

CHAPTER TWO

REFLECTION ON THINGS: SOCIOMATERIAL PERSPECTIVES ON ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The aims, discourse and practices of academic development in higher education rest on a series of assumptions about the nature of academic practice and student engagement, assumptions which shape its approaches to enhancement and change. In this chapter, we review and critique these, drawing on sociomaterial theory and evidence from a project that explored the academic practices of students and staff.

Academic development is an area of professional practice concerned with the support and development of academics' work; typically, there is a strong focus on the development of teaching, and academic developers are commonly responsible for threshold qualifications for academics such as certificates in learning and teaching in Higher Education (Eggin & Macdonald 2003). As a form of practice, it includes direct interventions such as workshops, but also includes the creation of conditions believed to be conducive to the development of academic work as professional practice – including working with academics as they learn to juggle competing aspects of their role, creating conditions for learning within work through variety and feedback, and encouraging people to locate their practice in a conscious and deliberate way in terms of space, time, practices and social groups (Boud & Brew 2013).

Although there are strong critical undercurrents within academic development, the field has been dominated by somewhat abstract formulations, such as 'active learning', 'student-centeredness' and 'learning styles'. We argue that these constructs, whilst well-intentioned, can come to represent unchallenged orthodoxies which are ideologically as opposed to empirically based. One result of this has been a relative lack of attention to disciplinarity, the situated nature of academic practice and the wide variations in the academy in terms of how knowledge is constructed, shared and developed. A further outcome, which is less recognised in the literature, is a lack of attention to the sociomaterial and embodied nature of academic practice.

In order to ground this critique in specific examples, we focus on a common technique within academic development: asking academics to reflect on their experiences. This technique of 'reflective practice' has become a core element of academic development practice, and holds a central position in how participant progress is assessed. This approach is intended to form a link between theory and practice through the discussion of specific academic contexts. However, it has been critiqued as having become part of an educational orthodoxy (Clegg 2000), which academics have learnt to subvert in order to 'play the game' by using it to demonstrate a positive orientation to 'active learning', and other such generic constructs (Macfarlane & Gourlay 2009). As Warhurst (2008) argues, reflection needs to recognise how teaching and learning is situated, and how it benefits from interactions with students by revealing their reactions to specific practices. Although reflective practice may appear to be strongly anchored in the day-to-day, we argue that an explicit or implicit focus on framing constructs such as 'active learning' or 'student centredness' may render the reflection less meaningful. We also argue that the deployment of a sociomaterial, fine-grained ethnographic

perspective may serve to strengthen the insights and depth of reflection, by focusing in greater detail on what students actually do.

To summarise, in this chapter, we present an alternative perspective on student engagement, proposing a close-up analysis of how students engage day-to-day with knowledge practices in complex networks, enrolling nonhuman actors while engaging with both print-based and digital technologies. We argue that academic development as a field would benefit from greater attention to these networks, and that by doing so the student would no longer be conceived of as a somewhat free-floating subject, or flattened into a (value-laden) category such as 'engaged', 'disengaged', 'deep' or 'surface' learner, or 'digital native'. We will illustrate this with reference to a set of academic development materials developed as part of a UK government-funded JISC 'Developing Digital Literacies' research project. These materials, based on themes arising from an analysis of students' multimodal journal data, seek to maintain an ethnographic link to students' networked, situated sociomaterial practice, rather than relying on or being structured by more abstract categorisation. We conclude with a discussion of how this perspective can be incorporated into reflective practice, leading to a more situated stance towards academic development.

Ideologies in Academic Development

Arguably, contemporary academic development has been founded on a series of constructs addressing the nature of teaching and learning in higher education, and also pertaining to the subject positions of students and academic staff. This has been driven, at least in part, by policies based on the ideology of 'student as consumer' – an idea that has shaped policies, been taken up by popular media and led to a new industry in 'market comparisons' internationally, including the UK, USA, Australia, Canada and parts of Scandinavia (Barefoot et al, 2016). This has led, for example, to the proliferation of student experience surveys, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement in the US, the Australasian Survey of Student Experience and the National Student Survey in the UK. The political consequences of this idea, in the way that it reframes the relationship between universities and society, is what makes it ideological: it has consequences for the relative power of different social groups, but often remains implicit within policy work, its taken-for-granted positioning making it difficult to critique, or even to explore empirically.

