, students often bring up things that are useful for the group, including the teacher. This happened in the lecture that I attended earlier that day, when a student brought up a point about projection that

Jeremy hadn't thought about. However, relying on student contributions can be difficult, requiring a great deal of spontaneity and confidence.

A key element of Jeremy's approach to teaching the module was his use of questions to drive the direction of the sessions. Another unique aspect of his sessions was the order in which he planned activities. For example, in the first class on Discourse Analysis (DA), we started the class by engaging in the process of doing a simplified version of DA and then he presented about the theory behind DA, followed by a more detailed activity that involved doing DA largely unassisted.

Example 13: Doing Discourse Analysis

Instead of telling us exactly what discourse analysis was, Jeremy shows us some pictures and then asks us what a psychologist might be looking for when using DA to analyse these pictures. The first one shows gender stereotypes, the second is an ad for soap which showed a black boy in a tub coming out white after using the soap, the third is the infamous picture of Boris Johnson with the bus that says how much money the UK gives the EU, and then asks why we don't give it to the NHS. After looking at the pictures he asks us what DA is. He thanks them for sharing. The students and Jeremy focus on how looking at these pictures in a deeper way reveals contemporary cultural norms and possibly demonstrates how these are shaped and change over time, and how much control the media has over us. As the students share, he asks follow up questions or asks the students to add to what they have said. Sometimes he contrasts the views of students, possibly highlighting that there is more than one way of looking at things. It was interesting when we came to the Boris bus, because it was so clearly political, and Jeremy was open about the fact that he had voted remain. Although it was overtly political, he focused on the idea of misinformation—how people that had voted may have been tricked by the government or media into believing something that wasn't supported by evidence. He supported this by showing them the UK's budget—pie charts and data from Parliament showed that what they give to the EU is a tiny slice compared to the amount they already spend on the NHS. (Field notes 20/10/2017)

Jeremy explains why he started with activities that allowed us to construct our own understanding of discourse analysis before he taught us about it:

First of all, the aim is that they come up with the answer before you do. And that happened today, actually. That guy at the front, he just nailed it, he spotted it. As long as somebody gets it, you know you've

done your job because you've given them enough evidence to go on. So that's one reason for that. Secondly, the topic was discourse analysis and one of the take home messages was that you do discourse analysis anyway, being a person in society, we're just decoding messages, therefore let's do a little bit of that. Let's convince ourselves we already know what we're doing and then look at what the expert response is.

Jeremy's rationale for the order of events in his class demonstrates two important ways that Jeremy empowers students. First, he points out that discourse analysis is something that we do in our everyday lives, and therefore we can use our everyday experience as a starting point to learn more about the theory. The second is that instead of telling students all they need to know, he encourages them to put the pieces together themselves, building on knowledge from earlier on in the course as well as what they have learned in the session. In order to make these connections easier for students, Jeremy often used popular culture in his examples, the Twilight Saga for example, to make it clearer that all communication involves discourse.

Discourse is crucial for a critical pedagogy because... critical pedagogy says we're surrounded by ideology all the time. Ideology is everywhere. Often where you don't expect it to be. To give students examples of some things that can be understood through ideology, then you're doing an educator's job right there.

Jeremy used examples from popular culture, including TV shows and movies, to emphasise to students that everything is ideological, not just politics or religion. In addition to drawing on examples from popular culture, Jeremy also sought to make connections easier for students by using more accessible language in his lessons. Throughout the sessions, Jeremy based his activities on grids, which were a helpful way to teach the key terms and methods for analysing the topic of the sessions. In both instances, at the beginning of the class Jeremy used more common language, which was later changed to include more technical 'psychology' language.

I think of teaching as bridging the gap between where they are and where they need to get to. Not bombarding them with too much technical language. If there is technical language, using a simpler term first. Especially discourse analysis, which again is all about the everyday, you know we're all going to have discourse on this anyway, it's an odd thing to turn into a technical thing, and we all do it.

This approach to teaching technical language as well as the practices that they are a part of is an effective way to make these practices more accessible to those that might not be able to understand or apply them without scaffolding. Although I think this was meant to be supportive, there is also perhaps an assumption that students cannot develop these skills on their own. This approach also seemed to link to how Jeremy described the analyst to the students—as being the expert who reveals that which the patient cannot see, a role that he challenged in class as being elitist. When asked how he reconciles the hierarchical dynamic in psychology with critical pedagogy, Jeremy responded by identifying himself as a critical psychologist:

I'm kind of a critical psychologist, which means that you take psychology to be the problem, not the solution. I like psychology, but I don't really teach it as stable knowledge that is reliable... The kind of courses I teach are always quite open to debate. Zizek had a point about this, he said that ideologies are all around us and that's okay. In soap operas and packages, toothpaste ads. But the deepest ideology is how we understand ourselves. For me, critical pedagogy is all about de-constructing the psychological structures that perform who we are. Because they're not neutral. The way we think about ourselves, the way we act on ourselves, the way we conceptualise our relation to society. They have an ideological function, as well. I think I'm in a great situation because I don't see a mismatch between critical pedagogy and doing critical psychology. To me they are one and the same thing, in a way, because they're always trying to investigate the relation of power to subjectivity. How we come to live through those power structures. And that means you have to reflect on the power differential between the students and the lecturer.

Getting students involved in deconstructing the psychological structures that define us was something that Jeremy spent a large portion of both classes doing. The sessions I

attended were active, engaging students in analysing discourse from media in the first session, and analysing Freud and other case studies in the psychoanalysis session.

Throughout the classes, and the reflective dialogue, Jeremy seemed to focus on *doing* these practices, rather than just learning the theory behind them. Jeremy explains:

I don't really see the lecture as a vehicle for imparting knowledge, as such. I see it as kind of a place to inspire and to engage and get them to think about stuff they might take away with them. And also, they say that learning occurs by doing. And I think it's been well established that the lecture format is a very passive, disengaging format. So, I think the more we can get them to do, to work towards the answers themselves the more enjoyment they're going to get out of it, and the more they'll learn.

While Jeremy believes that teaching in this way will make learning more enjoyable and more effective, it does mean that sometimes the materials, activities and content he aims to cover don't fit into class time. Although Jeremy felt that students got a lot from the session, the amount of activities and discussions they had meant that they missed out on some of what he had planned, which Jeremy had been really excited about.

Like today, there's a whole lecture--I missed out an entire lecture--I was going to do Vietnam and post-traumatic stress disorder. Slightly different side of it. And I prepared it, I put a lot of work into it, actually, and I just didn't deliver it at all. But the learning outcomes were met, in my mind. And they were inspired, they took it away with them and I could tell they were interested. And I don't actually mind because, um I think improvising is a good alternative. It's a good way of teaching, to try and improvise, with a basic structure, and then responding to their questions and taking them in a different direction.

In a way, this issue about content relates to one of the hesitations often mentioned about implementing a more critical, student-led approach to teaching, which is that if educators leave the class direction up to students they might not learn everything on the curriculum (of course, not all educators aim for an objective- or content-led

curriculum). This is especially true in classrooms that use an inquiry-based approach, where students are more in control of deciding what they learn and how they demonstrate their learning. Possibly due to the assessment-oriented nature of schooling, educators and students alike focus on delivering and covering the content needed for the exam. Although the majority of the comments and questions from students in Jeremy's lectures were relevant and interesting, the discussions did redirect the focus of the class and possibly meant that planned content was not covered. However, despite lamenting about the amount of time spent preparing material that wasn't taught, Jeremy didn't seem overly concerned about divergence.

Yeah, it's a dilemma. It's definitely there, as a potential problem. But recently I've been thinking... less is more. I've been looking at my practice for the last year or so, thinking about my lectures and framing. And I've got this new theory and it seems to work. I used to have quite a strong narrative on where I wanted things to go, with loads of PowerPoints which made this argument. And now I'm thinking it's better if I just have a handful of images and a handful of slides with some text and some ideas with some pictures on and just see where it goes in the lecture. Improvise it out, see what they say, you can always bring in other things that they want to, and flip it over. ...For me it's much more about social engagement than it is this is the curriculum that I have to teach you because I'm the expert and I have all the knowledge. It's much more dialogical.

A key element of Jeremy's 'new' approach to teaching is to create gaps—it's his belief that the only way to help students develop agency over their learning is to leave them the space to do so themselves. This means moving away from a spoon-fed approach similar to Freire's banking-model of education in which the students are filled with the knowledge of the expert teacher. The 'gap' can manifest a number of ways, in the curriculum as well as the pedagogical approach. However, Jeremy felt that the university was making this kind of teaching difficult:

If you look at the university stipulations, these are learning outcomes, what we want you to do. The marking guide, what to cover, there are the skills they've got to acquire. And, I think, 'where are the gaps?' There are no gaps, and I think it's such bad pedagogical practice, for me to have an exact model in my mind of how they should answer a question. And then to put myself up as the expert who has the answer, and then to ask them to come up to where I am, to meet me. Because then there's no gap there, there has to be a gap between my understanding and their understanding and there has to be a gap in their approach, where they don't know what the answer is and they have to engage with that gap themselves and go fill it with their own agency, and their own problem-solving ability.

Throughout his classes, Jeremy did leave gaps—for us to talk to our neighbour or think about some questions or comments—and he also built a gap into the assessment, asking students to come up with their own topics and questions. He felt this was the antidote to the multiple-choice test, which focused on facts that were not up for debate. Instead, the assessment is an opportunity for them to make their own combination of topics and approaches from the course to answer their own question—an exercise that many of them find overwhelming. Jeremy thinks it's good for them to have a problem they have to solve on their own.

The lack of gaps at the university is one of the things that led Jeremy to become more interested in critical pedagogy. Many of the recent changes to the university environment have left Jeremy feeling like the only solution is to deliver a lecture, or what he calls 'death by PowerPoint'.

You have to teach well in spite of the university, there are so many rules and regulations and codes, and stipulations, it makes it very easy not to be a critical pedagogue. If you just want to give death by PowerPoint lectures and getting them to stick fingers on lips, that's actually fine. Because it's very cheap for the university to have 200 students in one room with one lecturer, it's quite happy to do that. For some reason students seem to quite enjoy it, as well, and all the kind of constant criteria, I mean it's demoralising... because you've got the learning outcomes, you've got marking guide. The marking criteria. And students are playing to that, and they're safe in that

environment. Critical pedagogy can't really be safe, it's got to take some risks. But the university doesn't let us take those risks. It's increasingly hard to do so.

Instead of discouraging him from exploring critical pedagogy, Jeremy was driven to understand more about how he could implement a different approach in order to teach in a way that would challenge the neoliberal, marketised university. While being surprised that the work of Freire was relevant in the current context, Jeremy recognised that although the struggles of students today are different to the peasants of Brazil, Freire's approach to education still had something to offer them. In particular, Jeremy thought Freire's empty vessel metaphor seemed particularly relevant to students in the marketised university:

... capitalism and the neoliberal forms of the university they just love the empty vessel, they love it, because it disempowers students. So, 'you don't know anything, you've got no skills. You've got no knowledge, no employability. We'll give you the employability because we'll sell it to you. And we'll give you the skills, because we'll sell you those. And by the time you leave, you'll be full.' But that is so wrong, first of all because the students already know a lot. They're very wise already, they know a lot of things, they have motivation. And they don't actually want to *buy* their education. They want to engage with something meaningful...

While some aspects of Jeremy's teaching focused on challenging the status quo through discourse analysis, the key aspect of Jeremy's practice that stood out to me was the active, dialogic pedagogy, which is why I placed him in the hegemonic co-investigator quadrant. This was also demonstrated by the fact that the majority of the reflective dialogue focused on pedagogical decision making, not curricular decisions. The pedagogical choices that Jeremy made to leave spaces for student contributions, and the spontaneity that entailed, resulted in a dialogic approach which valued student input, and clearly demonstrated a co-constructivist approach. While this

challenged the traditional power dynamics of the classroom and moved toward a more collaborative approach, the content covered in the module was not chosen for its critical or political nature. However, it was interesting that despite selecting more familiar or interesting topics for his students, they continuously brought the discussion back to topics such as sexism, racism and victimization.

6.4 Case Study: Claire

While I was unable to observe Claire since she wasn't teaching at the time, I knew her from a reading group and we had a shared interest in critical pedagogy and student-staff partnership work, which influenced our discussion. Student-staff partnership (SSP) is an approach which attempts to break down the hierarchical dynamic in the classroom by involving students in producing knowledge, research, making changes to their university or designing courses and assessments (Cook-Sather, 2013). While not directly related to a critical pedagogies approach, SSP does overlap with critical pedagogy in that it aims to empower students encouraging a more equal power relationship with staff, moving toward what Fielding (1999) refers to as 'radical collegiality'. Throughout the dialogue with Claire, one theme that stood out was that of identity and positionality—whether it was in her writing, research or teaching, Claire seemed to value her students' positions and also encouraged them to develop a new identity through being a member of the academic community. Part of achieving this was encouraging staff-student partnership and the kind of dynamic that would allow staff to build a relationship with students that made them part of the community of practice. However, institutional structures and conditions sometimes made it difficult to promote an inclusive atmosphere.

I started by asking Claire 'if I was a fly on the wall in your classroom what would I see?' She explained that she seeks a conversational style of teaching because she works in a widening participation setting, in which the formal academic style of teaching and writing can be challenging for students. One of her main reasons for teaching in this style is that she is "trying to make some links for them between what they're experiencing in their daily life and how we engage with that critically, to move

into critical thinking and writing.” Claire has taught at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels, and felt that using a conversational approach in the classroom works well across all levels, as it helps to challenge the typical hierarchy between staff and students. Since Claire teaches at a widening participation institution, she often works with mature students, but she still senses a power differential in terms of experience.

They always look at me and think ‘yes, but you’ve been doing this a really long time, and you’ve got a PhD, and you got it some time ago, and you’ve got all this experience...’ So, you know, I’m trying to break down that dichotomy, that binary, that happens between those of who have an established academic career and people who are starting.

For Claire, breaking down this binary and challenging the empty vessel approach to teaching is about challenging the power dynamic between teacher and students, but also about helping students, no matter their age, to realise that they have valuable knowledge and experience to contribute to the classroom. Instead of viewing the classroom as a place to impart knowledge to students, Claire sees it as an opportunity to teach them the skills they need to be able to critically analyse the world and their experience in it. This idea underpins Claire’s teaching, whether it is a theory-based class or one that focuses more on academic writing or skills. While on the surface they may seem to be leaning more toward a co-constructivist approach to teaching, Claire’s focus on the political nature of education and society makes a strong link to critical pedagogical theory through raising critical consciousness.

...my motivation for teaching is always political. And the kinds of theoretical texts that I teach are also very political, and I think education *is* political. And so, one of the things that I’m always trying to get students to do is to analyse their lived experiences and think about how is that then the same or different to the person beside

them, and what are the conditions that created those differences, and what does that mean now, in terms of access or in terms of writing.

Claire explained that writing and theory are strongly connected because both can be connected back to political motives or promote a sense of understanding about positionality and identity. As such, one of Claire's aims is for students to be able to own their writing—to have their own voice. The concept of student voice in higher education has recently seen considerable attention. The problem, according to Claire, is that in universities opportunities for student voice can often be quite tokenistic, meaning that they aren't based on a desire to genuinely engage students in dialogue about their education. Claire felt this is a shame because:

...in a lot of ways, it's ideally what a critical pedagogies approach is trying to get at—it's trying to get at students being able to own their educational experience and to take authorship of their own education and lives. But, I think it gets kind of co-opted and used in ways that really don't have that effect.

The problems with student voice go beyond how the university uses student voice by also shaping the way students speak and think about their university experience. By soliciting comments about certain aspects of their experience, Claire suggests it becomes more about satisfaction and consumerism than about students' genuine thoughts about their educational experience or the wider community. This offers students the illusion of control, while limiting the way in which students can speak.

I think that's a tension, right? Because I want to go to students and say "what do you need? What would you like?" But I want them to be really thoughtful, politicized students, and sometimes they're really neoliberal subjects. And because they've been conditioned and fully brought up in a neoliberal world, they don't know what it was like before. That's not a critique of them as much as a frustration. Because I think then, 'well how do we create the conditions for them to be liberated from that and be thinking otherwise about

education?’ And I think that’s one of the challenges critical pedagogies has, because we are operating in a really different framework than a lot of the people who wrote about critical pedagogies when they were sort of more emerging and being articulated, they were working in equally difficult frames, but quite...different ones.

The challenge of working with ‘neoliberal subjects’ extended outside of Claire’s student-staff partnership work and was a factor that influenced much of her practice. She found this neoliberal disposition particularly challenging for implementing a critical pedagogies approach since they are antithetical. Therefore, creating a space for meaningful dialogue and educational growth can be quite challenging when they don’t match up with the motivations of the university or the student body. While discussing this, Claire brought up the impact of student fees on the students attending university:

If students are coming in and thinking “I’ve taken out £9000 worth of loans (more if they’re an international student) for this year” and they’ve sort of broken it down in their mind as to how much this lecture is costing them, and you say “you need to do this work”, they don’t realise what they’re being offered is the opportunity to actually stretch and grow, with you as a resource, in the classroom. They think that you should be somehow imparting something to them. One of the real challenges is to help us all think about learning as process and development, as opposed to material that you can gain.

Claire felt that changing university to be more about learning as a process rather than learning as a means to an end, or even consuming or buying knowledge, was a process in itself that would be a challenge for the critical educator. One thing we discussed was how student-staff partnership or the critical classroom might provide an opportunity to further this aim.

I think being involved in the process of creating a research project and then hitting all the stumbling blocks, I think those things do help students understand the process and I think that’s really important. That... knowledge isn’t fixed in stone, there are a lot of different paths and in fact there are different outcomes. So, they’re not right

or wrong so much as this path led to this outcome, this path leads to that one. What went on there? How did that come to be? And then that is very much a critical pedagogies thing, what are the conditions of your life? What are the conditions of your education? How do you know that? How do you come to understand the world through those material and social and economic conditions?

When asked if being a critical pedagogue affects her approach to research, she wasn't sure which came first—being a critical pedagogue or being a critical researcher. She went on to explain that to her a key element of being a critical researcher is owning and being clear about your position in the research, relating back to the political nature of education and research, which was something that she endeavours to pass on to her students. In regard to her use of her own research in the classroom, Claire felt that it was more about the process rather than the content:

I don't talk about the content of my research that often... what I talk a lot about is the process of the research. So, how do I go about doing it? Especially when I'm teaching writing I'm very frank with students about my own struggles with writing.

