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*New lecturers' journeys : the formation of 'the academic' in Higher Education*

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***New lecturers' journeys -  
The formation of 'the  
academic' in Higher  
Education***

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

Sheffield Hallam University  
Sheffield Institute of Education

July 2017

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## Acknowledgements

A huge thanks to my brilliant supervisors, Bronwen and Jaqueline: inspiring, indomitable women and great role models. Thank you for steering me along my own journey towards 'being an academic'.

I am very grateful to my employer for funding this, and to managers and colleagues who have given me the time and space to get this done, especially in the last year.

Thanks to my friend Mikey, for the support and encouragement, being a calm voice of reason amongst the existential angst. You went ahead and showed it could be done.

My love and thanks to my parents for their ever present love, support and encouragement. I am incredibly fortunate, and this is for them as much as me.

The biggest debt of gratitude of all is to my husband Iain. For endless faith in me, for everything he does, for always knowing what to say when it all gets a bit too much - thank you, thank you, thank you.

RH, July 2017

## Abstract

This research explores the formation of academic identities in a large, northern post-1992 UK university. The study is contextualized within the current discourse of a managerialist, neo-liberal, marketised higher education context and the dominance of notions of 'excellence'. The research aimed to ascertain how academics conceptualise their academic role and practice over time and what might account for this, with an intention to identify implications for the support and development of new academic staff. The participants were academics who were undertaking or had recently undertaken a Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. A set of longitudinal interviews, three per participant, formed the primary data set with current course participants, with a secondary data set of one off interviews with a separate group of alumni course participants. The research sits within a constructivist paradigm and adopted a reflexive, interpretative approach to data collection and analysis, with both the voice of the researcher and participants remaining visible throughout. An iterative process of qualitative data analysis was used, with themes inductively generated from the data, using first open coding and then qualitative content analysis. Although participant narratives are heterogeneous, overarching themes were identified relating to conceptions of identity and factors influencing this. Conceptions of identity typically saw 'hybridised academic identities' emerging, together with the notion of the academic as a 'tri-professional'. Whilst the notion of 'research' was considered an essential aspect of the academic identity, differing conceptions of what this entailed highlighted disciplinary differences in approaches to research and scholarly practice. Several interdependent factors influencing the development of academic identity and practice were identified from the data. These were self-efficacy, pedagogical agency, mattering, and belonging, which were interrelated with a key aspect of a stable academic identity, pedagogical resilience. These findings informed the development of a tentative conceptual model for the formation of the academic, the 'new academic identity nexus'. Whilst it appeared that courses like a PgCert LTHE can contribute to the development of an academic identity, experiences in local subject contexts were the critical mechanisms through which an academic identity can be developed and realised. The proposed 'new academic identity nexus' has significant implications for leaders and managers in academic institutions.

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## List of Abbreviations

AL - Associate Lecturer  
BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation  
BERA - British Education Research Association  
COP - Community of Practice  
DBIS - Department for Business, Innovation and Skills  
DLHE - Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education  
EHEA - European Higher Education Area  
FHEA - Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy  
FT - Full time  
HE - Higher Education  
HEA - Higher Education Academy  
ILTHE - Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education  
LTSN - Learning and Teaching Support Network  
PCK - Pedagogical Content Knowledge  
PgCert - Post-graduate Certificate  
L - Lecturer  
LTHE - Learning and Teaching in Higher Education  
NCIHE - National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Committee)  
NCT - National Co-ordination Team  
NSS - National Student Survey  
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
PG - Post Graduate  
PGCE - Post Graduate Certificate of Education  
PT - Part time  
QAA - Quality Assurance Agency  
QCA - Qualifications and Curriculum Authority  
REF - Research Excellence Framework  
SL - Senior Lecturer  
STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths  
TEF - Teaching Excellence Framework  
TEL - Technology Enhanced Learning  
TQA - Teaching Quality Assessment  
TQEF - Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund  
UK - United Kingdom  
UKHE - United Kingdom Higher Education  
UKPSF - United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework



## Chapter 1 - Introduction

This research is concerned with the development of academic identities and practices, set against current discourses of 'excellence', particularly 'teaching excellence' (Gunn & Fisk, 2013). The study is contextualised within a neoliberal, managerialist and marketised higher education context (Stevenson, Burke, & Whelan, 2014), and current expectations of 'the academic' in higher education institutions. The study explores the conceptions and experiences of academic staff, in relation to their role and practice, before, during and after their participation in a post-graduate teaching course (the 'PgCert') for higher education. It also reflects on the researcher's own development of an academic identity, through the process and culmination of doctoral research.

### Rationale

Research into academic identity has suggested that the professional category of 'academic' is at risk; dissolving and precarious (Henkel, 2000, 2005; C. Watson, 2011), a phenomenon largely attributed to the pressures of a marketised, neoliberal higher education context, challenging the rights of the academic to academic freedom and regarding the academic as just another 'unit of human resource' (C. Watson, 2011). This rhetoric has predominantly been based on 'traditional academic identities' from elite institutions, with academic identity linked closely with discipline allegiances and norms, and the exercise of autonomy in research (Clegg, 2008, p. 331). Offering an alternative perspective, other research has highlighted the development of new, 'hybridised' academic identities "that are not as hampered by the overweening pressure of research productivity" (Clegg, 2008, p. 441). Rather than the influence of disciplinary 'tribes and territories' (Becher, 1989, 1994) these academics may instead draw from professional expertise (Findlow, 2012; I. Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark, & Warne, 2002) or interdisciplinary experiences (Davidson, 2004; Trowler, 2011) as the foundations of the development of an academic identity.

There is therefore a growing understanding of the diversity of academic identities in today's higher education institutions, although Fitzmaurice (2013, p. 613) comments,

while academic identity has been researched from a variety of perspectives resulting in greater understanding of the complexity and multiplicity of

identities, few studies have been carried out on academics who are relative newcomers to the academic world...

Studies that have been carried out relating to these newer manifestations of academic identity have largely been concerned with the transition of the expert professional or practitioner, for example from health care or teaching, into the academic environment (Findlow, 2012; Gourlay, 2011; I. Stronach et al., 2002; Swennen, Jones, & Volman, 2010). This research has highlighted, for example, the challenges that ensue from the alignment of the existing professional identity as 'expert' with the new 'novice' academic identity (Ennals, Fortune, Williams, & D'Cruz, 2016). These literatures offer insights into emergent thinking regarding new conceptualisations of academic identities - such as the 'pracademic' (Clegg, 2008, p. 335) and ideas relating to the formation of academic identities within a wider conceptualisation of the academy (Ennals et al., 2016; Gale, 2011; J. Smith, 2010).

However, the rapidly changing workplace that is the higher education sector today (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2009) leads several authors to conclude that there is a need for further exploration of academic identity in today's higher education institutions. Clegg's (2008) work identifying the proliferation of identities in academia suggests that "paying detailed attention to how changes are being experienced is an important element in theorising what is happening inside the university sector" (Clegg, 2008, p. 343). Gale (2011, p. 225) explicitly notes the

need for further research to investigate the 'academic identity' within different parts of the university sector...[and] the idea of different identities at different stages of the academic career (Gale, 2011)

This study, focusing on the identity formation of new academics, is designed to contribute to this body of literature and add insights into the how the lived experience of newly appointed lecturers may contribute to their construction of an academic identity. With reference to new academics and probation or induction practices, Smith (2010) suggests that

...greater attention to the assumptions underpinning the nature of UK universities' cultural practices and how these are enacted may make transition less difficult for many (J. Smith, 2010, p. 590)

For many new academics, transitional experiences and thus initial exposure to cultural practices include their participation in a PgCert or similar. Research around PgCert courses is limited (Butcher & Stoncel, 2012, p. 159), and is usually focused on the 'impact' of the course on new academics or the course's efficacy or otherwise in relation to the development of teaching skills (Trigwell, Caballero Rodriguez, & Han, 2012). The PgCert is the locus for this study, situating the research within the experiences of course participants - but importantly, exploring their experiences both on and outside of the course.

This research then aims to address a need for further research, building on Smith's (2010) work, into how the changes in the higher education sector are being experienced by new academic staff (Clegg, 2008), over time, in a 'post-1992' university (Gale, 2011). Rather than an exclusive focus on a PgCert course and its impact (Butcher & Stoncel, 2012; Trigwell et al., 2012), this is being explored both in relation to their interdisciplinary experiences on a PgCert course and their disciplinary experiences in their local contexts, to ascertain if or how these experiences contribute to the formation of an academic identity. It is not, as some previous research, focused only on new 'professional' academics, but instead considers both 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' (Ennals et al., 2016) entrants into the academy. The study also compares these new academics' experiences with that of more experienced academics, further into their academic career, an aspect which has received limited attention in existing research.

### Personal genesis

As well as articulating the academic rationale behind the development of this research, it is important to express the personal motivations and origins of my thinking regarding the study, as this informs much of the reflexivity referred to throughout the work.

There were three interrelated strands to the personal genesis of this research:

- my desire to find out whether the changing context of higher education, the pressures of league tables, surveys, 'excellence frameworks' and performativity (Ball, 2003) are impacting on how academics feel about themselves and their role

- my desire to find out whether the course I lead, the PgCert Learning and Teaching in Higher Education ('PgCert'), effectively supports academic staff in this current context
- my own difficulties inhabiting an academic identity and a sense of 'imposter phenomenon'; is what I do 'worthwhile' and am I 'worthy'? (Clance & Imes, 1978)

When I first began working in higher education, I didn't worry about 'who' I was as an academic - my mission was simply to try and help people become teachers, or become better teachers. I was a practitioner, an adult educator, who had ended up in higher education, teaching teachers. From the outset I felt like an outsider (Glass, 1962), a fraud or imposter (Clance & Imes, 1978) in higher education, even though my part of it was inhabited mostly by other practice-oriented teaching staff. Working in a university, I felt like

someone whose mental and bodily dispositions have evolved somewhere else and thus feels culturally 'out of place'... (Hage, 2006, p. 342)

When I started on the PgCert course myself (the course I now lead) as a new academic, I began to feel as though this sense of being 'out of place' may be because my 'subject area' did not actually have a 'subject' to hang our expertise on. As a teacher educator, I was aware of pedagogical content knowledge - or PCK (Shulman, 1986). But I was not a Maths, or English, or Science teacher educator, harking back to this strong tradition of subject informing a specific pedagogy. I was a generic 'post-16' teacher educator, and as such, had no real 'discipline' according to Becher (1989; 1994), although I later found some reassurance in the work of Furlong (2013) and his deliberate choice of the word discipline to describe 'education'. Yet the concept of subject specialist pedagogies - the idea that those learning to teach a subject should be taught by 'experts' from that subject, inducted into the practices and pedagogies of that subject, as opposed to 'experts' in teaching and learning more generally - contributed to a sense of uncertainty about my role, the 'value' of my work, and my professional identity.

Taking part in the PgCert as a new member of staff, I had become more aware of the rest of the University; of disciplines, of what I perceived to be 'real' academics, and of discipline identity and differences (Becher, 1994). Prompted by my sense of being an

outsider, I started to reflect on what my 'discipline' was - did I even have one? It didn't seem so, and I developed what I can best describe as an academic insecurity. I was not a 'proper' academic. I had embarked on Masters study as a means to add to my academic credentials, but these feelings instilled in me an even stronger desire to be defined by my practitioner status. I became defensive - I didn't want to be an 'academic' anyway. I have 'authenticity (L. Archer, 2008; Rathbun & Turner, 2012) - I teach, therefore I am.

Although the initial stages of my Masters (the PgCert course) had caused 'academic insecurity' in me, not long after completing my Masters, which explored concepts of teaching quality in higher education, I received some student feedback which praised my teaching for operating from a strong knowledge base and theoretical foundation, which had in turn helped the student make connections. Whilst I had received positive feedback before, no one had ever made these types of comments before. I realised that my Masters study had made its way into my teaching, that I was engaging in research-informed teaching, and that this had been effective at helping students learn. This was a 'critical incident' (Flanagan, 1954) for me in my development as an academic. I began teaching my modules with a new confidence. I thought that perhaps I might be able to become an academic after all - particularly in the kind of modern and vocationally-oriented institution I was in. Perhaps I had 'what it took' to overcome the 'imposter phenomenon' (Clance & Imes, 1978)

However, when I began teaching on the PgCert course, this reaffirmed to me the feelings that I had previously when undertaking it as a new member of staff - these colleagues were the 'proper' academics, not me. It appeared to me that most of them had doctorates and seemed to demonstrate strong disciplinary affiliations. My struggle with an identity as an academic, and after promotion, as a manager, continued as I embarked on the Doctorate in Education. This had now become twofold - one part related to my 'becoming' an academic (Wilcock, 1999) - my assumption was that was what doctoral study equated to - alongside my desire to maintain practitioner authenticity, which had also become increasingly fragile as my level of seniority increased. Could I be an 'academic', and a senior manager, and maintain 'authenticity'

(L. Archer, 2008)? Notes from my reflective diary again indicate my feelings in this regard:

*If I have to choose, I'd rather take the label of 'academic' than of 'manager', although clearly I should feel like both. Academics at least can be non-conformist, or at least try to be...*

However, opposing this was my conception of what an 'academic' was, linked perhaps to a dominant societal tropes (and to common dictionary definitions) - an academic was a high brow specialist, living in an 'ivory tower', someone who speaks and writes in jargon filled language that excludes rather than includes. The 'scholarly paradigm', according to Barcan (1996). In other words, everything I didn't want to be. I had built my walls of practitioner authenticity, and was now struggling with whether I could retain this and become a different kind of academic, one that made sense to me. Embarking on the Doctorate, I was determined not to become 'one of those' types of academics, or indulge in what I saw as pointless naval-gazing for its own sake - surely, I felt, research should be 'useful'?

As I became more involved in teaching on, and ultimately leading, the PgCert, my teaching and research area of educational policy and concepts of 'teaching quality' gave me increasing awareness of the changing world of higher education. Due to my reading for my Masters, and subsequently the Doctorate - and also my experience of teacher education and Ofsted - I began to get a sense that higher education was being subjected to the same kinds of performative cultures and pressures (Ball, 2003) as secondary and further education. I became interested whether, and if so how, this was impacting on academics. League tables, the National Student Survey (NSS), the Research Excellence Framework (REF), and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) - all contributing to an dominant discourse of 'excellence' and potentially 'hierarchies of excellence' (Watson, 2011), and perhaps to changes in expectations for academic staff. My desire to do a good job leading a PgCert for new academics caused me to reflect on whether these changes might be impacting on academics, to want to uncover what actually happens on the ground, and how academics might feel about it all. Despite my own struggles regarding the concept of being an 'academic', and my own experiences on the PgCert course, I did not assume that colleagues on the course would have the

same kinds of feelings of being an 'imposter' (Clance & Imes, 1978), as I had always felt they were all 'more academic' than me - even when I was teaching them. However, I felt that if expectations for the academic role were changing, particularly regarding 'excellence frameworks', then this might be causing shifts in how academics were experiencing their working lives - which in turn, might need to influence how I designed my provision to support them.

In relation to my own academic identity, at the start of my doctoral journey, I was concerned about my 'discipline', and whether 'education' was even a discipline (Furlong, 2013). If it was not perceived as such, could I really consider myself to be a 'worthy' academic? I wanted in my professional role to be able to help and support new academics in the most effective way, but if the 'generalist' teacher education offered by the PgCert course was deemed irrelevant by academics from other disciplines, could it - and thus me - actually make any difference? Whilst I enjoyed teaching on the PgCert course, I did not feel secure in my role, or have confidence in the value of what I did to those who experienced it. Undertaking the PgCert course myself had been instrumental in my conceptions of who I was as an academic; what my purpose was, and how I regarded teaching and learning in higher education - and although I had enjoyed the experience and learned from it, it hadn't resulted in me feeling more secure as an academic, quite the opposite - it had reaffirmed for me that I was a practitioner and that I wanted to remain so.

In summary then, the research initially emerged from a sense of my own academic identity, or lack thereof, and a desire to find out whether what I did actually helped to support academics new to teaching in higher education - essentially, to try to reinforce my feelings of professional validity and help combat imposter phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978). I was concerned that the generic 'teaching about teaching' that I provided might not be relevant or useful to discipline oriented academics. I also wanted to know whether the issues that preoccupied me relating to performativity and discourses of excellence were impacting on other academics, and if so, what this might mean for my professional practice in terms of supporting them. As such, the driving motivation for the research was initially quite limited - to find out whether what I did 'worked', to improve my professional practice so as to support others more effectively in the

changing HE culture, and hopefully enhance my feelings of being a worthy academic along the way, whilst at the same time knowing I was reluctant to relinquish my practitioner identity. Through the process of the literature review, this initial focus - whilst still motivated by the desire to enhance my own practice and sense of purpose - became less about me and my 'discipline' or lack of one, and more about how others might experience their academic role.

I wanted to understand more about excellence - both the political context for its emergence as a discourse, explored in the next chapter, and as a concept to be problematised. Did it relate to how academics felt about themselves and how these feelings were formed? I recognised that I had to develop a greater understanding of theories of identity, to better understand my own conception of it, and thus understand how that would shape how I interpreted participants' narratives. These ideas around excellence and identity informed my literature review, which also encompassed literatures exploring PgCert courses as potential manifestations of the neo-liberal agenda, and the possible impact of such courses on academic identity. I wanted to gain insights into how academics felt about their roles in the current HE context. To find out, if it was possible, how courses like this might be able to support new lecturers to cope with their challenges and with what I perceived to be shifting sands of the role in today's higher education.

My reflections and the questions I was asking myself in the early stages of this research illuminate facets of my underlying ontology, underlying biases and positionality that will be explored further in the methodology chapter.



## Outline of chapters

Following this introductory chapter, which sets out the motivation, genesis and focus of research, in Chapter Two I explore the higher education context at the time of writing. The shift towards massification since the Robbins Report (Robbins, 1963), and the rise of a neo-liberal, marketised higher education is discussed in relation to the increases in performative measures and the formalisation of research and teaching 'excellence' in higher education. This chapter sets the scene by examining the current nature of higher education and its institutions, defining in broad terms the environment that the participants in this research study are inhabiting in their professional lives.

Chapter Three, the literature review, is an exploration of the literature relating to the reflections and questions posed in the early stages of the research, and which form its themes. It explores the concept of identity as a theoretical construct, and in what ways different theories account for the development or manifestation of identity, and it reviews the literature on disciplinary and teaching identity. It problematises 'excellence' as a concept, and explores the potential tensions between excellence and identity in relation to the academic role, combining this with existing literature on the role and impact of PgCert courses for academic staff. The literature review culminates in the identification of the research aims and questions.

Chapter Four, the Methodology, explores my ontological and epistemological position, the nature and role of reflexivity in the enquiry, my positionality and the nature of 'insider research', within which the insider/outsider dichotomy is problematised. Careful consideration is given to ethical considerations, given the nature of the research, and the chosen research methods are justified, with an exploration of credibility and trustworthiness in qualitative research. The design of the interview schedule is defined including an overview of changes made following the pilot stage. The final section, approach to analysis, explores inductive and deductive approaches, the role and position of theory in the thesis, and the different stages of analysis that resulted from my priorities in exploring the data. These were to ensure the voices of participants remained visible, and be open to 'data that glowed' (MacLure, 2013), and

also to adopt a systematic approach that could help minimise researcher bias in extracting themes.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven discuss the findings by substantive topic area; chapter Five explores 'the new academic', chapter Six 'the developing academic' and chapter Seven, 'the academic experience. Chapter Eight then reflects on the 'experienced academic', exploring the alumni dataset and comparing this with the themes emerging from the longitudinal data. The rich datasets are presented alongside analysis, discussion and the emerging theoretical perspectives.

The final chapter, Chapter Nine, includes reflections on the research process and findings, and makes clear the contribution to knowledge, with tentative suggestions for an emerging theoretical model with application for practice. Recommendations emerging from the research are articulated, both for leaders and managers in universities, and for those running PgCert courses for academic staff. It concludes with next steps for the researcher, and suggestions for further research.

This research should be of particular interest to those with responsibility for learning and teaching in higher education, particularly those with influence over the support and development of academic staff in terms of how they inhabit their teaching role and develop their skills. It highlights previously unexplored aspects of the journey to inhabiting an academic identity and how it is we may become comfortable and confident with the 'academic-as-self' (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002) - as such, senior managers responsible for recruiting and supporting new academic staff in Departments and subject areas should find it useful. It should also be of interest to those with an interest in the discourses of excellence and identity in higher education, and particularly those who seek to understand how teacher educators or academic developers in higher education can best support those they teach and work with.

The outline summary of chapters is on the next page:

Chapter 1	Introduction: motivation, genesis and focus of research, target audience, outline of chapters
Chapter 2	Context: neo-liberal change in higher education and resulting implications for the 'academic' - massification, managerialism, marketisation, regulation, performativity and the 'formalisation' of teaching in higher education
Chapter 3	Literature Review: excellence and identity. Articulates the position of identity within the thesis from this complex field, and explores the tensions between literatures of excellence and literatures of identity. Further reflections explore an additional body of literature drawn on when the inductive approach adopted in analysis meant the initial framing of the study was insufficient. A summary is provided, leading to the research aims and questions
Chapter 4	Methodology and methods: ontology and epistemology, concepts of insider research, reflexivity, positionality, reflections on pilot, researcher bias in analysis, approach to analysis, and ethical considerations
Chapter 5	'The new academic' - Presentation of findings, analysis and discussion exploring initial conceptions of academic identity and influencing factors
Chapter 6	'The developing academic' - Presentation of findings, analysis and discussion exploring subsequent conceptions of academic identity
Chapter 7	'The academic experience' - Presentation of findings, analysis and discussion exploring what has happened to academics that may influence how they have constructed their academic identities
Chapter 8	'The experienced academic' - Presentation of findings, analysis and discussion comparing themes emerging from the secondary data set (from PgCert course alumni) with the longitudinal data.
Chapter 9	Conclusions, contribution to knowledge, and recommendations; limitations, areas for further research, reflections

*Table 1: Outline summary of chapters*

## Chapter 2 - Context

All of these developments—massification, universalism, neoliberalism, new public management, and globalization—brought with them various forms of external regulation, a new phenomenon for many institutions, and a greatly enhanced burden for others... (Henkel, 2009, p. 5)

This chapter will explore the changes in UK, specifically English, higher education over the last 50-60 years, highlighting the increase in student numbers (massification), the rise of managerialism and government intervention (Watson, 2011). It will focus on the resulting neo-liberal cultures of marketization, accountability, performativity (Olszen & Peters, 2005), contributing to a dominant discourse of excellence and an emphasis on the formalisation / ratification of the teaching role for academic staff - the increasing 'professionalization' (Wilensky, 1964, p. 170) or 'domestication' (Davidson, 2004, p. 301) of the academic.

### Neoliberalism

'Neoliberalism' is a term ubiquitous in the academic literature and beyond. A quick search of the commonly used referencing tool Mendeley results in 9584 academic results for "neoliberalism"; Google gives us 11,200,200 results; Google Scholar 178,000. From academic articles to its adoption as a 'term du jour' by the protest and campaign blog 'Another Angry Voice' (Clark, 2012), and references in the media, both educational and more broadly (Phipps, 2014; Verhaeghe, 2014) there are many who offer analysis and critique of this dominant economic philosophy. Despite this body of critique, neoliberalism has evolved "beyond a hegemonic set of discourses and practices to achieve the status of a doxa" (Patrick, 2013, p. 8) that is, "an unquestionable orthodoxy that operates as if it were the objective truth" (Chopra, 2003, p. 419)

To attempt to explain or understand 'neoliberalism', it is worth explaining the shift from classic, to modern, to neo in economic terms. 'Classic liberalism' (pre-1930s) supported the idea that free-market capitalism was the most effective way to advance human welfare, within limited intervention or constraints on the market. Modern liberalism (also known as social democracy) introduced 'statism' (barriers to trade,

price controls, government ownership of industry), and was dominant between the 1930s and 1970s (Harvey, 2005). From the late 1970s, neoliberalism emerged and, in simple terms, combined

...the free markets of classical liberalism with the income transfers of modern liberalism. Although this somewhat oversimplifies a complex reality, it broadly describes the policy changes that have transformed the world economy since 1975. Markets in almost every country are much freer than in 1980; the government owns a smaller share of industry... (Sumner, 2010)

Shahjahan (2014, p221 - emphasis added) tells us that in higher education, neoliberalism

refers to the theoretical and practical restructuring of HE according to neoliberal logics... such as marketization, privatization and emphasis on human capital development (Harvey, 2005), and the logic that assumes and justifies these material structures (Baez, 2010; Ong, 2006). According to this logic, society should construct and produce self-enterprising individuals solely interested in enhancing their human capital. **Economic rationality** operates as the overarching frame for understanding, evaluating and governing social life.

Whilst this is a useful definition, some of those criticising neoliberalism ideology, and the resultant (potential) demise of the university - for example Collini (2012) - can themselves be critiqued for inhabiting a particularly blinkered, elitist view of what higher education should be (Conrad, 2012). Indeed,

...the nostalgic imagination of public HE as egalitarian, open, accountable and nurturing of grassroots agency ignores the fact that public HE in some contexts has always and continues to be oppressive in terms of race, gender, class, sexuality, religion and ability. (Shahjahan 2014, p227)

Notwithstanding that many would argue that higher education should be discerning of 'ability' (though not oppressive, though the distinction no doubt depends on one's perspective), this position argues that the past world of higher education was not the utopia of learning that one could infer from the dominant voices, indeed quite the opposite. While Shahjahan's (2014) work refers largely to higher education in the United States, parallels can be drawn with UKHE - as Ahmed (2015) suggests,

critiques of neoliberalism might be masking elitism: a hatred of "the masses," and a perception that standards are lowering because of the widening of participation.

Considering the 'widening of participation', in England in 1963,

Only 1 per cent of working-class girls and 3 per cent of working-class boys went on to full-time degree level courses... For many this was an acceptable, indeed inevitable, state of affairs. Many in universities were convinced that they were already scraping the bottom of the barrel – “more means worse”, to quote a notion popular at the time. (Barr et al. 2014, pxvii)

In this pre-neoliberal age, were things really so much better for higher education, or perhaps more pertinently, for the student of higher education? A tiny minority benefited, leaving large swathes of the population deemed 'unsuitable' for higher education - much as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when according to Robinson (2008) many believed that

...it's not possible for many street kids and working class children to benefit from public education, they're incapable of learning to read and write... (Robinson, 2008)

Any system of higher education which privileged the elite minority is likely to be regarded as preferable by most of that elite minority (Barr et al., 2014). As such, while neoliberalism can, perhaps should, be critiqued as an influential ideology that has had many consequences for the world of higher education (and more broadly, though that is not the remit of this analysis), this critique tends to exclude consideration of the alternatives, whether they would be 'better' or 'worse', and for whom. Educationalists seem bound to the view that neoliberal = bad, and the debate is often characterized in left/right terms, although that depiction is misleading, especially in light of the liberal social democracies of northern Europe and their broad neoliberal reforms - and those who argue that as an economic policy it can and has been successful (Sumner, 2010). It is more difficult to find literature in defence of neoliberalism in higher education, although there are those who find the automatic linking of it to managerialism problematic:

Whilst critics of managerialism blame neo-liberal policies for the rise of the phenomenon, it is not obvious why such a link should exist. Neo-liberalism is defined by an overriding belief in freedom... (B. Miller, 2014, p. 144)

Miller (2014) goes onto argue that it would be possible for higher education to re-imagine neoliberalism to re-establish and protect academic freedom in the academy, as

Managerialism is not, therefore, a function of neo-liberalism but is, in many ways, anathema to it (B. Miller, 2014, p. 145)

In proposing an alternative vision for higher education in a neoliberal world, he argues that this

could be achieved by allowing our universities to re-establish their underlying values and priorities unfettered by the constraints of a regulated funding regime and then require them to be operated strictly on these bases... In order for genuine academic freedom to thrive our universities should be allowed to follow these values provided that they can do this in a sustainable manner, including the management of their resources. In this sense, real academic freedom arises from the freedom to choose our professional and institutional affiliations and the consequent responsibilities that result from this choice. (B. Miller, 2014, p. 151)

Those opposing neoliberalism might question the definition of 'academic freedom' provided above, potentially removed from Humboldtian ideals (Krull, 2005), although possibly a more realistic interpretation of a 'sustainable' (and diverse) higher education sector in modern times. Ahmed (2015) makes the point that critiquing managerialism wholesale has issues when such critique is used to avoid engagement with, for example, policy designed to promote equality -

Equality becomes something imposed by management, as what would, if taken seriously, constrain life and labour. Whilst we might want to critique how equality is bureaucratised, we need to challenge how that very critique can be used to dismiss equality.

However, the dominant analysis of the neoliberal phenomenon, and (commonly) related managerialist approaches, is one of critique - in some cases despair (Hill & Kumar, 2009) - and it is seen by many as exacerbated by the rise of mass participation in higher education.

### **Rise of mass participation, intervention and managerialism**

In 1963 a report was published that paved the way for expansion in higher education based on the premise that undergraduate places should be available to "to all who

were qualified for them by ability and attainment" (Robbins, 1963, p. 2). Although there had been the beginnings of change in the preceding two years, notably the beginnings of a national university application process, and the foundation of some wholly new universities (Willetts, 2014, p. 4), the Robbins report was responsible for undermining the notion "that only a tiny minority were able to benefit from higher education" (Barr et al., 2014, p. xviii). In spite of letters of opposition published in the mainstream media (Barr et al., 2014), the Robbins Report proposals were accepted by the Conservative government of the time, and expansion duly occurred, ultimately far exceeding the predictions of the author. Robbins envisaged a shift from around 8% of the age cohort in 1963 to 17% of the age cohort entering higher education by the early 1980s (D. Watson, 2014). While this proved to be a slight underestimation initially, by 2013/14 there were around 47% of 18-30 years olds entering higher education (42% full time) (DBIS, 2015b). No longer an 'elite' system, the massification of higher education had arrived (Giannakis & Bullivant, 2015), with resulting challenges - among which were financing and meeting the needs of a much more diverse student population.

As the sector, and academics employed within it, attempted to meet these challenges, the development of 'education as business' - the rise of 'academic capitalism' (C. Watson, 2011) - and the resultant shifts in underlying ideologies gave gradual rise to a different type of higher education. Increasing competition for students as the sector expanded gave rise to increasing marketization, and the introduction of student fees and the National Student Survey resulted in the 'student as consumer' mentality (Molesworth, Nixon, & Scullion, 2009). Managerialism, performativity, regulation and accountability became (and remain) commonly debated discourses in higher education research (Naidoo & Williams, 2014). Accountability in higher education was not a new requirement, being as it was in general terms "to do with responsibility and [carrying] connotations of 'being answerable to'..." (Biesta, 2004, p. 234), aspects which are not necessarily unduly contentious. However, Watson (2011, p. 967) alerts us to the idea that "this general meaning has been subverted in the current dominant discourse of managerialism in which accounting is linked to *audit*". She goes on to say that



the obfuscating principle of transparency.....enables the logic of the market to prevail within a managerialist discourse such that accountability succeeds in eroding democratic relationships...(C. Watson, 2011, p. 967)

Although the previous 'democracy' of higher education has been described as a hierarchical system where middle class old white men made all the decisions (Ahmed, 2015; Shahjahan, 2014), the loss of democratic relationships between institutions and government, and some would say loss of trust (Hoecht, 2006), is the context within which the sector has experienced increasing levels of government intervention. As Watson (2014, pp. 41–42) argues, the Robbins report also inadvertently

inaugurated the UK's experience as the most "tinkered with" by national government in the world [resulting in] wild lurches between expansion and contraction..., radical changes of mind about institutional status (and the question of what a "university" is), moral panics over dumbing down, subject choices, graduate skills, and debt; the "quality wars"; and a discourse about "world-classness" that flatly contradicts most of the social and economic goals being set for higher education by regional and national strategies (themselves increasingly influenced by devolution).

Watson's (2014, p. 42) table illustrates this 'legislative hyperactivity':

**UK Government HE initiatives since 1963: twelve frameworks**

1. 1963: the Robbins Report – creation of "new" universities, "ability to benefit"
2. 1965: the Woolwich speech – creation of the polytechnics
3. 1972: the James Report – reorganisation of teacher training, "diversification"
4. 1980-85: the Tory cuts – withdrawal of "overseas" subsidy, Green Paper on contraction and rationalisation
5. 1985: the National Advisory Body for Public Sector HE (NAB), "capping the pool," centralisation of local authority HE
6. 1988: the Great Education Reform Act – incorporation of the polytechnics, central institutions and large colleges
7. 1992: Further & Higher Education Act – ending of the binary line, Funding Councils for devolved administrations, creation of the "new new" universities
8. 1997: the Dearing Report – fees for full-time undergraduate students
9. 2004: Higher Education Act – variable fees, "new new new" universities, foundation degree awarding powers for FECs
10. 2009: Higher Ambitions – New Labour's parting shot
11. 2010: the Browne Review – higher undergraduate fees, new student contribution system
12. 2011: Students at the Heart of the System

*Table 2: UK Government HE initiatives since 1963: twelve frameworks*  
- from Watson (2014, p. 42)

Since 2011, several more changes have been experienced in UKHE, such as the removal of the 'student number control' in 2013/14 (removing the cap on the maximum number of students that can be recruited by an institution), and the most recent intervention, the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, which brings the 'Teaching Excellence Framework' into being. According to policy website WonkHE, this "represents the most important legislation for the sector in 25 years" (Morris, 2017) - though with current turmoil in UK politics, it is far from certain that this will remain the case.

This theme of continual 'tinkering with' higher education is seen both nationally (Brennan & Shah, 2014; Chalcraft, Hilton, & Hughes, 2015; Henkel, 2005) and internationally (Austin & Jones, 2015; Salmi, 2015), and as outlined above the sector is subject to increasing government intervention and control, albeit with aspects of devolved power. According to Kaiser et al (2014, p. 1), governments are

simultaneously devolving more control over programmes and budgets to individual institutions while directly intervening in higher education systems in order to ensure greater economic efficiency, quality of outcome, student access and accountability - the magic words of modern day higher education policy making.

Henkel (Henkel, 2005) further confirms that UK HE has been "subject to unprecedented government steering and scrutiny", resulting in league tables around which institutions must engage in 'ever-increasing contortions' to secure ranking. Stronach (2010, p. 21) notes that the now ubiquitous league table "has an emic appeal in that it is culturally commonplace and regarded as more or less unchallengeable" - it has become part of the 'logic of audit culture'. As such, academics in universities in England must not only be concerned with their research, teaching and scholarly activity, but also with their relative ranking at module, course, department and institutional level in a range of different league tables informed by an ever increasing range of metrics (Gibbons, Neumayer, & Perkins, 2015). The latest government intervention, and likely contributor to league table position, is a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The 2015 Conservative Manifesto made reference to a TEF - "...we will introduce a framework to recognise universities offering the highest teaching

quality..." (The Conservative Party, 2015, p. 35), and revisited comments relating to this from the 2011 white paper, *Students at the Heart of the System* -

We want there to be a renewed focus on high-quality teaching in universities so that it has the same prestige as research. (DBIS, 2011, p. 2)

Land and Gordon (2014, p. 10), in their discussion of TEF related developments internationally, note that "the UK and Australia both currently have governments prepared to be interventionist, if not dirigiste..." and go on to comment that there seems to be serious intention in Europe to "establish a form of TEF...for universities in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)". In England at least, it has been realised in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. The preceding Green Paper, 'Fulfilling Our Potential - Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice' (DBIS, 2015a) was introduced by the Conservative Minister for Higher Education Jo Johnson as providing the means for "recognition of excellent teaching - and clear incentives to make 'good' teaching even better" (Johnson & DBIS, 2015). The Bill's progress through the legislative process resulted in some changes to more controversial aspects:

...further requirements for market entry of new providers have been outlined, in what might arguably be a climbdown from the government's attempts to fully liberalise the market...(Morris & Leach, 2017)

as well as a pause on the linking of 'TEF rating' to fees until the academic year 2020/1. However, reference to 'outcomes based metrics' and the resultant 'gaming' (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2017) continue to be subject to concerned speculation in the higher education press, research arenas and social media spaces (BERA, 2016; Patterson, 2015; Ratcliffe, 2015). The explicit reference to 'teaching excellence', and to metrics that will judge the quality of this, provides further evidence of a policy context that, in the eyes of some, is leading to the 'ofstedisation' of higher education (BERA, 2016).

### **A focus on 'teaching excellence' in higher education**

A focus on teaching (as opposed to research) in higher education policy is not, contrary to government rhetoric, a new idea. The Robbins Report (Robbins, 1963, p. 182) makes specific reference to the need to focus on both, when it states that universities should

...maintain research in balance with teaching, since teaching should not be separated from the advancement of learning and the search for truth...they are complementary and overlapping activities.

The apparent prioritisation of research over teaching, as discussed in the literature (Stevenson et al., 2014), the education media (Black, 2015), and by the Government (P. Walker, 2013), some see as result of fiscal stimuli and 'REFable' pressures rather than academics actually preferring their research over teaching (Stevenson et al., 2014). So, while the opinion of Government is that "some rebalancing of the pull between teaching and research is undoubtedly required" (Johnson & DBIS, 2015), others argue that

On the contrary, the vast majority of the effort of academics and the bureaucracy of our institutions is already devoted to teaching... The "industries" of quality assurance around teaching existed long before the bureaucracy of the REF. (Black, 2015)

This opinion is supported by the existence of a previous effort to focus on teaching in higher education, the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) exercise in 1993, which included external subject reviewers carrying out observations of teaching, but met with such resistance from the academic community that it was phased out in 2001 (Laughton, 2003). Academic resistance to systems which are perceived to contribute to a reduction in autonomy have been well documented (Attwood, 2009; Laughton, 2003; S. Smith, Ward, & House, 2011). There has been widespread unhappiness with the continued rise of managerialism in education (Deem, 2003; Deem, Hillyard, & Reed, 2007) as discussed, as it is seen to conflict with the traditional accepted processes and purpose of higher education, and also perhaps with notions of academic immunity regarding the need for formalised checks of professional practice relating to teaching. Academics used to the critical reflection involved when undertaking research may view 'checks' on their 'teaching excellence' at best as unnecessary and at worst as an insult to their perceived professionalism and academic freedom, holding to the three ideals underpinning this - solitude, freedom to teach and freedom to study, from Wilhelm von Humbolt (Krull, 2005). In a critique of this perspective and Humboltian ideals however, Washer (2006, p. 244) discusses the seemingly incongruous situation of academics who feel comfortable with peer review of their research "yet still feel threatened by having their teaching practice reviewed" and that indeed they "may feel it an infringement of their autonomy or

professionalism". Ahmed (2015), whilst acknowledging the burdens and dangers of bureaucratization, also refers to critics of managerialist approaches as those who may believe

an academic world can be idealised in being mourned as a lost object; a world where dons get to decide things; a world imagined as democracy, as untroubled by the whims and wishes of generations to come...

The TEF has been referred to by Hall (2015) as the latest step on the new managerialist and marketization path, which as outlined above is the established policy context and direction in UK higher education (Naidoo & Williams, 2014; Stevenson et al., 2014) - discourses of regulation and control, autonomy and academic freedom having been prevalent in the academic literature for some time (Kaiser et al., 2014). Writing with regard to 'academic capitalism', Watson (2011, p. 955) notes that in the last decade or so, UK HE has been 'required to indulge in' market-like behaviours and that knowledge has become

a global commodity to be transferred, or in the current and more economically nuanced jargon, *exchanged* (C. Watson, 2011, p. 955 - emphasis original)

The resulting situation in our massified higher education system in England is summarised concisely by Stevenson et al (2014, p. 4) when they state that

higher education is being profoundly reshaped by its marketisation, with league tables, branding, discourses of 'excellence' and competition for students framing such moves.

In considering the implications of the current policy context across different kinds of higher education institution, Watson (2014, p. 45) provides an updated typology of UK universities:

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The international research university</li><li>2. The professional formation university</li><li>3. The "curriculum innovation" university</li><li>4. The distance/open learning university</li><li>5. The college</li><li>6. The specialised/single subject HEI</li><li>7. The "for profit" corporation</li></ol> |
|---|

**Table 3: The modern university: key types**

Watson (2014, p. 45)

This is simplified further into 'research-intensive' and 'teaching-led' for the purposes of the Higher Education Academy research carried out by Stevenson et al (2014). Institutions with traditionally different foci - teaching or research, student recruitment or student selection (Crozier, Reay, Clayton, Colliander, & Grinstead, 2008; McNay, 2015) have been influenced by the current discourses of 'excellence' and of the 'professionalization' (Wilensky, 1964) of the academic in higher education. Teaching focussed institutions (typically post-1992 or 'modern' HEIs) are increasingly being driven by a research agenda (McNay, 2015), yet must also strive for National Student Survey position and ranking, capitalising on any advantage of factors that relate to teaching 'excellence'. Research-intensive HEIs are being driven by the need to improve teaching practices in order to compete within a globalised, competitive market place (Stevenson et al., 2014), and now seek to obtain league table ranking and excellence in relation to their teaching as well as their research. Increasingly, and particularly in teaching-led institutions, the discourse is around the promotion, regulation, reward and recognition of teaching 'excellence' (Macfarlane, 2011; Skelton, 2009).

### Implications for the academic

Both situations have potential implications for the individual academic in the institution concerned - indeed, the

notion of the excellent all-rounder, with excellence in all three clusters (research, teaching and administration) becomes increasingly difficult to sustain... (Gunn & Fisk, 2013, p. 12)

The implications of a diversification of the professional role, and the resulting response of the prevalent audit culture, are articulated by Stark et al (cited in Stronach et al. 2002, p.126) as follows:

The more diverse, plural and unpredictable professional work becomes, the greater will be the managerial pressure towards homogeneity, singularity and coercive specification.

Evidence of this progression can be seen in the prevalence of managerialist approaches in higher education (Naidoo & Williams, 2014), for example

The standardisation and consistency of teaching approaches, in response to ...the NSS. Many lecturers felt strongly that the NSS was driving a form of

pedagogy which was 'highly damaging to innovation and creativity' (Stevenson et al., 2014, p. 35)

In Debowski's (2012, p. 8) discussion of the 'new academic', she highlights the increasing expectations and range of responsibilities by which their success is judged. Whereas an academic position in higher education may once have been by merit of a professional background or extensive research record, this is increasingly no longer deemed to be sufficient. The expectation, across different types of institution, but particularly in teaching-led universities, is that as well as engaging with the various measures of success and student satisfaction that are now part of the fabric of higher education (Gibbons et al., 2015; L. Stronach, 2010, p. 21), undertaking their own research and maintaining their scholarly practice, academics should also obtain formal qualifications as teachers (J. Smith, 2011) or equivalent 'professional recognition', thus reflecting the notion of the 'dual professional' (Land & Gordon, 2014; Nixon, 1996; J. Smith, 2010).

### **Academic professional development**

Again, aspects of this current discourse are not particularly new. Professional development provision for academics (in terms of their teaching practice) has existed in various forms for several decades (Light, Calkins, & Cox, 2009), often housed within university 'Learning and Teaching Institutes' (or similar) or within Human Resource professional development provision. In 2000, as a result of the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997) the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE) was formed and became a 'professional body' for HE lecturers. Courses focused on the development of teaching and learning for lecturers became increasingly formalised (by means of becoming credit bearing awards) after this (J. Smith, 2010). In 2004, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) was formed from a merger of the ILTHE, the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN), and the TQEF National Co-ordination Team (NCT). The HEA awards 'Fellowship' status at different levels to HE practitioners, and accredits Postgraduate Certificates for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (or similar), or non-credit bearing 'recognition routes', thus enabling HEA Fellowship to be conferred on completion. Some argue that this increasing 'specification' for the academic role risks de-motivating those engaged in it -

The more precisely you specify a professional performance, the easier it is to measure and the harder it is to motivate. (Stark et al. 2000; cited in Stronach et al. 2002, p.126)

The shift in discourse in recent years has been from participation in such professional development activities being seen as desirable but not necessarily essential, to a view that such qualifications or professional statuses being mandatory for an academic career that includes teaching (Findlow, 2012; Macfarlane, 2011; J. Smith, 2011). These routes to Fellowship, and particularly the PgCerts, are frequently reflected in institutional policy documents and promoted as a 'badge of quality' in terms of an academic's ability to be an effective teacher / practitioner. They - and / or the associated professional recognition - have also become more frequently visible as a specification in recruitment documentation (Nicholls, 2014).

Increasingly, since government funding was removed (Higher Education Academy, 2016), the HEA appear to have sought to strengthen their existing position as gatekeepers of the professional status, as they aim to ensure that the professional status is considered to be essential for academic staff (with or without the academic qualification), presumably in order to ensure their own continued relevance and survival. Indeed, they describe Fellowship as a "touchstone for quality of practice" and refer to themselves as 'active custodians' (Higher Education Academy, 2016). Likewise, within institutions, it could be argued that those with the role of 'educational developer' or those with a professional development remit must also ensure that their position is secure by means of establishing gatekeeper control (Zukas & Malcolm, 2007, p. 72). In the institution where the research is located, the PgCert course is located within an academic department (comprising teaching and research), but HEA accreditation (and conferral of Fellowship) is currently the remit of a central directorate, responsible for learning and teaching support and staff continuing professional development. This perhaps reflects the internal struggles within some institutions regarding the "legitimate institutional home of the qualification" (Smith, 2011).



This 'professionalization' agenda (from Wilensky, 1964) for academics in higher education that has emerged from the dominant policy context has been discussed at length in the literature, particularly since the formation of the ILTHE (now the HEA) (Davidson, 2004; Gunn & Fisk, 2013; Macfarlane, 2007). It is worth noting that since 2010, there has been a move in a different direction in the primary, secondary and further education sectors. Deregulation of the sector (expressed as allowing for employer jurisdiction and a demand-led system) has meant that teaching qualifications (such as a PGCE) are no longer mandatory for teachers in further education, sixth form colleges, academies or free schools, and the policy direction for the training of teachers in schools rather than HEIs continues. Despite this, there has been no let-up in the performativity culture, of which Ofsted are the physical embodiment (Ball, 2003). The bleed of this culture into higher education has for some been evidenced by the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (BERA, 2016; Darian, 2016). Although moderated somewhat as a result of its progress through the legislative process and objections in the House of Lords, the TEF still heralds for many the culmination of a marketised, neo-liberal higher education (Berg, Huijbens, & Larsen, 2016; Dixon & Pilkington, 2017).

## Conclusions

This chapter has explored the policy context for UK higher education, with particular reference to the English context. It has highlighted increasing government intervention, the changing nature and numbers of students, student-as-consumer, the demands of a marketised higher education culture and league tables, and resulting discourses of excellence. These changes are summarised by Morley (2011, p. 224) when she writes about today's higher education institutions as

global, entrepreneurial, corporate, commercialised universities ... Counter-hegemonic advocates did not necessarily predict the scale of neo-liberal and post-neo-liberal driven change in higher education [or] ... the re-scaling, industrialisation and massification of higher education. Transformation has been driven more by neo-liberal and austerity policies than academic imaginaries.

Gunn and Fisk's work (2013) suggests that this policy context, these recent and continuing neo-liberal changes to higher education (Olssen & Peters, 2005) - notwithstanding the possible alternative positioning of the neoliberal rhetoric offered

earlier - may have implications for academics sense of themselves (as professionals, as academics) and their practice, in relation to performativity, and the discourses of excellence (Stevenson et al., 2014).

PgCerts, and the processes for assessing and conferring Fellowship, are expensive, time consuming and have gradually become part of a neo-liberal regulation of higher education, albeit with relatively limited research (Butcher & Stoncel, 2012; Gale, 2011; Skelton, 2013; J. Smith, 2010) into the implications of participation for academics. Increasing professionalization, or "the proliferation of objective standards ... the spread of ... licencing or certification" (Wilensky, 1964, p. 137), distinct from the broader concept of professionalism - the assertion of critical agency by academics (M. Walker, 2001, p. 6) - has been evidenced in this discussion. These changing expectations for academic staff, developed and developing in 'response to shifting contexts' (L. Stronach, 2010, p. 10) highlight the need to explore literatures relating to excellence, and literatures relating to academic identities, in order to explore tensions between these two discourses, and identify areas for further research.

## Chapter 3 - Review of the literatures

Working within an HE system driven by market forces rather than academic values has resulted in tensions within my academic identity. (Sutton, 2015, p37)

...in the late twentieth century the change from welfare capitalism to neoliberalism had a fundamental impact on academic identities in the UK. There was a shift from university work being funded by the state ... to university work being defined and steered by market forces...The role of the state is no longer to finance universities but to extend and support market forces. (Sutton, 2015, p40)

There are indications from the literature that the recent neo-liberal changes to higher education outlined in chapter two have implications for academics sense of themselves (as professionals, as academics) and their practice (particularly in relation to discourses of excellence) (Henkel, 2009; C. Watson, 2011). This literature review will explore literatures relating to excellence, particularly teaching excellence, and literatures relating to academic identities, in order to explore tensions between these two discourses, and highlight areas for further research in light of the increasing professionalization of teaching and teachers in higher education (Davidson, 2004). 'Professionalization' is a contested term in the literature, and its complexities are noted, although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage with the wider literature on the concept. For the purpose of this discussion it is interpreted as "the proliferation of objective standards ... the spread of ... licencing or certification" (Wilensky, 1964, p. 137) - thus the introduction of the UK Professional Standards Framework (Higher Education Academy, HE Guild, & Universities UK, 2011), and the frequently mandatory nature of obtaining Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) in higher education today (Hibbert & Semler, 2016).

### Defining 'excellence'

there is a lack of sophistication in the conceptualisation of university teaching excellence....particularly in terms of changing expectations and roles over an academic career (Gunn & Fisk 2013, p7)

Since 2011, there has been something akin to a de-facto 'definition' of teaching in higher education, via the UK Professional standards framework (UKPSF) (Higher Education Academy et al., 2011), although this has never been presented as a definition of teaching 'excellence'. Collins and Palmer (2004, p3) outline issues with

defining teaching or 'good teaching' in higher education, one being that "the problem with teaching is that traditionally it has been rather a private activity", and thus it follows that 'teaching excellence', subject to discipline variation and individual perspectives is difficult (some would argue impossible) to conceptualise (Brockerhoff et al. 2014, p238). After all, what one person experiences as 'teaching excellence' another may view quite differently, which could relate for example to the heavily contested concept of 'learning styles' (Coffield, Moseley, Hall, & Ecclestone, 2004), or whether students have different preconceptions / expectations regarding 'excellent teaching', or perhaps simply whether or not they 'liked' the teacher. Many writers have explored the difficulties of definition or conceptualisation - Kane et al (2004, p287) state that "a fundamental tension exists whenever anyone tries to identify excellent teachers" and cite Lowman's (1996, p33) exploration of the notion of exemplary teaching being an idealised concept – difficult to define, but people think they know it when they see it. Centra and Bonesteel (1990, p11) suggest in their evaluation of 'college teaching' that "teaching is more complicated than any list of the qualities or characteristics of good teaching can suggest" - although this has not necessarily been heeded by those trying to compile such definitive lists over the several decades since they undertook their research (Madriaga & Morley, 2016).

Collins and Palmer (2004, p3) discuss the issues inherent in defining 'good teaching' as opposed to the ostensibly more quantifiable, measurable 'research' role carried out by an academic - in that research and publications are open to peer and public scrutiny, and the 'quality' of such output is scored via the REF and institutions' own internal measures based on this system. Potentially, the increasing use of 'learning analytics' (Gunn & Fisk, 2013) - education 'data mining' of course management systems - may offer a similar amount of 'measurable' data regarding student activities and outcomes, as they provide a means of digital surveillance in terms of what students are actually doing (and achieving), which could be linked back to 'teacher excellence', or lack of it. This linking of 'teaching excellence' to the outcomes of teaching is indicated in the metrics for the TEF - National Student Survey (NSS) data, Destination of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) data, and retention data (DBIS, 2015a) - and very much part of the evolving discourse regarding the increasing use of managerialist audit tools to measure academic performance (C. Watson, 2011). Although the TEF measures

teaching excellence using problematic proxies (Bagshaw & Morris, 2016), there is still likely to be little or no consensus in the academic arena as to how (or if) to define and measure something which at least in the 'doing' is regarded as private and individual – and where the discourse of quality or 'excellence' is ill-defined and / or contested (Madriaga & Morley, 2016).