Laudably, the field has also been driven by a set of values that has placed the student at the centre of attention, seeking to take account of their perspectives and experiences. It has also been driven by a desire to move away from a lecture-based pedagogy, which has often been perceived as a 'teacher-centred', and by extension is assumed to be insensitive to the diversity of student needs and to the challenges that they face as learners. In response, constructs such as 'active learning' and 'student-centredness' have gained currency, alongside an emphasis on course design based on 'learning outcomes', as opposed to content.

This has gained wide support via bodies such as the UK Higher Education Academy, as can be seen in the current HEA United Kingdom Engagement Survey (HEA 2016), and this perspective has also been taken up by equivalent government bodies internationally. New lecturers in the UK are generally expected to complete a course that focuses on these aspects of academic work, typically taking the form of a PgCert programme on teaching and learning, or on academic practice. These courses vary, and clearly critical and contrasting perspectives may be included, but typically these draw primarily on research into student learning in higher

education which has been critiqued for focusing on a relatively small group of dominant concepts (e.g. Haggis 2009). These constructs tend to be introduced to new lecturers as principles that should guide their practice as educators, as appropriate to their context. As a result, the content of the courses tends to centre on the concepts mentioned above, such as a strong focus on the importance of 'deep learning' and the encouragement of active 'student engagement'. Whilst such concepts have been critiqued in the educational literature for being over-simplistic (e.g. Webb 1997; Haggis 2003), they still dominate academic development, and enjoy considerable support and funding, forming the cornerstone of how not only individuals but also higher education institutions are assessed. This is visible in the kinds of questions asked within student satisfaction surveys, which are based on notions of 'student engagement'; they also increasingly influence how teaching is evaluated, as can be seen in the current proposals in the UK set out in the 2015 Green Paper on the Higher Education (BIS 2015), which seeks to introduce a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) to the UK sector. As such, these concepts have an increasing level of constitutive and also normative influence over the sector and the expectations placed on it in terms of higher educational knowledge practices. Due to these recent changes, it can be argued that the role of academic development is becoming more strategic and far-reaching, as the potential beneficiaries of these developmental activities are no longer simply the students, but also the HEI itself, whose financial independence and reputation is increasingly bound up in the perceived 'success' evaluated by these teaching and student satisfaction assessment exercises conducted at a national level.

It might be argued that this is a positive development, bringing to the fore the needs and rights of the students which – it is often argued in academic development contexts – have long taken second place to the demonstration of excellence in research. However, as educational practice becomes more central to how we perceive the success of a university, it is all the more imperative that the measures of 'success' that are used represent a nuanced and credible account of the lived experience of students and academic staff, as opposed to being based on questionable and over-simplistic ideologies which do not stand up to critical scrutiny or provide meaningful purchase on our understanding of contemporary educational process.

The relatively weak evidence base for these concepts is one reason to question their dominance. A further flaw lies in the attempt at a generic application of relatively crude concepts across a very broad set of disciplines and contexts, each of which has a distinct history and set of epistemological values and practices which may vary greatly in terms of what is seen as knowledge, expertise and the legitimate expression of disciplinarity. A common theme in academic development circles centres on academic staff and their apparent 'resistance' to such attempts to inculcate these values and practices (e.g. Di Napoli & Clement 2014). However, it might be observed that often this scepticism is based on a recognition of these two weaknesses – a lack of evidence on which to base the guiding principles, and a perceived lack of relevance to the context at hand, and might therefore be understood as a resistance to specific ideologies, rather than to academic development *per se*.

A further shortcoming in these accounts is that what constitutes 'good' educational practice – in addition to the relatively the abstract nature of the concepts being deployed – is the emphasis on a somewhat aspirational and ideological discourse of student agency and cognition – the ideas that students are free to act, in an unproblematic way. The construct of 'student engagement' – while appearing to place students centre stage – arguably encourages

a very rather narrow band of behaviour - in particular observable, interactive practices which conform to a specific set of ideas about what constitutes a 'good student' (Gourlay 2015b). Inherent in this construct are value-laden notions of 'active' versus 'passive' which may in fact serve to invalidate the practices of students who do not exhibit valorised behaviours, due to personal preference or indeed educational or cultural background. This may lead to a devaluing of practices which are not amenable to observation, or may be read as 'passive', such as reticent participation in class, or 'invisible' solitary study practices. A further result of this focus on 'active learning' is an emphasis on desired qualities of the individual student, such as determination, motivation and confidence. While these are clearly important, there is a risk emphasising these personal qualities may lead to an overly individualistic and somewhat abstracted conception of practice that assumes agency lies primarily in the individual. Additionally, it could be argued that these are culturally specific and favour an Anglophone educational culture where such attributes are prized, thus rendering 'deficient' student behaviours which are central to other educational cultures – such as silent listening, deference in class and so on.

