



*Trials and tribunals: consensus seeking in course design approval in Higher Education*

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# **Trials and tribunals: consensus seeking in course design approval in Higher Education**

Richard Paul Pountney

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
Sheffield Hallam University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2014

## **Declaration**

I, Richard Pountney, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Sheffield Hallam University for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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Richard P. Pountney  
29th July 2014

## Abstract

The focus of this study is an investigation into the characteristics of the processes and practices of course approval in higher education that shape, and are shaped by, the educational beliefs and values that university teachers bring to the design of their courses. It identifies the basis of how the curriculum is developed and approved, and the means by which new practices and ideas are made possible. The original contributions to knowledge are to the development of the theoretical concept of autonomy from which a model of curriculum development knowledge can be derived; and to the empirical understanding of the conditions for curriculum development.

Drawing on social realism this study applies Bourdieu's field theory to identify the field of HE as the object of study and curriculum development, as a form of academic development, as a subfield. Bernstein's code theory and the pedagogic device are applied to develop an external language of description for curriculum development knowledge. This analysis is differentiated using Maton's Legitimation Code Theory (LCT), and its dimensions of autonomy, semantics and specialisation of curriculum knowledge practices, to develop a language of description for positional and relational autonomy in course design and approval.

Course planning and approval is examined by means of two case studies in order to illuminate the nature of teachers' experiences; the basis of practice and its emergence; and the process by which curriculum reproduction and change takes place. The first case study examines cross-institution curriculum sharing involving 12 academics across 10 higher education institutions, comprising interviews, group discussions and documentary analysis. The second case study took place in one additional institution in two parts: the first part involved 17 academics involved in preparing 12 courses for approval, involving interviews and documentary analysis; the second part took place in the same institution with a further 10 staff responsible for approving these courses and involved interviews, documentary analysis and observations of approval events.

Three field positions are analytically distinguished (collegial; bureaucratic; and consensus-seeking) and re-evaluated in the context of course approval as it currently operates in these case study sites. The autonomy dimension of LCT is further elaborated with regard to concepts derived in the study: expertise, authority, purpose and consensus. The study finds that course designs are detached from their contexts of enactment (teaching and learning) and semantically condensed in that they are abstracted and tacit and difficult for teachers to articulate and for others to interpret. Strategies that enable teachers to devise and enact course plans and designs are seen to be subject to disciplinary perspectives, dispositions to knowledge and pedagogic practices, and the underlying principles of knowledge and knower structures. External influences on the curriculum, such as 'employability', can result in a 'genericised' curriculum that is difficult to pedagogise (i.e. to teach, to acquire cumulatively, and to assess). These conditions, in turn, restrict curricula and their associated pedagogies and limit the possibility of new curricula being realised.

The study concludes by formulating a dynamic coherence model of curriculum development that foregrounds the pedagogic and legitimation codes that organise and are the basis for curriculum practices that are currently prevalent in these contexts. An alternative consensual principle is proposed as the means of enacting coherent curriculum design that is better able to realise new forms.

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## **Chapter 1: Setting the context**

In this chapter I introduce the context for the research and its concerns, and I outline a brief history of the study. I have provided a *Glossary of Terms* (see Appendix 1) and a *List of Abbreviations* (see Appendix 2) used in this thesis.

### **1.1 The concerns of this study**

In 2009 I set out as a part-time doctoral student to investigate how to better understand the circumstances that surround, and the processes involved in, course development and approval. I had become curious about the influences that shape the construction of particular curricula and the relationship between the nature of a knowledge form/discourse and the curriculum developed to teach it. There appeared to be diverse and highly specialised forms of curriculum knowledge taught and learnt in higher education (HE) but I was unclear how these developed. At the same time there did not appear to be a set of theoretical and conceptual tools readily available for describing the ways that these knowledge forms progress and/or the different ways that knowledge claims are made and legitimated. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly to my work as an academic developer, I was uncertain how the 'rules' for HE teachers' legitimate performance are constituted and transmitted in teaching and assessment.

My professional role since 2008, as a Faculty Teaching Fellow for Curriculum Development, brought me into contact with both the course teams charged with preparing their courses for institutional approval and colleagues responsible for approving them. This perspective sharpened my understanding of the challenges I faced as an academic starting in HE in 1996 and leading an international postgraduate course in education since 2005. This is a journey that has taken place in the context of academic development within an institutional framework that is rationalised according to a number of forces acting currently in HE as discussed below. These personal and professional insights gained in my work speak to the research questions (RQs) that guide this thesis:

### ***Research questions***

**RQ1:** What are the characteristics of the teaching practices that are shaped by the educational beliefs and values that academics bring to curriculum design in higher education?

**RQ2:** What are the characteristics of course planning practices in a UK higher education institution and how are curricular forms generated?

**RQ3:** What are the characteristics of curriculum approval practices in a UK higher education institution, and how do academics interpret and respond to this in reproducing the curriculum?

I chose to study these research questions through case study. The fieldwork for the study took place in 2010-12 involving a cross-institution case study (Case Study 1) of curriculum sharing that included participants from across HE in the United Kingdom (UK) in a project hosted by the Subject Centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP) based at the time at Birmingham University. This was complemented by a second case study of 12 courses in one institution (Case Study 2). Transcription and coding of data was completed in 2012 and the development of coding models and languages of description was done in the first quarter of 2013. Central to these cases is the process of course approval as it operated, including the notion of curriculum legitimacy and authority, and how curriculum expertise is understood and recognised.

This study does not seek to evaluate the curriculum or the work of those involved in its making. Its concerns are not the student experience other than as an influence on the curriculum. Rather it investigates the basis for approval of courses and how this operates to affect how the curriculum is developed and becomes official.

### **1.2 The context: the university as the site of curriculum practices in UK HE**

For the purposes of this study 'curriculum development' in HE is defined as the activities and processes by which courses are designed, reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis, within institutional and national requirements in the UK. One subset of this is the process of course planning that takes place when new courses are 'approved' by the institution, or when they are 're-approved' (a process that takes

place typically every 5 or 6 years). Course approval occurs within a context in which academic institutions are increasingly subject to a struggle for student numbers in a competitive market (Dill and Soo, 2005), partly controlled by how they are ranked nationally and internationally (Liu and Cheng, 2005) including a hierarchical status based on prestige and reputation as a form of cultural capital (Bleiklie, 2002). Arising from these trends is a competitive accountability that has led to a rise in managerialism (Deem *et al.*, 2007) and a challenge to a 'self-contained, self-regulatory sphere of knowledge production' that is motivated by the globalisation and massification of HE (Henkel, 2007; Burnheim, 2010: 24).

The consequence of this is a period in which HE is undergoing a process of redefinition (Ball, 2003; Clark: 2004; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004) indicated partly by the use of terms such as 'new university', 'modern university', 'entrepreneurial university' and 'post modern university' (Hudson, 2009). It has been suggested that universities are repositioning themselves as corporate enterprises, as providers of education and research services, rather than being 'autonomous' cultural institutions (Brown, 2004: 13). As a result contradictory notions of 'knowledge' pervade the HE system. On the one hand there is a conception of knowledge underpinning the curriculum as the driver of productivity and economic growth (OECD, 1996); whilst on the other there is a view of knowledge as involving 'a wider, more temporary and heterogeneous set of practitioners, collaborating on a problem defined in a specific and local context' (Gibbons *et al.*, 1994: 3). This suggests that universities are 'constellations of practice' rather than discrete 'entities' and that this activity is 'constructed, negotiated, contested, professional and often complex' (Knight, 2001: 371). Furthermore, universities have developed an ability to 'combine and make compatible seemingly contradictory functions' in which 'their functions take place simultaneously within the same structure, although with different emphases' (Castells, 2001: 211), in the way, for example, that the research agenda coexists with the need to provide an excellent student experience.

This 'functional' view of the university as a complex institution reflects a 'social practice' viewpoint on knowledge and organisation, and one in which knowledge is shared at the level of subcultures (Brown and Duguid, 2001). 'Knowing how' to

develop the curriculum is a form of expertise that is associated with curriculum development knowledge as a subset of academic development. This expertise has become a 'craft knowledge' (Shay, 2012) that involves 'learning in the sense of becoming a practitioner – which includes acquiring not only codebooks but the ability to decode them appropriately ... as learning *to be*' (Duguid, 2005: 113, original emphasis). This suggests the view that useful knowledge in organisations such as universities is often best developed not by specialists detached from a problem but by those who directly benefit from a solution, or, as in this case, by those who have a stake both in the curriculum and how it is taught.

### **1.2.1 The rationalised institution**

Not all staff working on curriculum issues in universities are teachers: the massification of HE has created a workforce in universities that is upwards of 30% managers and administrators, with the relative greatest increase in HE resources in the last 10 years going to administration (Whitchurch, 2006). This involves professional staff working across boundaries as 'third space' professionals (ibid.) who rather than drawing their authority solely from established roles and structures increasingly build their credibility on a personal basis via lateral relationships as 'hybrid' professionals (Whitchurch, 2008: 394). The notion that the rise in the number of administrators in HE has delineated the professional (teachers) from the managers (administrators) is challenged by the emergence of 'hybrid' or 'new professionals' (Hudson, 2009) in universities. This shift in the means and mode of authority in universities can be seen as organisational sense-making (Weick, 1995). Furthermore, this takes place in the 'impermanence' of organisations and of 'fleeting social order' that suggests ambivalence to the idea of organisations as an arena for social practice (Weick, 2012). Writing about universities Bourdieu described this as the apparent 'bureaucratic logic' of the institution:

*... an impersonal and interchangeable power that, in this sense, has all the appearances of 'rationality' even as it is invested with the most mysterious properties of magical efficacy*  
(Bourdieu, 2004: 31).

However, a 'new institutionalism' is emerging brought about via changes in the current policy climate in education (Waters, 1989; Hull, 2006) including a disenchantment with

models of social and organisational action that see actors as relatively autonomous with 'unbounded rationality' to pursue their self-interests (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). What distinguishes these 'new' institutions from their older counterparts is that in order to gain authority as objective social structures the 'modern' university must be endowed with meanings by individuals:

*Institutions are thus repositories of taken-for-granted cognitive schemata that shape people's understandings of the world they live in and provide scripts to guide their action*  
(Bourdieu, 2004: 6).

Furthermore, institutional thinking and action is likely to be based on a form of 'conforming' that is disconnected from local practice and realities as a kind of 'de-coupling' of the legitimated model from its enactment (Meyer *et al.*, 2007: 192) as a distinct organisational model rather than a deficit one (Orton and Weick, 1990) or as a form of *refraction* in Bourdieu's (1992) terms. It is by developing and maintaining legitimacy that institutions safeguard their continuation (Douglas, 1986). In other words authority becomes accepted as a social convention in which it 'makes sense' for things to be as they are. This is a form of rationality in which, by naturalising the *social* in *reason* the institution automatically legitimises it (Fullan, 1991). Cleaver (2002: 16) refers to this as institutional bricolage especially where institutions are bureaucratic in nature, rather than 'socially embedded'. She discusses this in relation to collective action, as a form of 'consensus', in which conflict and dissent can be minimised through attention to the type of social solidarity embedded in these structures. This notion of consensus is related to how autonomy and expertise are conceptualised within the institutional context for curriculum approval and what is understood by the term *academic development*.

### **1.2.2 Academic development as context for curriculum development**

Academic development emerged in the 1960s and 1970s at the point where universities were set to expand, and has emerged as a new field of practice that has its own discourses, networks, conferences and distinctive forms of practice (Clegg, 2009). The term academic development is now used synonymously with the term 'educational development'. Individuals call themselves 'staff developers' in which they



'subjectively position themselves as being on the side of students' (ibid.: 407) and the idea of academic development has become significant in HE support systems (e.g. the Higher Education Academy (HEA), the subject centres, as they existed at the time of this study, and the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA)). The shift from development to *enhancement*, however, as '*the process of taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of learning opportunities*' (QAA, 2006) is how academic development is currently defined. Every university now has a Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) strategy that directs teaching staff and sets out the priorities for academic development. These strategies are often seen as 'top-down' and to be formulated as rhetoric in which a vision of improvement is 'non-linear' and 'contradictory' and in which 'desiring is as important as rational argument' (Clegg and Smith, 2010: 115).

Conceiving of this as *academic development*, and of those involved as *academic developers*, stresses the need for a coordinated and purposeful strategy for curriculum development that at the same time strives to be inclusive and collaborative (Clegg, 2009). Alongside these perceptions of academic development exists a context of course ratings and psychologically informed research on student learning that has contributed to a deficit 'teachers need fixing' model (McAlpine, 2006: 123), with academic development as the panacea, typified by the championing of constructivist approaches to teaching (Clegg, 2009).

### ***The role of academic developers in curriculum development***

The notion that teachers can and should be designers of their own courses is subject to a set of conditions that remain empirically unexplored. The lack of attention this has received stems partly from an unresolved tension between product and process approaches to the curriculum and the dominance of 'rational curriculum planning' in which the curriculum is designed as a mapping or coherence. Underlying this is the desire to achieve prescribed learning outcomes (LOs), driving curriculum change (Blackmore and Kandiko, 2012). These LOs are shaped by 'meta-drivers' that include national frameworks for qualifications (NFQ), employability, widening participation,

flexible online learning, quality assurance (QA) and internationalisation of the curriculum as important 'factors in the discourse' (Hughes and Tan, 2012: 13).

These external factors influence the revision of courses. Combined with the specialised procedures and knowledge in curriculum design they can be seen to remain tacit to the course teams involved. Academic developers in HE, myself included, have an important role in supporting teachers who work in pressured and busy environments where they are given little time to focus on the aims of the course not to mention its pedagogic rationale (O'Neill, 2010). Here professional autonomy co-exists with managerial approaches from above that impose curriculum initiatives rather than those arising purely from subject or disciplinary demands. Often course teams are not members of an institution's 'centre', resulting in a kind of 'peripheralness' in which academic developers are seen as members of a privileged 'periphery' (Clegg, 2003: 806). The role of the academic developer then becomes to prompt teachers to 'make explicit many aspects of their curricula which were traditionally known only to themselves or visible only within their local discipline area' (Hughes and Munro, 2012: 26).

The sense that teachers and academic developers are social agents in making the curriculum together to 'skilfully manage the social enterprise of decision-making' (Kessels, 1999: 12) suggests that this is best achieved via consensus. This echoes Fullan's (1986) 'adaptive approach' and underlines curriculum development as a social enterprise (Oliver, 2002; Weller, 2012) in which effective educational priorities are not constructed but negotiated. However, the danger is that the enterprise is reduced to a 'hollowed collegiality ... a process in which interpersonal confrontations [are] avoided by sacrificing planning' (Oliver, 2003: 5). This involves group 'sense-making' and individualised action in which the purpose of the course team is '[merely] to establish points of reference – local norms, values and practices' and where for the most part the development process involves 'individuals agreeing this framework then acting individually within it' (Oliver, 2002: 30). Millen asks:

*Why is it assumed that when we are "given" a course to teach that we know how to write a course outline? Where is it that we "learn" how to do this important piece of pedagogy? What underpins this process?*

(Millen, 1997: 11)

There is an important dynamic to be explored here between ownership/autonomy and the established framework and expectations for course design and the relatively high perception amongst academic staff that they have autonomy in making changes to the curriculum that are, in reality, relatively minor (Oliver, 2002). This 'big picture' of the rationalised curriculum, however, needs to be weighed alongside the 'hurricane model' (Cuban, 1976) in which 'life below the surface' goes on relatively unaffected. The aim of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of this context, its bases and the implications for practice in course planning and approval.

### 1.3 The structure of this thesis

Having briefly set the context and concerns in this chapter the structure of this thesis is now described:

- Chapter 2 is a critical review of the literature of curriculum and curriculum development, identifying the ideas that shape the curriculum, the influences that have arisen, and the organising principles, notably *employability*, that directly affect it. The concept of *coherence* is identified as key to curriculum development, along with the positions that social agents take in the field with regard to *collegiality*, *bureaucracy* and *consensus*.
- Chapter 3 outlines the conceptual framework for the study, including *critical realism* as the social ontology, based on Archer's morphogenetic sequence; *social realism* as the epistemology and explanatory framework drawing on Bernstein's code theory and knowledge structures and Maton's legitimisation device; and *institutional rationalism* as the organising framework for the fieldwork drawing on neo-Weberian substantive research studies.
- Chapter 4 provides a justification for a case study methodology. The research design is described including a discussion of methods, the research settings, data collection, ethical issues involved in insider research, and data analysis.
- Chapter 5 presents a case study (CS1) in curriculum sharing in ten institutions, characterising the teachers' *collegially focused* context by examining the

general dispositions, conceptions of and beliefs about how courses are designed.

- Chapter 6 is the first part of a case study (CS2) of curriculum development in one institution characterising the *bureaucratically focused* context by describing the experiences of course leaders who have recently been through the approval process and those of teachers and managers who are involved in approving courses.
- Chapter 7 is the second part of a case study (CS2) of curriculum approval in one institution, characterising the encounter of these two contexts/cultures as a form of *consensus seeking* and analytically distinguishing all three field positions and code clashes and shifts that occur.
- Chapter 8 presents a discussion of the findings in the light of the theories that inform the research and the literature. A schema for curriculum coherence is identified alongside a model for its enactment, and implications of this for practice are discussed.

In the next chapter the literature is reviewed and key concepts relevant to this study are identified.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will critically review the literature on HE and the curriculum and identify key research findings and concepts relevant to this study. It begins by exploring understandings of the curriculum and its associated concepts and how these have emerged through *ideas* that underpin them. This leads onto exploring how ideas derived from socio-cultural perspectives and the literature of academic development have influenced the curriculum. The *organising principles* that emerge from these influences are then examined, including how *employability* now holds a particular determining status in curriculum development. I identify the concept *coherence* emerging from the literature as central to curriculum practices and processes and I differentiate two orientations to coherence, *evaluation* and *heuristic modelling*. The key concepts identified in the literature are then summarised and discussed, and three field positions in relation to curriculum development are derived.

### 2.2 The curriculum as an idea in practice

It should be noted at the outset that the literature on curriculum in HE is marked by its absence. This absence has been noted in a range of recent commentaries (for example Stark, 2000; Oliver, 2003; Barnett and Coate, 2005; Maton, 2005; O'Neill, 2010; Clegg, 2011). This dearth of literature and research (Hicks, 2007: 2) is accompanied by a general want of agreement on curricular meanings and approaches (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006). The concept of curriculum itself is framed in HE by a broad and varied set of ideas and dispositions to what it is and what it stands for (Smith and Lovat, 2003; Barnett and Coate, 2005; Marsh and Willis, 2007; Marsh, 2009). Notably, key policy documents on HE do not mention curriculum, for example the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997) in the UK (Barnett and Coate, 2005) and the 2007 review of HE in Australia (Hicks, 2007). Portelli (1987) finds more than 127 definitions of the term curriculum in the literature while Goodlad notes that it is 'tantalisingly difficult to know what a curriculum is' (1994: 1266). This situation worsens when one considers the importance of the curriculum: 'If the curriculum is to be the instrument of change in education, its meanings, and operational terms must be clearer than they are currently' (Toombs and Tierney, 1993: 175). Furthermore, this lack of specificity exists

alongside current understandings of the curriculum as individual, ongoing and unpredictable (Marsh and Willis, 2007).

While the HE curriculum is complex (Barnett, 2000) and largely unknown (Barnett, 2012) there is recognition of major curricular trends, evident in policy documents, particularly 'the standardisation of educational structures, processes and outcomes' (Blackmore and Kandiko, 2012: 5). The Bologna process (Bologna Declaration, European Commission, 2009) operating across Europe, for example, is one such 'unified system that facilitates mobility, transparency and recognition of qualification' (Karseth, 2006: 255). However, while there is 'fuzziness' surrounding the concept of curriculum, in which 'the very idea of curriculum is unstable, its boundaries uncertain' (Barnett and Coate, 2005: 17), the curriculum continues to be made and delivered suggesting that there is, pragmatically at least, a sufficient understanding for it to operate: 'Curriculum planning, however haphazard, occurs' (Latucca and Stark, 2009: 20). How does this happen?

At its simplest, and perhaps most common sense, level a curriculum is a plan for learning (Taba, 1962; Lattuca and Stark, 2009), that has a number of components including programme and content, learning objectives and learning strategies, assessment methods and resources (Daniel, 2001: 6). This view of curriculum as primarily 'content' is the aspect 'most visible to students', and which is often synonymous with curriculum structure at the course or module level<sup>1</sup> in HE (Blackmore and Kandiko, 2012: 7). Content, as the essential 'what' in learning, is often overlooked by teachers in HE who, on the whole, choose to emphasise the 'who' and the 'how' of the curriculum as highlighted by Maton (2009). Furthermore, content is organised into theory-based, academic or disciplinary knowledge, while practical knowledge remains poorly defined (Short, 2002). This suggests an approach to curriculum as 'acquisition' – one that can be viewed through four lenses (Bernstein, 1977; 2000):

1. The planned or intended curriculum featured in course documentation.

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<sup>1</sup> This study uses the terms course rather than programme and module rather than unit. The term programme is used to mean a collection of courses.

2. The created or delivered curriculum reflecting the planned curriculum translated into practice.
3. The received or understood curriculum referring to the intended learning experience and the way it is understood by students.
4. The hidden or tacit curriculum containing those parts that are not formally part of the curriculum, but are nevertheless conveyed through educational content and processes and by the organisational culture.

Of these, the first two receive the most attention, while there is very little acknowledgement or analysis of the last category (Blackmore and Kandiko, 2012: 6). The curriculum can be further differentiated by means of its textual realisations: *intended* (as specified in official descriptions), *enacted* (realised in classroom pedagogies and materials), and *assessed* (the assessment tasks assigned to students in a given course) (Cuevas and Feit, 2011b). Others contend that the 'lived curriculum' is played out through complex linkages and dependencies between the intended curriculum (influenced by policies of the state and/or institution) and the enacted curriculum (as realised through practice and the actual curricula content that students engage in the classroom) (Porter and Smithson, 2001).

More broadly, as Marsh (2009: 5) suggests, the curriculum can be understood as a continuum – from the 'permanent subjects that embody essential knowledge' at one pole to the 'questioning of authority and the searching for complex views of human situations' at the other and ranges from 'all planned learning' to 'what students can construct on their computer'. Meaning associated with the curriculum points to a regulating process: the rules of the game, laid down so both students and teachers know what to do and can be seen to be 'playing fair' (Parker, 2003). Curriculum is understood to be 'relational, developmental, dialogic and non-replicable' (ibid.: 535) and as a dynamic and interactional process (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006).

### **2.2.1 The emergence of the concept of curriculum**

An historical insight into curriculum development shows it to be influenced by two orientations: *product* and *process*. The former held sway for several decades and its influence is still felt (Tyler, 1949). The product approach focuses on defining goals,

establishing corresponding learning experiences and evaluating outcomes. Stenhouse (1975) led a response to Tyler's ideas on the curriculum offering an alternative – the 'process approach' (Eisner, 1985; Knight, 2001), advocating principles for selecting content, developing teaching strategies, and assessing students' strengths and weaknesses. The process curriculum aimed to do away with the 'behavioural objectives and hierarchical learning tasks' of the curriculum as product in which the success or failure of the curriculum was based on predefined changes in the learner's behaviour (Howard, 2007: 2). The mechanistic approach to learning was challenged by a model of the curriculum as a shared idea of the common good, and the goal of informed and committed action (Stenhouse, 1980). However, there remains considerable sympathy for an approach, such as Tyler's, that sets the curriculum developer tough questions about the 'effective curriculum' (Posner, 1995). Its influences can be seen in large scale curricular reform (O'Neill, 2010) such as the Bologna Declaration (European Commission, 2009) that works to standardise curricula and to reinforce the importance of learning outcomes to describe student achievement (Hughes and Munro, 2012: 26).

The focus of these two different models, one that emphasises plans and intentions (the product model) and one that emphasises activities and effects (the process model) can be seen to affect how curriculum development is understood and treated, especially in the early stages of planning (Neary, 2003: 39). Where there is a preference for the process approach this is roughly based on its perceived superiority to an 'outcomes-led rational approach', in which coherence in the curriculum is realised as a form of 'a spiral of repeated engagements to improve and deepen skills, concepts, attitudes and values and extend their reach' (Knight, 2001: 371). However, advocates of both models of curriculum reform remain relatively unaware of their consequences (Marsh and Willis, 2007: 25).

Tyler's (1949) attempt to simplify teaching to a set of rational plans and procedures was developed into a 'diagnosis of needs' (Taba, 1962), underlining the importance of an inductive reasoning approach to the curriculum. Planning of the curriculum became the focus, differentiated by Goodlad and Richter (1966) into instructional, institutional and societal levels. The significance of this 'turn' was to emphasise the rational



approach, leading to the introduction of intended learning outcomes and the importance of evaluation and instructional plans (Posner, 1974). Variations on this in the 1960s and 1970s included a focus on interaction (Cohen et al., 2004), the culture of the school (Skilbeck, 1976) and the importance of analysing the learning situation (Johnson, 1967). The underlying aim of these innovations was to establish curricular models to improve educational systems (Marsh, 2009). This 'efficiency of learning' model has mutated into various forms and has been examined by various commentators as 'traditionalist' (Pinar, 2006), 'rational/managerialist' and 'quasi-scientific' (Apple, 2004). These variations share a common concern for the connection between society and the curriculum.

### **2.3 Influences on the curriculum**

So we can see from the above discussion that the idea of the curriculum is somewhat ill-defined and has been shaped by different perspectives on the purpose and value of the curriculum. In addition to this broad understanding of models and aims of the curriculum as an idea in practice an historical overview also throws light on how the curriculum has developed in response to key *influences*. These include cultural, social, pedagogic and vocational influences that have a bearing on the meanings surrounding the curriculum, and how notions of academic development affect this.

#### **2.3.1 Cultural influences on the curriculum**

Traditionally curriculum theory has separated and delineated curriculum processes as design, dissemination, implementation, evaluation and to some extent innovation (Grundy, 1987: 41). Partly as a response to this, postmodern and post-structural ideas on the curriculum (Slattery, 2013) 'reconceptualise' the curriculum as a holistic process (Pinar, 2006) in order that the curriculum can more easily respond to social change (Bleakley, 2012). Bourdieu's field theory offers an understanding of education as a field in which cultural and agential forces are at play while Bernstein's (1971, 1977) knowledge codes and structures offer a view on social and cultural transmission and control. It is the latter's emphasis on 'relations within' education that enables the organising principles of the former's 'relations to' the field to be examined (Maton, 2005).

The perception of the curriculum as a political and ideological site of struggle is discussed by many. For example Ermenc (2005) highlights the embedded cultural perspectives that privilege some groups and marginalise others; while Volet (2004: 7) emphasises the importance of a plurality of diverse viewpoints that promotes curriculum content beyond 'a singular cultural base'. Both the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997) and the HEFCE (2006) strategic plan 2006–2011 highlight the importance of HE in developing civic values (Barnett, 2007), and the conception of education for 'making citizens' and to promote active citizenship (McCowan, 2012: 52). A further debate that emerges is the need to 'internationalise' the curriculum (Crichton and Scarino, 2007) and this has a number of facets: that it contributes to culture and cultural relationships including the key, transferable skill 'to think globally' (Leask, 2004: 338); that the curriculum needs to change as a result of globalisation (Barnett, 2005); and that it develops skill sets for students to live and work in an international world (Dunne, 2011). Changes to the UK HE curriculum in response to this influence include three levels: international awareness in which the curriculum is infused with examples, cases and perspectives of internationalisation; international competence in students' formal and informal experience of education; international expertise, using study abroad and international work placements to prepare students to become global professionals (Edwards *et al.*, 2003). Internationalisation, therefore, is one example of how external influences are affecting the curriculum. The notion of the internationalised curriculum remains 'elusive' however (Svensson and Wihlborg, 2010) and the goal of becoming interculturally competent, in order to work and live in a globalised world, are concepts 'with no naturally given meaning' (Dhalin, 2004: 1).

The curriculum is also regarded as a 'culture unto itself' in which dominant cultural perspectives are reflected in curricular design 'incorporating assumptions and the valuing of certain skills and knowledge' (Dunne, 2011: 616). From this perspective the curriculum is seen as 'locus and transmitter of values' (Rudolph, 1977: 3) in which society shapes and is shaped by cultural transmission (Bernstein, 1990). Goodlad defines three perspectives on curricular decision making including: socio-political (the influences of stakeholders, internally and externally; technical-professional (the methods of the curriculum development process); and substantive (what should be

learned) (Goodlad, 1994: 1266). The implications of this include the positioned role of universities in relation to an external global environments and how in the last two decades universities have come under increasing pressures to adapt to 'rapidly changing social, technological, economic and political forces emanating from immediate as well as from broader post-industrial external environments' (Bartel, 2003: 43).

### **2.3.2 Socialisation and its influence on curriculum**

One significant factor in these ideas of curriculum change is the dispositions and mindsets of those involved, including teachers and learners (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999) and of student's perceptions of the curriculum as a form of 'becoming' (Barnett, 2009). Kreber (2010) adds 'teachers' beliefs' to Fanghanel's (2007) filter of 'pedagogical beliefs' as a 'conditioning' that operates at the micro-level of the classroom, drawing on the concept of authenticity with regard to teacher identity and pedagogy (Sachs, 2001). The beliefs and values that teachers bring to course design are seen to have a strong influence on how they perceive the benefits of course development (Toohey, 2000). Fanghanel (2012), exploring what being an academic today means, identifies a discourse that promotes pedagogies that empower students in the real world, beyond the confines of work and disciplinary knowledge acquisition. The rhetoric of promoting flexibility and choice is prevalent in the accounts of teachers designing their courses, as a way of defending the rights of 'consumers' of these courses (Deem *et al.*, 2007). There exists here a tension between teachers seeking to make the curriculum authentic for their students and the loss of the authenticity of their own identities (Ball, 2003). Young (2008) sees peer review as a means of overcoming this contradiction in which the 'resilience' of 'traditional' academic values (e.g. transmitting a passion for the subject, or providing students with intellectual capital) cannot be taken for granted. He questions the popular consensus and belief in 'active learning pedagogies' that make possible a drift towards the generic curricula identified above, in which a meta-skills discourse of 'learning how to learn' predominates.

Changing practice can be an internal struggle for teachers (Delpit, 1995) in which the amount of teaching experience is not necessarily an indicator of willingness to change (Norton *et al.*, 2005). One implication of this is that what teachers think they are teaching might be at variance with what they are actually teaching (Goodlad, 1977; Goodlad *et al.*, 1979) and that how they report their teaching to others might not match other people's observations of it. As we shall see in Chapter 5 participants in this study found it difficult to resolve a view of their teaching as promoting a disciplinary identity rather than one that promotes disciplinary knowledge *per se*. This was echoed by what teachers say about their experiences in the lived curriculum as contrasting with an officially sanctioned one (Joseph, 2007).

Oliver (2003) found that academics preferred the day-to-day departmental discussions and informal opportunities to exchange ideas rather than formal training. This resonates with Stark's (2000) much larger-scale study in the US that suggested that less than a third of university teachers reported that pedagogical training had had an influence on their course design indicating an inherent conservatism to changing what works. This reluctance to seek an 'enlargement of repertoire' (Hatton, 1989) is seen to limit the development of practice, as a 'contextual struggle' in which both the curriculum and the context are redesigned. This questions the degree to which curriculum planning is a rational, structured curriculum design process (as might be deduced from the educational and staff development literature) and finds little evidence that this approach is one that academics follow: 'instead of a one-off act of creation, it seemed much curriculum design took the form of bricolage or else an iterative process of refinement and adjustment' (Oliver, 2002: 11). This resonates with findings of this study and was seen to be central to understandings of curriculum development held by participants.

The literature suggests that the strength of these influences varies by discipline. Fanghanel (2007) investigated university lecturers' pedagogical constructs with reference to the context of practice and found the discipline to be a key filter of practice. Elsewhere it is suggested that some academics identify with their disciplines rather than the institution (Henkel, 2000). Badger and Sutherland (2004: 282) in a study that examines academics' perceptions of lectures found the purpose of lecturing

to undergraduates to be induction into ‘ways of thinking and models of [the] subject’. This sense of apprenticeship into a discipline is a ‘complex process, involving learning principles and understanding threshold concepts, becoming familiar with themes and theories and learning to speak the language of the discipline’ (Farrell and McAvinia, 2012: 99). The accounts of participants in this study echo this struggle with conflicting notions of themselves as teachers and as members of a discipline.

## **2.4 Organising the curriculum**

There are a number of *organising principles* that emerge from and are shaped by the influences outlined in the previous section, including the involvement of students, the role of assessment, the discipline and institutional planning. The distinction between influence and organising principle as used in this study lies in the degree to which factors have a direct effect on the structure and content of the curriculum. Some imperatives such as internationalisation and inclusion are important influences that curriculum designers are asked to respond to, whereas others, such as employability, have a more far-reaching effect. For example, employability, in this study, is shown to not only change the curriculum itself – the way in which it is organised – but to transform what is understood as the purpose of the curriculum. The following discussion considers these effects and a series of organising influences, including:

- the involvement of students
- how assessment organises the curriculum
- disciplinary understandings and their effect on the organisation of the curriculum
- employability

The way in which these influences relate to the concept of quality as an overarching organising principle is then explored.

### **2.4.1 The involvement of students as an organising principle**

The increasing influence of students’ views and needs on the design of the curriculum emerges from the literature on student development (Stark, 2000: 430). Curricular goals are worded in terms of student development in course handbooks and teachers

stress them in their first encounters with students on the course (Barnett, 2004a). There is also an increasing call for the involvement of students in curriculum development, as active co-creators of knowledge (Sfard, 1998). Teachers in Stark's study (2000) reported that, after disciplinary influences, student characteristics were the next strongest influence on their course planning. These characteristics included student ability, preparation, interest, and commitment to the course.

The emphasis on involving students in the curriculum is highlighted in approaches to the 'negotiated curriculum', as a form of decision-making action that integrates both intention and the manner in which the intention becomes operationalised into classroom reality (Lovat and Smith, 1995: 23). This expands the traditional idea of the curriculum towards a view of the 'teacher and student acting as co-constructors of knowledge' (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006: 275). Such reasoning conjures an image of students as active participants. Importantly, the corollary of having students as active participants in the construction of learning is that learning becomes meaningful (Grundy, 1987: 102). Furthermore, 'curriculum negotiation involves giving students a voice in the choice and development of learning opportunities: both the 'what' and the 'how' of curriculum' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 171). At the same time, emerging themes from the literature so far indicate that despite these recommendations, not only is there is little consultation with students until the redesign stage within curriculum design, but also student input into curriculum design is not always considered helpful (Bovill *et al.*, 2009). This would suggest that student involvement in the curriculum (other than to receive it) is an aspirational organising principle.

#### **2.4.2 How assessment organises the curriculum**

The importance of assessment as an organising principle of the curriculum (Diamond, 1998; Daugherty *et al.*, 2008) arises for three reasons: it is the means by which the curriculum is regulated externally; it defines what students see as important; and it is the focus of institutional activity defined as academic development. These can all be considered to regulate the curriculum but each differs in the form it takes and the way that teachers respond to it.

In the first of these assessment has an efficacy awarded to it by its 'regulative potency' as recognised in the QAA Code of Conduct, which states 'all students are required to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes' (QAA, 2006: 4). It is in the context of QA that assessment is framed, in which 'Institutions encourage assessment practice that promotes effective learning' (QAA Code of Conduct, Indicator 3: 5). While admitting there is no agreed definition of assessment the QAA guidance on assessment points to its importance in organising the curriculum:

*When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education.*  
(Angelo, 1995: 7)

Therefore it is ironic, perhaps, that assessment attracts the most public criticism: the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997: 139–140), for example, describes it as out of date and outliving its 'usefulness'. Rust (2007: 233) suggests that current summative assessment practices in UK universities are not only unfair but 'intellectually and morally indefensible, and statistically invalid', while Knight and Yorke (2004: 16) refer to assessment as being 'in disarray'. Furthermore, the dominant discourse of assessment is considered to be preoccupied with the measurement of learning rather than on the focus of promoting learning (Price *et al.*, 2011) giving rise to the 'testing culture' as opposed to the 'assessment culture' (Gipps, 1994), or the 'assessment for learning culture' (Black and Wiliam, 1998).

However, these shortcomings are significant given the second reason for the importance of assessment as an organising principle of the curriculum, namely that students put such store in it. Assessment is seen as a powerful lever to 'influence the way students respond to our courses and behave as learners' (Gipps, 1999: 41) and to 'have more effect on students than the teaching they receive' (Bloxham and Boyd, 2007: 3). It is not exaggeration, therefore to suggest that assessment defines what students regards as important, how they spend their time, and how they come to see themselves as students and then as graduates: 'it is not the curriculum which shapes assessment, but assessment which shapes the curriculum' (Brown and Knight, 1994: 12). The danger exists as Hicks (2007: 3) notes in 'the tail (assessment) wagging the dog (curriculum)' in which the danger of students complaining about assessment is

balanced against QAA finding fault with assessment quality processes. The latter indicates assessment to be 'rhetoric, for the benefit of auditors, not students' (Knight, 1995: 13) as a kind of 'backwash' that can determine what and how students learn more than the curriculum does (Biggs, 2003: 141). For this reason assessment is regarded as the 'Achilles heel of quality' (Knight, 2002) in which the academic rules shaping it remain deliberately tacit to avoid such difficulties (Bloxham and West, 2004; O'Donovan *et al.*, 2004; Bloxham, 2012).

The third reason is a hopeful one, however, because in spite of the difficulties outlined above, assessment remains the most efficient means of making changes to students' learning and to progress and develop the curriculum (Elton and Laurillard, 1979; Medland, 2012). The proposition here is that effective assessment strategies, properly applied and thought-through can avoid learning that is superficial and limited (Boud, 1995). The question remains whether assessment can offer the means by which knowledge can be gained for its own sake, independently, autonomously and for use in real-life situations (Dore, 1997: 8). However, assessment is seen as a potential catalyst for rethinking and re-organising HE curricula (Goldman *et al.*, 2012) in which the most significant shift is that from 'a focus on teaching to a focus on learning' (Hughes and Munro, 2012: 27). For this to happen, however, a better understanding is needed of how assessment is anchored in disciplinary forms of knowledge in the curriculum (Shay, 2008).

#### **2.4.3 How disciplinary understandings organise the curriculum**

In addition to its socialising influence discussed above, the discipline is also the means by which curriculum and pedagogy are organised by means of a logical taxonomy for a general body of knowledge, and a specialised vocabulary. The discipline also provides an accepted body of theory and a systematic research strategy, and techniques for its own replication and approval (Dressel and Mayhew, 1974). Academics' conceptions of their disciplines are based on a number of dimensions of understanding (Fanghanel, 2007) including epistemological characteristics and the classification of 'hard pure, soft pure, hard applied and soft applied' (Neumann *et al.*, 2002: 406). Here there is a distinction between the meanings of the terms *subject* and *discipline* (Parker, 2003): a



subject is a well-developed knowledge base that can be articulated, taught and assessed, whereas a discipline is a more complex structure, in which members develop a 'gaze' in which they are 'disciplined' into a community with its own discourse (Swales, 1990).

The relationship between subject and discipline, therefore, is one in which knowledge of the subject matter is shared in a discipline along with goals, language and methods. Taylor (2010) identifies common elements of disciplinary knowledge from the literature, including how knowledge is organised within the discipline and in relation to other disciplines. This includes the assumptions and values that influence the knowledge that the discipline pursues and how it goes about this. Ways of knowing about teaching and learning that have been generated by teaching practice in the discipline over time become *teaching and learning regimes* (Trowler and Cooper, 2002: 221), including discursive repertoires in which members of a discipline community communicate about and in teaching (ibid.: 232). The academic discipline, therefore, becomes the means by which knowledge is seen to be verified and authorised by academic scholars (Schiro, 2008: 4) and is the predominant influence on curriculum design (Stark, 2000). Furthermore, the disciplinary field prescribes how course content is organised (Donald, 1986; 1990) and the relative importance of knowledge as a set of skills as opposed to the discipline as a group of scholars with a related interest in understanding the world (Fanghanel, 2009). This is consistent with Biglan's (1973) distinction on the pure/applied dimension of disciplines, to which Becher (1994) added disciplinary 'tribes', each with its own cultural and cognitive style of knowledge work (Becher and Trowler, 2001), including curriculum (Muller, 2009), and the 'knowledge of the subject to be taught' (Sarakinoti *et al.*, 2011).

The textbook is seen as a strong influence on course planning (Roseman *et al.*, 2010) and it is becoming a stronger influence as publishers package textbooks with many auxiliary aids, including internet-based ones. The focus on disciplinary content that this indicates is underlined by Stark's (2000) findings that 1 in 2 teachers report that their first step is to select content, consistent with their emphasis on discipline as an organised body of knowledge to be learned.

Threats to this disciplinary emphasis on practice include an increase in managerial control in HE and the influence of academic developers rather than disciplinary experts in curriculum development (Land, 2004: 5). However, an even greater challenge stems from the orientation to knowledge itself and its 'unruliness' in whatever is collectively endorsed (Bloor, 1991) and the view that it can no longer be regarded as discrete and coherent but is constructed and contested (Gibbons *et al.*, 1994). In the era of life-long learning the reliance on bodies of disciplinary and canonical knowledge is reduced to generic and transferable skills (Edwards and Usher, 2001: 28). This has the potential to weaken discipline boundaries and leave them susceptible to external influences on the curriculum. The restructuring of HE courses to meet the perceived demand of employers, students and the government creates a dependence on external fields of practice to which they are linked (Beck and Young, 2005). It is this tension between external influences and drivers and the anchoring of practice to a disciplinary authority that remains to be explored.

#### **2.4.4 Employability and its effects in the curriculum**

It is inevitable that the theme of employability will figure in any current examination of the HE curriculum given the sustained policy steer and resulting proliferation of reports (Cullen *et al.*, 2002). The Robbins Report (1963) identified one of the four key aims for HE as 'instruction in skills suitable to play a part in the general division of labour' (1963: para. 25) while the Dearing Report, 1997, identified the vital role that education plays in a modern economy in which 'education and training [should] enable people in advanced society to compete with the best in the world' (NCIHE 1997: para. 1.11). It is the Leitch Report (2006), however, that has shifted the focus in education onto the central importance of skills (cf. Leitch, 2005), especially those that are 'economically valuable'. The pathology of education as responsible for a 'skills deficit' is one taken up by government policy and HE reformers who have largely ignored the report's call for greater funding for HE. Much reported in the media, for example, is employers' dissatisfaction with graduates' level of 'generic skills' including communication, team working and time management emphasising the importance of the education and training of the workforce (Ashton and Green, 1996). More recently the OECD report 'Learning Our Lesson: Review of Quality Teaching in Higher Education'

(Henard, 2010) states: 'Higher Education is becoming a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy'. These policies are shaping the curriculum as an external influence and are shown in this study to directly affect the structure and content of the curriculum – to be a key principle in how it is organised.

With regard to the shape and structure of the curriculum itself, Nixon *et al.*, (2006; 2008) cite the drive to improve workplace skills and productivity as instrumental in curriculum policy. Smith (2012) in a review of the literature on work-related learning in curriculum design identifies 'work-integrated' learning in which students spend time in professional work or in practice settings relevant to their degrees of study into their occupational futures. This raises questions about how the workplace is legitimated as a vehicle for subject-specific learning and how the conception of the individual work-based curriculum that grows out of the experience of the user (Lester and Costley, 2010) is realised in HE.

In this context work-related learning is seen to be associated with the development of 'skilful practices in context' to acknowledge that academic and work-related achievements are situated in particular contexts (Yorke, 2011: 120) as a form of 'vocational expertise' (Billett, 2001). Work-based learning is recognised as a field of study in which contesting positions on how universities relate to employers are held (Gibbs and Garnett, 2007). Implicit here also are the difficulties involved in assessing work-related learning, requiring a 'paradigm shift' in assessment (*ibid.*). This includes the difficulty of articulating generic statements of learning outcomes to phenomena that are 'context-dependence, situated or, uncertain and volatile' (Sadler, 2002: 49). Attempts to bridge this gap are identified as a form of *negotiated* work-based learning that emerges from the experience of the learner, their work context and their community of practice (Nixon *et al.*, 2006; 2008). Work-related learning is seen in this context as a 'transdisciplinary' field that sits outside of subjects (Boud, 1999) with its own norms and practices that have the potential to put it at odds with the idea of discipline based learning (Lester and Costley, 2010: 567). In this conception learning is associated, in a narrow sense, with capability to do a job, and more broadly with

knowledge that is generated through practice and for use in practical purposes (Schön, 1987).

It can be seen, therefore, that emphasis has been directed to 'transferable skills' under the banner of *Life-long Learning* in which *experience* is seen as the key to employability (Pool and Sewell, 2007). Harvey et al, (1997), however, find a relative lack of regard for disciplinary-based understanding and skills in the skills agenda, especially where disciplines are not applied or vocational. The value of subject knowledge, skills and attitudes in this conception of the curriculum is as an employability 'asset' (Hillage and Pollard, 1998) but there is a view that for some subjects employability is 'modelling the invisible' (Gamble, 2001). Land (2004) suggests that the discourse of 'transferable skills' has a 'rhetorical potency' in the agendas of institutions, employers, funding bodies and government departments. He argues that while this raises the importance of employability skills in curriculum development this is often located outside the discipline in the 'managerial organisational space' of generic teaching. These accounts reflect a conflict between a sense of employability as a 'natural' and an 'alien' discourse, and its potential to be a form of 'troublesome knowledge' (Meyer and Land, 2005). The implication of this is that it might involve a shift in academic identity that many academics are unwilling to undertake or sanction. The choice between practical knowledge and knowledge for its own sake, for example, are competing discourses (Eraut, 2000). Land refers to this as 'domesticating' agendas in which developers and planners are called upon as translators, to manage often difficult meaning across boundaries' (Land, 2004: 11).

### ***Legitimizing knowledge for employability***

One view of employability emphasises the learner having special qualities as 'a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations' (Knight and Yorke, 2004: 5). The relative emphasis on the qualities of a graduate as well as on what he/she knows has implications for the curriculum and how this is perceived by academics whose concern is mainly for the discipline and its field (Kreber and Castleden, 2005). This suggests a view of the learner as being at the centre of his/her own employability, as a form of personal achievement (Knight and Yorke, 2004). It

highlights new forms of intellectual capital, and is seen to drive the ways in which universities are raising the profile of employability in the curriculum. One aspect of this view of employability is 'authenticity'. This can take the form of 'physical authenticity', the provision of a real work environment as 'doing real-world work' (Smith, 2012: 250), or as 'cognitive authenticity' (Herrington and Herrington, 2006) as work that is meaningful and purposive. The transfer of this learning from the workplace to the university presents the learner and teacher with a number of problems, not least for the relationship between theory and practice.

In summary, this link between the intended curriculum and a future world for students as employees can be considered to be the development of the 'deferred' or 'hybridised' curriculum that reflects a 'vocationalisation' of the HE curriculum (Grubb and Lazerson, 2005) in the call for graduate skills for the twenty-first Century. This in turn can be seen as constructing the 'prospective' pedagogic identity for students (Bernstein, 2000) as a form of pedagogic discourse.

#### **2.4.5 Quality as an organising principle in the curriculum**

The UK HE curriculum is overseen by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), an independent body that protects the public interest by overseeing how universities maintain their academic standards and quality. Formed in 1997 following the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Report, NCIHE, 1997) QAA introduced a new QA framework with reference points for standards and quality including its own code of practice, *The UK Quality Code for Higher Education* (QAA, 2012)<sup>2</sup>. This was based on two simple ideas: that it is important to be explicit about what is being learned and how this relates to the process of learning; and that this should be related to external reference points so as to demonstrate that they have validity beyond a teaching team and an institution (Jackson, 2000: 165).

With respect to curriculum development QAA, introduced the idea of *programme specification* for all courses that was intended to make explicit the institution's learning intentions and to relate these to national qualifications frameworks and other

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<sup>2</sup> At the time of the fieldwork in this study this was known as the *Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards* (QAA, 2006)

reference points such as subject benchmarks (QAA, 2000). This was intended to cover: knowledge and understanding that a student was expected to have on completion; key skills including communication, numeracy, use of information technology and learning how to learn; cognitive skills such as critical analysis; and subject specific skills (NCIHE, 1997). It was also intended to be made available to prospective students and to help them understand the relationship between learning outcomes and the LTA process (Brown, 2004). Furthermore, by making this explicit it would encourage teachers to make these connections in their curriculum designs. *Specification*, in this sense was meant to include the ideas of *process* – the act of specifying – and *product* – a description of defining characteristics of a programme of study (a curriculum). Programme specifications were welcomed by many as a new and consistent way of representing holistically the structure and content of a course, its main learning intentions and the LTA methods used to promote, demonstrate and evaluate learning (Jackson and Shaw, 2002: 6). The aim of improving the quality of information about an institution's academic standards by encouraging the adoption of an outcomes-based approach to learning, was central to this. The hope for this new system was to provide information in the programme specifications that would be seen as the basis for 'intelligent conversation' rather than as a bureaucratic 'master' (Jackson, 2000: 171).

The distinction, and relationship, between Quality Enhancement (QE) and QA is frequently discussed in the literature (Harvey and Williams, 2010). Williams (2002) argues that QE is an integral part of QA as shown by the dissemination of good practice (and the warnings against bad practice) that emerge from Institutional Review. The emphasis on QE to bring about transformation in practice (Jackson, 2009) is seen as a reaction to the demands for QA in the 1990s and the rise of performativity (Harker, 1995). Parker (2003) points to the 'trade-off' between QE and QA that has happened within UK HE as the means by which institutions accommodate both as a form of compromise. More recently, the QAA define QE as 'taking deliberate steps to bring about improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experiences of students' (2008a: 13). This is a view of quality as a relative concept (Raban, 2007) where transformation is considered to arise from applying what is known to work in terms of educational effectiveness (Gibbs, 2010: 11). While this is seen as something of a culture shift from the perceived managerialism of QA towards a more inclusive

approach the 'jury is still out' on this (Bamber and Anderson, 2012: 7) and there remains some indication that 'behaviours redolent of the displaced assurance regime' persist (QAA, 2008b: 6). The residue of accountability in the system is associated with tensions and 'distrust of the purposes of QE (Cheng, 2012) and the dominance of risk avoidance (Raban, 2007). The need, it is argued, is to make the improvement of HE conceptually and practically distinct from its accountability (Middlehurst and Woodhouse, 1995). Steps to achieve this include the academic audit of HE, which while being an accountability mechanism, improved the capacity of universities to independently assure the quality of their academic degrees and student learning by putting the improvement of learning and teaching on institutional agendas (Dill, 1995).

## **2.5 Institutional planning, design and evaluation of the curriculum**

The influences and organising principles outlined above can be seen to be manifested in various ways in the planning, design and evaluation of the curriculum. Within these processes course approval is central to the institutional context for wider curriculum planning. This takes the form of evaluation of curricular designs and plans and is where changes to the curriculum are made official. Curriculum reform is seen in the literature to have been driven by structural needs such as the 'over-crowded curriculum', and 'semesterisation and modularization' (Light *et al.*, 2009; Coate, 2012: 51). Semesterisation, as the breaking of the academic year into semesters, is related to modularisation as the breaking down of courses into units or modules. The use of these terms is pejorative, indicating a 'managerial' expedience rather than any pedagogical benefit. The notion of modularity, for example, has evolved, from being the simple division of courses organisationally into separate units, into principles of 'credit accumulation, progressive assessment and student responsibility and choice' (Turner, 2002: 1). Consonant with the focus on the structure of courses is the emphasis on defining learning tasks and outcomes and measurable competence (Fleming, 2006: 108), in which the curriculum development process ties together the strategic plan and classroom practice (Blackmore and Kandiko, 2012). Knight (2001: 371) argues for an approach to curriculum coherence that 'breaks with the discourses of learning outcomes, rational curriculum planning, linear, simple systems and starts in the complexities of learning (ibid.: 370).

In spite of a call for collaborative approaches to designing the curriculum (Ziegenfuss and Lawler, 2008) the role of design in the development of the curriculum is often seen as 'both marginal and subservient' to strategic planning and QA in HE (McNutt, 2012: 129). This is rationalised by managers who see strategic planning as avoiding the pitfalls that befall HE in times of austerity and reduced public funding (Pisapia and Robinson, 2011). Other studies, that take an insider view of curriculum development (Persky *et al.*, 2012; Naidoo, 1998), identify the importance of dialogue and a collegial approach to course review in bringing about clearer understandings of the curriculum, and a willingness to engage with the curriculum development process. This resonates with Vorster's study (2010) that examines the curriculum development processes of one academic department in a South African university, focussing on the events of curriculum meetings, curriculum documentation and the experiences of academics. She uncovers the various generative mechanisms from a critical realism perspective, in which the culture of collegiality is 'prized highly'. She describes this as a situational logic that promotes *protection* and results in morphostasis, while also being seen, it should be noted, as a field position that is effective in staving off a 'managerial approach to running the institution' (ibid.: 24). Evident here are two types of curriculum design process: one in which the institution rationalises the curriculum in forms of control and the other that centres on a professionally-led dialogue.

With regard to how the curriculum is evaluated three paradigms of curriculum evaluation can be seen in UK HE: Melrose (1998) categorises these as *functional*, *transactional* and *critical*. Each of these is underpinned by a different concept of quality. While these all relate in the main to evaluation of the delivery, rather than to the planning of courses, they are indicative of approaches that also apply to course approval. The first, the *functional* paradigm, works on the understanding that there is a 'concrete truth' to uncover about the worth of the curriculum or a revelation as to whether or not a course should change (ibid.: 39). Courses that best fit this paradigm are those that are judged to meet the goals of external drivers such as initiatives to develop the workforce. Quality processes associated with this involve 'checking standards' to arrive at 'zero defects' informed by a 'fitness for purpose' concept of quality (Harvey, 1993).



The *transactional* paradigm of evaluation focuses on how the course meets the needs of stakeholders, especially students as customers or consumers. This paradigm recognises the importance of (inter-)subjectivity of judgement and the perspective of the evaluator. The third *critical* paradigm is based on ideas about communities of learning and self-evaluation and the power to set the group's own standards. This might involve empowering teaching staff to initiate and direct the evaluation process in an action learning set or action research group, or any form of ongoing consultation with stakeholders. The emphasis here is on improving the curriculum, and likely outcomes are a questioning of the current goals of the curriculum. Review of curriculum is seen as a collaborative and systematic community learning process (Marshall and Peters, 1985). This process however becomes transactional if there is a stronger emphasis on seeing stakeholders as customers rather than as partners.

Melrose's functional paradigm can be mapped to approaches considered to be QA, while her critical paradigm can be seen to align with QE. This association is made more difficult by the blurring of the distinction between the QE and QA discussed below and the level of discretion that academics have over the evaluation of their work (Bamber and Anderson, 2012). Furthermore, this conception of quality processes can cloak the fact that what academics object to mostly is the climate of institutional distrust of their work rather than the need to be held to account for performance (Worthington and Hodgson, 2005).

In addition, studies of curriculum approval point to the positions that academics take in response to their perception of bureaucracy and managerialism (Harvey and Newton, 2004). Academics are seen to distrust institutional audit and to treat it as a game in which to 'win' is to 'get away with it', an attitude that was observable in some of the participants' comments in this study. This finding is similar to the arguments of Newton (2000, 2002) that quality monitoring for HE has produced a 'game playing' attitude among academics to fulfil the requirements of quality procedures. Barrow (1999) also refers to game-playing behaviour which has resulted in academics regarding audit evaluation as demanding an inauthentic 'performance'. Against this background course approval processes are seen as isolated events that are not well

integrated into institutional processes for accountability and often fail to improve teaching and learning (Persky *et al.*, 2012).

### ***Peer review***

The notion of course evaluation as a form of peer review is seen as central to evaluative cultures in HE (Lamont, 2009). However, at panel events such as those that take place in course approval evaluation of the material is made on the basis of a pragmatic problem-solving in which panels are ‘uncoordinated parties’ that ‘suffer from uncertainty and may not be rational’ (ibid.: 24). This includes the myths and ceremonies that play a crucial role in legitimate the process of review (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). Here the formality of the event upholds the ‘sovereignty over decision making’ that is guided by a self-correcting method of ‘feeling one’s way’ towards a decision (Lamont, 2009: 6).

Horsburgh (2000) in a study of HE in New Zealand finds peer review to be the principal mechanism for ensuring quality of learning and teaching and evaluation curriculum. In this context collegial discussions are focused on student learning as a refraction of the forces that are acting on HE. External academics become ‘critical friends’, in which ‘professional dialogue and exchange of ideas are the important factors’ (ibid.: 97). She considers five aspects of course approval to be important:

- the curriculum design and overall intent;
- the learning, teaching and assessment strategies;
- strategies for ongoing improvements and enhancements;
- evaluation of outcomes;
- provision of resources.

These key stages of curriculum development involve the ongoing practices of the curriculum (the *lived* curriculum), a phase of planning, review and approval (the *intended* curriculum) and the putting into practice these intentions (the *enacted* curriculum). Following approval enacting the curriculum is accompanied by an ‘unpacking’ of the course (especially in the case of new courses as opposed to ‘refreshed’ ones) – i.e. at the point the (newly described) curriculum is taught.

The extent to which peer review informs these aspects can vary considerably. Hyun and Oliver (2011) found a collaborative culture between administrators and teaching staff to work very well. In the case of the QAA, however, there is an inherent tension between the principle of peer review and the bureaucratisation of the process. So, whilst the spirit of the QAA guidance is to make curriculum documents open and visible (and to some extent inclusive), the practice of documentation is generally seen as bureaucratic (and closed). This includes events, crucially in the typical form, in UK HE at least, of the Approval Panel Event (APE) led by the University Approval Panel (UAP), as meeting points, or crossroads perhaps, of the intended and the lived curriculum, as a process that is characterised as involving a form of consensus that directs how the curriculum is enacted and legitimated.

### **2.5.1 Achieving coherence in the curriculum**

Curriculum coherence, as the means by which the quality of the curriculum can be addressed, is seen as a key and central concept by curriculum writers and theorists (Anderson, 2002; Cuevas *et al.*, 2009; Stark *et al.*, 1997; Sherborne, 2008; Lattuca and Stark, 2009; Mhlolo, 2011; Schmidt and Prawat., 2006; Weller, 2012) and its significance has increased in line with HE expansion and the growth of large programmes of study in universities. There are several interpretations in the literature that reflect the viewpoint and underlying curriculum philosophy of those who advance them, including curriculum coherence as *evaluation*, and curriculum coherence as a *heuristic modelling*. These will be discussed in turn, followed by an exploration of the distinctions between them in order to derive orientations to these including dispositions held by teachers and others involved in course planning and approval processes.

### **2.5.2 Achieving curriculum coherence through evaluation**

Constructive alignment (Biggs, 1996, 1999, 2003) remains the basis of most approaches to planning the curriculum and for ensuring its coherence. This perspective places curriculum planning at the heart of academic work, and considers the structure, coherence, and integrity of the students' formal academic program to depend

substantially on 'the plans faculty created, and how tightly they prescribe what students should study, and how well they communicate their plans to students' (Stark et al 1997: 100). Evaluation of the curriculum is carried out as a form of mapping in which links are made between learning outcomes and the learning activities designed to bring them about as a form of enhancement (Oliver *et al.*, 2010).

Cuevas *et al.* (2009), in an institutional programme that is followed by universities in the US, describe this form of curriculum coherence as a *conclusion* based on a systematic study, interpretation, reflection, and judgment of 'curricular dimensions'. Their approach aims to establish and develop two types of outcome: *integration* and *structural alignment*:

- *Outcomes Integration* – the degree to which program outcomes are addressed in a course of study.
- *Structural Alignment* – the consistency between what faculty expect students to learn, what learning experiences faculty design, what goals faculty communicate to students, what faculty think they teach, and what faculty assess.

(Cuevas and Feit, 2011c)

Increasingly universities are using tools to map and plan the curriculum and this has been discussed by many (e.g. Porter, 2002; Hughes and Munro, 2012; Weller, 2012; Uchiyama and Radin, 2008). Spencer *et al.* (2012) note that while there are tools and approaches for mapping individual subjects they rarely map across the university, and that the quality of the tools in use and the data that is collected and analysed varies. Cuevas and Feit (2011a) offer a *curriculum matrix* method as an instrument for organising the curriculum mapping process in which assessments are mapped to learning outcomes across a course or courses. They aim to increase the specificity of this tool by offering 'levels of instruction' as a 'rubric' for content delivery. Similarly, O'Rourke *et al.* (2012) report the use of a tool, '*Coursewise*', that aims to improve the visibility of courses. It allows students and staff to see the range of assessment across 5000 individual modules and 300 programmes/courses. The aim is to increase transparency and they report that 'savvy' students have already begun to question

why they are confined to particular modules within their program when other 'more attractive' ones are on offer elsewhere in the institution (ibid.: 48).

The use of tools to map learning outcomes, such as 'Coursebuilder' (Hughes and Munro, 2012) is also gaining ground. Furthermore, the use of tools to create 'open' e-versions of the content of modules and courses is increasing. This include the '*C-SAP Toolkit*' (Marsh, 2010) that is used by the participants in CS1 in this study (see Chapter 5), and the development of an Open Textbook on Digital Literacy (Gruszczynska and Pountney, 2013).

Approaches to curriculum coherence that are achieved through strategies such as mapping are critiqued by some as redolent of a deficit, accountability model (Mhlolo, 2011) and as a function of management (Finley, 2000). Product-driven approaches are questioned (Ross, 2000) and doubts arise regarding the notion of coherence that is based around outcomes-based models as a 'commitment to efficiency', rather than strategies that are manifested through attention to processes, messages and the quality of communities and environments (Knight, 2001: 378). These criticisms of rational curriculum planning challenge the idea that curriculum planning is reducible to precise statements that can specify outcomes. Knight suggests that teachers are more likely to call upon 'lessons-in-memory' as remembered fragments of past practice that have worked well at other times: 'Here, outcomes are *not* habitually used for planning, but as checks that the plans are as good as they seem.' (Knight, 2001: 374 original emphasis). Creativity in the curriculum, he argues, depends on there being 'slack, spaces or spare capacity' in the system (ibid.). However, strong and persuasive arguments are made for systematic, rational processes that combine efficiency with a pragmatic approach (Wolf and Hughes, 2007).

### **2.5.3 Achieving curriculum coherence through heuristic modelling**

The emphasis in approaches that model the curriculum heuristically is on common-sense understandings of what works in practice, in which maps of the curriculum are mental maps or schemas that guide practice and its development, as a form of problem-solving (Kahneman *et al.*, 1982). This includes the idea of theories-in-use (Argyris and Schön, 1974) and design in practice (Argyris and Schön, 1996) in

organisational settings such as HE institutions. The basis of these schemas are often linked to the curriculum of the disciplines in that they can be influenced by disciplinary inculcation (Lattuca and Stark, 2009), embedded in teaching and learning in a discipline (Taylor, 2010), and determined by changes in disciplinary knowledge (Halliburton, 1977). Here curricula coherence-seeking is viewed as a heuristic device to guide learning and teaching rather than as designs that are pre-planned or programmed in advance. Bamber and Anderson (2012), for example, report the use of a 'discretion framework' as heuristic to allow a 'fresh look' at how institutions and individuals approach evaluation. Heuristics are used by others to formulate the basis of learning in disciplines and the associated beliefs (personal theories) about learning and instruction (Hofer and Pintrich, 1997).

The use of visual representations of the curriculum to map the underlying structures and linkages<sup>3</sup> is discussed by Jackson and Shaw (2002). This involves the use of conceptual imagery in which concepts are simultaneously the 'representation of a reality and the expression of an intention, a generalisation from experience and a hypothesis from which future experience might be predicted' (ibid.: 1). This use of concepts in design processes allows sense to be made of the world and for this sense making to be applied to new contexts and circumstances (Bolton, 1977). Applying this to curriculum making, Jackson and Shaw propose that the spatial visualisation of concepts can display relationships and dynamics that are otherwise difficult to perceive. Comparing curriculum development to a process of design that results in a product (a curriculum) they suggest that it involves both rational/systematic and more intuitive thinking (Jackson and Shaw, 2002: 2). This includes theories of learning that can be embodied in visual representations of the curriculum. They draw on Lawson's (1997) conception of the design process as a negotiation between a problem and a solution involving analysis, synthesis and evaluation and ask '[do] academics recognise these dimensions of design when they are reviewing and designing a course?' (Jackson and Shaw, 2002: 3)

In a 2008 study Roseman *et al.* explore the teaching of science and examine the fragmented ideas that students bring to class. They identify important connections to

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<sup>3</sup> An example of a curriculum map as a visualisation of curricular coherence is included in Appendix 23.

be made in order that new materials can be designed. Here the emphasis is on experimentation in the curriculum to find what works. It involves a mapping of the curriculum but the focus is on concepts and learning rather than the delivery of the course itself. Curriculum materials are considered to be coherent if they illustrate and model *integrated understanding*: that is, they are based on an understanding of how students connect ideas and apply them to new contexts (*knowledge integration*). This draws on Bruner's (1995: 333) concept of the need to 'grasp the relatedness of knowledge' and how experts have richly inter-related concepts that novices are less likely to possess. Significant in these studies is the emphasis on coherence of learning itself rather than on the efficiency of its management. Curricular coherence in this perspective is the desired quality of the curriculum materials that present a complete set of interrelated ideas and make connections among them explicit.

This reflects a view of alignment that goes beyond the simplistic matching of one set of content with another to consider the logical and hierarchical sequencing of concepts, including their 'horizontal' and 'vertical' coherence (Wilson and Bertenthal, 2005). A curriculum is considered to be horizontally coherent if its instruction and assessment are aligned with, and target the same goals for learning as, 'standards'; vertical coherence exists if standards at one level build on those at previous levels (Squires, 2009); and a curriculum is considered developmentally coherent if it takes into account the content knowledge, abilities and understanding that are needed to progress at each stage (Wilson and Draney, 2009: 7). While the use of the language of 'standards' with regard to vertical coherence might be associated with coherence as evaluation and the efficiency model of the curriculum it actually has its roots in Bruner's (1960: 334) conception of the curriculum as the search for a visible 'depth and continuity in our teaching'. The goal is to give students an emerging and progressive sense of the curriculum (Schmidt and Prawat, 2006) as opposed to (merely) providing a means by which this can be managed.

## **2.6 Discussion**

The view of the curriculum as a complex dynamic system with interdependent components and a commonly shared aspiration to achieve a curriculum that is

coherent is evident in the review of the literature above. It is within the processes and practices at the system level, however, that approaches to coherence can be seen to diverge: into the *product* model of the curriculum (coherence as evaluation); and into the *process* model (coherence as heuristic modelling). The distinction between the terms *influences* and *principles* is reiterated here in that principles directly affect both the structure and content and the purpose of the curriculum. If we consider employability, for example, a shift in focus in the curriculum from a vocational influence towards an applied principle of how the curriculum is organised and pedagogised can be identified.

At a subtle level both product and process approaches can be said to link to policy and policy measures in that they are both related to a drive for improvement, albeit that one attends to better management of the curriculum, while the other to better teaching and learning (Herman and Webb, 2007). A stark discrepancy is apparent here between approaches that promote a systematic, methodology of curriculum development and those that align themselves with a looser coupling between pedagogic and knowledge practices and planning. At issue, to some extent, is teacher agency in the design process and how this is situated within structural elements of the curriculum. What middle ground might there be?

The distinction between these approaches also lies in their divided purpose as the essential difference between coherence in theory to coherence in practice. In other words *evaluation* is, in practice, a looking backwards, while *modelling* is a looking forwards. This underlines the viewpoint that 'it is more important to understand how the written curriculum translates into practice than to understand what sense teachers make of the curriculum' (Mhlolo, 2011: 77). The implication here is that the curriculum is not simply hidden, in the sense of waiting to be revealed (Longstreet and Shane, 1993), but that it is masked as ritual in authority structures (Weber, 1964) as a bureaucratic form of the organising of the social (Dowling, 2007). Underlying this are the positions held interchangeably by social agents that can be summarised as representing three orientations to the practices of curriculum planning and approval:



*Collegiality*: teachers align themselves with approaches that are collegial and they perceive this to be a motivating and productive position for their work

*Bureaucracy*: teachers find approaches that are bureaucratic to be de-motivating resulting in a loss of engagement and productivity in their work

*Consensus*: teachers acknowledge the tension between collegial and bureaucratic approaches to be resolved through accommodation and that the degree of compromise that takes place determines their sense of autonomy.

These positions within the field of HE and its subfield of academic development remain to be analytically distinguished as position takings to curriculum coherence and the underlying basis of curriculum expertise and authority needs to be explored. How these orientations articulate with the approaches to coherence discussed in this literature review is unclear. Whilst what we know of curriculum development can be said to form an internal language of description, not least in how participants in this study talk about the curriculum processes they are engaged in, this review suggests that the basis of curriculum reproduction and change and how this occurs is not visible. This study aims to address this discursive gap.

## **2.7 Summary**

This literature review has identified and distinguished the ideas, influences, and organising principles operating in the curriculum in HE, as the object of study in this thesis. Three broad field positions, held by social agents at various points in the curriculum development process, have been synthesised from the literature. The indication is that the field is generally under-researched and under-theorised. There remains uncertainty, for example, about how curriculum practices and ideas are generated and how the practice of teachers in course planning and design in HE make this possible. This review identifies not only a gap in empirical research in the HE curriculum but also the absence of examination of what constitutes *curriculum development knowledge*, as the 'know how' and the 'know what' of designing courses. Indeed, it would appear that curriculum theorising has become a 'glass bead game' (Sears, 1992) rather than curriculum development as the 'art of the practical' (Schwab, 1969). This is implicated with the need for consensus based curriculum change and the

charge that this is rarely achieved (Blackmore and Kandiko, 2012; Barnett, 2004b; 2012) resulting in a lack of engagement by both those involved in developing the curriculum and those who approve it.

Whilst approaches to coherence outlined above represent an internal language of description for a working model of curriculum and its development in current practice in HE there is a relatively weak integration of the main ideas that emerge from the competing product and process approaches. For example, very little research into the process and basis of approving courses has been made, particularly in UK HE. This review has identified gaps in empirical study in which the basis of course approval and its effects is yet to be examined giving rise to the research questions of this thesis as stated in Chapter 1. The next chapter turns to social realism as a theoretical perspective on the curriculum that offers the potential for a deeper understanding of the issues and forces at play in the curriculum.

## Chapter 3: A social realist framework for knowledge and pedagogic practice

### 3.1 Introduction

The review of literature in Chapter 2 identifies key curriculum ideas and orientations to curriculum coherence and suggests that little is known about how these relate to the positions of social agents involved. Understanding curriculum approval, therefore, involves an examination of this problem space in order to develop the object of research and to find tools to analyse it (Ashwin, 2012). This chapter addresses the task of assembling a conceptual framework capable of researching curriculum planning and approval, and the underlying ideas, concerns and research questions set out in Chapter 1.

The conceptual framework for knowledge and practice in the curriculum that follows is organised into three interdependent and mutually constitutive parts. This is based on Archer's (1995) schema (revised by Maton, 2013a: 15) that connects social ontologies, explanatory frameworks and substantive research studies. The three parts are:

1. **Critical realism as an ontological perspective:** the key concept of *emergence* is discussed and Archer's morphogenetic sequence is outlined.
2. **Social realism as an epistemological perspective and explanatory framework:** Bourdieu's practice theory and the key concepts of *field*, *habitus* and *doxa* are explained. Bernstein's code concepts, including the *pedagogic device*, are introduced and their value to the study is identified. This theory is extended to include Maton's *Legitimation Code Theory (LCT)* and its *epistemic pedagogic device* and codes (*specialisation*, *semantics* and *autonomy*).
3. **Institutional rationality as an organising framework:** this draws on *institutional rationality* in relation to the *legitimation of curriculum authority* and *expertise*. This is then examined from the perspective of *autonomy* and the key concepts of *collegiality*, *bureaucracy* and *consensus* are identified as the organising framework for the empirical work of this study.

### 3.2 Critical realism

This study is shaped by critical realism which has been described as an ‘underlabouring’ ontology to social realism (Maton, 2008). It is based on an analysis of agents and structures that asks ‘What must the world be like for us to have knowledge of it?’ This binary embodies an analytical dualism (Bhaskar, 1979) that involves ‘ontological realism’ as a commitment to the idea that there is a reality that exists independently from, and prior to, individual experience from which human beings can create knowledge. This constitutes ‘epistemological relativism’ in that all knowledge is considered to be humanly produced reflecting the conditions under which it is produced; and ‘judgemental rationality’ as the notion of judgement and the possibility of judgement as beliefs that can be wrong (Moore, 2013). Critical realism is a ‘depth ontology’ in that it considers the world to be stratified and that ‘the real cannot be reduced simply to experience’ (Clegg, 2005a: 420). Here a distinction can be made between the empirical, the actual and the real, and in which the real includes mechanisms, events and experiences.