The link between 'excellence' and the range of 'data' that could be used to measure it underpins the work of Gunn and Fisk (2013). It is perhaps unsurprising that while proposing a 'taxonomy of teaching excellence' they also recommend more research is needed regarding the difference between teacher and teaching excellence, which

recognises that teaching excellence embraces but is not confined to teacher excellence and needs to fulfil the requirements of the range of internal and external groups invested in facilitating excellence in learning outcomes.

Their position supports the idea that any discourse of teaching excellence (or indeed definition thereof) should not be focused purely on the teacher - on their performance in the lecture theatre or seminar group on a particular day, or their ability to design effective and creative assessments, or their skills in providing meaningful feedback - but rather that it should encompass both the outcomes of teaching and the wider context. Their proposed taxonomy builds on the work of Prosser and Trigwell (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999) and other's (Trigwell, 2010; Trigwell et al., 2012) conceptualisations of what underpins an understanding of good teaching. They suggest two key concerns should be considered in taxonomy design:

- qualitatively identifiable variation in approach (classified as excellent, recognisably different from threshold and good) and relevant to different types of academic career profile and stage of career;
- how well an institution, discipline, individual academic informs, demonstrates, and judges that variation. (Gunn & Fisk 2013, p49)

This leads them on to the identification of four dimensions:

<p><b>Dimension 1</b> Achieving educational demands on universities: extent to which excellent learning outcomes in response to the relevant educational demands are defined and illustrated by universities</p>	<p><b>Dimension 2</b> Excellent structures: level of quality of the approaches of different domains promoting teaching excellence in universities</p>
<p><b>Dimension 3</b> Demonstrating individual excellence: degrees of success in demonstrating excellence in teaching practice</p>	<p><b>Dimension 4</b> Quality of evidence: levels of quality of evidencing individual teacher excellence</p>

*Table 4: Dimensions of teaching excellence*

(Gunn & Fisk 2013, p49)

The first dimension relates to student outcomes, including "fit- for-purpose entry into a determined career/ profession" (Gunn & Fisk 2013, p49). The second relates to university structures (such as schemes rewarding teaching excellence), and the latter two attempt to define what an excellent higher education teacher would look like and how this could, or should, be measured.

The first dimension could relate to what the TEF proposes in its use of DLHE data to measure teaching excellence. However, at what point does this, and the proposed taxonomy of teaching excellence, discharge the individual teacher from responsibility? If the teaching was excellent, yet the student failed to get a job within six months, does this mean the teaching was no longer excellent? If the teaching was on an engineering course in a Welsh university, and the region was then subject to large scale closure of the related industry - see for example Tata Steel (BBC, 2016) - could the university be judged on its 'teaching excellence' on the basis that far fewer of its graduates are likely to be employed within the sector they have trained them for? The unease regarding this as a measure is being felt across the sector -

The biggest area of concern [about TEF metrics]... related to the use of employment data. There are real questions about how this relates to teaching excellence and whether it is actually a proxy for the outcomes of the learning or rather more likely to reflect other factors such as course and career choice as well as other factors such as social capital. (Bois, 2015)

It is apparent that employment as a metric and measure of 'teaching excellence' is inherently problematic, although Gunn and Fisk (2013, p35) do not cite it as the only factor outside of the individual teacher that would contribute to a taxonomy of excellence. Brockerhoff et al (2014) also emphasises that the 'wider environment' includes the ethos, infrastructure, resources, and structures within the institution are those that enable the excellent teaching to take place in the first place (Fisk and Gunn, 2015: 35). Gunn and Fisk's proposed taxonomy is comprehensive in its inclusion of the many factors that could contribute to teacher and teaching excellence, and the methods by which these factors could be measured. This is an achievement, given all that has been discussed above regarding the issues inherent with such an undertaking. However, the research and analysis (and thus resulting taxonomy) does not engage with the concept of excellence as a potentially problematic discourse in and of itself - rather it seems to accept it as a 'taken for granted' 'good thing'.

### **Problematizing excellence**

As was explored in Chapter 2, the economic imperative driving change in higher education (Gibbons et al., 2015) has led to the marketized 'education as business' sector that we see now (Molesworth et al., 2009). In this system, the concept of excellence is very popular in policy rhetoric, at both macro and micro levels, and as such - because of its pervasive and increasingly ubiquitous presence in the languages of academic institutions - the excellence discourse is a dominant theme in educational research.

According to Coffield and Edward (2009, pp.375–6) in policy terms

‘excellent’ is clearly meant to be an improvement on ‘best’, so it carries from ‘best’ the implication that there is One True Model, which only needs to be discovered and disseminated for standards to rise.

This policy rhetoric implies that a model of excellence can be clearly defined (as we have seen, this is not necessarily straight forward), and it assumes that we should all be striving for whatever it is, and that it can be somehow measured or 'checked'.

Coffield and Edward (2009, p. 372), referring to the 'constantly changing architecture' of the post-compulsory sector, go onto critique this rhetoric, as it "fails to recognise

the implications of the complexities of teaching and learning in specific localities" and also ignores the complexities

involved in teaching, say, disaffected young people who have come to see themselves as unworthy human beings and as incompetent learners after 11 years of formal schooling

This is perhaps not something which many of those in government are likely to have experienced personally (Wright, 2015), but something which academics working in 'teaching-led' (recruitment focused rather than selection focused) universities may well encounter in their students. Coffield and Edwards's (2009) position on excellence is not one of opposition to the concept per se, but rather a warning against the oversimplification of the term and its overuse in policy rhetoric and metrics, and against the psychological pressure endured by professionals who are always expected to 'become better'. As Morrish (2015) writes in a personal opinion piece -

The bar must be raised, and raised again. No-one must slip beneath the bar. There is only the bar, the metric that cannot lie. Except it does.

Watson (2011, p. 960), focusing initially on research as opposed to teaching excellence, introduces the concept of a 'hierarchy of excellence' in higher education, pointing out that while "the neoliberal discourse of excellence has until recently been focused on research excellence", a close reading of government policy implies that the sector is undergoing a shift towards "a diversity of excellence" (C. Watson, 2011, p. 960), as illustrated by the government - "universities may need to withdraw from activities in which they cannot achieve excellence in order to focus on the areas where they can" (DBIS, 2009, p. 96).

This "hierarchy of excellence" is defined by Watson (2011, p. 960) as excellence in research, excellence in teaching, and a third level of "institutions capable of excellent service to their local and regional communities" (DBIS, 2009, p. 4) - thus a tripartite mission of higher education so as to be teaching, research and contribution to economic life. But can (or should) any institution be expected to perform equally well in all of them - and will league tables evolve to encompass this hierarchy?



Watson (2011, p. 960) highlights a difference in language between 'research assessment exercise' and 'research excellence framework', suggesting that the use of the word 'excellence' contains more obviously aggressive competitive connotations. She goes on to cite du Gay (1996, p. 58), when he states that

Excellence is a neoliberal virtue in which organisations and their members learn to thrive on chaos (in the decentred, global, free-market economy) and to renew continually their enterprising spirit.

Thus 'excellence' assumes a Darwinian edge, involving a

greater element of competition between universities for funding, with the winners being those who can best respond to evolving economic challenges (DBIS, 2009, p. 7)

The introduction of the 'Teaching Excellence Framework' continues this discourse, yet as Stronach et al (2002) point out "excellence can only be motivated, it cannot be coerced". Is the TEF (and the future linking of TEF results to fee setting) coercion or motivation?

Other factors which evidence the increasingly prevalent discourse of (specifically teaching) excellence are recruitment practices that reflect the increasing emphasis for higher education practitioners to have (or achieve following appointment) HEA Fellowship, and systems for reward and recognition of lecturers (Chalmers, 2011) that are 'inspirational teachers' becoming increasingly common (Madriaga & Morley, 2016). Such developments have been commented on as positive - that the eventual influence of the Dearing Report that first highlighted the need for such incentives (Macfarlane, 2011) has been successful in raising the status of teaching in higher education and enabling teaching and the scholarship of teaching to be an equal path to "the ultimate symbols of recognition and reward – promotion and tenure" (Chalmers, 2011, p. 25).

As Crook (2014) outlines in his analysis for Times Higher Education,

the 2012 increase in tuition fees means that student intake now has a greater effect on income and vice-chancellors are subsequently under pressure to prove to students that they value the quality of teaching as much as research. This perhaps explains why there has been a spike in the number of universities introducing professorships exclusively for teaching.

However, McFarlane (2011) suggests that

despite the good intentions of these initiatives, the effect been to lower still further the status of teaching, bifurcating universities between 'teaching' and 'research'... unlike subject-based research, 'pedagogic' research is not 'proper' research. It is not, therefore, any good for the purposes of research assessment.

He goes on to offer a robust critique of

tokenistic, all-must-win-prizes world of teaching awards and teaching 'fellowships', which have become a key feature of a patronising culture standing in stark contrast with the harder edged and more competitive realities of advancement through research. (Macfarlane, 2011)

This adds weight to Watson's (2011) ideas, discussed earlier, regarding hierarchies of excellence, where some 'excellences' are more highly prized (and/or rewarded) than others. This is further supported by a position piece from McNay (2015), in an analysis of the 2014 REF and the Education Unit of Assessment:

the message for units in modern universities, whose main focus is on teaching, is to look to the impact factor.... There is a challenge because much of their research may be about teaching, but the rules of the game bar impact on teaching from inclusion in any claim for impact. That dismisses any link between the two... and any claims to research- led teaching.

That said, there is emerging potential for the value of different types of research to evolve given the recommendations of the Stern review of the research excellence framework (Stern, 2016), and that the impact of research in terms of assessment

need not solely focus on socio-economic impacts but should also include impact on government policy, on public engagement and understanding, on cultural life, on academic impacts outside the field, and impacts on teaching...(Stern, 2016)

The recommendations of the Stern report have been welcomed by some HE policy commentators (Kirkby, 2016), although it remains to be seen what the final outcome will be as the white paper is yet to be published at the time of writing (June 2017).

As such, pure pedagogic research still remains less valuable in REF terms, and suggestions of change regarding this are as yet unrealised. Current 'reward and

recognition' initiatives for teaching could therefore be interpreted more cynically perhaps as management strategies to keep the overburdened teaching academics 'on-side' while they cope with the increasing administrative burden of their roles (Debowski, 2012), particularly as

whilst there was some sense that staff were pushing back against top-down approaches to 'raising' standards a stronger narrative was that lecturers were becoming 'worn down by relentless pressures' in the drive to attain ever-higher standards. (Stevenson et al., 2014, p. 29)

So, "within this context 'teaching excellence' has taken on particular meanings and become part of the everyday language and practice of higher education" (Skelton, 2007, p. 1), there is an accepted discourse regarding the 'reward and recognition of teaching excellence' (Clegg, 2007; Macfarlane, 2011), with varying views as to the motivation behind or benefit of these schemes (Clegg, 2007; Madriaga & Morley, 2016), yet there is no accepted consensus as to what constitutes 'excellence', particularly 'teaching excellence', in either policy rhetoric or academic literature, or indeed whether the pursuit of an ill-defined goal is necessarily a good thing. Excellence is a slippery and contested term (Skelton, 2004; 2009), one which Stevenson et al (2014, p. 5) consider may have been "evacuated of pedagogical meaning", and which Clegg (2007, p. 92) goes so far as to suggest should be abandoned, proposing instead a focus on 'good enough' teaching (Skelton, 2009). Indeed,

...the general message to be taken from the literature is that of the closing down of options and the increasing difficulty of achieving excellence across a highly divided, and divisive, system. (Nixon, 2007, p. 18)

However, that is not to abandon the concept of excellence, polluted as some see it by policy and metrics, as having no positive purpose.

Skelton (2007, p.3-4) offers a perspective on these negative interpretations of the discourse of excellence, when he illustrates that the excellence discourse explored so far relates primarily to performative and psychologized understandings of excellence.

With the rush to put teaching excellence on the agenda and to embed it within institutions through a variety of development mechanisms, a range of 'common sense' and problematic understandings about it have emerged. With the intensification of higher education work ... there is little time to question these

understandings. We are encouraged to enter into performative and psychologized discourses and further circulate their meanings and assumptions through ... regulatory practices to do with monitoring and evaluation. This can undermine critical faculties and de-energize people from questioning the way in which teaching excellence is being constructed.

In his original 'typology' (Skelton, 2005), performative and psychologized approaches to excellence are two of four 'ideal type' understandings. In later work (Skelton, 2007) he again argues for the need for a 'critical' understanding of excellence to prevail, which chimes with Coffield and Edward's (2009) exhortation of the need for a 'problematizing' of the concept, and to heed Bourdieu's advice about "the restitution of the complexity of problems" (1998, p. 106), rather than simplistic interpretations and thus policy. Skelton (2007, pp. 4–6) provides a comprehensive review of problematizing excellence and unpicking the taken for granted assumptions that prevail - namely that

Teaching excellence is a good thing... teaching excellence is value free and non-ideological... all teachers can become excellent through continuous improvement... students want a teaching excellence that is responsive to their needs... All institutions can provide teaching excellence; different forms can coexist and have equal value... Teaching excellence is necessary for economic competitiveness... Teaching excellence helps to promote teaching generally and lessens the teaching/research divide... Teaching can only be excellent if it serves learning...

Each of these assumptions is taken apart in turn and, in acknowledging that teaching excellence has long been a problematic concept, he argues the case for adopting a critical approach "with the intent of shifting common sense into more 'critical directions'" (Skelton, 2007, p. 6) rather than taking the position that there is no good to be had from further exploration. Nixon (2007), in making the case for excellence to be reimagined as a moral undertaking that could bring together different aspects of academic practice, makes reference to the 'stratification, fractionalisation and atomisation' of higher education and of the academic roles within it. There have been, he says

profound changes in the conditions of academic work. ... 'it is no longer sensible to speak of a single academic profession' and ... 'a caste distinction is emerging between "have" and "have-not" groups'. The latter... constitute 'an underclass . . . with limited prospects for advancement or employment stability'. At the same time increased differentials and tensions are apparent

among ... 'top-level academics' who are under pressure to produce high profile research... (Nixon, 2007, p. 16)

This analysis provides further weight to the idea that the pervasive discourses of excellence - or hierarchies of excellence (C. Watson, 2011) are impacting on academic identity.

### Conceptions of identity

Identity is a difficult term. More or less everyone knows more or less what it means, and yet its precise definition proves slippery (Lawler, 2015, p. 1)

...towards the end of the 20th century the concept of identity came under intense scrutiny by social theorists... fragmentations and dislocation in social institutions [challenge] existing basic assumptions about the nature of identity... (Henkel, 2005)

Theories of identity can be broadly categorised into two ideological domains - individualist and social. Individualist theories of identity, drawing on essentialist (we are what we are - Cartwright 1968) and liberalist ideologies (E. M. Wood, 1972), in simplistic terms assume who I am is free from influence by my social context, either micro or macro; I am free to be who I want to be, and am ultimately self-determined (Henkel, 2005). Social theories of identity, such as symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1986; Mead, 1934), and communitarian philosophies (Taylor, 1989), assume

identities are first and foremost shaped and reinforced in and by stable communities and the social processes generated within them... (Henkel, 2002: 965),

and it is these theories that have largely been drawn upon in discussions of academic identity. Tajfel (1981, p. 255) regarded social identity as

that part of the individuals' self -concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.

In relating communitarian and social theories of identity formation to academics sense of belonging to, and existing within, strong disciplinary boundaries, Henkel (Henkel, 2005) acknowledges that such theories, whilst not necessarily being abandoned, may

need "to be modified in the contemporary environment", of which further discussion later. She goes on to highlight an important criticism of communitarianism and symbolic interactionism - they do not consider functions of conflict and power in creating and maintaining conditions of identity construction. Castells (2010, p. 7) suggests that "the social construction of identity always takes place in a context marked by power relationships". Power relationships within universities, both overt and hidden, may previously have resided within disciplinary structures; to continue Henkel's (2009) and others ideas, there are likely to be other structures / communities within (and outside of) the academic environment that impact on identity formation.

As such, binary, either / or theoretical positions (in this case individual / social), whilst useful perhaps in enabling understanding of the core concepts of an ideological position or perspective, do not allow for the more messy, muddy continuum of human experience, within which human agents and the forces that shape them (whether internal or external) are unlikely to be able to be neatly categorized in such simplistic terms. Aligned with this perspective, Jenkins (2004) builds on symbolic interactionism (identity formation and maintenance) to define the construction of identity, both individual and collective, as a continuous and reflexive process, a synthesis of (internal) self-definition and (external) definitions of oneself offered by others - an 'internal-external dialectic of identification' (Jenkins, 2004, p. 20). In other words, we have an internal idea of who we are (which may itself be the product of socialization processes at micro and macro levels, as well as our own reflexive processes), and this conception is either affirmed or amended by our interactions with others. Thus, identity is constructed both by social and individual processes - to what degree, and the balance of structure and agency in terms of influential power, is itself a large area of research that this analysis does not intend to address.

For Henkel (Henkel, 2005, 2009) there are three dimensions of academic identity: meaning, self-esteem, and values - but where and how an individual interacts with these dimensions within their working life and the relationship of structure and agency inherent within them is shifting in today's universities, particularly as

academic work and relationships have become bureaucratized ...and the institution has more power to affect academic working lives (Henkel, 2005)

Another consideration is whether identity is fixed or fluid. Reflecting a post-modern perspective, Hall (1996) tells us that the stable and coherent identity is an illusion, constructed out of individuals 'narrative of the self'. Henkel (Henkel, 2005) tells us that

post-modernism celebrates fragmentation, fluidity and the transitory - the post-modern problem of identity is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open.

It may be, for example, that a particular 'identity' is more useful to us in certain situations, and thus we choose (consciously or otherwise) to adopt it. Certainly my own experiences of multiple workplace roles (and thus to some degree, identities) - manager, colleague, teacher, learner - result in, if not explicitly different identities then certainly different manifestations of 'who' I am when at work. This correlates with identity as

something that is situated and contingent, involving interpretation and negotiation on the part of an individual, and .... seen increasingly as being multiple, overlapping and provisional (Whitchurch & Gordon, 2010, p. 2)

More traditional realist concepts of identity would hold that one 'authentic' identity would exist and always be prevalent, however Bauman (1996, p. 18) also prefers the post-modern idea that an individual may have more than one 'identity' - and suggest that a person may be "pulled simultaneously in different directions by contradictory identities". Resonating to some degree with my own experiences, Winter (Winter, 2009) suggests that

as academics enact their professional roles, they are influenced by academic (traditional) and managerial (contemporary) identities and the contradictions and conflicts that arise from these competing identity claims...

Giddons (1984) identifies influences on identity formation as the competition between agency and structure, to what extent we are capable of realising autonomy in the development of our selves, and whether agency is true agency or a subconscious manifestation of structural influences; while Lawler (2015) explores the role of the individual and collective consciousness on identity formation, suggesting that both are

fluctuating. Neo-liberal discourse in higher education may 'reward' individual competitive behaviour, and encourage the development of autonomous academics capable of exerting agency - yet as we have seen, some commentators highlight the reduction in academic agency and autonomy (C. Watson, 2011), leading to suggestions that structural and collective influences on identity formation may be more dominant.

### Academic identity and discipline

In higher education, such 'contradictory identities' and difficulties as described above are suggested as a result of the diversification of academic roles and backgrounds (Henkel, 2009), as well as the impact of massification and managerialism (C. Watson, 2011; Winter, 2009), placing the sector in a very different place since the publication of Becher's (1989) influential work on 'Tribes and Territories'. The subject of 'disciplinary identity' was perhaps first explored some time before Becher's work by Snow (1960) in his famous Rede lecture of 1959, where a somewhat simplistic dichotomy (and chasm) was outlined between

Literary intellectuals at one pole—at the other scientists, and as the most representative, the physical scientists. Between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension—sometimes ... hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding. (Snow, 1960, p. 2)

Perhaps part of this hostility may have been exacerbated by what is described as a habit of the literary intellectuals "...who incidentally while no one was looking took to referring to themselves as 'intellectuals' as though there were no others..." (Snow, 1960, p. 3). Some considerable time later, Becher's 1989 seminal text *Academic tribes and territories: intellectual enquiry and the cultures of disciplines* was said by Bayer (1991) to have been prompted both by Snow's original speech and Biglan's (1973) typology of academic disciplines. In the first edition, Becher (1989) reinforces the notion that academic areas are conceptually distinguishable both epistemologically and sociologically. He identifies four basic dimensions, two of which having been previously outlined by Biglan (1973), and a further two new conceptual ideas relating to the convergent/divergent and the rural/urban. Focusing on the former dimension, which builds on the work of Kuhn (1962), it posits that



convergent disciplinary communities are tightly knit with a shared paradigm and impermeable boundaries. Divergent academic groups...have more permeable boundaries with a more fragmented, less stable, and comparatively open-ended structure (Bayer, 1991, p. 223)

As Becher develops his ideas (Becher, 1994) he returns to the anthropological ideas of Geertz (1976), to note

that disciplinary groups can usefully be regarded as academic tribes, each with their own set of intellectual values and their own patch of cognitive territory. (Becher, 1994, p. 152)

Referring to the earlier work of Biglan and Kolb (and highlighting the interesting coincidence of their analyses, given that they had a significantly different focus), he identifies what he refers to as 'intellectual groupings':

<b>Biglan</b>	<b>Kolb</b>	<b>Disciplinary areas</b>
Hard pure	Abstract reflective	Natural sciences
Soft pure	Concrete reflective	Humanities and social sciences
Hard applied	Abstract active	Science-based professions
Soft applied	Concrete active	Social professions

*Table 5: Broad disciplinary groupings*

(from Becher, 1994, p. 152)

Within this fourfold typology one can further distinguish the separate disciplines, and Becher (1994) concludes there is

very significant consensus about what counts as a discipline and what does not. While some analysts ... focus on epistemological considerations, presenting disciplines as each characterised by its body of concepts, methods and fundamental aims, and others ... define them as organised social groupings, most agree with Price (1970) in seeing both elements as essential--"we cannot and should not artificially separate the matter of substantive content from that of social behaviour".(Becher, 1994, p. 152)

My own subject area of education, often conflicted in terms of its position and identity in higher education (Furlong, 2013), at first glance appears to be a discipline according to Becher – it appears as an example of an 'applied social science'. However, the subsequent description of the nature of knowledge as

Functional; utilitarian (know-how via soft knowledge); concerned with enhancement of [semi-] professional practice; resulting in protocols/procedures (Becher, 1994, p. 154)

provides some doubt as to this. Becher (1994) goes on to state that 'education' is "uncertain in status" indicating that he does not regard it to be a 'discipline'. Further reading strengthens this assumption -

...because higher education is a field of study, *but not a discipline in its own right*, researchers in that field are not naturally conscious of disciplinary issues... (Becher 1994, p.160 - emphasis added).

Subsequently updated (Becher & Trowler, 2001), the second edition of the seminal text included a new introductory chapter discussing the new 'globalized landscape' and its fundamental consequences for higher education, much as has been already discussed previously. They noted that nationally and internationally higher education was becoming more vocationally oriented, and that the rise of 'knowledge media' and 'mega-universities' (exploring the phenomenon of massification) would have far reaching impacts. One of the impacts of such massification is that

academic staff are likely to have come from professions outside academia and more likely to be involved in vocational subjects and new disciplines and domains of knowledge (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 5)

resulting in what the authors refer to as "disciplinary dignification". The term itself seems rather pejorative. It implies that the only true disciplines are the original ones, as previously defined. Any newcomers are too late to the party and as such - whilst being dignified with the term discipline - don't really fit the typology and aren't deserving of the title. That said, this edition noted that

the shape of universities was changing, with interdisciplinarity and new fields of study with a practice focus becoming increasingly important... (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 6).

In consideration of the development of academic identity and practice, the authors acknowledged, as did Henkel (2005), that there are other factors that condition practices within universities beyond simple epistemological ones. However, the text still held true to the central idea of academic tribes.

Consideration of power and external structures impacting on academic identity is also explored in the second edition, which revisits ideas of regulation and control highlighted in the context chapter of this thesis. The notion of centralised Governmental control and mandates (such as that of 'excellence') impacting on the freedoms of academics and the instrumentalist view that HE is the servant of business is clearly articulated:

...this 'slide to performativity' clearly represents not just a shift in the HE curriculum towards operational competence as opposed to academic competence but a fundamental shift in power relations in terms of who defines what counts as useful knowledge and whose discourses achieve dominance. (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 6)

In a later critique of both Becher's early work, and his own co-authored update of the text in 2001, Trowler (2011) highlights an issue with the 'tribes' metaphor in that it implies

a relatively coherent set of practices, assumptions, values and a taken-for-granted approach to certain things. Yet on the ground within the 'same' discipline we often see diversity and conflict, paradigm wars and the strong influence of different educational ideologies.

That this observation includes within it mention of 'educational ideologies' is perhaps illustrative of the increased significance of approaches to learning and teaching in higher education - that an academic may not just identify with a subject area or discipline, but also with a particular pedagogical approach -which may or may not be the dominant one in their area. The diverse background of academics in modern higher education is also commented on by Trowler (2011) -

Academics as individuals draw on different sets of discursive and value-laden resources which mean that their focus may be on students, on the discipline itself, on the world of commerce and industry, or in some cases on challenging the status quo through their intellectual work...

Continuing this idea further, Henkel (Henkel, 2005, 2009) makes reference to the rise of 'university teachers' and 'non-research-active' academics, at least in terms of 'what counts' in the Research Excellence Framework. This, potentially, further limits the power of the discipline in identity construction, and means that academics look

elsewhere for their identity - perhaps in pedagogical or other cross-disciplinary areas (such as employability, inclusive practice, or internationalisation), or perhaps in conceptions of 'excellence', as the term becomes ubiquitous in policy at macro and micro levels.

In addition to the forces of managerialism, Trowler (2011) suggests that

there is often more commonality between individuals across disciplines than within them, certainly on some issues, as well as in terms of the approach they take to their teaching, research and other professional practices...

He summarises with the idea that the 'tribes' metaphor has had its day and that new metaphors are required, due to this diversification of the academic role (and identity) and ensuing practice, a result of

a variety of forces plus Stephen Ball's "global policy ensemble" of government interventions [which] have had very significant influences within almost every university (Trowler, 2011).

### Teaching and academic identity

Although previous research into teacher identities in higher education has noted, probably in light of Becher's (1989) work, that

many university academics hardly consider themselves "teachers" at all, instead visualising themselves more as a member of their discipline (Kember & Kwan, 2000, p. 255),

as we have seen in the previous section the diversification of the academic role and the breaking down of previously strong disciplinary boundaries and traditions (Henkel, 2009) suggest that teaching could be an important part of a modern academic's formation of identity. Enmeshed as they are in this 'complex higher education system' (Skelton, 2012, p. 25), and with a diversity of backgrounds and entry routes into their role within it (Henkel, 2009), teaching and pedagogical alignments (whether located within the discipline or outside of it) may well be an important part of a modern academic's formation of identity, especially if we return to Henkel's (Henkel, 2005) ideas of meaning, self-esteem, and values - all of which can potentially be found, and realised, in the teacher-student relationship. Clegg's (2008) discussion of 'hybridised

academic identities', considering new academic entrants from industry, confirms this possibility,

newer emerging identities, or hybrids, were mostly not shaped by a reference to nostalgia for an elitist past, but were based on different epistemological assumptions derived from other professional and practice based loyalties... (Clegg, 2008, p. 340)

Discussion of teaching and teacher identity in higher education is not without its challenges, reflecting the issues explored earlier regarding the definition of 'excellence'. Davis and Sumara (2007, p. 54) highlight the fact that

...despite the prominence and diversity of discussions of *learning*, the same levels of attention have not been given to pedagogy. Simply put, the meaning of the word *teaching* is rarely the site of contestation in debates of educational reform.

Given the emergence of the Teaching Excellence Framework, this situation may change in the coming months and years. However, framed within a discussion of the conflicting conceptions of teaching and the dominant philosophical world views that have influenced these conceptions, Davis and Sumara (2007) argued that this dominance of research and opinion regarding 'learning' led to a stagnation in the definition of 'teaching' – although in their summary, they return to the relationship between the two and infer their interdependence -

...our worry is ... the assumption that *teaching* is reducible to *what the teacher does*, as opposed to its effects on learners.(Davis & Sumara, 2007, pp. 64–5)

This notion aligns with the 'doing' aspect of identity construction, which is that we are what we do (Wilcock, 1999), and suggests that the true nature of teaching includes subtleties that cannot be satisfactorily defined through a list of characteristics or actions, something that supports Kane et al's (Kane et al., 2004) arguments regarding the risks of such 'behavioural' led approaches. However, for most constructions of teaching identity, it is the 'doing' (of both teacher and student) that forms the basis of the conception (Swennen et al., 2010).

Kember (1997) reviewed a range of literature (Dunkin, 1995; Fox, 1983; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996) regarding academics' conceptions of their teaching, and thus their

construction of their 'teaching identity', and found significant correspondence between the different conceptions outlined. The overall framework he proposed for defining conceptions of teaching has been used in later analysis– for example Light et al (2009, p. 29) use his table as a basis for exploring ideas about teaching in higher education, and articulate three main 'conceptions of teaching':

<b>Aspects of conception</b>				
<b>Categories of conceptions of teaching</b>	<b>Student learning</b>	<b>Student relationship to course content</b>	<b>Teaching</b>	<b>Focus of good teaching</b>
<i>Transmission</i> Teacher-focused	Student learning is not the teacher's concern	Passive-compliant acceptance	Transmission, soliloquy-monologue	Quantity, quality, structure and transmission of content
<i>Acquisition</i> Student-focused	Student learning as acquisition of course concepts and skills is teacher's concern	Compliant-active acceptance	Explanation, demonstration, active-monologue towards dialogue	Strategies and tips that help students acquire the course concepts and content
<i>Engagement</i> Learning-focused	Student learning as conceptual development and understanding is teacher's concern	Active-reflective construction	Facilitation, intersubjective-active-dialogue	Developing ways to help students improve and change their conceptual understanding

**Table 6: Conceptions of teaching in higher education**

(Kember, 1997; Light & Calkins, 2008; Light et al., 2009, p. 29)

Light et al (2009, pp. 29–30) developed Kember's (1997) student centred 'conception of teaching' further and transformed it into 'learning-focused' teaching, in which the teacher helps students to develop and change not only their conceptions of the subject, but also of themselves. Thus from their perspective excellent teaching should aim to be transformational, potentially for both teacher and learner, and help to create 'critical beings'. This construction of teacher identity and notion of excellence is not explicit in Gunn and Fisk's (2013) proposed typology, which instead focuses on 'disciplinary mastery' and 'fit for purpose entry into a career' (Gunn & Fisk, 2013, p. 7), with some reference to the development of appropriate attitudes. Potentially, this is

because frameworks of teaching excellence require measures, and measuring whether or not students had evolved in to critical beings due to transformational teaching would be more complicated than assessing how many had 'mastered' the subject content and obtained a job. That said, the influence of constructivist theories of learning (for example Bruner 1966; Vygotsky 1978) to teaching and learning has seen teachers in higher education being encouraged to teach in a learner-centred, participative way (Light et al, 2009) - the table above suggests in its choice of language that the 'learning-focused' approach (or at least the student-focused) is preferable. It also indicates a move away from a construction of a teaching identity by virtue of 'doing' towards an overall ethos and 'becoming' a teaching academic (Ennals et al., 2016; Wilcock, 1999). This is not to say of course that all disciplines, both traditional and those benefiting from 'dignification', (Becher & Trowler, 2001) - have suddenly adopted such approaches; however, the increasing prevalence of 'teaching qualifications' for new academics (Land & Gordon, 2014; J. Smith, 2011) indicates that more academic staff may be being exposed to such constructivist conceptions of teaching as indications of 'excellence'.

### Discipline identity and pedagogy

The work of Boyer (1992) - first published in 1990 as part of a Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Forum - was influential in developing the idea that an academic identity comprised four distinct but interrelated 'scholarships': discovery; integration; application; and teaching (Boyer, 1992, pp. 89–90). He is often cited as influential in promoting the value of teaching scholarship (and thus excellence) and encouraging a more inclusive approach to academic identity (Macfarlane, 2011), although

it is telling... that Boyer's much vaunted four forms of scholarship lists the 'scholarship of discovery' first and the 'scholarship of teaching' last... (Macfarlane, 2011, p. 211)

The notion of an academic's discipline loyalty and interest being stronger than their interest in the 'scholarship of teaching' is well documented, notwithstanding today's shifting contexts in higher education that continue to blur the boundaries of discipline affiliations (Trowler, 2011). However, it may be that things have moved on since "the

very concept of a scholarship of pedagogy is still very unfamiliar to many university teachers” (Baume, 1996, p. 3), not least given that

...most UK, Australian, and New Zealand universities now encourage academics, or require them as part of a probationary agreement, to undertake a course of initial professional development to prepare them to teach in higher education. Such courses are intended to bring participants up to a minimum level of competence to safeguard quality standards and may therefore be considered as a precondition of excellence. (Land & Gordon, 2014, p. 6)

So while there may be increasing awareness of the importance of pedagogical practice, and of the concept of 'teaching excellence' (if not the detail), a debate still exists over whether “improvement of teaching needs to be rooted in the intellectual substance of the field” (Rice, 2005, p. vii), harking back to Shulman's (1986) ideas about pedagogical context knowledge. Light et al (2009, p. 36) also refer to the ongoing “‘generic vs discipline’ teaching skills debate” - in other words, must staff development for teaching always be based in the disciplinary area, or can interdisciplinary professional development also develop pedagogical practice? Davidson (2004) makes a case for the benefits of 'critical interdisciplinarity' in teaching development, while Smith (2010) warns of the potential issues in such provision. Trigwell et al (Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin, & Prosser, 2000) found a range of views as to the interpretation of the 'scholarship of teaching', from those who perceived it as interdisciplinary to those who felt it must be grounded in discipline-specific literature and practice. The position I find most persuasive is outlined by Davidson (2004, p. 302) -

That the disciplines have distinctive pedagogical identities is not a new notion. To support and enhance these is useful, but nevertheless serves an essentially conservative agenda. That discipline boundaries are in fact flexible, culturally determined, interdependent and relative to time is a less appreciated perspective, yet one which can serve the essence of higher education: the critical agenda...

The notion of (or evidence for) discipline specific pedagogies across many academic subjects, particularly in the Humanities and social sciences, is not well established (which does not of course negate the existence of strong discipline identities), whilst specialist pedagogies do appear to be apparent in - for example - Maths (L. N. Wood et al., 2011). As a teacher educator teaching multi-disciplinary groups, I could argue that I need to refute the idea of 'discipline specific pedagogy' (or at least approach it



cautiously) in order to give my professional role meaning and value. Conversely, if reflecting on the identity and practice of 'teacher educators' in higher education, then I believe there is a 'discipline specific' pedagogy. This is in fact a developing area of research and considered to be an important part of the identity and professional development of teacher educators (Swennen et al., 2010; Swennen & Klink, 2008). Suffice to say then, I have sympathy for and understanding of the need and desire for the 'identity' of a discipline-specific pedagogy, especially as Becher and Trowler (2001) outline, the 'traditional' academic feels increasingly under threat. Whilst not necessarily contesting Boyer's four scholarships, they argue that in the 'new' world of globalised and massified higher education they have to be supplemented by

the 'scholarships' of leadership, management, administration and entrepreneurialism, which now form an inescapable part of the modern academic's agenda. (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 18).

They write further on the changing nature of an academic's' role, away from traditional notions of autonomous researchers and towards the inhabitation of a managerialist system – more contact hours with more students needing more support, for example – and articulate this thus:

Meanwhile changes to the higher education system, the internal character of universities and to the very meaning of higher education have resulted in a highly differentiated, more permeable, system in which close engagement with the disciplinary knowledge core through research is only one academic activity among very many. (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 7)

That they feel strongly about this is evident:

To generalize, deprofessionalization of academic life is clearly occurring, while traditional ideas about the special status and knowledge claims of academics have rapidly become outdated. (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 13)

Whether this changing role amounts to de-professionalization or simply a different type of professionalization is contestable - they conduct their analysis from a very specific disciplinary stand-point, where disciplinary research is the defining characteristic of an academic's identity and practice, and within which 'excellence' relates to research excellence. As this review has articulated, discourses of excellence

and conceptions of academic identity have evolved beyond this relatively simplistic position (Henkel, 2005, 2009; C. Watson, 2011).

### Excellence and identity

The excellence rhetoric and discourse, and the positioning of one's own institution in the 'hierarchy of excellence' (C. Watson, 2011), may provoke contemplation as to where on the scale of excellence one's own institution (and thus oneself and own prospects?) may lie, and influence the development and evolution of academic identities, and the tensions that may be experienced at both institutional and individual levels (C. Watson, 2011). This concept of evolving (or threatened) academic identities has been explored by Henkel (Henkel, 2005), specifically in relation to shifts in academic autonomy within the scientific academic community, established as it is within a strong disciplinary identity (Becher, 1994), and by Clegg (2007), in a small scale study exploring the impacts of the performativity culture. Clegg (2008, p. 343) concludes that

paying detailed attention to how changes are being experienced is an important element in theorising what is happening inside the university sector,

which chimes with the motivation for this study.

At the start of the New Labour era, Barnett (1997, p. 146) said that the category of academic was 'dissolving' within new patterns of institutional organisation in which staff become human resources, increasingly expected to subscribe to notions of excellence. As Watson (2011, p. 965) describes,

within the corporate university I am a unit of 'human resource' to be aligned to strategic targets. The corporate identity of the university is performed daily... creating a discourse of the corporate professional.

This embodies universities' desire to

align everyone ever more closely to strategic objectives, within which our individual responsibilities (and our academic freedoms?) are defined. (C. Watson, 2011, p. 965)

Pels (2000, p. 148) refers to this progression from 'professionalism to audit' as

yet another instance of the swing of the liberal pendulum from a romantic primacy of the ethical to a utilitarian primacy of the economic

in another reference to the influence of neoliberal philosophy, previously explored.

The emphasis on audit and professionalization, as well as contributing to the overburdened academic highlighted in Stevenson et al's (2014) work, may actually result in a form of bureaucratic focus that de-professionalizes the academic, shifting their conception of their identity and how they experience their working lives. This relates also to the ideas expressed by Becher and Trowler (2001) in their analysis of the dilution of 'the academic'. Weber's ideas regarding the dissolution of 'substantive rationality' in terms of academic practice highlight the potential dangers associated with formal rationality (Whimster & Lash, 2014). Ritzer (2001), in discussing the many areas of our lives that are codified and subject to formal systems, comments that such rationality – whilst having the potential to enlighten – can also be a means of control. Weber envisaged a time where we would be imprisoned by a nightmare bureaucracy (something that may ring true with academics today?), where the

autonomous and free individual, one whose actions had continuity by reference to ultimate values, would be less able to exercise his or her substantive rationality (Ritzer, 2001, p. 125)

Ritzer (2001, p. 182) states that "the educational system is heavily affected by the advance of bureaucratization and formal rationalization" and links this strongly with deprofessionalization: "more external control generally means less power" (Ritzer, 2001, p. 186), which in turn may impact on an individual's 'sense of self'.

There appear to be, then, conflicting claims for both the professionalization of academics in higher education, in relation to (in some cases mandatory) attendance on 'teacher development' courses and related 'professional development' opportunities (Davidson, 2004; Land & Gordon, 2014), and the de-professionalization of the modern academic, embedded as they are in the managerialist, audit-oriented and performative cultures of modern higher education (Henkel, 2005; C. Watson, 2011). However, these different claims are focused on quite different aspects of the academic role; an academic is deemed to be increasingly 'professionalized' in terms of their achievement of a teaching qualification, expected commitment to excellent teaching

and engagement in pedagogical dialogue; and increasingly de-professionalized in relation to their autonomy, subjection to internal and external surveys, administrative requirements, time available for research, and so on. These apparently conflicting claims actually reflect two notions of professionalism - 'inside-out' (the notion of self-determination and moral responsibility), and 'outside-in' (reliant on the specification of rules and procedures) (I. Stronach et al., 2002, p. 125). Arguably, although ostensibly 'professionalizing' the academic who teaches, mandatory PgCert courses could equally be aligned with a 'de-professionalizing' agenda.

Although research indicates that academics have always gained some of their identity from the teaching role (Fox, 1983; Kreber, 2002), there are now additional factors impacting on the academic sense of self. Mandatory teacher training, and the pervasiveness of the excellence rhetoric, in particular the Teaching Excellence Framework (DBIS, 2011) are relatively recent phenomena (in the case of the TEF, very recent). Previously, as has been explored, an academic's identity was bounded by strong disciplinary ties and engagement with research (Becher & Trowler, 2001), impacted by discourses of research excellence embodied in the Research Excellence Framework (C. Watson, 2011). If an increasingly part of academic identity is to be gained from the teaching role, as this review suggests, this is likely to be subject to similar pressures from an excellence rhetoric as much as, if not more than, the previously established 'academic as researcher' identity.

### **Identity, excellence and the 'PgCert'**

Literature regarding the impact of courses of teacher development on academic practice and / or identity is not widespread, although a few key sources provide useful material for reflection and analysis.

Gale's (2011) work exploring critical incidents with early career academics found that most considered themselves as teachers rather than as scholar, and as such constructed their professional identity as a teaching identity, something which aligns with the earlier discussion on conceptions of teaching - if a new academic is engaged

primarily in teaching, this will be the source of their initial identity construction in higher education. She considers that

context and access to particular influences and opportunities are seen as more significant than an abstract sector-wide 'academic identity'. (Gale, 2011)

Billot (2010) considers that the way in which academic staff are being required to modify their role to deliver quality teaching as well as produce research means that

collectively, the changing institution and the social and economic context in which it is positioned are affecting the identity of the individual academic. Thus, higher education is facing a professional identity crisis... (Billot, 2010, p. 714)

However, Clegg (2008, p. 226) offers an alternative interpretation, and whilst acknowledging that "how to be a proper academic is a moving goal...fraught with ambiguity", considers that the discourse of academic identities being under threat due to the rise of performative, managerialist culture - as explored by Stronach et al (2002), Harris (2005) and Henkel (Henkel, 2005), among others - is overstated. She comments that

...less prestigious places in terms of the league tables of universities might actually allow for the emergence of new, secure, hybridised identities that are not as hampered by the overweening pressure of research productivity (Clegg, 2008, p. 340)

She goes onto comment that there is a "need to resist over- simple derivations from what might be seen as global trends", as

despite all the pressure of performativity, individuals have created spaces for the exercise of principled personal autonomy and agency.... Rather than being under threat, it appears that identities in academia are expanding and proliferating, and that there are possibilities for valorising difference. (Clegg, 2008, p. 343)

Smith's (2010) data set indicates that for some, the combination of external and internal pressures of a 'neoliberal agenda' are manifested in their experience of a PgCert course for teaching in higher education.

I think that my response [to the PGCert] is a sort of ideological response as well because I see it as a sort of a part of the neoliberal agenda in higher education, it's part of that turning students into consumers and turning us into deliverers ... we were constructed as passive victims [of the initial professional development agenda] (J. Smith, 2010, p. 585)

Smith's (2010) longitudinal research into academic identity formation is contextualized within the changing nature of higher education. Her focus is on probation more broadly (and inequalities as experienced by her participants), though the data and subsequent analysis touches on the completion of PgCerts as part of probationary periods across a range of different institutions (referred to as 'old, middle-aged and new'). Identity is conceptualised as

a fluid process of co-construction in a variety of social situations, and is understood, in western tradition, as encompassing both individualised and collective elements (J. Smith, 2010, p. 580)

She reiterates the "perceived erosion of academic freedom through a growing concern with a neoliberal agenda undermining agency and collegiality in academic life" (J. Smith, 2010, p. 580) and some of her data (as per the quote above) supports this position. She offers an emerging typology of academic socialisation and resulting identity formation: resonant; dissonant; and rejection; and emphasises that this is not to "imply that there are 'types' of new academics, simply that there appears to be a limited range of responses to probationary circumstances" (J. Smith, 2010, pp. 582–583). For new academics falling into the 'resonant' category, they are more positive about their role and formative experiences; "a resonant socialisation experience is frequently enjoyed by 'accidental' academics" (J. Smith, 2010, p. 583) and those who experience a supportive departmental environment. Although not explored in detail, she suggests that "that there might be disciplinary differences in how resistance to the dominant discourse may be constructed" (J. Smith, 2010, p. 584), although goes onto say that

...there is no correlation between discipline or socialisation trajectory and view of the PGCert. In other words, those with resonant experiences find their teaching qualifications anywhere on the spectrum from useful to otherwise, as do those with dissonant or rejection trajectories (J. Smith, 2010, p. 588)

She acknowledges PgCert courses as a form of support 'for some', but notes three areas of concern regarding participation in them:

Firstly, the mismatch between the aims of the PGCert and the lived reality of experiences in specific departments ... the philosophy and practice of the teaching qualification is unhelpfully removed from departmental ethos and practice. Secondly... rather than professionalisation, the talk is ideological in nature, allowing a return to concern for the educational enterprise. [Thirdly] the [multidisciplinary] process enables a sharing of departmental experiences that highlight inequities in practice [which] simply adds to the stress, uncertainty and distrust...

Whilst not referencing discourses of excellence explicitly, her work underpins the idea that a relationship between the discourse of 'teaching excellence', completion of PgCert courses, and academic identity formation / socialisation is possible, and worthy of further exploration. She recommends that further institutionally focused research is carried out in order to design probationary experiences more appropriately for new academic staff and to gain a greater understanding of

the assumptions underpinning the nature of UK universities' cultural practices and how these are enacted [which] may make transition less difficult for many new appointees...(J. Smith, 2010, p. 590).

Smith (2011) uses the same dataset to specifically focus on perceptions of teaching qualifications of probationary academics, and in her later article she returns again to the "cohort effect of the PGCert ...uncovering unwelcome differentiation [between Departmental practices]" (J. Smith, 2011, p. 79) as an ethical dilemma. She also highlights "a need to more closely align practices and assessment to actual contexts of practice" and expresses concern that

probationary academics may not have access to a suitable range of practices to enable them to participate fully in their PGCert (J. Smith, 2011, p. 79).

Of particular concern to her is

the encroachment of the neoliberal agenda, characterised by increasing accountability and surveillance (Davies & Petersen, 2005), [which] has led to more uniform procedures ... Whilst PGCerts appear to impose uniform requirements on new academic staff in the UK context, less attention has been paid to the circumstances under which staff must labour to achieve course

outcomes. As surveillance increases (Davies & Petersen, 2005), it is suggested that practices become aligned and equitable. (J. Smith, 2011, pp. 78–79)

Butcher and Stoncel (2012), explored the impact of PgCerts on the practice of participants, specifically new academics recruited for their professional expertise in a 'teaching led' institution. They highlight that theories of higher education teacher development (theories of learning and teaching, and pedagogic assumptions) underpinning teacher education courses for academics "remain contested" (Butcher & Stoncel, 2012, p. 149). They reiterate that "the experiences and perceptions of staff undertaking a PG Cert... have rarely been captured" (Butcher & Stoncel, 2012, p. 160). Their rationale includes an acceptance of discipline specificity, and implies that the course needs to address "individual understandings of how learning happens in different subject areas" and "how to develop subject-specific strategies to meet the needs of students in their discipline". The results of their mixed methods research project are summarised thus:

Our findings revealed evidence of positive, sustained impact on new staff resulting in: more confident teaching approaches; a shift to learner-centred conceptualisations; practice reflectivity and cross-institutional dialogue as a catalyst for personal change. (Butcher & Stoncel, 2012, p. 160)

This summary, whilst offering possible insights as to the 'value' of the role of such courses in higher education, appears to be a relatively simplistic account of the benefits of participation – indeed, findings that I have gained myself over several years of nothing more robust (in research terms) than post-course evaluations. The authors do not really explore the shifting role of the academic as discussed earlier in this review; the increasingly prevalent discourse of excellence, managerialist expectations, and the tensions that ensue; or the on-going impact and implications for the identity and practice of academics in higher education.

Skelton (2013) explores the impact of a PgCert course on academics in a research-intensive institution, exploring whether it has changed how they see themselves, their work, and whether the course still achieves its aims in the context of increasing regulation, accreditation and external scrutiny (Skelton, 2013, p. 910). His work potentially offers a more positive reflection of PgCert course participation than Smith's (2010, 2011), although it was smaller scale and conducted in his own institution, and



he was known to participants as their tutor risking potential bias in answers, which is acknowledged in the article. A key finding of this research, seemingly due to the 'status' of teaching within the institution, was that

participation can be both personally transformative and/yet a poisoned chalice. In the light of this, more consideration needs to be given to how individuals can best be supported once back in their departments...(Skelton, 2013, p. 919)

In terms of positive outcomes, the benefits of the multi-disciplinary community and the 'critical interdisciplinarity' (Butcher & Stoncel, 2012; Davidson, 2004) that ensued

enabled people to question their existing ideas, practices and conceptions of the learner. The articulation of different disciplinary perspectives on teaching and learning matters encouraged people to rethink orthodox views and practices that had come to be accepted within their work (Skelton, 2013, p. 913)

This is broadly analogous to the business concept of 'disruptive innovation', whereby an innovation that disrupts the established market is usually a product of outsider influence (Yu & Hang, 2010). This concept of critical interdisciplinarity is alluded to by Davidson (2004, p. 310) -

an appropriate response to the challenge of contributing to the professionalization of teaching in higher education will confirm disciplinarity. This will be done by encouraging course participants to enquire into the theoretical underpinnings of their own practices, in interdisciplinary contexts, rather than by initiating them into 'good practice' of pedagogical (generic) research.

### **Preliminary conclusions**

This review has so far utilised a body of work around the discourse of excellence, explored the challenge of achieving consensus as to a definition of the concept (Madriaga & Morley, 2016), and suggested problematizing excellence is necessary to shift 'common sense' approaches into more critical directions (Skelton 2007). Discourse around teaching excellence has been an increasingly visible part of higher education, potentially starting with Boyer's (1992) 'scholarship of teaching', and continuing with the widespread adoption of awards for inspirational or excellent teaching, other reward and recognition strategies (Gunn & Fisk, 2013; Madriaga & Morley, 2016), and an increase in higher education teacher development courses

(Davidson, 2004; J. Smith, 2011). While attempts to 'measure' teaching excellence externally ultimately met with failure in the past (Laughton, 2003), the development of the TEF brings back to the fore the concept of teaching excellence as part of an audit culture to be measured and reported on. But do academic staff experience the 'excellence discourse' in their working lives, and do PgCert courses play a role in the communication and interpretation of the neo-liberal excellence rhetoric (Stevenson et al., 2014)? Are these courses the messenger (or enforcer?) of the neoliberal managerialist culture, or an opportunity for critical debate? Does the rhetoric translate to a lived reality for academic staff, and impact on their identity formation - can, or do, PgCert courses impact on academic socialisation, whether participants are 'resonant, dissonant, or rejecting' (Smith 2010) of their academic role and identity?

Key theories of identity have been explored, and the potential for different aspects of academic life (discipline, research, teaching) to impact on identity formation have been highlighted (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Kember, 1997; J. Smith, 2010). Despite this body of work, Trede et al. (2012, p.365) tell us that

Further research is needed to better understand the tensions between personal and professional values, structural and power influences, discipline versus generic education, and the role of workplace learning on professional identities.

Identity is understood as "a fluid process of co-construction in a variety of social situations... encompassing both individualised and collective elements" (J. Smith, 2010, p. 580). The appropriateness of this approach is further supported by Henkel (2009, p.9), who reiterates that increasingly

identity is conceived as a process ... an interaction between (internal) self-definition and the (external) definitions of oneself offered by others or an "internal-external dialectic of identification" (Jenkins, 1996). The context is increasingly likely to be indeterminate and complex (Taylor, 2008), tending to generate a "process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction" (Barnett and Di Napoli, 2008)...

Whilst these principles of identity formation are broadly accepted for the purpose of this study, "the paradox of identity as both individually and collectively constituted,

and our means of 'getting at' what may be important remains a challenge" (J. Smith, 2010, p. 580).