By attempting to break down this barrier or hierarchy in academic practice, Claire is hoping to help students feel more empowered by problematizing the idea of the teacher as expert. This is even more important for Claire since she typically works in widening participation institutions in which many of the students are returning to study and therefore may need more support adjusting to being a student. While adjusting to life at university can be hard, asking students to move away from a 'banking model' of education that allowed them to do well in exams to a different style of learning can be a struggle. This is particularly true of critical pedagogical approaches, where students are asked to learn in a way that challenges not only their conception of knowledge, but the dynamic in the classroom too:

...I think it is really difficult, especially in a UK context because students learn for assessment. And critical pedagogy is antithetical to learning to assessment, so I think that that's why we sometimes get into a bit of a knot about this because we don't know how to have a conversation explicitly about this. I think one of the things to do though, and what a [student-staff] partnership model of curriculum means is that students also have a stake in what's being taught and learned and how you are going to go about doing that learning. And sometimes in critical pedagogies we aren't as explicit as we could be with students. And so, I think in that sense, critical pedagogies have a lot to learn from partnership models.

Claire suggested having a conversation with students about which different approaches to teaching and learning might be appropriate for their classroom's aims so that students feel that they have a stake in their own learning experience—something which is important in both student-staff partnership and critical pedagogy. However, there are constraints to working in this way, as many universities require module outcomes, curriculum and assessments to be decided before the module begins. Of course, there is some flexibility within these structures, like allowing students to choose their own research questions or essay titles as long as they fit within the learning objectives, but these often seem like tokenistic offerings to make students feel more autonomous. Here, Claire and I discuss some ways to get around these restrictions:

Lauren: I wonder if you were planning a module, say on radical education or democratic education, if within that sort of a setting you could have your outcomes be to model democratic education, and then you could have more freedom within that because as a learning objective it would justify negotiating the curriculum and pedagogy of the course more.

Claire: yeah, like if your module became the laboratory that students tested things out to get to those learning objectives and in order to enable that you need to have more flexibility. It's really difficult to know, though, where the problem lies with this, because everyone gives you a different answer. Like, "oh the student information system can't handle that, oh the module evaluation form can't deal

with that”—whatever it is they’re always giving you a different reason. So, it is hard, but one of our tasks is to find the cracks, and wiggle about in the cracks until they get a bit bigger (laughs) until we have opportunities to demonstrate “look at what this does”.

Claire mentions demonstrating how things work as a sort of proof that critical pedagogy or staff-student partnership is a worthwhile or valid approach, emphasizing that academics might need to ‘spin’ what they are doing to meet the demands of neoliberal policies or discourses around what is valuable, leaving behind the critical or radical purpose of the practice. Staff-student partnership is an example of this, as it started out as a much more radical practice about challenging power dynamics and co-creating knowledge, while it is becoming more about preparing students for the workforce or letting students feel like they are getting involved in making changes and decisions at their university in order to raise student satisfaction scores. While it might be good that radical movements or approaches get taken up by the mainstream, it seems like this forces us away from the critical, radical perspective which made the initiative important in the first place.

For me, it’s really important to feel like there’s some congruence between my politics and what I’m presenting to the world. I don’t try and hide those things. I may not label them explicitly, but what I am saying makes very clear what they are. And so, I think there’s a difference between perhaps not labelling something super explicitly but explaining the ethics, explaining the approach in very clear terms, because people maybe are willing to have a discussion about the ethics and the approach, whereas if you label it right up front, they reject it—they would have an automatic ‘no’ to it. So, I’m not trying to make it more palatable to people, I’m just trying to start with the piece that people will be willing to engage and build from there.

Whether academics feel secure in their positions and institutions may also affect whether they are willing to take these risks. Claire felt, for example, that when she was new to academia she strictly followed the rules and taught in a more structured way.

Now that she has more experience, she is happy to improvise more and deal with issues that might arise from such an approach. Another factor that impacts whether academics feel they can teach in the way they want is their academic community—if other academics within their department are supportive or on board with a particular approach, Claire thinks they may be more likely to attempt to create a similar learning experience. This links to what Louisa said in her reflective dialogue, that she could not have developed and taught her module on radical education if she didn't have the support of colleagues on the programme. The dynamic in the department also extends to students, and Claire and I discussed different examples of departments that felt very much like a community, that had somehow created a space in which both staff and students could work together and learn from each other, promoting a collegial attitude amongst its members. Not only did this promote a sense of being a member of a community, it also allowed for a dialogue to occur across 'generations' and didn't segregate students and staff into separate groups. This dynamic meant that knowledge could be shared more easily across generations, and also meant that experience and ideas were valued from both groups.

While it is more difficult to place Claire in a quadrant since I was unable to observe her teaching practice, based on our dialogue and the most common codes that emerged from our dialogue, it seems like Claire might fall in the hegemonic co-investigator quadrant, or perhaps on the boundary between hegemonic and critical co-investigator quadrants. While Claire talked frequently about implementing a student-staff partnership approach that would allow students to feel part of the academic community, challenging the traditional, hierarchical power dynamic that exists in many universities, she rarely related this to the content of her modules. Her previous

academic writing courses did, however, provide an opportunity for her to encourage students to reflect on their positionality and their lived experience and how that might relate to their studies at university. Due to Claire's roles in widening-participation institutions, positionality seemed particularly important to her. This may connect with critical consciousness about how society has impacted on their positions, but it was unclear how explicitly this was discussed.

6.5 Overarching Themes for Hegemonic Co-investigators

When I started this research, I wasn't expecting to find such a strong association between critical pedagogy and a co-constructivist approach. Based on Paulo Freire's conceptualisations of critical pedagogy I was certainly anticipating a more student-centred approach to teaching and learning, but throughout the process of doing the research I was struck by how neatly co-constructivism complemented critical pedagogy. Four out of ten participants demonstrated key elements of a co-constructivist pedagogy by curating the classroom environment in order to promote and facilitate learning through discussions and experiences from which students could construct new understandings and learn how to critique new information. This finding aligns with the work of Bruenig (2009: 252), who found that although all seventeen participants identified as critical pedagogues, five of their interviews "suggested a more student-centred or constructivist orientation".

Not surprisingly, two key themes for these participants were challenging traditional teaching methods, which for many, meant a lecture, and pedagogical decisions. The majority of our discussions were spent discussing pedagogical choices and their impact. For Lena and James, the discussion centred on how student choice led to more effective learning; for Jeremy and Claire, their pedagogical decisions were often related to encouraging dialogue and a sense of belonging. An overarching theme for this quadrant was valuing student knowledge, which is a key pedagogical tool discussed by Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which aims to build on the existing knowledge of the students while also positioning them as equals in the student-teacher dynamic rather than as empty vessels to be filled by the teacher, and encourages an awareness of their own social reality. For example, Shor & Freire (1987:

138) discuss how dialogical “teaching [can] respect the language and the themes of students, but will challenge them with critical inquiries into the conditions they now sabotage or surrender to passively”. The crucial attribute that differentiates this quadrant from the others is the relative lack of focus on critical curriculum. This was more noticeable in the case of Lena, who admitted that she wanted to add more critical content to her module. Likewise, while Jeremy, Claire and James all challenged the status quo within their own classrooms, they didn’t make critiquing society the focus of their classes. However, it is important to consider the subject matter of each module, which might affect an educator’s ability to explicitly teach critical content: teaching and learning theory, psychology, and academic writing might not be subject areas in which one would expect to experience overt critical pedagogy.

Chapter 7: Exploring the Practice of Critical Co-investigators

This chapter focuses on those participants who demonstrated both a critical curriculum that challenges knowledge and the status quo as well as a pedagogy that challenged traditional, hierarchical ways of teaching. This quadrant only contains two participants, which perhaps speaks to how difficult it is to put critical pedagogy into practice in universities, especially in the current context of marketisation and neoliberalism. While both participants in this quadrant, Rajesh and Christine, spoke frequently of institutional structures and the effects of neoliberalism on the university, they both managed to find ways to either push back against or use neoliberalism as a teaching resource to reveal to students the mechanisms in society that work to maintain the status quo. Interestingly, the two participants had no themes in common, demonstrating that critical pedagogy can be practised in different ways while still adhering to critical pedagogical principles. Christine seemed to approach critical pedagogy from a more democratic angle, focusing on student choice and how this could be stimulated through the use of certain pedagogical decisions, while Rajesh's practice was driven and informed by a Marxist perspective that meant a focus on the political and how his teaching could connect theory to students' lived experiences as a way to encourage critical consciousness and action.

7.1 Case Study: Rajesh

Rajesh is a senior lecturer at a university in London, where his main module has been taught for nine years. The bachelor's module centres on politics and theory within education, two topics that students often shy away from when studying education. Throughout our discussion, Rajesh seemed to focus more on the theoretical and political dimensions of critical pedagogy, although he did tie these in with his practice by describing some of the ways he uses his students' lived experiences to teach the material of the module. On reading the transcript of our reflective dialogue, Rajesh identified four themes from the data, which were politicization, empowerment, activism and social class. These participant-identified themes overlapped with the most coded themes, which were neoliberalisation, marketization, critical pedagogy, political, lived experience and social class.

Rajesh teaches at a widening participation institution, where the majority of his students are what he calls 'non-traditional':

Many of them will have had very, very disenchanting experiences with education, some of whom will be returning. They're mainly black and Asian students. Many of them are young Muslim girls. So, I think the reason I'm saying that is because I think that's important, because I try to kind of use their experiences in the way that I teach politics and theory.

Over the course of the module Rajesh teaches a Marxist critique of neoliberal education, which he connects to their experiences. His Marxist critique focuses on self-interest, markets, and laissez-fair economics, which he makes more accessible to students by situating it in the English education system. The first term focuses on the case study of academies in England and the quasi-privatisation of education. By the end of the first term, he feels he has usually reached most of the students and

convinced them the module is relevant to them. The next term focuses on alternatives to neoliberal education. Rajesh felt that this is essential—to critique the situation but then offer alternatives. In order to do this, they look at other countries that focus more on social democracy, like Sweden or Cuba. Part of the reason that Rajesh feels he can do such overtly political teaching is that he gets high scores on student evaluations. In fact, he has been nominated as the best lecturer at his university three times, which he feels shows that “Marxism works as a pedagogic tool and also an alternative, or way to think about alternatives”.

When asked to describe his pedagogic approach, Rajesh said that he “hadn’t really thought deeply about it until quite recently”, but that it was pretty free flowing. Here, Rajesh describes an example of his typical teaching practice:

I often get students in lectures to kind of turn around, at several points, to speak to the person that's next to them on a particular given matter. Often the room is an issue because we're trying to pack in more students, more student fees and the rest of it. So, lots of interaction and dialogue. At the beginning of every single seminar we've got a particular item which is called "What's in the news". So, students have to come to the seminar with a particular news story that they've picked up and we discuss it and we try to understand it in the context of neo-liberalisation.

Rajesh sees activities like “What’s in the news” as opportunities to apply the theory being learned in the classroom to the real world. He thinks that encouraging students to apply the theories learned in class will help them to be more critical of the world they live in:

Ideology and discussion about ideology and the mode of production doesn't simply exist in our precious classroom. It's not as if you're coming through the door and that's ideology and mode of production there and then when you walk out it doesn't exist. It's there, you're living it, you're embodiments of neo-liberalism and that's partly why you don't see it.

Rajesh encourages them to “do their own research and their own thinking, critically, about the world” in an effort to raise their critical consciousness. As such, he tries to avoid lecturing too much because he would rather the students listen to a podcast or read an article of his if they want to learn more information about what they are discussing in class. To Rajesh, the class is more about “animating the whole idea of neoliberalism in the real world”, and less about delivering content. In addition to using news articles, Rajesh also uses London as a way to demonstrate some of the concepts they are talking about—for example, drawing attention to the juxtaposition of extreme poverty (East London and the Docklands) next to extreme wealth (the City and Canary Wharf). In one class, the students were asked to visit different parts of London, where they can see “the ways in which social class manifests”. In another class, they went to visit Parliament to learn more about the government and how it works in society.

Despite the difficult and eye-opening nature of Rajesh’s class, he feels the majority of students engage deeply with the module and it changes their world view. I was curious how Rajesh took students from reluctant to even attend (although the module is compulsory) to engaged in a Marxist critique of neoliberal society. Rajesh felt that the background of students played a large role in their interest, since many of them come from disadvantaged backgrounds and they want to better understand why they are disadvantaged:

My students are angry, and they don't really understand why they have been crapped on from above most of the time through a series of political parties, including Labour. And for the first time they'll have the theoretical tool box, the conceptual tool box, to really understand and frame their anger. So, for the first time perhaps, they're thinking 'I'm not angry because I'm just an angry person, you know, but there are reasons for this anger and these are reasons that I can outline now...'

Many of Rajesh's students have jobs, some even work full-time while studying, which means that he has plenty of 'material' when it comes to critiquing the neo-liberalisation of education. When Rajesh was at university he didn't have to work because university was free and he had a grant for living expenses; he explains that using examples from his own life allows them to see that things were once different and could be again. In addition to his own experience of being a student, Rajesh has 15 years of experience teaching in HE to draw on, which has allowed him to see a steady change in the purpose and system of higher education. He highlights the change in the dynamic between 'lecturers' and students, blaming this mainly on the institution and raising of student fees, which has fundamentally changed the student's role in HE.

But actually, what I try to do in my teaching is use the marketization of education as a learning resource in itself, as a teaching resource. 'What is marketization? How can you see it in yourself in the way that you are making decisions and the way that you are practicing being a student?'

Rajesh uses the marketisation of education as content for his module, an example of how neoliberalism has affected an institution that used to be free and for the public good, which has now been turned into a profit-making machine. Importantly, he explores with the students how marketisation has oppressed them. The increasing number of students crammed into each class to increase profits for the university, ever-rising student fees—these are all examples of the effects of neo-liberalisation and consumerism on public goods and services. For Rajesh, working at the university is a political practice, an opportunity to raise the critical consciousness of his students. In the context of his module, he thinks that he has to "work in the university and against it at the same time" in an effort to "make a difference" to his students and the community they live and study in. However, this can often be difficult as students are

used to learning in a very particular way, especially students from working-class backgrounds:

Working class students are told to get your head down, keep quiet and keep your nose clean. Do that and just get through it, don't get into any bother. If you raise your voice you might say the wrong thing, you might get yourself into trouble. You might be looking like you're a clever Dick. So, there's a class dimension to that, as well. If you've been to particularly middle-class schools, if you had a middle-class upbringing, you've been encouraged to become much more vocal and voice your opinion. And I think, certainly my experience, as a student and a lecturer, at [his university] students don't want to speak... I kind of... it's a gradual process. It is something that you have to cultivate.

Rajesh talks about his concern for social justice issues and his recognition that class background impacts on how students experience education, and how he experienced education himself. He raises these issues with the students so that they can become more aware of their own oppression and understand it. Rajesh not only focuses on raising the critical consciousness of his students but also in helping them develop a voice and a drive for action. Here, Rajesh explains what he thinks critical pedagogy is about from a Marxist perspective, and what makes that different:

It's two words: 'critical' and 'pedagogy'. I think the latter, pedagogy is pretty straightforward--it's the art of learning and teaching. Although we see it more as a science in this country, with more didactic learning and so forth, but the whole idea of 'critical' I think is often lost from the idea of critical pedagogy. I think there's lots of people who would identify or self-identify, as you put it, as critical pedagogues. And for some people, critical pedagogy is simply about criticizing or being negative about what's going on. But I think for me, as a Marxist, it's different to that. I think it's not only critiquing, providing an imminent critique of the world and education, and particularly higher education. For me, it's about offering an alternative and trying to understand it through the mode of production. The marketization of education exists because we live in a global neoliberal capitalism. And so, I think the critical aspect of critical pedagogy is that you've got to link what you're doing, your

issues in a module like my mine, to neoliberal capitalism and globalization. Without that, marketization would be nowhere near the kind of powerful external force that is.

This drive to offer alternatives and to understand the forces that have created the current situation is what leads Rajesh to identify more as a 'critical revolutionary pedagogue', which he says aligns more with Peter McLaren and Paula Allman's strand of Freirean thought. Rajesh further explained that he sees two ways of 'doing' critical pedagogy in the university, one is a discrete module on critical pedagogy, which focuses on the theory and the literature around critical pedagogy, while the other is a more integrated approach wherein you might use a critical pedagogical approach to teach a module with content that focuses on a different area. At Rajesh's university they have examples of both of these approaches—a distinct module on critical pedagogy and then other modules taught in a critical way. However, central to what Rajesh considers critical pedagogy is a focus on consciousness of the structures and systems that have created our current situation, which some modules on critical pedagogy do not flesh out:

I think without class consciousness and without consciousness of capitalism I think you're losing a battle to make any sustainable change. I think in order to have sustainable and genuine revolutionary change to a system, I think you've got to have consciousness. I think people have got to be conscious of what's going on and why it's going on and who it benefits and who it doesn't benefit and what their position is in all of that. So critical pedagogy is implicitly about raising consciousness. But to go back to what I've said previously, I get irritated with critical pedagogues or people who call themselves critical pedagogues when they don't do that stuff because it loses its potential. It loses its value, it becomes something else it becomes...it's just a different way of doing pedagogy. And so, for me, critical pedagogy has to be about a real change.

Rajesh was very upfront about his political position, and this clearly carried through into his module, as well as his opinion about other pedagogues that were neglecting

their responsibility to raise consciousness. Part of the reason for this approach is that Freire and many other critical pedagogues hold the view that all education is political and therefore, the political element cannot and should not be ignored.

...everything has to be imbued with at least some kind of acknowledgement of the politics of the mode of production. And if it isn't, it's half-baked, it's not comprehensive and it loses its value... I think as soon as you start to try to de-politicize something or make it uncritical: What's the point?! ... It doesn't do anything. In fact, it does do something. Let me change that. What it does is it maintains the status quo through that silence. So absencing politics or criticality from education is actually perpetrating and consenting, to use Gramscian language, the status quo and community hegemony, which is neoliberalism. By doing nothing you are doing a lot.

Although I didn't observe Rajesh teaching, his focus on both his pedagogical and curricular decisions in the reflective dialogue led me to situate him in the critical co-investigator quadrant. In particular, what set him apart from other participants was how he inspired students to become more politically active by raising their critical consciousness about why society is the way it is. By revealing the status quo to students through the module's focus on neoliberalisation, and by highlighting parts of their lived experience that reflected the effects of neoliberalisation, students became more interested and more likely to turn their new-found awareness into action. Despite the limitations of the classroom space, Rajesh regularly asks students to discuss ideas and theories together in the classroom. He also encourages them to engage with the world around them by bringing in news stories to discuss in class, showing that he values student contributions while also allowing students to steer the discussion toward issues that are important to them. These activities provide opportunities to raise consciousness, but also to discuss alternatives, which Rajesh feels is essential to critical pedagogy.