Critical realism, therefore, provides the ontological basis for this study by providing that there is a reality that may not be possible to know, and that this reality is differentiated, structured and stratified (Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 2009). Accordingly it is possible to differentiate three levels of reality: the ‘empirical’ (apprehended through sense data); the ‘actual’ (how events can be experienced); and the ‘real’ (objects, their structures or natures and their causal powers and liabilities) (Fairclough *et al.*, 2002: 3).

Approaches to how we know the world, therefore, need to take the nature of reality into account (Corson, 1991), and this is particularly so for social realist studies, such as this one, that examine the epistemological basis for knowledge and the curriculum, (Maton, 2004; Vorster, 2010). This study adopts a critical realist approach to structure and agency because of its suitability for investigating practices and discourse in HE (Ashwin, 2008), its potential for curriculum theorising (Priestley, 2011), and the insights it offers into curriculum change (Wheelahan, 2010). Critical realism as a ‘tool-making tool’ (Balkin, 1998), therefore, is particularly suited to notions of emergence (Priestley, 2011) and the ways that a new idea supplants the old (morphogenesis) and

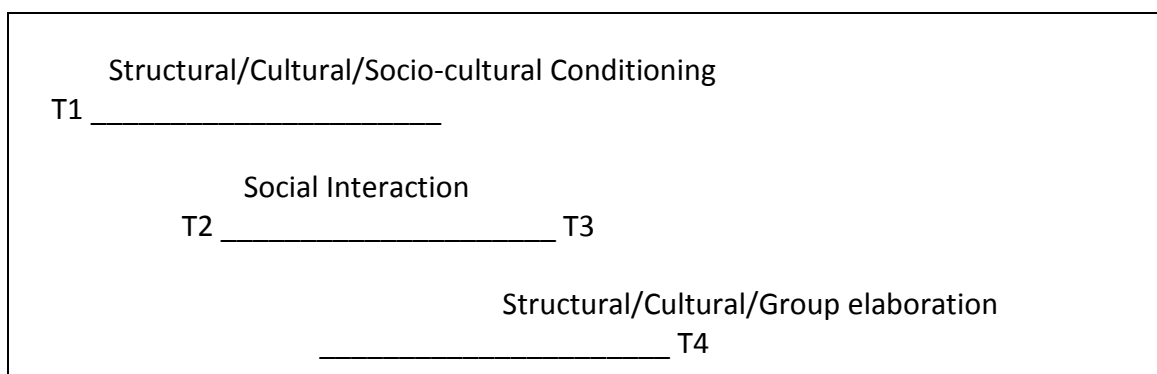
how the old ideas are maintained and new ideas are rejected (morphostasis) (Archer, 1988).

The concept of 'emergence' is central to critical realist studies and is identified as the space in which a new *sui generis* social practice may emerge that is irreducible to the sum of its parts and has its own properties and powers (Archer, 1995; Sayer, 2000). In this study, for example, understandings of curriculum development are seen to emerge from the processes of course approval. Empirical studies that draw on critical realist approaches seek an understanding of the emergent and its properties. Bhaskar uses critical realism to explore how interdisciplinary perspectives affect how climate change has come to be understood (Bhaskar *et al.*, 2010). Other studies include Vorster's (2010) examination of new curricula in a South African university; Skinningsrud's (2005) analysis of emergence of the Norwegian educational system; and Wheelahan's exploration of changes to knowledge in education systems (2010a). Archer's morphogenesis is also applied in Maton's analysis of the legitimization of cultural studies in UK HE (2005), and in Horrocks's exploration of the growing importance of information systems in UK government (2009).

### **3.2.1 The morphogenetic sequence**

Archer's morphogenesis (Archer, 1988; 1995) can be used to examine emergence in educational systems (Skinningsrud, 2005). Archer argues that it is emergence over time (morphogenesis) that makes emergent structural properties real and allows them to constrain individuals (Archer, 1995: 83). She recognises the interdependence of structure and agency (i.e. without people there would be no structures) and argues that they operate on different timescales. So while structure and agency are interdependent, Archer argues that it is possible to unpick them analytically. By isolating structural and/or cultural factors that provide a context of action for agents, it is possible to investigate how those factors shape the subsequent interactions of agents and how those interactions in turn reproduce or transform the initial context (see Table 1).

**Table 1: The morphogenetic sequence for structure, culture and agency (Archer, 1995: 157)**



Archer argues that the morphogenetic approach has two purposes: '(i) it is an explanatory framework for examining the interplay between structure and agency and their outcomes, and (ii) it is a tool kit for developing the analytical histories of emergence of particular social formations, institutional structures, and organizational forms' (Archer, 2010: 274). In other words, the morphogenetic sequence is both the means for explaining social formations (the methodological complement of critical realism), and also a means of accounting for change as the 'trajectories and dynamics of social formations'. This morphogenetic approach distinguishes analytically between subjectivism, which reduces structures to agents, and objectivism, which reduces agents to structures, in order to appreciate their interaction. Maton points to this complexity: 'Archer refers to subjectivism as 'upwards conflation' and objectivism as 'downwards conflation'. Archer (1995) also critiques the 'central conflation' of the structuration theory of Giddens (1991) which by 'conflating structure and agency prevents analysis of their interaction' (Maton, 2004: 64).

Archer offers a three-part cycle over time. In this cycle the morphogenetic sequence begins with a social structure that enables and constrains the actions of agents (at time T1), moves into a phase of social action within these conditions (T2 - T3), and concludes with the reproduction, transformation or change of the social structure (T4). The timings, span and nature of these phases depend on the object of study. For this study this suggests: analysing the structure of HE curriculum during a period of relative stability (structural conditioning); exploring changes to the curriculum and debates around these changes (social interaction); and establishing the structure of the

curriculum following these actions (structural elaboration). This is an overall time sequence rather than discrete moment in time.

With this in mind, this study identifies the kinds of events that might be suitable for analysis in a study of curriculum development, including periods of stability and change prior to the emergence of new curricula. It is important to note that it is in moments of disruption that the underlying structuring principles of the field are raised to visibility, as the 'methodological primacy of the pathological' (Collier, 1994: 163). In other words it is when things don't run smoothly, or when conflict occurs that insight can be gained. These are the points at which tacit beliefs and ideas may become more explicit and structures that were opaque become visible (Bhaskar, 1979: 48). In this study 'consensus-seeking focused' activity is identified as the likely but not the sole domain of the new, including new practice, understandings and insights. However, it is in this phase that the underlying organising principles of practice are exposed to analysis. The otherwise reductive question 'How does a particular bureaucratic process cause a particular kind of curriculum to exist?' can be developed into a more generalisable question 'How is this curriculum possible? And this itself can produce the question 'How are different curricula possible?'

### **3.2.2 A critical realist understanding of curriculum texts**

Critical realism allows for the possibility that things that 'emerge' have a degree of autonomy from the things they originate from, and cannot be reduced to them (Bhaskar, 1979: 104). In terms of this study the focus becomes how the forms of regulation of the curriculum (how it is approved) emerge and how this is realised in practice (how curriculum comes into being and is pedagogised). The position taken in this study is that reasons can be responsible for producing a change (as the actualisation of the real) and these reasons can be embedded in semiotic constructions such as texts and documents: '[semiosis] is concerned with the description of texts, judgements of texts in terms of truth, truthfulness and appropriateness, and explanations of the social causes and effects of texts' (Fairclough *et al.*, 2004: 32). In this perspective 'texts' are regarded to be the 'linguistic/semiotic elements of social events, analytically isolatable parts of the social process' (Fairclough, 2005: 916). Discourse in the context of this study, therefore, has the 'analytical dualism that

characterises critical realist approaches in that it subsumes ‘both linguistic/semiotic elements of social events and linguistic/semiotic facets of social structures’ (ibid.: 916). Furthermore, an analytically dualist position with regard to discourse is one that ‘distinguishes ‘social process’ and ‘social structure’ as ontologically distinct through interconnected facets of the social, and focuses research on the relationship between them’ (Fairclough, 2005: 935).

In this sense the events involved in curriculum processes can be considered to be textual in the way that they are produced through semiotic structures and systems. For example the ‘programme specification’ produced by a course team for an Approval Event, is the semiotic facet (a text) of an event. It is a level of abstraction (as an articulation of course planning and design), and a form of explanation. However, in a critically real perspective, curricular documentation has emergent properties that cannot be reduced to either the structures or the agents that produced it: rather it is a condition of the existence of social products that there are causal agents, whose reasons are autonomous (i.e. non-deterministic) (Bhaskar, 1993: 51). It is also important because of the need to account for the ways in which individuals’ meaning-making practices help them to perform identities within relational networks and explain how these networks contribute to ‘a sense of belonging’ (Burnett and Merchant, 2011: 50). It is the bases of these networks and the interactions that take place within them that is made accessible by means of social realism and this is now addressed.

### **3.3 Social realism as an epistemological perspective**

This section introduces social realism as a ‘coalition of minds’ (Maton and Moore, 2010) involving the theories and approaches of Bourdieu, Bernstein and Maton. Bourdieu’s practice theory and the key concepts of field, habitus and doxa are first explained. Bernstein’s code concepts, including the pedagogic device, are then introduced and their value to the study is identified. This theory is extended to include Maton’s *Legitimation Code Theory (LCT)* and its legitimation device and dimensions (*specialisation, semantics and autonomy*).



There is an important underlying principle in critical realism that knowledge must be social (Morgan, 2004). This principle, following Callinicos's (1994) discussion, of the value of critical realism as an 'underlabouring' philosophy to social realism, maintains the need to avoid the rendering of knowledge as having 'a priori' premises – i.e. existing independently of experience. Archer puts her finger further on this: 'An ontology without a methodology is deaf and dumb; a methodology without an ontology is blind' (1995: 28). Social realism, therefore, explores the sociological implications of critical realism for education: 'the sociology of knowledge in the sociology of education can have as an 'object' the socially organised ways in which such knowledge is systematically produced and transformed (rather than simply 'constructed' and reproduced)' (Moore, 2013: 339). It draws attention to the 'blind spot' within the field regarding knowledge (Muller, 2000; Moore and Maton, 2001; Wheelahan, 2010) and the distinction between 'knowledge of the powerful' and 'powerful knowledge' (Young, 2008). Furthermore Bernstein's theory illuminates the mechanisms by which university knowledge, curriculum and pedagogy both reproduce and interrupt social inequalities (McLean *et al.*, 2013). Bernstein express the key issue in terms of enhancement: 'enhancement is not simply the right to be *more* personally, *more* intellectually, *more* socially, *more* materially, it is the right to be the means of critical understandings and new possibilities' (Bernstein 2000: xx, original emphasis). Moore suggests that it is at this point that the epistemological issues merge into social issues, educational issues and justice issues: 'The powerful are so not because they can arbitrarily impose their knowledge/culture as 'powerful knowledge/culture', but because they enjoy privileged access to the knowledge/culture that is powerful in its own right.' (Moore, 2013: 350)

Social realism is important because it allows the researcher to examine the organising principles of curriculum knowledge, discourse and practices. Furthermore, it offers the potential to explain the relationship between theory and research and set out its place in sociological method: 'Against positivism realism insists upon the primacy of theory over experience, but against constructionism it acknowledges the ontological discipline of the discursive gap – reality 'announces' itself to us as well as being constructed by us' (Moore and Muller, 2002: 636). The premise is that for social realists the choice between essentialism and relativism is a false one, in that it is possible to say that

knowledge is historically and socially constructed without saying this means all knowledge is equal and merely reflects social power. Some knowledge claims, therefore, are more epistemologically powerful than others and give a more powerful grip on the world. Bernstein's pedagogic device (see below) for example is identified as a social realist approach in that it describes how society's social structure shapes the way it distributes knowledge and how its education system differentially specialises consciousness (Maton and Muller, 2007).

### **3.3.1 Curriculum development as a set of knowledge practices**

Various theories prevail on how individuals participate in practices, for example as 'carriers' of 'routinized ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring' (Reckwitz, 2002: 249–50), as 'engrooved' patterns of behaviour (Huberman, 1993) or as *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990). One point these theories agree on is that a social practice viewpoint needs to be alert to the danger of a 'rational-purposive' understanding of change, in which actors act 'logically' to achieve well-understood goals, or that managers and policymakers will have clear and stable goals in mind and be able to identify steps towards achieving them (Saunders, 2011). It is important, therefore, to avoid a view of practice that is 'hyperrationalised and intellectualised' (Reckwitz, 2002: 259) or that is difficult to realise in complex contexts such as universities (Barnett, 2000).

Taking a social practice perspective it can be argued that curriculum development is a set of knowledge practices: a 'complex form of socially established cooperative human activity' and a 'set of skills and habits put to the service of a variety of practices' (MacIntyre and Dunne, 2002: 5). Course approval, as the focus of this study, is a formal process within these practices. This has connotations of 'expertise' in which strong professional identity is what distinguishes the expertise of teachers (Bernstein, 1990; Beck and Young, 2005). There is an important connection here between knowledge and expertise (Hull, 2006) in which specialised theoretical knowledge is central to collegial practices (Waters, 1989). Notions around this include the idea of 'adaptive experts' (as opposed to 'routine experts') who are more likely to develop core competences and to continually expand the breadth and depth of their expertise (Bransford *et al.*, 1999: 48-49). Expertise is seen as subject to the criteria of

credentials, experience and track record (Collins and Evans, 2007) distinguishable as 'interactional expertise' from 'contributory expertise' in that the expert mobilises language to control meaning in a particular context. The underlying structure of this context is that its practices are stratified and that meta-practices, such as course approval, are subject to a 'meta-expertise' (ibid.). One form of this is 'referred expertise' which highlights the ability to use experience in one domain to make judgements about another (in the way that academics from one discipline are co-opted to approve the curricula of other disciplines, for example).

### ***Approval as curriculum expertise***

Competence can be understood as a form of 'social control of expertise and the position and role of professional groups' as a form of regulation (Jones and Moore, 1993: 385–386). In terms of this study, the work of approval panels can be examined as the exercise of competency/expertise constructed for those who are being approved. This expertise is translated into specific forms, of descriptions of the curriculum (programme specifications). In other words competency, having no content of its own, is a 'device for regulating content in other bodies of expertise' (ibid.: 391). This competency approach legitimates itself by denying context (it is 'disembedded in Giddens' (1991) terms) in order that the curriculum can be approved by the 'expert system' that is constituted by the approval panel:

*... it removes (de-locates) a discourse from its substantive practice and context, and relocates that discourse according to its own principle of selective reordering and focusing*  
(Bernstein, 1990: 183).

In this sense curriculum studies (the knowledge of the curriculum) is recontextualised into curriculum development and its hybrid, academic development (Clegg, 2009) as sub-fields of HE.

### **3.3.2 Bourdieu and the concept of field**

Bourdieu's framework comprises a series of inter-related concepts, principally those of *field*, *capital*, *habitus* and *doxa*, important to this study because of the power of these theoretical concepts to establish the object of study in this thesis, namely the field of curriculum development. His concept of 'field' underlies a conception of society (or

'social space') constituted by 'relations between field of practice which, under the impact of the division of labour, have increasingly differentiated to become relatively autonomous' (Maton, 2004: 36). Without autonomy the field cannot exist. The field itself is defined by Bourdieu as a configuration of positions comprising agents (individuals, groups of actors or institutions) involved in a struggle over status and resources to maximise their position, and it is the relations between these positions that gives the structure, in which he describes the field of position takings as 'the structured system of practices and expressions of agents' (Bourdieu, 1992: 105). Bourdieu argues that each field is governed by a specific logic and structure but that all fields share general laws including relative autonomy (without which it would not exist as a field), relational and hierarchical structures and struggles. It is the relational position of agents within the field's distribution of capital, from which they derive 'positional properties' (Bourdieu, 1993b) irreducible to the characteristics of the agents themselves.

The concept of field is used by Bourdieu to mean the 'locus of relations of force' which is subject to endless change and reconstitution as 'a potentially open space of play whose boundaries are *dynamic borders* which are the stake of the struggles within the field itself' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 104, original emphasis). *Doxa*, or cultural codes (Bourdieu, 1998), comprise principles and values embedded in a social field that serve two key functions: first, it limits the space of inquiry to a manageable level to make decisions, and second, it provides legitimacy to authoritative relationships. The theory can be used at various levels of aggregation and in this study the field is seen to be HE, in which academic development (and its subdivisions of quality as discussed in Chapter 2) is a sub-field, as a relatively autonomous unit with its own 'logic rules and regularities' (ibid.). As a socially constructed space the *field* and sub-fields are viewed as social arenas in which *capital* is accumulated and where struggles for power, position and resources takes place. This is related to the concept of *habitus* as a set of deeply founded dispositions and beliefs rooted in daily practices of individuals and groups which contribute to the accumulation of capital and the exercise of agency as the 'active presence of past behaviours' (Bourdieu, 1990: 54).

Capital in the context of course approval takes various forms: it is the production of texts, as accumulated labour (Bourdieu, 1986: 46) and cultural capital in the form of embodied history of courses and their disciplinary basis. This capital is institutionalised in the way that the approval panel confers entirely original properties on these texts – they ‘guarantee’ the cultural capital of a course by officially recognising it (ibid.: 47). The circulation of capital within the field can be seen to vary according to the practices and beliefs that underlie actors position takings relationally: for example for Bourdieu dominant agents tend to adopt conservative stances and dominated agents tend towards more radical stances (Maton, 2005: 690). This struggle is for the ‘symbolic capital’ that is claimed by the dominant in which particular forms of authority and power relations become embedded and hidden from the conscious view of the agent. In reflecting on these and other influences on the curriculum and how it is developed in and through the discourses around themes such as employability, the question arises ‘who has the power to initiate change in the curriculum?’ Or a better question might be who has the power to *approve* changes in the curriculum, and how does this affect orientation of others to the change process?

It is important to note here that the notion of habitus is not permanently formed and irreversible. Rather it is a ‘dynamic’ kind of ‘position taking’, as ‘the strategy generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations ...’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 18). Schiff (2009: 15) points out that Bourdieu rejects mechanistic accounts of practice: rather habitus is a principle of regulated improvisation, in which practice is improvisatory in character, but bounded, as ‘in a game’ (Bourdieu, 1990). For Bourdieu rule-following is a form of unconscious but willing compliance (Gerrans, 2005). It is in the ‘mis-fire’ of habitus, as a form of ‘crisis’, that new practice is possible. The position-takings or practices of agents are understood by Bourdieu (1986: 101) in terms of the formula:

$$[(\textit{habitus})(\textit{capital})] + \textit{field} = \textit{practice}$$

Practice in Bourdieu’s terms is the ‘meeting of two evolving histories, embodied in the logics of the context and of actors’ dispositions’ (Maton, 2013b: 20). What is important, using Bourdieu’s ‘practice lens’, is the degree to which this is embodied in social interaction and/or objectified materially in the exchange of objects or practice

itself (Corradi *et al.*, 2010). This can be seen as the importance of having a 'feel for the game' in which the feel is (roughly equivalent to) habitus and the game is the field. An example of this in this study is how course teams misrecognise, in Bourdieu's terms, the rules of course approval by mistaking it for a purely regulative process.

Other studies that have used Bourdieu's concept of field to examine HE include Naidoo's (1998) analysis of admissions policies in two South African Universities; Hudson's (2009) examination of new professionals in UK HE; and Deer's (2003) study of the integration of educational systems and self-reflective practice. Central to these studies are Bourdieu's concept of practice and how habitus, capital and field combine. These field concepts can be seen to deal with the internalist/externalist dichotomy in HE research that lacks a conception of HE as an object of study as a social structure that is 'irreducible to both its constituent parts and to other social fields of practice' (Maton, 2005: 689). In summary, Bourdieu's field theory provides for the specific institutions, actors, discourses or practices (internalist objectification of micro-contexts) and the wider interests, policies and social structures (externalist objectification of macro-social issues). For Bourdieu, the relatively autonomous field of HE acts 'like a prism' to refract external influences using the logic of the field to mediate and transform these into practices and policies (ibid.). There is a kind of dialectical interface, therefore, between internal structuring and wider social issues for which external issues are more than 'just context' and internal practice is never 'just detail'.

The limitations of Bourdieu's field theory in relation to this study are that it pays insufficient attention to the specific means of symbolic control and does not fully explain the particular mechanisms by which power relations set up particular subjectivities (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Naidoo (2004) suggests that Bourdieu's methodology can produce cinematic stills taken from the beginning and the end of an action sequence, in which the analysis of the action itself is rendered invisible. There is criticism also that Bourdieu 'emphasizes equilibrium and the reproduction of social relations at the expense of individual and collective actions that produce change' (Hayward, 2004: 12). In his critique Maton takes this further:

*Bourdieu's tools cannot (i) fully capture higher education as a social structure, (ii) grasp the possibility of [the curriculum subject] prior to its emergence, nor (iii) systematically analyse the changes that enable this possibility to emerge. Thus, Bourdieu offers a way of seeing the field; what is next required is a way of better conceptualising the field.*

*(Maton, 2004: 45)*

It is how the field and habitus intersect that affects the degree of autonomy within their boundaries. The need to build bridges between structure and agency in Bourdieu's work (Kemp, 2010) is recognised as requiring a synthesis between habitus and reflexivity that accommodates actors' beliefs and belief systems, and the internal dialogue that actors have with themselves (Archer, 2010).

### ***Summary: the value of Bourdieu's field theory to this study***

Beyond the assertion that Bourdieu's idea of reflexive sociology is a cultural theory of practice that provide tools that are 'good to think with' (Bernstein, 2000: 136; Lamont, 2012) his theory is valuable to this study as a way of conceptualising HE (the field) and the relative positions of teachers and their responses to the need to generate descriptions of their courses in differing contexts. This theory is used because of its power to assemble a working conceptual framework capable of objectifying the experiences and beliefs of HE teachers as a set of positions in the field of HE, and in that it enables HE and its curriculum to be seen as an object of study (Maton, 2005).

However, while Bourdieu's concepts are useful for thinking about the social nature of fields of practice, the social nature of knowledge itself remains unexamined. This gap will now be discussed in relation to Bernstein's code theory and knowledge structures.

### **3.3.3 Bernstein's code theory and the pedagogic device**

*How a society selects, classifies ... transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of control (in that society).*

*(Bernstein, 1977: 47)*

While Bourdieu's conceptual framework enables a view of the field and its practice and the position-takings of agents, it does not allow the surface practices and the underlying structures (its bases) to be distinguished. Bernstein offers a means of conceptualising change in HE by extending Bourdieu's field theory in one important

sense. Bernstein's code concepts and pedagogic device provide a way of conceptualising the field at classroom (Morais, 2002) and HE (Rosie, 2009) levels: the concepts of *code* as the means of analysing the structure of practices, and the *pedagogic device* that conceptualises the generative mechanism underlying practices (Singh, 2002). With regard to the research aims of this study this framework can conceptualise how changes in the curriculum are generated and how the possibilities of its forms are recognised and realised (Solomon and Bernstein, 1999)<sup>4</sup>.

Bernstein considers how knowledge is selected, assembled and sequenced into a curriculum but his focus is on the forms taken by culture rather than educational content that are significant in shaping the vision of reality (Morais *et al.*, 2004). To analyse this structure Bernstein first introduced the concepts of classification and framing in 1977, considered to be the primary concepts in his theory (Sadnovik, 2001: 14). The modalities of *classification* (C) refer to relative strengths of the boundaries between contexts or categories (such as academic subjects in a curriculum for example). The relative strength of control within these contexts or categories is given by the modality of *framing* (F), in which relatively strong framing indicates strong control from above, or by the teacher in relation to what happens in the classroom. Framing regulates and legitimises communication in pedagogic relations, where classification can be considered to establish voice, while framing establishes message. 'Framing is about who controls what' (Bernstein, 2000: 12), where strong framing privileges the transmitter and weak framing privileges the acquirer. The combination of classification and framing, as a *knowledge code*, allows a description that reveals the underlying practices, the rules of the game, and the unwritten principles that shape practice.

There are two principal codes that can be seen to operate in education contexts: a *collection code* (+C, +F) indicating strong boundaries and strong control; and an *integrated code* (-C, -F) indicating that the boundary between disciplines and everyday knowledge is weaker and learners have more control over the selection, sequencing and pacing of learning. Each code is associated with different forms of school

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<sup>4</sup> To clarify, this is an interview with Basil Bernstein carried out by Joseph Solomon that also appears as a postscript in Bernstein (2000). References are to the original journal article rather than the book.



organisation, curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation and each has its own attributes. For example the basis of teachers' identities tends to be subject fields under a collection code ('I teach history'). Alternatively, teachers' identities in relation to their understanding of students tend to be an integrated code ('I teach students'). These knowledge codes can also be applied to the curriculum in which strongly classified, collection type curricula can be termed 'closed', and weakly classified, integrated type, curricula can be termed 'open' (cf. Bernstein, 1967).

Underlying this are the three message systems that educational systems have in common: curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation (assessment):

*Curriculum defines what counts as a valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as a valid transmission of knowledge, and evaluation defines what counts as a valid realization of this knowledge...*  
(*ibid.*: 85).

### ***The pedagogic device and pedagogic discourse***

Having conceptualised knowledge codes and their modalities, classification and framing, to analyse educational contexts and practices and the dispositions that social groups bring to education (their coding orientations) Bernstein next raised the question of how different forms of educational knowledge are constructed. He formulated the *pedagogic device* (see Table 2) and identified three 'fields' of activity. These are: a field of *production* where new knowledge is constructed and positioned; a field of *recontextualisation* where discourses from the field of production are selected, appropriated and re-positioned to become 'educational' knowledge; and a field of *reproduction* where pedagogic practice takes place (Maton and Muller, 2007). The table below shows each field and the form of regulation that takes place within it as one of three rules: distributive rules that order how knowledge is distributed and regulated; recontextualising rules that order how knowledge is transformed into a pedagogic discourse in a form amenable to pedagogic transmission; and evaluative rules that order how the pedagogic discourse is further transformed into criteria for its attainment. Each of the fields is associated with the main type of knowledge structure/code that is prevalent and the typical sites and forms of the knowledge.

**Table 2: The arena of the pedagogic device (from Maton and Muller, 2007)**

Field of Practice	Form of regulation	Symbolic structure	Main types	Typical sites
Production	distributive rules	knowledge structure	hierarchical / horizontal knowledge structures	research publications, conferences, laboratories
Recontextualisation	recontextualising rules	curriculum	collection/ integrated codes	curriculum policy docs, textbooks
Reproduction	evaluative rules	pedagogy and evaluation	visible/ invisible pedagogic codes	classrooms, assessment

Together the three fields and the rules associated with them constitute an arena of conflict and struggle (ibid.) in which social groups attempt to dominate how educational knowledge is constructed (Ashwin et al, 2012). The device's recontextualising field has a 'crucial function in creating the fundamental autonomy of education' (Bernstein, 2000: 33) by means of the relationship between two forms: *pedagogic* and *official*. The pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) creates pedagogic discourse by selectively subsuming all discourses within the educational system. The PRF and its practices and agents, including teachers, produce pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. The official recontextualising field (ORF) refers to the degree of control from outside, including state policy, funding and national curriculum. The relative strength of influence of the ORF and PRF, and in particular the degree of control that the ORF has over the PRF, determines the *pedagogic discourse*. This is a symbolic rather than an actual discourse, as a principle of recontextualisation (Bernstein, 1990: 184). Indeed the pedagogic device itself is not something that is visible but which can be known 'through its effects in structuring practices (conceptualised in terms of codes)' (Maton, 2004: 49).

Curriculum as the symbolic structure of the recontextualisation field, therefore, is subject to recontextualising rules as a form of regulation and distinction between the ORF and the PRF and the space between them is referred to as the *discursive gap* in which ideology can exist. Bernstein argues that whenever a curriculum is re-located it is, to some degree, transformed, as a recontextualisation. This can take many forms,

contexts and levels, including how research is located in a university course, or how a national curriculum is transferred from state authorities to the school. It is subject to recontextualisation in the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) when it is used in the construction of tests, textbooks, curriculum designs and professional development programs (Neves, 2004).

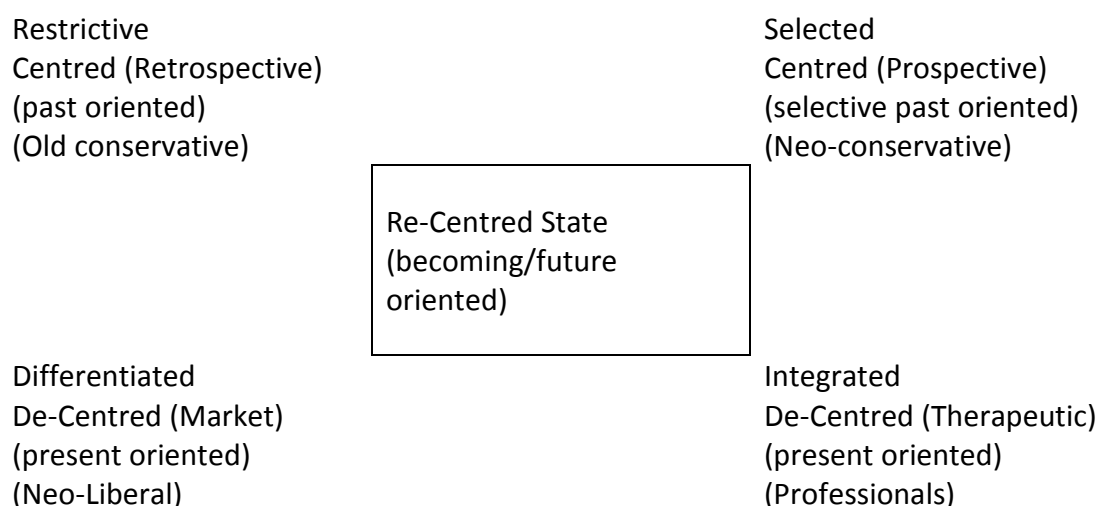
The form and content of curricular knowledge, therefore, is regulated by pedagogic discourse that embeds two discourses:

*... a discourse of skills of various kinds (instructional discourse) and their relations to each other, and a discourse of social order (regulative discourse)*  
(Bernstein, 2000: 46).

While instructional discourse is the rule that leads to the embedding of instruction (content, skills) in a social order, it is the regulative discourse that sets the limits and possibilities for what is thinkable and unthinkable in relation to knowledge, identities and classroom order (Singh, 1997). In this study the pedagogic discourse that orders how course teams construct their curriculum is seen to be dominated by the regulative discourse that directs the form that this takes (its structure and the way it is described).

### ***Pedagogic identities***

While Bourdieu's field theory offers a means of identifying position-takings or dispositions, Bernstein's concept of field position is elaborated in terms of three analytically distinguishable levels: author, actor and identity (2000: xvii). Bernstein (ibid.: 66) discusses pedagogic identities and distinguishes between local (those available in communities and groups) and official identities (those influenced by the state or external categories). He views pedagogic identity to be the result of embedding a 'career' in a social base, using career in an abstract sense to mean a kind of ordering of the social, involving knowledge, moral and locational aspects. He identifies four positions, or ideal types, (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Modelling Pedagogic Identities/Classification (based on Bernstein, 2000: 67)**

These four positions differ according to their bias and focus, and which of the various groups' struggles for control over policy and practice they represent: retrospective, prospective (centring identities) therapeutic and market (decentring) (Tyler, 1999). These pedagogic identities prescribe 'official knowledge' (knowledge that is subject to and produced by the ORF), constructed and distributed by the state (Beck, 2010), and as it emerges from the struggle of curriculum reform:

*Thus the bias and focus of this official discourse are expected to construct in teachers and students a particular moral disposition, motivation and aspiration, embedded in particular performances and practices  
(Bernstein, 2000: 65).*

Curricula reform, in this context, is the response to the perceived need to manage economic and social change, in which educational institutions are 'critically important sites for shaping social consciousness and managing or challenging social inequality' (Bernstein, 1999: 247). Bernstein's theories contribute to an understanding of how such reforms are structurally possible, and how curricular change is managed (Beck, 2012).

At stake in these identities are the degree of autonomy over resources available (the relationship with the centre or state) and the extent to which they focus on the past and are projected into the future: 'whereas the centring resources of retrospective and prospective identities recontextualises the past, although different pasts, de-centring resources construct the present through different 'presents'' (Bernstein, 2000: 68).

While this model is a complex arrangement of orientations (including temporal) it can be elucidated by the concept of classification in which centred pedagogic identities are characterised by stronger boundaries. In other words the modality of classification is the means by which power relations are transformed into specialised discourses (ibid.: xvii). I have synthesised these positions into Table 3 (drawing on Bernstein, 2000: Chapter 4).

**Table 3: Official pedagogic identities and their characteristics**

<b>Relations to state (centre)</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Recontextualisation</b>	<b>Principle of (temporal) projection</b>	<b>Exchange relation with economy</b>	<b>Locus of Control</b>
Centred (resources drawn from central contexts and discourses)	<b>Retrospective</b>	Past (based on grand narratives)	<i>‘stabilise past and project into future’</i>	<i>‘sustain equilibrium based on previous forms regardless of economy’</i>	inputs
	<b>Prospective</b>	Past (specially selected)	<i>‘stabilise the future by engaging with contemporary change’</i>	<i>‘optimise exchange value of products to raise economic performance’</i>	Inputs and outputs
De-centred (resources drawn from local contexts and discourses)	<b>Market</b>	Present	<i>‘compete and differentiate to construct the present’</i>	<i>‘optimise exchange value of products to ensure survival of fittest’</i>	Focus on inputs
	<b>Therapeutic</b>	Present	<i>‘stabilise and integrate to construct the present’</i>	<i>‘develop via progressive theories’</i>	Dispersed and weak

The four positions can be seen to be characterised by their temporal orientations (how they relate to the past in constituting the present and the future) and their principles of projection (the basis for action and its direction – whether projected or introjected). This is a framing that regulates in *what* way and *if* the classificatory relations (boundary) are acquired. Here, Bernstein is asking:

*Is the boundary a prison of the past (whatever the nature of the past) or is it a tension point which condenses the past yet opens the possibility of futures? (Solomon and Bernstein, 1999: 273).*

The purpose or principle of projection of the pedagogic identity reflects the principle that all pedagogic discourse is goal directed, as a form of becoming/future orientation: what counts is established by the forms this takes and how this is controlled (i.e. 'classified' in Bernstein's terms). Control is the 'bias, focus and management' of the discourse (ibid.: 67) including its inputs (its contents) and its outputs (their realisations in the curriculum) and the relative emphasis on this. It is important to note that Bernstein regarded these positions or ideal types as a 'pedagogic palette' as the means of analysing official pedagogic identities and local identities, using the same concepts (ibid.: xii). Space does not allow a full discussion of these positions and the identities they project other than to comment on the articulation of these as represented in Table 3. Notable here is how centred identities share an emphasis on the past but vary in how they serve a different prospective identity (i.e. they recontextualise different pasts). Similarly, de-centring resources are drawn from local contexts or discourses and 'construct the present although different presents' (ibid.: 66). This is relevant to this study because it offers the means of analysing the pedagogic identities that operate within the curriculum and its approval.

Bernstein uses the term symbolic (or discursive) resources to refer to that which is used to construct local identities, as a kind of 'belonging, recognition of self and others, and context management (what I am, where, with whom and when)' (Solomon and Bernstein, 1999: 272). It is broadly similar to Bourdieu's notion of 'capital' and can be understood as the 'modalities' of code (classification and framing) (Maton, 2004: 50). Thus the 'rules' that modify codes (the distributive, recontextualising and evaluative rules) are *resources* for codes, and can be distinguished from them, as invisible structural relations: 'differently resourced by different groups realising different distributions of power and principles of control' (Solomon and Bernstein, 1999: 270). Of these four official identities, projected by the state in line with its policies, the De-centred Market (DCM) pedagogic identity is the one which Bernstein aligns most closely with HE and this has been shown to be prescient of scenarios that have now become commonplace. Bernstein wrote in 1996:

*Imagine an educational institution which has considerable autonomy over its use of budget, how it uses its staff, the number and type of staff, the courses it constructs, provided: (1) it can attract students who can have choice of*

*institution, (2) it can meet external performance criteria and (3) it can optimise its position in relation to similar institutions.*  
(Bernstein, 2000: 69)

He pays DCM the greatest attention, outlining its orientation to the present, and its construction, via competition and differentiation, to be 'outwardly responsive' to what the consumer desires. This is a necessity, dictated by the market to be a process of projection rather than introjection, without which the institution will not survive. This short term and extrinsic orientation contrasts with the 'therapeutic' de-centred position in that it projects externally contingent and competitive local identities as opposed to inwardly integrated and adaptable ones. Here the policy shift to marketisation can be seen to affect autonomy (Maton, 2005: 701) and which focuses upon the 'exploration of vocational applications rather than upon the exploration of knowledge' (Bernstein, 2000: 69). This is an identity that has an *exchange value* in a market and the focus is therefore on those *inputs* that optimise this value and for which there must be no impediments to the flow of knowledge to meet demand: 'Contract replaces covenant' (Bernstein, 2000: 69). He points to the distinction between elite universities and the rest, pointing out that it is the discursive resources of the former that maintains their competitive position (their elite classification) in addition to (or resulting in) their attraction of high ranking scholars.

However, Bernstein stresses that all positions are possible simultaneously. He notes, for example, the complementary aspects of the *prospective* (neo-conservative) position and the *DCM* (the neo-liberal position) in that both adopt evaluation and enterprise as a de-centralised management device. Bernstein sees this official institutionalising of the DCM (intrinsic focus) and the legitimising of the identity it projects (extrinsic focus) as 'a new pathological position at work in education: the pedagogic schizoid position' (ibid.: 71).

The effect of this is to orient individuals to both the intrinsic value of knowledge and the instrumentalities of the market by leaving the instructional discourse of the institution untouched, but radically transforming its regulative discourse. This has implications for the central issue of pedagogic identity. In Bernstein's terms this is an increasing 'flexibilisation' of the self in which pedagogic identities are a consequence

of how knowledge is projected as a practice in a context that regulates that identity (Bernstein, 2000: 55). In this study the pedagogic identity projected by courses that prize employability is prospective, and this is associated with how the inclusion of work-related learning, for example, is regionalising the curriculum. What is meant by regionalisation and its importance to this study will now be discussed.

### ***Pedagogic modes, and performance and competence models***

Bernstein distinguishes between *singulars*, *regions* and the *generic* as the different forms of organising knowledge (Wheelahan, 2010: 24). Singulars have singular knowledge structures (e.g. Physics), while regions are the interface between the academic disciplines and the field of practice for which students are being prepared (e.g. medicine) in which knowledge is applied (Bernstein, 2000: 52). Bernstein adds a third principle for distinguishing and organising knowledge that has emerged in the late twentieth century that he describes as the generic mode that relies less on the academic discipline or how it is applied for its knowledge base and more on its market relevance. This shift to this third mode he calls genericism.

Bernstein describes the recontextualisation of curriculum subjects, in which strongly bounded *singulars* become *regions*, as *regionalisation*. This has three implications: firstly regionalisation involves a weakening in the classification of knowledge (its boundaries) such that it is space for ideology to play (i.e. it becomes subject to recontextualising principles and ideological bias that underlies it); secondly new power relations develop between regions and singulars as they compete for resources and influence; and thirdly, in the context of an institution, the field becomes susceptible to the combination of the degree of classification operating between the institution and outside, and the relations between staff in terms of allegiances and work relationships. The modality of these two factors gives rise to two codes: *collection* and *integrated* (see Table 4).



**Table 4: Implications of regionalisation for the institution**

	<b>Integrated Code</b>	<b>Collection Code</b>
Boundaries between subjects	Weak , permeable	Strong, insulated
Staff internal solidarities	Weak (need to bring together)	Strong (need to keep apart)
Control	Horizontal	Hierarchical
Pedagogic discourse	Open	Closed
Decision making	Collegial	Bureaucratic
Division of labour	Interdependent	Segmented

Framing, with regard to regionalisation in an institutional context regulates relations and is about who controls what. This includes the structure of the timetable, for example, in which strategies such as modularisation can be seen to fragment the unity of singulars and ‘to weaken the intellectual authority of subject specialists and their control of the content, sequencing and pacing of knowledge in their ‘own’ fields’ (Beck and Young, 2005: 189).

With reference to the curriculum itself, the degree of integration between subjects in the curriculum (its regionalisation) can be seen to be associated with two distinct approaches, the *competence model* and the *performance model*. Table 5 shows the characteristics of these ideal types in terms of their principles (Bernstein, 2000: 45) and their realisations in educational settings (Hoadley and Jansen, 2009: 179).

**Table 5: Collection and integrated curricula principles (based on Bernstein, 2000: 45)**

	<b>Competence</b>	<b>Performance</b>
Focus	Integrated code (-C, -F)	Collection code (+C, +F)
Pedagogic text	Acquirer (acquisition)	Performer (transmission)
Control	Implicit	Explicit
Autonomy	High	Low/high
Evaluation	Presences	Absences
Economy	High cost	Low cost
Time	Present-oriented (developing), future referenced (becoming)	Future-oriented (outcome), past referenced (has been)

This is the ‘social logic’ of these pedagogies that differ, amongst other things, in the degree of teacher/learner authority. They are tendencies at particular points in time or in particular teachers’ repertoires. While space does not allow a full discussion of these pedagogic models and the resources and code orientations that underpin them

it is important to note their significance as outputs of the pedagogic device that are essentially oppositional (Bernstein, 1990: 207). They are resolved as either ‘shared competences’ or ‘specialised performances’ distributed according to age, pedagogic status, or context as follows:

<b>Shared competences</b>	-	<b>Specialised performances</b>
Similar to	-	Different from
Simple division of labour	-	Complex division of labour
Mechanical solidarity	-	Organic solidarity

It should also be noted that performance modes focus on something that the acquirer does not have, ‘upon an absence, and as a consequence place the emphasis upon the text to be required and so upon the transmitter’ (Bernstein, 2000: 57). This deficit association has seen a shift in UK education, for example, away from performance models and the increased dominance of competence positions and new forms of competence, as a form of empowerment. At play in this shift in the PRF and its relationship with the ORF is the kind of ideology that can reform the curriculum with minimal regard to the field of production, as is currently happening in the schools’ curriculum in the UK. However, this is reflected in HE as the move to generic skills as a form of regionalisation that is a performance mode that Bernstein refers to as ‘genericism’.

The origins of genericism can be found in initiatives such as youth training schemes and prevocational education but can also be traced to contemporary issues such as those that drive employability in this study. These are characterised by such terms as ‘key skills’, ‘core skills’, ‘thinking skills’, ‘problem-solving’ and ‘teamwork’, as a form of ‘trainability’ (ibid.: 59). Bernstein notes the irony that these generic skills are referred to as ‘competences’, in which they appropriate the ‘resonances’ of the opposing competence model, and thereby ‘silence the cultural basis of skills, tasks, practices and areas of work, and give rise to a jejune concept of trainability’ (ibid.: 53). He describes the construction and insertion of generic modes as the pedagogic basis of ‘work’ and ‘life’ experiences. What is at stake here is who controls the curriculum and who says what counts as legitimate knowledge and pedagogy.

Thus, the pedagogic device, outlined in this section, is seen to materialise symbolic control and realisations of the device, pedagogic discourse and practice, in which the distinction is between the relay and what is relayed as the 'symbolic ruler':

*Whose ruler, what consciousness, is revealed by the discourses' privileging texts and the procedures of evaluation that such texts presuppose (Bernstein, 1990: 209).*

### **Summary: the value of Bernstein's code theory to this study**

Pedagogic identities and the pedagogic modes that are associated with them offer the first part of a social realism explanatory framework that is underpinned by a critical realist social ontology. Bernstein's code theory offers this study the means of identifying the classification of educational knowledge (and specifically curriculum development knowledge) in two dimensions: firstly the boundaries between general and specialised knowledge of the curriculum and whether general experience of teaching in HE is valued in course design and approval; and secondly the different forms of educational knowledge in the curriculum and how this is derived (whether it arises from the discipline for example). Furthermore, it makes accessible the framing of the teacher's (course designer) degree of control over the selection, sequencing, and pacing of curricular (content) knowledge and pedagogy, and the extent to which this is determined and evaluated by the institution and other external forces. It makes possible an external language of description for the classification and framing of curriculum development knowledge, central to this study as the means by which the data can be examined in the light of theory and vice versa.

To complete this framework a theory of enactment is needed that will enable the organising principles of pedagogic identities to be examined.

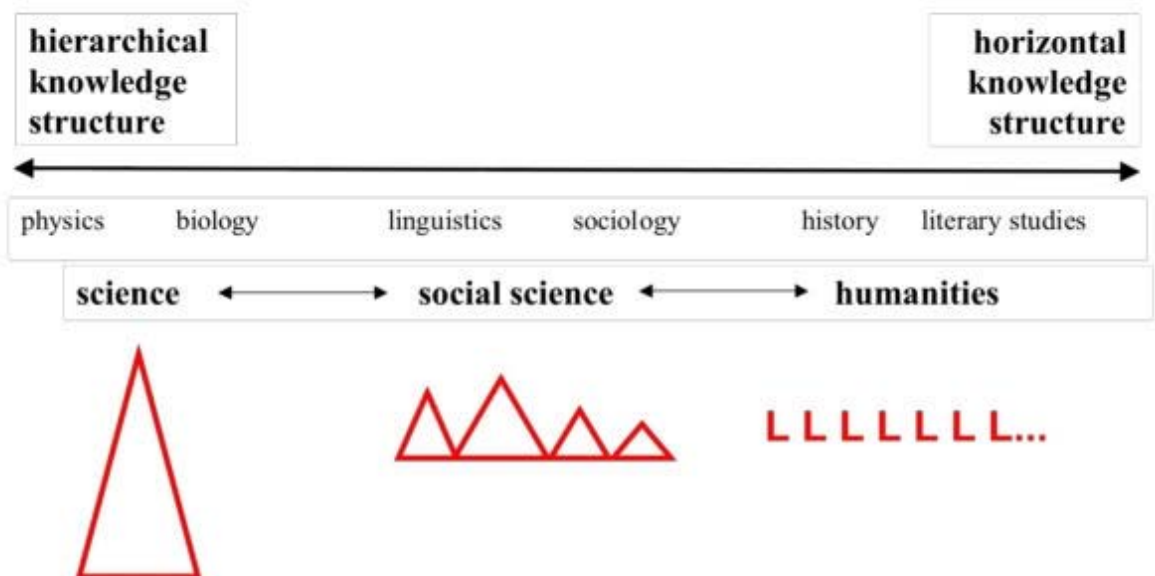
### **3.4 Maton's Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) and the legitimation device**

The third stage of development of Bernstein's theory, following *classification* and *framing* codes (Bernstein, 1977) and the *pedagogic device* (Bernstein, 1990) focused on knowledge structures. Bernstein considers pedagogic discourse to have two types: horizontal discourse and vertical discourse. Horizontal discourse is everyday common sense knowledge where meanings are largely dependent on the context and where

knowledges are strongly segmented from one another. Vertical discourse is the educational, formal or official knowledge and ‘takes the form of coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure’ (Bernstein 2000: 159) where meanings are related to other meanings rather than to a specific social context. Two types of knowledge structure exist within a vertical discourse:

- Hierarchical knowledge structures: e.g. physics, that develops through integrating past knowledge within more overarching ideas that attempt to explain a greater number of phenomena previously achieved.
- Horizontal knowledge structures: e.g. humanities/sociology that develops through the addition of a new approach of a new theory or alongside existing approaches and for which it is strongly bounded.

This model of different forms of knowledge (see Figure 2) is useful in understanding how knowledge develops over time and the context dependence of meaning.



**Figure 2: Knowledge structures in vertical discourse (Martin *et al.*, 2010: 438)**

However, Bernstein's work is less clear when boundaries are weaker (e.g. horizontal knowledge structures). Critics have noted that his work is limited to understandings of sociology as a subject:

*Where knowledge is explicit ... Bernstein's analysis is explicit: identity, insight and so on flow from this knowledge formation. Wherever knowledge is less explicit ... Bernstein's analysis becomes less explicit.*  
(Maton, 2009: 160).

Maton (2000a) argues that the sociology of educational knowledge remains sociology without a theory of knowledge. He identifies educational knowledge as a set of languages of legitimation (Maton, 2013a) i.e. as both positions and strategies within fields and in struggles and potentially legitimate truth claims. He developed Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) to build on and strengthen the applicability of Bernstein's ideas (Maton, 2004). Maton's development of LCT can be considered to be an elaboration of classification and framing, adding an epistemic dimension (social relations) to Bernstein's pedagogic device in order that *the knower* is brought into view. In other words the emphasis on knowledge and its transmission obscures a view of the learner in pedagogic relations and LCT provides a lens on this. In this study the knower is identified in two contexts: the first is how the curriculum is constructed with regard to the student as knower; the second is how the curriculum is approved with regard to the teacher as knower.

Maton formulates LCT as the *legitimation device* and uses it to explore how knowledge claims are legitimated. More specifically he identifies the legitimation device as the key to understanding both the ground over which actors struggle over and what they struggle over (Maton, 2013a: 45). In this perspective any knowledge/practice claim is made by someone (the subject) and is about, or oriented towards, something (the object). LCT considers education as comprising fields of struggle – drawing on a number of dimensions, each with their own code modalities:

- *Autonomy*, looking at external relations
- *Temporality* looking at time
- *Specialisation* drawing on social and epistemological relations to knowledge
- *Density* focussing on moral and material values
- *Semantics* looking at internal relations of semantic gravity and semantic density.

LCT, therefore, is a sociological framework for researching and changing practice. It forms a core part of social realism, a broad 'coalition' of approaches which reveal knowledge as both socially produced and real, in the sense of having effects, and which explore those effects. LCT extends and integrates ideas from a range of approaches, most centrally the frameworks of Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein (Maton, 2013a). It thus allows studies of diverse practices and contexts, using diverse methods, to build on one another. The framework of LCT comprises a multi-dimensional conceptual toolkit, where each dimension offers concepts for analysing a particular set of organizing principles underlying practices as legitimation codes. The usefulness of LCT to this study lies in its analysis of the underlying basis for practice and the changes that are operating. Every educational practice or context, therefore, is potentially subject to a specific code, or combinations of codes, which embodies the (typically unwritten) 'rules of the game' (Maton, 2013a: 132). However, not everyone is able to recognise or realise these rules, leading to what is termed in LCT a *code clash* (Lamont and Maton, 2008). Code clashes can arise from, for example, the code characterising the way a teacher thinks and acts and the code characterising the teacher's educational context, making it difficult for the teacher and his/her course team to achieve success, and resulting in, for example, antipathy to the educational context for course approval and its goals.

This study focuses on three dimensions of LCT: *Autonomy*, *Specialisation*, and *Semantics*. Maton refers to autonomy as the primary dimension of LCT that 'sets the context for all the other code modalities of a field'<sup>5</sup> and this will be examined first. I will then outline the other two dimensions of LCT that I use in this study, specialisation and semantics, and explain how these will be applied in this study to examine how knowledge is organised within the field. Specialisation and semantic code modalities will be shown in this study to differentiate the autonomy of the field with regard to the relative strengths of epistemic and social relations (its specialisation and how this varies epistemically) and to the disciplinary structure of knowledge (how this varies semantically).

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<sup>5</sup> This quote is from Maton's posting online (March, 2014) to the LCT UK Google+ Group in response to a discussion I led on the relationship between autonomy, specialisation and semantics.

### **3.4.1 Legitimizing the curriculum: the autonomy dimension of Maton's LCT**

The interests that are shared between social actors in the field and how these interests are negotiated can be analysed as a set of position-takings or dispositions (Bourdieu, 1990). According to Bourdieu, habitus is related to the field through a set of structuring principles of autonomy illustrated by the way the field generates its own values and markers of achievement (Maton, 2005: 689). The autonomy of a field, therefore, lies in the distinctive form of capital, particularly with regard to the state or market. What is absent from this view of autonomy is the means by which internal and external relations within the field of education, are refracted within subfields. In the case of this study the subfield is curriculum/academic development, as the object of study in this thesis. As discussed above, Bourdieu's practice theory is undeveloped (empirically at least) in terms of the structuring significance of symbolic practices for fields, because, as Maton suggests, 'it cannot conceptualise their structure in, for example, the manner offered by Bernstein's concept of codes' (ibid.: 702).

In response to the weakness in Bourdieu's theory to distinguish fully the symbolic dimension of practice from the structural one (see above), Maton (2004), in a study of cultural studies in UK HE, introduced the notion of positional autonomy (PA) and relational autonomy (RA) as one dimension of LCT. He distinguishes between them as follows:

- Positional autonomy (PA) refers to the nature of relations between specific positions in the social dimension of a context or field and positions in other contexts
- Relational autonomy (RA) refers to relations between the principles of relation (or ways of working, practices, aims, measures of achievement, etc.) within a context or field and those emanating from other contexts.

This builds on Bernstein's concepts of classification (insulation) and framing (control) (see above) to create modalities of PA and RA (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Principles of positional and relational autonomy (Maton, 2004; 2005)**

		Relational Autonomy	
		RA+	RA-
Positional Autonomy	PA+	Strongly insulated autonomous principles	strongly insulated heteronomous principles
	PA-	weakly insulated autonomous principles	weakly insulated heteronomous principles

PA captures the relations between positions (agents or discourses) within a category or context and positions outside the category, for example between actors in universities and state-sponsored funding bodies. RA is the principle of relation (or ways of working, practices, aims, measures of achievement) within a context and those emanating from other contexts.

Maton explains: 'In short, the distinction asks 'Who is running higher education?' (PA) and 'According to whose principles?' (RA)' (Maton, 2005: 697). The purpose of PA/RA analysis is to identify the shifts and clashes that can take place rather than to dichotomise these as set positions. For example, he identifies the changes in UK HE from the 1960s to 2000 as a (relative) weakening of RA while PA has remained (relatively) static. His analysis of this is that the control of the field has remained internally oriented, while its reward systems and ways of working have become more externally oriented, and particularly market-oriented. Maton develops a language of description for PA+/-, RA+/- that is mapped to his object of study problem (the emergence of cultural studies) (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Classification and framing of autonomy (based on Maton, 2004)**

Type of Autonomy	Strength of classification and framing	Realisation (macro level relations)
PA+	+Ce, +Fe of PA	Independence from government and institutional involvement
RA+	+Ce, +Fe of RA	valorised 'knowledge for its own sake' over vocationalism
PA-	-Ce, -Fe of PA	direct control of external agents
RA-	-Ce, -Fe of RA	oriented to meeting needs of the economy (or other external driver)

Key: Ce = external classification; Fe = external framing; +/- refers to relative strengths



This thesis applies PA/RA but in relation to the meso-level, in which relations are between the course (and the course team) and the institution. It will develop a language of description for autonomy that will enable the field and the data to be explored and for code shifts and clashes to be examined.

The only other study to use LCT autonomy is Burnheim (2010) (with a macro focus) in a study of three Australian universities. She found the primacy of the field dynamic to indicate the 'persistence of identifiable academic values, practices and power', but that the struggle for domination within the field is also located within 'broader dynamics including the state, media, place and social capital' (ibid.: 212). Notably, she also found that the concept of PA does not quite capture one important strand in her data: 'informal networks and connections between the universities and organisations in other fields, particularly at the senior level' (ibid.: 205). This argument points to the possibility of *refraction* of PA, the capacity of actors to transform extrinsic pressures into specifically intrinsic forms including strategies to deal with this such as resistance to bureaucracy, superficial compliance and forms of collegiality.

Bourdieu's notion of a 'refraction coefficient' (1993a: 182) is useful here in relation to the capacity of a field to transform forces based on the internal structure of the field (as a form of 'relations to' the field). Bernstein calls this 'recontextualisation' but includes the effects on pedagogic discourse, as 'relations within' the field. These strategies are related to forms of authority that have the potential to modify practice and to define expertise (or the space in which expertise operates). Models of authority action are outlined in section 3.5 below with respect to collegial and bureaucratic forms and field positions as synthesised in the review of the literature. The autonomy of these field positions will be shown in this study to vary according to their LCT specialisation and semantics code modalities: firstly in shifts in how the curriculum is specialised according to orientations to knowledge and the knower; and secondly in relation to the different semantic structures of disciplines/subjects. These two codes and their relevance to this study will now be explained in turn.

### 3.4.2 How the curriculum can be specialised by orientations to knowledge and knower

Maton (2000, 2007) begins from the premise that all practices, beliefs, or knowledge claims are oriented towards something (epistemic relations) by someone (social relations). He argues that for every knowledge structure there is a knower structure. The LCT code specialisation offers an understanding of the practices of knowers with regards to 'who they are' (knower categories) and 'how they know' (knowing practices). It looks at what makes a claim to insight into knowledge or a practice special or worthy of distinction. This dimension draws on Maton's proposition that the classification and framing of educational knowledge and practices requires the question 'what' and 'how' of knowledge and the question 'who' of knowers and is sub-divided into epistemic and social relations:

- Epistemic relations (ER): between educational knowledge and its proclaimed object of study (that part of the world of which knowledge is claimed)
- Social relations (SR): between educational knowledge and its author or subject (who is making the claim to knowledge)

These specialisation codes and their sub-divisions constitute the LCT *epistemic-pedagogic device* (EPD) and can be further divided to offer a greater degree of analysis of insights into knowledge (epistemic plane) and type of gaze (social plane). These are shown below in Table 8 and discussed below. Space only allows a discussion of one gaze, the cultivated gaze, and one type of insight, doctrinal insight, as the two most appropriate for this study.

**Table 8: Specialisation codes, dimensions and focus**

Plane	Dimension	Focus
Epistemic Relations (ER)	Ontic relations (OR)	between knowledge and the object (the known)
	Discursive relations (DR)	between knowledge and other knowledge
Social Relations (SR)	Subjective relations (SubR)	between knowledge and knowers (social position)
	Interactional relations (IR)	between knowledge and practices

Here SR can be examined by exploring the relative strength and weakness of these sub-relations and how they bound and control legitimate kinds of knowers (subjective

relations, SubR), or legitimate ways of knowing through interactions with significant others (interactional relations, IR). Legitimate knowers, for example, are identified in this study as being 'apprenticed' to the discipline. This is realised in subjective relations as 'being engaged with the discipline', but in many examples given by participants this is shaped by the relationship with the tutor as interactional relations. The varying strengths of these dimensions can be seen to be influenced by the introduction to the curriculum of topics from outside the discipline such as employability. The dominant social relation acting in relation to knowledge is that which is mainly determined by the interactions of the tutor, bounded within units of activities, such as modules, and subject to the institutional control of the curriculum.

### ***Specialised gazes***

The capacity to classify and define material and social phenomena (objects of study) has the power to produce specialised knowledge claims, through the use of specialised procedures, and the 'truth' of specialised knowers (Maton and Muller 2007). In this context 'truth is a matter of acquired gaze ... a particular mode of recognising and realising what counts as 'authentic ... reality' (Bernstein 1999: 165). Maton (2010b) develops this and conceptualises different kinds of gaze, the principle of selection of ideas and actors, and their recontextualisation within an evaluation system. This can be explored in the social relations to 'knowers' with respect to two sub-relations: subjective relations (SubR) between socio-cultural practices and the kinds of actors engaged in them; and interactional relations (IR) between socio-cultural practices and ways of acting involved.

With regard to a type of gaze, a relatively stronger interactional relation, combined with a relatively weaker subjective relation, suggests a 'cultivated gaze' (SubR-, IR+). The cultivated gaze weakly bounds and controls the legitimate categories of knowers (there are no limits to who can know), but suggests that ways of coming to know are limited to a number of legitimate means. In the context of the practices that are covered in the activities of academics discussing the curriculum, this would involve requiring 'a feel' for practices in social science education, as practitioners in a community of practice, involving the subject/discipline discourse and a specialised language. Within the context of making practice open for exchange taking place within

institutional quality processes, for example, the notion of an 'ideal knower' can be seen to be formed around the 'cultivated gaze' that is related to dispositions of the learner to the discipline. This is formulated in the value, or the privilege, that tutors place on the learner holding dispositions such as 'having a sociological eye' or 'thinking like an anthropologist'.

### ***Specialised insights***

ER highlights that practices may be specialised by both what they relate to (ontic relations, OR) and how they relate (discursive relations DR). In other words knowledge claims can be distinguished by their ontic relationships between knowledge and its object of study and their discursive relationships between knowledge and other knowledges (Maton, 2013a: 175). The varying combinations of strengths of classification and framing of these relations can produce an epistemic plane in which four principal modalities or *insights* are delineated. One of these, '*doctrinal insight*', is associated with practices that legitimate problem situations that are not restrictively defined, and where other possible approaches are relatively strongly bounded and controlled. The specialisation of knowledge, in this insight, depends less on what is studied, and more on how it is studied (OR-, DR+). In the case of social science, for example, the subject areas of sociology, anthropology, criminology and politics, and the segmented theories and approaches within them, offer clear and unambiguous referents to the knowledge, but not a means of deciding between their knowledge claims, in that the theory defines the world in which it works (Maton, 2013a: 182). Put simply, sociological ideas, for example, tend to be examined sociologically. In the case of the decisions made by an approval panel in this study, insight can be identified according to the extent that approval panels emphasise claims to curriculum knowledge based on how a course is taught rather than what is taught (DR); and its fitness for purpose as opposed to whether it has a sound disciplinary basis (OR). In other words it is the relative strengths of specialisation code modalities that determine the gaze and insights operating within a practice, and it where these codes shift over time or clash when held by different agents that is significant.

*Situational insight* is associated with practices in which there are stronger ontic relations in which problem situations, such as those facing course teams in designing

the curriculum, have no pre-determined procedures or solutions. Both types of insight will be seen to have a bearing on curriculum development in this study.

### **3.4.3 How the curriculum can be differentiated by its semantic structure**

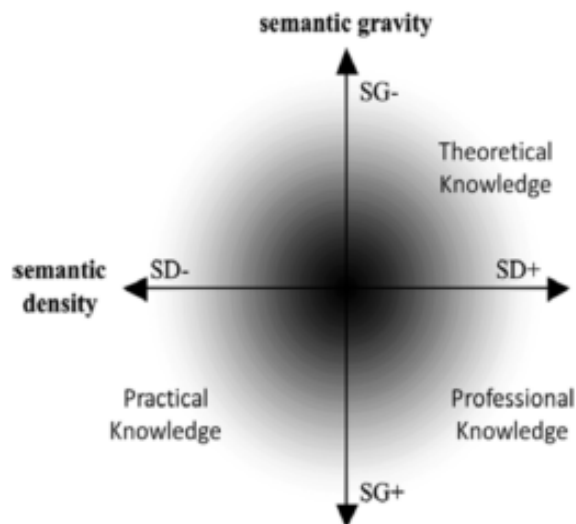
The organising principles of social fields of practice can also be conceptualised as semantic codes. Maton argues that these vary in the strength of semantic gravity and semantic density (Maton, 2013b: 11). Semantic Gravity is defined as:

*... the degree to which meaning relates to its context, whether that is social or symbolic. Semantic gravity may be relatively stronger (+) or weaker (–) along a continuum of strengths. The stronger the semantic gravity (SG+), the more closely meaning is related to its context; the weaker the gravity (SG–), the less dependent meaning is on its context (Maton, 2011: 65).*

The strengths of semantic gravity indicate how an object of study relates to context, and how much it depends on that context to make sense. In this study, for example, the concept of employability, as a key influence in the curriculum, is seen to depend on the context of the workplace to be meaningful. Semantic density is defined as:

*... the degree of condensation of meaning within symbols (terms, concepts, phrases, expressions, gestures, clothing, etc.). (Maton, 2011:65)*

The stronger the semantic density (SD+), the more meaning is condensed within symbols; the weaker the semantic density (SD–), the less meaning is condensed. (Maton, 2011: 66). The degree of condensation within a symbol or practice relates to the semantic structure in which it is located. For example, the concept of *curriculum coherence* in this study is seen to be situated by the discourse of evaluation and the structures that classify what counts as a successful course design (institutional course approval). In other words by virtue of its positions within relational systems of meanings (Maton calls these ‘constellations’) coherence possesses a semantic density of considerable strength. An example of semantic coding of knowledge in the curriculum is shown in Figure 3, (Shay, 2013, based on Maton, 2011: 66).



**Figure 3: Semantic codes of legitimation for knowledge in the curriculum (based on Shay, 2013)**

This is used to analyse the semantic coding of courses in this study with respect to their orientation to knowledge and the degree to which employability (and other influences external to the discipline) are integrated.

***Summary: the value of Maton's Legitimation Code Theory to this study***

This study applies the explanatory power of LCT to identify shifts and clashes in the development and approval of the curriculum in order that the organising principles of these practices can be understood. It focuses on three dimensions of LCT: *Autonomy*, *Specialisation*, and *Semantics* in which autonomy is the primary dimension. Maton's autonomy codes offer the means by which this study can examine the basis of decisions made by the teacher in determining the forms of curricular content knowledge, how it is taught and how it is evaluated (assessed). Furthermore it makes accessible two questions: firstly who controls course design and approval (PA)? And secondly according to whose principles (RA)? Implicit in this is the relations to the needs of the teacher, the discipline and the institution. It makes possible an external language of description for positional and relational autonomy of teachers' practices in course design and approval, central to this study as the means by which data can be examined in the light of theory and vice versa.

Specialisation and semantic code modalities will be shown in this study to differentiate the autonomy of the field with regard to the relative strengths of epistemic and social relations (its specialisation and how this varies epistemically) and to the disciplinary structure of knowledge (how this varies semantically). In other words it enables a fine-tuning of analysis in this study at the various stages and processes involving in designing and approving the curriculum, and a specificity in the findings that allows for differences in disciplines/subjects.

Having set out the explanatory analytical framework for this study I will now explain the basis for the organisation of the empirical work.

### **3.5 Institutional rationality as an organising framework**

Social realism informs substantive research studies by providing an explanatory framework for enactment and by 'defining' data and the means by which data 'speaks back to theory in the form of external languages of description (Maton, 2013a: 15). This thesis identifies the substantive research study of institutional rationality as an organising framework, drawing on the discussion of knowledge, curriculum and the institution in relation to the legitimation of the curriculum in which the importance of a focus on knowledge is established. The key concepts of *collegiality*, *bureaucracy* and *consensus*, are identified from a synthesis of the literature in Chapter 2 and can be examined with regard to the levels of autonomy they generate. These concepts are the means of organising the empirical work of this study.

This conjectural heuristic is adopted in this study as a *common-sense* starting point (a horizontal discourse in Bernstein's terms). It can also be said to construct an internal language of description for institutional rationality, as the 'principles of description to which it gives rise' (Bernstein, 2000: 91). This will now be explored below to establish a framework for the organisation of the fieldwork on the understanding that these concepts will analytically distinguished in Chapter 7 and reviewed in the light of this analysis in Chapter 8. In other words, flagged here is the importance of developing these concepts into an external language of description capable of describing something other than itself (Moore and Muller, 2002: 633).

### **3.5.1 Collegiality as a field position**

Collegiality in the literature of teaching as a profession is often used interchangeably with collaboration, and studies show that both are difficult to achieve (Fielding, 1999). Furthermore as a concept it shares the vagueness of the term 'curriculum', remaining 'conceptually amorphous and ideologically sanguine' (Little, 1990: 509). However, it has long been seen as the key to change (Hargreaves, 1994); as a condition for experimentation for teachers (Little, 1982); and as a 'virtue' that binds professionals together as a disposition to support and cooperate with colleagues (Ihara, 1988: 60). One important dimension of collegiality, therefore, is the relations between individuals in practice and the relationship between agency and structure in determining this (Kelchtermans, 2006). This is important to the habitus exploited in the field in which teachers' cooperative actions are central to their understanding of the notion of collegiality. Here there is a tension between collegiality and autonomy (Clement and Vanderberghe, 2000) and a deficit association of autonomy with uncertainty and fear (Lortie, 1975). Also teacher autonomy is seen as counter to the goal of teacher collaboration, as a kind of heresy (Hargreaves, 1994). Hargreaves and Dawe (1990), similarly, find there to be a collaborative culture (in schools), but that this is a 'contrived' collegiality in the form of the pragmatic day-to-day decisions that teachers make. Examining authority structures Lortie (1975: 232) identified two types and found these to vary in relation to the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for teachers and the degree of autonomy exercised: a vertical bureaucracy authority, forcing collaboration, and resulting in the routinisation of tasks and subordination of status; and a horizontal-collegial authority, in which the emphasis was on teachers working independently and in private, producing increased intrinsic reward (teacher satisfaction and feelings of worth).

#### ***The discipline as collegium***

Studies point to the influence of the discipline in HE on teachers' dispositions to collegiality (Becher and Trowler, 2001). The discipline is formed around intrinsically coherent practices that function only in the sphere of practicality (Bourdieu, 1998: 86). In this perspective, also, the discipline is a domain in which academics position themselves as protecting their own interests (Ihara, 1988: 56; Naidoo and Jamieson,



2005). This suggests that academics are pragmatic about the store they place in the discipline to guide their practice, or that they refract the external pressures by defending (or retreating to) disciplinary positions. This arises partly from the effects of new managerialism and the 'separating out of teaching from the nexus it formally constituted with research, a nexus very firmly located within the disciplinary domain' (Land, 2004: 5). These tensions have existed for some time in HE leading to the reinforcement of position-takings in arenas of struggle (Bourdieu, 1990). For example the Jarrett Report (1985: 22) refers to 'large and powerful academic departments together with individual academics who sometimes see the academic discipline as more important than the long-term well-being of the University which houses them'. The report counters this view by suggesting that universities should be 'corporate enterprises to which the component units and individuals should be subordinate', highlighting this as a struggle for control (Becher and Kogan, 1992: 181).

The discipline, therefore, is conceptualised as a *sub-field* in this study. Academic teams, or course teams, are integral to this, in that they are located within disciplines (the subjects taught and the disciplinary identities of the teachers) as networks of disciplinary practice and interest groups. In the context of discipline as a social construct, therefore, collegiality is seen as 'subjectivities in interaction' (Kreber, 2010) in which they are 'shaped, defended, reconstructed and negotiated in interaction with others' (Trowler, 2009: 191). The relationship between disciplines and academic development is interesting here in that subject specialists can be seen to move between discourses of education and their own subject selecting from both what best fits their own interests.

### ***The collegially focused context***

Any discussion of collegiality will at some point turn to bureaucracy. While bureaucracy is discussed below this section starts with the sociological roots of Weber's theory of rationality that identified 'ideal types' (Weber, 1964) and in particular legal-rational authority of the kind that is active in universities, and in particular in the written documents that typify the course approval process in HE. This has evolved as a system that is bureaucratically organised in which collegial forces are

at play. The principles of collegial authority, based on neo-Weberian understandings of bureaucracy (Hull, 2006) and the work of Malcolm Waters (1989), are:

*Expertise* – in which authority to make decisions is held by groups of experts

*Equality* – in which claims to authority are held ‘by a company of equals’

*Consensus* – involving all members (or their representatives)

Of these, expertise is the first and most important component of collegiality (Waters, 1989: 955). This echoes Ihara’s (1988: 60) contention that collegiality is a form of ‘connectedness’ based on respect for others’ professional expertise. To these Waters adds a high degree of ‘*specialisation*’ to qualify the basis of consensus as reliant on the negotiation between persons who are equal but may differ in their field or type of expertise. He derives from these four tenets a collegial principle based on Weber’s ideas:

*Collegial structures are those in which there is dominant orientation to a consensus achieved between the members of a body of experts who are theoretically equal in their levels of expertise but who are specialized by area of expertise*  
(Waters, 1989: 956)

Waters (ibid.: 956–959) identifies the main ideal-typical organisational characteristics implied by this statement that differentiate collegiate organisations from bureaucratic ones, as the ideal-typical characteristics of collegial organisations:

- *Theoretical knowledge* – knowledge that is specialised with respect to the organisation as a whole and is differentiated with respect to its members, and to a particular task that a sub-group or working party is assigned.
- *Professional career* – members are conceived of as professionals with a vocational commitment to tasks that override their own interests.
- *Formal egalitarianism* – in the performance of their specific duties members of sub-groups are equal to other members carrying out similar tasks.
- *Formal autonomy* – the control and policing of these tasks is carried out by members of these task groups themselves. Performance standards are established interpersonally and informally rather than by formal rules.

- *Scrutiny of product* – subject to evaluation by peer review via oral and written dissemination.
- *Collective decision making* – decisions are made in collective forums delegated to subgroups or specialist committees comprising peers. Ideally committees are oriented to the manufacture of consensus.