Smith (2010: p.581) highlights "the paradoxes involved in individual and collective identity formation (Lawler 2008), and between agency and structure (Giddens 1984) in UK higher education" and it is intended that this, along with Evans and Nixon's (2015, p.12) idea that "academic identity is not just shaped and formed, but is itself a shaping and forming influence", which involves "accommodation and agency, action and reaction, adjustment and resistance" (Evans & Nixon, 2015, p. 12) will inform the approach undertaken in the methodology and analysis in this study. Thus, for the purposes of this study,

identity will be understood as the interplay of the agency of the individual with the structures and boundaries that they encounter... something that is situated and contingent, involving interpretation and negotiation on the part of an individual, and ... seen increasingly as being multiple, overlapping and provisional (Whitchurch & Gordon, 2010, pp. 1–2)

As has been highlighted, there is currently relatively limited research into accredited higher education 'teacher development' and 'recognition' courses to explore whether they shape the ways participants think about themselves as academics, and how they think about their academic practice. These courses, and the processes for assessing and conferring Higher Education Academy Fellowship, are expensive (both for the institution and the individual, in terms of their time) and time consuming. They have become an accepted part of a neo-liberal regulation of higher education, 'professionalization' of the academic as teacher, embedded in a discourse of excellence, without there being much evidence to indicate the benefits of participation for academics, and indeed with some evidence to the contrary. This research will seek to address this knowledge deficit, considering academic identities and practices, developed and developing in 'response to shifting contexts' (Stronach, 2010: 10), one result of which is increasingly mandatory participation in a 'teaching qualification' (Gosling, 2010; Hibbert & Semler, 2016). It is acknowledged that the research will take place in the 'illusion of the university' (Watson, 2011: 965) which masks "a large, inconsistent, bureaucratic institution, made up of and serving many communities,

functions and interest groups and articulating quite different traditions" (Kerr, cited in Kavanagh, 2009: 254).

## Further reflections

As discussed in the first chapter, my initial ideas and interest in the research area stemmed from my own concerns regarding the potential influence of the performative regime and current discourses of excellence on the formation of the academic in higher education, and these have been explored in the preceding sections. However, this initial framing of the enquiry proved to be insufficient in the data analysis, and it became apparent through of the inductive approach adopted that further sensitising concepts were emerging. In keeping with the reflexive approach adopted, the thesis therefore represents the developments in my thinking as a researcher, from pre-existing ideas about the research area, to shifts in my understanding and subsequent development of an alternative conceptual framing for the enquiry. These emergent sensitising concepts comprised ideas relating to self-efficacy, agency, belonging and mattering, and these will now be briefly explored in order to help frame the following analysis and findings more holistically.

## Self-efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy stems from the ideas of social cognitive theory - (Bandura, 1986, 1997), itself a development of social learning theory, which emerged from Bandura's counter to behaviouristic models of human behaviour (Bandura, 1977). In a criticism of the 'extreme behaviourist perspective', he states

Man [sic] is a thinking organism possessing capabilities that provide him with some power of self direction. To the extent that traditional behaviour theories can be faulted, it is for providing an incomplete rather than inaccurate account of human behaviour. (Bandura, 1977)

Bandura developed his ideas further to account for his belief in the role of cognition in encoding and performing behaviours (Bandura, 1986), and his social cognitive theory centres on the idea of learning through observation of others and of the impact of role modelling in developing behaviour - related to ideas of communities of practice (Lave

& Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Social cognitive theory holds that learning, change or development is most likely to occur if the individual identifies with the role model and has a high level of self-efficacy, defined as

beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments.... Such beliefs influence the course of action people choose to pursue, how much effort they put forth in given endeavors, how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, their resilience to adversity, whether their thought patterns are self-hindering or self-aiding, how much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands, and the level of accomplishments they realize. (Bandura, 1977)

A person with a high level of self-efficacy will have a greater level of self-belief in relation to coping with (or mastering) difficult problems and is more likely to have the confidence to try new things and to recover quickly from negative experiences. Someone with low self-efficacy may lack the confidence to take on more challenging tasks and thus self-limit their performance and development.

### **Pedagogical agency**

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 2001) is based on an agentic perspective, that also recognises the role of structure on an individual's decisions and identity -

People are self-organising, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating, not just reactive organisms shaped and shepherded by environmental events or inner forces. Human self-development, adaptation and social change are embedded within social systems. Therefore, personal agency operates within a broad network of sociostructural influences...people are producers as well as products of social systems. Personal agency and social structure operate as co-determinants in an integrated causal structure rather than a disembodied duality. (Bandura, 2002, p. 121)

In the literature, concerns about a loss of academic identity with the rise of the 'managed academic' (Winter, 2009) place corporate values and structures at odds with notions of academic autonomy and resultant agency. Nixon (1996) too was concerned by

the extent to which an academic seeks to separate her/his inner professional self from an outer organisational self that privileges commercial principles and practices and enhances the role and importance of the academic manager.

The research and literature that reflects the most concerns about the impact of the loss of academic freedom on academic identity is predominantly referring to freedom for research:

Although research is a comparatively recent addition to the work of academics, the balance between teaching and research has altered significantly as research has come to dominate and is seen as central to defining professional identity and what it is to be a university (Harris, 2005, p. 431)

However, new academics in a teaching focused institution may not be unduly influenced by conceptions of freedom or otherwise in research, as their time may be more likely to be dominated by teaching or teaching related responsibilities, as previously noted by Gale (2011). As such, if an academic is to seek out the 'spaces for the exercise of agency' referred to by Clegg (2008, p. 343), it may well be that these spaces are to be found in teaching and teaching related activities - as such, in 'pedagogical agency'.

### **Belonging and mattering**

The concept of mattering first emerged in the early 1980s (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981) and directly relates to the need to belong from Maslow's (1954, 1970) 'hierarchy of needs'. A sense of belonging is a pre-requisite for feelings of mattering, and increased feelings of mattering may increase a sense of belonging (France & Finney, 2009). However,

there is an important distinction between belonging and mattering; namely, belonging to a group is not sufficient to elicit feelings of mattering. As such, one's sense of mattering is more extreme than one's sense of belonging. For persons to matter, not only must their presence in the group be acknowledged, but they must also feel as though they are important and that they make significant contributions to the group (France & Finney, 2009)

Thus, mattering can be also be seen to relate closely to self-efficacy, and development of self-concept.

Many of the ideas around belonging originate in research into marginalised and minority communities, such as the aboriginal population of Australia (L. Miller, 2003), or homosexual politics in Britain (Weeks, 1990). Earlier literature from Glass (1962), previously referred to, explores the notion of 'insiders and outsiders' in relation to

minority groups, with many parallels with the later literatures on belonging. Weeks (1990) draws the parallels between identity and belonging clearly -

Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. (Weeks, 1990)

Building on this, May (2011, p. 368) reflects that

Belonging involves a process of creating a sense of identification with one's social, relational and material surroundings...Thus belonging plays a role in connecting individuals to the social. This is important because our sense of self is constructed in a relational process in our interactions with other people as well as in relation to more abstract notions of collectively held social norms, values and customs."(May, 2011, p. 368)

Evident here is the role of structure as well as agency (Clegg, 2008) in the formation of a sense of belonging. May (2011, p. 370) acknowledges the similarities between the concept of belonging and Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) ideas regarding 'habitus': the conditioning of "durable, transposable dispositions" within agents, as a result of structures which "generate and organise practices" (Bourdieu, 1990). The concept of habitus is explained as the situation whereby an

agent is socialized in a "field", an evolving set of roles and relationships in a social domain, where various forms of "capital" such as prestige or financial resources are at stake. As the agent accommodates to his or her roles and relationships in the context of his or her position in the field, the agent internalises relationships and expectations for operating in that domain. These internalised relationships and habitual expectations and relationships form, over time, the habitus. (Fadul & Estoque, 2011, p. 55)

Thus the academic is socialised into the roles and relationships of the university environment within which are "hierarchies of esteem" (Clegg, 2008, p. 226) as forms of status capital (for example, perceived position within the university as an individual, perceived position of the university externally). As the academic is habituated to the university environment, and the structures which 'generate and organise practices', they internalise relationships and expectations for operating within this domain, which in time forms the 'habitus'. However, in this version of the world, the agent (our academic) only expresses agency inasmuch as it is a manifestation of habitus - they do not possess self-direction in the sense of autonomous agentic action. Archer's (2000, 2003) theories about the self, identity and agency challenge this idea -

there is more to the world than society... it is precisely because of our interaction with the natural, practical and transcendental orders that humanity has prior, autonomous and efficacious powers which it brings to society itself – and which intertwine with those properties of society which make us social beings... (M. S. Archer, 2000)

The significance of reflexivity as the 'internal conversation' (M. S. Archer, 2003) - and the various modes of reflexivity that an agent may inhabit - is seen as crucial to understanding "how the causal power of social structures and cultural systems is mediated through agency" (Vandenberghe, 2005, p. 231) -

At first, the human being is a (Bourdiesian) agent who involuntarily occupies a social position that defines his or her life-chances. As she becomes aware of the interests she shares with other members of his or her class, the agent is transformed into a (Tourainean) corporate agent who transforms society in such a way that the agent, who by now became a social actor and a role-taker, can not only occupy and personify the social role she takes on, but also personalise it in accord with his or her ultimate concerns. (Vandenberghe, 2005)

As such, the higher education environment both shapes and is shaped by the actors within it - and in turn, individual academic identities are themselves the product of external structures (influencing factors such as professional and or disciplinary cultures, institutional policies and assumed practices) and of their own reflexivity and inner dialogue. Academics examine their context, asking and answering themselves how they can best realize their concerns, which are self-determined, in circumstances that were not necessarily their own choosing (M. S. Archer, 2003). Thus, the concept of habitus is not refuted inasmuch as developed, to account for the role and significance of the individual reflexive agent in *acting on* as well as being *acted upon*.

The role of belonging intersects with these ideas in May's (2011, p. 370) critique of the limitations of habitus -

According to Bourdieu (1979: 171–2), our habitus fits a specific social field and as long as we remain in this field we are not necessarily aware of our habitus, but rather, it feels 'natural' to us. What the concept of belonging allows us to do that habitus does not is to understand how people can be embedded in a familiar everyday world yet feel that they do not belong there... mere



familiarity with a place, a group of people or a culture is not enough for us to gain a sense of belonging.

Academics may be habituated to the academic environment, and familiar with the culture -"the habits of the institution and the habitats that they occupy..." (Robinson, 2006), but a simplistic correlation between this and the exercise of agency (and development of sense of self-efficacy) cannot be assumed without consideration of the influence of belonging, and what May (2011, p. 369) refers to as "hierarchies of belonging", also pointing out that "not everyone is allowed to belong." The ability to participate in that society, in its development and also to develop a sense that one is able to influence as well as be subject to influences is also key:

...a sense of belonging is not built merely on the existence of a collectively shared culture, but requires also the right to participate in the development of the 'living tradition' or the reflexive arguments of that society... (May, 2011, p. 368)

## Summary

This literature review (and the previous context chapter) draws on a wide and diverse body of literature. Wallace and Wray (2011) categorise the nature of academic literature into theoretical (the development of models); research (data driven observational literature); practice (applied, makes recommendations); and policy (critique of existing agendas to effect change), though acknowledge that "any individual text may feature aspects of more than one literature type" (Wallace & Wray, 2011, p. 19). Much of the literature reviewed here cannot be categorised simply but represents cross over between, for example theoretical ideas about identity formation together with political or economic commentary regarding neo-liberalism, managerialism, and marketization. Smith's (2010; 2011) research literature could likewise be viewed as practice literature, and relates also to policy literature in her references to the neoliberal higher education environment.

The exploration of these literatures has influenced the development of the study in several ways. The exploration of policy literatures and related commentaries from less-traditional sources (media, policy websites such as WonkHE) informed the

establishment of a position regarding the context and position of higher education today, with regards to the neoliberal agenda, the consumerisation and bureaucratisation of current practice in higher education. This body of literature influenced my thinking in terms of the potential experiences of new academics - and resulted in sensitising concepts relating to administrative burden or the pressures of workload in new academics.

Theoretical literatures relating to identity, in several cases cross referencing back to neoliberal ideas emerging from the political literatures, informed the position and perspective of identity formation in relation to the enquiry, and as such the design of the interview schedule and subsequent analysis of the data. Taking the position that identity was not a singular entity, that it is formed by both agentic and structural influences, and internal and external processes (Jenkins, 2004), resulted in an interview schedule that sought to illuminate both the inner world (reflections, conceptions) and external experiences (day to day, doing the job, critical incidents) of the participants. Clegg (2008) and her ideas about 'hybridised' identities, and the policy literature of Gunn and Fisk (2013) influenced the design and analysis in remaining open to the notion of diverse and multifaceted academic identities. Furthermore, the theoretical and research literatures relating to conceptual ideas such as belonging, mattering and self-efficacy added further sensitising concepts (Blumer, 1954) into the analysis of the data, and interpretation of the participant narratives.

A final example of the influences of key literatures is in relation to the 'practice literatures' (Wallace and Wray, 2011) reviewed, much of which also made reference to dominant policy discourse and were also theoretical literatures in terms of their observational design. These were focused on the new academic experience, including participation in PgCert type courses. Ennals et al (2016, Archer (2011), Gale (2011) and Smith (2010, 2011) in particular informed my thinking in relation to notions of authenticity amongst new academics, ideas of 'novice' academics from 'expert' professionals, the significance of teaching, and the idea of 'resonant' or 'dissonant' experiences. These ideas influenced the design of the interview schedule in seeking reflections on when new academics both felt, and did not feel 'like an academic', in order to try to uncover their conceptualisations of their identity in different situations.

## Research aim, objectives and questions

The research aim, objectives and questions build on this literature review, and have been formulated to address this need for further insights into the experiences of new academic staff, and any resultant impacts on the development of an academic identity.

In order not to limit what may emerge from the data (MacLure, 2010), the research questions were constructed to be as open as possible around the broader aim, rather than narrow in focus around, for example, the impact of the neoliberal university and / or related excellence agendas, given the inductive approach adopted and the intention to be open to the possibility of different narratives emerging.

The overarching aim is to explore academic conceptions of themselves and their practices over time, and factors that may contribute to changes in these conceptions. Findings will be theorised in light of existing perspectives outlined within the literature review, or, if new ideas emerge, in light of additional theoretical perspectives. In keeping with my personal desire for research to be 'useful', a key objective is to identify any implications for the development and support of new academics. The research questions allow for the development of a qualitative, interpretative enquiry, the approach to which will be explored in the next chapter.

The aim, objectives and research questions are presented on the next page:

**Aim:**

To explore academics' conceptions of themselves and their practices, whether these conceptions change over time, and why that might be

**Objectives:**

- To identify how academic practices and identities are shaped
- To highlight aspects of the academic experience in order to inform recommendations for practice
- To identify implications for the support and development of new academics

**Research questions:**

1. How do participants think about themselves as academics, and about their academic practice, prior to participation in the PgC LTHE course?
2. Do these conceptions change during and after completion of the PgLTHE? If so, in what ways?
3. What might account for these changes?

## Chapter 4: Methodology

### Introduction and overview

This chapter will outline the approach to enquiry and analysis, explaining my methodology to justify the approach I took in trying to answer my research questions. The research focused on a group of academics who were undertaking / had recently completed the PgCert LTHE course at my institution, and their conceptions of their role and practices as an 'academic'. Longitudinal semi-structured interviews were carried out with current course participants over the duration of their attendance on the course, to ascertain whether their conceptions changed over time, and what the key factors were in this process. One off semi-structured interviews were held with a different set of participants, course alumni, 6-12 months following their course completion, in which they reflected retrospectively on their previous and current conceptions of their academic role and their practices. In analysis, data from current participants was prioritised for primary analysis, and then compared to the alumni retrospective reflections. Researcher reflections were recorded in a research diary. Analysis was conducted in a way that sought to answer the key research questions whilst remaining open to new ideas emerging from the data. The analysis identified key themes, whilst maintaining the visibility of participant voices and stories. The research was conducted reflexively, embedding the researcher's own personal journey as a 'learning researcher' and the gradual inhabitation of her own academic role and identity.

Data collection took place in a large, northern post-1992 university. The institution has a focus on vocational and applied degrees, and a student intake that includes a large proportion (around 70%) of local ('commuter') students. The university is made up of several large faculties, within which are varying numbers of academic departments. There are also several central directorates with responsibilities for cross-cutting areas (such as facilities, Human Resources, and also student related processes and activities).

The locus of the enquiry is the PgCert LTHE, a course that I currently lead and teach on. As such, this chapter will also highlight my positionality and the significance of insider

research and reflexivity for this enquiry; what does it mean for me to be researching an aspect of my own practice; what implications are there for my own evolving academic identity; and what steps have I taken to ensure that the data collection and analysis are credible and trustworthy? This chapter will justify the methods adopted in relation to the research questions, and explore the relationship between my underpinning ontology and the approach undertaken, making transparent my beliefs about knowledge and knowing, and thus contextualising the claims to 'knowledge' I make.

The research project aligns with principles of descriptive-interpretative qualitative enquiry, due to the

emphasis on understanding phenomena in their own right (rather than from some outside perspective); open, exploratory research questions (vs. closed-ended hypotheses); unlimited, emergent description options (vs. predetermined choices or rating scales)... (Elliott & Timulak, 2005, p. 147)

I am interested in individual's accounts of their own experiences and how they describe those experiences (see for example Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and also in my own relationship with the research area and subsequent influence of this on the enquiry and analysis of data. The underpinning rationale was a desire to find out more about participants lived experiences as academics; and how this would relate to both the literature, and to my own understanding as fellow academic, researcher and the PgCert course tutor. The research aimed to be explicit about any presuppositions, as well as my own positionality, and the impact of those on the interviews and analysis. In this regard, as noted above, reflexivity (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009; Finlay & Gough, 2003) was a key guiding principle of the qualitative approach adopted.

### **Ontology and epistemology**

Before trying to find new knowledge through research, it's necessary to identify what 'knowledge' is - how can we know, and what is 'knowing' anyway? My views on these philosophical questions have evolved over time and now align with the constructivist position that seeks understanding, a position on knowledge and knowing that is aligned with Gray's (2014, p. 18) 'interpretative' assertion, that "truth and meaning do

not exist in some external world, but are created by the subject's interactions with the world". This naturalistic paradigm is characterised by, amongst other things,

an emphasis ...upon description rather than explanation, [and] the representation of reality through the eyes of participants (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992, p. 16),

and as Gray (2014, p. 22) reiterates, "any attempt to understand social reality has to be grounded in people's experience of that social reality". A lack of fixedness in ontological thinking - the idea that ontological positions are just working assumptions - is discussed by Hammersley (2005), who indicated that while a researcher's philosophical perspectives influence the development of a practical orientation, this might subsequently change as a result of other influences, just as their philosophical position might evolve.

It may be as a result of long lasting influences of my upbringing (religious parents who see things very much in 'black and white' terms), and also my undergraduate discipline (Geography) that I had (and occasionally still have) a tendency to believe that 'the right answer' (or indeed an answer) can be found, and that my perspective is most likely to be the 'right' one - notwithstanding my *intellectual* acceptance of the subjectivist position that "the perspectives of other people are not wrong, but different" (Abma & Widdershoven, 2011, p. 672) and that a range of 'answers' (dependent on both one's and one's participants' values, culture, age and so on) may in fact present themselves. Despite my more recently emergent subjectivist philosophy, I can still sympathise with the position that an objective reality exists external to our experience of it (it's simpler that way), and that somehow we can find our way to the 'truth'. However, the development and practice of social science acts in contrast to this ideological position, typified perhaps in Weber's (1968) ideas about *verstehen* (the empathic understanding of human nature, as opposed to explanation) and his conception of social science as "the interpretative understanding of social action" (Weber, 1968, p. 4). He goes on to examine the term 'meaning', stating clearly that

"in no case does it refer to an objectively "correct" meaning or one which is "true" in some metaphysical sense".

Although *verstehen* is seen as a conceptual approach that rejects a positivist world view, Blaxter et al (2010, p. 60) intimate that Weber's writings allow for opposing paradigms to be brought together; that through understanding, one can explain – and thus the dichotomy between understanding (*verstehen*) and explanation (*erklaran*) may not be mutually exclusive. This is a position I can relate to – after all, if through research one gains a deeper insight and understanding of a particular area, it stands to reason that one may seek to propose 'explanations' for why things are as they are. That said, and the reason why this exposition of ontological position is important, I am mindful that such explanations should be considered as merely one possible interpretation of many.

As outlined above, the research area is that of seeking greater understanding, and includes an awareness of the researcher as a 'human instrument' (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). I am seeking the views of participants – their lived experiences – in order to further my own understanding, whilst maintaining an awareness of myself in the research process - reflexivity.

### Reflexivity

An awareness of self when researching is not a new phenomenon, according to Finlay and Gough (Finlay & Gough, 2003) who tell us that reflexivity in qualitative research - "where researchers turn a critical gaze towards themselves" goes back at least one hundred years. Bolton (2010) in writing about notions of reflective and reflexive practice, seeks a 'demystification' of the terms and clarity about the nature of a reflexive approach. Her focus, whilst aimed at those seeking to use reflective and reflexive writing and thinking to aid professional development as opposed to reflexivity as an approach to research, also offers a partial insight into the benefits and challenges of an embedded reflexive approach to research. She describes reflexivity thus:

Reflexivity is finding strategies to question our own attitudes, thought processes, values, assumptions, prejudices and habitual actions, to strive to understand our complex role in relation to others....Reflexivity is making aspects of the self strange: focusing close attention upon *one's own* actions, thoughts, feelings, values, identify and their effect on others, situations, professional and social structures" (Bolton, 2010, p. 13, emphasis original)



Through a reflexive approach to enquiry, I am alert to the discovery of dissonance between what I purport to believe in, my understandings, my espoused values, and my values in practice. My research aims to adopt reflexivity as an embedded methodological approach, via several mechanisms. The keeping of a research diary, to record thoughts, feelings and current 'positions' in relation to the research being undertaken, enables a 'watchful eye' to be kept on existing and emerging pre-conceptions or prejudices in relation to the topic under investigation. As data emerge, and during analysis, referring back to the diary enables interpretative assumptions to be checked against pre-existing assumptions, and ensure that findings are data led and reflecting the voice of the participants.

Wilkinson (1988), defines three distinct but interrelated forms of methodological reflexivity – personal, functional and disciplinary, with personal reflexivity relating to the identity of the researcher (linking to positionality, and self-awareness), functional relating to the role of the researcher (the form and function of the research) and potential effects on the research process, and disciplinary acknowledging a critical stance towards the "nature and influence of the field of enquiry..." (Wilkinson, 1988, p. 493). Each of these forms of reflexivity are combined and reflected to varying degrees in my own approach. An exploration of my own professional identity, as described in the introduction, has enabled me to be aware of its influence on how I operate at work and in undertaking research, and the risk of me subconsciously prioritising / giving precedence to aspects of the participants' stories that mirror my own experiences. A reflexive approach alerts me to this, and the need to be conscious not to discount the stories which are least similar to my own, or the perspectives that differ. The form and function of the research (and my own role both as course tutor and researcher) links to the potentially politicised role of the course, as identified in the literature review, and the inescapable link between its 'efficacy' and my own practitioner identity and sense of self-worth.

These aspects are potentially among the most high risk 'biasing' aspects to the research, in terms of both data collection and analysis, inasmuch as I could prompt or notice the positive commentaries from participants in relation to their experiences on the course, whilst ignoring / being less attuned to the negative ones. The nature of the

semi-structured interviews, the potential power dynamic within them highlights the need to be aware of how I have operated as researcher and any possible influences on the responses of participants. However, as stated by Elliot and Timulak (2005, p. 148)

bias is an unavoidable part of the process of coming to know something and that knowledge is impossible without some kind of previous conceptual structure.

Any possible power dynamic (student-tutor; researcher-participant) I attempted to mitigate by engaging in a conversational style of interview; they were also aware (as I express it explicitly in class and in course documents) of my regard and respect for them as colleagues. Originally, I thought I should try to mitigate against the risk of biasing interviews by avoiding empathising with participants comments or experiences (by not saying 'I feel the same' or 'that's how it was for me too', for example). However, the nature of the enquiry I was undertaking was not one where the researcher inhabits a land of impartial neutrality. My participants already knew me, as their tutor - to pretend otherwise would have created an artifice, and I was seeking authenticity in my interactions with them, much as I do as a tutor. As such, I did not avoid empathising or even sharing my own experiences if it felt appropriate to do so, in order to create an atmosphere of conversation, to encourage sharing and elaboration, and to encourage participants to see me as someone who, albeit in the past, had undergone similar experiences and could understand.

Finlay and Gough (Finlay & Gough, 2003) provide a useful summary of reflexivity, aligning its use with ontological perspectives -

A broad distinction can be made between *realist* uses of reflexivity, wherein researcher confession is deployed to convey the 'accuracy' or 'authenticity' of analysis, and...*relativist* forms of reflexivity, which tend towards disrupting narrative coherence.

The purpose of a reflexive methodology in this enquiry is broadly relativist, as well as contributing to, not the 'accuracy', but the 'trustworthiness' of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) - to explicitly articulate the researcher's position within the research, to ensure that narrative coherence is appropriately challenged, and to reassure the reader as to the self-awareness of the researcher of her own influences on the

processes and results of the research, thus increasing the 'integrity' of the data (Finlay, 2002, p. 210).

### Positionality

Possibly the most visible aspect of my positionality is the fact that as a tutor and co-course leader of this provision, I am emotionally invested in its success as providing an effective learning experience, one that genuinely helps academics to develop as teachers and to navigate the world of higher education as we know it. This second goal is not part of the explicit course aims, but definitely forms part of my own personal intrinsic motivation and thus impacts on how I deliver my part of the course.

At the start of each interview, I reassured participants regarding confidentiality, and reiterated the value to me of their honest thoughts and opinions, as a beginning researcher and an academic committed to trying to continually improve her practice. I also made use of what Blumer (1954, p. 7), in his discussion on issues with social theory, referred to 'sensitizing concepts' - a lens or a filter through which a researcher views their field. As he elaborates:

Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look. The hundreds of our concepts—like culture, institutions, social structure, mores, and personality—are not definitive concepts but are sensitizing in nature....they rest on a general sense of what is relevant.... A sensitizing concept ... does not enable the user to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. Instead, it gives the user a general sense of reference. (Blumer, 1954, p. 8)

Smith (2011) refers to the use of sensitizing concepts in semi-structured interviews in ways that may be meaningful to academics, and may help enable participants to express themselves openly, along with a conversational approach in interviewing. Her 'sensitizing concepts' were "academic cultures... perceived constraints and enablements...and the potential for autonomy" (Smith, 2011, p. 73). Similarly, my initial sensitising concepts resulting from my review of the literature meant I was alert to the potential influence of discipline and colleagues on the development of academic identity, and perceptions of external aspects such as excellence frameworks and league tables.

Blumer (1954) goes on to suggest that “sensitizing concepts can be tested, improved and refined”, through the process of the research. This was borne out; for example, whilst I had gained a 'general sense of reference' from reading regarding the potential importance of discipline / academic cultures (Becher & Trowler, 2001), I had not anticipated ideas relating to a sense of 'belonging', and became sensitized to these following interviews and my initial reflections on the stories that participants were telling.

One further aspect of my positionality touched on in the introduction is linked to my own academic identity. As well as leading the PgCert course, since 2014 I have been part of Departmental management, and am currently seconded to a Faculty leadership role. I am aware that I want to be, if not down with the kids, then 'one of the people', not part of 'the establishment' - which is my perception of what 'management' is. This reflexive analysis of my positionality in terms of my identity encourages me to be explicit about the reality of my role, and to question my inbuilt beliefs that being an 'academic' or a 'manager' is inherently not 'useful'. That said, I was keen as explored earlier for participants to not see me as 'senior leader' in the research process; I wanted to be a 'colleague', which is how I try to operate anyway regardless of my level of seniority, and which influenced my adoption of the 'research conversation' (Kvale, 1996) approach as described earlier.

### Insider research

My position in relation to the research may be simplistically interpreted as one of 'insider' - I work for the university, have done so for over a decade, and have "a lived familiarity with the group being researched" (Merton, 1972, p. 11) - I have undertaken the course myself, albeit many years ago, and also teach, module lead, undertake scholarly practice, and undertake other 'standard' academic duties. However, my position within the organisation means my identity - as perceived both by myself and by others - is not so clear-cut. In fact, as DeVault (1996, p. 35) reminds us, identities are "...always relative, cross cut by other differences and often situational and contingent". So the fact that I am now a senior leader, with more autonomy in my 'day job' than the course participants, makes me somewhat of an 'outsider' as well - much as I may want that not to be the case, as explored above. This 'power-relationship' is

one factor explored by Mercer (2007) as a feature of the researcher identity which can contribute to the insider/outsider position.

Although Olson (1977) favoured an 'inside/outside' dichotomy, mutually exclusive, other writers have refuted this in favour of a continuum, with permeable and unstable boundaries, with a researcher that may move back and forth between the different positions, "as situations involving different values arise, different statuses are activated and the lines of separation shift" (Merton, 1972, p. 28).

Mercer (2007) explores the features that may indicate these levels of insider-ness or outsider-ness - some innate and fixed, such as ethnicity, some innate and evolving, such as age, and other dimensions that are less tangible, such as the power relationships referred to above, and even the personalities of the researcher and specific participants. In Mercer's (2007, pp. 4–5) view, she believes it is possible for the 'insider/outsider' position to shift even within the course of the same interview, depending on the focus of the question and how the researcher is viewed by the participant in light of it. Within my research, this is entirely possible, as the questions move from the more esoteric and intangible conceptualisation of 'being an academic', to aspects of their local contexts (from which I am separated), to the specifics of the role of the PgCert course, to which I as the researcher am intrinsically connected in the eyes of the participants, as their tutor. I approached this by being transparent about this shifting role prior to the interview, to reassure participants that their honest reflections are more useful to me than them modifying their thoughts due to my relationship with the course and them, to reiterate confidentiality and to encourage openness in the 'spirit of the research':

*B: And can I speak frankly?*

*I: Of course, absolutely. I need people to speak frankly, you must, yes, yes.*

*B: Some of it was a total waste of time....a lot of the discussions we had, which I frankly thought were a waste of time.*

In this extract, although it appears the participant is seeking permission to 'speak frankly', it was expressed less as a request than a statement of what was to come - more of a rhetorical question, with my encouragement to continue not necessarily needed. This is, I believe, a result of the dialogue that I had encouraged on the course,

which participants had become used to and as a result had developed the confidence to express their views openly to me.

Whether it is 'better' for the purposes of research to be an insider or an outsider is contested with different writers expressing polarised views (Mercer, 2007), which can be broadly separated down methodological positions of objectivity and neutrality (indicating a more positivist view) versus insight, access and depth of understanding (indicating a relativist or interpretivist view). Both can be critiqued - the assumption that the 'neutral' outsider researcher comes in with no pre-conceptions or value judgements is problematic, and also they may well have

a structurally imposed incapacity to comprehend alien groups, statuses, cultures and societies ... and therefore cannot have the direct, intuitive sensitivity that alone makes empathic understanding possible (Merton, 1972, p. 15).

Clearly, I have an in-depth understanding of the wider context of the participants, although not with their local Departmental / disciplinary culture, so I am somewhat in between in this regard. Their cultures are not exactly alien, being as they are part of a broader 'university culture', but I do not have a lived familiarity with them. This perhaps gives a useful separation whereby participants felt they could discuss their feelings about their local context more openly, as I do not know to whom they might be referring. Several expressed this explicitly either prior to or after interviews; my post-interview reflections record one participant (C4, interview 3) stating

*it's good to just talk with someone about this stuff, someone outside the Department with no Departmental agenda... it's good to get things off my chest... sorry if I'm using you as a counsellor!*

Countering my concerns about pre-existing relationships with participants potentially biasing responses, or as outlined earlier, resulting in them being less open than would otherwise be the case, Mercer (2007, p. 7) suggests that

insider researchers usually have considerable credibility and rapport with the subjects of their studies, a fact that may engender a greater level of candour than would otherwise be the case,

and cites support from Hockey (1993, pp. 204–205) that

because the wider social structure classifies the researcher and informants in a similar or identical fashion, this creates greater confidence between the parties,

potentially leading to a greater appreciation of the complexity of the world being researched, and resulting in an accurate portrayal rather than a simplistic caricature.

However, the opposite may also be true - especially if the researcher position is fluid along the continuum of 'insider/outsider', and if there are hidden or overt power dynamics at play. As such, "people may not share certain information with an insider for fear of being judged" (Shah, 2004, p. 569), or even as Mercer (2007, p. 7) highlights, and particularly pertinently for me,

informants might be more willing to bare their souls to a detached outsider than to someone so intimately bound up with the life of the institution and so enmeshed in its power relations.

Nevertheless, it is my belief that there was relationship of trust between me and the participants: as their tutor, I was open and candid with them about my own challenges and successes at work, they know 'who' I am and 'how' I am; in most cases, I have watched them teach and shared ideas with them (an inherently personal exchange) and I believe - based on previous experiences with course participants - this actually enables them to feel comfortable with me and able to share their thoughts and feelings, even if they want to say things they think I'd rather not hear. The description by one participant (as mentioned above) of the research interviews as 'counselling sessions' where they could 'get things off their chest' indicates a willingness to share their stories.

As earlier writing indicates, I have a strong desire to be perceived as an 'insider', to 'belong' to the group - but as reflexive analysis exposes, I have to accept there are factors which mean I am not as much of one as I would like to be. This means that I can align with the conceptualisation of 'insider/outsider' as a continuum, rather than a dichotomy (Merton, 1972), particularly as Mercer (2007, p. 7) says,

the more we conceive of them as points on a continuum, the more we are likely to value them both, recognising their potential strengths and weaknesses, in all manner of contexts.

That there is not a fixed 'superior' position makes sense to me, and is further supported by Hammersley (1993, p. 219) when he says that

there are no overwhelming advantages to being an insider or an outsider. Each position has advantages and disadvantages, though these will take on slightly different weights depending on the particular circumstances and purposes of the research.

## Ethics

The nature of the research - a senior colleague asking participants questions relating to their perception of professional identity, the nature of their role, and feelings about their role - meant a careful consideration of ethical issues. In keeping with my institution's research ethics policy, I completed the internal ethics application and risk assessment and was granted permission to carry out the research by the Research Ethics Committee. The ethics policy aims to ensure that the interests of participants

are put first at all times and that researchers do everything possible to fully inform people who have consented to take part. Care is always taken to provide confidentiality and anonymity. (Institutional Research Ethics Policy, 2015)

In line with the policy, it was a priority for me to ensure high standards of "integrity, impartiality and respect for data", as well as exploring any aspects that could risk the "psychological wellbeing of participants" (Institutional Research Ethics Policy, 2015). A key area of potential risk to participant wellbeing in this research was colleagues speaking about their own personal views and relating this to their experiences as a lecturer at the institution. The broader topic areas were not considered to be sensitive or controversial, but it was possible that negative opinions about working practices or conditions could have been expressed. This had the potential to stimulate distress or dissatisfaction for participants if they had not previously vocalised such concerns. I was prepared to act in a pastoral capacity outside the research encounter (as appropriate in my course tutor role) and as such could, if needed, have effectively signposted participants to personal tutor support within the wider team as well as other advice and guidance in the wider institution. On one occasion where a participant was



expressing confusion regarding the workplanning process (following the interview), I was able to suggest that they seek out the individual with a particular role relating to that process in his Department.

It was also essential, and key to the trust relationship explored earlier, that participants were assured as to the anonymity of their thoughts and opinions. I explained clearly that not only would the data be secure, but - their interviews being used for analysis notwithstanding - what they told me would stay with me; only I would know that who had said what. I had a responsibility to act with integrity and with care, as the data these individuals were sharing with me related to some sensitive and personal aspects of their relationship with work, and relationships at work. As O'Leary (2004) outlines,

the power to produce knowledge requires responsibility for integrity in its production. Similarly, the power relationship inherent in researcher-researched interactions requires responsibility to ensure the dignity and wellbeing of the researched (O'Leary, 2004, p. 50)

Participants were informed about the nature of the research and invited to participate verbally and via email, so that key information had been communicated via different mediums. The information was revisited before the first interview and informed consent was obtained; this was revisited in every interview. Confidentiality was assured and explained (anonymised data, stored securely, exclusion of any more obvious identifying characteristics or commentary in the data).

There are no managerial relationships between myself and the participants - they all belong to different departments to me. However, during the data collection period, I gained a promotion to a different role with Faculty-wide responsibilities. I applied to the Research Ethics Committee for continued consent for the research given my role change, and this was granted. My change in role was communicated by letter to the participants (see Appendix E) and they were given the option to withdraw from the study if they chose. They all chose to continue as participants, including those from the same Faculty. The respective natures of my different roles (Faculty-wide role; course leader role; module leader role) were explained to participants - I reiterated my discretion at the start of every interview and assured them of the anonymity of their

data in terms of the research, and confidentiality in terms of what they shared with me. The result of this is that there are aspects of the data which are not included in order to protect anonymity - references to subject areas have been replaced with [subject] and references to practitioner roles as [practitioner].

In line with my approved ethics approach, to summarise, the names of participants and any obvious identifying characteristics (subject; previous profession) have been anonymised or removed. My results are only being presented as part of EdD submission and any publication that results from this work. All data is being kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act - all electronic data is stored on a password protected computer; all hard copy data (consent forms, and participant details forms) are stored in a locked filing cabinet within a locked office at my institution.

## Methods

According to Finlay (2002), in a qualitative interpretative enquiry terms such as reliability and validity are less appropriate, and the trustworthiness and integrity of the research should be the focus instead, defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as credibility, dependability and transferability.

Dependability relates to

the degree to which data change over time and alterations made in the researcher's decisions during the analysis process... On one hand, it is important to question the same areas for all the participants. On the other hand, interviewing and observing is an evolving process during which interviewers ... acquire new insights into the phenomenon of study that can subsequently influence follow-up questions.... (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 110)

This description above illustrates a reflexive approach, whereby shifts in the researcher's pre-existing conceptual framework and / or their 'sensitizing concepts' are discussed, and any resulting effect on the study articulated. This research project demonstrates trustworthiness via an explicit articulation of the approach to analysis, and an open acknowledgement of the position and role of the researcher in the construction of the findings. In terms of transferability, or "the extent to which the

findings can be transferred to other settings or groups" (Polit & Hungler, 1999, p. 717), Graneheim and Lundman (2004) make the pertinent point that ultimately it is the reader's decision as to whether the findings are transferable to other contexts. In this study, this is facilitated by

clear and distinct description of culture and context, selection and characteristics of participants, data collection and process of analysis, (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 110).

Polit and Hungler (1999) assert that credibility relates to the focus of the research and how effectively research data and processes of analysis address the intended focus.

Graneheim and Lundman (2004, p. 109) suggest that

choosing participants with various experiences increases the possibility of shedding light on the research question from a variety of aspects,

thus enhancing credibility. While I was not in a position to 'choose' participants, relying on volunteers from an opportunistic sample (Patton, 1990), the nature of the course participants meant I would be likely to end up with participants with some variety in experiences and backgrounds. Participants (current and alumni) were recruited via 'opportunistic sampling' (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Patton, 1990). For the current students, an email was sent to the new cohort prior to the course starting outlining the research and asking if anyone was interested in participating. Then, at the course induction event I was able to repeat this invite verbally, which resulted in seven volunteers, with whom I arranged the first interview to take place the following week before the course started, sending them a follow up email and consent form (see Appendix A and B). For the alumni, I sent an email outlining the research and asked for volunteers for an interview. Nine responded, and of these two were used for the pilot interview, and the remaining seven were used for the main alumni interview, again being sent the follow up email and consent form (see Appendix C). In line with Graneheim and Lunden (2004), I had felt that a range of staff in terms of contract type (full time, fractional, associate lecturer), subject area, and age / experience would be ideal, as this might provide a greater range of perspectives to analyse. I was conscious however that with the necessity of the sampling method used I would likely be working with a limited scope for selection in terms of participants. I had not set out to reflect a particular demographic of academic in my aims, and as such, I knew that

whatever my sample I would still be gathering interesting and complex data that would enable me to provide insights related to the stated research questions. In the end, the opportunistic sampling had in fact provided a fairly broad range of academic staff as the next section illustrates.

Whilst I was aware from the literature (and personal experiences) that possible 'types' of new academic may be apparent in the modern higher education research context, for example Clegg's (2008, p. 338) 'hybridised academic identities', I did not identify specific 'categories' prior to data collection. As the sampling was by necessity opportunistic, I had not designed a research project that was dependent on obtaining perspectives from specific 'categories' of academic (for example, nature of contact or occupation prior to academic appointment). In recruiting participants I collected basic personal data, as well as details about the nature of their contract, their time in teaching (if any) and their employment prior to their academic appointment. At the time of recruiting participants, although I had explored methodological issues in some depth, I had not finalised my approach to analysis, and felt it would be better to have this information and not use it, than not have it and need it at a later date. Also, I knew from an early stage that I did not want the individual stories and narratives to be lost in the mass of data, and as such, obtaining additional contextual details from participants enabled their personal stories to be visible. After initial exploration of the first data set (interview 1) and gaining a greater insight into the personal biographies of the different participants, I decided that identifying 'categories' of academic may be appropriate to add contextual detail to the analysis process and potentially add insights to the interpretation of the data. Several key factors were apparent in participant responses and reflections in the first interview - whether the new academic had come into higher education from industry (a professional entrant) or education (an academic entrant); whether they had any previous teaching experience; and what the nature of their contract was - part time, full time, temporary, permanent.

My intention was not to define 'types' of academic and explicitly compare their differing views - but rather to work out whether it is where they start from (their professional identity on entry, their previous experience) or what happens to them (their local contexts, the nature of their contracts) - or both - that may account for

their perceptions regarding the formation of their academic identities. Categorisation of this type would enable me to identify not only if there was any key dissonance or consensus about the nature and practice of being - and becoming - an academic, but to see if any connection could be made to differences in individual backgrounds and contractual circumstances at the point of entry. An adaptation of Flick's (2009) approach therefore allowed categorisation to emerge from the data and the potential for individual stories and associated contextual details to remain visible, something which was integral to the methodological approach. However, to maintain participant confidentiality in line with the ethics of the project, specific identifying details (such as precise subject area, age, occupation before higher education) were omitted from the summary table). As such, the participant details and categorisation table is presented like this:

<b>Current</b>						
<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Background**</b>	<b>HE Teaching*</b>	<b>Academic contract*</b>	<b>Perm/temp*</b>	<b>FT/PT*</b>
Sarah	Health related	Professional	None	Senior lecturer	Permanent	Full time
Liz	Finance related	Professional	Some	Associate lecturer	Temporary	Part time
Kate	Humanities	Professional	Some	Lecturer	Permanent	Part time
James	Sport related	Professional	Some	Lecturer	Permanent	Full time
Andy	STEM	Academia	Some	Lecturer	Permanent	Full time
Jacob	STEM	Professional	Some	Associate lecturer	Temporary	Part time
Rachel	Design related	Professional	Some	Lecturer	Permanent	Part time
<b>Alumni</b>						
<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Background**</b>	<b>HE Teaching*</b>	<b>Academic contract</b>	<b>Perm/temp*</b>	<b>FT/PT*</b>
Tony	Business related	Professional	Some	Senior lecturer	Permanent	Full time
Chris	Law / Criminology	Professional	None	Senior lecturer	Permanent	Full time
Barbara	Finance related	Professional	Some	Senior lecturer	Permanent	Full time
Sue	Law / Criminology	Academia	Some	Senior lecturer	Permanent	Full time
Abi	Health related	Professional	None	Senior lecturer	Permanent	Full time
Luke	Finance related	Academia	None	Graduate tutor	Temporary	Full time
Simon	Health related	Professional	Some	Lecturer	Permanent	Full time

*Table 7: Participant details and categorisation*

*\* at the time of the (first) interview*

*\*\* occupation before academic appointment*

Teaching experience refers to teaching experience at the point of appointment to their current post, and relates to higher education teaching experience. None of the current

participants had experience of teaching or training outside of the higher education context, and three of the alumni participants did (Tony, Barbara and Abi). One current participant (Sarah) and three alumni participants (Chris, Abi and Luke) had been completely new to teaching and academia on appointment - all the others had had some experience of / exposure to either teaching / training or academia or both (not necessarily in academic roles). This contextual detail is drawn on in the discussion and presentation of findings.

The distribution of the background of participants (predominantly professional) reflects the ethos and strategic aspirations of the institution in terms of its 'applied' mission. As such, the data may be appropriately representative of the institutional academic (and academics at similarly configured higher education providers), if not the sector-wide one.

The idea of a 'research conversation' is pertinent to this enquiry, as both researcher and participants are invested in the topics under discussion, and in creating a climate of trust as explored previously. In order to develop my framework to provide data for the research questions, and to develop my approach to conducting research interviews, the work of Flick (2000) on episodic interviewing, and of Kvale (1996) on ideas of 'intersubjectivity' and 'research conversations' were influential. Kvale's (1996, p65) position is that the interview is "an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest" and in the interview process,

knowledge should be seen as constructed between participants...as such, the interview is not exclusively either subjective or objective, it is intersubjective (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 267).

Thus the 'inter-view' (Kvale, 1996, p. 65) may involve a conversation and negotiation of meaning between the interviewer and their subject, which could arise from their personal ontology, the nature of their relationship and shared understandings of meaning, to name some important influencing factors. This notion of intersubjectivity supports the methodological approach taken in this enquiry in that awareness of the researcher's own opinion and 'bias' is an essential part the interview and / or analysis process. In addition to my self-awareness, I knew that my participants may also have

been aware of my position on a variety of issues relevant to the research, given I was their tutor, and had been for the duration of an academic year by the end of the research. As such, it would have perhaps been unrealistic to expect them to suddenly see me as an impartial interviewer - and whilst I did not engage in a conversation exactly, the nature of the semi-structured interview (and my preamble in terms of describing the interview process) enabled participants to ask questions for clarification, and for additional questions to be asked to explore emerging pertinent topics. Such practices can act as signs to the participant as to the researcher's interests and potential biases, although I made efforts to remain 'neutral' in terms of any responses relating to participants' experiences on the PgCert course. The 'research as conversation' approach allowed for emerging themes to be clarified with participants as part of the interview process, and at times to use the participants' feedback "to establish the next question in the interview" (Aronson, 1994, p. 2). For example, this 'reflecting back', seeking confirmation from the first interview with participant C1:

*Interviewer: I am getting a very strong sense of your teaching practice here, very strong sense that that's how you would describe it [being an academic], as someone who is facilitating learning? I'm not putting words in your mouth here?*

*Participant C1: No, that's how I feel, it's more facilitative and about growth and development and seeing people move on...*

As Gillham (2005, p. 6) points out, acknowledging the intersubjective nature of all social relations does not mean that as researchers we get lost in subjectivity, but rather than we must consider the role of this dimension. One may discover that one's positionality - and that of the participants - continually evolves as interviews progress and insights emerge, and reflexivity enables a continued awareness of this.

Flick's (2000) work on episodic interviewing influenced the design of the interview schedule, working on the principle that a key aspect of this kind of interview is to recurrently ask participants to explore situations or 'episodes' (which can be done within the course of one interview, and / or over repeated longitudinal interviews), which matched with the aim of the enquiry to discover the factors that influence an academic's developing thinking about their role and practice, including but not limited to their participation in a PgCert LTHE course.

All the interview schedules included the same themes, in order to allow for data to emerge relating to changes in perceptions and experiences of being an academic (particularly for the current course participants, but also for the alumni, by way of reflection). As described above, the interviews were designed in such a way as to encourage people to reflect on particular professional episodes (pre-course, first half of the course, period of undertaking the course), using ideas from Flick (2000) as a development of the 'critical incident' reflection method from Flanagan (Flanagan, 1954), although

...the episodic interview is designed more open in this respect, because it wants to focus not only problematic situations, but also positive, surprising, satisfying etc. situations.... (Flick, 2000, p. 15)

Reflections on particular critical incidents relating to 'feeling like an academic' or otherwise were encouraged, to try to pinpoint their feelings about what being an academic means to them, and what they consider their academic identity to be. Mirroring Smith's (2011) study into probationary practices for new lecturers, 'sensitising concepts' (Blumer, 1954) identified from the literature were included as prompts to encourage reflection on the influences of different aspects of academic life on academic identity, in particular disciplinary / academic cultures (Becher & Trowler, 2001); and in later interviews, ideas about 'belongingness' or 'mattering' (G. C. Elliott, Kao, & Grant, 2004; Schlossberg, 1989), and perceptions of external factors such as league tables.

Other than the initial interview for current participants, interview times and places were arranged by email. I always went to the most convenient place (on campus) for the participant, with the only proviso that we could find a quiet private space together. Sometimes, they wanted to come to my office. This caused me a dilemma as my office is a result of, and thus (for me) a symbol of, my senior Faculty role, and I felt it could carry with it some potential status symbolism which I did not want to be part of the interview experience. As such, I booked local small meeting rooms close to my office to separate the two things.



Before the initial (or only, in the case of the alumni) interview took place, I outlined verbally the broad aim and process of the research to the participant, reassured them of the confidentiality (and provided details of how this would be achieved), and provided them with this information on paper. I also asked them to complete a consent form and also to complete a short (one side A4) 'participant details' form (see Appendix D), an adaptation of Flick's (2000, p11) 'context protocol', that he advises using "in order to be able to contextualise the narratives and answers received from the interviewee".

As well as the interviews, in keeping with a reflexive methodology (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009) a research diary was kept for the duration of the enquiry period. This recorded 'critical incidents' in terms of the journey of the 'learning researcher' (Nadin & Cassell, 2006), as well as thoughts, feelings and a few moments of existential crisis as part of the research journey. The diary was completed intermittently, usually prior to or following key milestones in the doctoral process, including the piloting of the research tool, and my own self-administered interview. Flick (2009, p. 298) notes that

...documentation of this kind is not only an end in itself or additional knowledge but also serves in the reflection on the research process,

something which is illuminated in this entry from the research diary examining some of my 'existential' questions about the nature of 'becoming' an academic -

*30 Oct 2015*

*...handed out a section from the Lockett article today re: learning theories to the students on the PgCert course....the groups response was 'oh my god we can't read this, this is totally inaccessible' ...and that made me think oh my god I have become one of 'them' (an academic) without realising it - I just thought most of them would get it, they're all academics, but no.... they found it excluded them (it wasn't aimed at them but still...)... anyway I rescued the situation by saying I had given it to them to encourage them to reflect on the languages and jargon that are inherent within all of our subjects, and how best can we achieve the balance between plain English and communicating clearly, and introducing our students to the necessary vocabulary and understanding to be able to advance in the subject ... bringing it back to the point about identity - being presented with language that they could not access, this group of varied academics were marginalized and felt disenfranchised and possibly demotivated / excluded (outsider/insider?)... very interesting.... This ties into power dynamics, in that access to certain language is what gives some people (classes) the advantage and thus they progress in society - they speak the same language, this opens*

*doors - whether this is right or not (Wheelahon, 2012). In denying that such structures exist we are denying an equal right to gain access to the corridors of power....*

On being presented with language that they found difficult to access, this group of academics from various backgrounds and contexts were marginalized and felt disenfranchised and possibly demotivated / excluded - moving from insider to outsider within the space of a few minutes (Glass, 1962; Hage, 2006). At the time it occurred, whilst my 'academic' identity may have been (unintentionally, and uncomfortably) bolstered, my teaching identity felt increasingly insecure, with what I considered to be a teaching 'fail' and having also read that same week some negative feedback from the previous semester's cohort on the course. These reflections also caused me to consider my preconceptions about those on the course - and thus my participants - being 'academics' (as opposed to how I thought about myself), and assumptions I may have made about their confidence as a result.

### **Design of the interview schedule**

The interview schedule was designed on the principles of Flick's episodic approach; introducing the approach to the interview principle prior to the interview itself (how it would be conducted); then, exploring "the interviewee's concept of the issue and his/her biography in relation to the issue" (Flick, 2000, p6), and then to explore 'the meaning of the issue for the participants everyday life', followed by a "focus on the issue under study" before finally

"more general topics are mentioned in the interview in order to enlarge the scope again. Accordingly, the interviewee is asked for more abstractive relations" (Flick, 2000, p10).