7.2 Case Study: Christine

Christine teaches both a bachelor's module on democracy and education and a master's module on inclusive education in a research-intensive university in the northeast of England. When contacted, Christine recommended that I attend one session of each, as she feels like the pedagogy she uses on the two modules might vary based on the content, students, and level of study. As with the other participants, Christine was asked in advance if she would like to come up with some topics to discuss during the reflective dialogue, and she had thought of some themes she wanted to discuss. However, instead of using that as the starting point she asked if I would start by reflecting on my experience in her class to get her started and then she could follow up on her themes later if they were not addressed in the conversation. These themes were trust, boundaries, safety, freedom and clarity, which overlapped with the themes that emerged through coding: student freedom, pedagogical decisions, challenging traditional teaching methods, building relationships and institutional structures.

The first session I attended was the democracy and education module, which focused on democratic decision-making. The class had 38 enrolled students, with about 20 in attendance. When we arrived in the classroom, the tables were set up in rows, facing the screen. As the students arrived, they helped us to move the tables into 4 groups to enable group work and discussion. On each table, Christine placed name tags for the students as well as handouts about the first activity we would be doing. In contrast, when arriving to the second session I observed, which was about inclusive and special education and consisted mostly of practicing teachers or SEN consultants, the tables were already arranged in groups and many of the students were already

present. When I selected a seat the students at my table joked that I was sitting in someone's spot—it was clear that the class had a cohesive community and that the students knew each other well. In both classes, the students were very welcoming and interested to hear about my research. Christine had asked them for permission for me to observe in the previous weeks, so they were already aware of some aspects of my research.

The first class I took part in focused on three models of democratic decision-making and how these might be implemented in schools or inform pedagogy. Sitting in groups of about 5 students, we engaged in a series of activities, which we then discussed and reflected upon with the help of a handout. To begin the class, Christine used a PowerPoint to outline the plan for the session and to show us the aims of the class, which were to explore the concept of self-governance and learn about different models that can be used to make decisions within the school. Instead of giving a lecture about these ideas, Christine said she wanted us to experience what it might look like in practice and then reflect on that, engaging in a sort of praxis in the classroom to aid learning.

Example 14: Modelling Decision-making through Interactive Pedagogy

The second activity was a real situation that would directly affect the students in the class. Christine gave us a handout outlining the motion, which was what to do about the class that was going to fall on Bank Holiday Monday. When the class is taught in another term, students get 12 3-hour sessions, but because of the Bank Holiday, this cohort would only get 11 sessions. Christine offers several different choices: (1) don't have a session that week, as stated in the handbook, (2) use time on May 2nd for extra group work or tutorials, (3) run another session on May 2nd, topic to be decided by her, or (4) run another session on May 2nd, focus to be decided by the students. In this activity, we all move to the front of the room and sit in a circle and discuss the possible choices. In this model, everyone has the opportunity to share their opinion and debate with others. We all also have the opportunity to vote. But in the end, the majority wins, so not everyone is satisfied. It also takes us a while to get to the decision, because everyone gets a chance to debate, and we have to go through several rounds of voting to eliminate options. We then go back to our tables and fill out the handout grid. (Field notes 13/3/2017)

Example 14 demonstrates how Christine made the learning activities relevant to the students by engaging the class in a democratic process to make decisions about their own learning. This not only seemed to improve engagement with the activity, but it also helped make the consequences of the decision-making more tangible. It also exemplifies how Christine seeks input from students on how the class should be run, allowing them to share in some of the decision-making to make the class more democratic and considerate of the needs of students. This was an issue that came to the fore in the other two decision-making activities, which were about an internship requirement for the module and a student bringing their child to class when their childcare arrangements fell through. Both of these examples, although technically hypothetical, were issues that were likely come up at this university where, according to Christine, many of the students had caring commitments or jobs that students had to plan around. In this way, Christine was able to teach about democratic schools while still keeping the situations applicable to the context in which the students live and

study. Throughout the class, I participated in all activities, although I withheld my vote for the Bank Holiday as I didn't want to affect the results.

In conversation before I observed her first class, Christine told me that the module had been designed by a colleague for her to teach, so I was curious to learn more about how she had shaped it over the years.

I was given just the shell, really, with the learning outcomes and I designed the module the way I wanted to run it, right from the beginning. And, it has changed a lot over time, but one of the interesting things was that after the first year that I ran it, the guy who had written the module, he was involved in some second marking, and he said 'it's really interesting, because if I ran this module based on those learning outcomes, I would run it far more lecture style, far more theoretical, for more philosophical. That's how I would do it, and it's interesting that you've managed to interpret the learning outcomes in that way.'

Here, Christine highlights the experiential nature of her teaching, which was something that stood out to me as I participated in her classes. The planning and execution of her classes were discussed at length in our reflective dialogue, as well as how outsiders might perceive her classes. Christine is trying to do 'radical' things at her university by making drastic changes to the way the module is scheduled and run. Part of the reason she is able to make these changes is that her modules have been very successful in terms of outcomes and student satisfaction, a point that she raises later on in the conversation:

one year I was nominated for innovative teaching, which was for the democracy module, and I got shortlisted for that and didn't win. And then the next year, I was nominated for overall outstanding achievement for the democracy module, and I won that, and that was across the whole university. ... And then it got announced in the emails sent round to the faculty and everything, and several colleagues and the dean said, 'Well done, Christine, great news for the department, well done.' And what I was really interested in was

that people were pleased I had won, but nobody asked me what I do in that module. Nobody.

Christine reveals that her colleagues weren't interested in her approach despite recognition from students, and went on to talk about how this made her feel isolated from her peers. Although this allowed her to 'get away with' doing things in a different way, it also seemed to make her feel like she wasn't valued by her colleagues, the department or the university.

You just carry on with what you're doing. Do what you like as long as it doesn't cause any problems. So, it is quite isolating. But I also feel like I'm slightly...working under the radar—like I'm just doing what I do, and I can keep getting away with it as long as the students keep passing.

Although there does seem to be a lack of interest in Christine's work at her institution, despite her success, it is interesting to note that several times Christine suggests that 'she is getting away with' something, as if her approach to teaching is rebellious in some way. This suggests that Christine feels that her work is not the norm in her university and she is therefore on the margins, 'getting away with' using a more interactive, co-constructivist approach. I was interested in the rationale behind the design of her democracy and education class, because the session I observed was so interactive and different to a traditional delivery of content. Here, Christine explains why she went about scaffolding students to help them understand how to engage in democratic decision-making rather than just learning about it:

When I originally thought about the session, I was going to do all of the scenarios as being in democratic schools, so you know, 'we're in a democratic school and we're making a decision about blah-blah-blah'. But I actually thought it would be too difficult because some of them struggle to get their head round what a democratic school is, and so I'm almost asking them to do two things at the same time. ...So, I thought, okay no, I'm not going to do it about schools, I'm

going to do it about university and I'm going to do it about this group, so then actually they don't have to be role playing or acting, they can be themselves.

While making the situations 'real' meant that the students didn't have to pretend, it also meant that the decisions that were made during the activities were more relevant to their lives, which seemed to positively influence active participation.

All of the situations were real, but the second one... because it was majority voting, and it involved everybody, it felt like a reasonable thing that they were deciding. Whereas with the other ones, I think it would have been harder to get a sense of commitment from everybody else in the group that this decision was binding, if they hadn't actually personally been involved in it. Which I think is the issue with those models of decision-making. ...I think that they thought 'this is going to affect me'. So yeah, some of the quieter students were speaking up, which was good to see.

While the democratic decision-making process was the particular focus of this session, Christine did mention some other ways that she incorporated student involvement in decision-making, including freedom to pick their own essay topics. Christine was keen to expand student choice in her class and hoped to incorporate more opportunities in the next term, mainly through decisions about the curriculum. The current design of the session was influenced by the size of the class, an issue which was of great importance to Christine. It was her hope that her department would allow her to run a smaller class if she ran it in two terms instead of one, which would make a co-constructivist and inquiry-based approach easier.

The second class I attended was a master's level class on inclusion that focused on the concept of space and how it affected education and pedagogy. In this class we sat in groups and listened to Christine give a lecture on her research into space and democratic schools abroad [excluded to preserve anonymity] and in the UK. Before beginning her PowerPoint presentation, she passed around post-it notes for us to

write questions on, which would enable her to get through the presentation quickly while still allowing students to ask questions that came to mind while she was presenting. She presented three themes that she wanted us to focus on, which were space, size and freedom. She then presented two case studies: one school in another country and one in the UK, as well as the ethos behind democratic schools and how these characteristics were demonstrated in the two schools in different contexts. A key aspect of the presentation was how the architecture or design influenced the kind of pedagogy that was implemented. This related to the second theme, size, since the case studies revealed that a democratic approach to education might be easier in a smaller school. After her lecture she answered the questions that we had written on the post-it notes, drawing on the contexts of the students in the class, who she seemed to know well. With the remaining class time, we did an activity described in Example 15.

Example 15: Translating Theory into Practice

We break into groups and discuss how we could take these ideas and translate them into our own context. What would work, what wouldn't work? What elements of democratic education do we already implement? What could we realistically develop? We have 30 minutes to discuss with our group and we are given a piece of flipchart paper to write some key ideas on. The people in my group are all from different contexts, so they all share some things (mostly concerns) they have with this approach. Although they want to be more open and democratic, they felt they couldn't do it with their students, who are mostly SEN students. We decided to focus on project-based learning because it seems like something they can realistically implement in their classrooms that would still help students prepare for exams and would allow them to work together and explore topics in their own way. After, we feed back to the class on our discussion. Christine picks up on questions and instead of just answering them she asks other students to answer or talk about how they might address these issues. Specifically, we talk about different levels of education and how freedom might have implications at these levels. Christine ties these questions and comments back to the reading, which was about freedom but within a structure, or with boundaries. Christine connects this to social change and radical changes to the system that can be brought about by small changes at the local level. Although the system makes that difficult, people need to push up against the boundaries to make changes. She also reminds the students that the national curriculum isn't a law—it is a policy, so there is some flexibility within the system to make things more democratic. (Field notes 23/3/2017)

Example 15 demonstrates how Christine encouraged the students in her class to relate the theory presented through her own research into their contexts. Although at first this exercise seemed problematic for the students since they felt that the contexts were too different, we found a way around this by picking out an aspect we thought we could implement in a helpful way. Focusing on how to translate ideas or practices from one context to another was a focus of the lecture, which was echoed in the activity. Both drew attention to the fact that context is very important—Christine also mentioned this in reference to the use of case studies, which provide an example that can be used to explore how things could be different. This not only opens up other possibilities, but also demonstrates that there is always room for improvement and change, and that things are not fixed in stone. However, the size of the master's class

was much smaller and made this sort of dynamic easier. The size of the bachelor's level class meant that there was a different dynamic in the class, and a different kind of relationship with students, which Christine explains:

I think the other issue that has been really difficult this year is that the group is so big. And it makes a massive difference. So, you know, there's 38 students in my [BA] class, of which I normally get about 24 every week. They do keep changing—which 24 that will turn up—and it does make it much, much harder. So, if there is that sort of a number when it runs as a 3rd year module, I've already talked to the head of school, and said that we will have to run it twice...because I can't really stress this enough, the size of the group massively effects the learning. And, this year, it's been really difficult. I was quite pleased with the session that you saw, actually, but engaging some students when there are so many in a group is difficult. And me being able to even have a sense of them all as individuals, I mean I struggle with their names, and that's the most basic thing around having an individual connection with people. And if I don't even know their names, then it's really hard.

Although there seemed to be a really nice dynamic in both classes, Christine felt that she was just about managing to maintain an open and safe environment where people felt they could and should contribute, which contrasted to previous years where the class was smaller and there was more of a sense of community. Although students may not have noticed this or thought it was any different from their normal classes, Christine thought this kind of dynamic was essential to the ethos needed to promote a positive learning experience. Unfortunately, according to Christine, if anything universities are moving in the opposite direction, with class sizes continuing to expand.

And I have a real problem with it, because I really think that students get lost in that, and lecturers are going to often really struggle to do anything apart from stand at the front and talk. ...In terms of needing to know students, needing to understand students individually, them needing to feel that there is an identity and that they're somewhere that they belong, and that there are people that know them and care about them...I'm just not sure that's what's happening in universities.

Although Christine tries to create a different sort of environment in her classroom by getting to know her students and encouraging discussions and sharing ideas and experiences, there was some sense that she was working in isolation and that these changes, however well intentioned, might not make a difference to the students.

One thing I did want to say is that the modules you've seen me do are... it feels like a drop in the ocean to what the students experience at university. Particularly for the undergraduates, I think that for the master's it may be a bit different because there's probably a bit more inquiry-based stuff going on at the master's, but I think for the undergraduates, um, you know, its 20 credits out of however many they do altogether, and to imagine that that might really have an impact on students, I think for some of the students it really does, and for some students they carry that with them. But for many of them, I imagine its one module amongst many, which, once it's over, it's over and they're onto the next thing.

This was another critique of the structure of universities, and how they hinder the development of different kinds of teaching and learning. Due to the fragmented nature of different modules on degree programmes, there often isn't a feeling of a coherent programme where students feel part of a community and where the ethos of the programme informs the pedagogy of the modules. Staffing also contributes to this issue, as academic staff are often spread out and have roles on several different programmes. While this can be positive and lead to more interdisciplinarity, it can also have a negative impact on the sense of community within the programme, affecting both professional identity and the educational experience. Some of these factors might contribute to Christine's feeling that she is doing something under the radar, that she is 'getting away with' teaching in a more personal and humanising way.

While Christine felt that it was easier to work in the way she wanted in certain aspects of her job than others, it did seem like her identity as a critical pedagogue or a radical educator ran throughout her practice, whether it was teaching at BA or MA

level, or supervising PhD students. Her research areas of democracy and education heavily influenced her approach to teaching, and she continually made references to giving students freedom or control, despite the fact that many students found that very challenging. In both the classes I observed, freedom to make decisions about learning was a theme that ran through her practice and the content of the class. Throughout our reflective dialogue, a common theme that kept coming up was students' struggle with freedom. While some of the students embraced the freedom they had in Christine's class, many seemed to find it difficult to know what to do with it.

Some do need far more boundaries and a far greater sense of where the edges are and what they can do and can't do, and some do really need a bit more direction. Like 'Am I on the right lines, can you tell me I'm on the right lines or doing this at the right pace?' Some of them really need to know that, and that's okay. I'm absolutely fine with that, I don't want anyone to just feel abandoned onto a path, because that is the way that people end up dropping out and that's not the answer. Whereas some students straight away feel that this freedom is in fact really liberating and this means that they can read loads of stuff and explore loads of stuff and just come back with ideas and until they've kind of firmed up what it is they're wanting to do.

This is not surprising since most students will have spent their entire schooling up until this point being told exactly what to do in class, as much schooling relies on the banking model to prepare students for exams. It should not be assumed that students will automatically be able to flourish in a more democratic classroom – they must learn to participate, or as Christine argues, they need freedom within a structure, which scaffolds them to develop more autonomy.

Christine had a list of key words she had wanted to talk about in our reflective dialogue, and she followed up on these toward the end of our conversation.

There's something about *trust*, which is really important. Something about *boundaries* and we create boundaries in which that can take place. There's something about *safety*—that students really need to feel safe and need to feel that they're not just being abandoned or something. There's something about *freedom*, obviously. But I think there's also something about *clarity*, about being clear with students about what the task is, what the boundaries are, what will happen next, what the university regulations are, where this can happen, where this can't happen. I think that clarity is really important because that helps them to trust, I think, that you know what you're talking about and that you've done this before and that you can work your way around an institution.

At the end of our conversation, Christine seemed to withdraw or doubt her identity as a critical pedagogue, explaining that although she wanted to be one, she wasn't sure it was possible in her context:

I'm not sure I am a self-identifying critical pedagogue, in that way. Because I might self-identify as aligning myself with those values and aspiring to work in that way, but actually I think that within a university... if I was to say I am a critical pedagogue within my university I'm setting myself up to fail because I actually think that it's quite impossible. Because the constraints are so great that I can only get a glimpse of what that might be like.

Despite this feeling of futility or impossibility, Christine was also optimistic about some of the things that were possible within her context, demonstrating the sort of struggle she encounters between her values and her practice, a struggle that seemed common amongst other participants.

If somebody said to me that 'well, it's impossible within a university.' I might say, 'it is but we've to try and that actually, there is more space than you think that there is.' So, in that session that you came to, I was thinking about how students need boundaries so they know how far they can push. I actually think that works, as well, for me as an educator because I know what I can and what I can't get away with, and I can therefore push as far as I possibly can to those edges of those to get away with as much as I can. And as I said to you earlier, nobody really is paying attention—nobody is really looking and as long as people aren't falling through the net, they're not failing or whatever, I will continue to get away with pushing at those

boundaries. And so, for me, I think that part of the job is about challenging other people to say 'you could go further than you are, don't assume that your scope for doing this kind of work is really small, actually it's not, it's bigger'. And the more powerful that you are, in terms of if you're designing programmes or if you're a programme director, or if you're a head of school or a dean, your capacity to extend the boundaries is huge. I mean, like I'm a lecturer, my power is relatively small. But I feel as if there is space for me, but if I was in a more powerful position, you know, you could just slowly, slowly push some of those boundaries back. But people still have to know where the boundaries are in order to know how far they can go. And I think lots of people don't go as far as they could because they just don't realise how much space they have.

Like Arthur, Christine felt there was more space in the university to challenge traditional teaching methods and to engage in critical pedagogy. However, there are institutional constraints that one has to work within and against in order to make space for some of the key themes and practices that came out of our reflective dialogue. Christine felt that making space for student freedom and choice in the classroom was essential to challenging traditional teaching methods, while creating a positive educational experience for students seemed to be linked not only to student autonomy but also to building a trusting and reciprocal relationship with students. All of these aims were addressed within the constraints of the institution through the use of particular pedagogical approaches, like modelling democratic decision making or applying research to different contexts. Christine was the only participant who emphasised the importance of making her curriculum and pedagogy congruent, which situated her in the critical co-investigator quadrant. This was particularly noticeable in her lesson on democratic schools, in which she engaged students in democratic decision-making to model the democratic classroom. In the master's level class, she asked students to engage with her research on space and freedom to think about how they might apply these concepts to their own practice. Throughout both classes the

students were actively engaged in co-constructing understanding by working in groups and engaging in dialogue. By challenging the hierarchical power dynamic that is common in the classroom, Christine was able to create a more equitable dynamic which invariably encouraged the sense of community that was apparent. Although community isn't necessarily a key aspect of critical pedagogical theory, it does help to foster a more equal power dynamic, as well as a safe space in which students feel comfortable to challenge ideas, engage in dialogue and apply these new ways of thinking to their own lives.