These characteristics underpin an organising framework for the discussion of autonomy and how this is affected by dimensions of *collegiality*, *bureaucracy* and, thereby, *consensus*. It will also provide the basis of examining course approval later in this thesis, in which course approval panels represent and embody expertise. However, it should be noted that this is intended to be a heuristic aimed towards isolating the symbolic structures that legitimate practice and knowledge in curriculum development, rather than to analyse the power structures that legitimate domination, as in Weber's 'project'.

### **3.5.2 Bureaucracy as a field position**

One effect of massification in HE on professional roles is that academics now work in large, increasingly hierarchical organisations in which academic work is controlled by the bureaucracies that employ them (Beck and Young, 2005). The notion of the *bureau-professional* has emerged who must combine the independent judgement of the professional with the accountability and fairness demanded of bureaucrats as part of the 'new managerialism' (Newman and Clarke, 1994: 24). This is accompanied by the 'new bureaucracy' (Travers, 2007) that has turned the bureau-professionals into managers. These academic-managers, in turn, are conflicted in their roles by a 'projected ideal' of collegiality in their interactions with those they manage (Clegg, 2003). This widening of the bureaucratic role has increased the sense of 'street-level bureaucracy' in which the long reach of bureaucracy has come out from behind its desk (Lipsky, 1980). However, it is in the documentary form that traditional bureaucracy continues to exist: 'the combination of written documents and a continuous operation by officials constitutes the office (Bureau) which is the central focus of all types of modern organised action' (Weber, 1978: 219).

The approval of courses in HE institutions is part of the QA systems and is a *documentary* process, formulated around peer review. As such it is subject to the cultural codes, or *doxa*, (Bourdieu, 1998) that provide legitimacy to authoritative relationships. Authority then, arises from the mobilisation of particular cultural codes and the performance of particular subjectivities. Which codes and subjectivities are invoked is not 'accidental' or random, but arises in and from the field of practice. It is important to note here that bureaucracies in Bourdieu's terms are neutral, objective and uncontaminated in that they are the means by which states and institutions separate out processes from the self-interests of agents:

*The fundamental law of bureaucratic apparatuses is that the apparatus gives everything (including power over the apparatus) to those who give it everything and expect everything from it because they have nothing or are nothing outside it (Bourdieu, 1994: 216)*

Crucially, however, a neutral bureaucracy depends on the acceptance of the many to be governed by the few, in which the bureaucratic institution becomes the legitimate spokesperson for others. In this and other ways Bourdieu differs from Weber's (1964) conception of bureaucracy. Weber considers bureaucracy to trap the individual in an 'iron cage' rather than being taken-for-granted. Bureaucratic administration in Weber's theory of rationalisation is domination through technical knowledge (Weber, 1964: 225) in which bureaucracy constitutes the most efficient, indispensable and (formally) rational way in which human society can be organised (Swedberg and Agevall, 2005). However, a conception of bureaucratic forms is useful to this study because it allows contexts and field positions to be differentiated. Weber (1978: 956–958) identifies six features of bureaucracy:

- It covers a fixed area of activity, which is governed by rules
- It is organised as a hierarchy
- Action that is undertaken is based on written documents
- Expert training is needed, especially for some
- Officials devote their full activity to their work
- The management of the office follows general rules which can be learned

These features will be applied as criteria to examine the levels of bureaucracy in processes, texts and practices surrounding course design and specifically in the arrangements for course approval and the work of the approval panel.

### ***Collegial organisation types***

Waters (1989) suggests there are three collegial organisation types based on different degrees of bureaucratisation: *exclusively collegiate*; *predominantly collegiate*; and *intermediate collegiate*. The university is of the 'predominantly collegiate' type in that it combines professional and administrative activity, with the latter subordinate to the former. Waters' reconception of Weber is widely acknowledged but is not without its critics. Sciulli (1990) argues that Waters fails to distinguish between social integration (e.g. Durkheim's idea of normative consensus) and social control (e.g. Weber's notion of coercion). This study aims to steer around these inconsistencies by recognising Weber's concepts as ideal types that are adopted pragmatically as the *focus* of field positions identified but not their *basis*. Hull (2006) suggests that contemporary change in HE is characterised by a shift to the intermediate collegiate type, owing to the fact that authority structures have changed and that now professional activity is subordinate to the administrative. Course approval is one process in HE that requires specialist professionals and administration in that it requires documents to be prepared by course teams and for these to be 'validated' by a panel of experts.

### ***Rationalising bureaucracy***

One distinction can be made here in considering how academics are governed by bureaucratic means. The type of rationality involved in academic practice is a form of rationally-organised action as collective rather than individual behaviour (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011). In other words it is a form of bureaucratisation that institutionalises purposive-rational action of groups (Murphy, 2009). Murphy, discussing accountability in HE, suggests that the reach of bureaucratic accountability is limited in that academics operate at the instrumental and the communicative level. He draws on Habermas's re-evaluation of Weber to argue for a middle ground between autonomy and domination in the accountability debate, in which academics face-up to discomforting realities about their roles and responsibilities. This argument points to an inherent contradiction between collegiality and bureaucracy as a form of

decision making, in that the former is committed to equality while the latter is not (Fielding, 1999: 15). Indeed bureaucracy is recognised widely as the 'enemy of a quality culture' (Short, 2009) and counterproductive to academic development. This study examines the conditions for this by exploring the dispositions and position-takings that occur around the approval of courses in a rationally-organised, and (in terms adopted by this thesis) *bureaucratically-focused* context. Whether accountability and bureaucratisation provides the 'mis-fire', or disruption, to habitus, which is required for doxic positions held by academics to be challenged, however, remains to be seen.

### **3.5.3 The search for consensus**

Course approval will be shown in this study to be a formal process that operates as a form of consensus that involves peer review. As discussed in 2.5, decision making in HE evaluation takes place through a process of peer review. It is subject therefore to the rules of the field and is influenced by the habitus of the agents involved and the process itself in which the approval event is ceremonially routinised and formal (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). This field is made accessible by means of a social realist analysis.

Hargreaves (1994: 51) refers to the consensus-based 'cultural' version of collegiality and contrasts it with forms of bureaucracy that involve 'direct administrative constraint or the indirect management of consent'. It involves a type of idealised consensus as a form of democratic deliberation (Habermas, 1994) that is reliant on harmony and transparency (Cooke, 1993). This is consensus that does not actually happen but is instead 'the counterfactual anticipation that agreement can be reached without coercion and systematic distortion' (Trimbur, 1989: 612). Here consensus is an aspiration to 'organise the conversation according to relations to non-domination' (ibid.: 613). Decision making in institutional settings from this perspective can be viewed as the search for consensus that rests on argumentation while also proceeding by it. This is governed by the logic of complementarity that legitimises the social order (Douglas, 1986), thereby constructing a rationality that is internalised and taken for granted (in other words doxic in Bourdieu's terms). The definition, therefore, of who may speak and what counts as a meaningful statement is crucial as the means by which the decisions are legitimated.

A common conception of consensus is that it is holistic form of common agreement across the board. The reaching of consensus and 'stable' understanding is the exception in everyday life, however. A more realistic picture is that of 'a diffuse, fragile, continuously revised and only momentarily successful communication' (Habermas, 1972: 100). Consensus can be seen therefore as a social process rather than an outcome, where people 'feel their way' from one occasional consensus to the next (Corradi *et al.*, 2010: 244). It can be seen, therefore, to be institutionalised towards success (the achievement of consensus) as a form of 'techno-bureaucratic rationality' in which participation can leave deeply held doxa untouched (Schiff, 2009). Thus, from this perspective, consensus becomes:

*... a necessary fiction of reciprocity and mutual recognition, the dream of conversation as perfect dialogue. Understood as a utopian desire, assembled from the partial and fragmentary forms of the current conversation, consensus does not appear as the end or the explanation of the conversation but instead as the means of transforming it.*  
(Trimbur, 1989: 612)

The symbolic concept of *consensus*, therefore, is the means by which deliberation can go beyond accommodation to generate differences, in order to identify (and confirm) the system of authority that organises and classifies these differences (it may, therefore, also disregard and disconfirm them). This is a dependence on collective action as the 'complex interlocking of multiple reciprocal exchanges, direct and indirect' (Douglas, 1986: 31). Panels, committees and boards that have the authority to approve documents, such as programme specifications, therefore, are a form of interpretive community, activated through social processes, in which the goal is collective design, or co-construction of what exists in the interaction with the design proposer (as off-page or off-text) as much as in what is documented (McKenny *et al.*, 2006). This is evaluation-in-action, in which consensus requires a practical rationality that involves the searching for 'temporary breakdowns' (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011: 348) as the 'reflexive deliberations of human agents' (Archer, 2003: 15). This is also a search for the logic of practice (Bourdieu, 1998: 127) that exists in the principle that practices are continually challenged and reframed and that this encourages productive

dissension, rather than surface consensus, to provoke new ways of thinking and acting (McCormack and Titchen, 2006: 243).

Drawing on the discussion of collegiality and bureaucracy above expertise is identified as important in both. One distinction between them is that bureaucracies are rule-governed while collegial organisations are consensus-governed. In the latter, consensus is reliant on specialised expertise and knowledge as part of a *collegial principle* (Waters, 1989: 956) that works in varying degrees according to the strength of organisational collegiality. In the purest form of collegial organisation decision-making requires the full support of the 'entire collectivity' to achieve consensus that can only then 'carry the weight of moral authority' (ibid.: 955). Where collegiality is 'intermediate' it cedes the authority of knowledge to the 'professional judgement of experts, to academic specialities and professional training, to the wider meritocratic order of a credentialed society' (Trimbur, 1989: 611). Here expertise is specialised to such a high degree that no single expert can have complete knowledge relative to a given problem. In a Durkheimian sense this would suggest that consensus, as an outcome of collegial authority, emerges from organic rather than mechanical solidarity (Durkheim, 1933). The emphasis in organic solidarity is on interdependency, as a social cohesion in which individuals rely on each other in complex societies, as opposed to less integrated, segmentally structured mechanical solidarity societies. The broad association between the typologies of Durkheim's organic and mechanical solidarity and Weber's notions of (respectively) traditional and legal-rational authority is made here, while acknowledging the methodological differences in their projects.

The emphasis in organic solidarity is on the differences between individuals where roles are achieved rather than assigned. The shift from mechanical to organic social integration is linked to changes in education 'from education in depth to education in breadth' (Bernstein, 1967: 155). This is a change in the boundary relations in a number of dimensions including teacher as specialist, the subjects in a curriculum, knowledge itself and between the university and the outside world – inside and outside are no longer clearly differentiated. Bernstein (ibid.: 161) suggests that the terms 'closed' and 'open', rather than mechanical and organic (respectively), are more helpful to understanding the 'open institution' as the weakening of authority and its social basis.



A socially real view of consensus , as it operates in course approval, therefore, can approach it as a form of social integration, in which the positions taken relative to others in the field, and the principles by which this occurs, is governed by the degree to which this expertise can be contested – its autonomy. This study examines *consensus-seeking* activity as emerging from the dimension of *collegially focused* and *bureaucratically focused* practice. It identifies ‘expertise’ as codifying and regulating this practice through constructs of competence and performance. Through this analysis it seeks to elaborate the codes for autonomy to further specialise how these can be used to analyse the legitimisation of the curriculum. As noted earlier, these concepts are the syntax that comprises the principles of description that will be used to shape the research design. What remain to be developed are the empirical referents, how these referents relate, and the means by which these referential relations can be translated back into the internal conceptual language in the form of an external language of description (Moore and Muller, 2002: 633) for institutional rationality as it applies to course approval and the research questions of this thesis.

### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter has identified critical realism and Archer’s morphogenesis as a social ontology that ‘under-labours’ social realism. This ‘meta-theory’ can be distinguished analytically from the explanatory theories chosen for this study, namely Bourdieu’s field theory, Bernstein’s pedagogic device and Maton’s LCT. This social realism explanatory framework informs social ontology by mediating its access to the social world. It also provides the means by which this study can ‘speak back’ to theory in light of what data reveal (Maton, 2013a: 15) and to develop an external language of description that is capable of linking data to theory, and back again, as a translation device.

Social realism, therefore, as the conceptual framework for this study, incorporating Bernstein’s pedagogic device and Maton’s LCT, will guide the methodology of the study, its fieldwork and the analysis of data and provide the basis of claims made in this research. The next chapter will describe the research design that will achieve this.

## **Chapter 4: Research Design**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the processes and mechanisms that underpin curriculum development in a UK HE institution. In this Chapter I shall explain the purposes of the study more fully, and relate this to the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the study that I discussed in Chapter 3 and discuss the research design and processes. The research design is informed by the research questions and these are repeated here:

#### ***Research questions***

**RQ1:** What are the characteristics of the teaching practices that are shaped by the educational beliefs and values that academics bring to curriculum design in higher education?

**RQ2:** What are the characteristics of course planning practices in a UK higher education institution and how are curricular forms generated?

**RQ3:** What are the characteristics of curriculum approval practices in a UK higher education institution, and how do academics interpret and respond to this in reproducing the curriculum?

### **4.2 Qualitative approaches in social realist research**

A critical realist perspective on emergent practice argues for a qualitative approach to research. This is especially the case in the context of seeking explanation of a 'naturally-occurring' educational intervention such as curriculum development in which 'interest is in structure, powers, generative mechanisms and tendencies, which are all ways of scientifically conceptualising the underlying principles that produce the empirical' (Clegg, 2005a: 420-21). Indeed, the issues of structure and agency in HE are often ignored (Ashwin, 2008). It is important to acknowledge the causal mechanisms that underpin events in a realist ontology and it is possible to come to an understanding of the world through examining people's experience of the world to gain knowledge of it. Field research is capable of producing these explanations of the actual events and processes that lead to specific outcomes (Maxwell, 2012). Working

in a qualitative paradigm has a number of advantages when investigating natural settings such as institutions (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

#### **4.2.1 Developing knowledge of social processes**

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world and in the social context that is being researched (Silverman, 2006). As such it consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make that world visible. In doing this these practices have the tendency to transform the world through successive acts of representation. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self.' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 4). The need to develop a detailed understanding of the complex relationships between the experiences and concerns of the individuals involved in the study and the contexts for their academic practice (Maxwell, 2012; Flick, 2006) are central to this approach. It is also important to allow participants every opportunity to voice their own understandings (Creswell, 2007).

In taking a participant perspective I aimed to focus on meaning (Creswell, 2007; Flick 2006; Merriam, 1998) and the process of developing multiple meanings that individual actors attach to their experiences (Maxwell, 2012). For example, how participants experience the approval process can be seen in this study to influence how they understand it. The research took place in naturalistic settings in which I aimed to explore the particular contexts, and their effects on the participants' views and behaviours, by studying people or events in their actual settings. This design was emergent and responsive (Merriam 1998) allowing the research focus to be shaped, participants and context to be selected and data analysed (Stake, 2008). It involved multiple sources in which in-depth analysis of the topic and interpretation are facilitated by the use of more than one source - a case study of curriculum sharing in 10 institutions (CS1) and a case study of curriculum design and approval in one institution (CS2).

As a researcher I was a key instrument in collecting and transcribing the data enabling adjustments to the research design and deeper insight into the data and analysis to be

made. By providing detailed descriptions of the context, actors and events I will present the finding of this study (Merriam, 1998) taking into account the complexity of the issues and allowing them to be vicariously experienced by readers. These features are inextricably bound to the interpretive characteristics of this type of inquiry, allowing the researcher, the participants and the reader to make interpretations based on their own understanding of the issue (Creswell, 2007). The importance of my reflexivity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) is acknowledged, and the factors that may possibly have had a bearing on my interpretations have been documented in appendix 6 as a record of my viewpoints as a researcher.

The principles that direct my approach to the research set out above are returned to briefly in Chapter 8 in order to consider the degree to which these were achieved. The case for using these qualitative methods in a social realist approach is made by their appropriateness to the context in which what counts as performance or context (in making the curriculum) is ambiguous or contested, and in which variables are not tightly controlled. Furthermore, the actors in this study have the recognition and realisation rules (Bernstein, 2000) and an implicit, tacit model from which these rules are derived and the researcher's task is to find the rules and the model. This is what Bernstein calls the 'ethnographic position' (ibid.: 134), where the researcher has to 'first learn the language of the group or society, and know the rules of its contextual use' (ibid.). The role of the researcher here will be to model the members' recognition and realisation rules; i.e. the strategies of practice those rules constrain (the tacit model, or an internal language of description in Bernstein's terms). The risk for the researcher lies in the absence of a model in which the research is 'marooned' in the specific context:

*Without a model the researcher can never know what could have been and was not. Without a model, the researcher only knows what his/her informants have enacted.*  
(ibid.: 135)

Bernstein advises the researcher to show the transparency of a culture through the construction of an internal language of description (L1) from which one or more external languages of description (L2) must be derived to enable the internal language to describe something other than itself. Another factor is the disciplinary contexts for

practice, in the knowledge structures, and associated knower structures and how this is legitimated (Maton, 2010a). This is a dimension of the study that needs to be addressed in order that this model can be constructed.

### 4.3 Research design

In choosing the research design I was mindful of the logic that links the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial questions of the study, and the means by which coherence is ensured (Rowley 2002). This included my choice of research methods, participant/sample collection and data collection procedures and instruments. I also needed to consider the role of the researcher, and the specific interests that can affect the research designs (Dooley, 2002; Noor, 2008; Rowley, 2002; Yin, 2003). This design is outlined in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: Research questions, cases and methods**

Research Question	Case	Methods
1. What are the characteristics of the teaching practices that are shaped by the educational beliefs and values that academics bring to curriculum design in HE?	CS1: Cross-institution (n=10) Case Study in curriculum sharing	Discussion groups Interviews Course design texts
2. What are the characteristics of course planning practices in a UK HE institution and how are curricular forms generated?	CS2 Part 1 of a single institution Case Study in curriculum design	Interviews Course design texts
3. What are the characteristics of curriculum approval practices in a UK HE institution, and how do academics interpret and respond to this in reproducing the curriculum?	CS2 Part 2 of a single institution Case Study in curriculum approval	Interviews Course design texts Observations of approval panel events

#### 4.3.1 A case study methodology

This research adopted a case study approach appropriate to the nature of the happenings and events, and the concurrence of the two chosen contexts for curriculum development. The purpose was to develop insights into the wider issue of teachers' experiences of curriculum development and as such they each fall into the category of 'instrumental', as opposed to 'intrinsic', case studies (Stake, 2008) , in which the aim, in this study, was to develop an external language of description (Bernstein, 2000) in order that it becomes possible 'to generalise and abstract from the

particularities of the case study without losing its specificities' (Chen, Maton, and Bennett, 2011: 133). However, it can be considered to be *intrinsic* to the extent that it involved the researcher as an 'insider', and this positionality in the study is discussed below.

This approach resonates with the idea of a case as a bounded context (Miles and Huberman, 1994) that constitutes an integrated system (Stake, 2008). This enabled a focus on the variables relevant to the entity of the case only, with an emphasis on how these variables interconnect (Punch, 2005: 145). The choice of two sites for the case (the single institution (CS2), and the cross-institution context (CS1)) offered multiple cases (Yin, 2003) in which the focus of the research was also embedded within this wider case study. These perspectives enable variation among the participants and a variety of participant experiences and hence more compelling interpretations by the researcher (Merriam, 1998), enabling higher precision, validity and stability of the findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Having identified the three field positions in the literature review, consonant with an understanding of institutional rationality, I was aware of the need to explore these in relation to course design, planning and approval *in vivo*. The site of these practices was easily available to me in my own institution and my access to this was made possible and facilitated by my role as a Teaching Fellow for Curriculum Development. This therefore became case study 2 (CS2). However, an impasse was reached in my efforts to access the lived curriculum, the ongoing quotidian practices that my colleagues were involved in teaching and assessing courses. This was partly owing to the lack of available access to busy course teams and their immersion in this everyday business. While the events and activities that occupy a course team leading up to and during approval raise the visibility of practice and increase its accessibility for examination, this is not the case for lived curriculum processes.

Consequently, the site of CS2 did not easily provide access to the circumstances under which academics, by choice, are able to select examples of their practice that they are prepared to share readily and to discuss with others. This context is important because it offers a 'period of relative stability' in which the habit and associated repertoires of

routine activity and/or reflexivity and deliberation on action can be examined (Archer, 1995). Furthermore, the advantages of basing this phase outside the case study in one institution (CS2) is three-fold: firstly there is the likelihood that the 'bureaucratically focused' practice in institutional settings can influence the possibility of 'consensus-seeking'; secondly the composition of teachers from across the UK and from a range of HEI offers the means by which the field can be seen and its features explored; thirdly its discipline boundary (social science) allows the disciplinary perspective to be isolated and examined in relief. The limitations of the case study design is that it qualifies the degree to which the causal effects of habits and repertoire (conditioning in Archer's terms) in CS1 can be related to the 'reshaping of structural/cultural/group relations in the second CS2. To address this, the study constructs an internal language of description for the curriculum in Chapter 5 that is examined in Chapter 6 and used as a frame for the analysis of the second part of the case study set in one institution (CS2) in Chapter 7.

### ***Case Study 1 (CS1)***

The first case study involved 12 academics from 10 institutions taking part in a UK Higher Education Academy (HEA) open educational resources project based at the Subject Centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP) at Birmingham University (cf. Gruszczynska, 2011). The subject disciplines involved are those categorised as 'soft and applied' (Becher, 1994) including social science, environment and education. The demographics of the participants in the 10 institutions are typical of the sector, with an average tenure of 10 years and an average age of 51. The influences on curriculum development were typical of UK universities at the time of this study with an emphasis on employability, internationalising the curriculum, and inclusion. Appendix 3 shows the characteristics of the 10 institutions and their course approval processes. This study sees the bounded system as the university itself, and specifically those aspects of the institution that support the course planning process. The institution is defined as the management, administration, teaching staff, resources, buildings etc. and also factors that influence this such as disciplines, dispositions/identities of academic staff in the processes and arrangements for course planning. This is important because it emphasises course planning as a social practice (Oliver, 2003).

## ***Case Study 2 (CS2)***

The second case study is based in one large regional UK University involving curriculum development within one of the four faculties. The case study took place (2010-12) at Institution I10, a large, urban, post-92 university in the North of England, with over 30,000 students, referred to from this point forward as *Forgettown University*. Forgettown was established as a university in 1992, as a former Polytechnic, acquiring degree awarding powers and university title under the Further and Higher Education Reform Act (1988). It holds a midway position in the league tables for UK HEI and is well regarded for its vocational degrees while having several excellent research areas, and outstanding provision for international students. The institution is organised into four large faculties, each having a remit for the management of planning and development of provision in the form of a Quality Support Team (QST). The *Faculty of Social Development*, the largest of the four faculties, with 13,000 students is the specific context for this study, and the courses represented are a cross-section, including Education, Social Science, Built Environment and Real Estate, and Geography, Environment, Planning and Housing (see Appendix 17). In 2010 the QAA carried out an institutional audit and found 'confidence' in Forgettown University and the management of its academic standards. It identified good practice in the strategic use of employability and the use of the institutional Research Team to inform institutional practice 'at strategic and operational levels'.

CS2 is in two parts: the first is an examination of the period of activity of course teams' planning and preparation prior to the approval panel. The second involves the processes and practices that take place at the time shortly before, during, and shortly after the approval panel event. CS1 and the two parts of CS2 represent three phases of the research, examined in the field work chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively.

## ***Phases of fieldwork***

The three phases of the research use Archer's (1995) morphogenetic structure to provide an organising framework for the study as three, over-lapping phases. The notion of autonomy is related to collegiality and bureaucracy based on the discussion of this in Chapter 3. In other words, this study offers the initial proposition that an exploration of the problem space can be carried out organisationally according to the



phases of the morphogenetic sequence in relation to phases that are accessible to the research questions as ‘*collegially focused*’, ‘*bureaucratically focused*’, and ‘*consensus-seeking focused*’. This morphogenetic structure is described in Table 10.

**Table 10: Research design following Archer's morphogenesis (1995)**

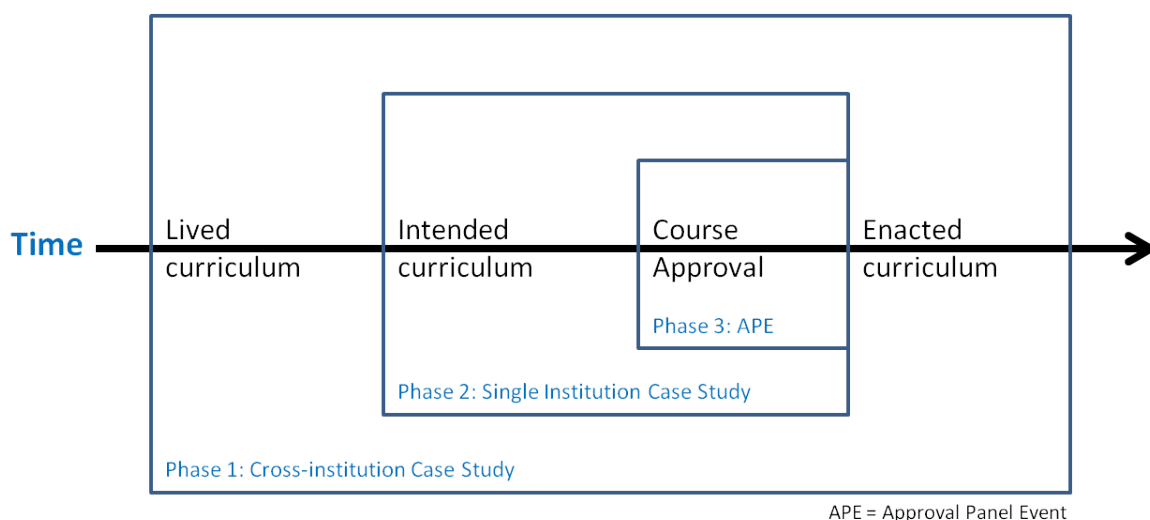
<b>Morphogenesis</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Organising principle</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Research Method</b>
Structural/cultural/ socio-cultural conditioning	1 (T1)	‘Collegially focused’	Analysing the structure of curriculum during a period of relative stability	Case Study of cross- institution curriculum sharing (CS1) involving interviews, documentary analysis and group discussions
Social interaction	2 (T2- T3)	‘Bureau- cratically focused’	Exploring changes to the curriculum and debates around these changes	Case Study of curriculum design in one institution (CS2 part 1) involving interviews and documentary analysis
Structural /cultural/ group elaboration	3 (T4)	‘Consensus- seeking focused’	Establishing the structure of the curriculum following these actions	Case Study of curriculum approval in one institution (CS2 part 2) involving interviews, observations and documentary analysis

This ‘nested’ design is influenced by the ontology of the study, based on a critical realist perspective. The research design of this thesis outlined here examines the possibilities for new curricula and how the structuring of curriculum development knowledge provides the bases for these possibilities. It uses Archer’s morphogenetic sequence, as a theory about change and its emergence, to organise the study, to map its contingences and to identify its arbitrariness:

*The point of the morphogenetic approach is precisely to specify the ‘who’s who’ and ‘who does what’ in social transformation. (Archer, 2010: 276)*

The actual empirical phases of the study and how they are related is shown in Figure 4. Working backwards from Phase 3 the diagram shows the stage of course approval to be centred on the Approval Panel Event (APE) as the meeting where course teams meet with the University Approval Panel (UAP). This activity is located within Phase 2 in which activity is focussed on designing the (intended) curriculum and preparing

documentation for the APE. Both phases 2 and 3 take place within the same institution and are the first and second parts of the second case study respectively. Phase 1 is the lived and enacted phases of the curriculum process that surrounds the planning and approval phases. In other words the course is *enacted* following course approval and becomes *lived* in the time between its approval and the next time it is approved.



**Figure 4: Empirical stages of the study**

It is important to note in this research design that courses and teachers involved in CS1 have all been subject to the activities and processes of phases 2 and 3 at some point in their histories. Similarly the courses and teachers in phases 2 and 3 have all experienced the enacted and lived phase. Both cases, therefore, are located in the field of HE and what links them is the process of approval (the legitimization of the curriculum) to which all courses in UK HE are subject (shown in the diagram as the APE). Furthermore the arrangements for course approval are reasonably consistent for all 11 institutions represented in the study (see Appendix 3), in accordance with the QAA Code of Conduct (QAA, 2006).

The cycle implicit in the morphogenetic structure and the empirical stages in this study is the development of the curriculum at the meso-level in HE (i.e. at the programme and course level within units of structure such as departments, governed by institutional processes). Specifically this involves the movement between the 'lived

‘and the ‘intended/official’<sup>6</sup> curriculum and back again to ‘lived’ (and around again to a new T4 and so on) and the activities of agents in this process. The time line in Figure 4 therefore is continuous in which these cycles occur and re-occur.

This structure and research design for this thesis, therefore, is organisationally and methodologically appropriate for how the curriculum is described by actors and its underlying structures. These terms emerged from the literature and were confirmed by the analysis and coding (see use of research tools below) of the data (participants’ accounts and reflections) as an emphasis on practice and are thus formulated in the organising framework as practice that is ‘collegially focused’ or ‘bureaucratically focused’, and the encounter of these emphases as ‘consensus-seeking focused’.

#### **4.4 Research methods**

The methods chosen in this study are appropriate to the research questions and the methodology in that they provide the means to examine the effects of structure and agency on the processes of curriculum development and how the possibility of new practices emerges. These include group discussions, interviews, documentary analysis and observations.

##### ***Group discussions***

Group discussions allow a specific set of issues to be explored by means of collective activity, including people's experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns. The method is particularly useful for allowing participants to generate their own questions, frames and concepts and to pursue their own priorities on their own terms, in their own vocabulary (Morgan, 1996) and to examine people's different perspectives as they operate within a social network.’ (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1998: 4; Burnett and Merchant, 2011). Analysis involves identifying, drawing together and comparing discussion of similar themes and examining how these relate to the variation between individuals and between groups. This involved the systematic coding of transcripts of data that was textual and ‘taken in the context in which the comments originated’ (Asbury, 1995: 418). The interactions regarding the curriculum and shared

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<sup>6</sup> The terms ‘lived’ and ‘intended/official’ arise in the literature. ‘Intended’ is preferred to ‘official’ here to avoid the automatic association with ‘bureaucracy’.

understandings of practice were suited to group situations in phase 1 where the process of peer review and feedback was integral to the working of the participants.

### ***Individual Interviews***

Semi-structured interviews with individuals were undertaken in all phases of the study and analysed to characterise teachers' experiences of the course design and approval process. The interview research method (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997) was used on the basis that it enabled the researcher to collect in-depth information by engaging with each interviewee's perspectives as 'negotiated accomplishment' (Fontana and Frey, 2008: 144). All interviews were conducted face-to-face. The interview questions were open-ended and developed based on the research questions, the literature and themes gleaned from the consultation groups (A and B). An outline of the topics is given in Table 11 and in Appendix 5.

**Table 11: General topics for interviewing course team members**

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Key Questions/Prompts (starting points)</b>
Initial Interview with course leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tell me about your experience of (re)approval to date?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do you feel is your role in the process?</i></li> <li>• <i>What are your expectations of the process?</i></li> </ul>
Mid-stage interviews with members of the course team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tell me about your experience of (re)approval to date?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do you feel is your role in the process?</i></li> <li>• <i>How do you feel you might contribute to the development of the course?</i></li> </ul>
Post-approval interview with course leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tell me about your experience of the (re)approval?</i></li> <li>• <i>Do you feel you achieved what you wanted to?</i></li> <li>• <i>What aspects do you feel might have improved the process?</i></li> </ul>

This phase of in-depth examination of the experiences of course teams involved multiple semi-structured interviews with individual course team leaders and members of the course teams (CPT1, 2 and 3). These 16 interviews (see Table 32 in Appendix 4) took place across the timescale of the approval process (see Appendix 14 outlining a typical timeline for the process). Typically interviews for each course team took place before, around the time of the event and afterwards. These were transcribed verbatim and discussed with the participant to check accuracy. This design increased the trustworthiness of the results of the study by allowing the researcher to observe changes in the participants' views over a period of time and to probe any apparently

contradictory statements as they arose. It also increased the likelihood of rapport to be established between the interviewer and the interviewee (Flick, 2006).

Each teacher participant in Group C (see Table 32 in Appendix 4) was interviewed individually once for approximately one hour, and in the main this took place within eight weeks of the Approval Event. With the participants' consent all interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. During the interviews the participants were asked to describe their involvement in course planning and their experience of the approval process (see row 4 of Table 11 for the interview guide for course teams and Table 12 for the academics involved in approving courses).

**Table 12: General topics for approvers' interviews**

Interview	Key Questions/Prompts (starting points)
Interview with members of QA support team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tell me about your role in the (re)approval process</i></li> <li>• <i>Tell me about your experience of (re)approval to date</i></li> <li>• <i>What things do you feel course teams should do for a successful (re)approval?</i></li> </ul>

### ***Documentation***

There were a number of documents that provided data on the course designs such as the submission documents prepared for the approval event. These included information about the types of course, the rationale for learning and teaching and assessment details. In addition a number of documents were produced by the event itself including conditions set by the panel and the panel comments on the course team's documentation. These represented articulation by CPTs on their intentions.

### ***Observations and field notes***

I attended approval events as a non-participant observer, including the closed sessions in which the UAP discussed the documentation of the course and made their decisions. I was able to make detailed notes of the interactions between the course team and the approval panel, and within the approval panel in recess. These were typed up and shared with members of the course team at the post event interview as an aide memoire. The coding of transcripts allowed the comparison of my understandings with those of the participants. This sensitisation to the issues being discussed is potentially able to evoke memories or alert participants to new, relevant incidents (Weiss, 1994).

### **Data set**

A summary of the data set is shown in Table 13 below. This lists the method, the research phase(s), the data source and the type and amount of data collected:

**Table 13: Data set**

Method		Research Phase	Data Source	Total (no./length)
Case Study 1		1	Participant peer review Interviews Participant process commentary Group discussions Written feedback on process Module designs and content	6 12 (12 hours) 6 6 6 24
Case Study 2 (parts 1 & 2)		1/2/3	Interviews (Groups A, B, C, D, E)	37 (40 hours)
Texts	Produced by Quality System	2/3	Faculty Quality Team comments UAP comments UAP conditions	12 12 12
	Produced by Course Team	2/3	Submission document: Module descriptors Course Rationale and Mappings	12 12 12
Observations (field notes)		1/2/3	Observations of Approval Events Researcher diary/Field notes (4 years) Researcher Identity Memo	4 (14 hours) 35,000 words 12,000 words

### **4.5 Participants and data collection**

Data were collected in line with the three empirical phases of the fieldwork that relate to the organising framework of Archer's morphogenetic sequence as identified above. Participants were organised into 5 groups (A-E) over the 3 phases (note Group D is involved phase 2 and 3) (see Appendix 4 for details of the 5 groups). This is summarised in Figure 5 below:

<b>Phase 1: Case Study of cross-institution curriculum sharing (CS1)</b>	
<b>Purpose:</b>	to explore characteristics of the <i>collegially focused</i> culture for course design
<b>Method:</b>	discussion groups, interviews, and course design texts
<b>Participants:</b>	12 teachers (social science) from 10 UK HEI in two groups:
<b>Group A:</b>	the ' <i>sharers</i> ' – 6 teachers (A1-A6) from 6 UK HE institutions (I1-I6) exploring making their course designs 'open'
<b>Group B:</b>	the ' <i>cascaders</i> ' – 6 teachers (B1-B6) from 3 UK HE institutions (I7-I9B) exploring the use of the course designs 'of others'
<b>Phase 2: Case Study in an institutional context (CS2 part 1)</b>	
<b>Purpose:</b>	to explore characteristics of the <i>bureaucratically focused</i> culture for course design
<b>Method:</b>	interviews, course design texts,
<b>Participants:</b>	16 teachers from 1 UK HEI (I10) in two groups:
<b>Group C:</b>	the ' <i>approved</i> ' – 9 teachers (C1-C9) from 7 courses (CPT4-11) exploring the course design and approval process
<b>Group D:</b>	the ' <i>approval seekers</i> ' – 7 teachers (D1-D7) from 3 course teams (CPT1,2,3) in 1 UK HE institution (I10) exploring the process of course approval
<b>Phase 3: Case Study in an institutional context (CS2 part 2)</b>	
<b>Purpose:</b>	to explore characteristics of the <i>consensus-seeking focused</i> culture for course design
<b>Method:</b>	interviews, course design texts, observations of approval events
<b>Participants:</b>	17 teachers from 1 UK HEI (I10) in two groups
<b>Group D:</b>	the ' <i>approval seekers</i> ' – 7 teachers (D1-D7) from 3 course teams (CPT1,2,3) in 1 UK HE institution (I10) exploring the process of course approval
<b>Group E:</b>	the ' <i>approvers</i> ' – 10 teachers (E1-E10) exploring the experience of 'approving' courses

**Figure 5: Data collection phases and participant groupings**

***Phase 1: Case Study of cross-institution curriculum sharing (CS1: Groups A and B)***

This takes the form of an analysis of a case study (CS1) of cross-institution curriculum sharing by two groups of participants, comprising 12 teachers from 10 different UK HEI (see Appendix 3). The first group, Group A (n=6), worked collaboratively and individually to prepare 20 modules of study, and their associated materials, to be deposited in a repository for education resources; while the second group, Group B (n=6), examined these resources, along with other materials that were developed, and

investigated their use in their own contexts with students. CS1 took place over time (April 2009 to September 2011) allowing an examination of 'people's different perspectives as they operate within a social network' (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1998). In this sense this case study can be seen to be exploratory (Fern, 2001). In addition analysis of the group interactions in the discussions as described below identified individual and collective experiences and shared knowledge of the participants (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2005).

The groups (see Table 29 in Appendix 4) are categorised, for the purposes of this study, as 'Sharers' (Group A) and 'Cascaders' (Group B) in order to examine 'putting a practice into practice' (Bourdieu, 1990: 9). This includes activities pertinent to the object of study in this thesis, such as discussion about what constitutes the curriculum and how this is described in a format that can be shared with others. Participants in the study are referred to by the (anonymised) name of the participant and the activity, in the form *[participant name and code], [case study activity]* e.g. '(Paula (A1), Peer Review)'. Where appropriate the institution is also given (anonymised as a code, I1-I10) (see Appendix 3 for an overview of institutions involved in this study). The data for each group are detailed in Appendices 4 and 5. They include an *initiation meeting* with the group (2 hours); a process of peer review in which paired discussions took place on shared modules; collaborative discussions on key topics; interviews, critical commentaries and case studies completed by each group member; and the modules themselves (see Table 33 and Table 34 in Appendix 5).

The discussion in these different contexts was guided by a set of broad open-ended questions as identified above. The participants were aware that their activities involved curriculum development and that course approval was at least implicit in the context for making their courses open and shareable with others in that each of these courses will have been subject to quality approval processes similar to that in the bureaucratically focused context of Institution I10. As Appendix 3 shows there is a high degree of homogeneity in the arrangements for course approval in this study.



### ***Phase 2: Case Study in an institutional context, Part 1 (CS2 – Groups C and D)***

This phase of data collection focused on the experiences of course planning team members who have completed validation (approval) and the understandings and dispositions of members of the Quality Team who are involved in the approval process. The data collected included individual interviews, and course design texts. The selection criteria for teacher participants in phase 2 were that they had recently either been involved as a course team member in course approval (Group C) or had served as a member of an approval panel (Group E). In addition individuals approached to participate as a member of Group E were chosen first from those who had actually officiated in the approval panels of course teams that made up Group D (the in-depth course team group). Members of the teacher group (C) were purposefully chosen to maximise variety among the participants and a range of disciplines in the faculty that could be classed as social science/soft applied (Becher, 1994) balanced by the practical aspects of selection (Stake, 2008). The participants were recruited through direct invitation. This included nine teachers who had recently experienced the course approval process (Group C) from seven course teams (see Table 30 and Table 32 in Appendix 4). As Table 30 shows the participants were experienced university lecturers.

In terms of the academics involved in approving courses (Group E) these were selected primarily on the basis of being involved in the approvals of the courses that were examined in-depth (CPT1, 2 and 3). The primary role, therefore, was of either chairing the approval panel (E2, E4 and E6) of the courses examined in phase 3 of this study, or were members of the panel (E7 and E8) for these course approvals. In order that a fuller picture of the characteristics of the approval process could be gained interviews were completed with senior members of the Quality Team (E1, E5 and E3), and Teaching Fellows (E9 and E10) who provide academic support for course teams.

### ***Phase 3: Case Study in an institutional context, Part 2 (CS2 - Groups D and E)***

Data collected in the third phase of the research included multiple interviews with members of the course team (see schedule Table 32 in Appendix 4), texts created during the course approval process, and observations of the Approval Event (APE) itself. This data provided insight into the layers of the teachers' experiences (Fontana

and Frey, 2008) by allowing me to examine the experiences leading up and including the approval event itself.

#### **4.6 Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues were addressed in a number of ways. First ethics approval was obtained from Sheffield Hallam University's Ethics Committee before the commencement of data collection. Secondly consent forms were signed by each of the participants before the first interview was started. This is included in Appendix 26 and describes the objectives of the research, the benefits of the study to the participants, as well as their rights to engage or withdraw at any time. Details of supervisors and were provided in case there was cause for complaints. Thirdly participants' anonymity was protected by the use of pseudonyms. Ethical issues are heightened in insider research owing to the sensitivities discussed above, including the need to act ethically as discussed below. All participants and their institutions are anonymised in this study.

##### **4.6.1 Insider research and researcher positionality**

As a fellow academic I adopted an *insider* position on many aspects of the research. I was aware that being 'inside research' is subject to a number of factors including identity, time and location and the power relationships between researcher and participants, and the relationship that continues after the research has finished (Mercer, 2007). The dynamics of insider research include *access*, *pre-understanding*, *role duality*, and *organisational politics* (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007: 67). I was provided primary access, as a member of the organisation in CS2, as a faculty Teaching Fellow for Curriculum Development as part of a 'privileged periphery' (Clegg, 2003: 806). I also had secondary access to all parts of the organisation (including documentation, data and networks) that might be closed to some participants owing to status or privilege. As a teaching fellow my relationship with participants was essentially as a supportive and advisory colleague. However the potential existed for the insights I gained in this research to colour my view of their practice and to be seen to judge and evaluate their work. I was cautious of this preunderstanding and the knowledge, insights and experiences that I might hold or have gained prior to undertaking the research, including practical and theoretical knowledge. Steps taken

to deal with this included the ethical considerations mentioned above and my making clear the terms and purpose of my research (see Appendix 26).

Also, in CS1 my role was as 'associate' to the HEA C-SAP national subject centre from 2009 to 2012 based at Birmingham University, which involved me in research in social science pedagogy and curriculum (e.g. Marsh and Pountney, 2009; Craig and Pountney, 2009; Gruszczynska and Pountney, 2013) and leading a national conference on e-learning in the social sciences in 2011. As 'curriculum consultant' to the project in which participants were taking part as partners (voluntarily) my role was supportive and advisory. However, there was the potential for incongruent relationship between myself and participants in which the demands of the project could supersede or diminish their willingness to disclose or in which they were fearful that I would misinterpret them. I addressed this by developing rapport with the participants and sharing with them my commitment to their curriculum and their own insights into it. This is evident, I believe, in the researcher reflexive coding where I was mindful of becoming and being the researcher, in which I specifically coded moments in being the project consultant and my interactions with participants. This mindfulness alerted me to potential difficulties in the researcher/participant relationship.

I was conscious, therefore, of the importance of 'moving from closeness to distance and back again' (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007: 690) and I heightened reflexivity in the coding and analysis of the data *in vivo* by means of a continual process of reviewing and reflecting on the data and its interpretation. A 'Researcher Identity Memo' (Maxwell, 2012) was kept alongside a field notes memo, and a researcher diary as a form of being on the lookout for 'sharp, sunlit moments of clarity or insight – little conceptual epiphanies' (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 74). I was able, therefore, to code my own perspectives alongside those of participants being vigilant for bias or prejudice towards a particular viewpoint (see Appendix 6). This process is referred to as 'looking ahead' (Bazeley and Jackson 2013: 42) as a means of keeping track of emerging ideas. By means of these strategies I was able to explore personal goals, recognise assumptions and draw on experiential knowledge. The study evolved from its focus on and allegiance to a specific problem: i.e. a direct involvement in course approval exploring the process of course design and approval and observing firsthand the

difficult that teachers had in making effective description of their courses that were adequate for their own practice, and for the official institutional quality process. This became a focus on practice and how it was legitimated. However, I had no stake or anything to benefit from participants' contributions other than to better understand the process, perhaps on the basis that it would inform my own future practice.

Excerpts from the *Researcher Identity Memo* and its coding structure are shown in Appendix 6: *Language of description for the researcher's (insider) viewpoints* as indicative of this reflexive process. This lists the main categories (*becoming* and *being the researcher*), their subcategories, descriptions and examples from the data. This illustrates that alongside the coding of participants' responses I also coded and interpreted my own questions and comments, reflexively. This 'internal' language of description for the researcher's viewpoint as an insider is held in the dynamic process of coding and concept-building in the study. While not guaranteeing impartiality it is intended to offset the problems of preunderstanding (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007) by acknowledging, and acting upon where appropriate, the researcher's experience and position in the research.

#### **4.7 Data Analysis**

This section outlines how the data was analysed: the means of analysis (using NVivo); the stages of analysis, including thematic analysis; how the coding was organised; and how the analytical coding of the data was used to create two languages of description as the means of further analysis in this study.

The full set of data collected for this study is outlined in Table 13 above. This comprised over 40 hours of interviews, over 100 texts and four detailed observations of approval events. An analytical approach was derived from Bernstein (2000), Miles and Huberman (1994) and Creswell (2007) and involved three stages:

- Searching for themes that emerged from the data
- Organising these themes according to positions in the field ('collegially focused' and 'bureaucratically focused') and Bernstein's three 'message systems' (Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment)

- Developing an analytical device (an 'external language of description' Bernstein, 2000) for using the concepts of classification and framing and Maton's Legitimation Code Theory.

In each of these stages the analytic procedures involved were interwoven (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The process of this selection of activity as 'moments of significance' is acknowledged earlier in this study, as a 'filtering' made by the researcher in which voices can be silenced (Kelle, 1997). However, the intention is to present these accounts as truthfully as possible, to give them space and to allow them to 'breathe' and to 'speak'. The following section describes these three stages in more detail.

#### **4.7.1 The use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software**

NVivo 10 (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2012) was used to store, organise and code the data (see Table 13). The use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software offers a number of benefits to the researcher, including transparency, which needs to be weighed against the dangers of the tool shaping the analysis (Bringer et al, 2004). It has value in being able show how concepts were developed in a rigorous manner and to offer an electronic audit trail, as a form of 'methodological congruence' (Morse and Richards, 2002: 251). It can also help the researcher acknowledge assumptions that might influence the data and avoid bias by means of a process of 'continued reflexivity' (Ahern, 1999). As noted above, this has been addressed in this study through a *Researcher Identity Memo* (see Appendix 6) as indicative of this reflexive process.

A detailed summary of the analytical approach and procedures applied in this study using NVivo 10 is shown in Appendix 23: *Stages of analysis of the data using NVivo 10* (modified from Chen, 2010: 84). This includes data management (the documenting of data and its organisation into folders); empirical thematic analysis (transcription, coding and analysis of data); organisational coding (classifying the data using theoretical codes into a tree structure of 'nodes'); and analytical coding (developing an external language of description); and post-coding (explaining and theorising based on the results of coding).

#### **4.7.2 Empirical thematic analysis**

I was mindful that the process of analysing the data and developing this into theory in the form of concepts is one of the most difficult processes for any researcher (Coffey and Atkinson, 2004). Morse (2004) suggests that in many instances researchers stop at descriptive categories and do not develop them into concepts. Concepts are essential to theory-building and can be labels, attributes of more complex concepts, or a concept that is derived from an existing theory. This is also a process of developing 'uniqueness' for these concepts, involving a movement back and forth to literature or to guiding theories (Morse, 2004). Concepts, therefore, are linked to data and are abstract enough to be described and used independently from the context (conceptual transferability). The importance of developing concepts is that this refines analysis by enabling: *synthesis*, in order that the analysis can move beyond the descriptive level to the a higher level of abstraction; *pattern recognition*, enabling the identification of similar instances; *variation*, allowing the researcher to see things that are similar and also different; *new instances*, the anticipation or recognition of new occurrences of the object of study (ibid.: 1390). However, while research is essentially a discovery process, I set out to avoid letting concept-building to be left to chance.

Drawing on the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) I used constant comparison for 'free-coding' the data and 'memo-making' as a dynamic form of analysis in which the data are broken down into 'incidents' or 'units' and coded. The purpose of this approach was to 'stimulate thought that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 337). It allowed me to simultaneously code and analyse data in order to develop concepts: by continually comparing specific incidents in the data, I was able to refine these concepts, identify their properties, explore their relationships to one another, and integrate them into 'a coherent explanatory model' (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984: 126). This model took the form of external languages of description outlined below.

#### ***Stages of data analysis***

This first stage of my analysis can be described as an immersion in the data, in which I coded interviews as they were transcribed. Beginning with the data, with

the intention to 'ignore the theory and model' (Bernstein, 2000: 123), I concentrated on the potential meanings that were emerging from the data. In accordance with this I read each interview transcript in its entirety, often with the audio recording playing in order to catch nuances of expression. These transcripts were, then annotated and summarised (Creswell, 2007). Texts were treated similarly in that they were read for meaning and key points were annotated. Field notes and observations were written up and coded last in order that these could be informed by themes arising from the interviews and texts. This close reading of data and the coding of participants' and the researcher's accounts of what was happening enabled me to sort them into 'substantive categories' (Maxwell, 2012). Descriptive labels were added to these coding categories. In total, I developed over 200 free nodes that were refined, by aggregating synonyms and combining nodes that were conceptually similar, into 68 coding categories. I then compared, modified, and eventually reduced them to 21 hierarchical structures to produce a coding scheme. An example of two of these structures is shown in Table 14 below.

The coding scheme contains a definition for each coding category and an example quote from the data. The full coding scheme can be found in Appendix 7: *Coding scheme for themes emerging from the data*. To aid in the thematic analysis coding models, I used NVivo to create visual representations of the themes/nodes showing how they are connected, of each stage were produced. Examples are shown in Appendices 10, 11 and 12. These visuals aided analysis by showing the inter-relationship of the concepts as they emerged.

**Table 14: Examples from the coding scheme for emerging issues**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example quote from data</b>
1.2 Curriculum [category set]	This set of codes identifies issues related to curriculum	<i>'It was really around one of the Housing and Planning modules where we realised that we hadn't exchanged our practice within the department so we began to get a debate going about that ...'</i>
1.2.1 Lived/informal [category sub code]	Responses coded as informal/lived curriculum and formal/intended curriculum	<i>'I think I pretty much used the content of what I had been doing before but the advantages to it becoming a module I think were first of all that we got a timetabled slot and that meant that students took it more seriously ...'</i>
1.2.2 Intended/formal [category sub code]	What teachers say about the formal curriculum	<i>'The module in the first, when we first put it forward for the re-approval, was pretty much the module that had run in the old form. However very close to it being revalidated it was suddenly thought "could this module be rolled out across the whole programme?"'</i>
1.3 Teaching [category set]	This category codes statements that teachers make about teaching	<i>'Lectures were very clearly about putting as much information on the slides as I possibly could so that if I didn't deliver the material appropriately the students still had it because it was written.'</i>
1.3.1 Teacher role [category sub code]	Coding of data related to teacher role	<i>'It was literally "you've been hired and we want you to deliver these 5 modules. Here they are, go and deliver them." I was literally a week ahead of the students'</i>
1.3.2 Experience [category sub code]	Coding of data related to the experience of teaching	<i>'I was preparing the material for next week the week before and I was reading and adjusting and adapting because, although the material was very good, I couldn't just pick it up and deliver it because I didn't know the background to it'.</i>

### 4.7.3 Organisational coding

The second stage of the analysis was organisational coding. At this stage the coded data from the 21 hierarchical structures was arranged according to 'theoretical categories', which are coding categories derived from prior theories (Maxwell, 2012). There were two levels of theoretical coding: one was Collegial and Bureaucratic field positions based on Bourdieu's field theory and the other was Bernstein's three 'message systems'. As discussed in Chapter 3, Bourdieu's field theory was elaborated to distinguish two field positions (collegial and bureaucratic) and the outcome of the intersection of these two positions in the course approval process. In order that the extent to which this distinction could be examined in the empirical data, the first level of organisational coding involved sorting these data into these three concepts. This is



presented below (see Table 15) with a definition of each concept, derived for this study and the coding categories belonging to each concept.

**Table 15: Results of data organisation based on the morphogenetic framework**

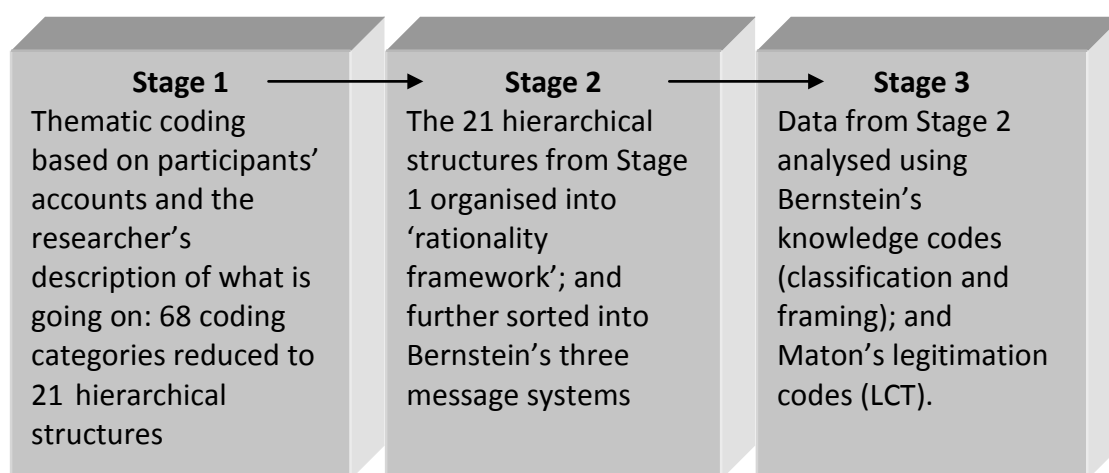
Concept and field position	Description	Coding categories sorted under the concept
<i>'Collegially focused'</i> field position	Features of the <i>'collegially focused'</i> culture as embodied by teachers prior experiences in the <i>'lived'</i> curriculum	1.1 Context 1.2 Curriculum 1.3 Teaching 1.4 Discipline 1.5 Exchange 1.6 Knowing 1.7 Description
<i>'Bureaucratically focused'</i> field position	Features of the <i>'bureaucratically focused'</i> culture embodied by teachers' practices and dispositions in the <i>'intended/formal'</i> curriculum	2.1 Teacher identity 2.2 Autonomy 2.3 Pedagogy 2.4 Curriculum development 2.5 Discipline 2.6 Approval 2.7 Metaphor
<i>'Consensus- seeking focused'</i> field position	Teachers' experiences of and responses to the meeting of the collegial and bureaucratic focus culture in the Approval process (including pedagogical adjustments and conflicts)	3.1 Challenge 3.2 Consensus 3.3 Conflict 3.4 Strategy 3.5 Expertise 3.6 Coherence 3.7 Change

The organisation of the data into the three concepts using the organising framework identified in the literature was followed by a further sorting into Bernstein's three message systems of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, in order that the data could be accessible in educational terms. It should be noted that the relationship between the three messages varies according to the three phases of the study. For example, in Phase 2 of the research the concept of pedagogy was not always visible in the process (recognition rules), owing to the emphasis in course approval on the structure of the curriculum and the technicality of assessment, and hence this is likely to affect the extent to which this can be put into practice in the reproduction field (the translation of the curriculum into teaching strategies and learning activity). Also in sorting coding categories some recurred in more than one message system: for example 'knowledge' occurred in curriculum and pedagogy because it was relevant to

both categories. Finally I reduced the coded data in each message system by aggregating the coding categories into a small number of broad themes (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994). These broad themes are outlined in the subsequent three analysis chapters of the thesis with rich descriptions and illustrations from the data. In each of these chapters the findings are discussed in relation to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. A summary of the analysis is given in Figure 6 below.

#### 4.7.4 Analytical coding

Once organisational coding was complete the next step was to analyse the data within '*collegially focused*', '*bureaucratically focused*' and '*consensus-seeking focused*' field positions in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, using Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing and Maton's Legitimation Code Theory. The purpose of this stage of analysis is to understand the underlying structuring principles of the two phases and their encounter in the Course Approval process, so that they could be compared and characterised. This would in turn lead to an explanation of the various outcomes of the teachers' experiences.



**Figure 6: A summary of analytical stages in the study**

In order to do this I needed to develop an 'analytic reading device' (Ensor and Hoadley, 2004) for this study that was capable of reading the data and addressing the explanatory framework outlined in Chapter 3. Such a device is a language of

description used to construct ‘what is to count as an empirical referent, how such referents relate to each other to produce a specific text, and translates these referential relations into theoretical objects or potential theoretical objects’ (Bernstein, 2000: 133). The distinction between internal and external languages of description is important here. An internal language of description (L1) is the theoretical language or theoretical framework of a study (Ensor and Hoadley, 2004). An external one (L2) is an operationalised theoretical language, or theoretical ‘apparatus’, specific to the data of a study, and therefore serves as a translation device allowing a dialogue between theoretical and empirical descriptions, or between L1 and the empirical data (Maton, 2004; Chen and Maton, 2014). As Dowling (1995; 2009) suggests, an external language of description develops on the basis of deductive and inductive analysis, moving interactively between the internal language and engagement with empirical data. ‘The language of description thus developed provides the basis for establishing what counts as data and provides for their principled reading’ (Ensor and Hoadley, 2004: 92).

### ***How was this achieved?***

The approach taken in the first stage of empirical thematic analysis was to start with the data, ignoring theories and models to concentrate on meaning emerging from the data (Bernstein, 2000). A theory of rationalisation (Weber, 1978; Waters 1989) as a form of field position (Bourdieu, 1992) was introduced into the analysis in the second phase. In the final stage of the analysis a translation device was developed based on the movement back and forth between the theory and the data. An example of the movement between data and theory during the creation of a language of description in the study occurred when it was noticed that participants spoke about how official accounts of the curriculum (those required by the official approval process) were ‘fake’, ‘not real’, or ‘made-up’ etc. From this empirical angle, the theory was re-examined, contemplating how this emphasis might be understood in terms of theory. LCT defines levels of positional and relational autonomy and this offered the tentative conclusion that personal experience of teachers might reflect a stronger relational position. However, moving back to the data different realisations were located of the concept of relational autonomy (such as the suggestion that teachers were able to ‘bluff out’, ‘dominate the discussion’ and ‘prevaricate’ over issues of course design and

therefore ‘win-out over time’). Through continuous moving back and forth between data and theory the point was reached of having a translation device that shows how relational autonomy is realised in slightly different forms in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in this study.

#### **4.7.5 Languages of description for this study**

Two forms of the L2 for this study are developed: the first is for curriculum knowledge and expertise (curriculum development knowledge) using Bernstein’s concepts of classification and framing; and the second is for Maton’s LCT positional and relational autonomy codes with regard to course design and approval. These L2s outlined here are developed, from the data and not *a priori*, as a first stage analysis and the means of translating between theoretical and empirical descriptions to code the data. They represent the first level of analysis and offer a framework for subsequently analysing the practice in the fieldwork chapters. It should be emphasised that this is the means of further analysis as the thesis develops – it is not the final analysis itself – and that is the reason for including them here. The discussion of the data takes place in the fieldwork chapters (5, 6 and 7) along with the development of both L2s. They are then both used to construct a model for curriculum development as it operates in the sites in this study.

#### ***L2 for the classification and framing of curriculum development knowledge***

Table 16 below shows an L2 for the classification and framing of curriculum development knowledge. An important distinction is made here between *educational knowledge* as that which is used to constitute the content of the curriculum (what is taught and acquired) and *curriculum knowledge* as the specialised know-how involved in designing (and approving) the curriculum. As discussed in Chapter 3, this is knowledge of the curriculum, and is associated with its hybrid curriculum development and academic development. The *classification* of curriculum knowledge is the strength of boundaries between: 1) everyday and educational knowledges (horizontal and vertical knowledge discourses) with regard to the basis for curriculum expertise; and 2) different forms of knowledge in a curriculum, as the basis for approving the curriculum. Notable here is the absence in the data of specialist curriculum

development knowledge: i.e. what might be termed knowledge that is specifically required to construct a curriculum and to maintain/ensure its coherence.

The *Framing* of curriculum knowledge is the degree of control over: the selection (what counts as legitimate knowledge); sequencing and pacing (how it is to be delivered); the evaluation (what criteria are used and who decides); and how the teacher's or course designer's conduct is regulated (who is in charge). Here weaker framing indicated the teacher is in control while stronger framing means the institution is in control of the curriculum and its design. In other words this L2 is developed to answer two questions in the analysis: what is being classified and what is being framed? The L2 is included here because it is the methodological basis of further analysis of the data.

**Table 16: Language of description for curriculum development knowledge**

Classification (C)			Framing (F)		
Concept manifested – Strength of boundaries between	Indicators	Example quotes from empirical data	Concept manifested – Degree of teacher control in:	Indicators	Example quotes from empirical data
Everyday and educational knowledges (specialised)	+C General experience of teaching in higher education is little valued in the course approval context	<i>'It wasn't until I had to write my validation document that I realised that module documents really meant anything'</i>	selecting content knowledge	+F Content knowledge is determined mainly by the syllabus (documented forms).	<i>'Students should be able to have a clear understanding of what is going to be taught, and this shouldn't be based on the whim or research hobby of the teacher'</i>
	-C General experience of teaching in higher education is highly valued in the course approval context	<i>'What has become apparent over time is how crucial an understanding of these concepts is to how students learn'</i>		-F Teachers are able to select content for themselves	<i>'we had developed a set of lectures given by well known names and this was filmed and played to the students each year'</i>
Different forms of educational knowledge in a curriculum	+C Knowledge gained in developing one's own subject content is of little relevance in approving the subject content of others	<i>'It doesn't help when someone who specialises in astro-physics is telling you what to do in a subject they know nothing about'</i>	sequencing and pacing the teaching of content knowledge	+F Elements of the curriculum are mandated by the institution	<i>'Developing students who are employable is a key driver for this university. It makes sense to have work-related and work-based learning activities in key modules'</i>
				-F The sequencing and/or pacing of learning is mainly determined by the teacher	<i>'I guess there are lots of ways to do it [employability] and lots of ways that students can bring it into their assignments. It's more of a theme than content itself'</i>
	-C Knowledge gained in developing one's own subject content is highly relevant to approving the subject content of others	<i>'I feel that having led the development of my own courses and being part of a number of revalidation panels that I am able to spot the weaknesses, and advise others'</i>	making evaluative criteria explicit	+F The institution makes evaluative criteria clear and explicit to teachers	<i>'It's very clear that students are being over-assessed and that for some students it is all essay, essay, essay ....'</i>
				-F Evaluative criteria are open-ended and interpreted by teachers	<i>'I need to make sure that students really engage with the module so I include a work diary as an extra element that they have to hand in. That way I know they've done it'</i>
			regulating the teacher's conduct in pedagogical relationship	+F A strong hierarchy is maintained between institution and teacher	<i>'What we want to do is make the expectations of [tutor] contact time clearer to students. And this needs to be a number of hours at specified times'</i>
				-F A weak hierarchy exists between institution and teacher	<i>'It's a joint partnership [between the teacher and the university] ... you know, the people that I work with are professional adult educators so I learn from them, they learn from me.'</i>

Note: +/- indicates 'stronger/weaker'

## ***L2 for teachers' autonomy in course design and approval***

An L2 developed for Maton's (2004; 2005) concepts of positional (PA) and relational autonomy (RA) is outlined in Table 17 below. PA is realised in this study as the degree to which the teacher (influenced by the discipline) determines curricular content knowledge, pedagogy and forms of assessment. RA is manifested as the degree of emphasis on disciplinary (and pedagogical) principles, as opposed to external economic ones. A language of description for these theoretical descriptions was constructed, similarly to that for classification and framing thus enabling a means of translating between this framework and the data. The section on the left refers to PA and the section on the right refers to relational RA. Each PA/RA column is structured so that when read from left to right it is a translator of data into theory. For example, when reading the first row of the PA section from left to right one can see that in relation to curriculum (column 1) the PA refers to the degree of emphasis on 'disciplinary forms of content knowledge' (column 2). The third column shows that a stronger PA+ is indicated by the participants' emphasis on disciplinary knowledge by the teacher, and a weaker PA- by the participants' emphasis on content knowledge being prescribed by the institution or external drivers. The last column then provides two participant quotes to illustrate the data consistent with these degrees of strength of the PA. By contrast, moving from right to left in the second row of this PA section of the table, the reader can read from data to theory. At the top of this second row in column 4 the participant comment is: *'we had developed a set of lectures given by well known names and this was filmed and played to the students each year'*. This comment was coded as exhibiting a stronger PA because it suggests that established practices were playing an important part in determining the form of pedagogy (column 3). Moving to the right towards a more theoretical level it indicates an emphasis on the *'teaching of content knowledge based on teacher's repertoire/habitus'* (column 2) in terms of pedagogy (column 1). In other words the L2 is developed to answer an important question in the analysis: the positional and relational autonomy of what? The L2 is included here because it is the methodological basis of further analysis of the data.

Bernstein's and Maton's concepts worked together in this stage of the analysis. For example, a participant remark '*we had developed a set of lectures given by well known names and this was filmed and played to the students each year*' was coded as showing weaker framing (-F) (see L2 for Bernstein's concepts in Table 16, row 2, last column of the framing section for selecting content knowledge) and also used to exemplify the positional autonomy (see L2 for Maton's concepts) in Table 17, row 1 (PA+) for teaching of content knowledge. This becomes possible owing to the fact that Maton's concepts integrate and subsume those of Bernstein (Maton, 2004).

After exploring the underlying structuring principles of teachers' experiences and practices through analytical coding, the study then drew conclusions based on this analysis. In this process explanations for the case study participants' experience of re-approval were developed, with a view to theorising the phenomenon for wider application. It is through this thorough inspection of empirical relations, conceptual relations and their interactions that this study aims to establish rigour and a high degree of precision. The integration of the three theories offers anticipated interpretation that is trustworthy owing to an analysis that is multi-layered (see Figure 6) above.



**Table 17: Language of description for teachers' autonomy in course design and approval**

	POSITIONAL AUTONOMY (PA)			RELATIONAL AUTONOMY (RA)		
	Concept Manifested – Emphasis on:	Indicators	Example quotes from empirical data in this study	Concept Manifested – Emphasis on:	Indicators	Example quotes from empirical data in this study
Curriculum	Teacher determines the basis for forms of content knowledge	<b>PA+</b> Teacher determines form of legitimate educational knowledge	<i>'there were essential topics that we knew we had to cover, and we've included these for a number of years'</i>	Discipline is the basis for forms of content knowledge	<b>RA+</b> Discipline emphasised as determining form of legitimate educational knowledge	<i>'the main thing was that you mentioned something about employability in the course design but no one ever really teaches it ...'</i>
		<b>PA-</b> Teacher downplayed as less important in defining legitimate educational knowledge	<i>'there are areas of the curriculum that all courses must cover, regardless of whether students become lawyers, or social workers'</i>		<b>RA-</b> External factors (such as economy) emphasised as determining form of legitimate educational knowledge	<i>'it is important that the quality of course content is assured, without that students will not choose us '</i>
Pedagogy	Teaching of content knowledge based on teacher's repertoire/habitus	<b>PA+</b> Established techniques and strategies for teaching content knowledge emphasised as determining form of pedagogy	<i>'we had developed a set of lectures given by well known names and this was filmed and played to the students each year'</i>	Teaching of content knowledge based on disciplinary pedagogic principles	<b>RA+</b> disciplinary pedagogical needs are emphasised as significantly shaping form of pedagogy	<i>'we knew we had to cover essential things like employability but we had no idea how these were taught'</i>
		<b>PA-</b> Established techniques and strategies for teaching content knowledge downplayed as significantly shaping form of pedagogy	<i>'it's what works and is effective rather than any particular pedagogic model'</i>		<b>RA-</b> Economic and other factors are explicitly emphasised as determining form of pedagogy	<i>'it's in work related learning, and work placement that students feel they get relevant learning and it's what they enjoy'</i>
Assessment	Evaluative criteria aligned with the needs of teachers	<b>PA+</b> Evaluation of legitimacy of student performances resides in beliefs of individual teachers	<i>'exams are the only real way that you can test whether the students have learnt anything'</i>	Evaluative criteria aligned to meet disciplinary pedagogical principles	<b>RA+</b> Explicit and specific evaluative and procedural criteria are emphasised in judging student performances	<i>'when the student hands in work for assessment they need to know who to give it to and when it will be marked and returned'</i>
		<b>PA-</b> Student performances are judged against shared criteria external to the teacher	<i>'written assignments are better assessed blind-marked, so that you don't know anything about the student ...'</i>		<b>RA-</b> Explicit and specific evaluative and procedural criteria are downplayed as not significant in judging student performances	<i>'the problem with giving students timely feedback is that all they care about is the mark, not what they could do better next time'</i>

NOTE: +/- indicates 'stronger'/'weaker'

#### 4.8 Quality of Research

There are a number of problems that can beset the qualitative researcher including inferences that are spurious, the researcher's influence on participants and bias towards particular interpretations (Maxwell, 2012). The position of researcher as insider, including my role as academic developer within the institutional setting of CS2 and as a member of the project team in CS1, is discussed above along with the measures taken to avoid bias and conflict of interest. In addition, the degree of reflexivity was increased by means of a systematic and iterative approach to analysis that included coding of my own research diary and fieldwork notes. The need to ensure the quality of research, including its validity is important (Yin, 2003). Construct validity, as the congruence between the object of study and the methods through which it is studied, is assured in this study by means of a chain of evidence and the sharing of interpretations of data and its reporting to key informants at key stages. The inferences made about the data and the cases have been subject to cross-analysis and the consideration of alternative interpretations, thus addressing internal validity. This included pattern matching and logic models of the coding (ibid.) that were formulated within each of the stages of fieldwork (see Appendices 10, 11 and 12).

External validity is enhanced through triangulation via the use of different vantage points to explore the notion of practice including the use of participant perspectives (the sharers, cascaders, approved, approval seekers, and approvers) and the use of multiple sites (11 institutions) and subject disciplines: 'located very much within the objective epistemology including that it is possible to have a detached, overall, 'helicopter's eye' view of a research problem' (Metcalf, 2004). This was embedded in the organisation of the data and also in the fieldwork in which Archer's morphogenetic framework provided an analysis of structure, culture and agency over time. At issue here is transferability rather than generalisability for the interpretive researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) in which thick description is aligned with thick theory as the means by which a language of description is sought that allows the data to talk to theory. The emphasis is to understand an issue better by seeking what is different and what is similar about the cases under scrutiny (Stake, 2008). Critical reviews of this

methodology, work in progress and conclusions have been sought in conferences and papers and this feedback has contributed to the development of the research design.

#### **4.9 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter explains the methodological approaches to be employed in the research and how these are related to the theoretical approaches identified in Chapter 3. A qualitative, case study approach has been chosen appropriate to the object of study and the empirical factors open to the study. Three theoretical frameworks will be applied:

1. Bourdieu's concept of field, elaborated through Weber's theory of bureaucratic rationalisation, as an organising framework for the collection of data to investigate issues of the determining factors involved in designing the curriculum, and to analyse these data.
2. The issues that emerged from this will be examined using Bernstein's three message system (curriculum, pedagogy and assessment). This empirical data will be then abstracted into a translation device for Bernstein's classification and framing concepts and Maton's Legitimation Code Theory, in the form of external languages of description for autonomy and curriculum development knowledge.
3. This provides for the analysis of the underlying structuring principles of the teachers collegial and bureaucratically focused contexts for designing and approving the curriculum. The approval process itself will then be conceptualised as an encounter between these contexts/cultures in which shifts and clashes of the (codes of) underlying structures have effects on the process, on the outcomes of the process, and on the understandings of actors in the process.

The relations between and within these three aspects will then be explored in order that an overall interpretation of teachers' experiences in designing courses can be developed including a model of how the curriculum is developed and approved.

