

Learning and Teaching in Higher Education:  
Policy Constructions, Participants' Experiences and  
Recontextualisation

Sarah Horrod

BA, University of Sussex  
MA, University of Essex

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Linguistics and English Language  
Lancaster University

February 2019

## **Abstract**

Sarah Horrod, BA MA. 'Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Policy Constructions, Participants' Experiences and Recontextualisation'. PhD Thesis, Lancaster University, February 2019.

Higher education is a site of struggle over aims, values and identities of students and academics. Learning and teaching are increasingly the focus of policy in English higher education as universities wish to be seen to prioritise the student experience. In this thesis, I examine national policy on learning and teaching focusing particularly on its recontextualisation within institutional policy as well as practices around assessment. Using an interdisciplinary framework, I bring together Bernstein's (1990) ideas on pedagogy from a sociological perspective and a framework and concepts from critical discourse studies (CDS). Specifically, I draw on Bernstein's (1990; 2000) principles of how pedagogic discourse is created, the identities available to students and teachers, the notion of the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) and the tensions, as well as overlaps, between these two fields. From CDS, I use the discourse-historical approach (DHA) to provide an underpinning notion of context and the tools to explore the data for discursive strategies used in legitimising policy proposals. My data includes policy documents both national and institutional, assessment texts and interview data. I focus on four key policy texts for detailed analysis together with analysis of interviews with students and lecturers. Policy documents construct a picture of university education as producing employable graduates, students as partners, institutions as communities and teaching as facilitation. I find dissonances between these

constructions in the policy documents and the portrayals in interview accounts. Findings also suggest a proliferation of discursive mechanisms designed to embed policy views on learning, teaching and the purpose of a university education. I address pertinent questions such as in whose interests, and with what effects, are such policy constructions and discursive mechanisms and whether certain types of universities are more likely to embrace them.

### **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to the lecturers and students who participated in the interviews in this study and shared their experiences and their work with me.

I would especially like to thank my supervisors Dr Diane Potts and Dr Johann Unger for their continuous support and advice throughout this process.

I am also grateful for the contributions of Dr Karin Tusting and Professor Alison Sealey at the panels and to Dr Andrea Abbas and Dr Sebastian Muth for their interest in my work and their questions and feedback during the viva.

For adding immeasurably to this journey, I want to thank some of the people I have met along the way. Firstly, to all those I started with, particularly Anne Bruehler, Brittany Corbucci, Lara Vella and Lynn Sakr. Also, to Pamela Olmos. The support and the laughter have been invaluable.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their love and support throughout this long adventure. To Natasha and Alexander, for your humour and for being full of surprises. To Gerard, for understanding and for always being there.

## **Dedication**

*This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my parents  
who effortlessly instilled a love of learning, believed in the power of education and  
embarked on their own learning journey*

## **Table of contents**

<b>Abstract</b> .....	2
<b>Declaration</b> .....	3
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	4
<b>Table of contents</b> .....	6
List of Tables.....	11
List of Figures.....	12
List of Abbreviations.....	13
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	14
1.1 Overview and motivation.....	14
1.2 Aims of the study.....	17
1.3 Study design.....	21
1.4 Outline of the thesis.....	22
<b>2 Background to the study</b> .....	23
2.1 Introduction.....	23
2.2 Changes in UK higher education.....	23
2.3 Influences on policy-making in higher education.....	26
2.3.1 Government policy-making.....	26
2.3.2 Regulating and funding higher education.....	27
2.3.3 Developing learning & teaching.....	29
2.4 Key features of the discursive landscape in higher education.....	33
2.4.1 Markets and marketisation.....	35
2.4.2 The purpose of a higher education.....	40
2.4.3 Roles, identities and pedagogic relationships in higher education.....	43
2.4.4 Examining marketisation and discursive practices.....	46
2.5 The institution under study.....	47
2.6 Summary.....	50
<b>3 Theoretical framework</b> .....	51

3.1 Introduction.....	51
3.2 The role of theory .....	51
3.3 A Framework for understanding pedagogy: Bernstein .....	52
3.3.1 Pedagogic discourse .....	54
3.3.2 Classification and framing.....	56
3.3.3 The Pedagogic device.....	57
3.3.4 The official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) .....	60
3.3.5 Performance models and competence models .....	64
3.3.6 Singulars, regions and generic modes .....	66
3.3.7 Pedagogic identities.....	70
3.3.8 Summary .....	73
3.4 Theorising policy .....	74
3.4.1 Overview .....	74
3.4.2 Critical policy studies (CPS) .....	76
3.4.3 Summary.....	80
3.5 Critical Discourse Studies.....	81
3.5.1 The discourse-historical approach.....	82
3.6 Establishing complementarity and reconciling differences .....	86
3.7 Key Concepts .....	87
3.7.1 Context.....	87
3.7.2 Fields of action.....	89
3.7.3 Genre .....	91
3.7.4 Text .....	92
3.7.5 Discourse .....	93
3.7.6 Recontextualisation.....	94
3.7.7 Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity .....	96
3.7.8 Strategies .....	98
3.8 Theorising interviews and interaction.....	100
3.9 The case for Bernstein and critical discourse studies (CDS) .....	103
3.10 Summary .....	105
<b>4 Study design and methodology .....</b>	<b>106</b>

4.1 Introduction.....	106
4.2 Research setting.....	109
4.3 Author positioning within the research .....	111
4.4 Data collection and selection .....	113
4.4.1 Assessment texts and practices .....	115
4.4.2 Policy Documents .....	117
4.4.3 Accounts of practice: Interviews .....	121
4.4.4 Data selection summary .....	124
4.5 Data analysis methods.....	125
4.5.1 Overview .....	125
4.5.2 Analysing context .....	126
4.5.3 Analysing fields of action.....	127
4.5.4 Analysing genre.....	129
4.5.5 Analysing discourse.....	129
4.5.6 Analysing assessment texts .....	138
4.5.7 Analysing interviews.....	141
4.5.8 Recontextualisation: Intertextual and interdiscursive analysis between data types .....	148
4.6 Summary.....	156
<b>5 Field of policy-making: analysis of policy documents .....</b>	<b>157</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	157
5.2 Locating the four policy texts: setting, purpose, audience, features .....	157
5.2.1 Fields of Action .....	157
5.2.2 Genres .....	161
5.2.3 Macro-structure and particular features of each text .....	162
5.2.4 Discourse topics across the four texts.....	167
5.2.5 Macro-functions and discursive strategies used across texts.....	169
5.3 Constructing higher education: topic-related macro-strategies in the four texts.....	178
5.3.1 Policy as embedded within processes and structures .....	179
5.3.2 The institution as a non-hierarchical community with shared values ....	182
5.3.3 A university education as developing future-fit graduates.....	192



5.3.4 Learning as socially-situated and teaching as facilitation .....	200
5.4 Intertextual relations between HEA discussion texts and HEA framework texts.....	209
5.5 Intertextuality and interdiscursivity between national policy texts and institutional policy texts.....	214
5.5.1 Department for Business, Information and Skills (BIS) white paper.....	214
5.5.2 HEFCE strategy statement .....	218
5.5.3 Institutional strategy.....	219
5.5.4 Institutional academic framework .....	222
5.6 Summary.....	225
<b>6 Field of learning, teaching &amp; assessment and policy remaking.....</b>	<b>227</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	227
6.2 Analysis of assessment practices .....	228
6.3 Analysis of interviews: Overview .....	230
6.4 Discourse topics across interviews .....	231
6.5 Macro-strategies .....	235
6.5.1 Policy as embedded within processes and structures .....	235
6.5.2 The institution as a non-hierarchical community with shared values ....	237
6.5.2.1 Predications of self and other: Constructions of the ‘good team member’ .....	238
6.5.2.2 Predications about students’ backgrounds and the right to be a ‘leader’ .....	245
6.5.2.3 Argumentation and the discursive strategy of singularisation: “I think I was an exception” .....	255
6.5.3 Learning as socially-situated and teaching as facilitation .....	260
6.5.4 A university education as developing future-fit graduates.....	264
6.5.4.1 Predications: Practical-theoretical .....	265
6.5.4.2 Argumentation: Topos of real life .....	270
6.5.5 Pedagogy as a process of continuous improvement.....	283
6.6 Conclusion .....	293
<b>7 Discussion and conclusions .....</b>	<b>294</b>
7.1 Introduction.....	294

7.2 Summary of key discursive strategies and discourses in the policy texts .....	295
7.2.1 Trends in discursive practices in higher education .....	299
7.3 Discussion in relation to theoretical framework .....	300
7.3.1 The “what” of learning, teaching and assessment .....	301
7.3.2 The “how” of learning, teaching and assessment.....	307
7.3.3 Identities of students, lecturers and the academic community .....	310
7.3.4 Recontextualisation: the ways and means.....	314
7.3.5 The blurring of the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) .....	318
7.4 Conclusions.....	321
7.4.1 Revisiting the research questions .....	321
7.4.2 Critique.....	324
7.4.3 Contributions .....	325
7.4.4 Limitations and further research .....	328
7.4.5 Final reflections.....	328
<b>List of References</b> .....	<b>330</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>356</b>
Appendix 1: Interview questions (sample) .....	356
Appendix 2: Ethics documentation.....	357

## List of Tables

Table 1. Key reforms in higher education in England. Sources: AdvanceHE, 2018; Brown & Carasso, 2013; Gov.uk, 2018; HEFCE, 2017; Marginson, 2018.....	25
Table 2. Principles of the discourse-historical approach (DHA) applied to this study. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015.....	85
Table 3. Context in the DHA, Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, pp. 30-31. ....	88
Table 4. The DHA in 8 steps applied to this study. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 34. ....	108
Table 5. Interview participants: students. ....	123
Table 6. Summary of data in the study. ....	125
Table 7. Context in the DHA applied to this study. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015. ....	126
Table 8. Discursive strategies with examples. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 33.....	132
Table 9. Assignment elements by mode, subject and timeframe. ....	140
Table 10. Construction macro-function across texts. ....	170
Table 11. Transformation macro-function across texts. ....	171
Table 12. Legitimation macro-function across policy texts. ....	172
Table 13. Macro-strategy 1: Policy as embedded within processes and structures. ....	180
Table 14. Macro-strategy 2: The institution as a non-hierarchical community with shared values.....	185
Table 15. Macro-strategy 3: A university education as developing future-fit graduates.....	193
Table 16. Macro-strategy 4: Learning as socially-situated and teaching as facilitation.....	202
Table 17. Summary of differences between HEA policy genres. ....	211
Table 18. Assignment elements in signature and compulsory modules.....	230
Table 19. Summary of key discursive strategies in selected L&T policy texts.....	296

## List of Figures

Figure 1. The pedagogic device. Based on Bernstein, 1990, p. 197.....	61
Figure 2. Modelling pedagogic identities, classification. Bernstein, 2000, p. 67... 71	
Figure 3. The 'Political Field': Functions, genres, discourses and discursive practices. Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 48. ....	90
Figure 4. Interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between discourses, discourse topics, genres and texts. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 30.....	98
Figure 5. Data located in fields of action.....	114
Figure 6. Fields of action. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015.....	128
Figure 7. A simplified functional approach to argumentation. Reisigl, 2014, p. 75. ....	134
Figure 8. Exploring intertextual links between HEA policy documents.....	149
Figure 9. Exploring intertextual links between national policy and institutional policy texts.....	149
Figure 10. Exploring links between policy texts and interview data and assessment texts. ....	150
Figure 11. Interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between discourses, discourse topics, genres and texts. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 30.....	151
Figure 12. Study design: a coherent framework.....	155
Figure 13. Fields of action in higher education. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015. ....	159
Figure 14. Discourse topics across the 4 HEA documents.....	168
Figure 15. Four stages of student engagement. After HEA & NUS, 2011. Healey et al., 2014, p. 16.....	176
Figure 16. A model for students as change agents. Source: Dunne & Zandstra 2011, p. 17, reprinted in Healey et al. (2014), p. 46.....	187
Figure 17. CareerEDGE model. Dacre, Pool & Sewell, 2007. Reprinted in Pegg et al., 2012, p. 23.....	198
Figure 18. Overlapping discourses between texts in different fields of action. ..	226
Figure 19. Discourse topics across student interviews.....	233
Figure 20. Discourse topics across lecturer interviews.....	234
Figure 21. Interdiscursivity: overlapping discourses.....	298
Figure 22. Discursive engagement with policy within the institution. ....	316

## List of Abbreviations

CDS	critical discourse studies
CPD	continuing professional development
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
DHA	discourse-historical approach
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEI	Higher education institution
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Report
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
L&T	learning and teaching
LDU	Learning development unit
SoTL	scholarship of teaching and learning
UKPSF	UK Professional Standards Framework

## Transcription conventions

(.)	pause of approx. 0.5 seconds
(..)	pause of approx. 1 second
(...)	longer pause
...	omitted data
=	overlapping speech
(laughs)	laughter or other non-verbal gestures e.g. sighing, pointing
CAPITALS	strong emphasis
(xxx)	unclear segment

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Overview and motivation

As I near the end of writing this thesis, an article appears on the staff section of the website of the institution under study about *co-creation* with its aim “to dramatically shake up how we work with students by making them equal partners in their learning journey”. I could examine the numerous assumptions underlying this statement; not least that this is new. However, for the moment, this example embodies questions at the heart of this thesis such as how ideas arrive in universities and in whose interest; whether they are taken up in practice and with what effects.

Higher education is a site of struggle between different agencies and actors. It is subject to unprecedented scrutiny from government, higher education agencies, the media, the public, employers’ bodies and a range of other stakeholders who question the purpose and value of a higher education. In England, the introduction of fees has focused attention on value for money leading to a renewed spotlight on students’ experiences of their higher education and metrics attempting to measure *teaching quality* (detailed in Chapter 2). Senior management in many HEIs have targeted learning & teaching through policy guidelines and practices with the aim of enhancing the *student experience*. Given such prominence in policy, it is important to consider the ways in which those involved in learning & teaching, universities as institutions and higher education itself are constructed in policy texts as contributing to the quality of this experience.

In this thesis, the focus on teaching and learning refers to analysis of practices and texts regarding the content of the programme and approaches to teaching and assessment. It also refers to how these concepts are discussed in policy. For example, the phrase learning & teaching (L&T) denotes an emphasis on activities engaging students in the classroom and is used in contrast to other areas of academic work such as research. The term scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) extends this to construct L&T as a valid area for enquiry, effort and rewards thus worthy of lecturers' attention (see Chapter 2 for details).

Policy is not just regulations and laws but a multitude of guidelines that are enforced through mechanisms of engagement. This thesis explores the struggle between different actors with different views on what constitutes a good higher education and what constitutes good teaching. As well as being an examination of policy, it concerns the practices and experiences of those engaged in learning and teaching. Taking a view of policy not simply as text but as multi-layered processes and practices, I seek to explore the connections between public policy texts, the mechanisms that enforce their dissemination and the texts, accounts and practices of those engaging with policy in higher education institutions (HEIs). Thus, recontextualisation of policy across texts and spaces is a central theme of the study.

The research stems from my immersion in the learning, teaching and assessment practices of higher education both as an educator supporting student writers from outside of students' disciplines and from teaching within degree programmes. That is, my experience in designing and coordinating English for

academic purposes (EAP) courses to support students in higher education gave me an insight into a range of disciplines and their assessments through collaborating with colleagues from across the university. I increasingly encountered diverse, innovative and complex assessment types such as those described by Leedham (2009) and McLean, Abbas & Ashwin (2017). I questioned whether such practices were simply a result of innovation in learning & teaching or something more multifaceted. Being located in a department within a faculty, rather than a separate language centre, ensured closer contact with degree level practices. My involvement in designing and teaching credit-bearing English courses also contributed to this understanding. Additionally, for the past five years, I have taught on postgraduate programmes thus involving me further in the regulations, guidelines and discussions around learning, teaching and assessment. I noticed a proliferation of policy guidelines relating to learning & teaching within the institution.

Thus, despite the role of policy and wider influences being evident in my proposal from the start, in line with my evolving role and interests, I would describe my study as moving from an EAP teacher's focus on *what* students are required to do, to a focus on *why*. In other words, assessment texts and practices and students' challenges in dealing with them were a starting point for this study but this shifted beyond the institution to an exploration of the influences shaping guidelines on learning, teaching and assessment and of the connections between practices and policy.



## 1.2 Aims of the study

This thesis seeks to analyse how higher education policy on learning & teaching constructs people and phenomena and how policy discourses are recontextualised as they move through different genres and spaces. It situates itself within the higher education environment and the analysis addresses issues such as the purpose of a university education and the identities of students and academics. This requires a theoretical framework capable of connecting detailed textual-discursive analysis of policy with the wider context and concepts through which to explain those connections.

I examine how policy connects with practices and accounts of experience both in terms of *what* is recontextualised but also *how* policy moves and becomes enmeshed in other texts and pedagogic practices (Bernstein, 1990). This is policy conceptualised in its broadest sense but I also recognise that policy is disseminated at least partly through specific texts. What kinds of arguments are made and then appropriated or transformed? How does policy move? This is embodied in the overarching research question:

*In which ways, and through what means, is policy on learning & teaching recontextualised in practices in one higher education institution?*

By “means”, I am not referring to the processes of how policy is made initially in terms of how ideas are debated and fragments of text put together. Instead, I am referring to the mechanisms that exist to enable dissemination or implementation/enforcement of engagement with policy. For example, if

promotion at least partly depends on gaining a teaching accreditation and that accreditation involves engagement with policy texts and ideas, this is a means through which policy influences people's practices.

Learning & teaching have become the subject of policy, but these are certain visions of what learning entails and, particularly, what teaching entails which emerge from the current context. This is a narrowing of what is considered "good" teaching. Therefore, I engage in detailed analysis of selected policy texts on learning & teaching to illuminate what constitutes "good" and how actors are represented. A focus on the discursive characteristics of policy can show how policy is constructed from a particular perspective and what types of argumentation are utilised to support the proposals. As I explain in Chapter 4, as a result of careful data selection, this analysis centres on four policy documents to address the following questions:

*1. How does national policy on learning and teaching discursively construct actors, processes and phenomena?*

*1a) How are students, lecturers and universities as institutions discursively constructed in HEA discussion documents?*

*1b) How are the aims of a university education discursively constructed in HEA discussion documents?*

*1c) How are learning and teaching constructed in HEA discussion documents?*

*1d) Which discursive strategies are prominent in this field of action?*

An exploration of connections between the macro and micro requires examining the practices and accounts of those working and studying within an institution. Since policy texts construct a particular vision of a university education and its participants, I examine how these constructions align with how interviewees construct their experiences. Thus, I interview lecturers and students on a set of programmes within one department (see Chapter 4) and analysis addresses the following:

*2. How do interviewees construct their experiences of learning & teaching and a university education?*

*2a) How do students and lecturers construct people, processes and phenomena?*

*2b) What different voices are present in the data?*

*2c) What ideologies underlie these different voices?*

The main aim of this study is to understand how learning & teaching policy is recontextualised; in other words, how it is transformed, or not, as it moves through different texts, genres, spaces and is taken up by different people. I aim to illustrate how national policy and institutional policy connect and how the former shapes the latter. It is uncontroversial that policy aims to exert an influence but my concern is with the ways in which policy legitimates its proposals and also how institutional mechanisms contribute to policy implementation. It is impossible to capture the vast network of agencies, documents and meetings contributing to the conversation around L&T and I do not focus on the processes of how a particular policy is made. However, by

analysing selected salient texts, I trace connections between texts at national and institutional level. It is not straightforwardly unidirectional since bodies representing groups of universities discuss their priorities with government agencies and academics, for example, work for agencies such as the HEA. One aspect is the changes from long discussion documents (the main focus of document analysis) to short framework guidelines and how this transformation contributes to a text acquiring the status of policy or guidelines for practice. Another concern is to investigate whether constructions of learning & teaching in policy texts align with people's experiences or not and so I examine participants' accounts for traces of recontextualisation. That is, I use the analysis of the policy texts to inform analysis of the interview accounts. Therefore, I address the following questions:

*3. How are discursive strategies recontextualised in different genres and different fields of action?*

*3a) What similarities and differences can be traced between HEA discussion documents and HEA framework documents?*

*3b) What connections exist between discursive strategies in national policy documents and in institutional documents and practices, including assessment practices?*

*3c) How do interviewees recontextualise discursive strategies evident in policy documents? Which strategies are present, modified or absent in their accounts?*

I wish to explore how policy becomes enmeshed in practices. By practices, I mean people's actions situated within a social context. This includes the language they use i.e. discursive practices, and such practices mediate between social structures and particular events or actions (e.g. Fairclough, 2010). Clearly, actors on the receiving end of policy do not simply recognise the validity of the ideas and embrace them. A range of discursive mechanisms exist which encourage or force this engagement. Making these visible contributes to illuminating the way that power and control are facilitated. The importance lies in the ways that teachers are encouraged to see themselves, their students and their teaching. I also consider what agency actors have when engaging with policy and what this reveals about the characteristics of policy processes and practices:

*4. Through what means is policy recontextualised?*

*4a) Which discursive mechanisms facilitate the recontextualisation of policy?*

*4b) What do traces of recontextualisation suggest about opportunities for agency in accepting, appropriating or resisting policy?*

### 1.3 Study design

These questions require a framework capable of connecting analysis at different levels or different spaces. I situate my study within critical discourse studies (CDS); specifically, the discourse-historical approach (DHA) (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015) which provides a multi-layered view of context and the tools for detailed analysis of discourse and recontextualisation. To inform the object of study and

to aid interpretation of findings, I draw on Bernstein's (1990; 2000) sociology of pedagogy; in particular, his conceptualisation of how pedagogic practice comes into being. Such an interdisciplinary approach is common in CDS and I describe how these form a coherent framework in Chapters 3 and 4.

#### 1.4 Outline of the thesis

To address the research questions, the thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 outlines the context of, and key debates around, higher education in England. It also describes the institution under study. In Chapter 3, I describe my theoretical framework which brings together concepts from Bernstein's (e.g. 2000) sociology and the discourse-historical approach (DHA) within critical discourse studies (CDS). Chapter 4 details the design and methodological steps of the study. Chapters 5 and 6 comprise the data analysis. First, I present analysis of policy documents and then analysis of institutional assessment texts and interview data. I focus on analysing traces of recontextualisation. In Chapter 7, I draw together my findings and discuss the implications by revisiting my theoretical framework. I finish with conclusions, limitations, ideas for further research and final reflections.

## 2 Background to the study

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the context for my study. This includes both the higher education landscape in the UK and the more local context of the institution under study. First, I outline important changes affecting institutions and students; specifically, those that impact the way that learning & teaching policies are formulated. There follows a description of the functions of national policy-making departments and agencies whose documents I have used with a focus on how these agencies are interrelated. I then examine the *discursive landscape* by which I mean topics of current, fierce debate starting with a discussion of markets and marketisation and then questions around the purpose of a university education, the identities of those who work and study in the sector and the marketisation of discursive practices (see e.g. Barnett, 2013; Brown & Carasso, 2013; Fairclough, 2010; Fanghanel, 2011; McLean et al., 2017, Molesworth, Scullion & Nixon (Eds.), 2011, amongst many others). I finish by describing the institutional setting of my study.

### 2.2 Changes in UK<sup>1</sup> higher education

It is a cliché to say that higher education is experiencing profound change and the notion of a changing context can be used to justify any practices as I discuss in Chapter 5. However, it is important to outline what most agree are significant moments for higher education (see e.g. Brown & Carasso, 2011; HEFCE, 2009; Marginson, 2018). Although they mostly concern England, they indicate trends

---

<sup>1</sup> Since 1999 responsibility for higher education has been devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland so more recent reform refers to England only.

evident internationally due to the global characteristics of competition in the sector and networks of policy influence (Mundy, Green, Lingard & Verger (Eds.), 2016). It is beyond the scope of this study to detail all the numerous reports, white papers<sup>2</sup> and Acts of Parliament<sup>3</sup> let alone their impacts which are, of course, subject to disagreement. I limit my discussion to explaining key trends and reforms which have impacted the sector. The trends include lower government funding and substantial increases in student numbers sometimes described as *marketisation* and *massification* (see e.g. Krause, 2009). To illustrate the expansion, in the mid-eighties, approximately 6% of young people went to university in the UK, in 2017 the figure was 49% (Adams, 2017). There were 60 universities compared to 167 higher education institutions (HEIs), and rising, in 2018 albeit the latter figure includes 33 former polytechnics which became universities in 1992 (Foskett, 2011; HESA, 2018). Polytechnics offered higher education, including degree-level, mainly in STEM<sup>4</sup> and more vocational/practice-based subjects such as teaching, art & design and nursing but have since expanded their offering. Regarding domicile, non-UK students totalled 20,000 in the mid-eighties; in 2017 it was approximately 442,000 (Foskett, 2011; HESA, 2018).

Table 1 provides a selective summary of key reforms in higher education in England. I focus on those related to changes to the structure of the sector, funding and learning & teaching.

---

<sup>2</sup> White papers are government policy documents that are proposals for new legislation. They precede a Bill; the document that goes to parliament for consultation. White papers represent key discursive moments of change.

<sup>3</sup> Laws agreed by parliament.

<sup>4</sup> STEM: science, technology, engineering & maths.



Table 1. Key reforms in higher education in England. Sources: AdvanceHE, 2018; Brown & Carasso, 2013; Gov.uk, 2018; HEFCE, 2017; Marginson, 2018.

Year	Name of reform, white paper or act	Details
1963	Robbins Report	- Proposal for substantial expansion of the university sector
1980	Overseas students start to pay full cost fees	- Ending of subsidy for overseas students
1988	Education Reform Act	- Creation of 2 funding councils for HE - Abolition of lifetime tenure
1992	Expansion of university sector HEFCE <sup>5</sup> created	- 33 Polytechnics become “new” universities - Single funding council for England
1997	Dearing Report	- Proposal for tuition fees
1998	Teaching and Higher Education Act – fees introduced	- Tuition fees of up to £1,000 per year
1999	Bologna Declaration	- Aim to create a common European higher education area with common priorities
2003	Higher Education Academy (HEA) created	- Organisation aims to improve quality of learning & teaching
2004	Higher Education Act	- Variable fees could be introduced
2005	National Student Survey (NSS)	- First national student survey
2006	Tuition fees increase and student loans introduced	- Fees increase to £3000 per year funded by income-related student loans
2009	Browne Review	- Proposal for further increases in tuition fees to a maximum of £9000 per year
2011	White paper: <i>Students at the heart of the system</i>	- Focus on the student experience - Proposal for easing market entry for new providers
2012	Fees increase to £9000	- Most universities charge the full amount to avoid perception of lower quality - Government withdraws direct subsidies for teaching in most subjects
2012/13	Partial removal of cap on student numbers	- Universities able to recruit more students with high A level scores: AAB and later ABB
2015/16	Total removal of cap on numbers	- Universities can recruit any number of students
2016	White paper: <i>Success as a knowledge economy: Teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice</i>	- Proposal for increased access to sector for alternative providers (not funded by HEFCE) - Proposal for Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)
2017	Higher education and research Act	- Creation of the Office for Students (OfS) to replace HEFCE <sup>6</sup> - Eased market entry for new providers - Introduction of TEF
2018	HEA becomes AdvanceHE <sup>7</sup>	- Organisation continues with its L&T priorities

<sup>5</sup> Higher Education Funding Council for England. Distributes government funding.

<sup>6</sup> HEFCE merged with the *Office for Fair Access (OFFA)* to become the *Office for Students (OfS)* in April 2018. The research funding element has moved to *Research England*, operating within *United Kingdom Research and Innovation*. OfS becomes the main regulator for English higher education (Gov.uk, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> HEA merged with the *Equality Challenge Unit* and the *Leadership Foundation for Higher Education* to become *AdvanceHE* in March 2018 (AdvanceHE, 2018).

As Table 1 illustrates, major reviews followed by white papers and then Acts of Parliament have sought to encourage, and then respond to the challenges of, a growing sector with lower government funding. The introduction of, and subsequent increase in, tuition fees is one response which has led to a focus on students' experience of their study and a renewed spotlight on learning & teaching as I discuss further below. Next, I discuss the functions of key organisations involved in policy-making and then elaborate on areas of debate around policy reforms in section 2.4.

### 2.3 Influences on policy-making in higher education

Numerous organisations influence decision-making in higher education including government departments, parliamentary committees, regulatory bodies, non-regulatory groups, think-tanks<sup>8</sup>, student and lecturer organisations, business groups, the EU and international organisations (see e.g. Ashwin, Abbas & McLean, 2015; Kogan, 2014). I only outline those most relevant to my research on learning & teaching policy and whose documents I have consulted (see Chapter 4). I illustrate below the complex network of influence between government, agencies and the higher education sector and how the key agencies both inform and implement government policy.

#### 2.3.1 Government policy-making

The government department responsible for higher education works with key higher education agencies such as HEFCE and the HEA discussed below and is

---

<sup>8</sup> e.g. HEPI, Higher Education Policy Institute, an independent organisation with the aim to shape policy debate (HEPI, 2018).

lobbied and influenced by other stakeholders such as Universities UK (UUK)<sup>9</sup> and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI)<sup>10</sup>. It produces white papers, creates Acts of Parliament and devises education policy more broadly according to government policy. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)<sup>11</sup> had the remit for higher education until 2016 when responsibility for universities moved to the Department of Education. There is now a minister of state for universities, science, research and innovation whose work spans both the Department of Education and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Gov.uk, 2018). Although it may seem that the department leads on policy, due to the numerous groups which inform and influence, it is part of a network of actors with, at times, competing interests in higher education. Therefore, policy-making cannot be seen as working in a simple, top-down way (see section 3.4). I include one white paper as part of my data set.

### 2.3.2 Regulating and funding higher education

Although other bodies are involved in regulation such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)<sup>12</sup>, the Student Loans Company<sup>13</sup> and HESA<sup>14</sup> amongst others, I focus here on the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and its role in allocating government funding as well as its implementation of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) since these have considerable impact on

---

<sup>9</sup> UUK is the organisation of university vice-chancellors.

<sup>10</sup> CBI is the leading UK organisation representing business interests (CBI, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> BIS became the *Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy* in July 2016. Responsibility for higher education moved to the *Department for Education* (Gov.uk, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> The QAA is an independent body charged with maintaining standards in HE. It reviews as well as sets expectations that HEIs must meet (QAA, 2018).

<sup>13</sup> The Student Loans Company manages the loans system providing funding to students.

<sup>14</sup> The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) is “the official agency for the collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative information about higher education” and HEIs are required to provide them with data (HEFCE, 2018).

learning and teaching. HEFCE existed from 1992 until 2018 and was the lead regulator for English higher education from 2010-2018. It distributed public funds, monitored quality and collected data and had the role of informing, developing and implementing government policy (HEFCE, 2017). However, since government funding for teaching decreased sharply, with the introduction of tuition fees designed to replace that funding, HEFCE's role diminished (Marginson, 2018). The body now has the title of the *Office for Students (OfS)* thereby reconstructing itself as firmly focused on the student experience. As noted above, it no longer has the role of distributing research funding but has now incorporated the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) with its remit to widen participation amongst under-represented groups (OfS, 2018a).

In terms of regulating or shaping teaching, or as some might suggest an attempt to provide another indicator designed to measure, and thereby rank, the quality of a university's education, the *Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)* was created in 2016<sup>15</sup> and implemented by HEFCE in 2017 (HEFCE, 2018). Its intention is to provide a parallel to the *Research Excellence Framework (REF)*. The stated aim of these frameworks is to provide a measure of an HEI's teaching and research quality respectively to inform student choice as well as to attract funding and allow highly-rated universities to charge higher fees. These metrics are controversial in that they tend to reward already successful universities (Marginson, 2018). The criteria forming the basis of the TEF have been criticised for not measuring "teaching quality" but instead focusing on outcomes such as

---

<sup>15</sup> Details of the TEF emerged in the government white paper: *Success as a knowledge economy: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice* (BIS, 2016).

retention, employment and satisfaction (Ashwin, 2017). I include one of HEFCE's strategy statements as part of my data.

### 2.3.3 Developing learning & teaching

Numerous groups are involved in shaping learning & teaching in the UK e.g. the QAA with its subject benchmark statements<sup>16</sup>, the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA)<sup>17</sup> and the National Union of Students (NUS). However, I focus on The Higher Education Academy (HEA) since it has become the most prominent, and arguably the most influential, in policy terms despite being a non-regulatory body. As noted above, in 2018 the HEA merged with two other groups to become AdvanceHE with its remit expanding to include equality, diversity and inclusion as well as leadership, governance and management (AdvanceHE, 2018). However, regarding learning & teaching, the schemes developed are presented as unchanged at present and I focus on its work and documents as the HEA. Created in 2003, it describes itself as “an independent, not-for-profit, charitable and non-regulatory organisation working for, and on behalf of, the whole sector” and as “the national body which champions teaching excellence” with its mission as “improving learning outcomes by raising the status and quality of teaching in higher education” (HEA, 2018). In 2016, the HEA described itself as owned by Universities UK (UUK) and funded by subscriptions

---

<sup>16</sup> QAA subject benchmarks outline what students should know in a particular subject by end of the degree. Described as “reference points in the design, delivery and review of academic programmes” rather than a prescribed curriculum (QAA, 2018).

<sup>17</sup> SEDA is the professional organisation for educational developers in the UK “promoting innovation and good practice in higher education” (SEDA, 2018). It focuses on educational developers rather than teachers directly and is a voluntary body of its members.

from universities “and others with a vested interest in HE teaching” (HEA, 2016) and outlined the influences on its work as follows:

The HEA’s areas of current focus are informed by our consultation with the sector, by funding council priorities, government policy, sector data, intelligence and reports amongst others. (HEA, 2016)

This account clearly constructs the organisation as influenced by government and funding council priorities as well as the higher education sector as a whole. In 2018, the website emphasises more on working in partnership with stakeholders, providing advice to others, promoting teaching excellence and “focusing on the contribution of teaching as part of the wider student learning experience” (HEA, 2018). It expands on its role in the following way:

The HEA’s charitable objective is to promote higher education for the public benefit by:

- providing strategic advice and co-ordination to the higher education sector, government, funding bodies and others on policies and practices that will impact upon and enhance the student experience;
- supporting and advancing curriculum and pedagogic development across the whole spectrum of higher education activity; and
- facilitating the professional development and increasing the professional standing of all staff in higher education. (HEA, 2018)

Its remit to advise is evident in its ideas and cases being within HEFCE and BIS reports thus illustrating the network of influences. Its aim of advancing pedagogic development, including in specific subject areas, links it firmly to educational/academic development units or centres of higher education research<sup>18</sup> which focus on pedagogy. This is where its publications are disseminated to and drawn on, then shared with academics with learning & teaching roles who, in turn, discuss them with lecturers and course teams (see section 2.5 regarding the institution under study). I reflect on these links further in my analysis of recontextualisation in Chapters 6 and 7.

In line with its aims to support professional development, the HEA produced a framework in 2011 called the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) described as “a nationally-recognised framework for benchmarking success within HE teaching and learning support” (HEA, 2018). The UKPSF has three dimensions to its framework: Areas of activity (A); Core knowledge (K); Professional values (V). Each of these has several categories. For example, A1 is “Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study”; K1 is “The subject material” and V1 is “Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities” (HEA, 2011). One of the purposes of the UKPSF is to provide recognition for teaching activities by linking the categories in the framework to the *HEA Fellowship Scheme*. This is an accreditation scheme for academics and other staff whereby they seek recognition at different levels: Associated Fellow; Fellow; Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow. An application principally involves a

---

<sup>18</sup> Various names for units supporting L&T e.g. academic development units, learning and teaching centres.

reflective account of professional practice on how one's teaching practice aligns with the UKPSF. This is supported by statements from referees. The Fellowship scheme is increasingly being adopted and promoted in HEIs<sup>19</sup> as a result of the TEF, especially perhaps in institutions less highly-ranked for research who aim to highlight *teaching quality*.

Many institutions have set up their own HEA-approved accreditation schemes rather than individuals applying direct (Shaw, 2018). This allows more applications to be processed and provides a clear role for academic development units in universities as they support and implement the scheme. Although intrinsic motivation is noted as a key factor in engaging with the scheme (Botham, 2018), extrinsic motivation is crucial as in certain institutions accreditation becomes an imperative through discursive mechanisms such as appraisal and promotion (Peat, 2015). Accreditation of staff may be a key performance indicator (KPI)<sup>20</sup> potentially leading to strains on the team that supports the process and staff viewing it as a tick-box exercise (Shaw, 2018). While benefits of reflecting on practice have been noted in terms of a reminder of achievements (e.g. van der Sluis, Burden & Huet, 2017), reflection within such a context has been criticised for forcing alignment with a certain view of learning & teaching (Macfarlane & Gourlay, 2009) and described as “retrospective benchmarking” (van der Sluis et al., 2017). Therefore, although one might expect the HEA to exert influence despite its non-regulatory status, pertinent issues include how compliance with its frameworks is encouraged and what messages

---

<sup>19</sup> The HEA states there are 100,000 Fellows worldwide as of December 2017 (HEA, 2018).

<sup>20</sup> KPIs are metrics that a university can track annually e.g. student retention, research income, student satisfaction measures.



and values underlie its guidelines. The HEA produces extensive literature around L&T including discussion documents and guidelines for practice. These are authored by a variety of academics, educational developers, freelance consultants and employees of the HEA. I include four HEA policy discussion documents for detailed analysis in my study. I also analysed the short framework guidelines' documents as I describe in Chapter 4.

#### 2.4 Key features of the discursive landscape in higher education

In the following sections, I outline key concepts and controversies in the discursive landscape of UK higher education. That is, I consider how notions of markets have shifted the topics of debate, language and arguments evident in discussions and texts on higher education including those relating to policy. I focus on those ideas that provide a context for my analysis and a lens which can inform the discussion of my findings in conjunction with my theoretical framework. Consequently, I discuss four main areas: the notion of markets and marketisation, the purpose of a university education, pedagogic identities and the marketisation of discursive practices. While they are all relevant to policy constructions, the first elaborates on changes summarised in section 2.2, and the others are issues stemming from a move towards a more market-like discourse.

First, though, I discuss how a neoliberal environment impacts on individuals and their engagement with discourses in policy. Gaining prominence in the 1980s and further accelerating since the financial crises of 2007-8, neoliberalism is viewed as an economic and political project of liberalisation - a return to nineteenth century laissez-faire capitalism - in which free markets and competition are

believed to work for everyone's benefit (Holborow, 2015) (see section 2.4.1 on markets and marketisation). These ideological aspects of neoliberalism, in terms of what is perceived as common sense, value-free or accepted/shared values, are relevant to a discussion of policy (Fairclough, 2000; Holborow, 2012). The reforms around deregulation noted in section 2.2 are justified by government in relation to the needs of an expanding sector offering mass higher education. However, the effects are felt unequally in that quality processes, for example, have a greater impact on lower-ranking HEIs (Abbas, Ashwin & McLean, 2012) and the messages being conveyed about the purpose of an education and identities are more likely to be targeted at, and embraced by, certain HEIs and their students (see sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3). Further, a noted feature of neoliberalism is that responsibility shifts towards the individual rather than society (Holborow, 2015). Students and academics, for example, are encouraged to engage in continuous self-development in order to compete with students needing to focus on becoming employable graduates through developing their *skills* (Holborow, 2012; Urciuoli, 2008).

The link between language and neoliberal ideology has been examined, for example, in relation to the *commodification* of certain languages (Heller, 2003; Duchêne & Heller (Eds.), 2012) including the dominance of English itself as a global language in higher education (Piller & Cho, 2013). In terms of language not simply reflecting but constituting the context, studies have investigated terms/keywords pointing to a whole range of related concepts that embrace neoliberal values such as *austerity*, *entrepreneurial university* (Holborow & O'Sullivan, 2017) or *multilingualism* (Krzyżanowski, 2016). This prevalence of

concepts designed to appear self-evidently beneficial encourages a conformity in language use. This is notable in policy texts explicitly promoting *shared language* in order to encourage *shared values* (section 5.3.2). The obscured character of the ideological within seemingly common-sense/positive messages can make it harder for people to resist these views as can discursive mechanisms which encourage using this shared language (section 7.3.4). This focus on the ideological character of argumentation and discourse is core to CDS (see Chapter 3).

#### 2.4.1 Markets and marketisation

There is widespread discussion of the concept of markets within higher education (e.g. Hemsley-Brown, 2011; Jongbloed, 2003; Shattock (Ed.), 2009). The notion of marketisation itself is often drawn on to critique aspects of change in higher education and their perceived impacts (e.g. Brown & Carasso, 2013; Molesworth et al. (Eds.), 2011). However, the meaning of this term is not always clear. Therefore, I explore how markets and marketisation are conceptualised in relation to higher education with an emphasis on the impact on the discursive landscape. This discussion informs my analysis of the policy texts. As Komljenovic & Robertson (2016) point out, markets in higher education are discussed in terms of ideological origins, symptoms and manifestations, as well as the extent to which universities are operating in a free market, with a focus on the consequences for structures, relations and practices. The consensus is this is not a free market, as for most organisations, and the term “quasi-market” is frequently employed (Foskett, 2011; Jongbloed, 2003; Marginson, 2018).

However, there is value in considering how authors describe a pure market in higher education since it sheds light on the extent to which the sector in a particular country is moving in that direction and thus the issues foregrounded (see e.g. de Boer & Jongbloed, 2012 on trends within Europe). Jongbloed (2003, p. 114) outlines the free market conditions for providers as follows: freedom of entry; freedom to specify the product; freedom to use available resources; freedom to determine prices. For consumers i.e. students, there should be freedom to choose provider and product; adequate information on prices and quality; the amount paid relates to the cost of the education. Brown (2011, p. 12) suggests similar characteristics adding specific features such as legally autonomous institutions and no subsidies for students. Recent reforms in the Higher Education & Research Act (2017) make further moves in the direction outlined above by emphasising information and choice. Examples include market entry eased for a range of new providers; caps on student numbers lifted and the potential for increased variations in fees between HEIs dependent on performance in key indicators e.g. the TEF.

I elaborate on these examples by discussing the overarching characteristics of markets suggested by Jongbloed (2003), namely competition and deregulation and how these are manifested in English higher education and with what effects. Institutional autonomy is regarded as a historical feature of the UK system in comparison to other countries (Brown & Carasso, 2013; Marginson, 2018). Although it is evident from numerous government reforms that the sector is subject to control and government funding is dependent on meeting certain criteria e.g. on widening participation, drop-out rates and employment (HESA,

2018), with deregulation, more indirect forms of governance exist. This produces the seemingly contradictory trends of deregulation alongside greater accountability achieved through increasing “managerialism” (Currie & Vidovich, 2009; Deem, Hillyard & Reed, 2007). This entails the sector being regulated indirectly through performance indicators (Ball, 2017; Marginson, 2018) including commercial league tables with their national and world rankings, the government’s National Student Survey (NSS), the REF and the TEF. The abolition of most funding for teaching and the increase in tuition fees to meet this gap is an example of deregulation which has profound consequences for HEIs. Tuition fees are the primary source of income at 44% in 2013/14 (Marginson, 2018). In 2012, most institutions charged the maximum of £9,000 since HEIs did not wish to be perceived as lower quality (Marginson, 2018). Fees rose to £9,250 in 2017 and as noted above, variable fees are likely in future due to the 2017 Act. Competition for students has intensified so rankings and other performance indicators become more important in attracting students.

A noted manifestation of deregulation is that individual HEIs have greater control over decision-making and planning to the extent that they can outsource activities and become more entrepreneurial in terms of creating new sources of funding through use of facilities and expertise for commercial reasons (see e.g. Barnett, 2011a; Jessop, 2017). This autonomy is, however, accompanied by greater risk particularly for lower status universities (Boliver, 2015; Marginson, 2018).

Existing distinctions between elite and less elite universities have widened further (Boliver, 2015). The sector has experienced different phases of expansion notably in the 1960s and in 1992 when Polytechnics achieved university status. In terms of competition, the sector is segmented or stratified around rankings, perceptions of quality and entry requirements (Brown & Carasso, 2013; Marginson, 2018; Nixon, 2011). Clearly, Cambridge is not competing with Greenwich and Boliver's study (2015) identifies four clusters of HEIs with new universities further divided into a higher and lower tier. Thus, free choice for students is not the norm since factors such as entry requirements, cost of living and perceptions of "fit" of a particular institution constrain all but the minority (cf. Abbas et al., 2012). Yet, there are indications of a shifting of numbers *across* the sector. Deregulation through the removal of the cap on undergraduate numbers in 2015/16 has led to greater pressure on some departments in less elite institutions since higher ranking universities can accept more students (Bekhradnia & Beech, 2018). Also impacting lower-ranking HEIs is the noted rise in unconditional offers to students, from 1.1% in 2013 to 22.9% in 2018, attributable to the intensified competition ("The scramble for students", 2018). The Higher Education Act (2017) allows for market entry and funding for "alternative providers" including international commercial companies which will increase competition further.

These pressures have led lower-ranking HEIs to seek other means of competing in the market such as focusing on teaching quality. However, they seem less likely to score highly in the TEF as currently formulated since the criteria partly focus on outcomes such as retention and employment (Ashwin, 2017). TEF Gold

awards in 2017/18 include a large number of high-ranking universities, despite some notable absences from Russell Group<sup>21</sup> HEIs, as well as some more specialist institutions (OfS, 2018b). In order to address the requirements of the TEF, universities are engaging with HEA schemes and frameworks such as the UKPSF and the Fellowship scheme outlined above. This focus on learning and teaching and its construction in policy and practices forms the core of my study.

The term marketisation, though often ill-defined, is generally used across the literature as the movement towards a sector with market features. Jongbloed (2003) defines it as a sum of the policies encouraging competition and deregulation in relation to the “freedoms to” for providers and students outlined above. He summarises these policies as liberalising markets to improve quality, efficiency and encourage student choice. Hemsley-Brown (2011, p. 118) defines it as “the adoption of free market practices” with examples such as cutting costs, including withdrawing unpopular programmes; offering popular courses and facilities; using advertising to enhance brand image and sales; the adoption of a business language and culture. The word marketisation is often used as a critique of such practices. For some, it is simply associated with a notion of neoliberalism and automatically seen as negative (Barnett, 2011b; Scullion, Molesworth & Nixon, 2011). Different metaphors and dichotomies are used in the discussion around marketisation. For example, there is the notion of education becoming a commodity and students being consumers of this product (e.g. Maringe, 2011; Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005).

---

<sup>21</sup> Russell Group: formed in 1994 of 24 research-led universities.

A more nuanced approach is to consider which aspects trouble which people and why. This may be a result of there being many markets involved e.g. for students, staff, research funding and commercial activities amongst others (Jongbloed, 2003). Some may dislike the entry of private providers into the sector either as HEIs or as providers of particular elements such as foundation courses<sup>22</sup> or the outsourcing of services such as cleaning and security. Others may dislike the indirect forms of governance or “managerialism” in the form of metrics and a feeling of practices being increasingly data-driven and micro-managed (Ball, 2017; Komljenovic & Robertson, 2016; Smyth, 2017). Further, a major concern seems the perceived negative effects of change on relationships and practices and the potential cultural, intellectual and pedagogic effects (Barnett, 2011b; Furedi, 2011). This is aptly described by McArthur (2013) as a sense of “unease” regarding certain practices in higher education. I discuss this further in section 2.4.3 on pedagogic relationships and identities.

#### 2.4.2 The purpose of a higher education

The expansion of the sector and rises in tuition fees have foregrounded this issue. It constitutes an area of debate in the media around value for money, in the academic literature over the extent of emphasis on careers and in policy texts through their construction of the appropriate focus. A useful distinction is between the activities of universities as institutions and the purpose of a higher education itself (see e.g. Barnett, 2011a). The former concerns the range of

---

<sup>22</sup> In the UK, organisations such as INTO and Study Group provide foundation courses for international students sometimes renaming the provision or centre as part of the institution.



activities a university may engage in such as teaching, research, consultancy, income-generation and public engagement. The latter focuses on what a higher education should provide to students and consequently to society at large. An education can be seen in predominantly economic terms as a private commodity, rather than as a public, social and cultural good, with a focus on the exchange value of the degree in terms of getting a job rather than the process of becoming an educated person or the communal benefits of having an educated society (see e.g. Ball, 2017; Nixon, 2011). This is described as “having” rather than “being” with its implications for identities of, and relationship between, academics and students (Molesworth, Nixon & Scullion, 2009).

The issue becomes whether higher education should have a substantial focus on preparing students for a career including developing *employability skills* (Abbas et al., 2012; Barkas, Scott, Poppitt & Smith, 2017). The context for a focus on employability is often linked to the needs of a *knowledge economy*. Jessop (2008; 2017) points to the influence of the OECD’s 1996 *Knowledge-Based Economy* with its discussion of the failure of education to meet the demands of modern economies and the need to “upgrade human capital” through continuous training and lifelong learning (OECD, 1996, p. 19) (See OECD, 2017 for the same phrase). This gives the appearance of being for the public good but primarily focuses on the individual’s need for continuous self-development within such an economy. Barkas et al. (2017), in dissecting the white paper *Success as a knowledge economy* (BIS, 2016) and the TEF, highlight the challenges for HEIs in choosing the appropriate focus of a curriculum given the priorities of different stakeholders i.e. students, academics, employers and government.

Modularisation facilitates such a transdisciplinary, applied curriculum with a potential lack of coherence (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005).

With concerns over the direction of higher education, there are calls to re-establish a focus on the public good and social justice, in terms of the benefits of a more educated and critically engaged society, and a focus on universities' strengths in generating and disseminating knowledge and encouraging deep or transformative learning (McArthur, 2013; Nixon, 2011). In this vision, a higher education should be challenging and unsettling in which "knowing is difficult" (McArthur, 2013, p. 49) and a transformative experience whose benefits may only be realised further into the future rather than one in which the student is constructed as a consumer who is the sole arbiter of quality and whose satisfaction must be guaranteed (e.g. Furedi, 2011; Maringe, 2011). In his discussion of possible forms of the university, Barnett (2011a) outlines the liquid, the authentic, the therapeutic and the ecological university which encompass various views on the priorities of a university education. His vision of a therapeutic university includes both detrimental and beneficial possibilities. The former involves a focus on helping students to deal with an uncertain future. The latter commends what he describes as "epistemological uncertainty" whereby students' confusion is "a natural state of affairs" (p. 124). The message is not to impoverish the experience by making it easy and consumer-friendly. I analyse constructions of the purpose of a university education in policy documents and interview data in Chapters 5 and 6 and I discuss these viewpoints further in Chapter 7.

### 2.4.3 Roles, identities and pedagogic relationships in higher education

This section discusses how the changes outlined above, including questions around the purpose of a higher education, impact on roles, identities and relationships. The multiple roles of academics are highlighted involving research, teaching, knowledge exchange, professional practice, community engagement and leadership amongst others (Krause, 2009; Whitchurch & Gordon, 2012). However, fragmentation is also noted with the separation of research roles and teaching roles in some HEIs with likely impacts on academics' sense of identity (Fanghanel, 2011; Krause, 2009). With the rise in alternative providers potentially leading to a group of teaching-only "post-2016" HEIs (Barkas et al., 2017) as well as the increase in elite institutions advertising for teaching-oriented posts (Swain, 2017), this fragmentation may increase further. Also discussed is the university *community* more broadly and the move away from simple divisions between academics, administrators and management to recognise a plethora of roles, many constructed as involving "academic work", including educational developers, learning technologists, librarians and those involved in careers, widening participation, outreach, enterprise amongst others (Whitchurch & Gordon, 2012). The demand for better data to inform performance indicators involves many of these staff in "compliance" work (Barkas et al., 2017; Teelken, 2012). This includes educational developers, academics with L&T roles and management in those HEIs where accreditation of teaching of all lecturers is required.

By identities, I am referring to the ways that people see themselves but also to the way such identities are discussed and constructed in policy texts. Academics

can be seen as having multiple identities in line with their varied roles as well as backgrounds and values (Delanty, 2008; Fanghanel, 2011). Despite their primary identity often characterised as situated within their disciplinary community and department (Becher, 1989), tensions are evident between this and an increasing allegiance to the needs of the institution in its quest to remain competitive (Smyth, 2017; Whitchurch & Gordon, 2012). This results in academics being part of a complex network of practices, and thus identities, requiring prioritising the needs of the individual, institution and other stakeholders at different times (Trowler, Saunders & Bamber, 2012).

Regarding students, given market-led practices, discussion centres on the extent to which students are positioned as consumers and what this might entail beyond simply giving students information and choice. The notion of consumer is premised on ideas such as value for money and the consumer being the best judge of quality leading to the continual seeking and prioritising of students' views. This aligns with the emphasis on aiming for student satisfaction rather than the quality of their learning (Maringe, 2011). Also evident is the notion of the "passive consumer" who does not take responsibility for their educational experience rather than being the active participant who is central to it. Nixon, Scullion & Molesworth (2011), reflecting on the negative side of choice, characterise some students as "conservative learners" who avoid risk, challenge and knowledge they think unnecessary for future needs, preferring subjects, assessments and lecturers they feel comfortable with. This aligns with studies that explore students' notions of dream futures in which students prefer the tasks and assessments e.g. pitches to live clients, guest speakers, that mirror the

exciting parts of an imagined future job (Haywood, Jenkins & Molesworth, 2011). The view of the passive, judging consumer can encourage practices such as not challenging students too much, not failing them, prioritising their enjoyment of the experience as well as accepting their feedback questionnaires uncritically. This is what Furedi (2011, p. 3) describes as “defensive education” as a response to the “culture of complaint”.

An alternative view is that students do not behave like consumers even if positioned as such. Marginson (2018, p. 30) suggests that with the loans system in place, students do not feel like consumers and if they do it is due to “cultural persuasion” rather than market forces. This may underestimate the financial pressures affecting students from lower-income backgrounds more than others given the limited loans for living costs. Tomlinson’s (2017) interview study explores the consumer idea directly with students. He found a range of views from an “active service user” approach, to ambivalence and finally outright resistance to the consumerist ethos and consumer label. The latter students suggested it lowered the value of their degree and marginalised their role. Despite the limitations of taking the answers at face value, the study describes a more complex picture regarding students’ views of themselves and their education. Alternative metaphors are explored such as the student as citizen and the possibility for students to be given more agency in determining their identities rather than accepting the discourse of themselves as consumers (Nordensvärd, 2011). However, I would not underestimate the influences on students to take the position of the consumer by the media but also by

institutions themselves through discursive mechanisms such as the NSS, module feedback forms and committees seeking students' opinions.

Inherent in discussions around identity of students and academics is the relationship between them and this is foregrounded as a central issue (e.g. Ball, 2017; Barnett, 2011b; Furedi, 2011; Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005). Fanghanel's (2011) analysis of the view of learning constructed in the NSS contrasts its outcomes-focused, predictable and instrumentalist approach, suggesting a "consumer's curriculum", with academics' own accounts of a more complex, challenging view of learning. Thus, potential exists for damaging the relationship if a *service provider-customer* view is adopted where students take less responsibility for their learning (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005). The mechanisms of an audit culture discussed above may impact that relationship.

#### 2.4.4 Examining marketisation and discursive practices

The discussion above addresses key topics of debate but most of those studies do not engage in detailed textual analysis. Critical discourse studies (CDS) considers the role of language in both reflecting and constituting marketisation trends (see Chapter 3). Fairclough's (1993) influential examination of marketisation in higher education was framed within a set of broader influences on discursive practices. He noted three trends: 1) a post-traditional society which frames the "conversationalization" or informal character of discourse 2) the construction of self-identity as a reflexive project framing a "technologization of discourse" in which organisations impose discursive practices upon their members and 3) the characterisation of a consumer culture with discursive practices being

promotional and instrumental (Fairclough, 1993, pp. 130-142). His study of a university prospectus, conference programme, CV and job adverts shows the construction of more entrepreneurial institutional and professional identities in which self-promotion is central noting this potentially signifies a shift in discursive practices. He also adds that such practices may be ignored or resisted.

Other higher education genres have since been analysed: websites (Zhang & O'Halloran, 2013); mission statements (Banda & Mafofo, 2015; Morrish & Sauntson, 2013); prospectuses (Ng, 2014; Teo, 2007) and policy documents (e.g. Ledin & Machin, 2015; Mulderrig, 2011) as well as key words such as *entrepreneurial* (Holborow, 2013; Mautner, 2005). The recontextualisation of European policy in national policy has also been explored (Fairclough & Wodak, 2008; Wodak & Fairclough, 2010). Less prominent is a focus on marketisation and pedagogy i.e. discursive practices in learning & teaching.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the construction of key actors in policy texts and in Chapter 6, consider how interviewees frame them rather differently. In my study, I explore how L&T policy and accounts of pedagogic practices both reflect and constitute such a discursive landscape of debate around markets, the purpose of a higher education and identities.