The questions were piloted on two alumni, and I interviewed myself (as an alumni of the course, albeit from a long time ago). This was to try to check for any avoidable ambiguity, and to ascertain whether changes were needed in wording, or order, or question type. Also, interviewing myself was part of my reflexive methodology, to explicitly explore, and record, my own ideas in relation to the research areas, to complement my research diary. This provided insights into my developing acceptance of my own 'academic identity', during the data collection phase:

*15 December 2015*

*...undertaking the EdD and also having a mentor / coach has helped me feel more comfortable in inhabiting the role of an academic, and accepting that it's an ok thing to be, and I don't have to be apologetic for it, and it doesn't have to be divisive - I can still be the same me but be an academic as well - the two aren't mutually exclusive.*

The choice of the word 'academic' in the research questions, rather than lecturer, or 'university teacher' was deliberate. Both 'lecturer' and 'university teacher' are quite specific terms and carry meaning in their relationship to the teaching side of the academic role. However, this research is focused on examining the academic role in the broader sense, including but not limited to teaching, and as such I felt it was more appropriate to use this term - with an understanding that the word itself, and the role implied by it - would mean different things to different people, and that this would need to be examined and explored through the research. It is also appropriate in terms of the formal employment contract, and how this group of staff are referred to by the university and other staff groups within it - as 'academics'. As a result of the pilot, minor changes were made to wording and question order, and the final interview schedule was as follows:

#	Interview 1 - current participants	Interview 2- current participants	Interview 3 - current participants	Alumni
1	What does 'being an academic' mean to you?	How would you describe yourself as an academic?	What does 'being an academic' mean to you?	What does being an academic mean to you?
2	How would you describe yourself as an academic?	What shapes your sense of being an academic (what shapes how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role)?	Did being on the course shape your sense of being an academic and / or your practice as an academic? What 'stands out' for you? Can you give me a particular example?	Did being on the PgCert course shape your sense of being an academic, and/or your practice as an academic? Can you give any examples of how if so?
3	What shapes your sense of being an academic (what shapes how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role)?	Do you have an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?	**How much has the course influenced or informed the way you think about your role? Can you give me an example to illustrate this?	**How much did the course influence or inform the way you think about your role? Can you give me an example to illustrate this?
4	How important is being an academic – as part of the 'overall you'?	Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last 5 months? What may account for these changes; why do you think this is?	What has been most influential in shaping how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role?	How would you describe yourself as an academic?
5	When and where are you an academic? Where and where are you not an academic?	Has the way in which you think about your academic practice changed? What may account for these changes?	Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last XX months? What may account for these changes; why do you think this is?	What has shaped your sense of being an academic (how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role)?
6	How much of your practice is informed by your sense of being an academic (consider the day to day, an average week)?	Has being on this course shaped your sense of being an academic and or your practice as an academic? Can you give me a particular example?	How important is being an academic – as part of the 'overall you'? (do you feel 'like an academic' at home?)	Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last XX months? What may account for this; why do you think this is?
7	Can you give me an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?	*How much has the experience of the course informed your sense of being an academic? Your academic practice? Can you give me an example from the course? An example outside the course?	In how much of your practice do you feel like 'an academic' (consider the day to day, an average week)?	How important is being an academic as part of the overall you?
8	Do you think that the course will change the ways in which you think about yourself as an academic/your academic practice?	<i>* If yes to Q6</i>	Can you give me an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?	When and where are you an academic, and when and where are you not an academic?
9			You have / haven't mentioned external factors like the NSS, league tables, the proposed TEF. Do you think these kinds of things impact or influence your sense of who you are at work and / or your working practice? What role do you think the course had (or could have) in this regard?	In how much of your practice do you feel like an academic in the day-to-day or in an average week?
10			What do you think the key role of the course is? Did it achieve this, for you?	Can you give me an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?
11			<i>** If yes to Q2</i>	You have / haven't mentioned external factors like the NSS, league tables, the proposed TEF. Do you think these kinds of things impact or influence your sense of who you are at work and / or your working practice? What role do you think the course had (or could have) in this regard?

**Table 8: Final interview schedule**

## Approach to analysis

The qualitative research process

can be represented as a path from theory to text and as another path from text back to theory. The intersection of the two paths is the collection of visual or verbal data and their interpretation in a specific research design. (Flick, 2009, p. 22)

Epistemologically, it is important to note that the transformation of interviews into textual data is a "substantiation of reality" (Flick, 2009, p. 303) - the transformation of the verbal interview encounter to textual data. Flick (2009, p. 303) tells us that

...the construction of a new reality in the text has already begun at the level of the field notes and at the level of the transcript and this is the only (version of) reality available to the researchers during their following interpretations...

How interviews are recorded, documented and transcribed organises material in a specific way, and "understanding may be realized by being able to analyse as far as possible the presentations or the proceeding of situations from the inside" - something that relies on contextual documentation, which will also allow for different perspectives on interpretation. As such,

this allows the researcher to reconstruct [the text] in its gestalt and to analyze and break it down for its structure—the rules according to which it functions, the meaning underlying it, the parts that characterize it. Texts produced in this way construct the studied reality in a specific way and make it accessible as empirical material for interpretative procedures. (Flick, 2009, p. 303)

Earlier in this Methodology chapter I refer to my approach of being explicit with participants about the approach to interviews - specifically, my use of 'reflecting back' and checking my own understanding and interpretation of what they are saying as the interviews progress. I encourage them to correct me and restate what they think wherever they think it is needed; I also told them that so doing was an important part of the research process and greatly appreciated by me. The aim was to adopt an approach to analysis that was methodologically sound and aligned with the embedded reflexive approach to enquiry; to approach analysis as an iterative process to allow for a "creative interplay among the process of data collection, literature review, and researcher introspection" (Patton, 1990, p. 163).

Tuckett (2005) acknowledges that prior reading can influence or narrow the interpretation of the data, although knowledge of the relevant literature can also "enhance sensitivity to subtle nuances in data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 49). Whilst prior identification of assumptions is important as part of a reflexive approach, I did not define any a priori codes or themes before detailed analysis as I wanted to be open to what emerged from the data. I was also conscious that, as outlined by Granheim and Lunden (2004), a different researcher may well have obtained different data from participants, interpreted that data in a different way, and come to different conclusions - such is the nature of research. As such, I wanted to find an approach to analysis that was replicable and transparent, and that would demonstrate the trustworthiness of the findings (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

### **Inductive and deductive analysis**

Following my self-administered interview, and resulting from my prior reading, I was able to identify my own assumptions before data analysis - an important aspect of the reflective methodology adopted (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and an approach which enhances the trustworthiness of the data by acknowledging any pre-conceived ideas and positionality in relation to the research area. As Gibbs (2007, p. 5) tells us, "inevitably data analysis is informed by pre-existing ideas and concepts."

I was aware that my own experiences of academic identity, of feeling like an outsider, could shape my interpretation of the data. I did not explore this area in the literature review, as at the start of the research I did not consider the possibility that the academics I would be researching might also struggle with their sense of academic identity or suffer from a sense of being an imposter (Clance & Imes, 1978) - instead, my own preoccupation with performative cultures (Ball, 2003) and excellence agendas (Clegg, 2007; Madriaga & Morley, 2016) had led me to consider these aspects as potentially influential in the development of academic identity and practice. My literature review, an exploration of literatures relating to concepts of teaching excellence and key theories of identity, had established a theoretical position on identity which would inform how I interpreted participants stories - that is that professional identity is fluid and can evolve, and may be influenced by both agential

(internal) and structural (external) factors. My explorations of the neo-liberal, managerial context of higher education and current discourses of 'excellence' and resulting structures (such as league tables) had influenced my thinking around the potential for this context to have a discernible effect on academic sense of self, that they may feel overworked and pressured, and potentially resent the administrative or performative aspects of their roles. As such, I was aware that I may be more attuned to such aspects of the data and less likely to identify aspects which did not relate to these areas. My first priority was to develop and deploy an analytical approach that would encourage my findings to be data led, and reflect the authentic voices of the participants.

Analysis of qualitative data can be undertaken using either an inductive (bottom-up) or deductive (top-down) approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In a deductive approach, a researcher's pre-existing theoretical framework informs the analysis - a template may be prepared, for example. In such an approach, I could take my pre-existing beliefs (outlined above) and form a framework from them - or create hypotheses from them - then approach the data with the intention to ascertain how the data fitted within this conceptual framework. If such an analysis was undertaken as a 'Foucaultian' or 'Bourdieuian' analysis (for example), the researcher's interpretations will also relate to the overarching ideas and concepts residing within the established theoretical approach that they are using to interpret their results - the results are interpreted through the filter of how that theory or theorist construed the world, and construed knowledge and knowing.

In contrast, an inductive approach means the identified themes will be closely linked to the data (Patton, 1990), and may not end up being closely related to the actual questions that were asked of participants, or be driven by the researchers pre-existing theoretical interest in the area:

Inductive analysis is therefore a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. In this sense, this form of thematic analysis is data- driven. However... researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum. (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p. 12)

Whilst an inductive approach can lend itself to the development of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) I did not follow the systematic and proscribed approach this requires (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). I wanted to be alert to themes emerging from the data, and either use theory explored in the literature review to analyse and discuss these, or, if new or unexpected themes emerged, explore further literature to enable me to theorise from the data. In this sense, my approach was neither wholly deductive nor inductive but something in between.

### Initial approach to analysis - 'glowing data' and case studies

In approaching the analysis, my primary priority was to ensure that, in keeping with my methodological approach, the authentic voices of the participants would be heard and would drive the identification of conceptual ideas, and that these voices would remain visible in the presentation of the data, and not lost or subsumed by an approach which combined all the data into one mass. Initially, I was drawn to case study approaches (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010; Yin, 2012) that would enable an in-depth analysis of each individual participant, followed by cross-case analysis to

delineate the combination of factors that may have contributed to the outcomes of the case, seek or construct an explanation as to why one case is different or the same as others, make sense of puzzling or unique findings, or further articulate the concepts, hypotheses, or theories discovered or constructed from the original case. (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008, p. 35)

In addition to this, I was drawn by the approach outlined by MacLure (MacLure, 2010, 2013) in her counter stance against "typological thinking" and a rigid adherence to "the staple repertoire of conventional inquiry" (MacLure, 2013, p. 228). She outlines her belief regarding "the capacity for wonder that resides and radiates in data, or rather in the entangled relation of data-and-researcher", believing that this acts "as a counterpart to the exercise of reason through interpretation, classification, and representation." (MacLure, 2013, p.228). In her view, conventional analysis is "obsessed with sameness and the establishment of fixed, hierarchical relations among entities", and as a result, drawing on the work of Deleuze (1994) "cannot open onto the new or the unanticipated".



In her earlier work, this is described as identifying data that 'glows' -

One way to describe its beginnings would be as a kind of glow: some detail...starts to glimmer, gathering our attention. Things both slow down and speed up at this point. On the one hand, the detail arrests the listless traverse of our attention across the surface of the screen or page that holds the data, intensifying our gaze and making us pause... On the other hand, connections start to fire up: ... sensations resonating in the body as well as the brain – frissons of excitement, energy...(MacLure, 2010)

As such, my initial approach to analysis was to immerse myself in the data and to approach this on a case study basis (participant by participant). As transcription had been carried out by a third party professional company (and provided in Microsoft Word documents), I needed to go through transcripts in detail and make factual corrections made for mishears and missing words (where possible). Although undertaken by different transcribers, the company had a clear house style and as such there were no notable differences in the transcribing approach. I listened to interviews, read them, read them again. In line with the ethics for confidentiality, I created a pseudonym for each participant (Skelton, 2013) and used 'Find and Replace' to ensure that these were consistent throughout the transcripts. I had not thought to ask participants in advance for a suggested or preferred pseudonym (Holt, 2010), something I would do in further research.

I arranged the transcripts by participant collating all the data relating to one participant together, in keeping with my plans for case study analysis. I colour coded the longitudinal interviews so I could easily see whether I was looking at interview 1 (black), 2 (blue) or 3 (green). I spent a long time getting to know my data, highlighting text that I felt might be of particular interest and writing notes against transcripts as a form of open coding, appropriate in inductive approaches (Polit & Beck, 2004). An example of this is shown in Appendix F. After this, I collated the coding I had made on transcripts into coding sheets (Elo & Kyngä, 2008) organised by participant and by interview (see Appendix F for an example extract).

I then created summaries of participant stories (simple descriptive 'case studies' or vignettes at this stage), including a summary of emerging ideas as possible categories or concepts (see Appendix H for an example), and then began looking for patterns and

links between the participants. Through this process, I felt I had gained a strong sense of my data - aspects emerged and seemed to me to glow in the way Maclure (2010; 2013) described - I started making connections between what participants were saying and possible conceptual ideas, as yet untheorised. I felt I had a grasp not only of individual stories but also potential emergent categories or concepts, connecting the different narratives from individual participants:

Academic / Practitioner Researcher / Teacher Expert / Novice Status Self Concept <b>= IDENTITY?</b>	Control / Powerlessness Significance / Insignificance Awareness / Ignorance Supported / Undermined Self Efficacy / Inadequacy <b>= AGENCY?</b>	Belonging / Isolation Valued / Ignored Included / Excluded Mattering / Insignificance <b>= BELONGING?</b>
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*Table 9: Emerging Ideas - October 2016*

Some of the emerging categories reflected concepts touched on in the literature review, such as the potential role of agency in identity construction, and the potential dichotomy that new academics from professional backgrounds may feel regarding being an academic or being a practitioner (Clegg, 2008). However, to my surprise, nothing appeared to emerge relating to the concept of 'excellence', in any form. Several of the emerging categories were linked instead to things I had not anticipated - specifically ideas relating to self-efficacy, belonging, feeling significant, mattering.

### **Second stage of analysis - qualitative content analysis, condensing data**

The second stage of analysis was designed to ensure that I had approached the analysis in a systematic way, to try to minimise researcher bias and counter the "deductive tendencies to see what one desires to see" (Morse & Mitcham, 2002, p. 28). Thematic analysis,

"a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data [which] minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail." (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 8),

was a form of analysis that I felt may offer the more systematic approach to the data that I was seeking - despite criticism by some as an example of the 'anything goes'

approach to qualitative research due to its flexible application (Antaki, Billig, Edwards, & Potter, 2003), and a lack of mainstream acceptance and the 'brand recognition' of other analytical approaches, due perhaps in part to its 'theoretical flexibility' (Clarke & Braun, 2013). However, thematic analysis is in keeping with Glaser's (1978, p. 178) epistemological principle of emerging categories and discovery rather than constructing grounded theory, as referred to previously. This aligned with my intent - I was not intending to generate new theory (and follow the proscribed approach of grounded theory to achieve this), rather I wanted to be open to discovery from the data and for categories and themes to emerge. Notwithstanding the 'fuzziness' inherent in qualitative data analysis (Bassey, 2001), I sought an approach that would enable a clear and systematic process of organising the data and identifying themes, to increase transparency and replicability. One form of thematic analysis, qualitative content analysis (QCA), intends to

make replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights... and a practical guide to action (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 42)

which resonated with the aims and objectives for this research. The QCA method should produce

a condensed and broad description of the phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis is concepts or categories describing the phenomenon. Usually the purpose of those concepts or categories is to build up a model, conceptual system, conceptual map or categories (Elo & Kyngä, 2008)

Elo & Kyngä (2008) comments indicate that the earlier stage of my analysis, the immersion in the data, was also an aspect of the QCA approach:

Researchers should allow themselves simply to read through each interview as many times as necessary to apprehend its essential features, without feeling pressured to move forward analytically... They often see the beginning of the categorization phase as chaotic, because at that point they possess several, seemingly unconnected, pieces of information ... narrative material is generally not linear, and paragraphs from transcribed interviews may contain elements relating to several categories (Elo & Kyngä, 2008)

Graneheim & Lundman (2004) provide a useful model of the QCA approach, in particular the identification of content areas for analysis (key overall areas of content

relating to the research questions). Content areas can be narrow in focus (potentially limiting the opportunity for unexpected areas to emerge as data may be discarded if not relating to the area) or broader, which allows for greater flexibility and enables all potentially relevant data to be considered, something I wanted to adopt. I did not want to reduce the data to one mass, as with some QCA approaches (Mayring, 2000), and risk losing the relationship to individual participants and thus access to contextual detail. Content areas are then used to create 'units of analysis' by combining data relating to the content area into one text (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, pp. 108–109).

In my approach, for the longitudinal data, I defined four content areas for analysis based on the research questions and interview schedule (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). These were:

1. Initial sense of academic identity
2. Subsequent sense of academic identity
3. Initial factors influencing academic identity
4. Subsequent factors influencing academic identity

These were then divided into six 'units of analysis', in order to maintain sight of the longitudinal data of interviews two and three:

1. Initial sense of academic identity (interview 1)
2. Subsequent sense of academic identity (interview 2)
3. Subsequent sense of academic identity (interview 3)
4. Initial factors influencing academic identity (interview 1)
5. Subsequent factors influencing academic identity (interview 2)
6. Subsequent factors influencing academic identity (interview 3)

For the one-off alumni data, I defined two content areas and related units of analysis:

- 1A. Sense of academic identity (interview 1)
- 2A. Factors influencing academic identity (interview 1)

Questions from each interview schedule were mapped to one of the content areas, as seen in Appendix F. At this stage, a decision was made to focus initially on current participant data for primary analysis. This was because of the inherent integrity of the longitudinal nature of the three interview sets, which provide data against all of the research questions - something I had become aware of during stage 1 of the analysis process. Analysis of the alumni data was planned after this initial analysis had taken

place, to sense check the findings and to add any relevant information either in support of or contradicting the initial analysis.

The next stage was for the text relating to each content area to be extracted using responses to identified interview questions, and re-reading of the data for any other aspects relating to the content area that may have fallen outside of responses to the interview questions. This data was brought together into one text, which constituted each content area's 'unit of analysis' (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, pp. 108–109). As with Frith and Gleeson (2004), the same meaning unit (text extract) could be included in more than one unit of analysis, if it was felt to be relevant to more than one.

In my adaptation of the method, this was done per participant in order to maintain the relationship between themes and individuals, rather than combining all participant text together. Thus in the Graneheim & Lundman (2004) method, data from all seven 'current' participants would have been condensed into six content area analysis tables; in my method, each participant had six content area analysis tables *each*, resulting in identification of broad categories per participant which would later be able to be compared across participants.

Content analysis can incorporate both manifest and latent approaches to the thematic analysis of the text. In the manifest approach, the researcher is not looking beyond what has been said by the participant - it is simply summarised, patterns identified and then later comes interpretation with an attempt to theorise the significance of the patterns and any wider implications (Patton, 1990). In contrast, the latent approach

goes beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies - that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data...for latent thematic analysis, the development of the themes themselves involves interpretative work, and the analysis that is produced is not just description, but is already theorised. (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p. 13)

In my approach, the categories were generated by a process of both manifest and latent interpretation. A basic level of latent interpretation was added to each table,

and the resultant categories, the final condensing of the data, were informed by the initial interpretative suggestions but were not theorised at this stage.

Although I had adopted this second stage of my analytical approach to increase transparency and minimise researcher bias, I was aware that as Clarke and Braun (2013, p. 12) point out, it remains difficult to truly be 'led by the data'; we do not operate in an intellectual vacuum that somehow removes all knowledge or ideas you may have about a subject. When condensing the units of analysis into categories, I was still aware that some of these may have emerged from my previous knowledge and insights about the wider field - my earlier reading around 'identity' had sensitized me to, for example, ideas relating to agency, and conceptions of teaching. However, although the categories were created from a tentative latent condensing of the data (thus early stage theorisation had begun), I did not use overtly conceptual language in the units of analysis (in many cases as I was not yet aware of the concepts that were relevant). As such, although another analyst / researcher may not identify the same categories, another person should be able to see how they emerged.

A table was generated for every content area and every participant (28 tables in total), resulting in the identification of categories per unit of analysis, per participant. As an example, Appendix I shows a complete set of units of analysis tables for one participant, 'Jacob'.

### **Final stage of analysis - identifying themes**

I deliberately tried not to make too much of a conceptual leap at the categorisation stage in order to prioritise an inductive approach to the data analysis. In the first stage of analysis, before the QCA, I had looked at the data with my original lenses ('sensitizing concepts') of 'excellence' and also of 'managerialism' - administration / bureaucracy, and also of agency, due to the literature review. However, as previously outlined, though some expected aspects emerged, I began to see different patterns that I did not have a conscious 'sensitizing lens' in relation to. My reflexive approach however had enabled an awareness that I was perhaps subconsciously sensitised to ideas relating to self-efficacy and belonging as outlined above. Approaching the second

stage (condensing the data), my acknowledged sensitising concepts had thus been expanded to include the ideas that had arisen from the initial immersion in the data. As previously explained, I did not develop any a-priori codes to fit the analysis to, but in looking for latent meaning and condensing into categories these emergent conceptual ideas were at the foreground of my thinking and interpretation of the data, confirming the combination of deductive and inductive approaches.

A final summary table combined all categories from the participant units of analysis (see Appendix J). At this stage, although aspects of the analysis thus far had drawn on case study approaches, I made the decision not to pursue a formal cross-case analysis (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008). One reason for this was pragmatic - I was not sure if, within the space allowed in this thesis, I could do justice to 14 individual cases and the ensuing cross-case analysis. I also felt that attempting to create and compare full case studies based on longitudinal data over multiple interviews (seven 'current' participants) with those based on single point data (a separate set of seven alumni participants) - all who could be considered early career academics - would be methodologically complex, and potentially beyond my skills as an apprentice researcher - to do this kind of analysis well, one requires both space and expertise (Yin, 1981). So, rather than try to establish themes on a case by case basis, and then compare them, I decided to try to identify commonalities in the categories that had already emerged, aspects which were similar despite individual differences in context or background. This also had the advantage of potentially enabling generalisable recommendations to be made following analysis.

As such, I collated all categories under each content area / unit of analysis (across all participants). I then went through the categories, and grouped together all those which appeared to be related in some way. Where I was unsure to what a category might relate to, I returned to the units of analysis to remind myself of the more detailed contextual data - one of the risks of QCA is that categories become overly abstract and as such meaning can be lost. This method ensured I stayed closely connected to the meaning behind each categorisation, and could group it accordingly. In most of the units of analysis, several categories related more to the content area of 'sense of academic identity' rather than 'factors influencing academic identity' (or vice

versa), due to the complex nature of participants' responses and to some data being used in more than one unit of assessment. These categories were separated out (and included in the appropriate unit of analysis where they were more relevant) so as to try to gain both a distinct sense of the nature of participants' conceptions of their professional identity and of the factors that influenced this.

After this process, I reviewed each grouping of categories and defined a theme; in this way, each unit of analysis had been condensed to several key themes. See Appendix J for a complete table of categories by participant, grouped categories and themes.

This led me to a summary table of themes, as shown below:

<i>Content Areas 1, 2, 3</i> <i>Sense of academic identity</i>			<i>Content Areas 4, 5, 6</i> <i>Factors influencing sense of academic identity</i>		
<b>Unit of Analysis 1</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 2</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 3</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 4</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 5</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 6</b>
not an academic	tripartite academic	teaching	confidence	self-efficacy	belonging / mattering
authenticity	student centred	research	experiences of HE	belonging / mattering	self-efficacy / resilience
tripartite academic		practitioner	validation	pedagogical agency	community / collegiality
				community / collegiality	pedagogical agency

***Table 10: Summary table of themes (current participants)***

The order of themes in the table relates to the total number of categories that were grouped to create the theme, with the highest appearing first. I was then able to compare this to the ideas that had emerged from the first stage of analysis (Table 9, p. 90), and I was reassured to see that my initial exploration of the data and subsequent systematic analysis via the QCA method has resulted in very similar themes emerging. As planned, I then returned to the alumni data to follow the same process (see Appendix K), and again similar themes emerged:



<i>Sense of academic identity</i>	<i>Factors influencing sense of academic identity</i>
<b>Unit of Analysis 1A</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 2A</b>
research and qualifications student-focused value and impact tripartite role lived academic identity	communities / collegiality agency and resilience self-efficacy and belonging HEI culture

**Table 11: Summary table of themes (alumni participants)**

Finally, I was conscious that, as advised by Elo & Kyngä (2008, p. 113) it was "necessary to be prepared to go back to the data..." I needed to combine the QCA condensing approach with the rich narrative data that I had, to avoid the analysis becoming overly reductionist and losing sight of my initial priority to keep the voices and stories of participants alive. As such, I returned to the original transcripts to 'sense check' the themes; text used in the units of analysis relating to key themes was extracted in context, to support the findings. A limitation of the qualitative content analysis method is the risk of losing the researcher voice, and treating the data as if it has emerged in a vacuum. With my methodological approach, the importance of transparency in terms of potential researcher influence was key. As such, selection of 'extract examples' (Braun & Clarke, 2006), or representative quotations, including the researcher voice was used as a key technique (see following chapters) to promote credibility of findings (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 110) and to ensure that I was visible in the research. I worked backwards from the themes to the units of analysis and then the associated rich data in the transcripts, to ensure that this was not lost in the presentation of findings, but could be drawn on to illustrate the key themes in the contexts from which they emerged.

### **Reflective observations**

The data and the project felt inherently personal to me - these were my students, after all. When reading the scripts (as opposed to listening as well), I could still hear their voices; I was personally invested in them - I wanted them to be ok. At the same time, I wanted to be able to take a step back and read the data as it was, to try and minimise the likelihood of me subconsciously referring to the additional data I had in my head about these individuals. Allocating pseudonyms was useful in this regard - it avoided de-personalising the participants (for example, referring to them as a code/number -

C1, C2), it kept them as people, but it still enabled me to work with the data more objectively. The adapted QCA approach I had designed also provided me with reassurance that I was following a systematic process that would work to minimise - albeit not remove - the potential for researcher bias.

As with much qualitative research, and particularly insider research, someone else undertaking the interviews could have received different information from the participants (and someone else working with the same data may have categorised differently, and drawn different themes from it). In terms of participant responses, me as the researcher may have impacted on what they were willing to say that was critical about the PgCert, given that I was their tutor. Some still did express a lack of enthusiasm for it, a disappointment about it, and several had criticisms of various aspects of it - and these may have been more forthcoming had an unknown person unrelated to the course been interviewing them.

My approach, being guided by the interview schedule but approaching the interviews as 'research conversations' was designed to instil trust and to acknowledge the pre-existing relationship I had with the participants. My evident empathy with some of the topics they raised (such as feeling out of the loop as an associate lecturer, or feeling the impact of positive or negative student feedback) may have encouraged them to elaborate more on these issues than others they could have mentioned. My sharing of some of my personal experiences (after they had shared theirs), or my affirmation of my understanding of their situation / feelings, was a reflection of my genuine engagement with and care of these individuals as my students as well as my participants. To have done otherwise - to have stayed more detached and not engaged in a dialogue with them - would have felt more false and created an artificial situation that may have been less likely to prompt in depth reflections from them. Some of the interviews made short digressions into me clarifying aspects of university regulations or procedures with them, if they were having issues, much as I would in a tutorial. One participant referred to the interviews as a counselling session, where he got to tell someone in confidence how he felt about his academic role. Had I adopted a more detached approach, with less reassurance and reflecting back, the interviews would potentially include different data. I wanted them to trust me, to feel I understood, and

in so doing be more willing to reflect openly about how they felt. My reassurance of and empathy with participants encourages them / gives them permission to elaborate on particular aspects they have raised. It is apparent in the transcripts that even where I am not directly empathising, I am encouraging them by saying 'that's really interesting', thus prompting further reflections - for example, in the transcripts, there are 75 occurrences of me saying variations of 'interesting; really interesting; that's really interesting'.

One important observation is that most of the participants don't recognise themselves as academics initially but then through the course of the interview (or interviews) - as I refer to them as such, and the questions they are asked repeat the assumption, they come to an understanding of an academic self-concept for themselves (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002), which they might not otherwise have done. So the act of taking part in the research may have stimulated reflection on self and identity that would not otherwise have been manifested, realised or brought to the surface. As such, how much is the research reflecting reality (whatever that is) and how much is the research creating a version of it? This is not a question I am able to answer, but rather feel it is important to demonstrate my alignment with the idea of the intersubjective constructed nature of reality that is manifest through the interview process (Kvale, 1996).

## Summary

This chapter has explored my methodological approach, outlining my beliefs about knowledge and knowing, framing the research within an interpretative, reflexive approach and providing justification for the use of semi-structured interviews as 'research conversations'. It also explains and justifies my evolving analytical approach, which drew on several established methods in order to demonstrate a transparent and replicable approach to analysis and one which allowed the safeguarding of individual narratives, whilst enabling a systematic and comprehensive approach to data interrogation. In summary, the analytical approach combined a form of qualitative content analysis (from Elo & Kyngä, 2008; Flick, 2009; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) with aspects of a case study approach and cross-case analysis (Khan &

VanWynsberghe, 2008; Yin, 2012), offering both a systematic approach to establishing themes from a large amount of data, whilst ensuring that potentially relevant contextual details of individual participants would not be obscured or eliminated, as they could be returned to in interpretation and presentation of the data. The different stages of analysis allowed me to confirm the robustness of my thinking about the data.

## Chapter 5: The new academic

### Introduction to findings and discussion

The next three chapters present the findings as the journey of the academic, reflecting the longitudinal nature of the primary dataset (current PgCert course participants). Chapter 5 explores the conceptions and experiences of the new academic, a 'novice' at or near the beginning of their academic career, who mostly identifies as 'not an academic'. Chapter 6 looks to 'the developing academic' - are there differences in participant self-concept as more time passes? In Chapter 7, 'the academic experience' is explored and theorised - do the experiences participants have had in their formative period have any relationship with changes they have experienced in their identity and practices? The presentation of the data in this way seeks to identify any changes in academic identity and practices, and then reflect on these changes in the light of the participants' experiences. The themes emerging from the analysis are discussed and theorised, and presented alongside extracts from the rich dataset. Data relating to the themes is extracted from relevant participant narratives in turn, and compared or contrasted where appropriate. While the aim of the analysis was to establish "arguments for the most probable interpretations", findings have been "presented in a way that allows the reader to look for alternative interpretations" (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 110), in order to promote the trustworthiness of the conclusions. Chapter 8 follows this exploration of the longitudinal data and explores the secondary data set of alumni data and the idea of 'the experienced academic', to see if the themes and concepts emerging from the primary data set are reflected or refuted in the alumni data.

### Introduction to chapter

This chapter, exploring the new academic identity, draws on the themes from units of analysis 1 and 4 (see table 12 below), and uses rich data from Interview 1 as this relates specifically to participants' thoughts and feelings prior to embarking on the PgCert LTHE. The findings coalesce around several themes, relating to nascent professional identity as an academic and how this might be formed, reinforced or undermined, providing indications of how validation of identity and practice may be experienced by 'the new academic'.

<i>Initial sense of academic identity</i>	<i>Initial factors influencing sense of academic identity</i>
<b>Unit of Analysis 1</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 4</b>
not an academic authenticity tripartite academic	confidence experiences of HE validation

*Table 12: The new academic - themes*

The overarching themes are discussed throughout this chapter, supported with rich data from the lived experiences of the different participants. Space is also given to data that may contradict or challenge themes, thus ensuring that overly generalised assumptions are not being made. In interpreting the findings, participant characteristics from Table 7 (p. 78) inform the discussion and are referred to as appropriate, in keeping with maintaining the contextual details of participant narratives and data. The themes will now be explored in detail.

#### **'Not an academic' / experiences of HE**

All the participants have some common features, but the lived experience and application of that is different from person to person. Whilst the theme of 'not an academic' was relevant to some degree for all participants, the manifestation of that varied as the table below summarises:

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Pre-conception of 'an academic'</b>	<b>Initial conception of own professional identity and practice</b>
<b>Sarah</b>	Academically accomplished, PhD / Masters qualified, specialist	teacher / facilitator, practitioner, helping others grow and develop
<b>Liz</b>	expert, knowledgeable, stuffy, elite, exclusory	teacher / lecturer - expert, practitioner, passing on knowledge
<b>Kate</b>	specialist, knowledgeable, researcher, teacher	teacher - passing on knowledge, changing thinking
<b>James</b>	lecturer (teacher), researcher, consultant (subject expert)	lecturer and practitioner
<b>Andy</b>	engaged in research, lecturer, teacher, teaching administration	lecturer / teacher - develop thinking and contribute to pedagogy
<b>Jacob</b>	subject expert, published researcher, PhD qualified	subject expert, practitioner, mentor, coach
<b>Rachel</b>	researcher, reading in an office, lecturer, specialist, PhD qualified, professor	teacher, passing on knowledge, collaborative learning (facilitator)

*Table 13: Participants' initial conceptions of professional identity and practice*

Participants self-concept in relation to their new academic identity was as a lecturer (or teacher), or subject expert or practitioner who teaches. Self-concept relates to social and communitarian theories of identity (Henkel, 2005) and is broadly defined as "a composite view of oneself... formed through experiences with the environment" (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002, pp. 2–3). As such, those participants who had more experience of the higher education environment had a more nuanced conception of the academic role given they had a broader 'frame of reference' for what it might look like - one of five areas of self-concept as categorised by Skaalvik (1997, pp. 52–4):

- frames of reference - comparison to others and / or reference to external standards - for example, a professional framework
- causal attributions - the factors to which people attribute their successes or failures, for example most participants at this stage were validated through their teaching, and also noted the need for qualifications to 'succeed' as an academic
- reflected appraisals from significant others- from previous experience or current
- mastery experiences - self-schema developed from mastery experiences in the same domain
- psychological centrality - if you believe yourself to be good at things you consider to be important, you will have higher self-esteem and a more positive self-concept.

In participant narratives, several of these factors are evident in the formation of their self-concept as a new academic. Sarah equated 'academic' with academic ability -

*Sarah: I don't view myself as academic. I know that sounds a really stupid thing to say. I wasn't very academic at school; I didn't really get on very well with GCSEs...*

Sarah had an image of 'the academic' (someone with a PhD, a specialist), and didn't feel that she fitted within that - she had no related 'mastery experiences'. Her self-concept was of an experienced practitioner, someone who helps others, someone who develops others - a teacher, or an 'academic-as-teacher' (Tomkins & Nicholds, 2017):

*Interviewer: Is there a difference, do you think, between an academic and a teacher? A teacher could teach in any sector, but we work in higher education. Is there a difference, do you think?*

*Sarah: I think if you're a teacher, you can do that anywhere. I think if you become an academic you might become a bit too specialised in a certain area...*

*and a bit more focused on maybe theory and research. ... For me it's more about using my experience to help others grow and develop.*

Initially, she did not display any obvious insecurity relating to her fulfilling a different role to her understanding of what an academic was. She critiqued academics for being 'too specialised', referring to her ability to be multidisciplinary. This was an aspect of her 'psychological centrality' (Skaalvik, 1997) - she believed herself to be good at this, and also felt it to be useful and important:

*Sarah: I get asked to do lots of things and I think it's because I've worked in lots of different areas. Some people might say - what is it? "Jack of all trades, master of none," but I think the opposite. I think the fact that I've done that has enhanced my skills and actually made me more confident in myself and also in my abilities and my skills.*

This attitude was also reflected somewhat by Rachel, reflecting on teaching outside of her professional specialism, although she was less secure in her practice -

*Rachel: ...it's kind of applying knowledge. I think sometimes it makes me feel very under confident about my input and other times it makes me feel quite strong because I feel like I offer something different.*

Sarah did not articulate where her pre-conceptions of the academic identity had come from other than to equate the word 'academic' with the notion of academic prowess / academic qualifications (something that will be explored later), something she had struggled with at school due to undiagnosed dyslexia and being labelled as 'not clever' by teachers - something closely linked to Skaalvik's (1997, p52) ideas about self-concept being shaped by 'reflected appraisals from significant others' -

*Sarah: I have got a sister who is very intelligent and excelled... one of the teachers actually labelled me, X was the clever [one] and I wasn't. It's a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy, looking back on it.*

Liz articulated very clearly her conceptualisation of an academic as an expert who passes on knowledge - Skaalvik's (1997) notion of 'psychological centrality', and identified as a common self-concept amongst new lecturers in Nicoll's (2005) research. However, she saw herself as not 'a traditional one' - an academic to her was someone uninterested in students and elitist in terms of language, which did not match with how she saw herself.



*Interviewer: How would you describe yourself as an academic? What type of academic are you, do you think?*

*Liz: Not the old school like you would see with the tweed jackets. I try and get relationships going with my students. I think that works better....*

Not having had a university experience until recently, Liz implied that her pre-conceptions had been built from media representations of 'the academic', and she acknowledged that until relatively recently she would have found the concept of her 'being' one scary -

*Interviewer: Out of interest, then, if you said not a traditional one..?*

*Liz: Yes, what's a traditional one?*

*Interviewer: Yes, what do you think a traditional one is? What does it mean to you, that word, then, 'academic'?*

*Liz: Before three years ago, it would have scared me to death.... 'academic', to me, meant stuffy rooms, stuffy books, lots of people talking a language I perhaps didn't understand. I didn't go to university... The academic world, to me, was the types I saw on the telly in films.*

However, Liz' recent experiences in her undergraduate education and her associate lecturer work had served to modify this conception of an academic, and as such she had been able to reconfigure her understanding of what an academic identity might encompass:

*Liz: From my experience of this institution, as far as I'm aware, I've not really come across that kind of stuffy academic...on the whole, my peers are people that have had similar backgrounds to myself. They've ...worked in the corporate world, and now, are just passing on the knowledge.*

So, whilst acknowledging that she was 'not a traditional one', Liz' interactions with colleagues 'like herself' had enabled her to re-conceptualise a different version of 'the academic' - that of the expert practitioner / professional, passing on knowledge as per Fox's (1983) ideas of 'transfer theory' of teaching.

Rachel manifested a similar pre-conception of 'an academic' and also indicated that this was formed from media representations, She struggled with being able to self-define as such, due to a lack of confidence in her 'academic ability' - which turned out to be a lack of confidence in the ability to teach what she knew, despite having some

previous experience of teaching as an associate lecturer. Implicitly then, there was a conception of an academic as teacher, similar to Sarah.

*Rachel: I suppose if I think about an academic, like what I would have thought before I even came back to university, it would have been somebody in an office doing a lot of reading and the traditional sort of lecturing and research...*

*Interviewer: Do you think that's just a general, if you asked a member of the public, do you think that's what they would say?*

*Rachel: I suppose because when you see an academic on television or something, they're unreal, but they're a real specialist in a particular area. I suppose they tend to talk to the people who are – they've probably got a doctorate at that stage or they're a professor or they are a complete specialist....*

Among the other participants, there were similarities in an understanding of what they thought 'an academic' was - they all made references to a subject (or professional) expert engaged in research and teaching in a university. They had all acquired this conception through their different types of exposure to and experiences within the higher education context, so linking to Skaalvik's (1997, p.52) 'frames of reference'. For James and Jacob, this included the nature of the recruitment process (explicit information about what was required in the role):

*James: ...in my interview for the lecturing role, there were academic questions, there were research questions and there was, "How are you going to bring money into the university?"*

For Liz, the processes she was going through to try to gain a permanent role felt like an ever increasing list of things to achieve, that were forming her impressions of what 'an academic' needed to be:

*Liz: ...I've come in as a teacher in my head to, "This is where I want to be," and just seeing the experiences and what is required of me, in the recruitment process, being told it can't be converted, you haven't got a master's, "Okay, well I'll get a master's. That's okay then, tick, I've done that." "No, that's not quite good enough, you need to have this experience."*

The possible influence of recruitment processes on the conception of academic identity was also indicated by Jacob:

*Interviewer: What's shaped that understanding, do you think, your sense of being an academic?*

*Jacob: It's in the last few months where I've gone through the recruitment process that I've hit... this is all anonymised, isn't it? Certain individuals have got very fixed views about what an academic is.*

For Kate, who had significant part time associate lecturer teaching experience, and Andy who had also had part time teaching experience as a PhD student, their observations of or interaction with influential others (academics and students), had shaped their conceptions of the academic role, linking to both 'frames of reference' and 'mastery experiences' from Skaalvik's (1997) framework:

*Interviewer: What do you think shapes your sense of being an academic? To elaborate on that question slightly, what factors influence your understanding of the role?*

*Kate - I definitely draw from people who I admire who have taught me or who I have worked with, their approach and what I have found engaging and the students' response as well.*

*Andy: I think for me the things that have shaped that the most are probably those who have taught me in the past and how they have exemplified themselves as academic role models.*

In affirming his identity as a lecturer or teacher, Andy also made reference to his 'workplan', implying that this indicated what was expected of him in his academic role:

*Interviewer: If people ask what you do for a living....?*

*Andy: I do say I'm a lecturer, rather than an academic.... I'm here to teach things.... I suppose each individual has a teaching proportion and a research proportion and for me personally, the vast majority of my contract at the moment is a teaching proportion.*

Kate, perhaps due to her teaching experience, had what Fox (1983) would have regarded as an more advanced 'theory of teaching', in that while her basic conception was as one who 'passes on knowledge', she also made reference to enabling students to 'think about things in a different way' - linking to Mezirow's (1997) ideas regarding transformative learning.

*Interviewer: How would you describe yourself as an academic? What sort of academic are you?*

*Kate: I think I'm very practically minded. I haven't got stuck into research as much yet... I think of myself first and foremost as a teacher. I think that is the*

*important bit of the job because that is the thrill of it, when you pass knowledge onto people and they get something or you make them think about something in a different way.*

Andy's response to describing the teaching aspects of an academic's role (he also defined research, scholarship and admin as other facets of the job) reflects a similar conception of teaching to Kate -

*Andy:... interacting with students, helping them to develop, helping them to reach their end goal of getting a degree, on the one hand, but also helping them to develop their thought processes, become more well-rounded individuals with good thinking skills...*

Andy felt that teaching should involve the development of students, but also include the opportunity to develop himself as a teacher (skills or subject knowledge, for example). This was articulated further in his reflections about what might make him feel less like or not like an academic -

*Interviewer: Has there been any aspect of practice where you have questioned your sense of being an academic?*

*Andy: ...I think if for example I were to only be given X modules... I might find it then hard to think, "Actually am I doing anything useful here?"...I am not developing personally as an academic. ... if you were to do the same thing for fifteen years, I mean besides being very bored of the modules, because that sort of course always requires the same X input. It simply doesn't change.*

From his response, it appears that Andy found validation - Skaalvik's (1997) 'causal attribution' regarding the development of his self-concept - from being able to undertake 'useful' teaching. He expressed this as useful for him in terms of his continued development, with the opportunity to contribute to the development of content, and useful for the students in developing their thinking skills.

For Jacob, as well as his recent experiences with the recruitment process, his familiarity with the university environment whilst working in a non-academic role had shaped his understanding of 'the academic' - and despite having an academic member of staff who undertook a mentoring role, he felt there was an 'us and them' culture between the different staff groups -

*Jacob: Well, I've worked at the university... for 15 years in an administrative, technical specialist kind of role.... I think my experience is probably from working at the university, but being indirectly involved with the academic group of staff. There is, I think, quite a big separation, in this institution, anyway, possibly in many...*

Jacob was, in his full time role, not an academic, and this is an indication of a sense of 'us and them' when referring to academic and non-academic, and a suggestion of feeling like an outsider in his new academic role as an industry specialist (Clegg, 2008, p. 338) . He saw himself as a subject expert, coaching others -

*Jacob: Practical, knowledge-based learning. I think I work well in smaller groups than in front of a big room of people. Helping people problem solve, so coaching and mentoring and tailoring that to the different groups' needs.*

He felt least secure in his academic role when 'standing in front of a room full of people' - for him, lecturing was not something he was confident about, and he did not refer to himself (unlike the other participants) as a lecturer.

As with Sarah, Liz and Rachel (who shared a slightly less nuanced interpretation of 'the academic'), Andy, Kate and Jacob also did not feel as though they necessarily inhabited an 'academic' identity, despite having an academic contract. Kate reflected on the use of the term itself and other people's potential interpretations of that, implying it could be seen as a negative label, acknowledging that if deserved this was probably ok, but reiterating her own reluctance to be seen as 'showing off' -

*Kate: I think it has like a ring of elitism or intellectualism about it or something...it sounds a bit superior or something like that, but I think it deserves a certain amount of respect, if somebody has achieved that level.... I guess in terms of personally, I try not to – I don't know, it's one of those things, in a social situation, you don't want to be all like, "I'm a lecturer" and showing off or anything like that, because I know some people who do do that...*

Kate's feeling here aligned with Sarah's perceptions of 'status' associated with the academic or lecturer label -

*Interviewer: How important is being an academic as part of the overall you?*

*Sarah: Not important. I'm not status driven at all. I am proud to be where I am, but that's more of a pride in overcoming personal obstacles...But I have noticed*

*people treat you differently when you tell them that you're a lecturer. I don't like that; that makes me feel a bit uncomfortable.*

In contrast, James, who had previously been employed at the university in a non-academic role was happy that he was now able to state his profession without feeling the need for qualifiers, and did not express any concerns about potential external conceptions of 'showing off' -

*James - Before when I was a XXXX, I wasn't embarrassed, but I always kinda said, "I'm a XXXXX but it's not what I want to do," I always followed it up. I don't know why...it was almost like people would turn their nose up at it, but there was no reason for that. Now when I say I'm a full time lecturer, I lecture. When someone asks, "What do you do?" "I lecture" because I'm proud of it.*

Although the analysis has not been undertaken with specific reference to gender, this sense of owning one's identity and achievements was commented on by one of the female participants in a conversation following on from her comments about probably not referring to herself as a lecturer in a social situation -

*Kate: ...I don't think I would introduce myself, "Hello, I'm doctor so and so," but using it in a work situation where it's significant, I think I would.. I might have it on my door at work, but I wouldn't necessarily use it at home, unless – I don't know, it's a difficult one. I want to be proud of my achievements but I don't want to feel like I'm lauding it over people at the same time. ... I think particularly that is a female thing more than a male thing. I think men are ... more comfortable with self-confidence or showing off I suppose, bravado, than women tend to be.*

Andy's non-identification with the term 'academic' was not about a sense of status (or otherwise), it related to him feeling he was 'a lecturer rather than an academic' and him 'being here to teach'. This had been shaped by the amount of teaching he had on his contract, and the fact that this is what he wanted to do - his comments also indicate his incredulity at those who would opt for something different:

*Andy: ... People at my previous university would try their best to buy out of their teaching by bringing in grants.... I thought, "You've just given up the best part of your job. Why would you do this?"*

In essence, although most of the participants did not feel that they were 'academics' as they understood the term, they were able to conceptualise a version of the role - mostly expressed as a conception of teaching or a practitioner identity, or both - that

enabled them to inhabit their nascent professional identity in the higher education context. This tentative inhabitation was impacted both positively and negatively by a range of factors, as will be explored in the next section.

### **Authenticity, validation, and confidence**

Linked closely to an identity as a practitioner rather than academic, the significance of professional expertise / experience is common in participant narratives, potentially due to the fact that the background of all but one (Andy) of the current participants are professional entrants to higher education, rather than having followed a more common (in some contexts) research route to an academic role in higher education of undergraduate degree, Masters, PhD.

This aspect of their self-concept relates to two of Skaalvik's self-concept categories (1997, pp. 53–4) - 'frames of reference', for example the professional standards and frameworks from their industry background, and 'mastery experiences' - the expertise they have gained from their professional role. As such, they carry this identity with them into their new role in the academic context, providing a sense of authenticity in their practice (L. Archer, 2008; Tomkins & Nicholds, 2017). Archer (2008) explores the concept of authenticity and inauthenticity in 'younger' academics, asking "who can be the 'authentic' and 'successful' academic in contemporary academia?" (L. Archer, 2008) and recognising in her work the challenges that were faced by her participants in establishing a 'authentic' academic identity. It's possible that the professional self-concept most of my participants demonstrated on entry to the academy ameliorates the insecurity some of them feel about not being appropriately 'qualified' for the job of academic, or feeling a lack of confidence or belonging - essentially, it helps to validate their presence as a new academic (Butcher & Stoncel, 2012).

Liz and Jacob make specific reference to 'expertise' -

*Liz: You can't stand up and teach a topic if you don't feel expert in it yourself... I've come in as an expert [profession]. I can tell you how to do [professional tasks]... I feel completely confident that I'm a professional. As an academic, I'm a new girl.*

*Jacob: ...in terms of my identity, I see myself more as a subject expert rather than an academic.*

There were also references to their professional experiences in business / industry, and the relevance of that to their academic teaching role -

*Sarah: I think it's more about that experience I've had and taking something quite complicated but making it make sense to someone.*

*Liz: I also have another job. I sit on the Board of the X in Derbyshire. ...I've still got this real-world experience that I can bring into academia.*

*James: ...my field, which is a very practical field, so the common process is going from a practitioner to a lecturer, as opposed to the other way around... my philosophy...is to practice what I preach. If I am going to stand in front of 200 students and say, "This is the way you X," but I'm not doing it, I think I'm doing them a disservice.*

*Rachel: I'd like to start doing my own work again, which can also feed into it. You can bring in all these exterior things that ...enrich what you're doing as a lecturer.*

*Jacob: My background is working in a business environment, so I'm quite happy to talk about things when I feel that I've got the background and the knowledge behind me....*

The idea of academics having higher qualifications and this validating their position was prevalent across five of the seven current participants, and varied according to their background. For Sarah, she recognised that having a Masters or PhD was important, and was herself working towards her Masters -

*Sarah: I got that PgCert and then because of that I was able to apply for this job, because obviously you need to be working towards your full Master's...*

- although she also expressed her belief that her professional experience counted for more than qualifications,

*Sarah:....It's less about whether I've got a master's or a PhD, which I know is important, I know that is important. I think it's more about that experience I've had...*

which may have been influenced by her feeling like she was already making a positive contribution -



*Sarah: We developed the programme and then we delivered it to the [external client] and all the senior management team....the feedback and evaluation was brilliant. At that point I thought, "I'm in the right job. I've got the right skill set for this," and I felt really proud...*

This positive teaching experience had clearly contributed to her sense of validation in her post. At the end of her interview however, her anxieties and insecurities about not having the status of the academic qualifications were clearly expressed, against a desire that the PgCert course would ameliorate this to some degree -

*Interviewer: Do you think that the course will change the ways in which you think about yourself as an academic or your academic practice in any way? It doesn't matter what you say, you can say no.*

*Sarah: I think it might reaffirm some of what I'm doing, so maybe some of the anxieties I've got around not having my master's, not having a PhD...*

The idea that a level of qualification provides confidence and 'kudos' was expressed by Liz, in referring to her move from practitioner to academia -

*Liz: I've had 25 years of being an [X], and now, I'm not. Well, I am, but... It is quite a rewarding thing. The fact that I've got a Master's: it's quite new and it's quite exciting. It's amazing, like, "Wow. I've got a Master's degree. Who would have thought that?" It gives you that extra kudos, that extra confidence...*

This sentiment is echoed somewhat by Rachel, describing her own transition into education, and the significance of having the qualifications herself, without which she would not have been able to think of herself as anything like 'an academic' -

*Interviewer: We might have touched on some of this already, but what do you think shapes your sense of being an academic?*

*Rachel: I would never have thought of myself even in any of that realm if I hadn't come back to university and done the BA and then done the Master's. I guess having that level of education myself is a starting point...*

Rachel also makes reference to the PgCert providing underpinning theory for the teaching academic, supporting the academic role, and potentially providing validation of practice. James too was enthusiastic about the PgCert, although more for the practical support he believed it would offer:

*Interviewer: Do you think that the course will change the ways in which you think of yourself as an academic, or change your academic practice in any ways?*

*James: Absolutely, without a shadow of a doubt.... absolutely to the second part, so it will definitely, 100% change my practice, because if nothing more, my teaching skills I have in my locker are few and far between...*

James also commented - indicating an extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation for undertaking the course - that if he didn't have to do the course he probably wouldn't have, but reiterated that he was sure it would be useful to him. James had also expressed his motivation to change careers into academia in pragmatic terms, for financial reasons and also as he was competing in a saturated market for jobs in his industry. He had achieved a Masters and intended to start a PhD. His professional accreditation and authenticity were very important to him, and he commented that in his field, academics were not widely respected as practitioners felt they were too removed from the 'real world'. He was keen not to become 'that type of academic' and as such felt it was essential that he keep a foot in both camps in order to retain his authenticity (and perhaps keep his options open) -

*Interviewer: How important is being an academic, as part of the overall you?*

*James: I have got a little bit of a personality trait that sometimes is a little bit "grass is always greener." For example, I worked with the lead X quite a lot and when he introduces me as a lecturer, I sometimes say, "No, I'm an X as well as a lecturer,"...*

Kate had a Masters, as well as Fellowship of the HEA status before starting the PgCert course, and stated her plans to start a PhD. However, like Andy, although she had a clear conception of the multifaceted academic role, her overriding conception of her purpose was as a teacher in higher education. She also had as an existing level of confidence in her practice (as did Andy), and as such seemed to refer to academic qualifications more as a necessary side-line rather than seeing them as integral to her role or identity -

*Interviewer: Do you have a Master's?*

*Kate: I've got a Master's. I've applied for the FHEA, I'm looking forward to doing this course very much and I would like to do a PhD starting next year. I have started doing bits of writing, but I think of myself first and foremost as a teacher. I think that is the important bit of the job...*

Andy (the only participant to have almost completed a PhD), went as far as to disaggregate the qualification from the academic role as he inhabited it -

*Andy: I don't think having a PhD or doing a PhD in itself makes you an academic. It's the research that you do afterwards. I mean a PhD is specifically to be a researcher. One can become an academic with or without a PhD, but a PhD in and of itself doesn't make you an academic.*

Andy's prior experience at a research-intensive university sets him apart from the other participants, in his interpretation that having a PhD doesn't necessarily mean you are an academic, which was at odds with most of the others' interpretations. Jacob, for example, when asked about the difference between subject expert and academic, equated a PhD with research and being an academic -

*Jacob: I think the other big difference is the fact that I've not done a PhD and I've not done some research and when I've been for interviews recently, it's been almost a closed shop sort of experience about, well, if you've not presented papers or you're not near the end of your PhD, we can't consider you, even though your subject knowledge is adequate.*

Jacob saw the lack of a higher academic qualification as preventing him from obtaining more permanent academic work. His comments indicate that this block to his progression to an academic career was frustrating, given the 'applied' mission of the university and his authentic real world experience and expertise.