## Chapter 5: Sharing and building the curriculum: course design in a collegial context

### 5.1 Introduction and context

This chapter addresses the first research question: What are the characteristics of the teaching practices that are shaped by the educational beliefs and values that academics bring to curriculum design in higher education? It presents the results of a case study (CS1) in curriculum sharing in a cross-institution context. The ‘collegially focused’ field position, identified in the organising framework for this thesis outlined in Chapter 3, is examined. Drawing on a thematic analysis of the data, the chapter is organised around:

- I. how the curriculum is shared, including the practices of curriculum design;
- II. how teaching is perceived as expertise in practice, including the influence of the discipline and academic development;
- III. how the curriculum is described, including forms of collegiality that make this possible;
- IV. the practice of curriculum design as a language of legitimisation.

The purpose of this phase of the study is to identify and examine the features of the field position as embodied by teachers’ prior experiences in the *lived curriculum*. This chapter brings the HE curriculum into focus, as the object of study and the field of practice (Bourdieu, 1990). This phase of the research involved 12 participants in two groups (see Table 29 in Appendix 4 for demographic information) from 10 UK HEI. Appendix 3 outlines the characteristics of these institutions showing that this sample is reasonably representative of UK institutions, in terms of their approval processes at least.

The case study activity took place in the context of the ‘open education movement’ (Atkins *et al.*, 2007; JISC, 2009; Conole, 2013) in two phases of JISC-funded curriculum development projects. Participants were experienced teachers known to the subject centre for their commitment to and engagement with the development of Social Science teaching and learning in their home institutions. They were given time by their institutions to work on the project and to make their course designs and materials

available to others. The 24 modules comprised an 'Open Course in Social Science' equivalent to the first two years of a general undergraduate degree in Social Science, or elements of levels 4 or 5 of an undergraduate course in a specific Social Science discipline (see Appendix 9: *Breakdown of modules showing pedagogical structure*). The modules illustrate a number of key curriculum issues that are raised later in the study – e.g. Internationalisation (module 12) and Employability (module 14). All 24 modules were pre-existing and had been developed iteratively, over time, through the standard process of review and student evaluation. In terms of the critical realist methodology outlined in Chapter 4, this phase represents an emphasis on the morphogenetic *structural/cultural/socio-cultural conditioning* stage (T1) of analysing the structure of the curriculum at a period of relative stability (Archer, 1995).

The analysis of the data, as outlined in Chapter 4, yielded the seven coding categories: *context, curriculum, teaching, discipline, exchange, knowing* and *description*. These themes are cross-threads and will be highlighted and woven into the narrative of this case study and illustrated with sample data. The meta-analysis of these themes towards the external languages of description of this study will be discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

## **5.2 Sharing the curriculum**

The participants in CS1 set out with the intention of mapping their curriculum and to share this in the form of module descriptions and the associated materials. They did this by sharing their materials, including course documentation, peer reviewing them, discussing the pedagogical implications in group discussions, and sharing their individual reflections in interview. Following this process and activity the 'completed' designs were uploaded to an online open repository for others to use in their own teaching. The value of this cross-institution sharing to this study is what it reveals about practice in the lived curriculum, its relationship with the intended curriculum, and the implications for how this is enacted.

In making their practices visible the case study provided an opportunity to bring together the insights that are otherwise kept private or at best shared with close

colleagues in one's own department or other universities (Marsh and Pountney, 2009). The participants' themselves, in setting out to explore this, recognised early on the need to address the tacit nature of their practice:

*... whilst we will be examining existing [curriculum] material, we will not be examining it for what it offers in itself, but for what it tells us about the assumptions which guided its production. This is but one example of a much larger tacit process.*  
(Group Discussion: Initiation Meeting).

Discussion of this provoked curiosity that whilst they shared knowledge and insights from research through publication, there was no similar mechanism to research pedagogic practice:

*Indeed, there does not seem to be a language or even a set of assumptions with which we discuss the creation, significance and effects (on our students and ourselves) of [curricular designs] ... a way of speaking about and reflecting on one of our key activities as lecturers*  
(Group Discussion: Initiation Meeting).

It was this lack of an existing language and a collective process, they felt, that prevented materials, including their course designs, being actively shared. The contrast between the 'closed and unwritten' practice of teaching and the 'open and published' collective endeavour in research and data generation was noted including the means by which its quality could be established. While this possibly masks the competitive nature of research cultures it is worthy of note as an indication of understandings of collaborative approaches to the curriculum.

### **5.2.1 The practice of designing the curriculum**

In sharing their curriculum in the form of modules and their descriptions participants brought with them their own practice histories (Cleaver, 2002). They were all experienced teachers, with at least 10 years in HE, having taught and led modules and courses. The modules of study offered for sharing had been through a process of 'quality control' in their own institutions. Appendix 3 outlines the approval processes of all the institutions in this study and shows there to be commonality in the processes, actors and timescales of approval.

Participants began by articulating what was common about the curriculum as a set of 'givens' or starting 'propositions':

1. Courses are designed as 'sets' of modules (i.e. they have been modularised)
2. Modules (in line with HE convention and practice) are aligned with learning outcomes, and a form of assessment
3. Modules, in practice and delivery, are contextualised and local
4. The contextualisation of modules involves intent that is often implicit/tacit/invisible – and constructing them to be shared requires this intent to be re-examined by a) the originator b) future user(s)
5. The re-use of modules that require strong context might afford (cultural) reproduction rather than a (re)design for learning
6. Stripping away contextual information in modules in order that they might be re-used is problematic in that insufficient structure may remain for others to interpret and use

Participants shared the view that the organisational structure of the curriculum, while advantageous to the process of sharing, was a given that they were unable to modify or change. This included the structure that both constrains and forms the context for teaching:

*The basic context in which we teach determines much of what we can do and what is appropriate: what preparation students need to take the module, how many weeks of teaching, how many classes/contact hours, what formats the teaching takes.*

*(Carina (A3) in conversation with Joshua (A6), Peer Review).*

A further outcome of these early discussions was an identification of approaches towards making and developing the curriculum taking place in their own institutions. These were:

- curriculum as a process for engaging staff;
- curriculum as an object or commodity to be consumed;
- curriculum as a translation, responding to the needs of a disparate and disperse constituency of learners.

However, in the initial conversations about the modules it soon became clear that the official descriptions (those officially recorded in their institutions as part of the programme specification), along with the materials they had developed, were insufficient for their effective use by others and were 'deficient' in the following respects:

- they were written in a language that was not easy to translate into practice;
- they were condensed and abstract and needed to be unpacked;
- they described the arrangements for the assessment of a module but not the way it could be taught or learnt;
- materials were heavily contextualised with 'local' detail.

To put this concisely, participants found that their understandings of (their own) good practice to be challenged when it was exposed to the scrutiny of peers (Goodlad, 1977; Goodlad *et al.*, 1979). One perceived reason for this pedagogic shortfall was the effect of the institution's imprint on pedagogical models as well as structure. This is indicated, perhaps, by the fact that almost all of the module descriptions followed a 'weekly-lecture-followed-by-seminar-with-reading' structure (see Appendix 9 for a breakdown of the modules showing their pedagogic structure). The joke shared within the groups was:

*What do you get when you take a tutor out of a classroom? PowerPoint and a timetable!*

Some group members attempted to counteract what they saw as a reduction of their pedagogy to presentation with PowerPoint, dominated by an institutional timetable. It was clear that participants saw teaching as embedded in a place and space in that learning activities (including presentation from the front or in lectures and the kinds of group activities that are permitted by space or by the layout of the room) are designed around the physical space that is available.

### **5.2.2 Tensions between the intended and the lived curriculum**

The participants identified two 'rubrics' that were seen to operate in relation to the modules they were sharing – the 'official' and the 'lived'. The 'official rubric' is that



applied under quality processes in HE institutions, as regulated by the QAA Code of Conduct (QAA, 2006). To meet these requirements the modules shared by participants in CS1 have been previously 'approved' by a system created by the participant's home institution to set, oversee and maintain these standards. QAA sets out the standards HEI are required to meet:

*Higher education providers [should] have in place effective processes to approve and periodically review the validity and relevance of programmes (QAA, 2011).*

The term 'lived rubric' was used to denote the criteria that surrounds the teacher's practice, in how the module and course is developed and iterated, the lessons learned from pedagogical activity, and the effects of interaction with students (the experience of teaching it). This rubric is shaped by institutional processes, covered by the 'official' rubric, such as module review and the comments of external examiners that attend the course and validate its assessment and who write a report. To this end an examination of the curriculum as practice looks at the rules and organising principles that apply and are applied. It does not evaluate the quality of the modules, but it is worth pointing out that their implicit 'value' is high owing to a number of factors: they have been taught and iterated over a period of time; they are authored by teachers with high status, in that they represent their institutions, departments and disciplines (and themselves) at a national subject centre; and that they have been chosen to be shared by teachers who are regarded as experts in their subject field (and subject to 'expert' pedagogical judgement). In other words the curriculum is representative in this context of one form of *expertise* and *authority*.

Accounts point to homogeneity in the regimes of course approval, and their processes, in the 10 institutions represented (see Appendix 3). Participants talked in interview about their experiences of curriculum development in their own institutions, including the adoption of modules made open by Group A. They felt that the descriptions permitted in 'official' module descriptions are 'too rigid' and that they were 'lengthy and bureaucratic'. They felt that the documentation for course approval is increasing (e.g. 230 pages for a foundation degree, describing 13 modules) and that this lack of flexibility and the dominance of the 'bureaucratic over the pedagogical' (Helen) to be one factor in constraining the potential for open approaches. Illustrative of this was

Jonah's (B1) report of the experiences of curriculum approval at his institution, and that having to balance between pedagogic and bureaucratic demands on course planners was 'typical' in HE.

### 5.2.3 The curriculum as 'product' and 'process'

Participants talked about their own conceptions of the curriculum. Seeing the curriculum as product was somewhat alarming for some:

*Once something is produced, finalised, packaged, presented, given, put in a repository for all to see, it all comes down to who has the power to decide what gets given to whom and when. ... who has most power, and who benefits from this process*  
(Angela (A2), Reflections)

This was balanced by a view of an 'idealised' curriculum that valorised the 'autonomous learner'. Internationalising the curriculum for example, covered in the module '*The International E-Communication Exchange*' (module 12), was considered to be an external driver with sound pedagogical motives:

*Without doubt, internationalisation often equates to making profit and university managers are alert to the benefits that can bring. But what if, instead of economic rationales, we could prioritise pedagogic rationales; research informed rationales and student focused rationales?*  
(Heidi (A4), Process Commentary).

Similarly, employability, another influence from outside the curriculum, was viewed as making the link between learning skills within the curriculum and transferable skills beyond the curriculum. In the module: '*Learning and Employability*'. Heidi refers to this as '*skills beyond subject knowledge*', adding:

*It is important that students understand the difference between employability and employment. Employment means having a job whilst employability refers to skills and qualities to secure a job, maintain employment and progress in the workplace.*  
(Heidi (A4))

It is interesting to note that the subject benchmarks for all four social science disciplines represented in CS1 include learning outcomes for professional skills and transferable skills. This is illustrative of the tension between the teacher facing outwards to the needs of society and the demands of government, while facing

inwards to the needs of their discipline. This dilemma also emphasises the construction of the 'ideal knower' in the form of an apprentice to the discipline. This is a source of concern for the group, in which they felt conflicted. One dimension of employability, for example, Personal and Professional Development Planning (PDP), was viewed by some as 'profane content' that was entering the 'sacred domain' of the discipline. This provoked comments on 'curricular pragmatism' from group members, including how assessments are now expected to cover these generic skills.

A discussion arose about the control of (what is in) the curriculum, and its purpose. At the same time, individuals saw no difficulty in employing disciplinary arguments to make the case for the inclusion of a specific topic or theorist, indicating perhaps that the basis of what counts as valid curriculum knowledge is unclear. It also highlights how the knowledge structure of the discipline affects the discourse of the curriculum, as an ideology of justification (Schiff, 2009).

#### **5.2.4 Regulating the curriculum through its structure**

One response to the need for richer descriptions of practice to enable sharing was an attempt to identify 'units of pedagogical structure' that would allow the modules to be taught by others (or used by students independently). The discussion centred on the question '*what is the basic unit of pedagogy?*' An analysis of the 24 modules shared in CS1 indicates the dominance of the 'lecture/seminar/PowerPoint model' in the articulation of practice suggesting that the basis of structure is more organisational rather than pedagogical. Paula's account is typical:

*The module is typically delivered over two hours per week to approximately 60 students. The format was written for a one hour lecture, one hour seminar per week*  
(Paula (A1), Process Commentary).

In other words, the over-riding 'imprint' was that of the institution/organisation rather than the pedagogical motives of the teacher. This is reinforced by an examination of the pedagogic rationales (the 'teaching philosophy' and 'what you would say to future users of your material'). For example, some described the pedagogic 'indicators' by setting out the teaching format (the times and number of sessions), adding 'please

note that attendance is required' and warning of the sanctions for non-attendance. This is a dominance of the organisational over the instructional and can be seen to emphasise the regulative aspects of pedagogy and its discourse in social science education (Rosie, 2002), thus integrating and subsuming the pedagogic discourse within it (Bernstein, 2000).

An examination of the module descriptions that participants made 'public' reveals an affinity with the standard renderings of practice that might be found in 'official' quality documents in any of the 11 institutions involved in this study. A surface analysis of the module descriptions examined above would indicate, for example, relatively strong(er) classification of boundaries (+C between topics and sessions) and strong(er) framing of control (+F over the classroom activities) in this curriculum. Initial analysis of this therefore suggests a *collection code* ('I teach sociology') as opposed to an *integrated code* ('I teach students') (Bernstein, 1977). The groups were aware of this tension in how their materials might be 'read', reassuring themselves that the released materials were 'approximations of practice only'. Joshua (A6) referred to this as 'stripping the car for parts' and Daniel (A5) called it 'surgically removing the teacher' (*Group Discussion: Module Mapping*). This emotive link between the teacher and practice is echoed by Peter (B3) who doubted that colleagues new to teaching would easily handle the comparison of their practice with that of expert others.

### 5.2.5 Examining expertise through exchange

A number of participants talked about the sense they had of teaching as practice that was 'borrowed' from others and that this went beyond mere imitation. The issue of ownership came up, in relation to how teachers develop practice and how students view this. Angela is explicit about this in the advice that she gives advocating this exchange as an 'honourable one' without the need for payment or obligation, involving a kind of 'bricolage':

*I would say that pedagogic work is made through a lot of borrowing and informal use of other people's work, with not much acknowledgement; it is a creative process of putting lots of things together.*  
(Angela (A2), Reflections).

Part of this embedded context is the 'intention to teach' as an expression of 'hope' for its future enactment. This is examined in the question that arose from within the group: 'how would we like our modules to be taught?' One response to this involves the expectation that there is a common and shared 'disciplinary understanding of the curriculum'. The exchange of practice, as a form of expertise, is therefore seen in these accounts to encompass a conception of an exchange gradient between teacher and student, and reciprocity between colleagues based on the tacit understanding of the value and rules of this exchange. This can be viewed as knowing in and as practice (Schön, 1983), in which dispositions to the curriculum and its context come into play (Bourdieu, 1986).

Exchange could also take the form of a translation, and this was literal in the case of David who had developed a national online portal for Welsh medium HE. He referred to this as his living gateway (*Y porth byw*) through which English was translated into Welsh within a cultural struggle. Here the translation into Welsh represented a form of exchange that involved students and teachers in 'a dynamic, emergent and collaborative process of learning (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006: 272). The discussion of how this could be achieved embraced a definition of 'negotiated curriculum' (Lovat and Smith, (1995: 23). The importance of involving students was acknowledged by the participants including how students are perceived as learners. However, the involvement of students was doubted as potentially problematic and time-consuming:

*To start with, students do not really have the right levels of pedagogic literacy to be able to evaluate the [course design]; furthermore, it will be very difficult to get the students to evaluate [course design] out of the context of the module.  
(Group Discussion: Module Mapping).*

How students are perceived is also indicated by the pedagogy that is designed for them that is often based around a particular type of engagement with students and a particular concept of the student as learner. The idea of student as 'autonomous learner', for example, figures in the way that the groups imagined participants would want to be involved in the curriculum if it was made available to them – i.e. that students would want to be involved but would also want to be left to get on with it. The prevalent notion of student as 'co-creator of knowledge' (Neary and Winn, 2009) was seen by the groups as somehow contradictory of their own hopes for their

teaching designs. How could it be possible that teachers would lead the development of their own course designs while consulting students on what this would be? This was likened to a doctor asking patients to diagnose themselves. However, where these designs were not rigidly grounded in learning outcomes or tied specifically to assessment the consensus was that students would show little interest, indicating a student preference for the authority of the teacher's direct input. At stake here appears to be teachers' authority and expertise and how this is perceived by students.

The general findings indicate that the groups doubted that students would welcome an open curriculum and would perceive it as extracurricular and external to their learning. This echoes findings of a large scale survey of UK Social Science academics (Marsh and Pountney, 2009). The reasons for this 'unfulfilled' promise of open education to bring about the 'negotiated curriculum' in which teacher and student act 'as co-constructors of knowledge' (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006: 275) remain unclear, and are in need of further analysis.

### **5.3 The discipline as the language of practice**

Sharing as a methodology for developing the curriculum was enabled, to some extent, by the fact that those involved were from a similar discipline, with shared implicit disciplinary knowledge and shared understanding of pedagogy. The value of the designs exchanged, in the context of the discipline, is referred to as taking place between 'like-minded people', as the application of 'taste' as 'a sort of social orientation' (Bourdieu, 1984: 466), involving being exposed to other people's practice, and learning from this. There was recognition in both groups that a language to talk about practice of teaching was needed. The groups agreed that the discipline was an existing shared language with which practice could be discussed in relation to knowledge:

*When we write and publish our research, we do not necessarily explain the whole background. We assume that the reader will be able to draw on the implicit disciplinary knowledge, and will take responsibility themselves for any 'gaps'.  
(Paula (A1) in conversation with Heidi (A4), Peer Review).*

Participants compared the need for a specialist language to describe practice, with the specialist and shared language that researchers use, and questioned whether there was the same motivation:

*With a research repository, staff will put their publications up because that is where the data will be drawn from for the REF, promotions etc., etc. What would encourage academics to upload their teaching materials?*  
(Carina (A3) in conversation with Joshua (A6), Peer Review).

This language of practice bound and delimited the means by which the practice of teaching could be talked about, and how the ‘packaging’ of teaching shaped pedagogy:

*Interestingly, many colleagues I know admit that it is not always a very effective way to explain what is going on to students — complaints that students do not read module guides are very common, and I don’t know many that read learning outcomes or assessment rubrics either.*  
(Joshua (A6), Reflections).

This was found to be easier when the language of the discipline could be put to work to present pedagogical positions (or world views), drawing on, for example, an anthropological perspective to make sense of practice. Or in the discussion of resources with regard to criminology, for instance:

*We are invariably asking questions about our discipline and how we think about teaching and learning. (...) students might bring to the study of criminology representations about victimisation, offending, and the major criminal justice agencies which respond to offending, as found in the media.*  
(Matthew (B2), Reflections)

Also, not surprisingly perhaps, disciplines and disciplinary perspectives are realised in approaches to learning activities and assessments, as a kind of disciplinary pedagogic mode, or signature pedagogy, (Shulman, 2005), as a form of cultural translation, in for example how visual images are used in anthropology:

*It is very important ... that pictures are not used to exoticise other/own cultures, peoples, beliefs, practices. I think my preoccupation with pictures would be that they are treated unethically and that the visual system where they come from is objectified, commoditised and lost.*  
(Angela (A2), Reflections).

This suggests that the participants used the language of the discipline to talk about and make sense of the discipline. It also indicates that the system of values and beliefs operating were influenced by disciplinary understandings.

### 5.3.1 The language of academic development

One established language readily accessible to participants was that of 'academic development', as 'a project committed to improvement and innovation' (Clegg, 2009: 409). This was neglected or ignored by the majority of the group and openly opposed by some in the form of a 'critical approach' to the understanding of curriculum and pedagogy:

*I think we should start with practice, in all its contradictory messiness. (...) I think we all have perfectly good resources to describe and reflect in the subject disciplines that we all practise. We use terms like ideology, power/knowledge couplets, discourses and the like to discuss the practices of policemen, politicians, media folk and the like – why exempt ourselves?*  
(Daniel (A5), Group Discussion: Pedagogical Frameworks).

Resistance to the notion of academic development is indicative of a general disposition by academics to the idea of having academic development 'done to them' (Clegg, 2009). Paula pointed to the discourse of Learning Teaching and Assessment (LTA):

*... LTA people in the institution have learned to 'speak jargon that people don't understand ... my preference is for pedagogical rationale rather than applying any 'out there' pedagogical framework*  
(Paula (A1), Interview).

While it is not unusual for academics to criticise the system within which they work, the social sciences are distinguished perhaps by the fact that they use the language of the discipline to do it. This critique of academic development in the form of an 'imposed' educational philosophy is a theme that plays around and within the groups, as a lightning rod in which they draw down disciplinary understandings:

*We would certainly want to use good sociological common sense to question the view that 'high level pedagogy' is simply the result of 'the concrete instantiation of philosophical positions', which is naive idealism, seeing practice as the outpourings of some individual consciousness. We might continue to question what exactly it is that 'constructivism' seems to offer the modern educational professional...*  
(Daniel (A5), Group Discussion: Pedagogical Frameworks)



Joshua compared attempts to make statements about beliefs underlying an approach to teaching to the practice of providing teaching statements to secure academic tenure in the USA. He contributed an article, *'Teaching Statements are Bunk'* (Heggarty, 2010), an opinion piece disparaging 'teaching philosophies' for their emptiness and platitude and because they are poorly suited to evaluate classroom ability. The headline makes his point, but it may miss the message that Heggarty offers in closing:

*My hope is that we can reduce one such aggravation by transforming the empty 'teaching philosophy' ritual into an evolving set of useful, nitty-gritty reflections on how to best teach university students.*  
(Heggarty, 2010)

Angela and Paula reflect on this:

*We wonder if people derive beliefs from scratch, or if not (and we recognise a lot of practice starts as 'borrowed') then where does this begin? There is an issue that teaching statements might become formulaic. Beliefs often emerge in conversation and discussion, not in institutional mandates*  
(Reflections).

This became an 'emancipatory device' to explore the concept of 'openness' as well as pedagogical issues around student engagement and in particular innovative assessment. It draws on a notion of teaching as 'subversion' (Postman and Weingartner, 1969; Ebner, 2008; Downes, 2008). Implicit here, perhaps, is that the struggle for status and resources for the curriculum is conditioned by a sense of what teachers bring with them, as embodied practice, and the need to reconcile this with dispositions to practice.

#### **5.4 Describing and generating the curriculum**

The groups regarded the process of making the curriculum open through description and exchange valuable for the development of pedagogy in that it 'opened up' the module to development by others. This sense of a 'generative' format for their module designs was seen as a benefit. However, while this was demonstrated in the exchanges that took place in peer review, the sense of how this might happen beyond the group was unclear. There was uncertainty about who the recipients, or end users were and what they knew about the module, the discipline and about teaching itself. Carina

wondered if this exchange implied a 'knowledge gradient' from the experienced tutor to the less experienced:

*One would expect them to seek guidance initially from more experienced colleagues ... the assumption is that they are experienced teachers and do not need to be told 'how to teach'...*

*(Carina (A2), Discussion: Module Mapping)*

There was also a fear that the modules would 'disintegrate'. Implicit here is the idea that practice is an aggregation of small actions and that making it available for others is a disaggregation. Appendix 9 shows the breakdown of the final version of the modules including the pedagogical structure, assessment and the use of materials. Creating these descriptions involved participants in overcoming difficulties that are embedded in the process of describing practice in order that it can become 'open'. These were seen to involve the triple problems of *description*, *context*, and *ownership*.

#### **5.4.1 The problem of how to describe practice**

In considering the issue of describing practices two questions emerged: 1) describing the 'what'? And 2) describing the 'how'? Participants decided to provide a commentary with the module descriptions that others would find useful. The participants voiced this directly to the 'other' teacher explaining the order in which to look at things. Angela, for example, offered advice to potential future users of her module designs by 'speaking to the other'. Some, however, doubted the usefulness of providing descriptions that guided the practice of others:

*The pedagogy is a composite of a number of pedagogical turns and moves - the pattern in the patchwork quilt will be difficult to see*

*(Carina (A3), Discussion: Pedagogical Frameworks).*

The difficulty of describing practice arose partly from its tacit and fragmented nature, including the conditions under which the original teaching was developed. It was felt that sharing and exposing the story of that process would be useful to others in allowing contextual and local materials and designs to be re-contextualised. The tacitness issue was also heightened in the recognition that practice is dynamic (i.e. it changes every time something is taught) and that institutional contexts were one condition for this.

In examining the descriptions of their practice through peer review the groups identified embedded practices that were invisible or below the surface and that were 'laden' with meaning beyond the official 'intended' outcomes. There were many examples of modules 'carrying meanings' to students that are not prescribed in learning outcomes or in the aims and objectives of the module, including assessment designed to regulate learning or behaviour rather than to examine learning itself.

Angela pointed to the difficulty inherent in any form of recontextualisation, that in effect much of what we do in constructing materials and teaching is borrowed practice, adapted and assimilated through tacit and explicit choices:

*What we are doing here is re-interpreting, from context. In doing so, our task, I feel, is to provide a sense of 'aid' in translating the way in which the context and the meaning was a kind of 'thick learning experience' as opposed at looking at the materials and interactions in a vacuum, as 'objects' (fetishised objects maybe), as pieces that have been taken out of context, re-used, dis-integrated.  
(Angela (A2), Process Commentary)*

Sharing, therefore, became a focus on the original context of the curriculum and how this could be moved (translation) and whether this would involve the materials changing (transformation).

#### **5.4.2 Ownership of the curriculum and how it affects exchange**

Practice as habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) is evident in participant's accounts of practice, alongside the concerns of ceding ownership and intellectual property. The connection between translating practice and owning it was noted often by participants, in their own practice and reported to them by colleagues in their institutions:

*I've got stuff now from when I taught in [university X], which was given to me by a colleague... but something about it being available to anybody, anywhere, is quite strange. You have put quite a lot of time and energy into thinking about how you might deliver and share those resources with students. I don't know how I would feel about sharing them  
(Tutor attending workshop (17)).*

Participants saw their teaching practice as a form of a repertoire that they had developed over a period of time, in which they had accumulated status and a number

of strategies, routines and materials as a sort of *accumulated history* in which they, as authors, have personal and professional investment. The act of making visible can be considered here to be an exchange, in which practice becomes visible to others, through a process of sharing, explaining, justifying, and rationalising. The experience of sharing led several to identify peer review as an important means of explaining and describing practice.

*If you've got a lovely course, well thought out, and the reading list is there... I think it's a bit barmy, to be honest, to give it away. It's more about it being copied by other institutions – I think that's the more dangerous thing. You want to differentiate yourself in the market. How do you defend that? I don't know (Tutor attending workshop (17)).*

The idea of ownership of the curricular materials suggests an intimacy in the relationship between teachers and their practice, the result of a 'craft' that is challenged, or under threat in being made open. The 'letting go' of pedagogical resources is thus seen as a struggle. Carina, on the other hand, was also concerned that her modules would be seen to be *'mundane, boring, lacking in innovation etc.'* While the collegial support of others can reassure, these responses indicate a level of anxiety around the risk of being plagiarised, having intellectual property stolen and/or losing competitive edge. It also emphasises a strong personal investment in the materials.

There appears to be a conflict of interest here between sharing the curriculum and the personal interests and concerns that teachers indicate in their practice. While I would avoid a conception of the behavioural and psychological aspects of 'dissonance' in this practice (Festinger, 1985) an examination of making the curriculum open as a social relation within a system of exchange suggests itself at this point. The next section examines the accounts of participants with regard to sharing their practice as an 'exchange'.

#### **5.4.3 Mutuality and reciprocation**

The notion of 'trust', in relation to the 'trustworthiness' of the curriculum, and what signified this, was raised by the group as an expectation that was seen to be bi-directional. Paula articulates this: 'we have to trust users of our material to use it

responsibly'. This indicates, perhaps, a concern for what happens once it is 'out of our hands'. The comparison between the trustworthiness of teaching material and that of research was raised again in the peer review activity.

*... after all when research is published, authors do not have a lot of say about how people will use their material. Lecturers should have the ability to judge decide for themselves if partners' [curricular materials] will be reusable for them. (Joshua (A6), Group Discussion: Module Mapping)*

The group discussed this as a process of translation and relocation rather than literal reproduction of practice, in what became the 'generative' principle in the development of a toolkit for describing and sharing practice. This included the importance of the 'what' in exchange, raised in connection with 'sensitive' issues in the lived curriculum. Participants were aware, for example, of the problems in the exchange of some disturbing issues embedded in modules and materials:

*Images of Abu-Ghraib, Guantanamo, pictures of prisoners who have been tortured ... raises many moral and ethical points of discussion within the class (Carina (A3) Process Commentary Module 17).*

Heidi offered the users of her module a health warning:

*Issues such as domestic violence, child abuse, race hate, homophobia and violence against the elderly often elicit strong emotions... I have yet to teach this topic without being approached by at least one student wanting to disclose personal issues – so be prepared! (Heidi (A4), Process Commentary Module 11).*

Furthermore, while Group A were concerned with the 'potential for exchange' Group B encountered the practicalities and realities of exchange, including institutional processes. Delilah (A5) experienced problems when her institution insisted the module, which had been officially validated elsewhere, should be reapproved. Institutional constraints on the process of curriculum design and delivery were also exposed when participants attempted to relocate materials and modules to their home institutions. This illustrates ways in which institutional constraints clash with the vision of an open curriculum where learners have the flexibility to select a range of individual units or courses to suit their personal needs for the development of expertise (Yuan, *et al.* 2008).

### ***The value of curricular 'goods'***

Both groups were sensitised to the conditions and rules of exchange, predicated by the use and re-use of things being produced and given, including asking 'who benefits'. This includes the conditions for ownership, including entitlement and a 'struggle with meaning' in which to own something 'you need to act as though you had made it from new' (Heidi (A4), *Discussion: Pedagogical Frameworks*) and in which materials are exchanged but ownership remains with the author and the exchange is 'dissolution' of context and practice, as a 're-making':

*Do our imagined future users actually feel they 'own' what it is that we create here? Or will they ever feel, like I did with the 'handed down teaching materials from previous lecturers' not quite at ease with using it and owning it?*  
(Angela (A2), *Group Discussion: Pedagogical Frameworks*).

Angela talked about how she invested cultural meanings in her practice citing the example of a string bag, or 'bilum', which she used with students and that she felt represented the way she carried her practice around with her:

*I chose the bilum for two reasons, one sentimental, as my supervisor had done her fieldwork in Papua New Guinea ... and had passed it to me, for me to carry, Bilum-like, all those things that I could carry with me, children, piglets, books, taros, all the many material and symbolic materials in my academic life.*  
(Angela (A2), *Module Mapping*)

In addition, participants felt that 'lived', everyday practice was 'messy' and 'untidy' and that open curricular materials needed to be 'cleaned-up'. This included the habituated transgression of copyright and intellectual ownership that participants were forced to 'own-up to' when preparing their materials to become open and 'official'.

The examples above represent a relocation of practice from one space to another as a recontextualisation (Bernstein, 2000: 77). In Bernstein's terms, making the curriculum open through sharing is a weakening of the collective base of the 'centralised sacred' which destabilises pedagogic identities, as indicated by the tensions and conflicts apparent in participants' accounts. The perceived value of the course design and materials that are exchanged suggests a shift here towards a 'market driven official pedagogic discourse, practice and context' (ibid.: 78). Participants resisted a view of their materials and course designs as 'goods' and their contributions as being made to

a 'market'. However, playing out here is the idea of symbolic exchange, in which teachers 'break a covenant' of inner dedication to one's own practice, in which there is a new concept of the knowledge of practice in which:

*Knowledge should flow like money to wherever it can create advantage and profit. Indeed knowledge is not like money, it is money. Knowledge is divorced from persons, their commitments, their personal dedications. These become impediments, restrictions on the flow of knowledge, and introduce deformations in the working of the symbolic market  
(Bernstein, 2000: 86, original emphasis).*

This is the source of the 'pedagogic schizoid position' as discussed in Chapter 3. It highlights the inherent contradiction operating in what teachers see as the purposes and value of their practice and the view held by the institution, or arena, in which the practice takes place.

### **5.5 Discussion: characterisation of curriculum design in a collegial context**

This chapter has addressed the first research question: What are the characteristics of the teaching practices that have helped to shape the educational beliefs and values that academics bring to curriculum design in higher education? The context for teachers' activity as a 'collegially focused' field position as embodied by teachers' experiences in the 'lived' curriculum has been characterised in this phase of the research. It has brought the HE curriculum into focus, as the object of study, by enabling the identification and examination of the issues and concerns that participants shared. The characteristics that have emerged from the analysis of the data are now summarised.

#### ***The curriculum strongly bound in the educational context***

The curriculum is seen to be inscribed by the context in which it is set, especially the imprint of the institution. It is contextualised with 'housekeeping' including regulations that govern the everyday practices involved. Teachers' understanding of the curriculum is closely associated with the use of curricular resources and texts, to the extent that practice is objectified materially (Corradi *et al.*, 2010). The relationship with these objects lies somewhere between a possession and what might be regarded to be a commodity in which the curriculum is an external realisation of internal interests.

These resources constitute a design for learning that acts as a 'carrier' for pedagogy, in which materials are not pedagogically neutral but can be (potentially) pedagogically 'inert' or 'inactive'. Applying these curricular resources involves expertise that is informed by dispositions towards learning and teaching and this (in the case of social sciences) is informed by the discipline (Trowler and Cooper, 2002).

Descriptions of the curriculum are evaluated by participants according to two 'rubrics' of practice: the 'official' (intended) and the 'lived' (Porter and Smithson, 2001). Experiences of the official quality processes have shaped conceptions of the curriculum (Jackson, 2000) and this conforms, in the main, to the model of description that is prevalent in UK HE by QAA. In addition to these internal influences external drivers such as employability and internationalisation of the curriculum are affecting how the curriculum is arranged and composed (Lester and Costley, 2010), and participants rationalise this as empowerment of the individual using the language of the discipline. This has led to conflicting views of the purpose of the curriculum as either process or product (Knight, 2001).

### ***The curriculum individualised and interactional***

Participants' accounts describe how they perceive knowers (e.g. as autonomous, or independent, and as a 'graduate') and this perception is mediated through pedagogic interaction (i.e. by classroom activities, assignments and assessment) as interactional and individualised (Parker, 2003). This perception is influenced by the use of curricular resources and texts, involving a relationship with knowledge and how it is acquired. Acquisition of knowledge is a social process involving the knower's social relation with the teacher (or with the teacher's relationship with knowledge). The sense of the 'negotiated curriculum' is a shift in control of the curriculum that requires the student to have a sense of the original intended purpose of pedagogic materials and the rationale for its production (Lovat and Smith, 1995). The basis of this is unclear to teachers and knowers (Bovill *et al.*, 2009) and has become a form of 'filling in the blanks' in which 'not knowing the rules of the game' has implications for both teacher and student.



Exchange is identified as a key characteristic of curriculum design in collegial settings (Horsbrough, 2000) arising from understandings of describing the curriculum and making it open (Oliver, 2003). Exchange is seen as the outcome of practice, for example in how teaching develops over time, and as an outcome of practice in itself, shaped by the metaphor of 'goods in transit'. Transfer of practice as an exchange is seen to involve bi-directional trust, and to involve a disintegration/reintegration as a 're-making'. Exchange is seen as reflexive and developmental, in which reciprocal understandings are exchanged, actually or potentially. As an 'actuality' exchange takes the form of insight into one's own practice; as a 'potential' it involves the transfer of symbolic capital (status and reputation), or as anticipation of the 'gift' being reciprocated in the form of similar goods or of improvement of the original.

### ***The discipline acting as (proxy for) pedagogy***

Participants see the discipline as a shared language, and a (re)source for meaning making that is useful in relation to the act of teaching itself and to form a meta-narrative of explanation, including a disposition to academic development (critical pedagogy) (Clegg, 2009). The discipline informs pedagogy and is itself a pedagogic mode (Stark, 2000; Fanghanel, 2007) and to a degree is a proxy for pedagogy. In other words the discipline not only substitutes for pedagogy it *authorises* itself to do this. This can be seen in the way that participants talk about, explain and justify their practice using the language of the discipline in preference to that of academic development. In the context of the discipline the exchange of curricular materials, including designs, is referred to as taking place between 'like-minded people', as the application of 'taste' as 'a sort of social orientation' (Bourdieu, 1984: 466). This can be seen to be a code shift (in LCT terms) from a knowledge code (ER+, SR-) to a knower code (ER-, SR+) (Maton, 2013a). Curricular engagement for example was considered to involve a range of scenarios for both teacher and learner in which conventional definitions of interactivity missed an important distinction between that designed to round out the tutor's own agenda and something more syllabus dependent.

The teacher's relationship with knowers is seen to be formed around pedagogic interactions that are also shaped by the discipline (Stark, 2000). The notion of *pedagogic framework* for teaching was adopted pragmatically as 'what works for us' in

the selection, sequencing, and pacing of content rather than conforming to any pedagogic theory (Oliver, 2003). Analysis of the module descriptions indicates relatively strong(er) classification of boundaries (between topics and sessions) and strong(er) framing of control (over the classroom activities) in this curriculum (+C, +F). Initial analysis of this suggests a 'collection code' (e.g. 'I teach sociology') as opposed to an 'integrated code' (e.g. 'I teach students') (Bernstein, 1977). Participants found this a surprising analysis and difficult to rationalise within their own schema. It echoes, however, other studies that have examined knowledge and knower codes in sociology (Lockett, 2012).

***Curriculum development knowledge weakly framed and strongly classified (+C, -F)***

Module and course mapping in this phase of the research is seen as iteration towards more focused and greater specificity of curricular description rather than increased coherence. These descriptions are inscribed by the institution as a 'power relay' of the academy and government policy. Participants found description difficult owing to its intrinsic tacitness of practice, and because of the 'baggage' that has accreted in practice over time (including 'housekeeping'). This is also affected by a sense of 'ownership' and a relationship with practice as 'borrowings'. The tacitness of knowledge was also identified as a difficulty that had to be overcome. Making the curriculum more open in a collegial context carries with it a number of constraints, including how practice is personalised, tacit and idiosyncratic at the various levels of institution, department, course, cohort and the individual teacher.

Curriculum design is subject to the bureaucratic requirements of the curriculum (its official rubric) and influenced by external factors such as institutional context, drivers such as employability, and a shared disciplinary understanding of practice as a form of consensus. This involved a *scrutiny of product* that was subject to peer review, collective decision making and a degree of autonomy in that this was carried out by the group themselves. This meets the four tenets of the collegial principle (Waters, 1989: 955 – see collegiality 3.7.2) indicating, however, a *predominately collegiate* organisation rather than an *exclusively collegiate* one (Waters, 1989) underpinned by the QA processes in HE. It also evidences relatively strong positional autonomy (PA+) and weaker relational autonomy (RA-) (Maton, 2004; 2005) as described in the

external language of description for autonomy in Table 17. This suggests that the curriculum design process in this context is governed by academics according to principles derived from the institutional field and beyond (i.e. economic and political). Furthermore the criteria for success can be seen to derive from a competence-based model (see pedagogic models 3.4.1) that is present-oriented (developing) while being future-referenced (becoming).

## 5.6 Summary

The analysis set out above offers a view of the field as a structured space of social forces and struggles involving actors from across the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This first case study demonstrates how participants are able to explain their practices, and use and develop conceptual language for themselves in order that practice can be examined and described. This is a search for structure and coherence in the social science curriculum (Berheide, 2005) that characterises the curriculum development work exemplified by participants – the means by which the curriculum can be understood and enacted, and how this is legitimated, echoing other studies (Lockett, 2009).

Orientations to practice in the *collegially focused* field position clearly involve teachers working together (Hargreaves, 1994) in which elements of reciprocity (exchange) and mutuality of practice (Little, 1990) exists. There are also a number of aspects of collaboration to be seen here as joint undertakings informed by professional ideals (Fielding, 1999), exemplified in group members' accounts and this is strengthened by mutual recognition of professional expertise, based on an authority derived from the discipline. This authority is seen to be furthered by peer review that is characterised by its 'horizontal' nature. However, the focus is mainly on intended gains (as the product of design, and as 'publication' of courses) indicating that this is possibly instrumental, and contrived (Hargreaves and Dawes, 1990).

However, as noted in this chapter, there are a number of instances where the basis of legitimation of the curriculum, the underlying principles by which things come into being or are possible, is unclear. The groups' search for a 'language for practice'

indicates the potential of open curriculum practice to build on its insights – its potential for cumulative knowledge building (Maton, 2010). However, the group were unable to identify the *generative* form of exchange, as the means by which new instances of their module descriptions could be realised. This problematises cumulative knowledge building in the curriculum with respect to how the curriculum develops over time, and how new pedagogical ideas are subsumed and integrated hierarchically, rather than segmentally within it. Accommodating this is possible through a rethinking of the curriculum as a (new kind of) disciplinary practice (Craig, 2010) but the implications of this are for the curriculum itself, and the struggle between everyday and theoretical knowledge, and the way that the curriculum is differentiated (Wheelahan, 2010; Shay, 2013). This is represented as an external language of description for curriculum development knowledge (see Table 16) and this is explored further in Chapters 6 and 7, and analysed/discussed in Chapter 8.

## Chapter 6: Seeking approval for the curriculum in a bureaucratic context

### 6.1 Introduction and context

This chapter addresses the second research question: What are the characteristics of course planning practices in a UK higher education institution and how are curricular forms generated?’ It presents the results of the first part of the second case study (CS2) in curriculum development. The bureaucratically focused field position, identified in the organising framework for this thesis that was outlined in Chapter 3, is examined. Drawing on a thematic analysis of the data, the chapter is organised around:

- I. how the quality processes operate, including aspects of bureaucracy;
- II. how curriculum knowledge is developed, including employability and its influence and how it is legitimated;
- III. how pedagogical meaning is inscribed in curricular designs, and the status of academic development as a knowledge field;
- IV. the form taken by assessment and the effects on curriculum design;
- V. the practice of curriculum development as a language of legitimation.

The purpose of this phase of the study is to examine course planning and design within the immediate context of one institution, as the *intended curriculum* phase. Here the academic framework that devises and administers course approval is seen as a context for the activities that surround and lead up to a formal university approval panel (UAP) and an approval panel event (APE) that will be examined in Chapter 7. The focus in this chapter is the work of course planning teams (CPTs) and the circumstances and processes that surround their work starting typically 6 months before the APE. This context has been chosen because it offers the potential for an in-depth examination of the issues involved in the preparation of courses for institutional approval.

The case study took place between 2010 and 2012 at one HEI, *Forgetown University*. This phase of the research involved 16 participants in two groups (see Table 30 in Appendix 4 for demographic information). Participants were involved in preparing their courses for approval (Group D) or had recently been through the process (Group C). While the context for CS2 is the intended curriculum it is important to note that the

modules and courses that were being developed invariably have their origins in the lived curriculum and the sort of practices identified in Chapter 5 (and in many cases have been approved before). This is significant given the research design of this study that considers the three phases of fieldwork to be 'nested' in the sense that each phase contributes insights and research findings to the subsequent phase. In terms of the critical realist methodology outlined in Chapter 4, this phase represents an emphasis on the morphogenetic *social interaction* stage (T2–T3) of 'exploring the changes [to the curriculum] and debates around these changes' (Archer, 1995).

The analysis of the data yielded the seven coding categories: *teacher identity*, *autonomy*, *pedagogy*, *curriculum development*, *discipline*, *approval*, and *metaphor*. These themes are cross-threads and will be highlighted and woven into the narrative of this case study and illustrated with sample data. The meta-analysis of these themes towards the external languages of description of this study will be discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

## **6.2 Quality assuring the curriculum**

Quality processes at Forgetown University are typical of UK HEI and are overseen by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and its code of practice, *The UK Quality Code for Higher Education* (QAA, 2012)<sup>7</sup>. The approval process in HE takes place around the submission of a document, as a form of a *programme specification* (QAA, 2000) that contains the intended arrangements for the teaching of a course, with information about the aims of the course, and how it will be taught and assessed.

### **6.2.1 The course approval process as a form of bureaucracy**

The Course Approval Process lies at the centre Forgetown's system of maintaining and enhancing standards and is achieved through a process of peer and external review that is designed to ensure that all courses are of a high standard and that mechanisms are in place for ensuring that the high standards are maintained. A typical timeline for course approval is shown in Appendix 14. Academic Services at Forgetown is a central

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<sup>7</sup> At the time of the fieldwork in this study was known as the *Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards*

department that has responsibility for institutional oversight of the academic governance and regulatory framework which underpins academic standards. The UAP is created by Academic Services, who appoints a chair (a senior member of staff, usually a Faculty Head of Quality from one of the other faculties), and a panel of academics from a pool of experienced academic staff. The appointment of the external academic panel member is made by Academic Services on the recommendation of the CPT.

Course teams are responsible for preparing the submission document, using the template provided by Academic Services. The structure of this template is shown in Table 18.

**Table 18: Structure of the Submission Document**

Section	Purpose
Section A	Aims and outcomes (covering knowledge, understanding, professional skills, intellectual and key skills) Learning teaching and assessment Programme design and structure Progression routes Entry requirements and profile
Section B	Aims and outcomes of intermediate awards
Section C	Course Rationale Learning Teaching and Assessment Design and structure External reference points Student support Additional sections relating to Distance Learning, foundation degrees, joint validations, PSRB
Section D	Assessment regulations and procedures
Section E	Programme data for management information systems
Section F	Module information summary table (the Quality Support Team complete this section)
Section G	Module descriptors

Key: PSRB – Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body accreditation

CPTs are led by a Course Leader (CL), who coordinates the work of Module Leaders (MLs), and delegates the course planning of modules, while being responsible for the overall design of the course and (in most cases) for the writing of the Submission Document. If the course is part of a discipline that involves Professional Bodies the CPT might also include a representative. Professional Bodies associated with Course

Approval in this study includes, for example, The Law Society, The British Psychological Society, and The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Professional Bodies usually are involved in course designs but the degree to which they can intervene or influence the curriculum varies.

The approval process can be considered to be *bureaucratic* on the basis of Weber's six features of bureaucracy (1978: 956–958) as discussed in Chapter 3. These are outlined in Table 19 with a description of how this is instantiated in this context.

**Table 19: Bureaucratic features of the course approval process (based on Weber, 1978)**

Bureaucratic feature	Realisation in the course approval process
It covers a fixed area of activity, which is governed by rules	The UAP is a 'standing committee' that is formed for the specific task of approving a submission document. The APE is a (typically) 3 hour meeting with a fixed agenda.
It is organised as a hierarchy	The UAP is 'chaired' by a senior academic and the secretary is a member of the central Academic Services.
Action that is undertaken is based on written documents	CPTs are required to submit a submission document based on a pro forma template. 'Conditions' set by the UAP are documented and must be met by a re-submission of an updated document.
Expert training is needed, especially for some	Chairs are trained. Secretaries have the administrative responsibility as a substantial part of their role.
Officials devote their full activity to their work	Chairs are often full-time Heads of Quality in their faculty. Secretaries take the role as substantive part of their duties.
The management of the office follows general rules which can be learned	The function of the approval process and the UAP is overseen by Academic Services and is governed via Academic Quality and Standards according to the QAA Code of Conduct

Key: UAP = University Approval Panel

APE= Approval Panel Event

It can be seen that that the course approval process broadly meets the criteria for a bureaucracy albeit as an *intermediate collegiate* organisation (Waters, 1989) in which professional activity is subordinate to administrative activity (Hull, 2006). It also requires expertise, held by the chair, the secretary, academic members of the panel, and an external subject specialist nominated by the CPT. Decision making is committee-based in which the chair holds responsibility for coordinating the results of the deliberation of approval as a form of consensus.



Institutional understanding of good practice in course planning is indicated by guidance given to CPTs to ensure curriculum coherence (see Appendix 13). Notable here is the encouragement to CPTs to include a diagrammatic representation of the course design showing the sequence of modules and the assessment mapping. CPTs were also expected to incorporate aspects of the institution's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTA) that sets out four key enhancement themes that were to be embedded within all courses. These are shown in Appendix 15: *Key LTA enhancement themes and advice* (see Appendix 16: *Generative Questions for Course Planning and Design*). The underlying principle of these key questions, or prompts, is that curriculum coherence can be created by the careful reflection on design as a form of academic development (Clegg, 2009).

### **6.3 Developing the curriculum as a form of planning**

Of the 12 courses represented in this phase (see Appendix 17) seven were undergraduate, three postgraduate and two were foundation degrees taught in collaboration with local colleges. Overall there are 200 (40%) or so faculty tutors who teach on these courses and 2000 (15%) faculty students who study on them. The courses are typical in that they follow a 'core' curriculum structure with some choice for students in the form of 'electives'. The range of courses (the number of awards, modules, students and tutors) indicates the range of complexity facing the CPT in planning and design.

Nine of the courses were re-approvals and had been in existence (with current students) for at least 3 years. Participants described how their course had evolved 'very messily' over time as a kind of 'sedimentation' in which modules had been added and amended over time. This included a mixture of credits and electives, often based around what tutors wanted to teach (as a research interest for example) rather than on ('just') what the students needed. The complex nature of courses became significant in the climate of what was termed by Forgetown as course 'rationalisation' in which modules were reduced and some courses closed. The re-approval of a large undergraduate degree in Housing and Planning (CPT2), for example, faced the reduction of awards from 20 to seven, and of modules from 126 to 75.

Managing what had become inconsistent over time while looking forward to what the course might become was a balance that CPTs found difficult. This included assessment practices that had grown over time in the lived curriculum, involving in some cases over-assessment (e.g. tasks set to regulate the student and student behaviour, such as the monitoring of attendance at lectures, rather than emphasising how students might demonstrate their learning). Inconsistency was also evident in LOs and assessment criteria. These aspects are indicative of internal modifiers of the planning process that the CPT, as course planners, would need to unravel.

### **6.3.1 Planning the curriculum as an intention to change**

All of the participants in this phase spoke of an initial excitement and enthusiasm for what lay ahead in planning the course. This was seen as a chance to 'put things right at last' or to 'get rid of that bloody module', as a refresh or 'clean start', echoing the sense of how the curriculum had become 'untidy' and 'messy' over time. For some this would be a visioning of what the course could become, as a kind of experiment or risk, based on a feeling for what was needed, but not knowing if this was right until the course had been taught at least once.

The process of planning at these early stages began, in some cases, up to a year before the APE and took various forms including course team meetings and some arranged specific 'away day' workshops off-campus to work intensively on this. Teams soon became aware of the logistical problems that changes to the curriculum might entail, including changes to how the course is taught. Sarah, planning to create an online version of the Autism course (CPT5) describes the difficulty they anticipated:

*I cannot tell you how awful it is, rolling out a distance learning course without full understanding from admin and everybody about the drawbacks, the pitfalls and everything.*  
(Sarah (C2))

There was, however, room in most people's thinking to imagine how the curriculum could be different. Betty at the outset of planning hoped to keep her curriculum (CPT2) 'open to ideas' and 'open to innovation', in order that they could 'opt to be different':

*The idea [was] that if the sky was the limit and we were in an ideal world, here's a sheet of paper, what would you want your course to look like? So if resources were unlimited, you know, were limitless and we could do anything, what would you want to do? That was my starting point.*  
(Betty (D2))

All CLs found the initial enthusiasm for the 'intended' course difficult to sustain for several reasons that will be explored below and in detail in Chapter 7. Many agreed that the primary reason for re-approving courses was to improve them, and that this would involve change. At the initial planning stage the general sense was that this focused on change to the structure and to some extent the content of the course, while there was little discussion of LTA practice itself. Underlying this emphasis on structure and content of the curriculum was a strong sense that the university's agenda was to improve by seeking efficiency and to ensure consistency. For some this was a tension between what the institution saw as necessary and what the course team regarded as established and working well.

Changes in the curriculum also emerged from course review and analysis and this took various forms. Gareth rationalised the changes needed to the Built Environment course (CPT10) by mapping the assessment of professional competences and linking them to specific modules. He found that some modules did not fulfil any particular need in terms of the student's vocational or professional needs and to have little bearing on their future employment. Some of these 'redundant' modules were 'longstanding' and taught by 'long serving staff', encountering issues of legacy and protectionism:

*Obviously there are issues [such as] it's been like this for the last 20 years so it must be right ... what became glaringly obvious is the reverse, that there were areas that weren't being covered and weren't being serviced by what was the programme that were in desperate need of coverage*  
(Gareth (C9))

This 'principled' approach was combined with a sense of pragmatism by others and involved 'drawing on what we already have' as a form of 'keeping things the same'. Playing out here is the combination of internal and external influences on the curriculum. However, these intentions were also affected by the structure of the curriculum, in for example having to reduce module credits from 20 to 10 to allow for

an institutional directive to include an international placement for all students on all courses. These orientations to change are indications of a combination of external influences and internally derived hopes and desires for making the curriculum. One aspect of this, employability, identified in the literature, will now be discussed.

### **6.3.2 Employability knowledge in the curriculum**

Employability is a key priority at Forgetown in which it aims to further increase the number of courses that incorporate ‘preparation for the world of work’ through course design and approval processes. This reflects a trend in HE that stems from government intervention in the HE over a period of time (e.g. Robbins Report, 1963; Dearing Report, 1997 – see discussion in Chapter 2). Forgetown, as typical of UK HEI, places a high regard for the employability of its graduates and how this is realised in the design of its courses, including transferable skills (Barnett, 1994).

The main principles of the employability strand of the LTA Strategy at Forgetown (see Appendix 15) reflect the importance of work-based learning as a explicit element of the curriculum (as a work placement module for example) and across the curriculum in LOs and the assessment tasks designed to address them. This is set out in the *Education for Employability* strategy at Forgetown and its four objectives (see Appendix 18 for how courses in this study map to this). One of these, careers advice, has been traditionally an extra-curricular facility in institutions that is supported centrally but is increasingly expected to be integrated within the course, as the ‘action-oriented curriculum’ (Barnett, 1994: 20).

For Forgetown the proportion of graduates gaining employment is shown in ‘destination data’, a key indicator of the ‘health’ of courses. While some uncertainty exists as to the extent to which employability can be converted into employment (for example that a job may not be graduate level employment) it was nevertheless the case that the courses in this study were required to address employability and evidence this in the submission documents. A number of CLs found some difficulty in addressing this. Anna describes having to adjust her understanding on arriving at Forgetown from a ‘red-brick’ university at which ‘a student doesn’t need to know

about employability because you leave with your degree and that's your passport'. She found that in contrast Forgetown emphasised students' direct professional experience as part of the way they learn. This was less of a difficulty for Leo, who arrived at the institution relatively recently from a (continuing) career as a professional musician. His course in Performing Arts (CPT9) had a strong bias on performance and work-based learning. Sheila, however, in her Criminology degree (CPT7) found employability difficult to embed for her colleagues, many of whom, preferred to favour other aspects:

*... their research, their discipline, their interest, their identity as an academic. PDP [professional development planning] and Employability are not predominantly the identity of academics and even the people who are very practice oriented ... don't do a lot of undergraduate teaching.*  
(Sheila (C5))

This, therefore, indicates a code clash between the relative strengths of a 'knower code' (ER-, SR+) emphasised in approaches to employability, and the knowledge code (ER+, SR-) emphasised in disciplinary positions and identities held by some academics. The question remains of the extent to which transferable skills represent procedural knowledge held by students that constitute what might be broadly termed work-related or work-based learning. In order to address this question an examination of how employability is pedagogised (reproduced in Bernstein's (1990) terms) now follows.

### ***Pedagogising employability knowledge***

An example of pedagogised employability in practice is illustrated in a story shared with me by Cathy about her experiences of supporting students' preparation for the world of work. In interview Cathy spoke about the approval of the Environment and Planning course (CPT2). She described a process in which her informal activity outside the course, in advising students on their careers and how to get a job, became integrated into the curriculum as an explicit *Professional Practice and Placement* module. This is a 20 credit, Level 5 module that is mandatory for students on vocational routes in Environment (CPT2). It has four learning outcomes:

- Identify complex problems in real-life situations;
- Identify objectives and personal responsibilities when working with others;

- Reflect on and analyse the values and ethics relating to professional practice;
- Reflect on and evaluate their own performance, and plan actions relating to their own continuing professional development needs.

What led up to the development of this module highlights the process of recontextualisation and its effects on practice and pedagogy. In 1990 Cathy was asked to 'prepare' students for placement. This involved helping them with CVs, and filling in forms and an optional lecture on 'how to behave on placement'. She set up practical sessions on 'work shadowing', 'how to deal with clients' and 'safety at work' that students found very useful. In 2005 this extra-curricular practice was 'recontextualised' (Bernstein, 1990) into a taught and assessed module. One effect of this was that students took it more seriously:

*Suddenly it was part of a module that was on their timetable and so attendance improved and you were able to get students to actually engage with it much more seriously*  
(Cathy (D4))

Also when it became a module it was formalised as teaching, with assessment criteria and LOs, and it became more theoretical as well. Adding theoretical content to what had been very practical changed the nature of the interaction with students, in which they questioned the relevance of some of the teaching, including self-management:

*A lot of students will see that and think 'I know how to organise myself'*  
(Cathy (D4))

On becoming mandatory the new placement module became 'equivalent to other modules' (it carried 'academic credit') in that it was timetabled as 'something they have to work at' and therefore subject to a comparison with other 'more theoretical' modules. This meant raising the theoretical basis of what had previously been ad hoc and informal and elicited a 'strategic' response from students to concentrate on other academic modules that they perceived as more important:

*So I think that they give less importance to the developing of these skills than to something with really hard content like Housing Law or Finance*  
(Cathy (D4))

The 'pedagogising' of the Professional Practice and Placement module that Cathy describes was achieved through a formalising of the assessment of two tasks and their 'weighting': Reflective Practice (75%) and Placement Appraisal (25%). Its importance was heightened when the module 'rolled-out' across the whole programme for all students in the re-approval of the course in 2010 (see Appendix 19: for an outline of the module LOs and assessment of the work based learning modules). Having originally set up extra-curricular activities for students Cathy found she was now responsible, as a module leader, for a core employability module, taught by a number of other colleagues in the team, including non-housing specialists. The practical everyday, 'common sense' knowledge had been 'verticalised' into a pedagogic discourse, in which the basis of exchange had become formalised along with 'the goods'. Furthermore this vertical discourse had a horizontal, segmented, knowledge structure (Bernstein, 2000) in which 'what it means to be a professional' sits alongside 'health and safety at work'. Cathy described this as:

*... a kind of turning the outside inside and the inside outside – like a kind of 'reversible coat' that changed how things look on the outside (Cathy (D4)).*

The pedagogising of Cathy's teaching can be seen as code shift in its classification and framing (from -C, -F to +C, +F) and as a 'disruption' in which practice that had become doxic was firstly raised to 'visibility' and then changed. The legitimisation of the underlying organising principles is now examined.

### **6.3.3 Legitimising work-related learning**

The transformation of this 'learning about work' from a horizontal to a vertical discourse can also be viewed as a 'semantic shift' (Maton 2010a) in which semantic gravity (the closeness to the context of work) had decreased (it had become decontextualised from practice – from SG+ to SG-); and the semantic density (the degree of abstraction of practice) had increased (it had become more abstract, more complex and more condensed into theory – from SD- to SD+). Cathy's Story is highlighted, therefore, because it allows this process to be tracked across time (i.e. in Cathy's 20 years at Forgetown and the history of the Placement Practice module). It starkly highlights the effects that formalising the curriculum has on learning and

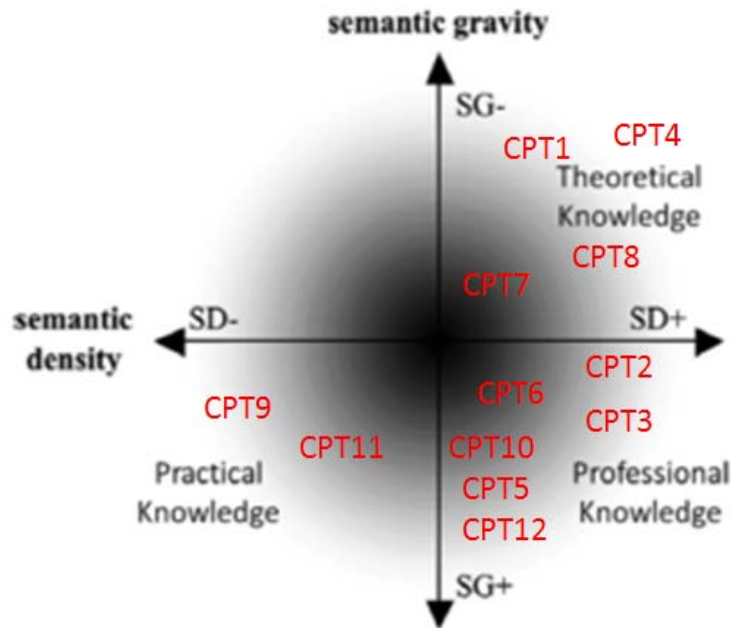
teaching and how knowledge becomes recontextualised into the curriculum and becomes reproduced into pedagogy (Bernstein, 2000).

While both Cathy and the Housing curriculum itself have longstanding involvement in developing employability as knowledge structure, others have come more lately to the need to provide work-related learning. This is reflected in the accounts of many in CS2 who describe the difficulty they find in making this particular curricular accommodation. The realisation of work-related learning in the curriculum (Smith, 2012) as it applies to the 12 courses in this study is shown in Appendix 18 in which each course is mapped to the four Employability Strategy objectives. Four of the 12 courses have introduced at least one specific module that accredits work-based or work-related learning (see Appendix 19), including the *Professional Practice and Placement* module discussed above in Cathy's story.

### ***The semantic structure of employability knowledge***

Shay (2013) makes the distinction between courses that align with a specific occupation, such as Policing (CPT12) in this study, and those that are professionally oriented, such as the Environment course (CPT2) and those that are 'general formative' such as the Applied Social Science course (CPT8). Based on Shay's categories and the knowledge structures using Bernstein's code theory (1977) and Maton's (2011) semantic codes the course in this study have been mapped in Figure 7.





**Figure 7: Semantic coding for employability knowledge of courses in the study**

Figure 7 shows the modalities of LCT semantics (Maton 2011) in which semantic gravity (SG) is shown on the vertical axis and semantic density (SD) is shown on the horizontal axis. The quadrants have been labelled according to theoretical knowledge (top right), professional knowledge (bottom right) and practical knowledge (bottom left). The placing of the 12 courses in this study onto this semantic plane is according to a rough estimation of their relative semantic density and semantic gravity. What is represented here is the verticality of the work-based curriculum: the degree to which its concepts are hierarchical and cumulative (how one concept builds, or is dependent on another). A holistic view of the work-based learning modules and the realisation of the institution's *Education for Employability Strategy* in Appendix 18 would suggest that there is variation in the implementation of this. The integration of work-based learning across the curriculum (e.g. CPTs 1, 3 and 5) as opposed to those that explicitly address this in specific modules (e.g. CPTs 8 and 12) for example, and whether the module is mandatory or a matter of choice for students (CPT7). The design of courses that respond to the institution's drive to increase employability can be seen in this study to vary not only in its structure but also in its internal pedagogical logic. The *Preparing for the World of Work* module (CPT7) for example includes the LO *Identify employability skills and practices* and the assessment criterion (the basis on which the

tutor will judge the student's work) *Ability to recognise relevant skills and practices necessary to enhance employability*. Even allowing for the problems of language and the limitations of bureaucratic approaches testified by participants in this study, this would appear to be a circular justification for pedagogy and one that students are likely to find difficult to interpret and to actualise in the assessment task (cf. Fazey and Fazey, 2001).

### ***Work-related curriculum coherence***

As evident from analysis of module descriptions, attempts to address the inclusion of employability knowledge in the examples in this study are typical of those identified in the literature as the need to align teaching activities and assessment with meaningful activity in the workplace (Smith, 2012; Ryan *et al.*, 1996; Yorke, 2006). This includes the importance of reflection in approaches to PDP and careers development (Clegg and Bradley, 2006) as outlined in Appendix 18. The four examples of work-based learning modules given in Appendix 19 all rely on a form of reflection in the assessment tasks (e.g. *Reflective Log*, *Reflective Report*) in which the LOs require students to reflect on their own *performance* (CPT2), their own *learning processes* (CPT7), *values and ethics* (CPT2), *learning achieved* (CPT8), and on the *organisation* (CPT12). This variation in the focus of reflection (McAlpine *et al.*, 2004) suggests that pedagogical approaches may remain ill-defined, tacit, and/or difficult to describe.

Table 20 below shows a typology of the courses in this study against the types of knowledge and curricula based on Shay (2013) and mapped to the quadrants of the Cartesian plane in Figure 7.

**Table 20: Sematic coding of courses in the study with types of knowledge and curricula**

<b>Quadrant</b>	<b>Semantic coding</b>	<b>Type of knowledge</b>	<b>Type of curricula</b>	<b>Principles and concepts</b>	<b>Examples from this study</b>
Q1. (top left)	SG-, SD-	Pseudo-practical knowledge	Generic	Not embedded in practice/ concept-less	None
Q2. (bottom left)	SG+, SD-	Practical knowledge	Practical	Derived from practice rather than theory	CPT9 <i>Performing Arts</i> CPT11 <i>Contemporary Fine Art</i>
Q3. (bottom right)	SG+, SD+	Professional knowledge / practice knowledge	Prof./ vocational	Based on logic of the demands of practice (derived from theory)	CPT2 <i>Geography, Environment, Planning and Housing</i> CPT3 <i>English Language Teaching</i> CPT5 <i>Autism</i> CPT6 <i>Education</i> CPT10 <i>Built Environment</i> CPT12 <i>Policing Studies</i>
Q4. (top right)	SG-, SD+	Theoretical knowledge	Applied theory	Based on logic of the discipline	CPT1 <i>International Relations</i> CPT4 <i>Social Science Research</i> CPT7 <i>Criminology</i> CPT8 <i>Applied Social Science</i>

It should be noted, however, that this placing is pragmatic in that it organises the 12 courses for further analysis. It does not attempt to take into account for example varying strengths of semantic density and gravity within a course and in the various modules (some of which are more theoretical, and some will be more practical), or to simplify the relative differences between courses (that Built Environment is more practical and less theory based than Education for example). Rather this analysis is useful to examine the shifts or movements that are taking place in making courses employment focused. Of interest in this typology is the top-up of Foundation degrees

(Performing Arts and Policing Studies) and the semantic shift that takes place in adding theoretical perspectives for students who have studied diploma stage at local colleges and the potential challenges for students.

### ***Realising employability knowledge in the curriculum***

Analysis of the data suggests that the realisation of employability in the curricula at Forgetown involves a technical level in which the practical issues dominate the discourse around employability (e.g. the management of work placements and the logistics of providing students with the opportunity to learn in the workplace), with little attention, on the whole, given to the differences that students might encounter including the culture of the workplace and the way that learning is organised and supported. Also there are challenges to the applied theory curricula in quadrant 4 such as Criminology and Sociology (the *general-formative degree* in Shay's typology). Applied Social Science (CPT8), as the largest of the courses affected by this in this study, has responded by including a package of 3 modules: *Work and Professional Development* module (10 credits level 5), an elective 30-credit project-management module or a 50-credit work placement module. It has also created an academic tutoring system for all students, with specific study skills modules. This contrasts strongly with the way in which Built Environment (CPT10), as a professional/vocational course in quadrant 3, bases its curriculum on the demands of practice, informed by theory. This course does not have a specially created work-based module but integrates its professional knowledge into modules, supported by the involvement of its professional bodies, and offers an 'independent' placement as a whole year in work between levels 5 and 6. The extent to which a discipline is able to accommodate external influences on the curriculum, such as employability, is potentially unfair when this is used as a measure of a course's success.

The importance of employability is reflected by the institution in the 'branding' of Forgetown University and how its 'message' has changed over time in its marketing literature. Prior to the fieldwork in this study Forgetown's 'offer to students' was articulated as '*We develop your thinking*'; more lately this has become '*We add value to you*'. This can be interpreted, on the surface at least, as a shift from '*what you will know*' on graduation to '*who you will become*' at some future, yet to be determined

point. This literal, if not symbolic, message is a shift from knowledge to economic worth and a clear statement to students, and teaching staff, of what counts in the curriculum and the prizing of a 'prospective' pedagogic identity for students (Bernstein, 2000).

#### **6.4 Pedagogy**

Having examined the practices at Forgetown for designing and organising the curriculum, attention will now turn to how participants organise their teaching; specifically the selection, pacing and evaluation of content knowledge. This is pedagogy as the second of three message systems (Bernstein, 1990: 185). This is set within Bernstein's (2000: 78) definition of pedagogy as the 'sustained process, whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria'. Pedagogy is symbolic rather than practical (in line with the pedagogic device) and the emphasis here is on *institutional pedagogy* (official) rather than segmental pedagogy carried out in face-to-face interactions. This will be explored with regard to several perspectives:

- I. the meanings that participants derive from and attribute to their understanding of pedagogy;
- II. the pedagogic identities attached to these meanings;
- III. how this is influenced by institutional academic development.

Where appropriate these accounts are referenced to the semantic coding of the course made in Table 20 above. The purpose of this analysis is to ask '*What kind of pedagogic identity is this projecting?*'

##### **6.4.1 Pedagogical meanings**

Participants spoke of teaching in terms of organisation, of something that was part of a professional role in terms of scale (the number of students, the amount of marking) and the allocation of time to this (from the total number of hours of being an academic). The term pedagogy was seldom used by the participants in groups C and D in the context of course approval in an institutional setting and the activities surrounding it. While this relative 'silence' on pedagogy can possibly be explained by

an over-riding concern for the practical aspects of course approval rather than a disregard for pedagogy it highlights one effect of the bureaucratically focused context. It supports the indications in CS1 that formal pedagogical models (e.g. Goodyear and Jones, 2004) were alien discourses for HE teachers as a type of 'academic pretentiousness' (Yates, 2009).

Varying perspectives on pedagogy were expressed by participants in the study indicating the links between their teaching practices and what they understood their academic role to be. Anna saw her teaching on the Geography and Planning degree (semantically a *Professional/Vocational Curriculum* (Q3)) as a means of keeping her in touch with her subject and her own professional practice. Roberta, teaching on a formative, Applied Theory Curriculum (Q4) in Applied Social Science, valued her identity as a researcher into bereavement and suicide and how this could provide students with an understanding of what research is and how it can be important. Hera, in her Fine Arts course, (coded semantically above as a *Practical Curriculum* (Q2)) saw pedagogy as a form of professional practice. She described the 'atelier system' in which students work independently in the studio alongside teachers who are also artists working on their own art work.

*[Studio practice] is the students coming into contact with you and your descriptions and understandings of your own practice and I guess ... your understanding of their practice*  
(Hera (C10)).

She described her practice as enabling students to have 'a relationship with a relationship' as key to their understanding of their own practice.

*... for that shape-changing to happen and for them not to be scared of it, cos then they will go on as students, and as artists, able, you know, to accommodate ... the new*  
(Hera (C10))

Hera described the structures in the university, including the breaking of learning into modules, and having to set LOs and to assess according to prescribed criteria, as directly affecting her practice. She found that this damaged her relationship with students, and their ability to produce art that is 'spontaneous and real'. These extremely brief, broad-brush accounts of pedagogy are offered here to indicate a

possible link between discipline and curriculum structures and the pedagogic modes of learning and teaching and are illustrative of many accounts in the data in this study.

#### **6.4.2 Teacher pedagogic identity**

In 2010-11, at the time of the fieldwork in this study, a reasonable estimate would be that 80% of the teaching staff in the Faculty of Social Development at Forgetown did not hold a qualification for teaching in HE. The main means by which teaching staff gained teaching experience and expertise was reported to me as 'trial and error', or 'learning on the job'. While induction into teaching involves a course for some new staff, a common experience, reported by all participants, including senior staff in Group E, was of being thrown into teaching with very little preparation. Sheila described how she was given modules and told to 'make sure the students enjoyed it'. She explained that there was no expectation that she understood how the university ran or the reason for the course:

*It was literally 'you've been hired and we want you to deliver these 5 modules. Here they are, go and deliver them'. I was literally a week ahead of the students (Sheila (C5))*

Typical also was being given a full teaching load. Sheila spoke of being given the entire teaching package by the individual who currently ran the modules and being left to get on with it. Roberta also described having to take over module leadership for things she had never taught. Developing practice was a process for many in which they overcompensated by giving the students too much information.