## 2.5 The institution under study

*River University* is a post-1992 or *new university*. This label belies its history since a technical institute existed in 1899, in addition to a centre of teacher training and a school of art from the early twentieth-century. It evolved as an

amalgamation of different colleges with changing names, statuses and locations influencing its current location across four campuses. The different parts merged to become a polytechnic in 1970 which then became a university in 1992. The university currently has approximately 17,500 students of which 15,000 are full-time and 4,300 are international and EU, 2,000 from outside the EU.<sup>23</sup> It has a reputation as a diverse and inclusive institution and survey data supports this.<sup>24</sup> The university offers most subject areas with the largest numbers of students in STEM subjects. Despite its fairly low overall ranking in most league tables, certain subject areas and programmes have a strong reputation such as fashion, design, pharmacy and journalism. It also has relatively low entry requirements.

In 2012, the university introduced a modified academic framework with major changes to the overall architecture or framework of programmes, namely the structure of courses and credit-size of modules, but also with the intention of implementing widespread changes in learning, teaching and assessment evident in the elements “key features” and “curriculum design principles”. Key features include employability, academic skills, assessment for learning and research-/practice-led teaching. Curriculum design principles elaborate on the key features. The implementation of the framework involved re-validating most modules to become 30-credit modules, rather than 15, incorporating the curriculum design principles.

---

<sup>23</sup> Approximate numbers as of December 2017 (*River University* website, 2018).

<sup>24</sup> Fewer than half the students self-identify as “white” on a survey (*River University* student profile, 2017).



In terms of learning & teaching more broadly, each faculty and department have a L&T lead although their visibility and activity vary. There is a centre to promote L&T, a type of learning development unit, which I name the LDU. Name changes in the past ten years included phrases such as higher education research, academic development, learning and teaching. It used to run a certificate in teaching in higher education but recently its main focus has been supporting the implementation of the HEA Fellowship scheme. The institution has the approval of the HEA to run its own university-branded scheme (see section 2.3.3). The scheme is currently being modified, somewhat controversially, to include teaching observation as an element. Apart from this, the LDU's main function has been assisting with the use of technology-enhanced learning (TEL); for example, with the introduction of a new VLE. However, there are signs of a broader focus on L&T with a new name, increased numbers of staff and proposals for new CPD<sup>25</sup> activities. As discussed in section 2.4.3 on identities, LDU staff's position in the institution is ambiguous since although often highly qualified in the field of higher education research, they belong to a team rather than an academic department and most importantly, their role is shaped primarily by institutional policy which seems to be more influential on practices. For example, an institutional KPI requires all academics' engagement with the Fellowship scheme and to have or be working towards an appropriate level of accreditation as a condition of promotion (see section 2.3.3). I discuss such discursive mechanisms further in my analysis. Having given a brief sketch of the institution, I describe the specific setting of my study in Chapter 4.

---

<sup>25</sup> Continuing professional development: activities to develop skills, knowledge, experience as a professional. Self-directed or required by professional bodies. Usually documented and reviewed e.g. in appraisal process.

## 2.6 Summary

This chapter has outlined the national and institutional context in terms of significant changes; functions of, and relations between, key HE organisations; areas of debate and some details about the institution in order to provide a background to my study. In the next chapter, I outline my theoretical framework.

### **3 Theoretical framework**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the key ideas that underpin my research. I focus on Bernstein's (1990; 2000) concepts around pedagogic discourse and the pedagogic device for analysing how pedagogic practices come into being – specifically, practices around assessment - including how they are shaped by external forces. I consider how policy is theorised in the literature and outline the conceptualisation of policy I use in my study. I also discuss a theory of language and approach to critical discourse analysis which complement this and support systematic analysis of texts whether written or spoken. I then discuss the main concepts used in the study and how I define them for the purposes of my research. I finish by drawing the different theoretical strands together.

#### **3.2 The role of theory**

Explicitness about the theoretical foundations of a study is advocated in both critical discourse studies (e.g. Wodak & Meyer, 2015) and education (e.g. Ashwin, 2012; Trowler, 2012). Also foregrounded is the need to select theories and concepts relevant to the object of study thus following Mouzelis (1995) in viewing social theory as a tool to investigate issues. These concerns are exemplified by Ashwin's (2012) exploration of the affordances of different theories for examining aspects of higher education "teaching-learning interactions" which includes L&T practices, curriculum and assessment, not simply classroom interactions as the name might suggest. He explicitly addresses the issue of considering "structure and agency" by examining the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical underpinnings in research. Some theories

may focus more on the local level which he suggests can be the weakness of an “Approaches to learning and teaching” perspective and of a practices approach e.g. “Academic Literacies” if one wants to explore wider influences. For connecting this wider “macro-context of social and political structures” with practices in a particular institution, Bernstein’s frameworks are valuable (Ashwin, 2012, p. 89). Critical discourse studies (CDS) is transparent about theoretical influences on the different strands, e.g. the discourse-historical approach, under the umbrella of approaches within CDS (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). It is also clearly problem-oriented as I discuss in section 3.5. The problem as the starting point, as well as a willingness to engage with other concepts and methods to explore an issue, present a complementarity between Bernstein’s ideas and CDS as I discuss further in sections 3.6 and 3.9.

### 3.3 A Framework for understanding pedagogy: Bernstein

Bernstein did not view his ideas as a theory but as ideas and frameworks to explore *problems* (Moore, 2013). I argue that Bernstein’s ideas provide a rich, relevant framework for addressing my research questions. I do not wish to simply prove the ideas in light of my analysis but assess their relevance and explanatory power. I outline how his ideas around the principles of pedagogy support investigation of the issues central to my study. These issues comprise firstly, *how* different agencies, in different strata or levels of context contribute to transforming knowledge to become pedagogic practice. That is, how forces external to the institution influence what is taught and how. Secondly, the issue of *what* is relayed; for example, the types of knowledge or skills, forms of pedagogy, the relationships between teacher and student.

Bernstein's principles of pedagogy, including the pedagogic device detailed below, have been described as "unique in formulating connections between the organization and structuring of knowledge, the means by which it is transmitted and the ways in which acquisition is experienced" (Arnot & Reay, 2004, p. 137). These connections represent the *how* or principles of pedagogy which was Bernstein's primary interest rather than what was relayed. Yet, his ideas provide ways of discussing the *what* in terms of conceptualising different forms of pedagogy and pedagogic identities. Since I examine policy texts on learning & teaching, I require concepts that can illuminate the *what* as well as provide a framework for investigating *how* different agencies come to influence learning, teaching and assessment practices.

Another concern in my study is the tensions between agencies and actors with different priorities and views of a university education. The conceptualising of the process of the pedagogic transmission of knowledge key to Bernstein's work can illuminate these sources of tension. This process starts with the source of knowledge production such as universities or private research organisations, traces the movement and transformation of knowledge through the influences of the State and its agencies, through education departments in universities, and then onto schools or universities to become curriculum subjects. Although Bernstein's ideas are sometimes seen as highly abstract, researchers have provided examples to illustrate the principles. For example, Ashwin (2012) describes the notion of moving from discipline as research to "discipline as curriculum" (Ashwin, 2012, p. 87) and the transformations that take place

between these spaces in order to produce material to teach and a way of teaching it. However, this is not a simple, smooth process. These spaces of transformation, the recontextualising fields in the pedagogic device discussed below, are sites of struggle over whose knowledge, whose discourses will predominate.

### 3.3.1 Pedagogic discourse

Before explaining the usefulness of the pedagogic device itself, I discuss other relevant concepts. Investigating influences on decisions around pedagogic practices in an institution requires a concept capable of explaining the principles of how these different influences are brought together and how powerful macro or social/political influences can be. The notion of pedagogic discourse is actually what Bernstein describes as a principle, “a recontextualising principle which selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 33) and the way in which various discourses are brought together to form the voice of education. The focus was on education’s own voice and what he terms “relations within” pedagogic discourse rather than “relations to” which concerns how education reproduces relations external to the discourse of education such as relations of class, racial inequality, gender.

Pedagogic discourse involves two discourses: rules that create “specialised skills” or the subject “instructional discourse” and rules that create the social order “regulative discourse”. Instructional discourse (the subject) is always embedded within a regulative discourse (power coming into play through the incorporation of “morals or values”) and the latter dominates (Bernstein, 2000, p. 32). The

subject is embedded within a set of values and “the secret voice of this device is to disguise the fact that there is only one” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 32). In higher education, this concerns values and priorities over not only what should be taught but how:

The theory of instruction also belongs to the regulative discourse, and contains within itself a model of the learner and of the teacher and of the relation. The model of the learner is never wholly utilitarian; it contains ideological elements. (Bernstein, 2000, p. 35)

As the extract shows, regulative discourse is seen as a recontextualising principle which I discuss below in relation to the pedagogic device. Since I focus on learning & teaching policy documents which portray an ideal of learners’ and teachers’ roles, identities and their relationship, the principle of models of teaching being part of regulative discourse allows me to question why a particular form of pedagogy and pedagogic relationships are foregrounded in policy documents and consider in whose interests these idealised representations are.

The word discourse has many conceptualisations and in section 3.6.5, I distinguish this notion of discourse from the primary one from critical discourse studies (CDS) used in analysis of texts in this study.

### 3.3.2 Classification and framing

Although I am not doing a comparative study of other subjects and other institutions, I am interested in whether subject areas such as business studies or indeed certain types of institutions e.g. *new universities* are particularly permeable to other influences. A further concern is how policy documents construct models of learning & teaching. The concepts of classification and framing can be utilised to address these issues. Classification concerns the strength of boundaries. There can be strong or weak classification between different subject areas, agents and practices (see section 3.3.6 for discussion of subject areas). Framing is concerned with how the learning & teaching are done e.g. the selection, pacing, criteria and the level of control that the transmitter (teacher) or acquirer (student) has over these:

Classification refers to *what*, framing is concerned with *how* meanings are to be put together, the forms by which they are to be made public, and the nature of the social relationships that go with it. (Bernstein, 2000, p.12)

Classification is linked with power, since strong classification suggests power is not diluted by other actors, and framing with control i.e. the extent of control that a teacher or student have. Framing focuses on the processes through which a curriculum and associated pedagogy are created and concerns the extent of control within a particular context. These processes not only involve decisions about content selection and pacing but also address how the learner-teacher relationship is framed. Weak framing means the acquirer has more apparent control over the elements and how the learning occurs. Some elements may be



weak e.g. pacing but others could be strong e.g. relations between teachers and students. These processes are sites of struggle between the priorities of a range of stakeholders such as academics, professional bodies and government agencies. Ashwin (2012) gives the example of the influence of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) with its guidelines on appropriate pedagogic approaches, as well as knowledge practices, for different disciplines. In this study, I focus on a selection of the HEA's policy documents.

### 3.3.3 The Pedagogic device

The pedagogic device is a set of principles for exploring the transformation of knowledge into pedagogic communication. It outlines the characteristics and workings of the mechanism or "relay" through which pedagogic communication is created; not simply what is relayed but how it is relayed (Bernstein, 2000). It provides principles for understanding how, for example, research knowledge in business studies becomes curriculum in a university and how agencies and actors in the recontextualising fields (see section 3.3.4) influence these transformations. Thus, in my study, it offers a framework for exploring *how* subject content and forms of pedagogy come to be as they are. First, I outline the main principles of the pedagogic device and detail their relevance to my study. In section 3.3.4, I establish the importance of the notion of recontextualising fields in explaining how different agencies potentially impact pedagogic discourse as well as the struggle between agencies e.g. of the state, professional bodies and actors within universities.

The device brings together the macro and micro structuring of knowledge by drawing connections between the contexts in which knowledge is produced (field of production), transformed into pedagogic discourse (field of recontextualisation) and reproduced through pedagogic practice (field of reproduction) (Bernstein, 2000). Each of these fields has a set of rules characterising the field: the distributive, recontextualising and evaluative rules respectively. These are in a hierarchical relationship with each other in that distributive rules influence the recontextualisation rules which, in turn, influence the evaluative.

The distributive rules concern who has access to what type of knowledge “who may transmit what to whom and under what conditions” (Bernstein, 1990, p. 183) and who are legitimate learners and teachers. Bernstein considers two types of knowledge: the mundane (specific to context) and esoteric (not context specific) and his particular concern was who has access to the latter. This could be a result of how the distribution of knowledge is controlled, for example, through the form of the education system. In the UK, grammar schools and private schools<sup>26</sup> arguably offer certain types of knowledge less common in state schools. In higher education, different types of institution have begun to offer degrees (see Chapter 2). Further, as Bernstein (2000) indicates, some institutions are more teaching-focused than research-focused and this may impact what is offered.

---

<sup>26</sup> grammar: selective by ability, free; private: fee-paying, selective.

The recontextualising rules concern how knowledge is transformed into pedagogic discourse thus becoming a school or university subject. Content must be selected and sequenced, pacing must be decided; in other words, a curriculum created. These transformations from an area of research into a university subject e.g. physics or history, are not simply about the arrangement of knowledge for a purpose but involve delocating and relocating different discourses (Bernstein, 1990). This creates space in which agents can influence the form of this recontextualisation and the device becomes “an arena of struggle between different groups for the appropriation of the device, because whoever appropriates the device has the power to regulate consciousness” (Bernstein 2000, p. 38). In higher education, professional bodies and political institutions may have an influence on the appropriate focus of a university education (Ashwin, 2012) (see section 3.3.4). A widely-quoted example illustrating the principle of the recontextualising rules is when the subject sociology becomes a more applied version such as criminology or social policy in newer universities with differing elements of curriculum content (McLean, Abbas & Ashwin, 2013; 2017).

The final part of the pedagogic device involves the evaluative rules. These centre on pedagogic practice and the notion of learners producing legitimate texts in the form of assessments. These rules may be established more locally. However, since these are linked back to the other sets of rules, practices of learning, teaching and assessment cannot be fully understood only by considering the school/university level itself (Ashwin, 2012). Although assessments provided the starting point for my study and form a part of my data, I analyse them for what

they can illuminate about the impact of agencies in the recontextualising fields and possible tensions between the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) which I discuss in more depth in the next section.

Figure 1 below illustrates these principles of the pedagogic device and I have annotated it with points relevant to higher education and my own study. A point about higher education is that the producers of knowledge may also be the recontextualisers and evaluators of knowledge through research, teaching and assessment although this is not the case in all universities. It is worth noting at this stage that the arrows in the diagram move both ways so although one can initially see it as a top to bottom or macro to micro process, there is potential for movement both ways and the device is “not deterministic in its consequences” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 38) with the potential for individual/group agency and resistance which I discuss further below and in my analysis.

#### 3.3.4 The official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF)

A key question for my study is how policies move, intersect with other policies and are engaged with across different contexts. The notion of the recontextualising fields conceptualises the influence of different types of agencies from different strata e.g. the state and its agencies, professional bodies as well as groups in universities themselves but also the tensions and struggle for prominence between them. This influence extends over both regulative and

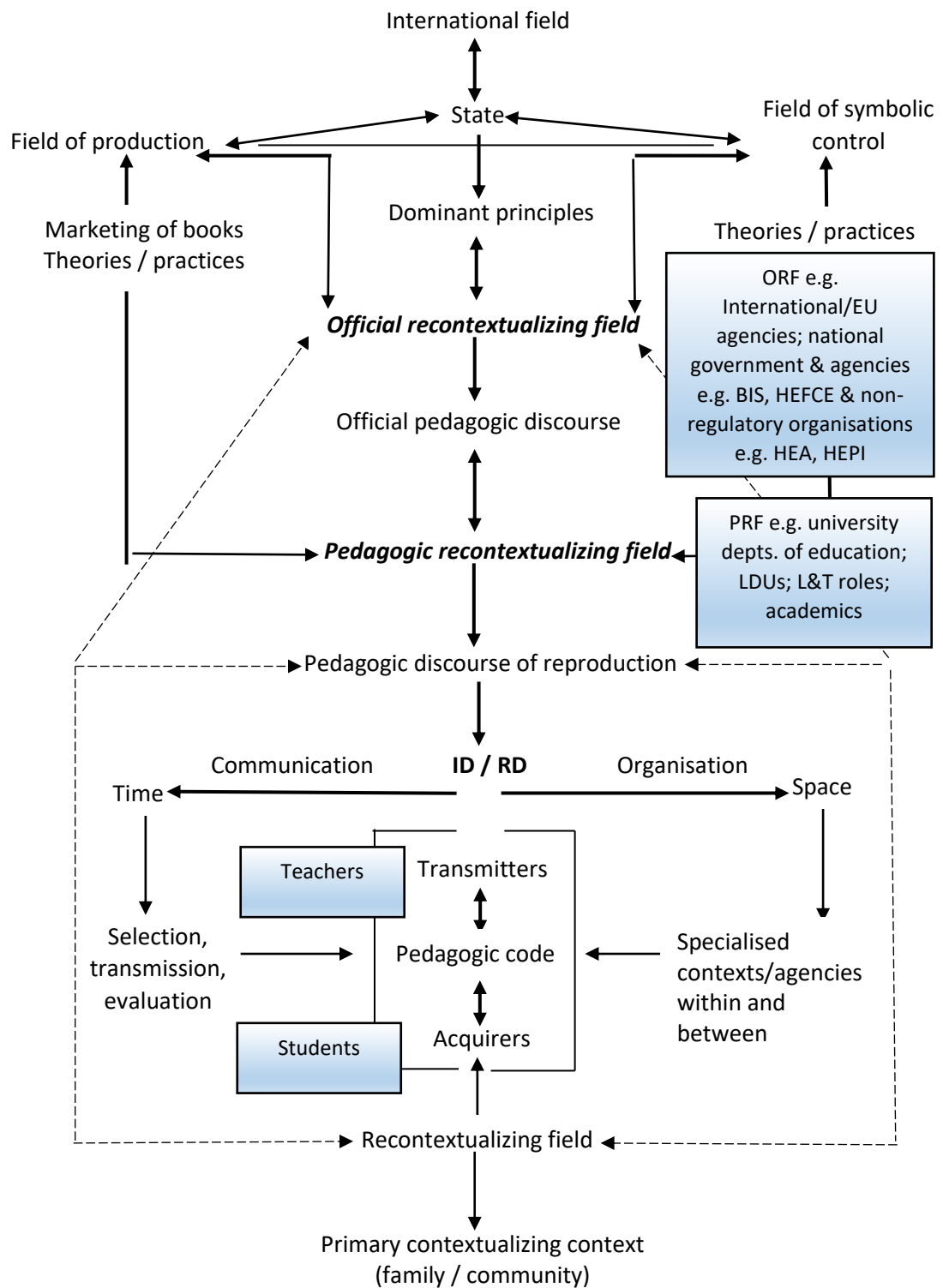


Figure 1. The pedagogic device. Based on Bernstein, 1990, p. 197.

instructional discourse (section 3.3.1) in terms of priorities and values, curriculum and ways of teaching. By viewing these influences as within fields, one can also consider the presence of new actors in a field and the influence of the field as a whole.

As Figure 1 illustrates, the recontextualising field comprises two sub-fields: the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF). The ORF comprises the state and its agencies. In the UK, this includes government departments of education and higher education agencies such as HEFCE, HESA, QAA amongst others (see Chapter 2). The PRF includes academics, university departments of education, lecturers with L&T roles, academic/educational developers often within LDUs and education media (see Chapter 2 and e.g. Trowler, 2004). There may be some debate about the positioning of the HEA. For example, Ashwin et al. (2015) place the HEA in the higher education field but suggest its discourses are part of the ORF (p. 3). In McLean et al. (2017), policy documents from developer groups are described as coming from the field of HE and thus from the PRF. This illustrates the potential for ambiguity around positioning. I choose to view the HEA as part of the ORF but perhaps more important is the relations and struggle within and between the fields. As discussed in section 3.3.2, a recurring theme within Bernstein's work is the strength of boundaries between different sites or fields. Regarding the recontextualising fields, one concern is the autonomy of the PRF; that is, its freedom from state or other agencies' control (Bernstein, 2000). This aligns with my interest in the ideological character of policy and how policy becomes

embedded in university practices. The transformations occurring in the recontextualising fields are described in the following way:

As the discourse moves from its original site to its new positioning as pedagogic discourse, a transformation takes place. The transformation takes place because every time a discourse moves from one position to another, there is a space in which ideology can play. No discourse ever moves without ideology at play. (Bernstein, 2000, p. 32)

Although Bernstein's definition of ideology is not explicitly stated, he describes the ways in which changes occur in the recontextualising field. In my study, I analyse selected texts from the HEA, trace discursive links with other ORF agencies, consider how these ideas are embedded within one institution and whether there are alternative voices within the PRF.

The conceptualisation of the pedagogic device has proved a valuable analytical framework as evident in studies that have applied it in different contexts. The expansion of the ORF to include international organisations and private think-tanks' influence on policy and practice in the Australian school education context was considered by Loughland & Sriprakash (2016). They demonstrate how the notion of "equity" is recontextualised by agencies with a market orientation and how this impacts at the school level thus exemplifying the idea of an expanding ORF and the loss of autonomy of the PRF. The tensions within and between the ORF and PRF are explored by Singh, Thomas & Harris (2013) who focus on the role of what they call "mid-level policy actors" in schools e.g. professional

development groups and teaching unions, in interpreting national policy on child protection. They demonstrate how the notion of recontextualisation “offers a coherent analytic framework for examining processes of policy enactment” (p. 477) by considering how these actors reinterpret policy to suit teachers’ contexts. The focus on teachers as recontextualisers of official discourse is embodied in Lim’s (2017) study of the adoption of “critical thinking” in Singapore schools. Weaker framing through teachers relating the notion to students’ lives and social issues allows for a less instrumental and potentially emancipatory conceptualisation.

Further, the principles of the pedagogic device are central to McLean et al.’s (2017) large study of “quality” and inequality in undergraduate sociology programmes in different types of HEI. The principles are used to interpret how sociology is differently classified and framed, with one of the less elite universities “Diversity” found to offer a strongly framed, theory-based course together with clear applications to everyday life. Their findings are used to argue for encouraging a strong disciplinary focus and identity in contrast to a generic, employment-oriented version of education. These studies exemplify how the pedagogic device can be put to work to investigate issues.

### 3.3.5 Performance models and competence models

In the following sections, I move beyond the device or mechanism itself and explain the power of concepts related to the “how” and “what” of teaching since these can illuminate the constructions in the L&T policy texts. Bernstein (2000) develops two models of pedagogic practice which classify and frame in different



ways. These are invisible pedagogies or competence models and visible pedagogies or performance models. The former involves weak classification of space, time and discourse and a focus on teachers' professionalism in assessing the learning or transformation occurring within the individual. The learner has more autonomy. Performance models exhibit strong classification, a focus on the outcomes and outputs of the learner and on the skills currently lacking. There is explicitness in teaching and assessment. Competence models focus on difference; performance models on deficit (Bernstein, 2000). The preference towards a particular model is linked to the age of the learner, the subject area but also clearly to educational trends and political influence and Bernstein is known for criticising some elements of progressive education, its invisible pedagogies and lack of explicitness which disadvantage children from working-class backgrounds (Moore, 2013). The three modes of competence model are situated within their socio-political environment: liberal/progressive (development within the individual) evident in 1960s/1970s UK schooling; populist (focused on competences within a local culture or particular contexts); radical mode (within group with emancipatory aims). Freire (e.g. 1972) is cited as a proponent of the radical mode which typically occurs within adult education (Bernstein, 2000).

Although Bernstein suggests higher education is likely to focus on performance models or visible pedagogies with clearly defined texts according to explicit criteria and outcomes, Ashwin (2012) notes that some practices within art & design and music resemble competence models. More pertinently, McLean et al. (2017) in their study on sociology in different HEIs, found that less elite

universities were engaged in more visible pedagogies. These concepts are relevant to my study since the L&T documents I analyse construct a particular model of pedagogic practice while interview accounts draw a different picture. Next, I turn to concepts Bernstein describes as types of performance mode which superficially seem to focus on disciplinary differences but their significance lies in their links to performance model characteristics.

### 3.3.6 Singulars, regions and generic modes

This section concerns the “what” of curriculum content which is the topic of both policy texts and interviews. I should state that I do not see the notion of discipline as necessarily pivotal in my study since influences at the institutional level may be more important. I take from Bernstein the importance of classification and permeability but more in relation to differences in elite and non-elite HEIs’ offerings. However, the distinctions between modes is useful for conceptualising the influence of generic modes, in particular, as I discuss below.

The principles of classification and framing are applied to the discussion of disciplines where subject areas are divided into singulars and regions with a singular being: “a specialized, discrete discourse with its own intellectual field of texts, practices, rules of entry, modes of examination and principles of distributing success and privileges” (Bernstein, 1990, p. 156) and more inward-looking. He gives examples such as physics, maths, history, and economics. Regions, on the other hand, are described as a “recontextualizing of disciplines into larger units which operate both in the intellectual field of disciplines and in the field of practice” (p. 156). Traditional regions include engineering, medicine,

education and architecture while newer regions comprise business studies, communications and media. Regions look inward to certain singulars but also outward to professional bodies and particularly to the demands of the market. With regions, the classification or boundaries are weaker and thus more permeable to outside influences. This is relevant since my focus is on business studies (see Chapter 4), a region, and the notion of other influences on pedagogy is central to my study.

A further mode which occurs where the voice of the discipline is very weak is generic modes. As the name suggests, these refer to general skills with an orientation to work and life and originate from employment-focused agencies outside the PRF (Bernstein, 2000). Such general skills are “directly linked to the instrumentalities of the market” and embody a sense of “trainability” and “capacity” rather than any specific ability (p. 55). “Trainability” aligns with the current widespread term “employability”, the topic of one of the selected policy texts, with its view of a world with ever-changing needs resulting in demand for people who can continuously adapt and be flexible as Bernstein outlines:

... where life experience cannot be based on stable expectations of the future and one's location in it. Under these circumstances it is considered that a vital new ability must be developed: 'trainability', the ability to profit from continuous pedagogic re-formations and so cope with the new requirements of 'work' and 'life'. These pedagogic re-formations will be based on the acquisition of generic modes which it is hoped will realise a

flexible transferable potential rather than specific performances. Thus generic modes have their deep structure in the concept 'trainability'.

(Bernstein, 2000, p. 59)

He suggests there is "an emptiness in the concept of trainability" but emphasises the social basis of the conception of generic modes and describes them as establishing trainability as the main pedagogic aim:

The extension of generic modes from their base in manual practices to a range of practices and areas of work, institutionalises the concept of trainability as the fundamental pedagogic objective. The specialised recontextualising field produces and reproduces imaginary concepts of work and life which abstract such experiences from the power relations of their lived conditions and negate the possibilities of understanding and criticism. (Bernstein, 2000, p. 59)

The suggestion is that while they seem neutral and value-free, they are a product of the social order as discussed below.

These three modes are connected with the concepts of introjection and projection with singulars focused on the former, looking inwards, and regions and generic modes the latter looking outward to market demands. He noted that singulars used to be the common mode but that perhaps regions would become typical from the late-twentieth century onwards. He also saw generic modes as a more recent trend. A salient point that Bernstein makes about generic modes is

their resemblance to competence modes through their aim to develop skills and competence within the learner and they may be constructed as central to a process of transformation and becoming but are, in fact, involved in projection outwards to life and career beyond education e.g. becoming an employable graduate. This can be illustrated by considering generic skills such as *reflection* and *articulating learning* (see Chapter 5). Superficially, they involve inner transformation but if used in assessment become performance modes with the aim of employment. Bernstein recognised this contradiction:

Thus generic modes and the performances to which they give rise are directly linked to instrumentalities of the market, to the construction of what are considered to be flexible performances. From this point of view their identity is constructed by procedures of projection despite superficial resemblance to competence modes. (Bernstein, 2000, p. 55)

In later work, Bernstein explicitly discusses the notion that different types of institution are likely to have different offers with elite institutions focusing on singulars and less elite ones focusing more on regions and possibly generic modes since the latter are more likely to be responsive to the market and offer courses that seem attractive to the types of students likely to attend. Although currently all universities face market pressures, there is still validity in this assertion of potentially differing focus.

### 3.3.7 Pedagogic identities

This section considers concepts pertinent to my analysis of how students and academics are constructed within the policy documents and how they construct themselves and others in interviews (Chapter 2 outlined the importance of identities in the discursive landscape). In some of his final work, Bernstein outlines, in what he calls “no more than a sketch” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 65), ideas around “official knowledge and pedagogic identities: the politics of recontextualisation” thus taking a more overt look at what he terms the “official arena” and different versions of the state. This is also where he focuses on higher education rather than schools. He describes pedagogic identities as “embedding a career in a collective base” or social order. The social base incorporates both state and local bases. He outlines a model which connects official pedagogic identities of the state with identities available to local actors. He suggests these different positions in the political arena with their differing approaches to managing change “are expected to become the lived experience of teachers and students, through the shaping of their pedagogic identity” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 66). Thus, he addresses the kinds of identities available. Figure 2 below shows Bernstein’s classification of identities.

Although there are four positions, they are not regarded as either static or mutually exclusive. I will not describe the model in detail but rather discuss relevant points about the two “de-centred” identities since they are recognisable in parts of higher education today. “De-centred” identities are characterised as

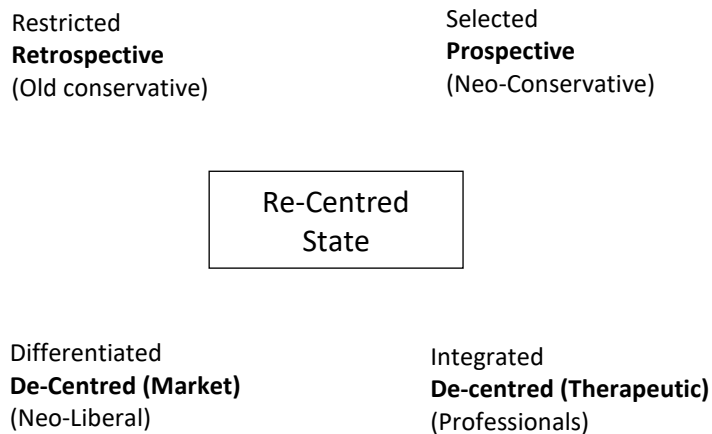


Figure 2. Modelling pedagogic identities, classification. Bernstein, 2000, p. 67.

having some degree of autonomy and a focus on the present. The market one, also described as “instrumental”, focuses on projection outwards to market demands with “personal commitment and particular dedication of staff and students ... regarded as resistances” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 69). The key point is that elite universities can maintain an element of introjection and a focus on knowledge creation while non-elite institutions in particular are responsive to market demands in creating their course offering:

... the unit of discourse is likely to be a unit which with other units can create varying packages according to the contingencies of local markets. As these market contingencies change, or are expected to change, the ‘new’ permutations of units can be constructed. Here the identity of staff and students are likely to be formed less through mechanisms of introjection but far more through mechanisms of *projection*.

(Bernstein, 2000, p. 70)

Although this could be viewed as a simplification in the current context, it provides a useful framework for exploration.

The therapeutic identity is described rather abstractly as progressive, a means of invisible control with a focus on non-specialised, flexible thinking and team work operating through a soft management style, with hierarchies and power disguised by interpersonal relations (Bernstein, 2000). This sounds like a competence model and this view is supported by Ensor (2004) in her study of changes to higher education curricula in South Africa. A salient point about the therapeutic identity is that “the concept of self is crucial and the self is regarded as a personal project” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 73). This focus on self-development is part of the construction of the purpose of a higher education. Bernstein suggests this model is not common due to its high costs and difficulties in measuring outcomes. However, I believe there are recognisable elements of these identities, relating to both the cooperative aspects and the focus on self, constructed within the policy documents as I discuss in Chapters 5 and 7.

The notion of pedagogic identities has been explored in a variety of contexts. Moore (2003) examines higher education reforms in the South African context and notes the usefulness of the notion of identity positions for analysing academics’ accounts of their identity. Cambridge (2010) utilises the principles to argue that the International Baccalaureate projects a “progressive, de-centred therapeutic identity” with a focus on developing character but is threatened by a market one. Beck & Young (2005, p. 183) consider the range of pedagogic identities available to those in higher education in an era of “increasing



marketization and managerialism” and question whether regions and generic modes lead to a less stable identity for academics. Identity, specifically the power of a disciplinary identity in overcoming inequality, is also a central concern in McLean et al.’s (2017) study. The construction of identities within policy documents but also interview data is a key area for analysis in this study (see Chapter 4).

Bernstein’s ideas are sometimes criticised for being over-abstract but also presenting dichotomies that may not reflect reality. However, despite his interest in relations between categories, he recognised that mixes were possible and that continuums existed. Despite the appearance of mechanisms and power working downwards, the arrows on the pedagogic device diagram move both ways and he suggested, as noted earlier, that resistance and change are possible (Bernstein, 2000). Since the fields are sites of struggle and opposition, there is the possibility for agency in educational institutions. He also recognised that positions are not static but change over time. In later work, Bernstein (2000) points to the increasing control and influence of the state and the consequent reduction in autonomy of educational researchers and teachers themselves over the construction of pedagogic discourse and practices. These influences on practices, particularly through policy texts and policy mechanisms, are key to my own study.

### 3.3.8 Summary

The pedagogic device and the concepts of pedagogic discourse, classification and framing, performance-competence models, singulars, regions and generic modes

and pedagogic identities provide a way of examining the mechanism through which university subjects come into being, the characteristics of what is relayed and the likely implications for practices and people. The notions of the recontextualising field and the ORF/PRF are particularly valuable for exploring who has power and influence over what is taught and what kinds of knowledge and values subjects are embedded within. However, Bernstein's ideas also provide analytical frameworks for exploring models of learning and teaching and identities of teachers and students. Since I am examining policy on L&T, the concepts further offer a lens through which to discuss my findings regarding constructions of learning & teaching in documents and accounts.

Bernstein invited researchers to produce empirical evidence to test the ideas. Indeed, the concepts discussed here have been employed in numerous studies and I have included salient examples above which indicate an increasing interest in using his later ideas to explore how power and control operate in current higher education contexts (e.g. Singh, Atweh & Shield, 2006; Wheelahan, 2010). Greater use of his ideas in higher education research is also advocated in (Donnelly & Abbas, 2019). Since part of my analysis involves examining policy texts mainly within the ORF, next I turn to how policy is theorised.

### 3.4 Theorising policy

#### 3.4.1 Overview

My interest in the connections between policy and practices requires a clear conceptualisation of policy and a means to explore these connections. Thus, this section outlines different approaches to understanding policy using examples

from education where possible. While policy may be viewed as discursive in character, few approaches to policy analysis actually analyse texts systematically (Ashwin & Smith, 2015; Fairclough, 2013; Saarinen, 2008). Therefore, I finish by describing the potential contribution of discursive approaches to policy analysis.

Most discussion around policy analysis highlights the broad divide between positivist and interpretive frames which have different understandings about the nature of knowledge (e.g. Ball, 2017; Fischer, Torgerson, Durnová, & Orsini, 2015; Trowler, 2014a). The latter labelled as post-positivist, interpretive or critical regard knowledge as constructed both in shaping or implementing/interpreting policy (Fischer et al., 2015). The positivist approach assumes that policy is based on sound knowledge in terms of identifying objective problems and proposing rational policy solutions. This knowledge is developed by experts and then implemented. Approaches based on these assumptions are usually labelled traditional or classical and focus on implementation within either a linear view of *design-implement* or a policy cycle of *identify problem-design solution-implement-review* (e.g. Fischer et al., 2015). Discussing higher education policy, Trowler (2014a) calls this the “rational-purposive model” in which policy objectives are clearly and unproblematically articulated and made by management or government agencies and then implemented on the ground in universities. Issues revolve around problems in relation to the process of implementation. Fischer (2015) notes that despite the push for the development of a multidisciplinary approach to “policy sciences” by Lasswell in the 1950s and growing interest in the study of policy during the

1960s and 1970s to attempt to solve social problems, research mostly attempted to measure inputs and outputs related to policy decisions.

It was only later in the 1980s that a “postpositivist” strand developed alongside the interpretive trend in the social sciences and a critical perspective emerged with the so-called “argumentative turn” drawing on Habermas’s (e.g. Habermas, 1984) notions of communicative action and deliberative democracy which offered principles for the critical evaluation of policy processes and communication (Saretzki, 2015). This took a wider view of policy analysis including challenging the normative assumptions on which a policy was based and considering the influence of the social context on policy reception.

#### 3.4.2 Critical policy studies (CPS)

The constructed nature of policy is explored in the field of critical policy studies (CPS) which exhibits clear connections with critical discourse studies (CDS) discussed in the next section. Similar to CDS, CPS is a collection of broadly critical approaches, rather than a single perspective, and includes three main strands: interpretive; critical; poststructuralist (Fischer et al., 2015). Although there is no doubt overlap between, and differences within, each approach, what they share is analysis of the situated, constructed nature of policy.

Regarding interpretive approaches, a broad field of study of interpretive policy analysis (IPA) has emerged with a focus on meaning-making as a reaction against the “top-down, instrumental-rational model of policy-making and implementation” (Yanow, 2015, p. 402). Studies focus on situated practices of

sense-making and “how policies mean” by exploring processes through which these meanings are communicated. There is a focus on the agency of actors involved in policy-making, and especially interpretation, and their ability to adapt policy for the local context leading to the concept of *appropriation* whereby actors reshape policy to suit their needs (Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009). To investigate these practices, qualitative, ethnographic approaches are needed in order to study policy formation and interpretation together. Some describe these as a middle ground between traditional and critical approaches (Levinson et al., 2009, p. 773). They focus on the contextual nature of policy construction and impact but do not necessarily foreground an emancipatory interest to the same extent as other perspectives within CPS (Fischer, 2015).

With clear links to CDS, the perhaps confusingly named “critical” strand within CPS refers to approaches drawing on Habermas’s examination of power structures and distorted forms of communication (Fischer et al., 2015). Some approaches focus on analysing how policy reproduces existing structures of power and domination with an emphasis on analysing the effects of policy. Others, also aligning their work within broadly critical approaches, though from a sociocultural standpoint, are those that focus on practices and “who can do policy” and “what can policy do” (Levinson et al., 2009, p. 769). Texts are situated within practices and the emphasis is on looking “beyond the text of policy to the practice that produces, embeds, extends, contextualises, and in some cases, transforms the text” (p. 770). Those taking a more critical standpoint argue, however, that with some interpretive approaches, there is too much emphasis on the agency of actors thus backgrounding issues of power.

Argued to be increasingly influential in critical policy studies (Fischer et al., 2015), poststructuralist approaches highlighting the concepts of diffuse networks of governmentality and the construction of the problems that policy is designed to solve, offer productive ways of exploring how policy works. Focused on analysing education policy mainly at the school level, Ball (2017) characterises his own work as the “sociology of policy” situated within a Foucauldian-inspired, social-constructivist approach and sees policy as a diffuse form of governance enacted through networks of agencies and actors both state and non-state. Policy embodies discourses which “mobilise truth claims and constitute rather than simply reflect social reality” (Ball, 2017, p. 8) thus aligning somewhat with CDS. Policies are not seen as objects but as processes and practices “ongoing, interactional and unstable” which may be resisted or remade within specific contexts (p. 10).

The concept of “policy technologies” illuminates how policy works in practical terms through new language, incentives, roles, identities and relationships rather than just official policy texts (Ball, 2017, p. 50). Ways that these technologies work in education are market form; performativity and management/leadership. Performativity refers to the culture of accountability of measures and reporting discussed in Chapter 2. While the language of policy is discussed regarding the “policy rhetorics and discourses” (p. 8), there is no systematic linguistic analysis but instead a focus on key terms such as *globalisation* and *choice*. This approach is valuable for highlighting the constructed and contingent nature of policy problems and solutions, the remaking of policy in particular contexts but also

how policy potentially remakes identities, thus aligning with Bernstein's (2000) concern with pedagogic identities.

If more encompassing approaches to policy have become the norm, such as those under the CPS label discussed above, the issue of what is *not* policy is raised by Johnson (2013) in relation to trends in language policy studies. A broad definition of policy can encompass official policy texts; mechanisms that have regulating power; processes (and indeed practices) which include creation, interpretation, appropriation and instantiation; policy texts and discourses across multiple contexts and layers of policy activity (Johnson, 2013, p. 9). These necessitate analysis beyond the single policy text to attempt to capture processes of policy remaking, movements of policy ideologies and practices around policy across space and time thus requiring concepts and methods that can attempt to analyse these phenomena (Barakos & Unger, 2016; Johnson, 2013).

This broad view which connects policy texts with practice is examined in higher education by Trowler (2014a) who, drawing selectively on the ideas of Ball (1994), argues like others that the traditional approach does not capture the reality of the complexity or "messiness" and that there is "only a limited distinction between policy making and policy implementation" since policy is made as it is put into practice (Trowler, 2014a, p. 15). Policy is conceptualised as any actions related to choosing goals, outlining values or allocating resources. It is "made" and remade through "recurrent practices, sets of attitudes and assumptions realized in specific contexts of practice" (p. 15) thus drawing on interpretive approaches. This creates a space to examine how policy is remade

and whether it is accepted, adapted or rejected. Influencing factors in the context are foregrounded, whether these are particular communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) e.g. subject areas, or particular formal groupings such as departments or faculties.

### 3.4.3 Summary

This section has explained how the move away from positivist views of policy-making towards interpretive and critical approaches in analysing texts, processes and practices and the movement of policy between settings can address the questions at the centre of this thesis. My interest lies in the connections between policy and practices so I take a critical, interpretive approach situated within critical discourse studies (CDS) which I outline in Chapter 4. As noted earlier, while the above approaches discuss language, they do not engage in detailed textual analysis. Fairclough (2013) argues for the contribution that critical discourse analysis (CDA)<sup>27</sup> can make, in this regard, to other approaches such as poststructuralist discourse analysis (PDA) and cultural political economy (CPE). In the following section, I discuss how CDS, specifically the discourse-historical approach (DHA), can provide concepts and analytical tools (see Chapter 4 for detail) for analysing policy texts and interview accounts but also provides the conceptual tools for exploring policy across settings. I then discuss how Bernstein's ideas, the conceptualisation of policy I outline and a discursive approach to analysis from the DHA can be brought together into a coherent framework.

---

<sup>27</sup> CDA is an earlier term for CDS. See section 3.5.



### 3.5 Critical Discourse Studies

A central issue for research that focuses on the discursive characteristics of policy and engages in detailed text analysis is to clarify the conception of language under discussion. Taking policy as situated and constructed, a link is needed between language and its context which views language as both reflecting but also constituting social processes and practices. This is a view of language as a social semiotic i.e. language as a resource for meaning situated within its sociocultural context (Halliday, 1978). Aligning with this, CDS views “language as a social practice” suggesting “a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). The ability of language to shape social relations and structures requires analysis of language as a manifestation of power within particular contexts rather than analysing language for its own sake (Fairclough, 1989, 2010; Wodak, 1989).

Characterised as problem-oriented, focused on social phenomena and, therefore, interdisciplinary, CDS embraces a range of underlying theories (social, cognitive and linguistic), approaches and methods and varying definitions of concepts such as discourse, ideology and context (Wodak and Meyer, 2009; 2015). The more recent term, critical discourse studies (Wodak and Meyer, 2015), embodies the notion of a collection of approaches drawing on varying theoretical underpinnings and different methods of analysis rather than a single method as perhaps suggested by the term CDA. With an interest in power, ideology and critique, CDS approaches seek to illuminate the hidden power relations within

texts; recognising that texts may show evidence of competing discourses and ideologies (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

Interdisciplinarity is highlighted as a common feature across CDS approaches since “complex interrelations between discourse and society cannot be analysed adequately unless linguistic and sociological approaches are combined” (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 7). In order to integrate the sociological and linguistic, there is a need to mediate between “text and institution, communication and structure and between discourse and society” (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 9). Utilising conceptual tools that can address a particular problem is embodied in the notion of “conceptual pragmatism” (Mouzelis, 1995). Although I cannot collaborate with researchers from other fields, by using Bernstein’s concepts from the sociology of pedagogy, my study utilises ideas that are key to answering my research questions and enriching my analysis. I outline the complementarity between different strands of my framework in sections 3.6 and 3.9.

### 3.5.1 The discourse-historical approach

I have chosen to draw on a particular approach within CDS: The discourse-historical approach (DHA). Described as drawing on the Frankfurt School of critical theory; Bernstein’s work; argumentation theory, amongst others (Reisigl, 2018), key principles underpinning the approach include: interdisciplinarity; problem-orientation; eclectic use of theory and method according to the problem investigated; recursive movement between theory and data; a variety of genres and spaces; importance of historical context; intertextual/interdiscursive relations; non-fixed categories and methods; use of ethnographic fieldwork

(Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 32). This approach has mainly been used to discuss overtly political topics such as discrimination (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001), national identity (Wodak, De Cillia, Reisigl & Liebhart, 2009), European politics and identity (Krzyżanowski, 2010; Wodak, 2011a) and right-wing populism (Wodak, 2015) which have a clear historical element but also more recently used in analysing language policy (Barakos & Unger, 2016; Unger, 2013).

In terms of key features, the DHA views an examination of context as crucial to fully understanding how a text makes meaning and context is multi-faceted as discussed below. Historical can be taken to mean examining changes over more compressed timescales with a focus on intertextual and interdiscursive transformations not just a long historical view (Wodak, 2011b). Key concepts within the DHA are discussed in section 3.7 and details of analytical tools in Chapter 4. Among my reasons for choosing the DHA is its emphasis on detailed text analysis and its focus on recontextualisation and the links between texts with its inclusion of “intertextuality and interdiscursivity” as discourse-analytic categories (see section 3.7.7). This enables me to engage in detailed textual analysis of policy texts and explore discursive connections between texts in different settings. Furthermore, the DHA incorporates ethnographic-inspired approaches including field work, observations and interviews to deepen analysis of the context (Krzyżanowski, 2011).

Critique is key in CDS, and defined in a general sense as questioning prevailing ideas, but it is also conceptualised in the DHA, based on Critical Theory, as operating at three levels: text or discourse immanent critique, socio-diagnostic

critique and future-related prospective critique (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). The first is designed to uncover inconsistencies and contradiction within texts. The second aims to reveal persuasive or manipulative discursive practices by drawing on analysis of the wider context and the use of social theories. The third aims to offer a better way forward in terms of improving communication and thus focuses on the potential for application (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). However, reflexivity is also seen as key in terms of transparency of the researcher's background and position. I aim to address these different types of critique with analysis focusing particularly on the second.

Following Lawton (2016), I have taken key principles of the DHA from Reisigl & Wodak (2015) and shown how they are applied in my own study in Table 2 below. I regard my study as interdisciplinary in the sense of drawing on concepts from a range of fields to investigate the issue. I describe it as problem-oriented since I started with questions about assessment practices and the proliferation of guidelines and policy mechanisms within an HEI. I choose different policy genres from different layers of context and incorporate an ethnographic-inspired approach to studying practices *on the ground* by conducting interviews and gathering texts from the institution under study. Recontextualisation is a key area of enquiry since I wish to trace intertextual and interdiscursive relations between different texts from national level to the institution.

Table 2. Principles of the discourse-historical approach (DHA) applied to this study. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015.

<b>Principles of the Discourse-historical approach</b>	<b>Applied to this study</b>
<i>1. The approach is interdisciplinary.</i> Interdisciplinarity involves theory, methods, methodology, research practice and practical application.	Theoretical frameworks from DHA and Bernstein. Draws on linguistics, sociology, policy studies.
<i>2. The approach is problem-oriented.</i>	Questions around practices in an HEI. Issues around marketisation of higher education. The proliferation of policies and targets.
<i>3. Theories and methods combined and integrated.</i> Used when integration leads to an adequate understanding and explanation of the research object.	Integration of concepts from DHA and Bernstein's pedagogic device. Different types of data.
<i>4. Fieldwork and ethnography if useful.</i> Used if required for analysis and theorising of object under investigation.	Use of interviews and range of texts from institution.
<i>5. Abductive approach.</i> Research moves between theory and data	Moving back and forth between analysis of different types of data, theory and research questions.
<i>6. A range of genres and spaces.</i> Intertextuality and interdiscursivity explored.	Different genres of policy documents from different layers of context: national and institutional. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity examined between different policy genres and interview data.
<i>7. Historical context taken into account.</i> Recontextualisation is an important process linking texts and discourses across time.	Recontextualisation is key focus of study: exploring connections between policy and practice across time and space. Historical context of education trends utilised in analysis.
<i>8. Categories and methods are not fixed.</i> Should be specific to problem under investigation.	Most relevant analytical tools chosen e.g. macro-strategies. Argumentation schemes e.g. topoi, not pre-determined (see Ch.4).
<i>9. Middle-range theories often used in specific analyses.</i>	Bernstein's framework is focused on education and characterised as middle-range.
<i>10. Application of results an important aim.</i>	Sharing and critical discussion of findings is an aim of the study.

To enhance analysis, I draw on recent developments in higher education but also look further back in tracing educational trends in L&T as relevant. I use analytical tools from the DHA selectively and aim to identify argumentation schemes e.g. topoi (see section 4.5.4) specific to this field rather than simply use pre-determined categories. The approach is certainly abductive as I moved back and forth between theory, data and research questions refining the object of enquiry and research methods accordingly. I describe this process in Chapter 4.

### 3.6 Establishing complementarity and reconciling differences

I see a complementarity in my chosen frameworks and approaches and this finds support in the literature. Hasan (e.g. 2005) calls for exotropic theories such as Bernstein's, with exotropic defined as outward-looking with the ability to dialogue with other theories, to work with equally open theories. Moore (2013) argues that Bernstein was reluctant to be labelled and was interested in such "meta-dialogue" (Hasan, 2005) i.e. an openness to bring together concepts and a view of mixed theory and mixed methods as resources to investigate a problem. Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) argue that Bernstein's ideas and CDA can work together "by establishing compatibilities and 'relevances' between them" (p. 113) since CDA aims to explore relations between the discursive and non-discursive i.e. between language and social structures and practices. CDS approaches highlight the benefits of inter/transdisciplinary work (Weiss & Wodak, 2003; Fairclough, 2003) and eclecticism, in terms of methods, data and analytical tools to investigate particular issues (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

In addressing issues of inequality, both consider, for example, the role of time and space in obscuring the workings of power. Bernstein was interested in a theory of language that considered the social context and was in conversation with Halliday and Hasan. My study focuses mainly on the discursive aspects of structures and practices but recognises there are real organisations, actors and practices with real influences which are constituted in these discursive moments. Thus, although the DHA is concerned with the constructed character of discourse, it also embraces a "weak realism" (Reisigl, 2018). A few studies have sought to bring Bernstein and CDS together (e.g. Brady, 2015; Rønning Haugen, 2009;

Slough-Kuss, 2015); however, they lack detailed textual analysis. Studies using the DHA specifically are less apparent.

Clearly, CDS and the sociology of pedagogy are not of the same order and it is necessary to address any potential incompatibility. I aim to reconcile any differences between approaches, principally by explaining how I use particular concepts in the next section, discussing the theoretical connections further in section 3.9 and in outlining the methodology in Chapter 4.

### 3.7 Key Concepts

The importance of clarifying definitions of key concepts in studies that seek to be interdisciplinary and incorporate both social and discourse theories is highlighted by Weiss & Wodak (2003). Given the coverage of the pedagogic device and other sociological concepts at the start of this chapter, I focus on concepts from CDS; specifically, as employed in the DHA. However, I also discuss how these dialogue with Bernstein's ideas. I consider differing conceptualisations where appropriate, focusing on how they are defined and used in this research.

#### 3.7.1 Context

From an academic perspective, context has been debated and theorised in many different ways in the social sciences, including linguistics (some argue under-theorised e.g. Van Dijk, 2009). A conception of context is clearly at the heart of Bernstein's work from his early discussion of the impact of social background on the ability to interpret and respond to the context, to later concern with the principles of the process of pedagogy and knowledge transmission from the

primary context (field of production), to the secondary context (field of reproduction) which could be the school or university (Bernstein, 1990). As discussed in section 3.3, Bernstein’s ideas incorporate the principles of how national and more local agencies and actors influence pedagogy.

As discussed above, the link between discursive events and social relations is key in CDS and context is conceptualised as having different dimensions. As outlined in Table 3, the DHA conceptualises four levels of context from the immediate text through to the socio-political and historical context to be examined when engaging in analysis of discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015).

Table 3. Context in the DHA, Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, pp. 30-31.

A concept of ‘context’ with four dimensions:	
1	the immediate language or text-internal co-text and co-discourse
2	the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses
3	the social variables and institutional frames of a specific ‘context of situation’
4	the broader sociopolitical and historical context which discursive practices are embedded in and related to.

Analysis of context is designed to be done in a recursive way moving back and forth between the different dimensions (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). All form part of the textual analysis and the detail of how this is done in my study, in the first two levels in particular, is outlined in Chapter 4. The institutional frames and the



broader socio-political context were outlined in Chapter 2 and are discussed as part of the analysis in Chapters 5-7.

### 3.7.2 Fields of action

In this section, I outline how I make effective use of two differing notions of *field* for particular purposes. As discussed above, Bernstein (1990; 2000) describes the principles governing the fields of production, recontextualisation and reproduction of educational knowledge as part of the pedagogic device and the actors and agencies involved in each. My interest lies primarily in the recontextualising field and the boundaries between the ORF and PRF since I am exploring connections between policy and practice. I use these concepts to pinpoint the object of study and to discuss my findings.

However, for textual analysis, I choose to use the concept of “fields of action” with its emphasis on functions of discursive practices in each field and its conceptualisation of the location, and movement, of the texts in my study.

Originating from Girth’s (1996) work, it is used in the DHA (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; 2015) to outline different functions such as the formation of institution-internal or external attitudes; legislation; advertising. Figure 3 shows an example of the “arena of political action” with eight fields of action from Wodak (2015, p. 48). It illustrates connections between fields of action, genres within them and discourse topics found in those genres.

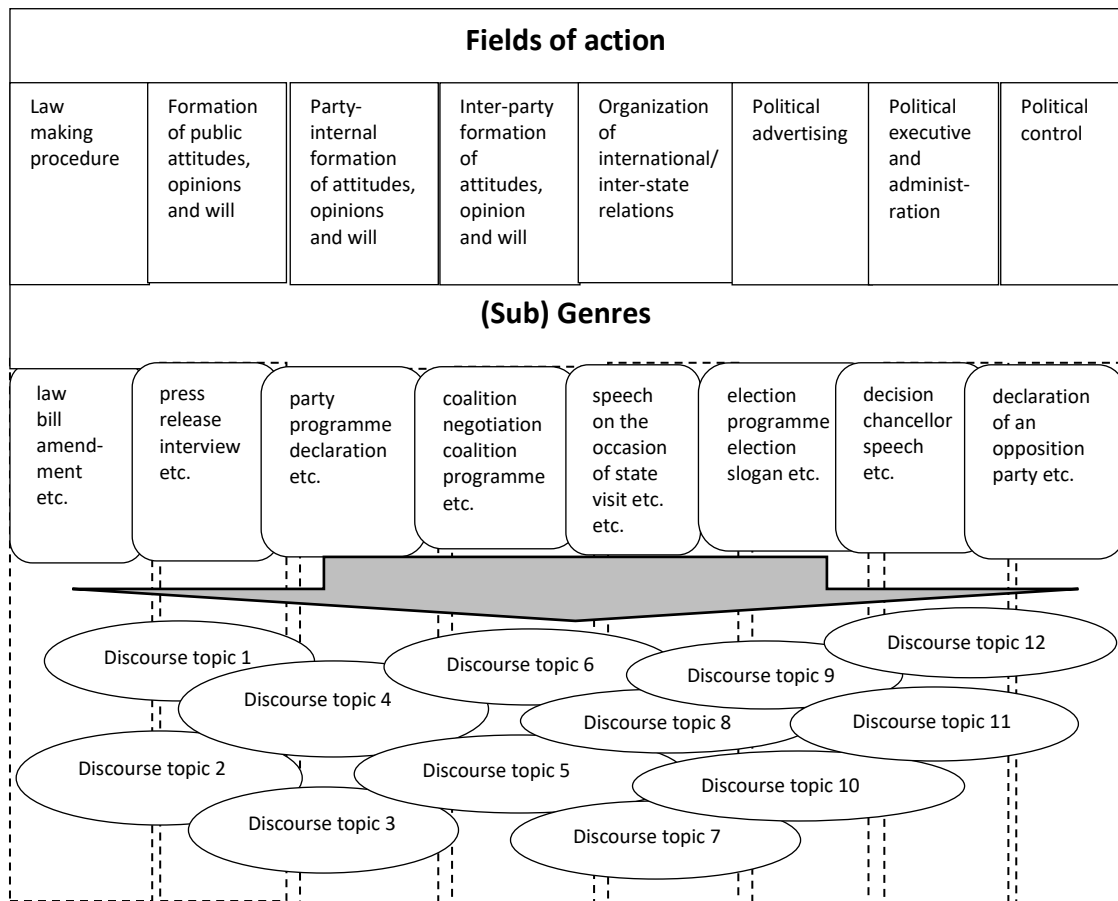


Figure 3. The 'Political Field': Functions, genres, discourses and discursive practices. Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 48.

This focus on function is a useful one since I am considering different spaces with different discursive functions. However, it is possible that a genre could appear in more than one field of action since, for example, a university strategy document could perform different functions internal or external to the institution. I am also examining how discourse on a particular topic, and the genres it is found in (see sections 3.7.3, 3.7.5 for definitions of these terms), change from one field of action to another i.e. from a government policy document in the field of action of policy-making, to a university strategy document in the field of action of institution-internal formation of attitudes, to a teaching document in the field of action of learning and teaching (see sections 3.7.6, 3.7.7 below). Actors can also

move between different fields. Connecting this movement with the pedagogic device, texts may originate in the ORF and move into the PRF.