Both Jacob and Liz experienced a lack of security in their contract status (being part time and temporary), and Rachel too had recently experienced this:

*Rachel: As an AL, you don't feel particularly involved in anything... I lost a lot of confidence because I probably shouldn't have hung around so long, I should have looked elsewhere... I felt devalued*

A sense of isolation as an associate lecturer (AL) was also reflected by Liz:

*Liz: I've not had anyone stood in the classroom telling me if I'm doing it right or wrong. As an AL, that doesn't happen, you see...*

Subsequently, on achieving a part time contract, this still presented challenges to the confident inhabitation of an academic role for Rachel -

*Rachel ..... being a point five as well, which is a choice, but I think as well you feel quite out of it and there's a lot that I miss...*

This sense of not being included, or being peripheral, impacted on Rachel's confidence despite the authenticity she felt regarding her practitioner expertise. In contrast, James added to his sense of validation in his academic identity when he experienced the offer of a full time academic contract -

*James:.... that was obviously a proud moment. I felt like an academic because I was an academic...*

As well as relating their nascent academic identity to authenticity and being 'qualified' for the role (either by means of professional expertise, or qualifications, or both), most participants made references to positive teaching experiences and interactions with students in response to the question 'Can you give me an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic?', indicating that these experiences serve to build confidence and provide validation for their professional role. Sarah's response was referred to earlier (p.114) and other examples are:

*Rachel: It has happened I think in a tutorial with second year students...we had a really good discussion and I really felt like the students moved on and they were all really fired up by the end of it.*

*Liz: As soon as I get my pens out and I'm writing on the whiteboard, it's like, "Wahey, hark at me. I'm a teacher."*

*Jacob: With project students, really, I think. With lots of one-to-one project meetings and there's been a couple of individuals who I feel like I really made a difference with.*

*Kate: [the students] got excited and engaged in it... and it was just one of those, "Oh, everything is connecting,"... It was one of those moments where I thought.. "I feel like a university lecturer because I feel like I know stuff."*

Kate also demonstrated her ability to cope with not being the expert in the room, and a potentially less than positive teaching experience -

*Interviewer: Okay, flip side, any experiences where you question your sense of being an academic, where you think, "I'm not an academic in this situation"?*

*Kate: I think coming onto a new module... I suddenly felt out of depth all over again...there were moments where I thought, "I don't know what I'm talking about." ...but I feel comfortable articulating that to the students. I say, "I've not taught this before. I'm learning this as well, let's figure it out together." ... rather than me trying to pretend that I know it all, I would rather say to them,*

*“Look, I only read this for the first time yesterday as well. What do you think it means?”*

Kate felt that she had something to offer as a facilitator, despite not being 'the expert' in a situation - something which is not commonly a trait of new teachers (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996). Kate's teaching experiences (six years as an associate lecturer) and performance experience (she was in a band) are possibly contributing factors to this level of self-assuredness. This indication of confidence and resilience when being in 'out of my depth' type situations was not expressed by other participants in interview one in their references to similar teaching situations.

*Liz: when you get a question where you think, “I should know that and I don’t.”... when you’re in a classroom, I feel I’ve got to come across as the expert in everything and know anything. It’s ridiculous. That’s when I stumble. I think, “How can I be this person that I think an academic should be?”*

*James: I suppose the teaching, every time I did, the first time I was very nervous... It didn’t help that I was teaching somebody else’s material, because that’s always difficult.*

*Jacob: ...standing in front of a full room of people, I get nervous.*

Teaching and student encounters then seemed to have the potential to both validate and challenge 'the new academic' in terms of their emerging professional identity.

### **Summary of themes**

The data illuminates the conceptions participants have formed of the academic role before their appointment. The roots of participants' preconceptions, whilst different for individual participants, was mainly linked with their familiarity or otherwise with the higher education context, and as such appeared to be external / structural rather than intrinsic (Neary & Winn, 2016). For those less familiar with HE, they had an impression of what could be termed the 'archetypal academic' (Barcan, 1996), largely from media tropes - someone who is perhaps a little eccentric, educated, bookish, elite, and specialised. For those with more experience of the higher education context, they had formed a different understanding of 'the academic'. This stemmed for some from their experiences as a student and having 'academic role models', and for others working as a member of (non-academic) staff in close proximity to academic staff. Recruitment and subsequent work planning processes were also instrumental for

several participants in forming their impressions of the academic role, in terms of explicit expectations.

Whilst several of the current participants recognised the notion of a 'tripartite academic' - research, teaching, and subject or practitioner expertise - in their first interview (Gunn & Fisk, 2013; Watson, 2011), and the others had a more caricature-like notion, most participants did not consider that they actually inhabited this professional identity, regardless of how they were conceptualising it. More dominant was a theme around rejection of the academic label for themselves ('not an academic').

Participants demonstrated two more readily inhabited manifestations of professional identity that can be summarised thus: 'not an academic, but a teacher'; and 'not an academic, but an expert practitioner'. All expressed some notion of themselves as a 'teacher' in the higher education context and their differing conceptions of teaching (Light et al., 2009; Pratt, 1992) emerged in relation to this. As such, positive teaching experiences and interactions with students provided them with a source of validation and confidence in their professional role and helped to establish this identity - although this was a two-way street, and the converse was also evident. As well as this, the practitioner identity that most of them arrived with carried with it a sense of authenticity and confidence (Stronach et al., 2002), which provided validation through a sense of professional expertise and, for some, purpose.

All participants referred to qualifications as a validating aspect of an academic identity. However, there emerged for some a sense of dissonance between the validation they experienced through teaching and their professional expertise, and a lack of confidence due to the realisation that they did not have what they felt was needed in terms of qualifications, resulting for some in a sense of inauthenticity (L. Archer, 2008; Gourlay, 2011) and imposter phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978). As well as the relationship that emerged between a sense of professional validation and qualifications, other challenges to establishing a sense of academic identity related to feelings of being peripheral or marginalised - for participants with part time and / or temporary contracts, it appears that confidence was impacted by a sense of being peripheral.

## Conclusions

Key themes relating to the idea of 'the new academic' have been explored and presented alongside rich data from Interview 1 (current participants). Prior experience of higher education environments was shown to be instrumental in shaping participants' initial conceptions of an academic identity, reflecting the role of external influences and social factors in our construction of identities (Blumer, 1986; Henkel, 2005; Tajfel, 1981). Table 13 (p. 103) shows that despite most participants not identifying with the label of 'academic' for themselves, they were all able to conceptualise a version of professional identity which fitted with their sense of self, who they were, and what they felt their primary purpose and function was at the university, thus they were able to negotiate a nascent professional identity that they were comfortable with (L. Archer, 2008). This strongly related to a sense of authenticity (L. Archer, 2008; Clegg, 2008) arising from professional and / or subject expertise. Other influencing factors were identified as validation and confidence. Some of these factors were pre-existing and intrinsic, in that participants 'arrive' with them (such as qualifications or professional expertise) and some were a result of early experiences in relation to their new academic role (for example, interactions with students or the nature of a contract).

This discussion enables the potential identification of any changes in conceptions and influences over time, as the participants gain more experience in their academic roles and progress through the PgCert LTHE, as the following chapters will explore.

## Chapter 6: The developing academic

### Introduction

This chapter discusses how participants conceptualised their professional identity and practices as they developed as an academic. It draws on the themes from units of analysis 2 and 3 (see table 14 below), and uses rich data from Interviews 2 and 3 as this relates specifically to participants' thoughts about their professional identity during and after participation in the PgCert LTHE. Where appropriate, the discussion is linked back to the previous chapter. Some aspects of potential influencing factors are touched on in this chapter, as participant narratives do not necessarily separate conceptions of their identity and reflection on factors influencing that identity, and the units of analysis reflect this as explained in the approach to analysis. However, this sense of influencing factors - 'the academic experience' - will be explored and theorised more fully in the next chapter.

The findings coalesce around several themes relating to changes in participants' sense of professional identity as an academic, which build on the themes from the previous chapter.

<i>Subsequent sense of academic identity</i>	
<b>Unit of Analysis 2</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 3</b>
tripartite academic student centred	teaching research practitioner

*Table 14: The developing academic - themes*

As previously, significant heterogeneity in the data mean that themes will be discussed with reference to the variety in the participants' experiences and conceptions and in order to recognise the differences in their prior and lived experiences.

The following table illustrates the participants' preconception of 'an academic', and their own initial conception of professional identity as an academic, then the development in their conceptions during and after the period of time that they were undertaking the PgC LTHE.



	<b>Preconception of 'an academic'</b>	<b>Conception of own professional identity and practice - 1</b>	<b>Conception of own professional identity and practice -2</b>	<b>Conception of own professional identity and practice -3</b>
<b>Sarah</b>	Academically accomplished, PhD / Masters qualified, specialist	teacher / facilitator, practitioner, helping others grow and develop	teacher / facilitator, gatekeeper to the profession	research informed teacher / facilitator, focus on student needs, reflective practitioner
<b>Liz</b>	expert, knowledgeable, stuffy, elite, exclusory	teacher - expert, practitioner, passing on knowledge	teacher - expert, practitioner, passing on current knowledge	researcher, teacher, expert practitioner, engaging students
<b>Kate</b>	specialist, knowledgeable, researcher, teacher	teacher - passing on knowledge, changing thinking	constant learner, responsibility to pass on new knowledge, transformative teaching	responsibility to create new knowledge, influence and impact subject and pedagogy, engaging students
<b>James</b>	lecturer (teacher), researcher, consultant (subject expert)	lecturer and practitioner (subject expert, consultant)	lecturer and practitioner (subject expert, consultant), assessor of students	teacher, assessor, no time for research or consultancy, disillusioned
<b>Andy</b>	engaged in research, lecturer, teacher, teaching administration	lecturer and teacher - develop thinking and contribute to pedagogy	lecturer and teacher, responsive to students, change pedagogy	pedagogical researcher, teaching leadership, reflective practitioner
<b>Jacob</b>	subject expert, published researcher, PhD qualified	subject expert, practitioner, mentor, coach	practitioner, educator, theory and practice	retraction from personal identification as an academic
<b>Rachel</b>	researcher, reading in an office, lecturer, specialist, PhD qualified, professor	lecturer = teacher, passing on knowledge, collaborative learning (facilitator)	teacher, planning creative teaching, influencing local pedagogy, doing research	academic 'nexus' - creative teaching, reflective practitioner, assessor, research, shared research with students

*Table 15: Participants' later conceptions of personal academic identity and practice*

The following sections will discuss the themes in detail, with reference to the rich data set.

### Research / the tripartite academic

Although conceptions of teaching in higher education have been extensively discussed in the literature (for example Fox, 1983; Kember & Kwan, 2000; Light et al., 2009; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996), leading in broad terms to a dichotomy between a teacher-focused 'transfer' identity and student-focused 'facilitative' identity (articulated in the previous chapter in relation to the different participants), conceptions of research have not been given the same attention (Brew, 2001, 2003). Brew (2001) identified four 'conceptions of research' in a study with established academic researchers. Whilst not necessarily comparable to the conceptions that early career academics may hold, what her study illustrates is that there is not one single understanding of 'research' (what it is, how it is carried out, to what end) amongst the higher education community. As such, new and developing academics when talking about 'research' may be reflecting a dominant conception within the subject area as expressed by their more experienced colleagues.

Brew's (2001) conceptions and the relationships between them are summarised in the following table, and are referred to where appropriate in relation to participant narratives:

	<b>Structural dimension (what is perceived and how the elements of what is perceived are related to each other)</b>	<b>Referential dimension (the meaning given to what is perceived)</b>
	<i>What is in the foreground is/are:</i>	<i>Research is interpreted as:</i>
<b>Domino conception</b>	sets (lists) of atomistic things: techniques, problems etc. These separate elements are viewed as linking together in a linear fashion;	a process of synthesising separate elements so that problems are solved, questions answered or opened up;
<b>Layer conception</b>	data containing ideas together with (linked to) hidden meanings;	a process of discovering, uncovering or creating underlying meanings;
<b>Trading conception</b>	products, end points, publications, grants and social networks. These are linked together in relationships of personal recognition and reward;	a kind of social market place where the exchange of products takes place;
<b>Journey conception</b>	the personal existential issues and dilemmas. They are linked through an awareness of the career of the researcher and viewed as having been explored for a long time.	a personal journey of discovery, possibly leading to transformation.

*Table 16: Structural and referential dimensions of conceptions of research*

(Brew, 2001)

By interview two, Sarah had concretised her notion of herself as 'not a typical academic', referring to herself as having 'broken the mould', largely down to her understanding that she had been recruited for her experience not for her qualifications. She inhabited a version of what Clegg (2008) referred to as a 'hybridised' academic identity. Her conception of her academic role had developed by interview two to include the concept of developing the workforce and being a gatekeeper of the profession -

*Sarah: What's the role of an academic? For me, teaching... it's to inspire the future workforce of [profession] and it's to equip them with the skills that they*

*need to be able to get jobs...[and] to try and actually filter out the ones that aren't meant for this profession as well....*

In interview two therefore, her conception of her identity as teacher / facilitator was still established, and additionally as someone whose job it was to create the workforce of the future - which can be assumed to be due to the professional and vocational nature of her subject area - in a sense, a self-concept of 'academic as professional gatekeeper', something noted in other areas of professional or vocational higher education (Hegender, 2010; Vacha-Haase, Davenport, & Kerewsky, 2004). By the time of her final interview, her conception of her academic identity had developed further to encompass the idea of research informed teaching, and she was also feeling less of an 'imposter' (Clance & Imes, 1978) in the academic role -

*Interviewer: What does being an academic mean to you now?*

*Sarah: I think what I'm now realising ...is that you think you do need the theory to back up what you're saying. I think I'm making sure now that everything that I do is properly researched ... I think I've realised now the importance of anything that I say, I want to back up with theory and evidence. That's not to look superior to anyone. That's not for my benefit, that's for the benefit of the people of the receiving end of my teaching really. For my benefit as well, because I think doing that, sort of, it gives you confidence in what you're saying and I think my confidence has grown now and will grow more...*

Sarah also indicates her reluctance that anyone should see her as trying to be 'superior' to anyone, linking to her feelings in the first interview about claiming what she perceived as the 'academic' status and her desire to remain grounded, as a result of her family and upbringing -

*Sarah: I'm quite humble and I don't think I'll ever lose that. I'll not be allowed because my family will kill me, if I start getting above my station they'll tell me.*

However, she demonstrated an emergent recognition of knowing that the research informed teaching would actually benefit the students, as well as benefiting herself by imbuing her with a greater confidence in her role - essentially validating her position further. In a similar reference to the potentially problematic interpretation of the label 'an academic', Kate's feelings in her second interview continued to make the connection with research (as with her first interview) and a responsibility to pass the

learning from research on to others, but maintained some of her initial reluctance around the term itself and any self-aggrandisement that might infer -

*Interviewer: How would you describe yourself as an academic?*

*Kate: I think more- I don't know if it's part of doing this [PgCert] course - but more as a constant learner, definitely. I probably thought, but I think it more now as an academic. Again, it's kind of slightly problematic, but you know that it does sound slightly grandiose when you call yourself an academic. But you know... as a researcher as well and a duty to pass that learning on as well, I think is a responsibility of an academic.*

In her second interview, Kate also highlighted the change in her practice in relation to the concept of transformative teaching, and very similar to Sarah, the idea that academics should approach their teaching practices from the students' perspective -

*Interviewer: Has the way in which you think about yourself – so not your practice, but the way in which you think about yourself as an academic – has it changed at all over the last five months? It may not have done, that's okay.*

*Kate: Yes. Definitely.*

*Interviewer: Okay. So in what way and why do you think that is?*

*Kate: I think I've realised a bit more, the gravity of the responsibility of teaching future generations.*

*Interviewer: Interesting.*

*Kate: ...you're going to affect hundreds of people's lives and how they think about everything – to some degree... It's part of your responsibility. Looking at it from the learner's perspective rather than "I've got to teach this thing"... I was very struck by the whole idea – transformative teaching - and thinking actually, I'm not just necessarily changing the student's perceptions of the world or the subject or whatever it may be, but also realising that you can change teaching... Even if it's just me trying something out and then telling another colleague about "Well I tried this and it worked" and they go "Oh, well I might try that" and you think that might get passed on...*

Recognising the significance and power of the teaching role in changing thinking and practice in others, both students and colleagues, was something she felt energised about. By her third interview, this conception of her academic identity was still evident, but the shift to academic as researcher was more apparent -

*Kate: I think to me, it now means more about being someone who is responsible for thinking about stuff that other people don't have the opportunity or the time to think about. And do that research, or do that thinking, on behalf of humanity for want of a less grandiose phrase.*

Kate's conception of research was more nuanced than Sarah's, fitting into what Brew (Brew, 2001) termed a 'layer conception' - "a process of discovering, uncovering or creating underlying meanings" (Brew, 2001). Sarah's conception of research at this early stage in her academic career was more akin to the notion of scholarship for teaching (Boyer, 1992; Brew, 2003), and also a sense of responsibility for 'critical inquiry' -

...scholarship in this conception is interpreted as the way academics demonstrate professionalism. It is demonstrated in an emphasis on attention to detail which includes logic, use of evidence, work properly referenced... (Brew, 2003)

In interview two, Liz still didn't feel she was 'an academic', continuing to see herself as an expert in her [professional] field. Her rationale for 'not feeling like one' had been reinforced by interaction with those she felt were in fact academics - which she believed were those who enjoyed 'research' -

*Liz: I think, in the group that I'm in, I've got some academics. They can do research. They like that stuff, whereas I'm -*

*Interviewer: What makes you think they're the academics?*

*Liz: Because they enjoy it. They want to research. It's what they're about. It's who they are. They want to go and research stuff, whereas I want to get on with it. I want to just practice, I suppose. Just do the jobs and get it done and move on. Whereas they're enjoying the richness of it, if you like.*

*Interviewer: Ah, interesting.*

*Liz: So I still don't see myself as ever being like that.*

She had recognised the importance of staying up to date in her field - relating to a scholarship for rather than of teaching (Boyer, 1992; Trigwell et al., 2000) - but reiterated that this was not 'for the love of it', rather it was because it was important to be aware of what was going on 'out there':

*Liz: I still see myself more as an expert in my field.*

*Interviewer: Mmm-hmm?*

*Liz: And that expertise comes from experience in the corporate world. ...So I suppose 'academic' is a label....So it's sharing my expertise and my knowledge... obviously I'm developing my knowledge as I go along. I've got to do that. I can't stand still.... So that is research, I suppose, but I'm not doing it from the love of it. I'm doing it because I've got to keep teaching and being aware of what's going on out there.*

By the final interview, however, Liz had had a fairly fundamental shift to seeing herself as an academic, albeit to her own surprise -

*Interviewer: What does being an academic mean to you?*

*Liz: ...It definitely has shifted, in as much because I am sort of am one. I never, ever thought I was. I still have got the stereotypical view of what an academic is, but I don't suppose that really exists anymore. I suppose it is someone that works within higher education that's involved in research as well as teaching.*

*Interviewer: You say it has shifted because you think you are one now?*

*Liz: Because I do do that.*

*Interviewer: You do do that?*

*Liz: Research, MSc, PGCert, I'm going to do a PhD, so I suppose that sort of makes me by default an academic.... If you're here to teach then I think the research element is what in my head makes you an academic.*

*Interviewer: Okay, and does it have to be subject research, or could it be pedagogical research?*

*Liz: Yes, either.*

She felt 'just' teaching was not being an academic - being involved in research, as yet un-conceptualised other than the idea of undertaking a PhD - was what was required for her to inhabit or own the 'academic' label. Although she had come into higher education 'for the teaching' and that is what she enjoyed, she had pragmatically accepted that doing research was necessary. Her professional identity had evolved through a combination of her internal self-definition (expert practitioner, teacher) versus external definitions and expectations (academics do research) - as explored by Jenkins (2004) 'internal-external dialectic of identification' (Jenkins, 2004, p. 20).

Liz had issues however equating that with her continued need to be the expert in the room -

*Liz:...the issues I have with research – that's a very broad statement – is you can never know it all and I find that very, very frustrating, that I can go in and claim, "I'm an expert because Joe Bloggs said this and Fred said the other," but I don't necessarily know-*

*Interviewer: Do you think that's to do with your [subject] kind of mind and the need to know it all?*

*Liz: Yes, how can I say I'm an expert because I don't necessarily know what other people are saying and I find that difficult?*

Although not conceptualised in detail, her comments reflected a 'domino' conception of research, something viewed as knowledge that solves problems and answers questions (Brew, 2001), which perhaps reflects the nature of her subject area.

Rachel had also started to feel more comfortable inhabiting an academic identity by the time of interview two, and had moved on from feeling like she didn't know what being an academic was, for her -

*Interviewer: How would you describe yourself as an academic?*

*Rachel: ...I can't help but think back to the last time we spoke, when I was feeling like, 'I don't even know what that means.' ...*

*Interviewer: What does being an academic mean to you?*

*Rachel: Well I suppose it is the teaching but it is also the research and it is all the other things that seem to go with it as well. Whether that is admin or whether that is dealing with the results and the feedback and all the other things that are associated... The teaching as well. Obviously that feels where it starts and then everything else sort of follows on. Then research; ... I am going to be doing some over the next couple of months and then applying for more for next year. I am starting to think as well how I can involve students in that research... I am thinking about workshops and how it might help them to think about their own work and practice. Trying to bring things together. Maybe that is what it is as well; the academic is bringing all these different strands together in a package. It is not any one single thing.*

*Interviewer: That is really interesting. That is a really interesting reflection to listen to. It sounds as though you are inhabiting a much fuller role by the sounds of it just from what you have described. Do you know what I mean?*

*Rachel: Yes. I think that is true. I think I may be feeling a bit more comfortable with what I am doing.*

Her notion of feeling 'more comfortable' - potentially, like she belongs - and how / why she had come to feel this links to one of the themes relating to 'the academic experience', which will be explored more fully in the next chapter. She continued, as with interview two, to develop her confidence in her own pedagogical practice and not feeling the need to do it 'the same way as everyone else', and expressed a conceptualisation of the academic role as 'bringing things together' - teaching, assessment, admin, research, research with students... with teaching being 'where it starts', the nexus of this academic identity. This was reflected in all the other participants by the final interview, that being an academic meant more than 'just teaching', although aspects of the teaching role - particularly assessment of students -



were significant as well as research in being experienced as manifestations of the academic identity.

Andy maintained his already well-established conception of what an 'academic' was throughout interviews two and three, in interview two reiterating that he still did not believe himself to be one in terms of his belief of what they should comprise (research, teaching, administration), and defining his personal role in relation to his teaching -

*Interviewer: Andy, how would you describe yourself as an academic?*

*Andy: I remain unconvinced as in interview one that I am an academic, still. Still correcting a PhD thesis so perhaps I'll feel like more of an academic when it's done.... What else? I suppose that I feel like a little bit more of an academic now that I've got things to mark in and got things to return and feedback...So feeling a bit more of an academic in that sense. Not so much on the research side. As I say, I've got a PhD still to correct.*

*Interviewer: Do you see yourself as a teaching academic predominantly at the moment?*

*Andy: Definitely. And whether that will change or not, I don't know. I mean, that's what I enjoy the most but there are things that could be investigated. When I've actually got time to do it.*

His pedagogical approach - to develop student thinking and abilities in the subject area - remained the same, but he had developed his thinking in relation to a responsibility to effect change in terms of responding to student feedback, essentially a more student-centred pedagogy or conception of teaching:

*Interviewer: And what about your academic practice? Either the way in which you think about it or the way in which you do it, has that changed in any way?*

*Andy: Certainly I don't think it's changed too much as yet. I have perhaps put more thought into trying to solicit student feedback on a more regular basis, even if very informally... And having it so that they feel they are being listened to is important.*

and adopting a slightly less-content heavy approach:

*Andy: ...[taking] things at a slower pace allows them time to assimilate, which I think is the thing that they've all said that was lacking before, was they had too much to get through in too small a space of time. So...having less of a quantity of content has been useful to them.*

By the time of interview three, he had expanded his understanding of his own academic role to encompass a greater emphasis on teaching related administration and the expectations regarding this -

*Interviewer: What does being an academic mean to you?*

*Andy: It still means what it did before I think. Yes, your classic research, admin, teaching, mesh in some sense to varying weightings. I think I'm starting to understand that there's more admin that's done than necessarily needs to be done, or that I realised needed to be done.*

*Interviewer: What type of admin?*

*Andy: Just making sure that the course runs smoothly in the background, that emails are taken care of between however many people need to know about however many things, like timetables and just what might be seen as mundane I suppose, but do contribute to the student experience more than I might have thought about...*

Andy articulated with clarity the difference he felt there was between a teacher, lecturer, and academic. For him, a teacher's responsibility is to teach the material, a lecturer in higher education has a responsibility to ensure that the material is up to date / current - a sense of scholarship for teaching (Trigwell et al., 2000), as with Liz - and an academic who teaches should be engaged in research (either pedagogical or disciplinary) that informs either the content or method of teaching (or both). He had a well-developed understanding of different conceptions of research (Brew, 2001), and acknowledged the lower status of pedagogical research in his discipline more broadly, something explored by Skelton (2012) and Land & Gordon (2014). However, his professional identity was firmly established as a teaching academic, and this was where he wanted to invest his efforts in order to develop. He felt fortunate that this was encouraged in his local subject area, as opposed to his previous position at a research intensive university.

*Andy: I'm by far and away not a subject specialist; as I say in terms of subject research specialisms, we have two or three people in the department who do [subject] as it were.*

*Interviewer: Yes and they research [subject]?*

*Andy: Exactly. We have a lot of people who contribute to the development of [subject] pedagogy which is being an academic, but in a different sense from the one in which I would initially think... If I went to see other [subject specialists] at my former institution and said, "This is what I'm doing." They'd say, "You're not doing research."*

Andy defined academic leadership in relationship to teaching (module, course, and so on) and additional student-related duties as 'admin' (again, perhaps relating to his previous position in a different university), and felt that perhaps he should do more of it seeing as he wasn't involved in subject research -

*Interviewer: What about anything where you've ever questioned your sense of being an academic or thought, "Why am I doing this?" Does that relate back to what we were discussing earlier?*

*Andy: Yes. Not researching makes me feel less like an academic but not less like I should be working at a university, if that makes sense... I'm not a [subject specialist] in the truest sense of the word. Perhaps I should engage more with the administrative side of things.*

*Interviewer: Really? Do more admin?*

*Andy: In terms of roles within the department.*

*Interviewer: Oh I see, so thinking about course management.*

*Andy: Yes that sort of thing. So I've volunteered for first year tutor next year... They give you most of a day a week to manage pastoral issues and things, which I think is perhaps what I'm better at than doing straight [subject] research.*

He maintained and repeated his earlier perspective of the academic as someone who doesn't care about teaching or students, a conception formed from his experiences of studying for his PhD in a research-intensive university, and as such this was the person he did not want to be -

*Interviewer: Is being an academic important to you as part of the overall you, of who you are, who Andy is both at work and at home?*

*Andy: To be honest not really. Being an academic was never something I aspired to particularly. Being somebody who teaches is something I aspire to. The rest of it just goes along with it.... if I think of an academic, I think of somebody who's sitting there and doing [subject] with four to six hours of contact with students if they're lucky. The luckier they are in terms of their own thoughts the less contact they have.*

James' affiliation with his academic identity was troubled by the time of interview two (and remained so in interview three). In interview two, he described himself as 'new still' and expressed that he was still 'getting to grips' with the role and what was expected of him.

*Interviewer: How would you describe yourself as an academic?*

*James: New still. Still learning. Still adjusting. Still getting to grips with what's expected of me and what I expect of other people.*

*Interviewer: Okay.*

*James: I've found my feet a little bit with the teaching especially. The supporting work documents, that kind of stuff, is still a little bit new to me.*

*Interviewer: What type of things?*

*James: The module forms and all that kind of admin stuff. A lot of that will take me longer than would be expected of others, I think.*

He went onto to express his doubts about whether he should be in the role -

*Interviewer: What about anything where you've questioned your sense... or you're questioning your sense of being an academic?*

*James: I've questioned a few times. Well, probably twice, maybe three times I've questioned whether I wanted to carry on down this path.*

*Interviewer: Okay.*

*James: ...more along the lines of, "Do I want to go back into [profession] full-time?" ...I do enjoy this role but... when you see other people doing things that you think, "Oh that's really cool. I'd like to be doing that" ...instead of teaching level fours skills, you think, "Maybe I've made the wrong decision"...*

It appeared that in finding himself undertaking 'service' teaching (basic level four modules), he was making unfavourable comparisons between his teaching role (and his difficulty making time for external work) and that of professionals in his field. By the time of interview three, although his conception of what an academic 'should' be was largely the same, his conception of it in relation to the role he found himself in had shifted -

*Interviewer: I wondered what your perception now is of being an academic, what does it mean to you, whether it's the same, whether it's changed?*

*James: I think it's pretty much the same. I only know this place and I think it's shifted a little bit in terms of the expectations upon me compared to what I gather at other institutions.*

*Interviewer: Okay, such as?*

*James: I think there is a much larger emphasis on teaching as opposed to research or anything else, which I always thought was quite an even split. But certainly at this place, I think the work plan and the workload is potentially a little bit more than you might find at other places. Certainly that's anecdotal stuff that I've got from other colleagues that have worked at other institutions.*

*Interviewer: So it's more heavily loaded for teaching here than research?*

*James: Yes, which when I first started I would have said, "Well, that's what we are. We're teachers." But now...I think my outlook has changed quite a lot, in the sense of I think without doing the research or without doing the practical element, certainly within my course, I feel like a bit of a hypocrite, telling people to do stuff that I don't do or haven't practiced myself.*

So, as with the other participants, he considered that the academic role should comprise research, either as part of or as well as maintaining practitioner expertise,

and felt that he was not getting the opportunities to do this. His conception of 'research' was aligned towards a 'trading conception' - consultancy, publications, and professional networks - (Brew, 2001). This builds on the theme of authenticity (L. Archer, 2008) from the first interview, to a sense of needing credibility and the link between this and research. This aligns with Nicholls' (Nicholls, 2005) research which found that "establishing credibility in their designated field of knowledge" was a key feature of the new academic's developing professional identity. James expressed a lack of interest in pedagogy, despite having been nominated for an inspirational teaching award, and said he was 'dreading' the coming academic year when he would have more teaching. He reiterated his 'grass is greener' mentality and said that he was jealous of professional associates who had gone onto high status careers in his field. He presented a sense of being disillusioned with the role as he was currently experiencing it:

*James: .... we're meant to be churning out four star papers and yet we've got half a day to do it. It's kind of like, well, something's got to give there. You can't do it over the summer because it's not practical.*

James appeared to be experiencing a 'dissonant' experience of academic socialisation (J. Smith, 2010, p. 583), risking moving towards 'rejection' and returning to his previous profession, partly as a result of performative pressures and expectations.

In a similar vein to James, Jacob also described himself as 'new academic' in interview two, but one who was learning more techniques and trying to think like 'an educator' in a development from his initial conception of himself as a subject expert and practitioner -

*Interviewer: How would you describe yourself as an academic?*

*Jacob: I would describe myself as a new academic who is developing- learning some new techniques...I'm very much, I think, it's problem-based learning. My background as a practitioner rather than a teacher, but I've been starting to think more as an educator and trying to apply some of the theory and practice into the very limited sessions I have with students. I'm only teaching two hours a week at the moment.*

Despite his limited opportunities in teaching, he had begun to focus on developing more student engagement and student-centred approaches (Light et al., 2009; Trigwell

& Prosser, 1996). He made reference to the constraints he had within his associate lecturer role, and that he was trying to work within those as best he could to broaden his experience and ensure the students had the best experience that he could provide. By the time of the third interview, he was able to articulate more clearly what he felt an 'academic' was, and made reference to research (as with his first interview) -

*Interviewer: What does being an academic mean to you?*

*Jacob: Somebody who supports teaching and learning in higher education. But also an element of research and scholarly thoughts.*

He had enjoyed being 'an academic', and wanted to have further opportunities, but having gone back to his full time non-academic role, was unsure about whether he would be able to pursue that avenue. He had an understanding of an academic as teacher and researcher, and had learned that his lack of research and higher qualification effectively ruled him out of applying for more permanent positions. Although he did not discuss it, taking part in the PgCert course could have exposed him to the diversity of practice across the institution in terms of who is and is not deemed appointable in different subject areas - an ethical issue relating to the multi-disciplinary, cross-university nature of this kind of provision (J. Smith, 2010) - and something which may have added to his sense of disillusionment. At the time of the third interview, a restructure was taking place in the area of his permanent contract, and as such he was in a period of career uncertainty more broadly, and his pursuit of the academic career had become less of a realistic option. He had moved from a position of enthusiastically embracing the academic role and the opportunities it might present him in interviews one and two, to a more resigned perspective in his final interview. So, whilst not perhaps typifying the 'rejection' categorisation of Smith's (2010) research, he was not given the opportunities to develop towards a 'resonant' acceptance of his academic identity.

Both James and Jacob's narratives reflect the ideas expressed by Colley et al (2007) regarding professional identities as 'unbecoming' as well as 'becoming' - as Archer (L. Archer, 2008) agrees -

... 'becoming' an academic is not smooth, straightforward, linear or automatic, but can also involve conflict and instances of inauthenticity, marginalisation and exclusion.

These ideas will be explored further in the next chapter.

### Student-centred / teaching

Participants' interactions with students, the student lifecycle, student-centred pedagogy all emerged (to varying degrees) as factors in relation to changing conceptions of their role. This aligns with Gale's (Gale, 2011) research into early-career academics' initial identity construction in a teaching-focused institution, where 'critical incidents' involving students were the most commonly cited aspects of manifest academic identity.

For Jacob, who was in a different position to the rest of the participants in terms of the nature of his contract, his interactions with students were the primary factor in distinguishing an academic identity from his other (predominant) professional identity. Despite his unavoidable disengagement from the notion of him inhabiting an academic identity going forward, he reiterated that connecting with students was where he had found it to be realised -

*Jacob: I've found [teaching] really, yes, a motivating process, and, I think it's been clear that the feedback from the students, that they've valued having me as a tutor, so that's been really, really good...*

Rachel articulated with clarity her feeling that being more involved with students and the student / teaching life cycle (planning, teaching, assessment, moderation) had helped her to inhabit her academic identity - recognising how all the different aspects of the role linked together, with teaching "where it all starts and the rest follows on". Her ideas to involve students in her own research (as explored in the previous section) had concretised for her this sense of the academic identity as multifaceted with teaching and students as the nexus. In Henkel's (2005) research,

the two things that emerged as most important for academic identities were the discipline and academic freedom... the sources of meaning and self-esteem...(Henkel, 2005)

whereas what this data indicates is that for the developing academics in this research, interactions with students are more closely linked to their emerging academic identity than a sense of their discipline or academic freedom in research. This is likely to relate to their primary identification as academics in teaching roles, rather than academics in research roles, and as Brew (2001, p273) noted, "academics in some areas of study do not even conceptualise themselves in disciplinary terms". Rachel articulated an identity as a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983), with a realisation that she had started to feel confident to use her approach to her previous professional role within her new academic role -

*Rachel: ...when you reflect on it, it is like, "Oh, I am beginning to think of things." I think I am starting to apply the way I would normally approach things to this role which I haven't done before..... Now I feel like I am more like applying how I would normally approach a job to doing this.*

In terms of conceptions of teaching, whilst still inhabiting a student centred, facilitative approach (Nicholls, 2014), Sarah described a shift in her pedagogical approach towards a more evidence and research informed approach to teaching. She felt this had been influenced by her feeling that this is what the students needed and should experience - her thinking about what she was doing from the perspective of the student experience and student needs, as opposed to her own -

*Interviewer: Is what you're describing now is more of a scholarly approach and linking research and teaching?*

*Sarah: Yes, definitely. Yes. I think I, sort of, fought against that at the start, because that didn't fit with me, but I was thinking about myself. I wasn't thinking about the learners' experience really... whenever you're doing anything, you need to be thinking about, "What's the best approach for them?" rather than, "What am I more comfortable with?"*

Sarah also defined a shift to engaging more meaningfully with reflective practice, in order to maintain a focus on the student -

*Sarah: When I did that [module review] last year, felt very much a paper exercise, tick box activity, whereas this time, it was a pleasure, I enjoyed writing it... I was going at it with a completely different lens and I was thinking, "Yes, it is about quality and it is about making sure we've got the learner at the heart"...*



In interview two, Liz explained her realisation that building relationships with students was an integral part of her role, something she hadn't realised before -

*Liz: I've got better relationships with students than I perhaps had then. I didn't think I had to build relationships. They were just turning up to see me and then go again. Whereas now it's a journey they're on as well as a course.*

So whilst her conception of 'being an academic' had shifted, to include research and a sense of making connections and building relationships with students, her conception of teaching (as the expert transferring knowledge) had remained largely the same, albeit with shifts in her approach to practice in terms of engaging students and a more student-centred approach (Light et al., 2009; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996) by the time of interview three -

*Interviewer: Can you give me any specific examples of things that you think you have either done differently or you might do differently?*

*Liz: I've moved away from talking at groups....I try to make it a lot more interactive and ask them questions a lot... so it's getting involvement of the group... it's thinking, "What can I do to make it less boring?"*

Andy - despite his depiction of the typical academic as one engaged in research - was comfortable inhabiting his teaching academic identity and also associated interaction with students with his academic role:

*Interviewer: In your average week how much of it do you feel like you are fulfilling the academic role, day to day, an average week?*

*Andy: I suppose when I'm teaching and when I'm generally helping students. I suppose when I'm performing administrative tasks although that seems to vary. The whole thing seems to vary depending on what's going on at the time. So May felt very busy and it felt like "I am doing this job." This is what May is like for academics. We have big piles of things to mark. Now it's June it feels like all the big piles of things have gone away.... I would say most of the time depending on the time of year.*

Kate also made reference to the ebb and flow of the academic year - the student life cycle - and the impact of that on her ability to inhabit her academic identity, which she had developed into the concept of the responsibility to do research, create knowledge and share with others. Similar to Liz, in her "just teaching is not being an academic" perspective, Kate expressed that being an academic felt different depending on the amount of teaching related work you were involved with (which links back to James'

feelings about having too much to do) and the immediacy of having to respond to and deal with student needs -

*Kate: ...it's easy to forget what it's like, being in the middle of teaching when you're in the summer or in different periods... it's different at different times of the year.... you have different perceptions of yourself as an academic. When you've got a few months over summer, you're more research focused maybe, and maybe working at a higher – sounds a bit pompous – but higher intellectual level than when you're teaching. Because teaching as an academic is a lot...more about getting the practical day-to-day stuff done and it includes photocopying, preparing teaching materials and simplifying things.*

*Interviewer: Messing around with PowerPoint?*

*Kate: Yes, all that stuff. Like Blackboard. Yes all that kind of stuff. All the electronic stuff and the administration, which feels like a bit less of a- I don't know where I am going with this, but as an academic in the middle of teaching. What I was trying to get at was student expectations, what students need from you is a lot more. You're a lot more focused on that in teaching because you're seeing them all the time...*

This sense of a teaching dominated academic identity, and one which is shaped by the pressures of different time periods in the academic year was reflected in Locke and Bennion's (2010) report on the 'changing academic profession', indicating that this sense of competing priorities is a commonly experienced phenomenon. The notion of a flexible and changing identity, 'becoming and unbecoming' (Colley et al., 2007) an academic at different times reflects the theoretical position on identity underpinning this discussion - Bauman's (1996, p. 18) post-modern belief that an individual may have more than one 'identity', and a sense of liminality - "periods of oscillation between states or statuses..." (J. Smith, 2010, p. 579).

For all participants, interactions with students (pedagogic experiences) influenced their personal conception of their academic identity - whilst all had found positive interactions with students to be a positive reinforcement of their practice, some also found this to be the case for their academic identity, although - as explored in the preceding section - for James the amount of student interaction and student related work had a negative impact on his academic sense of self due to his belief that this detracted from the time he should have to focus on research.

## Summary of themes

The multifaceted nature of an academic identity - for some expressed as the 'tripartite role' - had become more of a widely accepted conception in some participants by the time of the second interview, and all participants by the time of the third interview. This was being referred to not only as a theoretical construct but also as something they themselves could inhabit - it had started to influence their academic self-concept as they moved towards a more stable professional identity. Linked closely to this, the notion of 'research' as a core component of academic identity, and recognition of its significance (in various forms) to the academic role also developed as a theme and had become more dominant by the final interview. Associated with this for some participants, whereby a PhD equated to 'research', notions such as the 'qualified academic' and the 'academic as expert' continued to be expressed, as with interview 1. Participants' 'conceptions of research' (Brew, 2001) varied depending largely on their previous experiences of higher education and the expectations in their local contexts, and in some cases reflected a sense of scholarly practice or scholarship (Boyer, 1992) rather than 'research' as might be understood by a research academic. The role of 'research' in their sense of academic identity was in some cases complex - for those more well-versed in academia, the notion of research status or hierarchies (Chalmers, 2011; Skelton, 2012) within the discipline was significant. The conception of academic as practitioner was less evident than in interview one, especially by the final interview, although this conception (as part of a multidimensional academic identity) was still present in those participants with strong and recent professional roles in industry.

A second dominant theme related to teaching and interactions with students, developing the conceptions expressed in interview one. Approaches to teaching, assessment, the student lifecycle, all emerged (to varying degrees) as aspects in relation to their conceptions of their role, in both the second and third interview. Participants who had a predominantly transfer or teaching-centred conception of teaching had shifted towards more student-centred approaches, reflecting the development seen in previous studies (see for example Fox, 1983; Light et al., 2009; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996). By the third interview, a sense of the student life cycle and academic calendar had emerged for some participants as impacting on their sense of

academic identity, in terms of 'who' they were at different times of year. As with interview one, ideas relating to validation from student interaction and student interaction being essential to academic identity were reinforced, and several participants' narratives suggested the notion of becoming a 'reflective practitioner' (Schön, 1983).

Heterogeneity notwithstanding, by the final interview there was a shift in most participants' conceptions of themselves as academics. Some had moved more into a comfortable and stable inhabitation of their academic self-concept (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002). For those who had previously had an 'academic as teacher' conception, this had evolved into the idea of the research / theory informed teacher, responsible for staying up to date. For some of those with a conception of the tripartite role of the academic, this had evolved further into notions of the academic as influencer, influencing both disciplinary thinking and pedagogical practice. For most participants, the 'resonant' categorisation from Smith's (2010) typology of academic socialisation was evident. For one participant however, the passage of time had challenged his original conception of the academic as 'teacher, researcher, consultant', as he felt his workload did not allow for anything but teaching. This had led to him feeling disillusioned with his role and career change, aligning with a 'dissonant' or even 'rejection' categorisation (Smith, 2010), and a less stable professional identity. Another participant, having returned to his full time technical role and not having had his associate lecturer work renewed, was not able to inhabit a stable academic identity and was uncertain about his future as an academic. He maintained a perception of the 'gate holders' of the academic world preventing his progression into an academic career due to his lack of research and PhD.

## Conclusions

The discussion of findings in this chapter suggests most participants have moved towards a 'resonant' experience of academic socialisation (J. Smith, 2010) and a more stable professional identity. There is a move beyond notions of the academic as 'dual professional' and instead there is the idea of an academic in a teaching-focused, applied university as a '*tri-professional*', subject to both professional and disciplinary

cultures in the formation of their academic-as-self, whilst noting the influence of any pre-conceptions of 'the academic' on entry to the academy. They are required to have and / or develop expertise in subject, pedagogy and research, as well as have and / or develop operational skills in administration and leadership (teaching and / or research related). It also suggests that new academics have different conceptions of research, ranging from what might be more commonly referred to as 'scholarly practice' in terms of keeping current in one's subject and integrating that currency into teaching, to personal research - that may itself be formal (aiming for publication) or informal - into subject or pedagogical areas of interest. The data also illustrates that participants have perhaps been conditioned into what Hughes (2005, p. 21) refers to as "the myth of superiority of the lecturer as researcher" which he considers "may be closely related to the structure and even the political economy of academic life."

Although the actual term is not used in their work, Gunn and Fisk (2013) suggest an expectation of what could be deemed the tri-professional in higher education; expert in subject, teaching and research, a development from the notion of the 'dual professional' - subject expert and teaching expert. Notions of 'dual professionalism' for academics who teach in higher education were discussed by Beaty (1998), and also Nixon (Nixon, 1996), who in discussing a 'crisis of professional identity' described the 'Janus' like teacher who has a 'teacher identity' from their day to day occupation and a 'subject specialist' identity from the outside world. These ideas were reinforced by Peel (2005) in her article exploring the challenges of continuing professional development in the higher education work place, and more recently Nixon and Evans (2015) in their work exploring shifting identities of the 'European' academic. In 2008, Clegg discussed the emerging complexities of academic identities - the "multiple positions and ways in which academic identity might be understood by individuals" (Clegg, 2008, p. 332), many themes within which resonate with the findings discussed here. Despite some of these literatures suggesting otherwise, most of these developing academics did not express any notion of crisis with their inhabitation of their emerging academic identities. Rather, it appeared that they continued to negotiate the construction of their developing academic identity through social and individual processes, through self-definition and external definitions offered by others

- thus the 'internal-external dialectic of identification' (Jenkins, 2004, p. 20) continues, as explored previously.

The next chapter will explore the academic experience, and examine the possible factors influencing the changes in academic identity and practice that have been identified in this chapter, and thus potentially illustrate the ways in which new academics may come to be 'formed'.

## Chapter 7: The academic experience

### Introduction

This chapter, exploring the lived academic experience - specifically, what has happened to them over the course of the research - draws on the themes from units of analysis 5 and 6, and uses rich data from Interviews 2 and 3 as this relates specifically to participants' thoughts about their experiences during and after participation in the PgCert LTHE. Where appropriate, the discussion is linked back to the previous chapters.

In terms of the factors that may have shaped participants' sense of academic identity and their academic practice, a number of themes emerged, relating to participants' lived experiences as an academic. As previously, data is presented to ensure the visibility of the different participants and their lived experiences, and to make explicit their heterogeneity. The findings coalesce around several key themes, which will be discussed in a way which highlights the interrelated nature of their influences on participants' inhabitation of their academic identity and practice.

<i>Subsequent factors influencing sense of academic identity</i>	
<b>Unit of Analysis 5</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 6</b>
self-efficacy belonging / mattering pedagogical agency communities of practice	belonging / mattering self-efficacy / resilience community / collegiality pedagogical agency

**Table 17: The academic experience - themes**

These themes will now be explored and theorised with reference to the rich data set.

### Self-efficacy

According to Bandura (Bandura, 1986, 1997), and interpreted further by Bong and Skaalvik (2002) and McAlister, Perry and Parcel (2008) self-efficacy is shaped in an individual via four means - mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and physiological reactions.

The following table provides an explanation of these factors:

<b>Self-efficacy influence</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Enactive mastery experience</b>	A process that helps someone develop towards complex or challenging tasks from the achievement of more simple objectives. Prior experiences with the tasks in question provide the most reliable source of information for efficacy beliefs. Successes strengthen self-efficacy, whereas repeated failures undermine it. A firm sense of efficacy built on the basis of past successes is believed to withstand temporary failures.
<b>Vicarious experience / Social modelling</b>	Observation of behaviours which demonstrates the processes that accomplish an objective. People establish their self-efficacy beliefs on the basis of similar others' performance on the tasks. Modelling thus serves as another effective source of efficacy information. Vicarious experience exerts greater influence on self-efficacy formation when there are no absolute measures of adequacy and when people perceive similarity between the model and themselves.
<b>Verbal persuasion</b>	Persuasive communication and evaluative feedback from significant others also influence one's judgment of self-efficacy. Verbal persuasion is most effective when people who convey the efficacy information are viewed as knowledgeable and credible and when the information is viewed as realistic. However, disconfirming mastery experience easily outweighs self-efficacy beliefs created solely on the basis of verbal persuasion.
<b>Physiological reactions / physical and emotional states</b>	Heightened physiological arousals such as sweating, heartbeats, and mood changes also send a signal to people that affects their efficacy appraisal. Recognition of these somatic symptoms leads to self-efficacy adjustments through their effects on cognitive processing.

*Table 18: Factors influencing self-efficacy*

adapted from Bong and Skaalvik (2002, pp. 5–6) and Perry and Parcel (McAlister et al., 2008)

Feeling a sense of achievement when their teaching had been successful - an example of an 'enactive mastery experience' - was a common thread among participants. All cited positive interactions with students as ways in which they felt 'more an academic' and as such validated or affirmed in their academic identity and practice. In response to the question "Have you got an example of a particular aspect of your practice, something that you've done where you've felt like an academic?" participants offered very similar responses relating to critical incidents (Flanagan, 1954) while teaching or in some cases assessing students work. Sarah, in interview two, felt like an academic:



*Sarah: When the students give me good feedback.... When I feel like an academic is when I've done a session and then the students tell me it's had an impact on them.*

In interview three, she expanded this to reference her teaching (including external training that she had been asked to do), and also her completion of the PgCert qualification - all these experiences had provided her with validation of her academic identity as she experienced it, enabled her to experience self-efficacy, a sense of being competent in her role:

*Sarah: Any teaching that I do...The external training that I've been asked to do, because I think it's quite an honour when your manager asks you to do something like that, because it's very high profile.... Doing the... I think, and I'm not just saying this because you know....*

*Interviewer: Because it's me?*

*Sarah: Because it's you. I honestly believe getting that [PgCert] qualification has made me feel like an academic and feel like- it's given me that sort of, well I've got this qualification in teaching now that's at that sort of master's level. It makes me feel like an academic.*

The very positive feedback from senior colleagues she had received following the external training had strengthened her sense of self-efficacy, an example of 'verbal persuasion' in action, most effective when "people who convey the efficacy information are viewed as knowledgeable and credible" (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002, p. 6).

