It's About Time: working towards more equitable understandings of the impact of time for students in higher education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Higher education experiences are increasingly intensified by competing imperatives of study, work, and personal commitments. However, despite significant change, the assumption persists that time is a neutral and linear framework in which all students are equally positioned.

This report documents our research into how experiences of 'time', as well as dominant discourses about 'time management', impact on the attraction, retention, and performance of students in higher education. The study engaged 46 students from undergraduate programs at three regional universities, one in Australia and two a small regional town in the United Kingdom, where the student population includes significant cohorts of equity groups including students from regional and rural backgrounds.

The Project
Our overarching analytical framework utilises Adam's (1990, 2004) concept of 'timescapes', which is useful for understanding issues and challenges people have with conforming to institutional expectations about time across different contexts. Adam explains that we move across and within different timescapes, which include a diversity of social settings, organizational spaces and institutions, such as university, work and domestic/family life. The concept of timescape enables us to move us beyond, but to also include, notions of biological and clocktime, and it enables an understanding of how we move through life across complex 'maps' of time, which inform what we do and how we decide to do it, along the way. Consistent with the study of 'landscapes', the analysis of 'timescapes' also focuses on documenting the fine-grained details of the relationships between different spaces and places that shape time.

Twenty-six in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Australian students, and another twenty were drawn from the two UK universities. Recruitment was targeted at students from regional and rural backgrounds in Law, Engineering and Nursing degrees.

Our findings reveal that for the students interviewed, moving within and across different timescapes is not as straightforward and harmonious as is so often assumed, and that online resources offered to 'bridge' any difficulties with time are often not as helpful in practice as presumed. The understanding of 'time' gained from the study problematises dominant 'time management' discourses and strategies based on individualistic self-discipline.

Key Findings and Themes

- Students expressed a strong preference for face to face traditional lecture and tutorial teaching styles, explaining that they felt better able to remember important facts and details, and achieve a deeper understanding of topics, when they physically attended classes. This understanding was further deepened when teachers in those classes demonstrated a clear commitment to, and engagement with, their learning.

- Students felt more connected to their learning through direct contact with course and teaching staff and when they attended classes physically.

- Students made decisions about which classes to attend in relation to their sense of the teacher's commitment to their learning.

- Students found online resources to be most useful when these complemented face-to-face learning.

- Students from regional and rural backgrounds face significant time constraints in relation to pressure to find accommodation quickly and/or to organize travel. This generates additional costs, financial and emotional, and often requires finding time for paid work in order to cover the associated costs of this.

- Students take their study seriously and did not miss classes as a result of poor time management or low motivation, but out of necessity when juggling other demands on their time.

- Advice and information about time management provided to students tends not to take into account the complex demands and expectations that students from regional and rural backgrounds face.

- Assessment timeframes strongly influence the way in which students organize their study time. This tends to place a narrow focus on completing assessments, rather than on processes of learning and developing subject/discipline understanding.

- The students' accounts highlight the significant importance of pedagogical considerations in relation to time and student equity.

Recommendations

- A balance between *structured* time (e.g. scheduled lectures, seminars and tutorials) and *flexible time* (e.g. online learning and independent study) is important for student equity within and across programs of study.

- Regional and rural students require flexibility, for example through online resources, but also the recognition that the inability to attend all classes is not simply an indicator of poor time management or lack of motivation.

- Structures could be put into place to support students in navigating the accommodation and/or travel options available (such as negotiating within the private rental market and/or identifying safe travel arrangements) to ensure that students are not vulnerable to commercial practices or unsafe travel arrangements, particularly when they are facing severe time constraints in relation to their regional and rural background.

- Greater transparency and clarity in communicating with students before they commence their studies about accommodation and travel options would help students anticipate the time needed in the transition to beginning their university study.

- Greater understanding and awareness of the particular multiple demands that students from regional and rural backgrounds navigate in relation to time management would support the aim of creating greater equity in HE.

- Pedagogies that support the development of time management practices should avoid over-emphasizing assessment deadlines and under-emphasizing processes of learning and developing understanding.

- Given students' different social circumstances and available resources, it is crucial that higher education has the capacity to address *difference* rather than assuming all students must be treated the same. Attention to difference (in the context of improving student equity) requires that university staff is able to exercise flexibility on behalf of students.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the foundational role of 'time' in organising higher education experiences, it has received little attention in research (Stevenson and Clegg 2013). This is unfortunate, given that one of the main reasons students from equity groups cite for leaving study is 'lack of time' and 'time pressures' (see, for e.g., Horstmanshof and Zimitat, 2007). This research project aimed to contribute to the field of student equity in higher education by developing an understanding of how students' differential experiences of and challenges with time play out across different (and intersecting) equity groups, with a particular focus on how time impacts on students from regional and rural areas.

This report unpacks the contextual and relational dimensions through which time informs how competencies, capabilities, and aspirations in higher education are perceived, experienced and realised (or not). In doing so, it aims to contribute to developing finer-tuned equity policies and practices.

Project Rationale, Aims and Research Questions

The report aims:

1) to provide insights into how perceptions of 'time,' 'time pressures,' and 'lack of time' impact on the educational experiences of students from diverse equity groups and

2) to develop a platform from which embedded assumptions of 'time' and 'time- management' in higher education can be re-configured as flexible and responsive to the needs of students in order to better support their learning experiences.

We have investigated how institutional expectations associated with 'time management' affect different students in different ways, and how students from regional and rural areas attempt to 'effectively' manage their time.

The research project focused on the topics of equity in higher education, institutional structures and assumptions about 'time' in teaching and learning environments. The research draws on data from both Australia and the UK to build on work conducted in this area (Clegg 2010; Stevenson and Clegg 2013), and draws on interdisciplinary theories from education and sociology, grounded in the critical sociology of higher education.

The project addresses the following overarching research question:

- How does conventional thinking about time, in terms of educational trajectories and time management, create and reproduce different opportunities and exclusions in higher education?

Sub-questions include:

- How does time shape experiences of learning, with particular attention to students facing geographic challenges?
- How does time affect students' sensibilities of themselves as university students?
- Has their experience of 'managing' time changed through higher education participation and if so in what ways?
- What are the dominant messages about time and educational trajectories in HE?
- Is time differently experienced across different (often intersecting) equity groups?
- How do students experience time across and between different spaces/places (university, work, home and so forth)?

Conceptual framework

The project draws from a conceptual 'toolbox' to explore these research questions. Our overarching conceptual framework builds on Adam's (1990, 2004) notion of 'timescapes' to consider students' experiences of time and space and how this shapes their ontological orientations to temporality. 'Timescapes' opens up ways of thinking about higher education as more than a context, space or field. It helps us understand the way that experiences of time and space are inextricably connected. The concept of 'timescapes' in higher education sheds light on how in/equity plays out in time/space.

Timescapes are shaped by power relations; students experience time differently and are positioned unequally in terms of their social background, location and identities. Timescapes are shaped by social practices and expectations (for example attendance at certain times and according to institutional schedules) and are connected with institutional structures, cultures and values. We experience and live 'timescapes' through our mobility across and between different time rhythms, being and doing, which are always produced in space and time. Timescapes are deeply contextual and linked to formations of personhood and difference. As such, time is not neutral or linear; it is not something that we 'have' or 'manage' in any straightforward sense and is not only about 'clocktime', although our experiences of timescapes are often structured by formal schedules, deadlines and terms/semesters. Timescapes are interconnected with a range of different social contexts, organizational spaces and institutions, such as

university, work and home. Our experiences of the different timescapes we negotiate are often precarious and deeply shaped by structure *and* agency. Our experiences across different timescapes are not necessarily smooth but are often in tension (for example, meeting family expectations, university requirements and paid work commitments). Such a conceptual understanding of 'time' problematizes hegemonic notions of 'time management' as simply a set of decontextualized, disembodied skills and competencies. The data we collected and analyzed for this project illuminates these concepts of 'timescapes' revealing the precarious experiences and relations to time that students from regional and rural backgrounds actively navigate and maneuver.

In conceptualizing time and its relation to higher education through the lens of 'timescapes', we have critiqued hegemonic discourses of 'time management'. Drawing on feminist engagements with Foucault, as well as our analysis of the data from this project, we examine the ways that time management sometimes operates as a technology of discipline and control. *This tends to locate the problem of equity in individual students' capacity to appropriately manage their time.* Time management focuses on individual students' competencies and skills in using and planning their time effectively in relation to institutionally imposed time structures, regulations and rhythms but often without consideration of the multiple demands, expectations and needs at play across different and competing timescapes.

Within this disciplinary framework, equity is constructed as simply about providing remedial interventions to identify those students who lack efficient time management skills, compelling them to take short courses that aim to correct their presumed deficiencies. Students are thus seen as docile bodies who require reshaping through student equity interventions designed to subject them to processes of conforming to the dominant discursive time frameworks, in order to be 'on time' and to be(come) disciplined (employable) subjects through participating in higher education. Notions of 'time' are produced through logics that privilege 'clocktime', which are oriented around inequitable structures of patriarchal and capitalist forms of production and being a productive person. Feminized and cyclical forms of being 'in time' that privilege relationality, reproduction and domestic and affective forms of labor and subjectivity are marginalized in such conceptions of time. It is left to the individual student to 'manage' these contradictory timescapes and subjectivities across higher education/employment/domestic/unpaid labor/family/friendship and so forth. However, the inequities of this are made invisible through the disciplinary discourses of time management. For example, the emotional labor often associated with women of nurturing and sustaining relationships is made invisible and/or excluded from discourses of time management. Yet, Edwards (1993) pointed out over two

decades ago that higher education and family are two 'greedy institutions' that pose dilemmas for women in negotiating contradictory demands on their time with significant implications for their participation in higher education.

In order to explore the importance and relevance of the way in which time is structured in university study, we also apply the notion of social gravity. Social gravity 'denotes both a relation between how seriously one takes the social world (as when we say the "gravity of the situation") and the way the social forces of the world pull us into this world (gravity in the more Newtonian sense of the word)' (Hage, 2011: 84). Obligations and commitments help to organise time, in what could perhaps be extended into a temporal gravity, drawing individuals into certain practices at certain times. When this gravity is lost 'not only do people lose a sense of the meaning of their lives, but the world itself loses its material consistency: time and space dissolve and we come closer to an experience of nothingness' (Hage 2011: 89).