*Lectures were very clearly about putting as much information on the slides as I possibly could so that if I didn't deliver the material appropriately the students still had it because it was written. What it did mean was that students didn't need to engage with the lecture because I gave them all of the material. (Roberta (C7))*

Finding herself in a lecture with 120 students for the first time was a frightening experience for Anna:

*So I can remember thinking "oh god", I thought "I've got to get this right". It becomes like a theatre. It's a different skill when you're teaching large groups, a very different skill, as you know. Also some of these modules that had very similar names and I couldn't get my head around the difference... So we had*

*Neighbourhood Renewal, Neighbourhood Management, Neighbourhood Regeneration and I was thinking well what is the difference?*  
(Anna, (D4))

Having to teach someone else's module exposed people to their first thoughts on what they would like to change when they got the chance. This is a borrowing of practice that is undertaken in a competitive spirit rather than the reciprocal exchange typical of CS1.

Analysis indicates that the default position indicated in CS2 is one more aligned with absorption in the day-to-day difficulties of managing teaching loads. In the accounts above it is suggested that some academics identify with their disciplines rather than the institution (Henkel, 2000) and that external influences on pedagogy (e.g. the HEA and, at the time of this study, Subject Centres such as C-SAP) are 'invisible' (Barnett, 2009). This can be seen in the predominance of lectures as a form of pedagogy that students expect and which has a rational efficiency favoured by the institution, in which students learn 'to speak the language of the discipline.' (Farrell and McAvinia, 2012: 99).

There are indications here of 'prospective pedagogic identity' (Bernstein, 2000) that is future oriented. This rests on narratives that ground the identity in a recontextualisation of the past, on 'how things were done' to influence 'how things will be done'.

#### **6.4.3 Academic development**

The activities and texts produced by participants in this study are framed by institutional networks and policies including strategies such as that for LTA outlined above and in Appendix 15 (*Key LTA enhancement themes*). While wishing to avoid pathologising HE teachers' practice as a simplistic typology of *teacher focused/content oriented* and *student focused/learning oriented* (Entwistle *et al.*, 2000) it can be seen that the overriding disposition to pedagogy evident in the accounts of participants in CS2 was that of a disciplinary identity. Sheila was unequivocal about this:



*I was an academic, I wasn't a teacher. LTA was about becoming a teacher. I'm not a teacher. I still wouldn't call myself a teacher even though I teach students. I'm an academic who studies a discipline and I share that discipline and help my students engage with that discipline and develop their own understanding of it.*  
(Sheila (C5))

Sheila had a dual role as a teaching academic, leading the approval of Criminology (Q4 *Applied Theory Curriculum*) and as the LTA lead in her department. She described how she felt conflicted by this:

*.... so LTA was seen as a dirty word in some cases by academics because it was asking you to do something you weren't, which was to become a teacher, because what you were was an academic studying your discipline.*  
(Sheila (C5))

Anna is also a teacher and the LTA lead in her department, supporting Betty (D2) in the approval of the Environment course (Q3 *Professional/Vocational Curriculum*). She saw her LTA role as having a positive effect on others, in that it offered the potential to make practice easier for them:

*I also knew there was a lot of anxiety with my colleagues around this [how to teach work-based learning] and I suppose I saw the LTA role as a bit of an emollient type role where you've got the chance to manifest good practice*  
(Anna (D4))

These contrasting positions on the need for LTA as the mechanism for academic development (Clegg, 2009) can be seen to vary on the basis of the perceived value of innovation in learning and teaching. Participants describe this as the 'competitive element' in which innovation is related to people's professional identity and self esteem, and a struggle for LTA resources (funding and time), thus influencing orientations to pedagogy as academic development. In general there was an attitude that LTA was a set of themes, or trends, that become popular at certain points as a 'fad'. There was also suspicion that these fads were at the whim of management, and driven by an improvement agenda (Clegg, 2009). Employability was seen as typical of this approach particularly by those courses whose vocational aspects were not as visible or fore-fronted, such as History and English Literature. Leo, the LTA lead in his Humanities department, spoke of how LTA had become demoted as an issue and how he had to fight for it to be on the agenda for course planning meetings.

*The problem was people [humanities] would say 'yes we know we should be doing this LTA stuff but you know we don't know how you actually get this done in a course ... employability - what does this mean for my teaching?' (Leo (C8))*

Alongside this discussion of LTA as a concern for course planning teams there exists the idea of academic development that resonates with the literature as the space between the 'centre' (institution) and the 'periphery' (academics and their courses) in which members of the LTA team are in the 'privileged periphery' (Clegg, 2003: 806). Participants' accounts also associated curriculum development as outside interference with what is going to be taught. This is particularly evident in discussion regarding assessment, as the means by which the institution exerts power over the 'private spaces' in which teachers operate. This will be considered next.

## **6.5 Assessment**

Many accounts in this study articulate the difficulty that participants face in devising assessment that fits the bureaucratic requirements of the institution and the needs of students. Analysis of the curriculum documents submitted to the UAP by the course teams in this study shows there to be a range of assessment tasks across the 12 courses and within them (see Appendix 21). This shows that across the 485 modules included in the 12 courses in this study, 910 assessment tasks were used, roughly equivalent to 2 tasks per module<sup>8</sup>.

Even allowing for the size of this sample, in which there are some very large courses, such as CPT10 Built Environment (79 modules) and CPT4 Applied Social Science (110 modules) that account for almost 40% of the modules in this study between them, it is evident that essays (19.2%) and reports (22.2%) are the default assessment types. This indicates module designers' preference for students' extended writing. However, difference exist in, for example, the preference for exams in Built Environment (27.6%)<sup>9</sup>. Assessment types that might be considered to be practical in nature, such as

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<sup>8</sup> What is not included here is the relative weighting of assessment tasks within a module where there is more than one task. This is not always 50/50 weighting. However, this analysis does allow a broad picture to be gained.

<sup>9</sup> The relatively high figure of exams for CPT4 Social Science Research (20%) needs to be considered in the light of the small number of assessment tasks (10) in the 7 modules in this course.

presentations, work placements, and laboratory practicals account for only 7.4% of assessment tasks in total. To some extent this analysis is limited by the trend to make description of assessment broad and vague, as indicated in the literature (Bloxham and West, 2004; O'Donovan *et al.*, 2004) and in participants' accounts in this study. This is exemplified by the use of the term 'coursework' (e.g. CPT6 Education 26.1%) as an over-arching term left deliberately ill-defined by course teams to allow them to be flexible in meeting students' needs (see below).

However, some of these data provide interesting comparisons when course are organised into the curriculum types offered using LCT semantic coding (Maton, 2011), as shown in Appendix 22. While the number of courses varies across the quadrants (Q1 to Q4) there is an almost equal number of modules in the two quadrants Q3 (Professional/practice knowledge curricula) and Q4 (Theoretical knowledge curricula) allowing for a reasonable comparison. Notable here is that the essay assessment type is almost twice as high in the applied theory quadrant, Q4 (29.8%), while Report/Analysis is roughly a third higher in the professional practice quadrant, Q3 (28.9%).

In terms of the generic skills required by institutional strategies to increase employability, the need for new forms of assessment (Yorke, 2006) is identified, in which 'integrated' or 'authentic' assessment becomes more important (Nightingale *et al.*, 1996: 3). As shown in Appendix 19 this includes self-reflection including reflective portfolios and journals. This prizing of self-reflection in work related settings does not equate to self-assessment, however. It remains the task of the teacher to assess and grade and while the principles of reflection (Schön, 1983; 1987) are encouraged it remains difficult to assess critical reflection in practice. One example in this study (see Table 21) is how participants found it difficult to develop statements of LOs that apply generic criteria to workplace phenomena that are essentially 'context-dependent, situated or, uncertain and volatile' (Sadler, 2002: 49).

**Table 21: Cases illustrating the impact of changes to assessment regulations**

<b>Module</b>	<b>Assessment Tasks</b>	<b>Issues arising from changes</b>
<b><i>The Sociological Imagination</i></b> (Social Science Dept, Level 4, 20 credits, 2 semesters)	2 Assessment Tasks: <i>Assignment</i> (30%), <i>Essay</i> (70%). Task 1 covers LO 1 and Task 2 covers LOs 1, 2 and 3. Task 1 is related to task 2 and students can pass overall without meeting all LOs. Also a pass overall can be gained without passing task2 (e.g. 48% in task 1, 38 % in task 2 gives an overall pass 41%)	A change of practice is required to either end-load the module or to redesign all tasks to meet all LOs, and/or a re-design of teaching practice regarding subject knowledge and the support for students who find difficulty in managing their own learning.
<b><i>Principles of Evaluation</i></b> (Built Environment Dept., Level 4, 20 credits, 2 semesters)	6 Assessment Tasks: <i>Workshop exercises</i> (5%); <i>Blackboard Quizzes</i> (10%); <i>MCQ</i> (10%); <i>IT session Exercises</i> (10%); <i>Reflective Report</i> (5%); <i>Exam</i> (65%). LOs are distributed throughout the tasks e.g. LO6 can only be met in task 5 Reflective Report (5%) but a pass can be gained without meeting this.	Practice has evolved where the assessment is applied as a driver for pedagogical practice and for student engagement as well as the means of demonstrating learning. Changing assessment will change the basis of pedagogy.
<b><i>Work Based learning</i></b> (Architecture and Planning Dept. Level 5, 20 credits, 1 semester)	2 Assessment tasks: <i>Analytical Report</i> (50%), <i>Tutor/Employer Assessment</i> (50%). LOs are distributed between both tasks, and students are required to pass both tasks to meet all LOs.	A change of practice is required to either end-load the module or to redesign all tasks to meet all LOs, and/or a re-design of teaching practice regarding subject knowledge. Tutors fear a return to 'finals'.
<b><i>Mooting</i></b> (Law and Criminal Justice Dept., Level 6, 20 credits, 2 semesters)	2 Assessment tasks: <i>Reflection on 2 moots portfolio</i> (50%), <i>Assessed Moot</i> (50%). LOs are very specific for level 6 (e.g. 'explain the rules to mooring') and involve group and individual skills distributed across the module	Module team perceive new regulations to threaten the practice in this 'highly regarded module' that has a 'national profile'.

While the default position for course teams in their planning was to 'keep things the same' these accounts represent the many instances in the data where assessment was problematic. A general disposition prevailed in which it was better to let 'sleeping dogs lie' and 'the less said the better'. There was a good deal of uncertainty over LOs, for example, particularly in how they are realised in course design (Leney *et al.*, 2008), while being subject to a number of different approaches that are discipline specific in

HE (Anderson and Hounsell, 2007). The lack of formative assessment and a clear rationale for it is referred to as 'assessment in disarray' (Knight and Yorke, 2004: 16). It also highlights the difficulty of applying generic criteria to phenomena that are 'context-dependence, situated or, uncertain and volatile' (Sadler, 2002: 49).

### **6.5.1 Practice in assessment as pedagogic strategy**

Modules that fell foul of assessment regulations were referred to by senior faculty with responsibility for academic development as 'toxic', in that it was not only 'bad' assessment practice but that it might draw QAA attention to bad institutional practice. The stakes were high, therefore, for Forgettown's reputation and standing, echoing Knight's (2002) contention that 'assessment is the Achilles' heel of Quality'. The articulation of assessment in course documentation was not always sound and this was exacerbated by problems that did not come to light until courses were due for approval. One such problem arose when an edict for all LOs to be met in order for a student to pass a module was announced. The effects of the problems with assessment regulations as illustrated in the cases in Table 21 were unanticipated and were seen to depress enthusiasm generally and to lower engagement with the opportunity to revise and improve courses. Resolution arrived in the form of a 'magic sentence'

*[Academic services] gave us a sentence that we could use. We have to talk about modules being able 'to evidence achievement at a pass mark on a task'. That's the magic sentence. We referred to it as the 'magic sentence' in that meeting.*  
(Susan (E10))

An examination of the cases offers valuable insight into the dependency of practice on established pedagogical repertoires and how changes in assessment affected this (see Table 21). These four examples indicate the ways in which changes in assessment regulations challenged existing practice. In 'The Sociological Imagination' module, for example, an approach had evolved in which key concepts are taught and assessed in semester 1 and then extended and reapplied in semester 2. This is a good example of curricular coherence under threat given the need to end-load the module assessment or to re-design the LOs. This coherence is not always conceptual, as in the 'Principles of Evaluation' module in which practice had developed over time such that the

assessment tasks were used to regulate the activity of students rather than to demonstrate learning, as indicated by the low weighting of the Reflective Report task (5%). The assessment of the 'Work Based Learning' module reflects the difficulty facing course teams in devising assessment that allows students to demonstrate professional learning in a form that can be academically examined. The contingencies, for example, in a Tutor/Employer Assessment (50%) are varied, such as the balance between what the employer thinks and how the tutor assesses the student's work. While this 'works in practice' it becomes problematic when examined in the light of the official assessment precepts problem.

These examples highlight the disjunction between the regulations that guide the process and how these are interpreted and put into practice, and become dispositions and habits (Bourdieu, 1999). In this sense the problems with assessment can be seen as a disturbance in the institutional habitus that raises to visibility the underlying struggle for control of the curriculum and the pedagogy associated with it (Clegg and Ashworth, 2004).

#### **6.6 Discussion: characterisation of curriculum planning in a bureaucratic context**

This chapter has presented and discussed the first part of a case study of one institution's context for course design and approval, focussing on the planning activities leading up to immediately before the APE, and the experiences and perceptions that inform it. It has addressed the second research question: *What are the characteristics of course planning practices in a UK higher education institution and how are curricular forms generated?* In line with the research design of this thesis this was informed by the analysis of phase 1 of the research and will, in turn, inform the last phase. In this second phase the context for teachers' curriculum activity is characterised as a '*bureaucratically focused*' field position as embodied by experiences in the 'intended' curriculum. The characteristics that have emerged from the analysis of the data are now summarised.

##### ***The curriculum strongly bound in the institutional context***

Similarly to CS1 the curriculum is inscribed by the institutional context and the imprint of the way it is organised. However, in CS2 this is amplified and brought to bear more

directly on the planning of courses and the designs that are produced. In other words, whereas in the lived curriculum the effects of the institution are residual, the effects at the planning stage are immediately applied to the curriculum. Planning, therefore, is subject to a pedagogic discourse in that it constitutes a 'mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially unto each other, as a form of representation' (Fairclough, 1992: 63). The nature of this discursive practice is one in which texts are produced, distributed and consumed (ibid.: 78) as can be seen in the ways that CPTs and UAPs go about their work. Curriculum planning, therefore, is a form of discursive practice involving structured activity, including language behaviour as meaning making (Christie, 2005). The emphasis on social practice in the institutional context highlights the underlying organising principles of practice. Cathy's description of how employability was formalised illustrates how the recontextualisation of her practice was a shift in how it was legitimated: this changed the mode of practice and its pedagogic identity from 'therapeutic' to 'prospective' (Bernstein, 1990). The basis of its emergence became market-driven (the emphasis on 'goods for exchange'), while consciousness of this was limited by the perceived value of 'adding value' to students. The struggle between 'inside' as the dedication to inner values and those profane 'outside' practices becomes visible here.

### ***The curriculum homogenised and standardised***

In spite of 'good intentions' to design better courses, the over-riding position taken in relation to planning was conservative echoing the literature (Oliver, 2003; Hatton, 1989). Changes made are more likely to be those that are commissioned via institutional directives, such as an employability strategy, as development along a line of least resistance. This is an emphasis on structural coherence (as realised in the development of work-related modules), as opposed to pedagogical design (i.e. conceptual coherence as in the development of such ideas as Bruner's spiral curriculum). Where 'principled' curriculum design was the focus this became the means by which the curriculum was expedited (e.g. modules deleted or curriculum structures changed). Course teams responded to this by means of pragmatic compliance, refracting the pressures to survive the planning process into strategic coping mechanisms such as those thrown up by the need to incorporate employability into the curriculum. The effects of this vary in the degree of challenge for the course

team and how this is managed. The overall effect is a move towards a standardised curriculum as a form of genericism.

### ***Quality processes acting as pedagogic mode***

Course planning included the arrangements for the assurance of quality and the organisational and administrative arrangements for the approval of courses, identified as *bureaucratic* based on Weber's criteria (1978) and as an *intermediate collegiate organisation* (Water's 1989; Hull, 2006). The processes of curriculum development in this context are seen to be actively supported by LTA agencies in which the focus on achieving curriculum coherence is foregrounded, as a form of academic development, but relegated in its perceived importance. While pedagogy is relatively insulated from quality processes, this freedom is increasingly supplanted by interference in how courses are run and delivered. Participants' accounts of problems with assessment regulations, for example, indicate the disruption to habitus caused by bureaucratic 'moves' aimed at regulating the curriculum, albeit as a relay of external policy. Here the documentation of the curriculum became the means of control that operated upwards (i.e. between the institution and the QAA) and downwards (between the institution and CPTs) at the same time – i.e. it faced both ways. It demonstrates the pedagogic device and in particular the ways in which it is 'condensed' in the evaluative rules (assessment of learning in this case) in which it is possible to see what the work of the device has been (Hoadley and Muller, 2010). Central to this analysis is meaning, in which 'language becomes the interface of interrelated systems' (ibid.: 150), that makes a 'magic sentence' possible and efficacious. The resolution of a problem, therefore, would appear to be neither collegial nor bureaucratic, but consensual.

What is important here is how teachers construct their practice and the basis of 'what counts' and what criteria are applied to assess this (approval). In terms of the documentation of practice, as the texts that represent or embody practice, this is realised by formal descriptions that are a form of 'metadata' that indicate what constitutes a successful use of that text. Bernstein's explanatory framework for exploring this is developed further by examining the epistemic codes to uncover how practice and knowledge is legitimated. This is seen to vary by LCT semantic coding of courses (Maton, 2010a; Shay 2013) as a shift to genericism for applied theory (Q4)



curricula in particular. This is accompanied by an emphasis and shifts in specialisation coding (Maton, 2007) in which social relations are seen to predominate over epistemic ones (i.e. the knower takes precedence over knowledge) This is a development of local identities as narratives of becoming – ‘a becoming which is so to speak a recovery of something not yet spoken, of a new fusion’ (Bernstein, 2000: 76) as a form of ‘prospective [pedagogic] identity’.

### ***Curriculum planning strongly framed and strongly classified***

The accounts in this chapter, the first part of CS2, indicate forces at work in the curriculum that influence how it is understood, created and enacted. The emphasis on work-related competence, within a performance model, for example, characterises the curriculum making activity at Forgetown as the integration of context rather than the integration of meanings. Consequently, the generative principle (the basis of emergence for the curriculum) is derived from the outputs of practice (on creating the ideal graduate for instance) rather than its inputs (on creating knowledge for its own sake say), where content is exhausted by context (Wheelahan, 2007). This is not an issue of relevance or authenticity of knowledge in the curriculum (as addressed in attempts to embed employability described above) but rather it implicates the importance of context and the ability to transcend it. This is the domain of the ‘unthinkable’, as the ‘yet to be thought’ in which control of the pedagogic device is the means by which this is effected (Bernstein, 2000).

Curriculum development, as a sub-field of the field of HE is the arena of struggle for control of the pedagogic device. The bureaucratically focused context as a position in this field is subject to habitus, as the semi-conscious dispositions that people acquire through the social and material interaction with their surroundings (Bourdieu, 2000) and the differing capacities to accommodate new discourses, genres or styles (Bourdieu, 1991); and doxa as the regulating conditions of the regime in which it sits. One aspect of emergence (of new practice) is dissonance or mismatch between the schemes of perceptions and thought at the individual level and the objective realities of the field, as a form of disruption. This can be a key factor triggering change within the discursive agency of techno-bureaucracy acting within the strategic rationalities, such as the coping mechanisms described by participants in this case study as a space

for consensus to operate. This will be explored in Chapter 7 in the examination of the APE.

## 6.7 Summary

One can consider at this point that the discourse of course approval is technocratic on the basis that it applies to texts that are produced by curriculum planners, while being subject to texts produced by policy makers. These discursive texts are not only institutionalised and regulated, but are linked to action (Ojha, 2006). Terms such as 'approval' and 'validation', for example, carry not only instrumental meanings but also affective ones. However, while it is tempting to describe curriculum making as based on a 'bureaucratic discourse' that is governed by techno-rational decision-making, the basis of practice requires further analysis and a closer look at the approval process in the next chapter.

As presented in this chapter the experiences of those seeking approval and those who have achieved it can be seen to be interrelated in that they form part of a shared social fabric comprising the field of HE and the sub-field of academic development. In this context what is being exchanged is not only curricular 'goods', the materials including designs, but the approval of these goods, and the authority to deliver them. Orientations to practice in the *bureaucratically focused* field position involve co-production as a form of working together (Hargreaves, 1994), in which joint undertakings are informed by the bureaucratic requirements of the approval process. This is influenced directly by both macro-level influences on the curriculum and meso-level arrangements set out by the institution. While the full analysis of the basis of this practice awaits the closer examination of the APE the events leading up to it can be seen to be characterised by disciplinary position takings and strategies that have emerged to accommodate and cope with the forces acting on CPTs at the *intended curriculum* stage.

The recognition of expertise in this phase of the fieldwork can be seen to exist in the organisation of the curriculum arising from an authority based in the institution's quality processes. The *scrutiny of product* becomes subject to the UAP and its

functioning through the APE, as hierarchical. This suggests that the curriculum design process is governed by the institution rather the CPTs themselves (PA-) and that this happens according to principles derived from the institutional field and beyond (RA-). In other words the process leading up to the APE displays a shift towards weaker positional autonomy and relational autonomy with regard to legitimate educational knowledge (Maton, 2004; 2005). Furthermore the criteria for success can be seen to derive from a performance-based model (see pedagogic models 3.3.3) that is present-oriented (developing) while being past-referenced (maintaining). This is a DCM pedagogic identity that optimises the exchange value of products to ensure survival of fittest. This will be discussed in relation to the other field positions in Chapter 8.

## **Chapter 7: Approving the curriculum in a consensus seeking context**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter addresses the third research question ‘What are the characteristics of curriculum approval practices in a UK higher education institution, and how do academics interpret and respond to this in reproducing the curriculum?’ It presents the results of part two of a case study (CS2) in curriculum development in the context of one institution focusing on the approval of courses. The consensus-seeking focused dimension, identified in the organising framework for this thesis that was outlined in Chapter 3, is examined. Drawing on a thematic analysis of the data, the chapter is organised around:

- I. the context for the APE, its organisation and the importance of texts;
- II. an analytical distinction between the APE and the field positions of the collegial and bureaucratically focused phases;
- III. the experiences of approval seekers and how the process is understood and managed;
- IV. an historical perspective on the approval process including how this has shaped the work of approvers and given rise to an institutional rationality;
- V. an examination of the subfield of curriculum development knowledge, involving expertise and authority, and the concepts of consistency and coherence;
- VI. the pedagogical model and its effects on curriculum practice.

This third empirical phase of the study is located within the other phases and its purpose is to examine the site of course approval as embedded within the activities of the intended curriculum (phase 2 as described in Chapter 6), which itself is embedded within the lived curriculum (phase 1 of the study, CS1, as described in Chapter 5). Its main emphasis, therefore, is on the approval panel event (APE) itself, as an arena that ‘creates a sense of drama and struggle both inside and outside’ (Bernstein and Solomon, 1999: 269).

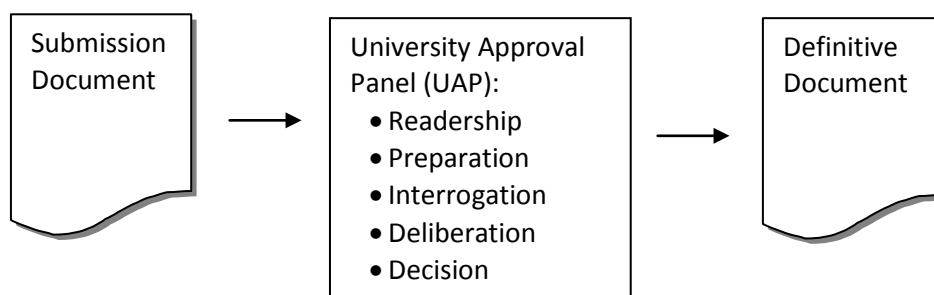
There were 17 participants in this phase involving two groups from 1 UK HEI. The research design of this study considers the three phases of fieldwork to be 'nested' in the sense that each phase contributes insights and research findings to the other phases. This includes the activities and practices identified that are specifically focused on the application for course approval and (the possibility of) academic development. In terms of the critical realist methodology outlined in Chapter 4, this phase represents an emphasis on the morphogenetic *structural/cultural/group elaboration* stage (T4) of establishing the structure of the curriculum following the focus on conditioning (T1: see Chapter 5) and on social interaction (T2—T3: see Chapter 6) (Archer, 1995).

The analysis of the data yielded the seven coding categories: *challenge*, *consensus*, *conflict*, *strategy*, *expertise*, *coherence* and *change*. These will be highlighted and woven into the narrative of this case study and illustrated with sample data that represent the group, key themes and/or significant moments of crisis or disruption in the study. The meta-analysis of these themes towards the external languages of description of this study will be discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

## **7.2 The approval panel event (APE) and its context**

The APE is described in 6.2 as an instantiation of bureaucracy expressing quality processes as directed by Academic Services at Forgetown University, under the QAA Code of Conduct (2006) (see 2.4.5). It takes place according to a timeline (see Appendix 14) that involves CPTs in preparing a draft programme specification (a submission document based on a template - see Table 18 in Chapter 5). The purpose of this document is to make explicit the institution's learning intentions and to relate these to national qualifications frameworks and other reference points such as subject benchmarks (QAA, 2000). Support for this at Forgetown University is typical of UK HE and the other 10 institutions in this study (see Appendix 3) and includes academic development in order to meet LTA themes (see Appendix 15) and guidance to course teams on preparing the document (see Appendix 13) what constitutes a good course proposal (see Appendix 16).

The bureaucratic features of the APE have already been established in Chapter 6. Central to this event is the examination of the submission document and the questioning of the course team, as both textual (the actual documents of the APE) and intertextual (how these documents are influenced by institutional regulative documentation and the QAA Code of Conduct) activity. The purpose of the UAP is to critique and approve a *programme specification*. This process is not necessarily a linear one and although it is focused on the UAP event as a three-hour ‘theatre’ and ‘performance’ it will be shown in this chapter to be the nexus of a multi-layered process. At the centre of this, and perhaps the most visible and material object, is the submission document. This enters the APE ‘arena’ as a proposal, the *Submission Document*. During the APE this is examined in exchange with the Course Planning Team (CPT), involving stages of *readership, preparation, interrogation, deliberation* and *decision*. It is then ‘transformed’ into the *Definitive Document* (see Figure 8). A typical agenda and approximate timings for the APE are shown in appendix 14.



**Figure 8: The production of texts in the approval process**

The APE can, therefore, be considered to broker practice at various layers:

- an event that transforms a submission document into a definitive document;
- a process that transforms the lived curriculum into the intended curriculum and back again;
- the legitimization of the curriculum (as a relay for bureaucracy);
- the granting of a ‘licence to operate’ to a course team;
- the means by which the collegial focus meets the bureaucratic focus and is transformed into the consensus seeking focus.

### 7.2.1 Habitus and position-takings leading into the APE

Activities associated with the planning, design and approval of courses are examined in Chapter 6 as the *bureaucratically focused* context. This happens at specific time periods when the elements of bureaucracy become more visible and powerful. It is important to note here again that bureaucracy is embedded in practices not in the individuals who operate the bureaucracy (Weber, 1964). This 'bringing to bear' of the quality process has the effect of placing the lived curriculum into relief and to objectify the work of teachers as plans and designs for learning. In other words, to use the metaphor of *dilution*, practice can be seen to have a higher *concentration* of bureaucracy (and lower autonomy) at periods of the intended curriculum and this is 'strongest' at the point of the APE. The strength of influence of the APE on projected practice is seen to vary according to several interrelated factors and three field positions can be distinguished analytically (see Table 22 below).

This typology generalises field positions although it should be noted that these factors vary by discipline and context. Via this analysis, the relative strengths of the factors implicated in the field positions can be seen to be temporal. The differences in LCT autonomy represent a shift that takes place in the intended curriculum phase, from PA+, RA- to PA-, RA- and this is, potentially, most pronounced at the time of the APE. Leaving aside the orientations that are realised in the final column of the table to be discussed later in this chapter, one can see these positions to be differentiated on a number of related factors. Notable here, as doxic in these field positions (Bourdieu, 1998), are orientations, or position-takings, to curriculum coherence, the type of expertise and authority, and the basis of exchange. However, as identified in Chapter 6, there are disciplinary distinctions at play that will moderate, and possibly refract, the influences of these orientations. The degree of semantic variation within the curriculum for example with regard to types of knowledge and curricula (Shay, 2013) is important. This indicates that courses that are based on theoretical knowledge and applied theory (Q4 in Figure 7 including CPTs 1, 4, 7 and 8 in this study) are likely to be disadvantaged in the approval process with regard to the difficulty they face in meeting criteria set by the institution, including employability and internationalisation (see Appendix 15: Key Enhancement Themes). This problem is exacerbated when one

considers the specialisation of knowledge (epistemic relations ER) and knower (social relations SR). This was examined in Chapter 5 with regard to the social science discipline (see 5.6.1) and is discussed further in relation to similar courses (CPTs 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 12) in Chapter 6. From this can be seen a potential code clash for semantics and specialisation and this is related to a code clash for autonomy.

**Table 22: Typology of field positions and orientations to the approval process**

Factor	Collegial focus	Bureaucratic focus	Consensus seeking focus
<b>Curriculum design</b>			
Coherence	Heuristic modelling	Evaluative	Contextual
Autonomy	PA+, RA-	PA-, RA-	Code clash
Knowledge specialisation	ER+, SR- (knowledge code)	ER-, SR+ (knower code)	Code clash
Semantic variation	SG+, SD-	SG-, SD+	Code clash
<b>Pedagogical design</b>			
Pedagogical model	Competence	Performance	Performance-based
Pedagogic code	Collection	Integrated	Mixed
Pedagogic identity	Therapeutic	De-centred market	Schizoid
<b>Evaluation (basis and criteria of establishing the worth of the curriculum)</b>			
Exchange	Pedagogic 'goods'	Marketable 'goods'	Approved 'goods'
Peer Review	Horizontal	Hierarchical	Mixed
Authority	Collegial	Bureaucratic	Rules-based
Decision making	Collaborative	Co-operative	Discretionary
Expertise	Mutual and reciprocal	Disciplinary	Technical
Collegial organisation	Predominantly collegiate	Intermediate collegiate	Variable

Key: PA = positional autonomy; RA = relational autonomy; SR = social relations; ER = epistemic relations; SG = semantic gravity; SD = semantic density

Taking up the 'dilution metaphor' again, it can be said that a stronger concentration of bureaucracy in the APE increases the *conductivity* for the legitimisation codes – the codes (their modalities) act more directly on practice and their effects are felt for a longer period. While constituted as a process of peer review, approval is subject to the institutionalisation of practices within a structured field of struggle for resources (Bourdieu, 1993) and for control of the pedagogic device or discourse (Bernstein, 1990). Actors within this arena make normative legitimating claims for the way that a curriculum should be according to the principles of the discipline, or the professional



bodies that oversee it (see Appendix 17). Those that are responsible for approving the curriculum are directed by claims for how a curriculum should meet the administrative/efficiency needs of the institution or to comply with externally focused drivers such as employability (see Chapter 6 for a discussion of this). Furthermore the claims that actors make for their curriculum, far from being merely marketing rhetoric, are the basis for the participation within the field and the criteria by which achievement within the field should be measured (Maton, 2000b: 81).

### **7.3 The experience of being approved**

Participants preparing their courses for approval describe the submission document template as 'unwieldy', 'unintuitive', and 'bureaucratic'. Nina, leading the large postgraduate programme in education (Q3 professional/vocational) found the document to be repetitive, in that the same information was required for each of her 12 awards. This had two negative effects in her view: the first is that this 'conditioned' a 'cut and paste' response from her team, and secondly, ironically she felt, it drew criticism from the faculty and the UAP readership of the documentation. Lost somewhere in the document she felt was the view of who the document was for, who the reader was and what 'voice' the writer was using:

*It should be an information document that's useful for students but I think there are lots of different voices and lots of interested parties in there.*  
(Nina (C3))

She saw the process, and the event itself, as a 'dance around the document' in which not everyone 'knew the steps'. Similarly, Leo, hoping to convince the UAP to approve a Drama award in his Performing Arts degree (Q2) found it difficult to document what he was trying to achieve and the expertise and facilities at the university.

These examples from the data represent the generally held feeling that courses were being judged by people who were not from the same discipline and who didn't 'know' the course. The disciplinary basis of participants' expertise and understanding of the process is the source of difficulty in 'voicing' the course by course teams and in 'hearing' this by course approvers and is resonant with participants' accounts of their disciplinary perspectives in phases 1 and 2 of this study.

### 7.3.1 Managing the process

Perceptions of the APE were influenced by both the experience leading up to it and of managing the creation of the submission document. While this process could be eased via careful management many described the process as taking over 250 hours of time. Also this difficulty increased with the size of the course: managing large programmes involved managing a large number of teachers. Gareth, for example, leading the re-approval of a large undergraduate Built Environment degree (Q3) saw his role primarily as project manager of a group of 42 staff.

The management of the process was heightened by complex degrees such as the cross-institutional Postgraduate Research Degree (Q4) led by Juniper. She is typical of Groups C and D in that she was not given time for the course planning and approval process in course leaders' work plans and felt that this was an added duty above the demands of being a course leader:

*These hours were just completely eaten up by the process ... So there is the issue of the nature of the work, the amount of work, the sheer physical amount of work that it involves*  
(Juniper (C1))

She argued the need for a project manager to help her with deadlines, and the disparate activities involved in pulling the Submission Document together, including the 'nuts and bolts', and the 'physical mechanics'. These details led to an increase in the pressure that 'being approved' put people under. Hera was exasperated by the demands that put upon her and her course team (Q2):

*... I was in tears about a month ago. It's also because it's been a really, you know, the long hours and I've just had a major commission and, you know, the more pressure that goes on in that paperwork the more ... I am going to have to leave, and I can't afford to do that, you know*  
(Hera (C10))

Aneka, leading a postgraduate international politics degree (Q4), echoed this, pointing to the difficulty of preparing and writing long approval documents over months and the difficulty of maintaining the coherence of this:

*I think I always had in my head what the rationale was, but actually then putting down the formal bits ... it was kind of like having the building blocks for how you fill in the more interesting bits in terms of the content and the approach, the pedagogy, that kind of thing.*  
(Aneka (D1))

Even when course teams began the process well in advance they found the 2-3 months leading up to the APE to be very time-consuming, and to occupy week-ends and holiday times. The level of experience of the team was also seen as having an effect on whether the course leader was able to delegate aspects of the planning and writing. This included knowledge of one's own discipline/subject but also technical curriculum knowledge such as how to write learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Anna, leading a large undergraduate degree in planning and housing, spoke about 'very uncomfortable meetings' when faced with reducing the number of modules and the number of awards in the degree.

Being creative, or even expressive, in the document was seen as unlikely, and most found the document and its writing to be boring and unrewarding as an exercise. This is partly due to the type of technical writing involved such as the articulation of awards and their aims, and credit points (see Table 18: *Structure of the Submission Document*). Most wrote the document linearly, and by the time they reached the Course Rationale this was likely to be 20 or 30 pages into the document. At this stage most report a pragmatic approach to 'filling in' the document, using the headings as a writing frame and copying material from institution policy documents on key themes that had to be included – or in some cases 'cut and pasting' from previous approval documents. The scale of the document and its complexity is shown in Table 23. On average a submission document was 200 pages and 130,000 words.

**Table 23: Course submission documents showing awards, modules, pages, and words**

Course Planning Team	Course Title	Level	Subject Area/ Discipline	Awards	Modules	Total Pages	Total Words	Course Rationale
CPT1	International Relations	UG	Politics	1	31	170	52,000	2,700
CPT2	Geography, Housing, Environment and Planning	UG	Environment and Planning	7	76	517	154,000	4,300
CPT3	English Language Teaching	PG	English	1	7	63	16,000	2,400
CPT4	Social Science Research	PG	Social Science	7	9	76	23,000	3,700
CPT5	Autism	UG	Education	1	6	55	16,000	2,200
CPT6	Education	PG	Education	12	40	502	157,000	6,300
CPT7	Criminology	UG	Criminology	4	94	569	177,000	5,000
CPT8	Applied Social Science	UG	Social Science	13	136	724	218,000	8,800
CPT9	Performing Arts	FD	Performing Arts	2	10	106	28,000	2,000
CPT10	Built Environment	UG	Built Environment	9	81	574	164,000	7,500
CPT11	Contemporary Fine Art	UG	Fine Art	3	10	82	27,000	2,000
CPT12	Public Services: Policing Studies	FD	Social Science	2	15	146	42,000	9,100
Average				5.2	42.9	299	89,500	4,667
Std. Deviation				4.2	41.6	242.8	73,605	2,548

Key: CPT=Course Planning Team; UG = undergraduate; PG = postgraduate; FD = foundation

However, the length of Section C, The Course Rationale, can be seen to be more consistent (average 5,000 words approximately) regardless of the overall size of the document. The purpose of the rationale is to explain how the course is designed and structured, including how it ‘facilitates key university priorities such as internationalisation and opportunities for work-based study’ (see Appendices 13 and 15). Support and guidance for CPTs was provided, as discussed in Chapter 6 (see also

Appendix 16) as academic development and the agency of the LTA support team, including myself. However, many doubted whether it was actually developmental:

*It felt quite high stakes, to me, it probably could be developmental and is probably intended to be developmental and maybe in some respects it is developmental, but that's not the actual feel of the process: It's developmental by accident, it feels more like it's about being accountable and getting it right and if you do it well you go in and get it right  
(Nina (C3))*

### **7.3.2 Approval as the documentation of practice**

In addition to the problems caused by changes to documentation illustrated by the assessment regulations problem (see 6.5.1) difficulty was found in the structure of the document itself, including for example how course teams were asked to address employability in two separate sections. Where courses had a number of awards the document contained multiple descriptions that were very similar. This replication for administrative purposes was seen to reduce the document's coherence and readability, while increasing its word length. The question in CPTs' minds was 'who is the document for?' and this limited their readiness to believe that articulating a good description of the course at the approval stage would lead to materials that could be transferred directly to the student handbook (i.e. into practice). Course teams found this difficult to translate into a conception of practice that was to be delivered sometime in the future, while they were aware that weak specificity at the approval stage would have consequences for the lived curriculum.

Some were able to imagine a process that could be creative, and in which the design as an outcome could be valued. Hera, drawing on her fine arts discipline, alludes to the value of 'making' the curriculum as a kind of 'thinking and visioning' in which 'the making informs what you are doing' (Hera, (C10)). This notion of curriculum design as craft (Shay, 2013) resonates with literature that points to curriculum as process, and the search for coherence as heuristic modelling.

Overall, a sense of regret predominated, that course teams had not been able to give the planning and the documentation the time they wanted to, that the discussions were often dominated by technical issues, and that fear of getting things wrong

restricted their creativity. Sheila expresses the lack of ‘authenticity’ of the document – its distance from practice, which as soon as it is written, bound and created it stops being ‘live’:

*I struggle with the definitive document because it's out of date on the day it's written... For me, I see the document as completely being a quality mechanism, to ensure that we do what we do, that we are saying what we say and that we have an infrastructure that exists.*  
(Sheila (C5))

The vagueness of module descriptors is another characteristic of submission documents that tutors found inauthentic. Susan, included here in her role as module leader, reflects on how people see module descriptors as a formality that masks ‘the real practice that goes on underneath’. She feels this tacitness is encouraged by the process for two reasons: a) it makes it easier to modify the module in future if it needs to be changed when it is actually put into practice; and b) it reduces the possibility that someone will find fault with it at the APE. Furthermore, she points to ‘official’ module descriptors as ‘straitjackets’ for those writing them and anyone who adopts the module in future:

*You can't easily change them so you need to be careful when you write them that you don't tie yourself to something that you'll later regret.*  
(Susan (E10))

This tacitness presented difficulties to course leaders who wanted their course team to see beyond the bureaucratic elements to think about what the module is about and what its content would be etc. Betty describes how the document frustrated her efforts to encourage the course team to think pedagogically rather than being ‘bogged down’ in a bureaucratic exercise. The distinction between planning and documentation is made by Alison, leading a postgraduate degree in Teaching English, with many online elements. She found that the need to create the document dominated the process, particularly in the latter stages:

*I think sometimes, validation becomes, you know, fill out the forms, get all the paperwork done, and that takes up so much time that the actual really sitting down and reflecting on it, and planning it, and how we might like to do it, it wasn't really given enough time.*  
(Alison (D6))

She found this fighting against time to get the paperwork done worked to 'frustrate creativity'. The questions 'what are we proud of that we do now, and how can we improve this?' were marginalised in the process by the overriding need to meet the requirements of the document. Very few submission documents included detail that indicated that they had noted reasons to change and how this was addressed. In this sense the documents represented the 'now' of the approval, taking little note of what had preceded it, and limited in its potential to anticipate what would follow it in the future.

### **7.3.3 Describing the curriculum as an intention to practise**

The inclusion of diagrams and illustrations is encouraged at Forgetown in the guidance to CPTs (see Appendix 13) but is rarely realised in specification documents. One reason for this is that they are difficult to achieve successfully and perhaps because of this they can be overlooked or disregarded. In attempting to describe the Masters in English Language Teaching (CPT3) that she leads, Alison developed a curriculum map that identified the fundamental principles that she wanted to embed holistically in the course. This addressed the question 'What do we want the students to have, and to be, on graduating?' The ideas surrounding this were drawn out and sketched along with discussions of what sort of teaching and learning was needed and the stages at which this would be covered in the course. The concern was for the structure and organisation of the curriculum and the conceptual development for learning. This was realised as a curriculum design and a map (see Appendix 24).

The mapping was included in Section C of the submission document (page 19 of 63 pages) in full page colour to emphasise the curriculum coherence, concept building and how the assessment tasks were realised. It is supported by a full page table on page 8 of the specification showing the design and structure of the course. This map shows how the four elements of the curriculum were related and how progression and knowledge building would take place. This map meets the criteria of conceptual coherence and curriculum mapping as identified in the literature (such as Jackson and Shaw, 2002). In particular it illustrates structural alignment and outcomes integration (Cuevas and Feit, 2011c). It also illustrates how this course (Q3,

professional/vocational) will deal with the pedagogical issues to do with work-related learning.

Several issues arose at the APE around the need for clarity about the structure of the curriculum and became Condition 2:

*Within the programme design and structure section of the Programme Specification, provide a brief statement which clarifies and quantifies how the relevant theoretical underpinning is integrated in the curriculum with the practical aspects of the course  
(Condition 2 set by the UAP for CPT3)*

Two issues arose in this ‘forgotten map’ incident: (1) the UAP collectively overlooked the mapping in the submission document; and (2) the CPT failed to mention it in their defence. In view of the fact that all three of the CPT present at the APE had spent time in 3 workshops in the preceding months preparing the mapping, this was surprising to say the least.

This example invites insight into the curriculum development expertise that was drawn on to create a successful curriculum mapping and how this became disembedded in the APE and recontextualised in the logic of approval. It is ironic perhaps that the UAP’s search for confidence in the document should be influenced by the CPT’s lack of confidence in its own practice, and it is possible that these are not unrelated.

#### **7.4 The work of approvers: developing an institutional rationality**

The practice of approving courses, as in the practice of preparing a course for approval, is subject to the embodied history and the habitus of those involved. In its lifetime as a university Forgetown has undergone a series of significant changes in its quality and awards framework in response to the changes taking place in the sector (see Appendix 25 for a summary of these). The move to QAA from its previous incarnation, the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) reflected the expansion of universities following the formation of post-92 universities and a ‘scaling-up’ of both student numbers and the creation of new courses. This prompted the need to create a standard curriculum structure for undergraduate provision, including the modularisation and semesterisation of the curriculum as *organisational efficiency*,



associated with a growing organisational complexity and the need for QA of the institution's provision. What followed was an increasing severity of quality regime that was applied to the new universities as 'you're a polytechnic and you can't be trusted to do all of this by yourself' (Rory, (E8)). In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, Forgetown became a 'leading light' of the credit accumulation and transfer scheme (CATS<sup>10</sup>) and a reputation for being 'gold plated' for quality, as satisfying the external agenda. Quality processes at Forgetown became practice, as the residue, or doxa, of a previous regime, with a view to guarding the institution against criticisms that it somehow might be lacking in terms of its management of quality and standards.

Rhianna described this as the QAA 'giving themselves legitimacy' that is more easily applied to post-92s as the 'new kids on the block' who don't have the 'confidence of an old university that has been around for donkey's years'. The increase in these levels of accountability for the quality of the curriculum now includes assessment and whereas CNAAB did not require detail on assessment arrangements it now figures highly. This has raised the stakes for the quality of assessment in curriculum design as can be seen in the assessment problems outlined in Chapter 6.

Drawing on the history of quality processes above, practice can be said to be 'doxic' in that it contains cultural codes established and maintained in the exchange of expertise of the actors and structures that make up the practice (Bourdieu, 1999). It might also be argued that somewhere in the collective memory of the institution was the experience of large scale reform and academic resistance to it: while at the same time orientations to a 'combative' approval process had developed in which 'we had to take a medicine that was good for us' (Maurice, (E5)).

The approvers spoke of the balancing act between being seen to be subject to robust quality systems while being fair and reasonable with their academic colleagues:

*And to do so in a way that is not overly bureaucratic. It's difficult to match those two things together. Inevitably there's a lot of bureaucracy involved, but at the same time it's really quite important that we're seen to have a process which*

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<sup>10</sup> CATS is used by UK universities to monitor, record and reward passage through a modular degree course and to facilitate movement between courses and institutions. 360 credits need to be accumulated to qualify for the award of an honours degree.

*scrutinises all provision thoroughly otherwise it looks to an outside observer as if we're not maintaining standards.*  
(Malcolm, (E3))

There was a high degree of sympathy by the approvers for course teams and a genuine desire to help them develop course designs that were effective for their teaching and for the students. This struck me as surprising given the strength of feeling directed against the approvers by the approval seekers as discussed above and in Chapter 6. The approvers were aware of an institutional logic that had emerged teleologically as 'keeping things simple' while based methodologically on 'a constant cycle of [quality processes] experimentation'. This had had an effect on how they were seen by others in their approver roles:

*I mean basically if you wanted to caricature our role in the faculties very crudely, part of it is being the faculty's policeman for rules and regulations, and part of it is being the faculty's fixer, right?*  
(Chris, (E6))

Approvers shared a sense that some academics were not good at planning and designing their course and several suggested that it might be better to leave this task to specialist curriculum developers. One reason for the lack of expertise in course design was considered to be a tendency for new, and often inexperienced, staff to be given the job of preparing a course for approval as a way of 'getting to know the course'. While this was not the case for any of the 12 courses in this study several participants spoke of this happening to them when they started out in HE. Lana questioned this:

*I don't quite understand what goes on with the almost, what's the right word, the random nature with which courses can and do get planned. ... why is there not more investment in that whole design process and up-skilling training of people to be involved in curriculum design, ... that whole process of either redesigning or designing new courses, can often, it seems to me, almost get left to chance*  
(Lana, (E2))

She pointed to the apparent pragmatism that operates in the minds of academics facing course approval:

*People just saying "basically I fill the template in and this will get me through the process, I'll worry then about what I'm going deliver in September once I'm through that*

*(Lana, (E2))*

This pragmatism can be seen to maintain a conservatism that emerges from the limitations that CPTs see operating in the system on the one hand, and how approvers see themselves tied by bureaucracy and utilitarianism on the other. The influence of this on decision-making will now be discussed.

#### **7.4.1 The basis of institutional course approval**

It was clear in approver's accounts that they applied a set of tacit skills and experiences to the process of approving courses and based this on a working *modus operandum*. This involved a process of readership of the document, as a 'gleaning of intent', but this was by no means a straightforward process, and it appeared that the difficulties of writing the document were mirrored by the difficulty of reading and interpreting the text. For some this meant checking the basics and leaving the CPT to explain the rationale in the APE (albeit subject to misunderstanding and oversight as in the story of the 'forgotten map' above in 7.3.3). There was a common reading 'method' that comprised getting a student's perspective and working backwards and forwards from the programme specification and the course rationale. This revealed strategies used by the approvers.

*I guess a lot of the time you're looking for where it didn't all hang together*  
*(Rory, (E8))*

Lana is certain that a key factor brought about by the introduction of a common template is whether the CPT is able to describe its course on paper. The default, she observed, was that people were good at articulating the course orally at the APE, as an academic defence, but weaker in writing this down:

*An awful lot of people were far better at coming into a meeting, going through the whole academic defence of the proposal, being really good at articulating what wasn't written into the document. You know I think if I had a pound every time I heard a validation meeting say 'well you just explained that beautifully, if only you'd been able to put that into your document'.*  
*(Lana, (E2))*

The accounts of approvers point to a 'filling in the blanks' process that took place at the APE, as a search for contextual coherence. They describe this as 'knowing what to

look for’, ‘knowing the mindset of course teams’, and ‘knowing the questions to ask’. This is confirmed in the analysis of approval seekers accounts. Aneka, for example, was confident she ‘could fill in any gaps’ left by the documentation or that had ‘got lost in translation’ (Aneka, (D1)).

The reading of the documentation by the faculty took the form of ‘signing off’ in which the CPT received feedback on the draft submission document four weeks before the APE. However, the result of this intervention (what was fed back to the CPT and what was done about it) was not provided to the UAP chair. One interpretation of this is that faculty readership was intended to give formative feedback and to decide whether the course was approvable – i.e. it had a regulative function. The readership comments provided by the UAP then became ‘range finders’, as identifying ‘the most obvious of problems’ that would set the agenda for the APE, and the basis of a ‘script’ for an interrogation of the course proposal. This situation confused CPTs on two counts: firstly they could not understand why the faculty readership differed from the UAP readership – the latter found new problems or ignored ones found by the former. Secondly, they were confounded when they prepared for a defence of points raised by the UAP readership only to find these disregarded in the APE or for new ones to be uncovered, or for the feedback to be contradictory. This resulted in a perception held by approval seekers that the basis of decision making was *arbitrary*, while the approvers viewed readership as *provisional* (upon further information). This is a view of approval as deferred or ‘waiting to be uncovered’.

Furthermore the basis of a successful defence of this would, for all but the clear-cut issues, be partly based on how convincing the CPT could be, or how well it argued the case. In other words approval would be granted on the basis of the attributes of the approval seeker (confidence in the CPT) indicating a knower code (SR+). This is privileged over the objective evaluation of the course proposal (confidence in the documentation) owing to the difficulties attached to making judgement on this as discussed above and elsewhere in this study. Hence this is a weaker knowledge code or epistemic relation (ER-). This can be analysed further in relation to what kind of insight and gaze are involved in this knower code (see 3.4.2). The acquired gaze is a ‘particular mode of recognising and realising what counts as “authentic” ... reality’ (Bernstein,

1999: 165). LCT identifies further elaboration of social relations as subjective relations (SubR) as the kinds of actors involved and interactional relations (IR) as ways of acting. The relatively stronger interactional relation (between curriculum knowledge and its practices), combined with the relatively weaker subjective relation (the social position of members of the CPT), suggests a 'cultivated gaze' (SubR-, IR+) operating in the interactions between approvers and the approved in which the approver is dominant and in which the basis of their expertise is defined by their social position.

This analysis of how approval works is indicated in the APE by the claims of the UAP to be experts (in one kind of curriculum knowledge) and that the CPT's interaction with this expertise defines what counts. What the UAP Chair could assume, given that the document had been read at faculty level, was that the course was 'approvable' (i.e. it had been 'signed off') and what remained to be decided was what the conditions would be. The basis of approval, therefore, becomes the setting of conditions.

Analysis of the conditions set by UAPs for the 12 courses in this study (see Appendix 20) finds agreement with the Quality Team's summary (see above) of the most common conditions set. In fact these were so commonplace that it occurs to me these could be 'pencilled in' before the APE even took place. In other words the overwhelming likelihood is that: a) the course will be approved and b) there will be conditions to do with learning outcomes and/or assessment. This begs two questions: firstly why isn't this addressed at the outset by CPTs and the agencies that support academic development in the institution? And second, what is the purpose of an approval system for which the outcomes can be predetermined? One possible hypothesis is that the basis of course approval is not a process to ensure the quality of courses but one that can be seen to ensure the quality of courses.

#### **7.4.2 The work of approvers: approaching consensus**

Space does not allow a full discussion of the experiences of approvers but Appendix 7 shows the coding scheme for this data and example quotes, as the basis of the interpretation given here, and its meta-analysis by means of the external languages of description formulated in this study. This makes accessible the legitimization of

curriculum development knowledge (the basis of what counts as legitimate knowledge for developing the curriculum) and the autonomy of the field (who makes the decisions and according to whose principles). Examination of approvers' accounts and observations of APEs exposes this. Rhianna (E7) described a 'mindset' that approvers needed. She doubted whether 'real and honest' exchange was possible with course teams in the context of the APE:

*If you put people under tremendous audit stress, all they'll turn into is performing monkeys and the thing will look fabulous. And then all they'll do as there's such a stress on the output, is that they will all learn from each other how to play the system. So you will not have an honest, in depth, genuinely taking it on board, process.*  
(Rhianna, (E7))

She saw the APE as an exchange in which there was benefit for both sides conditional on there being consensus on process being worthwhile. However, she doubted that the process could be called a 'conversation':

*Why would you ask somebody questions about a document...? I presume it's to scrutinise the ideas expressed in the documents... but it all too often turned into [being only] a document which is pointless.*  
(Rhianna, (E7))

She spoke of this as 'having confidence', in which a 'lack of confidence makes you insecure', that she compared, respectively to 'powerfulness' and 'powerlessness'. Her view of the APE as the opportunity to 'iron things out' also depended on her meeting with the course team at a preliminary meeting where she could 'get the nonsense out of them'. She characterises this as a provocation to 'remember what's important'. Her purpose is to help the CPT 'to be brave' and to have the 'courage to change'. Her leading and most important question, therefore, becomes: 'What do you want to do with this course?' (original emphasis).

## **7.5 The legitimization of curriculum development knowledge**

The field of practice of HE (identified in Chapter 5) and its sub-field, academic development (examined in Chapter 6), includes the APE as a mechanism, embedded in an intermediate collegiate organisation (Waters, 1989) in which the administration of course approval is predominant (Hull, 2006). The work of the approvers discussed

above focuses on the role of the Chair as the person who makes the final decision on behalf of the UAP. This involves delegation of questioning of the CPT to members of the panel, according to their specialism or expertise (i.e. Quality Lead, Internal Academic and the External Subject Specialist). While space does not allow a close examination of this division of labour the data is coded for the panel's specialist involvement and is included in Appendix 7 for perusal. One aspect indicated by this coding analysis is pertinent here and concerns panel member's contribution to the APE decision-making process and the degree to which the panel constitutes a body of expertise on curriculum matters. While allowing for individual agency, the UAP is treated here as a composite entity that has collective agency to make decisions and evaluation of the submission document.

### **7.5.1 Expertise and authority**

All of the UAP members claim expertise by virtue of their status as approvers and the basis for their expertise: i.e. of having a track record, experience and the credential of status (Collins and Evans, 2007). The authority derived from this expertise is to some extent symbolic. The role of the external subject specialist for example is seen to be a 'safety net' by the institution to assure QAA that subject issues have been covered. On the other hand, CPTs were also reassured that someone who knows the field and the needs of the course was 'in our corner'. In the cases covered in this study the external's main contribution was either to seek information that might be useful in his/her own context, or to make comments along the lines of 'at my institution we do it this way'<sup>11</sup>. Meanwhile, the discipline, as the main claim to expertise and authority in the lived curriculum can be seen to be devalued in the APE (the intended curriculum), other than in the cases where professional bodies are able to counter-claim what counts in the curriculum. Furthermore, the basis of what counts as powerful knowledge in the APE is 'regionalised' in that it integrates broad and genericised forms of knowledge (such as work-related knowledge) rather than those that are essentially discipline based (theoretical knowledge) (Wheelahan, 2010; Shay, 2012).

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<sup>11</sup> It should be noted, however, that none of the 12 courses in this study required a representative of the professional body to be present as is the case in some disciplines. This may well have changed the perception of the role of the external as being mainly 'honorary'.

The authority of the UAP is seen in instances in this study to be invoked against protests and challenges to its authority (as a form of infallibility). The apparent compliance with this by CPTs can be partly explained in the ways that academics receive institutionalised authority in a specific way as a ‘professorial charisma’, and the ways they react to their roles as state employees via an ‘ideology of disinterestedness’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: 66). Resistance by this equation can only be by non-engagement. This is the disposition that enables teachers to believe that they are autonomous, as an ‘enchanted adherence’ to the view that authority rests with them. The intended curriculum is the space in which this is stripped away, where teachers become disenchanted. Redemption is around the corner, perhaps, in the lived curriculum, where one only has to wait for the agents of bureaucracy to withdraw (see focal points of enactment below). This is where the power of ‘ordinary’ academics lies – in their ability to ‘inculcate the cultural arbitrary’ via ‘scheduled improvisation’ that helps to mask their relation to conventional pedagogy and the wider system of authority – as a form of ‘dependence through independence’ (ibid.: 67).

### **7.5.2 Consistency and coherence**

Evident here in the approval process is the concept of *consistency*, as the external relationship between the course and *all other* courses. This is seen to be derived historically from the need for the institution to be efficient and competitive (to have a market advantage). This indicates a de-centred market (DCM) pedagogic identity (Bernstein, 2000). Prized in this normative perspective is the approval of courses as ‘fit for purpose’, as having an *absence* of inconsistencies, such as those that arose in the cases in this study – e.g. credit tariffs, forms of assessment, and even ‘typos’. In this way the course conforms to being like other (approved) courses. This is reflective of a paradox, identified by Bernstein (1977: 109) and discussed by Maton (2013a: 198), in which [curricular] difference (organic solidarity, as part of an integrated pedagogic code) gives rise to [curricular] similarity (mechanical solidarity): or to put it another way, the curriculum remains undifferentiated and the same.

Coherence in the approval process is realised as the internal relationship between the course and itself – or to be more exact between the course and its *idealised*



administrative self. This ideal course is characterised by another *absence*, in this case of toxicity (i.e. a course is coherent if it has no hygiene issues, particularly with regard to assessment). This is the *coherence model of evaluation*, as the basis of legitimisation in which approvers (and to some extent approval seekers) hold up an idealised model of the curriculum, as a theory in use (Argyris and Schön, 1974) to which courses seeking approval are compared.

The focus on text and context that is seen to operate in course approval now becomes accessible to interpretation using LCT (Maton, 2010a). It can be seen for instance to vary semantically. By this analysis the preparation of the submission document is a shift in semantic gravity (the closeness to actual practice) from strong (SG+) in the lived curriculum, to weak(er) (SG-) in the intended curriculum. Similarly, the density of concepts (ibid.) increases (from SD- to SD+) in the packaging and description of practice into a form that is 'ready for approval'. Via this analysis the examination of practice in the arena of the APE becomes visible as a knowledge structure. This knowledge is extra-textual in the interrogation of the CPT on matters that are silenced in the text (e.g. how a topic will be taught); intra-textual in the examination of the submission document itself on matters of technical description (e.g. how many hours are allocated for face-to-face teaching); and inter-textual with regards to what is present in the official texts and other pedagogic texts (e.g. the parts of the programme specification that will find their way into student handbooks, teaching materials and marketing material). Implicit here is the relationship between the regulative discourse (the rules of the organisation) and the instructional discourse (the pedagogical principles that direct learning, teaching and assessment) and the extent to which the regulative discourse is dominant. This then becomes the basis for how curriculum knowledge is recontextualised as a field of practice.

The way this curriculum knowledge is specialised in the approval process can now be analysed via LCT epistemic codes. While knowledge relations in the context of approval are weaker than social relations, as discussed above, they are still 'in play'. The problem situation that presents during the APE is broadly defined as the need for a course to be 'fit for purpose' and therefore knowledge claims have a weaker ontic relation (OR-). Meanwhile, curriculum development knowledge (the course design) is

legitimated discursively by the UAP on the basis, for example, of how it is taught, not what is taught – i.e. it has a relatively stronger discursive relation (DR+). The legitimisation of curriculum knowledge, therefore, can be seen to be influenced by ‘doctrinal insight’ (OR-, DR+). This analysis evidences the APE to be a space in which the theory in action, that which is operated by the UAP on behalf of the institution, is the one ‘that makes sense and works’.

### **7.5.3 Curriculum development knowledge as a sub-field**

The notion that there is specialised knowledge involved in curriculum design (curriculum development knowledge) is indicated by the range of approaches that are identified in the literature (see Chapter 2) and a divergence between the curriculum as product and process, and coherence as evaluation and heuristic modelling. This involves a clash between the product (outcomes-led) model of curriculum and that of academic developers (O’Neill, 2010) whose preferred approach is more akin to the process model (see 2.3.4). The progressive view of the curriculum as academic development co-exists with the functional view of a mechanistic process of making the curriculum fit for purpose. However, this thesis suggests a nuanced and complex set of conditions and dispositions that require analysis. This includes a disciplinary perspective that partly rejects institutionally imposed notions of the curriculum and is suspicious of academic development and its agents. Thus relationships in course approval are characterised as existing in tension with each other in which academic development is seen as the ‘centre’ and CPTs are the ‘not-centre (periphery)’ in which dysfunction can operate (Clegg, 2003: 806).

A contradiction is apparent here in that curriculum evaluation can be seen to be at once weakly classified and framed whilst also being strongly classified and framed, and thereby exhibiting both integrated and collection codes (Bernstein, 1977). The reason for this lies in the underlying relations to which these features of curriculum evaluation refer. Those associated with a weak classification and framing are related to the intrinsic structuring of the pedagogic discourse (Maton, 2000b: 85) of, in this case, curriculum evaluation. These include the object of curriculum evaluation (the curriculum itself), procedures for its development, forms of pedagogy and so on. This is

contrasted with those aspects in which classification and framing is stronger which tend to refer to issues of who may adopt these procedures (ibid.), and, again in the case of curriculum evaluation, who may approve it and who can claim to be legitimately described as a curriculum approver. In other words, the language of legitimisation of curriculum evaluation involves differing strengths of boundaries around and between the definitions of what can be described as curriculum evaluation, on the one hand, and who can legitimately claim to be doing curriculum evaluation. Maton (2000b: 85) refers to this in his LCT as specialisation codes in which there are two co-existing but analytically distinguishable sets of relations he calls the epistemic relation (ER) and the social relation (SR).

The basis on which claims to curriculum knowledge are legitimated (or not) is related to understandings of expertise and authority. The story of the ‘forgotten map’ (see 7.3.3) illustrates the recognition rules (Bernstein, 1990) operating in the intended curriculum and which are concentrated in the APE. Indeed, Alison’s account of her misrecognised attempts to create and demonstrate curricular coherence (structural and conceptual) points to a specialisation *code clash* (Maton, 2000b) (see Table 22) in which her emphasis on knowledge building and integration (ER+) was overlooked by the UAP’s focus on confidence in the document and the qualities (i.e. being convincing) of the CPT as knowers (SR+). In other words the UAP were looking for different things, according to rules of the game that were misunderstood by Alison and her team. Furthermore, this dominance of the UAP in exchanges with CPTs indicates that the expertise of course designers is constructed and defined by the course approvers. This is not to say the ‘doctrinal insight’ that is operating does not allow knowledge building, but that it is knowledge building of a particular kind that is of ‘what works’ – in other words what matters is that the curriculum is consistent, and that it is structurally (and evaluatively) coherent.

Here curriculum knowledge itself is ‘regionalised’ further, and its boundaries weakened, in that it appropriates and absorbs a range of segmented knowledges, including efficiency and hygiene as the health and safety of the curriculum. These are added to rather than built onto other knowledge, contributing to the commonly held complaint that academic development is a ‘set of fads’. Furthermore the process and

product debate identified in the literature review is realised in the APE not as ideas held in tension but as segmented and separate and subject to (or disembedded from) context. The field of curriculum development knowledge, therefore, becomes a horizontal knowledge structure, with a weak grammar (Bernstein, 2000). As a result the legitimisation of curriculum evaluation in the form of course approval emphasises the weakening of boundaries, in for example the way that courses are expected to integrate employability (as discussed in Chapter 6). Approval of courses, by this analysis, becomes a techno-rational process. There are several implications of this and these are now discussed.

## **7.6 Discussion: characterisation of curriculum approval in a consensual context**

Having previously clarified and analytically distinguished the collegial and bureaucratic field positions within the field of HE, and the academic development sub-field in which they come into contact with each other, this chapter has examined the mechanism of course approval as the site of recontextualisation of the curriculum, using a social realist perspective. The outline of the work of the approvers above indicates that aspects of collegiality are operating in the interactions between the UAP and the CPT. Rhianna's work for example, demonstrates a collegial principle (Waters, 1989) in which her expertise is put to work to provide *scrutiny of product* subject to peer review and decision making that is intended to be collective. However, the degree of egalitarianism in operation is undermined somewhat by the power that the UAP has to, if not withhold approval, then to set a number of punitive conditions. Underlined, again, here is that bureaucracy resides in practices rather than in individuals (Weber, 1964). These practices and their outcomes are now considered.

### **7.6.1 The possibility of consensus**

The accounts of the approval seekers of the APE as 'adversarial', 'combative', and 'stressful' contrast with the approvers perceptions of the event as a kind of conversation between equals. Observations of APEs and the analysis of interviews identify that there was dialogue but that this was based on questioning against a script agreed by the Chair with the panel in closed session beforehand. These questions began as open invitations: 'tell me about your course ...', 'explain the general

assessment strategy ...’ and so on. However, these quickly turned to specifics, and a weak form of ‘accusation’: ‘you said your course was [this] but it says on page [x] that you actually...’ Furthermore, questions asked by one panel member that were followed up by another gave the impression of a mild form of interrogation.

Further to the discussion of decision-making above the consensus present in the conditions set during the APE can be seen to subjunctive on the part of the approvers: i.e. it takes the form of ‘... if only this course had been [like this] then [everything would have been fine]’. This is mirrored by the subjunctivity of the approval seekers who are likely to say (privately at least): ‘I could have had [this kind of course] if [this had been available/I had understood this] but [they/the system wouldn’t let me]’. These kinds of conditional inferences are indicative of an ‘imaginary’, constructed rationality attributed to an extra-social authority (Delanty, 2001).

One conception of consensus was as a type of ‘satisficing’<sup>12</sup> (Simon, 1956) as a decision-making strategy that attempted to meet an *acceptability* threshold. Decision making as discussed above was based on the setting of conditions and it is extremely rare for a course to be refused approval, partly owing to preliminary readership that ‘signed-off’ courses as ‘ready to be approved’. This approval readiness was on a QA hygiene basis – i.e. that the course would not contravene regulatory aspects of course design. Decisions then became the best available in the circumstances involving negotiation and to some extent compromise. This contributed to approvers’ perceptions that the process was a collegial one, in that what the CPT saw as being ‘grilled’ the UAP viewed as a discussion aimed at coming to an agreement about what the conditions would be. This is a form of misrecognition on both sides, alongside notions of the cultural arbitrary as the pedagogic action as operating between ‘pure force and pure reason’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: 10).

Possibly contributing to a commitment to a consensus is the ‘cultivated gaze’ that is active in the interaction between the CPT and the UAP, in which significant others are recognised by their roles, and the expertise that is attached to them. This is backed by analysis of the data and agreement with the literature on consensus that it is ‘a

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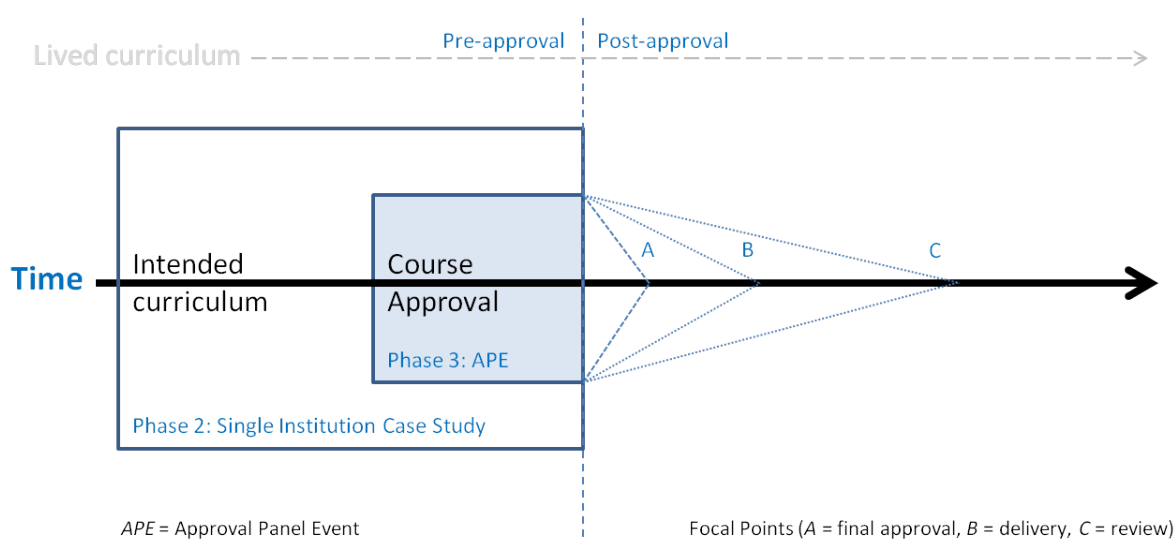
<sup>12</sup> ‘Satisficing’ is a portmanteau word combining satisfy and suffice.

necessary fiction’ (Trimbur, 1989: 612). It is this acceptance that sustains the UAP in feeling OK about passing judgement on the work of peers alongside the understanding that the process is institutionalised towards success (Corradi et al, 2010).

This is a construction of the panel, by the approvers, as an ‘interpretive community’ involved in co-design (McKenny et al, 2006) and this is confirmed by the numerous moments in APEs where the panel ‘pedagogise’. This takes the form of ‘well you could have done it this way’, or ‘why didn’t you think of doing it this way ...’, and the common construct from the external was ‘at our place we do it like this ...’. The stock response from the CPT to this well-meaning advice is always ‘we didn’t know we could’. This is a kind of deferred (or delayed) heuristic modelling – the kind that would have been possible if only things were different. True consensus then remains a potential, ‘the dream of conversation as perfect dialogue’ (Trimbur, 1989: 612).

### 7.6.2 The focal points for enacting the curriculum

The value of enactment, as praxis, is identified as a potential of LCT (Maton, 2013a: 209). In the lived curriculum the enactment is through engagement with ‘capability, self-realisation and self-reliance’ (Barnett and Coate, 2005: 63) and in classroom pedagogies and materials (Cuevas and Feit, 2011b). Within the intended curriculum enactment of the curriculum is through its dependencies (Porter and Smithson, 2001) and the authority that the policies of the institution have among teachers. This is illustrated in Figure 9 below as they currently operate in the case study context.



**Figure 9: Focal points of the influence of the APE on projected practice**

This shows the period in time, or interval, immediately following the APE (shown as Post Approval) in which there are a number of focal points at which its influences remain active. These are:

- **Final Approval (A):** the interval in which the CPT submits an updated submission document that addresses the conditions set by the UAP. At point A the submission document becomes the definitive document (the programme specification) and the institution administers JACS codes for all modules. In addition to external requirements this is used internally to 'set the course up' on the university systems.
- **Delivery (B):** the interval between final approval and the first time the new or re-approved course is taught (usually at the start of the following academic year). This is the period in which the course will be prepared and materials gathered. This process can be seen to an unpacking of the course and a shift in semantic codes of the course: i.e. a strengthening of semantic gravity (SG- to SG+) and a weakening of semantic density (SD+ to SD-).
- **Review (C):** the interval up until the first time the course is reviewed. This usually takes place annually as part of the Annual Quality Review (AQR) submitted to Academic Services that includes the external examiner's report.
- **Iteration (D – not shown):** a gap of usually 5-6 years before the course is required to go through the approval process again.

Analysis of the data suggests that some aspects of decision-making in course approval are discretionary and that, in the context of the APE at least, the curriculum expertise of CPTs is reduced. It also suggests that CPTs do not have (or are not in control of) the realisation rules (Bernstein, 1990) as the means by which the rules of the approval process (the basis for legitimating the curriculum) operate. In other words it is not just curriculum development knowledge itself that is in question, but whether it is the right kind of curriculum development knowledge. And in cases examined what appears to be prized is a *coherence as evaluation* model, as product over process.