### 3.7.3 Genre

Educational genres were a starting point for this study in that assessment texts drew my attention since some exhibited an interesting mix of academic and professional genres. This means that genre labels such as essay or report are hardly informative (Swales, 1990). Instead a more detailed analysis of characteristics is necessary for understanding assessment requirements (see Chapter 4). The notion of a genre chain (Swales, 2004) provides insight into the complexity of assessment since it often forms a chain of different summative parts, or genres, which constitute the final assessment e.g. group presentation - group report - individual reflection.

Aspects of the notion of genre are useful for my analysis since power can be exercised through certain genres (Weiss & Wodak, 2003). In the DHA, a genre is described as “a socially conventionalized type and pattern of communication that fulfils a specific social purpose in a specific social context” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 27). The focus on purpose and context provides a clear link between the text and how it is intended to be used and in what situation. It also connects genres with fields of action whereby discursive practices within fields have a particular function realised through different genres. For example, I analyse what I label HEA *policy discussion documents* but also compare them intertextually with much shorter HEA *policy framework documents* noting the changes between

genres and their different uses within different fields of action (see Chapters 4 & 5).

The conceptual metaphor of genre networks is employed to illustrate the interconnectedness of different genres (Swales, 2004). The network metaphor is useful in conceptualising the recontextualisation of knowledge, and discourses, as influenced by numerous agencies, discourses and genres in different spaces and at different times. For example, professional bodies' guidelines, national agencies' guidelines, institutional policy documents and departmental guidelines are all genres which influence learning, teaching and assessment. Clearly, it is impossible to capture the vast network of influences but this study chooses key agencies and genres to explore the connections with pedagogic practice (see Chapter 4). Although the concept of genre is not as pivotal in this study as the concept of discourse, its importance regarding policy documents lies in the function of certain genres, used in a network of related genres, and their use as powerful discursive mechanisms (e.g. HEA framework documents) to shape practices (see section 7.3.4). In addition to function, a genre's power derives from its patterning or structure which I discuss further in Chapter 4.

#### 3.7.4 Text

Texts may be written, oral or multimodal and are the concrete manifestations of speech acts (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). In the DHA, texts are not analysed for their own sake but as they relate to structured knowledge (discourses). Texts mediate between discourse and social practices or structures. They can be seen as belonging to a certain genre and situated within the layers of context outlined

above (Wodak, 2015). That is, they are linked to other texts intertextually and interdiscursively as discussed below. Thus, understanding the full meaning, and power, of a text requires analysis of the context since texts can be sites of struggle of competing discourses and ideologies (Weiss & Wodak, 2003).

### 3.7.5 Discourse

Numerous conceptualisations of discourse exist including: a text above the sentence level; a text in its social context; language seen as a form of social practice or action which is embodied in the DHA's conception of discourse discussed below (Barakos & Unger, 2016). In some CDS approaches, the non-count noun *discourse* is used while in others it is not. Fairclough (2015, p. 88) describes *a discourse/discourses* as "semiotic ways of construing aspects of the world ... identified with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors" leading to discourses with ideological labels e.g. a neoliberal discourse.

However, the DHA describes *discourse* in a multi-faceted way as "context-dependent semiotic practices" within particular fields of social action, socially constituted and socially constitutive, related to a particular macro-topic and linked to argumentation about validity claims involving people with different perspectives (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 27). The key features are summarised as: a) macro-topic relatedness b) pluri-perspectivity and c) argumentivity. For example, one could have *discourse about marketisation in education* which recognises that different people will have different views about marketisation; some supportive, some critical.

One issue is how the boundaries of a discourse are defined or constituted and their scope. Reisigl and Wodak (2015) argue that this depends on the analyst's perspective and boundaries are fluid rather than fixed. I outline in greater detail in Chapter 4 how the notion of discourse is operationalised for analysis, including the concepts of *discourse topics* and *discursive strategies*. The importance of the concept of discourse lies in its conceptualisation in constituting social relations as well as reflecting them and which topics, which perspectives are included, transformed or excluded, leading to the notion of recontextualisation.

#### 3.7.6 Recontextualisation

As discussed in section 3.3, Bernstein (1990) uses the concept in discussion of the principles governing the creation of pedagogic discourse. The notion of recontextualising fields embodies the idea of regulative discourse enacting an influence over what is to be taught and how. It concerns the influence of different agencies as knowledge passes from one context to another and the focus is on how power and control are enacted. The notion also attempts to theorise what conditions lead to smaller or greater changes occurring in the recontextualising field. I use Bernstein's notion of the recontextualising field and the two sub-fields, the ORF & PRF, as a framework for discussing movement of knowledge, manifested in texts, through time and space and also for providing concepts through which to discuss data.

Inspired by Bernstein, the concept has been used in CDS to inform discourse analysis of texts. It is clearly different to Bernstein's conceptualisation but it

retains resonances. The focus is on the process of dislocation, relocation and transformation. Arguments or topics are de-contextualised by being taken out of their original context and then recontextualised into the new text and context (even different field of action). In doing so, they may acquire a new or altered meaning; perhaps used for a different purpose (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015).

Wodak & Fairclough (2010), in their analysis of the recontextualisation of European higher education policies in Austria and Romania, describe recontextualisation in the following way highlighting the transformations in texts, discourses and genres and the differing effects according to setting:

Spatial and temporal relationships between texts involve relations of *recontextualization* whereby texts (and the discourses and genres which they deploy) move between spatially and temporally different contexts, and are subject to transformations whose nature depends upon relationships and differences between such contexts.

(Wodak & Fairclough, 2010, p. 22)

In the DHA, recontextualisation is operationalised by exploring intertextuality and interdiscursivity as described below. Krzyżanowski (2016) has argued for a return to Bernstein's conceptualisation in order to explore what he terms the increasingly conceptual nature of discourses. Although not focusing on education, he highlights the process of decontextualisation and strategic reshaping at intermediary levels thereby obscuring the source of the changes and their ideological nature.

In this study, I use Bernstein's conceptualisation in terms of considering the principles of how knowledge, whether *subject knowledge* or knowledge about *learning and teaching* is influenced by regulative discourse and changed as it moves through the recontextualising fields and into the field of pedagogic practice. However, for the purposes of discourse analysis of policy texts and interview accounts, I draw on the DHA's operationalisation of the concept, recognising that "recontextualization is often textually realized in the *mixing* of 'new' recontextualized elements and 'old' elements" (Wodak & Fairclough, 2010, p. 24) including particular discursive strategies (detailed in Chapter 4).

### 3.7.7 Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity

In its operationalisation within CDS, recontextualisation is manifested through analysing intertextuality and interdiscursivity. These concepts are drawn from an extensive literature e.g. Bakhtin (1981) on the dialogic nature and polyphonic characteristics of texts. Texts are dialogical in that they respond to other texts; for example, by anticipating opposition and counter-arguments. They are polyphonic in the sense of containing different voices and ideologies. Policy texts embody both these features since in aiming to persuade, they anticipate opposition and in so doing, contain a range of voices. Intertextuality concerns the links between one text and another, either by explicit reference or by allusion, and how elements e.g. topics, actors, events, quotations or arguments change in their relocation from one context to another since meaning is made in its use in the new context (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). For example, an argument made about education by a book's author may be used for a different purpose in a policy document.



In the DHA, interdiscursivity is viewed as the overlapping of topic-related discourses, discourse topics and sub-topics (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). For instance, discourse about marketisation in education may refer to other discourses such as discourse about globalisation or recession or modernity.

Figure 4 below illustrates intertextual and interdiscursive relationships showing links between discourse topics, texts, genres and discourses. This figure, based on an illustrative case in Reisigl & Wodak (2015), shows the relationship between an online tabloid newspaper article about global warming which included a tweet from a professor and then postings commenting on the article. The point is that a discourse about a topic can draw on multiple discourse topics, texts and genres and actors can use overlapping discourses strategically.

These concepts enable a productive textual analysis of policy documents in different layers of context e.g. national policy documents and institutional policy documents but also between different genres of national policy texts and between policy texts and interview data. The aim is to trace topics and arguments across texts to explore recontextualisation and ultimately to establish the characteristics of the regulative discourse and the relay through which it operates (Bernstein, 2000). Chapter 4 outlines this process.

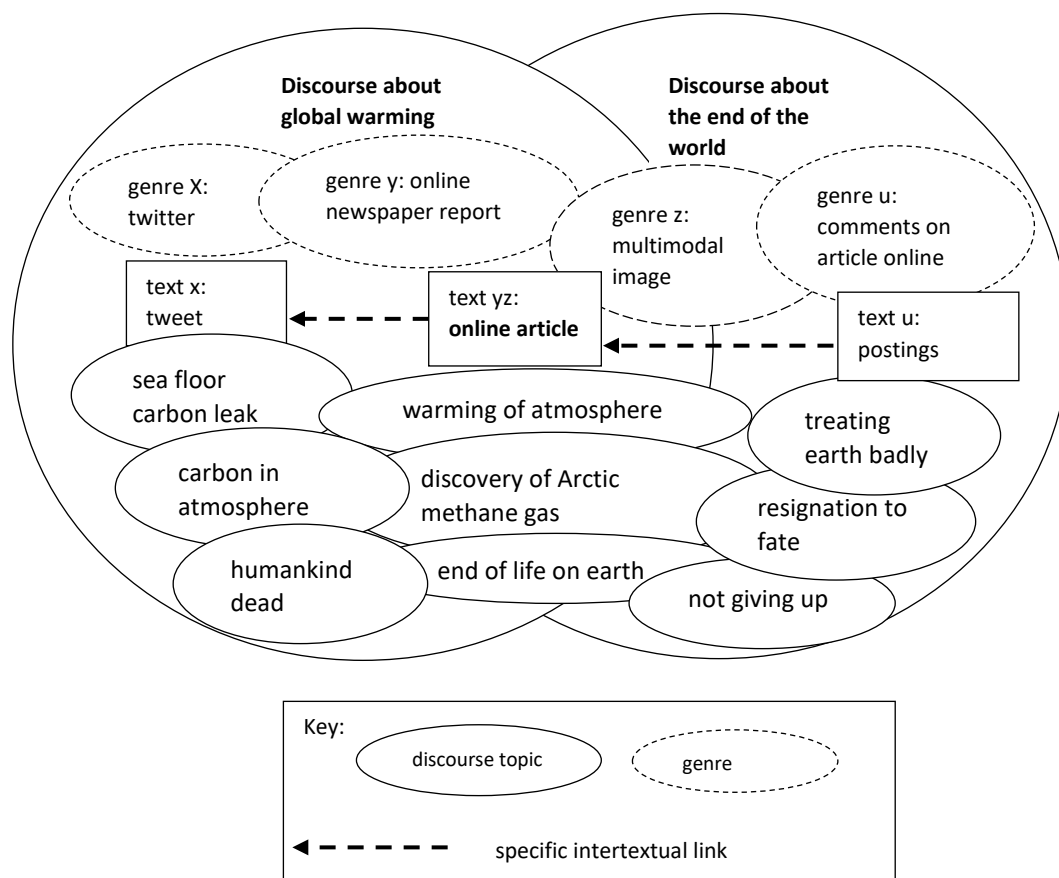


Figure 4. Interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between discourses, discourse topics, genres and texts. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 30.

### 3.7.8 Strategies

Strategies concern the linguistic means to achieve specific goals in texts. In CDS, a strategy is viewed as a “more or less intentional plan of practice (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 33). The more or less is important as it is recognised there can be intentional action and unconscious action; the latter as a result of socialisation and recurring practices (Wodak et al., 2009). However, they emphasise that actors must take responsibility for their acts i.e. they cannot blame their socialisation. Analysts would not be able to

critique if strategies were seen as completely unconscious. Greater intentionality exists in prepared speeches or advertising than in interview data (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 32). Policy documents fall into the former category of more intentional action so it is pertinent to analyse the strategies that are used.

In the DHA, the concept of strategy is further delineated at the macro-level into macro-functions and topic-related macro-strategies. A macro-function identifies the broad purpose of a particular section of text e.g. justification, construction, transformation as well as sub-strategies such as legitimisation and avoidance (Wodak et al., 2009). Although these strategies were identified in the study on national identity and are not intended to be *a priori* categories, a strategy such as legitimisation is clearly relevant to policy documents. I outline in Chapter 4 how I identify macro-functions in my data.

Analysis of topic-related strategies forms an even more important part of my study. This involves the interpretive labelling by the analyst of the construction of a particular social actor, process or phenomenon. It is the result of a synthesis of analysis of discourse topics, and micro-analysis of discursive strategies (see Chapter 4), which contribute to the way a subject is constructed (Unger, 2013). For example, there is the construction of “the nation as an imagined community” (Wodak et al., 2009) or “Scots as the language children bring to school” (Unger, 2013). It will encompass a number of discourse topics and employ a range of discursive strategies including certain types of argumentation. It represents a way of seeing the world so can be seen as ideological. It is similar to Fairclough’s (2003; 2015) view of *a discourse*. Uncovering the way the macro-strategy works

is crucial to understand whose perspective is dominant in the text and a first step to understanding where this view comes from and why it is being perpetuated. The detail of different discursive strategies and the process of analysing texts and generating macro-strategies are outlined in Chapter 4.

### 3.8 Theorising interviews and interaction

In this section, I explain how interview data is viewed in this thesis. It has been argued that qualitative interviews within applied linguistics have been under-theorised and that little reflexivity exists over issues of method and the status of the data (e.g. Mann, 2011; Talmy, 2011). Contrast is made between the interview as research instrument and interview as social practice. In the former, the data is collected to extract the truth about events, attitudes or feelings and interviewees seen as “vessels of answers” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p. 17). In the latter, the interview is regarded as a situated interaction, data as co-constructed and as an account that can be analysed using discourse analysis. The analyst considers *how* the interaction is constructed as well as the *what* (Mann, 2011).

Within CDS, given that discourse both reflects and constitutes social structures, relations and practices, it is important to analyse the *strategies* evident in interview data in a similar way to other texts (Wodak, 2011a). As noted above, discursive strategies are more or less intentional ways of constructing people and phenomena for a particular purpose. While an interview is an incomplete snapshot and interviewees come with their own agendas, this analysis provides insight into real issues, relations and structures. Analysis of intertextuality and

interdiscursivity can be employed to explore connections between policy texts and interview accounts.

Yet, interview data is clearly different to written texts since it is a situated interaction between two people. Concepts drawn from the discursive turn in social psychology and ethnomethodology such as positioning, framing, footing and stance, and their connection to the construction of identities, have been used to enrich analysis of interview and focus group data (Jones, 2013b). Within a CDS approach, positioning is placing ourselves and others in relation to particular ways of thinking or acting which are ideological. Framing and footing derive from Goffman's (1974; 1981) work on the presentation of self. Framing is the participants' sense of what the occasion is e.g. chatting, arguing, interviewing and usually based on socially-recognised activities. Footing concerns the position a person takes up in relation to the frame of the interaction e.g. it could be the responsibility they take for their words or a change in footing may suggest a different perspective 'as a student', 'as a manager', 'as a father' etc. These concepts have been used in DHA studies e.g. Wodak (2011a) in which framing and footing were examined in interviews with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), through the analysis of particular discursive strategies, to see how they constructed "being European" (p. 94).

Approaches that are broadly social constructivist regard identity not as fixed but as multifaceted, dynamic and emergent (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) and the plural *identities* is often used to acknowledge different aspects of identity and that identities are constructed, performed and used as a resource in interaction

(Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Cameron, 2001; Schiffrin, 1996). This is pertinent to analysis of student and lecturer interviews since they exhibit different aspects of their identities to support their points. The interviewer should also be reflexive about their identities and role in shaping the interview (Mann, 2011).

Indeed, the key issue for CDS is how the above concepts are employed to evidence claims. The analyst can examine how people use positioning strategically to accomplish particular discursive actions such as to resist others' positioning or to support a particular attitude or action (Jones, 2013b). Elements that have been used to analyse identity in spoken interaction can be framed within a CDS approach as contributing to argumentation (Reisigl, 2014). For example, the use of narrative (Schiffin, 1996), *small stories* (Georgakopoulou, 2007), examples that interviewees use, can be analysed for how they contribute to constructing the identities of themselves and others and support their arguments. Within DHA studies, framing and footing have been used to deepen analysis of *perspectivisation*. *Perspectivisation* is the discursive strategy which positions a speaker's or writer's involvement in or distancing from the point being made (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001) (see Chapter 4 for how analysis of elements of spoken interaction can be linked to DHA discursive strategies).

Further, interviewees taking up seemingly contradictory positions within the space of a conversation is not regarded as problematic since this can be indicative of different discourses and ideologies struggling for prominence (Cameron, 2001). Thus, I focus on differing voices within interview data and how these connect with ideological positions and the wider context. I aim to be

reflexive, examine the *what* and *how*, situate the analysis within a DHA approach while interpreting the findings in relation to my broader theoretical framework.

### 3.9 The case for Bernstein and critical discourse studies (CDS)

In section 3.6, I noted the potential for exotropic theories (Hasan, 2005) such as Bernstein's and CDS to work together. I argued for their complementarity since they share an interest in the following: openness to theoretical dialogue; problems as starting points; the principles and mechanisms through which the workings of power or "symbolic control" (Bernstein, 1990) are obscured; a concern with inequality and the link between language and social structure thus theorising context. Indeed, strong connections exist between Bernstein's ideas and certain branches of linguistics. Halliday's work on the development of a theory of language in society, systemic functional linguistics (SFL), frequently acknowledged Bernstein's influence as does more recent work in educational contexts within an SFL paradigm such as Martin's (e.g. 2009) genre-based pedagogy aiming to empower disadvantaged school learners and Coffin & Donohue's (2014) *language as social semiotic* (LASS) approach to teaching and learning with its focus on language as providing access to *decontextualised* knowledge in higher education. Lukin's (2013) SFL-oriented study of ideology or "symbolic control" in language on "the meanings of war" makes connections with concerns in CDS. Bernstein is also frequently cited as an influence in critical linguistics (Kress & Hodge, 1989) and later critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995), including the DHA (Wodak et al., 2009).

Bernstein's notion of code is central to his work and its conceptualisation as a particular configuration of classification and framing, and thus orientation to meaning, is relevant to this study. The pedagogic device and associated ideas discussed in section 3.3 provide ways of conceptualising different approaches to learning and teaching and student/lecturer identities based on varying configurations of classification and framing. Linguistic/discursive analysis can illustrate how these configurations are constructed and what forms of argumentation are drawn on to do so thus illuminating the ideological character of policy ideas. In this study, I chose to use an approach from CDS, rather than SFL, together with Bernstein's ideas. The DHA's focus on argumentation, intertextuality/interdiscursivity and integration of the wider socio-/historical context into analysis and exploration of discursive functions such as legitimation make it particularly suitable for analysis of policy texts (Lawton, 2016; Wodak & Fairclough, 2010).

Specifically, I use Bernstein's ideas to identify the object of study i.e. the principles governing the formation of pedagogy, the characteristics of the ORF and PRF and the relation between the recontextualising fields. I also use his ideas to aid interpretation of my findings through his work on models of L&T and pedagogic identities. The DHA provides a framework for using specific tools for textual analysis which can be productively used to identify the forms of argumentation within a particular field such as higher education. It also conceptualises context in a way that foregrounds discursive links between different settings; for example, tracing how arguments and topics move and



change and the increasingly obscured character of such mechanisms (Krzyżanowski, 2016). Thus, the DHA and Bernstein's ideas can be brought together to examine the wider influences on institutional practices.

### 3.10 Summary

I have outlined the relevance of the pedagogic device, the recontextualising field in particular, for inspiring the focus of investigation by connecting L&T practices with policy-making. Bernstein's ideas also provide a rich framework for discussing models of learning and teaching and pedagogic identities. Taking a critical, interpretive approach to policy-making, I have explained how CDS, specifically the DHA, offers a way of analysing texts but also a view of context that allows me to connect analysis of policy texts and interview data in different settings. Finally, I have argued for the complementarity of Bernstein's ideas and the DHA as a theoretical framework for exploring connections between L&T policy and practices.

## **4 Study design and methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the overall design and describes the methodological steps of my study. As discussed in Chapter 3, I draw together concepts from sociology and critical discourse studies. I use Bernstein's notion of the pedagogic device as an overarching framework for exploration; focusing particularly on what Bernstein (1990) calls the recontextualising field. This encompasses the principles governing the spaces and practices where the subject knowledge is embedded within a regulative discourse of values and where the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) have the potential to enact their influence over what is taught and how. My aim is to analyse the discursive traces of such potential influences by analysing selected texts from different layers of context. To operationalise my questions and framework for discourse analysis, I draw on the discourse-historical approach's (DHA) levels of context and its tools for analysing texts including the relations between texts by considering intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

I would describe my study as starting with a problem of interest that merits further exploration, rather than starting with a "macro" concept such as neoliberalism. Wodak & Meyer (2015) characterise the former as more "inductively-oriented" and as staying at the meso-level. A meso-level study aims to examine the problem in-depth by collecting rich data in order to provide insights and explanatory critique. The DHA is described in this way and suits my project as discussed in Chapter 3. However, the scope of the data collection is necessarily limited in a project of this size. Data proliferation can be a risk with

an approach that aims to explore a range of texts and practices but I believe by following a careful data selection strategy (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015), I can still explore recontextualisation in a meaningful way. In Chapter 3, I explained how my study has the features of research within the DHA and in this section, I detail the process of conducting my research.

Reisigl and Wodak (2015) propose an outline for an 8-step programme to be implemented recursively noting that this is most appropriate for large-scale projects. In Table 4 below, I have added examples from my own research process. As part of this process, I gained ethical approval from Lancaster University on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015 and from the institution under study on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

To summarise this research process, my questions started with assessment practices and increasing awareness of policy-making and policy dissemination within the organisation. However, in conjunction with the refining of my theoretical framework, my focus has evolved into analysing selected higher education policy documents and their intertextual/interdiscursive links with other texts, including interview data. I explain this process further below. The aim is also to engage in critique (point 7 in Table 4 and Reisigl, 2018) in terms of highlighting forms of argumentation within the texts especially when claims of “normative rightness” (i.e. what must be done in policy terms) have an ideological basis; exploring discrepancies between discursive strategies and social practices and finally sharing findings for further discussion.

Table 4. The DHA in 8 steps applied to this study. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 34.

DHA 8-Step programme	Applied to this research project
<p><b>1. Activation and consultation of preceding theoretical knowledge</b> (i.e. recollection, reading and discussion of previous research)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researching different approaches and previous studies in CDS, including in education settings; theories and studies from sociology (education); literature on higher education; literature on policy.</li> <li>- Choice and integration of DHA &amp; Bernstein’s pedagogic device as theoretical framing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Systematic collection of data and context information</b> (depending on the research questions, various discourses and discursive events, social fields as well as actors, semiotic media, genres and texts).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifying a research setting &amp; data and gaining ethical approval</li> <li>-Collecting sample assignments, module and programme information.</li> <li>- Identifying relevant higher education agencies (HEA, HEFCE) and government department (BIS) and collecting relevant policy documents.</li> <li>- Collecting institutional policy and strategy documents.</li> <li>- Interviewing lecturers and students within chosen setting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Selection and preparation of data for specific analyses</b> (selection and downsizing of data according to relevant criteria, transcription of tape recordings, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selecting key policy documents: 4 HEA documents.</li> <li>- Selecting key policy documents from other layers of context: BIS white paper; HEFCE strategy document; HEA framework documents; institutional strategy and policy documents.</li> <li>- Selecting a range of assignments and categorising.</li> <li>- Transcribing interview data.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Specification of the research question/s and formulation of assumptions</b> (on the basis of a literature review and a first skimming of the data).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outlining research questions and refining continuously after consulting literature, theory and first look at the data.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Qualitative pilot analysis</b> (including a context analysis, macro-analysis and micro-analysis)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial analysis of limited number of discourse topics &amp; discursive strategies and intertextuality &amp; interdiscursivity for confirmation document.</li> <li>- Refining of analytical tools for further analysis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Detailed case studies</b> (of a whole range of data)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One set of programmes, one institution but with aim of researching an issue.</li> <li>- Analysis of 4 key policy documents. Analysis of interview data. Analysis of recontextualisation between different levels of policy documents and between 4 policy documents and interview data &amp; assignments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Formulation of a critique</b> (interpretation and explanation of results, taking into account the relevant context knowledge and referring to the three dimensions of critique).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion of analysis (see Ch7) in relation to research questions and DHA analysis tools, the discursive landscape of higher education (Ch2) and Bernstein’s framework of pedagogic device (Ch3)</li> <li>- Critique (Reisigl, 2018): text/discourse-immanent e.g. forms of argumentation (Ch5&amp;6); socio-diagnostic e.g. discrepancies between discursive and social practices (Ch7); prospective e.g. critical discussion of findings</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Practical applications of analytical results</b> (if possible, the results may be applied or proposed for practical application targeting some social impact).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dissemination of findings and practical suggestions for ways forward e.g. encourage dialogue around L&amp;T documents and practices at institutional and national level</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Research setting

At the institutional level, the site is one department of a Business School within a faculty of business & law, at the time of the research, in a *new or post-1992* British university. As outlined in Chapter 2, my research has coincided with recent changes to the overall academic framework in the institution. This is ostensibly about restructuring programmes and module credit values but has also been used to overhaul learning & teaching practices and assessment. This development allows lecturers, in their accounts, to discuss practices before and after these changes.

The department's programmes have a good reputation. They are accredited by the discipline's professional body and students can gain a professional qualification in addition to the degree. Many lecturers are experienced practitioners who have worked in industry. Although I believe the influences relevant to my area of investigation are at the national and institutional level rather than at the level of discipline, there are reasons for my choice of setting. I was already familiar with the practices in this department and these drove my interest in exploring the influences on assessment texts and L&T practices more broadly. I chose business programmes since they are an example of what Bernstein (1990) calls a region which are potentially more open to outside influences. This aligns with my aim to examine the wider contextual influences on pedagogic practice. If business appears to be an area heavily influenced by higher education policy, such developments may be evident elsewhere to varying degrees. Their presence may also be indicative of a growing trend. As Wodak and

Fairclough (2010) note, recontextualisation occurs at different paces within different settings.

The department's set of postgraduate programmes can be summarised as intensive and strongly framed (Bernstein, 2000). Students have relatively high contact hours plus group meetings outside class to work on both formative and summative assessments. They must work in groups which, at the time of the interviews, were pre-selected. Assessment requirements are made explicit through detailed briefs and further face-to-face/online support. The content and pacing are strongly framed with no choice of modules (dissertation topic areas are suggested too) and many different elements included (see Chapter 6).

Overall, the programmes represent a *performance mode* in Bernstein's terms being entirely outcomes-based with numerous criteria-based assignments. This strong framing arguably is necessary with large numbers and a predominantly non-UK cohort from diverse cultural, subject and work backgrounds.

I adopt Reisigl and Wodak's (2015) view of a case study as a case focused on an issue rather than an institution or person. The notion of delimiting the scope of data collection for "instrumental" reasons (Stake, 1995) in investigating a specific issue is also pertinent. I recognise the choice of one department in one university is for convenience purposes as it places a limit on the data. To some extent, the data is bounded by the practices of that department's students, lecturers and other staff. However, as Yin (2009) discusses, the boundaries of a case are blurred and permeable. For example, staff work across different programmes, schools, faculties and may be part of cross-university groups too, both formal and

informal. There may be a sense of coherence within a particular department, school or faculty but people are exposed to different values and practices including the institutional. Since my study focuses on recontextualisation including the links between official policy and institutional practices, certain texts originate from beyond the institution. However, all the selected data is relevant to the issue I am investigating. I would like to regard my findings as having relevance beyond the specific setting in that similar issues may be found in other universities. In this way, I am attempting to meet the indicator of quality of “transferability” in qualitative research (see e.g. Edge and Richards, 1998, p. 345).

#### 4.3 Author positioning within the research

Reflexivity regarding my own position within the university is important. Although the simple dichotomy of insider/outsider has been problematised, the notion of a continuum may help the researcher reflect on their positioning and its impact on their study (Trowler, 2014b). I am an insider since I am part of the institution, participate in L&T practices but also engage with and utilise discourses in policy and guidelines when necessary. I am an outsider in relation to the LDU as well as the faculty and department under study but I have also formed acquaintances with lecturers and some students. The benefits of being part of the organisation such as access, shared experiences and familiarity with certain practices, allowing a more emic approach, need to be balanced with the risks of making assumptions about the workings of the organisation or what is worth investigating (Trowler, 2014b). Thus, the etic view of the researcher is key in order to maintain a critical, reflexive approach at every stage of the research

process. I need to be reflexive about how my own position and experience have shaped the areas for investigation, my approach to interviews and interpretation of my findings. I acknowledge this, for example, in the way I approach and analyse interview data (see section 4.5.7). Further, although I may have engaged in some of the processes described, my analysis focuses on participants' accounts and salient documents following a systematic approach as described in this chapter. While shared experience led to more conversational interviews yielding rich data, I also have a responsibility towards my interviewees as they are part of the institution. Thus, my approach to ethics is to mitigate any risks to individual participants by preserving their anonymity including through careful consideration about how to present data (see sections 4.4.3, 4.5.7).

I acknowledge the role of interpretation in my research and that, while following a clear process, subjectivity is a feature of a qualitative, interpretive approach (Creswell, 2013). I regard this as a resource rather than an obstacle but transparency about decisions and the data collection and analysis process is central including recognising that qualitative studies follow a more iterative process. Taking a critical stance towards institutional practices is essential and clearly part of a CDS approach and such critique may have benefits in the longer-term. CDS acknowledges problems as starting points and that researcher beliefs should be transparent (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). That is, an issue is worthy of investigation since it may be seen as a source of potential injustice but this does not detract from the systematic and triangulated approach taken to gather rich



data to explore the issue (see section 4.4). I describe how interpretation and reflexivity impact data analysis in section 4.5.

Regarding researcher values, namely the ontological and epistemological positions underpinning the research, I see my study as operating within a realist ontology and constructionist epistemology. Although reluctant to be labelled himself, many regard Bernstein as a realist (Moore, 2013) and CDS, and specifically the DHA, as embracing realism in acknowledging the existence of real organisations, real structures and processes with real effects (Reisigl, 2018). However, CDS also adheres to a more constructionist epistemology in that our knowledge of the world is always partial, made meaningful in relationship with others and mediated, for example, through language and discursive practices (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). These discursive practices are constitutive not simply reflective. I argue that the recognition of real impacts and potential for inequality provides a point of complementarity between Bernstein and CDS as discussed in section 3.9.

#### 4.4 Data collection and selection

In this section, I describe the data types in my study and outline their purpose and relative importance. Since my research investigates influences on pedagogy and has a focus on intertextuality and interdiscursivity, I selected data from a range of “fields of action” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015) as described in Chapter 3. The practices of learning, teaching and assessment occur in the field of learning and teaching but are clearly influenced by other fields of action e.g. the field of

institution-internal formation of attitudes, opinions and practices as well as other fields of action such as national policy formation in higher education. In Figure 5 below, I outline the main texts for analysis noting they do not all carry equal weight. Following the DHA steps and a targeted selection strategy, I chose texts that assisted with answering my research questions. Thus, I present detailed analysis of the HEA discussion documents and interview data (highlighted in bold below) to address research questions 1 & 2 (see Chapter 1) and present analysis of other texts as relevant to an exploration of recontextualisation (RQs 3 & 4).

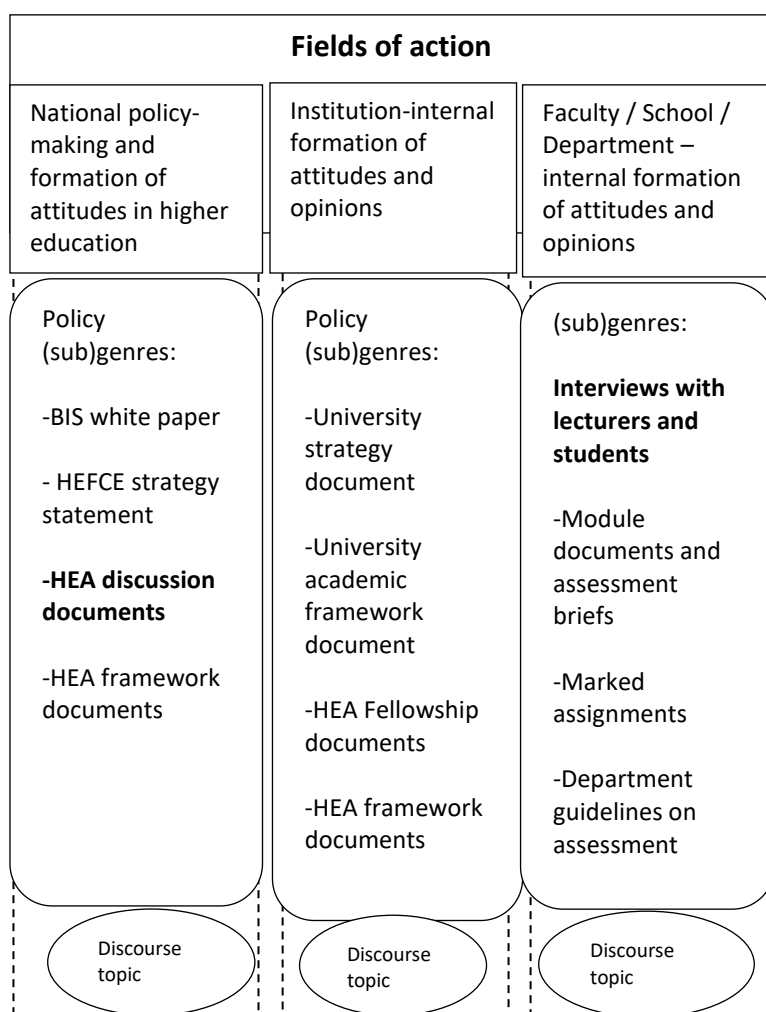


Figure 5. Data located in fields of action.

#### 4.4.1 Assessment texts and practices

As my aim is to examine influences on practice, I first need to understand what these practices are. To reiterate, my interest lies in L&T practices more broadly but this exploration starts with assessment since it represents the evaluative part of Bernstein's (1990) pedagogic device and assignment briefs and marked student texts provide an indication of what knowledge and skills are valued. It is also, together with module documents, a concrete manifestation of curriculum content and priorities. To gain a deep understanding of how one domain has created its assessment strategy, as noted above, I have chosen the set of postgraduate programmes within one department of the Business School. There are four distinct programmes which each consist of five-six modules (all compulsory) drawn from thirteen different modules in total. Each of the four main programmes on offer has a *signature module* unique to that programme chosen as a focus for an employability-related assessment, worth typically 10% of the module (although university guidelines state employability should be embedded throughout all modules). Such a decision is the result of faculty and university guidelines, which in turn are likely to be influenced by higher education policy and models of good practice.

I have chosen postgraduate programmes partly because of their intensive nature, necessitating fast acculturation, which means that requirements are usually made explicit to students. Secondly, this is a highly diverse cohort in terms of national, cultural and linguistic backgrounds; typical across many postgraduate programmes in the UK. International and EU students constituted almost 70% of students doing higher degrees in UK universities in 2013/14, with business

subjects the most popular choice for international students (HESA, 2018).

Indeed, many postgraduate business programmes in the institution under study consist almost entirely of international and EU students. Such diversity follows the government's *internationalisation* agenda with universities encouraged to use this diversity as a resource. As internationalisation is one of the discourse topics prevalent in policy documents, the international nature of the student cohort is a useful aspect to explore. Thirdly, being a one-year programme, the amount of assessment and the practices associated with it are bounded in comparison to a three-year undergraduate degree. This ensures a manageable amount of data and avoids the necessity to collect data over a longer period or only focus on a particular year of the degree.

Analysing texts related to assessment has a dual purpose in my research. Firstly, an understanding of the practices in the chosen setting is necessary in order to explore recontextualisation of policy discourses. Secondly, analysis of assignment texts, as well as module documents, informed interview questions and discussion and those texts were the starting point to explore L&T practices in the text-mediated interviews. In order to avoid "cherry-picking" certain appealing assignments for analysis and discussion and be transparent about data choices (Wodak and Meyer, 2009), I examined the range of assignment types in eleven modules across the set of four programmes to establish the types of assessment being done. I collected module guides and assessment briefs and the marked assignments for each interviewee. Since the interviewees were on different programmes within the set, this gave me access to a sample of the full range of

assignments and module documents. Detail of how I analysed the texts is given in section 4.5.6 below.

#### 4.4.2 Policy Documents

To explore recontextualisation, as illustrated in Figure 5 above, I selected key policy documents as data from both the university and UK higher education organisations particularly those focusing on learning & teaching. These agencies can be seen as located within both the field of action of national policy formation and the field of action of institution-internal formation of attitudes since policy is clearly designed to be implemented and so intended to shape opinion and practices. Of course, there are a multitude of research reports and discussion documents published by higher education agencies. I decided to concentrate on the Higher Education Academy (HEA) (see Chapter 2) since it aims to have the most impact on learning & teaching in UK higher education by focusing on *teaching quality*; a topic that is becoming more prevalent with the government's introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (see Chapter 2 for detail).

The HEA currently has six areas of focus for its *Frameworks* (models for practice) and associated *Toolkits* (process and questions for curriculum review purposes) which together form its core resources for relevant staff at universities to draw on:

- Embedding employability in higher education
- Student engagement through partnership

- Transforming assessment in higher education
- Internationalising higher education
- Flexible learning in higher education
- Student access, retention, progression and attainment in higher education (HEA, 2016)

I chose to focus on the first four of these areas which I see as particularly relevant to the setting of my research. For example, although its conceptualisation is not agreed upon, discussion of employability has become widespread. Employability has an affinity with business and other vocationally-oriented programmes so business schools have been early adopters of the concept and proposed practices. I view this as useful since it can indicate the direction that other departments are moving towards in terms of embedding policy. Assessment is a key part of any university education and in my study, analysis of assessment texts is a starting point in considering what skills and knowledge are valued. Assessment reflects the evaluative rules in Bernstein's (1990) pedagogic device which are influenced by the recontextualising rules (see Chapter 3). Student assignments also form a basis for interview questions. As noted above, internationalisation is pertinent to the setting of my research. This is not to suggest that internationalisation is simply conceptualised as having international students but their presence foregrounds the debate about how curriculum, teaching and assessment are adapted or not in light of the student cohort. Student engagement through partnership can be seen as a more recent agenda and perhaps signals a new direction that may acquire the same status of employability in terms of prevalence in learning & teaching discussions and university documentation.

My initial attention was drawn to HEA *framework* documents which are short documents designed to be used by university senior management and those with a learning & teaching role. They are aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) which forms the basis of the HEA Fellowship scheme (see Chapter 2). In that sense, these frameworks will be familiar to those involved in shaping learning and teaching guidelines and likely to inform policy at different levels within universities. The authors introduce these frameworks in the following way which not only reinforces the notion they are designed to guide practice but also highlights the role of a shared language:

When you're looking to address strategic priorities, it really helps to have a shared point of reference and common language to discuss and shape policies, practices, processes and partnerships. (HEA, 2016)

On further investigation, I discovered these frameworks are the distillation of numerous discussion documents. In particular, I found four documents from the HEA which the organisation itself claims have been most influential on the latest (2016), and slightly earlier (2012-14), versions of their strategic *frameworks*. I decided to focus my detailed analysis on these longer documents since they are more like discussion documents thus more suitable for analysing discursive strategies. However, I analyse some features of these frameworks as they exemplify aspects of recontextualisation (see section 4.5.8). The timing of the discussion documents (2012-14) means that they have already been widely disseminated and likely to have had some influence on practices already. Given

their likely influence, they are also chosen for their “intertextual and interdiscursive scope” and “salience” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 39). Details of the four HEA texts are given in the analysis chapter but their titles are as follows:

1. *Pedagogy for Employability* (2012)
2. *Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education* (2014)
3. *A Marked Improvement: Transforming assessment in higher education* (2012)
4. *Internationalising Higher Education Framework* (2014)

In addition, to explore recontextualisation, I analyse intertextuality and interdiscursivity between these four texts and the following documents. I examine the four associated HEA framework documents in their earlier versions (2012-14) but also the 2016 versions and trace the changes between texts. After surveying the literature around higher education trends and policy, I chose other salient texts from the national level: The Department for business, innovation and skills’ (BIS) 2011 white paper *Students at the heart of the system* and the Higher Education Funding Council for England’s (HEFCE) 2011 strategy statement *Opportunity, choice and excellence in higher education*. From the institutional level, I examine the university’s strategy document (2011/2) as well as the institutional framework document (2012) which has guidelines for learning & teaching. I explain how I analyse the core texts and these other documents in section 4.5.



#### 4.4.3 Accounts of practice: Interviews

The aim of this study is to explore the connections between policy texts and practice. However, it cannot be assumed that there is a direct, causal influence from “top-down” policy documents to practices in the institution and this study takes the view of policy as multi-layered and evident in processes and practices not simply official policy texts (see section 3.4). I also consider that actors at the institutional level, to some degree at least, can remake policy to suit their situation. As one aspect of investigating practices, this study explores how people potentially affected by policy, or involved in the remaking of policy, report their experiences, attitudes and practices in their work and study.

The use of approaches which attempt to gain an insider’s perspective is supported within the DHA (Reisigl and Wodak, 2015, p. 32) if it assists with analysis of the object under study and can enrich research into complex social, economic and political contexts (Krzyżanowski, 2011). As noted in Chapter 3, DHA-oriented research utilising interviews, among a variety of data types, includes studies on the construction of Austrian identity (Wodak et al., 2009) and on European identity “doing politics” in the EU (Wodak, 2011a). The latter study, in particular, discusses the importance of analysing interview data for exploring both collective and individual identities. An issue in my study is how students and lecturers construct themselves and others; individually but also as belonging to particular groups e.g. the *university community* or *high-performing students*.

On the issue of policy more specifically, such a combination of data types can provide a perspective from the inside on how, and to what extent, policies are

recontextualised in particular settings across time and space (Johnson, 2011; Lawton, 2016; Savski, 2016). Therefore, I chose to conduct interviews with those involved in learning and teaching to investigate accounts of their experiences and practices, explore identities and trace elements of recontextualisation. The interviews were based around assessment texts and related questions as I describe further below. The interviews being semi-structured enabled a flexible approach (Richards, 2009) and conversations followed different paths in that I followed up on certain points or interviewees themselves focused on particular issues they wished to discuss. I explain how I analysed interview data in section 4.5.7.

### *Participants*

#### *Students*

I wanted to have students' views of learning, teaching and assessment and hear their experiences of the year. I selected students with a range of assessment scores from across the set of degree programmes and invited them to participate, resulting in five interviews lasting approximately an hour each. In terms of their performance on the programme based on their assessment grades, two of the students interviewed can be characterised as very high-performing, one in the middle and two as lower performing. The interviews started with general questions around their experiences of the year, modules and assessment moving onto questions around sample marked assignments to prompt discussion. Sample interview questions can be found in Appendix 1. Students gave me permission to use their assignments in the study. Table 5 summarises students' background information.

Table 5. Interview participants: students.

<b>Students</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Performance in assessment</b>
<i>Elsa</i>	Scandinavia	Studied specific subject area before	Very high-scoring
<i>Ivy</i>	Far East	Some work experience	Low scoring
<i>Leyla</i>	Middle East	Some work experience	Mid-high scoring
<i>May</i>	UK	Extensive work experience	Very high-scoring
<i>Zoe</i>	North America	Different subject & work background	Mid-low scoring

### *Lecturers*

Interviewing lecturers was in some ways more crucial than interviewing students as I wished to explore potential influences from policy on their decision-making in their modules. To explore lecturers' accounts of their experiences and practices around teaching and assessment, I interviewed five module leaders from the department. To preserve anonymity, I do not discuss their individual backgrounds. The majority were experienced practitioners who had worked in industry. Some were or are involved in developing good practices in learning & teaching who can reflect on the guidelines for the faculty and university. Some have held course leadership or managerial positions in the department so have a wider view of faculty and institutional policy. The interviews were based around discussion of module guides and sample marked assignments from the interviewed students. I was particularly interested in how lecturers talked about their decisions around assessment and the influences on their practices.

### *Transcription*

When transcribing interviews, theoretical considerations impact the level of detail to include. As Ochs (1979) notes, transcription is "theory" with

conversation analysis, for example, including the most detail to capture the turn-by-turn making of meaning. For the purpose of discourse analysis within the DHA, I do not require such a level of detail and focused on aspects such as readability thus producing what Bucholtz (2000, p. 1461) calls a more “naturalized transcription”, closer to written discourse. However, I did include details that could aid interpretation (Du Bois, 1999). I see transcription as an important stage in analysis since the act of transcribing enables familiarity with the data and encourages initial noticing of patterns, topics and features of interaction (Cameron, 2001). I began by transcribing the data to record the words themselves and other details such as pauses, overlaps and non-verbal cues e.g. laughter, which may assist with analysis. I then listened again to correct any inaccuracies in wording. During the process of analysis, I re-listened to salient sections in order to check that my transcription contained the details I felt relevant to show how the interaction was co-constructed and to provide sufficient detail to explore discursive strategies (see section 4.5.7 for details).

#### 4.4.4 Data selection summary

As Table 6 illustrates, the data in my study was collected from the institution and the wider context as relevant to answering my research questions. This was an iterative process in which I collected data from these settings e.g. assignments and policy documents, conducted some initial analysis, consulted my theoretical framework, refined my research questions and analytical tools before selecting key documents for further analysis. Data was collected in 2015 apart from the 2016 versions of HEA frameworks.

Table 6. Summary of data in the study.

Origin of data	Data	Detail
The university	Assignments from the programmes	Marked assignments for each student interviewee
	Programme and module documentation	Programme guides and module guides
	University strategy document	University strategy 2011/12-2015/16
	University academic framework document	Revised academic framework 2012
	Interviews with students and lecturers	5 students 5 lecturers (module leaders)
Higher Education Agency (HEA)	HEA discussion documents x 4	4 reports: employability; partnership; assessment; internationalisation
	HEA framework documents	Frameworks and Toolkits for each HEA area of focus. 2012-14 versions. 2016 versions.
HEFCE	HEFCE strategy document	<i>Opportunity, choice and excellence in higher education, 2011</i>
Government department (BIS)	BIS white paper	<i>Students at the Heart of the System, 2011</i>

## 4.5 Data analysis methods

### 4.5.1 Overview

Discussion of the concepts below applies to my textual analysis of policy documents and interview data. After reviewing these concepts, I consider the specific aspects of analysing assignments and interviews since there are particular aspects of analysis to be highlighted. Finally, I explain how I use Bernstein's ideas to deepen interpretation of the findings.

#### 4.5.2 Analysing context

The four layers of context as conceptualised in the DHA (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015) summarise all the aspects of analysis undertaken in a research project. It provides an overview framework to guide systematic analysis. I illustrate the levels of context with examples from my own study in Table 7 (cf. Wodak & Fairclough, 2010):

Table 7. Context in the DHA applied to this study. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015.

A concept of context with four dimensions:	
1	the immediate language or text-internal co-text <i>e.g. of policy documents or interview data – discourse topics; discursive strategies; macro-strategies</i>
2	the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses <i>e.g. between policy documents from different ‘fields of action’ &amp; between those and interview data and assignments</i>
3	the social variables and institutional frames of a specific ‘context of situation’ <i>e.g. the university’s structure and culture [and faculty, school, department and other formal / informal groups within that]; the frame of the interviews</i>
4	the broader sociopolitical and historical context which discursive practices are embedded in and related to <i>e.g. the current higher education environment; the policies of government (and its agencies); the political and social context in the UK</i>

This is not to assume a direct and mono-directional causality between the wider context and the texts (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001); instead there could be multiple modifying influences including the institutional context and individual practices impacting on recontextualisation. The focus for linguistic analysis involves the first two levels: the first level analysing the policy texts and the interview data themselves, the second level the intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between different policy texts and between policy texts, interview data and

assessment documents. However, the aim is to move in a recursive way between the dimensions (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015) and the other levels of context are important for informing the analysis. The fourth dimension of context, the wider sociopolitical and historic context, is discussed in Chapter 2 but like the third level of institutional frames and social variables, is integrated into the analysis and discussion where relevant.

#### 4.5.3 Analysing fields of action

As noted in Chapter 3, the concept of fields of action, with its focus on the function of discursive practices in different fields, is useful not only for considering where particular texts or genres are produced and disseminated but also how they are recontextualised within different fields, appearing in a different genre, perhaps with a different purpose. This framework also incorporates the notion of discourse topics (see section 4.5.5) which may appear in more than one field of action, in different genres, combining with other discourse topics. This is discussed further below in the sections on discourse and interdiscursivity.

In terms of analysis, HEA policy documents can be assigned to the field of action of national policy-making. However, they are also used within the field of institution-internal formation of attitudes and particularly in its recontextualised form as an HEA framework document, they may be used within the field of learning and teaching as well as in professional development and accreditation given its links with the UKPSF and the Fellowship scheme. Figure 6 illustrates

selected fields of action within higher education and shows links between fields of action, genres and discourse topics.

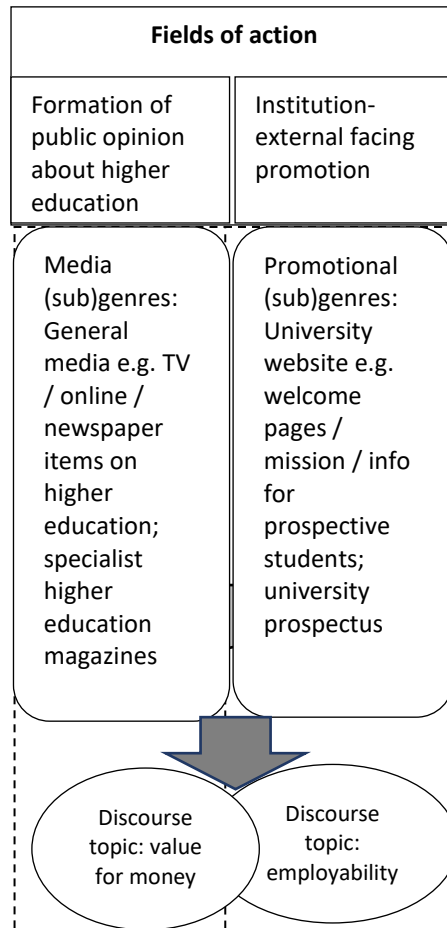


Figure 6. Fields of action. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015.

The field of action of the formation of public opinion about higher education through the media contains a number of genres such as news items or TV programmes which, in turn, contain discourse topics such as value for money. This topic can also be found in other fields of action such as institutions' formation of attitudes externally through websites and prospectuses although



the field may also contain other related topics such as employability. In Chapter 5, I examine the fields of action relevant to my study.

#### 4.5.4 Analysing genre

As discussed in Chapter 3, since certain genres are influential, examining the social purpose of a particular genre illuminates their function. For example, as I discuss in Chapter 5, the HEA frameworks have become powerful within the PRF due to their links with the UKPSF and Fellowship scheme. Further, the notion of genres having a structure with different sections or stages with different functions, similar to Swales' (1990) "moves", is used in the DHA to describe the "macro-structure" of a text (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). This provides insight into the characteristics of the genre which informs analysis of discourse. I took this approach with the four main policy discussion documents in order to provide a description of the texts. I also noted the macro-structure of the more standardised policy framework documents and I include this in my discussion of recontextualisation (see section 5.5). I draw on the notion of genre networks to consider how texts are linked to other texts but I prefer to locate these genres in different fields of action as this illustrates their location but also the movement involved in recontextualisation.

#### 4.5.5 Analysing discourse

As outlined in section 3.7.5, within the DHA, discourse is viewed as "a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices situated within specific fields of social action" with macro-topic relatedness, pluri-perspectivity and argumentivity as key elements (Reisigl and Wodak, 2015). In this section, I explain how this

conceptualisation of discourse is operationalised by discussing what are sometimes termed macro-analysis and micro-analysis (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). The former encompasses analysis of discourse topics and the macro-structure of a text and the latter involves analysis of the discursive strategies. However, this distinction can be misleading since the researcher moves between the different types of analyses in a recursive way and the findings are combined in order to identify the *macro-strategies* or *macro-functions* described below.

#### *Analysis of discourse topics*

A first step in analysing discourse is to outline the contents or “thematic dimension” of each document, noting the discourse topics that are specific to that text (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). A discourse topic can be summarised as what a section of text is about and is subject to the interpretation of the analyst (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). In that sense, it could be seen as a type of thematic coding. This is a key first step in identifying discourses. In terms of analysing the four policy documents, I listed topics in each text then looked at topics across the texts to establish which topics appear in all or most of the four texts. I then created a map of these topics (see section 5.2.4). For example, I identified the topics of “learning communities with shared values” and “future-fit graduates” in all four texts.

#### *Analysis of discursive strategies*

Analysis of discursive strategies provides the micro-level analysis in the DHA. Reisigl & Wodak (2015) outline the following questions which guide this analysis. In italics are the labels for the respective discursive strategies:

1. How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically? *Nomination*
2. What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes? *Predication*
3. What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?  
*Argumentation*
4. From what perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed? *Perspectivisation*
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly, intensified or mitigated? *Intensification or Mitigation*

(Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 32)

Each strategy has a particular objective and typical devices or means and context-specific linguistic realisations. In Table 8 below, I describe the objectives of each discursive strategy and provide examples from my own data to illustrate some “linguistic realisations”. For example, a nomination strategy has the *objective* of discursively constructing actors, processes and phenomena through various *means* or *devices* including nouns denoting processes and an example or *linguistic realisation* of this is “the student experience”. Clearly, some strategies are more prominent in the data than others and warrant detailed analysis in order to identify the common discursive strategies in a particular genre or field of action.

Table 8. Discursive strategies with examples. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 33.

Strategy	Objectives	Devices (sample only)	Examples from policy documents' data
Nomination	discursive construction of social actors, objects, phenomena, events, processes and actions	- membership categorisation devices - tropes such as metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches - verbs and nouns to denote processes	- <i>learning development workers</i>  - <i>the student experience</i> - <i>student engagement</i>
Predication	discursive qualification of the above (positively or negatively)	- evaluative attributions e.g. adjectives, prepositional phrase - collocations - comparisons	- <i>authentic assessment</i> - <i>effective pedagogy</i> - <i>crowded curriculum</i> - <i>passive consumers</i>
Argumentation	justification and questioning of claims of truth or normative rightness	- topoi e.g. topos of authority - fallacies  - formal argumentation schemes	- <i>'From student satisfaction surveys to Select Committee reports, there is firm evidence that assessment is not successfully meeting the needs of students, employers, politicians or the public'</i>
Perspectivisation	positioning the speaker's or writer's point of view and expressing involvement or distance	- deictics  - direct, indirect speech representation	<i>'We believe it is vital, in an increasingly competitive labour market, that students graduate with all the qualities necessary to gain and retain fulfilling employment'</i>
Intensification or Mitigation	modifying (intensifying or mitigating) the illocutionary force and thus epistemic or deontic status of utterances	- diminutives or augmentatives - indirect speech acts - verbs of saying, feeling, thinking	- <i>excessive appetite for resources (summative assessment) = I</i> - <i>a partnership approach might not be for everyone = M</i>

As Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p. 44) note, the five categories operate at “different levels of linguistic organisation and complexity”. For example, predications can form part of nominations e.g. *graduate* instead of *student* focuses on the outcome of study. Predications also often form part of argumentation schemes in that the

traits assigned to a particular actor or phenomenon can be used as a basis for arguing that a particular action is true or the right thing to do (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). This is evident in the following cause-effect structure: “*a 21<sup>st</sup> century education requires a radical rethink in assessment practices*” (predications in italics). Argumentation is a rich area for analysis in policy discussion documents since writers use arguments to support their policy proposals. Argumentation schemes include cause-effect structures and counter-argument/argument structures (see Chapter 5 for examples). Another frequently analysed type of argumentation scheme in the DHA is the use of topoi. This is a notable feature of my analysis so I describe it in some detail below.

### *Topoi*

The key point about topoi is that they obscure the ideological character of a claim. They contribute to positive/negative evaluation without detailing the warrant or providing evidence. Reisigl (2014) notes that the notion of topos (present in Aristotle) was introduced in *The Discursive Construction of National Identity* (1999) but explicitly defined in *Discourse and Discrimination* (2001). It was conceptualised as being both formal and field- or content-oriented. I explain these two types of topoi with examples from my data. Formal analysis of argumentation is based on the “reduced functional model of argumentation”:

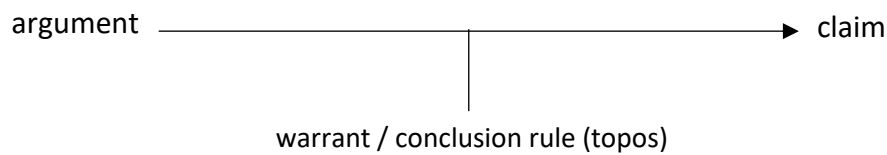


Figure 7. A simplified functional approach to argumentation. Reisigl, 2014, p. 75.