Liz articulated her feelings of self-efficacy via mastery experiences in interview two, talking about when teaching had gone well (and the undermining of self-efficacy when it hadn't) -

*Liz: It's walking out of a session where it's gone really, really well. 'Get me, I did that, I've passed on some knowledge.'... Yes. 'I'm worthy.' Whereas some ones you just think, 'Oh my God, they didn't get that at all.' Where I feel that personally, that I've done something. I'm not good enough to be there.*

*Interviewer: Right.*

*Liz: ...And then the more that they go well, the more I feel confident in what I do. Whereas the ones that don't go well give me that dip.*

In interview three, she spoke about her feeling of being 'an academic' when delivering teaching in a formal lecture theatre environment -

*Interviewer: To a lot of students?*

*Liz: Sixty-odd, yes, so yes, probably that. That's the first time I've done that and I've thought, "Wow, this is what I do."*

Similarly to her previous example though, the same situation also had the potential to make her feel less confident in her role, in that in the example she referred to she was speaking outside of her subject specialism and comfort zone and thus felt a bit of an imposter (Clance & Imes, 1978) - "a bit of, "They've paid a lot of money and they've got me", demonstrated that her self-concept of wanting to be the 'expert' (Nicholls, 2005) was well ingrained. Overall, her confidence had increased however, and she remarked that as a result of completing the PgCert course it felt as though she now had a tool box of techniques that she could now utilise due to the change in her contract status. For Liz, what appeared to be the most important aspect of her ability to begin to inhabit an academic identity was her achievement of the permanent contract after several years as an associate lecturer. In achieving the security of contract, she had achieved the ultimate validation of role and evidence of her self-efficacy and value. Her feelings here can also be related to a sense of belonging and mattering (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004; May, 2011), which will be explored in the next section.

The ability to recover from a negative experience and the impact of a subsequent positive one were also articulated by James, and indicate the influence of social modelling on the development of self-efficacy - using others' performance as a basis for one's own, which has greater influence on self-efficacy formation if the individual considers the role-model to be similar to themselves (Schunk, Hanson, & Cox, 1987; Schunk & Pajares, 2002) - something also referenced by Kate -

*Kate: ...just seeing how other people taught and go "I'm doing this, you could try this" and being a bit braver...*

James also gave an indication of the affirmation of self-efficacy from student feedback, in discussing his inspirational teaching award -

*James: Well I suppose the inspiration award, as much as I try to play it down because I'm not good at receiving praise I don't think, but yes, that was obviously one where I felt for a short amount of time, "I've done something good here and I have changed someone's education in a positive way," essentially. That is always going to be a nice feeling.*

Despite his overall retraction from identification with the academic role, due to the change in his contractual status, Jacob continued to express (as with his first interview) that interactions with (and impacting on) students had been a significant contributor to his sense of academic identity, alongside his initial feelings around his subject expertise - his reflections indicate that his success in 'making a difference' (a mastery experience, with elements of verbal persuasion) had contributed to a feeling of self-efficacy:

*Interviewer: Did you have any particular aspects of your practice, where you really felt, you know, "Oh, actually, I feel like an academic when I'm doing this?" Did you have any moments like that?*

*Jacob: Yes, I think, perhaps when students asked me for advice for placement interviews, and then, later on, told me that they've got the job....[I] could see, tangibly, how I was able to make a difference and help.*

This is mirrored by Andy's reflections on interactions with students seeking him out for help and support, which contributed to his sense of 'being an academic' and a feeling of self-efficacy in his role:

*Andy: I think [the most influential thing is] the way that students approach me. That they seem to think I know things, and that they seem to believe that I talk sense most of the time. So that's had a positive impact...they must view me as some kind of useful academic person I suppose, at least in the teaching side of things.*

Kate also referred to 'feeling like an academic' after enactive mastery experiences in teaching, articulating the sense of doing a good job, knowing you are helping others. She also equated this to being able to utilise her professional experiences and guide students accordingly -

*Kate:...I was teaching... And just feeling like... "I'm able to do this. I'm able to give this knowledge to people in a way that I can see them understanding it and help and breaking it down into bits"....And there are moments when you think "Yes, I am the right person to be here at this moment... I'm not just a lecturer who has just been in the world of academia".*

The role of the PgCert course in the development of self-efficacy via vicarious experience / social modelling is evident in several participant narratives. Whilst PgCert tutors are more experienced teachers than course participants, the ethos of the course explicitly promotes a sense of mutual respect between colleagues rather than a

hierarchical relationship. As such, observation of course tutors' teaching was influential for several participants -

*Interviewer: Are there any other influences that shape how you think about the role?*

*Rachel: I think actually, being a student [on the PgCert] and being on the receiving end of some of the methods. Because it's like seeing it in action [and] does give those platforms for talking to other people who do things in different ways....*

*Kate: ...the different methods that the different tutors used... and just seeing how other people taught and go "I'm doing this, you could try this" and being a bit braver...the other thing that was great was to see when tutors tried things, and it didn't always work, but it didn't matter that it didn't work because that's part of the process...*

*Andy: I think that's the most important thing about the course...watching you all reflect as you teach is very useful to see.*

*Jacob: I'm trying to, you know, pick up on practical tips as well and I like the ethos of how [the tutors] consciously change the method of delivery on a week by week basis in order to demonstrate different things, without actually saying "That's what you're doing". I think that's a really good way of doing it.*

For Liz, this vicarious experience / social modelling through the PgCert had had a significant impact on the development of her academic identity, breaking down the preconceptions that she had arrived with -

*Liz: [the PgCert has] made me realise that the stereotypical academic doesn't exist, the one from the 1940s... I suppose the course and my experiences have just made me see what one is now, which is much more involved...*

Closely linked to the idea of self-efficacy is the notion of self-concept, discussed in Chapter Five and illustrated by the quote above. Considering the development of the 'academic-as-self' identity, and the individual journey towards a conceptualisation of academic identity that they are at ease with, the relationship between self-concept (identity) and self-efficacy is inextricably interlinked. Winter (Winter, 2009) explored the differences between an academic's 'imagined' or 'perceived' identity and their actual experience of how it is constructed. In Winter's research, this 'identity schism' is seen as problematic due to alignment of academic endeavour around corporate goals; however, for some of the participants of this research, discovering that they were not

expected to be the 'traditional academic' but could instead develop a different version of it was a relief - an indication of the influence of the local and institutional context on the individual's construction of identity (Clegg, 2008; Henkel, 2009).

Factors influencing self-concept have been categorised into five areas (Skaalvik, 1997, pp. 3–4) and were referred to in Chapter Five; the relationship between these categories and factors influencing self-efficacy is apparent. Frames of reference can be compared to 'vicarious experience'; causal attributions to the sense of success or failure from teaching experiences; reflected appraisals from significant others to verbal persuasion; and mastery experiences are identified as factors in both frameworks.

This evident overlap between the constructs of self-concept and self-efficacy is articulated as follows:

Individuals who are otherwise similar feel differently about themselves and choose different courses of action, depending on how they construe themselves—what attributes they think they possess, what roles they presume they are expected to play, what they believe they are capable of, how they view they fare in comparison with others, and how they judge they are viewed by others. Without doubt, these are beliefs and perceptions about self that are heavily rooted in one's past achievement and reinforcement history. Yet it is these subjective convictions about oneself, once established, which play a determining role in individuals' further growth and development (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002, p. 2)

The research findings from this study illustrate that self-concept in new academics evolves over time as they become habituated with the academic environment, making the move from outsider to insider (Merton, 1972), developing a sense of belonging and mattering (to be explored later) and as they have access to opportunities to develop their sense of self-efficacy.

The following table offers a practical exemplification of the factors influencing self efficacy (from Bandura, 1977; Bong & Skaalvik, 2002; McAlister et al., 2008), prompted by examples arising from participant narratives:

<b>Self-efficacy influence</b>	<b>Suggested exemplification</b>
<b>Enactive mastery experience</b>	Experience of successful teaching activities (evidence of success from student feedback, reflection on practice, student engagement). Participation in lower risk pedagogical activities (for example a microteach) may encourage confidence in pedagogical practices when faced with more challenging situations. Sense of direct validation of own practice and evidence of impact contribute to self-efficacy.
<b>Vicarious experience / Social modelling</b>	Observation of other practitioners engaging in teaching activities. A greater influence in self-efficacy would be observation of those with similarities to self - so peers across subject areas, or peers / role models from within subject discipline. Observation does not necessarily have to be of 'perfect practice'; rather it serves to reinforce self-efficacy if it is seen as achievable for the individual. Sense of indirect validation of own practice and the influence of others practice contribute to self-efficacy.
<b>Verbal persuasion</b>	Positive feedback from colleagues or managers on work undertaken. Observation of practice and subsequent reflective feedback conversations are a powerful tool as they can potentially combine mastery experiences and verbal persuasion. Feedback from individuals who have themselves evidenced mastery and are credible are more likely to influence the development of self-efficacy. Reassurances where experiences were not perceived a mastery experiences by the individual (for example, objectives were not achieved) could be reconceptualised using verbal persuasion. Sense of direct validation of own practice contributes to self-efficacy.
<b>Physiological reactions / physical and emotional states</b>	Teaching activity typically results in a heightened physiological state (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016), more so in new practitioners as evidenced by participants' 'nervousness' before teaching. The potential is for new academics to have a reduced self-efficacy when experiencing such symptoms as they consider such indications to be a precursor to a reduced level of performance. Reassurance from others (social modelling and verbal persuasion) that such responses are normal may help ameliorate the impact of this on self-efficacy in the new academic and - ideally via vicarious experience - provide them with strategies to help overcome it. Thus, indirect validation of own practice and the influence of others practice can contribute to the maintenance of self-efficacy.

*Table 19: Self-efficacy and the new academic*

## Pedagogical agency

Participant data suggests that such opportunities are more readily realised with appropriate freedom to design and deliver teaching materials - in other words, to have some sense of ownership over what they are asked to teach, either in terms of content or method or both, so that they are more willing to readily and enthusiastically enter their 'academic-as-teacher' mode of operation. This is being termed 'pedagogical agency', although "whether the exercise of that agency has beneficial or detrimental effects, or produces unintended consequences, is another matter" (Bandura, 2001). It is not assumed that the freedom to design and develop teaching will automatically support the development of self-efficacy, but that there is a relationship between the two. Participant narratives suggest the difficulties encountered with delivery of material that was not their own -

*James: I suppose the teaching, every time I did...I was very nervous, so I suppose I felt like an academic in a negative way...It didn't help that I was teaching somebody else's material, because that's always difficult.*

Here, James expresses the idea of challenging teaching experiences having a negative impact on his academic identity, and needing some ownership over materials in order to increase the chances of an effective teaching experience.

The idea of building positive self-efficacy from positive student interactions and feedback - enactive mastery experiences (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002) , as well as a sense of the negative impact of limited pedagogical agency, was also reflected by Jacob:

*Interviewer: Have you got an example of your practise, a specific thing where you've felt like an academic?*

*Jacob: ...the rapport and the bond that I've got with the tutorial groups now and yes, the sense of respect that I feel I've got....feedback from them has been excellent... I did manage to take a lecture session at the end of the semester... that was really a good experience.*

*Interviewer: Did you enjoy that?*

*Jacob: Yes. I really did. I prepared for it. Initially I thought I was going to be working with the module leader's slides, which I was uncomfortable with... [but] I ended up [doing] a presentation that I'd based around the micro-lectures that I'd been using last semester.... It went really well...*

Andy also referred to the role of pedagogical agency in the development of his academic identity -

*Andy: I suppose before, I didn't have much control over things....as a graduate helper as it were, while doing your PhD...Well now that you have the opportunity... you can sort of build the course identity yourself a bit more I think. So you actually have control over the delivery, rather than just being assigned to help the problem, as it were.*

Liz made reference to 'module leading' as an indication of the opportunity for some ownership and control of her academic work, following her change in contract status from associate lecturer to a permanent appointment -

*Liz: I want to spend some time... thinking about different techniques I can use in the classroom. I'm hoping I can do that going forward... then I can actually plan [teaching] and get to module leading and things like that.*

Rachel also referred to the limitations of her associate lecturer status, with limited opportunities for planning, and that had changed with the shift to a permanent contract, which had influenced how she felt about being an academic -

*Rachel: I am now starting to [feel like an academic], because I've had a hand in planning some things, so I feel like I'm getting involved in the planning as well as the delivering. .... I think it's partly about the confidence and the autonomy of feeling that I can kind of create my own session, sort of thing.*

By the time of interview three, she was able to articulate that having the freedom and the confidence to be more autonomous in her teaching practices, to be more creative, was something which was developing her sense of academic identity -

*Rachel:... Feeling like I am waiting to be told what to do. Now I feel like I am more like applying how I would normally approach a job to doing this. Being more creative, being more autonomous... Also feeling like I can do it the way I want to do it. I don't have to do it like everybody has done it before. You can have a discussion with somebody and some people are resistant to the things you might want to do and other people are more like, "Yes, let's do it."*

Here, a sense of both agency and influence on others was contributing to her construction of her academic identity, as referred to by Swennen et al (2010, p. 134) -

Our identity is constructed by our involvement in the communities of practice that we belong to, and our identity influences these communities...



Kate, when thinking about changes to her practice, also reflected in a similar vein regarding influencing others in interview two. By interview three, she was even more confident in her role of sharing practice with colleagues with the aim of developing pedagogy in her area, as well as colleagues influencing her own practice - a two-way process of pedagogical agency impacting on her development of a sense of self-efficacy through mastery experiences and verbal persuasion:

*Kate: I feel very lucky in that my colleagues in my new department are extremely supportive of trying out new things and if I've tried out something, I make sure I tell them about it, and they're like "Oh that's a great idea, why don't you do this?"*

The employment of pedagogical agency offered a meaningful opportunity for the development or reinforcement of self-efficacy during the formal teaching observations on the PgCert course. Several participants reflected on the significance of their impact, and Rachel in particular how the requirement of the course actually enabled her to have pedagogical agency,

*Rachel: Part of what the [PgCert] course did was allow me in the observations to direct my own [teaching]... I had to go to my course leader and say, "I want to do something more than a tutorial."*

And she commented further on the benefit of this:

*Rachel: Also with the observations it forces you to do some things that you wouldn't normally do. You could hide away and just say, "I won't do that for now. I won't deal with that." I think it gives you a lot of opportunity to grow in confidence...*

Similar sentiments were reflected in James' comments about preparing for his observations and microteach -

*James: To have [the observations] personalised to me as well I think was good. I think the microteach was good as well actually... it kind of made me switch on a little bit...made me think about "...What am I going to put together? How am I going to do it?"*

Liz and Jacob expressed clearly the impact of the formal feedback, demonstrating the role of persuasion (in this case verbal and written) and confirmation of mastery experiences on self-efficacy:

*Liz: The only time in my career I've ever been observed was when X came. So that was a big deal. That was almost another, 'I'll find out now if I'm doing it right. Is this what I'm supposed to do?'... And to have something written back, that said, 'Yes, you're doing this well, this went well, they did well here,' it was like, 'Hey'.*

*Jacob: The only teaching observation I've ever had has been on the course... [it] was really positive with X... there were a couple of little aspects that she picked up on that I've tried to use.... I think I'm more confident to be able to do that type of thing than I would have been prior to the start of last term.*

In order for the exercise of agency to have beneficial rather than detrimental effects (Bandura, 2001), the position of the individual agent must be considered (Henkel, 2005). What is appropriate pedagogical agency for one new academic may have a negative impact on self-concept and self-efficacy for other. It could perhaps be described as enabling the academic to operate within the 'Goldilocks zone' of pedagogical agency, which will be different depending on the position of the individual with regards to their level of experience and confidence for the task they are being asked to take on. Agency in this context does not mean autonomous agency (Clegg, 2008; Giddens, 1984) - complete self-direction of what and how to teach, on the basis of one's own motivations, interests and / or values - rather, it implies some constraints (for example, a course is already in existence; learning outcomes and assessment tasks may have already been defined; a professional body may stipulate certain content for accreditation; and so on). However, pedagogical agency for new academics is rather at the 'small' end of the scale - ownership at the class or module level of how to approach what may be pre-defined course level or module level outcomes. As experience and self-efficacy increase, so the scope of pedagogical agency increases with it.

The findings discussed in this section suggest that in the spaces that are given to new academics for the exercise of appropriate pedagogical agency, they are able to develop a sense of self-efficacy, and in so doing come to develop or inhabit a conception of an academic identity. The developing academic identity reflects the multiplicity of the academic role - for some self-defining as a 'non-traditional academic' (Findlow, 2012) - in a modern 'applied' university. The relationship between this and the themes of belonging, mattering and community is the focus of the next section.

## Belonging, mattering, community

The development of an 'academic-as-self' self-concept, reliant on a positive sense of self-efficacy, itself engineered partly through pedagogical agency, is also symbiotic with the construct of belonging - linked closely to mattering - and the role of professional communities and collegiality.

Regarding communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in the more formal sense Wenger (1998) stated that a CoP should consist of people in a shared domain, contain expert-novice interaction and "dense relations of mutual engagement organised around what they are there to do", as well as 'joint enterprise' and a 'shared repertoire' (Wenger, 1998). Hoadley (2012, p. 293), possibly betraying the subconscious influence of a performative culture, suggests that whether something is a CoP can be established by asking "are these people part of a formal, goal oriented, team?". Perhaps mindful of this Gourlay (2011, p. 76) warns that

a 'community' should not be assumed to pre-exist in an academic department in a form that will allow novices with limited experience of advanced scholarship to learn new practices from more experienced colleagues...

Reflecting this position, my data illustrates that formal communities of practice do not necessarily exist within the local contexts of all the participants in this research. Instead, Lave's (1991) earlier ideas of 'informal' communities of practice and Smith's (2010) specific reference to the influence of community and collegiality in departments on the ability of academics to 'develop and assert' their academic identities (J. Smith, 2010, p. 589) are more commonly reflected in the data. Ennals et al's (2016) research into the development of academic identity in occupational therapists support the findings in this regard:

While identity is inwardly generated, it critically depends on... others who relate to us through and about our roles. The academic environment (our colleagues, managers, prevailing strategic directions and so on) generates strong messages regarding role demands and our capabilities in relation to those demands. (Ennals et al., 2016)

Outside of departmental influences, the PgCert operates as an alternative or additional professional community - though not a community of practice - for most of the participants. Adding to the impact of the PgCert on self-efficacy by virtue of exposure

to vicarious experience (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002), their regular interactions with each other and the course tutors offered participants in some cases a replacement professional community. Jacob explained how he had limited contact with colleagues from the academic department, but said that

*Jacob: the [PgCert] has been, you know, a very good support network. I think talking to colleagues, other academic members of staff and you know, discussing issues or problems or sharing stories, but also it's being part of that community...that's been very positive...the sense of community has been really important as well. That's been quite strong....*

Mirroring this, Liz explained how the PgCert experience, and replacement 'community' had enabled her to establish her place within the work environment -

*Liz: [the PgCert] is my only connection with the university and what we're expected to do and where we are and how things work... So it's been incredibly valuable for me to learn all that sort of stuff.... I was very isolated before in my teaching and working day...yesterday is the first team meeting as a member of the team and the things they're talking about... They are things I wouldn't have known were going on before [the PgCert]*

These comments from Liz suggest the significance of developing a feeling of belonging in the construction of her professional identity, a key theme to emerge from the data.

Four key factors influencing belonging - themselves linked to self-efficacy - have been identified (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; May, 2011) - connectedness, acceptance, legitimacy, and alignment of values. Closely linked to these ideas, mattering has been conceptualised in the literature as comprising of several components (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Schlossberg, 1989) that can be summarised as follows:

- attention (or awareness) - the feeling that you are noticed by / command the attention of others, we feel we matter because others realise we exist
- importance - when time and energy is invested by others in your welfare or development
- reliance - when others need us / are reliant on us, we feel we matter (this could have both positive and negative implications)
- appreciation - when the time and effort you put into something is valued by others

(adapted from France & Finney, 2009, pp. 106–107)

In the findings, mattering was experienced as a form of validation, and it emerged in both the positive and the negative ('not mattering') - for example, one participant made direct reference to 'not being listened to as a new member of staff'. Schieman and Taylor (Schieman & Taylor, 2001), in their discussion on mattering, explore how

work-related structures can expose individuals to opportunities for success and failure, which contain messages about their relevance to others...Over time, the strength of bonds solidifies group cohesion and reciprocal transactions. Such experiences cultivate the interpersonal investment in and commitment to significant others (Schieman & Taylor, 2001)

Participants encountered different experiences of belonging and mattering in relation to these factors, impacting on their constructions of their 'academic-as-self' identities. The reflections from Liz, Rachel and Jacob were strongly referenced to 'connectedness' 'attention' and 'importance' - their experiences as associate lecturers (and latterly for Rachel, her experiences as a permanent but fractional member of staff); Kate also shared some similarities in talking about her experiences as a fractional member of staff. James also had some issues feeling a sense of belonging and that he mattered, which appeared to relate to local cultures and his own career doubts - so 'importance', 'legitimacy' and 'alignment of values' - rather than the nature of his contract. James also expressed his appreciation of a mentor taking the time to support him in giving a lecture, something which also contributed to his sense of self-efficacy -

*James: He was there guiding me through the next one, which I don't think I'd have been able to do if he'd not done that and given me the time and the effort to help me fix the first one...*

Sarah and Andy both expressed a sense of confidence in the significance of their contributions from their first interviews, and indicated that they felt part of a local academic community - in other words, they were experiencing the key factors needed for a sense of belonging and mattering to be established. Sarah and Kate also expressed a sense of 'importance' and 'attention' (Schlossberg, 1989) with references to supportive management and mentors -

*Sarah: My manager keeps telling me she's got all these ideas for me about being a shining star and all this kind of thing... I aspire to be like her really...role model in her really... she's my mentor for my Masters as well...*

*Kate: [the] direct managerial team, I've been told we're very lucky to have and I'd probably say are the most supportive in the university...*

*Kate: And a colleague, who was a managerial colleague, saw all this stuff that I was getting together [for teaching] and she said "Oh cool... we can use those to show in open days..."*

For Jacob, coming from a professional role elsewhere in the university, he had been surprised to find himself left to 'get on with it' with very little guidance or support, and contrasted this with both the framework he was used to working in, and the experience of undertaking the PgCert (as previously explored) -

*Interviewer: What do you think shapes your sense of being an academic? So how you think about yourself and how you understand the role as well?*

*Jacob: I think a really big one is the department itself and the support or lack of support, might I say, in that as an AL, I've been thrown into the deep end, left to get on with it and that's my experience....my experience of it has not been broadly positive.*

As an inexperienced teacher and new academic, this amount of what could be described as pedagogical agency (as in the previous section) was a negative, rather than a positive, as it impacted on his sense of belonging and mattering - he was 'disconnected' from the academic department, he was not important to them, they were 'unaware' of him (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004). He had agency in terms of style of delivery but indicated that he had too much autonomy and not enough support; he didn't have ownership over materials or design, he was told what to cover but he didn't have a sense of this making a difference to the course area, or a sense of belonging to an academic department. As seen previously his sense of self-efficacy came solely from interactions with students and from the PgCert observations and community.

Liz had never been to university before recently undertaking her Masters and as a result of that taking on associate lecturer work. She did not feel comfortable in her new academic role, indicating a lack of a sense of legitimacy (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; May, 2011) which was exacerbated by her peripheral status as an associate lecturer; she felt like an outsider (Glass, 1962) - she was not 'important'

*Liz: I'm still scratching away to get the position, which hopefully I'm going to get conversion this year. That's what I'm going through. That's my ultimate. If I make it, and I've gone through AL and made it to that position, that's almost my tick-box. I've done it. I'm worthy.*

In a very similar vein to Jacob, her opportunities for the development of self-efficacy in her role came directly from successful student encounters and from opportunities afforded by the PgCert course (as discussed previously):

*Liz: So yes, my success, I measure personally from how I feel [teaching has] gone. And that's maybe because I'm an AL. Because that's all I have got. I don't have those meetings with teams and line managers....*

In her final interview, Liz confirmed just how important obtaining the permanent position had been for her, providing the ultimate validation of her role and position, and confirming that she had been accepted, others were aware of her, she was now legitimate:

*Interviewer: How important is being an academic as part of the overall you? Has that changed in any way?*

*Liz: Being an academic isn't necessarily important to who I am. Having the position is incredibly important. I am a lecturer; I'm not a lecturer in waiting. This is what I do; this is my job. This is my career, this is what I'm going to do going forward, so that is incredibly important.*

She also reflected on the role of the PgCert, and specifically the experience of a community of other academics, in shaping her sense of self as an academic, making specific reference to her previous isolation -

*Interviewer: That's interesting that you have reflected on the fact the course, even though the course is predominantly about teaching really, the course has actually impacted on your broader understanding of the role?*

*Liz: Yes, it has.*

*Interviewer: That seems to be it? If you don't think that then you can say you don't think that.*

*Liz: No, it has, but that again is a lot to do with the experience of the different people I've met. I was very isolated before in my teaching and working day.*

Rachel also felt peripheral as an associate lecturer (and subsequently as a part time member of staff), and indicated that this had a negative impact on her confidence and a sense of belonging - in her first interview, she related her lack of confidence in inhabiting an academic identity to repeated temporary contracts -she had felt

"devalued" and not appreciated (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004); she felt she did not 'matter'. Later, in referring to her fractional role, she described her working patterns and feeling the need to come in on non-working days -

*Rachel: ...being a point five as well, which is a choice, but I think as well you feel quite out of it and there's a lot that I miss. Last year I would come in on days when I shouldn't be here... I ended up being in when I shouldn't be sometimes and part of that I think was to understand what was happening and to start to feel like part of the team.*

This extract exemplifies the difficulties associate lecturer and part time staff may feel in trying to establish a sense of 'connectedness' (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; May, 2011), and as such, establishing a sense of belonging and a sense of their own place and significance in a team. For temporary and fractional academics, then, one of the challenges they faced was limited time inhabiting the physical space of the university - and according to Leach (2002, p. 286), belonging is built through the meanings we attribute to our environment by being in it and engaging with it. Tilley (1994, p. 26), in his exploration of individuals' space and place in landscapes that can also be related to the built environment, reflects that

"The place acts dialectically so as to create the people who are out of that place. These qualities of locales and landscapes give rise to a feeling of belonging and rootedness and a familiarity, which is not born just out of knowledge, but of concern that provides ontological security. They give rise to a power to act and a power to relate that is both liberating and productive".  
Tilley (Tilley, 1994)

If new academics feel this sense of place, of 'belonging, rootedness and familiarity', they are more able to identify with, feel part of, feel concern for the institution or at least their part of it; they are able to relate to their environment and to act within it. New academics will, as May (2011, p371) summarises, go through a process of making sense of their environment, developing a sense of belonging and eventually identifying with the place, and "in this process...come to understand who [they] are, both as individuals and as a group of people".

A feeling of 'not belonging' is not necessarily negative, as it can give rise to what Bottero (2010, p. 8) referred to as a disruption in the 'dispositional habitus' which awakens reflexivity, which is similar to the idea of 'critical incidents' (Brookfield, 1990;



Flanagan, 1954). Such incidents can prompt us to notice what is around us, "disrupt the smooth flow of everyday experience and of the taken for granted" (May, 2011, p371), and as such stimulate development of practice and / or self-concept as a response. In other words,

...a sense of not belonging can open up new possibilities ... Not belonging does not have to have purely negative consequences, just as belonging is not necessarily a positive thing or an ideal state. (May, 2011, p371),

In her second interview, Rachel reflects on her changed sense-of-self as academic and the reasons for this. Essentially, her own specific contribution to the team had been recognised and she had been given a specific role to develop an area of the course, so meeting the 'mattering' needs of reliance and appreciation (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004):

*Interviewer: What does being an academic mean to you?*

*Rachel: I think over the last year I have gradually been doing more. I feel more like I belong I suppose. I just feel like I am more involved in stuff... I think I'm sort of feeling more like, 'Hmm, there might be a contribution I can make that is different from what other people are doing.' And I think that, again, is a confidence thing, isn't it? Of, like, valuing your own potential to actually contribute to something...*

Rachel also emphasised the significance for her of a colleague who was willing to join her in challenging established 'ways of doing things' in course areas - highlighting the importance of local change agents who enable newer academics to feel at least some sense of acceptance and shared values and can combat a lack of connectedness (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009):

*Rachel: ...there's a lot of people...they've been there a long time and have particular ways of doing things. And it always seems to be, 'That's the way you do it'...so it's good to have somebody else who's fairly new and has recently done the [PgCert] course, so we can feel a bit like, 'Ooh, let's try this.'...Then it could be like, 'Okay, so let's build on that.' I think not trying to go, 'This is a whole revolution.' You know?... And it's kind of a diplomacy, isn't it? It's an act of diplomacy.*

For James, a sense of uncertainty about his choice of career was prevalent by the time of his third interview. Some of the reasons he explored to account for this related to his feeling that he needed to gain more experience 'in the trenches' to be able to present himself as an authentic practitioner-lecturer (L. Archer, 2008) in his field, that he felt a hypocrite teaching things he didn't know or hadn't experienced himself, which

relates back to his initial conception of an academic as expert practitioner, engaged in consultancy. However, James also articulated additional factors which he felt may account for his unhappiness in his role as he currently experienced it. Following his account of a supportive colleague who had helped him improve his teaching, a follow up question related to the approach of his Department more generally:

*Interviewer: Do you feel like your department is quite supportive generally?*

*James: I thought it was and I'm quickly changing my mind a little bit.*

*Interviewer: Really? Why do you think that is?*

*James: ...I don't know if this is every institution or whether it's just this one, but I feel like there can be underhandedness going around and I didn't realise that. Everyone on the surface seems so open and helpful... but there is that element of selfishness and stuff...*

This links to a sense of acceptance, of not being in the 'inner circle' (L. Archer, 2008). He felt that perhaps as a new member of staff he was not been made aware of research or development opportunities and perhaps was been given a higher teaching workload of less popular modules. He commented further on his sense of being there being insiders and outsiders as opposed to a more open or collegial team environment

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*James: That's what I feel goes on and I'm sure it probably happens in most workplaces, it's probably not just this institution...but it's frustrating. It's difficult and that might be part of the reason that I've started to have a little bit of a negative outlook on this role, because of that aspect as well.*

While James had some pedagogical agency in terms of his approach, he did not have any ownership over the nature of the work he was allocated, and had developed a sense of there being 'unfair practices' within the local area that were disadvantaging him. The potential then was for him to feel that he was not significant, and that he didn't matter (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004). He had not yet developed the pedagogical skills or resilience to deal with disengaged students, and found this to be very demotivating - further adding to a lack of validation and sense of not being valued.

Andy still didn't really feel like a 'proper academic' during his later interviews, despite completing a PhD, which for all other participants was an essential component of being an academic. This was due to his established 'hierarchies of esteem' (Clegg, 2008; Whitchurch & Gordon, 2010) formed from his exposure to a research intensive HE

culture previously, which included the perception of pedagogical research as opposed to discipline specific:

*Andy: ... One of my friends, she'd been collecting a bit of [pedagogical] data throughout the year. She wrote it up in a couple of months. To write her previous [subject] paper took her two years of doing [subject]. ...She thought that the two weren't really comparable in terms of stature within her thought processes, which I suppose has shaped my thought process as well. I don't think of it as less. I just think of it as very different. You're researching how to teach [subject] most effectively, versus being a research [subject specialist].*

However, Andy had a secure sense of self and place due to an explicitly acknowledged role for him in the Department, to improve the teaching. He had a sense that he was valued, he 'mattered', and he belonged. His Department's ethos aligned with his own with regards to the prioritisation of effective teaching and the importance of pedagogical research - a very clear illustration of the impact of 'alignment of values' (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; May, 2011). His discipline's general lack of regard (as opposed to his local Department) for pedagogical research meant that by the time of his third interview he continued to see himself as 'not a proper academic'... although this did not appear to be an issue for him:

*Interviewer: Do you feel your views are values that you can contribute equitably for your course team?*

*Andy: Yes. Definitely. I mean I was brought on board to effect change, partly.*

*Interviewer: Interesting. That's been said to you explicitly has it?*

*Andy: Yes. There was dissatisfaction. The student feedback has not been positive on a particular module.*

This clarity of purpose and definition of his contribution and the nature of his work plan meant he identified as a teaching academic. He wanted the opportunity to undertake pedagogic research as he maintained that the idea that an academic should be engaged in research was immutable; however, he was happy for this to be the less high status pedagogic research rather than subject research.

Andy had a clear sense of purpose, a sense of the specific contribution he was able to make - he 'mattered' (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004), and a sense of belonging in a Department where despite the more typical assumptions about the discipline's approach to teaching and pedagogical research, he shared similar interests and priorities with his colleagues. In addition he was full time, and engaged in a large

amount of teaching, and by the time of the final interview, had been allocated module leadership and year tutor duties - something he had asked for. This level of agency and involvement enabled him to have the 'total immersion' experience referred to by Rachel that she felt she struggled to experience due to her part time contract.

Sharing some similarities with Andy's experiences, in her final interview Kate also referred to the importance of a supportive and enabling local culture. She felt a sense of 'importance' and was 'appreciated' (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004), thus she mattered -

*Kate: I was an AL for six years in X and now I've only been in my post for a year and a half, so I kind of feel like a newbie all over again, when you're in permanent post...I feel very lucky in that my colleagues in my new department are extremely supportive.. And also, being encouraged to go for research things as well... and that encouragement I've found very refreshing.*

*Interviewer: Great to hear that.*

*Kate: I think part of it is very lucky with the managers that we've got... I'd probably say [they] are the most supportive in the university.. especially for someone at my stage who's just starting out and giving you the confidence to go for stuff as well.*

Kate also articulated very clearly a critical incident that had crystalized a sense of 'feeling like an academic', and also illustrates a sense of belonging, through acceptance and legitimacy (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; May, 2011) -

*Interviewer: So, any particular examples of your practice, since the last time we spoke, perhaps or possibly the same example if you haven't got a new one where you did something and you thought "Yes I feel like an academic today"?*

*Kate: When I had my PhD interview....I came out of that and thought "I actually know what I'm talking about" and the fact that they said there and then "We'd be delighted to have you"*

*Interviewer: Brilliant.*

*Kate: And I didn't have to wait for any decisions, so I thought, that's gone well.... Yes, so I felt like a proper grownup that day.*

In her reflections following this she noted a contribution the PgCert course had made to her sense of academic identity, defeating the sense of imposter phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978), increasing a sense of connectedness:

*Kate: I realise that everyone in this job feels a bit like they're waiting for someone to catch them out....And that's kind of comforting in a way, because we're all in that boat....just having that space to talk to colleagues across disciplines is brilliant, because we never normally get to do that. And realising*

*that everybody's experience is quite similar regardless of what your subject area is. And just doing things like, I went to that PhD research day...And asking questions a few times and things like that, that feels like, "I can join in with this, I'm one" [an academic]... So that's quite nice.*

In this extract, she articulates the importance of a professional community and a sharing of experiences with colleagues - both local and across the university - to build a sense of belonging in the academic role.

In her second interview, Sarah had reflected on an incident which had challenged her academic identity and caused her to question herself - however, the presence of supportive - and in Sarah's words, non-judgemental - colleagues enabled her to respond to the situation appropriately, despite finding it difficult:

*Interviewer: Is there anything that's happened which you feel has also had an influence in the last five months about what you're doing and how you do it?  
Sarah: ...one student, this is first time it's happened to me, has come back to me, she's not happy with her mark. The email she wrote was epic, you know, trying to justify why she needed a higher mark....I was like, "What do I do now? I've got to respond." ...I thought I'm not responding until I've spoken to X. [She] is brilliant. She's always someone I can go to. [She] wouldn't judge me in any way, I know she wouldn't. Anyway, we read it and formulated a response together... That was something that I found difficult but I'm glad that I didn't just bury my head in the sand, ignore the email, or not tell anyone because I'd be worried what other team members would think...*

This connectedness - access to support, role modelling in difficult or challenging situations - illustrates how a sense of belonging can help to develop pedagogical resilience (Gu & Day, 2007).

Sarah felt an increased sense of legitimacy (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; May, 2011) - linked to Clance and Imes (1978) ideas about 'imposter phenomenon' - by her final interview - illustrated by reference to her feeling she 'matched' the UK Professional Standards Framework - this had given her confidence in her practice and her role - "*I felt confident that I was doing everything that I needed to be doing.*" She also made reference to her increased sense of being comfortable with being an academic, and not suffering from 'imposter syndrome' any more. She felt this was as a result of several factors- 'just doing the job', professional validation from observations on the PgCert and from colleagues (self-efficacy), achievement of the PgCert qualifications

(self-efficacy and belonging), and the validation she felt she achieved by being asked to do external work for her team (self-efficacy, belonging, mattering). She also reflected on her own previous pre-conceptions of what an academic 'should' be:

*Sarah: I think it was more about my perception of what an academic should be...unconscious bias... trying to live up to this thing that you're not, but actually you don't need to live up to it, because it's not there anyway...*

*Interviewer: If you think about yourself when you first got the job, first got appointed, and how you are now, has the way that you think about yourself changed?*

*Sarah: Yes....I just feel like, I put in one of my assignments about something called, like, an imposter syndrome. I don't feel that any more at all.... I feel like I should be here, and I've got every right to be here.*

Being part of a team of similar colleagues (much as Andy) among which was a mentor she aspired to be like, and having a manager who evidently was supportive of her career progression (which provides validation for her role and her practice) also appeared to add to a sense of belonging for Sarah:

*Sarah: I just think [mentor] sort of gets rid of the myth that I had in my head why I thought I could never be an academic because...she's not your classic academic...*

This extract also illustrates the concept of vicarious experience impacting on self-efficacy, most effective when people perceive similarity between the role model and themselves (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002; McAlister et al., 2008). Returning to May (2011) and Levett-Jones and Lathlean (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009) and the factors influencing belonging - which are themselves linked to self-efficacy - it is possible to draw on the participant narratives to summarise a possible exemplification of each factor for the new academic:

<b>Component of belonging</b>	<b>Suggested exemplification</b>
Connectedness	Being included, mattering to others, positive professional relationships with others
Acceptance	Being welcomed, being noticed, mattering to others
Legitimacy	Contributions are respected and valued, significance of own contribution is recognised by self and others
Alignment of values	Reflection of professional values in others, reflection of self in professional values of organisation

*Table 20: Components of belonging exemplified for the new academic*

The table above supports the preceding discussion by demonstrating that a key mechanism impacting on (and interdependent with) the sense of belonging is the idea of 'mattering'.

The framework for mattering previously articulated (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Schlossberg, 1989) can also be applied to the experiences of the new academic and exemplified in light of the data from participant narratives relating to belonging and mattering, and explored in the discussion so far:

<b>Component of mattering</b>	<b>Suggested exemplification</b>
Attention (or awareness)	Other staff in your team know your name You are invited to team meetings You are included in team communications Your opinion counts / is sought You have a mentor and a line manager
Importance	You have a mentor and / or a line manager who spend time with you Your development needs are prioritised and provided for You are supported practically and emotionally by colleagues and managers
Reliance	You can make a distinct contribution to your course area Your contribution improves the effective functioning of the team and / or course Students seek you out for support
Appreciation	Others notice your efforts and achievements Your efforts and achievements are publicly acknowledged by peers and senior staff Students provide positive feedback

**Table 21: Framework of mattering for the new academic**

The inverse of these experiences may promote a sense of 'not-mattering', with resultant impacts on belonging, self-concept and self-efficacy. Significantly, these experiences of mattering are, for the new academic, only likely to be realised in their immediate local context. So, regardless of the positive benefit of the PgCert course for some in providing a replacement professional community, and enabling a sense of belonging in the higher education environment more generally, it is at the local level where the specific actions of managers and colleagues will impact on mattering. Without this positive reinforcement, and the related sense of belonging, the potential

positive influence from the PgCert experience on identity and practice would appear to be very much diminished.

### Pedagogical resilience

The findings discussed in the previous sections suggest that belonging and mattering are also instrumental in the development of resilience, a relationship that has not been widely discussed in the literature, as referred to by Flett et al (2014) -

Mattering is another protective factor linked with positive self-views and self-efficacy that has not been extensively discussed in the context of a factor that promotes resilience.(Flett et al., 2014)

Resilience, closely related to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Gu & Day, 2007), is defined as the

capacity to continue to “bounce back”, to recover strengths or spirit quickly and efficiently in the face of adversity (Gu & Day, 2007)

Bandura (2001) explains that the stronger the sense of self-efficacy,

the stronger their staying power in the face of impediments and setbacks, the higher their morale and resilience to stressors, and the greater their performance accomplishments...

This discussion conceptualises resilience as 'pedagogical resilience' - what is needed to 'bounce back from' negative teaching experiences, and cope with the specific challenges of teaching in higher education when new to the profession. This specific conceptualisation of resilience is due to the fact that for the vast majority of new academics in a teaching focused institution, their work plan will be comprised predominantly of teaching (Gale, 2011). For an associate lecturer, it is highly likely to be completely comprised of teaching. Whilst resilience in the domain of research and publication (coping with peer review, for example) is no doubt a necessary development of the academic self-concept, this is likely to emerge later in their career - the immediacy and critically personal nature of the teaching encounter is what will preoccupy them in the early stages of their career.



While interactions with students have already been explored as a key factor in the development of self-efficacy and a mechanism which may account for changes in participants' sense of self as an academic, several participants also noted their struggles in dealing with less positive interactions with students, and less positive teaching experiences, and for some the impact that this had on their perception of 'self-as-academic'. By the time of interview three, having had more opportunities for interaction with students, examples of this included students challenging marks, a lack of student engagement, and negative student feedback on modules or courses. For Liz, who also still had issues of feeling 'like an imposter' in lecture theatres, negative feedback was very difficult to avoid focusing on:

*Liz: I get really knocked by anything negative. ...When you get the forms back and 80% of them are fabulous, "Love you," la, la, la and then you get two in there, "Hardly stayed awake," I mean, "What? Who is it?" It's trying to find that person.*

And for James, students' personal challenges to his approaches were part of the reason he felt he was questioning his academic career path, leading to a less stable professional identity:

*James: I've had a lot of instances this year where I've got nothing back from them. Again, it's I either need to get over that need of appreciation, or I need to find something else to do... I would expect them to turn up and want to do what they've paid money to do, which they so happily remind us, of how much they've paid. That is a real frustration of mine, like the e-mail that I mentioned. If they'd got a problem with a grade then that's completely fine, that doesn't have an issue for me, but when they start questioning my person and my approach to them...*

Jacob had struggled with marking, but that was less down to students and more down to the lack of guidance and support he had received from the department. However, evidencing his ability to be a reflective practitioner, and also his developing pedagogical skills, he was able to positively frame it as potential learning opportunity, and look at how - if he had the agency - he would have improved the process.

Some participants however demonstrated that despite issues like this occurring, or finding oneself 'teaching outside their comfort zone', they were able to use the experience to learn from, as with Sarah:

*Sarah: I got the module evaluations forms and I was quite upset by- out of 30, I was focusing on 2. But it was good because it did get me to, sort of, step back and look at my practice.... I think that things will constantly happen where I question but I think that's good. If ever I get the point where I don't ever get a wobble, I'll worry that I've got too complacent.*

Other participants found that their ability to respond to what was needed reinforced their sense of academic identity, as with Andy, who referred not to negative student feedback but to students challenging marks -

*Andy: Because they will quibble over every [mark] and you can do that...It is a qualitative judgement, but in addition, there is a quantitative element to it that they feel they can argue and you need to explain to them, from your standpoint as an academic looking at a piece of work and saying "Well, I think it's worth this because" and hopefully you can get them to see how they would improve in the future and why they got whatever they've got.*

And Kate, referring to teaching outside of a comfort zone:

*Kate: I didn't feel pressured, but I did feel less academic then, but I kind of used it. I tried to use it in a positive way to not pretend. Because people do sometimes deliver somebody else's lecture and pretend that they know it all. I would rather say "Look, I don't know this, but let's find out" or "Let's figure it out". Yes, because there's nothing worse than having someone, a teacher being fake.*

In this extract she evidences a confident self-concept, a high level of self-efficacy, which may have been enabled through a strong sense of belonging and mattering, as discussed earlier. For Rachel, who had also struggled with how teaching outside of her comfort zone or subject specialist area made her feel, she had also been able to reconceptualise this as a positive -

*Rachel: I have tutorials with first years that really unnerved me. I think part of it was it was a [subject] based module and it is really not my comfort zone...I did in the end feel more confident this year than I did last year. I feel like I have actually learned quite a lot from it as well which is quite good I suppose.*

Rachel, similar to Kate's reflections, also referred to how her confidence in interacting with students had been built through the professional community and modelling of reflective practice offered by the PgCert course, which had also helped her to develop a sense of belonging contributing to her pedagogical resilience:

*Rachel: I think [the PgCert] has broadened the way I think and it also, I think probably it has given me a bit of confidence that maybe I am not as rubbish as I think I am. I think it is interesting when X was talking about, "You feel like a fraud or you feel like," you know. ...You are kind of acting which it feels like sometimes, doesn't it?*

To develop pedagogical resilience, a person has to learn to "adjust to negative conditions with the aid of their resources" (Bobek, 2002, p. 202), and learn from past experiences (Le Cornu, 2009). The conceptual framework on self-efficacy explores mastery experiences and vicarious experiences as critical factors - therefore whether experienced directly or indirectly (that is, coping with something yourself or watching someone else cope), such experiences add to an individual's available 'resources' and increases their resilience for dealing with situations in the future. Thus, the data from participants connects the concept of pedagogical resilience to self-efficacy and the stability of the academic professional identity. Pedagogical resilience is enhanced when an individual is "capable of assessing adverse situations, recognizing options for coping, and arriving at appropriate resolutions" (Bobek, 2002). Adverse situations, such as the critical incidents (Brookfield, 1990; Flanagan, 1954) referred to in the previous discussion, may act as catalysts for the development of resilience (Bobek, 2002), but only if the other parts of the jigsaw are in place - a sense of belonging, mattering, self-efficacy; the support of a professional community, and the ability to be reflexively engaged in one's practice (M. S. Archer, 2000; Bolton, 2010).

Bobek's (Bobek, 2002) research identified the following resources as "important in the development of resilience"

significant adult relationships, a sense of personal responsibility, social and problem-solving skills, a sense of competence, expectations and goals, confidence, a sense of humour, and a sense of accomplishment. (Bobek, 2002)

Five of these pedagogical resilience 'resources' can be cross referenced to the conceptions of self-efficacy for the new academic (Table 19, p. 151), the frameworks on belonging (Table 20, p. 172) and mattering (Table 21, p. 173), and the ideas pertaining to pedagogical agency, to demonstrate the relationship between these conceptual ideas. This is shown on the following table:

<b>Pedagogical resilience 'resources'</b>	<b>Realised through:</b>
Significant adult relationships	Self-efficacy: vicarious experiences / social modelling; verbal persuasion. Mattering: all aspects Belonging: connectedness, acceptance
A sense of personal responsibility	Self-efficacy: mastery experiences Mattering: reliance, appreciation Pedagogical agency (ownership / control) Belonging: legitimacy
Social and problem-solving skills	Self-efficacy: mastery experiences; vicarious experiences / social modelling Mattering: reliance Belonging: alignment of values
A sense of competence	Self-efficacy: mastery experiences; vicarious experiences / social modelling; verbal persuasion Mattering: importance, reliance, appreciation Belonging: legitimacy, acceptance
A sense of accomplishment	Self-efficacy: mastery experiences; vicarious experiences / social modelling; verbal persuasion Mattering: reliance, appreciation Pedagogical agency (ownership / control) Belonging: legitimacy

*Table 22: 'Resilience resources', self-efficacy, belonging and mattering*

### Summary of themes

A key theme was the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Bong & Skaalvik, 2002), strongly related to which is participants having opportunities for validation of their practice, a continuation of ideas discussed in Chapter 5. However, as participants gained more experience, self-efficacy - closely related to the development of self-concept (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002) - was linked to a sense of influence and impact, and of personal significance and contribution. One mechanism for the development of self-efficacy in the new academic, most probably as the majority of their workload is teaching related, appeared for some to be access to appropriate opportunity for pedagogical agency, with agency being defined as "the power to originate actions for given purposes" (Bandura, 2001). Pedagogical agency is defined here as agency in relation to teaching - some ownership or control over teaching content and/or delivery. This created what appeared to be an enhanced ability to develop a sense of

self-concept through teaching activities and thus experience self-efficacy when things go well. Observation of teaching (from the PgCert course tutors) appeared to be a way for some participants to have the opportunity to realise both pedagogical agency and self-efficacy.

Another theme to emerge was a sense of belonging, indications of which also began to emerge in previous chapters, and to which the themes of mattering and experience of community and collegiality are linked. Belonging, explored by Maslow (Maslow, 1970) and seen by him as essential to his theory of 'self-actualisation', is aligned with the development of self-concept and also self-efficacy: for vicarious experience or role modelling to impact, Bandura (Bandura, 1997) believes it is essential to be able to recognise oneself within the other - to be able to 'relate'. More recent research defines belonging as "a sense of ease with oneself and one's surroundings" (May, 2011, p. 368) which stems from a sense of being included and on the 'inside' as opposed to being peripheral. It carries with it opportunities to be part of a subject community and experience collegiality (Ennals et al., 2016; J. Smith, 2010) and through this, exposure to role models and / or modelling of practice. As Wenger et al (2002, p. 203) state, participation in professional communities relates closely to the construction of identity, as they provide "formal and informal opportunities for newcomers to develop skills and a professional identity". Also emerging from participant narratives, and linked closely to ideas of belonging and self-efficacy, is the idea of 'mattering' - again, building on themes explored in Chapter Five around validation, this was a sense of being significant and valued, of being needed and noticed (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Schlossberg, 1989).

The data also indicates the significance of the concept of 'resilience' - resilience amongst new practitioners having been widely explored in literature relating to professional development and teacher identity (Bobek, 2002; Gu & Day, 2007). The concept of 'pedagogic frailty' in higher education is the focus of a recent book (Kinchin & Winstone, 2017), and Winstone (Winstone, 2017, p. 33) explores what she considers to be the "...the 3 Rs of pedagogic frailty - risk, reward and resilience". In my discussion, 'pedagogical resilience' is understood as resilience in relation to teaching, that which incorporates confidence in the skills needed for teaching and the ability to

recover from negative experiences or feedback. The data from participants connects the concept of pedagogical resilience to self-efficacy and the stability of the academic professional identity.

## Conclusions

This exploration of the academic experience found that most participants became more confident in their academic identity, and by the end of the research had developed a sense of 'academic-as-self' that they were more comfortable inhabiting, and a sense of a more stable professional identity. Participants who had become more comfortable inhabiting their academic role and identity had experienced opportunities for validation via self-efficacy, in most cases through appropriate pedagogical agency. They had also developed a sense of belonging and mattering in their roles, felt valued for their contributions, and had a level of 'pedagogical resilience' - the ability to cope with negative or difficult teaching or student experiences.

Despite the differences in participant backgrounds, what appeared to be most influential on their development of an 'academic-as-self' identity was not where they had come from or their pre-conceptions, but what happened to them once they had joined the academy. Interactions on the PgCert course and its interdisciplinary professional community were influential for most participants, contributing to self-efficacy and to a limited degree, belonging, but more significant was the interactions and experiences in participants' local contexts, which is where the opportunities for belonging and mattering are more fully realised.

The next chapter focuses on the secondary data set (the alumni data), and explores similarities and differences between this dataset and the initial findings.

## Chapter 8: The experienced academic

### Introduction

As explained in the approach to analysis, the decision was made to focus on current participant data for primary analysis due to the inherent integrity of the longitudinal nature of the three interview sets, which allows exploration of developments across time with the same participants. As the alumni data is from a different set of participants including it with the longitudinal data would have impacted on the internal coherence of this data set; the alumni data does not enable a 'real life' temporal perspective on the research questions, which are longitudinal in nature. However, the alumni data - gathered as it is from very similar questions (see Table 8, p. 85) - contains participants' reflections on their understanding of being an academic and their academic practice, whether they feel this has changed, and explores the potential shaping factors both in terms of their current understanding of their academic role and any changes they may have experienced. As such, the data can contribute to an understanding of how academics conceptualise their identity and practice and why, after they have been in post for a slightly longer period of time and have thus potentially been subject to different pressures or influences.