In contrast, an alternative sociomaterial reading of student engagement would move the focus away from these broad notions governing agency and behaviour of the individual, and instead would theorise the student first and foremost as constantly entangled in complex networks of social actors, both human and nonhuman. This helps to recognise the considerable variation there is in academic practices, between students, disciplines and national systems, particularly when access to technology is taken into account (Goodyear et al. 2005). This reframing would include elements which have been traditionally seen as neutral 'context' against which social action takes place – such as physical spaces and temporal frames. It would also reframe physical artefacts conventionally regarded as 'tools' such as digital devices, and elements regarded as 'information', such as texts or verbal lectures. A sociomaterial perspective (as elaborated in this volume by Fenwick and Edwards) would regard all of these elements as agentive actors in higher education knowledge practices, and as such would seek to interrogate critically conceptions of 'student engagement' or related notions such as 'active learning', which position the student as the primary or sole site of agency.

Implications for academic development

This shift has implications for academic development, whose foundational principles arguably rest on the notion of 'facilitation' of learning, which is assumed to emanate from student agency when the right conditions are provided for this to flourish. The onus in this perspective appears to be on the lecturer to provide these opportunities through a maximisation of student active participation in interactive tasks. Although this type of practice may be very valuable, what is missing from this account is a recognition of the powerful role of sociomaterial networks in these practices, and in particular the highly specific, emergent and sociomateriality-situated nature of these networks. In practical terms, this may for example be to do with the layout of the classroom on that particular day, or the devices and texts present during the task at hand, and how these may inhibit, influence or generate particular practices. This may also include what is materially produced by the students, such as notes or artefacts - what is made, retained or transformed materially by a task in addition to the generation of talk and cognitive activity. A sociomaterial perspective would also recognise what is *not* currently observed or physically present – networks of practice extending beyond the temporal or physical 'context' of the particular observed educational encounter – such as online networks, and practices taking place over a longer timeframe. If viewed in these terms,

we argue that what is within the gift of the lecturer to 'facilitate' is subtly altered, with a more granular level of attention being brought to bear on the detail of student practice and the sociomaterial networks in which it is entangled, and also a concomitant reduction in the emphasis on individual student agency and the performance of 'engagement'.

One of the key approaches in academic development is the use of structured 'reflection' as a means of focusing on participants' own educational practice, while applying the principles discussed above. Although ostensibly personal and led by the participant on the course, this approach has been critiqued as implicitly normative and convergent (e.g. Clegg 2000; Macfarlane & Gourlay 2009). The avowed intention is to relate abstract concepts to the particular of day-to-day practice in a specific setting. However, if the emphasis is on demonstrating a commitment to 'active learning' or 'student engagement', it is likely that the account will seek to identify what would conventionally be seen as evidence of success on those terms, with markers such as high levels of verbal interaction being highlighted. As long as the reflective task is designed to exhibit these outcomes, educational process will be seen through a prism which privileges certain features of the observable flow of practice, and which elides others. What is needed to address this is a different kind of process, one that provides a more inclusive lens through which to view these processes.

In the next section, we will describe a research study which used such an alternative perspective to investigate the day-to-day study practices of a small group of postgraduate students over a one-year period, using a sociomaterial framing. We will discuss the possible implications for academic development, and will describe a set of development resources which were created on the basis of the research findings. These were designed to encourage academic staff discussion and reflection while also raising awareness of the importance of the sociomaterial in educational practices and process, as opposed to focusing on the concepts critiqued above.

Methodology

The examples presented in this chapter are drawn from data from a JISC-funded project on students' digital literacies. (Further information about this can be found in Gourlay & Oliver 2013.) This was undertaken at a UK postgraduate institution specialising in Education, and consisted of three phases of empirical work (analysis of an existing survey, focus groups and longitudinal multimodal journaling plus a series of semi-structured interviews). The journaling work involved 12 students, three students drawn from PGCE courses (the UK qualification to teach in compulsory education), taught Masters courses, taught Masters courses studied at a distance, and doctoral students; the journaling was also undertaken by four members of academic staff over a slightly shorter period. The study received institutional ethical clearance and followed approved procedures for informed consent, including guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality, and the right to opt out at any point.