This is a simplified version of Toulmin’s (1969) original 6-part model (Reisigl, 2014). The argument gives the reason for a claim. The claim is the statement which has to be justified or refuted. The conclusion rule or warrant is the topos: “the central parts of argumentation that belong to the premises” and links the argument to the claim (Reisigl, 2014, p. 75). For example, the topos of authority is used in the following example (my data in italics):

Argument: X says that A is true/has to be done,

*Feedback from employers suggests that students are frequently unable to articulate effectively the skills and attributes that they have acquired whilst studying at university. (University Framework document)*

Conclusion Rule: If authority X says that A is true/has to be done (= topos)

*If employers say that students are frequently unable to articulate effectively the skills and attributes that they have acquired whilst studying at university.*

Claim: Thus, A is true/has to be done.

*Therefore, it is true that students are frequently unable to articulate effectively the skills and attributes that they have acquired whilst studying at university.*

The authority of employers is used to argue the above point without actually providing any evidence to support the claim. What are described as formal (or content-abstract) argumentation schemes include the scheme or *topos of authority, definition, example, comparison*, amongst others. I illustrate these in Chapter 5.

Reisigl (2014) argues that since argumentation is seen as topic-related and field-dependent, *topoi* can also be content-related conclusion rules that can typically be found in particular fields of action. These *topoi* can reveal the “specific character of discourses” within these fields (Reisigl, 2014, p. 77). For example, in the analysis of right-wing populist rhetoric in Austria, typical *topoi* included *topos of people, topos of democratic participation, topos of anger* etc. An example from my own data, to be discussed in the next chapter, is the *topos of uncertainty* relating to a construction of an uncertain future frequently drawn on to argue for broad conceptions of key concepts or a broad range of skills for students. It is argued that this kind of *topos* remains a “functional concept” since it still acts as a conclusion rule connecting the argument to the claim. A criticism of analysing texts for content-related *topoi* is that it can lead to long lists of *topoi* (e.g. in Wodak et al., 2009) without sufficient focus on analysis and critique (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). Reisigl (2014) rejects this criticism but does call for not

producing an excessive number of categories. While not using content-related topoi in his own work, Kienpointner (2013) acknowledges their potential usefulness in analysing argumentation. I find it useful to identify a limited number of common content-related topoi within the field of action of higher education policy-making especially since there is limited literature on this area.

Identifying the most common topoi in a particular field of action is useful for determining how particular groups or sections of society think and argue. It is also important to try to establish whether the arguments are based on sound or fallacious premises from a normative point of view in order to provide some critique (Reisigl, 2014). However, this is not always straightforward to do without specific context knowledge (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). In my analysis, I aim to determine some of the most commonly-used topoi, both formal and content-related, in the field of learning & teaching policy-making within higher education. This involves being aware of existing topoi but since this field has been less researched from a DHA perspective and topoi are not meant to be *a priori* categories (Wodak et al., 2009), I examine the data without preconceptions to identify topoi characteristic of this field.

#### *Analysis of macro-functions and macro-strategies*

As discussed in Chapter 3, strategies are conceptualised at different levels and in particular ways in the DHA. On a macro-level, two types appear across the literature albeit with shifting labels. In this study, I use the terms macro-functions and macro-strategies in the following way. Macro-functions highlight the purpose or function of a text or text section and include broad functions such



as *justification, construction, transformation, destruction* as well as more specific functions or strategies such as legitimisation, singularisation and avoidance (Wodak et al., 2009). Although these were identified in the study on national identity and are not *a priori* categories, some are useful for my own analysis. The process of identifying them is to work from the micro-analysis of discursive strategies and their means of realisation. For example, language of change, metaphors of obsolescence, a contrast between the past and now, *topos of consequence* of inaction, all indicate a call for *transformation*. This macro-function is prevalent in the text about assessment. Macro-functions can overlap. For example, *transformation* forms part of a broader *legitimation* strategy; common in policy documents. I discuss these further in Chapter 5.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the term macro-strategy can be used to describe a particular construction of people or phenomena in a text or texts and is a collection of discourse topics and discursive strategies (Unger, 2013). It is ideological in the sense that it is a representation from a particular perspective of an actor, process or phenomenon. The identification of macro-strategies is important for my study since although my study does not focus on the discursive construction of *one* country or *one* language, my research questions address how key actors and processes such as students, staff, a university education, learning and teaching are discursively constructed within the policy documents and interview data. For example, policy itself is discussed in the policy documents and I identify a number of discourse topics such as “the embedding into processes, practices and culture”, “recognition and reward systems” and “shared values” and a range of discursive strategies such as the *topos of opposites*

“piecemeal”, “small-scale” versus “embedded” which lead me to identify a macro-strategy of “policy as embedded within processes and structures” (see Chapter 5 for detail). This represents a particular perspective since an alternative view might be a more agentic view of policy as more democratically enacted or appropriated.

#### *Discourse - summary*

The above discussion illustrates the multi-layered character of analysing discourse. Returning to the definition at the start of this section in which discourse is described as topic-related, amongst other features, one can identify discourses in general terms such as discourse on/about global warming (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015), immigration (Wodak, 2015) or in my own data, discourse on *employability* or discourse on *continuous improvement*. Although establishing the boundaries or degree of granularity is subject to the interpretation of the analyst and not straightforward, it can be useful for a discussion of interdiscursivity and recontextualisation as I discuss further below.

#### 4.5.6 Analysing assessment texts

As indicated in section 4.5.2, I collected sample marked assignments as well as assessment briefs and module guides. One of the main purposes was to consider what constituted good and poor practice across modules and for each type of assignment. Both the assignments and module guides were used as mediating texts in the interviews. An overall purpose was also to analyse aspects of discourse within assessment texts e.g. key discourse topics or discursive strategies, which together with the more detailed analysis of policy documents

and interview data enabled an exploration of recontextualisation of policy as described below. For example, through close reading, in assignments I noted discourse topics I label “reflection”, “articulating learning”, “employability” and in a module guide I noted a learning outcome “an appreciation of the relevant employability skills developed on the module” which is a paraphrase of the topics above. These texts mediate practices and thus inform an analysis of discourse.

In analysing marked assignments, I also noted particular discursive strategies on the part of the assignment writer which constituted interpersonal work in terms of producing a valued text. For example, in a high-scoring reflective assignment, I noted considerable use of positive predications and intensification to portray the events attended and resulting learning in a positive light: “Sitting in the audience in front of a *stellar* panel of alumni who are now successfully pursuing careers in [subject area] was *incredibly* inspiring” and “It has *opened my mind* to the world of possibilities”. However, these findings mainly informed interview questions regarding expectations and practices.

Analysis of assignments focused on understanding the features of the text with the ultimate aim being to make connections with other findings on discourse. Since the assignments could not easily be categorised with genre labels such as essay or report, after surveying the assignments, I identified features which I could then use to categorise them in a more fine-grained way. I labelled these features: mode; number of students; subject; timeframe. *Mode* concerns whether the assignment is writing, presentation, discussion or mainly visual. *Number* is whether individual or group. *Subject* relates to the assignment focus in terms of

whether broadly literature-based or focused on one company. “Live” indicates a real company is involved in the assessment process; “one company” suggests it is a case study (but not live); “not one company” means it is not a case study and more issue or literature-based. *Timeframe* excludes assignments with the usual deadlines but includes more unusual forms such as time-limited e.g. 24 or 48 hours; retrospective i.e. after an event; tests in class. This resulted in Table 9 which shows the assignment elements according to the above characteristics on the set of four master’s programmes during the year 14/15. I also added how many assignment elements had those features and across how many modules. For example, group writing constitutes fifteen elements of assignment (out of forty-eight surveyed) and occurs in ten of the eleven modules surveyed. There were ten assignment elements related to “live” assessments found across four modules.

Table 9. Assignment elements by mode, subject and timeframe.

	Type of assignment	No of assignment elements	Across how many modules
Mode & no. of students	Individual writing	21	11
	Group writing	15	10
	Individual presentation	1	1
	Group presentation	7	6
	Group discussion	2	2
	Mainly visual	3	2
	Group simulation game	5	1
Subject	Live company	10	4
	One company or product	22	8
	Not one company	15	9
Timeframe (other than usual deadline)	Retrospective (reflective)	13	6
	Time limited	4	3
	Test in class (excl. Presentations)	3	3

I discuss these findings and the assignment types in more detail in Chapter 5 noting that the main aim is to examine discourse in these texts and so connections are made between these texts, interview data and policy documents. This analysis facilitates the exploration of intertextual and interdiscursive relations across data types.

#### 4.5.7 Analysing interviews

As discussed in Chapter 3, I regard the interview data as the textual product of a co-constructed interaction. I do not claim that I have accessed interviewees' true experiences, opinions or feelings. However, I believe there are links between discursive practices and social processes and, therefore, analysing discourse in interview data can indicate practices, structures as well as different ideologies. My approach to analysis is guided by reflexivity regarding my role in constructing the interview with the interviewee and I view the interviews as partial accounts or snapshots presented by interviewees who have points they want to make. Aspects of the setting should be acknowledged. The interviews revolved around assessment texts and questions around interviewees' experiences and were conducted at the end of the taught part of the course but before the dissertations. Students' experiences of assessment were fresh in their memory as they were close to events. They were able to reflect on their experience but did not have greater distance. This is not seen as a disadvantage but simply to recognise that the interviews are contextualised within a certain time period. Interviews with lecturers were also mostly done at the end of the course.

I am acquainted with the lecturers and two of the students which has an influence on the way meaning is co-constructed as shared knowledge and prior acquaintance are made relevant in the interaction. This familiarity is not necessarily a disadvantage. Garton and Copland (2010) explore what they term the “acquaintance interview” by using Goffman’s (1981) concepts of frames and footing (see Chapter 3) to consider how “prior relationships” are invoked or explicitly referred to and how the perception of the event (framing) and alignment of self and others (footing) shift continually within the interaction. For instance, lecturers occasionally raise the question of whether the data is useful or not for me:

(1)

Sue: ... so what we, going back to the point, trying not to give you loads of rubbish data here, [name] has been involved with this module for a long time

This illustrates a shift in footing from being an interviewee to being a researcher who knows this is an event that produces data. Also, lecturers occasionally refer to shared experience or knowledge:

(2)

Sue: ...and we have to be careful I think, I don’t know if you’ve had this kind of dialogue in [interviewer’s faculty], but we have to be careful not to over-assess them really

This shared experience clearly impacts the starting points and development of interaction and these aspects are seen in the interview transcripts and addressed in the analysis where relevant.

Furthermore, the interviews were based on questions around written texts i.e. sample marked assignments and module guides. The topic of assessment framed the interviews in that both lecturers and students talked about their experiences prompted by examples of these texts. Since the interviews are seen as jointly constructed, it is unsurprising that conversations followed different paths. Different voices emerged in that some lecturers' accounts more closely mirrored recommended learning and teaching practices and focused on the positives in their accounts. Others were candid about negative experiences. Some openly positioned themselves as in disagreement with espoused practices or highlighted the issues as they saw them. I see this variety in accounts as useful in indicating different discourses and sources of tension.

My overall approach to analysis is informed by the DHA's framework which I used to analyse the policy texts and I describe those steps below. By using the DHA's levels of context and tools for macro and micro analysis to frame my analysis of the interview data, I ensure consistency with the analysis of the policy texts which aids subsequent analysis of recontextualisation. It is important to recognise, however, that an interview produces a different kind of text from a policy document (see section 3.8). As discussed in Chapter 3, particular concepts e.g. framing, footing and positioning have been used in DHA studies involving interviews and focus groups to enrich analysis of predications, perspectivisation

and argumentation in order to explore how identities are discursively constructed (e.g. Wodak, 2011a). Contradictions and shifts in positioning and opinions in accounts can also indicate competing discourses. I detail below how these concepts from an interview as interaction perspective are used to aid the analysis.

In terms of stages of analysis, I did not want to simply mine the data for extracts to support points made in the analysis of policy texts. I wanted to be open to what was in the data itself and be systematic in applying the DHA's tools for analysis. Broadly, these include the identification of discourse topics and discursive strategies. Analysis started at the transcription stage (see section 4.4.3), included repeated listening to the audio to check accuracy and features I wanted to include such as pauses, laughter, elements of prosody such as stress. I then read and re-read the transcripts to become familiar with the data and made initial notes about a variety of features e.g. constructions of certain actors, events or phenomena; positioning of self and other; types of discursive strategies employed; features of the interaction such as turn-taking and footing. I then re-read the transcripts again in order to identify discourse topics in a systematic way. As noted earlier, the identification and labelling are subject to the interpretation of the analyst. The discourse topics provide a starting point from which to analyse participants' evaluation of these topics and their positioning of themselves and others. In other words, they precede detailed analysis of the discursive strategies.



Clearly, the prompts provided by marked assignments and module guides, as well as the questions around expectations and experiences, all shape the interaction. I created topic maps to indicate the main topics discussed. Since I am looking for patterns across interviews, the topic maps show the topics discussed by all or most of the interviewees. I also attempted to group the topics spatially according to the overall topic area e.g. guidance and feedback or work-related aims and indicate where topics are clearly linked by using overlapping shapes. However, the main aim is to analyse their evaluation of these topics and their positioning of self and others in order to consider how particular actors, processes and phenomena are discursively constructed. Furthermore, topic maps cannot show the nuances of individual interviews or participants' evaluation of those topics. Each interviewee had a story to tell in relation to their experience and I wanted to illustrate this rather than simply reducing the data according to particular themes. Therefore, analysis of discursive strategies is crucial for a detailed examination of discourse and as a starting point for exploring recontextualisation as discussed below.

In terms of micro analysis of selected extracts of the interview data, my starting point was the DHA's discursive strategies of nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation and intensification and their linguistic realisations. As discussed above and in Chapter 3, I drew on work on interviews as interaction. These have informed CDS approaches to analysing interviews and focus groups as Reisigl (2014) notes in relation to viewing examples in narrative episodes as claims within argumentation. Spoken data has many features but I only include those that notably contribute to an understanding of the discursive

strategies relevant to my research questions. I considered features that can indicate evaluation and positioning e.g. pauses, laughter, emphasis (e.g. Myers & Lampropoulou, 2016); speech representation of “direct” or “reported” speech (Baynham, 2011; Lampropoulou, 2011; Lampropoulou & Myers, 2013); impersonal “you” (Myers & Lampropoulou, 2012). Thus, I considered particular features to inform my analysis of how participants were positioning themselves and others in relation to the topics they were discussing i.e. strategies of perspectivisation, and how certain features contributed to the claims they were making i.e. strategies of argumentation (Wodak, 2011a). To illustrate the potential of analysing such features, I include an extract from an interview with a lecturer who is discussing the importance of precision in use of concepts in his module:

(3)

Interviewer: but presumably they're taught that in the class, they're taught to understand objectives or to read and interpret?

George: but that's not [own module name], that's where the problem becomes, that is not the domain of this module or at least there is not the (xxx), to read an objective or to read a problem statement is not the domain of a single module, however (.) if you are let to get away with that and one module comes and says “no I'm not playing this game”, for them it's difficult (..) so to my mind the problem has already been generated

I indicate how features of spoken interaction such as narrative examples, speech representation or impersonal “you” are used as discursive strategies to evaluate self and others but also to make a wider point. He uses my question as a prompt to discuss his opinion of not only what should be done but of other lecturers. First, he presents his point about developing certain skills throughout the programme rather than just one module. Then he shifts to talking about other lecturers with “however” and the “if you are let to get away with that”, with the impersonal “you” referring to students but used in a generalising sense indicating this often happens. The actor is absent in the passive construction “you are let” and then the metonymic “one module comes and says” again avoiding naming anyone specific. The shift into direct speech representation “I’m not playing this game” positions others in a negative way and is used as evidence to support his claim. This is reinforced through the perspectivisation strategy evident in “for them it’s difficult” suggesting that the students are not to blame and also “to my mind the problem has already been generated” indicating that others are causing the problem. What initially started as a comment on students’ difficulties, becomes a claim regarding inconsistency of approach within a department. Thus, features of spoken data can be analysed regarding their contribution to discursive strategies such as argumentation.

After analysing transcripts for discourse topics and discursive strategies, I then made connections between my analysis of the accounts and the analysis of the policy documents and moved back and forth between the interview data, the policy documents, my theoretical framework and the wider literature. The way I

present my analysis of interviews is not distinct from my exploration of recontextualisation. That is, I framed my analysis through the lens of the macro-strategies identified in the policy texts (see Chapter 5), to consider which ones are present, adapted or absent in the interview data. I also include any new topics or strategies that emerge from the interview data itself. I describe this process of exploring recontextualisation further below.

#### 4.5.8 Recontextualisation: Intertextual and interdiscursive analysis between data types

A key concern of this study is to examine in which ways and through what means policy influences educational practice and so analysing relationships between texts is central to this. To explore recontextualisation, I focus on intertextual and interdiscursive links between texts in different genres in different fields of action (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). I focus on recontextualisation between layers of policy making and remaking (see e.g. Lawton, 2016). Specifically, in Chapter 5, I examine intertextuality between the HEA policy discussion documents and the policy framework documents since the latter are a distillation of the former and widely used in institutions (see Figure 8 below). In this way, the framework documents move into the field of learning and teaching in a way that the discussion documents do not.

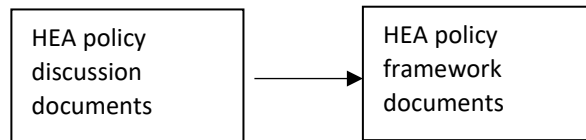


Figure 8. Exploring intertextual links between HEA policy documents.

I also trace elements of recontextualisation between HEA texts and other texts; in a sense backwards to government texts and then on to key policy texts in the institution. This is to explore possible origins of discourses but also to indicate how topics and strategies move into institutions and how they are modified:

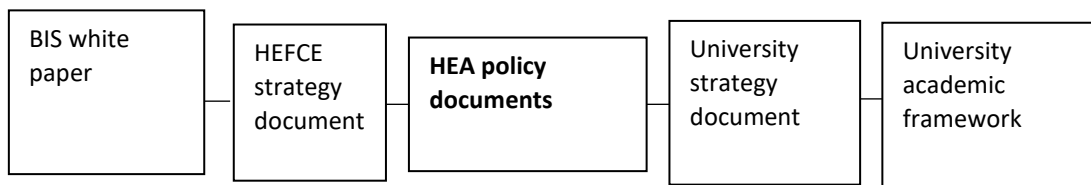


Figure 9. Exploring intertextual links between national policy and institutional policy texts.

In Chapter 6, my major focus is on recontextualisation between HEA texts and principally interview accounts but also assessment texts themselves. As discussed above, I frame this by considering the extent to which the macro-strategies in Chapter 5 appear in the interview data:

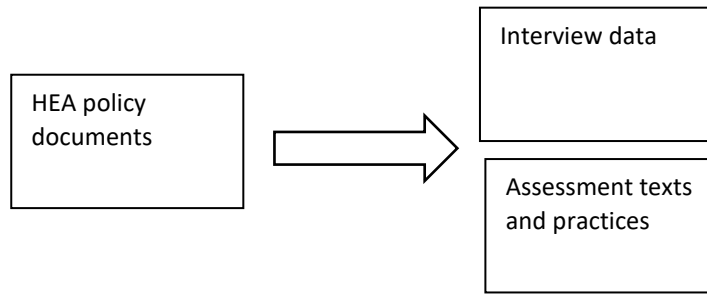


Figure 10. Exploring links between policy texts and interview data and assessment texts.

These simple representations illustrate the texts to be explored. What is also important is which field of action and which genres the texts appear in, and which topics and discursive strategies move and how they change. In the process, I examine intertextuality in order to determine which other texts and voices appear within a text whether through explicit reference to earlier texts or more commonly through references to the same actors, events, phenomena or the same arguments (Fairclough, 2003; Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). I also examine interdiscursive links, defined by Reisigl and Wodak (2015) as the overlapping of different discourses by, for example, drawing on the same discourse topics. In concrete terms, this means analysing particular discourse topics, but also discursive strategies, to consider how they are being recontextualised from one text (and one genre, one field of action) to another and how they are changed e.g. whether new elements are added and the extent to which the meaning changes. Figure 11, which includes elements of my own data, illustrates how these connections can be represented and therefore analysed.

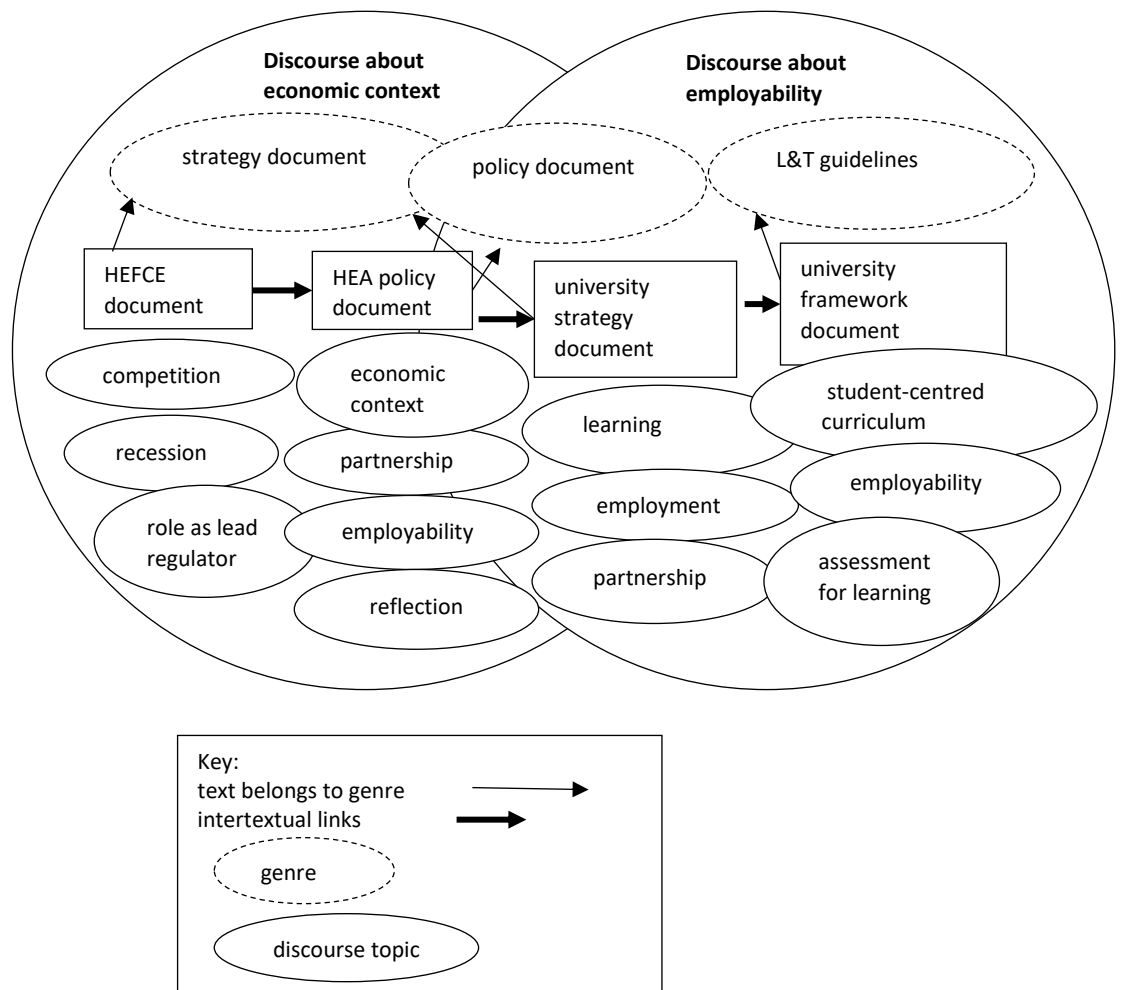


Figure 11. Interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between discourses, discourse topics, genres and texts. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 30.

The figure includes some of the texts within my study and just a few discourse topics that appear within the texts. Starting at the broader level of the *discourse about employability* which appears in the policy documents, numerous discourse topics relate to this. I select just one, “reflection” to illustrate my process of analysis and the potential for intertextual and interdiscursive analysis by examining the movement of topics and strategies across layers of context or in Bernstein’s terms from the ORF into the PRF. Reflection is a topic evident in the

field of learning and teaching since certain assignments are explicitly labelled “reflective” and this assignment type formed part of my original motivation to explore reasons for such assessment. As detailed in Chapter 5, I find that employability as a discourse topic appears in three of the four selected policy texts and is discussed in detail in the *Pedagogy for Employability* discussion document. Reflection is an associated discourse topic along with other topics such as “articulation of learning” and “active learning”. Reflection on learning (preferably experiential and active learning) is seen as promoting articulation of content learned and skills developed which is constructed as a precursor to being employable. I note the same discourse topics are recontextualised within the much shorter 2016 HEA framework document on employability. In this text, they are conflated into “reflection and articulation” and presented as one of ten “areas of focus” in the framework model diagram. At the level of the institution, this topic is then recontextualised further within the university’s own framework which are guidelines for L&T. Through a discursive strategy of argumentation, specifically a *topos of authority* of employers, the importance of articulation and reflection for “employability” are highlighted:

Feedback from employers suggests that students are frequently unable to articulate effectively the skills and attributes that they have acquired whilst studying at university. Regularly highlighting the skills that are being developed through learning activities can help students gain confidence in presenting themselves to employers.

(*River University academic framework, 2012*)



As noted above, there are numerous reflective assignments and the assessment brief for one states: "... reflect upon how the event has influenced your thinking about your future career" thus inviting a specific kind of reflection that must evidence transformation. In turn, I can trace these discourse topics in the interviews with lecturers and students. In the interview extract below, the lecturer echoes the assignment brief and also assumes the perspective of the student:

(4)

Interviewer: So what kind of reflection are you looking for?

Karen: ... how it's shaped me, how has that made me think differently or has it confirmed exactly what I thought, just to get them, rather than just turning up and thinking, listening and thinking, oh yeah, that's interesting and go away, what will I do differently, what will I alter on my CV?

I can also trace the topic of articulating learning in the interview. Karen's comments below occur during an explanation of their assessment mix and how they frame a literature-based, more theoretical assignment. They bring together the discourse topics of competition "it's a tough world out there" and real-world relevance "how does this help our students?" with that of articulating learning "a skill they could articulate to an employer"; including the onus on the lecturers to be clear about what students are learning "we need to spell out for them":

(5)

Karen: ... on the understanding it provides a skill that they could articulate to an employer and for me that's everything in a business school that I think we do, I'm not into, I think rigorous academic standards is absolutely definitely where we aspire to and engaging pedagogies but at the same time always thinking how does this help our students? Cos it's a tough world, they've got to somehow, and sometimes we need to spell out for them what they're learning and how that might be useful

Clearly, this brief example only touches on some of the discursive features of these texts and their links with other texts that could be explored. However, it illustrates how the recontextualisation of policy can be examined and the process of analysis of moving recursively between different types of data. Topics move into different fields with the same labels but employing different discursive strategies. Sometimes, of course, topics change their labels or merge with other topics and use different strategies. The topics described above also form part of the macro-strategies relating to the construction of the purpose of a university education and learning & teaching so such analysis forms part of identifying and tracing these macro-strategies between documents and interviews.

I have detailed the process for analysing discourse and recontextualisation in texts. I also consider how the findings from this analysis might be typical of discursive practices within the field of L&T and how this relates to previous studies of marketisation in higher education (e.g. Fairclough, 1993). A further important step is to interpret my findings within the other part of my theoretical

framework: the pedagogic device, the ORF and PRF and pedagogic identities (Bernstein, 1990; 2000). Figure 12 represents the connections between concepts and frameworks, locates the data and the potential for analysing recontextualisation.

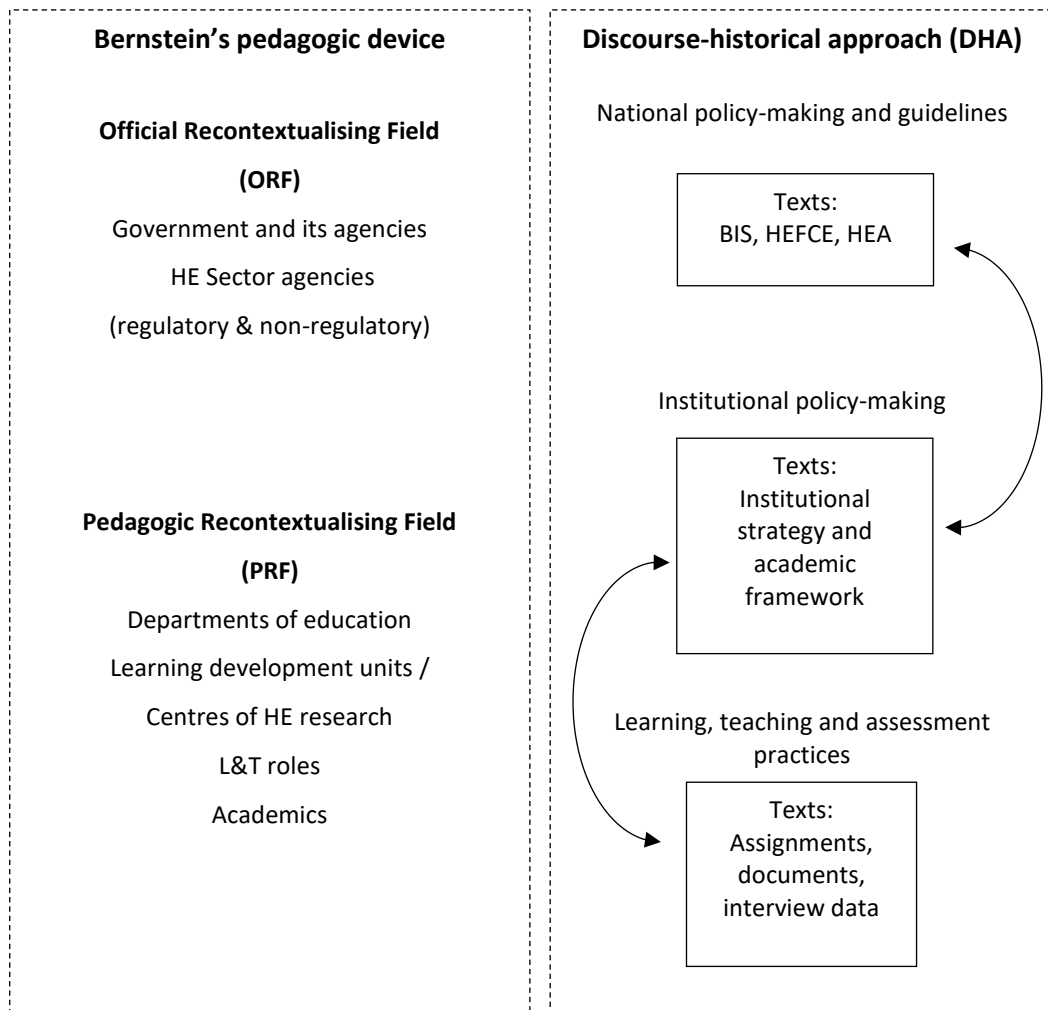


Figure 12. Study design: a coherent framework.

#### 4.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined my research design, methodology and explained the rationale for bringing together analysis of different types of data from different layers of context in order to explore the recontextualisation of policy. In the next chapter, I present my analysis of policy texts from different fields.

## **5 Field of policy-making: analysis of policy documents**

### 5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the analysis of the selected policy documents which establishes how key actors, processes and phenomena involved in learning & teaching in higher education are constructed. My main focus is on the four HEA policy documents. In section 5.2, I first outline more detail about the setting, purpose and audience of these texts. Then I describe distinctive features of each of the four texts. This is followed by initial analysis of features *across* the four texts including discourse topics, macro-functions and discursive strategies. In section 5.3, I move to a central part of the analysis which is the analysis of macro-strategies across the four texts. This illustrates the ideological characteristics of the constructions of students, lecturers, a university education and universities as institutions as well as how policy itself is constructed. I then begin to explore recontextualisation by tracing intertextuality and interdiscursivity between different, but closely connected, genres of HEA policy documents (section 5.4) and between national policy texts and institutional policy texts (section 5.5).

### 5.2 Locating the four policy texts: setting, purpose, audience, features

#### 5.2.1 Fields of Action

The purpose of this section is to locate the texts by describing their source, purpose, intended audience and distinctive features (see section 4.4.2 for an overview of text selection). I start by locating them in terms of the fields of action of their production but also their circulation. As discussed in section 4.5.3, the notion of a field of action is useful for considering where texts, discourses and social actors are located but also how texts and discourses, and indeed actors,

can move from one field to another. It is a particularly important concept for this study since I analyse how discourses are recontextualised from one field of action to another from their origins into universities' own strategy documents, policy guidelines, practices and participants' accounts. A field is characterised by the main function of its various discursive practices although it could have more than one function. Figure 13 shows a range of fields, genres and discourse topics within higher education based on my analysis. In particular, I highlight the location of the HEA policy discussion texts and note the other texts analysed in this chapter.

In Chapter 2, I gave an overview of the HEA and the socio-political and higher education environment it operates in and in Chapter 4, I explained the rationale for text selection. In this section, therefore, I focus on discussing the authorship, audience and purpose of the texts in terms of fields of action. The HEA, despite being an "independent and non-regulatory" organisation (HEA, 2018), belongs simultaneously to different fields of action in that it builds on government policy and creates guidelines for universities to follow thereby having the function of policy-making and the formation of attitudes and practices within the sector. It produces numerous publications related to its key priorities in learning & teaching, including some work on particular disciplinary areas, and these would mostly be read by university management, members of learning development units and academics with learning & teaching roles. More recently, the HEA has been involved in providing teaching accreditation through its Fellowship Scheme within universities (see section 2.3.3), so is part of the field of institution-internal

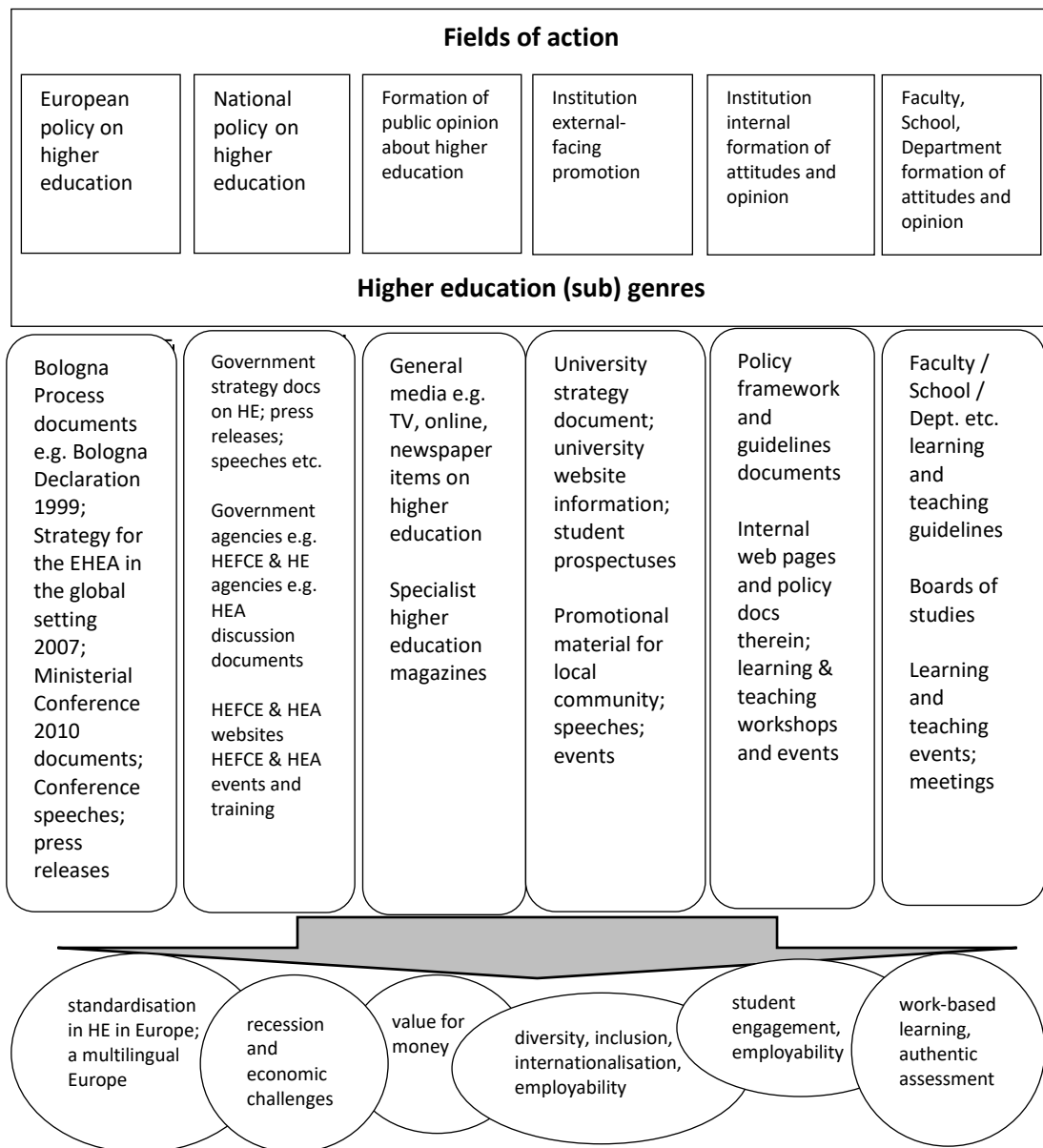


Figure 13. Fields of action in higher education. Based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2015.

formation of attitudes and practices with an increasing number of its publications visible in universities. It is interesting to note the organisation's expanding functions, and therefore the fields it is part of, reflecting the increasing influence of national agencies not only on formal requirements of, for example, quality assurance, but also on learning and teaching practices themselves. This

expansion in relation to notions of the ORF and PRF is discussed further in Chapter 7.

The situation is not so clear-cut in another sense when considering the authorship of the discussion texts since actors can move in and out of different fields. In this case, some authors are also currently academics while others are directly employed by the HEA. Some of these were once academics, others are consultants or have different backgrounds. This raises the question of the positioning of those involved in the HEA, and their work, given that the guidelines are linked to government policy and priorities as well as those of *the sector*.

As noted in Chapter 4, the four HEA documents concern the topics of employability; partnership; assessment and internationalisation. Details are as follows:

1. Pegg, A., Waldock, J., Wendy-Isaac, S., & Lawson, R. (2012). Pedagogy for Employability. *The Higher Education Academy*.

[text referred to as PFE]

2. Healey, M., Flint, A., & Harrington, K. (2014). Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education. *The Higher Education Academy*.

[text referred to as ETP]



3. HEA (2012). A Marked Improvement: Transforming assessment in higher education. *Higher Education Academy*.

[text referred to as AMI]

4. HEA (2014). Internationalising Higher Education Framework, *Higher Education Academy*.

[text referred to as IHEF]

### 5.2.2 Genres

The first three documents can be characterised as *discussion* documents. They are reports commissioned by the HEA and cited as being highly influential on the resulting *framework* documents (see section 4.4.2). In terms of audience, most academics would probably only come across the framework documents, either as part of their seeking HEA Fellowship scheme accreditation or in a recontextualised form through university frameworks and guidelines. They are unlikely to encounter the discussion documents themselves unless they have learning & teaching roles. The first two documents have named authors while the third document is described as a collaboration between a large group of people (named in document). I chose these documents because they are reports and are more discursive than the frameworks.

Being part of the fields of formation of policy as well as the formation of attitudes and practices within universities, they are a genre which aims to persuade. They discuss the context, approach and rationale for the proposals and aim to provide evidence in the form of literature, cases and models. These texts advocate certain

approaches but this is combined with elements of an academic register evident in the extensive discussion, reference to literature and other sources of evidence as I discuss in my analysis below. This no doubt reflects the fact that many of the authors are academics and that the audience are too. The fourth document is slightly different. This is the 2014 version of the Internationalising higher education framework. There was no single report to use for this topic since the framework was developed from a Learning & Teaching Summit in 2013. I use the 2014 version since it has more detail than the 2016 versions. I discuss the development of the 2016 Frameworks as part of my discussion of intertextuality in section 5.4. In the following section, although the macro-structure is an element of genre, I discuss it while describing the distinctive features of each text.

### 5.2.3 Macro-structure and particular features of each text

Before discussing the analysis *across* texts, I briefly describe the macro-structure and the particular features (contents, discursive strategies) of *each* text. The first text *Pedagogy for employability* (PFE), like all the documents, outlines the context as a rationale. It outlines the current economic and policy context, then moves onto the higher education sector context. It then discusses definitions and models of employability and finally an extended section on implications for the curriculum. A feature of this text is the acknowledgement that there is not yet an agreed definition or model for employability and that institutions need to adapt the concept to their own situation. I discuss this in more detail in the macro-strategies section. The text makes extensive use of short case studies, thirteen in all, to illustrate the ways that approaches to employability are being put into

practice. Another distinctive feature is a short digression on what might be called *structural factors* affecting equality of outcomes for graduates such as reputation of the institution, subject studied, gender, ethnic and socio-economic background and once in employment, the sector worked in. It is argued that intervention is necessary since inaction allows the more advantaged to continue to thrive. This uses a discursive strategy of transformation with its negative connotation of continuation, drawing on a *topos of consequences (of inaction)* (see section 5.2.5) as a source of legitimation for an employability approach:

The issue for higher education is what it should do to enhance the employment potential for the full spectrum of its graduates, while acknowledging that economic forces, of various kinds, will influence the graduates' success. However, continuing to make assumptions that students can all be treated in the same way, and have equal confidence in dealing with the labour market, runs the risk of perpetuating disadvantage as the relatively advantaged are able to maintain their position. (PFE, p. 8)

The suggestion is that such policies can address inequality although the text seems to express caution that these barriers can be overcome. The implication is that if students go to an *elite* university and study an in-demand subject, they may not need to devote time to employability skills. This may be why less highly-ranked universities are early-adopters of the approach as evidenced by the names of the majority of the institutions described in the case studies.

The second text, *Engagement through partnership* (ETP), is the longest document at around sixty pages excluding references. It starts with an executive summary, moves on to sections called 'The context and case for partnership', 'Building a conceptual model' and 'Developing partnership learning communities' which explores the literature on communities. This is followed by 'The four areas of partnership' which has the detail of the model, how it can be implemented in curriculum and pedagogy and contains numerous diagrams/models and case studies. The conclusion outlines 'tensions and challenges' and 'ways forward'. The text draws heavily on the *topos of example* through eleven case studies and the *topos of authority* through twelve models. Discussion and rationalising around concepts and literature is prominent within this document suggesting that people may find the ideas challenging. This could be labelled a *topos of challenge* (cf. Wodak, 2011a in relation to EU policy) as there is frequent use of the idea of difficult challenges being ultimately beneficial.

This strategy of transformation is even more evident in the third text *A marked improvement* (AMI) whose subtitle is 'Transforming assessment in higher education'. The starting point is that assessment is "far from perfect", "[has] not kept pace with the vast changes in the context" and that "it is time for a serious reappraisal" (p. 7). It uses the discursive strategy of negative connotation of continuation and positive connotation of, in this case, "radical change", presenting current practices as obsolete (cf. Wodak et al., 2009). In terms of structure, the text consists of a brief synopsis, a first section titled 'The rationale and groundwork for transforming assessment', the "groundwork" being what changes need to be made in terms of processes, structures, staff development and

leadership. The second section is titled 'Assessment standards: a manifesto for change'. The political metaphor of the "manifesto" is continued with the "six tenets" which comprise this manifesto. For example, the first tenet is "Assessment for learning", the second "Ensuring assessment is fit for purpose". Each tenet is presented in a table with accompanying justification and then bulleted key points that form the basis of the tenet. Such a table layout draws on the *topos of authority* by giving it the status of a model. The third section is an 'Assessment review tool' consisting of questions categorised under the six "tenets" for institutions to review current practices. Part A is for senior managers to "address strategic institutional issues for radical changes across an institution". Part B is for "working groups" of programme leaders, teaching staff and students. A five-point scale to record answers and note evidence and actions contributes to legitimising the proposals. The choices are: 1 = none or very little, 2 = some but sufficient, 3 = just adequate, 4 = considerable but still some gaps, 5 = full and comprehensive (AMI, p. 25). This suggests that 5 is the only acceptable answer and all other answers demand action for change. A list of annotated reading sources follows, each one linked to particular tenets, thus using a *topos of authority* in the form of literature to support the proposals.

The fourth text, the *Internationalising higher education framework* (IHEF) is a much shorter document in line with its intended use as a set of guidelines. However, it has similar discursive strategies and genre elements as other documents. The front page is a simplified diagram of the framework, then an introduction outlining the economic and political context as a basis for the proposals, followed by 'aims and objectives', 'aspirations', 'using and applying the

framework' and a page for the detailed framework diagram. The framework includes areas of "activity", "knowledge" and "values". For example, the areas of "activity" are: "Fostering an inclusive ethos"; "Promoting intercultural engagement"; "Enabling a global learning experience"; "Facilitating a global academic community" and "Embedding social responsibility". The creation of these framework models again uses the *topos of authority* by visually representing and connecting ideas that effectively could be a list of points. The following pages expand on elements of the framework and include what they call "vignette exemplars" of what actual, though unnamed, institutions have done, again using the *topos of example*. For instance:

Video conferencing is used to connect students in the UK with those in Russia to discuss their respective learning experiences, aiding cross-cultural understanding, building confidence and language skills.

(IHEF, p. 7)

The text then covers what "organisations", "people" and "curriculum" can do and the benefits for them of these practices. It has a review tool in the form of questions for institutions about the above three aspects. The final section is a glossary with terms defined "for the purposes of this framework" e.g. Activity is defined as "the contribution that an individual or group can make to the process of internationalising HE, requiring an underpinning set of knowledge and values to be implemented effectively" (IHEF, p. 16). This glossary seemingly aims to ensure that readers develop a shared language and understanding as discussed further in section 5.3.

#### 5.2.4 Discourse topics across the four texts

As discussed in section 4.5.5, the aim of outlining the discourse topics across the texts is to determine the main macro-strategies being used and ultimately to analyse the interdiscursive and intertextual links between policy documents in different fields of action as well as in the interview data and student assignments thereby looking for traces of recontextualisation. Having noted the discourse topics in each text, I looked for common topics across texts resulting in the topic map in Figure 14 below. As indicated by the dotted arrows, the topics in the middle are the ones found in all four texts, the others in the top half are found in three texts and the ones below in two texts.

I have synthesised these topics further, and analysed discursive strategies (integrated in the discussion of macro-strategies in section 5.3), to produce a limited number of topic-related macro-strategies which I have named as follows:

1. Policy as embedded within processes and structures
2. The institution as a non-hierarchical community with shared values
3. A university education as developing future-fit graduates
4. Learning as socially-situated and teaching as facilitation

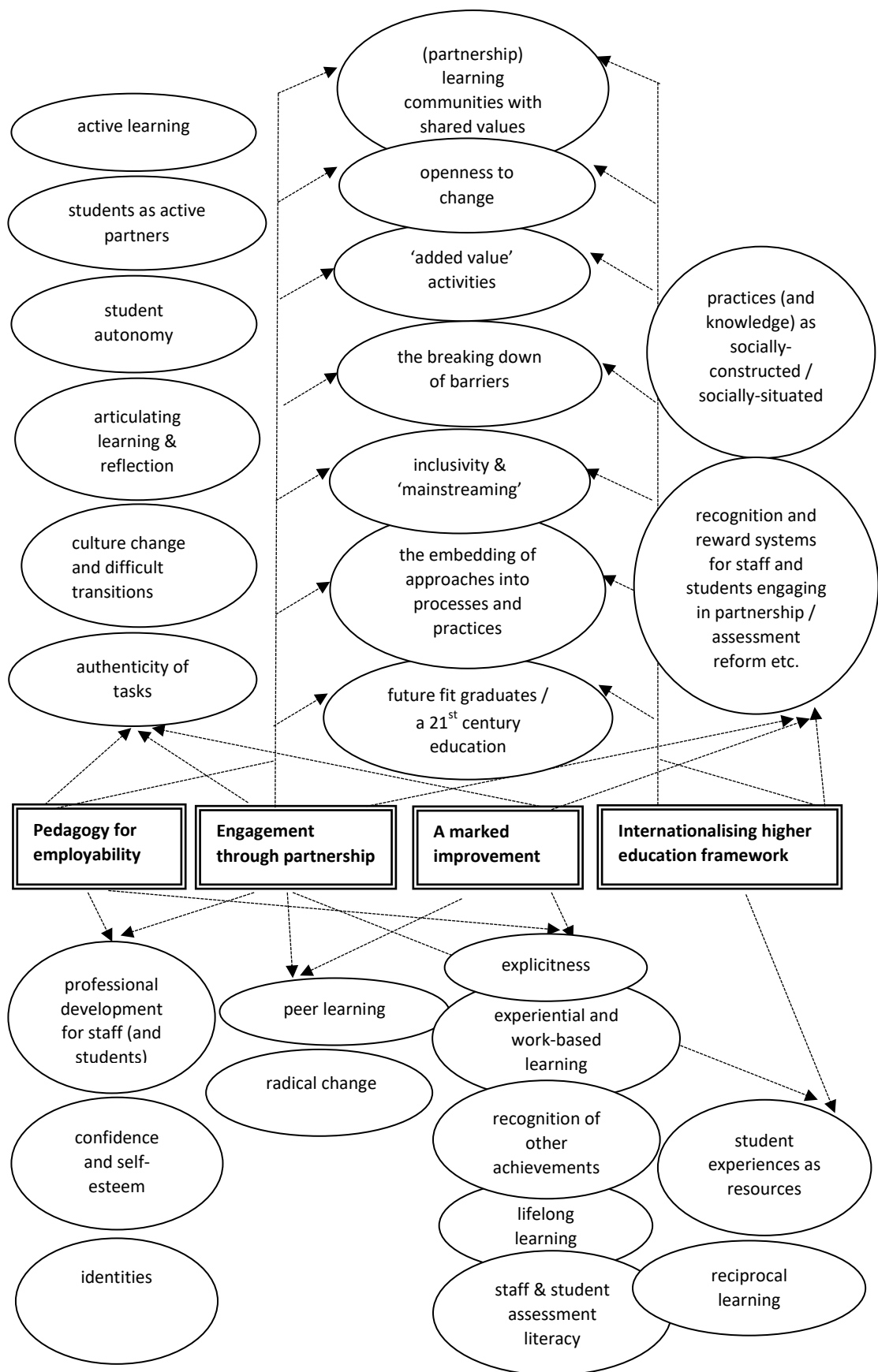


Figure 14. Discourse topics across the 4 HEA documents.



Although there is some overlap between these in terms of discourse topics, I see each one as having a particular emphasis. The first concerns how policy implementation itself is discussed. The second focuses on the construction of staff, student and “community” identities. The third concerns the aims of a university education; constructions of a “21<sup>st</sup> century” university education. The fourth strategy involves how learning is constructed, with its implications for teaching. Since these form the core of my analysis, I examine in detail how these topic-related macro-strategies work by analysing the collection of discourse topics and discursive strategies that constitute them. I also begin to discuss why these macro-strategies are used. First, however, I discuss some overarching *macro-functions*, and the associated strategies, that are used across the policy texts.

#### 5.2.5 Macro-functions and discursive strategies used across texts

As noted in section 4.5.5, in the DHA, I can consider the broad functional strategies or *macro-functions* of a section of text, such as legitimisation, construction or transformation that predications, argumentation schemes contribute to. For example, predications such as “innovative” and “effective” aim to legitimate policy proposals. I briefly consider the key macro-functions and associated discursive strategies across texts. These macro-functions are not discrete. For example, even where transformation is prominent, it is part of a broader legitimisation strategy.

### *Construction*

This is a common macro-function used to construct a particular phenomenon or concept within the policy proposals e.g. *partnership learning communities* discussed in section 5.3.2. This involves defining what the concept is and is not; particularly with new or unfamiliar ideas. It involves the pursuit of a shared understanding embodied in the discourse topic of a “shared language” and a strategy of avoidance in terms of backgrounding any disagreements or tensions. A summary is given in Table 10 below. I note how the *topos of definition* and the *topos of opposites* are salient in constructing particular concepts within policy. The latter is used extensively in constructing the meaning of new proposals.

Table 10. Construction macro-function across texts.

Construction macro-function		
strategies (functional)	discursive strategies	means and forms of realisation (with examples from texts)
strategy of definition	topos of definition e.g. of new concepts	definition language glossaries of terms in some texts
	topos of opposites (what is and is not)	structures of contrast: <i>partnership is a process not a product</i>
constructing a community: emphasis on sameness strategy of avoidance (backgrounding of difference)	nomination predications	community <i>shared values / language</i>

### *Transformation*

It is unsurprising that policy focuses on the need for change and transformation. There are particular ways that the documents discuss transformation. A summary is presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Transformation macro-function across texts.

Transformation macro-function		
strategies (functional)	discursive strategies	means and forms of realisation (with examples from texts)
emphasising the need for change: difference between then and now / now and future ('dissimilation')  negative connotation of continuation	nominations e.g. of change	-change words: <i>transformation</i> metaphor of political campaign involving transformation: <i>manifesto, tenets</i> (assessment)
	predications	-negative adjectives: <i>obsolete, out-dated, vulnerable</i> practices; <i>piecemeal, incremental</i> changes -major changes: <i>radical</i> rethink, <i>fundamental</i> change
	topos of opposites i.e. past to present or present to future	-negative / positive structures: <i>traditional</i> versus <i>new ways of thinking</i> // <i>consumer</i> versus <i>change agent</i> or <i>co-producer</i>
	topos of context referring to e.g. tuition fees, competition	-vague language: <i>challenges, current context</i>
	topos of consequences - negative consequences of not changing	-structure of cause and (negative) effect
	topos of modernity	-language of modern, new: <i>21<sup>st</sup> century</i> practices
	topos of uncertain future	-language of uncertainty

A key strategy involves “dissimilation” (Wodak et al., 2009) or a contrast between the past and now or the present and future. Particular argumentation schemes are employed to show why current circumstances demand change, with the negative connotation of continuation, either because the context is different and/or because what exists now is inadequate. As the table shows, *predications* involving negative evaluation of current practices e.g. “obsolete”, “out-dated” and of existing initiatives “piecemeal”, “incremental” are salient; supporting the argument for transformation that is “radical” and “fundamental”. The *topos of opposites* is used to reinforce the need for transformation e.g. “traditional” versus

“new ways of thinking”. Also used as argumentation shortcuts are various content-related topoi which I discuss under the macro-strategies below.

### *Legitimation strategy*

Unlike other texts which aim to justify past actions, policy texts focus on the present or future and aim to legitimate the proposals being made. The discursive strategies summarised in Table 12 have the broad macro-function of legitimating the policy proposals.

Table 12. Legitimation macro-function across policy texts.

Legitimation macro-function		
strategies (functional)	discursive strategies	means and forms of realisation (with examples from texts)
legitimation	nominations e.g. processes as actors	-nouns: <i>curriculum, pedagogy, delivery</i>
delegitimation – taking authority away from some actors	predications e.g. positive evaluation	-positive adjectives: <i>effective pedagogy / innovative curriculum</i>
	topos of authority e.g. use of models e.g. use of ‘evidence’ e.g. referral to ‘authority’ – employers, students, organisations	-multimodal e.g. <i>models, tables, scales with hierarchy of good to best</i> -annotated bibliography –list of references with summary of how relates to proposals -direct or indirect quotation from authority e.g. <i>employers suggest that...</i>
	topos of example e.g. use of case studies	-case studies / vignettes of institutional practices that reader can admire
	topoi (content-related) e.g. context, uncertainty, modernity	-referential vagueness: <i>in the current context; an uncertain future</i> language of ‘new’: <i>21<sup>st</sup> century education</i>
	formal argumentation schemes e.g. counter-argument / argument	-CA/A structure: <i>some academics might argue that... however,</i>
	intensification e.g. importance of policy	-intensifying adjectives, adverbs, verbs: <i>have proliferated; increasingly important</i>
	mitigation – to avoid claim of being prescriptive	-mitigating, qualifying language: <i>it may not be relevant to all institutions</i>
	topos of consequences i.e. consequences of inaction / not following policy	-cause-effect: <i>not addressing employability will allow the privileged to maintain their position</i>

Both nomination and predication are used extensively to legitimate policy. As discussed in Chapter 4, nomination (naming of actors), like predications, can include an element of positive evaluation e.g. initiatives, enhancement. A common type of nomination is the discursive construction of processes as actors such as pedagogy, delivery, curriculum. This enables a concise style and concepts to be related to each other through cause/effect, concession, comparison but is also a euphemising strategy employing agent deletion (Wodak et al., 2009) e.g. “effective pedagogy” removes the teacher as an actor. This also serves to suppress any complexity or challenges as processes are effortlessly linked together e.g. “effective pedagogy demands consistent policy frameworks” (PFE, p. 10). Extensive positive predication e.g. “innovative curriculum” makes it harder for the reader to disagree with such seemingly positive developments (e.g. Wodak, 2011a). The following extract illustrates this way of legitimating proposals:

Students should experience assessment as a *valid* measure of their programme outcomes using *authentic* assessment methods which are both intrinsically *worthwhile* and *useful* in developing their future employability. (AMI, p. 10)

The predications “valid”, “authentic” and “useful” are linked to suggest a cause-effect relationship between being authentic and being valid/useful.