7.3 Overarching Themes for Critical Co-investigators

A critical curriculum and a critical pedagogy only coincided in two out of ten participants who self-identified as critical pedagogues. To be placed in this category, you needed to demonstrate both a reconstructivist curriculum and a co-constructivist pedagogy, modelling the critique of power in the classroom in order to raise critical consciousness and offer alternative ways of being. It is interesting that even in this quadrant, each participant seemed to focus more on theory (Rajesh) or pedagogy (Christine), which further supports one of my early theories that participants tend to focus on either the theory/curriculum or pedagogy aspect of critical pedagogy in their practice. Themes from Rajesh's reflective dialogue centred on the political, marketisation, lived experience and social class. Rajesh, particularly as a 'critical revolutionary pedagogue,' felt it was important to offer alternatives to students instead of just focusing on what is wrong with the system. He also felt that making his practice congruent with his beliefs was important to show students that there is an alternative to the status quo—whether it is in the classroom or outside it. Christine, on the other hand, focused more on student freedom and choice in the classroom as well as building relationships and challenging traditional teaching methods, demonstrating her focus on pedagogy. However, these pedagogical strategies were linked back to theory as she taught about democratic schools and alternative methods of education.

Although Rajesh and Christine were both able to implement a critical pedagogy in their modules, this wasn't done without acknowledging the constraints of their institutions. Christine spoke about feeling marginalized and pushing against the boundaries, while Rajesh used the constraints imposed by neoliberalism and marketisation as a teaching resource in his classroom, drawing his students' attention

to how they were being affected by these ideological structures. This suggests that there still may be some space for a transformative, critical pedagogy in the university, although it may be harder to implement in some universities.

Chapter 8: Discussion

This thesis aims to better understand how self-identifying critical pedagogues (SICPs) put their beliefs about critical pedagogy into practice in the current neoliberal context. Therefore, this chapter will begin by exploring the model that was developed using data to better understand critical pedagogical practice in English HE. Although SICPs seemed unified in aiming to implement a critical pedagogy, they went about achieving this through three different combinations of curriculum and pedagogy. This chapter will then discuss why critical pedagogy appears to not be pervasive in HE and suggest a possible relationship between this and the finding that 5 out of 10 of research participants talked about feeling their critical pedagogy was 'secret' or was something they did on the margins. The neoliberal context for HE, discussed in Chapter 2, is core to the discussion here, and will be explored through a discussion of the main constraints experienced by participants at the macro, meso and micro levels of their lived experience, along with previous research on higher education. Key findings of the research as well as the limitations will be discussed, followed by suggestions for further research that have emerged as a result of this study.

8.1 Different manifestations of critical pedagogy

One striking finding from this research is that not all self-identifying critical pedagogues had an explicit social justice agenda. For example, one person in the research (Lena) appeared most interested in developing co-constructive learning opportunities as a way to challenge hierarchical teaching relationships in the classroom and foster autonomous and relational learning of students. These aims are of course concerned with care for and equality of class members, however the curriculum content in the session I observed did not explicitly focus on equality issues or social

justice issues, but rather on the importance of developing a co-constructive practice in a school classroom. Others may have engaged in critique of societal issues without explicitly challenging the power dynamics present in the classroom. From these insights and other observations, I developed the model below (Figure 9) to help identify the different assumptions about pedagogy and curriculum that appear to underpin the different practices of the self-identifying critical pedagogues. While this model was introduced briefly in Chapter 4 as a way to analyse and discuss the data collected, the model will be explored in more detail in this section.

While the model mostly emerged from my observation that my participants typically tended to focus on implementing either a critical curriculum or critical pedagogy, the model became more concrete through writing a paper (Clark, 2018) that explored the work of Aronowitz & Giroux (1985) on transformative intellectuals and a paper by Webster (2015) entitled *In Defence of the Lecture*. The work of Aronowitz & Giroux (1985) was fundamental in helping me to develop the grid into four sections that demonstrated varying levels of critical content and action. However, Aronowitz & Giroux (1985) were more interested in the political awareness and action of intellectuals, and do not focus on pedagogy specifically, although pedagogy is political. The varying levels of critical awareness is what prompted the use of a grid with each axis a spectrum from less critical to more critical in terms of both knowledge that is taught and teaching approach that is used.

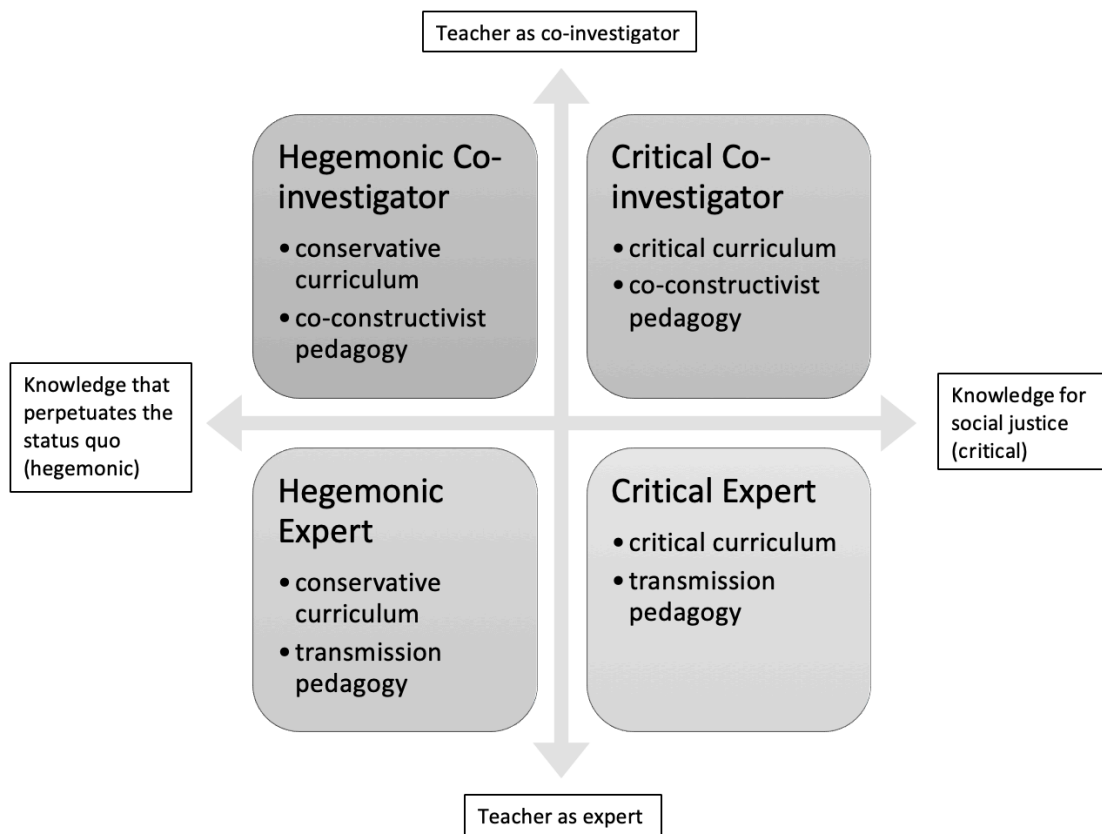


Figure 9: Different Manifestations of Critical Pedagogy

The naming of each quadrant took considerable thought, and multiple revisions.

Originally, each quadrant was identified by the dominant aspect of that approach, for example, the bottom right quadrant was distinct in that it demonstrated a reconstructivist curriculum that was characterised by knowledge that challenged the status quo. The pedagogical approach that was used by participants in this quadrant was transmission-based. However, to call this part of the model ‘reconstructivist’ would imply that all those who teach a reconstructivist curriculum use a transmission approach to teaching. Therefore, it seemed to be important to develop ‘new’ terms to describe the quadrants to avoid confusion, as well as to use terms that described both elements of the quadrant (curriculum and pedagogy). I drew on the work of Aronowitz

& Giroux (1985) again to develop the names corresponding to the spectrum of knowledge that is taught: hegemonic to critical. I use the term 'hegemonic' in the sense of knowledge or structures that perpetuate the status quo. McLaren (2003a: 76) defines hegemony as "the maintenance of domination not by the sheer exercise of force but primarily through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures". While the term hegemony is often perceived as malicious or purposeful, hegemony can also be perpetuated by individuals without intention, for example by educators who choose to remain objective or unpolitical (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). McLaren (2003a: 76) gives an example to demonstrate:

Hegemony was at work in my own practice as an elementary school teacher. Because I did not teach my students to question the prevailing values, attitudes, and social practices of the dominant society in a sustained critical manner, my classroom preserved the hegemony of the dominant culture.

To name the pedagogy spectrum, I drew on the work of Freire (1970), specifically his comparison of banking and problem-posing education to consider the position of the teacher, focusing on the power distance between students and teachers: expert to co-investigator. I will now explore the curricular and pedagogical assumptions that underpin the practices of educators in each quadrant.

Hegemonic Co-investigator

In the first quadrant, which I have called Hegemonic Co-investigator, the element that most defines this approach is the co-constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Educators in this quadrant are engaged in using a pedagogical approach that challenges traditional teaching methods, however the knowledge they are teaching is not critical of the status quo. The educators in this quadrant taught hegemonic

knowledge in the sense that they did not challenge how knowledge perpetuates the control of the dominant ideology. This is akin to the Accommodating Intellectual described by Aronowitz & Giorux (1985: 56), who “do not define themselves as self-conscious agents of the status quo, even though their politics further the interests of the dominant classes” they do this through teaching “uncritically the ideas and social practices that serve to reproduce the status quo”. However, there is a sense of dissonance for the Hegemonic Co-investigator, since the pedagogical approach that underpins their practice is one that challenges hierarchical power dynamics in the classroom and engages students in dialogue and problem-posing that might lead to critical consciousness. In a sense, these educators are missing the opportunity to align their critical, co-constructivist pedagogy with a curriculum that would make explicit the purpose of such pedagogy.

The knowledge being taught through the curriculum reproduces the status quo since it uncritically presents ideas and social practice, but this is achieved not through overt indoctrination, but through the teaching of ‘traditional’ or disciplinary knowledge—knowledge that has been researched, usually in universities, and published in specialist journals that are peer reviewed. It is not ‘critical’ knowledge in the sense that it is not knowledge about the social, political and economic context one inhabits, including knowledge about why we hold specific beliefs about the world and knowledge about why the world is the way it is. This would include knowing about the political, economic, historical, and cultural roots of different social phenomena. One way this can be achieved is through “deconstructing historical experiences to expose their causes and effects” (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2012: 59). Although this critical engagement might be easier in certain disciplines, helping students to be critical of the

production of knowledge is another way to bring criticality to the curriculum. For example, in the case of Lena's class, which she identified as lacking critical content, she could have encouraged students to look at where the research they were using to inform their teaching was conducted—was the reading list constituted of mainly Western researchers and contexts? Where did the funding for the research come from? How were learners' identities being constructed in reference to gender, class, and race?

Participants in this quadrant implemented a co-constructivist approach to teaching which manifested in different ways but was underpinned by the idea that knowledge was created collaboratively in the classroom (Carnell & Lodge, 2002). Further, a co-constructivist approach creates spaces for students to develop and articulate their understanding of concepts and how they relate to their lived experience. This could be through the use of problem-based learning (PBL), group projects, flipped classrooms, or peer instruction. While Lena's research-led approach to teaching and learning was the most developed version of a co-constructivist classroom, Jeremy perhaps offers a more typical exemplar. While Jeremy did lecture for a portion of his session, transmission of ideas was interspersed with discussions and group activities and were relatively short. These opportunities to discuss and engage in discourse analysis and psychoanalysis provided students with hands on experience and an opportunity to shape their understanding through discussion with their small groups and the wider class.

Critical Co-investigator

This quadrant encapsulates what many would consider the 'ideal' form of critical pedagogy in that there is a congruence between the method of teaching and the

content being learned. Participants in this quadrant demonstrated elements of a Social Reconstructionist curriculum as well as a co-constructivist pedagogy, which are both underpinned by a social perspective. According to Schiro (2013: 152), Social Reconstructionists maintain that “education has the power to educate people to analyze and understand social problems, envision a world in which those problems do not exist, and act so as to bring that vision into existence”. Key concepts in a Reconstructionist curriculum are that meaning is socially-constructed, learning should start from students’ lived experiences, and the curriculum should focus on the social (individuals, structures, and cultural differences) as well as the future. The connections between the social Reconstructionist perspective and Freire’s critical pedagogy are clear—the focus on the social and the immediate, lived experience of the students as a way to engage them in critiquing society and acting to improve it.

Although it is not always the case, a Social Reconstructionist approach to the curriculum is often associated with a social constructivist approach to teaching, as the reconstructionist aims of the curriculum are hard to achieve unless paired with a pedagogy that relies on dialogue, sharing of lived experience, student-centred teaching and learning, and active learning strategies. In particular, methods like problem-based learning (PBL) or inquiry-based learning (IBL) engage students in exploring issues that are relevant to their community while also encouraging social construction of knowledge and understanding while minimizing the power distance between the teacher and students. These approaches speak to the idea that learning is a social activity in which we strive to come to a shared understanding of knowledge that is “embedded in society and reflecting its knowledge, perspectives and beliefs” (Reusser, 2001). According to Reusser (2001: 2060), much of the teacher’s role when

implementing a co-constructivist approach is to create an environment for this sort of learning to take place, which involves:

the preparation of the students for collaborative learning (including training for cooperation and discourse prior to the collaborative learning event), the establishment of a culture of dialog and of problem-based learning, group characteristics (composition, size, ability and sex), the goal and incentive structure of the task, and the structuring of group interaction.

The above highlights the different role the teacher plays in a co-constructive context, demonstrating that the educator still has responsibilities to facilitate and set up an environment that makes co-constructive learning possible. This relates back to Freire's (1970) description of the banking model of education, which clarifies the role of the critical educator in the classroom by contrasting it with what Freire considers to be an undesirable approach. It is important, however, to point out that Freire didn't mean that the teacher in the co-constructivist/problem-posing classroom is not directive or has no authority, but rather they strive to create a classroom that balances directiveness and a more democratic approach (Schugurensky, 2014). This is an important distinction to make, because Freire was particularly concerned about the "potential for manipulation that exists in nondirective approaches" (Schugurensky, 2014: 102). Freire explains this position in more detail in conversation with Ira Shor (Shor & Freire, 1987: 172):

I said that the liberating educator can never manipulate the students and cannot leave the students alone, either. The opposite of manipulation is not laissez-faire, not denying the teacher's directive responsibility for education. ... The liberating class does not accept the status quo and its myths of freedom. It challenges the students to unveil the actual manipulation and myths in society.

Therefore, the teacher doesn't 'leave the students alone' to learn on their own, but instead attempts to balance the directiveness necessary to teach with also creating an environment where students can engage in questioning the status quo and seeing how education can be different.

The two participants that were placed in the Critical Co-investigator quadrant demonstrated both a critical curriculum and a co-constructivist pedagogy. Christine, for example, taught about democratic schools in both her sessions using a range of co-constructivist and active learning strategies. In the BA level class we engaged in democratic decision-making to solve real problems that affected the students in the class. In her MA level class we worked as a group to think about how we could apply some of the concepts to our professional practice, specifically focusing on the transferability of theory from one context to another. Rajesh used his students' experiences of marketization to challenge neoliberalism as well as drawing attention to inequalities in society by taking students on trips to visit places in London that demonstrated blatant disparities in wealth. For example, they considered the differences between areas such as Canary Wharf and the Docklands, or the City and Tower Hamlets; areas that are very close geographically but massively diverse in terms of affluence. Dialogue around these issues aimed to raise students' critical consciousness by enabling a critique of their own lived experience.

Critical Expert

Quadrant three is premised on a Reconstructionist curriculum and a transmission pedagogy, which indicates that although the content of the class may focus on content that aims to convey critical knowledge, it is delivered through a more traditional pedagogical style that is teacher-centred. This traditional pedagogical style that

positions the teacher as expert also positions the students as non-experts, like vessels ready to be filled with knowledge from the teacher, from Freire's (1970) description of banking education. However, the important question to ask is whether a transmission pedagogy undermines the teaching of critical curricula.

Giroux (1978: 148) argues that the school is not only engaged in teaching students the official curriculum, but also teaches a 'hidden curriculum': "those unstated norms, values and beliefs transmitted to students through the underlying structure of schooling". While Giroux is speaking primarily of schooling and not higher education, the aspects of the hidden curriculum he cites are present in higher education as well, mainly homogeneous grouping of students, large power distance between the teacher and the students, and evaluation as the sole responsibility of the teacher (Giroux, 1978). In essence, students learn that if they are to be rewarded (with good grades), not only do they need to demonstrate their academic prowess, but they also need to conform to the academic and behavioural rules of the classroom or institution. Therefore, Giroux (1978) argues, students become conformists rather than 'critical and creative'. Most importantly for social change and action, Giroux (1978: 149) argues that "they learn that 'knowledge' is the product of professional rank and entitlement; or to put it another way, students learn how to be silent in the face of authority". This situation, then, would have an impact on the imparting of critical knowledge—might students be confused by the dissonance between a method of teaching that implicitly and explicitly exercises authority over students and a curriculum that encourages them to consider power dynamics in society and how these impact on the production of knowledge?

This question brings us back to Webster's (2015) paper *In Defence of the Lecture*, in which he attempts to defend the lecture from the critiques of Freire presented in the banking model of education. Webster claims that Freire disapproves of the way that knowledge and reality are presented to the student, as fixed. Webster (2015: 90) claims that when Freire speaks of narration sickness (as a result of the banking model),

he is referring to the manner that reality is presented, showing particular concern for inert, static ideas which are presented as unproblematic 'facts' and which have an existence of their own without any connection to the personal experiences of human persons – especially the students.

Webster goes on to focus on the fact that students aren't passively receiving this information, they are thinking and engaging with the information, they are just passive in the sense that they aren't actively engaging in constructing understanding with others. Webster (2015: 92) suggests that to avoid students simply accepting lectures as fact, they should be encouraged to listen critically, so that they "constantly scrutinize and challenge the speaker's assertions which should not be assumed to be 'true' in a manner that leads to the passive way-of-being to which Freire warned". However, if we consider this alongside Giroux's (1978) argument about the hidden curriculum, it is easy to see that teaching in a certain way can encourage students to learn to be silent in the face of authority—to not challenge the content of the lecture, and to assume that the speaker possesses knowledge the student does not.