There is a 'carryover' from the APE final approval (A) and the first time the course is taught (B) in which the effects of 'relief' on 'getting that over with' causes the task of preparing the course and its materials (handbooks, online resources etc.) to be overlooked. Subject to the amount of change in the course this meant that the early weeks of the new academic year as a busy time for CPTs and the source of some panic. This was exacerbated if the team had opted for a 'big bang' (i.e. new and current students moving to the new course all at the same time). One outcome of this is default conservatism with respect to academic development. In other words the emphasis on pedagogy, already depressed in the run-up to approval, is squeezed out

further. Also it is at this point the newly approved course is passed over to individual module leaders, many of whom have had no active part in the writing of the document or the APE, other than specifying their own module.

Point C as the first review is a critical point for some courses. The interval between B and C is the point when the changes (if any) of the curriculum is tested in the fires of practice. A number of cases occurred where the intended course, while fit for purpose on paper, proved to have a number of contingencies that were unforeseen and were difficult to put right. The process of making changes to a course outside of the cycle of the APE is referred to as the *minor modification* process, carried out by a faculty subcommittee. Some of the modifications made to courses in their first year, however, were far from minor. One approver referred to this as the '*Humpty Dumpty* curriculum'. It points to the unintended consequence of the 'passive/inert' positions taken by a few CPTs in the APE, where the lack of detail masked serious weaknesses that escaped the UAP's notice.

Point D is iteration and it is not shown in the diagram because it is not talked about and does not appear in the data. Absent also are associated ideas, implicated in the notion of course design, such as re-design, experimentation, testing of approaches and pedagogical progression. One can speculate that these are invisible because they are silenced by evaluative coherence, or they have become less possible. This will be discussed in Chapter 8 with regard to an alternative model.

However, I wish to qualify this critique by making two points: the first is that there was much to commend in the quality of courses approved; and secondly the weaknesses that did exist were essentially technical not pedagogical. There were possible pedagogical weaknesses, but as discussed above the UAP's pedagogic code, its official identity, is set to examine structural rather than the conceptual coherence of courses. Here the recognition rules (Bernstein, 1990) of the institutional habitus are set to evaluative coherence, and its influence is seen to extend to the enacted curriculum. This is not to generalise from CS2 to the institutions represented in CS1 (and beyond) but to suggest the possibility of transferability to *similar relations* within these and other contexts.



### 7.6.3 A performance model and its effect on pedagogic identities

The analysis of the reach and carryover of the APE (and its variants that exist elsewhere – see Appendix 3) identifies the dominant relation to the practice of approval within the field of HE as a performance model. The pedagogic code of this relation is an ongoing strategic response to the conditions of the local education market in which the exchange is of approved goods that are ‘fit for purpose’. This projects an imaginary subject that is an idealised course, marked by absences, and reflecting the ‘employable’ student. This is course approval as an externally oriented mechanism of projection with an ‘outward responsive identity rather than one driven by inner dedication’ (Bernstein, 2000: 69) (see discussion in Chapter 3.3.3).

The criteria for what counts as a legitimate course description (one that can be approved) are filtered and modified (i.e. *recognised*) in response to the readership of the document, but are *realised* on the basis of the questioning and discussion that takes place in the APE. Furthermore, this interaction at the APE is influenced by the legitimisation of the qualities of the approval seeker as being competent, convincing and confident (in other words a knower code, SR+).

These are the characteristics of a performance pedagogic mode and a DCM pedagogic identity (see 3.4.1) and this is shown in Table 24 (based on Hoadley and Jansen, 2009: 179). Its temporal orientation is future outcomes-based while being past referenced. In other words it derives the basis of what will happen in the future on what has gone before.

**Table 24: Realisation of *performance pedagogic mode* in course approval settings**

	Performance Mode
Approval seeker	CPT has little control over the selection, sequence, and pace of issues addressed in the approval process; assumption that course can be described adequately for all students at all levels (homogeneity);
Approver	direct approval role; transmits knowledge according to defined rules of the institution; control is hierarchical, the approver decides and sets conditions according to official rubric
Pedagogy	Institution and (by relay) academy (QAA)-centred; clearly demarcated curricular themes specified in the document template and realised in pedagogic discourse (academic development); little link between formal curriculum knowledge and disciplinary or everyday knowledge
Assessment (evaluation)	specific performance criteria; there are clear rights and wrongs; focus on absences – on what the approval seeker has left out; failure (non-approval or delayed/deferred approval dependent on conditions to be met) if the approval seeker does not complete things fully or correctly; approver performs the task of evaluation
Location	clearly marked course sites, specified by the institution

This is the institutional habitus as the ‘active presence of past behaviours’ (Bourdieu 1990: 54) that has a history that is selectively applied – you might say that the institution chooses what to remember and what to forget (Douglas, 1986). To put this another way, the institution chooses what it wants to be mindful of, as in the case of the ‘*forgotten map*’ (see 7.3.3). This ‘persistence of misrecognition’ (Schiff, 2009) is an orthodoxy that can be challenged by disruption, the ‘misfire’ of habitus (ibid.), as in the assessment precepts dilemma for example. It is by the means of the ‘*magic sentence*’ that normal service is resumed – i.e. via the discretionary authority of the QA machinery the institution reminds itself to forget.

The performance pedagogic mode illustrated above is the *seeking coherence as evaluation* model of curriculum development identified in the literature (Cuevas et al, 2009; Cuevas and Feit, 2011c; Stark et al, 1997). As discussed above, the bureaucratically focused context emphasises the *functional* paradigm of curriculum and its evaluation (Melrose, 1998). In this view the events and mechanisms that make up the process of course approval are a substitution for real curriculum development in which the approval event (and its texts) becomes the site of curriculum

development in a form that is shaped by the pedagogic device/pedagogic discourse. The APE, therefore, can be considered to be a relay for the pedagogic device and its legitimacy). It is also the arena of struggle between competing actors for the pedagogic discourse: CLs are concerned with making the process easier and less stressful; quality teams are concerned with making the process efficient and hygienic; and academic developers are concerned with making the process more coherent and pedagogically sound. In other words, the discourse of academic development, the pedagogic recontextualisation field (PRF), is subsumed and absorbed within the discourse of approval, the official recontextualisation field (ORF).

#### **7.6.4 Agency in the curriculum**

Having identified the dominant pedagogic mode operating in course design and approval as a performance (DCM) model it is important to note that this study has examined the *conditions* for this (see Table 22 above) rather than analysed the outcomes (i.e. the courses themselves). In other words it is the basis for the value of these 'goods' rather than their valuation that concerns this study. Furthermore, while the dominant form of coherence is *evaluative* the heuristic modelling approach to seeking coherence in the curriculum, as identified in the literature (e.g. Wiggins and McTighe, 1998; 2005; Bamber and Anderson, 2012; Jackson and Shaw, 2002; Wilson and Bertenthal, 2005) can and does take place. Many of the courses in this study make use of techniques for designing the curriculum (such as Alison's (D6) curriculum map). Similarly, approvers, such as Rhianna (E7), use strategies to help CPTs to design their courses effectively. What is being explained in this study are the bases of this, and the means and possibility of practice being other than it is, in which agents are free to make choices. Two of these choices - whether to transfer and/or transform practice; and whether to work alone or in a group - are significant in terms of emergence (Archer, 1995) in which causal powers are shared by structures and social agents that affect the actual (Bhaskar, 1979). Understandings of exchange, for example, are explored in CS1, and are seen to involve forms of ownership while being subject to the difficulties of description including contextual and conceptual coherence (Muller, 2009). Here the spaces in which people interact are 'space[s] for emergence' (Osberg and Biesta, 2008).

This critical realist perspective acknowledges the retroductive logic of drawing on practice (Collier, 1994) such as education in which the knowledge on which practice depends is also knowledge from the practical experience of performance (Clegg, 2005a). This is formulated as constitutive (non-causal) reasoning in the form of ‘what is object A in virtue of object B?’ In asking, therefore ‘how does a de-centred market pedagogic mode cause a particular kind of curriculum to exist?’ one is able to address more generalisable questions of the form ‘How are different curricula possible?’ Thus one might consider how DCM constitutes curriculum subjectivities and how individuals are discursively re-positioned by policy technologies of curricular reform (Dowling, 2007). For example, Cathy’s ‘*reversible coat*’ (see 6.3.2) is an example of the interaction between structure and agency in which the emergence of a module for employability has a degree of autonomy from Cathy’s extra-curricular practice from which it originated but which was not its cause. The explanation of this from a critically real perspective is that reasons can be responsible for producing a change (as the actualisation of the real) and these reasons can be embedded in semiotic constructions such as texts and documents.

In this sense the enacted curriculum is *refraction* (Bourdieu, 1993: 183) of the APE as illustrated in Figure 9. One interpretation that then becomes possible is that this is refracted via agents’ strong positional autonomy (PA+) (Maton, 2005). In other words actors have the capacity to transform extrinsic pressures into specifically intrinsic forms including strategies to deal with this such as resistance to bureaucracy, superficial compliance and forms of collegiality (Burnheim, 2010). This is the space of messy practice, and profane unorthodoxies, at the edges of the lived curriculum where the light of the ‘approval sun’ takes a long time to arrive. Within the APE’s gravitational pull it can take the agentic form of expedient pragmatism, as the means of struggle by which the official pedagogy is translated and possibly transformed into an instructional (cultural) one. It is the ‘reflexive deliberations of human agents’ (Archer 2003: 15) that offers the individual self-awareness as the means of being close to practice, as a form of practical rationality. Angela’s ‘*string bag*’ (see 5.4.3), for example, is a ‘reflexive habitus’ (Archer, 2010: 288), as the means by which she can hold the symbolic and personal meanings of her practice and carry these with her – ‘bilum-like’. What

remains to be explored is a model for connecting the lived and intended curriculum more directly and more powerfully, and for both the structural and agentic concerns to be addressed.

A model for understanding this will be elaborated in the final chapter, alongside a further examination of the legitimation of the curriculum development field with respect to the autonomy dimension of LCT and how this can be further distinguished with regard to epistemic codes (authority, expertise, consensus and purpose).

## **Chapter 8: Approval as an invisible tribunal enacted through consensus**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The main aim of this study was to understand more about the phenomenon of course planning and approval by examining it through a cross-institution case study (CS1) and a two-part case study in the context of one institution (CS2). The concern was to illuminate the nature of teachers' experiences; the basis of practice and its emergence; and the process by which curriculum reproduction and change takes place. In this final chapter the key research findings are summarised and these are examined in the light of previous research to identify the main contribution of the study. These findings are mapped and synthesised to enable a model of curriculum development, as it operates in these cases studies, to be identified. The limitations of the study are then examined and the implications and recommendations for practice are set out.

### **8.2 A summary of findings and contribution**

This study contributes to knowledge of curriculum development via its analysis of the meso-level, course focussed, processes that take place in the case studies, as broadly representative of UK HEI. By means of the research design set out in chapters three and four I was able to examine three positions in the field. These positions were organised using concepts of rationality (*collegial*, *bureaucratic* and *consensus seeking*) and have been distinguished analytically in Chapter 7 (see Table 22) according to the coding of the bases of their curriculum and pedagogical design, and how these are evaluated.

This study has used Bourdieu's field theory to identify the field of HE as the object of study and curriculum development, as a form of academic development, as a subfield with its own set of specialised knowledge practices. It has applied Bernstein's code theory and the pedagogic device to develop an external language of description for curriculum development knowledge (see Table 16) and Maton's epistemic codes and the epistemic pedagogic device to develop a language of description for positional and relational autonomy (see Table 17) in course design. The research questions and the main findings are outlined and mapped and then discussed below.

### **8.2.1 The findings related to the first research question**

The first research question asked: What are the characteristics of the teaching practices that are shaped by the educational beliefs and values that academics bring to curriculum design in higher education? This was examined in the first phase of the research in a case study (CS1) of 12 teachers from 10 UK HEI brought together to explore their own (Social Science) curriculum practices and to develop an open curriculum for others to use. Teachers' accounts presented the context for their activity as a 'collegially focused' field position embodied by teachers' experiences in the 'lived' curriculum. This phase of the research enabled the HE curriculum to be brought into focus, as the object of study, by enabling the identification and examination of the issues and concerns that participants shared. The characteristics that emerged from the analysis of the data identified practice in the lived curriculum to be strongly bound in the educational context and the imprint of the institution: this included the regulations that governed the practices and to be objectified materially in curricular resources and texts (Corradi et al., 2010). This was seen to be derived from the discipline, rather than external pedagogical models. This study finds that academics resist such models and to consider them to be imposed by academic development and academic developers.

The teaching of content knowledge, including pedagogic techniques and strategies, is seen to be based mainly on teacher's repertoire and habitus. There is indication that forms and criteria for assessment are aligned mostly with the teacher's needs. This suggests relatively strong positional autonomy (PA+). However, in both case studies the institution is viewed as setting external (economic) drivers such as employability that are seen to be at odds with this content knowledge, and which shape pedagogy and assessment. This indicates relatively weak relational autonomy. Strategies that teachers find to be 'collegially focused' are effective in as far as they provide and enable the meta-language needed for curricular change, including the language of the discipline. Peer review and collaborative approaches to the curriculum, based on understandings of mutuality and reciprocity, are found to be effective ways of engaging teachers in the development of the curriculum.

### **8.2.2 The findings related to the second research question**

The second research question asked: What are the characteristics of course planning practices in a UK higher education institution and how are curricular forms generated? This was examined in the second phase of the research by means of the first part of a case study (CS2) that took place in one institution involving 17 academics preparing 12 courses for approval. The context for these teachers' activity as a 'bureaucratically focused' field position as highlighting teachers' experiences in the 'intended' curriculum, while embodied in their prior experiences in the 'lived' curriculum, has been characterised in this phase of the research. The study finds that teachers preparing their courses for approval in the intended curriculum are subject to a technocratic discourse centred on the production of texts. These texts mainly serve a regulative function rather than a developmental one.

Positional autonomy (PA) is reduced leading up to and during the approval process, weakening the boundaries of curriculum knowledge (content) and the control of how this is assessed. Dispositions to practice at this stage are seen to be cooperative in nature and disciplinary position taking is a strategy used to resist and refract institutional policy. Employability is seen as an external influence on the curriculum, and is a potential weakening of (some) disciplinary boundaries, particularly those that are applied theory in nature. This leads to elements in the design of course design that can be difficult to pedagogise effectively in some disciplinary contexts.

### **8.2.3 The findings related to the third research question**

The third research question asked: What are the characteristics of curriculum approval practices in a UK higher education institution, and how do academics interpret and respond to this in reproducing the curriculum? This was examined in the third phase of the research second part of a case study (CS2) taking place in one institution involving 7 participants from phase 2 who have prepared their courses for approval and 10 staff responsible for approving these courses. The specific context for this phase of activity was the approval event (APE), characterised in this study as a form of 'consensus



seeking', in which the intended curriculum, informed by the lived curriculum, is legitimated.

This study finds that an institutional habitus has emerged from historical processes that are rationalised as efficient and effective in assuring quality processes. These processes are counter-productive, however, in enhancing the quality of curricula, producing a conservative effect on the development of courses. This has effects that are projected into the continuing life of the course and are potentially long lasting. Teachers understand the approval process to be a strong form of bureaucracy and they counter this through strategies that aim to avoid the intermediate effects of restrictions on the curriculum.

The approval event itself is subject to code shifts and clashes in autonomy, the specialisation of knowledge, and the semantic variation that exists in curricula. This is seen to have the potential to generate conflict between approvers and those seeking approval and to be dysfunctional. The criteria for successful curricula are derived from a performance-based model that is present-oriented (developing) while being past-referenced (maintaining). This influences orientations to practice by emphasising an idealised curriculum that is hygienic and risk free, while limiting the possibility of change in the curriculum. Institutional resources for academic development are directed towards curricular coherence derived structurally (its composition) rather than through the modelling of the curriculum heuristically. The role of academic developers, therefore, as a result of orientations to practice and the contributory effects of other factors identified above, tends towards activity that maintains the status quo as opposed to interventions that aim to enhance the curriculum and its associated pedagogy.

#### **8.2.4 Mapping and discussion of the findings**

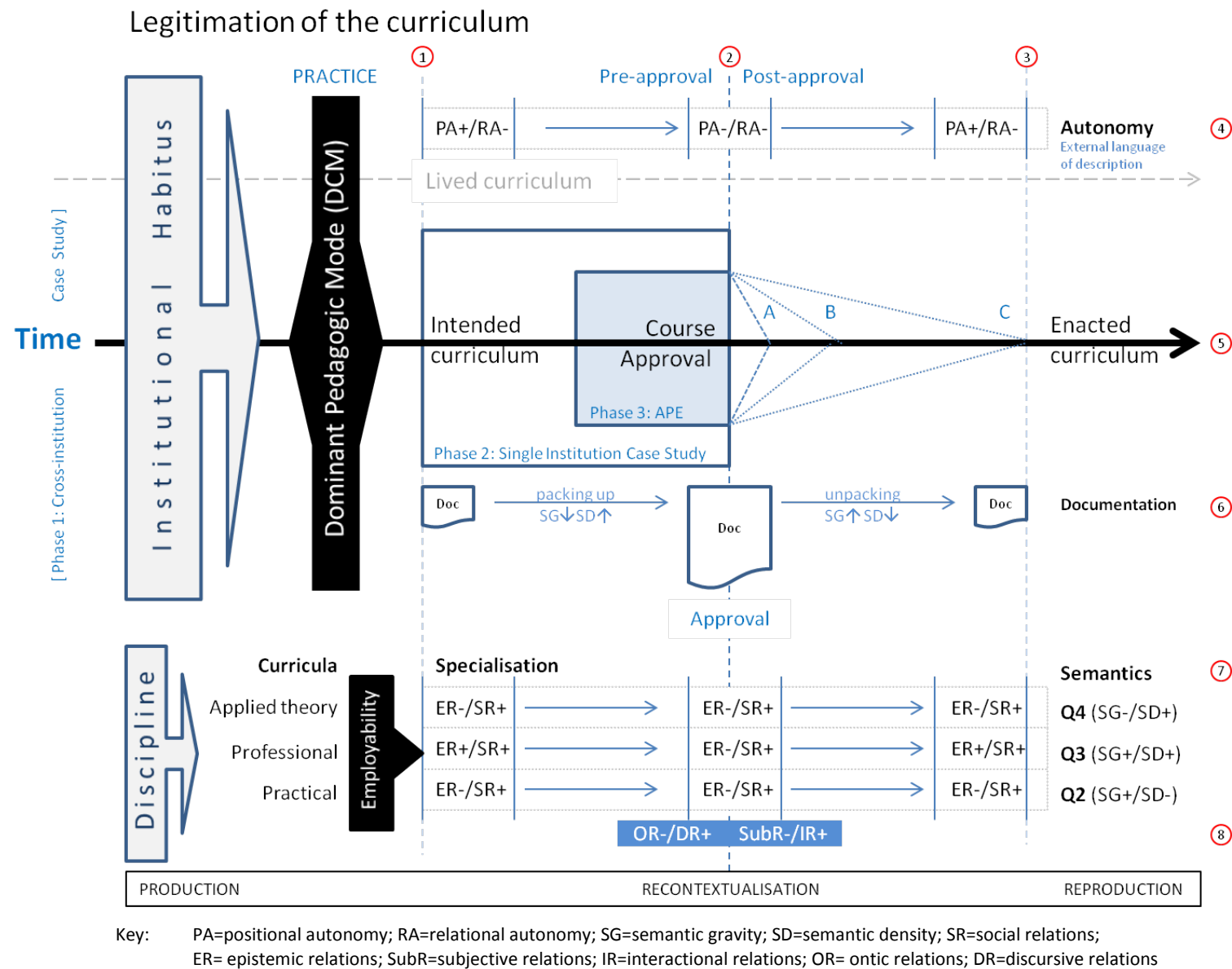
Figure 10 illustrates graphically how the different elements of the findings relate to each other. This is organised on a timeline that shows the iterative cycle from the lived curriculum, to the intended curriculum, to the enacted curriculum and so forth. Three stages are shown as vertical dotted lines numbered 1, 2 and 3:

1. This is the start of the intended curriculum (the point at which the CPT is contacted and told that the existing course will be reapproved or the point that they decide to create a new course (see Table 39 in Appendix 14 for a timeline of the approval process).
2. This is the date of the APE. The APE is shown as a box to indicate that the APE process **starts** six weeks before the actual event (see Table 40 in Appendix 14, for the APE timeline).
3. The final stage is focal point C as the time that the course is reviewed for the first time after approval (see 7.6.2). This can be a year from approval, or earlier if significant difficulties are found in the implementation (delivery) of the course.

At the centre of the diagram is the APE itself as the nexus of the approval process as a network of connected processes, orientations and positions. Practice is arranged according to this, as pre-approval and post approval. This is the basis of the diagrams used in the research design chapter, showing the three empirical phases of the study. This includes the focal point projections that were discussed in 7.6.2. The findings mapping is then organised, within this temporal structure as an *upper* and a *lower* section, as the *institutional* and the *disciplinary* perspectives respectively. These sections will now be discussed in more detail and their elements will be explained.

### ***Upper Section: Institutional perspective***

Institutional habitus is central to curriculum development as the 'complex amalgam of agency and structure' (Reay *et al.*, 2001: para. 1.3). As discussed in 3.3.2 habitus is the 'power of adaptation' (Bourdieu, 1993: 78) as the interlacing of past and present, individual and collective. The approval process has a history and has been developed over time (see 7.4.1).



**Figure 10: Diagrammatic representation of findings**

Operating within this is a dominant pedagogic mode (the de-centred market pedagogical identity) that was identified in 7.6.3. as a performance model. This has a number of implications for practice, including the approval process. There are then three descending hierarchical sublevels operating (numbered 4, 5 and 6 on the diagram). These will be described starting at the top:

4. **Autonomy:** this is shown as the coding of positional (PA) and relational (RA) autonomy. An external language of description (see Table 17) was developed for this, based on data. Using this framework it was established that relational autonomy (for teachers and CPTs) was weaker for all three stages – i.e. that the principles applied in directing teachers work were derived from external economic or political fields. At stages 1 and 3 the PA is higher indicating that at these points teachers' practice was governed by themselves, positionally at least, as autonomous agents. However, at stage 2 (the APE) the PA had weakened, indicating that decisions made about their practice are governed by the institution. It has been noted in the study however that there are instances in the lived curriculum when the PA of teachers is under threat as in cases such as the assessment precepts dilemma (see Chapter 6). However, in circumstances such as these, external to the approval system, agents are able to refract this through strategies of resistance. In the APE, however, this is refracted by the approval process (into focal points A, B and C and beyond).
5. **The Intended Curriculum and the APE:** the intended curriculum is shown on the mapping to represent the period from when the CPT becomes bureaucratised: in other words its members become subjects of bureaucratic practice. In the pre-approval period the CPT plans and prepares its curriculum. In the second period, post-approval the bureaucratic image of the course is projected to point A (final approval meeting conditions), point B (delivery of the course) and point C (course review).
6. **The documentation of the curriculum:** the APE is identified as an event that transforms a submission document into a definitive one. The document becomes a *programme specification*. It is examined in 7.2 as having a context, and its structure

is outlined in 6.2.1. It represents the approval process as the documentation of practice (see 7.3.3) and the bureaucratisation process as the dominance of the regulative discourse and the ORF over the PRF (indicated graphically by the relative sizes of the document icon in the diagram). While documentation is required at stages 1 and 3 in the lived curriculum the purpose of this is mainly pedagogical, in that the programme specification is translated into student handbooks, teaching materials and marketing materials. This is shown as the semantic shifts in the documents: a decrease in semantic gravity (SG) and an increase in semantic density (SD) (a '*packing up*') in preparation for the APE and the reversed shift post-approval (an '*unpacking*'). This involves the shedding of accreted experience in order to make courses transferrable (recontextualisable) or the adding of details to a new course/module after it has been approved. This is problematic for CPTs as identified in the problem of *context, description* and *ownership* in CS1 (see 5.4). It also brings into action the recognition rules (knowing what counts) and the realisation rules (knowing what form this should take) of the pedagogic device (Bernstein, 1990) as demonstrated in participants' accounts, as a form of 'how to play the game'.

### ***Lower section: Disciplinary perspective***

The discipline is identified as the main influence on the language of practice (see 5.3) and the basis of understanding of curriculum and pedagogy (see 6.4). The discipline is the likely source of the production of knowledge which is recontextualised and then reproduced in classroom practice, including assessment. External influences on this such as employability (see 6.3.2) and the framing of pedagogy in the form of work-related learning are seen to weaken (to regionalise) boundaries of curricula. The strength of this influence varies according to knowledge structure of the discipline in question. These are identified in the study (see 6.3.3) as applied theory (Q4), practical (Q2) and professional/vocational (Q3) based on a typology created by Shay (2013) drawing on Maton's (2011) LCT semantics codes. These variations include LCT semantic and specialisation.

7. **Semantics and specialisation:** It is the combination of the semantic and specialisation codes and their shifts and clashes that cause difficulties for approval seekers and approvers:
- a. **Semantics:** the varying strengths of SG and SD are seen to differentiate curricula according to Shay's (2013) typology and this includes the type of knowledge. The requirement for all courses to address employability (see Appendix 15) disadvantages some courses especially those that are based on applied theory, owing to the difficulty of accommodating practical experience. These courses find difficulty in pedagogising this knowledge and in finding space within an already full curriculum for placements and work-based study. The UAP is not concerned with whether achieving employability is possible in sociology, for example – it is not their primary concern. However the shift to genericism (including transferable skills) is a challenge for all courses.
  - b. **Specialisation:** the variation of SR and ER is also seen to differentiate curricula and to differing degrees. For some courses the concept of the ideal knower in the form of an apprentice to the discipline predominates. This is identified in CS1 as students having 'a sociological eye' or 'thinking like an anthropologist'. However, the risk is in the discipline's vulnerability to the forces that legitimate the 'ideal knower', as 'graduateness' for example, aligned with employability as a narrow set of attributes. Furthermore the basis on which the UAP arrives at its decision is influenced by *doctrinal insight* (see 7.5) as the basis on how it is taught (its consistency and structural coherence) not on what is taught (disciplinary knowledge).
8. **The basis of legitimisation of the curriculum:** the final level is that of the APE as the nexus of the approval process. This is shown as the blue box at the intersection of stage 2 (the APE) and level 8. This shows the coding of the specialisation of knowledge in the approval process as two modalities. First it should be noted that the coding for specialisation at stage 2 (the APE) suggests a *knower code* to operate (SR+). It is important to note that this relates to the CPT as knower, not the student. In other words, it is the qualities that

academics demonstrate during the APE (and located in the document to some extent) that are what counts in decision-making. Here confidence in (what) the CPT (are saying and how they say it) is as, if not more, important than the objective evaluation of the course itself. This is misrecognition by approvers in which approval seekers are complicit. This emphasises the interactional relations (IR) over the subjective ones (SubR) as a '*cultivated gaze*'. This is indicated in the APE by the claims of the UAP to be experts (in one kind of curriculum knowledge) and that the CPTs interaction with this expertise defines what counts. It is also associated with weaker epistemic code (ER-) in which disciplinary knowledge is marginalised and in which evaluative coherence is prized in curriculum development knowledge. Second, as noted in 7b the type of insight that the UAP apply in their decision-making is *doctrinal* in which there is a disregard for the conceptual coherence of curricula in favour of consistency and structural coherence (the *administratively* ideal course).

Both the institutional and the disciplinary perspectives are seen to be controlled by the pedagogic device and its rules and this is illustrated in the mapping in the bottom bar that aligns the three fields of pedagogic discourse: *production*, *recontextualisation* and *reproduction* and in which the APE becomes the site of struggle for the control of the pedagogic device. The two perspectives are also linked in the effect on both the institutional habitus and the regionalisation of disciplines of work related learning.

### 8.2.5 Code shifts and clashes

It is important to note that the purpose of the identification of codes operating in practice is more than a stock-take or a labelling of parts. The code theory analysis identifies the significance of the underlying shifts and clashes of code modalities that are seen to influence practice and their effects. These are located in the diagram as follows:

- A shift in Positional Autonomy (PA $\downarrow\uparrow$ ): this takes place during approval. Its effects are to engender position taking that reduces the approval process to subjectification of the curriculum.

- A Semantic shift in the course documentation (SD↓↑, SG↓↑): this reinforces the notion that the programme specification is inauthentic and disconnected from practice, and reduces its potential to guide and support the CPT in the enacted curriculum.
- A shift in classification of disciplines (↓↑C): employability is an influence on the curriculum that weakens subject boundaries. This undermines the disciplinary foundations of the pedagogic habitus of some teachers whose curriculum is affected more than others. This becomes a semantics code clash in the approval process for those CPTs. This is implicated in a shift to a *knower code* (SR↓↑) for some courses/curricula that can clash with the *cultivated gaze* (SubR-, IR+) operated by the UAP.
- A clash in the epistemic code (ER↓↑) in curriculum development knowledge: the *doctrinal insight* (OR-, DR+) applied by the UAP is a mismatch with the social/epistemic codes held by some CPTs. The effect of this is to undermine the credibility of the curricular expertise of the UAP and the value of the APE as developmental.

One perspective on code clashes is that they are misfires in habitus as principles of 'regulated improvisation' (Schiff, 2009: 4). Dispositions therefore are contingent on the misrecognition on which habitus depends but also bring with them the 'constant possibility (and, in fact, the frequent actuality) of disruption' (ibid.). It is in moments of disruption that these become clearer, as the 'methodological primacy of the pathological' (Collier, 1994: 163). These are the points at which tacit beliefs and ideas may become more explicit and structures that were opaque become visible (Bhaskar, 1979: 48). The work that code clashes/disruptions to habitus do is to provoke new models, new understandings.

*Without a model the researcher can never know what could have been and was not. Without a model, the researcher only knows what his/her informants have enacted*  
(Bernstein, 2000: 135)

To make way for a model in this study the ground must first be cleared. This is now addressed in a review of the three field positions and the concepts associated with them. The purpose is to consider what elements of this framework are efficacious in



the model or which need to be revised in the light of the study. Following this a re-appraisal of autonomy will be made in light of the emergence of the concepts *authority*, *expertise*, *consensus* and *purpose*

### **8.3 The characterisation of the field positions and the limitations of this analysis**

This study identified three field positions, apparent in the literature, as a heuristic for organising the fieldwork: *collegial*, *bureaucratic* and *consensus seeking*. This was based on a neo-Weberian conception of the rationalised institution (Waters, 1989; Hull, 2006) in which behaviour was organised rationally (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011) as a form of bureaucratisation that institutionalised purposive-rational action of groups (Murphy, 2009). The aim of this organising principle was to isolate the symbolic structures that legitimate practice and knowledge in curriculum development. These field positions were distinguished analytically (see Table 22) using a social realist explanatory framework that identified discrete differences in how authority is claimed, and how this rested on subjectivities, identities, and power exercised. Key to this are the epistemic relations (ER) involving knowledge structures, discourses and legitimacy taking place and understandings of the concepts *expertise* and *authority*. At the same time, it would appear, this is influenced by the understandings operating and the concepts, also derived from data, *consensus* and *purpose*. These will be re-assessed below in terms of how they relate to the autonomy dimension of LCT, but first the basis of this analysis will be explored.

#### **8.3.1 Are bureaucracy and collegiality trustworthy concepts?**

While the terms bureaucratic and collegial were adopted heuristically from the literature, consonance was found with participants' accounts. Also this study finds that the practices involved in preparing and documenting courses for approval are seen to be institutionally embedded, and based on a centralised, bureaucratic planning system. Furthermore, the data show that professional expertise is valorised in *knowing how* to conduct bureaucratic management of the curriculum. This has provoked a tendency to homogenise the curriculum, through a techno-bureaucratic approach to curriculum governance that has become doxic – a situation in which taken for granted values are enacted automatically in practice, without much questioning, both by those

who are dominant and those who are dominated (Bourdieu, 1993). There are elements here of bureaucracy as dysfunctional (Crozier, 1964), as illustrated in the second case study (CS2).

However at this point the interpretation of bureaucracy becomes teleological of a certain perception of agency in which the cause of things is explained by their original intention or aim. The contention, that bureaucracy arises from centralisation and impersonality (ibid.), and that individuals' goals can become subverted is one conclusion that can be drawn. Cause can be attributed here to those that see practice as a series of strategic games, where individuals attempt to exploit any areas of discretion for their own ends and exploit 'zones of uncertainty' where outcomes are not already known. However, this explanation needs to be balanced by understandings of collegiality that were present in the study that indicate a more nuanced interpretation of cause and effect.

Collegiality as a complementarity of bureaucracy was observed in this study at its strongest in CS1, in which the glue that held people together was the common purpose of peer-reviewing other people's materials and course designs. Here teachers were cooperative rather than collegial and successful course design was achieved by delegation and division of labour (organic solidarity). It was also based on mutual recognition of expertise and pedagogical authority based in the discipline. More widely in the second case study notions of collegiality were seen to be linked to collaboration (Fielding, 1999) and remained vague and amorphous (Little, 1990). The finding that 'collegially focused' strategies enable the meta-language needed for curricular change is not disputed in CS2 but neither is it fully endorsed. This suggests a binary relationship of the strengths of collegial and bureaucratic approaches that may be over-simplistic and there is a need for caution in this analysis.

One proposition identified in the literature is that dispositions to authority structures are related to intrinsic/extrinsic rewards including prestige and authority (Lortie, 1975). This works on both sides of the approver/approved line, even allowing for how the institution's rewards are tied to different 'goods' and different values of these goods. This is refraction operating in opposing directions in which the institution is

rewarded for the outcomes of approval (being seen to apply QA) while the improvement in curriculum and pedagogy might be negligible (the potential for QE):

*Even when the gap is noted, the formally compliant university gets credit for playing by the rules of the game.  
(Meyer et al., 2007: 192).*

Similarly, perhaps, the CPT can reassure itself that it has successfully got approval out of the way and things can get 'back to normal', for the next five years at least. This is a de-coupling as a coping mechanism (Weick, 2012). It might also perhaps throw some doubt on how this is rationalised by agents and the reliance on their versions of the story.

Caution is also required in interpreting how the regulative tends to dominate the instructional discourse (Bernstein, 1990). While it is evident in the data that pedagogical issues are demoted in favour of the regulative and technical this cannot be presupposed as self-fulfilling or exclusive. In other words it is possible that all combinations of collegial and bureaucratic conditions are possible. Allowing for this, this study identifies the APE to represent a form of 'invisible tribunal' that acts to legitimate the curriculum, and the CPT and the UAP acting within a form of curricular authority and expertise that is directed by the interplay with and between purpose and consensus. This complex relationship between agents, structures and causality is understood in critical realist terms as a 'constant conjunction' that requires 'necessity' (Bhaskar, 1979). While the classical empiricist position reduces causal laws to patterns of events, critical realism acknowledges that causal laws exist as *tendencies* that generate phenomena, in which the patterns are reflections of these tendencies, actualised through real mechanisms, which may or may not be observed at the empirical (ibid.: 27) (see 3.2 for a fuller discussion of this). What has become clear in the course of this study is that collegiality and bureaucracy, while serving as bridging concepts, offer insufficient explanatory power.

### ***New meanings for old concepts?***

While acknowledging the fact that approvers and approval seekers are talking about different things in different ways in the approval process, it is in the efficacy of the external language of description (L2) that offers the means of explaining this and

creating trustworthy interpretations. The two L2s in question are generated from data and developed iteratively in relation to theory. The L2 for autonomy for example (see Table 17) examines the basis of PA and RA in relation to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and enables a distinction to be made between the practices in collegial and bureaucratic contexts. Furthermore, the analysis of this provides for an examination beneath the surface of claims of both approvers and approval seekers that they are acting collegially and to identify a shift in the coding of autonomy at the time of the APE.

Combining this with an analysis of the L2 for curriculum development knowledge (see Table 16) enables an analysis of the shift in the classification of knowledge between the CPT and the UAP. For example curriculum coherence, identified in the literature as a key concept, is seen to vary as opposing positions on coherence as evaluation, and coherence as modelling.

Having explained the code shifts and clashes that take place in the course design and approval process by means of code theory the question remains, identified early in the literature review, how does the curriculum process continue to operate given so little is known about it and that there exist such tensions and struggles? Or to put this in terms of a subsuming research question of this thesis: *What is the basis of curriculum reproduction and change and the process by which this occurs?*

### **8.3.2 The value of consensus to understanding the curriculum development process**

The kind of ceremonial routine and formality that characterises academic panels such as the APE (Lamont, 2009) is referred to by Hargreaves (1991: 51) as a cultural version of collegiality that is consensus based. He contrasts this with forms of bureaucracy that involve 'direct administrative constraint or the indirect management of consent'. Consensus by this definition is the commonly agreed way of doing things, as pragmatism based on 'what works'. This includes the trade off between the UAP and the CPT of 'sufficient quality assurance' for 'damage control' in getting the course approved. Consensus therefore is a social process where people feel their way towards it (Corradi *et al.*, 2010: 244) to make decisions that rest on argumentation while also

proceeding by it. While UAP decision-making does not rely on unanimous consent it operates by agreement. The CPT may not agree with the conditions set by the UAP, but the event is reliant on the agreement of its members to take part and to abide by the outcome. This can be considered to be part of the institutional habitus that undergirds the APE and the practices that are socially embedded within it.

Here consensus works by supplanting individual rational choice in favour of institutional thinking. At the same time the UAP can overlook pedagogical weaknesses in the course by favouring its hygiene. This is institutionalised towards success (the achievement of consensus) as a form of ‘techno-bureaucratic rationality’ in which participation can leave deeply held doxa untouched (Schiff, 2009). However, this is a view of bureaucracy that is potentially isolated from the social structures and agency that give rise to it and is therefore a ‘socially empty’ concept. It is also distinguished from collegiality in that bureaucracy resides in practices and not in people. However, the situation remains in HE that bureaucracy cannot be easily ignored and its forms (specialisation, standardisation and hierarchy) are here to stay (Hull, 2006). This is to concede that bureaucracy is a relatively enduring set of interpretations widely held by participants in this study and elsewhere, and as such it can be seen to constitute a structure as a result of agents’ ‘diagnoses of their situations through reflexive deliberation ’ (Archer, 2003: 7). In other words bureaucracy exists because people experience it and therefore believe it to exist – it becomes socially agentic.

To understand this is crucial for exploring the bases upon which curriculum authority is claimed and maintained and how particular kinds of subjectivities and doxa are reproduced in the process of authorisation (approval) including the curricular expertise at play. Regardless of whether it is considered to be collegial or bureaucratic, the UAP claims *authority* (and a form of *expertise*) through an idealised notion of the curriculum. The legitimacy of this is axiologically charged with respect to the beliefs and values that teachers bring to curriculum development and this has been identified in this study as varying according to understandings of *consensus* and *purpose*. For example employability is shown to be a condensation of terms such as student-centred and graduate-focused as a form of binary in which courses do or do not prepare students to be employed. In other words it limits the possibility of there being other

purposes for the curriculum and in which consensus directs the curriculum towards a particular form. Consensus then becomes the degree to which this expertise is socially integrated, its social solidarity, influenced by how this aligns with what is perceived as its purpose or reason.

### **8.3.3 Towards an elaboration of the autonomy dimension of LCT**

By analysing the characteristics of practices I have identified a typology of the characteristics that represents the interplay of (curricular) authority, expertise, purpose and consensus, and the way that these concepts structure, and are structured by, forms of curricular coherence. The task now is to identify the organising principles of this.

Autonomy sets up the field, and without autonomy there is no field (Maton, 2004: 36). This study has applied autonomy, as the primary dimension of LCT, to identify the degree to which expertise, as the basis for curriculum authority, is contested: positional autonomy (PA) is the modality of 'whose expertise/whose authority' while relational autonomy (RA) is the relative strength of 'what (counts as) expertise/authority' and 'according to which principles or purposes' (Maton, 2005). Given that PA captures the relations between positions (agents or discourses) within a category or context and positions outside the category (as in say between actors in universities and state-sponsored funding bodies) I ask 'who is running curriculum planning and approval?' - PA↓↑ (course design, approval). Given that RA is the principle of relation (or ways of working, practices, aims, measures of achievement) within a context and those emanating from other contexts I ask 'according to whose principles is the curriculum planned and approved'? - RA↓↑ (course design, approval).

The data show that autonomy is influenced by the possession of specialised knowledge and that the formations of this knowledge specialises actors and practices and this is interpreted by means of the two L2s in this study. The L2 for curriculum development knowledge indicates the knowledge and skills needed to develop the curriculum range from 'anyone can do it' to 'you need special skills to do it'. What those special skills are

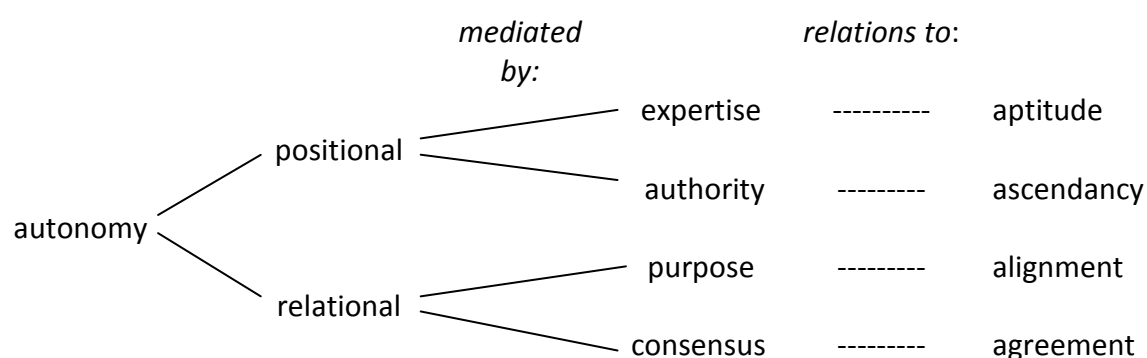
is not immediately apparent, or you might say they remain invisible. Also, the L2 for the autonomy of curriculum development raises questions about how to account for differences between practices sharing the same autonomy codes. For example, I found several anomalies in the analysis of autonomy operating in the field of curriculum development and approval:

1. PA is strong before the approval event and becomes stronger afterwards (albeit that pedagogy is relatively insulated but assessment is less so) - PA↑ (pedagogy) PA↓ (assessment)
2. While PA is relatively weak at the time of approval (PA-, RA+) it can be characterised as *inexpert dominance* where the legitimate expertise of curriculum development knowledge is devalorised by the relative strength and dominance of authority to approve the curriculum.
3. For some subject/discipline areas the relative weakness of relational autonomy (RA-) at the time of course approval is characterised by *conflicted intention* in for example where the emphasis on employability for applied theory curricula conflicts with the curricular purposes identified by course teams.
4. While there was a return to relatively stronger positional autonomy in the lived curriculum following approval (PA↑) the legacy of the effects of the approval process was not apparent in the analysis of the positional and relational relations of the autonomy dimension. In other words the autonomy codes did not fully describe the underlying basis of practices at these varying points.

Meta-analysis of these inconsistencies together with the findings of the phases of the research suggests two propositions. First, by differentiating positional relations with regard to *authority* and *expertise* I am able to conceptualise their modalities as *positions* comprising relations between practices and that part of the world relative to positions of social status (authority relations) and the possession of specialised knowledge (expertise relations). This might enable different relations between theory and data to be explored in greater depth. This moves us beyond the notion of habitus by distinguishing practices capable of more precise empirical descriptions from formal modelling of empirical relations. Also separating authority from expertise extends and systematises the exploration of field positions as identified in this study; collegial and bureaucratic. Second, by differentiating relational autonomy with regard to *purpose*

and *consensus* I can conceptualise their modalities as *attitudes* comprising relations between practices and that part of the world relative to positions of social status (consensual relations) and possession of specialised knowledge (purposive relations).

This has the potential to provide an enhanced account of autonomy codes. In relation to the autonomy of any field this offers a 'positional-attitudinal model' of relations to *aptitude*, *ascendancy*, *alignment* and *agreement* with regard to curriculum development knowledge. This study has indentified these concepts as deriving from the data and I set this out below in Figure 11 as a typology of these relations in relation to the *autonomic* plane of LCT.



**Figure 11: 'Positional-attitudinal' typology of curriculum development knowledge practices**

Using this typology I conjecture that autonomy may be further described in terms of positions and attitudes. Furthermore, exploring forms of curricular autonomy raises questions of differences within positions and attitudes, and their extension as dispositions. In other words the autonomy of any field can be characterised by positions and attitudes (dispositions) that may refract these further. Thus in terms of positional autonomy stronger authority relations may have a predominantly *purposive* or *consensual* disposition depending on whether legitimate positions are defined as constructed through agreement and/or is subject to alignment with a pre-determined (curricular) purpose. In terms of relational autonomy stronger consensual relations may be mediated by the degree of aptitude or mastery of curriculum development knowledge that operates and how this is constructed by ascendant interests in the curriculum. This analysis moves beyond collegiality and bureaucracy as the simplistic



focus of curriculum practices towards the underlying basis, made accessible by LCT and the elaboration of the autonomy dimension derived in this study. One example of this is the notion of conflict, identified in the coding of course approval in this study, which can now be understood as the degree of alignment with the purposes of the curriculum as set out by the institution and the level of agreement, or solidarity, that operates within the APE. How can this be further theorised?

### ***The specialisation of autonomy: epistemic insights***

Adopting this social realist understanding of consensus provides a conceptual cornerstone for the interactional practice that takes place in the context of the APE in the form of consensus seeking in order that the APE can function. This interaction is the transmission model that regulates the recognition rule by which the curriculum is classified ( $\downarrow\uparrow C$ ) and the realisation rules by which it is framed ( $\downarrow\uparrow F$ ) (Bernstein, 2000: 16), further elaborated as a knowledge structure by means of LCT (Maton, 2005). I would further conjecture that the differing forms of PA and RA can be further distinguished by means of a *cross-conceptualisation* of the autonomy and the epistemic specialisation dimensions of LCT (ER) and its sub-relations ontic (OR) and discursive (DR) relations. By using these two dimensions together I am able to combine PA with the epistemic plane ER+ (OR+/-, DR+/-) to surmise a *positional plane of knowledge practices*:

- *ontic positional autonomy* (OPA $\uparrow\downarrow$ ): mediated by what status positions knowledge practices relate to (expertise)
- *discursive positional autonomy* (DPA $\uparrow\downarrow$ ): mediated by how knowledge practices relate to status positions (authority)

To put this another way, I speculate that the form taken by positional autonomy as evidenced in this study reflects an *ontic/discursive* distinction whose forms vary according to the positional relation to knowledge they refract.

Similarly, I am able to combine RA with the epistemic relations plane to propose an *attitudinal plane of knowledge practices*:

- *ontic relational autonomy* (ORA $\uparrow\downarrow$ ): mediated by what principles, or ideas knowledge practices relate to or are aligned with (purpose)
- *discursive relational autonomy* (DRA $\uparrow\downarrow$ ): mediated by how knowledge practices relate to the principles operating (consensus)

In other words, I offer the proposition that the form taken by relational autonomy in this study reflects an *ontic/discursive* distinction whose forms vary according to the attitudinal relation they refract.

Put another way, I conjecture that the possession of knowledge *expertise* and *purpose* makes an ontic distinction between the contents and form of everyday knowledge and specialises it as curriculum development knowledge; and that similarly curriculum *authority* and *consensus* makes a discursive distinction. Note however, that these concepts relate to knowledge not to the qualities of those who hold the knowledge – i.e. it is not the social relation between knowledge and its author or subject (who is making the claim to knowledge). Together these distinctions can be analysed as *epistemic insights*.

Returning to the discussion of LCT in 3.4.2 of how the curriculum can be specialised by orientation to knowledge and the knower, and insights into knowledge (epistemic plane) and type of gaze (social plane) this analysis makes possible my finding that operating in the approval process is doctrinal insight (OR-, DR+), identified in the way that the UAP emphasises claims to curriculum knowledge based on how a course is taught rather than what is taught (DR+) and its fitness for (institutional) purpose as opposed to whether it has a sound pedagogic or disciplinary basis (OR-). A cultivated gaze (SubR-, IR+) was also found to operate in the interactions between approvers and the approved in which the approver is dominant and in which the basis of their expertise is defined by their social position. Hence there is a clash between practices that have the same autonomy code but differing specialisation codes. The apparent contradiction that both these specialisation codes are operating simultaneously becomes accessible therefore by means of an elaborated autonomic plane in which the claims of the UAP to be experts (in one kind of curriculum knowledge) can be seen to be based on the CPTs interaction with this expertise in order to define what counts.

In other words this is refracting interactional relations (SubR-, IR+) by means of a discursive lens (Maton, 2013a: 194). This analysis becomes possible when autonomy is hybridised with the epistemic plane of the specialisation dimension. How can this be used to differentiate and explain differing forms of curricular coherence for the same autonomy codes?

### ***The legitimization of curriculum coherence***

As explained above, this elaboration of LCT autonomy dimension has the potential to explain the basis of authority that results from that which is bestowed on it by the forms of expertise arising from purpose and consensus, and how these interrelate. This authority, embodied by the UAP, mediates a form of curriculum that is idealised around two competing forms: coherence based on evaluation; and coherence based on heuristic modelling and these provoke (and are provoked by) different forms of expertise, authority, purpose, and consensus as summarised in Table 25.

**Table 25: Curriculum coherence and autonomic types**

<b>Autonomic type</b>	<b>Evaluative Coherence</b>	<b>Heuristic modelling coherence</b>
Expertise (OPA)	Aptitude in the physical structure and hygiene of the curriculum (PA- (OR-))	Aptitude in the conceptual structure and design for learning within a curriculum (PA+ (OR+))
Authority (DPA)	Ascendancy derived from status positions based on managerial or administrative activity, roles and responsibilities (hierarchical) (PA- (DR+))	Ascendancy derived from status positions based on pedagogical activity, roles and responsibilities (horizontal) (PA+ (DR-))
Purpose (ORA)	Aligned with the ideas, principles and needs of the institution and external demands (RA- (OR-))	Aligned with the ideas, principles and needs of the discipline and/or the needs of society (RA+ (OR+))
Consensus (DRA)	Agreement, or group solidarity in which decisions are reached based on the ideas, principles and needs of the institution (RA- (DR+))	Agreement, or group solidarity, in which decisions are made based on the ideas, principles and needs of learners and teachers and on what works in practice (RA+ (DR-))
Insight (OR, DR) within autonomy (PA, RA)	Doctrinal insight (OR-, DR+)	Situational insight (OR+, DR-)

I hesitate at this point to suggest that this might constitute a topology rather than a typology but I speculate that various combinations of these dispositions are possible and indeed likely. For example different curricular purposes will engender different forms of expertise and authority which in turn will in turn affect the possibility of consensus, suggesting that these concepts are interrelated and interdependent. What remains in terms of theory and concept building is to examine the degree to which existing concepts exhaust their organising principles and whether these autonomic types, 'crossed' with epistemic specialisation codes, constitute sub-relations of positional and relational autonomy, respectively. It also remains to be fully explored whether knowledge practices can be examined as varying strengths of these sub-relations within the autonomic plane. However it offers the possibility of a more nuanced understanding of legitimisation of the curriculum and further exploration of the basis of struggles in social fields such as curriculum development. It also demonstrates the efficacy of LCT to 'build knowledge about knowledge' (Maton, 2013a: 194). This analysis, therefore is a work in progress, or what Maton (2013a: 215), echoing Bernstein, calls 'productive imperfection'.

### ***The implications for practice of doctrinal and situational insights***

Doctrinal insight (OR-, DR+) is seen to operate within curriculum approval and for its effects to be strongest at the APE and occurs in this study when the autonomy of CPTs is weaker (PA-, RA-). The emphasis and balance between consensus and authority (the discursive relations existing in relational autonomy) are seen to favour an evaluative coherence (based on consistency of structure and hygiene) and this is the measure of achievement for successful curriculum development. Authority is in the successful management of the curriculum (e.g. being 'gold-plated' for quality assurance as in the case of Forgetown University). This is achieved by a type of methodological dogmatism (Maton, 2013a: 176) in which what matters is how the curriculum is designed rather than what form the design takes. Legitimacy flows from using the specialised approach (realised in the APE and performed by the UAP) and its outputs are the curriculum texts. Expertise in curriculum development knowledge is downplayed or refracted into the procedural know-how of completing this documentation. Thus, doctrinal insight is an allegiance to an approach not a problem.

Situational insight (OR+, DR-) in curriculum approval is based on stronger ontic relations, identified in this study as expertise and purpose. This is implicated in stronger positional autonomy (expertise) and may or may not have stronger relational autonomy (the purpose of the curriculum). Here knowledge practices are specialised by problem-situations for which no pre-determined procedures are set and for which more than one procedure may be used. Expertise is derived from skills and knowledge of the conceptual structure and design for learning within a curriculum (curriculum development knowledge) and authority is downplayed or refracted into pedagogical activity and roles. The basis of legitimacy is in the explanation of problems and the application of specific procedures. This insight offers a means for 'opening up debate to new approaches' and the potential for cumulative knowledge building (Maton, 2013a: 184). Hence it is an allegiance to a problem not an approach. However, while situational insight offers the conditions for heuristic modelling coherence there is a danger that discursive relations can become too weak. In this scenario very weak authority may produce procedural relativism ('anything goes') along with the overpowering choice of too many curricular ideas associated with weaker consensus.

One implication for this tentative conceptualisation of curriculum autonomy is to augur the need for a code shift in epistemic autonomy from doctrinal to situational insight. The stakes for this can be seen in how HE is faced with the notion of curricular openness, as represented by the work of participants in CS1 in this study, and genericism, as illustrated in CS2. This is a blurring of subject boundaries as a form of integration in which the conditions for progressing knowledge are uncertain and in which there is disconnection between the technical and the moral purposes of the curriculum (Wheelahan, 2010). Approval, in this context, is a loss of meaning rather than a loss of freedom – and consensus is the possible means of recovering that meaning. This requires a re-articulation of the epistemic relations of the field by re-asserting ontic relations, and a form of consensus in which decision-making is based on solving learning and teaching problems rather than the management of courses.

However, caution is needed in interpreting the outputs of coherence models, in the way for example that curriculum mapping approaches can be used for both evaluation

(Stark *et al.*, 1997; Cuevas *et al.*, 2009) and modelling (Kahneman *et al.*, 1982; Bamber and Anderson, 2012). It is also possible for problem-solving, as a focus of situational insight, to be applied to curricula to integrate employability in response to external demands where relational autonomy is weak rather than strong. What is needed is a model of enactment that allows for this variation.

#### **8.4 The space of possibles: towards a model for curriculum development**

This thesis has examined the basis of course approval in higher education. It finds that the texts that teachers create for the institutional approval process are poor representations of their pedagogic intentions. Furthermore, these intentions are further limited by the organising principles that operate in the approval process. I have examined these principles using social realism to identify the coding orientations of course development as a set of knowledge practices. I find that there is a particular kind of insight operating in course approval, and that this insight reflects a dominant form of curricular coherence that is in essence evaluative. This 'doctrinal' insight is at play in the approval process and is also seen to influence the planning of courses, the attitudes of teachers, and to maintain the status quo in course designs. The effects of this are seen to shape the autonomy of knowledge practices in the curriculum, and this autonomy is differentiated according to forms of authority, consensus, expertise and purpose. This throws into relief the knowledge structures and coding orientations of curriculum development knowledge itself, and what constitutes legitimate 'know-how' as well as 'know-what' in designing the curriculum. These findings are useful for course teams, academic developers and institutions because they make visible the implications of current practices in UK higher education.

The structure of the field of curriculum development and its pedagogic and legitimation code has been examined in this study (see 7.5.3) and identified as a specialist field organised around curriculum development knowledge (curriculum studies) as a specialist field using the L2 (see Table 16 in Chapter 4) that sets out how knowledge is specialised and how this is framed. This field of knowledge has been shown in this study to have a pedagogic discourse and to be structured horizontally and organised segmentally whilst having a knower structure that is organised

hierarchically. The key ideas and concepts in use in practice, influences and organising principles of this field were set out in the literature review, Chapter 2. Of these the concept of coherence, identified in the literature, has been pinpointed as central to the practice in the field generally and its subfield, academic development, as a key curriculum influence, particularly in relation to curricular autonomy. This has been differentiated in this study with regard to its ontic relations (expertise and purpose) and its discursive relations (authority and consensus) as discussed above. This pedagogic code and its modalities is an external language of enactment (Maton, 2013a: 209) and can be used to generate a model, as a *space of possibles*.

#### **8.4.1 A dynamic coherence model of the curriculum**

This thesis has identified a range of organising principles underlying the set of practices that constitutes curriculum design, development and approval as it operates in the two case studies. This analysis has enabled the field of academic development to be examined along several dimensions, revealing issues that were previously obscured. This principle basis of the legitimacy of the curriculum, its autonomy and the measures of its achievement with regard to curriculum coherence, have been explored as it relates to the empirical. How does this inform practice?

*A dynamic coherence model* of the curriculum attempts to capture the underlying bases of practice that have been identified within processes of curriculum development, including course design and approval. This relates to the differing forms of curriculum authority and expertise shown to be operating in this study in the case studies; the variable emphasis on the purposes of the curriculum that shifts at the time of course approval to the material and technical; and the tendency towards contextual coherence and evaluative hygiene in the intended curriculum. The model re-configures these 'invisible tribunals' as an 'imaginative act rather than the browbeaten response to social power' (Maton, 2013a: 105) because it identifies the possibility of something being other than it is.

While the equilibrium of the curriculum will vary over time its stable state is reached when opposing strengths of the four relations are resolved. Stasis is the position that

the curriculum is likely to return to in the lived curriculum. The APE and the approval process are seen to be disruptions to this stable state that provokes a struggle for control of the pedagogic device that remains largely unresolved. However, positions A, B and C (labelled in Figure 10 above) are the projections of approval described in 7.6.2 and also, characterised as visible and certain (they will happen), and oriented towards institutional authority, and technical and evaluative coherence. Less visible and certain is point D, iteration, and two further stages identified in this study as *experimentation* (E) and *(re)design* (F). These positions D, E and F are (increasingly) uncertain and less visible (tacit) and are oriented towards disciplinary and individual perspectives, pedagogic concerns and coherence achieved through heuristic modelling. These three positions, or moments, will now be described briefly:

- **Iteration (D):** This is usually the point at which the course is taught for a second time (normally in the second year after approval) but it can be any point the course team chooses. Changes to the curriculum made at this stage include modification to assessment, the introduction of new topics, a new course handbook etc.
- **Experimentation (E):** This is the point, or state, in which the course team tries out new approaches, pedagogical methods or substantive teaching materials. This may not include modification to the official curriculum documentation but texts are likely to be generated.
- **(Re-)Design (F):** This is the point, or state, in which the design of the course is significantly changed. This can involve changes to timetabling, environment, form (e.g. online) and pedagogical method. It will involve changes to the programme specification and may well trigger the approval process.

The movement from D to F requires the need for specialist curriculum expertise in modelling coherence or a shift or addition of teacher expertise to include curriculum design (teacher as designer or curriculum architect). This specialist design expertise includes aesthetic as well as functional design. This expertise is defined as the possession of specialist curriculum development knowledge with respect to modelling coherence.



#### 8.4.2 The possibility of academic development

In the enactment of the curriculum model outlined above academic development becomes increasingly agentic. However, accounts in this study suggest that academic development is resisted (CS1 – see 5.2.4) or irrelevant (CS2 – see 6.3.1) for a number of reasons. This includes the perception of the approvers that their work was a form of academic development (see 7.4.2) and that both approval seekers and approvers who had an explicit academic development role were conflicted in their understanding of how this role could support curriculum development (see 6.3.3). These findings concur with the literature (see 2.3.5) that shows resistance to academic development (Clegg, 2009) and questions whether academic development is supporting teachers to build knowledge cumulatively (Shay, 2012). Shay asks the question of academic development: ‘are we there yet?’ with regard to educational development and its status as a field. She calls for a knowledge base to strengthen academic development as a professional field that is able to engage rigorously and systematically with the problems of HE. In the context of course design and approval this knowledge base, as it exists in the case study contexts, is set out by the external language of description for curriculum development knowledge (see Table 16 in Chapter 4). This problematises the form of specialist knowledge that is accessible as discussed above.

This study contributes to this debate on the place for academic development in HE by examining the conditions for activities that support the development of the curriculum. It has identified the structure of the field of curriculum development as horizontal and segmented with weak grammar (Bernstein, 2000) and its boundaries as being regionalised (Shay, 2012). It agrees with Raban (2007) that the separation of enhancement (QE) from assurance (QA) is not helpful for academics or the institution, and the need to reconnect them. This realignment would be in line with QAA’s (2006) original conception of the programme specification in which it is:

*... constituted through an active process in which planning, acting and evaluating are all reciprocally related and integrated into the process’  
(Grundy 1987: 115).*

This directs the focus to the purpose of academic development and the role of academic developers. This purpose is not only to implement external drivers for

change but to negotiate the pedagogical benefits of adjustments to practice with colleagues. Thus the positional-attitudinal typology (see Figure 11 above) relates also to the academic developer's role. Here perceptions of the academic developer's curricular expertise and authority are subject to understanding its purpose and the consensus that operates to recognise and legitimate its authenticity.

### ***Authentic curriculum development***

The notion of academic development in which the curriculum is developed through consensus is an imagined one in which authenticity is constructed rather than uncovered (Smith, 2012). Central to this is integrity of practice as 'imagination's heartwork':

*.....which entitles practitioners to the freedom to pursue co-operatively the inherent benefits of the practice to high levels of excellence, with due accountability to the public but without undue interference from outside interests.*  
(Hogan, 2009: 39)

Alongside this is the need to 're-colonise' the dual endeavours of curriculum design and strategic planning by developing a language and rationale that resonates with teachers' shared beliefs and values (McNutt, 2012). Teachers' own personal frames of reference need to be addressed alongside the external agenda in a collective *reflexive habitus* (Archer, 2010) involving being mindful in organisational settings (Weick, 2012). This mindfulness implicates a teacher expertise that is open and adaptive in its autonomy and organic in its consensus. It provokes me to reappraise and modify the Waters' collegial principle (see 3.6.2). By my re-definition social consensus, defined as a form of social solidarity, can be formulated into a consensual principle:

*Socially consensual structures are those in which there is a tendency towards collegiality achieved between the members of an inclusive and open body of experts who are theoretically equal in their levels of expertise but who are specialized by area of expertise*  
(Based on Waters' (1989: 956) collegial principle)

However, the difficulty that this future for curriculum development faces is that to address this is to be 'caught in the act' of performing the very ideology of change that its critics are quick to jump on. This is the trap that Bernstein describes as the fear of the new social order, constructed by 'new technologies, lifelong learning policies and a

fluid, adaptable workforce’, as a ‘totally pedagogised society’ (Bernstein, 2001: 365). Its potential effects situate academic developers in a world that requires ‘a new cadre of pedagogues with their research projects, recommendations, new discourses and legitimations’ (ibid.: 367). It is an imagined future with a number of possibilities.

### ***What is the possible future for curriculum approval?***

Drawing on the findings of this study and the discussion above I will now consider briefly how a curriculum approval process developed according to this *consensual principle* would achieve both structural/administrative and contextual/conceptual coherence. I offer five tenets, or guiding principles, that would be present in such a curriculum design and approval process:

1. The timeline for decision making involves iteration and shared, open and collegial teamwork in which the curriculum is designed with specialist support and resources.
2. The decision making process includes the contribution of heuristic modelling, involving mappings and other techniques and involving non-rational and intuitive thinking
3. The *structural* and *administrative coherence* of courses is supported by expertise available to advise course teams.
4. The *conceptual* and *contextual coherence* of courses is supported by expertise available to course teams.
5. The documentary process for assuring the structural alignment of courses is related efficiently and practically to the texts that are used in the delivery of the course by teachers and students.

These tenets are indicated by participants’ accounts in this study and emerge from their stories and in response to the question ‘What *system of approval* would you wish for?’ represented by these sample quotes:

*... having people specialising in particular areas of documentation would actually improve what we get*  
(Chris (E6), approver)

*... if resources were unlimited, you know, were limitless and we could do anything, what would you want to do? That was my starting point - for people to think in an innovative way.*  
(Betty (D2), approval seeker)

*We need to move away from the gold-plated approach to management quality to address an external agenda and to become more confident, see ourselves as a mature institution with several successful audits behind us and actually start to look again at a more flexible risk-based approach to all of this ... And not worry too much about what the QAA might think next time it came in*  
(Lana, (E2), approver)

*It has to be time to sit down and think. You have such a long time to regret that you didn't change something, you know, make it better when you knew it was needed*  
(D6, Alison, approval seeker)

### **8.5 Limitations of the findings**

This study was limited in a number of ways, including most notably the decision not to examine the internal coherence of the 12 courses in the institutional case study; the absence of a rigorous study of professional and academic development; and the lack of investigation into the lived curriculum in the case study of one institution's arrangements for course design and approval (CS2).

Taking these in turn, the generalisation of the approval system in the case study institution rested on the homogeneity of the systems that all courses undergo in the institution and the transferability of this to the 10 institutions represented in CS1. While this allowed some 'triangulation' of accounts the approval systems in the CS1 institutions were not available for close examination. In developing a theoretical language for the coherence of courses in the case study I am unable to verify that this is also the dominant pedagogic code for all institutions in CS1. However, some trustworthiness can be attributed to the analysis of the CS1 courses in relation to the 12 courses in CS2 in that one of the courses studied (CPT8: Applied Social Science) is comparable to the course created by participants in CS1, allowing for reasonable inferences to be made about what counts as legitimate texts. Nevertheless, the basis of the analysis of pedagogy for the L2 for Autonomy assumes that the discussion of pedagogy in CS1 'stands for' the (lack of) discussion of pedagogy in CS2. The argument that this justifies the inclusion of the cross-institution case study (CS1) in the research

design therefore may also appear to be circular, if not at least pragmatic. Also, the proposition that the discipline is the basis for pedagogical dispositions is established in CS1, and while this is triangulated to some extent in CS2 the relative absence of discussion of pedagogical issues in CS2 throws some doubt at least on this causal inference.

However, the research design aimed to address this in three ways: (1) the data from the case studies is differentiated (e.g. sharers and approvers); (2) the research design is progressive in relation to Archer's morphogenetic sequence in which CS1 data were used to identify the field and to shape rather than determine the examination of the second case study; and (3) the autonomous principles of the three phases of the research in which the activity took place. Thus, while the findings from CS1 were taken into account for the second and third research questions the analysis was not solely dependent upon it. However, there remains the need to research further into the conceptual coherence of curricula and to identify the potential for knowledge building as the basis for curriculum renewal (Shay, 2012). This study contributes to this by identifying a curriculum model capable of making renewal possible, but does not identify the means of achieving this.

The second limitation is the absence of a rigorous study of professional development and the role of academic developers. This is pertinent given the centrality of the notion of expertise to the concepts of autonomy and consensus. While expertise was defined in relation to teachers' skills generally there was not an examination of expertise in terms of curriculum development and how this might be developed. Academic development was critiqued in participants' accounts and in my analysis it is clear that the means of enacting the consensual principle remains tacit. However, this study will advance practice by providing a model for examining the goals of curriculum development strategies and for evaluating them.

The final limitation is the lack of investigation and knowledge of the lived curriculum in relation to the acts and strategies of curriculum development at the classroom and course levels that are ongoing. The decision to focus on the approval event emerged from my allegiance to a problem that presented itself initially in my professional role

as a curriculum developer. It is possible therefore that the research design contains bias towards academic development determinism. Efforts to counter this were taken including researcher reflexivity and a careful consideration of insider research as outlined in Chapter 4. It is inevitable that an aspect of this remains present in research of a 'naturally-occurring' educational intervention such as curriculum development in which 'interest is in structure, powers, generative mechanisms and tendencies, which are all ways of scientifically conceptualising the underlying principles that produce the empirical.'(Clegg 2005a: 420-21).

### **8.5.1 An appraisal of the qualitative nature of this research**

Returning to the characteristics of qualitative research identified in 4.2.1 these can now be re-appraised. The focus of the analysis of participants' perspectives was on meaning (Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2006; Merriam 1998) and the process of developing multiple meanings that individual actors attach to their experiences (Maxwell, 2012). This was achieved through close attention to participants' accounts, and the stories they told. The study took place in naturalistic settings in which I have explored the particular contexts, and their effects on the participants' views and behaviours, by studying people or events in, or close to, their actual settings (Maxwell 2012) including observations of actual events and meetings. The design of the study was emergent and responsive and adaptive (Merriam 1998) allowing the research focus to be shaped, participants and context to be selected and data analysed (Stake 2008). This was able to accommodate novel insights offered by the approvers, including a re-appraisal of the concept of bureaucracy. This provoked a return to the data to re-examine the notion of consensus and for a new understanding of this to emerge.

Furthermore I used multiple sources, including in-depth analysis of the topic and a cross checking of interpretations facilitated by the use of more than one source (the cross-institution case study (CS1) and the in-depth case study of one institution (CS2)) and the relationship between these was made clear in the research design and the analysis was structured in the three fieldwork chapters to reflect this. As a researcher I was central to my research as far as collecting and transcribing the data enabled adjustments to the research design to be made and deeper insight into the data and

analysis was potentially increased. For example the in-depth analysis of the *assessments precepts dilemma* (see 6.4.3) was not foreseen but was a disruption of practice in the case study that could not be overlooked. It required a much greater analysis of the documentation than was originally anticipated in the original research design.

The study provided rich data and description of the context, actors and events that were used to present the finding of this study (Merriam, 1998). I took into account the complexity of course design and approval issues in order to allow them to be vicariously experienced by readers of this study. This included the extended accounts of participants' practice. The research, therefore, is interpretive and inextricably bound to the interpretive characteristics of this type of inquiry, allowing me, alongside the participants and the reader to make interpretations based on one's own understanding of the issue (Creswell, 2007). This involved reflexivity on my part as a researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Flick, 2006) in which the researcher's reflexivity and the factors that may possibly have had a bearing on the researcher's interpretations are documented and recognised as important.

In Chapter 1 I set out the professional concerns that guide the thesis and I explain the object of study and the research problem to which I have allegiance. I explain that I have a role in my own institution and my own interest in the research. In the research design in I acknowledge the access granted to me within my own institution and in my professional role. The ethical considerations arising from this are explored in 4.6 in which I set out the issues arising from insider research and my positionality as a researcher, including access, pre-understanding, role duality and organisational politics. This includes the possibility of incongruent relationships in both case studies and I set out how I countered this by careful and cautious checking of my interpretations and that this was made possible by mean of a researcher identity coding of the data. This reflexivity enabled me to aim for impartiality and to counter prejudices and viewpoints and how I was perceived as a researcher. Ultimately, however, I confess that I am part of the institution and the institutional processes. There are inevitably weaknesses, prejudices and interests at play in any study: I have worked to limit these while acknowledging their existence and possible effects.

There are inevitably weaknesses, prejudices and interests at play in any study. I have worked to limit these while acknowledging their existence and possible effects. In this I have acknowledged my concern for academic development as central to my professional role in HE while being vigilant to the effects that might cloud or veil my understanding of what I encountered and observed. There are inevitably weaknesses, prejudices and interests at play in any study: I have worked to limit these while acknowledging their existence and possible effects.

### **8.5.2 Implications and recommendations of this study**

This study informs teachers' understandings of how the curriculum is developed in HE, and the means by which this is undertaken. It highlights the need for institutional support for course design that can accommodate economic and other factors that influence its development and implementation. The importance of peer review in this is emphasised, as a means of safeguarding both the practical and the moral purposes of education. Further research is needed on how this can be implemented at the course level and the institutional processes of supporting academic development. This thesis recommends:

1. The documentation required for quality assurances purposes needs to be simplified and separated from that required for course and pedagogical design. This will enable teachers to do both more effectively.
2. Course designs should be contextually reconnected with their sites of enactment (teaching and learning). The documentation of courses should be made less semantically condensed and less abstract and tacit. An improved understanding of this will inform the preparation of these documents.
3. Course designers should rationalise the curricular requirements of the discipline more clearly and effectively. Understanding the underlying principles of knowledge and knower structures will assist this and equip course teams to accommodate (or resist) influences from outside the discipline. It will also assist academic developers to support the planning and course approvers to legitimate the course design.
4. The effects of changes to the curriculum to address 'employability' should be clearer to course teams and institutional academic development teams. This



includes recognition that compliance with external influences on the curriculum can weaken discipline and curriculum boundaries for some curricular subjects, especially those that are applied theory and that help is needed to develop pedagogical approaches that support teaching and learning of work-related knowledge and skills.