Both *intensification* and *mitigation* strategies are used to legitimate the proposals. Firstly, intensification is used across the texts to highlight the growing

importance of these issues e.g. “interest in the idea has proliferated” (ETP, p. 12). However, in the case of AMI, it is mainly through intensification of how bad the current situation is e.g. “excessive appetite for resources” (summative assessment) and “assessment is far from perfect” (AMI, p. 7). This is a common strategy in policy documents which need to suggest urgency and wide acceptance of the need for change.

*Mitigation* strategies are often used alongside intensification strategies. As well as acknowledging the range of definitions, models and approaches in relation to key policy concepts, the texts often state they are not being prescriptive. Claims are mitigated by saying that models can be adapted according to context and research evidence on the impact of these policies is lacking. An example of this is in the conclusion of the ETP text:

We acknowledge that a partnership approach might not be right for everyone, nor is it possible in every context. Our aim in this publication is not to be prescriptive, but to call for opening up to the possibilities and exploring the potential that partnership can offer. (ETP, p. 60)

There is concession through “acknowledge” and mitigation with “might”, “suggest” and “nor ... in every context”. However, this is counteracted with the positive, though vague, “possibilities” and “potential”. This combination of highlighting the proposal’s importance while mitigating the claims draws on an academic register to avoid accusations of being prescriptive. However, I discuss

later how mitigation is absent in the *framework* documents which are guidelines for practice.

Certain types of *argumentation scheme* are used extensively to legitimate the proposals. I have noted how the discursive strategies operate at different levels and overlap in some respects. For example, the predications and intensifications discussed above often form part of a formal argumentation scheme. As discussed in section 4.5.5, topoi work by providing a warrant for a claim. However, the warrant may be questionable or lack evidence to support it. The policy documents make extensive use of formal topoi such as the *topos of authority* utilising models. The simple act of creating a model in diagrammatic form lends authority to the claim being made since it gives a sense of being scientific or of proven value (Ledin & Machin, 2015). It is visually appealing and constructs relationships between concepts as logical and self-evident. To aid legitimation, models often have hierarchies with one element which embodies the policy proposal presented as the best option. For example, the ETP text has numerous models with suggested hierarchies; one of which is in Figure 15 below.

Mitigation strategies are often used in discussion around the model to counteract this suggested hierarchy of good practice e.g.

While not proposing these concepts stand in a simple linear relationship to each other, ladders of participation and engagement can be useful in clarifying differences here. (ETP, p. 15)

Figure 15. (Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions)

However, whether they are lists, matrices or more complex figures, the images with their arrows, top to bottom and left to right framing of concepts invariably indicate which is the preferred practice. Another prevalent type of *topos of authority* is to refer to certain actors as having the right to be listened to e.g. employers or students in the following:

Students have also noticed how assessment fails to meet their needs, particularly in relation to relevance to the world of work. (AMI, p. 7)

Similarly, the *topos of example* is used extensively through the presentation of case studies as examples of good practice. This presents the idea in concrete form e.g. a teaching activity or assessment that the reader can relate to, is encouraged



to admire and perhaps to feel inadequate if they are not engaging in equally innovative practices. The PFE text alone has thirteen case studies. Each case has a title and a sub-title summarising the range of its activity e.g.

Case study 12: Venture Matrix

*Approximately 1,100 first-, second- and final-year undergraduates from over 50 modules across many disciplines. (PFE, p. 39)*

There is then a summary of the case and its benefits. The IHEF text being a shorter framework document follows the same principle but with much shorter “vignette exemplars”. Illustration of concrete examples is thus clearly used to legitimate practices.

### *Delegitimation*

One way of legitimating the policy proposals is to lend authority not only to the proposals themselves but to certain actors. This also involves delegitimating other actors and associated activities. This sometimes involves backgrounding by hardly mentioning them e.g. lecturers and teaching, or by suggesting that they do not have the right to an opinion. An example of the latter is the use of a *counter-argument-argument* structure. As noted in section 4.5.5, this is included as a formal argumentation scheme but more broadly is also an example of dialogicality (Bakhtin, 1981) since the writer is anticipating the reactions of the intended reader. A limited amount of criticism of the approaches is introduced to acknowledge different viewpoints but then an argument provided to refute the criticisms:

Some question whether students have the expertise, knowledge and experience to be fully engaged in partnership in learning and teaching. However ... students are neither disciplinary nor pedagogical experts. Rather their experience and expertise typically is in being a student – something that many faculty have not been for years. They understand where they and their peers are coming from and, often, where they think they are going. (ETP, p. 20)

In the example, the vague “some” in “some question whether” clearly alludes to academics with “faculty” mentioned later in the extract. There is a clear structure of counter-argument/argument with the refutation of the counter-argument stating that students are expert at being a student adding “something that many faculty have not been for years” implying a criticism of outdated staff. The counter-arguments are rarely discussed in any depth but mentioning them gives the appearance of considering different perspectives.

### 5.3 Constructing higher education: topic-related macro-strategies in the four texts

Having discussed the salient macro-functions and discursive strategies across the four texts, I now turn to the topic-related macro-strategies that construct actors, processes or phenomena in particular ways. I focus on those strategies which relate to my research questions. As discussed in Chapter 4, a topic-related macro-strategy is a loose collection of discourse topics and discursive strategies. It can be seen as ideological since it constructs these entities in certain ways which

might appear as common sense or widely-accepted but derive from a certain perspective.

### 5.3.1 Policy as embedded within processes and structures

I start with how policy itself is constructed since there is considerable, what I call, “meta-discussion” about how policy should be treated. I see this as a macro-strategy because the metaphor of embedding and associated discursive strategies have the aim of ensuring compliance and standardisation. Although compliance is the intention of policy, this suggests a certain insecurity of policy-makers that otherwise the policy would not be embraced. Table 13 below summarises the key contents and strategies.

The discursive strategies of intensification and mitigation characterise discussion of policy. That is, the topic of each policy document is presented as being increasingly important to debates in higher education. At the same time, implementation of policy is mitigated in the sense that all the documents suggest they are not being prescriptive and that each institution, field and level of study can adapt the policy in their own way.

Another type of mitigation is the limited available evidence of the impact of policy implementation. The PFE text discusses the “lack of evaluation of initiatives and approaches to teaching and learning employability skills” (p. 46). The ETP text mentions the need to build “a robust evidence base for the impact of partnership for students, staff, institutions and students’ unions” (p. 11) and the

Table 13. Macro-strategy 1: Policy as embedded within processes and structures.

Policy as embedded within processes and structures		
<b>DISCOURSE TOPICS:</b> -the embedding into curriculum, processes, practices and culture -embedding recognition and reward systems for staff and students engaging in partnership / assessment reform / internationalisation		-shared language – shared values – shared point of reference -staff development strategy -evidence-informed change -articulation -explicitness
STRATEGIES (functional)	DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES	MEANS OF REALISATION ( <i>with examples</i> )
legitimation	nominations	- <i>tenets &amp; manifesto</i> : metaphor of policy as political manifesto
	predications e.g. of how policy should be done	-adjectives e.g. <i>embedded, shared, core, integrated, permeating</i> -metaphor of <i>embedding</i> (like a plant in order to flourish)
	formal argumentation scheme e.g. cause-effect:	-cause-effect structure: e.g. need staff development / re-negotiation of relationship between students' union and institution / culture change - in order to embed policy -& vice-versa e.g. embed policy in order to: evaluate it, have evidence-informed change
	topos of opposites – to reinforce need to embed / follow policy	-negative / positive adjectives: <i>piecemeal, small-scale, incremental</i> adjustments versus <i>major</i> change <i>embedded</i> versus <i>bolt-on</i> <i>explicit</i> versus <i>tacit</i>
	intensification	-adjectives and metaphors: <i>embedded into core</i>
	mitigation – to avoid claims of 'prescription' or force	-qualifying language: <i>not being prescriptive, may need adapting</i> <i>lack of evidence</i>
delegitimation		

AMI text discusses the need for “evidence-informed change” (p. 4). The texts suggest that if HEIs are not “embedding” these policies in some way, they will not be able to evaluate the impact.

The seeming flexibility evident in the mitigation strategies is also challenged by the widespread metaphor of embedding:

The emergence of an integrated, embedded model relies on the presence of a sector-wide commitment to disseminate a core template for the delivery of employability, which can then be tailored and adjusted to meet the needs of each individual HEI; there will remain an issue of value, quality and sustainability until that commitment is met. (PFE, p. 29)

Policy is constructed as in need of embedding within curriculum, processes, structures and culture. Part of this process involves the academic community, especially staff, having “a shared language” as discussed in section 5.3.2. This notion of shared language, and so values, extends to the provision of a glossary in the IHEF text where terms are defined “for the purposes of this framework” (p. 15), to annotated bibliographies with literature supporting the proposals and a review tool in AMI which invites staff to assess the extent to which they are following the “tenets” of good assessment. Embedding is further supported through the discourse topics of articulation and explicitness which are prevalent in discussions of policy. Institutions are required to be explicit about their approach to employability:

From 2010 each English HEI has been required to articulate their position in relation to student employability through the provision of an ‘employability statement’ for prospective students on both the Unistats

and UCAS websites. (PFE, p. 11)

Embedding is also encouraged through staff development with notions such as enhancing “staff assessment literacy” indicating that they need it. In terms of “recognition and reward systems for staff”, embedding occurs through the link between policy and the UKPSF; particularly through the Fellowship scheme discussed in section 5.5. Another discursive strategy used to highlight the importance of embedding is the *topos of opposites*. Approaches described as “piecemeal”, “small-scale”, “incremental” are negatively evaluated in contrast to those which are “widespread” and “embedded”.

Policy documents unsurprisingly aim to be persuasive and “embedding” approaches is part of legitimation. The insistence on developing a “shared language” is interesting since it assumes this leads to shared values and practices. The amount of space devoted to discussion about how to ‘do’ policy suggests they have an audience that is difficult to convince. The prevalence of so many discursive mechanisms to try to ensure compliance supports this. This is indicative of the influence of the official recontextualising field (ORF) on the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF), and potential blurring of the two, and I discuss this further in Chapter 7.

### 5.3.2 The institution as a non-hierarchical community with shared values

This macro-strategy concerns how universities as institutions are constructed. I analyse the discourse topics and discursive strategies that contribute to its construction as a community that is non-hierarchical with shared values. I argue

that the notion of community is used to suppress potential divisions and to attempt to overcome the positioning of students as consumers. Implications for constructions of learning and teaching are dealt with separately in section 5.3.4. Table 14 below provides a summary of key contents and strategies.

As Table 14 shows, this macro-strategy incorporates a number of discourse topics related to breaking down barriers between people, groups and spaces such as “learning communities”, “students as partners”, “inclusivity and mainstreaming” and “working across disciplines and levels” amongst others. The focus is on identities, relationships and the construction of a “community”.

A key concept is the notion of learning communities. Discussed in all four texts, a variety of terms are used including “a shared community of learning” (PFE), “partnership learning communities” (ETP), “assessment communities” (AMI) and “a global academic community” (IHEF). I identify two main issues concerning this notion of community: who is in it, who is foregrounded or backgrounded and secondly, the characteristics of this community. In terms of its membership, it involves going beyond simple student-lecturer relations. The *nomination* “lecturer” is rarely used. Instead, there are terms such as academics, practitioners, learning providers, tutors and often just “staff”. The community comprises all those within and connected to the institution: students, lecturers, professional bodies, senior leaders, careers service, learning support staff, information technologists, student union sabbatical officers, alumni, academic policy makers and academic developers. The term “academic developer” stands out and is used across texts. It is a nomination applied to those advising on

learning & teaching. As noted in Chapter 2, they often belong to a learning development unit. They seem to occupy a role that is a bridge between lecturers and policy (see e.g. Trowler, 2004). Their title suggests that academics need help to bring their pedagogy up-to-date. Academic developers, alongside academics with L&T roles, are potentially a key conduit for encouraging favoured practices outlined in policy especially with the introduction of the TEF.

Different predications of students are salient in the texts. “Students as partners” is used across three of the texts but the ETP text has a range of additional terms fitting the partnership theme. Predications such as “co-producers”, “partners in SoTL”, “teachers and assessors” and “change agents” indicate an expanded student identity giving students more responsibility for their education and indicative of the key concept of “partnership learning communities”. The ETP text devotes a section to conceptualising these and distinguishing them from other types of community including Wenger’s (1998) communities of practice. The text highlights that all participants should be involved in the shaping of the community rather than being acculturated into an established one. New members are to be “fully valued for the contributions they make” (p. 28). The discourse topic of “blurring boundaries between staff and student identities and roles” (ETP, p. 20) encapsulates the proposed relationship between students and lecturers and the notion of partnership is further conceptualised with the topics of inclusivity, mainstreaming and working across boundaries. The latter is constructed as students and staff working in communities that cut across different disciplines, levels, roles, institutions and countries embodied in the



Table 14. Macro-strategy 2: The institution as a non-hierarchical community with shared values.

<b>The institution as a non-hierarchical community with shared values</b>			
<b>DISCOURSE TOPICS:</b>			
- partnership	-redefining identities	-reciprocal learning	-mutual ownership / responsibility
-students as active partners	-removal of barriers	-professional development for staff (and students)	-belonging
-global academic community	-working across disciplines, faculties etc.	-peer learning	-dialogue
-partnership learning communities	-inclusivity & mainstreaming	-whole institution approaches	
		-shared language / shared values	
<b>STRATEGIES (functional)</b>	<b>DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES</b>	<b>MEANS OF REALISATION (with examples)</b>	
sameness / levelling of difference (assimilation)	Nominations e.g. members of community	-(lecturers=) <i>academics, practitioners, learning providers, tutors, staff</i> others: <i>academic developers</i>	
	Predications e.g. of students of student body of community of values	-adjectives, prepositional phrases etc. of ROLE of students e.g. students as... <i>active partners, change agents, scholars and colleagues, teachers and assessors, co-producer, co-creator, partners in scholarship of teaching and learning [SoTL], expert in their student experience, pedagogic advisers and consultants</i>	
needing to come together		-adjectives collocating with community e.g. - <i>assessment / learning / global academic community</i>	
avoidance of 'difference'		-adjectives of 'in common': <i>shared values, common language, a shared commitment to the process</i>	
legitimation of some voices / delegitimation of others	topos of opposites (bad versus good / traditional versus new) topos of definition	negative / positive structures: <i>-power over versus power with</i> <i>-enculturating international students versus using a collaborative planning, teaching and evaluation frame</i> <i>-deficit model of disempowered students versus students valued for their contribution</i>	
difference between then and now (discontinuation / dissimulation) – from old ways to new	topos of context i.e. competition, fees	-referential vagueness - allusion to context: <i>in this current context</i> -sometimes followed by reference to fees, competition, demands of students	
	topos of challenge	-lexis of challenge evaluated positively: <i>challenges, hurdles</i>	
	formal argumentation scheme – cause-effect	-cause-effect structures e.g. <i>students' involvement in assessment leads to less frustration if fail</i>	
	Perspectivisation	-involvement: deictics - <i>we argue that partnership is</i> -distancing (academic register): <i>It is timely to take stock; evidence suggests</i>	

notion of a “diagonal slice” across institutions (ETP) and the global orientation of IHEF.

The *topos of authority* through the use of models is particularly salient in discussion of partnership learning communities and the role of students in their HE experience. Noted above as a legitimation strategy, there are numerous models with hierarchies of engagement clearly suggesting a preference for the option where students make the decisions. The model in Figure 16 below exemplifies this ordering of preferred practices.

This matrix works from left to right and top to bottom indicating the ultimate option where “student as driver” and “student engagement” meet with “students as agents for change”. These models are further supported with case studies thus combining *the topos of authority* with the *topos of example* as evidence for the value of the proposals.

All the texts use a strategy of transformation in which new or proposed practices are contrasted with traditional ones. A discursive strategy used extensively in the discussion of partnership is the negative connotation of one idea contrasted with a positive connotation of the new idea employing a *topos of opposites*. This is arguably also a strategy of construction since partnership is presented as a new concept that needs constructing in people’s minds; specifically, what it is and is not as illustrated by “partnership is a process of engagement, not a product” (p. 7). Table 14 shows further condensed examples which follow the predominant

Figure 16. (Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions)

negative/positive structure. Further, below is an extract from a section titled 'Cognitive dissonance' which illustrates the attempt to reject what the sector itself has created through a *perspectivisation* strategy of distancing from existing measures:

A partnership approach may be directly at odds with principles embodied in key drivers and mechanisms which have a strong influence on behaviour and attitudes among students and staff. In the UK, this includes the National Student Survey (NSS), Key Information Sets (KIS), institutional key performance indicators and the Research Excellence

Framework (REF). These place an emphasis on the importance of quantifiable information and the achievement of specific outcomes and impacts whereas a partnership approach places value on a creative process that may result in unexpected outcomes. (ETP p. 10)

Distancing is achieved firstly by removing any agent in the nomination “principles” and almost suggesting that staff and students are inexplicably influenced by such measures. The TEF could be added to the list since it contributes to this renewed focus on L&T and provides a further potential “influence” on behaviour as discussed in subsequent chapters. Secondly, through the use of the *topos of opposites* of “quantifiable information” versus a “creative process” in a partnership approach, there is an attempt to offer a better alternative with predications such as “creative” and “unexpected”. The *topos of opposites* is frequently used to denigrate what are seen as “traditional” approaches. Past experiences and practices are not acknowledged or valued. There is an assumption that this is new, and that new is better.

The case for partnership learning communities, like most of the policy proposals, draws on what I call a *topos of context* (usually economic, political and social).

Below is an example from the discussion around partnership:

Wider economic factors and recent policy changes are influencing a contemporary environment in which students are often positioned as passive consumers of, rather than active participants in, their own higher education. It is timely to distil the current context, underlying principles

and direction for future work on students as partners in learning and teaching. (ETP p. 7)

As the *context* label suggests, this is often or initially referentially vague e.g. “factors”, “changes” and “current context”, but these are explicitly linked later in the text to the introduction of fees, the need for value for money, competition between HEIs and increased graduate unemployment. I also note here the *topos of opposites* in “passive consumers of, rather than active participants in” and distancing through the use of passivisation “positioned as” to avoid discussion of who positions them in this way and why. The predication of “passive consumers” and “the dominance of a consumerist discourse” (p. 17) are elaborated on for a page and this context is used to justify the need for an alternative.

One of the underlying reasons for this partnership approach is clearly to counteract discourse about marketisation, in which students may be seen as demanding, dissatisfied, fee-paying consumers, by encouraging students to reassess their role and become more invested in their own education. The ETP text describes partnership as “a sophisticated and effective approach to student engagement” thus signalling it as a response to a problem:

We argue that partnership represents a sophisticated and effective approach to student engagement for two connected reasons. First, it foregrounds qualities that put reciprocal learning at the heart of the relationship – such as trust, risk, difference, empowerment, interdependence and agency – allowing us to go beyond a consumerist

relationship, and its critique, in meaningful and relevant ways. And second, partnership is different to other, more traditional relationships of power in higher education, which means that it is often experienced as an unfamiliar way of working, learning and thinking. (ETP, p. 17)

The extensive list of positive nominations and predications e.g. “trust”, “empowerment”, “meaningful” are used to support the case for partnership. Again, the unexpected embodied in “risk” and “unfamiliar” is constructed as positive using the *topos of challenge* to criticise those unwilling to take those risks. Changing the discourse, and eventually practices, is presented as a solution to deal with measures such as higher fees. The implications of this for constructions of learning and teaching are discussed in section 5.3.4.

As well as constructing the community as “non-hierarchical”, equally foregrounded is the notion of “shared values”. This is a community that cannot necessarily rely on shared history since it is temporary for the students at least, so shared values, understanding and language feature across the texts whether in terms of “a shared understanding of good assessment” or a “common language”.

The latter refers to the IHEF framework document itself:

It provides a shared point of reference and common language to discuss and shape policy, practice and partnerships. (IHEF, p. 3)

The idea of shared language leading to shared values was noted above regarding “embedding” policy. This raises the issue of whether people describing their

practice through the lens of these policy buzz words actually support the proposals and how these ideas are recontextualised in their practices and accounts of their practices. I address these issues in Chapters 6 and 7.

The construction of learning communities with their shared values aims to unite the different members in a common cause and suppress potentially divisive issues and tensions. There are indications of this throughout the texts. For example, the ETP and AMI texts explicitly address and question the role of UK student unions and contrast a traditionally combative or anti-management approach by unions with a proposed more harmonious relationship:

A partnership approach ... raises questions about the extent to which and how it is possible for students' unions to balance this politically-oriented critical role while working in new ways with their institutions. Creating an ethos of partnership that permeates the whole culture of an institution requires confronting the significant tensions raised and entering into a re-negotiation of the relationship and underpinning values between a students' union and its institution. (ETP, p. 59)

The *topos of opposites* is evident in “new ways” versus “politically-oriented critical role” and the metaphor of embedding is present again in “permeates the whole culture”. These strategies are used to support the claim for a changed role for unions in the same way as calls for culture change directed at academics.

It is clear then that this particular conceptualisation of community as non-hierarchical with shared values is used to address tensions within HEIs as well as to encourage students to take an active role to counteract a consumer perspective.

### 5.3.3 A university education as developing future-fit graduates

This macro-strategy embodies how the purpose of a university education is constructed. At its core is the notion that a university education should focus on preparing students for work albeit in an uncertain future hence the predication “future-fit”. I argue that the discursive strategies used contribute to the vagueness of the notion of employability. This vagueness is used strategically to avoid prescribing a template for what makes students employable. However, there is more certainty around the construction of a *pedagogy* for employability. This is unsurprising given this is the focus of the PFE text in particular. Table 15 has a summary of topics and strategies.

This macro-strategy encompasses a number of discourse topics including the over-arching “future-fit graduates” (a term adopted from the title of a CBI/UUK publication, 2009, cited in PFE p. 6) as well as “lifelong learning”, “added value activities”, “authentic tasks” and “articulation of learning and reflection”. The construction of a university education draws on a *topos of uncertainty* regarding the future in which predications such as “complex”, “rapidly-changing” and



Table 15. Macro-strategy 3: A university education as developing future-fit graduates.

A university education as developing future-fit graduates		
<p><b>DISCOURSE TOPICS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-embedding employability</li> <li>-the real world</li> <li>-a 21<sup>st</sup> century education</li> <li>-future fit graduates</li> <li>-articulation of learning &amp; reflection</li> <li>-added-value activities</li> <li>-confidence and self-esteem</li> <li>-lifelong learning process</li> <li>-radical change</li> <li>-evidence-based pedagogy</li> <li>-authentic tasks</li> <li>-graduate attributes</li> </ul>		
STRATEGIES (functional)	DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES	MEANS OF REALISATION ( <i>with examples</i> )
legitimation of aims of university education	Nominations	-characteristic highlighted e.g. end result: <i>graduate</i> -positive adjectives: <i>employable graduate, future fit graduate, 21<sup>st</sup> century graduates fit-for-purpose, up-to-date, innovative, global education</i> <i>added-value activities</i>
	Predications	
transformation – needed to meet needs of 21 <sup>st</sup> century education	topos of opposites	-negative / positive structures: <i>narrow versus broad understanding of employability</i> <i>tacit versus explicit</i> <i>rewarding research activity rather than teaching</i>
construction & legitimation	topos of modernity	-lexis around newness and future: <i>a 21<sup>st</sup> century education, future-fit graduates</i>
	topos of uncertainty – practices legitimated by future uncertainty	-lexis of uncertainty and complexity of future: <i>unknown, complex</i>
legitimation of some actors [students / employers] & delegitimation of others [lecturers]	topos of authority – esp. employers	-citing research/evidence from particular sources: <i>Feedback from students and employers shows...</i>
	formal argumentation scheme: counter-argument / argument	-CA/A structure – weaker/ stronger language: <i>many academics will point out that they've 'been doing it for years'. If the students on these programmes are not equally clear about where, how and why ... however, some clarity and re-emphasis is needed.</i>
	formal argumentation scheme: cause and effect	-structures of cause and effect e.g. fees⇒more demanding students ⇒ need for up-to-date L&T added value/employability ⇒students standing out
	intensification – importance of issue	-adjectives/nouns/verbs etc. of importance/urgency/frequency: <i>centrality of this issue, employability awards have proliferated</i>
	mitigation – qualifying, not being prescriptive	-qualifying language / 'deficit' language: <i>might, may, some etc.; lack research into impact of employability approach</i>

“uncertain” are salient and also embodied in claims such as “intended career pathways may evolve or disappear with changing local, national and global economic circumstances” (PFE, p. 14). This topos underpins the predication of “*future-fit* graduates” by drawing on an uncertain future which requires resilience and readiness for change. This uncertainty about future skills’ requirements forms the basis of the notion of “employable” rather than “employed” graduates evident in a definition of employability:

Employability is more than about developing attributes, techniques or experience just to enable a student to get a job, or to progress within a current career. It is about learning and the emphasis is less on ‘employ’ and more on ‘ability’. In essence, the emphasis is on developing critical, reflective abilities, with a view to empowering the learner.

(Harvey 2003, cited in PFE p. 4)

The general predications “critical, reflective” illustrate this wider conceptualisation of employability which is further emphasised through the *topos of opposites* “employ” versus “ability”. This preference for a broader perspective is also constructed through increasingly vague definitions and elements of models such as the discourse topics of “building confidence and self-esteem” and the importance of a “positive attitude: a can-do approach” (CBI, 2011, cited in PFE p. 19).

The predication future-fit forms part of a discursive strategy I label the *topos of modernity* which includes the widely-used predication “21<sup>st</sup>-century” as well as

“up-to-date”, and “innovative”. The IHEF text constructs a university education as “Preparing 21<sup>st</sup>-century graduates to live in and contribute responsibly to a globally interconnected society” (p. 1). The AMI text argues for “assessment methods and approaches that are better able to assess the outcomes of a 21<sup>st</sup>-century education” (AMI, p. 11). It also suggests:

... there are reputational advantages to having up-to-date and fit-for-purpose assessment practices as fee-paying students explore more closely what higher education institutions are offering in relation to teaching and learning. (AMI, p. 10)

This *topos of modernity* is used as a shortcut to support all policy proposals. This extract also draws on the *topos of context* whereby “the context”, alluding to higher fees and competition, leads to more demanding students which in turn leads to the need for the often unspecified “21<sup>st</sup>-century” practices.

Aligning with the broader conceptualisation of employability, a degree alone is no longer seen as enough and the discourse topic of “added-value activities” appears across texts and in PFE with reference to the introduction of the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)<sup>28</sup> and its intention to “formally recognise more from the HE experience than just the degree programme” (PFE p. 11). The mitigation of “just” downplays the importance of the core programme, giving

---

<sup>28</sup> HEAR introduced in 2008 to “provide a single comprehensive record of a learner’s achievement”. Includes academic record and extra-curricular activities. Ninety HEIs currently participate (HEAR, 2018).

increased status to extra-curricular achievements and work experience as justified below:

...the importance of recognising employability developed through ‘added value’ alongside the HE experience, and the attractions that this has for attracting prospective students. This ‘added value’ is particularly emphasised by employers seeking graduates who stand out from the crowd. (High Fliers, 2011, cited in PFE, p. 12)

This extract draws on the *topos of context* referring to competition in labour markets evident in the phrase “the need to stand out from the crowd” and the *topos of authority* of employers. The predication “added-value” clearly has a dual purpose: attracting students to HEIs and implicitly addressing the discourse about value for money. This has implications for course design as evident in interview data discussed in Chapter 6.

In contrast to vague definitions of employability, there is more certainty over elements of learning & teaching that contribute to it. The texts focus on “authentic tasks” and “active/experiential learning”. Active learning is linked with a constructivist approach to learning discussed further in the next section. Authentic is constructed as those activities that mirror the workplace such as work-based learning, live projects, group work. These activities alongside reflection are presented as the most useful for employability:

... experiential and work-based learning approaches ... can be integrated with live projects, work placements, internships and voluntary experience to ensure that students are able to reflect constructively upon the experience itself, their learning and their development. (PFE, p. 27)

Such authentic tasks are constructed as easier to produce the right kind of reflections than more “traditional”, subject-knowledge oriented tasks. Reflection is presented as a key approach in pedagogy despite little discussion of what reflection involves beyond the notion of “articulation of learning” discussed below. This emphasis on reflection is evident in the model in Figure 17 below presented as a “practical model of employability” aimed at students and parents. This model suggests that reflection leads to general qualities such as self-esteem which are presented as key to employability.

In line with the broad construction of employability with its focus on general skills and attributes, the topic of “articulation of learning” is prevalent:

... the ability to articulate learning and raising confidence, self-esteem and aspirations seem to be more significant in developing graduates than a narrow focus on skills and competences. (PFE, p. 9)

Figure 17. (Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions)

The claim is that students need to improve their ability to say what they have learned:

There is quite a lot of evidence that they are often not prepared to translate their experience of 'doing a degree' into the language of achievements valued by employers. When employability-enhancing elements are only tacitly present, students claims to employability are seriously compromised. (Knight et. 2003, p. 5 cited in PFE, p. 30)

Despite the distancing and lack of an agent in "there is a quite a lot of evidence", the *topos of authority*, in "valued by employers", is used to suggest that employers believe students are not able to explain their learning. There is an implicit *topos of opposites* regarding tacit versus explicit elaborated on in the subsequent paragraph "making the tacit explicit" to support the case for "articulation".

A salient discursive strategy used to delegitimize the views of those who might disagree with policy proposals, including the focus on employability, is the formal argumentation scheme of counter-argument/argument discussed in section 5.2.5 as a legitimation strategy. This works by dialogically anticipating criticisms and refuting them:

... some academics are opposed to what they would consider an overemphasis on the utilitarian mission of HE, and do not believe that employability development should form a taught and assessed part of a degree programme. The concerns of such staff may be addressed by pointing out that learning, teaching and assessment approaches designed to develop high level subject-based skills will also help develop key employability skills – one does not preclude the other. (PFE pp. 41-2)

In this extract, the nomination “academics” and perspectivisation of “they” seem to have the effect of distancing them and their opinions, as does the certainty of “will”/“does not” and “is needed” to reject the premise of the counter-argument.

Also notable is the combination of intensification and mitigation strategies in the legitimation of this particular orientation to the purpose of an education. Despite intensification of the importance of the topic, there is extensive mitigation around the lack of a clear template or model and lack of research evidence on the impacts. This suggests not being prescriptive while simultaneously insisting on its importance and the need for explicitness. To summarise this macro-strategy, employability is constructed as the purpose of an education despite the lack of

clarity over what employability involves beyond general notions such as self-confidence. There is more certainty over the right kind of pedagogy and next I examine in more detail how learning and teaching are constructed in the policy documents.

#### 5.3.4 Learning as socially-situated and teaching as facilitation

Another macro-strategy that is prevalent in all four texts is the idea that knowledge and learning are socially-constructed or socially-situated. This draws on constructivist, social-constructivist and social models of learning that place a focus on learners and learning (e.g. Dewey, 1916/1966); discovery (e.g. Bruner, 1960); the importance of interaction (e.g. Vygotsky, 1930-1934/1978) and the social aspect of learning (e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991) and these authors are referred to in the texts. Given these are policy documents on learning & teaching, it is unsurprising that they utilise theory. It was also noted that in terms of genre, these texts review the literature as a means to construct the proposals. However, I argue this use of theory is significant for two reasons. Firstly, the discursive strategies draw on and construct a democratic, learner-centred, transformative view of education which, while presented as new, originates from the thinking of Dewey, Bruner and Freire (Aubrey & Riley, 2016). Secondly, the texts include an array of concepts from many theorists on learning and pedagogy which seemingly fit this view of learning and teaching. Its importance lies in the way that students and lecturers are constructed in the texts, the limited discussion of teaching as an activity and the reasons for this construction of education. Although approaches derived from social-constructivist models of learning appear to be a general trend in education (e.g. Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, 2009;



Illeris, 2017), such a representation of learning and teaching conveniently aligns with the need to give students more responsibility for their learning and to counteract the positioning of students as passive consumers of their education. The use of applicable theory suits the current needs of policy. Table 16 below has a summary of topics and strategies.

I suggest there is a *topos of social-constructivism* which underpins claims regarding approaches to L&T. One could argue this is simply the epistemology underpinning the pedagogic proposals. However, I argue it is a discursive strategy because it is used as a *warrant* and has ideological purposes: to position students and teachers in particular ways as a response to perceived problems. This informs proposals in all four documents: a focus on assessment for learning, dialogue about standards and dialogic feedback in AMI; active/experiential learning in PFE; partnership learning communities in ETP; critically reflecting on own and others' situated assumptions and values in IHEF. In most texts, this notion of being "socially-situated"/"socially-constructed" is stated explicitly at times; but not explained. It is applied to three important concepts: learning, knowledge and power which together combine to produce the particular perspective in the policy documents. Despite clear overlap, I discuss each in turn.

Table 16. Macro-strategy 4: Learning as socially-situated and teaching as facilitation.

<b>Learning as socially situated and teaching as facilitation</b>		
<b>DISCOURSE TOPICS:</b>		
-knowledge and learning as socially-constructed / socially-situated	-active learning; experiential learning; enquiry-based learning	-difficult transitions
-knowledge situated in communities	-reflection	-questioning our own assumptions
-co-creation of knowledge and institution itself	-transformative learning	-beliefs, practices being situated within personal, cultural and national context
-student autonomy	-higher-order learning	-openness to change
-peer learning	-authenticity of tasks	
	-assessment for learning	
	-high impact practices; signature pedagogies; threshold concepts	
	-radical pedagogy	
<b>STRATEGIES (functional)</b>	<b>DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES</b>	<b>MEANS OF REALISATION (with examples)</b>
legitimation and delegitimation of approaches to learning & teaching  delegitimation of teaching as an activity / of teachers	Nominations – lecturers as facilitators	nouns etc. describing role of lecturers e.g. <i>facilitators, intermediaries</i>
	predications	positive adjectives e.g. of learning: <i>active, experiential, reciprocal, socially-constructed</i> of approaches: <i>cutting edge, innovative, constructivist, inclusive, radical</i> of knowledge: <i>co-created, situated, negotiated</i>
	topos of opposites e.g. traditional versus new	negative / positive structures: <i>didactic teaching versus facilitation and coaching</i> <i>quantifiable outcomes versus the unknown</i> <i>detailed assessment criteria and outcomes versus standards</i>
	topos of social-constructivism	knowledge is socially constructed / learning is socially-situated [warrant] SO supports argument for: <i>- active learning; dialogue; authentic tasks; group work; reflection on experience; use of student knowledge as resource; student involvement in SoTL; radical change</i>  but absence of discussion of role of a ‘teacher’ / expertise of teacher / teaching
	topos of uncertainty	uncertainty about future used as basis for arguing the positives of complexity & unexpected outcomes e.g. <i>rhizomatic learning</i>

### *Learning and its implications for teaching and teachers*

The predications “socially-situated/socially-constructed” are explicitly applied to learning, teaching and assessment in the texts. “Transformative”, “radical”, “democratic” and “learner-centred” are widely used to describe learning and pedagogy. Predications attached to learning such as “active” and “experiential” (Kolb, 1984) are widespread. The focus is on learning by “doing” preferably by engaging in authentic tasks and reflecting on them as discussed in section 5.3.3. Learning occurs through learners’ engagement with tasks, by interacting with others, reflecting and learners constructing knowledge by building on existing knowledge and experience. This ties in with evolving conceptualisations of education from teaching to learning, to discovery and inquiry (attributed to Hodge et al., 2008, cited in ETP, p. 41) moving on a trajectory which gives increasing responsibility to students. In the texts, discussion of discovery and inquiry constructs students as actively involved in their learning as well as in subject and pedagogic research.

Predications suggesting new ideas such as “innovative” and “cutting edge” are used despite the ideas themselves not being new. The implication is that such ideas have not been implemented before and are not already being done. This is emphasised in the ETP text through the use of predications in terms embodying more recently conceptualised approaches/buzz words in the higher education literature: “signature pedagogies” (Schulman, 2005); “high-impact practices” (Kuh, 2009); “threshold concepts” (Meyer & Land, 2003) (see also Fry et al., 2009).

A key discursive strategy to construct learning and teaching is the *topos of opposites*. Existing approaches or those not promoted within the policy documents attract negative predications such as “traditional” and “didactic” in contrast to the positive-sounding “facilitation and coaching”:

Lecture-based teaching methods are still important in developing theoretical and abstract contextual knowledge. Action learning approaches necessitate a move away from didactic instructional approaches to teaching methods based on facilitation and coaching, involving difficult transitions for both teachers and students who are schooled in the more traditional methods. (PFE, p. 32)

This example simplistically contrasts constructivist approaches (mentioned just before this extract) with lecture-based methods as if they are polar opposites and the only options. This is reinforced by the *topos of challenge* in “difficult transitions” in which change is positive and those constructed as reluctant to change are evaluated negatively. There is a greater focus on *teachers* needing to change in the extract.

The nomination “facilitation” noted above is widely used to construct “teaching” and the term “facilitator” used for teachers. Although suggested as new, the roots of facilitation go back to Dewey, the term facilitator popularised by Rogers (1969) and discussed by others such as Bruner and Freire. While Dewey discusses the important, multifaceted role of the teacher and Vygotsky and Bruner the concept of scaffolding and its role in students’ learning, this is largely

absent from the documents. Despite being texts about pedagogy, there is a focus on approaches, a void where discussion of the teacher's role and teaching could be and a poorly-conceptualised, narrow construction of facilitation in which lecturers' expertise is backgrounded. This negative connotation is reinforced through discourse topics of "partnership" and "blurred boundaries" between staff and students discussed earlier. I discuss this *invisibility* of teaching further in relation to the concepts of visible/invisible pedagogies (Bernstein, 2000) in Chapter 7. These discursive strategies enable the legitimisation of proposed approaches such as active learning, problem-solving, collaborative activity such as peer-to-peer learning & assessment as well as specific activities such as group reports, live projects, reflective assignments, simulations etc. The issue is not with their potential usefulness but the lack of critical evaluation, the suggestion of originality and the backgrounding of any notion of teaching.

### *Knowledge and learning*

The *topos of social-constructivism* is used in relation to knowledge in various ways. In the AMI text, assessment standards are described as socially constructed; specifically, within disciplinary discourse communities leading to "Tenet 3: Recognising that assessment lacks precision" and "Tenet 4: Constructing standards in communities" (p. 20). This is used to argue for greater dialogue between staff and students to enable mutual understanding of standards and "an acceptance of differing interpretations and understandings" (AMI, p. 20). This utilises the same *topos of uncertainty* to construct partnership. It represents a backlash against measures, criteria and "quantifiable outcomes" previously, and still, so valued.

Knowledge is also constructed as socially-situated to argue that everyone's knowledge and experiences are valued. The texts highlight the need to utilise the diverse perspectives, cultures, experiences and knowledge of students as an important learning resource and staff are encouraged to critically reflect on their own, and others', beliefs, attitudes and practices "as situated within personal, cultural and national contexts" (IHEF, p. 9). Predications such as "co-created" and "reciprocal" are applied to learning and knowledge. Reciprocity and mutual benefit are exemplified in the ideas of students' involvement in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy (two elements of the partnership model) (ETP, p. 25). Despite mitigation by stating such initiatives are not widespread and that students would need input on pedagogy and research methods, it is constructed as desirable and suggests that students have sufficient knowledge of their subject and of pedagogy to engage in enhancing pedagogy or designing the curriculum itself and conversely that their teachers have no special knowledge or expertise that cannot be quickly acquired.

A more radical example of this approach to knowledge, presented as a potentially transformative learning experience, is the discourse topic of "rhizomatic learning". The metaphor draws on the behaviour of a rhizomatic plant starting from anywhere and going in any direction:

... knowledge can only be negotiated, and the contextual, collaborative learning experience shared by constructivist and connectivist pedagogies is a social as well as a personal knowledge-creation process with multiple goals and constantly negotiated premises.

(Cormier, 2012, quoted in ETP, p. 52)

In this approach, the “community is the curriculum” suggesting that whoever is there at the time not only brings their experiences but can decide what is to be learnt. The case for such an approach is that it “helps to prepare students for working with uncertainty and complexity in the future” (p. 52). Therefore, it draws on the *topos of uncertainty* as a premise in a similar way to the argument for a broad conceptualisation of employability. Neither the implications for pedagogy are discussed nor the kinds of contexts in which it may be appropriate except for one example of postgraduate educational technology students creating their own curriculum. The negative connotation of facilitation is evident in the following extract:

students ... combining their own blogs with knowledge sign-posted by tutors and engaging in discussions with professionals within the tutors’ networks. In this way, the tutors enable an entry point into a professional learning community. The students’ emerging knowledge not only influences the development of the curriculum, but also the development of the learning community and knowledge within the field.

(Cormier, 2008, cited in ETP p. 52)

Knowledge is constructed as detached from people, echoing Bernstein's (2000) discussion on the separation of *knowledge* from *knowers* in that tutors just direct students towards it and also act as an intermediary between students and the real world of work. In this sense, it is delegitimising the expertise of teachers and fits the deficit model that is constructed through a variety of discursive strategies e.g. backgrounding of expertise, knowledge and teaching as an activity; topics such as "assessment literacy" and "rewards & recognition" for staff who engage with the proposals.

### *Power and learning*

Predications such as "situated" are also applied to power. The following extract discusses possible consequences of a focus on active "co-creation" in a partnership approach:

In many cases this may involve staff relinquishing a level of control, for example, over pedagogic planning and curriculum content, which may cause discomfort ... It may be prudent to anticipate potential resistance to partnership by providing space for colleagues to explore and reflect on this ... [and] the situated nature of power. For example, a sabbatical officer from a students' union may sit on more high-level university committees than a senior lecturer, and have access to different forms of influence.

(ETP, p. 32)

Power is "situated" rather than fixed or according to role. Here the negative "discomfort" and "resistance" are linked to lecturers, again positioning them as



reluctant to change. The example of a single (and non-typical) student draws on the *topos of example* to suggest that if students have more power in that sense, they should have more power over their learning. The text uses the NUS's own manifesto for partnership as support: "investing students with the power to co-create, not just knowledge or learning but the higher education institution itself" (NUS, 2012, p. 8 cited in ETP, p. 14).

The way that learning, knowledge and power are constructed contributes to the legitimization of particular proposals. The point is not that innovative approaches are unnecessary or bad, it is the constructions of students and teachers, the suggestions of deficit regarding current practices and the absence of pedagogy itself. The appropriation and adaptation of a supposedly radical, learner-centred, transformative approach to learning is a strategy designed to solve the perceived problem of demanding, passive learners. The irony is that government and sector policy have created these conditions and there is, indeed, a focus on measures and "performativity" rather than the creative, unknown possibilities espoused in the documents.

#### 5.4 Intertextual relations between HEA discussion texts and HEA framework texts

In this section, I examine how these influential discussion documents evolved into HEA *Framework* documents. These frameworks are the short documents widely disseminated to universities' senior management and staff with L&T roles. They have an increasingly important role in shaping institutional policy in many HEIs and a direct influence on academics through the HEA Fellowship

scheme. I discuss how the field influences the genre and in turn, the discursive strategies. I focus on the “partnership” documents to illustrate aspects of recontextualisation. These framework documents appeared in an earlier form between 2012-14 (e.g. see IHEF, 2014 above). These have since been replaced by 2016 versions which are more standardised. The 2016 frameworks are each accompanied by a “Toolkit” which consists mainly of questions for institutional/department self-reflection on the policy area similar to the “review tool” in AMI. As such, it is a discursive mechanism of “embedding” since unfavourable answers would aim to encourage change in the institution. I summarise key differences between these texts in Table 17 below.

The earlier frameworks were more diverse; firstly, in terms of length with “Partnership” 8 pages and “Employability” 24 pages. The content varied with “Employability” having more literature and models; IHEF has vignette exemplars of good practice; the “Partnership” framework mentions a possible alignment to the UKPSF. The 2016 versions are all four pages long and have identical section headings as indicated above. As a genre, they are quite different from the original discussion documents which, while being essentially persuasive, review literature to build their arguments and are more dialogic as they anticipate likely criticisms through acknowledging and refuting counter-arguments. Despite the similarity in the concepts and models in the discussion documents and frameworks, the latter are a distillation of the key ideas and presented as guidelines for practice. Moving from discussion documents to the 2012-14 frameworks on to the 2016 frameworks, mitigation markedly decreases and ideas are stated as facts as evident in the 2016 versions e.g. “The values which

underpin successful student engagement through partnership *are ...*” and “Partnership approaches *involve* students in the formal processes of course design, revalidation and professional development for staff” (HEA, 2016).

Table 17. Summary of differences between HEA policy genres.

	Discussion document	2012-2014 Frameworks	2016 Frameworks
<b>Length</b>	(PFE, 2012): <b>58 pages</b> -including 9 pages references	<i>Defining and developing your approach to employability (2013) [E]:</i> <b>24 pages</b>	<i>Embedding employability in higher education:</i> <b>4 pages</b>  [+ Toolkit: 15 pages]
	(ETP, 2014): <b>77 pages</b> – including 13 pages references	<i>Framework for partnership in learning and teaching in higher education (2014) [P]:</i> <b>8 pages</b>	<i>Student engagement through partnership:</i> <b>4 pages</b>  [+Toolkit: 5 pages]
	(AMI, 2012): <b>61 pages</b> (including review tool & annotated bibliography)	<b>no version</b>	<i>Transforming assessment in higher education:</i> <b>4 pages</b>  [+ Toolkit: 11 pages]
		(IHEF, 2014): <b>18 pages</b> (including glossary)	<i>Internationalising higher education:</i> <b>4 pages</b>  [+ Toolkit: 12 pages]
<b>Contents: standard / variable features</b>	-National & sector context -A review of relevant literature -Models and case studies -Argumentation - Variable elements e.g. number of models or cases	Brief context; outline of frameworks; review tool. Variable elements e.g. glossary (IHEF); examples (IHEF); link to UKPSF [P]; models [E]	Standard format: p1: what is it? p2: why important? p3: model & explanation p4: link to UKPSF
<b>Discursive strategies</b>	Discusses pros and cons; range of definitions and models. Mitigation through counter-arguments but still argues for particular model / approach.	Concise. Persuasive. Some mitigation.	Direct, concise statements of fact; No mitigation. Vagueness of expression.

Despite this directness, there is also increasing vagueness of expression. In the ETP text (2014), partnership learning communities “allow us to go beyond a consumerist relationship” (p. 17). This is paraphrased in the 2014 Framework in which one rationale is “to offer a constructive alternative to consumerist models of education” (HEA, 2014, p. 2). In the 2016 version, the rationale is less explicitly expressed: “to enable and empower all students to engage deeply” and “to engender a sense of belonging; vital for retention and success” (HEA, 2016, p. 2). This vagueness obscures the concrete rationale given in earlier documents.

In terms of acknowledging sources, there is increased distancing from individual authors in later texts. The discussion documents contain the caveat “The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Higher Education Academy” (ETP, p. 77). The 2014 frameworks mention the names of authors in their acknowledgements. The 2016 texts do not name authors at all although they acknowledge the influence of the discussion documents. Alongside the genre features and discursive strategies discussed above, this contributes to their status as “policy”.

In these 2016 Frameworks, the link made with the UKPSF is much stronger. The UKPSF consists of three main areas: Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge and Professional Values. In the 2016 Frameworks, these phrases are modified and included as elements within the 2016 models themselves. The “Partnership” model incorporates “Partnership values” such as “authenticity, inclusivity, reciprocity, empowerment, courage” etc., which were not included in the overview model itself in ETP. Terminology from the UKPSF has been adapted and

incorporated into the 2016 framework models. The most explicit link is in the section on page 4: “How does this framework align with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)?”. Unlike a vague reference to the UKPSF in the 2014 framework on partnership, in the 2016 versions, each framework’s content is indicated as being relevant to particular elements of the UKPSF as in the Partnership framework below:

Staff and students (who have roles in teaching and supporting learning) may want to consider how engagement through partnership can offer an effective approach to areas of activity, enable deeper understanding of core knowledge and demonstrate alignment with professional values. This framework is particularly relevant to:

Activity: A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5 Knowledge: K2, K3, K5, and K6

Values: V1, V2, and V3

HEA invites lecturers, teachers, learning support staff and graduate teaching assistants to evidence their use of this or other HEA frameworks in applying for HEA Fellowship in recognition of their commitment to professional practice. (HEA, 2016, p. 4)

This enables a concrete connection between the frameworks and the HEA Fellowship scheme since the latter encourages explicit reference to elements of the UKPSF in evidencing good practice in the reflective accounts forming the basis of accreditation. Lecturers can tick off particular elements of the UKPSF by using information in the frameworks and relating their practice to it. To do so, they need to show how they have embedded ideas from the frameworks in their

practices or at least use the right language to discuss their teaching. Explicit intertextuality is thus encouraged through use of key terms and by citing numbered elements of the UKPSF. This potentially limits what is constructed as good practice.

## 5.5 Intertextuality and interdiscursivity between national policy texts and institutional policy texts

The purpose of this section is to explore recontextualisation between policy texts at the national level and institutional level. I examine how discourses and discursive strategies evolve as they move between different fields of action. While it is difficult to capture the complex network of influences, by focusing on salient texts I aim to illustrate aspects of recontextualisation. As outlined in section 4.5.7, I consider key documents from government and its agencies and from the institution itself in light of my analysis of HEA documents. Although the topic of “embedding employability” is easily traceable from government white paper to institutional L&T guidelines, I choose to focus on the macro-strategy of the *institution as a community* since I wish to trace the origins and recontextualisation of topics such as partnership and community.

### 5.5.1 Department for Business, Information and Skills (BIS) white paper

In this section, I examine the relevant discursive strategies in the white paper: *Students at the heart of the system* (BIS, 2011) since this text has been influential and clearly informs the HEA documents. As the title suggests, the paper argues for putting students first and facilitating choice by easing market entry for new providers, dropping restrictions on recruitment of high-achieving students and

providing more institutional information. I focus on the tension between discursive strategies used to discuss topics of consumer power and active learning. The former positions students as powerful consumers in a higher education market and the latter calls for students to not actually behave like passive consumers.

The white paper discusses generalities regarding pedagogy evident in predications such as “excellent”/“high-quality” teaching. The nomination teaching is used unlike the HEA documents which focus predominantly on learning. In the extract below, the *topos of authority* of the vague “some university staff” is used to support the claim for focusing on teaching and controversially to link the measurement of its quality to promotion:

But some university staff believe that good teaching is not sufficiently considered in promotion selection processes ... We expect our reforms to restore teaching to its proper position, at the centre of every higher education institution’s mission. (BIS, 2011, p. 27)

However, it abstracts away from the people involved by using nominations such as “curriculum”, “delivery” and “teaching excellence” as evident in the title of Ch.2 “Well-informed students driving teaching excellence”. This uses a cause-effect argumentation scheme to suggest that students being provided with ample data leads to better teaching. Both these examples take agency away from lecturers suggesting that, for example, course survey metrics are what encourages people

to be better teachers rather than their own expertise or desire for self-development. This is elaborated on in Ch.3 of the paper:

We consider the publication and effective use of student surveys and other evaluations to be at the heart of a continuous process of improving teaching quality. Such data collected and used in an open and transparent way can both support informed student choice and stimulate competition between peers. (BIS, 2011, p. 34)

The “competition between peers” constructs teaching as rivalry between colleagues rather than collaborative activity. The discourse topic of “continuous improvement” is salient in the white paper and it is invariably connected with measurement and data. Contrastingly, in the HEA texts, the topic of improvement is obscured somewhat by the focus on “transformation”. It is implicit, however, in aspects of the partnership model such as student involvement in “SoTL” and “curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy”. These discursive strategies suggest that what exists is inadequate, that continuous improvement is desirable but will not happen without external pressure.

The notion of active learning is mentioned, drawing on the same *topos of opposites* as the HEA texts, to argue that students should not see themselves as consumers:



A good student is not simply a consumer of other people's knowledge, but will actively draw on all the resources that a good university or college can offer to learn as much as they can. (BIS, 2011, p. 33)

The above extract is attributed in a footnote to an HEA 2008 publication, indicating a network of influence between government and higher education agencies. The *topos of example* is drawn on through the inclusion of a short case on Loughborough university which touches on the idea of partnership, shared values and students "actively" engaging in "enhancing the delivery, content and assessment of their programmes" which again emphasises students driving change as active learners rather than passive consumers:

Students can engage actively in enhancing the delivery, content and assessment of their programmes through staff-student liaison committees ... and other elected members of the student body who represent students' views at University learning and teaching committees ... Student engagement in decision-making and feedback is vital and valued by University staff, and it contributes significantly to a shared commitment to excellence in learning and teaching at Loughborough.

(BIS, 2011, p. 36)

The "enhancing" assumes the need for improvement as discussed above. The predication in "shared commitment to excellence" indicates the need for shared values and previews the HEA documents on partnership which detail what such partnership learning communities involve. In the white paper, the focus on

metrics and data for students' benefit is notable whereas the HEA texts use discursive strategies to distance themselves from the quantifiable at least in terms of approaches to learning.

### 5.5.2 HEFCE strategy statement

I briefly consider the HEFCE strategy statement, *Opportunity, choice and excellence in higher education* (2011), which was a response to the BIS (2011) white paper. The HEFCE document discusses the challenging economic climate, competition and introduction of tuition fees and provides the information for the discursive strategy, the *topos of context*, which is salient in the HEA texts. The context provides the warrant to “drive up quality” and to focus on the student experience evident in this extract:

High quality learning and teaching is at the heart of higher education, and of the student experience ... HEFCE will continue to have a statutory responsibility to ensure that the quality of learning and teaching is assessed in every institution in England. (HEFCE, 2011, p. 8)

The emphasis is on “high quality learning and teaching” and “assessing” this quality but this is not addressed in any detail beyond its broad objectives for learning and teaching which include:

To support the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment, diverse forms and modes of provision, the effective utilisation of learning technologies and the increased accessibility and use of open educational resources. (HEFCE, 2011, p. 8)

The topic of continuous improvement is evident and the emphasis is also on flexibility and choice. The document outlines what it regards as major issues such as student choice, widening participation, employability and financial sustainability. In line with maintaining standards and a focus on the student experience, it goes on to argue for increased student influence on the sector: “Students will also be given a greater role in holding higher education institutions to account” (HEFCE, 2011, p. 8). Again, little detail is given. It is HEA texts, analysed above, which build on BIS and HEFCE statements and elaborate on what community and a focus on the student experience might mean in terms of learning and teaching.

I now consider how the topics and strategies from the field of national policy-making are recontextualised within the field of learning and teaching through key policy texts within the institution under study. I examine how discursive elements of procedures and structures encourage the need to evidence a commitment to certain approaches to learning and teaching.

### 5.5.3 Institutional strategy

University strategy documents are publicly available so give a sense of the values of the institution to the outside but also serve an important purpose in shaping

attitudes and practices internally. The university's strategy document (2011/12) is significant for this study firstly because it clearly recontextualises topics and discursive strategies from higher education agencies' documents and secondly, because of requirements on staff to refer to it explicitly in numerous texts and practices. In line with this need, the main section of the document consists of numbered points under the headings: "Learning, enquiry and practice", "Enriching lives" and "Respect for individuals, communities and our environment". All points use the intentionally inclusive deictic expression "we" or "our" suggesting the "*community of scholars, students and staff*" mentioned in the Vice Chancellor's introductory preface to the document. However, who "we" refers to seems to shift: e.g. from senior management: "we will review our processes", to teaching staff: "our courses and opportunities will meet our students' needs", to admissions: "we will only admit students who have the ability, commitment and potential", to estates and IT: "We will make sure that our physical and our virtual working environments are fit for purpose". If read by an external audience, "we" simply suggests the university as an institution, the purpose of the text is a form of promise and it is "addressee-exclusive" (Wodak et al., 2009). However, when read by an internal audience, the function becomes about forming attitudes and influencing practices. Given its interdiscursive connections with programme/module documents, appraisal and other texts circulating in the institution, the "will" in "we will" is likely to be interpreted as an instruction i.e. what staff must do.

In terms of the discourse topics of community and partnership, the following two points are relevant:

3.4 We will be welcoming and outward-looking, blurring the boundaries between staff and students, the University and the community, and will work closely with local and regional communities to develop an engaged Civic university.

3.6 The [University name] community will be courteous, collaborative and entrepreneurial. We will be known for our collegial, supportive culture, ignoring internal and external boundaries to provide the best possible education to our students. (*River University strategy, 2011/12, p. 4*)

The first one recontextualises the discourse topics of partnership and a lack of hierarchy in HEA texts. The second addresses the topic of breaking down barriers whether hierarchical or between different functions or departments or the university and the community. The topic of learning is also salient as evident in the “our purpose” section:

To develop potential, transform lives and improve the world around us.  
To be led by learning in all that we do: enabling others to learn,  
continually learning ourselves and pushing the boundaries of learning  
through teaching, research, and enterprise and professional practice.