This social gravity that draws individuals into trajectories of practice also requires the accumulation of cultural capital. Bourdieu suggests that cultural capital is the forms of knowledge and practice that are *relevant* to the social conditions that are being faced. For individuals, the accumulation of cultural capital is part of a trajectory, as the accumulated cultural competence must continually be matched to the future anticipated by and for the individual. Importantly, cultural capital is temporalized, as 'the accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state… presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor' (Bourdieu, 1986: 48). As opposed to economic capital, which may be inherited, or the task of accumulation being delegated to others, cultural capital requires the direct investment of time by the individual. This does not apply only to raw knowledge, but also to the conscious and preconscious processes that underlie cultural and economic systems.

These theoretical perspectives have underpinned our methodological approaches, which we set out in the next section.

Methodology

Methodological Overview
Many higher education students, particularly from equity groups, cite 'time pressures' as a major reason for leaving study, but this has received little research attention. This study explores the experiences of time for higher education students from regional and rural backgrounds. Regional and rural students

represent an important equity group in the context of time, as they must transition from slower paced regional and rural areas into busier cities, find accommodation and employment and/or adjust commuting practices all while adjusting to tertiary study. In this context, effective and successful time management strategies are crucial for regional and rural students to develop and maintain throughout their study.

In order to explore regional and rural students' experiences of time, 26 in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with students from a regional university in NSW and another twenty drawn from the two universities of a small regional city in the United Kingdom. Students were recruited by contacting course and program convenors to disseminate recruitment material to students from regional and rural backgrounds. Information was also circulated through accommodation services in order to allow students to make contact with the researchers. Students who participated were also asked if they knew other regional and/or rural students who might be willing to participate in the research. Recruitment was targeted at students from regional and rural backgrounds in Law, Engineering and Nursing degrees. These programs of study were selected to provide a diversity of contexts in which time might be differentially structured in relation to disciplinary assumptions and practices, pedagogical imperatives and historical practices. We were also interested in selecting subject areas that have particular gendered patterns of participation to explore how gender might differentially shape experiences of time in relation to regional and rural backgrounds. The Australian university students consisted of ten engineering students (nine male, one female), five nursing students (all female) and seven law students (two male, five female), while another five students were recruited from other degree programs that were from a regional and rural background (four female, one non-binary). The age range of students was between 18 and 34. The twenty UK University students comprised ten nursing/health related students (seven female and three male), four engineering/related students (three male and one female) one law student (female) and five students from other degree programs who all had lengthy journeys on to campus (four female and one male). Of the twenty students interviewed, three were international students (two Chinese and one Mexican); the rest were UK students (two Black British, four Asian British and eleven White British).

For classifying regional and rural status in the Australian study, we have applied the *Australian Standard Geographical Classification - Remoteness Area* (ASGC-RA 2006) model developed in 2001 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This geographic classification model offers a standardized statistical

geographical mapping system, enabling comparisons between areas in Australia (see http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/content/ra-intro). The categories are defined by 'remoteness', a concept based on the physical distance of a location from the nearest urban centre, defined by population. The model identifies five area types: RA1 - major cities; RA2 - inner regional; RA3 - outer regional; RA4 – remote and; RA5 - very remote. The system is updated each census, the most recent being in 2007 after the 2006 census. Students in the Australian study predominantly come from the RA2, inner regional and RA3, outer regional areas. These students were selected because it was impractical or impossible to study at university without moving closer in order to attend.

Although our primary focus is regional and rural students, a number of students were also recruited from other backgrounds. Two students were from international backgrounds. There were also three students who had grown up in or nearby Newcastle. These students however contributed useful contrasting data to the project. Regional and rural students identified a number of advantages, particularly living at home, that students whose family home was in the Newcastle area held. Yet, in other ways these students complemented the experiences of regional and rural students in their discussion of time, most notably on the preference for face-to-face time throughout their degrees.

The UK students self-selected to be interviewed for the project based on the fact that they travelled what they considered a long journey to get to campus on a daily basis. The longest journey was a five hour round trip, with the majority travelling for up to three hours daily. A small number of those who put themselves forward to be interviewed did not have long journeys but requested to be interviewed as they struggled to manage their time and felt that they had something useful to contribute to the project.

Participants have also had the opportunity to fill out a time-journal. Participants were asked to record their daily reflections (over a two-week period) on time and 'time management' as a source of data in the form of 'time journals'. Although this has not formed part of the analysis for this report, we will be integrating this into the analysis as we prepare manuscripts for publication in 2017.

A major constraint on the recruitment of participants in the UK for this study was the disjuncture between the Australian and UK academic calendars, as the approval for the project fell in the summer break for the UK. This had a significant impact on recruitment, as the recruitment period began in early

October. Consequently, a smaller number of students have been recruited in the UK in order to maintain the overall timeline for the project.

Interviews

Interviews explored a range of questions regarding student's experience of time. This included the reasons for study at Newcastle Australia or Sheffield UK, how they organized their time, techniques and strategies that they used in their study and whether they felt that there were disadvantages in their use of time in comparison to students who lived nearby their respective universities. Across the two studies there were a number of key areas of disadvantages identified in the way that time was used. Students in the UK study required much longer commute times than the local students and felt that this was a major disadvantage. In the Australian study, students from regional and rural backgrounds generally did not remain living in their place of origin because of the long distance and/or commute times required to attend university. This meant that it was necessary to move into Newcastle in order to attend university. Because of this, students identified disadvantages around the demands of paid employed and unpaid domestic labor that they felt were not experienced as severely by local students.

Even with the identification of these constraints, regional and rural students overwhelmingly preferred face-to-face teaching and learning over distance or online delivery. Students spoke about a range of reasons as to why this was more suitable, including feeling more highly motivated, that they learnt more, and that they had more opportunity to interact with teaching staff, particularly when they had questions or difficulties in their learning. A potential limitation of this discussion however is that no students who were primarily learning through distance or online delivery were included in the project. Further research could explore the experiences of both in-person and distance/online students to consider whether preferences or disadvantages exist in different course delivery structures.

Analysis

The team participated in a collaborative approach to analysis, drawing on the aims and research questions, and the insights from the conceptual perspectives outlined above. This was an iterative process, so that descriptive themes emerging from the data were coded and this prompted the team to explore conceptual perspectives that could 'speak to' these themes. We met regularly as a team, including on Skype, to draw on the different insights from across the team, as we developed our coding

of the data. We went through processes of data reduction, to data conceptualization and then back again to develop an in-depth understanding of the emergent themes, both descriptively and in terms of theorization. We also examined the data for policy and practice implications, as the project is committed to translating the theoretical understanding into suggestions for practical strategies.

TIMESCAPES

Introduction

In order to explore the perceptions, experiences and challenges students from regional and rural areas in Australia and the UK face, given they access university at a significantly lower rate than others, this section highlights the insights about time that participants shared with us in interviews. The students' accounts have provided a rich map — a conceptual landscape (what we refer to in this report as a 'timescape') — from which we can better understand their challenges and preferences for learning. This conceptual landscape is influenced by both dominant discourses about time and everyday student experiences, which are often contrasting and problematic; however, as we will explain in this report, this disjuncture is often 'invisible' to students who tend to blame themselves if their experiences do not correspond to dominant ideals, even when their circumstances would make this impossible. In the following section, we outline the concept of timescape and then highlight the illustrations of time that students sketched for us.

Just as we perceive and envision space, we also 'picture' time. Within our 'present', we 'picture' the past and future. Although mostly unaware of this, we move through life with complex 'maps' of time, which inform what we do, and how we decide to do it, along the way. These 'choices' are enabled through our relation to the world around us; our 'possible geographies' are constructed through specific exposures to different kinds of experiences and opportunities (or not). Thus, our understandings and experiences of time are deeply relational and developed according to context (socio-cultural and material). Barbara Adam conceived of the lived experience and perception of time in terms of 'timescapes' (Adam 1998; 2004) to describe the way people perceive and manage their own and others' time, an envisioning that is produced in relation to normative frameworks. She introduces the concept to capture the complexity and multi-dimensional aspects of time in any context. Adam's 'timescapes' enables conceptualisation of the *different and diverse* elements existing in an overall unifying landscape (try picturing a globe or concept of the universe, for example) — timescape — with different timescapes (picturing/perceptions and pictures/structures/materialities moving within it).

In *Being and Time,* Heidegger (1927) argued that because we do not exist independently of our relationship to the world, others and history, our experiences of time are intensely relational *and* they profoundly shape our encounters within social fields (such as higher education), and our sensibilities of self and other. Heidegger argued that our relationship to time is deeply psychical and emotional. Time is

not only purely what many presume it to be: ahistorical, 'objective' and 'rational' and reduced to 'clock-time', which presumes a sameness and homogeneity of the ways that temporalities are lived, embodied and experienced. Heidegger instead argued that a sense of time is passed-down and that in this sense the past is lived in the present. Heidegger writes about this as taken-for-granted and passed on through tradition. As Deleuze also argues, timescapes are discursively (re)constructed through tradition and habits (Thompson and Cook, 2014).

This conceptualisation enables us to see that people's timescapes, and their resources to have and be on/in time, are not the same. One's social location/space/position shapes one's time. It is not enough to talk about 'temporality' (the experience of time as distinct to time itself) as if experiences of time are different to time. Any simplistic conceptual separation requires challenge because it does not acknowledge the constitutive elements of space/place in relation to time. Time does not exist apart from context and it is not neutral; it is deeply embedded in socio-cultural dynamics of power and inequality.

Although this introductory discussion is focussed on the theoretical underpinnings that enable us to understand experiences of time, developing theory is important to enable to think through how we live through time because it is much more complex and contextual than we usually see. It is to the experiences of students, who have come to Newcastle or Sheffield to study, that we will shortly turn our attention in order to start sketching out the bigger picture, as well as providing insights about the specific challenges students face in coping with time constraints. In doing so, we hope to contribute to finding more inclusive and productive ways for improving the experiences of students because in this project we have seen a significant tension and disjuncture between official institutional assumptions and discourses of time that serve to mask the inequalities and difficulties the students interviewed face in HE.

Stevenson and Clegg's (2013) investigation of how students imagine their futures reveals why 'there are compelling theoretical and empirical reasons for thinking more explicitly about temporality and future orientation rather than seeing it as obvious' (p. 18). They argue that individuals' views of future achievement and what is envisaged as possible, are heavily influenced by social context and relationships, experience and wellbeing, within that complex process of 'framing'. In her 2010 paper, Clegg argues that students' 'experiences of time are much more complex than implied by the technical rationality of "planning"' (pp. 347-348). Drawing on Adam (1990; 1995), Clegg outlines the multiple, co-present dimensions of time: 'time as linear divisible clock time; temporality as our being in time; timing

as in "when" time; and tempo the intensity of time' (Clegg, 2010: 347). This work by Stevenson and Clegg (2013) and Clegg (2010) focuses on conceptualisations of the past, present and future. Inspired by this work and in contrast to the conventional conceptual understanding of time as only the measurement of it (that separates measured and experiential time), we highlight the importance of understanding time as contextually specific. Even what are presumed to be entirely objective measures like a clock or a calendar are culturally specific in that they represent deeply taken-for-granted, culturally-specific assumptions based on historical practices. Even when people come to meet within the 'same' time-space like HE, timeframes and timing are not the same for everyone. It is the presumption that *everyone* has exactly the same time in common that is problematic for not everyone has the same amount of time for HE and it is this that is a critical point of exclusion for people with other obligations.