The student body at the institution is predominantly mature and postgraduate, representing diverse countries of origin and prior educational experiences. Many students combine study with work and family responsibilities, and have not studied for several years. Participants in the journaling phase of the project were invited from those who had volunteered to take part in the focus groups, to ensure that the diversity of the student body was represented, in terms of gender, age and study status (home/EU or international student; full-time or part-time).

The longitudinal multimodal journaling involved 3-4 interviews with each participant over a period of 9-12 months. (Students studying at a distance were interviewed over Skype.) All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The first interview explored students' histories of using technology in their studies. As part of this, the participants sketched maps and used these to talk through their patterns of studying, including the ways in which they studied in different locations. At this first meeting, all participants were given an iPod Touch handheld device, with which to take photos, videos, notes or other records of their study practices. Participants were encouraged to focus on their day-to-day lived activities, and the networks and material/spatial aspects of their practice, to avoid making abstractions rather than retelling the specifics of their practices (Gourlay 2010). At each subsequent interview, the discussion was structured around the data that each student chose to present to the interviewer. These images, videos and notes formed part of the data set, as did the presentations that the students made: initially, these were typically conversations around individual images, but by the end of the series of interviews, several participants produced structured presentations in which they themselves categorised data in terms of patterns or themes they identified as salient.

The analysis of the dataset, together with the transcripts, images and videos, provided detailed insights into how student practices unfolded day-to-day, at a level of granularity not normally afforded by interview or questionnaire-based research into student engagement. The themes that were identified in the analysis centred on the powerfully co-constitutive nature of the sociomaterial in these practices, in particular the roles of digital devices, texts, temporal frames and material spaces as nonhuman actors in networks of practice (see Gourlay & Oliver 2013, Gourlay 2014, Gourlay 2015 for a fuller discussion of the results). The findings of the study undermined the view critiqued above – that the primary site for student agency resides in the cognitive or attitudinal approach of the student, and also questioned the notion that the quality of these practices is amenable to direct and unproblematic intervention on the part of the lecturer. Instead, the research results suggested that study practices are highly localised, contingent, emergent and situated.

These findings were then used as the basis for designing academic development materials. (JISC ND). These materials sought to build on the already established principle of reflection in academic development, but added a further dimension of explicit and structured focus on situated sociomaterial practices and networks. Participants in academic development settings would be asked to undertake some of the same multimodal and non-textual data collection processes used within the project, documenting what they do in their day-to-day scholarly practices and also seeking to document precisely what their students are asked to do. Excerpts from the research data set and from other publicly available sources are used to provide illustrations and points of comparison. This is intended to show possible forms of diversity and difference in practice, as a prompt for further analysis and reflection on practices from a sociomaterial perspective.

In the following section, two examples are provided of data from the student and staff journaling, showing the themes that were developed in relation to these, and the ways in which these links were reflected in the subsequent design of the development materials.

Constitutive spaces

The use of spaces featured as a theme across the entire dataset. Participants such as Juan (a male Masters student) spoke eloquently about how they associated these spaces with specific forms of work, and the connotations that they carried.

I enjoy [...] being, sort of, in a dusty, you know, sort of, wooden shelved, kind of, old library, where it's, sort of, cosy and warm, that's, you know, I like that and that's a part of the experience of studying that I enjoy. (Juan interview 1)

Where I live it could be, you could be in a town sort of anywhere and you wouldn't really necessarily notice. Whereas you come in here and you come over the Waterloo Bridge and you see St. Paul's and the Houses of Parliament, you know, you're in London, you're doing something again. You know, this is where people do important things and that, kind of, thing and it gives it a reality. [...] It focuses me a little bit on that. (Juan, Interview 3)

These spaces had become associated with sets of practices. Drawing on a mobilities perspective (Edwards *et al*, 2011), this illustrates how the repetition of practices in specific locations over time results in 'sedimentation', and the creation of meanings and associations.