(*River University strategy p. 2*)

This echoes the HEA texts’ topics of “reciprocal” and “transformative” learning. Despite elements relating to the characteristics of the institution and its location, most of the text unsurprisingly recontextualises topics and strategies from

national policy documents. Regarding explicit intertextuality, staff are encouraged to refer to specific numbered points in the university strategy in their appraisal form and other documents to evidence their responses to the strategy in their practice. This encourages the shared language and embedding promoted by the HEA texts.

#### 5.5.4 Institutional academic framework

This is an important document which bridges university strategy and learning & teaching practices. As noted in Chapter 2, the revised framework (2012) was introduced in 2013 with major changes to the overall “architecture” of programmes, but also with the intention of implementing widespread changes in learning, teaching and assessment evident in “key features” and “curriculum design principles” making it highly relevant to discussion of practices. Changes in the external environment are characterised with the predications “radical” and “unprecedented” and the need for a new framework uses the *topos of context* found in national policy documents:

The need for review was driven by radical changes in the external environment (fees, changing student expectations, unprecedented levels of competition and public scrutiny) and by evidence of some systemic weaknesses in the existing framework reflected in overall student satisfaction, achievement and graduate outcomes.

(*River University academic framework, 2012*)

This statement also refers to issues with performance such as satisfaction and graduate outcomes being the result of “systemic weaknesses in the existing framework”. The framework’s aim is noted as elaborating on the direction outlined in the university’s strategy above, particularly as regards L&T. Key features relating to pedagogy include “assessment for learning”, embedding both employability skills and academic skills in the curriculum and a more coherent programme rather than a set of modules. Embedding policy within practices is presented as crucial thus using the same discursive strategy as the HEA. Curriculum design principles explicitly link to numbered points in the strategy document and the points below recontextualise the discourse topics of community, student involvement in enhancing their course and the curriculum being student-centred as outlined in HEA documents. The nuancing of the notion of student-centred evident in the predications “accessible” and “inclusive” reflects the diverse student population of the institution:

4. The curriculum should be student centred, accessible and inclusive.

[2.1; 2.2]

9. The curriculum should be designed to foster student engagement in both the ongoing enhancement of the course and the wider life of the university community. [3.3; 3.4]

*(River University academic framework, 2012)*

Approaches to teaching are elaborated on in the section on technology-enhanced learning (TEL) and the concept of active learning, discussed in the HEA ETP text,

is foregrounded using the same *topos of opposites* “active learning” versus “being passive recipients of knowledge” to support its case:

Active learning is not one pedagogic model but encompasses a plethora of models and approaches with the common feature that students are actively participating in learning (e.g. discovering, constructing, taking ownership, rather than being passive recipients of knowledge).

(*River University academic framework, 2012*)

The text also uses the same discursive strategy as the HEA documents in anticipating potential criticism and presenting a refutation of a counter-argument, in this case regarding the role of the academic:

The benefits of active learning approaches may be moderated by the perception that such practices coupled with technologies will undermine the role of academics, disrupt the balance of disciplinary knowledge and process ... therefore risking learning objectives not being achieved ... It may also be felt that these risks will be compounded by weak digital literacies. Such concerns can be countered. JISC (2009) argue that the academic remains key because “rather than replacing the teacher, technology has in many ways increased the focus on pedagogic skills. The art of the practitioner as instigator, designer and animateur remains key to the process of learning”. The Inquiry based learning model for example ... provides a framework by which students progress from a staff led



exploration of existing disciplinary knowledge through to a student led  
'authoring' of potentially new knowledge

(*River University academic framework, 2012*)

This presents lecturers as reluctant to change or engage with active learning and as having "weak digital literacies". It also uses the strategy in the HEA texts of suggesting a hierarchy of good practices. Most of the institutional framework, however, is similar in genre to the HEA frameworks in that it presents clear guidelines for practice.

This section has shown the potential in tracing topics, discursive strategies and their recontextualisation between national and institutional documents. I summarise one aspect of interdiscursivity in Figure 18 below. This illustrates the overlap between discourses and movement from "well-informed students driving continuous improvements in *teaching*" to a more subtle focus on "partnership in *learning*" with allusions to enhancement. I discuss this further in Chapter 7.

## 5.6 Summary

This chapter has examined the discursive strategies used in the HEA policy documents in detail and traced connections with other key policy documents both national and institutional to explore the recontextualisation of discourses. This indicates how discourses move between the ORF the PRF and the connections between the two recontextualising fields (Bernstein, 2000). I discuss this further in Chapter 7. In the next chapter, I deepen my analysis of

recontextualisation by focusing on the institution, its practices and the accounts of those who work and study there.

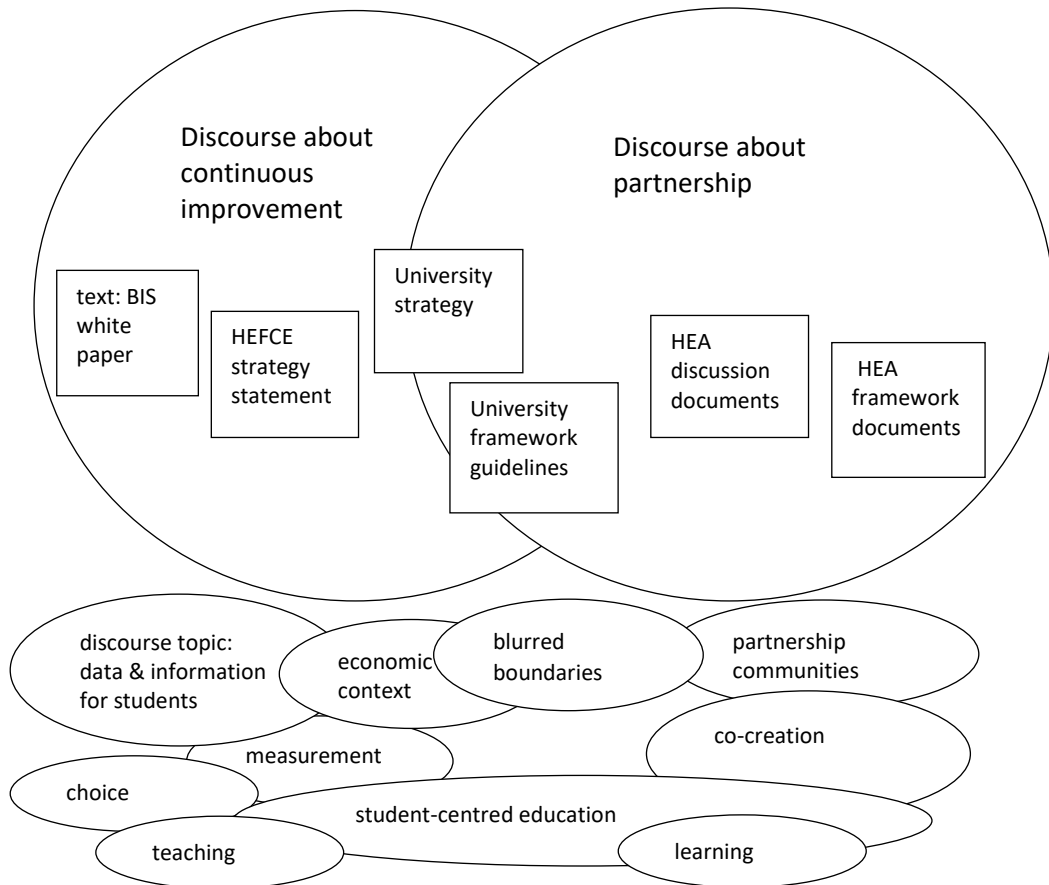


Figure 18. Overlapping discourses between texts in different fields of action.

## **6 Field of learning, teaching & assessment and policy remaking**

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores recontextualisation further by focusing on the practices and accounts of practice within the institution itself. I analyse student and lecturer accounts of their experiences and practices around learning, teaching and assessment. I also examine the latter through marked assignments and module guides. Exploring recontextualisation involves tracing discourses between policy documents (Chapter 5) and the interview data.

The analysis in this chapter reflects key debates discussed in Chapter 2 since through discussing their experiences of their course, students and lecturers construct themselves and others in ways which reflect topical issues in higher education. For example, contrary to constructions of a community identified in the policy documents, participants' accounts focus on difference. One might argue that people are always constructing themselves and others in their talk. However, it is salient when these constructions are ideological in that the perspectives they take can be traced to issues in the wider context. Furthermore, the lack of consensus seen in policy documents over, for example, what constitutes employability, and indeed what the aims of a university education should be more broadly, are reflected in interview data in terms of disagreements between lecturers over pedagogy. Thus, I consider the interview data in the light of the macro-strategies from Chapter 5 in addition to examining other discursive strategies within the accounts. First, I start by considering assessment practices.

## 6.2 Analysis of assessment practices

As outlined in section 4.4.1, the purpose of exploring assessment practices through collecting assignment texts and module documents was two-fold. Firstly, assignments are not simply a reflection of practices in a subject area but also represent, at least to some extent, the recontextualisation of policy and guidelines on learning, teaching and assessment. Traces of policy discourses are evident in assessment texts and practices. As section 4.5.6 shows, assignments were categorised according to characteristics such as mode, subject and individual-group. This was used together with module documents to gain a clear understanding of requirements. Secondly, since they are used as a focus for discussion in interviews with students and lecturers, I wished to understand the assessments across the set of programmes. Reviewing marked, high-scoring and low-scoring assignments assisted with this and provided specific points to raise in interviews such as expectations around group writing or the kinds of reflection perceived as more valid.

In section 4.5.6, I summarised the different assessment elements and noted the diverse range of assignment types as well as the lack of any formal exams. Group assessment is used widely as are retrospective assignments. The modules label the latter as reflective writing and this includes reflecting on events, projects or the module. As expected on business programmes, case studies are widespread as are “live” assignments involving a real company in the assessment. Generally, individual case studies, reports and literature reviews carry the most weighting although some group reports constitute 30-40% of module totals. The less traditional elements e.g. reflections, blogs, multimodal assignments, group

discussions or presentations, typically account for around 10%. Such assignments clearly align with active learning, authentic tasks and group interaction outlined in the policy documents.

Table 18 below summarises assessment types on the four key modules which run all year. Three of these are termed “signature” modules as they are, excepting one, unique to one programme and must contain an “employability” element. The fourth module is compulsory for all programmes. The table shows that each module typically has between four and eight assessment elements or tasks. Given that each programme has six modules, excluding the dissertation, this amounts to numerous assignment elements (cf. McLean et al., 2017 on a similar wide range of assessments in “lower-ranking” HEIs). I discuss further details of the assignments, expectations and experiences around them, and the ways in which they recontextualise policy, in my analysis of interview data below.

Table 18. Assignment elements in signature and compulsory modules.

KEY MODULES / NUMBER OF ELEMENTS OF EACH TYPE	SIGNATURE MODULE 1	SIGNATURE MODULE 2	SIGNATURE MODULE 3	COMPULSORY MODULE 4
<b>MODE &amp; NO. OF STUDENTS</b>	-1 individual writing -2 group writing -1 individual presentation -1 group presentation	-3 individual writing -1 group writing -1 group presentation -1 group discussion	-4 individual writing -3 group writing -1 group presentation	-3 individual writing -1 pair writing
<b>SUBJECT</b>	-3 live co. -2 one co.	-2 live co. -1 one co. -3 not one co.	-3 live co. -3 one co. -1 not one co.	-3 one co. -1 not one co.
<b>TIMEFRAME (OTHER THAN USUAL DEADLINE)</b>	-2 retrospective -2 class presentation	-2 retrospective -1 class test	-1 class test -1 time-limited -1 class pres.	-2 retrospective -1 time-limited -1 class test

### 6.3 Analysis of interviews: Overview

The purpose of conducting interviews with lecturers and students is to examine accounts of their practices and experiences to explore connections with policy. Since I aim to explore recontextualisation, I focus on the topic-related macro-strategies discussed in Chapter 5, and the associated discourse topics and discursive strategies, to explore the extent to which these strategies appear in the interview data. However, in order to be open to the data, I also discuss any other macro-strategies and discursive strategies that I identify as relevant to my research questions.

As outlined in Chapter 4, there are two main stages to the analysis: macro-analysis to identify discourse topics across interviews and micro-analysis to examine the discursive strategies used by participants. This analysis then informs the identification of topic-related macro-strategies indicative of particular ideological positions.

#### 6.4 Discourse topics across interviews

As noted in section 4.5.7, the mapping of discourse topics is a starting point for identifying discursive strategies and macro-strategies. To reiterate, a discourse topic is broadly what a section of text is about, subject to the interpretation of the analyst and aims is to be non-evaluative, recognising that different people take different stances on the topic. I grouped the topics spatially according to the broad area e.g. group work or students' backgrounds. I also linked topics, in the form of overlapping ellipses in the figures below, where there was a clear connection between them in terms of how they were made relevant by participants in the interaction e.g. links between leadership in groups, conflict and collaborative writing coming under the broad topic of group work. Clearly, there are also links between broad areas such as group work and students' backgrounds and these connections are discussed in the analysis of discursive strategies.

As seen in Figures 19 and 20, what appear to be similar topics occur in both sets of interviews. This is unsurprising given the prompts and context of the interviews. Yet, the focus is clearly different with students concentrating on their experience of assessments and the programme as a whole while lecturers discuss

the rationale for their choices and discussion of student performance. Lecturers also refer to university policy and its influence on their practices.

The discourse topic maps provide a starting point for micro-analysis of discursive strategies across interviews. For example, a topic such as “conflict in group work” being prevalent leads to further analysis of the presentation of self and others including forms of argumentation. Analysis of these discursive strategies and topics contributes to the identification of the macro-strategies in relation to my research questions and analysis of how those strategies found in the policy documents are recontextualised within the interview data. In the section below, I analyse the presence, absence and recontextualisation of the four macro-strategies identified in Chapter 5 and consider the discursive strategies used by interviewees. Clearly, interview data is quite different from policy texts (see section 4.5.7) so I focus on discursive strategies used by speakers and consider differing accounts in relation to the macro-strategies.



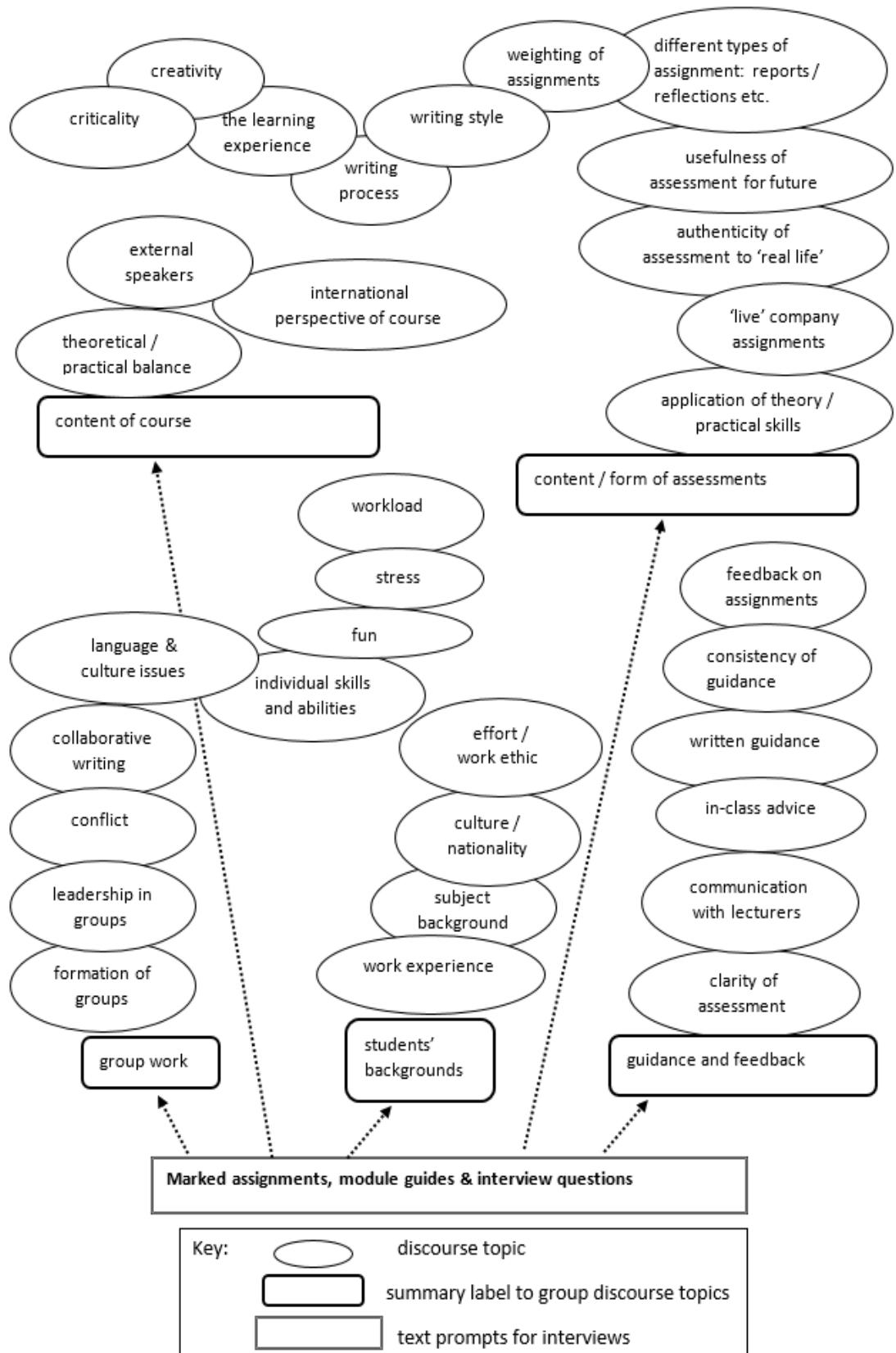


Figure 19. Discourse topics across student interviews.

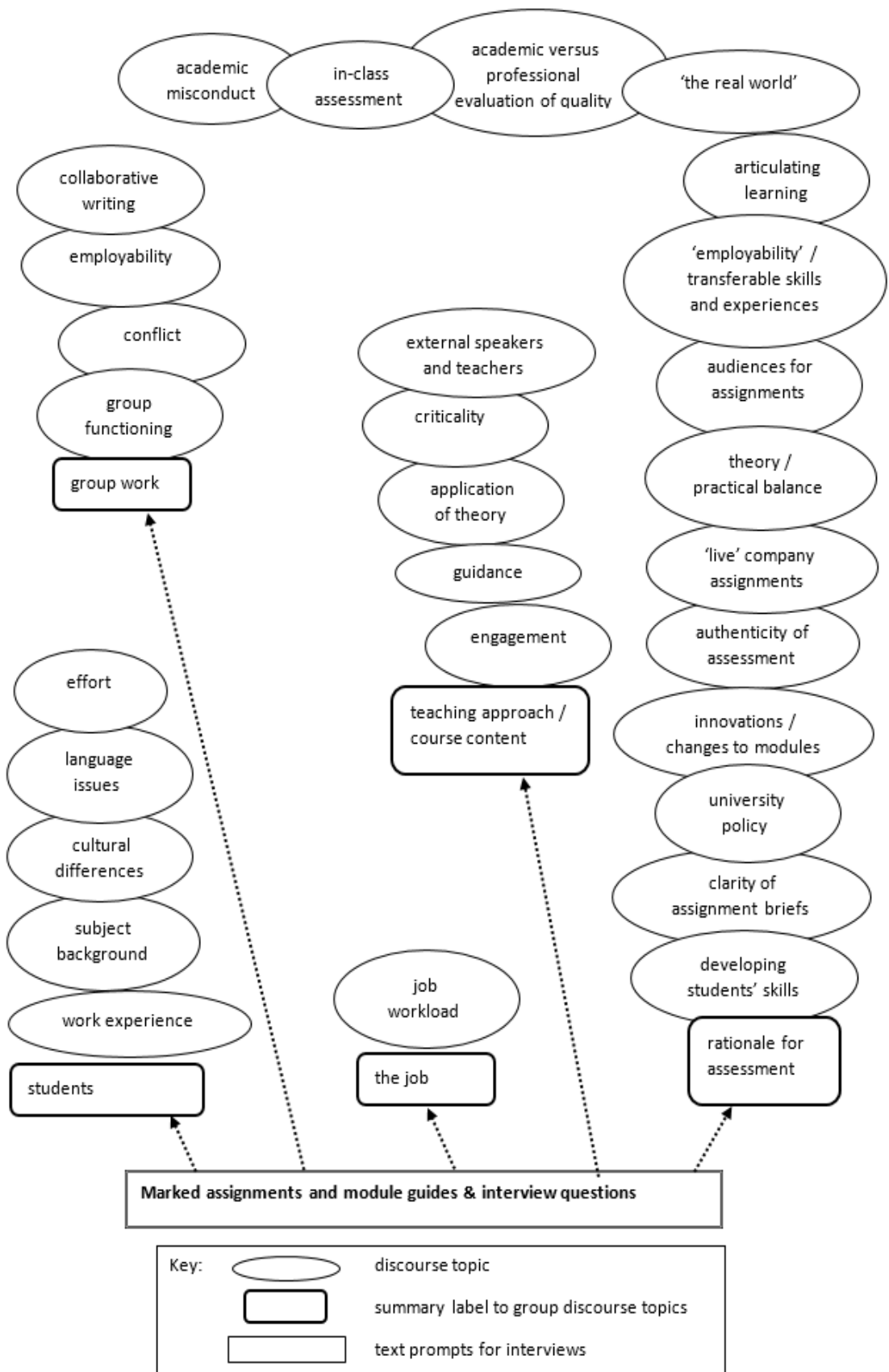


Figure 20. Discourse topics across lecturer interviews.

## 6.5 Macro-strategies

### 6.5.1 Policy as embedded within processes and structures

This macro-strategy was prevalent across the policy documents with the predication “embedded” being central and the alternating uses of intensification and mitigation strategies to suggest both the importance of the proposals but also how institutions are free to adapt as relevant. This is policy talking about itself and how it should be embedded within processes, structures, curriculum and culture. In this sense, the ways in which policy is remade in practices, and accounts of practice, represent the recontextualisation that is the focus of my research. In Chapter 5, I analysed how policy is recontextualised between different genres as well as between different fields of action. I also examined the processes and structures which encourage embedding of policy e.g. the UKPSF, HEA Fellowship scheme and the institutional academic framework all linking to promotion, appraisals, module validations or other processes. In the following sections, I analyse interviewees’ accounts and explore recontextualisation through the lens of the macro-strategies from Chapter 5 while being open to new macro-strategies evident in the data.

I finish this section with an extract illustrating discursive strategies around “embedding” in which the lecturer discusses the impact of new institutional academic framework guidelines. As noted in Chapter 5, these guidelines have clear discursive links with national policy documents. I demonstrate how seemingly contradictory statements in interview data can reveal competing discourses. In the first extract, Karen explains how they completely restructured

a module as a necessary part of re-validation and expresses satisfaction with the changes:

(6)

Karen: in year 2 of [academic framework] completely we threw the whole thing up, rewrote the module and we've basically switched the semesters in fact that's what we did, we put [name] first and then me second so now in effect the assessment was not quite halved, they do more than half, but in effect it's now just one plan whereas before they would have written two plans ... and then they do the extra bit which is the employability bit that's the sort of the bit that's (..) changed, we're very happy with, we're not changing next year, this has worked a treat, we really feel it's right

In the extract below, Karen suggests they were already engaged in those practices around “employability, engagement” which initially seems to contradict the first point.

(7)

Interviewer: so what were the guiding things in [academic framework] that you picked out?

Karen: employability, engagement, which we'd already, to be honest, that was like well there's nothing new there for us really, the employability making it very explicit was

The contradiction is partly explained by creating a new “employability” assignment element. However, these extracts also indicate competing discursive strategies whereby lecturers position themselves as responding to and embedding new guidelines but also construct themselves as having always been engaged in such favoured practices. This somewhat counters the claims in policy documents that this is new.

#### 6.5.2 The institution as a non-hierarchical community with shared values

To recap on how this macro-strategy worked in the policy documents, the key discourse topics included “partnership learning communities”, “shared values”, “blurred boundaries” and discursive strategies such as predications of students as... “change agents” or “co-creators” as well as extensive use of the *topos of opposites* to construct what partnership is and is not e.g. students as “passive recipients” versus “active participants” or “traditional roles and hierarchical relationships” versus “working in partnership”. I noted that the texts explicitly stated the purpose of this construction of partnership learning communities as being an effective approach to student engagement i.e. a solution to the perceived problem of students disengaging and adopting a consumer ethos. The aim is also to background any possible tensions within the “community”.

In student accounts, despite expressions of appreciation of their course as a whole, the notion of a community with shared values is largely absent. Instead there is much discussion of tensions and difference and even the construction of a kind of hierarchy based on the qualities discussed below. When community and shared values are mentioned or implied, it generally refers to small nationality

groups rather than all students or all students, teachers and other staff. In lecturer accounts, there are indications of a particular sense of community at the level of close departmental colleagues but also a sense of disagreement over pedagogy. The notion of blurred boundaries and partnership between students and staff is generally absent. However, I examine this further when discussing teaching and learning in the subsequent section. First, I discuss the discursive strategies that participants use to construct their own accounts of the community they inhabit.

#### 6.5.2.1 Predications of self and other: Constructions of the 'good team member'

Predications of self and other people are a common discursive strategy in spoken interaction and this is the case in my data. It becomes of interest when it has ideological significance i.e. when it relates to wider socio-political issues (see Chapter 2), rather than simply reflecting how people present their identities. For example, group work is a major topic of discussion by students. Their distancing of themselves from others is significant since their constructions of other people relate to issues such as entry requirements, attendance, engagement and ability. The predications are used as legitimation for attitudes and actions. They form the basis of an argumentation scheme of cause and effect which operates in the following way: that person has this characteristic or I have this characteristic, therefore I needed to act in this way. While this may not be unusual, it is perhaps exacerbated by the diversity of experience and by the use of group work assessment.

As noted in section 4.4.3, the students interviewed were from a range of abilities and backgrounds. The high-performing students are the ones who characterise themselves as hard-working, highly-motivated to get good grades and allude to other characteristics of the 'good team member' such as having relevant subject knowledge, work experience, a good language level and simply 'being there'.

These desirable characteristics evident in students' accounts are then drawn on to justify why those without these qualities were unable to contribute fully to the group. I examine how these constructions appear to distance students from each other rather than unite them as one community since assessments are high-stakes and students are ultimately concerned about their individual performance. I also discuss how these strategies reflect ongoing debates which policy seeks to address.

#### *'Being hard-working'*

This predication is important since it constructs how individual effort is key, that students come with seemingly different aspirations and levels of effort and the way that some students need to take over work. It challenges the notion of a harmonious community and the idea that group work is unproblematic. In the following extract, Elsa makes the broad distinction between serious and non-serious students and positions herself as the former. She also implies that inadequate language levels of others impacted the group. The latter issue is discussed in the next section so here I focus on the predication of hard-working:

(8)

Interviewer: so you didn't know there was going to be any group work before you came?

Elsa: well I kind of expected it but I did not, some people take school more seriously than others as well, I'm, I moved here to go to school, kind of so this has been my life I guess, it was hard being placed in a group where there was different priorities, and also language coming in and when you don't understand what the other one is saying, but it did improve I think, so that was a good challenge I think, but it's also been really really hard at some, yeah

Although Elsa repeats the rationale provided by lecturers of group work as difficult but ultimately a valuable experience in the form of the predication, a “good challenge”, she also alludes to its difficulties and positions others as not having the required qualities, including the same level of focus “there were different priorities”, willingness to make sacrifices “this has been my life I guess” and ability to communicate clearly “language coming in”. She uses the distancing expressions “there were” as well as the mitigations of “I think” and “I guess” but then finishing with the intensification “it’s also been really really hard”. The lack of agency indicated in “being placed” also points to the fact that they did not choose their group. Elsa later elaborates on the process of doing group work and is more explicit that the group work was effectively “two people” implying others’ lack of effort or inability to contribute:



(9)

Interviewer: Ok, so just tell me about how you approached the group report, how did you work in your group in terms of actually doing the assignment?

Elsa: to be honest, this is (...) two people, three people who have written this, it's me and another (same nationality) on a group who wrote pretty much wrote everything in here and we had some help with our third member who'd written something but erm

Interviewer: and how many were in your group?

Elsa: five (...) well we improved ourselves but it was kind of just accepting that people were the way they were cos we tried to divide the work, cos other members of the group had the main responsibility for this part before Christmas cos we had so much else to do and that turned out to be wrong so we had to go and change it, so we had just figured if we're going to finish it, we're going to have to do it cos you know basic things like referencing was wrong and stuff so we kinda had to take control over it but erm

Interviewer: so how did you, kind of, within the group how did you approach it, did you initially allocate different parts?

Elsa: oh we started with that yeah but we knew that we'd have to rewrite it erm (...) and that's just the way it is, I think because we wanted to do well on it, it means a lot so we wouldn't want to hand in something that we knew was wrong cos we did check it, when you can't find a source for what's been used or it's a blog or something, you can't use that, and though you try to say that FIVE times, when that's still going on, you have to do it yourself but

In this extract, Elsa initially seems to distance herself from the strong opinion that the rest of the group were not useful through avoiding “I” and using mitigations such as “kind of” and “just” and the distancing constructions of “it was” and “that’s the way” in “it was kind of just accepting that people were the way they were” and “that’s just the way it is”. This also positions the others as not being able to change their inability to contribute. Together with the argument that they wanted to do well, this is then used to support the claim that “we kinda had to take control over it” and “you have to do it yourself”. The perspectivisation strategy evident in the shifting “we” can also be noted. “We improved ourself” refers to the group but in the rest of the extract, “we” refers to the two students only as in “we wanted to do well on it”, as she distances herself from the formal group. The switching to the impersonal “you” at the end of the extract, as she lists examples of poor practice by others, seems to be used to support the claim that they needed to take over. In this case, the “you” appears to be generalising and indicate a shared perception that this is necessary in a situation like this. The intensification from the stress and the phrase itself “FIVE times”, and the use of the *topos of example* in her small story about advising others what to do, adds to her positioning of others as not being able to improve or contribute.

In lecturers’ accounts of group work, most comment on the challenges and some acknowledge a need for one or two students to take a lead. In the extract below, Sue comments on the group dynamics and aligns herself with the ideal construction of a group in which participation is more equal:

(10)

Sue: ... there's always going to be some groups who just get everything right (..) either because the better people carry the rest, which we HATE, (..) and some people are just, you know you do get groups where you've got one or two really pushy students who (..) are so focused on (..) which is a good thing, on their degree, that they try and take over other people and that can be a problem as well, basically people still (..) don't like group work even though they acknowledge they have to do it so we are, we have tried, we have worked to reduce it, so we've reduced the weighting on most modules now

Sue expresses a dislike of the taking over of groups by the better students and this is presented as a consensus among lecturers with the “we” and the emphasis in “which we HATE”. Although she suggests it is good to be so motivated in “are so focused on (..) which is a good thing”, the intensification and predication in “really pushy students” and “that can be a problem as well” seems to position those students as a source of the group work issues. This is unsurprising given that it is those students who tend to complain about the stress caused and the potential negative effect on their grades.

### *'Being there'*

This section discusses the predication of ‘being there’ or present in contrast to those who are erratic attenders. It is often used in conjunction with ‘being hard-working’ discussed above. Both students and lecturers talk about it and the issue is pertinent since attendance and engagement are increasingly discussed within universities despite the notion of engagement being poorly-conceptualised. As noted in Chapter 5, the policy proposals aim to tackle this issue of engagement

through notions such as partnership. For the interviewees, the issues involve students working or just not attending and their consequent level of commitment to the course and their group. The higher-performing students all mention the idea of being in class to get advice and how they refined their understanding of assessment requirements from their lecturers. Throughout her account, Leyla presents herself as fully-committed to the course and in elaborating on the issue of guidance, it becomes clear that she is making a point about attendance and positioning those who do not attend as at a disadvantage:

(11)

Leyla: yeah (...) but even in the brief it was not very explicit when you ask the lecturer he always clarifies, he always answers

Interviewer: so it's important to be there, to be at the briefing workshop and to hear, just to keep listening?

Leyla: exactly

Interviewer: every lesson more or less? Did he give some kind of clues or some kind of emphasis to something that he wanted?

Leyla: yes, he says I'm giving importance to that so stick on that, use that framework, it's important, don't put it to body, put it to appendices so very detailed things, Ok, yeah um but as you said, there is a saying I really like, it says that the opportunity dances with who are already on the dance floor

Interviewer: (laughs) ok yeah

Leyla: so I believe that yeah, if you are there and if you listen carefully you will catch uh but otherwise if you are not coming to school, this won't help just by, as it is

In her third contribution above, she shifts into speech representation, introducing the voice of the lecturer to illustrate her point about being in class to get the detailed advice. She also mentions a saying “opportunity dances with who are already on the dance floor” as support for her argument and positioning of others which is evident in the final phrase “if you are not coming to school, this won’t help just by, as it is” referring to the written guidance. In this way, absent students are positioned by others as not caring, making little effort, or as with Leyla, their preference for detailed written guidance as indicative of cultural difference. Their last-minute approach and need for explicitness is presented as inferior. The absence of these students, whether due to work reasons or otherwise, is seen by the attending students as detrimental to the functioning of the group. Attendance is discussed by lecturers but I discuss their accounts in relation to pedagogy below.

#### 6.5.2.2 Predications about students’ backgrounds and the right to be a ‘leader’

This section focuses on how students’ backgrounds are made relevant by interviewees and considers the predications of having work experience, subject knowledge and a good language level and how these are used to support students’ claiming the right to lead their group. These predications reflect pertinent issues such as entry requirements and the diversity of the cohort. Through its policy documents, the university constructs diversity and inclusivity as key attributes of the institution but also presents them as areas to be addressed through appropriate pedagogy. Lecturers discuss the positives of drawing on students’ backgrounds but I show how students take a less positive view at times.

*'Having work experience'*

May, a high-scoring student, describes an experience of group work in which she and another student were the organisers and did most of the editing and she justifies her approach on the basis of her motivation to excel and her extensive work experience. The intensification of "literally directly from doing undergrad" positions the others as very inexperienced:

(12)

May: I think the thing with my group is that there were two younger perhaps students who had come literally directly from doing undergrad and so they didn't have a lot of work experience and so they didn't always know what were the pertinent things to bring out

In the following extract about the process of group work, she positions herself as someone who is happy to do a lot of the work and to lead the group:

(13)

May: ... I found that I tended to kind of pick up the more meaty (.) bits and maybe that's because naturally I like to do but erm even when I was doing that I was dipping into (laughs) other people's sections a lot (laughs) maybe it's a little bit of a control freak within me but then I would (..) spend a lot of time doing the editing of the reports, reading it through for cohesion if people had written sections that I felt hadn't covered things that it needed to cover then I would more times than most re-write them

Interviewer: ok

May:                    which was probably (laughs) not a good thing to do

Although she mitigates her taking on the work with “tended to”, “maybe” and “a little bit of”, and the laughter perhaps indicates she recognises that she is not following the intended practices associated with group work, she uses the argument that the work was not good enough and so presents herself as an authority able to judge quality and, therefore, take a leading role.

As illustrated above, interviewees shift between different identities such as student, employee, parent, which they use as a resource to support a claim (see section 3.8). In the following extract, May elaborates on her personal dilemma regarding issues with group work as she shifts her footing (see section 4.5.7) into the manager role rather than student role using a perspectivisation strategy evident in “I think from a manager perspective”:

(14)

Interviewer:    And the other people were ok with that were they, the other people who didn't contribute so much?

May:                I think so, yeah I mean this is the challenge of group assignments isn't it really (laughs)?

Interviewer:    (laughs)

May:                I mean fortunately we didn't have any of the language issues that I think I've heard about from other groups and I think from a manager perspective what I struggled with is if I do this, are the others going to learn from that process and how are you going to learn from that process because ultimately when you come away with a master's and you passed your

master's, you want to, you are saying I can do this and if they are going to the workplace and they actually can't do that then am I doing them a disservice by doing that? so I struggled with that a bit and so I was trying to give them the space and the time to do something that (.) was to a standard that I felt comfortable with them submitting but erm (.) sometimes it didn't always (.) materialise so I tended to step in which is probably not good

Interviewer: but they were ok with that?

May: Ye=ah I mean they benefitted from good marks as a result of it so I think that they weren't going to (laughs) be dissatisfied with that erm I just hope that in the long run that they can stand on their own two feet with the things that they're required to do

May again alludes to the potential learning experience for the others and by moving into the impersonal “you” suggests a shared perception to support her point with “and you passed your master’s” perhaps inferring they may not have passed otherwise. The shift back into “they” in “if they are going to the workplace and they actually can't do that” focuses back on the students and indicates perhaps her real perception. Although expressed in an indirect way with the mitigating “sometimes”, “didn’t always” and “tended” and the rather euphemistic “to a standard that I was comfortable with them submitting” (i.e. something that met my standards of quality) and “it didn’t always materialise” (i.e. they didn’t produce something that was good enough), she is suggesting they are likely to struggle in the workplace due to their inexperience and lack of skills. With the outcome of “they benefitted from good marks”, she indicates that otherwise their marks would be low and so they should be happy with her managing of the group



work. Finally, her characterisation of the other students as like children with the idiomatic “I just hope that in the long run they can stand on their own two feet” is used to support the claim that they were too inexperienced to be very useful.

The use of this discursive strategy illustrates that many students have a range of identities to draw on as evidence to support their opinions as well as critically evaluate what they think their education should involve. In one sense, it supports the idea of the policy texts’ “partnership learning community” in which all can contribute. However, it also illustrates the diversity of ability and experience which can make group work problematic.

*‘Having subject knowledge’*

In terms of having subject knowledge, despite this being labelled a “conversion” course by lecturers, higher-performing students position those without a relevant degree as being less able to contribute. Elsa recounts that the group had two leaders, herself and someone else from the same country:

(15)

Elsa: we worked really well together and she had a [specific subject] background as well and we were the only ones who had that (..) so, I understand that some things are easier for us and also with the language, I understand that if you don't know English that well and you're coming from an arts degree which is nothing to do with this, that this is challenging, but we had other assignments and I feel they helped out as much as they could

With “we were the only ones who had that” she is indicating that this is an important attribute and the intensification of “nothing” in “an arts degree which is nothing to do with this” she constructs other backgrounds as not useful. Zoe is someone who places herself in the middle in terms of relevant background but indicates surprise at the range of knowledge:

(16)

Zoe: I think that, with the requirements you know, being in any discipline to get into the programme, I think I was expecting more (.) beginner level as far as [subject area] goes and it was kind of one of those things that I didn't quite understand, a master's level but yet (.) no [subject] background or any kind of business background, so I didn't really have a lot of expectations when I came into the programme just based off of that and then once the programme started and you started to meet other people ... it was a wide mix of levels of education in their backgrounds and so (..) yes and no, I think there are some really good parts of the programme but I also think that there's a huge division in [subject] abilities and performance which might have caused frustration among students especially in group work scenarios

Her mitigated “I didn't quite understand” and the intensification “huge division” are perhaps used as a reason to underpin her lower than expected performance.

Her mitigated “might have caused frustration” is an indication of group work issues relating to different backgrounds which she elaborates on later in the interview:

(17)

Zoe: ... I'd like to learn from these people as well, you know, they've done really well, and they understand and they've done four years of [specific subject] or business and I haven't, so it would've been nice to create a space where you know, you help me, I help you, kind of have that give and take, but it was more like, you know I know this and I'm not sharing it kind of attitude

Interviewer: that's a difficult one isn't it, in a group?

Zoe: yeah really difficult, it was almost like you're competing with each other rather than helping each other and I, I want to help everyone and I want to try and contribute as much as I can but there's, there's a certain point where you just say, ok

Here she is positioning herself as less knowledgeable but wanting to learn from others with the indirect "it would have been nice to create a space" while presenting the others as not willing to share their knowledge and not being team players.

Some lecturers, however, focus on the positives which is not always evident in students' accounts. Karen suggests that having a background in the subject is not necessarily an advantage:

(18)

Interviewer: So there's actually quite a high percentage who have not got a [specific subject area] background?

Karen: oh yes, loads, in fact the majority, perhaps it's not the majority, very occasionally we get people who've got, which is silly really, they've come on with a BA in [specific subject area] or a BA in [related subject area], which is, you know really? they shouldn't be doing this, they should be going and getting much more work experience, and the next level are the ones who've got the general business degrees, there's a fair few of those but that's fine because they want to specialise but a lot have got English literature, history, they tend to, and they're great, they're fantastic, they're starting from a, they have to do a bit more at the beginning, but they're fab

The predications of “fantastic” and “fab” to describe those with no background in the subject can be contrasted with student’s own perceptions of others regarding their ability to contribute to group work.

*‘Having a good language level’*

It is already clear from extracts above that language and writing issues are unsurprisingly highlighted in group work. The predication of “not speaking the language” is frequently used by high-performing students as a reason why some students were less able to contribute to group work and why others needed to take over the assignments. The issues of language levels and writing skills are

raised by most lecturers too with two lecturers commenting on the IELTS<sup>29</sup> levels of students. One expresses a wish for a re-raising of the entry requirement and another doubts that some students have the 6.5 level stated on their certificate. Overall, this construction of “poor language” is linked to admissions policy by lecturers and presented as a source of frustration by both with students focusing on its impact on group work.

### *Leading a group*

From the accounts above, it is clear that some interviewees took leadership roles in group work as a result of their background and experience. Some groups, however, operated in a seemingly more democratic way but often with poorer results. Leyla evaluates the challenges faced as a “valuable experience” in the end but expresses some regret at not having a leader as “our group structure was not hierarchical”. She tells a story about a hard-working friend who wrote something she knew was not relevant but Leyla did not challenge or criticise it:

(19)

Leyla: I knew it from my heart that it was not about [specific topic], it was about the general analysis of the company, like they are in the industry, but [specific topic] is something very different and there is no time left but she did the work and she did a lot so I said ok, it's ok, it's not exactly what they want but let's submit, so most of the time that happened

---

<sup>29</sup> IELTS is a test of English for academic study. International students must achieve the grade set by the university for admissions purposes or do a preparatory English course at the HEI.

She positions herself as knowing what was needed with the predication “from my heart” but with her shifting into speech representation and the mitigating “it’s not exactly what they want” presents herself as unwilling to disrupt the group dynamics. The following is from the same part of the interview exploring further how the group worked and wrote together:

(20)

Interviewer: Do you think um, did you feel that that worked out the best way or do you feel in retrospect that maybe it's useful if somebody (.) just takes control?=  
=Yes

Leyla: =Yes

Interviewer: =In the final, in the final thing and says well actually that part's not good enough, I'm going to rewrite it, do you know other groups who behave like that, do you think it's a better way to behave or do you think that would destroy the group kind of relationship?

Leyla: I think it would be better to have a leader in the first place (..) although they actually offered me some of them said ok, *Leyla*, we want you to be our leader because it doesn't work and I didn't want to take the responsibility actually because for me (..) I prospect that being a leader was reminding to come uh (..) you know sending additional mails so it was for me additional work, not being a leader that managing the work so I refused to be a leader because for me as I said (...) what they are offering me was not a proper leadership but now (..) when I look at the past I think it would be much better in terms of the grades if someone was a leader (..) uh but there are some natives in our group, native English speakers, so uh actually I trusted (laughs) them but even in the native

English speaker's part there were some feedback like poor English (.) and when you see it you cannot believe, how can you write poor English in your native language?

By recounting the story of her being asked to be leader, she positions herself as someone whose knowledge and skills were respected but she evaluates the offer as “not a proper leadership” since she associates proper with “managing the work”; suggesting an editing role. Although she later rejects other students’ arguments that “native speakers” should volunteer more, by including the point about their inability to edit the work well, she seems to be positioning them as being able to contribute but not trying in contrast to those making an effort, like her friend, despite not necessarily having the skills to do so. Such accounts construct group work as needing a leader and the more democratic model as ultimately producing worse grades. The above predications around students’ qualities and backgrounds are drawn on to discuss group work and support claims for their views and behaviour. Next, I turn to the accounts of those who are constructed as having less to offer the group and I examine how they make claims to belong to this ‘community’.

6.5.2.3 Argumentation and the discursive strategy of singularisation: “I think I was an exception”

Clearly, all discursive strategies are used for a purpose e.g. to position oneself or others as legitimation for actions or viewpoints as seen with the predications and perspectivisation, including shifts in footing, discussed above. In this section, I focus on a particular type of argumentation: the discursive strategy of

*singularisation* (Wodak et al., 2009). This involves presenting certain qualities as unique and here seems to be used to resist others' positioning of themselves as not being able to contribute to this "community". As discussed above, participants position those they see as "weaker" students through comments on their lack of effort, work experience, subject knowledge and lack of English. Notable in accounts from lower-performing students is their highlighting of individual skills and abilities whereas the high-performing students typically present themselves as generally capable.

Students highlight their particular skills, experience and interests such as their familiarity with design, particular software or their comfort with statistics. As Leyla says in relation to her volunteering to do the financial parts, "most of the people don't like numbers in my course (laughs)". A further example is Ivy who presents herself as quite relaxed, does not necessarily get high marks or spend too much time going over assignments, even characterising herself as a "very bad student" for not going back and editing her work. She appears to be contrasting herself to students who talk about how much they work and how stressed they are by other group members who do not. Below she contrasts her understanding of creativity and design with most other students by aligning herself with the lecturer and their different, looser way of giving feedback:



(21)

Ivy: But I think erm some, most of my classmates, they don't understand, it's hard to describe creative process and for them it's like hard to understand her comments ...

Interviewer: Oh right, so the kind of feedback?

Ivy: Yeah the feedback, they found it very, not very structural but from my point of view it's hard to critique, this is not right, this is wrong, this will score you 80%, this is hard, so I can understand it

The phrase “this will score you 80%” alludes to her perception that most students prefer explicitness about expectations and in feedback. However, she draws on her identity as an experienced designer and foregrounds her understanding of this area. She also presents herself as relaxed through her comments on group work and the process of writing which apart from the person who gets the editing work “because she’s a native speaker, she’s American (laughs), so it’s all on her”, she describes as more equally shared “we go back and forth, go back and forth with the whole paper again”. She also positions her group as unusually pragmatic:

(22)

Interviewer: Yeah and was everyone comfortable to comment on other people's parts?

Ivy: Yeah we're lucky, we are, very just like make it, get it done, (laughs) nothing personal

The “nothing personal” supports this pragmatic approach with the “we’re lucky” indicating their more positive group dynamics in contrast to other groups.

Ivy also presents herself as somewhat unique in relation to her attitude to the composition of the cohort. She takes up the lecturer’s point of view whereby at the start of the course, before setting up groups, the diversity of the course is presented as something special. In the following extract, she alludes to other students who do not seem to appreciate this:

(23)

Ivy: I will say, I think it's a really advantage, it's a good experience, I think especially our course, there's no local, no British and everyone come from everywhere, I quite like it, it's very diverse, but erm I found I was quite erm, I know it's not a good feeling but I feel that they are in, you know, still in their own group of people, they didn't enjoy the full advantage of this school, because it's a very diverse school and it's what makes it amazing

Interviewer: yeah yeah oh right, so some people not mixing?

Ivy: yeah and even the group project I heard a lot of people are like 'her English, there's a cultural difference' but then this is the fun part of it like to I don't know there must be something in people from [country], from [continent], there must be something, but some people just very stubborn

Interviewer: but you were quite positive about?

Ivy: yeah I really enjoyed it, this was the fun part

She is suggesting that many students take a different view from her with the use of “they” and “I heard a lot of people”. She is positioning those who spend most of the time with their own nationality as losing out, and she characterises them with the intensification “just very stubborn”. She is also suggesting that these are the students who do not recognise the qualities of those they label “weaker” students “there must be something in people from [country]”. With the implied generalisations that those students make with regard to whole countries or continents, she positions those students as being rather narrow-minded and herself as the opposite. There is a sense that these students not surrounded by students of their own nationality, construct those in larger nationality groups, despite being generally high-achieving, as failing to take full advantage of the course and perhaps being less independently-minded. This strategy of singularisation allows lower-performing students to legitimate their contribution.

The discursive strategies discussed above serve to construct a distance between members of the cohort. Given the high-stakes nature of the group assessments at the time, this appears to prompt students to focus on difference rather than having the intended effect of creating a sense of community as outlined in the policy documents. Of course, one can also view it as representing a point in time of struggle and dissatisfaction which is simply part of the learning process. Interviews conducted at a greater distance from events may construct the experience differently. Accounts of students’ experiences of the course in general are discussed further below.

In terms of a community with shared values amongst lecturers, accounts suggest close links between some colleagues and good relations in general between staff and students. I deal with issues of “community” among academics while discussing the other macro-strategies in the following sections since the topic is most evident whilst discussing pedagogic approaches or the purpose of a university education.

### 6.5.3 Learning as socially-situated and teaching as facilitation

To recap, in the policy documents this macro-strategy works by drawing on social constructivist theories that present learning as socially-situated with greater focus on learners and learning. This is associated with discourse topics such as “active/experiential learning”, “authentic tasks”, “assessment for learning” and “questioning assumptions”. Overall, effective learning is constructed as radical and transformative. Teaching is constructed as facilitation through the *topos of opposites* e.g. “didactic teaching” versus “facilitation and coaching” but the role of teaching and teachers in scaffolding learning is largely absent. In the interviews, I did not explicitly question lecturers on their beliefs about learning and teaching but most talked about their approach and aims while discussing their modules. I discuss the key discursive strategies in relation to those identified in Chapter 5 and argue that the light-touch facilitation of the policy documents is not reflected in the interview data.

The aspect of learning being socially-constructed in the sense of achieved through dialogue and interaction is evident in the data. As noted above, most students place importance on “being there” and engaging in discussion with their

teachers, and other students to some extent, in order to learn. They also use the metaphor of a difficult journey to describe their experience and how, despite challenges, they develop their skills and understanding. What is not present is any sense of a passive consumer ethos in the students' accounts. There are instances of students remarking on their desire to get good marks since they paid a lot for their studies but this is in the context of their working hard and assuming leadership in group work.

In terms of knowledge, some lecturers reflect on how they actively encourage students to contribute their experience to classes which reflects the particular identities of these postgraduate students who often have work experience.

Regarding learning and teaching, most lecturers discuss the notion of developing good practices in their students, relevant to the field. In the following extract, George uses the strategy of *singularisation* to construct his module as distinct and his approach as uncompromising:

(24)

George: ... it's very different from other modules

Interviewer: and do they like that, that's what they like about it?=  
=NO

George: =NO

Interviewer: oh they don't like it?

George: they find it very difficult, my argument is they find it very difficult because the other modules don't teach them precision and accuracy ... but (..) they get away with it, I will not let them get away with that in this module

The perspectivisation strategy of the direct “I will not let them” indicates his focus on challenging his students and developing good practices. It also suggests disagreements over approaches which is reflected throughout his account as he repeatedly claims that all modules need to develop these good practices, not just one, and that students need to develop their understanding and practices by working independently:

(25)

George: not only the practice in class, it's all about creating good practice in themselves, it's the same if you get a person, you want to teach them to ride a bike, if you're always there, well then, they'll never learn, they need to be on their own to use the skills and whatever they learn ... we are looking to embed good practice and good habits in the students, and we forget this and then we become (.) FE<sup>30</sup> and we become erm, what is the word come on, when they go and do practice in a company, apprenticeship, that's not what we're here for ... I'll be happy not to have module handbooks, to have nothing and say you must be analytical, critical, you need to, these are the core things that the students need to demonstrate

In this extract, he highlights the importance of letting students go and apply the knowledge they have gained and developing the skills of critical analysis. He later reflects that sometimes they will fail but they will learn from that. Using a *topos of opposites*, he compares this with, and is critical of, a “spoon-feeding” approach

---

<sup>30</sup> FE refers to Further Education i.e. institutions that are not universities.

and a tolerance of low standards which indicate some tensions over what kind of teaching is appropriate.

Next, I consider whether the narrow construction of “facilitation” evident in policy documents is present in the interview data. I argue that, conversely, there is much discussion of the considerable time and effort in supporting these students even though they are master’s level rather than first year undergraduates. Despite the range of challenging activities students engage in, there is little indication of involving students in curriculum & assessment design or SoTL. Instead, all lecturers discuss extensive support in the form of responding to queries, looking at students’ formative writing, guiding students through complex assessments with multiple stages such as consultancy projects with live clients. In that sense, students are indeed engaging in dialogue and learning occurs through interaction as suggested in policy documents. However, the effortless type of facilitation in policy documents is not evident. In the extract below, John constructs the innovative assessments as requiring substantial lecturer support and suggests a possible return to simpler types of assignment:

(26)

John: if we're going to be carrying on with students like this we should move away from a conventional master's model to a (...)

Interviewer: To what?

John: well to basically question answer essays or something like that where they can just use a textbook and ...

Interviewer: do they involve too much work for you, for the students?

John: well this year I had to do a lot of work for them and I found for the first time in my life I was actually going out to do the project for them and they just didn't seem to appreciate that at all or understand what was actually needed of them, they sat there just taking and yet not even using some of the stuff, they just could not see (..) what was (..) yeah ... there's no relevance here (laugh) you see what I mean

Although presented as an unusually difficult year, he also indicates some continuing issues in “if we’re going to be carrying on with students like this”. He constructs some students as risk-averse and unused to such autonomy in contrast to the engaged students of the policy documents. While this example simply illustrates a snapshot of a challenging year on one module with one cohort, it does outline potential risks in designing challenging forms of learning which I discuss further in the next section.

#### 6.5.4 A university education as developing future-fit graduates

In this section, I examine constructions of the “good course”, the presence or absence of the macro-strategy I labelled “a university education as developing future-fit graduates” and how particular topics or strategies are recontextualised at the level of practices. I argue that in the interview data there is a clear focus on future careers, unsurprising for a business subject, and certain aspects are taken up such as the notion of “added value” and “articulation of learning and reflection”. However, there is a more nuanced approach to what a course should cover from students and some clear disagreements among lecturers over the implications of a focus on work for course content and pedagogy.



To recap, this macro-strategy involved a focus on producing graduates that are fit for work in an uncertain future. Prevalent discourse topics included “employability”, “added value”, “articulation of learning and reflection”. Discursive strategies centred on the *topos of modernity* e.g. “a 21<sup>st</sup> century education”, “future fit” and the *topos of uncertainty* which was used to legitimate vagueness around what employability entails; focusing on “ability” rather than employ(ment) as such. Overall, explicitness and embeddedness were salient in the policy texts combined with this ambiguity over what a core template for employability might be. The interviews inevitably centred on the content of the course itself with students’ evaluation of what they experienced and lecturers’ justification of their choices. This often revolves around discussion over how practical courses should be. Both lecturers and students discuss the idea of the programme preparing students for careers or “real life”. However, there are disagreements over what that should entail. I examine what I term the *topos of real life* but as a prelude to this I consider the widely-used predications of “practical” and “theoretical”. I also analyse other discourse topics that are prominent in accounts such as “reflection” and “added value.” Although there is discussion around innovative practices, the concept of “21<sup>st</sup> century” practices is absent from interviewee accounts.

#### 6.5.4.1 Predications: Practical-theoretical

A question to students about their expectations of the course often prompts comments about whether it was more practical or theoretical than expected and there is much discussion in both sets of interviews about assessment along a continuum from very practical to theoretical or research focused. One probable

reason for this is that business students expect their courses to be practical. The course being open to students from any subject background is a further reason. Although students generally say they expected it to be more practical and several students mentioned the wish for more outside speakers, they also report a sense of achievement when they feel they have grasped what they label as “theory”. Ivy, who has creative work experience, aligns with this view and positions herself as someone who now has additional expertise she can use:

(27)

- Ivy: I do like it gives me a very theoretical structure of [subject], like putting [subject] into a very scientific level because it doesn't occur to me, I thought [subject] should be like ooh, that's the decision, just go do the practical stuff, erm yeah (laughs)
- Interviewer: So you just thought it was going to be quite practical but do you feel that you've benefited from all the theory, the theoretical ideas that you've come across?
- Ivy: yes (..) a few days ago I was reading some [subject] journals so now I feel like I know all those terminology, why this happened, why people do it, like there is some theoretical mind in it, it's not like oh decision, there are a lot of thinking behind it

She uses the story about reading journals with ease to illustrate her developing understanding and imply how she might use this in future. Another example is Leyla who, although she also expressed a wish for more outside speakers, frequently refers to theory throughout the interview. This is part of her overall positioning of her particular programme, an MSc, as much more challenging than the MA programmes: “I saw that their lectures are more superficial compared to

ours” and “after the Christmas we had 27 in total assignments and the MAs had 9 so there is a huge difference between MAs and MSc”. She seems to take pride in being part of what she perceives as a more challenging course and her resulting understanding:

(28)

Leyla: ... it was more academical the education I got here but I'm still glad for this because I learned a lot (.) now I learned all the theories specifically related with my field (..) now I feel like I'm an expert in [subject] field actually

Although students' perception of what is practical is not straightforward, with some characterising case studies as practical perhaps due to using analytical skills on real cases, there is an appreciation of clearly practical skills such as those related to particular software or the writing of professional genres. Scepticism about other types of practically-oriented assessments is discussed in the following section.