The distinction between what I am calling the Critical Expert and the Critical Co-investigator has been made before by Aronowitz & Giroux (1985). In their paper they present educators as intellectuals who can be classified into one of four categories: transformative, critical, accommodating or hegemonic. According to Aronowitz &

Giroux (1985: 56), the transformative intellectual makes “the pedagogic more political and the political more pedagogic” by problematizing knowledge and modelling critique. Critical intellectuals are critical of social organisation and practice yet remain apolitical in the sense of not engaging in social action or supporting the students in becoming socially active. Accommodating intellectuals generally perpetuate social, political and economic organisation, but are unaware they are doing so, while hegemonic intellectuals are those that knowingly perpetuate inequitable social/economic arrangements because this benefits them by maintaining their position in society. Most essential to this discussion is Aronowitz & Giroux’s (1985: 56) assertion that transformative intellectuals make the pedagogic more political by “utilizing forms of pedagogy which treat students as agents, problematizes knowledge, and makes knowledge meaningful so as to make it critical in order to make it emancipatory”.

While there are some overlaps between Aronowitz & Giroux’s (1985) categories and my own, their categories focus more on the curriculum and approach to knowledge while focusing less on pedagogy. Direct comparisons between the two critical categories (transformative and critical versus critical co-investigator and critical expert) are therefore not possible. While Aronowitz & Giroux (1985) fail to discuss the pedagogical practice of their critical intellectuals, their lack of encouragement for ‘social action’ suggests that perhaps they are not engaged in a pedagogy that would challenge power dynamics in the classroom (Clark, 2018). While this might seem similar to my findings about participants in the critical expert category, I think that the reason for the relative absence of co-constructivist pedagogy differs—they appear to challenge social, political and economic organisation but perceive constraints on their

ability to teach in ways that support more student participation and decision making about learning.

Hegemonic Expert

The approach in the fourth quadrant delivers non-critical content using a transmission pedagogy, and although it is not what I would consider critical practice, it is included here to demonstrate the spectrum of different approaches that range from more to less critical and more to less student-centred and constructivist. Educators in the this quadrant would teach knowledge that perpetuates the status quo, although I wouldn't go as far as to claim that, like Aronowitz & Giroux's (1985) hegemonic intellectuals, they are doing so on purpose and to benefit themselves. It's possible, instead, that these educators are unaware of how their approach to pedagogy and the curriculum is maintaining and reproducing inequality, putting them more in line with Aronowitz & Giroux's accommodating intellectuals. This is a position that is also presented in Giroux's (1978) paper about the hidden curriculum. He proposes that unless teachers have a strong theoretical framework to guide both their teaching and reflective practice, "teachers become powerless to recognize and control the larger socio-political forces affecting the nature of their teaching" (Giroux, 1978: 149). This could also be the case, I suppose, if teachers do not accept that knowledge is socially constructed and, therefore, the curriculum they teach and the way they teach it could be seen as un-ideological.

Using the Framework

The purpose of developing the framework was to enable identification of different manifestations of critical pedagogy in English universities. At times it was challenging to place participants in one quadrant, because practice is not fixed—we necessarily

adapt in different contexts or when teaching different content, making a firm conclusion about pedagogical identity difficult (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). Figure 10, below, also helps to demonstrate how these approaches are on a continuum and that not everyone fits cleanly into a particular category, rather some are positioned closer to another quadrant or even straddling different quadrants based on the implementation of different strategies or approaches in different contexts.

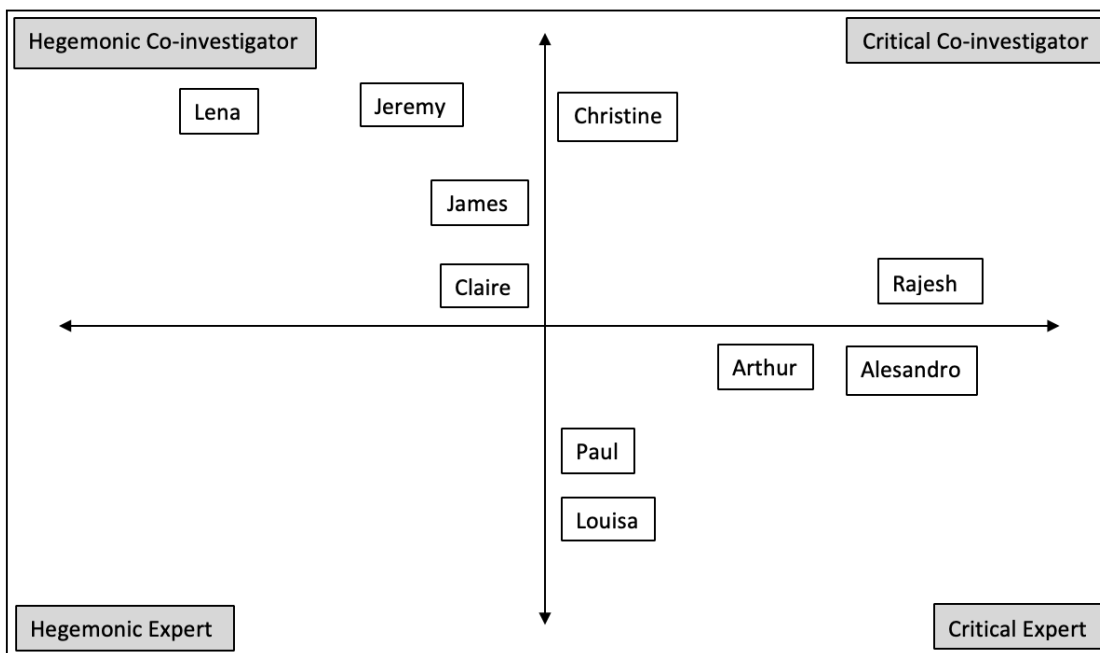


Figure 10: Participant Map

This was particularly true of Paul, who although teaching about Marxist theory in one of his lectures did not touch on critical content in his other class. Christine, on the other hand, could be placed on the intersection of the hegemonic co-investigator and critical co-investigator quadrants due to the pedagogical approaches used in her two classes—one was more constructivist while the other used a transmission approach—but both classes observed included taught critical content. Alesandro was less straightforward, because although his module on critical pedagogy contained critical content,

his teaching approach utilised a range of pedagogical approaches, including lectures, group work and discussions. Of course, these positions are based on the limited data obtained through participant observations and the reflective dialogue; the approach these educators might use in other situations might be totally different. This highlights the fact that practice changes in different contexts, and therefore participants may not be easily or effectively pigeon-holed into one category or another.

This revelation has implications for research around teaching practice more generally and connects with the idea of theory-in-use and espoused theory (Argyris, 1976). Although there might be a particular approach which underpins pedagogical decision making, to always teach in the same way might be restrictive and impractical. Certain situations might require a slightly different approach or the use of different strategies, depending on the aim of the session, the number of students, or the level of the class (i.e. master's level or bachelor's level). However, an important theme that I identified early on in the research process was that of 'purpose'. Although the ten self-identifying critical pedagogues that participated in this study all had diverse understandings of critical pedagogy and they put these into practice in different ways, their purpose for espousing this approach was relatively uniform. All the participants seemed to believe that education could change society for the better, and that they could encourage this by approaching content and teaching in a way that challenged systems and knowledge that we take for granted. Another reason that purpose is key when speaking of critical pedagogy is that although SICPs might have good intentions, they do have to work within the constraints of the university, keeping in mind the expectations of different stake-holders. Although several participants mentioned that they believe there is space to challenge how things are done within their universities,

they also perceived many constraints that made teaching in the way they wanted difficult or impossible.

8.2 Key Findings

Although some of the key findings have been mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter, this section will discuss these findings in relation to other literature on universities. In addition to the framework that was developed to conceptualise critical pedagogical practice, these findings represent a contribution to scholarship on critical pedagogy in higher education. These key findings include the tendency for most participants to focus on either curriculum or pedagogy when implementing a critical pedagogy, the sense that several participants felt they needed to do critical pedagogy 'in secret' or 'under the radar', the importance of building a sense of community, and the underlying purpose of implementing critical pedagogy in the university.

Focus on Critical Curriculum or Pedagogy

While it is possible that misunderstandings of the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy contributed to a focus on either pedagogy or curriculum amongst participants, the majority of them seemed to be well versed in critical pedagogical theory, making this unlikely. However, it is possible that instead of confusion about the theory underpinning critical pedagogy, educators are struggling to understand how to change their practice to reflect their values. Similarly, Biggs (1996) explored how constructivism was translated into university classroom practice, and found that constructivist teaching was more about a focus on certain constructivist values than it was a prescriptive method. This aligns with critical pedagogy in that many authors (McArthur, 2013) have mentioned the need to stay away from seeing critical pedagogy as a tick-box exercise and instead view it as a theory that can help shape practice in

different contexts. However, the problem identified by Biggs (1996: 349) was how the teacher moves “from a ‘focal awareness... of the learner’s world’, and appropriating principles, *to doing things differently*”.

Alternatively, it is possible that participants’ experience of critical pedagogy and, therefore, knowledge of practice was limited raising the question of how one learns radical pedagogical practice when one’s whole life experience is likely to have been of transmission pedagogy (Fanghanel, 2004; Phillips, 2005). Indeed, Argyris (1976: 370) points out the difficulty of changing from theory-in-use to a new espoused theory in his seminal work on single- and double-loop decision making: “because it requires that individuals question the theories of action that have formed the framework for their actions”. Perhaps, subconsciously, even though critical educators want to implement a critical pedagogy in their classrooms, they fall back into their old theory-in-use when they meet the constraints of working in a university. Argyris (1976: 370) points out that changing to an espoused theory that is different from others in the same institution could be risky:

There are few group, organizational, or societal supports for significantly different behaviours. New behaviour, for example, a focus on real-time inquiry and shared power and trust, could actually cause difficulties for a person because it would be considered deviant behaviour.

Therefore, according to Argyris (1976), changing your approach from what you are used to can be challenging and risky for your career. This will be discussed in more detail later in the next section.

While the participants were equally split between the Critical Expert and Hegemonic Co-investigator quadrants, transmission-style teaching seemed to be the more dominant approach across participants, even if it was interspersed with

discussion or group activities. This made me wonder if perhaps it is easier to teach content that is critical of the status quo or about social justice, than it is to challenge the form of teaching, since academics are often already engaged in and comfortable with critiquing society and knowledge (Coffield & Williamson, 1997). Challenging their own teaching practice and that of their colleagues may be harder to do, especially when critical pedagogy demands the sharing of power and control (Argyris, 1976; Sweet, 1998). The prevalence of critical content over critical pedagogy could also be an extension of the valuing of research over teaching, which was discussed in Chapter 2. The production and critique of knowledge might be seen as more important for an academic than engaging in reflection about their teaching practice (Chalmers, 2011), meaning that those who prioritise teaching risk career progression.

'Pushing at the Boundaries' of the university 'Under the Radar'

A theme that emerged from reflective dialogues with all ten participants was the idea that they were doing something subversive—they were pushing at the boundaries or doing radical things under the radar. This was somewhat unexpected, although perhaps was reflected in the difficulty I had recruiting participants. There was a sense that they were doing something different, and other educators in the university might not approve of what they were doing, which relates to a comment from Lena, who felt she had been tagged as one of 'the weird ones'. At the same time, there was also a sense that many colleagues didn't care about what others were doing in the classroom—for example, Christine won a teaching award, but no one even cared to ask what she was doing to earn that accolade. On the one hand, participants felt they needed to be secretive about what they were doing, while on the other hand, others in their institution didn't seem interested in their practice. Jeyaraj & Harland (2016) also

found that many of their participants saw critical pedagogy as a private pursuit—something they kept hidden from their departments or institutions, even avoiding sharing their practice with colleagues, as they felt it was something they should keep ‘below the radar’. In Jeyaraj and Harland’s (2016: 7) research, they reported “while all had the freedom to explore a broad range of issues, most were cautious about openly declaring to anyone that they practiced critical pedagogy”. However, it is important to note that many of Jeyaraj & Harland’s participants were working in countries where open critique of the government and status quo were very dangerous, which is not necessarily the case in England.

Many of my participants talked about doing little things that were within their power to make their classrooms more in line with their critical beliefs. This connects to the work of Skelton (2012a), who used the term ‘strategic compromise’ to explain the behavior of academics whose values clash with those of their establishment. This involved “accepting structural constraints beyond one’s control whilst... focusing on aspects of practice where they felt values could be realized” (Skelton, 2012a: 266). While the work of Skelton (2012a) and my findings focus on the struggle against structural constraints, at the core of this struggle is a difference in values. The values that underpin the purpose of the university and teaching within the university often differ at the macro, meso and micro levels.

Beliefs surrounding the purpose of the university, which were discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, have a profound impact on the academic and teaching practice of educators in the university. Two purposes highlighted by McArthur (2011), which are especially pertinent in the current era of marketization, are the social and economic purposes of the university. Although there isn’t necessarily a dichotomy

between these two purposes, and individuals can hold perceptions about the purpose of HE that involve emphasizing one or the other, the social and economic purposes of the university are often positioned as being incompatible. According to McArthur (2011: 740), government policy on higher education often:

acknowledge[s] the social role of higher education, but rarely is it explained, explored or elaborated. Attention quickly focuses back on higher education's economic role and particularly its role in providing a trained workforce and supporting productive industries.

While it would be naïve to suggest that university students aren't concerned with employability after they graduate, this doesn't mean that it should be the sole purpose of the university. This instrumentalist approach to education has an impact on the kind of teaching and learning students experience at university, making it seemingly "inconsistent with understanding learning as a social activity, inescapably linked to the wider socio-economic world" (McArthur, 2011: 741). A higher education driven by a social purpose would focus more on making society more socially just through education and research, therefore affecting the whole of society, not just those who actually attend the university (McArthur, 2011). McArthur's (2011: 747) argument is that perhaps these two purposes of education are not as contradictory as one would think—they just need to be reconsidered through a socio-economic lens that highlights that "social justice cannot be separated from economic factors. Moreover, higher education should serve all society, sustaining, enriching, cultivating and critiquing the culture that underpins that society". While McArthur's (2011) argument is informed by critical pedagogy, her work draws heavily on Adorno, a critical theorist, which might explain the importance she places on economics. While not denying the importance of preparing students for the work place, Giroux & Giroux (2006: 29) see the aim of

education as more than job readiness and teaching students to challenge inequality in the work place or society, but as “about imagining different futures and politics as a form of intervention in public life”.

Many within the field of higher education research and teaching (see Williams, 2013; Molesworth, Nixon & Scullion, 2009), and especially critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2010; McArthur, 2010a; Neary, 2012, 2016; Amsler & Canaan, 2008), have criticized the values behind the marketised and neoliberal university. In an essential chapter by Ronald Barnett on the (in)defensibility of marketization, Barnett (2010) reviews the values that underpin both pro- and anti-marketisation camps. Positions on both sides are nuanced, according to Barnett (2010), with the pro-market side divided into those who see the market as an effective way to allocate scarce resources, while others feel the competition in the market will lead to increased quality. Those who are against the market also have diverse rationales; the construction of the student as consumer and the effect this has on their educational experience, and those that see the university as a social institution and therefore a public good. Barnett points out that these are both value-laden and ideological positions about marketization, which leads him to call for a “less value-driven view to be developed” (Barnett, 2010: 40). However, I think it would be impossible to view this issue in a ‘less value-driven’ way, as values about the purpose of education and the role of universities in society necessarily underpin the debate since education can never be value-free.

While there are diverse societal opinions about the marketization of higher education, Barnett (2010) also points out that these stances often differ within the university—even at departmental level, which can lead to the clashes of values that were identified in Skelton’s (2012a) research at the meso level. According to

Kuznetsova & Kuznetsov (2019: 1), the quasi-market status of universities in England means that they are institutions that combine “different, often conflicting, institutional logics”, which are made up of values that guide work and teaching practice.

‘Hybridisation’ is the term Kuznetsova & Kuznetsov (2019: 1) give to the university that results from a clash of institutional logics:

...hybridization happens because the reaction to the pressures of marketization by managers and academics is often motivated by dissenting frames of reference: market responsiveness versus academic values, respectively.

In practice this could mean that some colleagues feel their working lives and teaching practice are deeply affected by marketization, while others in their department may not even acknowledge these effects or see them as negative. In the current funding climate, the reality is that increased marketization of higher education as a way to fund teaching and research is an economic imperative. Perhaps those in the university who oppose marketization and the effects this discourse has on the university, students and knowledge should challenge these trends by speaking out about them in their teaching, research and discussions with colleagues in an effort to “recapture the vital role that critical pedagogy might play as both a language of critique and possibility by addressing the threat of free market fundamentalism” (Giroux & Giroux, 2006: 21), moving the debate from critique to action.

The Importance of Community Building

Building a sense of community was identified as important in both the meso and micro level of participants’ practice. In terms of the meso level of the department and institution, participants suggested that part of their sense of isolation and need to do critical pedagogy ‘in secret’ came from the sense that they were not part of a critical

community. This seemed to stem from a lack of shared ethos with their colleagues and a sense that others were not interested in sharing practice, an issue also identified by Fanghanel (2004) in relation to training for university teachers. At the micro level of the classroom, building a sense of community was a core aim of many participants as it was deemed important to supporting dialogue and a more reciprocal dynamic in the classroom, in line with a Freirean approach to teaching (Freire 1970). According to Wenger (2010: 180), a 'community of practice' develops from participating in the production of understanding as a group, which creates a community that enables members to understand the purpose of the community, engage productively, and use the understandings and tools that have been created by the group. Lave & Wenger's (1991) concept of communities of practice can be applied at both the meso and micro level, looking at the community of practice both within the department and in the classroom, to better understand how the existence or absence of such a community could facilitate or hinder the dynamic needed to implement a critical pedagogical approach. Although this could be said of any kind of learning approach, I think it is particularly important to critical pedagogy because a community of practice might make it easier to create a space in which students feel comfortable engaging in dialogue, challenging dominant ideas, and developing new understandings of the world. Indeed, Watkins (2005) has reported there is strong evidence that sense of community within a school leads to a multitude of benefits for both staff and students, including increased motivation, participation, self-efficacy, and ownership over learning.