For some participants, the use of technology enabled them to carry out academic activities in a range of different locations – different spaces could be connected together by carrying tablets, laptops or books from one site to another. Yuki, a female Masters student, characterised this in terms of being "less bound by place", where being "bound" meant connecting to location-specific networks of resources, people needed to carry out their studies. Gertrude (a female academic), by contrast, drew a map (Figure 1: Gertrude's map) and explained how the network she had set up at home allowed considerable freedom, whereas the office computer (drawn next to a 'sad face' sticker) was connected to administrative systems but blocked the installation of software needed for academic work. The freedom and creativity she enjoyed teaching an online course from home was a marked contrast to her experience of being blocked and frustrated, trying to do academic work in the office. She also explained how different practices were associated with different times – writing academic work at her desk in the day, writing emails on a laptop on the sofa in the evening, and reading papers on a Kindle E-reader in bed at night.

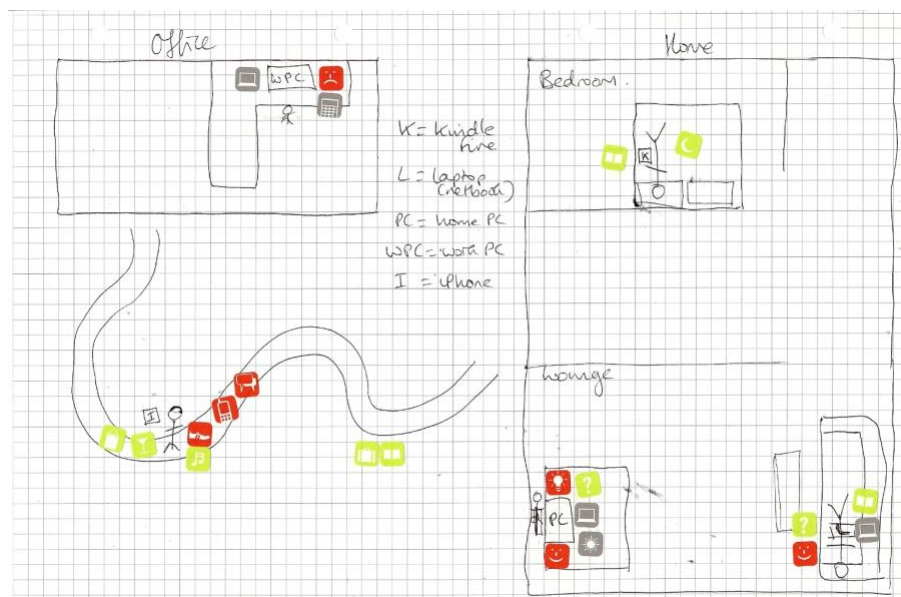


Figure 1: Gertrude's map

These examples illustrate the ways in which space was not merely some backdrop or container for students' practices, but was constitutive of them, and also constituted through them.

Within the project, this led to implications for institutional policies on the provision of services (such as wifi) and different kinds of space for students. To encourage academics to reflect on what the implications might be for them and for their students, the staff development materials included a series of resources and tasks intended to generate a sociomaterially-oriented form of reflection (although this term was not explicitly introduced). Participants are asked to sketch out the spaces and places where they undertake their own academic work, and to identify the network of resources that they drew on to carry that work out in these different places. They are asked to compare these with maps drawn by other participants, and shown examples of maps generated by participants in the research project, so that similarities and differences can be identified. This stimulates discussion, but grounds this in their day-to-day lived activities, and the networks and material/spatial aspects of their practice. The broader intention and subsequent discussion was focused on sensitising the participants to their students' equivalent networks and day-to-day practices, leading to a more detailed type of insight into the lived daily experiences of the students and the challenges they face. This could generate insights for the academics in terms of how to structure, guide and support study practices, reading and academic writing – all key aspects of academic performance that have arguably received less attention than classroom based pedagogies within academic development.

Following texts

Whilst the project was initiated to study student digital literacies, participants' images and accounts were full of books, print-outs, notebooks, folders, post-it notes, pens and other conventional printed materials and artefacts, and several participants brought these materials along to the interview for additional emphasis. None of the participants appeared to view the digital / analogue as an 'either/or' binary; for all of them, digital and print texts co-existed in a complicated set of intertwined relationships. However, this complexity was only visible during the process of production; by the point of submitting work for assessment, for example, the messy interplay was hidden by the apparently simple print or digital artefact.