How students 'picture' time

As discussed, time is composed of complex irreducible elements (Adam, 1990; 1995). Measures of time (including clocks, calendars and timetables) are highly visible whereas socio-cultural aspects of time are not so easily recognised. It is the more subtle, yet powerful, aspects and dimensions of time that are less 'visible' (or conscious), which we seek to highlight. The interviews with students from regional/rural backgrounds show that time is experienced contextually, in relation to social positioning, and reaches deep into our psyches (Butler, 1997). Dominant time is institutionally structured and students' differential timescapes (perceptions, locations and lived experiences) are all caught up within complex webs of social networks, relations and inequalities that are also 'pictured' differently within different contexts. The following analysis provides some illustrations of this.

City Size/Pace

Across the Newcastle data, students interviewed discussed a clear sense of what they perceived as the timescape(s) of life in more populated areas. Asked about their preference for attending university in Newcastle, they talked about the importance of feeling 'comfortable' in that timescape, for example, it not feeling too intense and fast-paced. They described their 'picture' of people rushing around big cities and it being 'daunting' to them. Parking and traffic were considered significant issues that could cause stress and students thought a lot about avoiding areas with too much traffic. Too much travel time getting from one place to another (and difficulties with parking) in a city was seen as 'wasting time'. Wilbur (Newcastle, Engineering) said:

> … it feels like there's more space, physically space to do things, there's more time, time goes slower
> in a way in the smaller towns, you're not busy bustling driving around, you're not… it just feels like

everything's a bit slower. You kind of don't have to manage time as much, you know, country town because there's not that much pressure. There's not as much pressure for jobs, there's not too much pressure, there's not the population, you know, like rental space to live, driving in the congested traffic to get to work.

Ciri (Newcastle, Nursing) commented on Sydney not being a good option because she does not see herself as 'being like a city person' who is 'too busy'. About Sydney, she says 'it's too busy. I'm not a city person at all, and my kids are definitely not city people'. Similarly, Warwick (Newcastle, Law) said:

I grew up on a property and XXXX's quite a small town. Even the thought of moving to Newcastle was kind of daunting. To me, at that point, it seemed like a massive city. Compare it to Sydney or the other universities, Newcastle made sense in that respect.

Thus, time and pace are critical to students. Warwick also talked about university choice being about avoiding 'stress':

I think having grown up in a small town, we lived on a property... Compared to like Sydney, the times I've been there just seemed so busy, so full-on all the time. I don't know if it made me stress but [I] thought that if I moved there I would be stressed all the time. I had a fair bit more to do with Newcastle than Sydney before I moved here just because it was closer. I think it was kind of that and I think it was just ... coming from a small town that was just quite chill and easy going, whereas whenever I thought of Sydney or anything like that it's just full-on all the time.

When asked if he thought the pace of life picked up when he moved to Newcastle, Warwick answered:

Yeah, it did a bit. I moved onto the colleges for the first two years ... there was always something happening there. There's just so many more opportunities around Newcastle compared to back home. I do think the pace definitely picked up. I think going into full-time study and moving out of home, all of that, everything kind of happened at once. I found it was kind of a situation where I wanted to get involved or I wanted to be busy all the time, all that, I could, but I could also take a bit of step back if I wanted.

Also reflecting on transitions in comfort with an increasing pace, due to location (based on the larger the location the more the social stimulus, activities and opportunities and intensity of pace), Rachel (Newcastle, business) said:

… I guess like growing up in Newcastle then more people would be – they probably, I don't know, are more inclined to move onto bigger cities. Like me, I would love to move to Sydney because that would be the next big thing. But I feel like I'm progressively doing it. Whereas, like Newcastle would probably be like – like I don't know, I can't even explain it but I feel like just like moving and changing the lifestyles will probably be a little bit easier. So I guess like Newcastle for me was like, I want to move to Newcastle because of the environment, it's bigger than XXXX but not as big as Sydney. But now, I'm kind of like, okay like Newcastle is slowly getting smaller now, I perceive it to be smaller. But Newcastle people could probably just move freely into Sydney and feel a bit more comfortable. I don't know if that makes sense but…

It is interesting to consider the way that Rachel finds it difficult to describe space-time and how comfortable she is with the gradual increase in pace, depending on a slow 'progression' (between timescapes) where she develops new pictures or perceptions of time, which she says occurs because she builds her experiences.

In discussing what is usually considered to be a rational 'choice' in choosing where to study, Warwick (Law) also talked about the critical importance of imagining oneself as comfortable in a timescape. He said that family connections helped him:

> Warwick: Also my eldest sister was staying here at the time. She did teaching. I kind of had some family that was here. Also it's probably one of the closest universities to where I live or where I'm from. It's a combination of all of those things, it just kind of made sense.
>
> Interviewer: You felt like there was more support in Newcastle?
>
> Warwick: Yeah, I think so. The thought of moving to a city coming from a rural area kind of scared me at the time. Newcastle was the best option in that sense, I guess.

Finding a new home

Students studying at Newcastle described how finding accommodation is an extremely stressful, challenging and expensive aspect of moving to study at university. While on-campus accommodation is offered at the University of Newcastle, these places are limited and are shared between students coming from regional, rural and international contexts. Students descriptions of the 'frustrating' aspects of their 'personal' timescapes (finding accommodation and an income to enable study away from place of origin) reveal how critical they are to enabling them to move and gain a degree. As do other sections of this report, the interview excerpts described in the following pages show how students are not supported, and their essentials for being able to study, are not recognised as structural issues needing to be addressed, but are left to students to deal with alone as if separate individual issues. A need for regulation and the integration of flexibility in rental contracts are among the issues students suggest require addressing before any great change will occur for increasing participation and completion rates for regional and rural students. These 'individual' timescapes require recognition as structural problems.

Gregore (Newcastle, Law) explained that he 'didn't realise that you basically had to apply for on campus before you got your offer. You pretty much had to put the application in when you put

your UAC application in pretty much.' Rachel (Newcastle, business) talked about the pressure of finding somewhere to live fast:

> Because I didn't think I was going to go to University of Newcastle, I was thinking at the time I was going to go to Sydney so I didn't even apply for on-campus accommodation until like probably a few weeks after. And so anyway, by the time we got to February I got accepted into Newcastle Uni I didn't know what to do. I was like, gees I've got to move into some place in two weeks. And I was thinking to move in with a family friend, like young people still. But then I actually got a phone call from the colleges and said that I actually got in. So that was like the biggest relief ... You don't know if you're going to get in and then you have to pay for the application anyway.

Others talked about how competitive it is, and difficult, to get accommodation on campus.

Casey (Newcastle, Engineering) explained that living on campus 'is really expensive, like, it really breaks the bank. They really wring the neck out of every cent that you've got ... I think they've calculated what people get from Youth Allowance and they're wringing every cent of that plus more.' Casey continues:

> [some] people get help from their parents and money is not really a concern to them. You can see that by the way they drink and the way they waste money and stuff. But, yeah, I, like, don't get me wrong, I really like college; it's really good. But it really - really wrings the neck out of every cent you've got. It's Newcastle. It would be worse in other places as well because, you know, it would be a lot - it would probably be a lot worse in other cities I would say.

Casey described how he 'found it really difficult for the first couple of years with accommodation. That was just the bane of my existence. It really affected my studies'. He explains:

> I just think that for someone who moves to Newcastle there's too many people making money out of student houses and stuff like that. They're not, I mean, they're real estate agents so - or home owners, so sometimes you get good ones. I just feel there's not a lot of honour amongst them. I mean, obviously there's some good ones and I had some good ones. But I just think it's really hard when you're looking for accommodation when you move here. Because imagine if you've travelled for - I don't know, from Scone or you've travelled from Moree or something with your parents to look for accommodation. You might look at five or six houses in the one day, which is a lot of houses. My old man's slept on the ground in a lot of parts of the world and lived it hard and he wouldn't have me living in some of the places that I looked at. So I'm not saying that we looked at five or six places in one day and didn't pick any because they weren't suitable because I'm picky. It's because they weren't suitable. Just the fact that you've got to travel from your home town and then have accommodation and stay somewhere and look at houses for a couple of days, and you don't know if you're going to find one. Then eventually you've just got to go to a real estate agent at four o'clock and say, "Look, sign me up for this one." It's not necessarily what you want but you don't have the time. There's that much demand come sort of February that you ... you end up having to sign, like, a 10 month lease or a 12 month lease for something that's not suitable.

Students talked about very frightening experiences moving into large share houses with people who were very distracting, drug addicts and one student described how he slept in a shed and others on lounges because of struggles to find somewhere to stay. Keith (Newcastle, engineering) explained how

'the time constraint [for finding accommodation after being accepted] was the big thing. I think given more time it probably wouldn't have been quite as stressful.'

Finding enough income (and time to fit it in) to enable university study

Similarly, the financial aspects of individual timescapes requires attention, as the structural limitations of government support is a significant issue for whether these students are able to participate and complete university. As Reay et al (2009) found about their UK study of students' reasons for choice of university, although the students interviewed at the university discussed had stayed at home while studying and had local universities to choose from, 'nearly all the [students] cited a combination of location and financial reasons for choosing to study for a degree' (p. 5). They also talked about transport issues, with one student saying that it 'the whole issue of transport and getting there which was what put us off' (p. 5).

Dolores (Newcastle, law) talked about how she had the financial support of her parents for the first two years of her degree, so she knew how much that helped her with being able to have the time to study. She contrasts that with her current experience of studying without any financial support from them. She has to fit in enough work to afford to live, find the time to fulfil the necessary self care functions, and find the time to participate in the learning, study and work on assessment tasks. Like many of the other students who did not receive any financial support and lived away from home, Dolores described feelings of envy about students who receive financial assistance and even more about local students who live at home:

> Because I know people that live at home and I just envy them so much. They must have it so easy just having to go home and they've got nothing to worry about. Whereas you've got to work, buy groceries, clean the house, make dinner and all that sort of thing; do your washing. Whereas they don't do that so they can focus on uni so much more.