Several participants mentioned how having to operate under the radar or on the margins made them feel isolated within the university. In particular, Christine, Lena

and Louisa mentioned a conflict between the ethos of their institution or department and their own, which led to a sort of identity struggle. This was similar to one of the findings of Skelton's (2012b) research on teaching identity in a research-intensive university. He found that when his participants couldn't identify with their colleagues and their practice, "they did not appear to have a meaningful community of practice and expressed feelings of isolation and non-belonging" (Skelton, 2012b: 36). In contrast, Louisa mentioned that she felt more supported to teach in the way she wanted because she had a like-minded colleague in her department. Palmer (1992) found that a sense of community can be essential to sustaining individuals' commitment to their own beliefs in his work on movements for change. Membership in such a group can help people feel less isolated when they realise that "even though they are out of step, they are not crazy" (Palmer, 1992: 6). However, finding a sense of belonging in a community that shares the same interests as you necessarily means there are also people excluded from the community (Mercer-Mapstone, 2019), people whose disagreement might actually lead to a valuable learning opportunity for generative disruption. According to Wenger (2010: 181) "learning can be viewed as a process of realignment between socially defined competence and personal experience". What is more, this process of realignment can either make you identify with or dis-identify with the community in which you are situated. In the case of the participants in this study, those who identified with their community of practice seemed more able to put their personal values into practice, while those who dis-identified with their community felt they had to compromise or conceal their practice from the community (Kreber, 2010). Gourlay (2011) questions the applicability of the communities of practice model to higher education, arguing that the individual and

often text-based nature of academia may explain the lack of communities of practice in HE. In her study on the experiences of lecturers with a professional background, Gourlay (2011) highlights the absence of the three key aspects of CoP: shared repertoire, mutual endeavor and expert-novice interaction. These elements also seemed to be missing in the experience of my participants, which may explain their feeling of isolation. Instead of dismissing the usefulness of CoP in HE, like Gourlay (2011) I would suggest that universities should not assume that communities of practice develop organically within programmes or teams, and instead spaces for sharing practice need to be actively developed to help foster both professional development and a stronger sense of community.

The importance of community was also discussed in relation to the micro level of the classroom; many participants discussed building a relationship with students, and eight of the ten participants spoke of this in terms of a lack of community being a barrier to CP. In particular, Christine, Claire, Alesandro, Jeremy and Lena mentioned the importance of creating a sense of community in the classroom to encourage student contributions, engagement, and a sense of belonging. Wenger (2010: 182) posits that in order to identify with the community of practice, members must negotiate their participation in order to better understand the system and their position in it. This sort of negotiation was particularly visible in Christine and Lena's classes, where students were active participants that had developed a strong community through decision-making, activities, dialogue and participation. This sense of community seemed absent in classes that were more didactic and transmission-based, like Louisa, Arthur and Paul's classes. In others, like Jeremy and Alesandro's classes, the negotiation taking place was visible, with some sense of community

emerging as students began to feel more comfortable. However, in these classes the participation seemed more forced, possibly because although there were opportunities for dialogue and group activities, these were still teacher-centred and teacher-led.

While building a community to foster a sense of belonging emerged as a key theme at both the meso and micro level of practice, this is not something that features strongly in the critical pedagogy literature. This is interesting, because it seems that a critical pedagogical approach, one that disrupts and challenges the status quo, often exposing students to difficult realities, would be fostered by feeling part of a community that could support you through this process. It's also surprising given the history of Freire's work with illiterate communities in Brazil and other countries in South America. In these cases, community and the knowledge shared by these communities was seen as underpinning Freire's approach (Freire 1970). Community was also a key aspect of Ellsworth's (1989) classroom, which enabled them to cultivate trust, which was seen as essential for creating a safer space to engage in dialogue. Although shared purpose and genuine investment in social justice issues helped to create connections, Ellsworth and her students realized they needed to go beyond this to create a sense of community they all identified with.

The Importance of Purpose in Critical Pedagogical Practice

While critical pedagogical theory seemed to underpin participants' pedagogical beliefs, this manifested in different ways. For example, some key elements of critical pedagogy include critique, dialogue, action, conscientization, and self-transformation.

Interestingly, participants tended to focus on one of these elements—perhaps because of the difficulty of implementing critical pedagogy in their contexts. For example,

Rajesh was one of the few participants who mentioned conscientization, a process where students become aware of their oppression and why it has occurred, as an aim of his module. Paul also highlighted this in his lecture about Marxism, which he felt should challenge students to think about how their lives could be different, and why they are that way to begin with. Alesandro was one of the few participants to highlight the importance of action in critical pedagogy, inspiring students to engage in action once they leave university. Lena, with her co-constructivist approach, focused on engaging students in dialogue to co-construct understanding and ownership of their learning experience.

Breunig (2009:259) concluded her study by wondering if her participants' critical pedagogical praxis was based on "an implicit approach to teaching and learning about issues of justice". This calls into question whether educators using a critical approach are required to be explicit about the reasons behind their pedagogical practice for it to be considered 'critical pedagogy'. Breunig (2009) goes on to say that she doesn't think educators should let the experience speak for itself—if the aim is for students to reconsider or modify their beliefs, a space for engaging with critical content through a critical pedagogy should be provided. In a sense, Breunig (2009) seems to be suggesting that purpose or implicit critical pedagogical beliefs are not enough to make a difference, echoing the work of Aronowitz & Giroux (1985: 51), who posited that educators should "take active responsibility for raising serious questions about what they teach, how they are to teach it, and what the larger goals are for what they are striving". To have critical pedagogical values implicit to one's teaching practice would lead to a separation of the political and the pedagogical, and while Aronowitz & Giroux (1985) recognize that such a 'critical intellectual' still engages in critique of the

status quo, they do not act on their beliefs in the classroom or society, and therefore do not create the conditions necessary for a different future.

8.3 Why isn't critical pedagogy more common in universities?

After collecting and analysing data from ten SICPs, I was surprised that only two educators implemented both a critical pedagogy and critical curriculum. Previous research on critical pedagogical practice in HE has highlighted the discontinuity between theory and practice (see Ellsworth, 1989; Breunig, 2009), suggesting that perhaps educators are unsure about how to put critical pedagogical theory into practice. Another possibility is that like the educators in Davis & Sumara's (2003) study, my participants were attempting to implement critical pedagogy based on a naïve understanding of the purpose behind it. Davis & Sumara (2003: 128) attributed this to "'mistranslations' of theoretical discourses", which can be a result of misunderstanding or of not accessing the direct texts that underpin the approach. Of course, this may be largely to do with the fact that there is no checklist or plan for 'doing' critical pedagogy, which makes it difficult to implement and also difficult to identify.

Although I was aware of the changes to HE in recent years due to marketisation, since I was new to academia I didn't appreciate the multitude of factors that constrain pedagogical practice in universities. As I conducted reflective dialogues with my participants, it became clear that many of them felt they were in a precarious position at their university, which meant they needed to be careful about how they responded to these changes and the tightening of control. There are many explanations for why critical pedagogy is not widely practiced in HE, in this section I will focus on key constraints that have come out of my work, which can be broadly

categorized into macro, meso and micro level constraints (Skelton, 2012a). Although constraints at the different levels overlap and influence each other, it helps to organise them into different levels to show how problems at the macro level can influence those at the micro. As discussed in Chapter 3, the macro level includes government policies and the dominant discourse about higher education, the meso level is concerned with the context of individual institutions and departments and their regulations, while the micro level consists of the classroom or the physical environment of the university.

Challenges at the macro level

At the macro level of government and societal discourse and policy around higher education, there are several constraints to implementing a critical agenda in the classroom. Although these were discussed in more detail in Chapters 1 and 2, they will also be discussed here using data from this study. Several participants (Rajesh, Louisa and Jeremy) cited the effects of the marketisation of higher education on their classrooms, in particular mentioning the affect this has had on class size and the expectations of students. This was further exacerbated by the economic purpose of the university which is often mentioned in policy documents, such as *Success as a Knowledge Economy* (BIS, 2016), emphasising the role of universities in national development and job readiness. While universities should consider their impact on society both in terms of social justice and contributions to knowledge, looking at universities as preparing students for the world of work may instrumentalise them and promote credentialism (Williams, 2013). This might, in turn, lead to comments such as “tell me what I need to do to get a first” or simply “what do I need to do to pass the exam?” This instrumentalism not only means that students are more focused on the

product of their learning rather than the process, but it is possible that they are less likely to be open to a student-centred, co-constructivist approach. For example, a study by Prosser & Trigwell (2014: 791) found that students are “more likely to adopt surface approaches to study if ... their teachers are adopting more information transmission and teacher-focused approaches to teaching”. Perhaps students favour transmission pedagogies that allow them to memorise information for assessment, but further research with students would need to be conducted to find if this is the case. However, the research of Prosser & Trigwell (2014: 791) found that “not only is there a relationship between teachers’ approaches and their students’ approaches in large first-year classes, but also that the relationship is substantial and powerful”, suggesting that if changes were made to teaching approach, this would trickle down to effect student learning and students’ conceptions of learning. However, it is hard to see how sustainable changes to teaching could be made by isolated individuals in the university. Phillips (2005: 9) pointed out that “changes to curriculum and teaching approaches are unlikely to be resolved by teachers working individually... if colleagues teaching other subjects do not present similar messages to students, innovative approaches are unlikely to be sustainable, despite their grounding in research”. This demonstrates how issues at the macro level can impact directly on the situations at the meso and micro levels, by influencing students’ attitudes and aims when it comes to attending university, as well as institutional decisions around funding and economic viability.

Challenges at the meso level

Among challenges at the meso level, those mentioned most often by participants were the expansion agenda, regulations around course development, and differing values within departments and institutions. Class size was an issue that was mentioned by

several participants, which relates to the marketisation of higher education since universities are under pressure to enroll more students in order to fund research and teaching since the funding structure has changed (Langa Rosado & David, 2006). Not only does increasing enrolment impact class size at the micro level, but it also impacts what is taught, since programmes with small student numbers are often cut if they are not seen to be contributing enough money (Stromquist, 2007; Cowden & Singh, 2013). Another key challenge at the meso level was the clash between the aims of critical educators and others in their departments, which manifested in various ways. Although some level of diversity of opinion within a department is arguably a good thing that encourages debate around practice and design, it can often leave educators feeling isolated from their peers if there is a strong difference between them and their colleagues. Several participants (Louisa, Christine, Paul) mentioned that they feel more able to challenge the status quo if they have the support of a like-minded colleague.

Control over teaching practice also manifested in a more official sense, in that regulations around module design meant that critical educators often felt that they had limited opportunities to transgress the traditional approach to module design. This of course differed across universities, as some are considerably more flexible than others in how structured modules have to be. For example, Claire found that in her old institution there was much more room to try different ideas than in her new institution. This meant that negotiating the syllabus or the reading list with students could be seemingly impossible, as these had to be agreed upon before the module was approved. Both Alesandro and Jeremy mentioned this as restrictive to critical pedagogical practice, as it left no space for spontaneity or doing things differently, or no 'gaps' (as identified by Jeremy). This was also the case for assessment practices,

which was another meso level constraint mentioned by participants—it is hard to teach students to value certain kinds of learning when they are still assessed in a very traditional way.

Challenges at the micro level

Constraints at other levels often result in more visible effects at the micro level. These effects were certainly more visible to me, as this was the level in which I engaged with participants. ‘Barriers to critical pedagogy’ was coded in all ten reflective dialogues, in association with a range of specific constraints. The most prevalent association was institutional structure, making a firm connection with the meso level. However, the effects of these constraints were most visible as larger class sizes, student engagement, lack of time, and the consequences of taking risks. Another issue was that of the learning environment, which overlaps considerably with class size, institutional structure, and engagement. Nine out of ten participants mentioned the effects of larger class sizes on their ability to implement more participatory forms of pedagogy and promote student engagement. This often seemed to be the case when the number of students in the class meant that changes had to be made to the way the class was taught, as was the case for several participants, but especially for Arthur whose class expanded unexpectedly.

Student engagement was another theme that came out of the data from all ten participants, suggesting that it might be a pervasive issue in HE. Although participants most often used the word ‘engagement’ they never explicitly explained what they meant by this. However, it seems that most of them were using it in the same sense as Gourlay (2017: 23) as being “primarily identified in interlocution or observable interaction”. It’s interesting to note that all the participants I observed seemed to

have issues with student participation aside from two: Christine and Lena. I find this interesting because they both strove to create a more democratic and co-constructivist classroom, putting an inclusive pedagogy at the centre of their practice. Other participants who discussed their attempts to encourage student engagement seemed to focus on opportunities for discussion with peers and learning activities, both of which, Gourlay (2017) points out, imply interaction with others as the key way to demonstrate engagement. This means that students who are quiet or shy might be seen as passive or 'not engaged', which has implications for how we typecast learners, especially those from other cultures or backgrounds who might not be used to 'active learning'. However, it is interesting to note that in both Lena and Christine's classes there was a strong sense of community, which may have made participation and engagement with others feel more comfortable and productive. Watkins (2005: 52) argues that "classroom involvement and participation is linked to a sense of community: as students' sense of community increases, participation increases". This draws attention to another important difference between Lena and Christine's classes and those of other participants—they had a sense of community which seemed to make a difference to engagement where even 'active,' co-constructivist pedagogies did not.

Chapter 9: Reflection

As a critical researcher, I am particularly interested in how my research approach can be more congruent with critical pedagogy. This manifested in a number of ways, from creating opportunities for my participants to engage in reflection about their practice, to challenging the power dynamics in traditional research. This chapter will focus on reflection and reflexivity and how they impacted on the process of doing research, simultaneously providing an opportunity for me to reflect on the process of doing critical research. According to Macbeth (2001: 35), “reflexivity is a deconstructive exercise for locating the intersections of author, text, and world, and for penetrating the representational exercise itself.” While reflexivity is focused more on introspection and self-awareness of positionality, reflection is concerned with building understanding based on action or practice (Watts, 2019). The two practices are deeply connected, as reflexivity also encourages us to see that the self is socially situated and action-oriented, meaning that when being reflexive we necessarily reflect on our actions and behaviours. This chapter will look at the process of reflection on two levels: participants reflecting on their own practice, and me reflecting on the research process, and how these spheres of reflection interacted. Alongside the reflection on the research process, I will reflexively unpick my own practice as a researcher, focusing on my assumptions and position and how they may have shaped the research. The chapter will finish by looking at some of the critiques of reflection and reflexivity in research and what I learned through the process of reflecting about the research process.

9.1 Participant Reflection

Patti Lather's (1986b) work on research as praxis is particularly illuminating in relation to the power of research as an opportunity for participants to reflect upon their own situation in order to change it for the better. Connected to this is her concept of 'catalytic validity,' which is the "degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energises participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it" (Lather, 1986b: 272). While viewing research as an opportunity for reflection may encourage us to engage in a sort of negotiation of power, which is already very complicated and extends beyond the researcher-researched dynamic, this should not completely appease us into thinking that the power dynamic is balanced or that the research process benefits both researcher and the researched equally (Ben-Ari & Enosh, 2012).

In my own research, several participants mentioned the value of engaging in reflection about their practice and how it aligned with critical pedagogical theory. This was something that I tried to build into the research design—by participating in and observing the practice of my participants, we were then better able to reflect on their practice together in the reflective dialogue. Thinking about and explaining their teaching practice would necessarily involve some level of reflection, whether this was on a more superficial level or involved more introspection about values and practice. For example, at the end of our reflective dialogue, Christine said "the process of thinking about it and talking to you has been quite interesting for me as well, just in terms of the reflective space to think about what I do." This was echoed by Louisa:

I think talking to you has made me realise how few opportunities we have for actually reflecting on our own teaching and evaluating

things in a really useful way. I mean, we have some form of evaluation, but it doesn't get at these issues about what you're *really* trying to do...

Lena asked me to send her a copy of the transcript so that she could read over it, saying that she rarely has the opportunity to talk about her practice with others. This was surprising, especially since Louisa, Lena and Christine all work in the field of education or education studies but relates to the isolation discussed in Chapter 8. However, it was encouraging to hear from participants that they had taken something positive out of the research experience.

Critical reflection about teaching practice is by no means new, although it seems less popular now compared to the craze of Schön's reflective practitioner in the 1980s and 1990s. Engaging in critical reflection on practice can encourage educators and other practitioners to examine their current practice and develop it to align better with their beliefs about education and teaching. In fact, Larrivee (2000: 294) goes as far as to claim that teacher's beliefs about practice often go unchallenged, thus leading to "unexamined judgments, interpretations, assumptions and expectations". Kreber (2005) agrees, claiming that much of the research on teaching and learning in HE is done in an attempt to fit into the system by demonstrating 'good practice', rather than critically reflecting in order to evaluate or change practices. Larrivee (2000) considers critical reflection as involving the examination of both beliefs and the impact of practices, and how they are affected by ethical considerations. Engaging in this sort of reflection often results in realizing that our beliefs and practices are mismatched (see Argyris (1976) on espoused theory and theory-in-use), which may result in a re-evaluation and re-formation of the beliefs that underpin our behavior, or a change in how we attempt to put these beliefs into practice. This is an important exercise since

“our beliefs shape our identity” (Larrivee, 2000:295), and therefore changing our beliefs can be challenging and risky. By asking participants to examine their practice and discuss it with me, they had the opportunity to better understand how their espoused theory matches with their theory-in-use. For some participants, this might have been a difficult process as they realised that their espoused beliefs were not being put into practice and they were stuck in what Argyris (1990) called a ‘reflexive loop’, in which we “select data, add personal meaning, make assumptions based on our interpretations of the selected data, draw conclusions, adopt beliefs, and ultimately take action” (in Larrivee 2000: 295). In the reflexive loop, practitioners can maintain and justify their practice by choosing to see some elements of their practice while ignoring others. Perhaps by reflecting with an outside observer, participants were pushed to realise some elements of their practice that they weren’t seeing before.

The practitioners that Larrivee and Argyris and others in the reflective practitioner community often seem to talk about are those that have undertheorized their teaching practice or implement a more instrumentalised version that attempts to strip away values, similar to Davis & Sumara’s (2003) participants who had a naïve interpretation of constructivism. My participants, on the contrary, are actively trying to bring a political and value-laden approach into their teaching practice. While this might suggest engaging in this critical, reflective exercise might be unnecessary since they have a theory that guides their actions, on the contrary, it is still essential to continue to engage in critical reflection. Larrivee (2000: 301) asserts that “teachers have to continually challenge the underlying beliefs that drive their present behavior”. These beliefs might not be directly about pedagogy but could also be about the context or

their students. In light of my findings about participants' perceptions of constraints at different levels, reflection becomes essential to engaging in strategic compromise or the challenging of oppressive structures (Ashwin, 2008).

In the case of my research, this could mean that self-identifying critical pedagogues might want to challenge their perception that embodying a critical pedagogy in their classroom is impossible or too challenging, or they might want to challenge what they consider to be critical pedagogical practice. By examining the beliefs that dictate behavior practitioners can begin to see how past experiences, beliefs, assumptions and expectations, feelings and personal agendas influence their response to a situation (Larrivee 2000). While the process of critical reflection varies, there are key elements that are present in many models, including desire for change, uncertainty, personal discovery and transformation. My hope is that by engaging in my research, participants have been inspired to continue to examine their practice beyond the reflective dialogue, leading to more effective teaching based on their own beliefs and values.