An obvious example of this was provided by Juan's discussion of fieldwork: his description of generating data illustrates the process of *entextualisation* (Silverstein & Urban 1996), where talk is taken from an interactional setting and made into a textual record. However, even when they were created, these texts were not stable; they were constantly reworked and recreated. There were frequent moves between digital and print versions of the text – for example, Gertrude described printing off a course outline so that she could read through it and get an overview of the course she had to teach, annotating and editing it with marker pens, then returning to the Virtual Learning Environment to make changes to the digital version. Several participants described similar patterns when drafting work, moving iteratively between print and digital versions to refine the text. Another student teacher, Louise, described how most of the texts she used when teaching were reworkings of previous materials:

It's mostly sources that are coming from other professional development courses that we work on, whether they're accredited or not accredited. And they're repurposed, I mean, a very small number of items can just be repurposed, they can be left as they... as they... as they are... as they are whole, and used differently. Um, that's a small number, most items are edited, changed, worked into something else, um, because this is, you know, a pretty unique context that we're working with. Um, so, yes, they do have to become very bespoke for these particular students, yes. (Louise)

She described a complex process of editing, which involved sharing drafts with colleagues using the Dropbox cloud storage service, in an editing process that involved at least eight points at which what looked like a ready-to-use text was moved, edited or re-created before being made available to her students. This illustrates what Blommaert (2005: 46) has called *text trajectories*, whereby "a lot of what we perform in the way of meaning-attributing practices is the *post-hoc* recontextualization of earlier bits of text that were produced [...] in a different contextualization process, at a different time, by different people, and for different purposes."

Juan produced a flow-chart like map of the process of writing his dissertation, showing the spaces, services and technologies through which his text passed on the route to submission. These included movements of other text in the library, and on the library's computer; movement of electronic versions of the text onto and off of a USB memory stick; the passage of ideas from written notes to a folder annotated with post-it notes and then typed to create a digital version; sharing of versions with the tutor over electronic systems and with peers in the student bar; as well as physical creation of various versions through printing it off (in a different college, where printing was cheaper); before finally printing, handing this to a company to bind the text, and then handing the bound version in to an administrator to go out for marking. No trace of this complex journey remained in the final printed and bound version that an academic then received to mark.

Producing Academic texts (2)