Students discussed the 'really stressful' financial issues they face, with government benefits not enabling them to concentrate on study. Having to move to study means that life is very expensive for students and the prospect of finding an income from somewhere 'very daunting'. Many students talked about the 'trickiness' of navigating government support. Some students talked about frustration with the system where parental income was assessed, but as adults over 18, even though they didn't qualify for benefits until 22, many students said their parents did not support them because their perceived they were adults and didn't feel they could or should continue to support them. Roseby (Newcastle, Nursing) said 'Just because they earn money, doesn't mean that they give it to me!'.

Some Newcastle students talked about strategies to be considered 'independent' (being over 22 years of age or having been considered employed full time for 18 months) to become eligible to receive benefit:

> The main reason I took the gap year was to be classified as independent so that I could get youth allowance, because I knew that financial constraints were a big thing coming to university. That was my main motivation for taking a gap year. (Keith, Engineering).

> I couldn't get Centrelink off my parent's wages because they earned too much together. They were over that threshold. I had to wait 18 months until after I finished school and I had to have earnt a certain amount in a year period in that 18 months to qualify for independent Centrelink and because I worked for a year. After I left school I was a tradie as an apprentice. I just scraped over the limit. Then I got, I had to wait until halfway through the year. It was about June or July and after that I got independent. (Sean, Engineering)

Expectations

Early, vivid perceptions of what studying away at university might be like were discussed above in terms of initial perceived timescapes. Ideas about 'stressful' pace and 'juggling' time were described as powerful and important in decisions about where students did not want to live and study. Students' explanations of their changing timescapes once at university were also illuminating. For instance, Leah (Newcastle, nursing) explained how her course is much more difficult than she initially expected and she struggles with keeping 'on top of everything'. Every year, she starts out expecting to be on top of study. Asked whether she has done so this year, she answers:

> I'd like to say, yes, but probably not. I still very much submit assessments last minute and do them a week before they're due, or on the odd occasion I get two weeks of input but I'm – every year, or every semester I make the vow, I suppose, that I'll be on top of tutorials this year and everything, which I've actually been trying to get started in the last few weeks.

Students talked about feeling 'guilty' for not being able to concentrate 'enough' (as an idealised imagining of having enough time) on study. However, after navigating their way through the first years, they became more accepting of the 'realities'. The idealised student they picture/d is still there in their perception of what things could be like given ideal circumstances, but the competing needs of life in a new place make that impossible for them. As Annie, a Sheffield nursing student with three children comments:

> My mind-set for this three years is literally 'Get on with it, get your head down and get on with it.' Then when I'm qualified and I can choose a job that's nearer home, that suits family lifestyle, that suits me and my career development then I feel that I'll have more time for fun things, looking after myself again and I'll have a bit of money.

Talking about these structural necessities, they still tended towards blaming themselves for not being more like the highly productive (probably impossibly so, given their circumstances) ideal student they imagine — and feel some 'envy' about — whose parents both support and provide domestic work for them. The competing demands of both paid and domestic work (equally 'time consuming' and 'draining') on study, were described as considerable and in terms of 'make or break'. Some students did expect things to be as 'hard' as they envisaged. For example, Albert (Newcastle, engineering) expected difficulty and time constraints, saying 'It's started to get to the real hard maths at the moment, before it was sort of maths and engineering separate but now it's gone together and it's really getting quite hard but that's what I expected'.

Some students discussed being disappointed about their living away at university because of their accommodation:

> Well, probably the first two years of university I actually did not like Newcastle. I didn't like it at all because I was just unhappy, like, really unhappy because of the accommodation situation. Because I wasn't going exceptionally well at university and so, yeah, I probably didn't get to get - get to know Newcastle that well. Then come the years after that I was - I was finding all these great things about Newcastle and saying, "Why were you wasting your time? You could have been having so much fun, you know, visiting - visiting XXXX reserve and just different things around." That sort of - that initial first impression of Newcastle sort of (...). So in later years I've managed to recognise all the incredible good things about Newcastle and I really love it. I think this would be the best to get a career because it's such a beautiful place. Whereas in the first couple of years that was sort of marred by the bad rental situation … (Casey, Engineering)

Like Casey, students described how these 'personal timescapes' impact greatly on their experiences of study and what they are able to achieve.

Overwhelmingly, students also talked about their picture of the ideal learning environment being face-face with online learning elements like lecture recordings, so they could use it to catch up on classes they could not attend and to revise by 'speeding up' or 'slowing down' important points. However, being in class provided the connection to the learning that enabled deeper connections to learning. Many students talked about it helping them to 'picture' in their memories important aspects and examples critical to their study. Students remembered 'feelings' and sensory experiences, which they described as very important and something they could not get from online forums. Therefore, if lecturers were considered 'boring', students would not see the value in taking the time to attend and would use recordings to substitute. Sean (Newcastle, engineering) explains:

> Some subjects the lecturers actually don't have enough lecture time to get through the material. They just kind of rush through it because they have to you know to try to get all the content done, but maybe it would be nice to have a little more lecture time for most subjects. I feel like the tutorial

> time is probably the right amount … It's probably pretty good, yes. Like a one or two hour tute every week. It's pretty good, you know … You'd rather [it] with like 20, you know, 20 [students] in a classroom, but yeah, just doesn't happen.

For the UK students however, not attending lectures was a real risk as those who had skipped classes on days where they might travel five hours to attend a one hour lecture, found that their grades subsequently suffered.

Imagining future timescapes, students talked about 'seeing themselves' in a place and as a type of professional. Wilbur, (Newcastle, engineering) talked about his choice of university being about imagining a future there:

> Newcastle for me represented a good balance of regional and bigger city. It felt like it was going somewhere, like I went and did some open days at [another] Uni and it just felt like XXXX was kind of, as a town, dying a bit … Newcastle seemed to have a future in it.

About his career, he said:

> … wondering about the future, where is this going to go. I couldn't really ever see myself working in a job as a Chemical Engineer. I came home and I, you know, there's wires everywhere, amplifiers in pieces and I thought why don't I just do Electrical Engineering. That makes a lot more sense.

Here Wilbur describes his interest in electrical engineering as closely related to his experiences and enjoyment of music. He is in a band with fellow students and works around study for performances. Other students talked about their preference for careers and study that connect closely with their interests, although this was often not recognised when they were choosing programs, but was described as the reason for changing them. Students gained more insight about what the different areas involved and what their future careers might look like once they had experienced some university study.

Sean (Newcastle, engineering) discussed why he thought having a degree was important. He described enjoying being a 'tradie' for 18 months before university:

> I liked that work then. I didn't have any problem with the work then but I just thought, when I'm 50 years old, not everyone can own their own business and be in the office so I might end up being on the tools until I retire. I was just thinking, do I really want to be doing this when I'm 55, 60? Talking to the older tradies too, they were kind of, when I told them I was leaving, they were like, yeah, I don't blame you.

This long term view of life was the motivation to attend university, and something he highlighted was advised by his workmates, school and, particularly, his parents. Richard, a Sheffield nursing student who

had also worked in a manual role originally, was also motivated to change career to avoid following his father down the mines:

> I got my engineering qualification funded. But when I finished I thought 'I don't want to get covered in grease and dirt, I don't want that type of life. I was going to go down the pit, my dad was a miner and he said 'Don't do it, you're just wasting your life.' So I kind of, it was a waste of time really. It learnt me about electronics, which is fine, but as a career I wouldn't do it.

Im/Possible geographies of time and space

The views of higher education before, during and afterwards, will continue to be traced throughout this report, and aspects outlined here will be developed in relation to important key themes emerging from the interviews. We explore the kinds of timescapes that HE is attempting to 'paint' for students and how students negotiate (or not) these. As Reay et al (2009) explain about the UK context, institutional and social habitus, in the form of what feels 'comfortable' to students 'like them' from different places (geographically and culturally), dominate decisions about where to go to university. Students do 'choose' but they must do so by fitting into the scenes made available to them, as determined by socio-economic circumstances, government support (and lack of it), institutional structures and services (and lack of them), and wider, historical idea(l)s about what being at university, and a university student, is like. These contexts of social action, or socio-cultural capacities to choose, are sketched out both for and by us through a complex, generative relational grid of possibilities and constraints (Southgate and Bennett, 2015; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). We are neither the blank slate or docile bodies that the human capital model presumes/desires, nor do we have the complete freedom to apply unrestrained choice. Where we come from and go to, and the timing we have to get there, are generatively developed according to our social and geographical locations — where we are sitting in time/space.

TIME ECONOMICS

Introduction

When speaking of time students will often apply an economic logic in the way that they conceive of, anticipate, and order their experiences. Spending time and wasting time, maximizing time and saving time are examples of this. Time can be more or less valued and more or less productive. In order to evaluate the productivity of time, students engage in practices of anticipation in the attempt to find appropriate strategies. As has already been demonstrated, this requires an understanding of a fine balance between priorities. However, the increasing economic burden faced by students must also engage in paid work. The amount of part-time paid work required to pay for living expenses during study is increasing for Australian undergraduates (McInnis and Hartley, 2002). In an earlier Australian study, 41% of student respondents considered that paid work became an obstacle to study, with not having enough time to study cited as a major concern (McInnis and Hartley, 2002: 37). In the UK, there has been a large and rapid increase in the number of students working. A survey completed by Endsleigh (2015) shows 'that eight out of ten (77%) university students now work to help fund their studies – compared to just 59% last year and 57% in 2013'. Even with the best intentions, students become obligated to prioritise employment in order to support their study.

Rural students are particularly vulnerable to instrumentalizing study because of the need to live away from home. If enough time is not available it is necessary to produce priority orders based upon assessment deadlines, as, while employment constraints produce stress and struggle, the time that it takes to participate domestic labour is also another major impact on the window available for study. This produces a set of circumstances that shift the obligation and priority away from deeper conceptual learning in education.

Time, Economy and Speed

The economising of time is considered to be a fundamental turning point in capitalist production. As Harvey explains, 'there is an omnipresent incentive for individual capitalists to accelerate their turnover time *vis-à-vis* the social average, and in so doing to promote a social trend towards faster average turnover times' (1990: 239). The compulsion of capitalist economic practices is, then, on the notion that production speed can be indefinitely accelerated. One of the crucial components of this economy of time, then, is *anticipation*. Greater anticipatory awareness allows for a faster and more accurate

assessment of outcomes and hence, more control over these processes in the present. In the university context,

This system of anticipation of time, and capitalist time economics becomes a 'deep structure' in contemporary societies. Or, for Pierre Bourdieu (1998), 'doxa'. Doxa refers to systems of logic that become 'common sense', where the roots of a system of logic become taken-for-granted and individuals are unable to draw them into conscious recognition. Because of the doxic relation between economic and educational practices, the idea of speed and efficiency becomes a tacit component of education, and knowledge production. These ideals become embodied in the education system as forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). This extends not just to what is learnt, but also the system students use in order to prioritise and value their use of time while studying. Cultural capital, then, is not just what is learnt at university, but also the process in which it is learnt. Learning to maximize time and to save time, to produce efficiently, becomes a core and unique form of capital in the contemporary university.