This chapter explores the idea of the 'experienced academic' - specifically, the reflections of alumni course participants, who had completed the PgCert course between six and twelve months previously. The reality being, therefore, that they are just a little more experienced than the current participants.

The discussion refers to the themes from units of analysis 1a and 2a (see Table 23, over the page) and uses rich data from each of the alumni interviews. What emerged from alumni data was broadly analogous to the current participants' dataset, with commonalities emerging in both conceptions of academic identity and factors influencing those conceptions. Themes are not explored in fine detail; rather the similarities and differences are highlighted between this dataset and the preceding discussion, to ascertain whether there is support for the emerging conceptual ideas discussed in the previous chapters.

<i>Sense of academic identity</i>	<i>Factors influencing sense of academic identity</i>
<b>Unit of Analysis 1A</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 2A</b>
research and qualifications student-focused value and impact tripartite role lived academic identity	communities / collegiality agency and resilience self-efficacy and belonging HEI culture

**Table 23: Summary table of themes (alumni participants)**

As with the current participant data, in interpreting the findings, participant characteristics from Table 7 (p. 78) inform the discussion and are referred to as appropriate, in keeping with maintaining the contextual details of participant narratives and data.

### **Constructions of academic identity**

Extracts from alumni interviews illustrate the alignment of alumni participants' narratives with those of the current participants, demonstrating notions of practitioner authenticity (L. Archer, 2008), imposter phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978), and the academic as tri-professional (Gunn & Fisk, 2013), as well as rejection of the 'archetypal academic' and acceptance of a hybridised academic self-concept (Clegg, 2008)

*Interviewer: what does being an academic mean to you?*

*Tony: I don't really align myself to the standard university model of an academic...the archetypal medieval academic. And that is probably because of my transition into academia from the world of business – from industry...I always have loved learning. I love teaching. ...How I see myself as an academic: I see myself essentially as an educator and a learner.*

*Chris: I feel like I can do the practice stuff, and I feel like there's value in that in this institution, both in terms of the skills and the subject knowledge...I feel in order to be an academic I need to be more published. I guess one of the telling signs of this is if somebody asks me what I do I don't say academic.... I often say, "I'm a [practitioner] pretending to be an academic." ... Then I do say, "I lecture in [subject]"...*

*Luke: A good academic, you could argue, is based around three components. One is 'Teaching'. Two is, ultimately, 'Research'. Three is you being an 'Expert' in your area. To the extent that you're a good academic or a not so good academic is how you balance around those three components.*



Despite the broad agreement as to what constitutes 'an academic', there were also similarities with the current participant data in terms in the personal conceptualisations of not being a 'full academic'. Chris, Barbara, Luke and Simon all expressed different constructions of their academic identity: Chris as a practitioner 'pretending to be an academic'; Barbara as a teacher; Luke as a 'quasi-academic' as he had not yet got his PhD, and Simon as a practitioner - although Simon's reflections on this in the interview prompted a later comment to emerge -

*Interviewer: In how much of your daily day-to-day practice do you feel like an academic? Consider the day-to-day, an average week?*

*Simon: I don't know why my brain says I'm not an academic because clearly I am. In my day-to-day I'm either preparing work, marking work, producing some feedback or actually being with students.*

This extract is also a good illustration of the theme that interacting with students and the student lifecycle is a key aspect of inhabiting the academic identity, experiences necessary for the development of self-efficacy, belonging and mattering (Bandura, 1997; G. C. Elliott et al., 2004; May, 2011) - something that also emerged from the earlier analysis.

One difference or development from the previous findings emerged in terms of conceptualising the role as 'research, teaching, and management' - with the expertise (in this case, practitioner) as a 'taken-for-granted' aspect of the research and the teaching. This participant interpreted the academic career path as a choice between these three paths - and was unsure as to which he wanted to follow -

*Chris: I feel like there is definitely a choice to be made between those three paths with an academic role. I feel like I'm just about doing all three at a very low level at the moment, and keeping all those balls in the air, because I'm not sure which ones... Not just which ones I'm good at, but which ones I want to be good at.*

*Interviewer: The three paths are teaching, research, and management?*

*Chris: Yes. For example, there is talk about a deputy head of subject role....I am thinking about it, but then I'm also thinking, "That's taking me then very definitely down that path."... and I'm not sure whether that's where I want to go or not. I'm not saying that it isn't, but I'm not sure if it is, because I don't know if that fits with my definition of what an academic is, which is what I came to do.... I don't know. I feel a bit like I'm having an academic identity crisis...*

At this slightly later stage in an academic career then, progression was seen by Chris as a choice between 'management' (of people and provision) or research - that both

could be an option was not expressed (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2009). This idea of a choice or focus for the academic role was also mirrored by another participant, who worked in an area that categorised its academic staff into 'practical academics' (those without PhDs) and 'research academics' -

*Barbara: I mean, I think the general term, being an 'academic', means somebody who teaches and researches at a university.... the subject I teach is a very practical subject – not in every respect, but in a lot of respects it's a very practical sort of subject.... in our department, there are three sort of groups, really. So people mainly research and do a little bit of teaching; people do half and half; and people that do mostly teaching and a little bit of research. I would put myself into that category.*

Barbara had many years of experience working in high status industry companies in her field. She identified predominantly as a teacher rather than an academic, or as a 'practical academic' in the terminology of her area - Clegg's 'prac-ademic' (2008, p335). In a reflection of Clegg's (2008, p.338) findings, she considered that the research expertise was outside of universities, not within them - she maintained her industry perspective that academics were not in touch with the real world, and this had not changed despite her being in post for two years.

In another development from the findings from current participants, despite not necessarily recognising themselves as 'academics' in the first instance, was the alumni participants expressed more of a sense of a 'lived academic identity' - relating to essentialist theories of identity (Cartwright, 1968) - their academic identity was part of who they essentially felt themselves to be, in and out of the workplace. All but one of the participants (Barbara) expressed this sentiment. Barbara, who felt herself to be more an expert practitioner and teacher, also discussed how she would take work home with her, in terms of always responding to emails (evenings, weekends, holidays). This practice had been normal in her previous professional role, and she felt that as students should be viewed as customers, this was the right thing to do. So while this was not necessarily a manifestation of a lived academic identity, it was certainly a lived professional identity. For the others, they felt that the 'academic' to be an essential part of them - and their answers illustrate what they consider that 'academic' to be, for example:

*Interviewer: How important is being an academic as part of the overall you?*

*Tony: Fundamental, absolutely fundamental. I get a bad press in the family. I get a bad press over a dinner-table conversation. I really do... "If you want a different take on something then just listen to Tony for a few minutes." ... it conditions what I do, where I go and what I think, so it really is a fundamental part.*

*Interviewer: How important is being an academic, whatever your interpretation of that word is, as part of the overall you?*

*Chris: Well, if we take my definition of being an academic then I think it's quite important. Even in my old job I was seen as, and quite liked being seen as,...more academic than your average [practitioner]...it's very important to me that people see me in that way, because I think that's just what I'm used to. Everybody likes to be good at something, and that's the bit that I feel I was good at.*

*Interviewer: Do you feel like you carry your academic role, potentially, if it's part of who you are, outside of work with you, so in the pub or at home?*

*Chris: Yes, definitely. Yes, some people take the mick out of me for that. My wife does a very good job at humouring me, I think. Every time that there is a [subject] issue, or whatever, I like to explain why it is how it is.*

*Interviewer: How important is being an academic as part of the overall you and who you are?*

*Sue: Oh, very. That's who I am.*

*Interviewer: Okay. So you're like that in the pub, and you...?*

*Sue: Yes, yes, exactly. But I won't be quite as argumentative as I am in my academic career.*

*Interviewer: I see, okay. But it's a strong part of who you are.*

*Sue: Oh, yes. I would say that's my identity.*

For Tony, Chris and Sue, their inhabitation of the academic role involves being knowledgeable enough to offer a 'different take', understand the detail of things and explain why things are as they are, be challenging and even 'argumentative'. Luke expressed his academic sense-of-self as being seen as an expert within the work context, and outside of work being interested in television programmes, films or literature which reflected his subject area. For Abi, it was engaging in activities outside of work which enabled her to use her professional skills in a different context, which usually gave her further material to reflect on in her academic practice and research. Simon felt unable to ignore a conversation outside of the workplace if it involved his subject specialism - he wanted to offer his insight and expertise, and also gain access to material / information with which to inform his own teaching and research. These expressions of identity outside of the workplace may contribute to their sense of

legitimacy and thus belonging (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; May, 2016) within the work place, and / or may be symptomatic of a strong vocation for the profession they have chosen (Gu & Day, 2007).

This sense of a lived academic identity was not as evident in the current participant data - Sarah spoke about her desire to encourage people to fulfil their potential, which linked to her identity as an academic teacher, and Kate spoke about the cross over between her other activities and her academic role in terms of subject expertise. However, it was not conceptualised as clearly as with the alumni participants. This may be as a result of the different personalities in the two data sets - it is not possible to draw a simple or incontestable correlation between length of service and the development of a lived academic identity. This is something which would require further research. However, it is a notable difference in the data sets, and as such has been commented on.

### Factors influencing the 'experienced academic' identity

The themes relating to factors influencing the sense of academic identity from the alumni data have even closer parallels with findings from the current participants. A sense of community and collegiality; creativity and ownership in teaching (pedagogical agency); factors relating to validation, recognition and belonging; and the idea of self-efficacy - all of which were reflected to varying degrees in the previous findings.

Luke and Sue (as 'academic entrants') mirrored Andy's (the other 'academic entrant') perspective that the key aspect shaping their *pre-conception* of academic identity was their previous experience in research-focused institutions, and being habituated to dominant disciplinary discourse (Becher, 1994), as exemplified in Luke's comment:

*Interviewer: What do you think has shaped your understanding of the role, how you think about yourself as an academic, and how you understand it?*

*Luke: I think that's quite an easy one to answer. It's the way in which I was institutionalised, let's say, at other institutions.*

Similar sentiments were expressed by Andy and Sue, However, this pre-conception had then been subject to modification as a result of their experiences as an academic in a

teaching-focused institution, and all three of them had reached a slightly different conceptualisation of 'academic-as-self' as a result. For Andy and Sue, this related to being engaged in pedagogical research, and significantly, this being valued by their teams and the institution, linking to a sense of mattering (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004; Schlossberg, 1989). For Luke, it was his relationships and interactions with hugely experienced professional entrants and exposure to their expertise, leading him to reflect that they were 'no less of an academic'. Essentially, he had become aware of - and begun to value - what Clegg (2008) referred to as 'hybridised academic identities'.

One key difference in emphasis was the impact of the PgCert experience on their conceptions of academic-as-self, their practice and their identity.

In the primary dataset, the influence (and benefits) of the PgCert were cited by most participants, for example:

- Sarah, for whom achieving the qualification and relating herself to the UKPSF were particularly influential on her sense of being able to inhabit the 'academic-as-self';
- Liz, for whom the course broadened her sense of who could be 'an academic' and thus helped her to feel a sense of belonging, although for her practice it was more of an abstract 'thinking ahead' as she had not yet had chance to instigate her ideas;
- Rachel gained confidence to direct her own teaching and try new things;
- Kate benefited from exposure to different methods and the concept of 'transformative teaching', as well as combating 'imposter syndrome' through realising others felt the same;
- Andy felt that the course had not impacted on his academic identity but had made him more attuned to seeking out and reflecting on student feedback and student needs;
- Jacob, for whom the course provided an understanding of the requirements of an academic role, but whilst he felt it had been beneficial for his teaching over the academic year, perhaps as he was no longer in an academic role he did not articulate any sense of lasting impact or influence of it on his practice and identity; and
- James, who did not feel the course had been particularly beneficial or influential other than validation of practice from the observations.

It is possible that participation in the course may have had negative consequences for Jacob and James, in terms of exposure to different practices in recruitment (Jacob) or

work-loading (James), leading to an increased sense of dissatisfaction, although they did not express this.

While the influencing aspects of the PgCert and particularly the benefits of the professional network it provided was present in the data from the current participants, the alumni participants had perhaps had chance to reflect over a longer period and potentially come to see more aspects of their practice and / or their sense of academic self as having been influenced by the course, something suggested perhaps presciently by Rachel:

*Rachel: I think there are lots of different elements of the [PgCert] course...sometimes you don't realise until later how those things are influencing you. I think we are all saying, "We are going to really miss it." You have this time when you can think as well which I think that was reiterated throughout the course as well. It is precious time.*

The alumni participants provided greater clarity and depth in their reflections on the influence of the PgCert professional community:

*Interviewer: Did being on the course shape in any way your sense of being an academic and/or your practice?*

*Tony: I met contacts, obviously. I think it also fostered community. And I see that as important. ...there is that rich mix of like-minded people from different disciplines who have brought together a sense of community, and I think that is stimulating.... It also gave me the opportunity to observe and use influences of others' practice in my practice...I thought was a very, very privileged thing to do.*

*Chris: I think [the PgCert] was actually a real positive.... Because I have just been straight to university, did [subject], did my vocational qualification, training, whatever, so I'm used to everyone around me thinking the same way that I do. There are some people in that group who think very differently to the way that I do. Which was enlightening.*

*Barbara: From the research point of view, working in groups was very useful. And I think that was one of the best bits of the course really, because I think a chance to learn from other people with different experiences, and different backgrounds, and different experiences with research, that was very worthwhile ... I presented the results of that at [my Departmental] away day... So having done that, I thought, "Oh yes, I quite like doing this. This is good." So that was a very positive thing...*

*Sue: Very much so to do with reflecting on my own teaching practice. So I didn't really do that before...it has changed my direction of research as well as my teaching practice. Research is quite important to my academic identity, so the fact that that's shifted quite substantially as well, and I enjoy it. It's certainly, yes, it's been quite a substantial impact... And meeting people. That's been brilliant... And if you're going to be a well-rounded academic, you should probably have a bit of awareness of what goes on in the other areas, otherwise we do work too much in silos. And if you're going to learn best practice...the micro-teach... was brilliant, the idea of, you may not be teaching the same thing, but... You can still learn the same skills, doesn't matter...*

*Abi: To have conversations where you think, "Yes. I clearly don't know this. I need to learn about it." [the PgCert] definitely opened up my thinking... I think what it does is the course allows you an understanding of how different people are and how the different disciplines mix in, or don't mix in. It gives you an understanding of the processes. It allows you to question your thinking, how you manage your academia, how you manage everything else and gives you an opportunity to think differently.*

*Luke: One of the biggest things I took from the PGCert was meeting new people and getting new ideas from people...in intra-group discussions and intra-peer. if you're thinking about the traditional academic which I talked about, does X fit into that? Perhaps not, no, but does that make him any less of an academic? ...When am I ever going to meet people like this again? When am I ever going to be in a room of 30 people with wide backgrounds? It's amazing. That's never going to happen again, is it?*

*Simon: Obviously, essentially we're all experts in our areas and there's no reason why that expertise is just closed to our subject. So having this ability to see how someone's done something and think, "How could I adapt that, how can I reflect that in my area of specialism?" That's got to be beneficial.*

These extracts reflect a range of the concepts previously discussed, from self-efficacy through vicarious experience (Bong & Skaalvik, 2002), moving from outsider to insider via familiarisation and belonging (Gourlay, 2011; May, 2011), and broadening of self-concept through exposure to different versions of the 'academic-as-self' and hybridised academic identities (Bandura, 2001; Clegg, 2008). They also highlight that there may be potential disadvantages in 'too much belonging' - for example, the creation of discrete disciplinary silos, in the fashion of academic tribes and territories (Becher, 1989), or groups whereby one interpretation of practice / mode of operation / version of the 'academic self' becomes the norm and remains unchallenged - could lead to stagnation in terms of, particularly, pedagogical practice and difficulties in the sense of self that the new academic is trying to establish - this was reflected in current

participant Rachel's interview when she referred to wanting to change established practices in her area as "an act of diplomacy". Research on belonging in nursing has found that there is a "tendency to conform to clinical practices, irrespective of whether they are 'best practice', to be accepted" (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009). As such, disruption in the habitus through 'critical interdisciplinarity' (Davidson, 2004) - itself realised through the PgCLTHE - creates spaces for challenges to disciplinary hegemony, and the possibility of 'disruptive innovation' (Gunn & Fisk, 2013; Yu & Hang, 2010).

In another example of the development of a sense of belonging, Abi made specific reference to not understanding some of the words used by 'academics' in her area and feeling excluded as a result -

*Abi: ...it's only really probably in the last year that I've had the understanding of, "Oh, that's what it means," because you feel an idiot, going, "I want to know what it means."*

This was also echoed by Tony, in his reflections on the PgCert -

*Tony: ...it was the stuff that nobody tells you. But it's so important.... And it's these external factors which you hear in conversation and soundbites from line mangers...*

And echoed by Rachel, in the current participant data, in response to the question about whether the course has influenced or informed the way she thought about her role:

*Rachel: [it's about] putting a name to certain things.. it gives you insight. It gives you knowledge...*

This correlates with Shotter's (1993, p. 195) ideas that being excluded from the language of a society "is to live in a world not one's own", experiencing what Giddens (1984) referred to as 'ontological insecurity', something Weedon (Weedon, 2004) considers to be damaging to an individual's sense of self, and by association, a sense of belonging. The PgCert experience was providing these individuals with a space within which they could develop a sense of belonging on a larger scale - to the university - but also, by virtue of increased insider knowledge (L. Archer, 2008), to their local contexts as well.



The alumni data also illustrates in very similar terms to the current participants the significance of opportunities for validation of practice on a sense of self-efficacy and mattering, whether this is through more tangible recognition and impact (such as the inspirational teaching award - Sue and Simon), clarity of role and contribution to a team (Chris, Abi and Simon), or a realisation of the ability to use research informed teaching (Abi). The value of pedagogical agency (and the negative effects of being 'told what and how to teach') was highlighted by Tony, Chris, Abi and Simon, for example:

*Tony: if the programme is overly prescriptive, it is the equivalent of teaching out of a textbook and it's one of these programmes, perhaps, that almost by definition has to be delivered in a pretty prescriptive way because it's delivered by so many tutors apiece and we all have to present the same stuff to the individual groups, probably I come out of sessions like that thinking, "Well, we'll make a tape recording in the lesson."*

*Simon: It was interesting seeing how some people are really tied. ...When I said, "Oh, I've just got this and I've got open reins. I'm going to do this and this lecture, I'm going to do that," they were saying that they can't....*

*Abi: I think that was probably one of the biggest things, going from working within a team and being dictated to, to working in a team where my opinion counts, where I'm allowed to make decisions.*

Simon's extract relates to the potential ethical issue commented on by Smith (2010) in her research, where different departmental probationary practices were exposed through participation in cross-disciplinary activities. A similar example was commented on earlier in the discussion in relation to recruitment practices. This type of issue may cause stress or distress for the individual academics involved and from the course tutors perspective, what to 'do' with this information is a cause for concern as "guaranteeing confidentiality precludes action to resolve difficulties" (J. Smith, 2011, p79).

Belonging and mattering emerged through the data in several different ways. Chris was probably the most conflicted in terms of a sense of belonging - he still felt quite strongly influenced by the norms of his previous professional practice, and felt he was still learning to be an academic, by which he partly meant (as well as being published) the ability to push back / question / challenge senior management - a potential

influence of disciplinary norms and local cultures on his perception of the 'academic'. However, despite his sense that he needed to opt for 'a type of academic' to become (researcher, teacher, manager), he expressed a sense of his background and skills being valued by his department, and the knowledge he was able to make a significant contribution to as a course leader - he was aware that he 'mattered' (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004).

Making a distinct and valued contribution, having a positive impact on students, and influencing colleagues / practice being important to a sense of academic self - all aspects of the self-efficacy, belonging and mattering frameworks previously articulated (Bandura, 1997; G. C. Elliott et al., 2004; Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; May, 2011)- are reflected in Simon's comments:

*Interviewer: And it means different things to different people and that's fine. Just describe what sort of an academic you are, even if you don't see yourself as one, if you see what I mean. What sort of one are you?*

*Simon: so part of my work allowance is TEL support. ...and when I look at TEL, I don't see TEL as using something just because it's there. It's got to have a purpose, it's got to make my life easier and improve the outcome for the students. So if I do something and I think, "This is great," and the students then reflect and say, "This is great," then why not share it with everyone else?*

Sue talked explicitly about impact of colleagues and the work she was doing being appreciated and valued:

*Interviewer: What about any other kind of influencing factors in terms of what has shaped you here at this institution in terms of your academic role and practice, and understanding discipline, colleagues, any other factors that have influenced you?*

*Sue: Colleagues, definitely. Everyone here is so friendly, and so helpful, and so willing to muck in. My line manager and my boss, head of department, are so supportive. If I have ideas, there's always someone that's willing to help me push them... you can tell that the people in the department actually appreciate the work that's being done, which tends to go under the radar in a lot of other institutions.*

And Abi articulated her sense of having agency to develop, but also the support she needed:

*Interviewer: What do you think accounts for that shift in who you are and how you are as an academic?*

*Abi: There's the team and the trust. I always call it being given enough rope to dangle, but not hang myself. Being reassured. Being able to go to my boss and say, "I have made a mistake. How do I manage it from there?" Going from being, basically, bawled at, to going, "It's okay. Don't worry about it. Let's see what we can sort out."*

In an example of what May (2011) referred to as part of the 'complexities of belonging', Abi - coming in from practice - noted that initially she had felt like an outsider in the university environment, and also felt separated from her previous practitioner colleagues due to being 'one of them now'. She was 'in-between', belonging in neither environment. However, over time she had developed a sense of belonging as an academic, something the PgCert had helped with, in terms of literally 'learning the language', and expressing this to practitioner colleagues with a sense of pride in what she had accomplished:

*Abi: I suppose, up until maybe the last year, I've always gone, "I'm a [practitioner], but I lecture at university." Now, I'm like, "I'm a senior lecturer at a university."... I suppose it's because I've done so much education and because I've constantly learned. I think I've come to the point where... [practitioners] look at you and go, "Oh, you're one of them, are you?" Now, I'm going, "Well, yes. I am." "Actually, I'm proud of the fact, and you could be like me if you want to be."*

Barbara expressed how supportive colleagues from a range of different backgrounds had been a great help -

*Barbara: I'm sharing an office with different people who have different experiences. I think that has been the most helpful thing... I think talking to colleagues has been a big part of it. The people are fantastic. Really excellent. And the people I share an office with are brilliant, and that's had a huge effect*

She also indicated that a lack of consultation and hierarchical power structure with the Department (a lack of agency) had a negative impact on a sense of academic identity -

*Barbara: But these sort of diktats come down that this has to be done, that has to be done, with really no insight as to what it's like for people actually delivering the service....it just seems to be decided, and there doesn't seem to be that level of discussion or consultation. The people I'm working with have a huge amount of experience of all sorts of things, and that doesn't seem to be used really, which I find frustrating.*

This was echoed by Sarah (from the current participants), and also reflected by Abi, in her comments about the imposition of bureaucratic systems. Although the alumni participants noted an awareness of external metrics and measures, Abi was the only one to specifically refer to them as being used 'as a stick', and that was to do with the issues of relevance for her subject area / nature of her students and the questions of the NSS. Of the other participants, Tony and Chris appeared to accept a 'student as consumer' reality and were pragmatic about it; Barbara was disillusioned about the lack of dialogue about actions and felt the NSS was not fit for purpose; Sue felt it was a 'farce' but didn't worry about it; Luke felt removed from the process; and Simon felt the external professional accrediting bodies were more important. As such then, and as with the findings from the current participants, the data did not indicate any significant influences on academic identity or practice from external measures and metrics such as the NSS or league tables. This may be because these systems are so enmeshed in the practices of higher education that new academics are unable to discern or disaggregate their effects, or simply accept them as part of the job (L. Archer, 2008), and / or it may be that they are not exposed to them at this stage of their career in the way that academics with leadership responsibilities may be.

### Summary of themes

The alumni data shows that the slightly more experienced academics conceptualised their academic identity in very similar terms to the current participants in their second and final interviews, and that the factors contributing to the shaping of their identity and practice were also comparable. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that the alumni participants were only between six months to a year from completion of the PgCert, and so radical changes in conceptions and influences were perhaps unlikely.

Themes emerging from the alumni sense of academic identity mirrored those that had emerged from the current participants in terms of the notion of the tripartite academic, combining practitioner and/or subject expertise, research, and teaching - the academic as 'tri-professional', as has been discussed (L. Archer, 2008; Gunn & Fisk, 2013). However, in some cases, this 'tri-professional' conception included aspects of

management, something not seen in the previous discussion. Linked to the idea of the multidimensional academic identity, the idea of preparing students for a professional role (and the impact of professional expectations) was also prevalent, unsurprisingly perhaps given the dominant professional background of the participants. Alumni participants also saw engagement with research (either personal, or research-informed teaching) and interaction with students as core elements of their academic identity, and some conceptualised themselves as lecturers or practitioners rather than as academics, although all were able to articulate what they thought 'an academic' was or should be. All these ideas are reflected in the discussion of the current participant data, demonstrating the analogous nature of the findings. The key difference between the datasets was a majority of alumni participants demonstrated a sense of a 'lived academic identity', something that was explored in the discussion.

The themes relating to factors influencing the sense of academic identity from the alumni data have even closer parallels with findings from the current participants. A sense of professional community; creativity and ownership in teaching (pedagogical agency); factors relating to validation, recognition and belonging; and the idea of self-efficacy - all of which were reflected to varying degrees in the previous discussion.

## Conclusions

In summary, the chapter adds ideas about what academics may feel and experience when they have been in their role for a little longer, which may not be in the minds of the newer academics. The immediate pressure for new academics is to understand their craft and develop pedagogical effectiveness - the immediacy of dealing with students and teaching is the most important thing as it carries with it so much exposure and risk to sense of self-concept and self-efficacy. Potentially, as the alumni participants have developed a little more pedagogical confidence and resilience, their perspectives encompass a slightly wider variety of influences and pressures that are less evident to the new academic. That said, although the alumni data points to several areas for potential further research (which will be identified in the next chapter), it is evident that this discussion of the 'established academic' supports the conceptual ideas about the development of academic identity that emerged from the initial analysis.

## Chapter 9: Conclusions

### Introduction

This research explored the experiences of a group of new academics over the course of an academic year, while they were undertaking a postgraduate course for 'learning and teaching in higher education', asking them to reflect on their conceptions of 'being an academic' and their practices, and consider what might influence these conceptions and practices. It also explored reflections on the same themes with a separate group of slightly more experienced academics, alumni of the same PgCert course.

The research set out to discover how these academics conceptualised themselves and their practices, whether this changed, and what might account for any changes if so - this formed the basis of the research questions. A key objective was to identify implications for the support and development of new academics.

### Contributions to knowledge

This study shows that 'the academic' in a modern, teaching focused university manifests an 'academic-as-self' identity from a diversity of backgrounds and influences, building on Clegg's (2008) and others ideas of the 'hybridised' modern academic identity. The findings show that a move from expert practitioner to novice academic usually results in an initial self-concept as practitioner expert and / or teacher, which aligns with research from Ennals et al (Ennals et al., 2016), and the idea of the 'prac-academic' from Clegg (2008, p. 335). The findings also show that feelings of 'imposter phenomenon' are common among new academics, as is their desire for authenticity and validation of their identity and practice, which builds on the work of Archer (2008). As academics become more experienced, leadership and management are seen to be another potential development of the academic identity, positioned by some as a choice to be made between management, research or teaching.

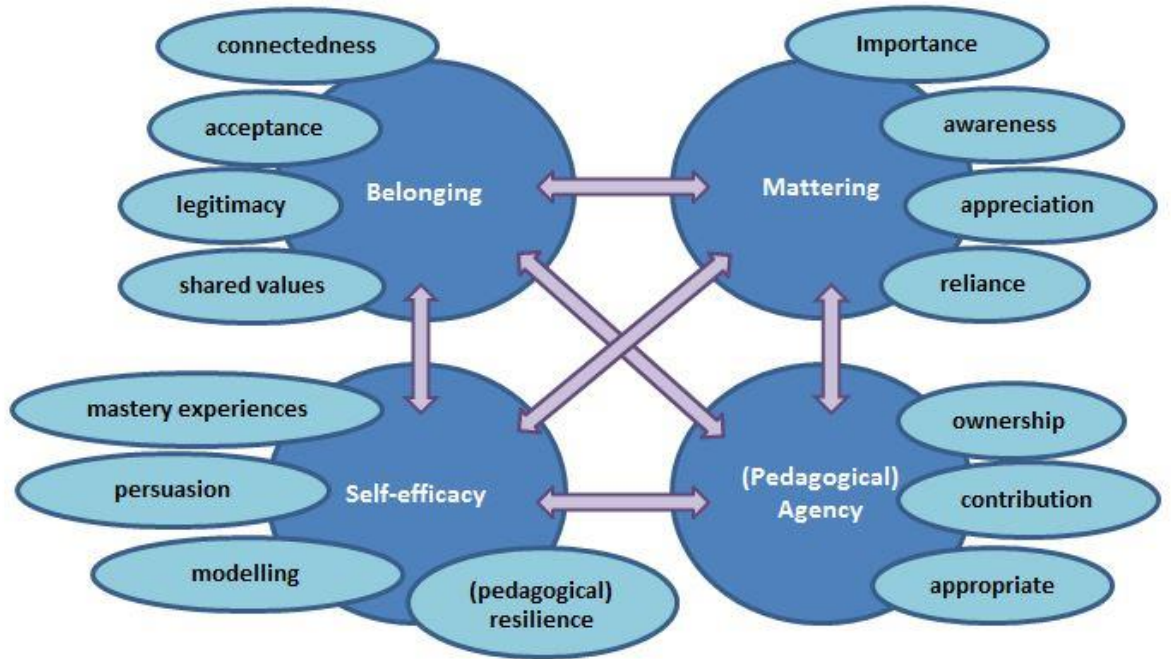
In this study, conceptions of teaching were significant in terms of the initial construction and manifestation of an academic professional identity, and interaction with students seen by most as the key mechanism for realisation of the professional

identity at this stage in their careers - the academic as teacher. This conception developed over time to a conception of the academic as a form of 'tri-professional' - with the academic role comprising of subject expertise (from research or practice), teaching expertise and engagement with research, although conceptions of what 'research' entailed varied. This construction of the academic role as requiring expertise in several areas aligns with the work of Gunn and Fisk (2013) and suggests that academics may be unconsciously assimilating the demands or expectations of a performative culture, explored in the early chapters of this thesis.

In exploration of the academic experience, new insights have been identified regarding the factors that influence the construction and development of academic professional identity. Existing literatures relate identity and belonging (Ennals et al., 2016; May, 2011); identity and mattering (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004); self-efficacy and identity (Bandura, 1997; Billot, 2010), and agency and identity (Clegg, 2008; Henkel, 2005) including some within the context of higher education and academic identity. However, the unique contribution to knowledge in this study is the identification of the interdependence and intersectionality of these concepts together with a relationship with pedagogical resilience in the formation of the new academic identity.

### **Conceptual models**

The concepts theorised from the data can be usefully brought together in a tentative model to illustrate the interdependent nature of the factors influencing the 'formation of the academic'.



*Figure 1: The new academic identity nexus*

The model that has emerged from the data indicates the intersectionality between the factors influencing the development of academic identity in new academic staff. Whilst existing literature offers theorising of the individual concepts in relation to identity, the findings from this study have identified the crucial intersectionality of the concepts as embodied or experienced by new academics.

Belonging, commonly experienced as a sense of legitimacy, being accepted, and included, has been previously theorised by May (2011) and Weeks (1990). The findings from this study demonstrate the interdependence of belonging with mattering (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004; Schlossberg, 1989); as such, belonging requires a sense of mattering to be realised - participants did not seem able to feel legitimate, accepted and connected unless others were at least aware of and ideally appreciative of them in their local contexts. Whilst Becher's (1989, 1994) notions of academic tribes and territories in relation to identity have been superseded, and notions of academic identity formation have become more complex, a key finding is that belonging and mattering are predominantly realised in the local context and subject communities, which carries with it a suggestion of the importance of disciplinary community.



Whilst the data indicated that experiences resulting from participation in PgCert courses can potentially contribute to a sense of belonging and self-efficacy, these experiences do not supplant the primacy of the local experience. The PgCert was influential for some as it had provided a space within which to acclimatise to the academic environment, its culture and its language, and in some cases a replacement professional network where one was lacking. A realisation that other academics (new and long standing) feel a sense of 'imposter phenomenon' helped to moderate some participants' sense of 'not belonging'. However, although the PgCert course had the potential to contribute to a sense of belonging and self-efficacy, it does not appear to be able to supersede the primacy of the local experience, which if not supportive may potentially negate any positive impact from the PgCert course.

A further aspect of the intersectionality of the conceptual ideas contained within the model is the relationship between belonging and self-efficacy. Bandura's (1997) theories regarding self-efficacy and mastery experiences were shown in the findings to provide a sense of legitimacy - which Levett Jones and Lathlean (2009) regard as a key aspect of belonging. Mastery experiences for new academics related primarily to successful teaching, the opportunity for which appeared to be more readily realised via appropriate 'pedagogical agency'. References were made to the difficulties of teaching material not your own; participants equated feeling 'not like an academic' to being dictated to in terms of teaching and being required to follow prescriptive instructions for the delivery of content. Thus appropriate pedagogical agency not only makes teaching 'easier', but may make it more likely for self-efficacy to be reinforced, with resulting impacts on belonging and mattering. This offers a distinct perspective on and new insights into the ideas of agency and identity expressed by Clegg (2008) and Henkel (2005), as well as progressing Bandura's (1997) ideas regarding self-efficacy and identity by demonstrating the relationships between this and later observations from May (2011) and Elliot et al (2004) regarding belonging and mattering.

Mattering - being known to others, appreciation from others, and the sense that others are reliant on you (G. C. Elliott et al., 2004; France & Finney, 2009) the interrelates with belonging as described, and is impacted by self-efficacy, particularly

positive feedback (persuasion) and modelling (Bandura, 1997), as these create a sense of appreciation. The intersectionality between pedagogical agency and mattering was illuminated when a participant was able to create their own contribution to a module or course, this increased the sense that others were reliant on them, and the chances they had of experiencing appreciation from others.

Belonging, mattering and self-efficacy also appeared to be impacted by participants' opportunities for and ability to have influence - whether that be on a local scale (colleagues, subject area, Department), or wider scale (institution, discipline). For some, opportunities to experience this appeared to relate to the nature of their contract (full time / part time, permanent / temporary), which impacted on their lived experience of the workplace, and in their participation, or not, in a local subject community.

The complexity of the interrelationships can also be expressed in table form:

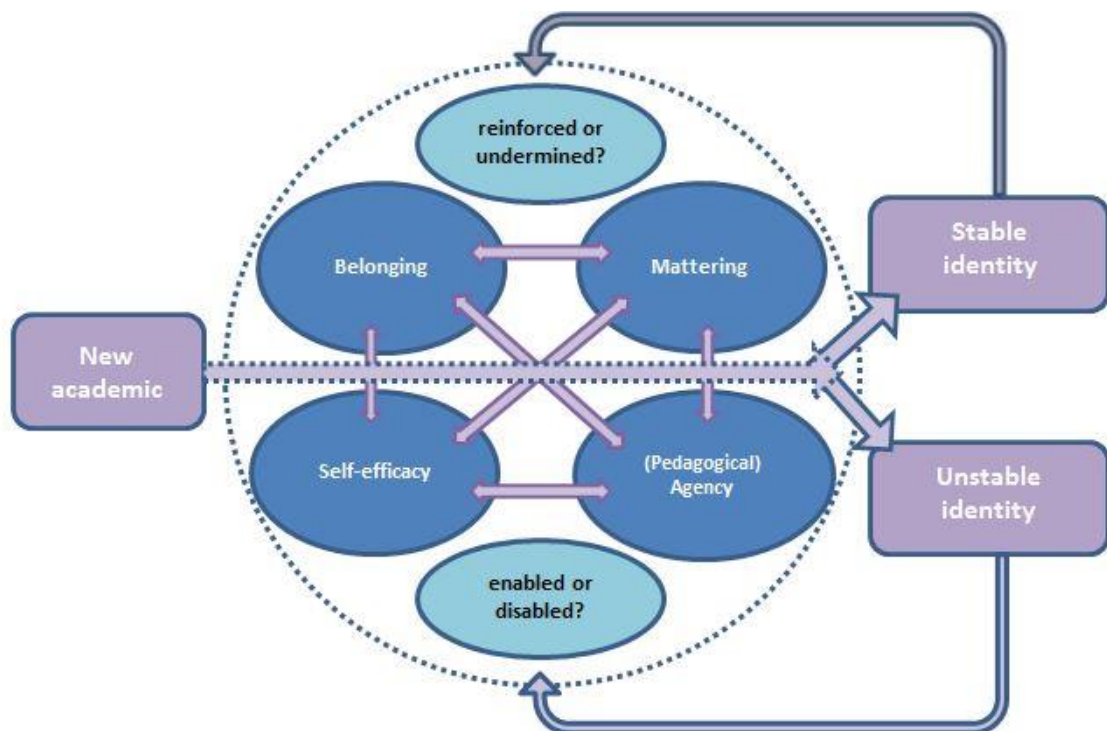
<b>Concept</b>	<b>Suggested interrelationships</b>
belonging	requires a sense of mattering (importance, appreciation) impacted by self efficacy impacted by (pedagogical) agency
mattering	requires a sense of belonging (connectedness, acceptance) requires opportunities to develop self-efficacy impacted by (pedagogical) agency
self-efficacy	reinforced / undermined by belonging / not belonging reinforced / undermined by mattering / not mattering reinforced / undermined by appropriate / inappropriate (pedagogical) agency interrelated with (pedagogical) resilience
(pedagogical) agency	a mechanism for / manifestation of belonging (legitimacy) a mechanism for / manifestation of mattering (reliance) reinforces / undermines self-efficacy

*Table 24: Conceptual interrelationships*

Interrelated with self-efficacy is the capacity for resilience (Bandura, 2001; Gu & Day, 2007) - in this study, conceptualised as 'pedagogical resilience', given the key mechanisms for participants sense of self-efficacy were shown to be student related work (teaching, assessing). The findings show it is common to experience a reduction in self-efficacy on entry to the academic profession - conceptualised as 'imposter phenomenon' (Clance & Imes, 1978), which builds on Ennals et al (2016) theories

regarding the move from expert to novice in new academics - and particularly on experiencing the exposing demands of teaching. The experiences that the new academic undergoes may influence whether their sense of self-efficacy is able to develop, and thus strengthen the new professional identity, or whether the opposite occurs, leading to an unstable or uncomfortable professional identity. As such, the model progresses thinking regarding resilience and self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001; Gu and Day, 2007) by identifying the intersectionality of these concepts with belonging, mattering and (pedagogical) agency.

A second tentative model shows the journey of the new academic towards their professional identity, and does not assume a fixed end point, in keeping with constructions of identity as situated and contingent (Jenkins, 2004; Whitchurch & Gordon, 2010) and suggesting an ongoing process:



*Figure 2: The identity nexus and the new academic's journey*

A new academic has to acclimatise to the culture of the institution, and if new to higher education to the culture more broadly. They need to learn the languages, the

norms, the ways of working - both at a local and institutional level - some or all of which may require a shift from their previous professional culture. While their level of exposure to a higher education environment before their appointment may impact on an initial sense of belonging or not belonging, the findings indicate - building on ideas from Smith (2010, 2011) - that the local context and culture that they operate in is nevertheless influential in the development of a stable professional identity. If the new academic has opportunities to experience belonging (feeling included, feeling welcomed, feeling legitimate) and mattering (counting, contributing, feeling appreciated), then self-efficacy (and resilience) may be reinforced. As such, the model uses the data from this study to synthesise existing conceptual ideas from May (2011), Bandura (1997), Elliot et al (2004), and demonstrates their intersectionality and the dynamic nature of the individual's self-concept.

As identified under the first model, a key mechanism for belonging and mattering may be pedagogical agency, as this may provide a greater sense of legitimacy - the significance of your own distinct contribution, and a sense of reliance - a feeling that your contribution improves the effective functioning of your team and / or course. Pedagogical agency is thus potentially significant in the development of self-efficacy, belonging and mattering. When all components in the nexus are reinforced, with appropriate pedagogical agency enabled, the outcome may be a stable or comfortable academic identity - which may continue to develop, or conversely, be destabilised at a later date, something that would require further research to establish.

Alternatively, the initial journey through the nexus may not be a positive one. Belonging and mattering may be undermined, for example due to a temporary or part time contract and / or a lack of connectedness with a course team, a lack of appreciation, or a sense of alienation or isolation in the higher education environment. There may be no opportunities to develop or reinforce self-efficacy, for example no role modelling, positive feedback, and a lack of pedagogical agency (or conversely too much unsupported autonomy). These factors could combine to lead to a low sense of self efficacy (and low pedagogical resilience), and ultimately an unstable professional identity. It may also be possible that with just one aspect of the nexus absent,

undermined or disabled, the new academic would be less likely to be able to develop a stable academic identity, but this would require further targeted research to ascertain.

For later career academics, the nexus could evolve and the four key contributing factors (potentially with agency in a broader sense replacing pedagogical agency) may continue to work interdependently to support the continuing construction of a stable academic professional identity. Some indications of this were provided in the secondary data set, but it is something which would require further research to establish.

It is also possible that these models of identity formation could relate not only to academic identity, but to professional identity more broadly. The concepts of belonging, mattering, self-efficacy and exercise of appropriate agency are not uniquely applicable to the higher education context. As such, the models may have applicability in the broader field of professional identity and development.

## **Recommendations**

The recommendations emerging from the research are presented within the context of the study and associated limitations that are articulated in the subsequent section. Recommendations are mainly focused on considerations for policy and practice within universities in relation to new academic staff. The discussion draws on the exemplifications of self-efficacy, belonging and mattering - Tables 19, 20 and 21 in the discussion. There are also several considerations suggested in relation to the providers of PgCert type provision.

The findings around belonging and mattering and relationship to contract type and status are significant. Given the expectations on academic staff to be 'excellent all-rounders' (Gunn & Fisk, 2013, p. 12) and the desire of universities to secure position in league tables, both for research and teaching excellence (Stevenson et al., 2014), an area that may require focus is the experiences of part time and temporary staff, including associate lecturers. These staff may face challenges in the development of a stable academic identity, and if they are not able to do so, this may have resulting

implications, both for themselves and for their employing institutions. The findings suggest that universities may need to find ways of identifying and supporting staff who may feel marginalised or disenfranchised, isolated or peripheral, in order to support these staff towards the development of a stable academic identity, and in terms of university corporate goals, most commonly to enhance the student experience and thus university performance. In relation to this, universities may need to consider the impact of increasing numbers of temporary and associate lecturer staff on academic teams and professional communities, itself an area for further research to build on the work of Lopes and Dewan (2014).

Relating to the above, within local departments leaders and managers may need to consider mechanisms by which all staff can feel part of a professional community, and thus develop a sense of belonging and mattering, enhancing self-efficacy. Effective communication and ensuring that new staff, especially part time and temporary, are included in key activities within the local area (team meetings, planning days) may be one approach. Support for new academic staff to develop their skills in teaching and / or research via formal mentoring and role modelling within the subject area may help engender a sense of legitimacy, of a meaningful contribution, and reinforce their sense of the significance of their role within the team.

The policy context explored in Chapter Two highlighted the 'managerial pressure towards homogeneity, singularity and coercive specification' (Stronach et al, 2002, p.126) as a result of performative pressures from league table culture (Stevenson et al, 2014). The findings from this research suggest a connection between the resulting lack of pedagogical agency and a potentially negative impact on the development of self-efficacy, belonging and mattering and thus the development of stable academic identities. Therefore, leaders and managers (local and university-wide) may need to consider whether a desire for consistency in the student experience may have unintentional negative effects, both for individual academics and the work they undertake.

The findings showed that conceptions of research varied widely across participants, but by the final interview all felt 'research' to be an aspect of academic identity and

practice. However, other research shows that in a department with a strong practitioner focus, the commitment is often to developing the practice profession rather than the discipline within higher education, and as such established academics in these areas are "unable to serve as role models for new academics in the development of their academic identities" (Jawitz, 2009, p. 246). This implies that even if the new academic experience is supportive and enabling, there may be a lack of effective role modelling in the development of an appropriate conception of research (Brew, 2001) and as such the academic as 'tri-professional' may not be supported to develop. Potentially, as universities seek to establish distinct identities for themselves in terms of their position in the 'hierarchies of esteem' and the nature and status of research within the institution (Clegg, 2008; Henkel, 2005), this aspect will be of interest to leaders and managers in their decisions about how best to support the new academic to inhabit an academic identity which combines the values of the individual (Fitzmaurice, 2013) with the mission of the university (Winter, 2009). It could be, for example, that PgCert type provision may need to (where it does not already), encompass the research as well as the teaching aspect of the academic role, or that local 'research champions' have a key role in positioning the nature and 'conception' of research for that subject area. Ennals et al's (2016) work around the concept of 'doing, being, becoming and belonging' as a means to construct new 'scholarly' academic identities explores this aspect and cites a communal process of collaborative action research amongst practitioner academics as one means by which this might be accomplished (Ennals et al., 2016).

For providers of PgCert type courses, the findings regarding the primacy of the local context and experience are especially significant. Where this does not happen already, they may want to consider whether working more closely with discipline areas in the delivery of the course might help enhance a sense of belonging - connectedness - for new academic staff. Observations and micro teaches were cited as being particularly influential, and interpreted as a means by which self-efficacy can be reinforced and developed. However, this could be seen as their self-efficacy being enhanced by conforming to the performative regime, relating to concepts of teaching excellence explored in earlier chapters (Macfarlane, 2007; Skelton, 2005). If academics look beyond this, or do not consider the dominant discourse around 'excellent teaching' to

apply to them, then teaching observations and subsequent feedback (verbal persuasion) may have a destabilising effect. PgCert providers may need to consider how discipline pedagogies and differing conceptions of excellent teaching can be represented in their provision in order to enable the opportunity for the development of self-efficacy through observations. This may be aligned with closer working with discipline areas, as outlined above. There is a potential conflict here for providers of PgCert courses and associated observations of teaching - are they a manifestation of the neoliberal, performative regime (Macfarlane, 2007; J. Smith, 2011), or a supportive mechanism which can contribute to the development of a stable academic identity - or something in between? This complex interplay of factors may rest on the how such experiences are enacted, the relationship between observer and observed - something explored by Gosling (2002) - and the way the experienced is framed. If PgCert courses do not wish to be seen as an instrument of a managerialised, marketised performative culture, then course leaders and tutors may need to manage both explicit and implicit messages very carefully.

A recurrent idea in the findings was the notion that discovering other academics felt like 'imposters' provided a sense of reassurance and for some, countered a sense of 'not belonging'. As such, PgCert providers may wish to consider an explicit articulation of the prevalence of 'imposter phenomenon' and the concept of 'belonging' to help new academics begin to construct their academic-as-self-identity.

The PgCert occupies a complex space within the habitat of the university, offering both potential benefits and potential risks to participants. PgCert providers could consider whether they have a role to play regarding information about - and thus promotion of - parity of experience for new staff joining the university. That said, anything which risks breaking the confidentiality of the tutor-student (and colleague-colleague) relationship and what I as a course leader establish as the 'safe space' of the PgCert classroom would need to be approached very carefully for ethical reasons.

### **Limitations, further research**

A limitation of the models and one reason for their current positioning as 'tentative' is the nature of the connections between pedagogical agency and the development of



self efficacy. There is scope for more investigation to strengthen the assumptions made, building on existing research (for example Bandura, 2001; Lindblom-Ylance, Trigwell, Nevgi, & Ashwin, 2006) and undertaking more, to test the assumptions inherent in my conceptual model, and to further develop the ideas contained within it.

It is also important to acknowledge that the research and resulting conceptual models are based on the analysis of a small- scale opportunity sample at one institution, and as such "caution should be exercised in extrapolating generalisable conclusions" (Gourlay, 2011, p. 75). However, the implications generated from the findings should resonate beyond the immediate context and contribute to existing research literature in the field.

The location of the research may limit the application of the claims to the type of institution where it took place, and although some participants had followed an 'academic route' into a higher education career, the data was more focused on 'practitioner academics' due to the nature of most of respondents. It would be useful to undertake a similar study in a different type of institution, or across institutions, to see if the conceptual model proposed applies in different professional and academic contexts.

The comparison between current and alumni data in terms of themes may have been strengthened had the same set of participants had been used and interviewed a fourth time. This would have extended the research timeline but may have added to the integrity and coherence of the data set. This provides an opportunity for further research (if the original participants were willing) to revisit them several years into their academic careers, and see if and how their self-concept had evolved or changed, potentially enabling a development of the conceptual model for later career academics. Whether or not the original participants are able / willing to participate again, further research with later career academics would be of interest, to explore what emerged for some in this research as the choice between teaching, managing or researching, and whether that impacts on their sense of academic identity. Building on existing research (for example Lea & Callaghan, 2008; Locke & Bennion, 2010), a potential area for exploration may be how different academics develop into their

careers. Do personal dispositions (something not really explored in this research) play a role in the development of a stable academic identity, and academic career development? Are there implications of pursuing different types of opportunities, and if so, what might they be? Are talented individuals 'promoted out of teaching', and if so, what impact might that have on their identity, practice and the wider university? Later in their careers, are they aware of the neo-liberal agendas and pressures (Harris, 2005; Henkel, 2009; C. Watson, 2011) explored in the original literature for this research, or are they - as appears to be the case with the participants in this study - unconsciously operating from within the performative regime?

Another area of interest, referred to in the recommendations, may be to explore whether a focus on data, measurements, and consistency detracts from leaders and managers feeling able to enable the type of environment suggested in the findings and represented in the model - one which reinforces a sense of belonging and mattering, enabling pedagogical agency and self efficacy. Do the pressures of the current performative and audit regime (Ball, 2003; Madriaga & Morley, 2016; Skelton, 2005) risk academic 'performance' levelling out at mediocrity rather than allowing for excellence - a paradox of compliance / consistency versus creativity? This could also be portrayed as a tension between external pressures (and resultant internal pressures) for 'consistency' in the student experience (L. Archer, 2008; I. Stronach et al., 2002), and the need for academics to feel comfortable and confident in their role and their teaching (Skelton, 2009), which is an inherently personal activity.

Limitations of the methodological approach are explored at length in Chapter 4, and should frame the interpretation of findings. However, in following the principles of transparency in qualitative enquiry, it is anticipated that this research journey has resulted in credible and trustworthy conclusions and recommendations.

### **Final reflections**

At the beginning of the research, my pre-conceptions about the possible findings centred around the increasing administrative workload of the modern academic, and the pressures of performativity from external (and resultant internal) regulatory and performance related measures - the pressure to be 'excellent'. I assumed that

academics may feel their identity and their practices to be compromised by the requirements of a managerialist higher education, and a bureaucratised performative culture. These ideas led to the original literature review, based around excellence and identity, in relation to conceptions of teaching and discipline. The findings of this research demonstrate that whilst for a minority of participants aspects of administrative workload and bureaucracy were noticed, and some felt an impact from performativity measures, for the majority of new academics these were not significant factors in the development of their academic identity and practice. However, this may be because a performative culture is embedded in their thinking and doing - perhaps from their previous profession (this was implied by some participants), or from an acceptance at the start of their new career that 'this is how things are'. Higher Education might simply be presumed to operate like a business (Molesworth et al., 2009), and this becomes a 'taken for granted' by new entrants to the academy, so as such they don't question it. This perhaps might make them less likely to suffer dissonance than those who find the notion anathema to that which they believe higher education to be (for example Henkel, 2005; Shahjahan, 2014).