Lecturers throughout their accounts discuss the importance of having practical elements or applying the theory in ways that are useful to future careers often explicitly referring to the concept of employability. When discussing the detail and rationale for her module assessments, Karen continually mentions the transferability of skills and experiences whether from “live” assignments, literature reviews or group work:

(29)

Karen: I think they also like the fact that (.) a lot of the other modules are quite heavy on theory and ours is also heavy on theory but there is always always a practical aspect which is (.) what we're really keen to do because [specific subject area] is a practical subject ... and then the other thing we do really heavily is promote employability, really heavily, so we've got this whole task as well that they have to do which is marked and it counts towards the grade, but always we're thinking you know how does what we're doing help them, either shape their career, understand what the jobs are, develop their skills and so on, that's the feedback we get anyway (laughs)

The intensifications of “always always” and “really heavily” contribute to the positioning of herself as someone who is focused on the practical application of knowledge and skills. Although most lecturers conclude there is a good practical-theory balance across the programmes' assessment, some also indicate a lack of consensus on an employability focus:

(30)

Interviewer: I guess that's part of the [academic framework] as well isn't it, about being very explicit about how it's addressing employability ... so being explicit presumably throughout all the assessments?

Karen: In here, on ours, I can't vouch for my colleagues, I would say no

Interviewer: Cos even though there's that separate bit which is very directed at employability because of these?

Karen: Yes, this is completely employability throughout, yeah

- Interviewer: So that affects the types of assessments you do?
- Karen: Yeah yeah but I wouldn't say that's the same for other modules, definitely not, you know they'll talk the talk but I (..) I'm anonymous so I can say it, the ones who are purely into theory and studies and research, I'm not sure the links are there and they might say they are cos they might say well we use cases, really? that's only, it's not really making the students
- Interviewer: And you think maybe the type of students you're getting, their expectations?
- Karen: It's a conversion course Sarah, it's a conversion course, why do they come on a [subject area] course when they've done geography cos they want a job in [subject area], full stop

Karen positions herself as employability-focused “in here, on ours” but negatively evaluates others who are not with the initially hedged “I can’t vouch for my colleagues” moving to a more explicit “definitely not”. She presents herself as meeting what she sees as students’ real needs while positioning others as into research and theory and only pretending to address the employability requirements with the idiomatic “they’ll talk the talk”. She shifts into the voice of other lecturers, introduced with the mitigated “they might say”, to indicate the others’ counter-argument and then uses this to refute their claim with her own conclusion “it’s not really making the students”. This seems an argument she has discussed before. Such differing views and potential sources of tension over aims and pedagogy are discussed further in the next section.

#### 6.5.4.2 Argumentation: Topos of real life

Prominent in students and lecturers' accounts relating to course content and assessment is the *topos of real life*, drawn on as legitimation for producing assessment that mirrors what students will face in future careers. This is not surprising given that it is a business subject and that employability, despite its unclear conceptualisation, is such a prominent topic in discussions and guidelines around assessment. I focus on this topos since it highlights clear disagreements over what "real life" means for pedagogy. There are also risks associated with using the "real life" label to justify choices. In this section, I first explain how this topos works. I then consider extracts from the data in which cynicism is expressed about the "real life" aspect. I finish with accounts of those who challenge the premise of this argument.

This topos is used as an argumentative shortcut to support students' claims about the usefulness of a course or assignment and to support lecturers' legitimations about their assessment practices. As discussed below, the "real life" label is used to justify a variety of elements e.g. type of grouping, subject of the assessment, skills developed and practices. A common way it is used is to legitimate the inclusion of group work. This topos draws on a number of discourse topics such as group work, live briefs and discursive strategies e.g. predications such as "live", "authentic" and perspectivisation in terms of e.g. lecturers' referring to their experience as practitioners before entering academia.

*“Live” assignments*

The topos of real life is used to justify the use of “live” assignments. As noted in Chapter 4, the predication “live” refers to those assessments with a real company involved in part of the assessment of students’ work; usually through presentations. Lecturers highlight these as being particularly popular with students and argue they give the students an opportunity that is similar to real life:

(31)

Karen:           the [external organisation] come down as well and watch the presentations so it's very much about how it would be in real life and they do love that.

The intensifications of “very much” and “do love that” highlight this enjoyment of live briefs. In all cases, the company judges the presentations and in one module, the winning groups have the chance to do a short internship with the company as an added incentive. Most students evaluate these assessments in a positive way as being more motivating than e.g. case studies from a book or literature reviews:

(32)

Ivy:               ... that made a difference for me especially like you feel more engaged because it's like you work for them so you feel more engaged, but the literature review like [module name], [name of assignment], the [module name], it's like far, you can't touch them, you just walk around them so you don't feel that engagement

Interviewer: and cos you did a presentation didn't you for the company, did you feel you should put a lot of effort into that?

Ivy: yeah yeah you feel more

Interviewer: you put extra effort because they're a real company?

Ivy: there's more passion, there's more passion behind it, I just don't know why, like you feel you should, there's so many ideas because when you analyse it, it's a real thing and then you can change it, there's a little bit, little ego going on in the (xxx) and I think every team mates have that, that ego like (.) we can change it, we have ideas

Interviewer: so you feel you're making a little contribution?

Ivy: yeah yeah yeah

Here Ivy uses the impersonal “you” e.g. “you don’t feel that engagement” to suggest that this is generally true. She shifts back into “we” at the end to refer explicitly to her group and what she describes as “ego” when she says “we can change it, we have ideas” to indicate their thought processes and position themselves as having ideas to contribute despite being a lower-performing group in written assignments. This approach seems to allow some groups to succeed on elements of the assessment through their creative ideas and recommendations. Different criteria for evaluation are used by the company and the lecturers and below Laura justifies the presentation being assessed by the practitioners since a pitch is what is judged in the workplace:



(33)

Laura: ... it's the presentation actually it's very important in winning a pitch and so on so that's what (..) we wanted, the report was, we gave them feedback on the presentation and also saying to the student, well look the company is going to assess what you say in a slightly different way from what we are going to assess it, so actually one of the two groups that were chosen by the company had the winning group because they thought some good recommendations, some good ideas that they liked for the brand (..) actually did not get a very high mark in the report because the report was lacking the (..) sort of academic bit, so the application of theory to practice

Interviewer: Ok, and did you think the students were able to differentiate those audiences well enough?

Laura: Some yes and some (..) no, so yes the group that yes, that second group that won the pitch but still didn't do a very good report and they were surprised, how come we won and also you know another group said, you gave us a high mark how come we didn't win the pitch (laughs) and that was, you know we let the company choose and so we said ok well they judged (xxx)

Here Laura re-enacts what the students said by shifting into speech representation e.g. "how come we didn't win the pitch" to illustrate her point around different criteria being used although she does not regard this as an issue. It is the topos of real life that is used to support such a task and to support the differing judgements of quality of industry and academia. However, this is not supported by all lecturers and George criticises the non-academic approach that companies encourage.

Another lecturer John, when outlining what makes his module distinct, draws on this topos of real life e.g. “real issues going on out there” to support his reasons why students like it:

(34)

John: ... what they have actually liked about this module eventually is it's the one that makes them think, it's the one that makes them apply, it's the one that actually has some sort of reality with, we talk about real organisations, we talk about real issues that are going on sort of out there so they tend to actually like that erm (..) what they appreciate at the end but don't like going through at the time is they have to do a lot of reading, they have to be able to write properly, they have to be able to communicate effectively, and all those sorts of things which as they go through the process is like pulling teeth as you well know (laughs), but when they sort of leave and they finish they come back and say thank you, you know, thank you for that

His use of “eventually”, “at the end” and the idiom “like pulling teeth” indicate his belief that students find the module difficult but ultimately rewarding. He is positioning his module as uniquely challenging, like George above, through the strategy of *singularisation* by repeating “it’s the one that” suggesting not all other modules do this. He also implies that the skills he mentions are those needed in the workplace and his story about former students’ attitudes with the shifting into the voice of the students “thank you for that” suggesting that this approach contributed to their ability to cope at work. However, lecturers also draw on this topos to position students in a less positive way when assessments do not go

according to plan. Presenting himself as an experienced practitioner, he uses the following story related to group work to suggest they are not familiar with real life:

(35)

John: ... and they've got a very naïve view of what employment is and erm so what they're saying is that why are we assessing then on group work because if they had somebody who was not contributing to the group in industry, they would get fired (..) and when you get people like myself who've actually worked in industry and other people actually saying to them no they would not get fired you know because if you're presenting to a client, you need to be able to erm cover the mistakes going on in the organisation and you need to just figure out how to get the best thing possible but for them it was like no that shouldn't work, also they HATED doing any consulting work erm

Here he relates how students use the topos of real life themselves to criticise group work when frustrated by it. Students refute that it is like real life since they say that people who do not contribute would get fired. In the extract below, Elsa aligns with this view when responding to a question about the rationale for group work:

(36)

Interviewer: but also do you think ... maybe they've said something about justifying it but do you think it's also just getting on with people that you don't necessarily get on with? and that's, that's part of work and part of life I guess?

Elsa: well sure I guess but it's not going to be, I know there's going to be challenges working later in life but (.) when someone doesn't know the language, they would never get the job in the first place kind of thing, if you don't do your work, you'll get fired (.) there was no getting fired here, kind of

In my question, I effectively echo one of the rationales often given for group work but she rejects this argument by repeating my “I guess” in a disbelieving way and turning around the ‘real life’ argument as justification for her own claim. She shifts into the generalising “you” in “if you don’t do your work, you’ll get fired” as support for her point that this is not like the “real world” with the use of the clichéd phrase, “there was no getting fired here”. A point that emerges is that trying to offer engaging, innovative group tasks with live companies is often highly motivating but time-consuming and occasionally risky. There is also an indication that using the topos of real life can be problematic as students can turn the argument around when they do not like something. This issue of cynicism is explored further in the next section.

*Scepticism about the topos of real life*

*Predications: “A lot of work for little reward” and “inauthentic”*

Next, I explore further how students evaluate assessment that draws on the *topos of real life*. In particular, I consider scepticism about the real life or employability

label by examining the constructions of some assessment as either “a lot of work for the marks” or “inauthentic”. The predications “a lot of work” and “low weighting” are often used together to evaluate assignments. Students indicated that if they liked the subject, they would refer to assignments in this way but still say they enjoy it. For example, when referring to a complex learning journal assessment that required application of theory to current examples and concise 500-word entries, May says:

(37)

May: ... because a lot of it's relevant and recent, it was really fascinating and I really enjoyed actually doing those assignments, some of them were a LOT of work for perhaps not a lot of marks (laughs) it felt like

However, if students do not like aspects of the assignment such as the type of company, the client, the group work element or feel it is not relevant, they use this predication to evaluate the assignment in a negative way e.g. as not useful. Below Leyla mentions the time involved and weighting when discussing a live project:

(38)

Leyla: I feel like this assignment didn't contribute to my, to my skills (...) and it took six months to write that, it's only (.) 15%, on the other hand, this took maybe two weeks but it's 40%, so the balance was not good, well arranged

Throughout her account, Leyla talks about the progress made and skills developed and in this extract she evaluates the assignment as not contributing to her skills and comparing it to a different assignment to support her claim that the effort-weighting balance was not effective.

Generally, live assignments are seen as practical as are modules that students recognise as clearly workplace skills-oriented e.g. using particular software or practising professional genres. However, common across students' accounts is some level of cynicism about the real-life label when applied to certain types of assignments often those connected to the "employability-related" element of the module. May discusses the reflective assignment in which they have to write about three careers' events attended. She evaluates some as interesting, some as not useful and expresses some frustration at not knowing exactly what kind of reflection they wanted. However, she also comments on the purpose of it:

(39)

Interviewer: yeah it's quite an interesting one?

May: yeah it was an interesting one, I think it's just how does that connect back to (.) what you learnt in the module, you kind of then get a bit um (..) (laughs) cynical, you kind of think they've done it because they want you to go to these events (laughs)

Interviewer: of course, yeah, you're probably right, exactly

May: and if I didn't have that, would I have gone to those events is the question I guess, so but

Here she questions the links between the events and the module and suggests the purpose of the assessment is to get students to attend the extra events. She shifts

into “you” to suggest a generalised perception i.e. that other people feel the same. At the end, she uses a hypothetical question to suggest she would not have attended had it not been a requirement. Other reflective assignments seem to attract similar levels of scepticism. Here Ivy is referring to a reflection on a group assignment worth 10%:

(40)

Interviewer: ... so what do you think she was looking for (.) here?

Ivy: oh, here? (laughs)

Interviewer: yeah

Ivy: a reflective essay is I really like this course blah blah  
blah, I didn't really read the brief even

Interviewer: uhm, is there a bit of information there about the  
reflective essay?

Ivy: I think she emailed about a little bit of it ...

Interviewer: (looking at feedback) ok, she said you didn't write a  
thousand words

Ivy: (laughs)

Interviewer: is that because you felt you didn't have enough, more  
to write?

Ivy: I didn't feel like it

Interviewer: or just too many assignments going on?

Ivy: I don't know what I was thinking, I didn't even look at  
the word count, maybe just a paper (laughs)

Interviewer: ok yeah maybe because it's a fairly small percentage?

Ivy: yeah yeah

Her moving into representing the words she thinks they expect in the assignment “I really like this course blah blah blah” is a summary of what she thinks the expectation is and her laughter indicates her scepticism about the assignment's

value. Although some students report enjoying these freer reflective pieces e.g. blogs, there is both confusion and scepticism present in accounts.

Another assignment that attracts these types of comments and questioning of its “real life” rationale is a time-limited, 24-hour assignment:

(41)

May: ... I don't know how realistic the 24-hour assignment  
(..) one was, I think that

Interviewer: why did they do that do you think, what was the  
reason, did they say why?

May: the rationale was that this is what you would have in  
the real world and I was like I don't believe that it's  
just only 24 hours (laughs) and then actually their  
rationale, when people were criticising it, they were  
like, well sometimes you only get a few hours (laughs)  
I was like, you're not starting from scratch, if you work  
in a company, you might have a template in which case  
then all you're doing is just putting in and because of  
the scale, the scope of it, I do wonder whether actually  
the scale of it was bigger than for a 24 hour  
assignment personally

May re-enacts the exchange between lecturer and students. The quotative “I was like” is used twice to introduce her refutation of the “real world” argument. Her comments e.g. “I don't believe...” indicate her thought processes perhaps, rather than what she actually said. She draws on her own work experience and uses the generalising “you” to support her claim that this is what actually happens in a company. In summary, students seem to question the “real life” premise when



they do not like an aspect of an assessment by drawing on their own work experience as evidence to support their claim. This indicates the possible risk in using this as a rationale.

*Rejecting the “real life” premise*

Although all lecturers regard the programmes as preparation for a professional career, there is different emphasis about how to do this. Some focus on the type of task, some on the skills being developed, some on the ability to articulate learning, some on the groupings, some on the “added value” elements or a combination of these. Some though reject the argument that assessment should reflect real life in the sense of doing those activities they might do at work. George discusses this explicitly and instead argues that they are preparing them and the focus should be on certain in-demand skills of analysis, problem-solving, argumentation and writing skills developed within the discipline. Although he supports his own employability task which gets students to demonstrate understanding by applying the detailed skills learned on the module in response to a job advert, he also rejects some of the aspects that come under employability:

(42)

Interviewer: yeah I'm probably thinking about the learning and teaching guidelines within [academic framework] which are more employability

George: but I don't understand this, you come there and you demonstrate that you go through a very clearly articulated defined way of thinking, isn't this employability?

Interviewer: yeah

George: so why do I need, you understand what, I think we got it wrong and we keep on doing it wrong and we are

Interviewer: but certain assessments are LABELLED as employability

George: but employability to me is a process of good thinking and developing an understanding, you develop this, why do you think (..) that most of the major [subject area] companies in the UK don't employ graduates of [subject area] but they employ graduates from Oxbridge, because they say you've got a good way of thinking and solving problems

Using a perspectivisation strategy “to me” and the *topos of example* of what top companies do, he redefines what he believes employability is. He also argues that group work has a place but this and other real-life practices such as presentations are over-used:

(43)

George: ... but I think we are over-egging it on the main principle of this is what happens out there, there are lot of things that they happen out there that we are not doing here, like (..) you fail a module, you're out of the course, we don't do this, so we are preparing them, it's not identical, so some of our colleagues say but this is what is happening ... so the balance, I don't think we've got the balance right, but has it got a point, place, yes but in the end the students need to stand on their own feet, when they go for a job, they're only going to get the job not because they are part of a

group, because they are on their own, once they are in there that's different and if they are strong in themselves and they know how to use the skills that they got here to support themselves, well they'll do well in a group, on the other hand if they've been hiding behind a group, they are going to fail irrespective

He uses the *topos of example* of students failing but still being on the course to illustrate that it is not meant to replicate real life and that the programme is about “preparing them, it’s not identical”. He also indicates disagreements with colleagues over assessment and pedagogy by shifting into the voices of others “so some of our colleagues say, but this is what is happening”.

In terms of how the macro-strategy of “a university education as developing future-fit graduates” is recontextualised, although there is clear evidence of attempts to “embed employability” through “authentic tasks”, these accounts of differing views indicate disagreements over what to focus on and how to prepare students for the future.

#### 6.5.5 Pedagogy as a process of continuous improvement

Despite HEA documents being focused on learning & teaching, teaching as an activity is hardly discussed and the particular notion of continually improving practice is also largely absent. More salient is the macro-function of transformation in the sense of teaching and assessment needing to adapt to the new context. Where it is explicitly mentioned, continuous improvement is

constructed as part of a partnership learning community's practices with an emphasis on students' role:

... they work together with academics to enhance teaching, assure quality and maintain standards ... they understand themselves as active partners with academic staff in a process of continual improvement of the learning experience. (Ramsden 2008, p. 16, cited in ETP, p. 26)

Implied in this predication "continual" is that what exists is never good enough. Of course, it seems uncontroversial that teachers aim to continuously enhance their practice as embodied in ideas around the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) and action research. However, I argue below that rather than simply an evolution of programmes or an enhancement in teaching practices, the continuous modification of practice evident in the interview data frequently appears to be a response to problems created by the changing context.

A collection of discourse topics and discursive strategies constitute this macro-strategy. Discourse topics include innovations, changes to modules, evolution of courses, university policy, added value and the student experience. Discursive strategies are mainly legitimation strategies drawing on formal schemes of cause and effect e.g. implementing this change will make students happier or perform better as well as the *topos of context* which refers to issues such as attendance and competition with other providers.

One discourse topic from the documents that does appear in the interview data is the notion of “added value”. I discuss it here since it fits the idea of aiming to continuously make improvements by adding more to the programme. It is significant because it is a reaction to increased competition and is constructed by interviewees as a necessity for the institution, and other lower-ranking HEIs, who need to offer something distinctive. An example of this is a professional diploma offered as part of the programme. Changes have been made so that both teaching and assessment of the diploma occur during the master’s programme, rather than only the teaching, thus encouraging higher completion levels. Below Sue constructs the change as providing “added value” by having a course that stands out in the market place:

(44)

Sue: ... this gives us some distinctiveness (...) it's a horribly crowded market as you know, why should a student pick us, well if we can position ourselves as offering some added value, that has real value to them on their CV, then that may influence choice so yes, we're driven by the desire to make the [name of scheme] thing work

She also describes this added value in sales promotion terms:

(45)

Sue: yeah it's a bit like saying here's your BOGOF, here's your buy one get one free, well if you don't want your free one, that's entirely up to you (laughing) ... what you've paid for your master's also gives you a

professional qualification, so but really you know that aside, as I said, the old model of having this dissertation spreading over five months, they don't need five months, it's a sixty credit module, yeah, they have to collect primary data yeah, but it's a bit like, the idea, the more time you give someone to do something, they're still going to, the chances are they're going to put all the effort in at the end

The comments on the dissertation refer to the changes made to the programme not only to add more but to re-organise the content so that it is timely. The dissertation is now done in about six weeks. Sue also uses the metaphor of a “boot camp” to describe short, sharp periods of time on particular elements with teaching swiftly followed by assessment:

(46)

Sue: we will have three boot camps ... the only way they will work is if the students finish, have the teaching and finish the assessment before the next block starts, at the moment you see, assessments are trailing through, if I'm making sense, throughout the dissertation and throughout the [name of module element]

This is presented as producing better student results and satisfaction. However, it also somewhat contradicts the suggested approach of pushing assessment to the end outlined in the university's framework. It is an example of a programme team presenting deviations from guidelines as responding to the needs of their students and the viability of the course. It is also a response to competition and to

perceptions e.g. by the media, by students, of a lack of value for money. George reports a comment from a senior management person which addresses this perception:

(47)

George: he said, these people finish in May (...) they are not doing anything during the summer, why are they paying 12 months ... then I was discussing this with some of my colleagues, I said well he's got a point, this is not a part-time degree why don't we make sure that at least from our side we say we occupy you 12 months

He suggests that this perception informed their decision to add more and reorganise the programme.

Lecturers discuss the evolution of courses and how they review and make changes. Yet, this often seems more related to the exigencies of the situation and enhancing student satisfaction in the short-term. Sue describes the modifications to group set up whereby groups now choose each other and how this has reduced the complaints significantly at least to lecturers. In student interview data, groups were still pre-determined. Although one rationale for group work was that it emulates the work place, it also solved the problem of marking large numbers of assignments and masked potentially failing students. However, when group work is used for high-stakes assignments and causes dissatisfaction, it gradually becomes formatively assessed:

(48)

Sue: basically people still (..) don't like group work ... so we've reduced the weighting on most modules now and there are some modules where they don't do any summative assessment as a group, they still work in groups but they write things up individually, and I think that's where it's going

The “it” in “I think that’s where it’s going” suggests this is institutional guidelines or policy rather than individual preference. The move back to doing more individual assignments is discussed further by Sue below:

(49)

Interviewer: really so it's going BACK in a way, so it went forward towards more and more group work and now you think it's going back a bit to individual?

Sue: it's just a feeling I get and I know that from a QC, quality control? quality committee perspective ... the QC philosophy is (..) minimise group work, get rid of it, get rid of it, you know from an undergraduate perspective it causes endless problems as I've understood it

There is the use of the *topos of authority* by referring to the Quality committee perspective although there is mitigation with the “as I’ve understood it” and a suggestion of ambivalence in both these extracts towards this move. Sue also comments on proposed changes in pedagogy towards more in-class assessment:



(50)

Sue: ... but you know everything seems to be changing on sort of pedagogic grounds, if you speak to someone like [name] ... our department's [L&T position], there's a big shift, you know, there is a problem with marking if you've got big numbers, but there's, there's a shift to doing more work in-class, more assessed work in class that you can assess and mark in class

Interviewer: ok, er

Sue: but I think you're right, there is a tension between

Interviewer: where's that coming from? is that coming from anywhere in particular that idea? is it just to reduce the work in a way for lecturers?

Sue: it's about attendance

Interviewer: ok

Sue: so for undergrads you know, there's a big, you know there's a problem (..) throughout university probably of students who just don't come, who don't turn up, and so if you can do more in class that gives them a reason to be there, the idea is you drive up attendance, so it's a faculty and probably a university strategic (.) move and I think this year we've been told undergrad wise, you've got to have eighty per cent (.) attendance (.) on your module ...

Interviewer: yeah that's interesting, so could be more, even on postgrad, could be moving towards a bit of more individual stuff but in class, yeah

Sue: yes I think certainly there's a move towards more individual (..) stuff, erm in class, the philosophy of doing as much as possible in class anyway has always (.) been where we are

The “everything seems to be changing on pedagogic grounds” and the use of the *topos of authority* by citing someone with a L&T role describing “a big shift” suggest a change in direction by the institution. This aligns with the strategy of transformation evident in the policy documents. However, it is not drawing on the topos of a 21<sup>st</sup> century education but rather is focused on the challenges in the sector. The clarity and certainty of the response to my question “where’s that coming from” with the swift “it’s about attendance” shows she is in no doubt what the drivers are. In-class assessment addresses the problem of attendance and engagement. Instead of, or in addition to, the purported aim of enhancing practice, such changes are actually responses to problems.

This is embodied in George’s comments about a lack of pedagogy. He discusses the issue of numbers and how with small classes or at an individual level, teachers and students “solve problems together”. However, he argues that with a hundred students a pedagogy is needed as he elaborates on below:

(51)

George: when he came in he said I want this faculty to be known for its unique pedagogy ... but where is the unique pedagogy? clickers as I say many times and cabaret style is not a pedagogy, it's a gimmick

Interviewer: and so is he trying to create?

George: there isn't one, well we haven't, we've been unsuccessful, to my mind [name] should have delivered this, but this has not been delivered and we are three years down the line, so if you say all these Fellows, what is their role? ... so where I think we failed is for some, we got to have the educational

people to say look here is our way of doing things and take us with them, otherwise becomes

With the categorical “there isn’t one”, he suggests there is a lack of direction. He also questions the purpose of having the HEA Fellows if they have no role in contributing to a pedagogical approach that can respond to the challenges resulting from high numbers and students’ relatively low levels of skills. As discussed above, George characterises education as developing good practices and discusses the need for the university to better confront issues with students’ skills on entry and the realities of their lives:

(52)

George: but then from our side (..) the educational thing to make them better citizens, more educated citizens is one thing but how do we do it given the pressures that the individuals have? those are different things, one is about what we do with them the other one is about HOW we do it with them and we're not addressing either of those things and the frustration is when it's so obvious or in which case I must be very stupid or very naive, cos to my mind these things are very simple you know

He claims that neither the “what” nor “how” of programmes are being addressed. He also suggests that senior management need to deal with issues faced by this type of institution such as timetabling efficiently to allow students to work. He presents changes as rather ad hoc and short-term. For example, there is the focus on engagement rather than learning; techniques rather than addressing the real

issues. He argues that lecturers do not fail their students because it will negatively impact discursive mechanisms such as module feedback and module reports. This short-term focus is exemplified in his discussion of module feedback surveys and he alludes to the debate about how effective learning and teaching can be evaluated:

(53)

George: ... it's the same principle about satisfaction of the programme, we're asking satisfaction when they've just finished the programme, this is nonsense (..) it's not a piece of cake (..) you'll only know whether that programme has achieved its purposes until you go out there and you've been out there, and for that I don't know the answer, for one year two years three years I don't know and some of the modules like this they only realise crumbs I needed this when they did their dissertation (..) so you evaluate a module at the point where it finishes but the purpose of that module does not become (.) evident to the students

By referring to education as “it’s not a piece of cake”, George illustrates what he regards as the conflicting priorities of a focus on short-term satisfaction versus long-term value. With the claims for increased challenge, being unafraid to fail students and the dismissal of what he characterises as “gimmicks”, he positions his emphasis as on the latter. Lecturers discuss innovations, changes and continuous improvement but underlying much of this seems to be an attempt to respond to problems perceived to be created by a changed context. By some

lecturers this is constructed as operating in an environment of disagreements and without a guiding pedagogy.

## 6.6 Conclusion

My analysis has focused on exploring recontextualisation of the macro-strategies identified in Chapter 5 as well as identifying particular discursive strategies in the interview data. Although this is a snapshot of a small group of participants' accounts at a particular point in time and interviewees have points they wish to foreground, the impact of developments and policies in L&T and the HE sector more broadly can be traced. Student accounts illustrate the influence of diverging backgrounds on their experiences whether in terms of English levels, subject background or work experience as well as the influence of pedagogic trends. The intensive and goal-focused nature of the masters' programme probably intensifies the feelings evident in their accounts. Lecturer accounts indicate the evolving nature of programmes but also show how they respond to institutional and sector pressures through, for example, following or adapting university guidelines and responding to sector competition. Thus, differing discourses around aims of a higher education and types of pedagogy are evident in interviewee accounts. The form, and importance, of this recontextualisation will be discussed further in Chapter 7 as I relate my findings to the debates outlined in Chapter 2 and to my theoretical framework in Chapter 3.

## **7 Discussion and conclusions**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the implications of the analysis conducted in Chapters 5 and 6. I discuss the findings from those chapters in light of the literature and theoretical framework discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Specifically, I summarise the discursive strategies, and their functions, identified in the selected L&T policy documents. I focus on the implications of such constructions and highlight notable discursive practices. I also reflect on the discursive mechanisms which facilitate the embedding of policy. Finally, a major part of this chapter revisits ideas around the pedagogic device, relations within, and between, the ORF and PRF and pedagogic identities (Bernstein, 2000) to frame interpretation of my findings.

Taking a CDS approach, policy documents can be seen as constructing reality in a certain way and, at least partly, constructing the problems which policy is created to solve (section 3.4.2). This can be identified as a legitimisation strategy to support the policy proposals. This connects with the identification of the macro-strategies since they are ideological in the sense of indicating a particular perspective on the aim of a university education or appropriate pedagogic approaches. For example, the construction of outdated, ineffective forms of assessment leads to the solution of radical change towards “fit-for-purpose” assessment which recognises that standards are socially-situated. As analysed in Chapter 5, the reality or context that is constructed is one of upheaval and change and I can summarise the issues constructed in the policy documents as follows:

Issue 1: The context creates more demanding students with, potentially, a passive consumer approach

Issue 2: The context raises questions around the purpose of higher education and how to address future employment

Issue 3: The student experience in relation to learning, teaching & assessment is not good enough and lecturers are resistant to change

Issue 4: Policy cannot be implemented unless everyone shares the same values and the same language

Next, I summarise what a DHA approach has revealed in terms of illustrating the discursive strategies evident in the selected L&T policy documents. I consider the extent to which these may be typical of the field of higher education policy-making on L&T and whether they represent a shift in discursive practices.

## 7.2 Summary of key discursive strategies and discourses in the policy texts

A key aim of this study is to identify the discursive strategies in the selected L&T policy documents. In Chapter 5, I analysed these in detail in relation to the macro-strategies which construct people and phenomena in particular ways. In Table 19, I summarise the key findings regarding the strategies used in the HEA *discussion* texts, although some are also found in the *framework* texts, and I highlight the strategies' functions.

Table 19. Summary of key discursive strategies in selected L&T policy texts.

<b>Discursive strategies</b>	<b>Means and forms of realisation</b>	<b>Discursive function within the field of HE learning &amp; teaching policy-making</b>
-topos of context	vague reference to context, sometimes followed by specifics: competition, fees etc.	-to form basis of legitimation for all policy proposals
-topos of uncertainty	language of uncertainty and complexity	-to argue for general skills and attributes that can respond to an uncertain future
-topos of modernity	language of new and modern	-to persuade people that radical transformation is necessary to fit modern vision of university education
-topos of social constructivism	language of situatedness, mutuality, equality, negotiated characteristic of learning and knowledge	-to argue that knowledge, learning, standards are socially-situated and can be negotiated – to underpin a partnership approach & to background teachers and teaching
-topos of authority	multimodal models referring to authorities	-to give authority to proposals and to show hierarchies of preferred practices -to give priority to e.g. student & employer views
-topos of example	case studies, vignettes from “new” universities	-to give authority but also to show the ‘ideal’ to aspire to -to legitimate but also to construct a vision of good teaching, curriculum & assessment
-topos of opposites	contrasting nouns/adjectives	-to construct preferred/non-preferred practices to define concepts in people’s minds
-topos of definition	defining terms; use of glossary	-to explain what a word means in context of that policy proposal
-formal argumentation schemes	counter-argument/argument structures	-to show a consideration of other options, views and possible challenges before rejecting them
-nominations	processes as nouns preferred terms for people	-to abstract away from real people and processes in order to background them
-predications	positively evaluated adjectives etc. negatively evaluated adjectives	-to positively evaluate the policy proposals and make them appear common sense/the obvious choice -to negatively evaluate the “traditional” & resistance to change
-perspectivisation	mix of distancing and involvement language	-to suggest objectivity but also commitment to proposals
-intensification & mitigation	intensifying and qualifying language	-to show urgency of situation but also to give illusion of not being prescriptive



Table 19 outlines the detail so here I summarise the characteristics of these strategies and how they work to legitimate policy. The underlying rationale is provided by the urgency associated with *the context* alluding to competition, fees and an uncertain future which necessitate radical change towards “21<sup>st</sup> century” practices and a focus on e.g. employability, the student experience. Elements of an academic genre include the emphasis on providing *evidence* to legitimate the proposals. This includes extensive use of models, case examples, definitions of concepts, use of literature and referral to selected authorities e.g. employers and students. There is a mix of *certainty* and *insecurity* apparent in the discursive strategies. Certainty, and the self-evident character of the proposals, is notable in the extensive use of positively evaluated elements and hierarchies of “good practice”, the use of intensification strategies and the insistence on knowledge, learning and power being socially-situated. Insecurity is notable in mitigation strategies although this partly stems from avoiding being seen to be prescriptive. It is also evident in the emphasis on institutions needing to embed policy, the repeated need to have “shared values” which entails having a “shared language”. Thus, language is seen as a tool to implement policy. As noted in Chapter 5, any mitigation is removed from the *framework* documents and they become guidelines for practice.

In terms of delineating discourses, which as noted in Chapter 3 is not straightforward, taking the DHA definition of discourse being topic-related and different perspectives using particular forms of argumentation (see section 3.7.5), I can summarise prominent discourses in these policy texts and perhaps the field of higher education policy-making on L&T more broadly. Prevalent are

discourses about community, partnership, employability, learning, a 21<sup>st</sup>-century education and policy itself. One example of dissonant discourses overlapping is the emphasis on measures, metrics and accountability regarding, for example, *teaching quality* combined with discourse about transformative learning as a creative process with unexpected outcomes. Figure 21 illustrates the texts and discourse topics which contribute to these respective discourses. The implications are discussed further in section 7.3.

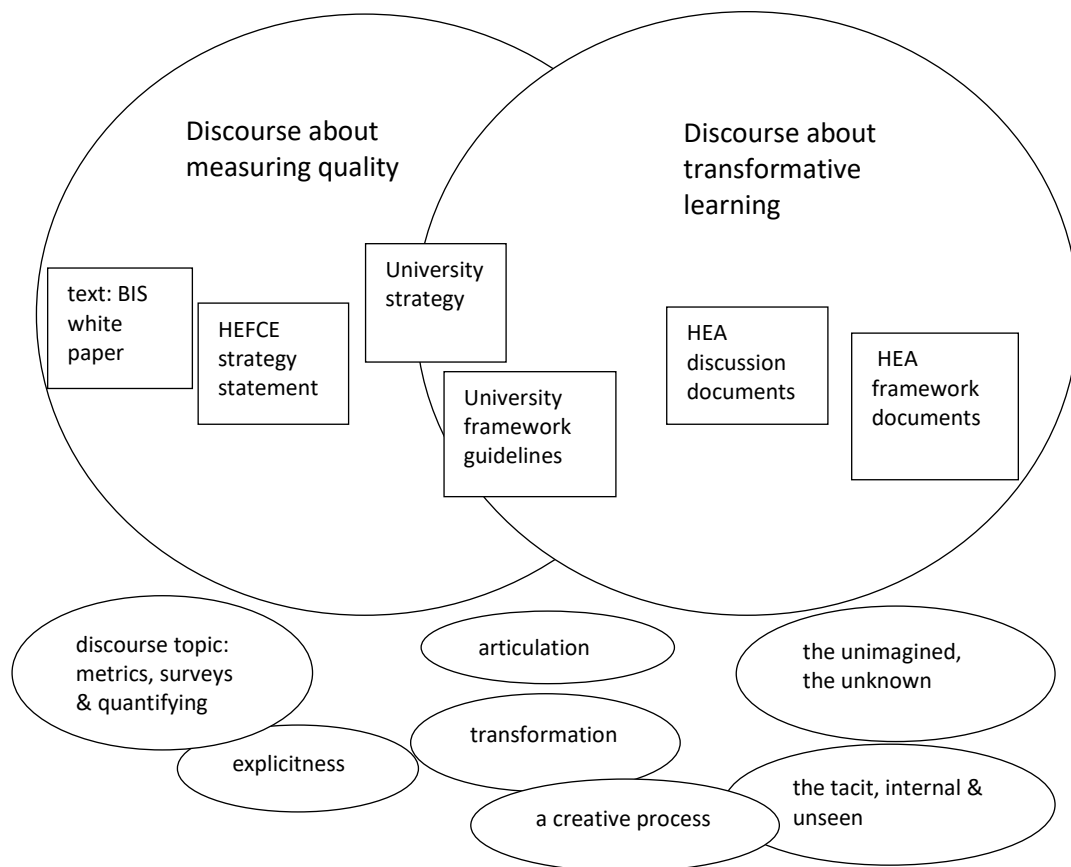


Figure 21. Interdiscursivity: overlapping discourses.

These findings represent the analysis of discourses and discursive strategies in the selected policy texts. Since the data comprises a small number of texts from selected agencies, albeit influential, I cannot generalise these findings to the field of policy-making on L&T as a whole. However, given my analysis of recontextualisation across genres and fields of action, there are indications that such strategies appear at the institutional level. This may be particularly true in certain types of HEIs. I discuss this further in section 7.3 but first I relate my findings to previous work on discursive practices in higher education.

#### 7.2.1 Trends in discursive practices in higher education

In section 2.4.4, I noted Fairclough's (1993) work on marketisation and higher education also noting subsequent studies. Evident was the promotional character of discursive practices and the construction of entrepreneurial identities. Notable in the L&T texts is the attempt to distance from symbols of marketisation such as metrics, outcomes and a consumer culture to provide an alternative discourse about partnership and learning. While aspects of this alternative may be beneficial, the discursive strategies serve to deny that good practices already exist and legitimate the authority of some actors while delegitimising others. The effect is to relativise and background expertise and knowledge. In terms of discursive practice, through the increasingly conceptual character of discourse (Krzyzanowski, 2016) within an appealing frame, the ideological is obscured through a process of decontextualisation and recontextualisation. I discuss these issues further in the next section.

### 7.3 Discussion in relation to theoretical framework

A principal concern of this study has been to understand how learning, teaching & assessment texts and practices come to be as they are. In other words, my aim is to explore what occurs in the spaces between discipline as research and *discipline as curriculum* (Ashwin, 2012) and Bernstein's concept of the pedagogic device is pivotal in conceptualising how power and control are enacted in these spaces. In particular, I wished to examine the characteristics of, and relations between, the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) since these are sites of struggle for control over pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 2000). I also wanted to connect these with practices and accounts of practice within an institution. The policy ideas originating from the ORF can be considered as "regulative discourse" in Bernstein's terms and the "instructional discourse" or subject content is embedded within it. In this case, the regulative discourse e.g. from policy texts (or indeed from professional bodies) constructs the context, problems-solutions and values that should frame the "what" and "how" of a higher education.

I consider how my analysis connects with Bernstein's ideas and the debates outlined in Chapter 2. Since the policy documents concern learning & teaching, I choose to discuss the constructions of learning, teaching, students and lecturers through the framing of Bernstein's ideas around the pedagogic device. Although the issues clearly overlap, I divide my discussion into sections on the *what* and *how* of learning, teaching & assessment, followed by a section on pedagogic identities. I compare the way that policy constructs these with the accounts in

interviews. I then focus on the means of recontextualisation since this is crucial to understanding why such policy discourses may be harder to resist.

First, I briefly discuss how interview accounts reveal different voices in relation to the issues highlighted in policy texts. Student accounts exhibit more consistency with agreement over general satisfaction with the course, certain issues such as group work and varying voices tend to represent those of higher-performing and lower-performing students. Lecturer accounts reveal a wider range of voices which indicate perhaps different levels of openness but also different voices in relation to the issues under discussion. Some are more closely aligned with approved practices and viewpoints while others are more questioning. A continuum is visible from those who use the language of policy e.g. terms such as “co-creation”, “facilitation”, to those who discuss practices that seem to align broadly with policy, to those who explicitly discuss and question certain guidelines and practices. Interview data also reveal elements of agency in terms of points in time offering opportunities for actors to appropriate policy in their own way. I discuss this further in the section on recontextualisation and discursive mechanisms.

### 7.3.1 The “what” of learning, teaching and assessment

As discussed in Chapter 5, the macro-strategy of “a university education as developing future-fit graduates” summarises the construction of the “what” within the policy documents. I use Bernstein’s notion of classification involving the boundaries between categories; in this case between subjects as well as between HEIs and external influences. As noted in Chapter 3, Bernstein saw

subjects such as business studies as regions which draw on a number of different disciplines but are also permeable to other influences e.g. professional bodies, the market. However, I would argue that a more pertinent focus than on the discipline itself, although business studies is inherently oriented to the outside world, is Bernstein's suggestion that lower-ranking universities could be more open to the demands of the market and tend to focus on regions and on generic modes (Bernstein, 2000; see also Ashwin, 2012). In this section, I discuss the implications of the findings that the policy texts construct a curriculum that foregrounds employability and authenticity. I also consider whether the accounts and practices of interviewees align with this.

The appropriate focus and purpose of a university education is much debated (see Chapter 2). Discussion revolves around the balance between a focus on disciplinary knowledge and skills, the inclusion of so-called generic skills in preparation for a future of work and the importance of other extra-curricular elements. In the policy documents, the concept of employability encompassing general skills and attributes is foregrounded and the subject knowledge embedded within this with little discussion of the value of such knowledge as noted in McLean et al. (2017). The higher education experience is constructed as needing to "add value" to the basic subject which is presented as just one element within university education. I argue that this backgrounding of the subject is detrimental. Further, the policy documents tend to conflate an education being powerful and practical with it being authentic. As discussed in Chapter 2, a critical view regards such appeal to authenticity through, for example, work-based learning, guest lecturers, live briefs, presentations etc. as a "lifestyle"

approach to study with the fun parts representing an idealised future career thus potentially deflecting from the hard work of learning (Haywood et al., 2011, p. 193). A more positive view is that these elements can engage students in their learning provided they are not a substitute for engaging fully with disciplinary knowledge (see e.g. Barnett, 2011a on Adorno's "jargon of authenticity"). Innovation, engagement and a focus on disciplinary knowledge and skills are not mutually exclusive.

As part of the discussion over authenticity and orientation to *the real world*, I would also distinguish between the notions of general skills and knowledge or skills that have a practical use. For the former, Bernstein (2000) uses the term generic modes which promote "trainability" rather than skills such as critical thinking or analysing *within* a subject area. The generic skills described as competencies are regarded as a transparent representation of actual skills needed rather than an ideological construction (Moore, 2013). In the policy documents, these include reflection and articulation of learning, enhancing general work-related communication skills and, at its most vague, developing a positive, can-do attitude. The aim is to prepare students for an uncertain world so they are resilient and adaptable. They resemble competence modes by seeming to focus on learners' self-development but are in fact focused on projection outwards towards future careers (Bernstein, 2000) and being able to tell employers about their skills. This could be viewed as the veneer of transformation, rather than an actual transformative process of changes in thinking or understanding. This aligns with Barnett's (2011a, p. 122) narrow characterisation of the "therapeutic university" in which education helps

students to deal with external or “ontological” uncertainty about the future rather than “epistemological uncertainty” or confusion regarded as part of the process of developing understanding.

The analysis in Chapters 5 and 6 indicates that institutional learning, teaching and assessment practices are in certain respects a response to policy priorities and lecturers’ accounts confirm the influence of the employability and engagement agendas. Classification seems fairly weak and boundaries between the subject, the department, the institution, professional bodies and other agencies and trends are somewhat permeable. However, despite openness to the influence of ideas from lecturers with L&T roles, the LDU and senior management, exhibited in part by innovative approaches and the employability imperative, I also found a strong focus on the discipline in the curriculum and assessments. Elements such as reflective assignments, group work, live project briefs, visual elements, simulation games, as well as the “added value” of a professional qualification embedded into the course structure, can firstly be regarded as more engaging and innovative approaches to learning and the importance of this should not be underestimated. They also align with discourses around employability, authenticity and, to some extent, partnership. The noted wide variety of assessment types is also found in lower-ranking universities in McLean et al.’s (2017) study.

Despite these clear connections, analysis of assignment data and interview accounts constructed a more complex picture and evidenced a clear focus on the discipline and a strong theory-research base to the courses was seen as



fundamental by lecturers. Even assignments involving creative visual work, simulation games and reflective blogs were mostly based on application of concepts and frameworks. Students expressed appreciation of this thorough grounding in theory and the literature in their accounts. For these postgraduates at least, accounts construct students as prepared to engage in intellectual challenge through dealing with theory, an extensive literature and complex assessment practices while simultaneously enjoying some of the seemingly more authentic elements such as live briefs.

I also noted disagreement among lecturers about what employability meant with some more supportive of the institutional line on its importance, some seeing it as useful for engagement and others dismissing the idea of assignments developing generic employability skills arguing that the skills required are developed within the subject. Despite positive views in student accounts on *authentic* elements, I also noted scepticism about some of the assessment that employed the appearance of being work-related and an authentic mirror of “real life” (see section 6.5.4) e.g. time-limited assignments, some reflective assignments. Confusion was evident in student accounts when assignments did not clearly link to module content, did not seem to require use of theoretical concepts or when judgements differed between their teachers and industry. Perhaps in those cases, the link between module content and assessment had become more tenuous and students did not regard the elements labelled as developing employability as contributing to the deepest learning.

The theory-practice dichotomy is problematised by arguing that both are needed in that theory, in terms of an understanding of the discipline, forms the basis which can then be applied to real issues. McArthur (2013) from the perspective of a critical pedagogy for social justice, argues that reducing higher education to simply practice potentially stratifies the knowledge available to students in different types of institutions. Similarly, McLean et al. (2017) suggest the importance of connecting disciplinary knowledge with topical issues but argue that developing powerful disciplinary knowledge is key. They argue that departments should not allow “impoverished, skill-based employment-focused versions of university education” (p. 214). For the highly-motivated postgraduates in my study, this may be less of an issue. For undergraduates, the over-focus on employability with its emphasis on generic skills may have detrimental effects. Signs of this appear at undergraduate level with some programmes including a significant generic skills’ module aimed at preparation for work placement and on other programmes, a lack of coherence due to numerous employability-related elements inserted in modules. This issue of coherence was noted in Naidoo & Jamieson (2005). The argument advanced in the policy texts, albeit mostly implicitly, is the existence of structural inequalities in terms of educational and social background needs to be compensated for by this focus on employability. The implication is that lower-ranking HEIs need to address this more. Potential problems with students taking an instrumental approach to their education in which subjects are viewed in terms of relevance to future careers, include the move towards a defensive approach in which only the easy and the relevant are included (see e.g. Furedi, 2011; Smyth, 2017).

However, as McLean et al. (2017) show in their comparison of four types of HEI, the lower-ranking “Diversity” HEI maintains a strong disciplinary base but scaffolds and adapts to the students they have without diluting the subject. This is evident in my data but also that those developing the curriculum are under pressure from other influences in the PRF (see section 7.3.5).

### 7.3.2 The “how” of learning, teaching and assessment

For Bernstein (2000), *framing* involves control over the “how” of pedagogic discourse and so how learning and teaching themselves are envisaged and how learners, teachers, and relations between them, are constructed. In Chapter 5, the macro-strategies of “learning as socially-situated and teaching as facilitation” and “the institution as a non-hierarchical community with shared values” summarise the construction of the “how” of learning & teaching. A notion of community is highlighted in which students are partners, learning is socially-constructed and transformative employing the language of radical, democratic, learner-centred approaches to learning. The notion of teaching and a teacher’s expertise is largely absent from the documents (also noted in McLean et al., 2017 in their review of policy documents). This suggests weak framing regarding relations since learners are presented as having more control over their learning and relations are democratic. This is explicitly presented in HEA texts as a solution to counter a transmission concept of education and a consumerist ethos. It does represent to some extent an “alternative model” to a marketised one as noted by Ashwin et al. (2015) in the policy documents of educational developers, lecturer and student groups etc. but I agree that “the overall effect is to reinforce rather [than] to challenge” the dominant discourse (p. 619). As discussed in section 7.2, I argue

that the construction of L&T is strategic since it aims to counter a consumer model while conveying messages that align with the consequences of marketisation such as a deficit model of teachers and teaching and the notion of continuous improvement (the *quality enhancement* noted in Fanghanel, 2011). It also exemplifies the links between the HEA and government agencies.

I believe the construction of L&T is detrimental for two reasons relating to knowledge and pedagogy. It is re-discovering and re-appropriating the language of social-constructivist approaches to learning to involve the learner and make learning sound more fun. While acknowledging that socio-cultural and social-constructivist approaches have expanded the conceptualisation of learning, the disadvantages have been highlighted by authors such as Beck and Young (2005), Shay (2008) and Singh (2017). The primary focus becomes on the learner and their learning rather than on knowledge. Shay (2008) outlines the impact on assessment criteria which refer to general skills rather than specific forms of knowledge within a subject. The HEA texts suggest that standards are constructed within communities, rather than objectively existing in any way. Although this acknowledges the aspect of interpretation, it has the effect of relativising the assessment process and implying that teachers' judgement is not to be trusted, thus contributing to a general backgrounding of their expertise.

Regarding pedagogy, these policy constructions align with Bernstein's (2000) competence mode of learning or invisible pedagogy - pedagogy being invisible to the learner - with the focus on development within the learner, a discovery approach and the teacher as facilitator of this process. In the policy texts,

teaching is indeed invisible despite research showing that higher education predominantly engages in visible pedagogy and performance modes with clear outcomes (Bernstein, 2000). This is especially true in lower-ranking HEIs in which learning is highly scaffolded for students from diverse backgrounds (cf. McLean et al., 2017). As noted in Bernstein's criticism of progressive education with its invisible pedagogy, the problem arises for the groups of students who need more support and may not know where problems lie (Moore, 2013). Denying that teachers as knowers have a role, or that teaching is occurring at all, is to the detriment of these learners.

In accounts of practice and assessment documentation, framing is constructed differently from the policy documents. As noted in section 4.2, within the department, framing is quite strong in relation to pacing and explicitness regarding expectations. Learning is to some extent constructed as "active", "experiential" and as happening through interaction whether in class or in group work. However, it is also constructed as the result of a process of individual effort and struggle by both lecturers and students.

Relations between students and lecturers are reported as good. Accounts suggest their diversity of work experience and culture are valued and brought into the classroom. However, relations do not resemble the ideal partnership model of the HEA texts since there is considerable support for students beyond a narrow construction of "facilitation" and little sign of their involvement in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Despite the requirements and guidelines of the new institutional academic framework, lecturers are able to

have significant control over the teaching and pacing of different elements and this is constructed as for the benefit of students and as part of a process of continual review. Yet, the notion of reviewing pedagogy and continuous improvement is constructed not only as a sign of professional practice but as a response to external pressures such as issues with attendance, engagement and competition. There are signs of weak framing with lecturers with L&T roles and faculty committees being able to shape practices. It may be that lecturers have not changed their view of learning and teaching, they simply adopt techniques and approaches which align with guidelines and respond to problems in the setting.

### 7.3.3 Identities of students, lecturers and the academic community

As noted in Chapter 3, Bernstein's (2000) later work conceptualises pedagogic identities situated, and available, within different types of socio-political context. Below, I discuss the resonances of my findings with the concepts of instrumental and therapeutic identities in particular but also the dissonances between the identities constructed in policy documents and those found in interview data. I argue that the identities constructed in the policy documents of a deficit view of teachers and teaching and a partnership identity of students, as a response to their consumerist tendencies, is detrimental in several ways. Firstly, it reinforces the idea that teachers need managing and cannot be left to do their job (see e.g. Collini, 2012; McLean et al., 2017). Although the view of students as consumers is reductive, the view of partners is not necessarily helpful as it reinforces a deficit view of academics' as teachers, creates unrealistic expectations of students but

also encourages practices that may not be in students' best interest (see McLean et al., 2017 on the disadvantages of weak framing on behaviour).

### *Students*

In the policy documents, students are not passive recipients but instead active partners and co-creators of their education. They have an expanded identity in the sense of not only being fully involved in their learning and bringing diverse experiences to bear but also in continually improving the curriculum, teaching and assessment and contributing to the SoTL. This aims to counter the potential consumer identity which Bernstein would regard as an *instrumental* identity. While acknowledging that reciprocal learning occurs, McArthur (2013) argues there is nothing inconsistent with a democratic approach in recognising that academics have knowledge and experience that students do not yet have (p. 155). Yet policies, and institutional guidelines, are reluctant to say this and advocate treating students as consumers to the extent that their satisfaction is surveyed regularly and feedback used to assess the quality of a course (see e.g. Maringe, 2011 on the inadequacies of this approach alone) and as customers who can also contribute to pedagogy (see e.g. Furedi, 2011 for criticism of this).

From interview accounts, it is clear that these types of postgraduate students have expanded or multiple identities since many have work experience and are diverse in age and background. Despite the perceived hierarchy within the student body, exacerbated by group work practices, they do not present themselves as already having the knowledge the university is providing. Indeed, lecturers' accounts depict their struggles as well as their achievements. Further,

there is little indication of a consumer identity (also noted in Tomlinson, 2017). Given the programmes' aims to prepare them for a career, students have a clear focus on the future. However, I did not perceive an instrumental approach apart from frustration with others seen as preventing them getting top marks. Instead, both lecturers and students construct students as enthusiastic in engaging in a demanding course. Their developing disciplinary identity is evident based on their increased understanding and expertise. Despite initiatives to promote a "therapeutic" self-development through e.g. reflection, albeit for instrumental purposes, this was not embraced enthusiastically (see Chapter 6). McLean et al. (2017) caution against creating a focus on flexible, enterprising identities suited to an ever-changing employment market.

### *Lecturers*

As discussed in detail in Chapter 5, the policy documents construct the notion of facilitators rather than teachers and an overall deficit identity of possessing no special knowledge or skills together with a reluctance to change. This is contrasted with model lecturer practices in case examples in which academics facilitate innovative learning opportunities for their students. In interview accounts, there are traces of an expanded role, as discussed in Chapter 2, whereby lecturers are expected to be educationalists, media & IT experts, proficient at admin and managing people plus the usual teachers and researchers (Krause, 2009). Given the TEF and the institution's renewed focus on teaching, part of the expanded identity is to demonstrate an interest in the SoTL. Indeed, there are "rewards and recognition" for those who do engage in visible self-development (see Chapter 5 for this topic in policy).



However, some tensions over this are evident in accounts. George explicitly discusses his reluctance to see any more lecturers doing education PhDs suggesting a wish to preserve a disciplinary research focus. This aligns with the notion of weaker classification accompanying regions and generic modes and the potential passing of part of that identity to others (e.g. Beck and Young, 2005). These include lecturers with L&T roles, careers staff, staff developing generic skills and to external professional bodies regarding the real-life angle and predominantly to policy-makers and implementers including academic developers who promote policy-informed good practices. As noted in Chapter 6, George, in discussing the lack of a pedagogy or direction, questions the role of HEA Fellows if they have no role in contributing to enhancing teaching. This usefully points to the main, instrumental purpose of accreditation as self-interest, and the institution's ability to count numbers of such staff (Shaw, 2018).

However, countering this suggestion of loss of control and identity to some extent, is lecturers' very clear identification with the subject discipline in interview data. The department and one's colleagues are cited as key by some lecturers (see e.g. McLean et al., 2017; Trowler, 2008 on the influences within departments). On the other hand, through Sue and George's comments on trends in pedagogic practice, the accounts include acknowledgement of the influence of L&T staff albeit some of the comments are critical. As well as academic identities in the department seeming to have a clear disciplinary focus, there are also strong SoTL advocates as indicative in certain interviewees' accounts. While these are not mutually exclusive, accounts indicate others' influence on learning & teaching practices e.g. staff with L&T roles, the LDU and faculty committees.

Bernstein (2000) suggests this dual focus inward and outward is likely. Perhaps there is a shift towards the instrumental involving being seen as compliant and embracing favoured practices (Teelken, 2012). This may be particularly true in certain types of HEI but also for early-career academics who are not familiar with any other system or practices (see e.g. Beck and Young, 2005). One of the interviewees expressing their refusal to engage with HEA accreditation as it was currently designed was at a senior level and so there are issues of power here. I discuss this further in the section on recontextualisation below.

### *The community*

I discussed in Chapter 5 how the notion of community is foregrounded in policy documents while student-lecturer relations are backgrounded. Besides sounding appealing, the construction of community has the purpose of downplaying any tensions. More serious perhaps than the “bad faith” Barnett (2011a) uses to describe this term when, for example, departments do not communicate with each other, are the clear hierarchies and top-down decision-making in HEIs which challenge this sense of community. It also obscures the real challenges of dealing with students’ differing abilities, backgrounds and circumstances of study. This unwillingness to deal with such issues is discussed in several lecturer accounts.

#### 7.3.4 Recontextualisation: the ways and means

This section addresses the macro-strategy from Chapter 5 of policy being “embedded in structures, processes and culture”. I further explore the discursive elements of mechanisms and practices which attempt to ensure such embedding

and shared values. Despite accounts evidencing the possibility for individual and group agency in certain moments, and indeed signs of resistance to certain practices, there is also a limiting of what it is possible or advisable to say. For example, nobody is going to say in their HEA Fellowship application that their students love traditional lectures. Some may argue that actors just need to *play the game* and evidence their shared language and values when necessary. However, the normalising or common-sense appearance of such practices, and the reification of certain terms and language (noted in Peat, 2015), are potentially pernicious in terms of their effects and should be questioned.