A key time practice for students was identifying the time-value of different courses, their content and their assessment structure. Students took an anticipatory approach to study, prioritizing completing assessments, and so along with this, prioritizing course content relevant to assessment completion. Students regularly did not feel that they had enough time available for their study, or at least, not what was expected in their courses. Students would hence anticipate what subjects were harder/easier and more/less important and prioritize their time use accordingly. As Dolores, a Newcastle law student, explains:

> **Interviewer:** So do you do what you think you need to get done?
>
> **Dolores (Law):** I'd say yes for certain subjects and no to others. I think the ones that I have, like, weekly quizzes and things like that for I do a lot more study than, say, a subject that we only have, like, one essay and tutorial participation and that's all the marks except for the exam. So those things take a bit of a back burner to the ones that you have to keep up with every week. Yeah. So, yeah, a lot of - a lot of this semester has been seminar participation based on you talking about the questions you had to answer that week or something. So you have to keep up with it.

Dolores suggests that study becomes prioritized based upon the urgency of assessments, reflecting Case & Gunstone's (2003: 62) finding that 'the basis that students appeared to use for deciding whether they had time for something rested first and foremost on whether the task counted for marks and how much'. In the example of Dolores, courses that utilize a more regular and regulated system of assessments are more time demanding. These utilize a hegemonic clock time (Adkins, 2011), whereby the constant imminence of the assessment requires the student to make it the central priority.

Because of the pressures of priority as the above example suggests, students learn to develop anticipatory practices in order to identify early in the semester which subjects were more important, more difficult, or required greater time investment. As Daisy (Newcastle, law) explains:

> **Interviewer:** So how many hours would you estimate that your study time takes up?
>
> **Daisy (Law):** It varies depending on how many assignments I have. I know you're supposed to do ten hours a week per subject, but there are a lot of subjects that I really don't struggle with and I don't need to do any of the textbook reading because the lectures are in depth enough that it covers it, or the assignments are only on very specific things, so you can get away with glossing over it a little. I think law is probably the one that should take up the most of my time and it probably doesn't always, just because there's so much reading to do and in that one you really want to do the reading to understand it. When you have four or five assignments that's… I'm just like I've got to get the assignments done now and I'll do everything else then.

What is important about this approach is that it is perceived this way as part of a sense of a *lack* of time to properly engage with courses. Yet, in Sean's (Newcastle, engineering) case, lectures can be more or less valuable, and time can be saved by not attending:

> I don't go to all of them because you work it out that some, for me some lectures I get a lot out of but some lectures I don't get anything out of so I work that out at the start of semester and I kind of, some lectures, I'll just read the lecture slides and then if I get stuck or something, I download all the Echoes and I put them in a folder. Then I'll just raid the lecture slides. If I don't understand something, I'll just find it on the Echo.

Sean suggests that simply adhering to the timetables of degrees/courses is not always the best value for time, and that more efficient practices can be developed around them in order to reduce the amount of time required. Students show a high degree of ability to discern different values within education systems. Yet curiously, students do not appear to put high value on the idea that thinking, deep reflection or research time is valuable time spent. As Memphis (Newcastle, law) shows, only the actual *production* of the assessment item is perceived as relevant.

> **Interviewer:** So do you think that – currently with your 30 units do you think that you do like 30 hours of study a week?
>
> **Memphis:** No. Like at least not measured out like that, like – look I'm very guilty of doing the 'due today do today' kind of approach of this aspect which I shouldn't.

Yet later in the interview, Memphis discusses the process involved in producing an assessment, which requires a much longer period of thinking and development than just using the last day before the deadline:

> **Interviewer:** So in the end even when you're doing them sort of close to time when they're due it sounds like you must think about them a lot on the way.

Memphis: I do think about them a lot. Like if I had an essay due on the Friday and then on the Monday I was like doing all my research and then – see around Monday – Thursday I'm doing all this research and I've got mum like going – shouldn't you have started it by now? It's like – well I have, I don't understand what they're trying to ask me to write about. So four days of doing research and then on the Friday I was like – shit, better write Saturday and I ended up getting like 23 and a half out of 25 for it. But I guess I spend a lot of time thinking about the assessment which I think what is my thesis, what am I going to write rather than –

Interviewer: So you might not be writing but you're actually doing the research towards producing it.

Memphis: Yes I think I could do that more efficiently because we are very slow about doing it. But I do think that and I guess while I don't come to tutorials all the time – I guess I spend a lot of the time focusing on the assessments and I think the tutorial is not going to help me with the assessments and like why am I bothering coming and I stayed home the other week. I'm like – I could go to class or I can work on this as a home task though and stay at home and work on the task.

The research and thinking to understand the assessment are not given nearly as much value as the completed assessment item. This reflects the findings of Case and Gunstone (2003: 63), where chemical engineering students saw understanding more difficult or deeper concepts was less time efficient, and would instead focus on what was required to complete assessment items. These cases suggest that priority of study is also about *speed*. Or in other words, completing courses by investing time in order of priority is a means of speeding up the process of learning, and removing the messier and less clear uses of time that are inherent in critical reflection, research and developing understanding. The students' accounts point towards the desire to have clear, unambiguous and measurable uses of time. From this we might also suggest that this study strategy is aimed at 'compressing time' (Adam, 2004). That is, between constraints on study time and the overarching idea of vocational training, students look to use the time that they have for study in ways that maximize output, without 'wasting time' on those aspects of the study process perceived to carry less value.

Time Practice: Prioritising work

From this discussion it is possible to suggest that students orientate their time based upon perceived systems of obligation. These are orientated towards outcome and economic concerns, and appear to focus little on inherent meaning of study and conceptual understanding. This is exacerbated by the students' employment commitments, which demand more time from the student that cuts into time otherwise reserved for study. As Daisy (Newcastle, law) suggests, work increasingly takes over priority from learning, where university must be fit around the shifts at work:

It's been a challenge for sure. I had the first year and a half where I haven't worked so I got into this good routine where I could focus on university work nine to five, and then outside of that time was my time and I could relax a bit or read. But now when I'm working four or five hours in the morning or afternoon, I have to try and squeeze my university work around that.

Employers requesting for participants to come into work often felt like an obligation:

> **Florence (Newcastle, speech pathology):** I guess, trying to... when someone says... casual, it's like, "Are you available now? On this day?" You want to feel that obligation to be like, "Yes, I'm available." Because you don't really want to cut that off. Then trying to fit in where I can study in other parts as well.

This was often a begrudging obligation however, as students were aware that even though their intent was to prioritize study, it became a challenge to do so. The time that is lost to taking shifts at work either has to be 'made up' (such as Daisy being up until midnight studying each night), or otherwise greater effort to instrumentalize study is required.

The Time Constraints of Domestic Labor

Participants overwhelmingly identified the extra domestic labour of moving out of home as a major area of disadvantage. Not only was it necessary to work in order to afford living expenses, but this also meant that they experience the time burden of domestic labour. Dolores (Newcastle, law), began living on campus having her rent and food expenses paid for by her parents, but at the end of the second year her and her parents decided it would be best for her to pay for herself. This made things 'a bit tougher':

> It really gets me sometimes, like, you see people - at uni they'll be, like, "Oh, I'm just going home and dinner's all ready for me and I'll just do some study." Whereas you know you have to fit in work and doing all the jobs around the house and it could be, like, a few hours later that you finally get to sit down and - and study. So, yeah, that's a big part and just not being able to see my family very much because I have to work and, yeah, if I've got big assessments on I can't just, like, drop everything and go home… You find you just end up eating toast for dinner because you can't be bothered to, like, cook.

As a full time student, the juggling of study with the time commitments of work and domestic labour appear as an unfair component of day-to-day life. Dolores clearly identifies not only that this disadvantage exists, but also the ways in which it effects her study time. And when work and major exams or assessments are incongruous, there are no means for retreat in order to prioritise study. Another participant, Keith (Newcastle, engineering) initially deferred from studying because he had struggled to commit enough time to study and had begun failing subjects. He sees that having to live out of home was part of the problem:

> **Interviewer:** Do you think that if you had been able to live at home to study it would have been easier from when you started?
>
> **Keith:** I think so definitely. It frees up costs and it frees up time, which is related anyway because if you don't have to spend money then you don't have to work, which is what a lot of other people

who are studying where they live because they don't have jobs. So I think it makes a huge difference, and I think it probably would have made a huge difference if I was still at home doing the same courses, I think I would have been a lot more likely to have succeeded straight away. Maybe that's having your parents look over your shoulder as well, I don't know.

Keith quantifies that domestic labour 'takes maybe three or four hours out of your day'. What this demonstrates is that for regional students domestic labour and employment become major priorities in the way that they economize time. Ruth, a Sheffield student describes how she is 'spread thin' by having to manage her on-campus, study, paid work, and home time:

I've got a good couple of days where, I think it's on a Wednesday, where I will be up about six o'clock in the morning, I'll have to be in for nine o'clock and I will have work, I'll have to come home and go straight to work. The idea of it is daunting but I've got to do it, I've got to come in and I've got to go to work, I've got to pay for my car. It is tiring and you can only spread yourself so thin but I've just got to do it, it's got to be done. The reason, I do it that way so that I have the money…I do it so I don't have to have an overdraft, like I don't even have a bank account which can overdraft and I do it specifically so that I limit the amount of debt that I will be in to just my student loan.

Maresa, also a Sheffield student, highlights how she constantly has to make choices as to how she uses both her time, and her money:

There are many things that I have to do but I do what I can you see. There are many things that I have to do like visiting friends, my kids, but the time, it's not there. Besides, this travelling is very - It's costly. It's expensive. All of my finances go to travelling, so even if I want to travel to visit my friends somewhere I can't.

For many of the students, having to constantly work, and having to make time for studying, means that there is little time available to take a deeper, or more conceptual approach to learning and developing their understanding. Students are in the process of a tacit recognition that the most important units of time are those that have tangible, quantifiable products of labour emerging from them. At the objective level, it does not matter how much time goes into a certain product; rather, what is important is the product itself. This is what creates a sense of need, then, to maximize time use, through reducing the input for the output. But in the case of higher education, this approach does not necessarily produce better outcomes.