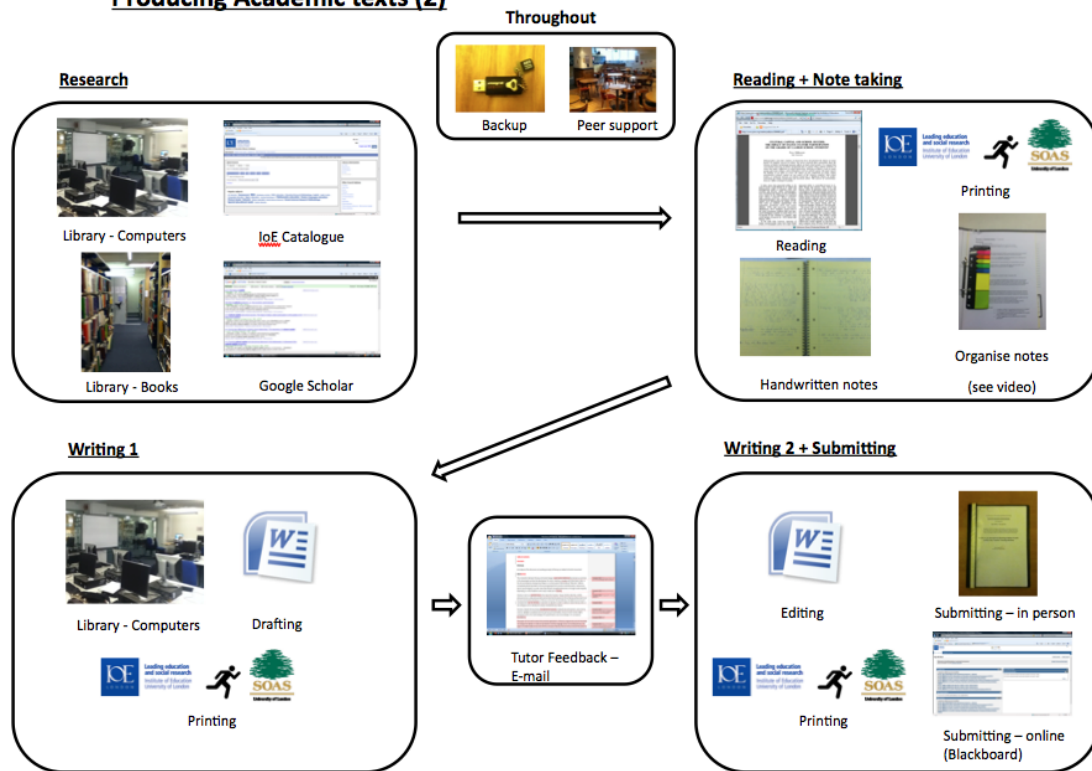


Figure 2: Juan's map of the process of writing a dissertation

Revealing this complexity shows the processes of disciplinary knowledge production in a way that is rarely seen. Given how central writing remains in academic work, this has implications for the kinds of support made available to students within the curriculum, and the opportunities provided to them to rehearse and develop these forms of practice (see, e.g., Bazerman *et al.* 2005, for an account of the value of writing across the curriculum). It also offers a more nuanced account of what 'student engagement' might look like, showing how a student who may say little in class could be transforming ideas and working with a rich diversity of texts in the production of an assignment.

To encourage other academics to reflect upon these complex but normally invisible processes, this research approach was incorporated into a set of academic development materials. Participants in the academic development sessions that use these materials are asked to choose an actual text they have produced, and then to create notes and take images (or bring other artefacts) that illustrate the process of its creation, and to bring these along for discussion with peers. Images from the project data set are also provided, again to support comparisons and contrasts. To stimulate the discussion, participants are asked to think about what other texts were used to create this; how they were found, accessed and managed; when and why the work moved between different modes (image, writing, layout, speech, etc.); when it changed format (paper, post-its, word processing files, wikis, e-mails, etc.); and how different versions of and revisions to the work stored, recorded and/or managed. Consistently, this prompts participants to consider the interplay between people, things and spaces, and this typically results in a deeper appreciation of the complex and negotiated practices students need to develop in order to study successfully.

Discussion and conclusions

Current orthodoxies around academic development may be well intentioned and apparently student-centred, but we contend that these broad-brush and at times ideological concepts - while apparently benign - in fact oversimplify and elide key elements of the lived experience of students and academics. In doing so, they risk distorting practice in ways that are unhelpful. Students' classroom talk (or online discussion) is important, but if this is mistaken for being the primary proxy for learning, and the only evidence that educators have of their 'engagement', this can disadvantage learners who may be just as thoughtful, and potentially just as successful, but who happen to speak less in front of the teacher. This can undermine the very values that motivated academic developers to focus on students' experiences in the first place.

Paying attention to the rich but messy lived reality of students' knowledge practices – to the sociomaterial, situated ways in which students achieve success – can help us to avoid this irony. Attending only to students' public behaviour misses the ways in which they work with people, texts, devices and so on as part of their studies, 'behind the scenes'. This can be particularly important in drawing attention back to questions of social justice: students in different countries, disciplines or even institutions have very different access to the infrastructure and technology that they need for their studies; some must go to considerable length to re-create the study environments that others take for granted, as has been shown with studies of students from disadvantaged socio-economic groups in South Africa (Czerniewicz, Williams & Brown 2009).

Drawing attention back to these overlooked elements changes how we understand students' engagement. It suggests new kinds of reflection for academics who are seeking to enhance and deepen their understanding of educational processes in ways which are sensitive to the embodied, social and material conditions of studying, and offers an opportunity for the kinds of professional learning advocated by Boud and Brew (2013). This perspective highlights and values diversity and difference, and can help to raise difficult but necessary questions about the nature of success, equity and power in a range of disciplinary and educational settings that do not start and stop with the individual student's cognition, or their spoken public performance. In practical terms, this type of focus can allow academic staff to gain insights into challenges that students may be facing in their engagement outside the classroom, in particular in relation to the selection and engagement with academic texts, and the development of academic writing. A more nuanced awareness of the complexities of study practices and the challenges faced by students in meeting the demands of coursework can support academic staff to provide greater scaffolding and guidance for students in how to approach their work outside the classroom – support and guidance which have often been regarded as 'remedial', and therefore outside of mainstream academic practice.

Specific examples of such practices are, of course, helpful in stimulating such reflection. However, individual cases cannot 'stand for' wider student experiences in a simple, unproblematic way. Rather than advocate specific materials, or codify cases into some student typology, the argument here is that academics need to pay close attention to their own practices, and to the practices of their students. This kind of process, supporting attention to the complex details of students' lives, can support a different quality of reflection, one that is better able to discern the influences of disciplinarity, the situated nature of academic practice and the varied ways in which knowledge is created within Higher Education.

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