The reflective dialogues were also an opportunity to consider the issue of how I was representing the participants, as after observing the participants I was then able to ask for clarification or explanation in the reflective dialogue. This was useful in terms of more accurately understanding the participants and the kinds of pedagogical thinking they engaged in. However, thinking of representation in this way highlights the position of power that I was in as the researcher—I was the one who had the opportunity to represent the participants to serve the purposes of my research, while they had relatively little control over how I was going to represent them (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). This carried through into the writing up of the data

chapters, which I found difficult. As I was writing these chapters I found it hard to move away from a linear retelling of what had occurred—somehow this seemed like the most authentic way to convey what had transpired in our discussion or in the classroom. By presenting the data in this way, it felt that I was indeed just recounting what had happened rather than using the data to tell a different story. But in reality, no matter how I present the data it is still my interpretation of what happened and what was said.

Problematising the purpose of participant reflection

In giving participants the opportunity to contribute to the analysis of their own data, I was hoping to provide another opportunity for participant reflection, the first being the reflective dialogue itself. While textual reflexivity is often concerned with narrowing the ‘distance’ between the researcher’s representation of the subject and that subject’s reality (Macbeth, 2001), my rationale for asking participants to identify themes within our transcript was to create another opportunity to better understand what they thought was important when exploring critical pedagogical practice. It was interesting that when identifying themes from the transcript, some participants seemed to be very focused on the data and only mentioned things that we explicitly discussed, while others seemed to pick out broader themes that pertained to critical pedagogical theory and practice. For example, Louisa identified two tensions as themes: delivering content versus starting with the knowledge of students, institutional requirements versus “the pedagogical commitment to creating a genuinely critical space”. Whereas Lena identified five themes that were very closely related to what we had discussed in the interview, such as distributed expertise (a learning activity she uses), how to be engaging and what that means, and the

importance of choice in making learning more meaningful. While my aim was to encourage further reflection on their practice, since this was then included as data, it is interesting to think about who this reflection was really for—was it in an effort to ‘give’ participants an opportunity to reflect further, or was it to further my own understanding of their critical pedagogical beliefs? If it is both, does it make it less empowering for participants?

9.2 Researcher Reflection

In addition to hoping that my research allowed participants to evaluate their beliefs and values and how they affect their practice, I aimed to do the same throughout the research process, constantly reflecting on my assumptions about critical pedagogy, my participants, and the process of doing critical research itself. Reflexivity is often used in qualitative research as a way to improve the reliability of the data, demonstrating that the researcher is in a constant process of reflection on what they are doing and how this may impact the participants as well as the outcome of the research (Pillow, 2003).

While there is some debate around the usefulness of reflexivity in the research process, since this research is attempting to implement a more critical and emancipatory approach to research, it is important to be reflexive not only about my position as the researcher, but also about how this research has produced knowledge about critical pedagogy in HE. Since I am a PhD researcher, being reflexive is even more important, as it helps me become more aware of the values that inform my own practice as well as the conventions that constrain it. While reflecting on her pedagogical practice, MacGillivray (1997: 470) pointed out that although we often have to work within and against the conventions of academic practice, frequently we are also “struggling *within and against [ourselves].*” Therefore, this section is a mixture

of reflecting on how this research has attempted to challenge the norms of social research, but also being reflexive about how I have struggled to fight my own understanding of what is valid or valuable about my contribution. I will also reflect on the dynamic I attempted to foster with participants and how this impacted the research.

Struggling against the norms of social research

Approaching research from a critical perspective meant that from the beginning I was interested in involving participants in steering the direction of the research through the participant observations, the reflective dialogue and the analysis of the data. However, this turned out to be more complicated than I had originally thought, as the participants were not overly keen to take this role. In the first instance, participants were invited to come to the reflective dialogue with themes or questions to guide our discussion, an offer that only one participant accepted. After the data had been collected and transcribed, I sent participants their transcripts to read over and check, asking them to contribute several themes that they felt emerged from the dialogue in order to “let the data, the subjects, speak for themselves” (Pillow, 2003: 179), which was slightly more successful. While involving participants in the research process in this way may have led to a dynamic that suggested that participants played an active role in the research process rather than being objects of study, I think that perhaps this dynamic can be challenging for researchers and participants alike, which may explain why participants were reluctant to take these opportunities.

Although I was attempting to let the participants guide and contribute to the research process in order to share power, at times this felt tokenistic, since I was still making the decisions about what to focus on in the participant observation, which for

the most part guided the discussion in the Reflective Dialogue. Trinh (1991) points out that in this situation I was still in a position of power as I 'gave' the participants this opportunity, and indeed by giving them this opportunity I was possibly imposing on them to participate in a way they did not wish to. For example, Christine was one participant that explicitly declined to identify themes from her data, stating in an email that she found it hard to analyse her own data in this way; while several others declined because they were busy. Therefore, when trying to share power with participants it is important to "continually question the capability of the subject to define her/his self or even the desire of the subject to do so" (Pillow, 2003: 185). In hindsight, it may have been more productive, and potentially less intrusive, if I had talked to the participants more before the participant observation and successive reflective dialogue in order to understand the issues *they* thought were important. This could have influenced the design of the study from the beginning, rather than trying to get participants to offer their thoughts after the fact. My reason for approaching it the way I did was to allow things to come up naturally from the participant observation, however, what happened instead was that I felt like I ended up pulling things from the data that were important to me and the research rather than issues that might be pressing to the participants.

Language in Research

Another area that I was interested in due to its relation to power, and effect on the research process, was the language used to talk about research. As mentioned in Chapter 4, I attempted to challenge the hierarchical conventions of research by avoiding language that implied an unequal power dynamic. For instance, the word 'interview' implies a hierarchy in which the researcher has more power than the

participants, since they guide the discussion, develop the questions, choose the topic. By using 'reflective dialogue' I hoped to emphasise the dialogic nature of the dynamic I was hoping to create space for. Although I am aware of the power of language to frame situations and perceptions, I noticed throughout the research process that I felt uncomfortable using non-traditional language to describe the data collection process. In fact, at times I reverted back to calling it an interview because I thought participants might be confused by the language I was using or might find it trivial that I was trying to call this method of data collection something else. Perhaps had I been more explicit about all of the different things I was trying to do to challenge traditional research methods and why, participants would have been more willing to engage with these methods, and I may have felt they were more legitimate. If I had explained the purpose of asking them to bring some questions or topics to the reflective dialogue, they may have been more likely to do so. Also, had I explained why I was calling it a reflective dialogue rather than an interview, they may have been more open to a different dynamic. Despite this, I do think that the dynamic in the majority of the reflective dialogues was quite open and led by participants as we were reflecting on shared experiences, and I was of course responding to their comments and the direction in which these comments took the discussion. Having learned from my mistake, when I contacted the participants with copies of their transcripts and the field notes from my time in their classes (if applicable), I explained to them why I wanted them to contribute five themes after reading over the interview. I hoped that this would make them more likely to respond. Of course, other factors may have influenced whether participants responded, like the time of year, how busy they were, and the amount of time that had lapsed since the reflective dialogue.

Issues of Identity: Avoiding Judgment

In addition to the language used to describe the data collection methods, the language used to describe participants also may have a significant impact on the dynamic between the researcher and the researched (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009; Hall, 2002; Morse, 1991). This was particularly true in the case of my research, as I started to become aware of the important role identity played in the implementation of pedagogical beliefs in the university. Therefore, the sample and what they were called ended up being very important. 'Self-identifying critical pedagogues' was the term chosen from the beginning of the research process, as it helped to narrow the sample to those that identified *themselves* as being critical pedagogues. Because I was interested in learning about different approaches to implementing critical pedagogy, as well as how the neoliberal university might hinder its implementation, I didn't want to close down the opportunity to observe and interview those who might not be practicing critical pedagogy as I might perceive it. By calling for and inviting self-identifying critical pedagogues, I hoped to avoid judging who was really a critical pedagogue by allowing people who identified with this approach to participate in the study. However, as I mentioned in Chapter 4, since I used a snowball sampling technique, I was mainly referred to participants by others, which brought up a strange situation in which peers might identify others as being critical pedagogues when the person themselves did not self-identify.

The issue with judgment extended beyond identifying the sample population and was something I considered early on as an ethical concern that may cause participants anxiety about their practice, which might make them more likely to modify their normal teaching practice when I was participating in their classes. As such,

I specifically mentioned in the information sheet (see Appendix) that the point of the project was not to judge whether participants were 'doing' critical pedagogy—rather it was my aim to explore different approaches to critical pedagogical practice in universities and to understand the challenges associated with these methods. I felt quite strongly that I was not in a position to judge people's practice; however, as the project went on it became clear that first of all, I was judging people to some extent because it is almost impossible to watch people without judging them on some level, and this was happening through my interpretation of what I was experiencing and how they described what they wanted to be doing. I had some idea of what I thought critical pedagogy should look like, even if I could not articulate this explicitly at the beginning of the research (MacGillivray, 1997). Although I think that to be able to contribute something worthwhile to the field, I do need to map different practices using certain criteria, what I definitely didn't want to do was 'catch them out' for not 'practising what they preach'. Therefore, although in the discussion chapter I categorised participants based on their practise and their approach to implementing critical pedagogy, what I didn't do is point out where participants said one thing and then did another—because I don't think this is helpful for anyone, and it is not the purpose of this research.

Reflecting on Data Collection & Analysis

Instead of attempting to simply interpret the actions and words of my participants, I also had my own experience as a participant in their classes to draw upon. In a sense, by drawing upon these shared experiences and being reflexive about them, I am assuming, as Ropers-Huilman (1999: 24) does, that "our knowledge from participation in a research situation is useful...that our constructed meanings might be worth

listening to.” Originally, the purpose of starting with participant observations was so that I could get a sense of the kind of pedagogical practices self-identifying critical pedagogues use in their classrooms as a jumping off point for the reflective dialogue. Using this approach was supposed to provide real examples that we could both reflect upon and discuss, and although the research did work in that way in many cases, it also may have caused problems around pedagogical desirability bias and researcher bias. For example, while for the most part I felt that I was getting an accurate picture of my participants’ typical teaching practice, there were several times when participants asked me if I thought they were doing things right or if what they had done would be useful for my research, which made me wonder if they were changing their practice because I was observing. I had hoped that participating in the class rather than sitting on the edge observing might mitigate this. I also tried to reassure participants that I was interested in learning about different critical pedagogic approaches and that I wasn’t looking for particular approaches to teaching. However, I was often aware during the research that I did have expectations of the participants and their practice, and these expectations were in a constant state of flux as I read about critical pedagogical theory and practice, observed others, and changed my own understanding of what critical pedagogy might look like. These shifting understandings invariably influenced my collection and analysis of the data.

As the study went on, I found it hard to not make comparisons between participants. To some extent, making comparisons across participants is a normal practice in the research process, as one constantly reflects on the data throughout the data collection process (Maxwell, 2012). Looking back at the transcripts from the reflective dialogues, I was struck by the number of times that I mention the

experiences or thoughts of other participants, and while I don't think that is necessarily bad practice, it clearly was something that was influencing the way I thought about the data and the participants. For example, in several of the reflective dialogues, I bring up the issue of engagement, which was something that was mentioned by Louisa, the second participant to engage in a reflective dialogue. As a result, her mention of student engagement as a serious problem likely predisposed me to look for and ask about engagement, potentially making it into a bigger issue than it was to others. However, it was an issue in many of the classes that I observed, it may have just been called something else or talked about in a different way if I had not framed it as an issue about 'engagement'. For the most part, I found that having a shared experience upon which to base the reflective dialogue was helpful because it allowed us to talk about concrete events that had happened, rather than an abstract idea of what critical pedagogical practice might look like. This became more obvious after interviewing participants who I could not observe teaching (Claire, James, and Rajesh), for whom it was hard to anchor the conversation and as a result I felt that the interviews were less systematic.

Reflections on the participant observation component of the research also urge a reflection on the extent to which I was truly a participant in the classes I attended. This seemed to vary depending on the dynamic of the class, as mentioned in Chapter 4. In classes where active participation was encouraged for all students, like engaging in psychoanalysis of Freud (Jeremy) or using sociocratic decision making processes to determine what to do with extra class time (Christine), I was definitely a participant observer because the classes themselves were more participatory. In other classes that were more transmission based, I took notes on content, like the other students, and

occasionally asked questions or responded to the questions of the teachers. In these classes I would say I was participating, but in a different, more passive way, like the other students seemed to be. But this was largely due to the pedagogy being used in these situations. There was one class, in particular, where I was definitely not a participant observer: Lena had specifically requested that I observe from the edge of the room, as the structured nature of the class, as well as what they were doing in the session I observed (peer feedback), meant that it would be disruptive to the students if I participated. Clearly as a participant observer, the researcher cannot always control what they participate in, which means that in different classrooms they will participate in different ways. Research is a messy process in this sense, and doesn't always go exactly as planned, but because my research focuses on different pedagogical practices this provided rich material.

Reflecting on the Dynamic between the Researcher and the Researched

While the language used to talk about the research process and the participants invariably affected the dynamic of the research-participant relationship, other factors such as rapport building, reciprocity, and shared experience also affected the dynamic and therefore the research process. There was a difference in the dynamic with certain participants, in particular those that I knew before the research started, as well as those that I observed compared to those I did not. In a sense, this may support the decisions I made in regard to the design of my study—by starting with participant observations I became more familiar with my participants, which made the reflective dialogue more interesting and more informed by a shared experience or history.

Rapport was stronger with participants I knew before the research started, for example, I knew both Louisa and Claire quite well from seminars I had attended, and I

had met Paul and Jeremy at conferences. Therefore, I already had a connection with these participants that made working together more comfortable. However, this might not always be a good thing, as it also may have led to me making assumptions about their practice or beliefs without asking them about them in the reflective dialogue (Ben-Ari & Enosh, 2012); perhaps, our conversation was more open, but this may have led to us not discussing certain things.

Reflection on the connections I had with participants is not done in an effort to claim that I have a more valid understanding of my participants, on the contrary, like Ellingson (1998 in Pillow 2003), I think it reveals instead that the data that I collected was in some respects even more 'contaminated' or subjective than if I had never met my participants or been a part of their classes, which is not to suggest that this is undesirable or that producing uncontaminated data is possible. My participant observation of their classes meant that much of what we talked about was based on my own experience of being in their classroom combined with my experience of being in other classrooms (whether they were part of the research or not). In this sense, it is impossible to separate what I observed and what I brought to those observations from the research. While some might see this as problematic, I prefer the perspective of Ellingson, which is that "this contamination with my own lived experiences results in a rich, complex understanding of [the participants] which I am observing" (1998, in Pillow 2003: 183).

My Position: Changing Roles in Teaching and Research

Reflexivity can be used as a way to challenge the power dynamic between the researcher and the researched (Macbeth 2001). While reflecting on the power differential between researchers and the researched is important, especially in critical

research, engaging in this piece of research taught me that roles are not fixed, and the power dynamic might not be as simple as it seems on the surface (Hoffman, 2007). The power dynamic in this research was complicated because although I had more power over the research itself, because I was researching more experienced researchers and teachers my lack of experience made me *feel* less powerful. This may have been complicated further by my role working within higher education. When I started the PhD, I was a student with no experience teaching in higher education, and all I could rely on was my own experience of being a master's student in England to guide me through the reading and research that I did before designing the study. However, over the course of my PhD I gained experience as a personal tutor for master's students at my university, which then turned into a teaching role.

By the end of the study I had some insight into teaching in higher education, which changed my perspective on the data I collected, and conversely, the data I collected through observations and discussions with critical educators has certainly influenced my own practice. At the beginning of my PhD, my interest in critical pedagogical practice stemmed from my interest in why lecturers were choosing not to implement this approach. At the time I had no understanding of how challenging it was to do something different, or how many constraints educators in HE encounter. This became especially clear to me teaching on a master's level course with over 150 students in a lecture hall—although I wanted to use a more co-constructivist and critical approach to teaching, this seemed impossible on such a large scale and in such a space. While on a practical level, my observations of experienced pedagogues taught me about interesting techniques, on a theoretical level engaging in this research taught me about the crucial element of purpose when it comes to pedagogy. Coming

originally from a psychology background, I had previously seen learning in a mechanistic way, focusing on how changing the environment and the approach to teaching could lead to more effective learning. Focusing more on the purpose behind teaching for social justice brought in a sociological perspective that I had not previously considered.

9.4 Critiquing Reflexivity

While engaging in reflexivity has become quite common in qualitative research over the past several decades (Macbeth 2001), the form and benefits of reflexivity are less definitive. Throughout this chapter, I have highlighted both the need for reflection and also the challenges of engaging in this exercise. Pillow (2003) questions the usefulness of reflexivity in qualitative research, warning against using it simply as methodological tool to legitimate and validate methods and findings. In some respects, I may have fallen into some of these traps in this chapter, attempting to justify my methodological decisions to make my actions and the results more valid. While Pillow (2003) questions whether self-reflexivity actually produces better research, claiming that it often comes off as narcissistic or even self-indulgent, I wonder whether this should be considered the utmost purpose of reflexivity. If Pillow (2003) hopes to argue against using self-reflexivity as a methodological tool, might we instead consider the aim of reflexivity as a developmental exercise that enables researchers (and indeed educators, as reflective practitioners) to improve their practice and learn from their experiences in a more structured way. Although Larrivee (2000) might argue that reflexivity and critical reflection should be constantly occurring, guiding our practice, perhaps including these thoughts in articles and theses would be a helpful exercise to not only encourage researchers to reflect, but also to share the development of their thoughts and

practice with a wider community. Indeed, Macbeth (2001) points out that as educators and researchers we engage in reflexivity constantly, as all action involves reflexivity. By talking or writing about reflection and reflexivity we are simply attempting to make these processes more visible.

9.5 Learning from the Research Process

Reflecting on the process of doing a PhD and carrying out a study of teaching practice in HE has been incredibly helpful for my own teaching and research practice. Looking back over the process has helped me to see how much my practice and my thinking about research has changed and developed through experience. The constant struggle to 'do research well' was something that I thought was unique to early career researchers, but after reading more about critical research I am reassured that these are issues that we should all be constantly reflecting on as we engage in research throughout our academic careers. More than that, this chapter has provided the opportunity for me to think about and interrogate how I went about creating new knowledge about critical pedagogy in the university, as well as the process of doing critical research. This is in line with what Pillow (2003:178) identifies as the outcome of reflexivity: "producing knowledge that aids in understanding and gaining insight into the workings of our social world but also provides insight on how this knowledge is produced".