TIMES STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES

The interview accounts illuminate how students are unequally positioned in relation to time structures across different programs of study. This is related to formal structures such as timetables, schedules of classes and tutoring, programs, terms/semesters, assessment deadlines, holidays and other such institutionally imposed time structures. This also relates to less visible time structures including independent study time, online learning and time 'in between' the formal structures, including time spent travelling to and from different scheduled classes.

Time Structure and Flexibility

The assumption that greater 'flexibility' provided through online learning meets the needs of regional and rural students was significantly challenged by the students' accounts. Many students responded positively to having greater time structure through face-to-face, on-campus provision. Students valued time in class, working directly with their lecturers and peers, and this structure of the physical timescape served as a form of gravity in helping them to plan their time across the multiple other timescapes they navigated. Too much flexibility, with less structured face-to-face time on campus, caused some students to struggle with planning their time. Students valued time on campus, as it enabled them to connect with others, building relationships that nurtured their learning and that involved contact with their lecturers and their peers. Physical attendance in face-to-face classes provided a conceptual grounding and visual memory of learning through a stronger sense of connection to space, place and time. This was experienced as tangible and more impactful than learning outside of such formal structures. Yet, flexibility for students remained an important theme too, without which many students would not be able to continue their studies.

Students overwhelmingly favoured structured, face-to-face time. A core aspect of this desire for face-to-face time was that it helped structure the student's day, through the attendance of lectures and tutorials but also to build a stronger sense of connection with their field of study. As Daisy (Newcastle, law) explains in her interview:

> **Interviewer:** So what do you think it is that you actually get from being face-to-face?
>
> **Daisy:** It's easier to connect with what you're learning, and to put importance on it and prioritise; right this is what I'm doing now. This face-to-face class I have to go to because people are expecting me to be there, and it's a certain time, it's a certain place and it's a scheduled routine. So you can't put it off or prioritise anything else over the top. It's so much easier to learn if you're actually

present. They say turning up to lectures makes you 50 percent more likely to pass or something like that, because you actually understand it and you're there and you can ask questions.

Warwick (Newcastle, law) also emphasizes the value of face-to-face time, including having the opportunity to attend lectures to help students "take it all in" in preparation for seminars and tutorials:

Interviewer: Do you prefer to have face to face time or the online learning?

Warwick: I prefer face to face I think. It's nice having the resources available online but having that face to face lecture and the face to face tutorial is really helpful. Even just being motivated, getting here at uni, I feel like I do a whole lot more at university then I would at home. We had a course last year that they changed over from a two hour lecture and a two hour tutorial, just a two hour seminar. I think we all found that quite difficult because we had a bit of online learning beforehand, but it was quite difficult going into a class, being expected to know all of this stuff and being questioned on it, as opposed to having the option to sit in a lecture beforehand to take it all in, maybe ask

Structured time facilitated students' participation, whilst online learning seemed to make it harder for students to focus because it is not at a "set time":

Daisy: We've changed to online lectures for law as well, which was a terrible decision in my opinion, because…

Interviewer: Is it just on Blackboard?

Daisy: Yeah just through ECHO.

Interviewer: Is that just this semester?

Daisy: Well it's the way that it's going for most courses now. But yeah this was the first semester I've had to deal with it. So we've moved to the online system, so I don't have a set time now when I have to be doing a lecture.

Although students clearly valued face-to-face and structured time, they also valued the flexibility offered through online learning. This enabled the opportunity to go over material at the student's pace: "it is good if you need to go back to revisit a lecture and you can stop and start it at home and write down exactly what they say and things like that, so, yeah, that is also good" (Dolores). Listening to online lectures at home allowed flexibility but was consistently considered by the students to be distracting:

Interviewer: So do you prefer to have face to face time or...

Dolores: Yeah. I think so because it's, yeah, it's hard to find the time to sit down and sit down for a good, like, the lecture would be two hours. But by the time you stop, start, stop, start, write things down it takes a good chunk out of your day so it's tricky. It's easier to just go to a two hour lecture and have it over and done with and you've heard it all and you've caught what you can … at home you can get distracted easily.

Students pointed to how the structured, face-to-face pedagogical moments were richer and more personal than online learning, due to the physicality of the relational connection with the lecturer – "the

actual person saying it" (Iris, Newcastle, social science). This appeared to touch on more affective dimensions of the pedagogical experience. Iris describes how these structured, face-to-face moments helped her to make connections between what she was studying and her "personal life", which significantly enhanced her learning:

> **Interviewer:** What was it about face-to-face time that you think was...
>
> **Iris:** I think that it was being spoken to, it was an actual person saying it, you had to show up and sit there and they'd mark your name off. It was definitely just them physically being in the same classroom as you, I think. Whereas the face-to-face... When like an online tests or something like that, I'd just open the slides of that week but the textbook and... I don't even think I bought the textbooks. No, I did buy the textbooks or read them. I just kind of guessed and it was fine.
>
> **Iris:** There'll be certain times where I'll be able to recall what I learnt in class that day due to something that happened in class, like something funny that the tutor said, or someone that was in class with me, or how I was feeling, what was happening my own personal life at the time. Whereas online that's up there and it doesn't really exist.

Time Structure and Transportation

Students from regional and rural backgrounds struggle with the time structures of higher education in relation to transportation. For some students, "travel's the biggest time constraint" (Max, Newcastle, Engineering).

The Sheffield students, who were recruited from the city's two universities, had, primarily, elected to stay living in their home communities and to travel to campus and back each day. For some students this involved a five hours round trip, with complex and stressful journeys - as Helena, a nursing student who alternates attendance at University with being on placement, explains:

> I normally do long shifts which are three days a week, just so I don't have to travel every day. So then I'd leave the house at about half past five to get here for half past seven normally and parked in time. Then occasionally they let me go early because I live so far away, but at times I'm getting home at about nine at night, which is quite difficult because I've got a little girl who is one… And then when I'm at uni I normally leave at about half past seven in the morning to get here for nine.

For many of the students, driving to campus left them feeling, at best, stressed on arrival, whilst the unreliable journey to work might also mean they were late for classes, as Melanie describes:

> When I come out of my village and I sort of get in to Rotherham it just queues – there is never not a queue. To get here for 9 am or even 10 am there is still queues. They are just massive. It's just stop, start, stop, start. Sometimes they can be really long, like this morning it was much longer than normal, and I was like 10 minutes late, even though I set off with an hour and a half to spare. I was still 10 minutes late, so you can never judge it. Ever… I missed the tram this morning and then the tram was late, so I waited 15 minutes in the cold for a tram, which also added to me being late. It was just a bad morning this morning.

Ruth also has a long daily journey involving driving, a train journey, a bus journey and a walk to get to campus which she too finds highly stressful:

> I had to be in for ten o'clock today, this morning and I got up at quarter to seven, about half six, quarter to seven to get ready, get my breakfast etc. and then I had to start off at ten to eight to the train station to park my car, to catch the train for quarter past eight to then head over here for nine o'clock. I always have to be here an hour before I'm due to be in, to be in Sheffield for nine o'clock and walk into Sheffield City Centre to catch a bus to be here probably for about half past nine, quarter to ten, to then get my lecture or seminar which is at ten. So it will probably take me, about two and a half hours in total, two, two and a half hours to actually get here and then the same getting back.

For those who drove on to campus trying to find parking was a further constant stress as there is no campus-based parking available, as described by Richard:

> My typical morning, when I know I've got to be here early, I'll be up about half past five, leaving about twenty past six to get here for any time around or before seven o'clock and that's to start at nine. So I have to get here two hours early just to get anywhere near the university knowing that you can confidently come inside and think 'Right I'm parked, I don't have to worry about that, I can do my work.

Like Helena, Richard is a nursing student and for all the nursing students the stress of commuting was compounded by the fact that when they were on placement they could not claim travel expenses unlike their locally-based peers since travel payments to placement were only made for distances measured from the campus and not from home. Such practices heightened their sense of being disadvantaged and treated unfairly. The cost of travel was a constant concern for the commuting students, with Ashia, an Education student, noting that she had to make a constant choice between travelling in by coach which was cheaper but would not get her to her 9 o'clock lecture on time, or train which meant she could arrive on time but which was significantly more expensive:

> Usually I don't have time to have breakfast and on Thursdays that's a problem because I won't eat from quarter past seven until about 12 because I'm just in lectures and seminars from then. So it really affects my concentration and stuff like that, so, yeah…I mean it's just about timing really because if I miss my bus then I'll miss my coach and I won't be able to get here in time for a lecture or a seminar, so that's usually a problem. I mean there's been a few blips where the coach has broken down on the motorway or a train's been delayed…or I'll just miss my coach because a lecture has run over or something like that. That's a bit hard.

Travel also shapes time in gendered ways as issues of safety determine timeframes for students at both universities. For Ruth, a Sheffield student, the stress of the journey was heightened by the sense of danger she felt in making the return journey late at night which, she believed, placed her in grave danger

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Last year in criminology they expected us, we had a lecture at six o'clock which was six 'til seven, but every three or four weeks it wouldn't finish until nine o'clock at night... So that means I'd have to walk to the station at nine o'clock at night... It's dangerous to say the least. Then my last train is at quarter to ten so it's cutting it close, if I miss that then I'm screwed basically, I'd have to get a parent or someone to come and pick me up, I'd have to or else I'd just be stranded there. Then once I get home, I wouldn't get in until eleven o'clock... Even for people who live here I think it's quite unrealistic to expect people, I think there's been quite a few students, specifically to this university as well, who have been attacked, murdered, kidnapped, raped, there's been quite a few that I know of any way that have had all these things, a case of each at least. It is dangerous and I think they don't recognise that and I think it's very unfair.

It is important to note here that there is no evidence that such attacks have taken place. Nonetheless Ruth believes that she is being placed in danger. This is echoed by Ciri, (Newcastle, nursing), who explains in her interview:

Ciri: The only thing I hate when you're talking about parking is that it's frightening at night time. It's actually frightening walking down to your car, and I park over – do you know where the new living accommodation is and there's a pay carpark just past that? Walking along there at night time is really frightening; it's not safe. There's no way that is safe.

Interviewer: It's quite a long way to walk as well.

Ciri: Yeah and it's dark and it's shaded.

Florence (Newcastle, speech pathology) echoes this in her account:

Interviewer: Now that you live off campus, do you drive to uni?

Interviewee: Depends on when I'm finishing. If, I guess it was in the winter, sometimes I would because I didn't really want to walk to XXXX, that sort of area that we live in, it's not great at night. Yes, I would drive to University Drive and then I'd walk in. Or sometimes, depending on when I finish, I would walk in.