The difference between my preconceptions and the findings may have been a result of the disjuncture between my experience and position as the researcher, and that of the 'new academic'. In the earlier chapters, my own reluctance to be identified as 'an academic' and to maintain a sense of my practitioner authenticity and standing was explored in detail - I felt fairly sure that I could still think like a newcomer to higher education. However, one cannot simply discount the knowledge, skills and 'insider' status that working for an institution for over a decade will provide - the things that we have forgotten we know, our taken-for-granted tacit knowledge. It is such knowledge that may give rise to assumptions about how others may think and feel, and inform preconceptions about the experiences - and needs - of others. In any role which involves supporting the development of others, and teaching others, what this illustrates is the importance of this level of self-awareness and the ability to attempt to see the world through the eyes of the student or participant (and in the case of this research, both).

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## Appendix A: Participant information letter



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Dear

Further to our conversation, I would like to invite you to participate in a piece of educational research examining how staff in higher education think about themselves as academics, and about their academic practice, in relation to participation in (and completion of) of a PgC LTHE course. The research involves interviewing current and alumni participants of the PgC LTHE course - current participants will be interviewed three times, at the beginning, middle and end of their course; alumni will be interviewed once.

A time line is outlined below:

Activity	Time
First round of interviews (Interview 1)	September 2015
Analysis of Interview 1 data	September 2015-November 2015
Second round of interviews	February 2016
Analysis of Interview 2 data	March-June 2016
Alumni interviews	January-July 2016
Third round of interviews	June-July 2016
Analysis of Interview 3 and Alumni interviews	August 2016
Final data analysis	September - December 2016
Write conclusions	January-March 2017
Submission of thesis	March 2017

In order to ensure I am operating within the strict ethical guidelines required for doctoral study, and in line with the SHU [Research Ethics Policy](#), you should know that I was recently appointed as 'Head of Student Experience and Quality Enhancement' for the Faculty of Development and Society. However, I am carrying out the research in my capacity as course tutor and co-course leader on the PgCert course (which remains unchanged at present), as a practitioner seeking to gain insight and understanding into the experiences of academics who undertake the course. I do not foresee any conflict of interest between this and my appointment to a new Faculty-wide role. In fact, I hope that the research will contribute positively to both roles.

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants have the right to withhold data and / or withdraw from the study prior to data analysis. Any information that you give will be anonymised and other data presented so that you will not be recognisable to a third party in any subsequent report or presentation of this work. All information given will be treated in the strictest confidence. All participants will be entitled to an optional debrief meeting, and a full report of this work will be available on request.

If you are willing to participate in this research, please complete the attached form and return it for my attention in the internal mail by < >. If you would like further information before making your decision please contact me on 07919293093 or at [r.hodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:r.hodgson@shu.ac.uk)

Thank you very much in anticipation of your support in the exploration of this topic.

Yours faithfully,  
**Rebecca Hodgson**

**Supervising tutors:**

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## Appendix B: Participant Consent Form 1



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### Participant consent form (current course participants)

I am willing to participate in a piece of educational research examining the identity and practice of lecturers in higher education, in relation to participation in (and completion of) of a PgC LTHE course. I understand the research involves:

- three 20 minute interviews at the start, middle and end of the PgC LTHE course
- an optional debrief meeting

Please tick each one to indicate your consent to participate in the research:

- I consent to participation in interviews
- I consent to my interviews being transcribed and the resulting data used for analysis
- I understand that participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withhold data and / or withdraw from the study prior to data analysis
- I understand that I am entitled to an optional debrief meeting

Print name: .....

Sign: .....

Date: .....

### Supervising tutors:

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## Appendix C: Participant Consent Form 2



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### Participant consent form (alumni)

I am willing to participate in a piece of educational research examining how staff in higher education think about themselves as academics, and about their academic practice, in relation to participation in (and completion of) of a PgC LTHE course. I understand the research involves:

- one 20 minute interview following completion of the PgC LTHE
- an optional debrief meeting

I am aware that the researcher has a role within the Faculty of Development and Society leadership team in addition to her role as course tutor and co-course leader on the PgC LTHE.

Please tick each one to indicate your consent to participate in the research:

- I consent to participation in an interview
- I consent to my interviews being transcribed and the resulting data used for analysis
- I understand that participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withhold data and / or withdraw from the study prior to data analysis
- I understand that I am entitled to an optional debrief meeting

Print name: .....

Sign: .....

Date: .....

### Supervising tutors:

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## Appendix D: Participant Details form



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### Participant details form

All data will be anonymised, but for analysis purposes it is helpful to know some key characteristics of participants.

**Discipline / Specialist Subject** .....

**Job title / role**.....

**Time in teaching** .....

**Time teaching in Higher Education** .....

**Occupation before teaching in HE**.....

#### Age range

- <25
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- >55
- Prefer not to say

#### Gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

#### Ethnicity

Are you of black or minority ethnic heritage?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

#### Nationality

Are you British?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



## Appendix E: Change of Role Information



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**21 March 2016**

Dear research participant

In order to ensure I am operating within the strict ethical guidelines required for doctoral study, and in line with the SHU [Research Ethics Policy](#), I need to inform you of a change in my main role at the University. My previous role was based within the Teacher Education Department as the 'Head of Academic Development'. From 1 March 2016, I was appointed as 'Head of Student Experience and Quality Enhancement' for the Faculty of Development and Society. My role as course tutor and co-course leader on the PgCert LTHE course remains unchanged at present.

I am carrying out the research in my capacity as course tutor and co-course leader on the PgCert course, as a practitioner seeking to gain insight and understanding into the experiences of academics who undertake the course. I do not foresee any conflict of interest between this and my appointment to a new Faculty-wide role. In fact, I hope that the research will contribute positively to this role as well.

As outlined in the original participant information, all information you provide is anonymised and other data presented so that you will not be recognisable to a third party in any subsequent report or presentation of this work. All information given will be treated in the strictest confidence. As per your original consent, given in September 2015, participation in this research is voluntary and you have the right to withhold data and / or withdraw from the study prior to data analysis, which will be taking place from April 2016.

If you have any questions about this, please do contact me on 07919293093 or at [r.hodgson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:r.hodgson@shu.ac.uk). If I do not hear back from you within three weeks (12/04/16) I will assume that you are happy to continue being a participant in the research.

Thank you very much for your support in the exploration of this topic.

All the best  
Rebecca

**Rebecca Hodgson**

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## Appendix F: Coding and Collation of transcript codes example (early analysis)

	<p>Interviewer: What else do you think has been influential?</p> <p>Sarah: The students. The feedback that they've given me.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay, interesting.</p>
<p><b>role of student feedback in shaping conceptions of self / confidence?</b></p>	<p>Sarah: I got the module evaluations forms and I was quite upset by- out of 30, I was focusing on 2. But it was good because it did get me to, sort of, step back and look at my practice. So definitely student feedback has a major influence.</p>
<p><b>colleagues shape practices (community?)</b></p>	<p>Other colleagues who work very differently to me, but I feel I can learn from them. Even the ones who I find really difficult to work with, I think, push yourself to work with them people and they influence me in a big way. But also social, like my family, friends.</p>
<p><b>social and personal factors (family, friends)</b></p>	<p>Interviewer: Oh, really?</p> <p>Sarah: Yes, that kind of thing. I think they've shaped the kind of person that I am.</p> <p>Interviewer: Yes, okay.</p>
<p><b>influence of role models</b></p>	<p>Sarah: Particularly my mum and dad because they're very- they've always been positive and sort of told us we can do whatever we want, put our mind to it type thing. Obviously my older sister's an academic. I don't know whether that has got anything to do with it, because she trained to be a X and I trained to be an X. She went into academia and I went in, so I don't know if there's a bit of role modelling stuff going on there.</p>

*Figure 3: Transcript work (early analysis)*

**thinks that teaching is a valuable role**  
**feels like an academic 'most of the time' as always thinking about stuff**  
**aspects of home life reflects academic role for example tv and radio choices**  
**interacting with non-specialists can make you value your own knowledge more**  
**when physically present at work feels inhabits the role more**  
**slight change in mind-set when in the research centre**  
**sees all aspects of the role as part of the role**  
**validating moment with students in a tutorial group when they had been inspired to do the set work and more as a result of the discussion**  
**felt had been responsible for the students 'moving on'**  
**academic identity challenged when feels teaching / lecturing has not gone to plan**  
**feels like 'oh god can I really do this?' = confidence**  
**the peripheral academic admin that takes up so much time especially when you are new to it**  
**thinks the course will change understanding of how students learn, different approaches and engaging students**  
**having the tools and understanding the theory re: teaching and learning will help her feel more confident in her academic role**  
**learning from peers**  
**learning from course tutors approaches**

**academic as someone who plans teaching as well as delivers it, more involved with students, and engaged in research**  
**academic = ownership over work? eg ownership over teaching... agency?**  
**didn't feel like one previously**  
**being part time takes longer to inhabit the role**  
**planning what you are going to do with students is key to inhabiting the role for her**  
**taking some control important**  
**in the past felt constrained by lack of experience or by what others did**  
**having the confidence to have autonomy**  
**having tools for teaching and knowing the names of such activities gives her a sense of legitimacy**  
**understanding of the role shaped by increased confidence and autonomy and her increased understanding of where she fits on the course she teaches on**  
**is making a needed contribution that matches specialist skills**  
**now has a sense of purpose in the context of the whole course increased her confidence and sense of self-worth?**  
**feeling like you are being useful and making a contribution to a team**  
**feels like your specialist skill is being valued and utilised**  
**significance of clarity of your place within a team**

*Figure 4: Collation of transcript notes (early analysis)*

*Black text = interview 1*

*Blue text = interview 2*

*Green text = interview 3*

## Appendix F: Mapping of interview questions to content areas

### Unit of Analysis - 1 - Initial sense of academic identity - Interview 1

- 1 What does 'being an academic' mean to you?
- 2 How would you describe yourself as an academic?
- 4 How important is being an academic – as part of the 'overall you'?
- 5 When and where are you an academic? Where and where are you not an academic?
- 6 How much of your practice is informed by your sense of being an academic (consider the day to day, an average week)?

### Unit of Analysis - 2- Subsequent sense of academic identity - Interview 2

- 1 How would you describe yourself as an academic?
- 4 Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last X months?
- 5 Has the way in which you think about your academic practice changed?

### Unit of Analysis - 3- Subsequent sense of academic identity - Interview 3

- 1 What does 'being an academic' mean to you?
- 5 Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last XX months?
- 6 How important is being an academic – as part of the 'overall you'? (do you feel 'like an academic' at home?)
- 7 In how much of your practice do you feel like 'an academic' (consider the day to day, an average week)?

### Unit of Analysis - 4 - Initial factors influencing academic identity - interview 1:

- 3 What shapes your sense of being an academic (what shapes how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role)?
- 7 Can you give me an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?
- 8 Do you think that the course will change the ways in which you think about yourself as an academic/your academic practice?

### Unit of Analysis - 5 - Subsequent factors influencing academic identity - Interview 2

- 2 What shapes your sense of being an academic (what shapes how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role)?
- 3 Do you have an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?
- 4 (Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last X months?) What may account for these changes; why do you think this is?
- 5 (Has the way in which you think about your academic practice changed?) What may account for these changes?
- 6 Has being on this course shaped your sense of being an academic and / or your practice as an academic? (if so, how?)

### Unit of Analysis - 6 - Subsequent factors influencing academic identity - Interview 3

- 2 Did being on the course shape your sense of being an academic and / or your practice as an academic? (What 'stands out' for you? Can you give me a particular example?)
- 4 What has been most influential in shaping how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role?
- 5 (Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last XX months?) What may account for these changes; why do you think this is?
- 8 Can you give me an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?
- 9 I note you have / haven't mentioned external factors like the NSS, league tables, the proposed TEF. How much do you think these kinds of things impact or influence your sense of who you are at work and / or your working practice?

### Unit of Analysis - 1A - Sense of academic identity - ALUMNI

- 1 What does 'being an academic' mean to you?
- 4 How would you describe yourself as an academic?
- 6 Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last XX months?
- 7 How important is being an academic – as part of the 'overall you'?
- 8 When and where are you an academic? Where and where are you not an academic?
- 9 In how much of your practice do you feel like an academic in the day-to-day or in an average week?

### Unit of Analysis - 2A - Factors influencing academic identity - ALUMNI

- 2 Did being on the PgCert course shape your sense of being an academic, and/or your practice as an academic? Can you give any examples of how if so?
- 3 How much did the course influence or inform the way you think about your role? Can you give me an example to illustrate this?
- 5 What has shaped your sense of being an academic (how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role)?
- 6 (Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last XX months?) What may account for this; why do you think this is?
- 10 Can you give me an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?
- 11 I note you have / haven't mentioned external factors like the NSS, league tables, the proposed TEF. How much do you think these kinds of things impact or influence your sense of who you are at work and / or your working practice? What role do you think the course had (or could have) in this regard?

Figure 5: Mapping of interview questions to content areas

## Appendix H: Participant summary example

### "Sarah"

This participant is a female senior lecturer, between 25-34 years old. She had been working in the university for a few months at the start of the research and was approaching the end of her first year by the final interview. Her occupation prior to working in higher education was as a manager in the NHS. She had no teaching experience prior to her academic appointment. She teaches on health-related professional courses and is involved in delivering training for external clients including the NHS. She was towards the end of her study on a Masters course. At the start of the research, she did not identify as an 'academic', and did not feel the word applied to her. She shared openly the labels she had been given when she was younger of being 'stupid', which she felt was due to her undiagnosed dyslexia. She felt she had achieved well career wise in her previous role in the NHS, but was having to learn a new role in higher education. She felt the role of an academic in her position and from her background was to facilitate teaching, to help others grow and develop. She lacked confidence in some aspects of her role, particularly the assessment of student academic work, although felt confident in her approach to teaching. Her interactions with students provided her with both affirmation and challenge regarding her academic role - she found having her marking challenged difficult, and found critical student feedback hard to process. Leading on a project for the creation and delivery of training for practitioners from her profession was instrumental in her inhabiting the academic role - her links with her profession were very important to her. Her conception of her role changed over the duration of the research; she demonstrated a wider interpretation of the academic role as one incorporating research and scholarly activity, and she began to more confidently inhabit this role herself. Her perception of undertaking academic admin changed - initially she struggled to accept this was part of the role, but latterly she found she enjoyed it as it gave her a respite from more cognitively demanding tasks. She found undertaking assignments for the PgCert course and her Masters challenging, but followed the advice of her mentor to read literature in advance of writing, and found that this increased her confidence in both her writing and her teaching, and thus enabled her to feel 'more of an academic'. She felt frustrated with the way external pressures like the NSS were handled by management, feeling that there should be more ownership given to staff at her level so that they could engage with the process more. She had a very reflective style, used juxtapositions of feelings and family to her role at work and repeatedly mentioned the influences of family, friends, colleagues and latterly the PgCert course - 'the social domain' - on how she sees herself and how she operates.

### **Sarah - emerging ideas**

- academic as 'other'
- importance of significant colleagues and managers
- validation from positive student encounters
- repudiation of sense of self from critical student feedback
- fear of being measured / judged
- importance of clear role / contribution to a team
- importance of having responsibility and ownership of key process

## Appendix I: Example QCA units of analysis - 'Jacob'

### Unit of Analysis 1 (Jacob) - Initial sense of academic identity - Interview 1

*What does 'being an academic' mean to you? How would you describe yourself as an academic?*

*How important is being an academic – as part of the 'overall you'? When and where are you an academic? Where and where are you not an academic?*

*How much of your practice is informed by your sense of being an academic (consider the day to day, an average week)?*

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit (manifest)	Condensed meaning unit (latent)	Categories
I find that a slightly difficult question because my background is X practitioner and it's through that that I've had some involvement as an associate lecturer over the last five years. But in terms of my identity, I see myself more as a subject expert rather than an academic.	back ground is practitioner and through that has had AL work, sees himself as subject expert not academic	associate lecturer / subject expert is not an academic	subject expertise, teaching and research
I'm lacking perhaps the experience of teaching. It's something that I've been involved in, but haven't got that background. I think the other big difference is the fact that I've not done a PhD and I've not done some research...	lacking experience of teaching, PhD qualification and research	need teaching experience, PhD, research to be an academic	
Practical, knowledge-based learning. I think I work well in smaller groups than in front of a big room of people. Helping people problem solve, so coaching and mentoring and tailoring that to the different groups' needs.	Practical, knowledge-based learning with small groups, problem based coaching / mentoring	confident with work-based learning approach to teaching	
I think my area, there's lots of new innovation, there are lots of things happening at the minute and there are several avenues that I'd like to explore more. It's trying to find the time to do it all.	lots of innovation in his subject area he'd like to explore if he could find time	time pressures impact on opportunities for research	practitioner
At the moment [being an academic] it's quite a big driving force. It's, in terms of a career path and a career choice, something that I'm working quite hard towards	working hard towards being an academic as a career path	intrinsic desire to change to academic career	lack of qualifications
I'm an academic... Or am I an academic on a Wednesday afternoon? That's an interesting one. Yes and no, I think. I'm both an academic and a student when I'm involved in this [PgCert] course	feels like both academic and student when involved with PgCert	feels like an academic when on PgCert	
I'm an academic on Fridays when I'm teaching tutorial groups and then also when I'm sat at my desk and I get emails or phone calls from project students. The rest of the time, it's different because I've got a full-time job at the university in the X department.	academic when teaching or interacting with students, rest of the time in a full time job	distinct work identities due to AL role	being on the PgCert
The teaching I've contracted for two hours' teaching time a week, so I've got that. That's around lunchtimes on a Friday, 11:00 until 1:00, so I'm trying to minimise the impact on my full-time job.	two hours teaching a week designed to minimise impact on fulltime job	distinct work identities due to AL role	
I attended a subject group meeting last week and people were talking about ...a re-validated course, they've re-worked the first year....and picked up some of the areas... which we've got access to in my other role. It's sort of motivated me to, perhaps, prioritise looking at that a little bit more ...and trying to find areas where there is crossover and I can develop my subject specialism in a way that could be useful to both roles...	attended a subject group meeting about revalidation and began to think about how he could find useful areas of crossover	recognising potential for subject expertise contribution to academic area	opportunities to contribute to subject area
I think the subject specialism has allowed me to get involved as an AL anyway, but now it's perhaps a more conscious thing. I'm looking for areas of developing and looking at ways in which there is correlation between [the roles]	subject expertise has brought the AL work, but looking for correlation	potential for symbiotic relationship between practitioner expertise and academic role	lack of teaching confidence
my main motivation for signing up for this course, was to enhance that and increase my confidence and get to the point where I'm less nervous standing in front of people, I feel like I know what I'm doing more and feel that I can identify with the role more confidently.	main motivation for PgCert is to increased confidence in teaching and can identify with the role more confidently	confidence in teaching key to inhabiting academic role	

## Unit of Analysis 2 (Jacob) - Subsequent sense of academic identity - Interview 2

*How would you describe yourself as an academic?*

*Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last X months?*

*Has the way in which you think about your academic practice changed?*

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit (manifest)	Condensed meaning unit (latent)	Categories
I would describe myself as a new academic who is developing- learning some new techniques and starting to integrate more into the academic community than I was last time we spoke.	feels like new academic who is starting to integrate into academic community	time significant in developing sense of academic identity	limited time with students
I'm very much, I think, it's problem-based learning. My background as a practitioner rather than a teacher, but I've been starting to think more as an educator and trying to apply some of the theory and practice into the very limited sessions I have with students. I'm only teaching two hours a week at the moment.	background is practitioner but trying to think more as an educator in limited time with students	an academic is an educator	academic as educator
Confidence is much higher. Yes, much more confident in myself, I think, and my ability to do the role.	More confident in himself and ability to do the role	confidence relates to academic identity	pedagogic confidence
I was able to try and embed some of the ideas [from the PgCert], think about what I was doing, think about what my learning outcomes were, think about how to structure my session a little bit more and what my role was.	embedding ideas from PgCert into planning teaching and the role of the teacher	understanding of the role of the teacher can shift	student-centred conception
...there's been big changes because it's gone from nothing [teaching] to ... kind of quite extreme. And I've sort of found my way into that... within a couple of weeks had worked out a format and approach to tackling the tutorials that seemed to really work. But I was quite open with the group to say "If things are working well, let me know. If things aren't working so well, let me know" and "These are your tutorials. I'm here to help but I'm happy to move things around or do things differently".	changes in practice as has gone from no teaching to teaching every week, using a format that works and seeking feedback from students	important to seek feedback from students about own practice	student-centred conception
"Turn on your screens. Get on with your exercises. Put your hand up if you've got any questions" and that was the remit I was given. I could quite easily have just done that, took the money, sat there, said nothing, but for me, that's not the best way of teaching and engaging and it's also not developing me either.	could have followed the remit he was given but decided against it as not the best way of teaching or developing himself	disagrees with approach to teaching in local context	sybiosis of theory and practice
So it's been quite a good symbiotic relationship really [doing PgCert and starting to teach]. It's allowing me to try and learn and develop whilst giving students probably the best support I can...	symbiosis between doing PgCert and doing the teaching, allows him to learn and give students best support he can	need to be teaching to relate to the PgCert course	sybiosis of theory and practice

**Unit of Analysis 3 (Jacob) - Subsequent sense of academic identity - Interview 3**

*What does 'being an academic' mean to you?*

*How important is being an academic – as part of the 'overall you'? (do you feel 'like an academic' at home?)*

*In how much of your practice do you feel like 'an academic' (consider the day to day, an average week)?*

*Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last X months?*

*Has the way in which you think about your academic practice changed?*

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit (manifest)	Condensed meaning unit (latent)	Categories
Somebody who supports teaching and learning in higher education. But also an element of research and scholarly thoughts.	academic supports teaching and learning in HE, and does research	academic as teacher and researcher	academic as teacher and researcher
when I first started doing it, I was quite unsure about what I would be letting myself in for. And, having actually come out of the other side, I've really, really enjoyed it. I've found it really, yes, a motivating process, and, I think it's been clear that the feedback from the students, that they've valued having me as a tutor, so that's been really, really good.	wasn't sure what to expect but has really enjoyed it, been motivated by it, and valued the positive feedback from students	affirmation and validation from feedback from students	affirmation and validation from students
I've really valued the experience. So I would certainly like to have some involvement again. I don't think it's really had an impact outside of work.	would like more academic work, but hasn't really impacted on who he is	practitioner identity still strongest	practitioner
To be honest, there's been a huge amount of autonomy, in how... I prepare, or how I've done my teaching this year, which is something that I'm a little bit surprised at, as an associate lecturer.	high degree of autonomy in preparation and delivery of teaching which has surprised him	no guidance from Dept regarding teaching	autonomy (negative)
[Do you think you'd like to be a full-time academic] Yes, although I'm not sure how realistic that is at the moment.	not sure if will be able to follow academic career path	no confidence in continued academic role	uncertainty



#### Unit of Analysis 4 (Jacob) - Initial factors influencing academic identity - interview 1:

*What shapes your sense of being an academic (what shapes how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role)?*

*Can you give me an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?*

*Do you think that the course will change the ways in which you think about yourself as an academic/your academic practice?*

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit (manifest)	Condensed meaning unit (latent)	Categories
when I've been for interviews recently, it's been almost a closed shop sort of experience about, well, if you've not presented papers or you're not near the end of your PhD, we can't consider you...	interviews are a closed shop unless you have presented papers or done PhD	recruitment process is unfair	recruitment processes / gatekeepers
It's in the last few months where I've gone through the recruitment process that I've hit... I think, again, certain individuals- this is all anonymised, isn't it? Certain individuals have got very fixed views about what an academic is. These are people who are gate holders to the job for me, so, yes, if you don't tick the box of this, then that seems to be quite a big stumbling block, but that's just one person's experience, however, they're in a position where, quite influential.	recruitment process and gatekeepers of academic jobs look for all boxes to be ticked to be an academic, barrier to his progression	progression to academic jobs subject to academic gatekeepers	
That being said, some of the feedback that I've received through the recruitment process has been constructive in that that's led me to look at ways of developing, look at ways of shaping my background, my experience, which has brought me to this [PgCert].	feedback from recruitment process useful to shape his career development plans	recruitment process shapes understanding of academic role	us and them cultures
I think my experience is probably from working at the university, but being indirectly involved with the academic group of staff. There is, I think, quite a big separation, in this institution, anyway, possibly in many...	indirect involvement with academics shaped sense of the role, feels a big separation between academic and non-academic	academic / non-academic, us and them culture in universities	mentors / enablers
...there's an academic colleague who has performed quite a mentoring role for me over the last few years, so it's through that contact we were working, both involved in developing a project... started to build some ties and started to build some links with the academic side of things. So it's through that that he encouraged me to take on some project students. I've done some guest lectures about the project that we were involved in over the last five years and then that moved onto taking some tutorial groups. So that's a really positive reinforcement of it.	academic colleague acted as mentor and encouraged him to take on project students, guest lectures and then tutorial groups, this reinforced his sense of an academic identity	owes opportunity for academic work to a key colleague who mentored him	validation from students
I've worked at the university since 2000, so I've worked here for 15 years in an administrative, technical specialist kind of role....I haven't had that student contact until something like the last five years and I've started to build on that.	worked at university 15 years in technical role, started to have student contact about 5 years ago	student interaction stimulates a sense of academic identity	levels of confidence
With project students, really, I think. With lots of one-to-one project meetings and there's been a couple of individuals who I feel like I really made a difference with. That's a really positive feeling, that they've put the work in and they've got to a point and I'm confident that they are going to be happy with the mark they've got.	feels like an academic with project students, feels like has made a difference to their achievement	evidence of making a difference to students affirms academic identity	professional community
Standing in front of a room of people....I think it's just confidence. My background is working in a business environment, so I'm quite happy to talk about things when I feel that I've got the background and the knowledge behind me. I'm happy in one-to-one situations and small groups. But, yes, standing in front of a full room of people, I get nervous.	questions sense of being an academic when nervous about speaking to a room full of people	presentation confidence key to inhabiting academic role	
...getting feedback and failing, not failing, failing and learning in a safe environment, which is good.	getting feedback and trying things out in a safe environment is good	importance of supportive spaces to develop	
I hope so... I think the experience and I think, actually, more networking with other academics would be really helpful as well. There are a lot of people on the course who are full-time teaching. I'm just doing a couple of hours a week, but it doesn't seem to be a problem at the moment.	hopes experience of doing the PgCert and networking will be helpful, doesn't seem to matter the different amounts of teaching people have	opportunities to network with other academics key to development of academic identity	
I think the qualification hopefully will be useful in terms of future career progression, but it's not the biggest driver. That being said, I wouldn't have necessarily signed up for the course had it not been a box to be ticked on the application form. But now I've got involved, I'm hoping to get things out of it for me other than just an application form.	motivation is getting the qualification for career progression but hopes it will be more than a box to be ticked	mandatory nature of PgCert not a barrier to potential benefit	

## Unit of Analysis 5 (Jacob) - Subsequent factors influencing academic identity - Interview 2

*What shapes your sense of being an academic (what shapes how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role)?*

*Do you have an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?*

*Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last X months? What may account for these changes; why do you think this is?*

*Has the way in which you think about your academic practice changed? What may account for these changes?*

*Has being on this course shaped your sense of being an academic and or your practice as an academic? (if so, how?)*

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit (manifest)	Condensed meaning unit (latent)	Categories
I think a really big one is the department itself and the support or lack of support, might I say, in that as an AL, I've been thrown into the deep end, left to get on with it and that's my experience... So personally, I think that is a potentially really important support network and shaping factor, but my experience of it has not ...been broadly positive. I mean, there are members of staff within the department who are very supportive on a one-to-one basis...but there isn't the framework that I'm perhaps more used to working, in a non-academic environment.	lack of support from the Dept, left to get on with it, could be an important support network but not had a positive experience of it and not used to this way of working	associate lecturers are not visible or significant to Dept	isolation
I have some fairly hefty constraints at the minute. And somebody on the peripheral on the department, don't feel necessarily confident about vocalising that at the moment when I'm also actively seeking to move more substantively into that department. So it's a difficult balancing act.	is peripheral to the department and seeking further work so does not feel confident about voicing concerns	expressing dissatisfaction may be detrimental to future academic work opportunities	nature of contract
there's perhaps been some negative influence going on [from the Department], which has been less easy to deal with because I don't feel particularly empowered in my current role.	not empowered in current role so not easy to deal with negative aspects of academic department	status of contract limits opportunity / desire to influence	departmental cultures
the rapport and the bond that I've got with the tutorial groups now and ...the sense of respect that I feel I've got. And the students are very open with me in talking to me about issues and I'm able to support them and they acknowledge that and I think I'm very grateful for it. So feedback from them has been excellent. So that's been useful.	has bond with and respect from students, appreciates their acknowledgement of his help and their feedback	students are source of affirmation of academic identity	student interaction
I did manage to take a lecture session at the end of the semester. I managed to do the end of semester wrap-up revision session. So that was really a good experience.	taking a lecture at the end of semester was a good experience	lecturing is significant in academic identity	student interaction
Initially I thought I was going to be working with the module leader's slides, which I was uncomfortable with ... I ended up using a presentation that I'd based around the micro-lectures that I'd been using last semester to plan my tutorials anyway. It went really well in terms of engagement from the students... putting their hands up and answering questions so that ended the semester on a high.	uncomfortable using someone else's materials so developed own and got good student engagement	lack of ownership over teaching resources problematic	ownership of teaching
I think because of the nature of the contract I've got at the moment, it's very clear on what my role should be and it's working within those constraints. But it's also I'm trying to expand the constraints a little bit rather than just do the minimum, to look for opportunities to practise and put into practise some of the concepts I've been thinking about.	nature of contract limits academic role but trying to expand this where he can, looking for opportunities	willingness to think and work outside of defined roles	ownership of teaching
I think being thrown in the deep end and finding that I've done a pretty good job. Yes, I think...grateful that I've had the opportunity of doing the tutorials because for me, I learn better in an active learning environment and I think in the subject discipline that I'm teaching, that's true for most of the students as well.	having to do job unprepared and realising it has gone well has been good, prefers active learning and thinks students do too	alignment between practitioner skills and teaching ability	ownership of teaching
The feedback from the microteach session was really useful as well. Because I think that happened before teaching started as well. So that was my first sort of stab at it and then I used that format in the tutorials rather than just say "Turn on your screens. Get on with your exercises. Put your hand up if you've got any questions" and that was the remit I was given. I could quite easily have just done that, took the money, sat there, said nothing, but for me, that's not the best way of teaching and engaging and it's also not developing me either.	feedback from microteach useful and shaped approach to teaching which was not to adopt the remit of the Dept but to be more student focused which helps him to develop as well	Dissonance between own preferred approach to teaching and Departmental method of instruction	PgCert community
...the timing of doing the LTHE first module was really valuable. So as I was sort of starting into that module, I was able to try and embed some of the ideas, think about what I was doing, think about what my learning outcomes were, think about how to structure my session a little bit more and what my role was. The timing of the course and the teaching starting worked very well in that it kind of nudged me to be reflective about things.	timing of PgCert helpful as aligned with starting teaching and enabled thinking about planning and delivering teaching	PgCert stimulated reflective practice	PgCert reflective practice
it's been quite a good symbiotic relationship really [PgCert course and starting teaching]. It's allowing me to try and learn and develop whilst giving students probably the best support I can...	PgCert course has positive symbiotic relationship with his teaching experiences	PgCert helps ensure students get best experience from him	PgCert reflective practice

the [PgCert] has been, you know, a very good support network. I think talking to colleagues, other academic members of staff and you know, discussing issues or problems or sharing stories, but also it's being part of that community and going through the learning reflection process has been useful. And the teaching staff are great for bouncing ideas off or talking to. So that's been very positive.	PgCert a good support network, talking to colleagues and being part of a community	PgCert is replacement professional community	
the sense of community has been really important as well. That's been quite strong....I'm trying to, you know, pick up on practical tips as well and I like the ethos of how [the tutors] consciously change the method of delivery on a week by week basis in order to demonstrate different things, without actually saying "That's what you're doing". I think that's a really good way of doing it.	sense of community on PgCert is important, and opportunity to gain practical advice and learn from tutor modelling	PgCert is replacement professional community	
I'm grateful for the opportunity I think. And literally, signed up to it as a box-ticking exercise to get the qualification to try and help my employment chances next year. A bit apprehensive about going back into a learning environment. It's been ten years since my MSc but I try to keep an open mind and I found it being beneficial, being pleased that it's something that I actually value doing rather than doing as a means to an end, so it's all good.	grateful to be doing PgCert and even though was box ticking exercise is pleased that he values doing it and finds it beneficial	mandatory nature of PgCert not a barrier to potential benefit if open to this	

### Unit of Analysis 6 (Jacob) - Subsequent factors influencing academic identity - Interview 3

*Did being on the course shape your sense of being an academic and / or your practice as an academic? (What 'stands out' for you? Can you give me a particular example?)*

*What has been most influential in shaping how you think about yourself as an academic, how you understand the role?*

*Has the way in which you think of yourself as an academic changed over the last XX months? (What may account for these changes; why do you think this is?)*

*Can you give me an example of a particular aspect of practice where you have 'felt like an academic' / questioned your sense of being an academic?*

*I note you have / haven't mentioned external factors like the NSS, league tables, the proposed TEF. How much do you think these kinds of things impact or influence your sense of who you are at work and / or your working practice?*

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit (manifest)	Condensed meaning unit (latent)	Categories
it's difficult, I think, to separate the course from the teaching experience I've had this year, and they two, very much, have gone hand in hand. And, taken together, yes, I definitely feel that there's been some shaping. I feel a lot more confidence, as a teacher, and, sort of, basing that on the experience of having done it, and also, sort of, thinking through some of the concepts and things that we've looked at in the course. So, formative assessment, summative assessment techniques. Thinking about student engagement, and thinking about TEL all of these things, have been really useful.	difficult to separate out impact of course and experience of doing the job, more confident from having taught, was really useful to learn about teaching concepts	academic identity shaped via a symbiotic relationship from doing the course and doing the teaching	pedagogical development familiarisation
The key, for me, personally, [the PgCert] was about equipping me to do the role that I was doing, which was a teaching role. And, in terms of that, I think it was, you know, it succeeded for me, personally.... So it's given me that framework to work to. It's given me that, sort of, greater understanding of the context of what I was doing, and the issues around, sort of, engagement, assessment feedback, pastoral support.	PgCert equipped him for teaching role, provided a framework for that and an understanding of context	role of PgCert is pedagogical preparation and familiarisation	professional community
I think just in the, sort of, whole approach to planning for a curriculum for a session. Thinking about, learning outcomes, thinking about the situational analysis, trying to prepare with these, sort of, concepts in mind. And thinking about the assessment as well, both formative and summative. So the, sort of, almost like a higher framework there.	planning curriculum, preparing with concepts in mind, thinking about assessment, all gives a framework	PgCert provides a pedagogical framework for practitioners	autonomy (negative)
It's [PgCert] been a little bit of, thinking about colleagues on the course, and the students, that's been really useful. Just chatting about issues, or talking things through, and just having another perspective on things.	PgCert has been useful to chat things through and gain another perspective	Only opportunity to seek guidance has been PgCert	

To be honest, there's been a huge amount of autonomy, in how I prepare, or how I've done my teaching this year, which is something that I'm a little bit surprised at, as an associate lecturer.	high degree of autonomy in preparation and delivery of teaching which has surprised him	no guidance from Dept re: teaching	affirmation from students
Marking I've found difficult, but partly that was process-related, down to the information that I was being given, and the criteria I was being given to mark to.	Marking difficult due to process and criteria	lack of clarity from Dept re: assessment process	reflective practice
I think ...some of the issues around the assessment, at the end of the most recent semester, and, sort of, the lack of clarity around what's actually being assessed. There's a bit of an issue there....it's still a cause for reflection and thinking about, you know, how things could have been done differently, and how to make improvements.	issues he had with assessment caused him to reflect on how things could have been improved	turned a negative experience into a positive one for self-development	
Yes, I think, perhaps when students asked me for advice for placement interviews, and then, later on, told me that they've got the job. Things like that were very, were very, you know, could see, tangibly, how I was able to make a difference and help.	Helping students to get placements enabled him to see he was making a tangible difference	making a difference to students key aspect of academic identity	
you know, they [NSS] should have an impact, but then, how great should that impact be, really? If you're doing things right, according to, sort of, the way that you want your curriculum to be delivered, then you'd hope that the other indicators would naturally fall out of that rather than teaching to a result.	NSS shouldn't have a big impact, shouldn't teach to it, should fall out of what you are doing anyway	external factors not a key driver / influence on practice	

## Appendix J: Combined categories and emergent themes - current participants

Unit of Analysis 1: Initial sense of academic identity (interview 1) Unit of Analysis 2: Subsequent sense of academic identity (interview 2)

Unit of Analysis 3: Subsequent sense of academic identity (interview 3) Unit of Analysis 4: Initial factors influencing academic identity (interview 1)

Unit of Analysis 5: Subsequent factors influencing academic identity (interview 2) Unit of Analysis 6: Subsequent factors influencing academic identity (interview 3)

	Content Areas 1,2,3 - Sense of academic identity			Content Areas 4,5,6 - Factors influencing sense of academic identity		
	Categories - Unit of Analysis 1	Categories - Unit of Analysis 2	Categories - Unit of Analysis 3	Categories - Unit of Analysis 4	Categories - Unit of Analysis 5	Categories - Unit of Analysis 6
Sarah	not really academic	gatekeeper	research informed teacher	family background and status	local role models	affirmation from qualifications
	lacking 'academic' qualifications	workforce of the future	'down to earth' self-concept	self-concept as generalist	own academic ability	influence on local area
	practitioner experience	non-traditional academic	role as defined by UKSPF	effectiveness in role	impact on students	response to student feedback
	teacher, developer of people	practitioner with theoretical grounding	student centred reflective practitioner	making a valued contribution	collegial support	feeling of belonging
Liz	practitioner expertise	significance of research	significance of research	academic archetypes	isolation	affirmation from contract
	intimidating conceptions of typical academic	professional credibility	teaching not academic	teaching experiences	professional community	professional community
	student interaction	separation of teaching and research	being an expert	reflective practice	validation from observation	necessity of qualifications
	has academic qualifications	student centred pedagogy	confidence	confidence from expertise	nature of contract	management cultures
	status of academic label		job security	lack of teaching qualification	student feedback	acclimatisation to spaces
		insider		conception of teaching	feeling effective in role	
Kate	research informed teaching	problematic nature of academic label	knowledge creation	role models	time of year	modelling on PgCert
	qualifications	responsibility to teach and learn	responsibility	teaching critical incidents	teaching workload	colleagues
	contract status	transformative teaching	influence and impact	departmental culture	personal responsibility	being valued
	elitism	able to make valued contributions	location of status	effectiveness in role	Affirmation of self and practice	supportive local cultures
	confident self-concept		conception of teaching		techniques to combat teaching insecurity	feeling of belonging
	having a purpose		pedagogical resilience			
James	Tripartite academic identity	Tripartite professional identity	teaching focused	habituation to academic environment	collegiality	observations influence practice
	Uncertainty	insecurity	practitioner authenticity	validation from contract status	differences with local practices	dissatisfaction with role
	pragmatic career choice		disillusionment	ownership in teaching	nature of teaching	practitioner authenticity
	Authenticity			separation of practitioner and	lack of surety in career choice	interactions with students

				academic		
	Status				unexpected requirements of role	unsupportive local cultures
						feeling of insignificance
						status and reputation
<b>Andy</b>	tripartite - research, teaching and admin	incomplete PhD	academic administration	role models	HEI cultures	Discipline pedagogy
	lecturer not academic	tripartite academic	academic calendar	exposure to HE cultures	feeling of belonging	PgCert models reflective practice
	influencing pedagogy	assessor, supervisor	self-concept as lecturer	nature of workplan / contract	personal significance	validation / significance of contribution
	HEI cultures	influencing local area	research hierarchies	opportunities for influence	ownership of teaching design	Disciplinary cultures
	engagement with students	self-efficacy	student focused	opportunities for growth	status of pedagogic research	Status of types of work
	work-life attitude	student-centred pedagogy		interest in pedagogic research	reflective practice from PgCert	
	teacher, lecturer, academic				affirmation through student interactions	
<b>Jacob</b>	subject expertise, teaching and research	limited time with students	academic as teacher and researcher	recruitment processes / gatekeepers	isolation	pedagogical development
	practitioner	academic as educator	affirmation and validation from students	us and them cultures	nature of contract	familiarisation
	lack of qualifications	pedagogic confidence	practitioner	mentors / enablers	departmental cultures	professional community
	being on the PgCert	student-centred conception	autonomy (negative)	validation from students	student interaction	autonomy (negative)
	opportunities to contribute to subject area	symbiosis of theory and practice	uncertainty	levels of confidence	ownership of teaching	affirmation from students
	lack of teaching confidence			professional community	PgCert community	reflective practice
					PgCert reflective practice	
<b>Rachel</b>	lecturer not academic	becoming an academic	teaching core of academic nexus	academic stereotypes	ownership of teaching	ownership of teaching
	link research and teaching	pedagogic agency and influence	part of student life cycle	subject and pedagogical confidence	contribution and influence	pedagogical confidence
	value of professional expertise	contribution	the qualified academic	having academic qualifications	local cultures	PgCert modelling
	being an expert	leadership	workplace presence	nature of contract	allies / change agents	collegiality
	collaborative teaching	confidence	planning teaching	sense of being peripheral	teaching successes	validation from students
	subject passion	pedagogical knowledge	pedagogical currency	marginalisation	pedagogical modelling from PgCert	feeling of belonging
	physical location	resilience	reflective practitioner	local cultures and change agents	reflective practice from PgCert	involvement / immersion
			assessor of students	positive interactions with students		reflective practice
			administration workload			

## Grouping of categories and identification of themes

### Unit of Analysis 1 - Initial sense of academic identity (interview 1) - grouped categories and themes

<p>intimidating conceptions of typical academic elitism  not really academic  lecturer not academic  lecturer not academic  collaborative teaching  teacher, developer of people  subject passion  student interaction  engagement with students  practitioner  uncertainty  practitioner experience  self-concept as generalist</p>	<p>authenticity  lack of teaching confidence  lacking 'academic' qualifications  qualifications  academic qualifications  lack of qualifications  confident self-concept  contract status  Status  status of academic label  being an expert  practitioner expertise  value of professional expertise  having a purpose</p>	<p>Tripartite academic identity  tripartite - research, teaching and admin  teacher, lecturer, academic  subject expertise, teaching and research  link research and teaching  research informed teaching  influencing pedagogy  interest in pedagogic research  administration workload</p>	<p>pragmatic career choice  physical location  HEI cultures  work-life attitude  being on the PgCert  opportunities to contribute</p>
<b>not an academic</b>	<b>authenticity</b>	<b>tripartite academic</b>	<b>ungrouped / relating to influences</b>

**Unit of Analysis 2 - Subsequent sense of academic identity (interview 2) - grouped categories and themes**

symbiosis of theory and practice Tripartite professional identity significance of research separation of teaching and research tripartite academic incomplete PhD becoming an academic professional credibility non-traditional academic gatekeeper practitioner with theoretical grounding problematic nature of academic label	student-centred pedagogy transformative teaching responsibility to teach and learn student-centred conception student centred pedagogy academic as educator assessor, supervisor workforce of the future conception of teaching	contribution leadership confidence influencing local area able to make valued contributions pedagogic agency and influence insecurity self-efficacy resilience pedagogic confidence pedagogical knowledge limited time with students
<b>tripartite academic</b>	<b>student-centred</b>	<b>ungrouped / relating to influences</b>

**Unit of Analysis 3 - Subsequent sense of academic identity (interview 3) - grouped categories and themes**

teaching focused teaching not academic student focused teaching core of academic nexus conception of teaching self-concept as lecturer part of student life cycle student centred reflective practitioner academic administration academic calendar role as defined by UKPSF assessor of students planning teaching	research informed teacher academic as teacher and researcher significance of research research hierarchies knowledge creation the qualified academic being an expert 'down to earth' self-concept	practitioner practitioner authenticity reflective practitioner	workplace presence insider responsibility influence and impact pedagogical currency confidence autonomy (negative) location of status job security uncertainty disillusionment affirmation / validation from students pedagogical resilience
<b>teaching</b>	<b>research</b>	<b>practitioner</b>	<b>ungrouped / relating to influences</b>



**Unit of Analysis 4 - Initial factors influencing academic identity (interview 1)- grouped categories and themes**

<p>having academic qualifications subject and pedagogical confidence confidence from expertise lack of teaching qualification levels of confidence sense of being peripheral marginalisation professional community opportunities for influence opportunities for growth mentors / enablers local cultures and change agents opportunities to contribute being on the PgCert work-life attitude</p>	<p>academic archetypes academic stereotypes habituation to academic environment role models departmental culture separation of practitioner and academic role models exposure to HE cultures family background and status us and them cultures recruitment processes / gatekeepers HEI cultures physical location pragmatic career choice</p>	<p>positive interactions with students making a valued contribution teaching experiences reflective practice teaching critical incidents effectiveness in role effectiveness in role ownership in teaching validation from students validation from contract status nature of contract nature of workplan / contract</p>	<p>interest in pedagogic research administration workload self-concept as generalist</p>
<b>confidence</b>	<b>experiences of HE</b>	<b>validation</b>	<b>ungrouped / relating to identity</b>

**Unit of Analysis 5 - Subsequent factors influencing academic identity (interview 2)- grouped categories and themes**

<p>impact on students affirmation through student interactions Affirmation of self and practice teaching insecurity student interaction teaching successes own academic ability student feedback validation from observation time of year teaching workload unexpected requirements of role confidence able to make valued contributions self-efficacy resilience</p>	<p>feeling of belonging personal significance differences with local practices isolation isolation status of pedagogic research HEI cultures local cultures departmental cultures lack of surety in career choice nature of contract nature of contract nature of contract insecurity contribution limited time with students</p>	<p>ownership of teaching ownership of teaching ownership of teaching design personal responsibility nature of teaching contribution and influence influencing local area pedagogical currency leadership pedagogic confidence pedagogical knowledge</p>	<p>local role models professional community collegial support collegiality PgCert community allies / change agents PgCert pedagogical modelling PgCert reflective practice PgCert reflective practice</p>	<p>conception of teaching</p>
<b>self-efficacy</b>	<b>belonging / mattering</b>	<b>pedagogical agency</b>	<b>community / collegiality</b>	<b>ungrouped / relating to identity</b>

**Unit of Analysis 6 - Subsequent factors influencing academic identity (interview 3) - grouped categories and themes**

<p>influence on local area being valued feeling of belonging feeling of belonging feeling of belonging acclimatisation to spaces involvement / immersion familiarisation feeling of insignificance dissatisfaction with role management cultures unsupportive local cultures Status of types of work status and reputation workplace presence insider responsibility location of status uncertainty disillusionment job security</p>	<p>feeling effective in role affirmation from students interactions with students response to student feedback validation from students observations influence practice affirmation from qualifications affirmation from contract necessity of qualifications practitioner authenticity affirmation / validation from students pedagogical resilience</p>	<p>colleagues supportive local cultures collegiality professional community professional community Disciplinary cultures Discipline pedagogy PgCert modelling modelling on PgCert PgCert models reflective practice reflective practice</p>	<p>ownership of teaching pedagogical confidence pedagogical development autonomy (negative) influence and impact pedagogical agency and confidence confidence autonomy (negative)</p>
<b>belonging / mattering</b>	<b>self-efficacy / resilience</b>	<b>community / collegiality</b>	<b>pedagogical agency</b>

**Summary table of themes:**

<i>Content Areas 1, 2, 3 Sense of academic identity</i>			<i>Content Areas 4, 5, 6 Factors influencing sense of academic identity</i>		
<b>Unit of Analysis 1</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 2</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 3</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 4</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 5</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 6</b>
not an academic authenticity tripartite academic	tripartite academic student centred	teaching research practitioner	confidence experiences of HE validation	self-efficacy belonging / mattering pedagogical agency community / collegiality	belonging / mattering self-efficacy / resilience community / collegiality pedagogical agency

## Appendix K: Combined categories and emergent themes - alumni participants

	Sense of academic identity - categories	Factors influencing sense of academic identity - categories
<b>Tony</b>	negative conception of archetypal academics	PgCert community
	academics as professional, educators, learner	observations
	lived academic identity	local collaborators
	conception of teaching as collaborative	insider knowledge and belonging
	conception of teaching as non-hierarchical	student feedback
		pedagogical agency
	student as consumer	
<b>Chris</b>	practitioner	validation through research
	professional expertise	PgCert community
	lecturer not academic	significance of contribution and expertise
	research	local cultures and discipline hierarchies
	pressure to focus on aspect of tripartite role	academy as different to business
	student centred pedagogy	pedagogical creativity and agency
<b>Barbara</b>	lecturer not academic	professional identity
	practical / professional expertise	PgCert community
	student focused	local colleagues / role models
	research informed teaching	insignificance / lack of consultation
	students as customers	
<b>Sue</b>	teacher	HEI cultures
	researcher	research cultures
	reflective practitioner	teaching awards
	making a difference / impact	recognition / belonging
	pedagogical research	nature of contract
	lived academic identity	observations
		PgCert community
<b>Abi</b>	qualifications	PgCert community
	academic as practitioner expert, teacher and researcher	academic insider
	student centred pedagogy	pedagogical confidence
	confidence	research informed teaching
	insider status	professional ethics
	listened to / valued	role models
	limited time for research	agency and trust
		imposed bureaucratic systems
	supportive local cultures	
<b>Luke</b>	academic as tripartite	PgCert community
	PhD	local colleagues / role models
	research	recruitment practices
	expert	Intra-disciplinary
	lived academic identity	engagement with research and teaching
	teacher-centred pre-conception	authentic teaching using own research
	student-focused conception of teaching	administrative tasks
<b>Simon</b>	practitioner	pedagogical agency
	researcher	PgCert inter-disciplinary community
	develop profession, questions practice	reflective practice
	teacher	influence
	collegial	valued contribution
	qualifications (lack of)	pedagogical resilience
	student interactions	expectations of profession
	academic as lived identity	negative autonomy
	student-focused conception of teaching	validation from impact on students / making a difference

**Unit of Analysis 1A - Sense of academic identity - grouped categories and themes**

researcher PhD research research research informed teaching researcher limited time for research pedagogical research qualifications (lack of) qualifications	conception of teaching as collaborative conception of teaching as non-hierarchical student-focused conception of teaching student interactions student-focused conception of teaching student centred pedagogy students as customers teacher student focused student centred pedagogy teacher-centred pre- conception teacher reflective practitioner	insider status listened to / valued collegial making a difference / impact develop profession, questions practice confidence	academic as tripartite academic as practitioner expert, teacher and researcher pressure to focus on aspect of tripartite role academics as professional, educators, learner negative conception of archetypal academics practitioner professional expertise lecturer not academic practical / professional expertise practitioner expert lecturer not academic	lived academic identity lived academic identity lived academic identity academic as lived identity lived academic identity
<b>research and qualifications</b>	<b>student-focused</b>	<b>value and impact</b>	<b>tripartite role</b>	<b>lived academic identity</b>

**Unit of Analysis 2A - Factors influencing sense of academic identity - grouped categories and themes**

PgCert community PgCert community local colleagues / role models PgCert community observations local colleagues / role models supportive local cultures role models PgCert community PgCert community observations PgCert inter-disciplinary community PgCert community local cultures and discipline hierarchies local collaborators Intra-disciplinary expectations of profession professional identity professional ethics	pedagogical agency pedagogical resilience pedagogical agency pedagogical creativity and agency negative autonomy authentic teaching using own research agency and trust pedagogical confidence research informed teaching reflective practice engagement with research and teaching	insignificance / lack of consultation significance of contribution and expertise recognition / belonging teaching awards influence valued contribution academic insider insider knowledge and belonging validation from impact on students validation through research student feedback making a difference	HEI cultures research cultures recruitment practices nature of contract academy as different to business imposed bureaucratic systems administrative tasks student as consumer
<b>communities / collegiality</b>	<b>agency and resilience</b>	<b>self-efficacy and belonging</b>	<b>HEI culture</b>

**Summary table of alumni themes:**

<i>Content Area 1A</i> <i>Sense of academic identity</i>	<i>Content Area 2A</i> <i>Factors influencing sense of academic identity</i>
<b>Unit of Analysis 1A</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis 2A</b>
research and qualifications student-focused value and impact tripartite role academic self-concept	communities / collegiality agency and confidence validation and belonging HEI culture