5. The conceptual coherence of curricula requires attention to enable curricular designs to achieve cumulative knowledge building. This coherence should find a balance of 'practical experience' and theoretical knowledge in the curriculum to prevent the latter becoming uncertain, contested, and 'squeezed', and being increasingly replaced, or transformed, by the former.
6. Course approval should allow for the provisionality of the course design of new courses and the changes made to existing ones. This includes providing the optimal conditions for curricular experimentation.

These recommendations, taken together, have the potential to affect the 'possibility' of new curricula and pedagogies and for curriculum development to become a creative rather than a regulatory exercise.

## **8.6 Conclusion**

This study has focussed on the characteristics of the practices that shape, and are shaped by, the educational beliefs and values that university teachers bring to course design and planning. It contributes to the literature by exploring an area that is under-researched in order to throw light onto the processes by which the curriculum is developed and approved. A theoretical language capable of examining these practices and a model of curriculum development that is able to enact them has been identified.

The original contribution to knowledge of this study is located in three areas: empirical, theoretical and methodological. It has extended empirical knowledge of the course planning and curriculum development process in higher education by exploring the experiences of academics and other staff involved in the course planning and approval processes. Secondly this research is theorised at the interdisciplinary intersection of a set of literatures: on professional development of teachers in higher education, on the curriculum process, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

And thirdly, the extended methodology chapter has been developed using an analytical framework drawing on Bernstein's code theory and Maton's legitimation code theory. This framework has been applied, uniquely at the time of this study, to the meso-level in UK HE to develop a language of description for autonomy that enables the field and the data to be explored and for code shifts and clashes to be examined. It has identified autonomy as the primary dimension of LCT that sets the context for relations among other code modalities of a field and an elaboration of the concept of autonomy has been proposed.

This study has documented and developed an understanding of the processes and mechanisms that enable or constrain how the curriculum is developed and approved in a UK HE institution at a time when understandings of the purpose of the curriculum are contested and in flux. It has explored the cultural, structural and agential factors that promote or impair curriculum development. It is evident that there are important pedagogical implications of the curriculum discourses leading up to and during curriculum approval events and lessons to be drawn. These insights expose the organising principles that underpin the bases for developing the curriculum and offer the potential for a model of curriculum change processes that can be used by curriculum developers.

I am now, more than ever, mindful of the importance of understanding such effects on the processes that currently operate in my own institution and elsewhere and the need to investigate this further.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Glossary of terms used in this thesis

Note: words in *italicised bold* have their own glossary entry

**academic development:** a sub-field of the field of Higher Education - used as a generic term encompassing *curriculum development* and *learning, teaching and assessment*, undertaken by specialist academics (academic developers) with specific roles for promoting the improvement of courses and teaching and the student experience.

**accreditation:** acknowledgement that a course has met certain standards. Used in this study to refer to the conferring of accreditation status to a course by the university, but also, in some cases, by a *Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body*.

**approval (Course):** the institutional process of certifying a course as 'fit to be taught', also known as validation, to ensure that all courses are of a high standard and that mechanisms are in place for ensuring that the high standards are maintained. Approval is a form of *legitimation*.

**approval panel event (APE):** a formal panel event (lasting about 3 hours) in which the *university approval panel*, led by a chair, scrutinises the *submission document* (the proposed *programme specification*) and puts questions to the *course planning team*

**assessment:** the process of identifying a mark or grade for students' work in a module, including the defined tasks, or assignments, that the student must undertake, and the learning outcomes and criteria required for the evaluation of the submitted work. Also, specifically in this study, one of *Code Theory's* three message systems.

**authority (curricular):** the power to state what is approvable or legitimate, derived from curricular *Expertise*, and what counts as expertise (*Relational Autonomy*) and whose expertise (*Positional Autonomy*) and the degree of social integration or solidarity of this expertise (*consensus*). This authority mediates the *idealised curriculum* as based on *coherence*, as combinations of *evaluation* and *modelling*, and *consistency*.

**autonomy:** the degree of independence from external influences. In this thesis 'Autonomy' refers to a dimension of *Legitimation Code Theory* that explores the organising principles of practices in terms of 'autonomy codes', which comprises two relations: *positional autonomy* and *relational autonomy*.

**award:** the degree, diploma or certificate conferred on the student upon completion of the course. The term *award* is synonymous with qualification.

**bureaucracy:** used pragmatically in this study to organise aspects of the fieldwork that focused on institutional formal processes for *curriculum approval* as 'bureaucratic forms', based around Weber's (1968) six features of bureaucracy. Combined with Waters' (1989) collegial organisation types, bureaucracy offers the conceptual means of identifying field positions in this study that can then be analysed using code theory. Hence, *bureaucracy* is the focus of field positions but not their basis.

**classification:** a code of Bernstein's *pedagogic device*, conceptualising relations of power that regulate relations (boundaries) between contexts or categories

**Code Theory:** theories devised by Basil Bernstein, primarily the concepts of *classification* and *framing*, and developed by Karl Maton into *Legitimation Code Theory*. This study uses Code Theory's three message systems, *curriculum*, *assessment* and *pedagogy*, to organise the findings.

**coherence (curricular):** the internal relationship between the (actual) course and its idealised administrative self; and the means by which the *Quality* of the *Curriculum* can be addressed - identified in this study as having two domains: *evaluation* and heuristic *modelling*. *Coherence* is situated by the discourse of evaluation and the structures that classify what counts as a successful course design (institutional course *approval*). This is related to the



- possibility of experimentation and (re-)design of courses (**modelling**). Both are influenced by curricular **purpose, authority, consensus** and **expertise**.
- collegiality**: used pragmatically in this study to organise aspects of the fieldwork that focused on curriculum sharing and peer review as ‘collegial forms’, based around ‘subjectivities in interaction’ (Kreber, 2010). Combined with Waters’ (1989) collegial organisation types, collegiality offers the conceptual means of identifying field positions in this study that can then be analysed using **Code Theory**. Hence, collegiality is the focus of field positions (especially those of the **discipline**) but not their basis.
- consensus**: used pragmatically in this study to organise aspects of the fieldwork that focused on idealised notions of peer review as ‘consensual forms’, based around cooperation. Combined with Waters’ (1989) collegial principle, consensus offers the conceptual means of identifying field positions in this study that can then be analysed using code theory. Hence, consensus is the focus of field positions (especially those of the *Approval* process) but not their basis.
- consensus-seeking**: an elaboration of the concept of *Consensus*, derived in this study, in two ways: firstly as the pragmatic resolution of conflict/struggle in the encounter of *Bureaucracy* and *Collegiality* in the *Approval* process; and secondly as an accommodation of evaluative *Coherence* to recover meaning and to make possible curriculum modelling in the form of experimentation and (re-)design.
- consistency (curricular)**: the external relationship between the course and *all other* courses. This is seen to be derived historically from the need for the institution to be efficient and competitive (to have a market advantage). This promotes a de-centred market (DCM) **pedagogic identity** (Bernstein, 2000). Prized in this normative perspective is the approval of courses as ‘fit for purpose’, as having an absence of inconsistency. Consistency is associated with **coherence** as giving the form of the idealised curriculum governed by curricular **authority**.
- course (of study)**: the accumulation of modules, according to a set of rules, that leads to the award of a qualification. *Course* is also, a unit of structure with regard to the work of academics.
- course rationale**: a section of the **submission document** in which the **course planning team** articulate how the course is designed and structured, including, typically, how it facilitates key university priorities such as internationalisation and opportunities for work-based study.
- course planning**: the generic activity of preparing forms of **curriculum, pedagogy** and **assessment**. *Course planning* is used in this study in the specific sense of the period leading up to the **approval panel event**, in which a **course planning team** prepares a **submission document**.
- course planning team (CPT)**: the group of academics who are responsible for teaching a course and who work on the preparation of course designs and information for the approval process, including the course leader and module leaders. This can also include department **learning, teaching and assessment** leader, and the **quality** leader, student representatives, and external advisers.
- credits**: Credit is a means of quantifying and recognising learning whenever and wherever it is achieved. Credit is awarded when the specific set of learning outcomes for a module or programme have been successfully demonstrated. One credit represents 10 notional hours of learning. 360 credits successful study in an undergraduate degree (180 credits for a Masters degree).
- critical realism**: the theory that some sense-data can and do accurately represent external objects, properties, and events, while other sense-data do not accurately represent any external objects, properties, and events. This involves ‘*ontological realism*’ as a commitment to the idea that there is a reality that exists independently from experience of which human beings can create knowledge; ‘*epistemological relativism*’ in that all knowledge is considered to be humanly produced reflecting the conditions under which it is

produced; and '*judgemental rationality*' as the notion of judgement and the possibility of judgement as beliefs that can be wrong.

**curriculum:** a plan for learning that has a number of components including programme and content, learning objectives and learning strategies, assessment methods and resources. This view of curriculum as primarily 'content' is the aspect 'most visible to students', and which is often synonymous with curriculum structure at the programme (*course*) or *module* (unit) level in HE. Also, specifically in this study, one of *Code Theory*'s three message systems.

**curriculum development:** the activities and processes by which courses are designed, reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis, within institutional and national requirements. One subset of this is the process of course planning that takes place when new courses are approved by the institution, or when they are re-approved (a process that takes place typically every 6 years).

**discipline:** a general body of knowledge with a reasonably logical taxonomy; a specialised vocabulary; an accepted body of theory; a systematic research strategy; and techniques for replication and validation (Dressel and Mayhew, 1974). In this study discipline is considered to be synonymous with 'field of study', and as a means of classifying units of study (*courses* and *modules*) in terms of the subject matter being taught and/or researched in them.

**discursive gap:** the symbolic space between the *internal language of description* (L2) and the *external language of description* (L2) that is susceptible to ideology. In other words the gap between theory and data that the external language traverses.

**discursive relations (DR):** one of two sub-relations of *epistemic relations*, DR is used to describe the relationship between practices and other practices, and can be used to explore emphasis on legitimate procedures for constructing objects of study.

**disposition:** the coding orientation brought to education by different social groups that can be analysed by means of *classification* and *framing*, and *Legitimation Codes*. Disposition includes values, modes of practice and relations, as the differing positions within society.

**distributive rules:** the ordered regulation and distribution of a society's worthwhile knowledge store - one of the three pedagogic rules of the *pedagogic device*.

**employability:** a graduate's achievements and his/her potential to gain a graduate job. This is measured with regard to achievements relating to the course of study itself but importantly also includes transferable skills and personal attributes gained from studying at university.

**enacted curriculum:** a stage of *curriculum development* involving the putting into practice of the intentions articulated in the *intended curriculum* phase. *Pedagogic practice* is subject to the immediate influence of the *approval panel event* and its projected effects and curriculum documentation becomes 'sacred'. Used in this study as the focus of one phase of fieldwork.

**epistemic-pedagogic device (EPD):** an aspect of the *legitimation device*, the generative mechanism of social fields of practice. The setting of the EPD are conceptualised as *Specialisation* codes (*social relations* and *epistemic relations*).

**epistemic relations (ER):** a relation of LCT *Specialisation*, which explores the relations between knowledge and its proclaimed object of study (that part of the world of which knowledge is claimed). ER can be differentiated into *ontic relations* and *discursive relations*.

**evaluation:** a systematic determination of a subject's merit, worth and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards; used to assist an organisation to assess any aim, realisable concept/proposal, or any alternative, to help in decision-making; or to ascertain the degree of achievement or value in regard to the aim and objectives and results of any such action that has been completed.

**evaluative coherence:** a form of curricular *coherence* in which the technical and material aspects of the curriculum, including its hygiene, predominates in its *approval* (legitimation). This is likely to be associated with curriculum *authority* that rests primarily with the institution, and *evaluation* that focuses on contextual aspects of the curriculum, including generic skills such as *employability*.

**evaluative rules:** the ordering and transformation of *pedagogic discourse* into a set of criterial standards to be attained - one of the three pedagogic rules of the *pedagogic device*.

**expertise (curricular):** a term used generally in a social practice context to stand for the degree of interdependence between the individual acting and the social practice in which they act (Billett, 2001); developed specifically in this study as a determining factor in the *approval* of the *curriculum* (its legitimisation) given by its (LCT) *Autonomy* (and its sub relations: of whose expertise – *positional autonomy*; and what counts as expertise – *relational autonomy*) and the degree of *consensus* as its social integration in curricular practices.

**external language of description (L2):** refers to the syntax whereby the *internal language of description* (L1) can describe something other than itself. The L2 constructs what is to count as an empirical referent, how these referents relate, and the means by which these referential relations can be translated back into the internal conceptual language (Moore and Muller, 2002: 633)

**external subject specialist:** a member of the *university approval panel*, external to the institution, who represents specialist disciplinary/subject knowledge and *expertise*.

**faculty:** a unit of organisational structure of a university in which academic departments are divided. Each faculty acts as an umbrella organisation for departments which share common concerns and academic interests.

**framing:** a code of Bernstein's *pedagogic device*, conceptualising relations of control within contexts or categories, the modality.

**gaze:** an analysis of *knower structures* made in respect of varying strengths, or modalities, of *social relations*, realised as a social plane (a continuum from weaker to stronger) identifying: trained; cultivated; social; and born gazes. Each of these gazes involves varying strengths of *subjective relations* and *interactional relations*.

**genericism:** the move to generic skills as a form of *regionalisation* of the *curriculum* that is based on a performance mode that has its origins in initiatives such as youth training schemes and prevocational education. These are characterised by such terms as 'key skills', 'core skills', 'thinking skills', 'problem-solving' and 'teamwork'.

**hierarchical (knowledge structure):** the characteristics and nature of a *knowledge structure* defined as 'a coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised' which 'attempts to create very general propositions and theories, which integrate knowledge at lower levels, and in this way shows underlying uniformities across an expanding range of apparently different phenomena' (Bernstein, 1999: 161, 162), such as the *discipline* of physics.

**horizontal discourse:** everyday commonsense knowledge where meanings are largely dependent on the context and where knowledges are strongly segmented from one another.

**horizontal (knowledge structure):** the characteristics and nature of a *knowledge structure* defined as 'a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and criteria for the construction and circulation of texts' (Bernstein, 1999: 162), such the *disciplines* of the humanities and social sciences.

**idealised curriculum:** a typology of the *curriculum* as two realisations: i) based on curriculum *coherence* based on *evaluation* focused on the absence of toxicity and inconsistency; ii) based on *coherence* based on *modelling* in which the '*space of possibles*' includes the potential for curricular experimentation and (re-)design.

**insight:** an analysis of *knowledge structure* made in respect of varying strengths of *epistemic relations*, realised in an epistemic plane as (a continuum from weaker to stronger) including: knower/none; situational; doctrinal; and purist insights. Each of these insights involves varying strengths of *ontic relations* and *discursive relations*.

**institution:** a place of Higher Education, usually a university.

**intended curriculum:** a stage of curriculum development involving a phase of *course planning*, review and *approval*, in which the planned curriculum is described in curriculum documentation. Used in this study as the focus of one phase of fieldwork.

**interactional relations:** a sub-relation of *social relations* (SR) that analytically distinguishes between practices and the kinds of actors engaged in them and between knowledge and practices of knowing by subjects. This describes how strongly knowledge claims bound and control legitimate ways of knowing through interaction with significant others.

**internal language of description (L1):** refers to the syntax whereby a conceptual language is created. This is the language of a theory, knowledge or practice that effectively describes itself. This is only as good as 'the principles of description to which it gives rise' (Bernstein, 2000: 91). In other words to avoid circularity or to describe things that are outside the theory that it investigates (external referents) an L1 needs an *external language of description* (L2).

**knower structure(s):** an elaboration of Bernstein's *knowledge structures* by Maton to include the 'who' of knowers to the 'how' and 'what' of knowledge. Constituted as the *Epistemic-Pedagogic Device* and given by *Specialisation* codes, *epistemic relations* and *social relations*.

**knowledge structure(s):** the characteristics and nature of the fields of knowledge *production* conceptualised by Bernstein as structures (*horizontal* and *hierarchical*), and differentiated by Maton as the epistemic plane (*ontic relations* and *discursive relations*)

**language of description (LoD):** an analytical device that acts to translate one language into another; distinguished as *internal* and *external* LoDs, whereby the internal language (L1) refers to the syntax whereby a conceptual language is created and the external LoD (L2) refers to syntax whereby the internal language can describe something other than itself (Bernstein, 1996: 135:6) The LoD provides the basis for establishing what are to count as data and provides for their principled reading. The space between L1 and L2 is the *discursive gap*.

**learning, teaching and assessment (LTA):** an institutional discourse on academic practices - also referred to as *academic development*. Associated with institutional LTA Strategy setting out the goals and principles of learning and teaching that academics are asked to subscribe to, undertaken by specialist academics (academic developers) with specific roles for promoting the improvement of courses and teaching and the student experience.

**Legitimation (languages of):** practices and strategies within fields and in struggles and potentially legitimate truth claims - applied in this study with regard to the *approval* of courses.

**Legitimation Code Theory (LCT):** a theory devised by Karl Maton that considers education as comprising fields of struggle and which comprises (currently) five dimensions: *Autonomy*, looking at external relations; *Temporality* looking at time; *Specialisation* highlighting social and epistemological relations of knowledge; *Density* focussing on aggregations of moral and material values; and *Semantics* looking at internal relations of *semantic gravity* and *semantic density*.

**legitimation device:** a meta-language for objectifying fields, involving codes that are organising principles of practice and knowledge claims as dimensions of *Legitimation Code Theory*.

**lived curriculum:** a stage of curriculum development involving the ongoing practices of the *curriculum* in which *pedagogic practice* settles into a form of repertoire (*habitus*) characterised in this study as being 'beyond' the immediate influence of the *approval panel event* and its projected effects and in which *curriculum* documentation becomes 'profane'. Used in this study as the focus of one phase of fieldwork.

**modelling (coherence):** a heuristic form of curricular *coherence* in which the *pedagogic* and moral aspects of the *curriculum*, predominates in its *approval (legitimation)*. This is likely to be associated with curriculum *authority* that rests primarily with the individual teacher or the *discipline*, and *evaluation* that focuses on conceptual aspects of the curriculum, including its mapping.

**module:** a unit of structure of a *course* that carries prescribed *credits* and defined assessment tasks and learning outcomes.

**ontic relations (OR):** one of two sub-relations of *epistemic relations*, OR is used to describe relations between practices and that part of the world towards which they are oriented, and thereby can be used to explore how strongly knowledge practices bound and control legitimate objects of study.

**open educational resources:** materials freely shared through open licences which facilitate use, revision, translation, improvement and sharing by anyone. Resources are published in formats that facilitate both use and editing, and that accommodate a diversity of technical platforms. Whenever possible, they should also be available in formats that are accessible to people with disabilities and people who do not yet have access to the Internet. (Cape Town Declaration, 2007). These include whole *courses* or *modules*, as in this thesis.

**pedagogy/pedagogic practice:** what defines what counts as a valid transmission of knowledge. Also, specifically in this study, pedagogy is one of the three message systems of Bernstein's *Code Theory*.

**pedagogic device:** the *pedagogic rules* and *pedagogic fields* that govern the field of activity conceptualising the generative mechanism underlying practices.

**pedagogic discourse:** a symbolic rather than an actual discourse, as a principle of *recontextualisation* (Bernstein, 1990: 184) that is not visible but which can be known 'through its effects in structuring practices (conceptualised in terms of codes)' (Maton, 2004: 49). Two types of discourse are recognised: *horizontal* and *vertical*.

**pedagogic fields:** the fields of activity (*production*, *recontextualisation* and *reproduction*) that constitute an 'arena' of struggle and conflict created by the *pedagogic device*.

**pedagogic identity:** a symbolic rather than empirical notion of identity as a form of field position. Bernstein distinguished between 'local' (those available in communities and groups) and official identities (those influenced by the state or external categories), as an ordering of the social into four ideal types: retrospective, prospective (centring identities) therapeutic and market (decentring) (Tyler, 1999). These differ according to their bias and focus, and represent various groups' struggles for control over policy and practice.

**pedagogic rules:** the rules (*distributive*, *recontextualising* and *evaluative*) associated with the fields of activity (*production*, *recontextualisation* and *reproduction*)

**Positional Autonomy (PA):** a sub-relation of the *Legitimation Code Theory* dimension *Autonomy*, referring to the nature of relations between specific positions in the social dimension of a context or field and positions in other contexts.

**purpose (curricular):** developed in this study as a dimension of the *coherence* model of *curriculum development*. Purpose is expressed as a continuum from an emphasis on the purely material and technical at one extreme to the pedagogical and moral at the other.

**practice(s):** used generally as a synonym for activity in the context of learning and teaching (practices), but also in a specific sense to refer to knowledge practices and pedagogic practices that can be examined according to the code modalities of Bernstein's concepts *classification* and *framing* and Maton's *Legitimation Code Theory*. It is used in this study in a social realism meaning as the meeting of two logics: context (field) and dispositions (habitus).

**production (field of):** Bernstein's conceptualisation of the *pedagogic codes* and *pedagogic rules* in a field where 'new' knowledge is constructed and positioned.

**professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB):** bodies that oversee the curricula of *courses* in Higher Education. Some of these bodies specify elements of the *curriculum* that must be included, and some approve curricular designs (prior or post institutional approval).

**programme specification:** the description of courses required by the QAA, making explicit the institution's learning intentions and relating these to national qualifications frameworks and other reference points such as subject benchmarks (QAA, 2000).

**quality assurance (QA):** administrative and procedural activities implemented in a quality system so that requirements and goals for a product, service or activity will be fulfilled. In the context of higher education, the processes and organisation of a system to maintain

and assure academic standards (especially in respect of the Quality Code of Conduct (QAA)).

**quality enhancement (QE):** a term used to distinguish academic development from the overtones of monitoring associated with the word assurance. QAA defines enhancement as 'the process of taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of learning opportunities' – used synonymously with 'continuous improvement'. A wolf in sheep's clothing.

**rationality (institutional and curricular):** the tendency to 'naturalise social classifications' as a form of rationality: in other words, by naturalising the *social* in *reason* the institution automatically legitimises it (Douglas, 1986). Rationality is used as an organising framework for this study, using the concepts of **collegiality**, **bureaucracy** and **consensus** as broad and pragmatic headings for phases of the fieldwork.

**recontextualisation (field of):** Bernstein's conceptualisation of the **pedagogic codes** and **pedagogic rules** in a field where discourses from the field of **production** are selected, appropriated, and repositioned to become 'educational' knowledge.

**recontextualising rules:** the transformation of society's knowledge into a *pedagogic discourse* that is in a form amenable to pedagogic transmission (learning and teaching) - one of the three pedagogic rules of the **pedagogic device**.

**regionalisation:** the process of **recontextualisation** of **disciplines** or subject fields in which **singulars** become **regions** as a form of **genericism**

**regions:** **disciplines** or subject fields in the curriculum that have weakened **classification** of knowledge (boundaries) as a result of merging with other subjects or expanding to include professional practice. Examples include Business Studies.

**relational autonomy (RA):** a relation of the **Legitimation Code Theory** code **Autonomy**, referring to the principles of relation (or ways of working, practices, aims, measures of achievement, etc.) within a context or field and those emanating from other contexts.

**reproduction (field of):** Bernstein's conceptualisation of the **pedagogic codes** and **pedagogic rules** in a field where **pedagogic practice(s)** take place.

**semantics:** a dimension of **Legitimation Code Theory** that examines meanings within social practices. This is given by two concepts **semantic gravity** and **semantic density**.

**semantic density (SD):** one of two relations of the **Semantics** dimension of **Legitimation Code Theory** giving the degree of condensation of meaning within symbols (terms, concepts, phrases, expressions, gestures, clothing, etc.). Semantic density may be relatively stronger (+) or weaker (-) along a continuum of strengths. The stronger the semantic density (SD+), the more meaning is condensed within symbols; the weaker the semantic density (SD-), the less meaning is condensed. (Maton, 2011: 66). The degree of condensation within a symbol or practice relates to the semantic structure in which it is located.

**semantic gravity (SG):** one of two relations of the **Semantics** dimension of **Legitimation Code Theory** giving the degree to which meaning relates to its context, whether that is social or symbolic. Semantic gravity may be relatively stronger (+) or weaker (-) along a continuum of strengths: 'the stronger the semantic gravity (SG+), the more closely meaning is related to its context; the weaker the gravity (SG-), the less dependent meaning is on its context'. (Maton, 2011: 65). The strengths of semantic gravity indicate how an object of study relates to context, and how much it depends on that context to make sense.

**singulars:** **disciplines** or subjects in the curriculum that are unique or have appropriated a unique space or identity and field of **production** within a discourse that is only about themselves (they are said to be narcissistic), with few external references and an internally controlled field of production

**Social Realism:** an epistemological perspective and a loosely bounded school of thought that combines Bernstein's, Maton's and Bourdieu's theories and extends them to encompass knowledge as an object of study. It argues for a stronger position on knowledge in which knowledge is not only social but also real. It explores the organising principles of (or

‘relations within’) different forms of knowledge and their implications for student achievement and knowledge building (Maton, 2013a: 10)

**social relations (SR):** a relation of *Legitimation Code Theory* for *Specialisation*, based on the premise that all practices, beliefs, or knowledge claims are made by someone. It examines the relations between educational knowledge and its author or subject (who is making the claim to knowledge). SR is differentiated as *Subjective Relations* and *Interactional Relations*.

**Specialisation:** a dimension of *Legitimation Code Theory* that distinguishes relations to knowledge and knowers by conceiving of knowledge as having two co-existing but analytically distinct sets of relations, highlighting that knowledge claims and practices are simultaneously claims to knowledge of the world and by authors, or oriented towards or about something and by somebody

**subjective relations (SubR):** a sub-relation of *social relations (SR)* that explores relations between knowledge and its subjects and can be used to conceptualise how strongly knowledge claims bound and control legitimate kinds of knowers.

**submission document:** the document submitted by the *course planning team (CPT)* to the *University Approval Panel (UAP)* for approval, also known as the definitive document. A template is used for this with predefined headings, including the *course rationale* - also referred to by QAA as the *programme specification*.

**syllabus:** an outline and summary of topics to be covered in an education or training course.

**university approval panel (UAP):** a panel of curriculum experts formed by the institution in which the *course* is delivered. It typically comprises a chair (usually a senior academic) and several experienced academics (often from other faculties within the institution) and an *external subject specialist*. The UAP is treated in the study as a composite entity that has collective agency to make decisions and evaluation of the *submission document* – i.e. to exercise *approval*. Also, in this study, the process by which the *lived curriculum* is ‘transformed’ into the *intended curriculum* and back again, via the *enacted curriculum*.

**vertical discourse:** the educational, formal or official knowledge that ‘takes the form of coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure’ (Bernstein 2000: 159) where meanings are related to other meanings rather than to a specific social context. Two types of knowledge structure exist within a vertical discourse: *horizontal* and *hierarchical*.

## Appendix 2: Abbreviations used in this thesis

APE:	Approval Panel Event
C:	Classification
CNAA:	Council for National Academic Awards
DCM:	De-centred Market
DR:	Discursive Relations
EF:	Explanatory Framework
EPD:	Epistemic Pedagogic Device
ER:	Epistemic Relations
F:	Framing
HE:	Higher Education
HEA:	Higher Education Academy
HEI:	Higher Education Institutions
JACS:	Joint Academic Coding System
LoD:	Language of Description
L1:	Internal Language of Description
L2:	External Language of Description
IR:	Interactional Relations
CPT:	Course Planning Team
CS1:	Case Study 1
CS2:	Case Study 2
LCT:	Legitimation Code Theory
LTA:	Learning Teaching and Assessment
OER:	Open Educational Resources
OR:	Ontic Relations
ORF:	Official Recontextualising Field
PA:	Positional Autonomy
PDP(P):	Personal and Professional Development (Planning)
PRF:	Pedagogic Recontextualising Field
PSRB:	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body
QA:	Quality Assurance
QAA:	Quality Assurance Agency
QE:	Quality Enhancement
RA:	Relational Autonomy
RIS:	Research Input and Skills
SD:	Semantic Density
SG:	Semantic Gravity
SO:	Social Ontology
SR:	Social Relations
SRS:	Substantive Research Study
SubR:	Subjective Relations
T1/T2/T3:	Time Sequences (Morphogenesis)
UAP:	University Approval Panel



### Appendix 3: Institutions in the study and their approval processes

**Table 26: Institutions' locations, size, university group and UK ranking**

Code	Campus	Created	Location	Students	University Group	UK Ranking*
I1	Urban	1966	West Midlands	9000	ACU	27
I2	Urban	1984	London	4000	(university college)	102
I3	Urban	1968	N. Ireland	26000	Universities UK	74
I4	Urban	1992	Lancashire	33000	University Alliance	88
I5	Urban	2007	Devon	5000	Universities UK	116
I6	Rural	1962	Staffordshire	10000	ACU	45
I7	Urban	1992	Teesside	28000	University Alliance	97
I8	Urban	2009	Lancashire	16000	(university college)	105
I9A	Urban	1883	South Wales	30000	Russell Group	35
I9B	Urban	1884	North Wales	17000	EUA	64
I10	Urban	1992	Yorkshire	30000	University Alliance	76

\*UK Ranking based on 2011 positions

**Table 27: Institutions and the characteristics of their approval processes**

Code	Documentation **	Panel	Event*	Readership	External Subject Specialist
I1	Template for the <i>programme specification, curriculum map and module descriptors</i>	Programme Approval Subcommittee set up by the university Teaching and Learning Committee	Programme Approval Subcommittee (PASC) meets once per semester and approves courses in a block. Attendance by the course team is required..	Signed off by school management team first. PASC makes recommendations of approval to university Senate.	Attends the event and completes a report.
I2	Template for the <i>programme specification and module descriptors</i>	Awarding university chairs the panel, alongside learning resources rep. and QA rep. and a secretary.	A preliminary meeting is held with the course leader and the report of this is tabled at the final event. The final event is half or full day depending on size of programme.	Secretary to the panel drafts a report on the whole approval process to the university college to check.	Attends the preliminary meeting and the final event. May also be involved in the development stage.
I3	Template for the	Academic Planning Sub-Committee	An evaluation panel - <i>'a peer-review</i>	Provided at the event.	Part of Evaluation Panel

	<i>programme specification and module descriptors</i> : must be submitted to Panel at least 3 weeks prior to Panel meeting.	(APSC) of the Academic Development and Enhancement Committee. Chaired by Pro-Vice -Chancellor and two Deans	<i>process involving dialogue between the course providers and an expert panel comprising internal University representatives and external subject specialists</i> '.		-recommended by faculty members
I4	Template for the <i>programme specification and module descriptors (Strategic Approval Form)</i>	Convened by Faculty Quality Administrator, including senior Faculty Manager, Head of Department or equivalent, Collaborative Partnerships Office representative in instances where collaborative provision is involved.	Attended by panel and programme leader.	Provided at the event	Part of Evaluation Panel -recommended by faculty members
I5	Template for the <i>programme specification and module descriptors</i>	Academic Board delegates approval of programmes to Academic Development Committee, and the detailed approval to the Learning, Quality and Standards Committee	Attended by panel and programme leader.	Supported by the Quality Unit, papers presented at the event	Part of Evaluation Panel -recommended by course team
I6	Template for the <i>programme specification and module descriptors</i>	Academic Planning Sub-Committee	Attended by panel and programme leader.	Provided at the event	Part of Evaluation Panel -recommended by course team
I7	Template for the <i>programme specification and module descriptors</i>	Approval/Review Panel comprising: i) Chair; Secretary; Quality Manager or nominee; at least one cross-University member from the Quality and Standards Unit database, selected for their expertise relevant to the specific review; at least one member from the School under review, independent of the programme(s) under consideration; at least one external academic member from another HEI; where appropriate, at least one external colleague from the field of practice e.g. employer or practitioner	Attended by panel and members of the programme team.	Provided at the event	Part of Evaluation Panel -recommended by course team and provides written comments

I8	Template for the <i>programme specification</i> and <i>module descriptors</i>	Awarding university chairs the panel, with subject specialist and a Quality Team rep.	Attended by panel and members of the programme team.	Provided at the event	Externals are optional. Subject specialist from awarding university attends.
I9A	Template for the <i>programme specification</i> and <i>module descriptors</i>	Panel comprises A Chair, who will be a member of the University's academic staff ; two internal panellists who will be members of the University's academic staff not from the School in which the programme is located; and at least one external panellist with relevant subject expertise; a student panellist who may not be from the School in which the programme is located.	Event divided into series of meetings: (i) panel alone; (ii) panel and Dean of School and Director of Learning and Teaching Programme Director; (iii) panel and programme team	Provided at the event	Part of Evaluation Panel -recommended by course team and provides written comments
I9B	Template for the <i>programme specification</i> and <i>module descriptors</i>	Panel comprises: Chair of the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group or nominee chosen from the Validation Pool; one representative from the Validation Pool (not to be a member of the presenting School); the Appointed External Subject Specialist; one academic staff representative from a related discipline (not to be a member of the presenting School); professional or employer representative, where appropriate; Academic Registrar (or nominee) <input type="checkbox"/> Panel secretary appointed by the Academic Registrar	Attended by panel and members of the programme team.	Provided at the event	Course team nominates 3 candidates and 1 is chosen by the Chair. External is part of Evaluation Panel and provides written comments.
I10	Template for the <i>programme specification</i> and <i>module descriptors</i>	Chaired by a senior academic – 2 academics attend from other faculties, Department Quality Lead, and secretary.	A 3 hour event where the panel meet with the course team to discuss the proposed programme spec.	Feedback on the prog. Spec. is sent to the CPT 3 weeks before.	Attends the event, sends feedback to the chair and this is sent to the CPT before the event with the other feedback

\* The event is face-to-face unless specified \*\* all documentation includes a Course Rationale unless specified

## Appendix 4: Participant Demographics

**Table 28: Purpose, focus and dates of the work of Groups A, B, C, D and E**

Group	Name	Phase / Date	Purpose	Focus
A (n=6)	<i>Sharers</i>	Phase 1 April 2009 to April 2010	To share 20 existing HE modules in Social Science and to develop them further	Pedagogical frameworks for sharing curricular designs and practices
B (n=6)	<i>Cascaders</i>	Phase 1 September 2010 to September 2011	To examine the conditions for sharing curricular designs, and to contribute a further 4 modules	Student engagement and the conditions for sharing the curriculum and its re-use in new contexts
C (n=9)	<i>Approved</i>	Phase 2 September 2010 to September 2012	To prepare the course for delivery following the approval of the submission document.	To reflect on the approval process and the implications of the (re-)design of the course for enactment
D (n=7)	<i>Approval Seekers</i>	Phase 2 September 2010 to September 2012	To plan the course and to prepare the submission document for the University Approval Panel	To reflect on the course review and planning process and the experience of preparing course designs
D (n=7)	<i>Approval Seekers</i>	Phase 3 September 2010 to September 2012	To design the course and to prepare the submission document for the University Approval Panel	To reflect on the experience of having course designs approved and the implications for practice
E (n=10)	<i>Approvers</i>	Phase 3 September 2010 to September 2012	To approve the courses submitted to them as members of the UAP in the APE	To reflect on the process and experience of approving courses

**Table 29: Demographic information for Case Study 1 (Groups A and B)**

Group	Code	Name	Gender	Institution Code	Experience (years)	Discipline
A 'Sharers' (n=6)	A1	Paula	F	I1	14	Sociology
	A2	Angela	F	I2	12	Anthropology
	A3	Carina	F	I3	14	Politics
	A4	Heidi	F	I4	17	Criminology
	A5	Daniel	M	I5	23	Sociology
	A6	Joshua	M	I6	11	Politics
B 'Cascaders' (n=6)	B1	Jonah	M	I7	16	Politics
	B2	Matthew	M	I7	11	Criminology
	B3	Peter	M	I8	8	Criminology
	B4	Colin	M	I8	7	Sociology
	B5	Delilah	F	I9A	17	Sociology
	B6	David	M	I9B	19	Sociology

**Appendix 4: continued**

**Table 30: Participants' demographic information (Groups C and D, Institution I10)**

Group	Name	CPT	Gender	Experience (years)	Subject Area	Level	Role
Group C 'Approved' (n=9)	Juniper	4	F	23	Social Science	MA	CL
	Roberta	8	F	16	Social Science	U	CL
	Sheila	7	F	14	Social Science	U	ML
	Sarah	5	F	11	Education	U	CL
	Nina	6	F	10	Education	MA	CL
	Ruby	6	F	14	Education	M	CL
	Leo	9	M	8	Performing Arts	FD	CL
	Gareth	10	M	17	Construction	U	CL
	Hera	11	F	11	Fine Arts	U	CL
D 'Approval seekers' (n=7)	Aneka	1	F	12	Social Science	U	CL
	Betty	2	F	14	Environment	U	CL
	Linda	2	F	21	Environment	U	CL
	Anna	2	F	13	Environment	U	CL
	Cathy	2	F	19	Environment	U	CL
	Alison	3	F	14	Education	MA	CL
	Tony	3	M	17	Education	MA	ML

Key: CPT=course planning team, MA= masters, U=undergraduate, FD=foundation, CL=course leader, ML=module leader F=female, M=male

**Table 31: Academics involved in approving courses (Group E, Institution I10)**

Courses Approved (from the study)	Code	Name	Gender	No. of Interviews	Total Time (min.)	Approval Role	Own Subject
Group E 'Approvers': specific experience of approving courses							
n/a	E1	Paul	M	1	60	Central Quality Team	English
n/a	E2	Lana	F	2	120	Central Quality Team	n/a
CPT 1,7	E3	Malcolm	M	1	60	Committee Chair	Nursing
CPT 2,10	E4	James	M	1	60	Committee Chair	Mathematics
CPT 6,4	E5	Maurice	M	1	60	Committee Chair	Engineering
	E6	Chris	M	1	60	Committee Chair	Politics
CPT 9,12	E7	Rhianna	F	1	60	Committee Chair	Accountancy
-	E8	Rory	M	1	60	Committee Chair	Business Studies
CPT2	E9	Giles	M	1	60	Faculty Teaching Fellow	Politics
CPT2	E10	Susan	F	1	60	Faculty Teaching Fellow	Sociology
	Total	10		11	660		

#### Appendix 4: continued

**Table 32: Teacher interview schedule (Groups C and D, Institution I10)**

Course Planning Teams (CPT)	Code	Name	12 weeks before	8 weeks before	4 weeks before	During event	4 weeks after	8 weeks after	12 weeks after	16 weeks after	No. of interviews	Total length of interviews (hrs.)
<b>Group C 'Approved': general experience of course design and approval</b>												
CPT4	C1	Juniper								X	1	1
CPT5	C2	Sarah						X			1	1
CPT6	C3	Nina					X				1	1
CPT6	C4	Ruby						X			1	1
CPT7	C5	Sheila						X			1	1
CPT8	C7	Roberta					X				1	1
CPT9	C8	Leo					X				1	1
CPT10	C9	Gareth					X				1	1
CPT11	C10	Hera				X					1	1
<b>Group D 'Approval seekers': specific experience of course design and approval (over time)</b>												
CPT1	D1	Aneka	X			X		X			3	3
CPT2	D2	Betty	X			X			X		3	3
CPT2	D3	Linda					X		X		2	2
CPT2	D4	Anna						X			1	1
CPT2	D5	Cathy						X			1	1
CPT3	D6	Alison	X			X		X		X	4	4
CPT3	D7	Tony			X			X			2	2
	Total	16	3	0	1	4	5	8	2	9	25	25

## Appendix 5: Data set for Case Study 1 Group A and Group B

Outlined below are the elements in the data set for Group A: 'The Sharers':

**Initiation Meeting:** a face-to-face, open agenda, meeting (2 hours) of the researcher with members of the group to identify 'the problem' and to discuss the philosophy and methodology of the work.

**Peer Review:** the group were organised into three pairs and took part in a peer-supported development activity, in which they reflected on issues pertinent to their curriculum and on how their own teaching materials could move towards being open and shareable. This was developed through a series of prompts:

- What major issues with regard to re-usability can you identify?
- How would you explain the design of your module to somebody who wanted to teach your module?
- What sort of contextual information does your teaching material contain?
- What influenced your decision as to the format of the assessment? How transferable is your assessment strategy to anyone else using your material?
- How would you like this module to be taught?
- Given the widespread use of visual teaching material what issues might arise with regard to re-purposing?

These reflexive discussions in turn informed thinking in terms of creating a 'mapping' framework capable of revealing pedagogical decisions about the creation and potentials for (re)-using the materials.

**Module Mapping Discussion:** the 'raw' materials from this project were discussed during an auditing of existing materials process that took place around a Group Discussion on Module Mapping. These discussions began to outline a narrative or history around the materials, such as the length of time the module had been offered, what kinds of changes had been made in light of feedback and review, what kinds of student cohort took the module and how it was delivered. This focused on eliciting 'rich descriptions' of project partners' modules as well as discussing a variety of approaches to structure, disaggregation and potential re-use. This was linked to the case studies, in that it was envisaged that the module mapping would be one of the elements of the case study. The following elements of structure emerged, as 'worthy of examination', in these discussions, as iteration towards a greater specificity of description:

*Pedagogical Rationale:* a statement of intentions, and underlying beliefs held about learning and teaching, and a conception of the learner that the originator of the module had acted upon.

*Content:* rationalised as 'units of pedagogical structure', albeit as 'approximations of practice'.

*Learning outcomes and assessment:* rationalised as an attempt to elicit a clearer 'alignment' between learning outcomes and assessment (Biggs, 1999) and 'back-to-front' design (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005).

**Pedagogical Frameworks Discussion:** the Pedagogical Frameworks discussion took place concurrently with the Module Mapping discussion and arose in response to the suggestion that for the element of Pedagogical Rationale an 'off-the-shelf' framework such as that proposed by Goodyear and Jones (2004) might suffice. One outcome of this was the decision to base pedagogical rationale on a simple two-part statement: i) Rationale and ii) Indicators

**Process Commentary:** each member of the group was asked to reflect on the development of the modules in a commentary on the process of developing the module and preparing it to become open, as formative exercise in building a case study. This used a pro-forma that invited comments on issues and obstacles including:

- 'Before' commentary: how module typically is delivered, including rooms, technology, numbers of students, and how the module is reviewed.
- 'Process' commentary: reflections on material ownership re institution, consortium process, motivations to share and release, copyright sensitive elements in materials, review process for materials, experience of toolkit development.
- 'After' commentary: what has changed in the materials, insights into own practice, how they would encourage others to use the material, what else can be developed and refined, issues of capturing tacit practice, issues of discovery and visibility of pedagogic material, issues of 'culture change' and sustainability.
- Participants were also asked to consider a video commentary to accompany a narrative about the module(s), and these were included in the case studies.

**Interviews:** the researcher conducted an interview with each member of the group. Notes of these interviews were made and shared with the individual and in the wiki for all to review and discuss. The issues raised by means of this reflexive review and mapping activity were then explored further in their own experience of the process. This would offer an overview of the 'journey' of partners' teaching materials and the steps involved in making their modules open and ready to be shared and repurposed, as '*honest accounts of module development*'. It was intended that these accounts would reinforce 'trust' in the materials, while acknowledging the situational and contextual realities of academic practice.

**The Modules:** following the discussions around the materials, and any interventions due to copyright and formatting, the 20 module outlines and associated materials were released into JORUM Open, as well as the MERLOT repository (see Table 33)

**Table 33: Modules and materials shared by Case Study 1 (CS1: Group A)**

Participant/ Institution	Discipline	Module/ Type of material
A1: Paula (I1)	Sociology	<b>04: Sociology of Health and Illness</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides] <b>05: Sociology of Human Reproduction</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides] <b>06: Gender and Society</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides, reflection sheet] <b>07: Comparative Sociology</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides] <b>08: Embodiment and Feminist Theory</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides, class paper] <b>09: Ethnicity and 'Race'</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides]
A2 : Angela (I2)	Anthropology	<b>01: Visual Anthropology</b> (20 credits) [module handbook] <b>02: Anthropological Ideas</b> (20 credits) [module handbook] <b>03: Exploring Religions and Cultures</b> (20 credits) [module handbook]
A3: Carina (I3)	Political Sciences	<b>17: State Crime</b> (20 credits) [module handbook, lecture slides]



		<b>18: Public Policy</b> (20 credits) [module handbook, re-sit coursework information, lecture slides] <b>19: Government of the United Kingdom and Ireland</b> (20 credits) [module handbook, word documents (assignment, resume and exam), lecture slides]
A4: Heidi (14)	Criminology	<b>11: Crime and Violence</b> (20 credits) [module handbook and lecture slides] <b>12: International E-communication exchange</b> (10 credits) [handbook for academics, student handbook, messages showcase, FAQ, topics, weekly work, guidelines for reflective essay, screenshots, lecture slides] <b>13: Gender, Crime and Justice</b> (20 credits) [online handbook, lecture slides] <b>14: Learning and Employability</b> (20 credits) [contents, accessing pebble pad, examples of exercises for pebble pad, reading list, teaching schedule, student handbook, classroom activities]
A5: Daniel (15)	Sociology	<b>15: Sociology of Leisure</b> (30 credits) [module outline] <b>16: Research Methods</b> (30 credits) [lecture slides, audio files, Xerte files]
A6: Joshua (16)	Political Sciences	<b>10: Mass media in America</b> (30 credits) [module handbook, portfolio document] <b>20: Why Politics Matters</b> (30 credits) [lecture slides, reading list, lecture recording]

#### Data set for Case Study 1 Group B

Outlined below are the elements in the data set for Group B: 'The Cascaders':

**Group Discussions:** discussions were held by the group, face-to-face and online. Selections from these discussions are made verbatim, citing the speaker, where appropriate, or are identified as minutes. These have been organised by the researcher under themes:

- *Initiation:* initial meeting of the project attended by Group B members, project manager, project assistant and the researcher, to discuss the scope, focus and activity of the group.
- *Cascade Model:* defining a process perspective.
- *Evaluation:* meetings and discussions to review and reflect on the work of the project and the way forward.

**Reflexive tasks:** the group were invited to take part in four reflexive tasks, on the understanding that academic practice can be critically reviewed and better understood through reflection. The purpose of this was to develop a collaborative framework for cascading practice within the social sciences. The tasks were built around a series of reflexive prompts:

- Introducing open educational resources
  - What is your understanding of Open Educational Resources?
  - How would you explain them to colleagues in your department institution / administrators / students?
  - What do you hope to gain from your participation in the cascade project?
- Exploring open educational resources
  - Has your understanding of the concept of 'openness' changed?

- What is your experience of locating, identifying, and selecting teaching material?
- What is the basis on which you 'trust' materials you have discovered?
- Developing the Cascade framework
  - Create a 'mindmap' showing how you understand the concept of 'cascade' and addressing how you see the cascade emerging. Include stakeholders that you see as important in this process, and consider how this framework can be sustained.
- Peer review
  - How are you addressing the cascade framework in the context of your involvement in the project?
  - In what way does the disciplinary context impact on your own involvement in the project?
  - What conditions need to be met to enable students to understand the purpose and their relationship with teaching material and how might we deal with any issues they might have about loss of contact with teachers?
  - What major issues with regard to re-usability can you identify?

**Interviews:** the researcher conducted an interview with each member of the group. Notes of these interviews were made and shared with the individual and in the wiki for all to review and discuss.

- Tell me about the curriculum development context in your institution
- What activities were going on before the project?
- What teaching materials have you identified and how are they being used?
- What are the hopes for the future use of teaching materials in this project and beyond?

**The Modules:** following these activities, each pair of participants submitted module outlines and associated materials and these were released into JORUM Open, as well as the MERLOT repository (see Table 34)

**Table 34: Modules and materials shared by Case Study 1 (CS1: Group B)**

Participant / Institution	Discipline	Module/ Type of material
B1: Jonah (I7)	Political Sciences	<b>21: Governance and Public Management</b> (20 credits) [module handouts, lecture PowerPoints]
B2: Matthew (I7)	Criminology	
B3: Peter (I8)	Criminology	<b>22: Creativity for 'Edupunks'</b> (non-accredited) [Professional development resource for HE in FE staff : eleven 3-hour activity-based sessions, wiki]
B4: Colin (I8)	Sociology	
B5: Delilah (I9A)	Sociology	<b>23: Research Methods</b> (20 credits) [Welsh medium, repurposed from C-SAP project 'Welsh Medium Research Methods Resources for the Social Sciences']. <b>24: Getting Started with SPSS</b> (10 credits) [Welsh medium repurposed from the OpenLearn module 'Getting started with SPSS']
B6: David (I9B)	Sociology	

## Appendix 6: Language of description for the researcher's (insider) viewpoints

**Table 35: Language of description for the researcher's (insider) viewpoints<sup>13</sup>**

Coding	Description	Example quote from data
1. Becoming the Researcher	A set of codes related to becoming the 'insider' researcher	<i>'Why has it happened like that before...?'</i>
1.1 Being course leader	Coding moments related to being a course leader	<i>'As a course leader I know the kinds of time pressures that you face ...'</i>
1.2 Leading a course team during re-approval	This category codes moments related to leading re-approval	<i>'As a course leader who has been through the approval process I know the kinds of difficulties that you face ...'</i>
1.3 Being Teaching Fellow for Curriculum Development	Coding moments related to being the Faculty Teaching Fellow for Curriculum Development	<i>'This has many resonances with the kind of tensions that are emerging from my work with course teams ... they all have this tussle with their own identities as themselves as academics but also their representation of the subject and how that is impacted upon by the external'</i>
1.3.1 Advising course teams on design and approval	Coding moments related to when the researcher draws on his experience of advising course teams on design and approval.	<i>'Course teams have spoken to me about the tensions that they feel ... their intentions to describe a course or imagine a course which is the one they really one the one they're proud of, the one their students they want. And they describe it as being allowed to do what they feel is right, that it feels right to their academic instincts.'</i>
1.3.2 Being a member of the Approval Panel	Coding moments related to when the researcher draws on his experience of being present at Approval Events.	<i>'And you mentioned your process of collating the responses from the readership, ..., I've experienced that actually as an observer in a validation that you chaired, and I thought it was really really effective actually and one of the most effective elements of a chair's process for what it's worth'</i>
1.3.3 Experience of the 'precepts problem'	Coding moments related to discussions of the 'precepts problem' that the researcher was involved in as a Teaching Fellow.	<i>'OK the exact example that I'm mindful of and my participants talk about is the model A model B situation ... [the] problem emerged a year ago last November, regarding the new precepts. Were you involved with any chairing any USP's ... first of all what's your take on the problem?'</i>
1.4 Being a curriculum consultant	Coding moments related to the researcher being a CSAP curriculum adviser	<i>'I know that advising academics outside [I10] these difficulties are common in the academy ...'</i>
2. Being the Researcher	A set of codes related to being the 'insider' researcher	<i>'Why does it happen like this now ...?'</i>
2.1 Drawing on theory	Coding moments related to when the researcher draws on theory.	<i>'I am mindful of how things appear on the surface can mask all sorts of things that aren't visible to us ...'</i>
2.1.1 Having a methodology in mind	Coding moments related to when the researcher holds a methodology in mind.	<i>'Can I ask you about your discipline and if you feel this has any influence on the way you describe your course ...?'</i>
2.1.2 Drawing on empirical data	Coding moments related to when the researcher draws on empirical data in the study.	<i>'But let's just drill into that for a moment because it is something emerging from the study and that is that what that focus on learning outcomes appears to be shaping or has shaped is the boundaries and the limitations.'</i>

(Table continued over)

<sup>13</sup> These are quotes from interviews across the study. All quotes are by the researcher speaking with participants.

(Appendix 6 continued)

<b>Coding</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example quote from data</b>
2.1.3 Applying theory of rationality	Coding moments related to when the researcher draws on rationality theory	<i>'You do that very collegially, ..., and they have this fear of the bureaucracy. And they get to the panel with a very conservative view of their own curriculum ... Any thoughts on that, why do you think that happens?'</i>
2.1.4 Applying theory of knowledge structures	Coding moments related to when the researcher draws on knowledge theory	<i>'... so these are specifically employability modules and in there you mentioned earlier, you attempt to include what you might call theoretical knowledge or, tell me about that, explain that to me'</i>
2.2 Seeking understanding	Coding moments related to when the researcher seeks understanding	<i>'... why do you think that is ..?.'</i>
2.2.1 Asking people how they became who they are	Coding moments related to when the researcher asks about participant's background	<i>'... can you tell me about you came to [I10] and you started teaching ...?'</i>
2.2.2 Asking how things came about	Coding moments related to when the researcher asks about how things have emerged	<i>'A lot of course teams have complained about lack of clarity over the assessment regulations and module descriptors... there is a pattern, and it does reproduce, why do you think that is?'</i>
2.2.3 Asking how things work	Coding moments related to when the researcher asks about the process and how it works	<i>'It almost seems to be good practice dependent on the panel, the chair's understandings of those processes and how effective they can be. Is that left to chance ...?'</i>
2.2.4 Asking participants to paraphrase	Coding moments related to when the researcher asks participants to put things in their own words	<i>'That's very interesting [what you just said] ... could you say a little more about this. How would you explain it to a student for example?'</i>
2.2.5 Asking participants to 'imagine'	Coding moments related to when the researcher asks participants to imagine how things 'could be'	<i>'... and this is an open-ended question, and that is if you could design, forget what's happened in the new system, if you could design an ideal approval process, ... what characteristics would you include if you could, if it were down to you, if you could, based on what you already know?'</i>
2.2.6 Confirming participants' viewpoints	Coding moments related to when the researcher confirms participants viewpoints by giving this back to them	<i>'I guess I interpret you as saying, the spirit of what learning is, the spirit and understanding of what might emerge from, ill-defined in some cases, activities. It's the kind of principles that surround that.'</i>
2.2.7 Offering interpretations	Coding moments related to when the researcher offers an interpretation for comment	<i>'I'm going to offer an interpretation of your concerns around the learning outcomes model. But the learning outcomes model is one that my participants, my teams that have spoken with me and worked closely with me, ...'</i>

## Appendix 7: Coding scheme for themes emerging from the data

Node / hierarchical structure	Description of what the category/code relates to	Example quote from data
<b>1. Collegially focused field position and practice</b>	A set of codes related to the collegially focused context in the lived curriculum. These are organised under seven hierarchical structures: <b>context; curriculum; teaching; discipline; exchange, knowing; description</b>	
<b>1.1 Context</b>	This category codes statements that teachers make about the context for teaching	<i>'The rooms were set out in a circular-shape, they were too small for the number of students. The rooms had many teaching technologies that had never been removed (old projectors, maps) and were stored in the room 'by default'.</i>
1.1.2 Local practices	Responses coded as referring to local practices	<i>'The module is typically delivered face to face in a two hour lecture slot followed by a one hour seminar slot later in the week. The idea is that the students are introduced to the concepts and ideas in the lecture'</i>
1.1.3 Local resources	Responses coded as referring to local resources	<i>'The rooms had a basic furniture ... The room also had an old TV with a HVS incorporated that nobody ever used and sat in a corner. The room had terrible ventilation and too much glare for the screen!'</i>
<b>1.2 Curriculum</b>	Coding of data related to curriculum	<i>'It was really around one of the Housing and Planning modules where we realised that we hadn't exchanged our practice within the department so we began to get a debate going ...'</i>
1.2.1 Lived/informal	Responses coded as informal/lived curriculum and formal/intended curriculum	<i>'I think I pretty much used the content of what I had been doing before but the advantages to it becoming a module I think were first of all that we got a timetabled slot and that meant that students took it more seriously ...'</i>
1.2.2 Intended/formal	What teachers say about the formal curriculum	<i>'The module in the first, when we first put it forward for the revalidation, was pretty much the module that had run in the old form. However very close to it being revalidated it was suddenly thought "could this module be rolled out across the whole programme?"'</i>
1.2.3 Employability	What teachers say about employability	<i>'The way students are assessed is they do some work in the second year so that's to do with the preparation for going on placement and they write a reflection on the experience they had when they were doing their work shadowing and on the skills ...'</i>
1.2.4 Knowledge	What teachers say about the importance of knowledge	<i>'While planning the course, he kept asking himself the following questions: what should somebody at the end of level 4 know about local/global politics? What level are they at now? What do they expect from the course? What would academic colleagues expect a first year student to study?'</i>
<b>1.3 Teaching</b>	This category codes statements that teachers make about teaching	<i>"Lectures were very clearly about putting as much information on the slides as I possibly could so that if I didn't deliver the material appropriately the students still had it because it was written. What it did mean was that students didn't need to engage with the lecture because I gave them all of the material.'</i>
1.3.1 Teacher role	Coding of data related to teacher role	<i>'It was literally "you've been hired and we want you to deliver these 5 modules. Here they are, go and deliver them." I was literally a week ahead of the students.'</i>
1.3.2 Experience	Coding of data related to the experience of teaching	<i>'I was preparing the material for next week the week before and I was reading and adjusting and adapting because, although the material was very good, I couldn't just pick it up and deliver it because I didn't know the background to it'.</i>
1.3.3 Teaching resources	Coding of data related to the use of teaching materials	<i>'Where I believe this project is going beyond other projects is that by providing people with the maps, itinerary, discussions, we are creating a new learning context but more importantly we are allowing for these people to OWN these objects'</i>
1.3.4 Housekeeping	What teachers say	<i>'So I include even room numbers and time etc. and update this</i>

	about the routine elements of their practice	<i>each year. This makes more work for me in the long run and I probably should keep those separate as a 'housekeeping appendix'</i>
1.3.5 Pedagogy	What teachers say about pedagogy with regard to their practice	<i>'To start with, students do not really have the right levels of pedagogic literacy to be able to evaluate the [course design]; furthermore, it will be very difficult to get the students to evaluate [learning] material out of the context of the module.'</i>
1.3.6 Assessment	What teachers say about assessment practices	<i>'I don't tend to look at other subjects as much unless I want to see a particular form of assessment. Even then, I would want that assessment as closely related to my subject as possible.'</i>
<b>1.4 Discipline</b>	Coding of data related to disciplinary understandings	<i>'When we write and publish our research, we do not necessarily explain the whole background. We assume that the reader will be able to draw on the implicit disciplinary knowledge, and will take responsibility themselves for any 'gaps''</i>
1.4.1 Discipline discourse	What teachers say about the discipline with regard to their own practice	<i>'We are invariably asking questions about our discipline and how we think about teaching and learning. (...) students might bring to the study of criminology representations about victimisation, offending, and the major criminal justice agencies which respond to offending, as found in the media'</i>
1.4.1.1 Resistance	How teachers use discipline as a form of resistance to institutional authority	<i>'We use terms like ideology, power/knowledge couplets, discourses and the like to discuss the practices of policemen, politicians, media folk and the like - why exempt ourselves?'</i>
1.4.1.2 pedagogic mode	How teachers describe the discipline as influencing their pedagogy	<i>'We would certainly want to use good sociological common sense to question the view that 'high level pedagogy' is simply the result of 'the concrete instantiation of philosophical positions', ...We might continue to question what exactly it is that 'constructivism' seems to offer the modern educational professional ...</i>
<b>1.5 Exchange</b>	Coding of data related to exchanging pedagogic practice	<i>'We wonder if people derive beliefs from scratch, or if not (and we recognise a lot of practice starts as 'borrowed') then where does this begin? There is an issue that teaching statements might become formulaic. Beliefs often emerge in conversation and discussion, not in institutional mandates'</i>
1.5.1 Sharing	What teachers say about sharing practice	<i>'I have embodied the belief that when I create my teaching, this one has to be 'mine', rather than 'shared', and that students can not 'copy' others. I have learned in assessment practices that I am not to allow students 'to copy', and plagiarism is a severe punishable offense in our understanding of the boundaries of 'copying'</i>
1.5.1.1 Making visible	How sharing is a process of making visible	<i>"What we are doing here is re-interpreting, from context. In doing so, our task, I feel, is to provide a sense of 'aid' in translating the way in which the context and the meaning was a kind of 'thick learning experience' as opposed at looking at the materials and interactions in a vacuum, as 'objects' (fetishised objects maybe), as pieces that have been taken out of context, re-used, dis-integrated.'</i>
1.5.1.2 Peer review	What teachers say about peer review as a process	<i>"... whilst we will be examining existing material, we will not be examining it for what it offers in itself, but for what it tells us about the assumptions which guided its production. This is but one example of a much larger tacit process.'</i>
1.5.1.3 Reflexivity	How teachers talk about their practice and their understanding of it	<i>'Indeed, there does not seem to be a language or even a set of assumptions with which we discuss the creation, significance and effects (on our students and ourselves) of producing educational resources ... a way of speaking about and reflecting on one of our key activities as lecturers'</i>
1.5.1.4 Trust	What teachers say about the trust needed in sharing practice and resources	<i>'Sharing resources doesn't bother me... but something about it being available to anybody, anywhere, is quite strange. You have put quite a lot of time and energy into thinking about how you might deliver and share those resources with students. I don't know how I would feel about sharing them'</i>
1.5.2 Borrowing	How practice develops as a form of borrowing	<i>'[my advice is] move away from 'originality' and the worries of 'borrowing' and 'copying' other people's work. I would say that pedagogic work is made through a lot of borrowing and</i>

		<i>informal use of other people's work, with not much acknowledgement'</i>
1.5.3 Cascading	How practice is passed on to others	<i>'This creative process comes into its performative stage when these are taught (residentially, online, on the street, on YouTube wherever the context of learning takes place) but actually the moment they are taught, new knowledge is produced'</i>
1.5.4 Generating	What teachers say about how practice is generated	<i>'One would expect them to seek guidance initially from more experienced colleagues ... the assumption is that they are experienced teachers and do not need to be told 'how to teach'...'</i>
<b>1.6 Knowing</b>	Coding of data related to knowing as a social practice	<i>'As well as developing students' understanding of contemporary policy and popular concerns around crime, a key aim was to enhance and develop students' independent learning skills.'</i>
1.6.1 Co-construction	How learning is co-constructed by students	<i>'[To] use it more as an invitation, signpost to different aspects of knowledge so in a sense to lead students in an empowered way, to take on board different ideas, different approaches to learning to so we have a role to lead them to this sort of more empowered approach of learning'</i>
1.6.2 Idealised	What teachers say about the ideal curriculum	<i>'it's important that we know what the purpose of our courses is ... do we have a clear idea of what are graduates are or will become as people?'</i>
1.6.2.1 Autonomous	What teachers say about students being autonomous	<i>'... there is just the possibility that a skilled student will impose different sequences [of learning] according to their own notions of what is optimal'</i>
1.6.2.2 Apprentice	How teachers see students as apprentices to the discipline	<i>'what we want to see is students thinking like a sociologist ...'</i>
1.6.3 Learner perceptions	What teachers say about the perceptions that students have of their teaching	<i>'Students tend to 'question' (or struggle to understand) the potential relevance of the resources outside of the formalised learning environment'</i>
1.6.3.1 Technology	What teachers say about technology in relation to learning	<i>'Whilst 'the new undergraduate' may exist, innate digital prowess is not their identifying factor'</i>
1.6.3.2 Resources	How resources are implicated in learning and teaching	<i>'Images of Abu-Ghraib, Guantanamo, pictures of prisoners who have been tortured ... raises many moral and ethical points of discussion within the class'</i>
1.6.3.3 The teacher	What teachers say about how students perceive the teacher	<i>'Interestingly, many colleagues I know admit that it is not always a very effective way to explain what is going on to students—complaints that students do not read module guides are very common, and I don't know many that read learning outcomes or assessment rubrics either'</i>
<b>1.7 Description</b>	Coding of data related to describing practice	<i>'The pedagogy is a composite of a number of pedagogical turns and moves - the pattern in the patchwork quilt will be difficult to see'</i>
1.7.1 Description problem	How teachers describe the problem of describing their practice for others	<i>'... the way you communicate to those students, every Wednesday at 11 o'clock I stand in front of 220 people and I try to communicate and talk to them'</i>
1.7.1.1 Tacitness	The difficulty of describing practice for others	<i>'You can tell if people have smartphones out, there's a sense if you are losing people – you can speed it up, you can clarify, you can move it on, .... how do you distil that...?'</i>
1.7.1.2 Richness	How description is capable of capturing the richness of practice	<i>'How a module is taught doesn't just depend on the availability of appropriate and useful materials. It depends on the dynamism of the teacher, the rapport with the class, the adjustments that need to be made ...'</i>
1.7.2 Context problem	How context limits the descriptions that teachers can make	<i>'a lot of my teaching takes place in rooms that other people use, and I find that when I get there tables have been moved, the whiteboard is full and there are no pens ...'</i>
1.7.2.1 Embeddedness	How context is embedded in practice	<i>'The module is typically delivered over two hours per week to approximately 60 students. The format was written for a one</i>

		<i>hour lecture, one hour seminar per week'</i>
1.7.2.2 Institution	How the institution is imprinted on practice	<i>'Our timetabling system means that one week we are in one building and the next week in another ...'</i>
1.7.3 Ownership problem	What teachers say about owning their materials and pedagogical designs.	<i>'If you've got a lovely course, well thought out, and the reading list is there... I think it's a bit barmy, to be honest, to give it away. It's more about it being copied by other institutions'</i>
1.7.3.1 Status	How teachers associate forms of description with their status as teachers	<i>'Do our imagined future users actually feel they 'own' what is that we create here? Or will they ever feel, like I did with the 'handed down teaching materials from previous lecturers' not quite at ease with using it and owning it?'</i>
1.7.3.2 Reputation	How teachers associate forms of description with their reputations	<i>'Academic articles are peer-reviewed, where is that process for the teaching materials?'</i>
<b>2. Bureaucratically focused field position and practice</b>	A set of codes related to the bureaucratically focused context in the intended curriculum. These are organised under seven hierarchical structures: <b>teacher identity; autonomy; pedagogy; curriculum development; discipline; approval; metaphor</b>	
<b>2.1 Teacher identity</b>	Aspects of practice and conceptions of practice that are related to teacher identity	<i>'My main role is teaching but I am also an academic. That means I not only have to know my subject but I have to research it and contribute to its knowledge ...'</i>
2.1.1 LTA	How institutional culture for LTA influences or affects the teacher identity	<i>'.... So LTA was seen as a dirty word in some cases by academics because it was asking you to do something you weren't, which was to be become a teacher, because what you were was an academic studying your discipline'</i>
2.1.2 Professional practice	Views expressed and experiences re. professional practice (as opposed to teaching practice)	<i>'[studio practice] is the students coming into contact with you and your descriptions and understandings of your own practice and I guess ... your understanding of their practice'</i>
2.1.3 Discipline	How teacher identity is influenced by the relationship with the discipline or subject area.	<i>'I'm an academic who studies a discipline and I share that discipline and help my students engage with that discipline and develop their own understanding of it'</i>
2.1.4 Being innovative	Views expressed and experiences related to wanting to be, feeling pressure to be, or needing support to be innovative	<i>'So if resources were unlimited, you know, were limitless and we could do anything, what would you want to do? That was my starting point. For people to think in an innovative way ... That you could do something different. That you could opt to be different'</i>
<b>2.2 Autonomy</b>	Coding related to autonomy	<i>'the trouble with this university is that it wants to tell you what to do and think ... and academics don't work like that ... it's not us!'</i>
2.2.1. Strategy	How autonomy is achieved by stealth, or by appearing to be compliant but resisting by playing the game	<i>'they said we could do it that way, but we ignored that and did it anyway ... what they couldn't see they couldn't interfere with'</i>
2.2.2 Assessment	How assessment practices and regulations affect perceptions of autonomy	<i>'the only way we could assess it was doing it in a way we didn't want in the first place ...'</i>
2.2.3 Pedagogic practice	Perceived degree of freedom to make decisions about practice	<i>'So in the past I might have been able to say [to] these students come on this day, these students come on a different day in order to do these mock interviews, it was harder to fit those things in ...'</i>
<b>2.3 Pedagogy</b>	Aspects of practice that are to do with pedagogy - ie the	<i>'The problem was that having to put internationalisation in meant we had to change the whole of the second year and that changed the electives and what we could do in year 3'</i>



	selection, sequencing and pacing of learning activities	
2.3.1 Becoming a teacher	What teachers say about being inducted into the culture of learning and teaching in an institution	<i>'It was literally "you've been hired and we want you to deliver these 5 modules. Here they are, go and deliver them." I was literally a week ahead of the students'</i>
2.3.2 Previous experience	Previous experience of pedagogy and how it influences dispositions and beliefs about teaching	<i>'Lectures were very clearly about putting as much information on the slides as I possibly could so that if I didn't deliver the material appropriately the students still had it because it was written. What it did mean was that students didn't need to engage with the lecture because I gave them all of the material'</i>
<b>2.4 Curriculum development</b>	Views and experiences described by participants related to the curriculum, how it is made, how it changes, what influences it etc.	<i>'There is concern about the number of modules we have across our group. There is an expectation that we are going to make ourselves very vulnerable as a teaching staff because we are going to spread ourselves too thin, because we are going to be teaching on 6, 8, 10 modules instead of 3 which people are familiar with.'</i>
2.4.1 External influence	Views expressed and experiences related to how the curriculum is affected by external influence (e.g. state policy, government intervention etc.)	<i>'There are a lot of Housing Associations getting involved with regeneration to do with pathfinders, this kind of thing. Of course with Government cuts in funding a lot of that work within Housing is now going.'</i>
2.4.2 Employability	Views and experiences related to how employability is included, integrated into the curriculum	<i>'It's hard to understand why because the employment rates from the course have always been very good and it is a course where students, if they are keen to be doing a course that's going to lead them into a job, students have gone straight into jobs from this course almost 100% throughout. However, the numbers are very low and they have been dropping down year on year'</i>
2.4.3 Designing	Views and experiences related to design and designing the curriculum	<i>'We don't have 13 modules total anymore. We have 50. You need to pick more than 3! So we had to have a conversation and say "you must be picking a minimum of 7 as a starting point, not a minimum of 3" and I think it was that people wanted to do the things that they created.'</i>
<b>2.5 Discipline</b>	Perspectives on practice which derive from differing subject/discipline perspectives	<i>'Everybody created modules about their research, their discipline, their interest, their identity as an academic'</i>
2.5.1 Importance	Views and experiences of the importance of discipline to teaching practice	<i>'... their research, their discipline, their interest, their identity as an academic ... even the people who are very practice oriented ... don't do a lot of undergraduate teaching.'</i>
2.5.2 Knowledge	Views expressed and experiences re. knowledge and knowing in disciplines/subjects	<i>'We made the decision also that what became glaringly obvious is the reverse, that there were areas that weren't being covered and weren't being serviced by what was the programme that were in desperate need of coverage'</i>
2.5.3 Change	Views and experiences of how the discipline/subject has changed over time and why	<i>'The minute it was suggested that Criminology was going over to Law we went "what does that mean for us?" ... They don't see that that's how the degree or the way in which we approach the discipline has developed'</i>
<b>2.6 Approval</b>	Coding of data related to the approval process and teachers' experiences and views	<i>'knowing how to teach something and to deliver it to students is not the same as explaining it to a panel of people who don't anything about your subject – the students know more than they do!'</i>
2.6.1	The degree to which	<i>'The idea [was] that if the sky was the limit and we were in an</i>

Developmental	the approval process is seen to be developmental	<i>ideal world, here's a sheet of paper, what would you want your course to look like?</i>
2.6.2 Support	Views expressed by participants on how approval is supported	<i>"I cannot tell you how awful it is, rolling out a distance learning course without full understanding from admin and everybody about the drawbacks, the pitfalls and everything."</i>
2.6.3 Problems	The perceived difficulties and how this affected them and whether they felt they could overcome these.	<i>'I did get the sense that curriculum development or strategic planning at a more senior level had been a strategic decision to develop this new area and so it was partly being led from the top also'</i>
<b>2.7 Metaphor</b>	The use of metaphors and figurative language - including symbols	<i>'... it was a baptism of fire'</i>
<b>3. Consensus seeking focused field position and practice</b>	A set of codes related to the consensus seeking focused context in Approval Panel Event. These are organised under seven hierarchical structures: <b>challenge; consensus; conflict; strategy; expertise; coherence; change</b>	
<b>3.1 Challenge</b>	The perceived degree of unknown aspects of the process and its outcome	<i>'while we think we can approve a course and that is the job done, we don't think about the things that will be problems down the line'</i>
3.1.1 Uncertainty	The views re. the process as uncertain	<i>'what we don't know is how the students will respond to this when we start teaching ... or what will work and what won't ...'</i>
3.1.2 Experiment	The views re. the process as an experiment	<i>'we thought we would try it ... of everything we did this was the most scary ...'</i>
<b>3.2 Consensus</b>	Views and experiences described by participants related to consensus	<i>'It should be an information document that's useful for students but I think there are lots of different voices and lots of interested parties in there.'</i>
3.2.1 Agreement	The experience of orientation to consensus in practice	<i>'For me, I see the document as completely being a quality mechanism, to ensure that we do what we do, that we are saying what we say and that we have an infrastructure ...'</i>
3.3.2 Cooperation	The experience of collective decision-making	<i>'You can't easily change them so you need to be careful when you write them that you don't tie yourself to something that you'll later regret.'</i>
3.3.3 Compromise	How the institutional and teachers' needs are accommodated within the same scheme	<i>'in some respects it is developmental, but that's not the actual feel of the process: It's developmental by accident, it feels more like it's about being accountable and getting it right and if you do it well you go in and get it right'</i>
<b>3.3 Conflict</b>	Coding of data related to moments of conflict or disruption	<i>'... the more pressure that goes on in that paperwork the more ... I am going to have to leave, and I can't afford to do that ...'</i>
3.3.1 Difference	Experience of conflict arising from differing perspectives	<i>'I guess we presumed that they had all seen it while reading and the fact that [they] didn't raise it implied that it wasn't relevant to the discussion'</i>
3.3.2 Misunderstanding	Experience of conflict arising from misunderstandings	<i>'The irony is we have a state of the art physical theatre workshop and at the workstation there's one of the most internationally acclaimed Dance specialists who had agreed to do the course!'</i>
<b>3.4 Strategy</b>	Coding of data related to strategies that people use	<i>"If we do this right they will write their own conditions"</i>
3.4.1 Managing	How teachers manage the design and approval process	<i>'sooner or later something had to give ... and people are too busy to spend time on getting it exactly so ... we just waited until they went away'</i>
3.4.2 Refraction	How teachers refract the institution's needs into their	<i>'the danger was that if you explained too much they would pick up on it ... the best thing was to be as circumspect as possible'</i>

	practice	
<b>3.5 Expertise</b>	Coding of data related to understandings of expertise	<i>'... why is there not more investment in that whole design process and up-skilling training of people to be involved in curriculum design'</i>
3.5.1 Knowledge expertise	How specialised knowledge is viewed	<i>'... I am a radio astronomer ... I know nothing about your course ...'</i>
3.5.2 Teaching Expertise	How teaching is viewed as an expert practice	<i>'... ultimately staff should be talking about what they are actually going to teach, regardless of how many hours etc. ...'</i>
3.5.3 Curriculum expertise	How the design of the curriculum is viewed	<i>'My pre-event impression was that it would be about 'high-level' issues and major cracks in our design ...'</i>
<b>3.6 Coherence</b>	Coding of data related to	<i>'it was how the course hung together that I was concerned with .. was it just a collection of modules?'</i>
3.6.1 Process/product	How the process and product approach to the curriculum is viewed	<i>'... badly designed courses just really cause problems ... And you need a process that does actually encourage innovation, new product development, that is what it's all about'</i>
3.6.2 Contextual coherence	Understanding and views expressed on the importance of context	<i>'you'd look at some individual module descriptors and well that doesn't fit with that, and so on ...you're looking for where it didn't all hang together'</i>
3.6.3 Conceptual coherence	Understanding and views expressed on the importance of concepts	<i>'what we wanted was a structure where students could first do the basics ... build on this in year 2 and specialise in year 3'</i>
<b>3.7 Change</b>	Coding of data related to understandings of change	<i>'we knew what we wanted to ... but they wouldn't let us ...'</i>
3.7.1 Dispositions to change	Views and beliefs about change and how it happens	<i>'We're talking about the 'academic freedom' ticket really aren't we? ... people get this perception of well you're basically trying to impose a one-size-fits-all'</i>
3.7.2 Achieving change	Views and beliefs about achieving change	<i>'It's almost like a health and safety audit, you know, is everything in place, does everything work, if so must be OK. Well, I find that quite mechanical.'</i>

## Appendix 8: Contextual help for the module mappings (Group A)

**Table 36: Toolkit descriptions for the module mapping showing ‘contextual help’**

Toolkit Item	Description	Contextual help ( <i>‘i-box’</i> )
<b>Overview</b>		
Title		Please insert the title of your module here
Author		Please insert here the name of the author or authors of the module
Institution		Please provide information about the institution with the module was developed
Credit weighting		Please select the credit weighting the drop-down menu (10/15/20/25/30)
Level		Please like the level from the drop-down menu (4/5/6/7)
Relationship to program course		Please indicate whether your module is normally delivered as a mandatory or an elective course
Joint or combined programme		Please indicate with your module is normally offered within joint or combined honours program
Mapping to JACS		Please indicate module classification according to the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) system
Syllabus or programme		Please state the syllabus or programme which the module was developed, for instance ‘BSC sociology’ or ‘BA anthropology’ etc.
Description		Please provide a description of your module – you can include here a brief overview of content, a history of the project, how and where it was developed, how long it has been taught, how it is changed since the beginning etc.
Meta tags		Please list keywords associated with the module subject (separated by commas). Make sure the tags you use will enable others to find/rediscover your module. While the tool allows you to create your own tags, you can see project guidance here <a href="#">[link]</a>
<b>Pedagogy</b>		
Rationale		Please provide a description of your pedagogic framework – by that, we mean outline of your pedagogical rationale as well as ways in which is realised in the context of your module. By pedagogic rationale we mean your approach to learning, teaching and assessment that you feel has impacted on the design and practice of the module. You can think about it as you would “teaching philosophy” which would like to share with any future re-users of your material
Indicators		Please provide a list of indicators of how the pedagogic rationales is realised in this module. For instance, what sort of teaching methods have you adopted and why?
Subject benchmarks		Use the document tabs to select subjects and subject categories. Select subject benchmarks [Criminology; Politics; Social Anthropology; Sociology] relevant to your course in each of the sub-categories by clicking on the check boxes. You can find more information about subject benchmarks at the QAA website <a href="#">[subject knowledge; subject specific; generic]</a>
Outcomes and assessment		Throughout the project, we are aiming for integration of learning outcomes assessment. This is why, as you worked with the tool, you will notice that the learning outcomes fields have been have been predefined K1, K2 etc. (for knowledge skills); P1, P2 etc. (for

	professional skills); C1, C2 etc. (for cognitive and intellectual skills); and T1, T2 etc. (for transferable skills)
Learning outcomes	[Add/delete learning outcomes]
Assessment	[Add/delete assessment item and percentage weighting]
<b>Content</b>	Add content descriptions: click on the 'Add Unit 'button to add new unit. Click on the 'Delete Checked Units 'button to delete units which have been marked. In the context of this toolkit, we understand 'units' as related to the pedagogical structure of the module, and so one unit might be for instance consist of a lecture and seminar; supported by a PowerPoint presentation and a tutorial handout.
Pedagogic unit title	Please enter the title of your unit (most probably it will be 'Lecture 1' or 'Introduction to Marxism' etc. Once again, try to make it easy for others to rediscover your resources later.
Pedagogic unit description	Use this space to describe your unit. Which material did you cover in the course of that unit, or is there anything that the potential user should pay attention to when engaging with this resource in the future except?
Pedagogic unit time	Please enter the number of teaching hours allocated to the particular unit
Pedagogic unit learning activities	Please describe the activities connected with particular unit – for instance I lecture followed by seminar etc.
Pedagogic unit materials	Here you can add any relevant materials associated with your unit. For instance, a PowerPoint presentation for your lecture and a Word document as a handout for the tutorial. Clicking on 'Add an Item' box will open a pop-up window where you can enter your item title, the filename and a link to a repository with this item is hosted. Please bear in mind that this tool will not store your documents, they need to be located on a Web-based repository such as JorumOpen or MERLOT
<b>Notes and additional resources</b>	
Notes	Here you can add any additional comments on your module
Additional resources	Add any additional resources you consider relevant, for instance reading lists for the module, a list of films which was incorporated into the module etc.