Interviewer: You don't live very far away, do you?

Florence: No, it's only less than 2ks.

Interviewer: Yeah, but it's just like the route itself is like...

Florence: Yeah.

Interviewer: ...dodgy?

Florence: Yeah.

Interviewer: I mean, XXXX is a bit dodgy anyway.

Florence: Yeah, it is.

Interviewer: Yeah. That really sucks.

Florence: Yeah. [Rachel] seems to... I guess she does it during the day, that sort of thing, and then at night I'll pick her up and vice versa if necessary.

For some students, such as Ruth, however, the journey to campus (once on the train) can also offer a quiet time for reflection and contemplation and act as a transition space between home and university life:

> I just sit there and look out the window, listen to music occasionally, but I quite like the quiet, I don't really like anyone sitting next to me because I like just sitting there and looking out the window and it just being quiet, enjoying not having to listen to anyone or do anything for the forty-five minutes that I'm on the train for.

Max, a Newcastle student, travels from Singleton, which is a 45-minute journey each way, and he spends four days per week on campus. However, Max also uses his travel time as a reflective space to think about and listen to the course's recordings of lectures.

However, for the Australian students, living in regional and rural areas was identified as a significant disadvantage, including in terms of meeting deadlines due to problems with submitting assignments. Leah (Newcastle, nursing) explains:

> **Interviewer:** So do you think that students who sort of live locally to the university, get an advantage that you didn't get because you were from Tamworth?
>
> **Leah (Nursing):** I think so. It's hard to say yes, I get an unfair advantage, but I've put myself in this position so, I take full responsibility for it. The Tamworth Rural Health Department that's run by the university here in Tamworth, I feel, that it would be better if they had the access for people that chose to do what I'm doing, live back home and still be able to access that, whereas we can only really access it through placement most of the time.
>
> They don't really have it set up for other people outside of placement because they've got a lot of University of Newcastle students staying there for their placement. They don't really – they've enough computers and things to access those people, but if you have outsiders coming in, that's where it makes it a bit more difficult. But I have chosen to go the hospital library instead, which I find is more helpful, but, I do think it would be nicer if there was a bit more understanding with assessments. I've had issues where the file's been too big to upload onto Blackboard in the portals and things, and I've messaged and emailed my tutors, because that's the only point of contact. I couldn't just call them, and then it turned out to be, well okay, just bring it in tomorrow. I live in Tamworth, I can't just bring it in. So it ended up having to be an Express Post and all these things where it's just not really realistic, but I get that, because the course isn't designed to be a distance course. I'm sure there would be other people in this situation, when they're not just ten minutes from the Uni and can just drop it in. I think there is some disadvantage there for kids in rural areas. I say kids – like people in rural areas.
>
> **Interviewer:** Have you known other rural students who have suffered that same sort of problem – actually not being able to get access through their internet.
>
> **Leah:** Not really. I don't really talk to many other rural students. I know, that there's my neighbours, but it's just like, oh, internet's bloody shit. We all kind of just go, oh yeah the internet's crap, we can't do anything, but I haven't really had anyone's that been a student for Uni, that needs it and can't use it. Otherwise it's pretty good. For the people that are in town, it's quite good, because in there, the service is great, but out where we are – we're 23 kms out of town, so we don't have any of the benefits that they do in there.

> So it's just a bit of a hassle to try and drive all in, and get all my stuff packed up, just to go in and do uni work. It's a bit of an issue, and a lot of the tutors I've had will just say, oh, you know, you can just pack up your stuff and go to the library and I'm like, it's not really that simple. I literally have to orientate my whole day around doing that. Because once you're in town, you have to do everything that you need to do in town before coming back out. If you drive 23 kms in, you don't need to drive 23 kms back out to grab a USB or something. It's not just that…

Time structures and choice-making processes

Choice-making is a complex process and time profoundly constrains students' choices. This is in relation to a range of other factors at play including access to support and resources (such as childcare, funds to support living costs, support for domestic labor and so forth). Students do not manage their time simply in terms of making the 'right' choices; they must make constrained choices in relation to what is available to them, the degree of risk involved, and their sense of commitment to other aspects of their lives, such as employment and family, for example.

Students regularly talked about the struggle of coming to an understanding of how much time was required to invest in study. While there are general time structures for how much study time should be put into each course, students found that they need to adjust this to their perceived personal abilities.

As Casey (Newcastle, engineering) suggests, the amount of time allotted to cover course content is often not enough for him to complete course content:

> Yeah. Yeah. Their concept of self directed learning is - is, yeah, pretty awkward for me to conceive because you don't have enough time. I mean, even the tutorials; I've got one class at the moment that's got a two hour tutorial and there's about five or six questions in that tute. If I work really hard in that tute I might get two questions done, maybe. So it's - there's not enough time.

Florence (Newcastle, speech pathology) explains her choices in relation to her sense of personhood and capabilities:

> I'm a person that's… Things don't really just come to me immediately and I can just type it out and that's it, done. I'm very much a slow processor so it tends to takes me a lot more time for me… I don't know, like for an assignment I'd have to start about 2 weeks before. Because it takes me that amount of time just to go through it and slowly get my things together, readings done and then start that process.

Thomas (Newcastle, engineering) explained that he was failing his course in terms of his (perceived) individual problem of not working out how much time he needed. Thomas' account highlights the value of providing support for time management. However, this also needs to be considered in relation to gendered practices at a wider social level. Feminist research for example, argues that constructions of masculinity often compel male students to understand themselves in terms of lacking organizational skills and 'laziness' (Jackson, 2002; Burke, 2006).

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Interviewer: Were you failing a course just because you were not putting enough time?

Thomas: Definitely. I didn't work out how much time I needed to put in to sort of kept that mind set from school, if I go to lectures then I will be all right and I will pass everything. You don't put the work in at home. You need to do the study at home to do that.

Interviewer: Right. Do you feel that the teaching staff made it obvious how much time you needed to put in?

Thomas: Yeah. They always used to say at the start or whatever of every course, you need to do 10 hours a week. I sort of brushed that off. This is what I will do. I will do what I want to do. I still don't stick to making sure to 40 hours of uni or Echo and everything like that. I just make sure I've got what I need to get done, done.

Albert (Newcastle, engineering) felt that he was 'behind' his peers and so took less units so that he had 'more time' to catch up. This raises the importance of considering how time is so important pedagogically in supporting students to develop their capabilities. Students from under-represented backgrounds often have not benefitted from access to high quality teaching or have not had the privilege of additional tutoring that many other students have enjoyed by virtue of their social advantages.

Interviewer: Do you think that – are there particular kind of challenges or difficulties that you face while you're studying at university?

Albert: Not in particular. At the start it was certainly hard to get into studying because I had never finished high school and that was sort of hard and the maths didn't come to me quite as easily as the others around me. But I think I've slowly picked up on that and now I'm sort of going with the flow and I'm sort of up with it like everyone else.

Interviewer: So how did you sort of grapple with the maths like if it wasn't coming as well?

Albert: Did a lot of time – I started on three subjects so I had a lot of time to look things up and research outside of what was going on. Like they would ask a question about something and it was sort of related to something else so I would research that and learn that for it and then figured out that everyone else around me sort of just knew how to do that from high school.

Interviewer: So did you feel like you were sort of a bit behind like what other people were…

Albert: I was a little bit behind but I realised that I had the benefit of time and the other support to get stuff done so I just did it.

Keith (Newcastle, engineering) echoes such concerns further reinforcing that pedagogical support within a particular subject area is crucial for students from under-represented backgrounds. This requires thinking carefully about time structures and course organization and ways of embedding pedagogical support in ways that enrich student's learning.

Keith: Not really. I think the biggest challenge is just I find the content difficult, so I've got to put in a lot of time to try and understand it. That does come down to a time management thing on my part,

in that I know that I need to put in more hours than someone else might have to to understand the same content. So I have to allow for that essentially.

Other students, however, had arrived at university with the expectation that, as commuting students, they would need to be highly organized with their time, making the most of every minute - particularly if they wanted to create a balance between university and home time, as Ruth (Sheffield) describes:

> **Ruth:** Yes, I try and get it done in the gaps here and then when not, I work Monday, Wednesday and Friday, I do two hours Monday, Wednesday, five 'til seven and then an hour on a Friday, five 'til six, it's only five hours a week. Then all time, between Monday and Friday any other time that I've got is spent doing my seminar prep. Mostly I get it done between Monday and Friday so then I have my weekends to myself and then start again the same Monday to Friday doing it.

Many of the students described 'spare' time not use for study as 'wasted time' as Richard (Sheffield) explains:

> **Richard:** So sometimes I do waste a bit of time but then I make up for it on a night time, like yesterday morning I was doing my assignment before I came to uni, yesterday night when I got home I was doing it again. So where I'd waste time, let's say I had a weekend and I didn't do any of it, like last weekend, I make up for it in the week. And knowing that it's due in this Friday I've set myself Monday as the hand-in date, I want it in before, whereas the last academic year I took it right up to the knuckle, which a lot do, but I work better that way, I just decided that I want it in four days before, just for me.

TEMPORAL AFFECTIVITY

As will be evident from the previous sections of this report, time was described by students in visceral terms; it was embodied and deeply felt. Considerable value was attributed to the physical experience of being in classes with the teachers and other students and the way students described this was palpable. They talked about how being there enabled deeper memories of the work — because of that physicality and being in that space. Clear themes that emerged about the emotionality of timing within students' experiences of learning and life will be described in the following pages.

Escape

When students talked about university choice, many talked with candor about 'escaping' their home towns. Dolores (Newcastle, law) explains that while it was difficult to 'juggle' work, life and study, she needed to 'get out' of her home town, where:

> … it sounds awful but at school there was not that many people that I really clicked with because a lot of people didn't have aspirations of leaving. So, yeah, the people that I've written that went to uni they were probably the people that I clicked with the most and was most friendly with and, yeah, just wanted to be with … I just needed to get out of XXXX. I wasn't going to hang around.

The desire to explore, be independent and see 'what the world had to offer' was strong. Lack of opportunity and limitations were described by Daisy (Newcastle, law):

> The one thing about XXXX that me and my parents really didn't like was that people get attached to XXXX; they stay there their whole lives. They work in retail and everything which is great; there's nothing wrong with that, but they don't look at the big picture and think about leaving, because XXXX is just such a safe community to just stay there. So you get stuck and then you have kids there so you're more attached, and just generation by generation it continues. I think they wanted us to not be stuck.

The future is considered very limited for people who stay in small towns, whereas others who leave feel enticed by exploring the 'the big picture'. Many of the students said they wanted to get away from 'being under the microscope' in a small town, but did not want to go to Sydney. Newcastle was closer and big enough for them.