In terms of developing the framework with the data from ten participants, judgements about pedagogical practice and values were based on relatively little observation and discussion with participants. Although I tried to observe at least two classes of each participant (with the expectation of those who were not teaching and Lena, who invited me to a five-hour session), upon reflection I feel that this relatively

short amount of time spent with participants made it difficult to understand whether their critical pedagogical practice varied from one context to another, or when teaching different content. My observations of participants in different classes seemed to indicate that practice is fluid and context specific and it would be interesting to study this further to find out more clearly why this is.

The most significant issue for this research is the inconsistencies in the study design. Most importantly, there were three participants that I was unable to observe because they were not teaching when I was conducting the research. This undermined one of the key foci of my research: the connection between theory (or pedagogical values) and practice. While I tried to circumvent this issue by asking participants to describe their 'typical' practice, this meant that I was relying on the description and memory of participants, which becomes more problematic when we consider the context specific nature of practice. However, the difficulty I had in accessing this population compelled me to include this data without participant observations. Another inconsistency within the study design was that, only four out of the ten participants engaged in the analyzing of their own data, which was something I added to the study design to engage participants in the research process. While this data perhaps offered more credibility to my interpretations of the data, the key purpose of participant analysis was to encourage participants to engage in further reflection and praxis in order to make the research more empowering. However, some participants did not want to analyse their own data, for various reasons, and in an effort to make the research process more democratic, I could not expect or require all participants to contribute.

Chapter 10: Looking Forward

This chapter builds on the key findings of this research in order to look forward to identifying where and how critical educators and researchers can push back against the forces of marketisation and neoliberalisation in English universities, and in society more broadly. In the current era of neoliberalisation, and specifically the marketisation of higher education, it is argued that critical pedagogies are more relevant than ever (MacLaren, 2003b; Cowden, 2010; Giroux, 2010; Amsler, 2014) as we live in a Post-Truth era that demands critical literacy and critical consciousness in order to challenge neoliberal, neoconservative and outdated values that promote inequality and social injustice. Recent social and political projects such as the #metoo movement and #Black Lives Matter have thrown issues of gender equality, sexual harassment and race to the fore of societal discourse. However, the devaluing of truth and evidence has led to an extremely polarized political spectrum that has resulted in a gridlock, preventing movement toward social change and resolution (Peters, 2017). This is particularly the case in the USA, but demonstrations around the world in 2020 in relation to BLM and coronavirus have pitted progressive social activists against neoconservative anti-maskers. Universities around the world claim to be striving to create a better world through their research and teaching, yet pedagogy to address issues that are centrally about social justice has yet to become mainstream. Campus initiatives, such as UCL Grand Challenges, that focus on world-wide societal issues attempt to draw attention to issues like sustainability, global health, justice and equality, and transformative technology; while smaller scale initiatives, like UCL ChangeMakers, encourage students to get involved in student-staff projects to improve their local university community (UCL, 2019). While these initiatives are a positive addition to the university experience

and can help students become more active agents for change more generally, for the most part they are situated outside the classroom, and are opportunities for the few and not the many (Mercer-Mapstone, Islam & Reid, 2019), meaning that hyper-engaged students that are seeking opportunities for engagement and those who can do unpaid work are more likely to take part. In order to make sure that these experiences are truly accessible to all students, developing pedagogical approaches that could be used in universities to embed social justice into the classroom and help create global, critical citizens is essential to achieve universities' supposed aim of creating a better world through education. Adapting critical pedagogy to the current university context would provide an opportunity and a space for dialogue that would encourage critical consciousness.

10.1 Spaces where Critical Pedagogy might flourish

Despite the presence of active citizenship programmes and student-staff partnership schemes at many universities (e.g. Exeter, Aston, Leicester, Edinburgh, Surrey, etc.), based on data from participants as well as my own experience engaging in both university teaching and student-staff partnership work, it seems that staff are more comfortable or perhaps more supported to implement critical pedagogy outside the classroom. For example, Christine mentioned that she found it much easier to 'do' critical pedagogy in her previous role working directly in a community. Critical pedagogical practice is often seen as risky, to both teachers and students, since it can lead to critical consciousness. Critical pedagogy might also seem incompatible with situations that involve assessed work (as mentioned by Lousia), which may account for more critical work done outside the classroom. While student-staff partnership could be used to foster critical pedagogy, it is not always critical pedagogy because the

rationale for entering into student-staff partnership is not always congruent with the aims of critical pedagogy. Indeed, some partnership work can be tokenistic and aim to raise student satisfaction and promote the acquisition of 'soft skills' (Jarvis, Dickerson & Stockwell, 2013). Initiatives such as UCL Grand Challenges or UCL's Global Citizenship programme might be more overtly aligned with issues of social justice, but the methods used to engage in such projects would need more exploration to determine whether they align with a critical pedagogies approach. Students continue to engage in activism on university campuses, building on the work of movements in the 1960s to address issues around race, gender, and sexual assault on university campuses (Rhoads, 2016), however this is work that typically takes place outside the classroom and outside 'institutional norms', which has implications for how student activists are perceived (Danvers & Gagnon, 2014). Research on student demonstrations at the University of Sussex (Danvers & Gagnon, 2014: 1) found that students are encouraged to 'engage' with the university, but only in 'legitimate' ways that align more with "discourses of students as consumers, as partners and as producers", while those who engaged in activism are constructed as "troublemakers, lacking valid critical capacity and incapable of independent, mature, reasoned political positioning". Macfarlane (2013) and Fielding (2001) both question whether the student engagement agenda is really to give students a voice or whether the illusion of voice and power is being used to further control the actions of students by choosing avenues for them to express their voice. This may also illuminate why some staff feel more able to engage in critical pedagogy in certain institutionally approved ways (such as SSP), but not necessarily in their classrooms where there are more regulations.

This thesis contributes to discussions about how we can embed social justice into classrooms, raising awareness about the importance of creating a critical community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to support radical educators in implementing their pedagogical values, while also recognizing that some of the work needed to promote social justice might need to take place outside the classroom. For example, alliances between students' unions and university staff unions (such as UCU) might be a prime place for students and staff to work together in a more overtly political setting, which would avoid the power dynamics of education that make critical pedagogy more challenging. During the recent strikes in UK HE, staff and students across many universities engaged in 'teach outs' while demonstrating at their universities, creating spaces for staff and students to come together outside the classroom, enacting a different kind of pedagogy that was overtly political and challenged traditional power dynamics, as well as encouraging students to become more politically active.

At the same time, it is useful to consider how educational policy and university regulations might be changed so that critical educators could come out of the margins, and their critical practice could become more mainstream. However, there is a tension here, as often when marginalized and radical practice becomes more mainstream, the ethos behind these practices can be lost as they are co-opted into the dominant discourse (Gur-Ze'ev, 1998). This can be seen in the move toward more active pedagogies, which may have originally been quite radical and underpinned by particular political and emancipatory aims, and instead became a tick-box exercise backed up by educational psychology (Fielding, 2001).

10.2 Implications

The findings of this research have implications for critical pedagogues and other educators who are working on the margins of the university. While this study does not attempt to make any generalisations, it does contribute a model that helps explore different manifestations of critical pedagogical practice in the university, which might encourage those teaching in higher education to explore and reflect upon the values that underpin and shape their practice, and work towards practice that is congruent with their pedagogical values. By presenting examples of the diverse approaches to implementing a critical pedagogy in the university classroom, this research adds to the scholarly literature around critical pedagogy, which often focuses on theory while neglecting how theory can be put into practice. In addition to contributing to the field, it is my hope that this research was an empowering experience for my participants, as it encouraged them to engage in praxis about their teaching.

The constraints that my participants perceived in their universities are not all unique to them, which means this research also adds to a more general discussion about the effects of marketization on academic activities in English universities. The strategic compromise that critical pedagogues engage in to implement aspects of critical practice may offer hope to others who struggle to teach in a way that coincides with their values. In addition, the research suggests that building a stronger sense of community within institutions might encourage more educators to feel supported to implement their pedagogical values, whatever they may be.

Another key finding of the research was that participants were more likely to feel comfortable challenging and changing the knowledge they were teaching than they were to implement a critical approach to pedagogy. This seemed to relate to the

distinction between theory-in-use and espoused theory, which led to many educators relying on methods they were comfortable with when they encountered resistance from students or colleagues. This has implications for university lecturers' implementation of creative or radical pedagogical approaches—if they are not engaging in ongoing reflection and evaluation of their own practice, they may revert to old ways of teaching that do not align with their pedagogical beliefs (Biggs, 1996; Argyris, 1976). Related to this is the risk that is involved in doing something different, which could lead to unforeseen results or even negative consequences for the careers of educators (Argyris, 1976). Although several participants reported that they likely had more freedom to work and teach in ways that aligned with their beliefs than they might take advantage of, there was still enough uncertainty to deter them from taking all of these opportunities. This might also be resolved by creating a sense of community in which colleagues feel they have more professional autonomy and support from their colleagues and institutions to implement their pedagogical beliefs.

10.3 Suggestions for further research

As the aim of this study was to explore self-identifying critical pedagogues' critical beliefs and values and how these are put into practice, this research has exposed several areas that could be explored further. For me, the main issues that stood out were those pertaining to identity, understanding, secrecy, and the effects of marketization.

The relationship between identity and pedagogy is something that could use more exploration. Although there has been research on pedagogical values (such as Skelton, 2012a), as well as a wealth of research on identity and belongingness (such as Lave & Wenger, 1991), the influence of belongingness on pedagogical practice would

be an interesting avenue to explore. Especially considering several participants felt safer implementing a critical pedagogy when there were other members of their programme or department that shared their views on teaching.

This issue relates to one of the key findings of this research, which was that the majority of participants mentioned that they felt they had to do critical pedagogy in secret, or under the radar. This finding was somewhat unexpected, although it was clear based on how difficult I found it to recruit participants that critical pedagogy was happening 'on the margins'. Future research could look into this finding in more depth, exploring what participants think the consequences of implementing critical pedagogical or radical pedagogy might be. Related to the fear and risk around implementing a critical approach is the rise of the use of lecture capture programmes in classrooms, and the recent move to online learning as a result of COVID-19. Although there has been a great deal of research done on lecture capture in higher education, the majority of this research seems to be on the effectiveness of lecture capture on academic achievement, attendance, student perceptions, and the most effective pedagogy for successful lecture capture (O'Callaghan, Neumann, Jones & Creed, 2017), seemingly ignoring the effect being recorded might have on decisions around teaching approach and content of radical educators. Research by Danielson, Preast, Bender, and Hassall (2014) demonstrated that lecture capture is 'more successful' when used to record lecture-style teaching in 'fact focused' contexts. While a study by Joseph-Richard, Jessop, Okafor, Almpanis & Price (2018) did explore the effect of lecture capture on teaching practice, they produced mixed results: on the one hand, lecture capture seemed to improve teaching quality; on the other hand, it negatively impacted on spontaneity and made people feel like they were being

watched. Considering the fact that many participants in my research felt the need to practice critical pedagogy 'under the radar', it would be interesting to explore how being recorded affects their practice and whether they feel safe to use their desired pedagogical approach.

Another avenue for further research that arose from this study is a more in-depth exploration of the effects of marketization in HE. Specifically, using an institutional case study approach to look at a group of educators within one university might be an interesting way to better understand the impacts of marketization at different levels for a range of educators with different teaching approaches or pedagogical values. This could be taken further by comparing institutions in different countries, such as Scotland and England, who have different funding arrangements that might mean marketization is manifested in different ways in different contexts (Deem & Lucas, 2007).

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Appendices

Information Sheet for Lecturers

Title

How do self-identifying critical pedagogues perceive and implement a critical pedagogical stance, and what affects their ability to implement critical pedagogy in the university classroom?

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study about critical pedagogical practice in the university classroom. The study will involve a participant observation of your classes and an hour-long reflective dialogue after participant observation.

My name is Lauren Clark, I am a PhD student at UCL IOE, supervised by Susan Askew of the Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment department. My thesis focuses on critical pedagogy in higher education, looking at teacher perceptions of critical pedagogy and if critical pedagogical practice is implemented in the classroom. If critical pedagogical practice is not used in the university classroom, what factors prevent this from happening? This study aims to address a gap in the literature on implementation of critical approaches in practice, rather than solely focusing on the theory behind critical pedagogy.

Study Design

The first stage of the research will be participant observations of one or two of your classes. In these participant observations I will mainly be focusing on the pedagogical practice of educators, although permission for observation will of course be sought from students as well. The aim of participant observations is to observe/describe/experience the practices of educators, not to judge them. During these classes I will identify interesting pedagogical approaches of educators, which we will then reflect on in the reflective dialogue.

The hour-long reflective dialogue with pedagogues will focus on the identified behaviours of pedagogues (as in Bills & Husbands, 2005), as well as the researcher's experience of participating in the class. This dialogue will be audio recorded for transcription and analysis. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript and analysis so that you may remove or revise any statements that may jeopardise confidentiality.

Ethics

The participant observations have few risks, except for unintended consequences of my presence (e.g., changes in pedagogical approaches of educators because they are being observed) and the potential for interruption of the course (very minimal). The preliminary discussion and the reflective dialogue have more ethical implications, particularly related to confidentiality. I aim to minimise these concerns by changing names and identifying details, and also by speaking about results in a more general way

rather than comparing or focusing on different educators unnecessarily. In addition, as I mentioned above, you will have the opportunity to review the analysis to remove or change anything you feel may compromise confidentiality. There is also the risk that you may feel that I am judging you throughout the participant observation, specifically on whether you use critical pedagogical approaches or not. Offering clear information about the aims of the study (such as this letter) will hopefully reassure you that I am only there to experience and describe practice, not to pass judgment. There are also issues surrounding confidentiality for student participants, but similar measures will be taken to protect their identity.

Participants' Rights

You can withdraw from the study at any time without explanation. Furthermore, you have the right to ask me to remove any data from observations and interviews with you from my analysis and report.

During the interview, you have the right to refuse to answer any questions that I ask without explanation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact me with any more questions you may have about the study.

Kind regards,

Lauren Clark
PhD in Education
UCL Institute of Education
l.clark.14@ucl.ac.uk

Information Sheet for Reflective Dialogue Only

Title

How do self-identifying critical pedagogues perceive and implement a critical pedagogical stance, and what affects their ability to implement critical pedagogy in the university classroom?

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study about critical pedagogical practice in the university classroom. The study will involve a stand-alone hour-long reflective dialogue when observation is not possible.

My name is Lauren Clark, I am a PhD student at UCL IOE, supervised by Susan Askew of the Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment department. My thesis focuses on critical pedagogy in higher education, looking at teacher perceptions of critical pedagogy and if critical pedagogical practice is implemented in the classroom. If critical pedagogical practice is not used in the university classroom, what factors prevent this from happening? This study aims to address a gap in the literature on implementation of critical approaches in practice, rather than solely focusing on the theory behind critical pedagogy.

Study Design

The hour-long reflective dialogue with pedagogues will focus on the practice of pedagogues and your thoughts on how you implement critical theory into your practice. The dialogue will be audio recorded for transcription and analysis. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript and analysis so that you may remove or revise any statements that may jeopardise confidentiality.

Ethics

The reflective dialogue involves ethical implications, particularly related to confidentiality. I aim to minimise these concerns by changing names and any identifying details, and also by speaking about results in a more general way rather than comparing or focusing on different educators unnecessarily. In addition, as I mentioned above, you will have the opportunity to review the analysis to remove or change anything you feel may compromise confidentiality. There is also the risk that you may feel that I am judging you throughout the interview, specifically on whether you use or agree with critical pedagogical approaches or not. Offering clear information about the aims of the study will hopefully reassure you that I am only there to better understand critical practice, not to pass judgment.

Participants' Rights

You can withdraw from the study at any time without explanation. Furthermore, you have the right to ask me to remove any data from interviews with you from my analysis and report. During the interview, you have the right to refuse to answer any questions that I ask without explanation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact me with any more questions you may have about the study.

Kind regards,

Lauren Clark

Information Sheet for Students

To Students:

This letter is to introduce Lauren Clark, a PhD student at the UCL Institute of Education researching critical pedagogy in the university classroom.

In order to understand how a university classroom in the UK functions and how different educators use different forms of pedagogy, I would like to participate in your classroom for a few sessions. I will be focusing on the practice of the teacher and my own experience of the dynamics of the class and how they may or may not reflect a critical approach. I will not be recording the class or collecting data on students.

Aside from minimal risks related to inconvenience and disruption of class time, there may be unintended consequences related to my participation. For example, because teachers know that my research is focused on critical pedagogy, they may feel compelled to change their practice as a result of my observation of their class. I hope that informing teachers that I aim to experience and describe their practice, not judge it, may prevent them from feeling the need to change their normal practice.

I appreciate your willingness to allow me to participate in your class. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about my research. Thank you.

Regards,

Lauren Clark
PhD student
UCL Institute of Education
l.clark.14@ucl.ac.uk

Informed Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE

How do self-identifying critical pedagogues perceive and implement a critical pedagogical stance, and what affects their ability to implement critical pedagogy in the university classroom?

PROJECT SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to explore the pedagogical practice and perceptions of critical pedagogy of self-identifying critical pedagogues in UK universities using a participant observation and a reflexive dialogue. This research aims to contribute to the gap in literature on critical pedagogy in the university classroom setting, and to ascertain if university teachers feel that the current system of British higher education inhibits them from using critical pedagogical approaches.

The researcher will participate in two or three classes of each critical pedagogue, followed by an hour-long reflective dialogue where the both the researcher and the pedagogue will reflect on their experience in the class, as well as identifying particular practices for discussion (as in Bills & Husbands, 2005). I will allow the participants to view the data analysis in order to change or remove anything they feel may compromise confidentiality.

By signing this form, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been addressed, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily.

Participant Name (printed)

Participant Signature

Date

Name of Researcher Obtaining Consent

Signature of Researcher Obtaining Consent

Reflective Dialogue Only Informed Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE

How do self-identifying critical pedagogues perceive and implement a critical pedagogical stance, and what affects their ability to implement critical pedagogy in the university classroom?

PROJECT SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to explore the pedagogical practice and perceptions of critical pedagogy of self-identifying critical pedagogues in UK universities using a reflexive dialogue. This research aims to contribute to the gap in literature on critical pedagogy in the university classroom setting, and to ascertain if university teachers feel that the current system of British higher education inhibits them from using critical pedagogical approaches.

The researcher will initiate an hour-long reflective dialogue where the participant will reflect on their teaching practice and perspectives on critical pedagogy in higher education, as well as identifying their own topics for discussion. I will allow the participants to view the transcribed data and analysis in order to change or remove anything they feel may compromise confidentiality.

By signing this form, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been addressed, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily.

Participant Name (printed)

Participant Signature

Date

Name of Researcher Obtaining Consent

Signature of Researcher Obtaining Consent