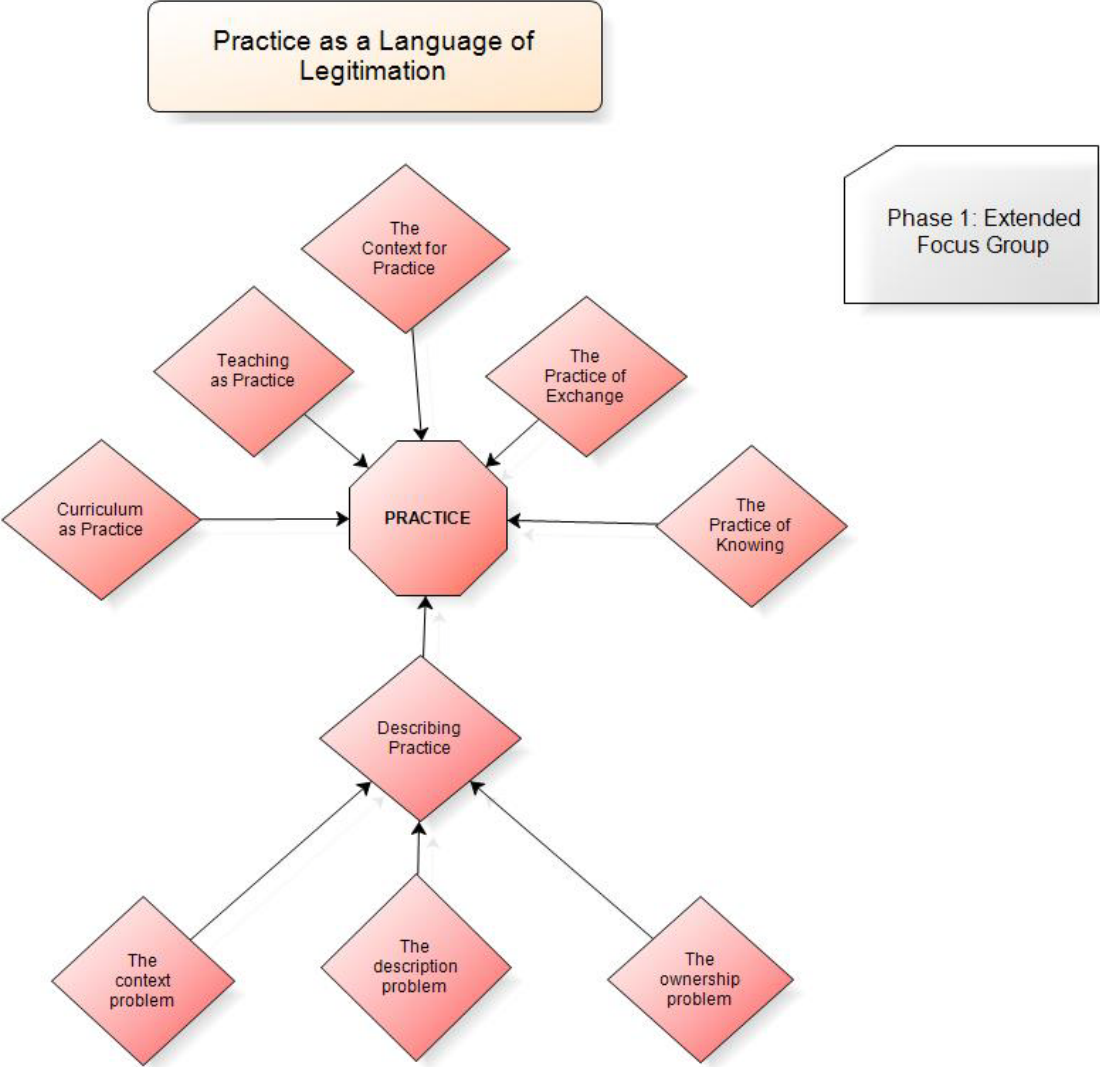
## Appendix 9: Breakdown of modules showing pedagogical structure (Group A)

**Table 37: Breakdown of 20 shared modules showing pedagogical structure (Group A)**

Module/ Type of material	Pedagogical Units	Pedagogical Activity	Assessment
<b>01: Visual Anthropology</b> (20 credits) [module handbook, lecture slides, video]	12 units (2 hours each)	lectures; learning activities; tutorials; exercises; readings	2 tasks: Essay (50%), Examination (50%)
<b>02: Anthropological Ideas</b> (20 credits) [module handbook, lecture slides]	6 units (4 hours each)	online materials; tutor video; exercises; readings	10 tasks: Written discussion (10%); Comparative Assessment (10%); Online discussion (10%); Contextual exercise (10%); Essay (10%); Kinship diagram (10%); Self-assessment (10%); Self-assessment (10%); Essay (10%); Essay (10%)
<b>03: Exploring Religions and Cultures</b> (20 credits) [module handbook]	15 units (2 hours each)	Lectures; learning activities; discussion; comparison; revision; thinking questions; readings	2 tasks: Portfolio (50%); Critical review (50%)
<b>04: Sociology of Health and Illness</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides]	8 units (2 hours each)	Lectures; guided discussion; readings	1 task: Essay (100%)
<b>05: Sociology of Human Reproduction</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides]	9 units (2 hours each)	Lectures; guided discussion; readings	1 task: Examination (100%)
<b>06: Gender and Society</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides, reflection sheet]	9 units (2 hours each)	Lectures; guided discussion; readings	3 tasks: Learning diary (60%), Essay (10%); Essay (30%)
<b>07: Comparative Sociology</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides]	9 units (2 hours each)	Lectures; guided discussion; readings	1 task: Examination (100%)
<b>08: Embodiment and Feminist Theory</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides, class paper]	9 units (2 hours each)	Lectures; guided discussion; readings	1 task: Examination (100%)
<b>09: Ethnicity and 'Race'</b> (10 credits) [module outline, lecture slides]	9 units (2 hours each)	Lectures; guided discussion; readings	1 task: Coursework (100%)

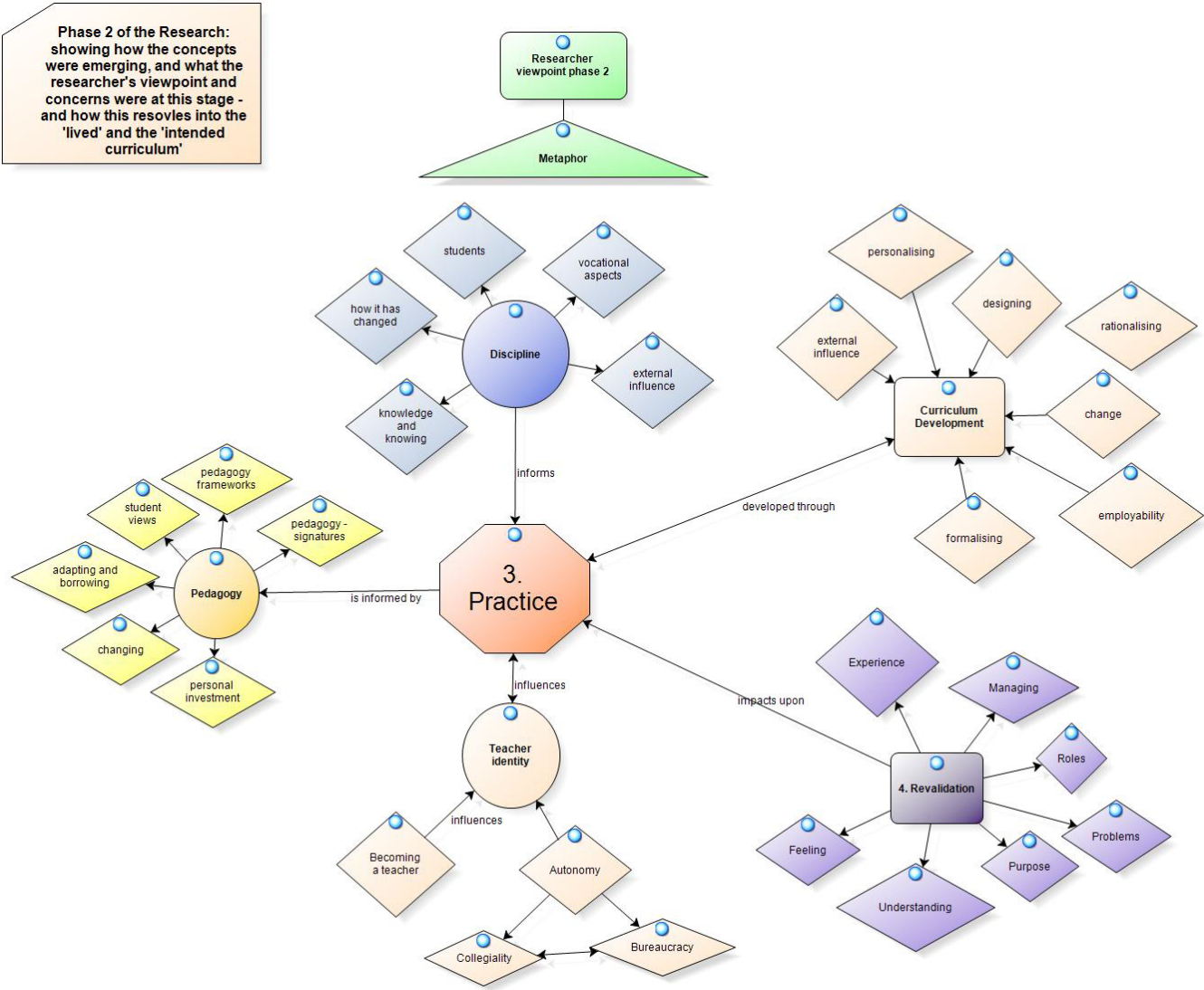
<b>10: Mass media in America</b> (30 credits) [module handbook, portfolio document]	9 units (2 hours each)	Lectures; workshops; group activities	2 tasks: Portfolio (40%); Examination (60%)
<b>11: Crime and Violence</b> (20 credits) [module handbook+ lecture slides]	15 units (3 hours each)	Lectures; seminars; readings	2 tasks: Group project (50%); Group presentation (50%)
<b>12: International E-communication exchange</b> (10 credits) [handbook for academics, student handbook, messages showcase, FAQ, topics, weekly work, guidelines for reflective essay, screenshots, lecture slides]	4 units (3 hours each)	Lectures; seminars; readings	2 tasks: Group project (50%); Essay (50%)
<b>13: Gender, Crime and Justice</b> (20 credits) [online handbook, lecture slides]	12 units (1 hour each)	Lectures; seminars; readings	2 tasks: Group project (50%); examination (50%)
<b>14: Learning and Employability</b> (20 credits) [contents, accessing pebble pad, examples of exercises for pebble pad, reading list, teaching schedule, student handbook, classroom activities]	5 units (1 hour each)	Lectures; seminars; handouts; Web links; readings	3 Tasks: Open-book test (50%); group project (30%); Self-assessment (20%)
<b>15: Sociology of Leisure</b> (30 credits) [module outline xerte RLO files]	6 units (2 hours each)	Reusable learning objects; readings	1 task: Individual presentation (100%)
<b>16: Research Methods</b> (30 credits) [lecture slides, audio files, xerte RLO files]	9 units (4 hours each)	Readings; presentations	3 tasks: multi-choice Test (30%); Critical review (30%); Research proposal (40%)
<b>17: State Crime</b> (20 credits) [module handbook, lecture slides]	11 units (3 hours each)	Lectures; seminars; readings; discussion questions	3 tasks: Essay (30%); Seminar tasks (20%); Examination (50%)
<b>18: Public Policy</b> (20 credits) [module handbook, resit coursework information, lecture slides]	11 units (3 hours each)	Lectures; seminars; readings; discussion questions	2 tasks: Essay (50%); Timed essay (50%)
<b>19: Government of the United Kingdom and Ireland</b> (20 credits) [module handbook, word documents (assignment, resume and exam), lecture slides]	10 units (3 hours each)	Lectures; seminars; readings; discussion questions	3 tasks: essay (30%); multi-choice test (30%); examination (40%)
<b>20: Why Politics Matters</b> (30 credits) [lecture slides, reading list, lecture recording]	6 units (2 hours each)	Lectures; seminars	2 tasks: Class test (30%); Group project (70%)

Appendix 10: Phase 1 coding model

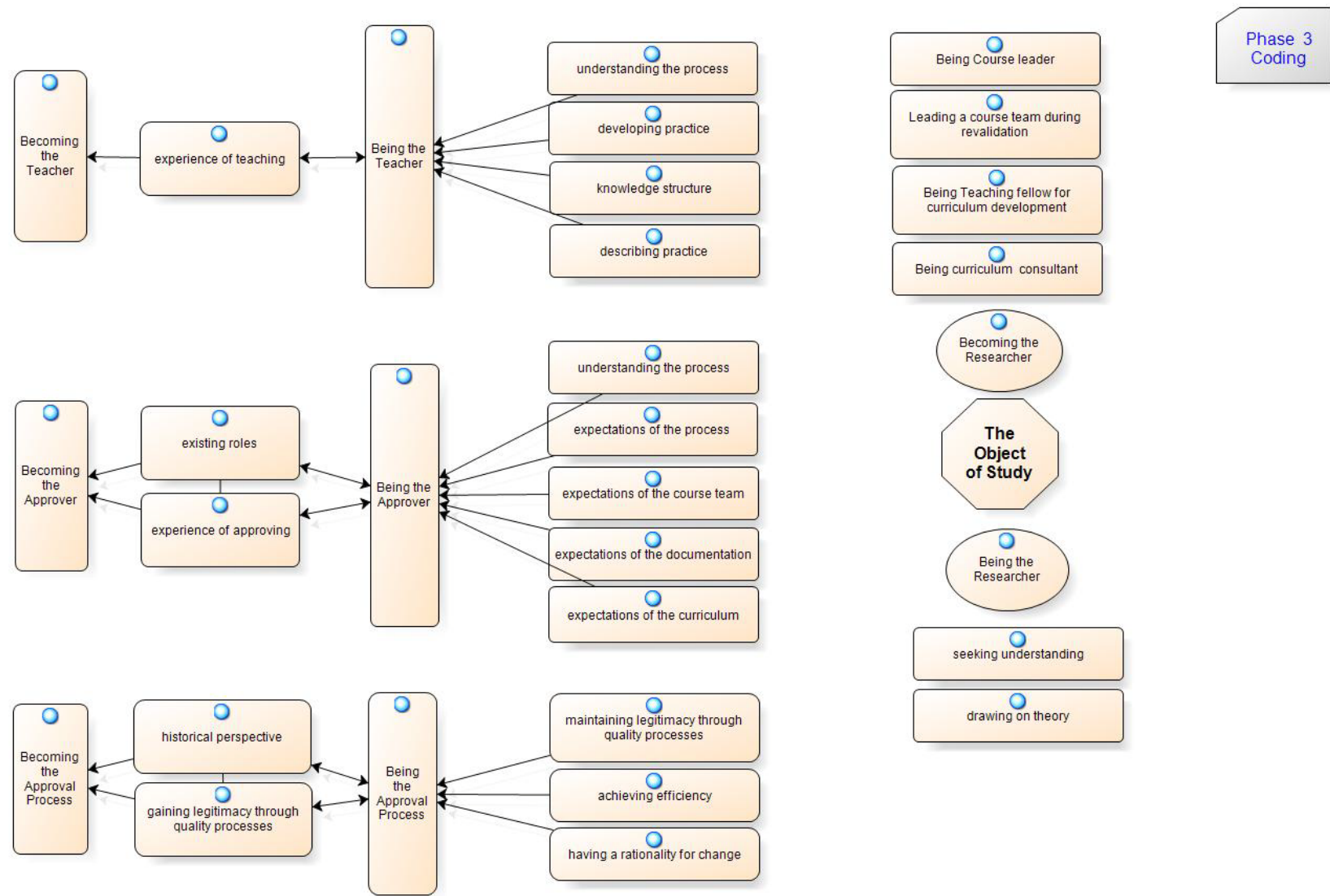




Appendix 11: Phase 2 coding model



Appendix 12: Phase 3 coding model



## Appendix 13: Initial advice given to course planning teams

**Table 38: Initial advice given to Course Planning Teams**

Topic	Advice given
Course Design and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This section should clearly explain how the course is designed and structured in terms of the balance of mandatory, elective and option modules, the sequence of modules, variations between modes of study and patterns of delivery.</li> <li>• It is helpful if this is represented in diagrammatic form which clearly shows the sequence of modules, their credit weighting and whether they are elective or mandatory</li> <li>• It is important that the structure of the proposed award(s) facilitates key Faculty and University priorities, such as internationalisation and opportunities for work-based study</li> </ul>
Learning, Teaching and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the LTA strategy embeds best practice and that LTA strategies are likely to deliver on the aspirations expressed in the learning outcomes</li> <li>• Ensure that the course responds to the enhancement themes that the University and Faculty have established (see below)</li> <li>• Ensure that the Learning and Teaching methods lead to delivery of the learning outcomes and that assessment methods and assessment criteria measure the learning outcomes</li> </ul>
Aims and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learning outcomes should embrace the overall aim of the programme, the benchmark statements, professional/inter-professional requirements, the level of the award and where appropriate learner autonomy and employability</li> </ul>
Module Descriptors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please ensure that the most up-to-date version of the module descriptor template is used</li> <li>• Please ensure that the content and presentation of the descriptors is standardised and that each section is fully completed and clear, especially in relation to assessment</li> <li>• Please also note that the external panel members on approval panels use the module descriptors as their primary indication of the currency and relevance of the content of the award</li> </ul>
Benchmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All awards should show they meet national benchmarking standards (where available) and also any other external standard such as professional body requirements</li> </ul>
Exemptions from Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If any award needs exemption from standard university regulations then this has to be applied for and approved prior to approval. Please note that these are generally only approved if there is a professional body requirement for this</li> </ul>
Student Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of this section is to explain as fully as possible the various mechanisms that are used to support students through their life cycle on the course, from entry and induction, through the period of academic study and preparation for employment</li> <li>• Details should be provided of induction arrangements, especially in relation to international students and any additional support that is provided</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details should be given of such systems, if used, as personal tutors, mentors, peer support, and also the roles and responsibilities of academic and student support staff</li> <li>• In addition, it should be shown how the university support systems are also available to students</li> <li>• If the award includes opportunities for work-based learning and/or placement then details should be given about support processes for this</li> </ul>
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## Appendix 14: Typical timeline for the course approval process and the APE

This appendix includes a timeline for course approval (Table 39) and the agenda, timings and activities of a typical APE (Table 40).

**Table 39: Timeline for Course Approval**

Activity	Timing	Description
Business Development Approval (BDA)	6-12 months before the APE	A formal meeting of the Faculty Business Committee attended by the Course Leader to discuss an application for 'business planning' approval.
Faculty Quality Support sends Documentation to Course Leader	Following business planning approval	Faculty Quality Support Officer contacts Course Leader and sends documentation and sets the date of the Approval Panel Event.
Course Planning	Between BDA and the APE	Taking various forms: (a combination of) team meetings; 'Away Days'; workshops; writing events; mapping activities.
Preliminary Meeting	3 months before APE	Meeting of UAP Chair, Course Leader and Faculty Approval Coordinator, to discuss the Submission Document.
Draft Submission Document submitted for Faculty Approval	4 weeks before APE	Faculty Head of Quality provides feedback on the document and approves the document to go forward to the USP.
Final Submission Document submitted for USP approval	1 week before APE	Course Leader amends the Submission Document following feedback from the Faculty readership.
Approval Panel Event (APE)	3 hour meeting of UAP	Led by UAP Chair including faculty and institution academic representatives, an external academic and an <i>Academic Services</i> secretary. Approval made with conditions and recommendations
Response to conditions	4 weeks after APE	Course Leader submits amended Submission Document
Final approval	8 weeks after APE	Chair of the UAP works with Academic Services to approve the updated Submission Document
Circulation of Definitive Document	8 weeks after APE	The document is circulated to Student and Learning Services; The Library; Members of the course team; Student Support and External Examiners.

Key: UAP – University Approval Panel; APE – Approval Panel Event

**Table 40: Agenda, timings and activities of a typical APE**

Timing (min.)	Agenda item	Description
Pre-meeting (6 weeks before APE)	Readership and comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Faculty sign-off:</b> submission document is submitted to Faculty quality team for readership and to confirm it is ready for the APE (6 weeks before APE)</li> <li>• <b>Final submission Document resubmitted:</b> CL makes amendments (if necessary) and submits to quality team who format it and send it to the UAP (4 weeks before APE)</li> <li>• <b>UAP readership:</b> UAP comments collated and sent to CL (1 week before APE)</li> </ul>
00.00 - 00.30 (30 minutes)	Preliminary Private meeting of the Panel to set the agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introductions:</b> Chair introduces the panel and sets out the purpose and agenda of the meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Identifying substantive issues from readership:</b> Chair summarises the issues raised in readership and each member speaks to his/her critique</li> <li>• <b>Setting the procedure:</b> Chair agrees issues to be discussed with the CPT and identifies which member of the UAP that will ask the questions on each issue.</li> </ul>
00.30 - 02.30  (up to 120 minutes)	Panel discussion with the CPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introductions:</b> Chair introduces the panel and the CL introduces the members of the CPT.</li> <li>• <b>Setting the procedure:</b> Chair explains the process and what the possible outcomes will be. The CL is invited to make a presentation.</li> <li>• <b>Presentation by CL (optional):</b> CL sets out the course design and the course rationale.</li> <li>• <b>Questioning:</b> members of the UAP question the CPT on specific issues.</li> </ul>
02.30 - 02.50  (20 minutes)	Private meeting of the Panel to agree conclusions and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Identifying substantive issues from discussion:</b> Chair summarises the issues raised in discussion and each member speaks to his/her critique</li> <li>• <b>Agreeing approval decision, conditions and recommendations:</b> Chair summarises the discussion and sets out the feedback to the CPT</li> </ul>
02.50 – 03.00  (10 minutes)	Panel feedback to CPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Giving overall approval decision:</b> Chair states the decision of the UAP, and sets out commendations of good practice and innovation</li> <li>• <b>Setting of conditions and recommendations:</b> Secretary outlines the requirements that the CPT have to meet in the final submission document and the date for this is agreed</li> <li>• <b>Thanks and closing meeting</b></li> </ul>
Post- meeting	Submission document finalised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Final document submitted:</b> Chair oversees the changes made in response to conditions and approves them (up to 8 weeks after APE)</li> </ul>

Key: CL = course leader; CPT = course planning team; APE = approval panel event; UAP = university approval panel

## Appendix 15: Key LTA enhancement themes (Institution I10)

**Table 41: Key LTA enhancement themes**

Theme	Aims
1. Effective and efficient assessment and feedback practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establish assessment approaches that support learning by developing strategies and models to move from assessment of to assessment for learning</li> <li>develop strategies that provide supportive and actionable feedback and make clear to students what is expected and the means to achieve this</li> <li>ensure that the course embeds the expectations set out in the Faculty Feedback Policy</li> </ul>
2. Ensuring that students are well equipped for the world of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that all students have curriculum opportunities to engage in relevant work-based, work-related or community-based learning and ensure that administrative support is available to support this</li> <li>ensure the development of employability skills for all students by embedding employability skills in the curriculum and in learning outcomes</li> <li>ensure that in course careers advice is offered to all students</li> <li>ensure that students have the opportunity to engage with a personal development plan process within the course</li> <li>if you have work based learning or a placement as part of your provision, please contact Student Support to discuss the requirements for the placement/WBL.</li> </ul>
3. Supporting student transition, progression and achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that academic support is an integral part of the student experience on all courses at all levels of study by embedding induction and orientation programmes for students and aligning these with module design</li> <li>provide active and student-centred approaches to student learning and academic literacy skills, including enquiry-led learning and information literacy, and embed these within the course</li> <li>provide learning contexts in which students are encouraged to develop as reflective and autonomous learners and include these in the module and course design</li> </ul>
4. Preparing students for a global world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop internationalised curricula and inter-cultural and global citizenship perspectives in the course including global citizenship and intercultural awareness, including course content that has international elements</li> <li>ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage with study or work overseas</li> <li>Incorporate opportunities for international students</li> <li>Provide appropriate learning support for incoming international students and outgoing students undertaking study or placement opportunities abroad</li> </ul>
5. Technology Enhanced Learning	<p>Ways in which technology can be used to support the development of the four LTA themes within modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how the course will be supported online, including the use of Blackboard</li> <li>how technology be used to support a range of learning experiences and activities across the course</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 16: Generative Questions for Course Planning and Design**

This document contains a full list of the generative questions and prompts from the LTA Enhancement, Enabling and Facilitating Themes at Institution I10 (Forgetown University):

- Assessment and feedback
- Ensuring students are well equipped for the world of work
- Preparing students for a global world
- Academic support integrated into the student experience
- Technology enhanced learning
- Providing active and student centred approaches to learning
- Student writing
- Information literacy

### Assessment and Feedback

- How does assessment and feedback design support student learning?
- How are students prepared for their assessment tasks?
- How are students provided with effective feedback?

### Ensuring students are well equipped for the world of work

- Is employability (as distinct from employment) addressed in your proposals?
- Does your course include opportunities for work-based or work-related learning?
- Will your students be provided with tuition in career management skills?

### Preparing Students for a Global World

- How does the course address issues of internationalisation/intercultural awareness/ global citizenship?
- How does the course support student and staff international mobility?
- How does the course prepare graduates for employability in European/ international labour markets?

### Academic support integrated into the student experience

- How will the course provide all students at all levels with access to academic advice and support?
- How can peer-assisted learning be embedded within the course design?

### Technology Enhanced learning

- How will the course be supported online?
- How will technology be used to support a range of learning experiences and activities across the course?
- How will technology be used to support and facilitate a range of assessment opportunities across the course?

### Student Writing

- What types of writing are students required to undertake as part of this course?
- What support do you give students in developing their writing during the course?
- How is student writing assessed on your course?
- How is enquiry embedded in the course?
- Does the design of your course encourage students to take increasing control of their learning as they move through the course?



- Which learning, teaching and assessment approaches might be used to support learner autonomy (including enquiry-based learning)?

#### Information Literacy

- How is Information Literacy embedded into the course?
- How will Information Literacy be assessed and evaluated?
- What is the reading strategy for the course?

#### Professional Development

- During the Course Planning process, have any Professional Development needs for the Course Planning Team (CPT) emerged to assist with understanding the Enhancement Themes?
- During the Course Planning process, have any Professional Development needs for the CPT emerged to assist with the QSME process?
- In order to deliver your course, are there any Professional Development needs for the Course Team a) prior and b) during course delivery?
- During the reviewing process of the course, have any Professional Development needs for the Course Teams emerged to assist with the QSME process?
- Are there any Professional Development needs that arise from needing to evaluate the course?
- What are the staff support and development implications of your application of e-learning in the curriculum?

## Appendix 17: Courses in the study and their characteristics (Phase 2)

Table 42: Courses in the study and their characteristics

Course Team	Course Title	Level	Subject Area / Discipline	Subject Benchmark	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB)	Awards	Modules	Students	Tutors
CPT1	International Relations	UG	Politics	Politics; International Relations	n/a	1	30	40	5
CPT2	Geography, Housing, Environment and Planning	UG	Environment and Planning	Earth Sciences; Environmental Sciences; Environmental Studies	The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management; The Landscape Institute	7	75	400	27
CPT3	English Language Teaching	PG	English	n/a	n/a	1	7	25	4
CPT4	Social Science Research	PG	Social Science	n/a	Economic and Social Research Council	7	9	40	32
CPT5	Autism	UG	Education	n/a	n/a	1	6	30	3
CPT6	Education	PG	Education	Early Years Professional Standards; Professional Standards for Teachers	n/a	12	41	100	18
CPT7	Criminology	UG	Criminology	Criminology	n/a	4	93	90	14
CPT8	Applied Social Science	UG	Social Science	Politics; Sociology; Social Anthropology; Criminology	n/a	13	110	350	26
CPT9	Performing Arts	FD	Performing Arts	Foundation Degree qualification	n/a	2	10	30	10
CPT10	Built Environment	UG	Built Environment	Construction; Property; Surveying	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors; Association of Building Engineers; Chartered Institute of Building	9	79	250	44
CPT11	Contemporary Fine Art	UG	Fine Art	Art and Design	n/a	3	10	120	12
CPT12	Public Services: Policing Studies	FD	Social Science	Criminology	n/a	2	15	30	6
<b>Totals</b>						62	485	1505	201

Key: FD= Foundation Degree; UG= Undergraduate; PG= Postgraduate      Note: Student numbers are anticipated and are approximate

## Appendix 18: Mapping of courses to the 'Education for Employability' Strategy (Phase 2)

Table 43: Mapping of courses to the Employability Strategy Institution I10

Course Team	Course Title	Level	Objective 1: accredited work-related/work-based learning	Objective 2: development of transferable skills	Objective 3: access to career management skills	Objective 4: personal development planning
<b>Q2: Practical knowledge; practical curricula</b>						
CPT9	Performing Arts	FD	<i>Skill for the Workplace; Professional Roles and Practice; and Performing Arts in Practice</i> modules.	addressed through subject-specific knowledge	Implicit use of institution's Careers Service	Embedded in <i>Practitioner Skills (I and II)</i> and <i>Performing Arts in Practice</i> . Modules.
CPT11	Contemporary Fine Art	UG	<i>Contemporary Art Advanced Study</i> module: optional placement report.	Independent student-led <i>Studio Practice</i> (60 credit Atelier System), including <i>Exhibition</i> (level 5) and <i>Final Degree Show</i> (level 6)	Implicit use of institution's Careers Service	Integrated: 'students expected to be responsible for their development as artists'
<b>Q3: Professional/practice knowledge; professional/vocational curricula</b>						
CPT2	Geography, Housing, Environment and Planning	UG	1 year work placement for students on optional <i>Professional Practice Placement</i> module (level 5)	Generic skills listed in programme LOs. Optional 'guest' lectures, 'simulations' and 'visits'.	PDP tutor and implicit use of institution's Careers Service	All students allocated a PDP tutor and timetabled tutorials at levels 4, 5 and 6. Online information.
CPT3	English Language Teaching	PG	Integrated across course designed to 'equip' students as international English Language Teachers.	Observation of experienced language teachers in the <i>Teacher Development</i> module	Implicit use of institution's Careers Service	Integrated in <i>Reflective Teacher Journal</i> assessment task in <i>Teacher Development</i> module. Tutorial each semester
CPT5	Autism	UG	Integrated rather than explicitly addressed in specific modules.	Generic skills listed in programme LOs; access to 'Key skills' online system	Reliant on existing professional backgrounds of students	Implicit reflection on work and context for autonomous learners
CPT6	Education	PG	Integrated - Part-time course aimed at existing practitioners in work contexts	Generic skills listed in programme and module LOs, including application of professional skills	'practice oriented' drawing on context-related experience, link to research and scholarship	PDP tutors model reflective practice and critique of practice. Students self-appraise.

CPT10	Built Environment	UG	36 week placement year between levels 5 and 6.	Generic skills listed in programme and module LOs; Professional skills addressed in specific modules for Real Estate, Construction, Surveying etc.)	Timetabled programme of activities focussing on career management skills around the placement taking place between levels 5 and 6	Integrated in modules. Implicit reflection on work and context for autonomous learners
CPT12	Public Services: Policing Studies	FD	<i>Work Based Learning in Policing and Criminal Justice</i> module (level 5, 40 credits)	Students apply to join the Special Constabulary or to establish links with a police service or associated voluntary organisation	First Aid course on the work-based learning module. Implicit use of institution's Careers Service	Integrated. Diagnostic test in key employability skills given at start of course. Portfolio as part of the <i>Learning Role and Professional Practice</i> module
<b>Q4: Theoretical knowledge; applied theory curricula</b>						
CPT1	International Relations	UG	Integrated rather than explicitly addressed in specific modules.	Generic skills listed in programme LOs to 'succeed as autonomous learners'.	Implicit use of institution's Careers Service	Module tutor is academic tutor for PDP tasks in: <i>Social Science Foundations</i> (level 4), <i>Work and Society</i> (level 5), <i>Reflecting on Work</i> (level 5) and the <i>Dissertation</i> (level 6).
CPT4	Social Science Research	PG	Integrated - Research degree aiming to develop researcher skills	Generic skills listed in programme and module LOs; 'learning through doing'	Implicit use of institution's Careers Service	Integrated: 'students expected to be responsible for their development as researchers'
CPT7	Criminology	UG	Elective work-related modules in levels 5 and 6: Preparing for the world of work (level 5)	Student maintains electronic portfolio	Implicit use of institution's Careers Service	Module tutor is academic tutor for PDP tasks in: <i>Social Thinking and Reflection</i> (level 4), <i>Critical Thinking and Career Management</i> (level 5); <i>Dissertation</i> (level 6)
CPT8	Applied Social Science	UG	A choice of 3 modules: <i>Work and Professional Development</i> module (10 credits level 5) and elective 30-credit project-management module or a 50-credit work placement module	Generic skills listed in programme and module LOs; Study skills module	Implicit use of institution's Careers Service. Professional development modules at levels 5 and 6	Module tutor is academic tutor with specific PDP tasks in level 4 Study Skills modules, and Professional Development modules at levels 5 and 6

**Key: Education for Employment Strategy - Objective 1:** ensure that all students actively engage with well structured, supported and accredited work-related or work-based learning.; **Objective 2:** embed high-level employability-related transferable 'skills' and attributes within the curriculum; **Objective 3:** provide all students at all levels with access to integrated and timetabled career management skills.; **Objective 4:** provide all students at all levels with access to personal development planning (PDP) to support their transition to the world of work

## Appendix 19: Work based learning modules

Table 44: Work based learning modules

Module	Course	Level	Assessment Tasks	Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
<b>Preparing for the world of Work</b> (10 credits) Elective	Criminology (CPT7)	5	<i>Reflection</i> (2000 words)	Identify employability skills and practices	Ability to recognise relevant skills and practices necessary to enhance employability
				Explain the transferability of skills across a range of different work environments	Ability to consider different ways that key skills and practices can be utilised across a range of settings
				Reflect upon their own learning processes within a work related setting	An evaluation of their learning and reflective practice
<b>Professional Practice and Placement</b> (20 credits) Mandatory / elective <sup>14</sup>	Geography, Environment Planning and Housing (CPT2)	5	<i>Performance Appraisal</i> (25%, 1000 words); <i>Reflective Report</i> (75%, 3000 words)	Identify complex problems in real-life situations, and select and apply appropriate techniques and behaviours to solve these problems.	Appropriateness of approaches, practice, techniques and behaviour employed in various workplace situations
				Identify objectives and personal responsibilities when working with others, and collaborate effectively in teams.	Self management skills applied in a professional teamwork context.
				Reflect on and analyse the values and ethics relating to professional practice in the relevant sector.	Knowledge and understanding of 'values and ethics' and analysis of their role and impact in professional practice.
				Reflect on and evaluate their own performance, and plan actions relating to their own continuing professional development needs.	Evidence of reflective practice skills, (including reflection, analysis, insight, planning)

Continued overleaf

<sup>14</sup> The professional Practice and Placement module was mandatory for Housing students and elective for the other awards in CPT2

Table 44 continued

Module	Course	Level	Assessment Tasks	Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
<b>Work Placement</b> (10 credits) Mandatory	Applied Social Science (CPT8)	5	<i>Project Plan</i> (20%, 1000 words); <i>Webfolio</i> (80%, 6000 words) <i>Employer Report</i> (P/F)	Identify and evaluate employability skills in the context of a relevant area of work	Understanding of the full range of employability skills; understanding of how certain employability skills apply to different areas and types of work; ability to analyse the relative importance of different skills appropriate to the area of work undertaken for the placement.
				Identify and explain a relevant aspect of politics and/or sociology through analysis of its application to the world of work	Understanding linkages between political / sociological theory and its application to the world of work; an appreciation of constraints on theory in practice; the accuracy and depth of understanding in explaining and using key concepts, theories and evidence; a detailed and accurate analysis of the work setting;
				Reflect constructively on learning achieved through the placement	Understanding of employability skills as applied work experience; ability to discern own strengths and weaknesses arising from this experience; the application of theory to practice; the ability to extrapolate relevant experiences and skills and consider their value for the future.
				Work on a project and identify goals, initiate action and find answers to identified problems, and communicate this effectively	Contribution to the project; ability to demonstrate role in a project; ability to demonstrate this through a variety of methods
<b>Work based learning in Policing and Criminal Justice</b> (40 credits) Mandatory	Criminology and Community Justice (CPT12)	5	<i>Portfolio / Reflection Log</i> (50%); <i>Professional Development Log</i> (50%)	Identify key areas where skills and competences should be developed	Ability to undertake a work based research project on a topic of special interest, chosen from within their field of study
				Build a range of professional skills, knowledge, and attributes that are required in the career role	Demonstrate ability to undertake an individual investigative assignment with direct relevance to their professional practice
				Recognise areas of learning that are important for effective professional standards and best practice	To enable students to compare and contrast the breath of roles, functions and responsibilities of individual practitioners in specific organisations
				Work effectively as part of a team and understand the importance of teamwork	To enable students to develop problem solving approaches to work based activities.
				Reflect on the organisation, its management structures, procedures, and customer base	Ability to reflect on learning
				Integrate theory into practice within a work environment	To enable students to acquire specialist knowledge and understanding required to practice in relevant employment

## Appendix 20: Course Approval Decisions: Conditions of approval and commendations

Course Team	Course Title	Level	Commendations of Good Practice/Innovation	Conditions
CPT1	International Relations	UG	Not specified	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formalise arrangements for student exchange with international partners to ensure an adequate standard of student management and support equivalent to those provided within the Erasmus Student Network.</li> <li>2. Include with Section C3, Programme Design and Structure, an explanation of how students are advised and directed to ensure that the topic of the dissertation is sufficiently relevant to the International Relations subject area, to ensure sufficient distinctiveness of award at level 6.</li> </ol>
CPT2	Geography, Housing, Environment and Planning	UG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The practice of explicitly identifying in assessment briefs the module and programme learning outcomes addressed is to be strongly welcomed</li> <li>• The innovative approach to embedding work based learning into the curriculum through the Professional Practice and Placement module</li> <li>• The provision of a named course leader together with a single point of administrative contact for students</li> <li>• The internationalisation of the curriculum, in an optional semester long study period overseas.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In respect of the Integrated Master award, the following points should be actioned: (i) (References to the award as M level to be amended to MPlan as appropriate; (ii) The BA (Hons) to be included as an alternative award within the Programme Specification and the learning outcomes should be added to Section B of the document; (iii) The position regarding approval of the Integrated Master award to be clarified in consultation with the USP Chair and ASQE colleagues.</li> <li>2. The assessment mapping diagram should be incorporated into the Learning, Teaching and Assessment section of the document.</li> <li>3. The module descriptors should be amended to take into account panel comments particularly with regard to the assessment strategy.</li> <li>4. The proposal for certain modules to include Model 2 Assessment should be resubmitted to Registry Services and the outcomes reported to the panel.</li> </ol>
CPT3	English Language Teaching	PG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• academic expectations;</li> <li>• focus on learner centred teaching and learning;</li> <li>• development of greater learner responsibility;</li> <li>• use of formative feedback (assessment for learning);</li> <li>• collaborative and enquiry-based learning;</li> <li>• structured development throughout the year;</li> <li>• recognition of individual differences;</li> <li>• provision of micro teaching and classroom observation;</li> <li>• use of reflective journals;</li> <li>• use of Blackboard to provide networking and a platform for peer feedback;</li> <li>• recognition of need to support transition of students, academically, linguistically and</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The learning outcomes for the intermediate awards should be reviewed and clarified in alignment with the Programme learning outcomes, and the mapping table modified accordingly.</li> <li>2. Within the Programme Design and Structure section of the Programme Specification, provide a brief statement which clarifies and quantifies how the relevant theoretical underpinning is integrated in the curriculum with the practical aspects of the course.</li> <li>3. Within the LTA Strategy section of the Definitive Document, a statement should be included articulating the role of learning technologies in supporting student learning.</li> <li>4. The <i>Teacher Development in English Language Teaching</i> module should be reviewed and the focus and module title redefined to reflect continuing professional development, in line with the discussion at the approval event.</li> <li>5. The <i>English Language Teaching Methodology</i> module should be reviewed, specifically the indicative content, to reflect how the module supports the development of basic English language teaching skills including reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and vocabulary.</li> </ol>

			<p>professionally, including the use of smaller assignments for assessment in semester 1 in order to provide earlier formative feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good peripheral support in place from various university services.</li> </ul>	
CPT4	Social Science Research	PG	Not specified	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The learning outcomes for the intermediate awards in Section B of the Definitive Document should be further developed. In order to clarify that the intermediate award titles are appropriate there should be an explicit statement that the generic modules would reflect the students' subject area of interest. The programme team should also consider the appropriateness of the intermediate award titles were students to complete only the specialist modules.</li> <li>2. The registration patterns discussed at approval should be clarified within the Definitive Document.</li> <li>3. There should be further clarification regarding the Types 1 and 2 dissertations, to ensure consistent terminology and assessment criteria and make explicit the distinction between the Type 2 dissertation and the RF2.</li> <li>4. The fact that the [course] students are research students should be made clear in the Definitive Document and the implications in view of ESRC guidelines relating to research students in terms of facilities, resources etc. should be addressed.</li> <li>6. The [course] Dissertation Proposal Form tabled at approval should be modified to include supervisory loading and reflect that it is forwarded to RDSC to comply with their terms of reference, and incorporated in the Definitive Document as an appendix. The relevant point in Section C5, should be reworded appropriately and make reference to the [course].</li> </ol>
CPT5	Autism	UG	Not specified	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The document should be revisited in line with the discussion at approval in order to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) rationalise sections of the document in terms of: (a) repetition in certain sections; (b) the Programme Learning Outcomes; (c) the Module Aims;</li> <li>(ii) amend the document in terms of (a) the intended audience; (b) the mapping of Learning Outcomes pp15-15.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. A commentary on the pathways and patterns of delivery through the course should be included in the document.</li> </ol>
CPT6	Education	PG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The programme offers a high degree of flexibility, and has been very thoughtfully designed to establish criticality and independent thinking as core features of the student learning experience.</li> <li>• Within the modules there are clear plans to include formative assessment opportunities through peer and tutor interaction.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Definitive Document should be revised and thoroughly proof read in light of the discussions at approval and the panel's initial comments to ensure that any typographical errors and omissions are corrected. Revisions should include removing the reference to "all ages" from the MA Early Years Programme Specification, p15.</li> </ol>
CPT7	Criminology	UG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A diverse range of assessment and feedback</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It should be explicitly articulated in the Definitive Document that the assessment</li> </ol>



			<p>strategies and the Assessment Diary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of the Virtual Learning Environment</li> <li>• Strategies to enhance employability and vocational work experience</li> <li>• Engagement of students in the development of the programme</li> <li>• Learner support and excellent choice and range of options</li> <li>• Dissertation (40 credits)</li> <li>• International experience and Appointment of Mobility Tutor</li> <li>• Simulation, Critical Thinking and Career Management modules</li> <li>• Research Mentoring</li> <li>• Podcasts of module information for students</li> </ul>	<p>feedback policy is in line with the University's requirement.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The learning outcomes for the intermediate awards should be rewritten to ensure that they reflect the level of the awards.</li> <li>3. The programme learning outcomes should be reviewed to ensure that they are set at the correct level.</li> </ol>
CPT8	Applied Social Science	UG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The opportunities within the programme for study abroad and work placement.</li> <li>• The provision of formative feedback within six weeks on all modules.</li> <li>• The appointment of a Departmental Mobility Tutor.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Definitive Document should be updated to reflect the agreement that it is appropriate for the Study Abroad module to comprise 50 credit points rather than 60 credit points.</li> <li>2. The arrangements for the 50 credit point work placement module need to be more clearly defined, particularly with regard to how student achievement will be demonstrated and assessed. The panel recommended that a placement operational handbook be produced which should specify: a) the minimum attendance expected; b) the arrangements for supervision of students; c) the students' responsibilities.</li> </ol>
CPT9	Performing Arts	FD	Not specified	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With regard to the Faculty not approving the Performing Arts: Dance route at this stage, references to the award should be removed from the document. In view of a partner college confirming the intention to develop a route, the Link Tutor should consult the Business Development Group accordingly.</li> <li>2. The Faculty Head of Quality and Enhancement should work with the Link Tutor to ensure that the Collaborative Provision Operations Handbooks have been completed appropriately</li> <li>3. The Faculty Head of Quality and Enhancement should work with the Link Tutor to ensure that the Student Handbooks have been completed appropriately. A list of the points identified during the approval discussions will be provided separately.</li> </ol>
CPT10	Built Environment	UG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dissertation module which is crucial in construction course programmes. Staff are commended for providing face to face support as supervisors to students, and for finding the time to allow all students a 30 min viva voce.</li> <li>• The integrated project module - an extremely valuable learning experience for the students.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A mapping of the PSRB competencies against the Programme learning outcomes should be included in Section C3 of the Definitive Document.</li> <li>2. The module descriptors should be revisited to ensure consistency with regard to:- (i) word count and study hours; (ii) indicative content; (iii) level differentiation; (iv) learning and teaching section so that appropriate delivery mechanisms are described.</li> <li>3. Write a statement in Section C2 of the Definitive Document explaining the overall programme assessment strategy and the rationale for the assessment instruments</li> </ol>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The great variety of methods used to assess students.</li> <li>• The use of blackboard to provide module and supportive information to students.</li> <li>• The adoption of an explicit approach to employability development within the curriculum, following the new employability policy.</li> </ul>	
CPT11	Contemporary Fine Art	UG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Atelier model and the system of ongoing critique, which were cited as an excellent model;</li> <li>• the commitment to enabling student self-direction within the course, and to overcoming the operational difficulties this presents;</li> <li>• the good practice in teaching and assessment as described to the Panel;</li> <li>• the strongly committed course team, as evidenced during the approval event and commended by students in their meeting with the Chair.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide full details of how the implications of the introduction of 90-credit modules will be addressed in the course design and teaching and learning strategies in regard to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) part-time students - provide separate course structure, delivery and assessment information, separate module information summary tables, and enhance the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Sections and module descriptors to demonstrate how part-time students will experience the course and access support;</li> <li>ii) international placement - detail within Section A3 the alternative modules to be studied at the University by students undertaking an international exchange, reflect this information in the module information summary table, and explain how the Course Team will ensure that the modules studied and assessed at exchange host institutions will achieve the learning required at level 5.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Revise Section C5 Student Support to articulate the strategies used to support level 4 students in their transition to Higher Education, including further detail of teaching strategies and arrangements for student contact with staff as described to the Panel.</li> <li>3. The marking matrix sheet presented in Section C should be revised to incorporate University standard grading classifications.</li> <li>4. Clarify within Section C2 Learning Teaching and Assessment, and within individual module descriptors if appropriate, the mechanisms for the provision of assessment feedback to students, including details of the different types of feedback provided, to reflect existing good practice as described to the Panel.</li> <li>5. Within Section A4 of the BA (Hons) awards volume, and Section B Intermediate Awards clearly explain the purpose and operation of the "Ordinary Fine Art Studio" and "Ordinary Creative Art Practice Studio" modules to describe their use in the provision of intermediate awards. Provide details of the method and timing of their assessment, and explain how students are informed of and supported in their options regarding the award of intermediate awards.</li> <li>6. Revise the Applicant Entry Profile for all awards to make more explicit the different expectations for applicants to the BA (Hons) and MArt awards, and clearly set out the criteria for progression or transfer to the MArt programme within Section A6 Entry Requirements for both MArt awards and within Section A4 Programme Design and Structure for all awards.</li> <li>7. Review all module descriptors and revise where necessary to ensure that alignment</li> </ol>

				with assessment model 1 or 2, the use of in-module retrieval, and the mapping of assessment criteria to learning outcomes are correctly reflected throughout.
CPT12	Public Services: Policing Studies	FD	Not specified	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each module should be revisited as follows: (i) to clarify the assessment activities and how they link to the assessment strategy in Section C2 of the Definitive Document; (ii) to provide clarification of feedback; (iii) to include minimum pass criteria; (iv) to clarify how work-based learning is used by non-work-based modules and in particular how it feeds into the assessment of those modules.</li> <li>The Definitive Document should include a statement explaining how the issue of potential plagiarism would be addressed.</li> <li>The Definitive Document should include a statement to articulate how work-based learning will be delivered and explain the support and opportunities for work placement for those students who have not joined the Special Constabulary.</li> <li>The Entry Requirements and Entry Profile section of the Programme Specification (Section 6) should be revised as follows: (i) to ensure alignment with the standard University Entry Requirements in terms of equivalence and level of English language capability. Should the course team wish to maintain the IELTS 6.5 proposed, the rationale should be provided; (ii) to clarify the selection of non-standard entrants; (iii) to make explicit to applicants the implications in terms of criminal records for completing a course in this area.</li> <li>The Programme learning outcomes should be revised to align more closely with University generic learning outcomes.</li> <li>The Policing 1 and 2 modules should be revised in line with the recommendation of the external panel member, and the course team should ensure as part of the revision that the assessment and learning outcomes are appropriate for the level at which they will be delivered.</li> <li>The arrangements for management and support for part-time students should be clarified to reflect in the Definitive Document the discussion at approval.</li> <li>The arrangements for transition to Level 6 study should be clarified in light of the discussion and the plans for revising the top-up degree.</li> <li>The course team should review the policy for no in-module retrieval and the structure of the course based on 10 and 20 credit modules.</li> <li>A response to the recommendations in the learning resources report should be provided.</li> <li>CVs for all staff involved in teaching on the course should be provided to the Link Tutor.</li> <li>References to the QAA's Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark statement should be included in the Definitive Document</li> </ol>

## Appendix 21: Type of assessment task by course

Table 45: Type of assessment task by course

Course Team	Course Title	Level	Modules	Assessment Tasks	Essay	Exam	Project	Coursework	Portfolio	Research Project	Presentation	Case Study	Report / Review / Analysis	Dissertation/Thesis	Reflection / PDP	Poster	Group work	Lab / Practical	Phase Test
CPT1	International Relations	UG	30	55	36.4%	9.1%	12.7%	3.6%	10.9%		7.3%	5.5%	9.1%	1.8%	1.8%		1.8%		
CPT2	Geog., Housing, Env. & Planning	UG	75	154	11.0%	9.7%	1.3%	12.3%	1.3%	1.3%	6.5%	3.9%	36.4%	0.6%	2.6%	0.6%	8.4%	1.3%	2.6%
CPT3	Eng. Lang. Teaching	PG	7	16	12.5%			6.3%		6.3%	6.3%		31.3%	6.3%	12.5%		6.3%	12.5%	
CPT4	Social Science Research	PG	9	10		20.0%				10.0%			70.0%						
CPT5	Autism	UG	6	12			8.3%	8.3%				16.7%	16.7%		50.0%				
CPT6	Education	PG	41	46	8.7%		10.9%	26.1%			2.2%	0.0%	32.6%	2.2%	6.5%		6.5%	2.2%	2.2%
CPT7	Criminology	UG	93	170	28.8%	10.0%	4.7%	13.5%	1.8%	3.5%	1.8%	7.1%	16.5%	0.6%	6.5%	1.8%	2.4%		1.2%
CPT8	App. Social Science	UG	110	198	30.3%	11.6%	4.0%	11.1%	4.5%	4.5%	1.0%	4.0%	18.2%	0.5%	2.0%	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%	
CPT9	Performing Arts	FD	10	27	11.1%			22.2%			37.0%		3.7%		25.9%				
CPT10	Built Environment	UG	79	174	6.9%	27.6%	4.6%	4.6%	1.1%	2.9%	5.2%		25.9%	0.6%	3.4%		4.6%	6.3%	6.3%
CPT11	Contemp. Fine Art	UG	10	21	4.8%	9.5%		66.7%	4.8%		9.5%		4.8%						
CPT12	Public Services: Policing Studies	FD	15	27	25.9%	11.1%		18.5%				14.8%	3.7%		14.8%	3.7%	7.4%		
	Totals		485	910	19.2%	12.6%	4.3%	12.4%	2.5%	2.6%	4.6%	3.8%	22.2%	0.8%	5.3%	0.8%	4.0%	2.4%	2.0%

Note: percentages to 1 decimal place

## Appendix 22: Type of assessment task by semantic coding

Table 46: Type of assessment task by semantic coding

Quadrants	Courses (CPTs)	Modules	Assessment Tasks	Essay	Exam	Project	Coursework	Portfolio	Research Project	Presentation	Case Study	Report / Review / Analysis	Dissertation/Thesis	Reflection / PDP	Work Placement	Poster	Group work	Lab / Practical	Phase Test
Q1: Pseudo-practical knowledge; generic curricula																			
Q2: Practical knowledge; practical curricula	9,11	20	48	8.3%	4.2%		41.7%	2.1%		25.0%		4.2%		14.6%					
Q3: Professional / practice knowledge; professional / vocational curricula	2,3,5,6,10,12	223	429	9.8%	15.4%	3.7%	10.7%	0.9%	1.9%	4.9%	2.8%	28.9%	0.9%	5.8%		0.5%	6.3%	3.7%	3.7%
Q4: Theoretical knowledge; applied theory curricula	1,4,7,8	242	433	29.8%	10.9%	5.3%	10.9%	4.2%	3.7%	2.1%	5.3%	17.6%	0.7%	3.7%	0.9%	1.2%	2.1%	1.4%	0.5%
<b>Totals</b>		485	910	19.2%	12.6%	4.3%	12.4%	2.5%	2.6%	4.6%	3.8%	22.2%	0.8%	5.3%	0.4%	0.8%	4.0%	2.4%	2.0%

Note: percentages to 1 decimal place

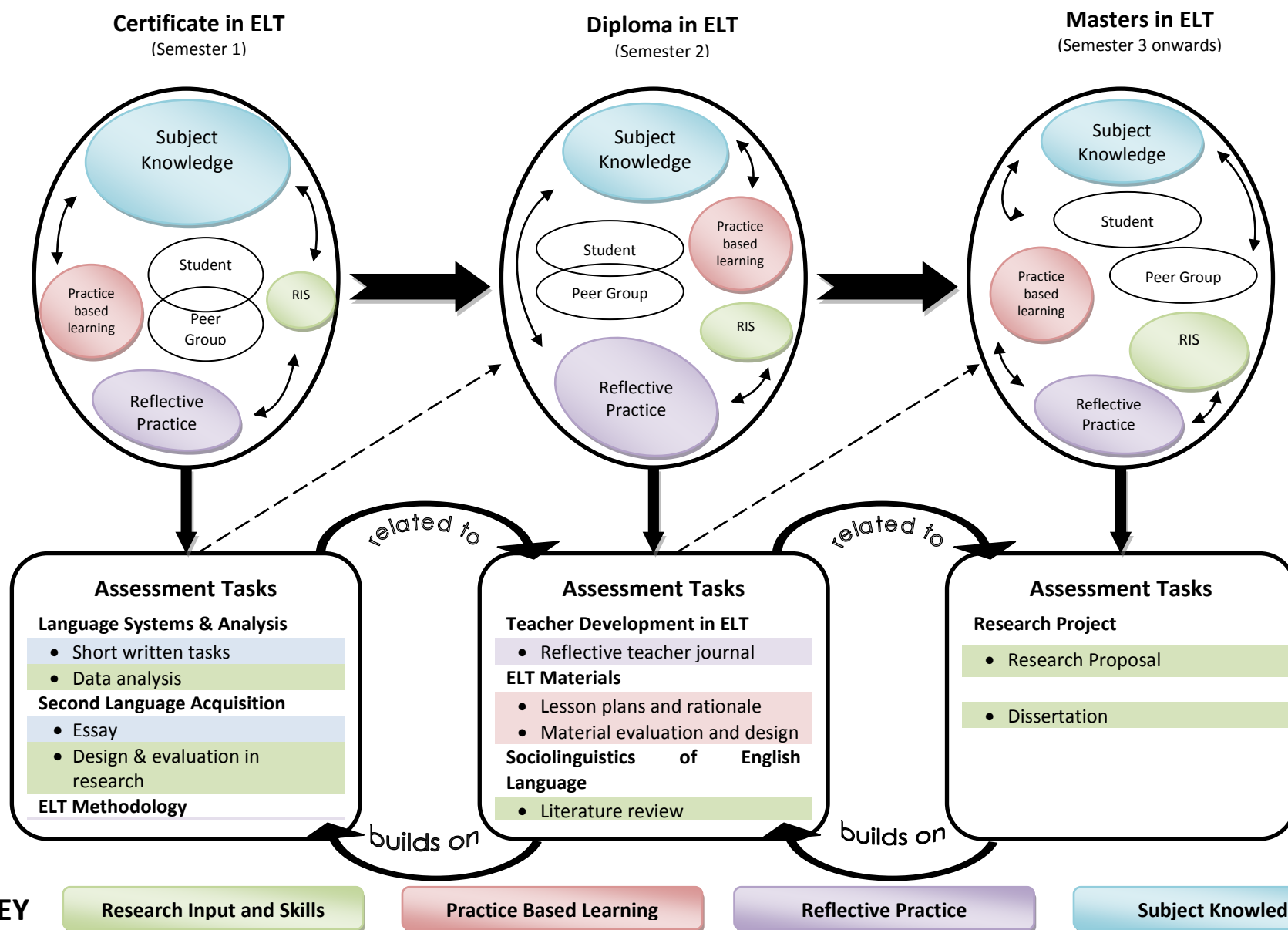
## Appendix 23: Stages of analysis of the data using NVivo 10

**Table 47: Stages of analysis of the data using NVivo 10 (modified from Chen 2010)**

Main Activity	Strategies used	Associated procedures
<b>Pre-coding:</b> Data management	Documenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created folders and sub-folders for different forms of data and documents, using the 'Documents' feature in NVivo 10</li> <li>Created a case memo linked to each case, using the 'Memos' feature in NVivo 10</li> <li>Created concept memos for theoretical concepts used, using the 'Memos' feature in NVivo 10</li> <li>Created a research journal using the 'Memos' feature in NVivo 10 to document reflections on the analysis process</li> <li>Formulated extended discussion groups data, interviews and text and imported them into appropriate folders</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 1:</b> Empirical thematic analysis	Summarising Memoing Annotating Classifying data using substantive categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read discussion group and interview transcripts in entirety, summarised and wrote reflections using case memos</li> <li>Annotated each discussion group and interview transcript, using the 'Annotation' feature in NVivo</li> <li>Read each transcript closely and assigned codes, using the 'Free Nodes' feature in NVivo, based on concepts derived from the data, using descriptive labels</li> <li>Sorted data into appropriate categories</li> <li>Compared data and modified codes</li> <li>Organised free nodes into hierarchical structures</li> <li>Created a coding scheme</li> <li>Maintained the research journal, and case and concept memos in NVivo (throughout the whole analysis process)</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2:</b> Organisational coding	Classifying data using theoretical categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Level 1 organisation:</b> Created three tree nodes using Bourdieu's/Weber's concepts of <i>Collegially Focused</i>; <i>Bureaucratically Focused</i>; and <i>Consensus-seeking focused</i> as the 'parent nodes' (i.e. general categories at the top of hierarchical structures)</li> <li>Sorted the coding categories developed in Stage 1 into the three coding trees</li> <li><b>Level 2 organisation:</b> Under each of these coding trees (i.e. Collegial, Bureaucratic and Consensus), created three tree nodes, using Bernstein's message systems of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as the 'parent nodes'</li> <li>Created 3 models of data (see appendices 10-12)</li> <li>Sorted the level 1 coding categories into the three Level 2 coding trees</li> <li>Conducted cross-analysis of the coded categories in each message system by aggregating the nodes into a small number of broad themes</li> </ul>

<b>Stage 3:</b> Analytical coding	Developing an external language of description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed descriptions of how Bernstein's classification and framing concepts acted out in the study by moving back and forth between data and concepts</li> <li>• Created indicators of how the descriptions of the enacted theoretical concepts, particular to this study, could be identified in the data</li> <li>• Constantly modified this translation device</li> <li>• Repeat the same process with Maton's concepts of positional and relational autonomy</li> <li>• Identified relationships among the coded data</li> </ul>
<b>Post-coding:</b> conclusion drawing	Explaining Theorising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evolved a general explanation of the phenomenon under study based on the results of the coding</li> </ul>

## Appendix 24: Curriculum Design for CPT2: Masters in English Language Teaching





## Appendix 25: Key dates and external reference points for Academic Awards Framework

Year	Change / implementation	Detail
1965 - 1992	Council for National Academic Awards	UK degree awarding authority for polytechnics and other non-University Institutions. Responsible for UK Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CATS) scheme.
1992	Further and Higher Education Act	Polytechnic gains University status and its own degree awarding powers as Forgetown University (I10)
1992	Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) established	External audits of institutions' quality management arrangements
1993 - 1994	SHU Cycle One and Two Framework approved	Begin phased programme of reapproval for all UG programmes in accordance with Cycle 1/2 principles. Cycle One emphasis on transitional experience into HE.
1994 - 1995	Implementation of Cycle One / Two Framework	Cycle 2 principles approved - emphasis on flexible structures and modes of study, variety of level of awards
1996	Review of Cycle One/Two Framework	System evaluated and reviewed
1997	Outcomes of Review approved -	Major modifications to Cycle One/Two Framework agreed
1997	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE)	(QAAHE) established from former Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) and QA divisions of HEFCE and HEFCW
2000	Further review of SHU UG Curriculum Framework under 'Learners as Partners' project - new Academic Awards Framework approved	Revised AAF, replacing previous 'prescribed' Cycle 1/2 model with more flexible, permissive model. Compulsory semesterised delivery of units abandoned. 'Mixed economy' of short fat and long thin unit delivery introduced. Incorporates generic learning outcomes by level and curriculum design principles intended to be 'enabling and flexible [that will] encourage the design of courses with the following characteristics: academic coherence, quality student experience, cost effectiveness, market responsiveness, flexible learning opportunities'
2000	Foundation Degrees introduced	Department for Education and Science
2001	QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	FHEQ publishes Qualification Descriptors for degrees and other HE level awards
2001	Credit Guidelines for HE Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland	Joint Guidelines developed by Credit Consortia, comprising CQFW, NICATS, NUCCAT, SEEC published by consortia of national credit bodies
2001	Revised SHU Academic Awards Framework	Approved by Academic Board. Implemented from 2001 onwards
2008	QAA Framework for Higher Education,	Second Edition published by QAA
2008	Higher Education Credit Framework for England	(Guidance on Academic Credit Arrangements) published by QAA on behalf of Credit Issues Development Group

2011-2012	Review of Standard Assessment Regulations,	Led by pro-vice chancellor for academic development (E1)
2012 - 2013	Changes to assessment practice and regulations	Phased implementation to be followed by review of Academic Awards Framework, particularly curriculum design principles

## **Appendix 26: Research briefing and consent form for participants**

### **RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET [example]**

**Title of Research Project:** Constructing the curriculum: a case study of course planning in Higher Education

You are invited to participate in my doctoral study research project on the process and experience of re-approval in our institution. I am approaching you because you are involved in a course team that is undergoing re-approval during the 2010-11 academic year.

If you agree to take part you will be asked to talk to me about your experience of the re-approval in a semi-structured interview, lasting approximately 1 hour. This interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. It will take place on campus at the end of the planning process and at a time and place to suit you. You will be provided with a transcript of the recording.

You will have an opportunity to discuss your participation in this study at any point. The data collected will be kept securely by me. My supervisors will only see coded data. At the end of the study the audio recordings and the copies of the paper diaries will be destroyed. The data will not be used in any other studies or research.

I will use this data to examine the experience of course planning and re-approval and to develop an internal language of description from which I aim to derive a model of the course planning process. This work will be written up in a public doctoral thesis in 2011/12, and elements will be used for publication of the findings following that. In these public documents you will remain anonymous and a coding system will be used to protect your identity and that of your course.

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide at any point that you no longer wish to take part you will be free to withdraw or withhold information. If you have any concerns during the study or afterwards you will be able to contact my director of studies, Professor Guy Merchant (g.h.merchant@shu.ac.uk).

If you have any further questions about the above or any other aspects of the research I will be very pleased to answer them.

Richard Pountney

[r.p.pountney@shu.ac.uk](mailto:r.p.pountney@shu.ac.uk)

(Continued overleaf)

## Research Participation Consent Form

**TITLE OF STUDY:** Constructing the curriculum: a case study of course planning in Higher Education

**RESEARCHER:** Richard Pountney

**DIRECTOR OF STUDIES / SUPERVISOR:** Guy Merchant / Cathy Burnett

Please answer the following questions by circling your responses:

Have you read and understood the information sheet about this study?      YES      NO

Have you been able to ask questions about this study?      YES      NO

Have you received enough information about this study?      YES      NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study?

• At any time?	YES	NO
• Without giving a reason for your withdrawal?	YES	NO

Your responses will be anonymised before they are analysed.

Do you give permission for myself and my supervisors to have access to your anonymised responses?      YES      NO

Do you agree to take part in this study?      YES      NO

Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having read and understood the information in the sheet for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to discuss the study with an investigator and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

Signature of participant: ..... Date: .....

Name (block letters): .....

Signature of investigator: ..... Date: .....

(Name, address, contact number of investigator.)

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.