Stress and self-blame

Leah (Newcastle, nursing) describes how stressful it was to live out of home:

> It was – I think probably the stress of that – sitting down to do study and being, all right, let's get into this, and then work messaging saying, 'oh, can you work this afternoon'. Then throwing out, going okay what do I need to get ready before I go to work? Whereas [at home], I knew that I'd be working, but I knew that I didn't have to worry about anything else. Whatever I gained from work

will just go for petrol and a phone bill. That was it. I think that's where it took a lot of my stress away, not going, oh my gosh, I've got to earn so much this week, but I can't because I need to study. So as soon as I came home, I didn't have to worry about that anymore. It was like, I've got food, I've got a house, you know, and if things got tight, I didn't need to ring Dad, like, he'd just say, take my car because you can't afford petrol, that's fine.

Students tended to blame themselves about not managing time well, even when they could also see that they had no choice but to keep going the way they were because of critical work, home and study demands. Feeling awful about not participating in extra-curricular time management sessions, Dolores (Newcastle, law) said:

I don't know how you would teach someone to, like, structure your home duties around uni … I'm sure there's been, like, time management classes and things at uni, but I've never gone to them. So it's probably more my fault … I'm sure I've had emails from different places, yeah, talking about all these classes and thing - workshops and things. Yeah. I don't really know … Yeah, you kind of just tend to flick over them. You don't really, like, "Oh, that would be good." Just, yeah, I'll go back to studying now though, yeah … It's, like, more hours out of your day that you have to spend going to that and it sort of disrupts your life a little bit, like, you - you know what I mean, if you, yeah, if you've got a certain - you have to go to work at this time and you've got to be at class.

Gregore (Newcastle, law) blamed himself for not spending enough time (not being dedicated or disciplined enough) on study, but then he explained that his classes and necessary study time mean that he takes much longer than the recommended times. Memphis (law) also blames himself for not having as much time as desired for study. He then reflects that it is very difficult when the assessments are all due at once, although he does not question the timing.

As noted in the above section, discussions were gendered, with self blame for being 'slack' and 'lazy' being expressed by many of the male interviewees. Wider research (see Archer 2003; Jackson 2002; Burke 2006) links discourses of 'laziness' with the problematic notion that men are 'naturally' lazy (Epstein et al. 1997), which undermines recognition of social structural inequalities (Burke 2006).

Frustration and misrecognition

Leah (Newcastle, nursing) described how important information is hidden from view in the university, and trying to navigate living away from home, and affording to, is made worse by the institution, which is not attuned to the importance of providing clear information about service provision. Leah expresses frustration about spending too much time looking for essentials and then missing out on them:

It's pretty kind of like, yeah, we can provide you things, but you've got to search for them, and how to get them. Trying to get a scholarship or anything like that, just a grant to help you out with some money for placements. It's like trying to – it's like hens teeth. It's ridiculous. It's so hard. A lot of people told me later on that you can go and get groceries from the – there's the place behind Bar on the Hill, you get some groceries – some vegies and stuff from there if you try … Yeah, if you're

struggling to buy food, you can get it. But it's only that I found that out, just before I was leaving. It was like, okay. There's so many things, but you don't actually – like I found none of that when I went to orientation at all. Here's your course, here's your information, here's some free stuff and if you want to join a group, and you're like, well, no thanks, but all righty. If you were fully into it thinking, that yeah, I'm going to try and find things, then you would, but when you've got other stuff on your mind, like I've got to get home, I've got to pay money. The day of my orientation … I drove down to Newcastle in the morning, did the orientation and drove back straight after it, because I couldn't afford not to. So, in that sense I didn't get that 'O' week experience, where I spent the whole time drinking and whatever else and meeting people. I had to get home. I had to make some money. I had to try and organize moving down. I didn't have the time, not to do that.

When asked if staff at university are considerate of time constraints, Ciri (Newcastle, nursing) answered:

No not at all … I guess who am I to judge, but no there's no actual real consideration for that or travel things. So there's currently roadworks at XXXX and I got stuck on the bridge for 40 minutes the other day. If there had been a class exam or anything you'd have just missed it. It is quite a rural campus, Newcastle itself isn't but they have 60,000 students here or some crazy number like that.

Students did not generally perceive there was enough consideration for their individual circumstances; they described ongoing issues that were perceived as being seen as simply individual problems and not of relevance to the wider program or university. Unless an acute episode for which they could seek exceptional circumstances, work, life and ongoing health issues were considered by the students as the individual students' issue to deal with. Another student, Jess (Newcastle, arts), who is visually impaired, explains that people are 'really helpful. Everyone is always going out of their way to sort of help' but 'the bureaucracy is a headache. Just all the, everyone wants to go out of their way to help but the amount of hoops you have to jump through is a giant headache'.

Lachlan (Newcastle, engineering) discussed the 'stress' of work placement:

I've been trying to organize some work placement. I've been ringing up companies and stuff which has been a bit of a pain in the arse sending resumes out to them. So yeah, that's been taking up a fair bit of time as well … Yeah, there's no real help for it. The university's got no real advice for you. They're just like you've got to ring up and Engineers Australia doesn't have any. Because nursing and, sorry health and education, it's all organized through the uni for you. You just put preferences in. They go out and organize it all. Whereas through engineering, it's all off your own... They're not going to give you the degree unless you've done your 12 weeks and ... You have to do all the organizing yourself which is pretty stressful to be honest. I think it'd be better if they did it like they did it for health. You just put preferences in. The only problem there is that sometimes they get posted out to places out west but I think there's enough engineering firms you know. Eventually Australia will just have a list of every single one that said they would take them then you just put preferences in. I think that would be the good.

Some students from nursing also talked about placement being very difficult because they could not continue work during that time and have no income. They said they feel quite desperate about this because they need to work to eat.

The struggles, individualization of blame and associated stress in the students' discussions are palpable. 'Pressure' and 'stress' were dominant themes that stood out in their discussions about time. Given that much of the discussion contributed by students in this research project focuses on the emotional aspects of time, careful consideration needs to be paid to this usually 'invisible' aspect. Fraser's concept of recognition (Fraser 1997; Fraser & Honneth 2003) is useful here to understand the ways that inequalities might not always be explicit, but subtle and formed through lived and embodied experiences of misrecognition (McNay 2008; Burke, 2012).

In the everyday, students may not want to feel exposed for fear of shame of seeming impoverished, 'needy' or struggling. The (imagined) ideal student subject is not meant to reveal their 'personal' issues and emotions in the university, as these are seen as private and about weakness, laziness, lack of commitment, derivation from the 'norm' and desired subjectivities and sensibilities or as a pathology. It is only in focused conversations that most students, especially males, open up about significant challenges and difficulties. Thus, important issues are masked, not only by official institutional discourses that individualize blame, but by the perception of what a student who belongs at university, and is a 'good student', looks like. The timescapes of HE thus serve to render invisible important aspects of students' experiences and needs that require addressing.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This project has explored student accounts of their perceptions and experiences of time in dealing with relocation or travel over relatively long distances as a result of them being from regional or rural areas. We have drawn on four overarching conceptual themes to consider the students' accounts: timescapes, time economies, time structures and temporal affectivity. Drawing on a rich array of sociological theory has enabled us to deepen our exploration of the descriptive themes emerging from the data and to illuminate students' perceptions and experiences of time beyond notions of 'time management'.

We have found that a balance between *structure* and *flexibility* is key for enriching student learning and considering structures of time that are put into place within and across programs of study. While students found online resources useful they typically did so as a complement to face-to-face learning, and demonstrated strong preference for traditional lecture and tutorial teaching styles. As has been demonstrated earlier in this report, students found it easier to structure their time around these allotted face-to-face teaching periods, and felt more connected to the course and teaching staff when they attended classes physically. Students felt they were better able to remember important details and achieve deeper understanding in classes when teachers demonstrated commitment and engagement with their learning. Students noted that if a teacher was not (perceived as) engaging they would often decide not to attend, as this was seen as a poor investment of their time, but then they would find it harder to follow the lecture recordings. Thus, teaching is recognized by students as important in determining their engagement in learning. This points to the importance of pedagogical considerations in relation to time and student equity.

Students coming from a distance to attend the university will often have to find accommodation quickly before commencing their studies. Students would benefit from a stronger system of accommodation ranking and review in order to facilitate finding suitable housing. It would also be beneficial for these systems to be clearly and transparently communicated to students commencing studies. Support structures could be put into place to support students in navigating the private rental market to ensure that students are not vulnerable to aggressive commercial practices.

The students' accounts foreground the struggles they face in negotiating multiple timescapes; put simply juggling the demands of study, employment and unpaid labor. Hence, students require flexibility, through online resources but also the recognition that the inability to attend all classes is not an indicator of poor time management or lack of motivation, but of the multiple demands students from

regional and rural backgrounds navigate. The students interviewed for this project took their study seriously and did not miss classes out of preference, but of necessity. Given students' different social circumstances and available resources, it is crucial that higher education has the capacity to address difference. This highlights the need for nuanced approaches to equity, that do not reduce the problem to individual skill, or to treated every student the same. Student equity demands the recognition of social differences. Without this, many students will remain unable to sustain their studies.

Greater recognition then is required in degree and course provision of the multiplicity of timescapes that students negotiate and experience in their day-to-day lives. Student experiences vary widely according to commitments to employment, family and other demands on their time. Such commitments are not only about individual choices but are attached to differential resources, social and geographic location and support available outside of their courses. This problematizes oversimplified notions of time management which are located within the individual, choice-making student. Students often make profoundly constrained choices because of multiple demands and pressures. Policies and practices for student equity therefore would benefit from a rethinking of time management that is able to recognize and address students' differential relation to time.

Assessment timeframes influence the way in which students organize their study time, often placing a narrow focus on completing assessments, rather than on processes of learning, developing understanding and education. As described in the interviews, compared to other cohorts, students from regional and rural backgrounds have greater time constraints as a result of having to find accommodation/travel further to study, as well as needing to find time to cover the associated costs of this (both financial and emotional). This makes them more prone to instrumentalizing their approach to study, which limits their pedagogical capacity and engagement with deeper/conceptual understandings related to their degree program.

This project has illuminated the significance of questions of time in relation to student equity. Further research should build on this to explore these issues across a wider range of student groups and institutional and disciplinary contexts. Such research is particularly significant at a time when higher education is looking increasingly to online forms of provision to reach a wider group of students. Time and student equity must be a consideration in such developments and be explored in ways that examine the relationship between time, space, equity and social differences.

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