Traces of recontextualisation between different HEA genres and between national and institutional documents were explored in Chapter 5. In this section, I focus on *how* policy ideas are recontextualised and their potential effects. Bernstein (1990; 2000) was interested in the nature of the “relay” or how knowledge is transformed into pedagogic discourse. In my study, a key question is how policy ideas around learning & teaching can become part of institutional practices and culture. Thus, I examine what I call *discursive mechanisms* which arguably play a key role and consider whether local actors remake or resist policy and what opportunities exist for individual or group agency. I leave reflections on Bernstein’s (2000) recontextualising field and relations within and between the ORF and PRF to section 7.3.5.

By mechanisms, I mean those accountability procedures and practices that academics need to engage in either as a compulsory or strongly encouraged part of their work. They form part of the “audit culture” that is widely recognised in

HEIs (see Chapter 2). They are discursive in character since they comprise written and spoken texts. Although some may view policy as just words, from a CDS viewpoint, language reflects but also constitutes practices. Policy mechanisms encourage those words to be engaged with such that they may influence practice and represent the attempt by HEIs to embed policy. Analysis of argumentation in policy texts suggests policymakers believe that otherwise people will not comply and secondly, that they cannot be trusted to act in the best interests of their students and the institution. Figure 22 summarises just some of the discursive mechanisms that lecturers engage with in which an account of their teaching practices is probably required. The outer layer represents typical sources of influence present within the institution.

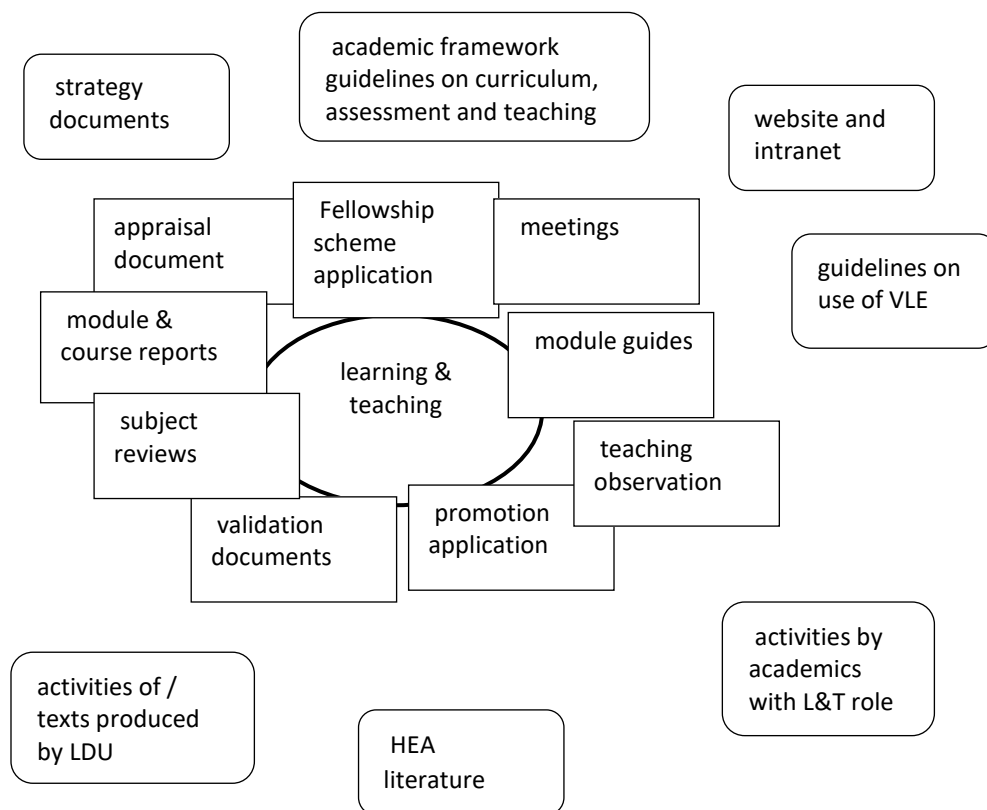


Figure 22. Discursive engagement with policy within the institution.

As noted in Chapter 2, the institution is encouraging staff to participate in the HEA Fellowship scheme. This is enabled by linking accreditation with promotion and encouraged through mechanisms such as appraisal, module reports and other texts. The scheme facilitates engagement with the HEA literature including frameworks and the UKPSF. It requires teachers to frame their practices through the language of learning & teaching policy as embodied in the framework documents. Explicit intertextual links between framework texts and the UKPSF were discussed in Chapter 5. Reflective accounts not doing this are likely to require modification and rewriting. Resistance to such practices may mean standing out and being more vulnerable (see e.g. Davies and Bansel, 2010; Smyth, 2017). The question arises whether this is viewed as simply another requirement or whether the effects are more detrimental in terms of narrowing the view of good practice and making people complicit in particular portrayals of teaching, the purpose of an education and the identities of students and lecturers (Davies & Bansel, 2010). Some may engage with the ideas at the level of innovative techniques and approaches. The distillation of ideas from discussion document to short framework guidelines facilitates this by removing the ideological detail to make the practices appear self-evident and “theory-free” (Loughland & Sriprakash, 2016, p. 235). Interview accounts exhibit signs of resistance to such mechanisms but generally self-interest and pressure from management encourages academics to participate.

### 7.3.5 The blurring of the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF)

The increasing influence of the ORF on the PRF and thus the issue of the autonomy of the latter was suggested by Bernstein (2000). To recap, the ORF includes the state, its agencies and associated bodies. The PRF comprises those involved in education within universities e.g. lecturers themselves, departments of education, LDUs, academics with a L&T role as well as higher education media. Some may argue the HEA is not part of the ORF since it is concerned with pedagogy and some actors within it work in universities (see section 3.3.4). However, I have indicated the complex network of influence between government and sector organisations (Chapter 2) and traced discursive links between them (Chapter 5). The expansion of the ORF has been noted in studies such as Loughland & Sriprakash (2016) and Singh (2015; 2017) such that it can no longer be conceived as simply the government and its agencies. Thus, I argue that BIS, HEFCE, the HEA and numerous organisations and interest groups, including business, belong to the ORF and shape the PRF.

There is a blurring of boundaries between the ORF and PRF in the sense that ideas and texts circulating in the PRF come directly from the ORF. The PRF being “aligned with/sponsored by” the ORF to varying degrees has been noted in Lim (2017, p. 369) and the notion of “pedagogic governance” encompassing the ORF and PRF outlined in Singh (2017). As discussed in Chapter 5, the HEA’s (and other ORF agencies’) texts have become embedded intertextually within a university’s own policy guidelines whether as management strategy documents or LDUs’ texts without questioning the ideas and in which contexts they are

appropriate. HEA texts themselves, mainly frameworks but also discussion documents, have increasingly entered the field of learning & teaching for the purposes of HEA Fellowship accreditation and as a response to the TEF more broadly. This may be more prominent in less highly-ranked universities who see the focus on teaching quality as an opportunity.

I would argue there is little sign of an autonomous PRF in the institution. The school of education does not seem to focus on higher education research itself since its main concern is training school teachers. The main ideas about learning & teaching come from management, academics with L&T roles and the LDU. A critical, independent voice of “academic developers” in the LDU is not evident and their influence somewhat weak since they are positioned centrally despite signs of an expanding remit and links to departments (see Chapter 2). One of the LDU’s main functions still is to implement the HEA Fellowship scheme and thus respond to policy priorities in light of the TEF, thus acting as a recontextualising agent or a “mid-level policy actor” (Singh et al., 2013) but with little sign of adapting or questioning the messages of the official texts.

The question arises whether alternative voices exist in the PRF. There are few *collective* alternative, critical voices being raised despite the fact that interview accounts reveal different voices and signs of tension and that the institution is to some extent a site of struggle over which pedagogies, which priorities. The PRF is a site of contestation and tensions exist between the PRF and ORF (Singh et al., 2013). As evident in the interview data, individuals have their own approaches and autonomy exists at programme level as course teams decide how to shape a

course to suit their aims and students. However, this is influenced by institutional needs: to remain competitive e.g. “add value” to programmes; keep students happy e.g. by removing unpopular elements such as summative group work assessments; encourage attendance e.g. by doing in-class assessment.

The question of potential autonomy also links to the notion of recontextualisation varying in different settings at different times (Wodak and Fairclough, 2010). Certain factors may influence the degree of compliance or embracing of preferred practices. For example, senior staff may feel less need to engage than early-career academics. Undergraduate programmes may be more likely to respond than postgraduate programmes. Within institutions, some subject areas with good reputations may see less need to comply. Finally, as Bernstein (2000) suggests, lower-ranking institutions may embrace these trends more than highly-ranked, research-oriented universities. The danger is if HEIs choose to move further towards general skills in an *instrumental/therapeutic* pursuit of employability and student satisfaction and a consequent reduction in the content and challenge of programmes. As noted above, this deepens inequality further by offering a different sort of education (Bernstein’s distributive rules) which backgrounds disciplinary knowledge, skills and values and the expertise of those teachers whose job it is to develop the same in their students (McArthur, 2013; McLean et al., 2017). My data reveals the autonomy of lecturers but also the considerable pressures on them to respond to these policy mechanisms and adopt these discourses.



## 7.4 Conclusions

### 7.4.1 Revisiting the research questions

The aim of this thesis was to explore the discursive construction of policy and its recontextualisation. Regarding the aims set out in the introduction, I comment on each research question in turn. Firstly, I wished to examine discursive constructions within national L&T policy texts:

*1. How does national policy on learning and teaching discursively construct actors, processes and phenomena?*

*1a) How are students, lecturers and universities as institutions discursively constructed in HEA discussion documents?*

*1b) How are the aims of a university education discursively constructed in HEA discussion documents?*

*1c) How are learning and teaching constructed in HEA discussion documents?*

*1d) Which discursive strategies are prominent in this field of action?*

In Chapter 5, I analysed these in detail by focusing on the key macro-strategies and discursive strategies identified and summarised my findings in section 7.2.

Although I cannot claim my findings to be generalisable, I outlined which strategies are prominent in my data. I suggest that these strategies could be typical in this field of action of higher education L&T policy-making given the influential nature of these texts and the HEA as an agency.

I also set out to explore how interviewees' accounts construct L&T:

*2. How do interviewees construct their experiences of learning & teaching and a university education?*

*2a) How do students and lecturers construct people, processes and phenomena?*

*2b) What different voices are present in the data?*

*2c) What ideologies underlie these different voices?*

I addressed these questions through the analysis in Chapter 6 and illustrated the range of voices from students and lecturers. Despite the small numbers interviewed, lecturers' accounts displayed varying constructions and positioning in relation to the macro-strategies identified in Chapter 5 which, together with consideration of the wider context and literature (Chapters 2 and 3), indicates sources of tension.

The final questions address recontextualisation which is the major focus of my study:

*3. How are discursive strategies recontextualised in different genres and different fields of action?*

*3a) What similarities and differences can be traced between HEA discussion documents and HEA framework documents?*

*3b) What connections exist between discursive strategies in national policy documents and in institutional documents and practices?*

*3c) How do interviewees recontextualise discursive strategies evident in policy documents? Which strategies are present, modified or absent in their accounts?*

*4. Through what means is policy recontextualised?*

*4a) Which discursive mechanisms facilitate the recontextualisation of policy?*

*4b) What do traces of recontextualisation suggest about opportunities for agency in accepting, appropriating or resisting policy?*

Recontextualisation between different genres and different fields of action was explored in Chapter 5 and clear connections were noted. In Chapter 6, I examined recontextualisation between policy documents and assessments as well as interview data, noting where arguments and discourses were present, modified or absent. I was also interested in *how* policy might be recontextualised. In Chapter 2, I indicated possible means in the institution. Discursive mechanisms were discussed in more depth in section 7.3.4. I also addressed what my findings suggest about opportunities for agency although these are only tentative conclusions given the limited data and setting of one department's set of programmes.

My overarching research question was as follows:

*In which ways, and through what means, is policy on learning & teaching recontextualised in practices in one higher education institution?*

I have explored the principles governing the creation of pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 2000) by examining texts in the recontextualising field, discursive mechanisms and the blurring of the ORF and PRF (section 7.3.5) and their contribution to this process of recontextualisation. Although my institutional data comprises interview accounts, assessment texts and policy documents rather than observations of practice, I believe I have indicated traces of the *what*

and *how* of recontextualisation as discussed in Chapters 5-7 and reflected on further in section 7.4.3 below.

#### 7.4.2 Critique

From the perspective of the three types of critique typically addressed in a DHA approach outlined in Chapter 2 (e.g. Reisigl, 2018), I have examined how the policy texts work in terms of discursive strategies (text/discourse immanent critique) and linked these strategies to the broader socio-political context in order to highlight the persuasive/manipulative character of the strategies (research question 1), their recontextualisation (research questions 2, 3 & 4) and the potentially detrimental effects (socio-diagnostic critique). Of course, I also need to be reflexive about my own positioning in the research (see section 4.3). I am not a disinterested observer but a teacher who comes across such discourses but also appropriates them when necessary, as I am subject to the same discursive mechanisms and audit culture as others. Further, I want to be clear that focusing on engaging pedagogies and wanting to improve students' experiences is positive. However, there are reasons for such a spotlight on teachers and teaching and the constructions of the problems and solutions are both ideological and possibly damaging. There is a risk of being drawn in by the exciting pedagogic techniques and the pressure for continuous enhancement to become the innovative teachers that HEIs require but not questioning the underlying messages being conveyed about who we are, who students are and what type of activity we are engaged in.

Specifically, it is surprising that documents about learning & teaching say so little about teachers and teaching. Of course, a focus on learning is appropriate but the construction of learning tends to highlight exciting activities rather than the hard work of learning. Further, the appropriation of various educational theories is not limited to a focus on the social and constructed characteristics of learning. Instead, in order to address issues of student satisfaction and employability, the policy documents move into relativising knowledge and expertise thereby backgrounding the role of knowledge, teachers and teaching in that learning. It is a solution to the *problem* of a market and customer ethos. Taking the view that discourses are connected with social practices and structures, the potential injustice is that those most likely to be attracted to this vision are lower status HEIs thus further stratifying the types of education on offer and subjecting academics to ever-expanding performance metrics. Thus, in terms of future-related critique, I would like to see discussion of the kinds of proposals being made and questioning of the way that people and education are represented. There is also the issue of the increasing number of discursive mechanisms that try to ensure “quality”. What are the impacts on those who have to engage with them? Is this limiting the conceptualisation of good practice?

#### 7.4.3 Contributions

This thesis makes a number of contributions. First, I contribute to existing work on policy analysis which takes a more complex, critical, interpretive view of policy not simply as text but as process and practices. Adopting that viewpoint means seeking to trace connections between policy texts and the practices of those who engage directly or indirectly with policy. I thus contribute to work

which explores the practices and views of people *on the ground*; in other words, those who actually experience learning & teaching, and whom policy is designed to have an impact on. It also means taking a multi-faceted view of context which encompasses analysis not only of a text but also intertextual links, the immediate context and the wider socio-political context. It entails tracing discourses, including arguments and topics, through different spaces in an attempt to highlight the ideological characteristics of such texts. I also show how a detailed textual analysis reveals how policy works in its forms of argumentation. I contribute to the growing number of studies which draw on the DHA's approach to detailed analysis of policy. Further, higher education is an area less researched using the DHA. Thus, a particular contribution is to show how the field of action of policy-making in learning & teaching in higher education draws on certain discursive strategies traceable to debates in the higher education context.

A further contribution is to bring together Bernstein's sociology and critical discourse studies to explore an issue, never assuming that they are of the same order but recognising that they share a primary interest in investigating problems within society using eclectic frameworks and methods to do so. I have shown how Bernstein's concepts, in particular the pedagogic device, can provide a framework firstly, for conceptualising the areas for investigation by looking beyond the institution itself and secondly, by providing concepts through which I can deepen interpretation of the findings. The later focus on the role of pedagogy as a primary form of control resonates today. In sections 3.6 and 3.9, I outlined the complementarities and acknowledged the differences partly by using the DHA's definition of recontextualisation for textual analysis while drawing on

Bernstein's notion as illustrating the principles of the recontextualising fields in which specific texts might originate and move between. I discussed how Bernstein and CDS are open to theoretical dialogue and have shared concerns including problems as starting points.

Regarding the DHA, linguistic analysis of discourse in texts provides detailed evidence of patterns of argumentation and how these relate to the wider social context and a particular ideological perspective. Analysis of intertextuality/interdiscursivity shows how arguments move and change; in other words, how policy ideas become policy guidelines but also how actors engage with policy. Taking the view that language is constitutive not simply reflective, this textual analysis illustrates Bernstein's recontextualising principles governing the creation of pedagogy. That is, analysis shows how *regulative discourse* works in shaping what is presented as a transparent and value-free view of skills, knowledge, L&T approaches and identities. A discourse-analytical approach thus complements and deepens exploration of the workings of the pedagogic device, addresses Bernstein's concerns with inequality and what he recognised as moves towards marketisation/neoliberalism within higher education by showing how language contributes to constituting these trends. Thus, bringing together Bernstein's concepts with the DHA is a particular contribution of this thesis.

#### 7.4.4 Limitations and further research

The scope of this study was necessarily limited to detailed analysis of a small number of texts and interviews and one setting within one university. Although I followed a careful data selection strategy, new texts from new agencies will emerge and proliferate. However, I hope that providing a picture of this setting, albeit a snapshot of a point in time, contributes to an understanding of what it is like to study and work in a particular type of UK university at present. I cannot claim the findings to be generalisable to other settings although others may recognise familiar themes and practices. There is clearly potential for more research that takes a detailed, discursive approach to policy analysis and more work to do in investigating the discourses in L&T policy in higher education. There is scope for further studies to explore the relations, processes and discursive mechanisms which enable recontextualisation. If I could extend the research, I would explore the discourses in L&T policy texts directly with lecturers and those who work in LDUs.

#### 7.4.5 Final reflections

As numerous recent publications attest, universities could be at a crossroads and it is timely to reiterate their purpose as providing a public good (e.g. Barnett, 2011a; McLean et al., 2017; Nixon, 2011; Smyth, 2017). Yet, there are reasons for “unease” (McArthur, 2013) some of which can be traced in interview accounts in this study. As well as feeling the need to exhibit “shared language” and follow approved practices, the normalising of which is described by Smyth (2017) as the “toxic” element of the *neoliberal university*, accounts touch on many issues that might cause concern. These include not failing students, increased workloads,



uncertainty over pedagogy, falling standards, repackaging courses to suit the market, tensions and disagreements within departments or faculties, constant changes in policy guidelines and preferred practices and restructuring within the institution. Some of these suggest uncertainty over direction which only seems to engender a further lack of trust in staff and attempts to control the *quality* of everything including teaching. Some argue that it is the enjoyable aspects of the job that prevent people from questioning. Others might say it is the workload and self-preservation that adds to this unwillingness to critique. Added to those reasons could be the obscured nature of the ideological once policy has passed through the recontextualising fields into universities.

Despite the sources of unease, insecurity and constant state of change that may be familiar to those working in universities, I think it is helpful to highlight the enthusiasm I came across of teachers for their subjects, their research, their teaching and their students as well as students' own enthusiasm for their courses and university experience. However, it is also important to examine, and challenge where necessary, how power and control are being employed to shape those identities, relationships and the experience of a higher education.

## List of References

- Abbas, A., Ashwin, P. & McLean, M. (2012). Neoliberal policy, quality and inequality in undergraduate degrees. In P. Whitehead & P. Crawshaw (Eds.), *Organising neoliberalism: Markets, privatisation and justice* (pp. 179-199). London; New York: Anthem Press.
- Adams, R. (2017, September 28). Almost half of all young people in England go on to higher education. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/sep/28/almost-half-of-all-young-people-in-england-go-on-to-higher-education>
- AdvanceHE (2018). About us. Retrieved from: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/about-us>
- Antaki, C. & Widdicombe, S. (1998). *Identities in talk*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.
- Arnot, M. & Reay, D. (2004). The framing of pedagogic encounters: Regulating the social order in classroom learning. In J. Muller, B. Davies, & A. Morais, *Reading Bernstein, researching Bernstein* (pp. 137-150). London: Routledge Falmer.
- Ashwin, P. (2012). *Analysing teaching-learning interactions in higher education: Accounting for structure and agency*. London; New York: Continuum International Pub. Group.
- Ashwin, P. (2017). What is the teaching excellence framework in the United Kingdom, and will it work? *International Higher Education*, 88(10), 10-11.
- Ashwin, P. & Smith, K. (2015). Researcher creations? The positioning of policy texts in higher education research. *Higher Education*, 69(6), 1007-1018. doi:10.1007/s10734-014-9819-9

- Ashwin, P., Abbas, A. & McLean, M. (2015). Representations of a high-quality system of undergraduate education in English higher education policy documents. *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(4), 610-623.  
doi:10.1080/03075079.2013.842211
- Aubrey, K. & Riley, A. (2016). *Understanding & using educational theories*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Bakhtin, M. & Holquist, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Ball, S. J. (1994). *Education reform: a critical and post-structuralist approach*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ball, S. J. (2017). *The education debate* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Bristol; Chicago, Ill.: Policy Press.
- Banda, F. & Mafofo, L. (2015). Commodification of transformation discourses and post-apartheid institutional identities at three South African universities. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 13(2), 1-19.  
doi:10.1080/17405904.2015.1074593
- Barakos, E. & Unger, J. W. (2016). Introduction: Why are discursive approaches to language policy necessary? In J. Barakos & J. W. Unger (Eds.), *Discursive approaches to language policy* (pp. 1-21). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Barkas, L., Scott, J., Poppitt, N. & Smith, P. (2017). Tinker, tailor, policy-maker: Can the UK government's teaching excellence framework deliver its objectives? *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 1-13.  
doi:10.1080/0309877X.2017.1408789
- Barnett, R. (2011a). *Being a university*. London: Routledge.

- Barnett, R. (2011b). The marketised university: defending the indefensible. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion and E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education: the student as consumer* (pp. 39-51). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Barnett, R. (2013). *Imagining the university*. London: Routledge.
- Baynham, M. (2011). Stance, positioning and alignment in narratives of professional experience, *Language in Society*, 40(1), 63-74.  
doi:10.1017/S0047404510000898.
- Becher, T. (1989). *Academic tribes and territories: Intellectual enquiry and the cultures of disciplines*. Milton Keynes; Bristol, PA., USA: Open University Press.
- Beck, J. & Young, M.F.D. (2005). The assault on the professions and the restructuring of academic and professional identities: a Bernsteinian analysis. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 26(2), 183-197.  
doi:10.1080/0142569042000294165
- Bekhradnia, B. & Beech, D. (2018). Demand for higher education to 2030. *Higher Education Policy Institute*. Banbury: HEPI. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2018/03/15/demand-higher-education-2030/>
- Bernstein, B. (1990). *Class codes and control, Volume IV: The structuring of pedagogic discourse*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Bernstein, B. (2000). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research, critique* (Revised Ed.), Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.
- BIS. (2011). *Higher education: Students at the heart of the system*, Government white paper. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Retrieved from: <http://discuss.bis.gov.uk/hereform/white-paper>

- BIS. (2016). *Success as a knowledge economy: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice*. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-white-paper>
- Boliver, V. (2015). Are there distinctive clusters of higher and lower status universities in the UK? *Oxford Review of Education*, 41(5), 608-627. doi:10.1080/03054985.2015.1082905
- Botham, K. (2018). An analysis of the factors that affect engagement of higher education teachers with an institutional professional development scheme. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 55(2), 176-189. doi:10.1080/14703297.2017.1407664
- Brady, N. (2015). 'Epistemic chaos': the recontextualisation of undergraduate curriculum design and pedagogic practice in a new university business school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(8), 1236-1257. doi:10.1080/01425692.2014.897216
- Brown, R. (2011). The march of the market. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion and E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education: the student as consumer* (pp. 11-24). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brown, R. & Carasso, H. (2013). *Everything for sale?: The marketisation of UK higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Bruner, J. (1960). *The process of education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bucholtz, M. (2000). The politics of transcription. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32(10), 1439-1465.

- Bucholtz, M. & Hall, K. (2005). Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies*, 7(4-5), 585-614.  
doi:10.1177/1461445605054407
- Cambridge, J. (2010). The international Baccalaureate diploma programme and the construction of pedagogic identity: A preliminary study. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 9(3), 199-213.  
doi:0.1177/1475240910383544
- Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with spoken discourse*. London: Sage.
- CBI. (2018). About us. *Confederation of British Industry*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.cbi.org.uk/about/about-us/>
- Chouliaraki, L. & Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in late modernity: rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Coffin, C. & Donohue, J. (2014). *A language as social semiotic-based approach to teaching and learning in higher education*. Malden, Mass.: Wiley.
- Collini, S. (2012). *What are universities for?* London; New York: Penguin.
- Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, Calif.; London: SAGE Publications.
- Currie, J. & Vidovich, L. (2009). The changing nature of academic work. In M. Tight (Ed.), *The Routledge international handbook of higher education* (pp. 441-452). New York: Routledge.
- Davies, B. & Bansel, D. (2010). Governmentality and academic work: Shaping the hearts and minds of academic workers. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 26(3), 5-20.
- de Boer, H. & Jongbloed, B. (2012). A Cross-national comparison of higher education markets in western Europe. In A. Curaj, P. Scott, L. Vlasceanu and

- L. Wilson (Eds.), *European Higher Education at the Crossroads: Between the Bologna Process and National Reforms* (pp. 553-571). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Deem, R., Hillyard, S. & Reed, M. I. (2007). *Knowledge, higher education, and the new managerialism: The changing management of UK universities*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Delanty, G. (2008). Academic identities and change. In R. Barnett & R. Di Napoli (Eds.), *Changing identities in higher education: Voicing perspectives* (pp. 124-133). London: Routledge.
- Dewey, J. (1966). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: London: Free Press; Collier-Macmillan. (Original work published 1916).
- Donnelly, M. & Abbas, A. (2019). Using the sociology of Basil Bernstein in higher education research. In J. Huisman & M. Tight (Eds.), *Theory and method in higher education research, Volume 4* (pp. 1-17). Bingley, England: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Du Bois, J. W. (1991). Transcription design principles for spoken discourse research. *Pragmatics*, 1(1), 71-106.
- Duchêne, A. & Heller, M. (Eds.) (2012). *Language in late capitalism: Pride and profit*. London: Routledge.
- Edge, J. & Richards, K. (1998). May I see your warrant, please?: Justifying outcomes in qualitative research. *Applied Linguistics*, 19(3), 334-356.  
doi:10.1093/applin/19.3.334
- Ensor, P. (2004). Contesting discourses in higher education curriculum restructuring in South Africa. *Higher Education: The International Journal of*

*Higher Education and Educational Planning*, 48(3), 339-359.

doi:10.1023.B:HIGH.0000035544.96309.f1

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London; New York: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: The universities. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 133-168.

doi:10.1177/0957926593004002002

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London; New York: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2000). Language and Neo-Liberalism. *Discourse & Society*, 11(2), 147-148. doi:10.1177/0957926500011002001

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2013). Critical discourse analysis and critical policy studies. *Critical Policy Studies*, 7(2), 177-197, doi:10.1080/19460171.2013.798239

Fairclough, N. (2015). A dialectical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis. In R. Wodak, & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse studies* (3rd ed.) (pp. 86-108). London: Sage.

Fairclough, N. & Fairclough, I. (2012). *Political discourse analysis: A method for advanced students*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical discourse analysis. In T. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as social interaction* (pp. 258-284). London: Sage.

Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (2008). The Bologna process and the knowledge-based economy: A critical discourse analysis approach. In B. Jessop, N.



Fairclough, R. Wodak, *Education and the knowledge-based economy in Europe* (pp. 109-125). Rotterdam: Sense.

Fanghanel, J. (2011). *Being an academic*. London: Routledge.

Fischer, F. (2015). In pursuit of usable knowledge: critical policy analysis and the argumentative turn. In F. Fischer, D. Torgerson, A. Durnová & M. Orsini (Eds.), *Handbook of critical policy studies* (pp. 47-66). Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Fischer, F., Torgerson, D., Durnová, A. & Orsini, M. (2015). Introduction to critical policy studies. In F. Fischer, D. Torgerson, A. Durnová, A., & M. Orsini (Eds.), *Handbook of critical policy studies* (pp. 1-24). Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Foskett, N. (2011). Markets, government, funding and the marketisation of UK higher education. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion and E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education: the student as consumer* (pp. 25-38). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin.

Fry, H., Ketteridge, S. & Marshall, S. (2009). *A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education: Enhancing academic practice* (3rd ed.). New York; London: Routledge.

Furedi, F. (2011). Introduction to the marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion and E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education: the student as consumer* (pp. 1-7). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Garton, S. & Copland, F. (2010). 'I like this interview; I get cakes and cats!': The

effect of prior relationships on interview talk. *Qualitative Research*, 10(5), 533-551. doi:10.1177/1468794110375231

Georgakopoulou, A. (2007). *Small stories, interaction, and identities*.

Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*.

Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Goffman, E. (1981). *Forms of talk*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Gov.uk. (2018). Department for Education. Retrieved from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action*. London: Heinemann.

Halliday, M. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. London: Edward Arnold.

Hasan, R. (2005). *Language, society and consciousness*. London: Equinox Publishing.

Haywood, H., Jenkins, R. & Molesworth, M. (2011). A degree will make all your dreams come true: higher education as the management of consumer desires. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion and E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education: the student as consumer* (pp. 183-195). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

HEA. (2011). UK professional standards framework, UKPSF. *Higher Education Academy*. Retrieved from: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf>

HEA. (2012). A Marked Improvement: Transforming assessment in higher education. *Higher Education Academy*. Retrieved from: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resource/marked-improvement>

- HEA. (2014). Internationalising Higher Education Framework, *Higher Education Academy*. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/internationalising-higher-education-framework>
- HEA. (2016). About us. *Higher Education Academy*. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/about-us>
- HEA. (2018). About us. *Higher Education Academy*. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/about-us>
- Healey, M., Flint, A. & Harrington, K. (2014). Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education. *The Higher Education Academy*. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/engagement-through-partnership-students-partners-learning-and-teaching-higher-education>
- HEAR. (2018). *Higher Education Achievement Report*. Retrieved from:  
<http://hear.ac.uk/>
- HEFCE. (2009). A guide to UK higher education. *Higher Education Funding Council for England*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>
- HEFCE. (2011). Opportunity, choice and excellence in higher education. July 2011/12. *Higher Education Funding Council for England*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/about/howweoperate/strategystatement/>
- HEFCE. (2017). Guide to funding 2017-2018. April 2017. *Higher Education Funding Council for England*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>
- Heller, M. (2003). Globalization, the new economy, and the commodification of language and identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7(4), 473-92.  
doi:10.1111/j.1467-9841.2003.00238.x

- Hemsley-Brown, J. (2011). Market heal thyself: The challenges of a free market in higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 21(2), 115-132. doi:10.1080/08841241.2011.623832
- HEPI. (2018). About us. *Higher Education Policy Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/about-us/>
- HESA. (2018). Students and qualifiers. *Higher Education Statistics Agency*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/free-statistics>
- Holborow, M. (2012). Neoliberalism, human capital and the skills agenda in higher education - The Irish case. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 10(1), 93-111.
- Holborow, M. (2013). Applied linguistics in the neoliberal university: Ideological keywords and social agency. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 4(2), 229–257. doi:10.1515/applirev-2013-0011
- Holborow, M. (2015). *Language and neoliberalism*. London, England; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Holborow, M. & O'Sullivan, J. (2017). Austerity Ireland and the neo-liberal university: Hollow enterprise. In J. Nixon (Ed.), *Higher education in austerity Europe* (pp. 107-126). London; New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Holstein, J. A. & Gubrium, J. F. (1997). Active interviewing. In D. Silverman (Ed.) *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice* (pp. 113–129). London, England: Sage.
- Illeris, K. (2017). *How we learn: Learning and non-learning in school and beyond* (2nd. ed.). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jessop, B. (2008). A cultural political economy of competitiveness and its implications for higher education. In B. Jessop, N. Fairclough, & R. Wodak

(Eds.), *Education and the knowledge-based economy in Europe* (pp. 13-39).

Rotterdam: Sense.

Jessop, B. (2017). Varieties of academic capitalism and entrepreneurial universities: On past research and three thought experiments. *The International Journal of Higher Education Research*, 73(6), 853-870. doi:10.1007/s10734-017-0120-6

Johnson, D. (2011). Critical discourse analysis and the ethnography of language policy. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 8(4), 267-279. doi:10.1080/17405904.2011.601636

Johnson, D. (2013). *Language policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jones, R. (2013a). Analysis of discourse and interaction. In C. Chapelle (Ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Applied Linguistics* (pp. 1-4). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Jones, R. (2013b). Positioning in the analysis of discourse and interaction. In C. Chapelle (Ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Applied Linguistics* (pp. 1-6). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Jongbloed, B. (2003). Marketisation in higher education, Clark's triangle and the essential ingredients of markets. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 57(2), 110-135. doi:10.1111/1468-2273.00238

Kienpointner, M. (2013). Review of Fairclough, Isabela and Norman Fairclough (2012) *Political discourse analysis: A methods for advanced students*. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 12(2), 295-304. doi:0.1075/jlp.12.2.07kie

Kogan, M. (2014). The role of different groups in policy-making and implementation: Institutional politics and policy-making. In P. Trowler (Ed.), *Higher education policy and institutional change: Intentions and*

*outcomes in turbulent environments* (pp. 64-84). North Charleston:  
CreateSpace.

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Komljenovic, J. & Robertson, S.L. (2016). The Dynamics of "Market-Making" in Higher Education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 31(5), 622-636.

doi:10.1080/02680939.2016.1157732

Krause, K-L. (2009). Academic work. In M. Tight, K. H. Mok & J. Huisman (Eds.) *The Routledge international handbook of higher education* (pp. 413-425).

New York; London: Routledge.

Kress, G. & Hodge, R. (1979). *Language as ideology*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Krzyżanowski, M. (2010). *The discursive construction of European identities: A multi-level approach to discourse and identity in the transforming European Union*. Frankfurt; Oxford: Peter Lang.

Krzyżanowski, M. (2011). Ethnography and critical discourse analysis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 8(4), 231-309. doi:10.1080/17405904.2011.601630

Krzyżanowski, M. (2016). Recontextualisation of neoliberalism and the increasingly conceptual nature of discourse: Challenges for critical discourse studies. *Discourse & Society*, 27(3), 308-321.

doi:10.1177/0957926516630901

Kuh, G. D. (2009). High impact activities: what they are, why they work, who benefits. In: C. Rust (Ed.) *Improving student learning through the curriculum* (pp. 20–39). Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, Oxford Brookes University.

- Lampropoulou, S. (2011). Having a say: Direct speech representation in Greek youth storytelling. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(14), 3374-3386.  
doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2011.07.009
- Lampropoulou, S. & Myers, G. (2013). Stance-taking in interviews from the Qualidata archive. *Forum Qualitative Social Research*, 14(1), 261-283.
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lawton, R. (2016). A critical integrated approach to language policy as discursive action: Strengths, challenges, and opportunities. In E. Barakos & J. W. Unger (Eds.), *Discursive approaches to language policy* (pp. 105-127). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ledin, P. & Machin, D. (2015). How lists, bullet points and tables recontextualize social practice: A multimodal study of management language in Swedish universities. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 12(4), 463-481. doi:10.1080/17405904.2015.1039556
- Leedham, M. (2009). From traditional essay to 'Ready Steady Cook' presentation. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 10(3), 191-206.  
doi:10.1177/1469787409343187
- Levinson, B. A. U., Sutton, M. & Winstead, T. (2009). Education Policy as a Practice of Power: Theoretical Tools, Ethnographic Methods, Democratic Options. *Educational Policy*, 23(6), 767-795.  
doi:10.1177/0895904808320676
- Lim, L. (2017). Regulating the unthinkable: Bernstein's pedagogic device and the paradox of control. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 26(4), 353-374. doi:10.1080/09620214.2017.1317605

- Loughland, T. & Sriprakash, A. (2016). Bernstein revisited: the recontextualisation of equity in contemporary Australian school education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37(2), 230-247, doi:10.1080/01425692.2014.916604
- Lukin, A. (2013). The meanings of “war”: From lexis to context. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 12(3), 424-444. doi:10.1075/jlp.12.3.06luk
- Macfarlane, B., & Gourlay, L. (2009). The reflection game: Enacting the penitent self. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14(4), 455-459. doi:10.1080/13562510903050244
- Mann, S. (2011). A critical review of qualitative interviews in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(1), 6-24. doi:10.1093/applin/amq043.
- Marginson, S. (2018). Global trends in higher education financing: The United Kingdom. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 58, 26-36. doi:10.1016/j.ijedudev.2017.03.008
- Maringe, F. (2011). The student as consumer: affordances and constraints in a transforming higher education environment. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion and E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education: the student as consumer* (pp. 142-154). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Martin, J. R. (2009). Genre and language learning: A social semiotic perspective. *Linguistics and Education*, 20(1), 10-21. doi:10.1016/j.linged.2009.01.003
- Mautner, G. (2005). The entrepreneurial university: A discursive profile of a higher education buzzword. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 2(2), 95-120. doi:10.1080/17405900500283540



- McArthur, J. (2013). *Rethinking knowledge within higher education: Adorno and social justice*. London: Bloomsbury.
- McLean, M., Abbas, A. & Ashwin, P. (2013). The use and value of Bernstein's work in studying (in)equalities in undergraduate social science education, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34(2), 262-280, doi:10.1080/01425692.2012.710007
- McLean, M., Abbas, A. & Ashwin, P. (2017). *Quality in undergraduate education: How powerful knowledge disrupts inequality*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Meyer, J. H. F. & Land, R. (2005). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge (2): Epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning. *Higher Education*, 49(3), 373-388. doi:10.1007/s10734-004-6779-5
- Molesworth, M., Nixon, E. & Scullion, R. (2009). Having, being and higher education: The marketisation of the university and the transformation of the student into consumer. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14(3), 277-287. doi: 10.1080/13562510902898841
- Molesworth, M., Scullion, R. & Nixon, E. (Eds.) (2011). *The marketisation of higher education: the student as consumer*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Moore, R. (2003). Between covenant and contract: the negotiation of academic pedagogic identities. *Journal of Education*, 30, 81-100.
- Moore, R. (2013). *Basil Bernstein: The thinker and the field*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

- Morrish, L. & Sauntson, H. (2013). 'Business-facing motors for economic development': an appraisal analysis of visions and values in the marketised UK university. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 10(1), 61-80.  
doi:10.1080/17405904.2012.736698.
- Mouzelis, N. (1995). *Sociological theory: What went wrong? Diagnosis and remedies*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Mulderrig, J. (2011). The grammar of governance. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 8(1), 45-68. doi:10.1080/17405904.2011.533570
- Mundy, K., Green, A., Lingard, B. & Verger, A. (Eds.) (2016). *The handbook of global education policy*. Chichester, UK; Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.
- Myers, G. & Lampropoulou, S. (2012). Impersonal you and stance-taking in social research interviews. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44(10), 1206-1218.  
doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2012.05.005
- Myers, G. & Lampropoulou, S. (2016). Laughter, non-seriousness and transitions in social research interview transcripts. *Qualitative Research*, 16(1), 78-94. doi:10.1177/1468794114561346
- Naidoo, R. & Jamieson, I. (2005). Empowering participants or corroding learning? Towards a research agenda on the impact of student consumerism in higher education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(3), 267-281. doi:10.1080/02680930500108585
- Ng, C. J. W. (2014). 'We offer unparalleled flexibility': Purveying conceptual values in higher educational corporate branding. *Discourse & Communication*, 8(4), 391-410. doi:10.1177/1750481314537576
- Nixon, J. (2011). *Higher education and the public good: Imagining the university*. London; New York: Continuum International Pub. Group.

- Nixon, E., Scullion, R. & Molesworth, M. (2011). How choice in higher education can create conservative consumers. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion and E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education: the student as consumer* (pp. 196-208). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Nordensvärd, J. (2011). The consumer metaphor versus the citizen metaphor: different sets of roles for students. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion and E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education: the student as consumer* (pp. 157-169). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ochs, E. (1979). Transcription as theory. In E. Ochs & B. Schieffelin (Eds.), *Developmental Pragmatics* (pp. 43–72). New York: Academic Press.
- OECD. (1996). *The knowledge-based economy*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2017). *Benchmarking higher education system performance: Conceptual framework and data. Enhancing higher education system performance*. Paris: OECD.
- OfS. (2018a). About us. *Office for Students*. Retrieved from: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/>
- OfS. (2018b). Teaching excellence framework. *Office for Students*. Retrieved from: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/teaching/what-is-the-tef/>
- Peat, J. (2015). Getting down to the nitty-gritty: The trials and tribulations of an institutional professional recognition scheme. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 19(3), 1-4.  
doi:10.1080/13603108.2015.1029999
- Pegg, A., Waldock, J., Wendy-Isaac, S. & Lawson, R. (2012). Pedagogy for employability. *The Higher Education Academy*. Retrieved from: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk>

- Piller, I. & Cho, J. (2013). Neoliberalism as language policy. *Language in Society*, 42(1), 23-44. doi:10.1017/S0047404512000887
- QAA. (2018). Subject benchmark statements. *Quality Assurance Agency*.  
Retrieved from: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>
- Reisigl, M. (2014). Argumentation analysis and the discourse-historical approach: A methodological framework. In C. Hart & P. Cap (Eds.), *Contemporary critical discourse studies* (pp. 67-96). London: Bloomsbury.
- Reisigl, M. (2018). The discourse-historical approach. In J. E. Flowerdew & J. Richardson, (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp. 44-59). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Reisigl, M. & Wodak, R. (2001). *Discourse and discrimination: Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism*: London: Routledge.
- Reisigl, M. & Wodak, R. (2015). The discourse-historical approach (DHA). In R. Wodak, & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse studies*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 23-61). London: Sage.
- Richards, K. (2009). Interviews. In J. Heigham & R. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistics: A Practical Introduction* (pp. 182-199). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rønning Haugen, C. (2009). *Contextualizations and recontextualizations of discourses on equity in education* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim.
- Rogers, C. (1969). *Freedom to learn: A view of what education might become*. Columbus, Ohio: C. E. Merrill Pub.

- Saarinen, T. (2008). Position of text and discourse analysis in higher education policy research. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(6), 719-728, doi: 10.1080/03075070802457090
- Saretzki, T. (2015). Habermas, critical theory and public policy. In F. Fischer, D. Torgerson, A. Durnová & M. Orsini (Eds.), *Handbook of critical policy studies* (pp. 67-90). Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA, USA.
- Savski, K. (2016). State language policy in time and space: Meaning, transformation, recontextualisation. In E. Barakos & J. W. Unger (Eds.), *Discursive approaches to language policy* (pp. 51-70). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schiffrin, D. (1996). Narrative as self-portrait: Sociolinguistic constructions of identity. *Language in Society*, 25(2), 167-203.  
doi:10.1017/S0047404500020601
- Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schulman, L. (2005). Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Daedalus*, 134(3), 52-59. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20027998>
- Scullion, R., Molesworth, M. & Nixon, E. (2011). Arguments, responsibility and what is to be done about marketisation. In M. Molesworth, R. Scullion and E. Nixon (Eds.), *The marketisation of higher education: the student as consumer* (pp. 227-236). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- SEDA. (2018). About us. *Staff and Educational Development Association*. Retrieved from: <https://www.seda.ac.uk/about>

- Shattock, M. (Ed.) (2009). *Entrepreneurialism in universities and the knowledge economy: Diversification and organizational change in European higher education*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Shaw, R. (2018). Professionalising teaching in HE: The impact of an institutional Fellowship Scheme in the UK. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 37(1), 145-157. doi:10.1080/07294360.2017.1336750
- Shay, S. (2008). Beyond social constructivist perspectives on assessment: The centring of knowledge. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 13(5), 595-605. doi:10.1080/13562510802334970
- Singh, P. (2015). Performativity and pedagogising knowledge: Globalising educational policy formation, dissemination and enactment. *Journal of Education Policy*, 30(3), 1-22. doi:10.1080/02680939.2014.961968
- Singh, P. (2017). Pedagogic governance: theorising with/after Bernstein, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 38(2), 144-163, doi:10.1080/01425692.2015.1081052
- Singh, P., Atweh, B. & Shield, P. (2006). Designing postgraduate pedagogies: Connecting internal and external learners. *AARE 2005 International Education Research Conference Papers Collection*. Retrieved from: <http://hdl.handle.net/10072/25236>
- Singh, P., Thomas, S. & Harris, J. (2013). Recontextualising policy discourses: A Bernsteinian perspective on policy interpretation, translation, enactment. *Journal of Education Policy*, 28(4), 1-16. doi:10.1080/02680939.2013.770554
- Slough-Kuss, Y. (2015). *The possibility of a 'new imaginary': Discursive 'de/humanising' 'framing' of teacher education for teaching diverse student*

*populations in OECD and CoE texts*. (Working Papers Series: International and Global Issues for Research, No. 2015/2). University of Bath.

Smyth, J. (2017). *The toxic university: Zombie leadership, academic rock stars and neoliberal ideology*. London, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.; London: SAGE.

Swain, H. (2017, August 22). Teachers in elite universities not feeling benefit of £9k tuition fees. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/aug/22/university-teaching-staff-pay-research>

Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. (2004). *Research genres: explorations and applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Talmy, S. (2011). The interview as collaborative achievement: interaction, identity, and ideology in a speech event. *Applied Linguistics*. (1), 25-42.  
doi:10.1093/applin/amq027

Teelken, C. (2012). Compliance or pragmatism: How do academics deal with managerialism in higher education? A comparative study in three countries. *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(3), 271-290.  
doi:10.1080/03075079.2010.511171

Teo, P. (2007). The marketisation of higher education: A comparative case-study of two universities in Singapore. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines*, 1(1), 95-111.

- The scramble for students. (2018, August 25). *The Economist*, 428(9106), 18.  
Retrieved from: <https://searchproquestcom.ezproxy.lancs.ac.uk/docview/2092813049?accountid=14557>
- Tomlinson, M. (2017). Student perceptions of themselves as 'consumers' of higher education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 38(4), 450-467, doi:10.1080/01425692.2015.1113856
- Trowler, P. (2004). Policy and change: Academic development units and the Bologna Declaration. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 9(2), 195-200, doi:10.1080/1360144042000334672
- Trowler, P. (2008). *Cultures and change in higher education: Theories and practices*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Trowler, P. (2012). Wicked issues in situating theory in close-up research. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 31(3), 273-284. doi:10.1080/07294360.2011.631515
- Trowler, P. (2014a). *Higher education policy and institutional change: Intentions and outcomes in turbulent environments*. North Charleston: CreateSpace.
- Trowler, P. (2014b). *Doing insider research in universities*. Lancaster, England: Paul Trowler.
- Trowler, P., Saunders, M. & Bamber, V. (2012). Conclusion: Academic practices and the disciplines in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In P. Trowler, M. Saunders & V. Bamber (Eds.). *Tribes and Territories in the 21st Century: Rethinking the Significance of Disciplines in Higher Education. International Studies in Higher Education* (pp. 241-258). Oxon: Routledge.



- Unger, J. (2013). *The discursive construction of the Scots language: Education, politics and everyday life*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Urciuoli, B. (2008). Skills and selves in the new workplace. *American Ethnologist*, 35(2), 211-228. doi:10.1111/j.2008.1548-1425.00031.x
- van der Sluis, H., Burden, P. & Huet, I. (2017). Retrospection and reflection: The emerging influence of an institutional professional recognition scheme on professional development and academic practice in a UK university. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 54(2), 126-134. doi:10.1080/14703297.2016.1273790
- van Dijk, T. A. (2009). *Discourse and context: A socio-cognitive approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (Original works published 1930-1934).
- Weiss, G. & Wodak, R. (2003). Introduction: theory, interdisciplinarity and critical discourse analysis. In G. Weiss & R. Wodak (Eds.), *Critical discourse analysis: theory and interdisciplinarity* (pp. 1-32). Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wheelahan, L. (2010). The pedagogic device: the relevance of Bernstein's analysis for VET. *Vocational learning: transitions, interrelationships, partnerships and sustainable futures: proceedings of the 13th international conference on post-compulsory education and training*. Gold Coast, Queensland. Retrieved from: <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/28884>

- Whitchurch, C. & Gordon, G. (2017). *Reconstructing relationships in higher education: challenging agendas*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY.
- Wodak, R. (Ed.) (1989). *Language, power and ideology: Studies in political discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wodak, R. (2011a). *The discourse of politics in action: politics as usual*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wodak, R. (2011b). Complex texts: Analysing, understanding, explaining and interpreting meanings. *Discourse Studies*, 13(5), 623-633.  
doi:10.1177/1461445611412745
- Wodak, R. (2015). *The politics of fear: What right-wing populist discourses mean*. London: SAGE.
- Wodak, R., De Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. & Liebhart, K. (2009). *The discursive construction of national identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Wodak, R. & Fairclough, N. (2010). Recontextualizing European higher education policies: the cases of Austria and Romania. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 7(1), 19-40. doi:10.1080/17405900903453922
- Wodak, R. & Meyer, M. (Eds.) (2009). *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: SAGE.
- Wodak, R. & Meyer, M. (Eds.) (2015). *Methods of critical discourse studies* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: Sage.
- Yanow, D. (2015). Making sense of policy practices. In F. Fischer, D. Torgerson, A. Durnová & M. Orsini, *Handbook of critical policy studies* (pp. 401-421). Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA, USA.
- Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles; London: SAGE.

Zhang, Y. & Halloran, K. L. (2013). 'Toward a global knowledge enterprise':  
university websites as portals to the ongoing marketization of higher  
education. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 10(4), 468-485.  
doi:10.1080/17405904.2013.813777.

## **Appendices**

### Appendix 1: Interview questions (sample)

#### **1. With lecturers**

- Could you tell me a bit about your module?
  - What distinguishes it from other modules in terms of topics, approach, knowledge and skills required?
- How do you think students feel about your module?
- Could you tell me about the assessment strategy for your module?
  - Why did you choose those particular assessments?
  - How have the assessments changed since the modified academic framework was introduced in 13/14?
  - What factors have influenced your choice of assessments?
- Could you tell me more about the marking criteria and your expectations of students?
- (Referring to assignment brief / sample marked assignments – participants will be given a few minutes to look at the documents in the interview) Could you tell me more about this assignment and what you were looking for?

#### **2. With students**

- Could you tell me a bit about your course?
  - Which aspects have you found most challenging / most enjoyed?
- In which ways is the course different to your expectations before you started?
- Can you tell me about your experience of doing the assessments?
- What do you think your lecturers are trying to find out / do when they assess you?
- (Referring to assignment / assignment brief - participants will be given a few minutes to look at the documents in the interview) Can you tell me more about the experience of doing this assignment?
- Can you tell me about how you think the course will benefit you in the future?

## Appendix 2: Ethics documentation

Sarah Horrod  
PhD candidate  
Department of Linguistics and English Language  
County South  
Lancaster University  
Lancaster LA1 4YL  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)2089486067  
E-mail: [s.horrod@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:s.horrod@lancaster.ac.uk)



January 2015

### Information sheet (Lecturers)

**This letter is to give you information about the research project and to invite you to take part in this research study. Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.**

Research project title: Exploring the wider contextual influences on writing and assessment practices within the Business School of a new university in the UK

My name is Sarah Horrod and I am carrying out this study as part of my Doctoral studies in the Department of Linguistics and English Language. The purpose of the study is to understand more about the nature of writing for assessment in the Business School. In particular, I am interested in the influences from the wider social context (such as policies of the university and higher education bodies, employers and other interested groups) on assessment topics, practices and forms of writing. The study focuses on assignment texts, decisions around assessment strategy and experiences of lecturers and students in engaging with assignment writing on their degree programmes.

My study will involve looking at a range of assignment texts and other related documents within the Business School. I will also be interviewing lecturers, other university stakeholders and students.

I have approached you because I am interested in understanding more about different business modules' content, assessments and the nature of writing in the modules.

I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in my study.

If you decide to take part in the study:

1. I would conduct and audio-record one interview with you during the academic year of no longer than 60 minutes.
2. I would collect assignments and related documents from your module. I will seek consent from students for any assignments that are to be used in the study.
3. Your insights will contribute to our understanding of different types of assignment writing and the experiences of lecturers in developing and implementing an assessment strategy. I would share with you any insights into the nature of particular types of writing and writing experiences, from a student point of view.
4. Any data I collect during the course of the research will be made anonymous. Any identifying information, such as names and personal characteristics, will be anonymised in the PhD thesis or any other publications of this research. All data will be used for academic and educational purposes only. For example, it will be used in a PhD thesis, academic presentations and publications.
5. The data I will collect will be kept securely. Electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer and files containing personal data will be encrypted.
6. If you decide not to take part in this study, this will not affect your position in the faculty or university.
7. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time and you do not have to give a reason. If you withdraw while the study takes place or until 2 months after it finishes, I will not use any of the information that you provided. If you withdraw later, I will use the information you shared with me for my study.]

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact myself or my supervisors:

Dr. Diane Potts & Dr. Johann Unger  
([d.j.potts@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:d.j.potts@lancaster.ac.uk); [j.unger@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:j.unger@lancaster.ac.uk) )  
Tel: 01524592434; 01524592591  
Department of Linguistics and English Language  
Lancaster University



**Consent Form (Lecturers)**

**Project title:** Exploring the wider contextual influences on writing and assessment practices within the Business School of a new university in the UK

1. I have read and had explained to me by *Sarah Horrod* the information sheet relating to this project.
2. I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the information sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.
3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time, but no longer than 2 months after its completion. If I withdraw after this period, the information I have provided will be used for the project.
4. I understand that all data collected will be anonymised and that my identity will not be revealed at any point.
5. I have received a copy of this consent form and of the accompanying information sheet.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Sarah Horrod  
PhD candidate  
Department of Linguistics and English Language  
County South  
Lancaster University  
Lancaster LA1 4YL  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)2089486067  
E-mail: [s.horrod@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:s.horrod@lancaster.ac.uk)



January 2015

### Information sheet (Students)

**This letter is to give you information about the research project and to invite you to take part in this research study. Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.**

Research project title: Exploring the wider contextual influences on writing and assessment practices within the Business School of a new university in the UK

My name is Sarah Horrod and I am carrying out this study as part of my Doctoral studies in the Department of Linguistics and English Language. The purpose of the study is to understand more about the nature of writing for assessment in the Business School. In particular, I am interested in the influences from the wider social context (such as policies of the university and higher education bodies, employers and other interested groups) on assessment topics, practices and forms of writing. The study focuses on assignment texts, decisions around assessment strategy and experiences of lecturers and students in engaging with assignment writing on their degree programmes.

My study will involve looking at a range of assignment texts and other related documents within the Business School. I will also be interviewing lecturers, other university stakeholders and students.

I have approached you because I am interested in understanding more about your experiences of assessment, writing and study on your business programme.

I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in my study.



If you decide to take part in the study:

1. I would conduct and audio-record one interview with you during the academic year of no longer than 60 minutes. I would ask you about your experiences of assessment and ask you to discuss a particular assignment from your programme, including your own marked assignment.
2. I would use your written assignment and interview as data in my study.
3. Your insights will contribute to our understanding of the experiences and preferences of students regarding assessment. You will also help us to understand more about the challenges of assignment writing for postgraduate students.
4. Any data I collect during the course of the research will be made anonymous. Any identifying information, such as names and personal characteristics, will be anonymised in the PhD thesis or any other publications of this research. All data will be used for academic and educational purposes only. For example, it will be used in a PhD thesis, academic presentations and publications. Insights from the data may also be shared with lecturers and key staff in the faculty and university with the aim of improving the learning experience of future students.
5. The data I will collect will be kept securely. Electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer and files containing personal data will be encrypted.
6. If you decide not to take part in this study, this will not affect your studies and the way you are assessed on your course.
7. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time and you do not have to give a reason. If you withdraw while the study takes place or until 2 months after it finishes, I will not use any of the information that you provided. If you withdraw later, I will use the information you shared with me for my study.

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact myself or my supervisors:

Dr. Diane Potts & Dr. Johann Unger

([d.i.potts@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:d.i.potts@lancaster.ac.uk); [j.unger@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:j.unger@lancaster.ac.uk))

Tel: 01524592434; 01524592591

Department of Linguistics and English Language

Lancaster University

**Thank you for considering your participation in this project.**



**Consent Form (Students)**

**Project title:** Exploring the wider contextual influences on writing and assessment practices within the Business School of a new university in the UK

1. I have read and had explained to me by *Sarah Horrod* the information sheet relating to this project.
2. I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the information sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.
3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time, but no longer than 2 months after its completion. If I withdraw after this period, the information I have provided will be used for the project.
4. I understand that all data collected will be anonymised and that my identity will not be revealed at any point.
5. I have received a copy of this consent form and of the accompanying information sheet.

Name:

Signed:

Date: