‘Education or Training?’: A case study of undergraduate business curriculum in a New University Business School

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DECLARATION

'I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently being submitted for any degree other than that of the Doctorate in Education (EdD) being studied at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised the work of others.'

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Signed by Supervisor/s

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ABSTRACT

This is a single case study of undergraduate business curriculum design and pedagogic practice in a post-1992 university business school (*UBS*). The central aim of the research was to investigate the factors that combined to influence the design and enactment of the *BA Business Studies* and *BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation* programmes. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with academics from the department of *Systems and Management* and a documentary review of programme texts. The data were analysed within an analytical framework which brings together Bhaskar's critical realism, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and Bernstein's theory of the *pedagogic device*. This thesis contends that the undergraduate curriculum in *UBS* has become recontextualised as a business project which frames knowledge as a commodity for the purposes of income generation, pedagogy as a rational, 'quality-assured' system for its 'delivery' and academics as the 'deliverers'. The pedagogic codes which underpin this model legitimise knowledge as narrow projections of business practices and confine didactics to behaviourist, sometimes incoherent, approaches to knowledge generation predicated on 'employability' and 'transferable skills'.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.0 Core Issues

This thesis is based on a single case study design and focuses on the construction of the undergraduate business curriculum in University Business School (*UBS*) which is located in the University of the South (*UoS*), a post-1992 university. More precisely, the BA *Business Studies* and the *BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation* programmes provide the focus of the investigation as 'embedded units of analysis' (Yin 2009). The reference to 'education or training' in the title is meant to be partly serious and partly ironic. It is serious in the sense that it helps foreground the problematic in the thesis as the curricular and pedagogical orientations of the focal degree programmes and their consequences for teaching and learning. It is ironic in that it is meant to imply that a simplistic binary, given the nature of vocational programmes in the context of higher education, is unlikely to adequately describe or explain the phenomena in a realistic or convincing way. Rather, this thesis seeks to demonstrate that curriculum design and pedagogical practice (CDPP) within *UBS* is constructed in a *pedagogic space* which is being continuously recontextualised (Bernstein 2000). *UBS* is conceptualised as site where the complex interactions of fluid structures are mediated by actors including students, academics, administrators and managers (Bernstein 2000, Fairclough 2004, Scott 2010).

The findings suggest that the *UBS* undergraduate business curriculum reflects neither an 'education' nor a 'training' paradigm but is a hybrid which has been formed by the influences of different, sometimes competing, educational paradigms. The *UBS* curriculum emerged out of the conditions of post-1992 UK higher education following the incorporation of the polytechnics into the 'new universities'. The undergraduate business curriculum at *UBS* resonates strongly with the discourse of 'new vocationalism' of the mid 1980s and 1990s. The 'new vocationalism' phase in vocational education was characterised by outcomes-based or competence-based curricula such as those advocated by the OECD (1989) and enshrined in the National Council for Vocational Qualifications established in 1986 (Ainley 1994, Barnett 1994, Beck and Young 2005, Hyland 2001, Symes and Mcintyre 2000). However, whilst National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) were

linked directly to specific occupational practices, the *UBS* undergraduate business curriculum, of necessity, relied heavily on pedagogical *simulacra* in the absence of work-based opportunities for students to link theory to practice. The organisation of work experience opportunities for undergraduates has become increasingly problematic as cohort sizes have continued to rise and sandwich degrees have become less attractive due to the financial pressure of increased tuition fees.

The *UBS* undergraduate programmes in focus approximate more closely to the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) model (1992-2007) which was designed as a vocational alternative to A levels (Jessop 1991, Jordan and Yeomans 1998, Smithers 1997). GNVQs did not attempt to link competence to specific occupations but to develop, as the *General* prefix suggests, a foundation of core skills, knowledge and understanding that would underpin a range of occupations (Allen 2004, Burke 1995). This thesis contends that curriculum design and pedagogic practice in *UBS* represent an extension of the GNVQ model described by Hodgson and Spours (1997: 60) as a: 'hybrid, a contradiction and a paradox'.

The national context, in which the university/polytechnic binary was abolished in 1992 and 'new vocationalism' became a dominant discourse in higher education, is critical to understanding the phenomena in question. When *South Polytechnic* was granted university status in 1992 it became incorporated as the *University of the South* (*UoS*) and located on three main campuses several miles apart. Together with partner colleges in the UK and worldwide, *UoS* has approximately 40,000 students, 28,000 *UoS*-based students of whom 22,000 are undergraduates *(UoS* website 2012). From its inception, and not surprisingly given its former polytechnic status, the *UoS* was conceived as a university whose mission and curriculum was explicitly 'vocational'. According to the *Academic Regulations for Taught Awards 2012*, the *UoS* mission statement is:

> The University [...*] (1) nurtures excellence in learning and teaching, research, consultancy and advanced professional practice serving a range of international, national and regional communities.

(1) the symbol [...*] is used in quotations to indicate that the extract has been anonymised by deleting numerals or words which are deemed as sensitive information or which could be potentially referenced to an author and where alternative symbols or letters have been substituted for the originals.

This positioning of the *UoS* was refined in the late 1990s and the early 21st century against the backdrop of the New Labour Government's all-pervasive discourse of the 'university-knowledge economy nexus' (Ainley 2004). The *UoS*, through its expansion of vocational undergraduate programmes, of which *UBS* was a particularly powerful driver, and its policy of widening participation, aligned itself closely with both the New Labour vision for higher education and the exigencies promulgated by Dearing (1997). The New Labour rhetoric of the 'university-knowledge economy nexus' is exemplified in the following quotation by Blackstone, former minister at the Department of Education and Employment (2001: 177-178):

> All this means that higher education has a central role in the knowledge economy, and in maintaining Britain's competitive position. I want to talk about five challenges for Britain's universities and colleges in the knowledge economy. First, to provide students with the skills and knowledge that they will need in the new world of work, and to make sure that the new qualifications on offer are appropriate. Second, to foster in those graduates a willingness to learn throughout life, as well as providing post experience courses and continuing professional development which are needed by businesses.

The article goes on to exhort universities to 'foster innovation and transfer of knowledge from higher education to business and industry' and so on. This quotation is relevant to my thesis for a variety of reasons. It captures the flavour of the rhetoric of the economic mission of higher education which has dominated government discourse over the last fifteen years.

More specifically, the values expressed are both contemporaneous with and presage a transformation process where the 'needs of industry' linked to human capital have been firmly placed at the centre of the university curriculum. But, some might argue: 'isn't this what a business school is for?' This thesis seeks to demonstrate that the narrowness of the ambition expressed by Blackstone and enacted in the *UBS* curriculum, may have, paradoxically, reduced the learning possibilities for undergraduates, with potentially negative consequences for graduates as both workers and citizens. In the light of the current record levels of graduate unemployment and the failure of social mobility to materialise, Blackstone's vision of higher education now itself appears redundant. It is my

experience of observing what I perceive to be a deepening disconnection between the rhetoric and the reality of teaching, learning and graduate employability, which underpins my primary motivation for this research. This perception began to form before the global financial crash in 2008 and has since solidified.

At the root of this personal dissonance is a concern that the undergraduate curriculum may have degenerated into what Wallin (2010), expounding on the ideas of Delueze and Guattari (1994), refers to as curriculum or *currere* (Latin for 'course to be run' or 'running track') which has been configured as 'territorialised', 'homogenised', 'reactive' and based on the primacy of the 'a priori image'. As Wallin (2010: 5) describes it:

> Dominated by disciplinary practices aimed at *keeping students on track*, contemporary education impels a self-similarity between student desire and an a priori image of the course to be run. Put differently, the creative forces exerted by students are made to resemble the ordered and prescribed course of currere's track. Mutations, deviations and monstrous protrusions are reterritorialised in currere's image of synthesis. That is, the reactive image of currere is conceptualised as an organised whole from which no lines or flows escape.

This thesis contends that the *currere* under investigation here resembles all too closely the 'ordered and prescribed course of currere's track', with potentially negative consequences for both student learning and employability. 'Confined', in the sense of being constricted or tightly regulated, would appear to be an appropriate adjective to describe the conditions for learning created by CDPP in *UBS* (Gibbs and Iacovidou 2004). If we accept the concept of the curriculum as 'the totality of the experiences that the [student] has as a result of the provision made' (Kelly 2009: 13), then the idea of 'confinement' can be seen to apply to various aspects of its enactment at *UBS*.

For example, the *UBS* curriculum (p.127) could be described as 'thinly sliced' and composed of theoretically disconnected modules underpinned by strongly framed learning objectives and assessment tasks predicated on the 'unwritten rule' of measurability (Barnett 2001). Confinement could also be applied to the limited temporal space afforded by the curriculum and the actual physical space of the main campus. This multilayered confinement may have 'squeezed out' opportunities for students to explore the kind of informal creative interaction associated with notions of the traditional student experience.

In *UBS*, as in most UK universities, issues of curriculum and pedagogy have been firmly placed under the management of the 'quality assurance' or 'quality enhancement' function responsible for 'Learning and Quality' (Hoecht 2006). The question then arises, if curriculum and pedagogy are strongly and neatly framed in management discourse as 'quality assurance standards' or 'administrative processes' or 'products for the market place', what are the consequences for the complex relationships between professional academics, curriculum design and pedagogic practice? Nixon (2007: 344) makes the point that this managerial discourse is not only representative but constitutive of professional practice:

> Universities have become increasingly dominated by a language which fails to recognise the rich unpredictability of learning...The language of inputs and outputs, of clients and products, of delivery and measurement... is not just a different way of talking about the same thing. It radically alters what we are talking about. It constitutes a new way of thinking about teaching and learning. Ultimately, it affects how we teach and how we learn.

Despite the professionalism, effort and commitment of hard working academics and managers at *UBS*, my professional opinion is that business undergraduates have not been served as well as they might be. In my view, curriculum design and pedagogic practice (CDPP) at *UBS* has been impoverished by a reductionist model of didactics based on crude notions of employability (Pring 1997, 2012). This phenomenon also appears ironic, given that the bulk of HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) funding to *UoS* has historically been based on undergraduate recruitment.

However, I would also wish to strongly emphasise at the outset, that the characteristics of the undergraduate curriculum and pedagogy described above are not confined to *UBS*, but, according to a significant tranche of academic literature, can be found throughout the UK higher education sector in both the pre and post-1992 universities (Barnett and Coate 2005, Fazackerley 2012, HEA 2009, Trowler *et al* 2005, Weimer 1997). It is also of note that academics from post-1992 universities such as *UoS*, appear to be vigorously engaging with pedagogical issues in 21st century UK higher education. For example, in 2011, 55% of the speakers at the HEA Annual Conference were from the post-1992 universities (HEA 2011). I would also contend that, despite formidable barriers, *UBS* holds the potential to revitalise

and enrich its CDPP (see section 7.3 p.184). However, before that can begin, it first has to, collectively, reflect on the realities rather than the rhetoric and the 'imaginaries' concerning *UBS* that currently hold sway.

1.1 Generic skills for generic workers?

In the flood of government rhetoric on the 'university-knowledge economy nexus' and 'non-useful subjects', the rich possibilities of teaching and learning have been 'drowned out' by the language of 'generic skills', frequently presented as a kind of pedagogical 'superglue' (Barnett 1994, 2001, 2005, Dearing 1997, Naidoo 2007, Wheelahan 2007). Generic skills have been lauded by some of its advocates such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) as providing a bridge for the 'academic-vocational divide' in UK education (Kelly 2001). Blackstone (2001: 178) provides a clear echo of this thinking, writing of how:

> Employers now seek graduates who combine specific knowledge with the generic skills that will enable them to make an immediate impact on business success and will be effective in a range of roles. They need skilled communicators, effective team workers and creative problem solvers.

However, as has now been philosophically, empirically and theoretically demonstrated (Barnett 1994, Ainley and Allen 2010, Brown and Hesketh 2004, Lauder *et al* 2012), the linkage of transferable skills to enhanced prospects in the graduate employment market is implausible. This was the case before the 2008 financial crash and even more so now with 25% of the graduates of 2011 still unemployed in 2012 (ONS 2012). In summary, there is now a substantial body of research which confirms that the rhetoric of the 'knowledge economy' has always been a long way from reality. The UK economy now exhibits a sharply stratified graduate employment market where, for example, former low grade white-collar or even blue collar work has been reclassified as 'new graduate jobs'. These jobs are often low paid, low skilled, part-time, unstable and far removed from the traditional 'middle class professions' or 'high skill occupations' in advanced technology industries (ONS 2012, Wilton 2007, Wolf 2002).

'Employability' is a 'slippery' concept; employable for what precisely? Bernstein's (2000) illuminating insight into the connection between 'genericism' and the future 'trainability' of graduates may help explain this conundrum. Perhaps, as Bernstein contends, there is a hidden curriculum which is concerned with developing graduates with flexible skills for short-term, low grade white-collar or blue-collar employment? Perhaps 'employability' or 'transferable skills' is fundamentally concerned with equipping graduates with the capacity to be 'transferable' in unstable employment trajectories (Ainley and Allen 2010).

Yet, students appear to have internalised new forms of identity-reassignment as 'learner-workers' (Williams 2005), 'student-consumers' (Naidoo *et al* 2011) or 'performative students' (Barnett 2009), partly predicated on a vague romantic vision of future membership of the 'professional middle class' (Haywood e*t al* 2010). To be clear at the outset, it is the design and enactment of the undergraduate business curriculum and its possible consequences which provides the focus for this thesis, and not the attitudes or behaviours of contemporary students, which are documented elsewhere (McArdle-Clinton 2008, Molesworth *et al* 2010, Williams 2010, Maringe 2011). Nonetheless, a key question posed in this thesis is whether the discourse of 'credentialism' and the 'graduate premium' is reinforced by a curriculum and pedagogy that implicitly *realises* and *recognises* 'objectified knowledge' and contributes to a 'means-ends' academic culture (Beck and Young 2005, Macfarlane 1997, 2007). It is hard to comprehend, amidst the rhetoric and reality of continuing economic uncertainty, the rationale for an undergraduate curriculum and pedagogy predicated on 'certainty'. For example, the certainty implied in reproductive modes of didactics for which a grade, as one of the academic 'objects of desire', will be awarded (Brady 2012). Might curriculum and pedagogy which offer visible, concrete and unproblematic connections of a projected 'real world' of professional practice actually subvert an undergraduate disposition for learning? (Barnett 2009, Bernstein 2000, Stacey 2010). The question also arises as to how far an instrumentalist orientation in curriculum and pedagogy is a way of coping with pressures from students empowered by market dynamics (Molesworth *et al* 2009, Naidoo *et al* 2011).

In response to these concerns, some might also ask the question: does any of this really matter that much? Up until 2012, the recruitment of students to *UBS* has grown exponentially and now accounts for approximately 26% of the *UoS*

undergraduate cohort (HESA 2012). In 2010, *UoS* boasted a relatively high student satisfaction rating (The Sunday Times 2010). However, beneath these 'headline-grabbing' statistics and powerful brand-building symbols are issues relating to the realities of the 'teaching and learning experience', as well as the comparatively weak graduate destination statistics for *UoS* graduates (HESA 2012).

There appears to be a growing recognition by senior management as, for example, the *Graduate Attributes Initiative* suggests (p.176) that undergraduate curriculum and pedagogy and the employment prospects of *UBS* graduates are bound up with each other. The next section provides a brief summary of the philosophical and ideological assumptions underpinning my approach to this thesis, as well as an outline of its structure.

1.2 Researcher position

From a *critical theorist* perspective (Habermas 1984) most of the above discussion might be regarded as 'missing the point' and perhaps even 'trivial'. The critical theorist approach to research embraces a strong ideological commitment to challenge what they perceive as the capitalist values inherent in educational discourse and much of the research that takes place in education. However, my research is located in a paradigm which Grundy (1987) defines as the 'practical interest' as opposed to the 'technical interest' or the 'emancipatory interest' claimed by critical theorists. The 'practical interest' eschews the instrumentalist or behaviourist orientation of educational research located in the 'technical interest'. The 'technical interest' aims to identify the rules governing, for example, learning behaviour, for the purposes of 'controlling the environment through rule-following action based upon empirically grounded laws' (Grundy 1987: 12). Rather, the 'practical interest' is concerned with interpretative meaning-making, leading, hopefully, to the taking of the 'right action' in a particular environment for moral as well as practical reasons. As Grundy (1987: 14) puts it:

> Such action, however, is not objective action; that is it is not action upon an object or even upon a person who has been 'objectified'. It is subjective action; that is it is the action of a subject in the universe acting with another subject.

In my value system, the aspiration of educating graduates to be happy, productive members of society is partly bound up with graduate employment. Work is, or should be, a vital facet of life, closely connected to the being and wellbeing of an individual, materially, psychologically and spiritually.

As Orwell (1986: 193) observed:

> People are wrong when they think that an unemployed man only worries about losing his wages; on the contrary, an illiterate man, with the work habit in his bones, needs work even more than he needs money.

In a modest way, my professional aim as an educator in a business school is to help develop young men and women to become 'critical thinkers' and ethical individuals as preparation for life with 'Others' within and without the workplace. Notions of criticality here can be understood in a number of contexts beyond the pedagogical notion of 'critical thinking'. The critical realist paradigm (Bhaskar 1989, Sayer 2010, Scott 2010) underpinning this research can be understood, simplistically, as a 'depth ontology' where phenomena (in this case the undergraduate curriculum) can be partially revealed and explained by the complex interactions of fluid structures and agents. 'Critical', in this regard, might also be understood in the broader sense as researching vocational education from a perspective of 'what in reality is going on?' rather than 'what would we like to imagine is going on?' and, from that understanding, to construct an evaluative, ethical, intellectual and ideological 'response' (Stacey 2010). From this position, it may be possible to, albeit in a modest way, effect 'a change for the better'.

Hacking (1999), writing within a social constructionist paradigm, conceptualises six *grades of commitment* in the relationships between the researcher, the research process and the social phenomena being investigated, the most 'demanding' of which are *rebelliousness* and *revolutionary*. The least demanding is *historical*, defined as a neutral reportage of events. The next grade is *ironic* where the researcher is able to reveal some aspects of causation of a phenomenon but 'ironically' feels compelled to leave it as it is. The third and fourth positions are

labelled the *reformist* and the *unmasking* and it is with these positions that I would align this inquiry. The *reformist* position is described by Hacking (1999: 20) as:

> Agreed that we have no idea at present how to live our lives without X, but having seen that X was not inevitable, in the present state of things, we can at least modify some aspects of X, in order make X less of a bad thing.

Hacking (199: 20) explains that the *reformist* and *unmasking* positions are aimed at stripping ideas of a 'false appeal or authority'. This brings me to my final point about the analytical framework for this thesis based on the pedagogical theories of Basil Bernstein (2000) and the techniques of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2004). Bernstein's theories are not being treated here uncritically. There appears to be, for example, an assumption in favour of the deterministic power of 'structures' over the agent's capacity to mediate (Harker and May 1993), though Bernstein (2000) refuted this. It might also be argued that the *pedagogic device* limits the analysis of power relations to 'discursive structures', which might be considered as one dimension amongst several within a critical realist paradigm, as presented by Figure 3 (p.70). Whilst Bernstein's *pedagogic device* is central to the analysis of the phenomena relating to the focal case, it does not represent the totality of the analytical framework applied in Chapters 4-6. Critical Discourse Analysis (Appendix 6 p.215) is also applied to operationalise Bernstein's theory and analyse *UBS* as a *network of social practices* which encompasses both discursive and material structures. These are summarised as in Figure 3 (p.70) and Figure 4 (p.77).

1.3 Aims of research and research questions

This thesis aims to analyse how curriculum design and pedagogical practice (CDPP) are constructed and enacted in *UBS* and its potential consequences for teaching and learning. A single case study design, operating within a critical realist paradigm, has been chosen, focusing on two undergraduate programmes as embedded units of analysis (Yin 2009). The core question is:

What factors have combined to influence the design and enactment of the BA Business Studies and BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation programmes in University Business School (UBS)?

Secondary questions:

1. What are the key organisational and processual influences which contribute to the design and enactment of undergraduate programmes in *UBS*?
2. How do academics' professional identities impact on their perceptions of curriculum design and pedagogical practice (CDPP) in *UBS*?
3. How might the undergraduate curriculum and pedagogy in *UBS* be evaluated in terms of both the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and academic literature on 'best practice'?
4. What are the potential consequences for teaching and learning resulting from the configuration of CDPP in *UBS*?

1.4 Limitations of this research

The research questions and research design were formally agreed by the University Research Degrees Committee (RDC) and the University Research Ethics Committee (REC). The thesis also seeks to comply with the research protocols recommended by the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2011). However this thesis contains some of the tensions typical of qualitative case study research:

1.4.1 Issues relating to the validity of the Type 2 single-case (embedded) study design

This discussion on methodology is further developed in section 3.3 on *Research Design* (p.74). However, this section 1.4.1 is specifically concerned with summarising the rationale for the *Type 2 single-case (embedded) study design* (Yin 2009) employed in this thesis, rather than the rationale for the case study method per se which is discussed in section 3.3. As Yin (2009) is the main influence, though not the only influence, on the case study design for this thesis, it seems appropriate to first, briefly, consider Yin's 'five rationales' for the single case. The first rationale is labelled as the *critical case* which posits that the chosen case possesses the potential to confirm or disconfirm a 'well formulated theory'. It is contended here that the *UBS* case is, in some respects, concerned with examining the claims made by the proponents of outcomes-based curricula (OBC) of its theoretical and philosophical veracity (Jessop 1991, 1995). Therefore, the *critical case* rationale does to some degree hold in this thesis.

The second rationale is the *unique or extreme case* where the case is so rare that it merits special consideration. This rationale is rejected as there is little empirical evidence to suggest that *UBS* could be unique. Conversely, government policy discourse on higher education and academic literature would suggest its typicality. The third rationale is the *typical case* where the evidence from the case will be assumed to be informative about similar phenomena. The problem here is that, whilst policy discourse on higher education curricula suggests that *UBS* is 'probably' typical, there is little extant empirical data to confirm or disconfirm this assumption. The fourth rationale is the *revelatory case* where the opportunity arises to observe and analyse a phenomenon with a low level of accessibility. This *UBS* case may, again, claim to some degree, that this rationale holds in this single case design. Empirical research on the construction of undergraduate business CDPP per se appears meagre and no comparable empirical research has been carried out in *UBS*. The fifth rationale is the *longitudinal case* which clearly does not hold here.

A less 'technical' approach to rationalising the single case is offered by Simons (1996: 230) who conceptualises the uniqueness of the single case in the form of a paradox:

> This is the paradox of case study. By studying the uniqueness of the particular, we come to understand the universal. At first sight this seems to be self-contra-dictory. That is the nature of paradox—a statement seems to conflict with preconceived notions of what is reasonable or possible... it is precisely through the engagement of the case worker in the paradox and living with the tension that creates, holding it open to disbelief and re-examination, that we eventually come to realise the significance of the event, instance or circumstance and the universal understanding it evokes.

In contrast to Yin's 'scientism', Simons (2012) presents a different perspective of case study research which stresses the potential of the case study to reveal the depth of meaning and complexity of social phenomena, but in a form that extends rather than 'closes' the area of investigation through confirmation or disconfirmation of prior theory. This approach also sits comfortably in the critical realist paradigm of dialectics and the fallibility of existing knowledge as new knowledge emerges. In terms of Simons (2012), the core value of the single case is not just 'uniqueness' of 'case X' in the sense of proposed difference from the statistical mainstream, but the uniqueness of the single 'case X' to reveal in depth the complexity of the phenomena

under investigation. In other words, it is the depth of meaning derived from the richness of the data in the single case upon which 'uniqueness' is claimed and not the intrinsic difference of the case from other cases. It is contended here that the two focal undergraduate programmes, as embedded units of analysis of CDPP, are typical of *UBS* in terms of the business school-wide organisational processes such as quality assurance frameworks and programme validation as well as its organisational culture and values. They are also typical of the generic character of most business degrees in *UBS*. Whilst the *Type 2 single-case (embedded) study design* of this research does not satisfy all of the criteria for a single case outlined by Yin (2009), in essence it has a compelling rationale. That is, fundamentally, it does reveal the depth and 'complex realities' of a *network of social practices* within a bounded case (*UBS*) which would, I contend, not be achieved by a multi-case or a quantitative research design.

1.4.2 The issue of bias in conducting qualitative research

Bias is a complicated issue which relates to bias and authenticity from both the researcher and the participants' perspectives (Cohen *et al* 2007). One approach was to try and mitigate this problem by being reflexive in approaching the data collection and analysis. For example, this meant questioning my own assumptions before and during data collection and analysis and in the drawing of conclusions. Another approach was to actively seek contra-evidence to emerging patterns and consider alternative explanations (Trowler 2012).

Equally problematic were the sensitivities of the participants around disclosure of professional practice. The level of trust afforded by participants varied from participant to participant. Some participants appeared to be more confident about their professional practice and less defensive than others. Two problems arose in this area: firstly, there was the problem identified by Alvesson and Spicer (2011) as the 'management of impressions'. Discourse analysis revealed, for example, that some participants were keen to convey the impression of ideological 'correctness' whilst espousing self-evidently contradictory values or beliefs.

Secondly, some participants appeared reluctant to disclose details of their professional practice and this manifested itself in resistance to probing, by answering in very general terms or evading the question altogether or by diluting answers with

expressions of uncertainty ('hedging', Fairclough 2004). My approach to mitigating this second problem was to, as far as possible, meet with the participant for an informal chat over coffee prior to interview, focusing on the protocols of anonymity and the purposes of the research outlined in the participant information sheet (Appendix 1 p.210). The participant information sheet also highlighted in advance a '*member checking process*' (Appendix 4 p.213) where participants would be given the opportunity in a follow up meeting to, having read the interview transcripts and subsequently enhance, refine or amend their answers to the interview questions. Allowing for two participants who left *UoS* in the interim, 50% (12/24) participants completed a 30 min face to face meeting to discuss their individual transcripts. 17% (4/24) completed a partial return, i.e. offered brief e-mailed comments and 25% (6/24) declined the opportunity. This enhanced my level of confidence that at least the raw data were reasonably robust.

1.4.3 The tension between analysis and interpretation of qualitative data in the critical realist paradigm

This problem relates to both the *data collection* and *data analysis*. In terms of the *data collection*, a standard criticism of critical realist research is that its deductive orientation can 'skew the data'. This can arise in a number of ways. For example, the use of propositions to orientate the interview questions could lead to a filtering of the data in a way which constrains the voice of the participant. Beyond the positioning of the propositions as heuristic 'sensitising devices' (Vaughan 1992) and not as positivistic 'hypotheses', care was taken to create spaces for participants to raise issues that were not part of the interview question profile. For example, a 'member checking process' was signalled to the participants in the participant information sheets before the interviews and subsequently enacted (as described in section 1.4.2 above). A second set of problems relate to the *data analysis*. In the coding and interpretation of the data the problem of decontextualisation can arise as the data becomes complicated by cross-referencing and interrogation.

The mitigation of this problem was attempted by the careful re-reading of each transcript in its entirety and reflecting on my interpretation.

1.5 Original contribution to knowledge

This thesis claims an original contribution to knowledge on the following grounds: My survey of the academic literature reveals that much of the published work on business and management is normative and means-ends in orientation. Business and management consist of various avenues of applied study which borrow from a range of disciplines, including, for example, economics, psychology and sociology. Not surprisingly, the vast proportion of the subject literature consists of textbooks and journal articles which, with some notable exceptions such as the *Journal of Management History*, offer practical strategies and operational techniques for 'managing organisations' within the various domains of marketing, economics, finance and accounting and human resource management. This literature is dominated by a technicist agenda such as how 'modern business techniques' might improve the 'bottom line' or simply how we might model 'business processes'. This discourse is frequently normative and stripped of its ethical or human dimensions (Contu 2009).

Publications aimed at the 'teaching of business', generally reflect the same staple diet of 'strategies' or 'solutions' or 'what works' typical of the approaches to educational research which frequently characterise UK academic professional conferences on 'teaching and learning in higher education'. In some ways, the *teaching* of business appears to reflect the same ideological and methodological assumptions as *practising* business. Business and management *studies*, like business and management *practice*, are often weighted towards 'action' or 'doing' and performativity (Barnett 2001).

There is, however, a relatively small, but growing, genre of literature on business and management which offers a more critical approach. This is exemplified by the *Critical Management Studies* Group associated with theorists such as Alvesson, Bridgeman and Willmott (2009). However, the focus of their enquiries is almost totally on the relationship between postgraduate teaching and research and 'management practice'. Judging by the evidence in the *Education Research Complete Database, ERIC* and *International ERIC*, critical research in the field of undergraduate business curriculum and pedagogy appears to be limited.

Critical research on didactics at undergraduate level is found in the work of McLean (2006), McLean and Abbas (2009) and Ashwin (2012) who apply

Bernsteinian concepts to the undergraduate curriculum and pedagogy in the teaching of sociology and Trowler (1998, 2001, 2005, 2012) who has written prodigiously on teaching and learning in higher education. Little critical empirical data on influences on the undergraduate business curriculum and pedagogy appear to exist beyond Hoecht (2006), Macfarlane (1997), Ottewill (2003), Ottewill and Macfarlane (2003) and Smith (2003). Wheelahan (2007, 2010, 2012) has analysed vocational education from a social realist perspective but mainly in the context of the Australian post-compulsory sector. Naidoo and Jamieson (2005: 274) hypothesised that universities, particularly post-1992 universities, would experience a 'distortion of pedagogical relations' under the impact of university-market dynamics:

> The potential undercutting of professional knowledge and virtues by consumer demand and satisfaction may, perversely, also have the effect of undermining, rather than enhancing, pedagogical relationships.

This thesis represents a response to Naidoo and Jamieson's (2005: 278) recommendation that future research investigations pay more attention to the interaction between the 'macro forces such as those associated with commodification and the internal functioning of the universities, particularly teaching and learning'. It is hoped that, what hitherto may only have been understood as tacit knowledge concerning CDPP in *UBS* may be illuminated by its conceptualisation and analysis in this thesis.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured in a traditional format under the guidance of the university's Research Degrees Committee (RDC) as well as the academic literature on this subject (e.g. Trowler 2012):

Chapter 1 Introduction

The introduction is designed to accomplish a number of objectives including an introduction to the core issues and the problematic relating to the analysis of undergraduate curriculum design and pedagogic practice (CDPP) in *UBS*. It offers a brief description of the context and professional setting in which the research took place.

Chapter 2 Theoretical perspectives on curriculum design and pedagogic practice

From the outset of my doctoral studies, my areas of research interest began to converge around a number of associated themes such as 'student instrumentalism'; 'graduate employability'; 'changing academic identities' and the 'impact of marketisation' on the culture and dynamics of university life in general and teaching and learning specifically. My research and writing has remained focused on these areas of interest and my ideas have been developed through summative EdD assignments as well as eight conference papers and a published article (Brady 2012). The key themes which are examined sequentially in the literature review are: *The National context*; *Academic professional identities* and *Undergraduate curriculum design and pedagogic practice*. These themes aim to provide theoretical underpinning in approaching the secondary research questions 1-4 (p.11). It should be stated here that the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 is presented as a 'comprehensive review' albeit that it represents a fraction of the vast quantity of literature available on these themes.

This literature review, to some extent, builds on EdD coursework assignments, where my tutors provided bibliographies and advised on the reading in terms of direction and importance. From this initial reading two generative processes were developed, i.e. personal evaluations of the quality of the work of

certain authors were arrived at and subsequently endorsed through citation in the work of other researchers. This approach could be crudely described as a kind of 'snowball method', as the references from one piece of work led to the next and were filtrated according to perceived quality, originality and relevance. Finally, the *Social Science Citation Index,* the *Research into Higher Education Abstracts* (SRHE) and, less scientifically, accessing *Google Books* and *Amazon UK*, to check if the literature was up to date before submission of the thesis.

Chapter 3 Research methodology

This chapter begins by explaining the critical realist paradigm (Bhaskar 1989) and indicating how it forms the assumptions underpinning the analysis of the phenomena relating to the undergraduate curriculum design and pedagogical practice (CDPP). This chapter outlines the *analytical framework* which applies a combination of Bernsteinian (2000) theory and critical discourse analysis, summarised in Appendix 6 on p.215 (Fairclough 2004, Machin and Mayr 2012). As Bernstein's *pedagogic device* is essentially a matrix of abstract theories of pedagogical relations, it has been operationalised by critical discourse analysis (CDA). Chapter 3 also explains the main elements of the research methodology: the research questions; research objectives; the case study research design; data collection and data analysis as well as addressing issues of reflexivity and interpretation.

Chapter 4 *UBS: a network of social practices*

This chapter is the first of three data analysis chapters (Chapters 4-6) and analyses the formal representations of power and control within UBS pertaining to organisational structures and managerial discourse. The assumptions underpinning these formal representations of power and control are then compared to the participants' discourse on professional identity. The purpose here is to consider issues such as value-congruence (Liedka 1989) or inculcation (Fairclough 2004) and their potential effects on CDPP.

Chapter 5 *Curriculum design: rational and emergent processes*

This second data analysis chapter analyses the focal programmes (BA *Business Studies* and BA *Entrepreneurship and Innovation*) in terms of describing their core structures, theorising as to the key influences on their design and evaluating their potential impact on didactics at *UBS.*

Chapter 6 *A pedagogy of confinement*

This chapter analyses the interview data and documentary evidence relating to pedagogic practice at *UBS.* Both Fairclough's (2004) critical discourse analysis and Bernstein's (2000) concepts of *classification* and *framing* are used to conceptualise how pedagogy was constructed.

Chapter 7 *Conclusions and Recommendations*

This chapter focuses on prior theory to evaluate to what extent the data analysis confirms or disconfirms prior theory or creates new theory in relation to curriculum design and pedagogic practice. It also discusses whether the data analysis confirms or disconfirms the five propositions (P1-5) listed in Chapter 3 (p.64) . These aims align with Yin's (2009) case study research design and his principle of *analytic generalisation*. This case study is largely *explanatory* in orientation aimed at 'explanation building' (Yin 2009) in relation to the construction of the undergraduate business curriculum. However it also contains an *evaluative* element in terms of making recommendations as to how undergraduate CDPP in *UBS* might be progressively reformed. These recommendations seek to address the organisational and cultural aspects of CDPP which have been analysed in the data analysis Chapters 4-6. The remainder of the thesis contains the reference section and appendices.

Chapter 2: Theoretical perspectives on curriculum design and pedagogic practice

2.0 Introduction

The following literature review focuses on the historical, economic and political contexts in which curriculum design and pedagogical practice (CDPP) have been enacted at *UBS*. It also engages with the academic literature relating to academic professional identity and approaches to curriculum design in UK education. This literature review provides theoretical underpinning for the secondary research questions 1-4 (p.11). In sequence, the three themes explored are: *The National context, Academic professional identities* and *Undergraduate curriculum design and pedagogic practice.* The *National Context* offers an overview of the government policy context in which *UoS* and *UBS* have evolved since incorporation in 1992. This context is important because, in terms of critical realism (Scott 2010) and the *analytical framework*, it provides further insight into the *structures* (Figure 3 p.70 and Figure 4 p.77) with which *UBS* interacts to shape its processes, including CDPP.

In terms of Bernstein (2000), this is understood as the relationship between the official recontextualising field (ORF) in which external agencies, for example HEFCE and QAA, exercise power and influence over higher education and the pedagogical recontextualising field (PRF) which is *UBS* (Figure 4 p.77). This analysis draws mainly on sociology of education-based sources to provide possible connections between neoliberal narratives on the 'economic mission' of universities and the discourse around CDPP in the business school. The 'anti-neoliberal' perspective, positioned mainly at the macro (government, state and economy) and meso (higher education) levels, represent the dominant strands in critical higher education discourse over the last 25 years or more. This literature review aims to foreground critical perspectives, exploring, in particular, academic sources on the official discourse of the 'university-knowledge economy nexus'.

The second theme of *academic professional identity* also draws on literature from the genre of the sociology of education (e.g. Beck and Young 2005), and the associated discipline of organisational behaviour (e.g. Schein 2004) to examine the changing conceptualisations of academic identities in the modern university.

Given that the main sources of empirical data for this thesis are the perceptions of academics on how CDPP are constructed in *UBS*, an examination of the literature on professional identities provides important theoretical underpinning. As agency-structure relationships within and without *UBS* provide a focus for the data analysis chapters, literature on issues such as cultural integration or socialisation will be examined (Liedka 1989). The less substantial but equally important body of literature on empirical studies of academics' identities in the field (the micro level) is also considered.

The last theme to be discussed is 'undergraduate curriculum design and pedagogic practice', which seeks to provide theoretical and philosophical underpinning for the data analysis of CDPP within *UBS*. This literature is explored in order to address core issues such as competing paradigms of curriculum design and the relationship between curriculum and pedagogy. This discussion of CDPP in UK higher education also draws on the genre of critical literature on vocational education. Authors who, for example, ascribe to the *Critical Management Studies* group challenge the technical-rationalist assumptions underpinning the dominant discourse on vocational education. As Contu (2009: 537-538) explains:

> The main point is that the family of CME [Critical Management Education] is distinctive in subjecting management practice and management knowledge to critical scrutiny *and* in attempting to develop and engender... a critical pedagogy in the curriculum, its design, educative process and method.

However, the *Critical Management Studies* group, like much of the discourse on the business curriculum in higher education, focuses mainly on postgraduate and not undergraduate perspectives (Alvesson, Bridgeman and Willmott 2009).

Critical literature on undergraduate business curriculum and pedagogy appears to be a niche area of academic research inquiry. Section 2.1 now turns to an overview of the national context of higher education in which *UBS* has evolved.

2.1 The National Context

The massification and marketisation of universities are the two grand narratives of UK higher education in the latter part of the twentieth century, which are still being played out in the twenty-first century (Molesworth *et al* 2010, Naidoo *et al* 2011). Scott (1995: 5), writing eighteen years ago, emphasised the rapidity of the expansion of higher education in the UK:

> Between 1987 and 1992 participation almost doubled from 14.6 to 27.8 per cent. It was only yesterday, during that turbulent half-decade, that Britain irreversibly acquired a mass system.

What Scott, from the perspective of 1995, could not fully anticipate was the degree to which the mass system of higher education would be so comprehensively reconfigured by successive government policy into a quasi-market. Neoliberal notions of a causal relationship between higher education and the growth of the 'knowledge economy' have now become 'conventional wisdom' and deeply embedded in the language of public discourse (e.g. Ainley 2004, Harris 2005 *et al*). According to public policy reports (e.g. DBIS 2010, Dearing 1997, ESRC 2008, Leitch 2006), a 'university-knowledge economy nexus' continues to evolve in which the universities' core mission is to generate the knowledge and supply the 'skilled graduates' required by business to leverage competitive advantage in the globalised 'knowledge economy'. For example, Peter Mandelson (DBIS 2009: 7), former Secretary to the *Department of Business Innovation and Skills*, described the university-knowledge economy nexus in the following way:

> Alongside its social and cultural role, higher education is, and will continue to be, central to this country's economic performance in the twenty first century. It is the key mechanism through which knowledge is generated, preserved and passed on. It equips people for the increasingly complex challenges of the modern workplace by teaching skills and instilling intellectual curiosity and self-confidence.

Dearing (1997) went even further placing education at the centre of the UK's very 'economic survival' in the face of what he described as the UK's comparatively poor economic performance 1963-1996. Dearing (1997: section 4.15) asserted that:

> With the global approach to production and service provision, the factors which will determine the economic future of the UK will be the

> quality, relevance, scale, and cost-effectiveness of its education and training, and the commitment of its population to lifelong education and training.

As several theorists (e.g. Apple 2010, Harvey 2006, Lewis 2007, Naidoo, 2011, Olssen and Peters 2005) have argued, the development of neoliberal policy in UK higher education from the 1980s onwards can be located in parallel neoliberal 'projects' across the globe. The 1980s public sector reforms of the Thatcher governments in the UK are not dissimilar to other, sometimes contemporaneous, neoliberal government policies in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Chile.

As Kus (2006) explains, neoliberal policies of economic deregulation and the privatisation or marketisation of public sector institutions begun in the 1980s can partly be explained as a response to the crisis in global capitalism following the oil crisis of 1973. The 'freeing up' of global markets would, according to neoliberal ideologues, increase economic growth by promoting trade and enterprise. For monetarist economists such as Friedman (1980) public sector institutions constrained economic growth because they were a drain on the tax payer (both consumer and business) and as such they were immoral (Plant 2010). It is also of note in this regard, that constructs of the UK's 'economic decline' and 'economic survival' linked to the imperative of the vocationalisation of education, are recurring and dominant themes in public discourse since the late 1980s (CBI 1989, Wolf 1998).

A paradox of neoliberalism is the use of state power to open up public sector institutions to market dynamics, though the pattern and pace of neoliberal reforms in different nation states have been governed by other socio-political power structures and their influence on local conditions (Canaan and Shumar 2007). For example, in the UK, the influence of powerful political leaders with strong electoral mandates, such as Thatcher post-1983 and Blair post-1997, has been critical. Therefore, successive government policies aimed at transforming universities into 'engines of economic growth' can be understood as one facet of a wider neoliberal colonisation of society and its public institutions begun under Thatcher in the 1980s and extended and deepened under New Labour post-1997 (Harvey 2006, Wolf 2002). Several authors contend that the modern university has been steadily absorbed into an evolving political, socio-economic and psychological order in which 'citizens' or

'Others' are being reconstituted as 'workers' and 'consumers' and the concept of 'society' reconceptualised primarily as an 'economic infrastructure' and a 'domestic market' (Apple 2010, Bauman 2008, Brady 2012, Hursh 2005, Ritzer 1993).

UK higher education policy between 1997 and 2010 was framed by the New Public Management model adapted and developed from previous Conservative regimes which demonstrated the regulation-deregulation paradox alluded to above (Brown 2010, Mahony and Hextall 2000). Universities became intensively regulated by central government agencies (e.g. HEFCE and QAA), and benchmarked against performance standards in a style of central government control which became coined in academic literature during the 1990s as 'managerialism' or 'new managerialism' (Deem and Brehony 2005, Parker and Jary 1995, Pollitt 1990, Randle and Brady 1997). Marketisation in UK higher education is, therefore, not a pure, unfettered market of perfect competition between private corporations, but a hybrid which some authors have labelled a 'quasi-market' (Furedi 2011, Brown 2010) or 'market-state' (Ainley 2004). The principle of market competition between universities was increased as a result of the 1998 Education Act (following Dearing's recommendations 1997) with the introduction of student tuition fees and market infrastructure such as league tables, labelled by Ball (2003) as the 'policy technologies' of marketisation and 'performativity'. The impact of these 'policy technologies' or 'market frameworks' (Naidoo *et al* 2011) on curriculum and pedagogy in higher education forms part of the discussion in section 2.3 below.

Post-2010, the Conservative-Liberal Coalition has extended and deepened the regulation-deregulation paradox by, simultaneously, increasing both the regulation of the state universities and the deregulation of higher education (HE) sector governance. For example, the Coalition has now extended criteria for performance benchmarks to 'employability', measured using post-six month graduate employment destination statistics by degree programme(HESA 2012). Conversely, unprecedented levels of privatisation are also now appearing in the HE sector, resonant of the US model (Slaughter and Rhodes 2010), including the emergence of new proprietary universities, such as the *BPP College of Professional Studies* (2010), the *New College of the Humanities* (2011) and *Pearson College* (2013).

Brennan and Patel (2011) contend that in contrast to the 1990s, where higher education funding was driven by a broadly expansionist agenda, it now appears to be

in a phase in which the legislative-regulatory focus has shifted from 'widening participation' to 'widening stratification'. A reconfigured university hierarchy is now symbolised by alliances of universities who have responded to the new market conditions by adopting shared brand positions based on relative market status (Ainley and Weyers 2008, Chapleo 2010, Sauntson and Morrish 2011). As Newman (2009) explains, the highest prestige cluster is the *Russell Group* (1994) with twenty of the top UK research based universities including Oxford, Cambridge and the elite London universities e.g. UCL. This is followed by the *1994 Group* of upper league table research intensive universities, for example, the University of Bath. The *University Alliance* includes a mix of both pre and post-1992 universities and advertises itself as a coalition of universities who are:

> ...actively engaged in their economic and social environments with close links to the professions and new industries and have a deep-rooted commitment to access through flexible provision. (Newman 2009)

The *Million+* group represent an alliance of the post-1992 universities and lastly, the *GUILDHE* universities, an alliance primarily of lower league table 'teaching universities'. 26 universities remain unaffiliated to any of these alliances.

However, it is particularly the expansionist narrative of higher education in the 1990s which is critical to understanding how changing conditions in higher education contributed to shaping its curriculum and pedagogy. Two connecting threads appear to be of particular relevance from this historical perspective. Firstly, according to Jessop (1995) it was envisaged by the DfES that GNVQs would become the main vehicle for widening participation and the expansion of higher education in the 1990s. Secondly, if, as anticipated, expansion would largely consist of 'non-traditional' university students (Haggis 2006), gaining access to higher education on a platform of GNVQs, it would be the post-1992 universities to which they would be applying. Edwards (1994: 9) endorses this proposition in the following terms:

> This seems the strongest argument of all for GNVQ. With the changing nature of HE, modularisation, semesterisation, pressures towards more open and flexible delivery styles, the decline of traditional examinations and much more, there seems to exist an

> opportunity to bring forward students with the very skills and qualities needed to cope with the new 'scene'.

The post-1992 universities and those institutions in their previous incarnation as polytechnics, were indeed largely responsible for driving this expansion of UK higher education towards a mass system over the last 25 years (ESRC 2008, Scott 1995, Symes and McIntyre 2000). The policy of widening participation resulted in an increase of 18 year olds entering university from 16% in 1997 to 24% by 2010 (HESA 2011, Robertson 2010), and 43% of 18-30yr olds who had experienced higher education, though still below the New Labour target of 50% (DfES 2002). Against a backdrop of continuous economic growth 2000-2008, the Government repeated the mantra that a university degree would offer a 'passport' to a middle class professional career for young people previously excluded from higher education (DfES 2002).

There remains, despite the devastating impact of the post-2008 recession on graduate employment, a deeply embedded societal expectation of higher education as normative at 18 years (Richardson 2010). In particular, large numbers of students, including non-traditional students, opted to take business degrees because this linkage between a degree and upward mobility had been explicitly made and accepted by prospective undergraduates and their parents (Williams 2010). Approximately, fifteen percent of UK undergraduates took 'business-related' degrees in 2011 (HESA 2011), aside from other vocational subjects such as engineering and technology. Despite the record levels of graduate unemployment, the Association of Business Schools (ABS: 2012) is still repeating the employability mantra:

> One in eight undergraduates studies business at university making it the UK's most popular degree choice. So why are business courses so popular? No-one wants to follow the herd but time and again it is shown that business graduates are more likely to get a job at the end of their course. Three or four years at university studying for a business qualification leads you deliberately and directly towards a good job through a variety of ways which do not just include time in the classroom.

Fairclough (2003) describes this phenomenon, in terms of critical discourse analysis, as government achieving a state of 'hegemony' in which a *particular*

representation becomes successfully projected as a *universal*. According to Starkey and Tiratsoo (2007), UK business schools have evolved rapidly from 'poor relation' status in the 1980s to a premier position in the 21st century higher education sector.

However, whilst the narratives of the university-knowledge economy nexus, 'employability' and 'key skills', mentioned above, still dominate government discourse in higher education, they have been challenged in what is now a formidable body of critical academic literature. In this review, two interrelated themes in academic discourse on neoliberal policy on UK higher education are briefly examined. Firstly, government claims made in regard to widening participation and social mobility. Secondly, the dominance of government discourses on 'employability' and 'key skills' and their impact on curriculum design and pedagogy. The latter theme is discussed in more detail in section 2.3 (p.42).

What still permeates a large volume of government discourse, or what Scott (1998) refers to as a 'public transcript', on the purpose of universities, is an instrumentalist view of higher education (DBIS 2011). A technical-rationalist, means-end rationale appears to drive much of higher education policy, which privileges the interests of business, albeit infused intermittently by the language of 'civic responsibility'. This discourse is clearly illustrated by a recent Government White Paper (DBIS July 2011: 39) which reinforces earlier policy discourse on the fundamental imperative to align the curriculum with the 'needs of business':

> Graduates are more likely to be equipped with the skills that employers want if there is genuine collaboration between institutions and employers in the design and delivery of courses. Although around 80 per cent of universities say they are engaged in collaborative arrangements with employers, this can still be improved.

The powerful symbolism of locating the governance of higher education in a department with the title 'Business Innovation and Skills' is obvious and inescapable. However, even before the onset of the recession in 2008 and the current high levels of graduate unemployment (Osborne 2012), the assumption that the conferment of a degree led to increased employment prospects was already being widely challenged. For example, the DfES (2002) assertion that graduates could expect to earn an average of £400,000 in additional earnings over a lifetime has been refuted by several authors (e.g. Chevalier and Lindley 2007, O'Leary and Sloane

2005). This figure was subsequently downgraded to £100,000 (DBIS 2009), but the concept of pinpointing a realistic 'graduate premium' has, in any case, become largely discredited amidst profound long term economic uncertainty. Government claims of increased social mobility through widening participation and the creation of 'skilled graduates' for professional occupations have also been strongly contested in academic literature. Research evidence on graduate recruitment confirms the low probability of business graduates from post-1992 universities gaining access to traditional 'middleclass professional occupations' within the UK corporate sector (Dawson *et al* 2006, HECSU 2007, Wilton 2007). Explanations for this phenomenon include the oversupply of graduates (Brown and Hesketh 2004), cultural capital deficit (Redmond 2006) and the embedded organisational cultures of employers who favour candidates from the elite universities (Benady 2009, ESRC 2008).

In May 2012, both the OECD and the *All Party Parliamentary Group on social mobility* reported that the UK had the lowest level of social mobility in the developed world, with entry to the professions restricted to graduates from elite universities. The mismatch between the nature of market demand for graduates and the capacities of graduates entering the employment market has been identified by Ainley and Allen (2010). In particular, they identify large numbers of graduates from the post-1992 universities who will inevitably face the prospect of unstable and low paid work, burdened by high levels of debt. Ainley and Allen's (2010) analysis offers a critical evaluation of the rhetoric around the government discourse on 'key skills' and 'employability', because it challenges the instrumentalist assumption that embedding 'key skills' in the higher education curriculum will lead to increased levels of upward social mobility.

Again, as the literature reveals, these arguments challenging the assumptions of the university-knowledge economy nexus discourse, which, although having received fresh impetus from the post-2008 global crisis, have been 'marinating' over decades. As Sieminski (1993: 98-99) predicted 20 years ago:

> ...it will only be sectors of core workers who will need opportunities to acquire new skills... For the majority of workers, low-level competence-based VET [vocational education and training] will suffice and will have more to do with maintaining social control and

> obtaining compliance from those who will occupy an uncertain future being assigned to the periphery of the labour market.

The link between the number of graduates equipped with generic 'employability skills' and increased economic competitiveness claimed in various UK government policy documents (e.g. DBIS 2009), has also been contested (Wolf 2002).

For example, research by the ESRC (2008) into large multinationals suggests that it is specifically graduates in 'high level skills' e.g. in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (the so-called STEM subjects) that offer the specialist knowledge and human potential which companies seek. Secondly, large companies, including those based in the UK, recruit these high level skills globally and not exclusively from the UK. This evidence brings into serious doubt whether the primacy accorded to the *generic skills* found in undergraduate business curricula is actually aligned with employer recruitment practices or 'needs'. Critically, the ESRC (2008: 16) research into seven international recruitment markets identified *dispositions* as the key differentiator in graduate recruitment:

> In all seven countries, employers did not view technical (hard) skills as a major problem. They could easily provide training for those who needed to get up to speed with the latest technical developments. Their major concern was finding suitable people with the appropriate behavioural competences to 'get the job done' or 'take the business forward'.

The veracity of the assumptions underpinning the skills-employability agenda will be considered in more depth in section 2.3 *on undergraduate curriculum design and pedagogic practice*. This review now turns to examining *academic professional identities* and the factors that have contributed to their evolution over the last two decades.

2.2 Academic professional identities

As CDPP is socially constructed, the issue of academic professional identities is important in understanding academics' paradigms and personal epistemologies as they enact their professional practice. Some of the 'structures' and 'causal mechanisms' discussed in section 2.1 above, which impact on actors in their *pedagogic space*, are located outside the university such as the influence of

government policy discourse, regulative mechanisms and 'market frameworks'. The possible impact on academic professional identities of these external influences is, therefore, one of two broad perspectives in the academic literature. One perspective is, to a large extent, concerned with conceptualising the impact of specific organisational and ideological influences on the nature and enactment of traditional academic roles of teaching, researching and administration (Naidoo 2005, Rowland 2003 *et al*).

The other perspective is the conceptualisation of the psychological and ideological relationships of the individual professional to the 'academic community' or the 'workplace' in which they practise (Van Mannen and Schein 1979). This second perspective considers various 'spaces of professional practice' and their potential influence on the values and beliefs of professionals, including the 'university department' and the wider *academy* of the disciplinary research community. It is also important to differentiate between how academic professional identity has been defined and redefined in terms of the academic discourse on the impact of *marketisation* or *corporatisation* and, alternatively, how academic professionals in the field describe themselves. Differing approaches to academic professional identity could also be characterised as literature which focuses on the analysis of academic professional identity at the abstracted, idealised macro and meso levels (the majority) and the genre which empirically investigates the phenomena at the micro level in local contexts (the minority).

2.2.1 The academic professional's negotiation of meaning within academic 'communities'

Professional identity has been researched from various disciplinary perspectives including sociology, psychology and organisational behaviour. Academic professional identities have also been described as 'fragmented' and 'multi-layered', linked to membership of various intra and extra-university communities such as practitioner or research communities (Clegg 2008). 'Professional identity' can be defined at a fundamental level, as an individual's 'sense of themselves' or 'self-perception', which may encompass personal notions of capacities, values, professional roles or relationships with 'others'. According to Epstein (1978: 101) professional identity formation:

> ... represents the process by which the person seeks to integrate his [sic] various statuses and roles, as well as his diverse experiences, into a coherent image of self.

Professional identity, from the perspective of the individual, partly reflects the summation of learnt behaviour of the individual in the context (s) of their workplace (s) over time. Professional identities are dialectical in being both formed by and influencing others in the enactment of workplace culture. For many authors, the essence of academic professional identity is behaviour premised on shared 'professional values' (Harley 2002, Henkel 2005, Nixon 1996, Randle and Brady 1997, Winter 2009).

Epstein's (1979) concept of 'integration' refers to how an individual manages to integrate into their workplace environment or align their own beliefs and values with those of the work group or the wider academic community. As Giddens (1991) indicates, there is an emotional dimension to professional identity, because a lack of integration, or 'value-incongruence' (Leidka 1989), between the professional and their workplace culture could have negative consequences for the individual's psychological or emotional equilibrium. Giddens (1991) links this phenomenon to a concept he terms *ontological security*, which he describes as the potential strength an individual derives from a sense of 'shared reality' with professional colleagues. Where a sense of 'conflicting reality' occurs, the result might be anxiety or alienation or personal crisis. As Giddens (1991: 44) explains:

> All individuals develop an ontological security of some sort, based on routines of various forms. People handle dangers, and the fears associated with them, in terms of the emotional and behavioural "formulae" which have come to be part of their everyday behaviour and thought.

If we accept Giddens's and Epstein's claims about the nature of integration and equilibrium, two assumptions about the individual professional in the workplace can be made. Firstly, all individuals, to varying degrees, experience pressure to negotiate a relationship between themselves and their workplace environment. Secondly, significant changes in the workplace culture can have potentially negative consequences on the ontological security of individuals and their professional identities, particularly those established over a long period of time. According to

Stacey (2007), the degree to which changes have a negative impact seems to depend on the degree of cognitive dissonance experienced and the personal history of the individual. Conversely, Clegg (2008: 340), in a more optimistic assessment, argues that the relationship between the individual's sense of self-worth and personal notions of professional identity may actually sustain them against the stresses of changing conditions of work:

> Overwhelmingly throughout the interviews there was a sense of self-worth being preserved alongside the analysis of changing or eroding values. This may in part be at the heart of the seeming paradox of a literature which bemoans the present condition of the university, and the apparent reality that as organisations they still function.

Clegg' findings (2008) confirm Stacey's (2007) thesis that a variety of responses to pressures on professional identity are possible depending on the strength of the individual's professional identity relative to the weight and nature of the pressures being brought to bear. Archer (2008) makes the counterpoint that some academics may find themselves in alignment with new trajectories of cultural and organisational change and experience no dissonance at all. For example, whilst changing paradigms and value systems may provoke negative reactions from some academics, others may see opportunities for personal aggrandisement (Archer 2008, Molesworth *et al* 2009, Macfarlane 2005, Piercy 1999).

These apparent contradictions raise the obvious methodological problem of how researchers might accurately capture beliefs concerning professional practice. For example, professionals may espouse or even act out behaviours which appear as manifestations of professional identity in order to achieve career advancement, or even just survival, whilst holding alternative or even conflicting internalised values (Schein 2004). The conceptualisation of professional identities and the forces which shape them are complex and 'slippery', partly because of the problem of measurement, but also because the configurations of power relations and ideological assumptions within university communities themselves are constantly shifting. Barnett (2000, 2011) situates the influences on the academic professional's identity in the wider fragmentation of the University in an era of *supercomplexity*. Barnett describes 21st century universities as being so fluid, so complex and diverse that they almost defy definition. This is because, as universities have become systematically

integrated into the wider economy and society, they have become defined by external forces such as government and the corporate world.

Kogan (2000) views academic professional identity as a personal epistemology of complex historical experiential influences on the individual, such as professional training followed by professional practice. Kogan (2000: 210) also foregrounds the influence of the wider *academy* which defines the professional in terms of 'the goods that she or he has achieved'. As Kogan (2000: 210) explains:

> The distinctive individual is also an *embedded individual*. He or she is a member of communities and institutions which have their own languages, conceptual structures, histories, traditions, myths, values, practices and achieved goods. The individual has roles which are strongly determined by the communities and institutions of which he or she is a member.

Kogan uses the term 'embeddedness' to explain how the individual's identity is, to a large extent, determined by their interaction within the community in which they are practising. Alternatively, Nixon (1996) emphasises the importance of individual 'separateness' and 'diversity' as legitimate and desirable elements of an academic community, conceptualised as 'academic freedom or academic autonomy'. Nixon assumes that within academic communities, professionals can and should, simultaneously, hold a shared identity with colleagues, whilst negotiating their own individual professional identities or achieving what Kreber (2010) labels as 'authenticity'. Again, the degree to which this can occur is dependent on a number of factors, including the pressure exerted on the individual by academic work groups to which they belong. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) describe this phenomenon as socialisation, in which an individual comes to learn and enact the cultural norms of the community or group in which they practice.

Knight and Trowler (2000) contend that the university department, as the 'main activity system' is the dominant influence on the socialisation of the academic professional, though they, like Clegg (2008), stress the agentic power of the academic to negotiate a 'personal space'. The subsequent enactment of professional practice by newly recruited academic professionals may be predicated on an internalisation of values or the imperatives of power dynamics or a combination of both. Post-recruitment, young academics may be socialised into the values and practices of a departmental culture heavily shaped by its leader and by its

disciplinary practice (Becher and Trowler 2001, Neumann 2001). In some cases 'visible identities' manifested as espoused discourse or behaviour may conflict with their 'personal project' or they may, if young and inexperienced, accept the dominant culture as the 'university norm' and internalise accordingly (Archer 2008). One consequence of this departmental process might be a 'cultural homogenisation', where students, as the ostensible collaborators/participants in the *pedagogic space,* are also collectively encultured or socialised into a set of expectations about, for example, what constitutes 'useful knowledge' (Bernstein 2000, Knight and Trowler 2000). This proposition will be considered further in section 2.3 (p.42) on *undergraduate curriculum and pedagogical practice*.

Wenger (2006) describes this synthesis of complex interactions between the individual and the collective as 'negotiated meaning' in a community where professional practice is the key driver of identity formation. Here Wenger (2006) argues that there is a subtle difference between 'imitation' or the 'internalisation of norms' by individuals and the construction of identities through 'communities of practice'. Central to Wenger's theory of negotiated meaning is the interplay between two processes that he terms *participation* and *reification* or the 'dual nature of identity'. By *participation* he means all of the instances of human interaction within a bounded system such as the workplace. *Reification* is the process of capturing the meaning arising from interactions in material forms, e.g. the minutes of meetings or planning documents. Wenger reaffirms the notion that individuals are seeking a position of equilibrium as members of a community where a trade-off takes place between the academic professional's required acceptance of the group's culture and his or her personal beliefs and values. In a pluralist culture the tension between the two is ideally resolved or negotiated in an emancipatory atmosphere. In a unitarist organisation there could be a tendency towards a subjugation of the individual by a cultural hegemony with which they might profoundly disagree.

Whilst Wenger's (2006) analysis sheds light on the properties and processes of professional identity formation and evolution, it appears limited in helping us understand issues such as the power dynamics of inter-group rivalry or managerialist discourses as dysfunctional aspects of the workplace which can impact on professional identities (Piercey 1999). Wenger's analysis of identity formation is structured as a 'process map' or typology depicting outcomes and relationship types at a highly abstract level. As Stacey (2007: 101) points out:

> What Wenger is doing, I think, is moving from a micro-description of communities of practice to an abstract, macro-level explanation of the process.

As Stacey goes on to explain, individual organisations are organic and unique, made up of collections of individuals with their unique experiences and which 'have a life of their own'. A key notion here is the concept of emergent properties which are held to exist in organisations represented by the 'messy realities' that sit beneath the rational representations of the organisation (Stacey 2007). These 'messy realities' provide the focus for the analysis of *UBS* in Chapters 4-6. The following section now focuses on the the major ideological and organizational influences on UK higher education of the last two decades.

2.2.2 The impact of corporatisation and marketisation on academic professional identity

From an organisational perspective, the traditional academic professional roles of 'tutor', 'researcher' and 'administrator' have been reconfigured (Barnett 2005). For example, academics devote much of their workload to managing partnerships or bidding for external funding (e.g. Hoecht 2006, Malcolm and Zucas 2009). Giroux (2009), Harris (2005) and Henkel (1997) characterise the conditions in which academic roles are evolving as the corporatisation of universities for the primary purpose of income generation. Henkel (1997) identifies corporatising trends in universities as a challenge to the traditional identity of the academic in terms of their professional purpose as teachers of students and autonomous researchers. She makes the point that organisational manifestations of corporatisation are aimed at optimising efficiency or 'institutional performance'. These relate to, for example, contract management to promote 'flexibility' and reduced security of tenure, as well as the development of academic programmes as 'market-facing' and the interventions in traditional academic domains by non-disciplinary support units. In many respects, the modern university as an organisation could be conceptualised as a 'machine' (Morgan 2006) designed to generate maximum revenues at least possible cost.

Australian universities appear to have experienced similar changes in terms of marketising and managerialist policies as those in the UK (Biggs and Davies 2002, Zipin and Brennan 2003). Szekeres (2006), writing in the context of Australian higher education, found cultural conflict arising from shifts of power from academics to non-academics within universities. Szekeres (2006: 137) effectively captures a flavour of this collision of identities in an interview with a member of a non-disciplinary support unit:

> Academic staff are experts in their field, but not necessarily in the day to day operations of the university. This, I think, is what causes the frustration between academic and general staff. At this stage, I still don't think academic staff quite grasp the fact that the university needs to be run like a business. The programs are our products—the students are our customers.

Corporatist trends in organisational change and discourse within the academy appear to have developed and deepened over the last fifteen years. Harris (2005: 426) takes up the corporatisation theme describing how:

> It is increasingly important that academic activity contributes to the institution' s overall strategy to maintain and improve its market position, which places more pressure on individuals to pursue and construct academic identities in line with corporate identity.

Naidoo *et al* (2011) contend that these corporatisation trends are likely to intensify in UK universities, dictated by the market logics of rising tuition fees to replace state funding, league table driven marketing communications and competition for 'student-customers'. This intensification of competition is also likely to be enhanced by a projected decline of 18 year olds in the UK by 13% between 2010 and 2020 (Bekhradnia and Bailey 2009).

Academic literature on the likely impact of the neoliberal hegemony on academic professional identities is largely framed in theoretical and philosophical terms, relating to the ideological and ethical collisions between market dynamics, academic professionals and professional practice. For example, Naidoo and Jamieson (2005) conceptualise the market dynamics of contemporary higher education as potentially leading to the 'commodification of teaching and learning'. In this dynamic, knowledge becomes objectified as a 'product' or 'commodity' to be

exchanged between the university and the 'student-consumer', with the intrinsic nature of learning as 'value in use' being lost. This relationship between the university, academics and students could become entirely framed as a 'transaction', where student-consumers pay tuition fees and the university provides credentials required for obtaining a 'good job' after graduation (Gibbs 2001, Molesworth *et al* 2010).

According to some theorists, the logics of these market dynamics are likely to lead to a 'distortion of pedagogical relations' in which the identity of the academic is reconceptualised into 'commodity producer' and trust between student and academic corroded (Naidoo 2005). As a consequence, adversarial behaviours amongst students may become more frequent as learning is recontextualised as the acquisition of credentials, at increasing financial cost, with the academic repositioned as a potential 'gatekeeper' to their acquisition. This theme is taken up by Molesworth *et al* (2009), in which they apply the philosophy of Fromm (1976) to posit a modal student learning paradigm as 'having' rather than 'being'. As Molesworth *et al* (2009: 280) explain:

> So students seek to *have* ideas or skills as if they are possessions that can be bought, rather than to know ideas as ways of seeing the world and skills as ways of acting.

In relation to Fromm's (1976) 'having' and 'being' distinction, Molesworth *et al* detect in their experience as academic professionals in a new university, a pronounced distortion of behaviours by students towards knowledge and the learning process including: the extreme privileging of summative assessment to the exclusion of formative learning opportunities and an adversarial approach to assessment where grades are regularly contested and complaints made. In this adversarial climate, they argue, the academic professional's identity is likely to be compromised by a corrosion of pedagogical relations which might result in the application of a 'conservative pedagogy'.

For example, experiments with curriculum and pedagogy may become 'risky' if they create student dissonance by appearing to threaten *realised* and *recognised* notions of learning as transactional relations involving knowledge-commodities (Bernstein 1999, McArdle-Clinton 2008, Molesworth *et al* 2010, Naidoo 2005). Experiments with curriculum and pedagogy might also raise levels of

uncertainty amongst students about 'outcomes', especially if the 'outcomes' of more risky, 'creative pedagogies' are not easily measured (Jackson *et al* 2006). As Molesworth *et al* (2011: 201) found in their research of undergraduate attitudes that:

> Many students talked of favouring 'safe' routes of study, avoiding experimentation where the possibility of failure was felt to be high.

As Naidoo *et al* (2011) infer, student satisfaction, measured by consumerist 'technologies' such as the *National Student Survey*, is likely to be higher if the curriculum and the pedagogy are predictable and assessment grades frequently high. In this way, the expertise of the professional to evaluate the progress of students is brought into question, whilst the capacity to practise their professional skills may become limited, as the academic professional becomes repositioned as a simple 'service provider'.

2.2.3 The phenomenon of identity schisms in business education

Jawitz's (2009) research into the culture of a South African university 'Department of Design' provides empirical data on academic professional identity formation. Jawitz characterises academic professional identity formation as a matter of conflicting influences which guide the 'identity-trajectories' of academics and whose relative power changes over time. He describes how distinct fissures appeared in a 'Department of Design', driven by the competing paradigms of academics in relation to teaching, research and commercial practice. For example, it became the norm for 'newcomers' to be orientated towards undergraduate teaching and academic research, whist established academics, 'old timers', focused on postgraduate teaching, applied research and commercial practice. Jawitz (2009) describes how the orientation towards commercial practice in the 1980s caused tension in the department between those who perceived themselves as 'academics' and those whom they perceived as involved in commercial practice outside the department. As Jawitz (2009: 246) explains:

> Frank highlighted the distinction between the identities of those prioritising a professional career and those choosing to develop a 'purely' academic career within the department. He contrasted the

> roles of a ‘pure’ academic, committed to the traditional roles of teaching and research, with that of the practitioner.

Jawitz's research found that this projection of the department towards commercial practice provided a key driver in identity formation and the departmental culture.
A vocational mission dominated departmental culture, partly because of what was perceived as a clear pathway between the academic discipline of design and the marketplace. This perception was reinforced by a tradition of recruiting practitioners from the commercial world with already fully-formed professional identities as practitioners. According to Jawitz (2009), the centrality of the projected ‘practitioner world’ in the departmental culture dominated academic professional practice in which, for example, CDPP was driven by perceptions of the ‘needs of business’.

Macfarlane (1997), in his case study research into the teaching of the BA Business Studies degree (BABS) at four UK business schools, also found that academic professional identities divided along distinct ‘academic’ / ‘practitioner’ lines in relation to CDPP. Whilst both orientations were aligned on the fundamental employability objective of preparing students for ‘careers in business’, they conflicted over the means. Macfarlane describes two distinct groups that emerged from his data, i.e. the *critical evaluators* and the *pragmatic synthesisers*. The first group (minority), drawn mainly from the disciplines of economics, organisational behaviour and industrial/employee relations, are characterised as focused on developing students as ‘critical thinkers’ capable of adapting to a changing world. The second group (majority), drawn mainly from the disciplines of accountancy, marketing, management, languages and information systems, adopted a more technicist approach to CDPP in relation to BA Business Studies (BABS). In regard to the *pragmatic synthesisers*, according to Macfarlane (1997: 53):

> Knowledge and skills within BABS were represented as a generic ‘tool kit’ which would help to prepare students for a range of different careers and work-based problems. A BABS degree was seen as initially equipping students with knowledge and skills and then helping them to select which ‘tool’ (or ‘tools’) to use in any given work-based situation.

From a critical realist perspective, the creation of typologies in relation to academic professional identity should be treated with caution, as these represent only 'snapshots' of complex phenomena. Further, they are 'snapshots' of phenomena arising in local and national contexts such as the conditions in 21st century universities, which are themselves fluid. Macfarlane's (1997, 1998) research findings are also sharply focused and neatly bounded compared, for example, with Clegg's (2008) study of academic identities, which are characterised as 'messy' and complex 'inner conversations' encompassing wider extra-professional personal values. However, Macfarlane's findings are, nonetheless, interesting in that they appear to correlate closely with Jawitz's data. For example, both studies identify competing paradigms based on the influence of academic disciplines predicated on projections of the commercial world.

Harley (2002) also confirms this phenomenon of competing paradigms or 'identity schisms' (Winter 2009) within business and management centring on projections of the commercial world. She describes the 'managed academic' as a professional who experiences *value-incongruence* as their values collide with the managerialist and corporatist values of other groups, such as managers themselves or other academics, who focus on research to the perceived 'detriment of teaching'. Harley (2002: 198) describes the phenomenon in the following way:

> In the business-related disciplines, for example, the emphasis on research and publication in high-status academic journals was considered to be to the detriment of the professional/vocational knowledge which had previously constituted the identity of former practitioners in both the old and the new universities, and this reinforced an academic–practitioner divide very much resented by some.

Macfarlane's assertion that a 'key pedagogic divide' is to be found in business schools also resonates strongly with some of the professional concerns which motivate this thesis. Macfarlane (1997:54) quotes Brown and Harrison (1980: 60) to summarise this key point:

> In business education, the critical issue remains a concern about the balance between the teaching of analytical skills in conjunction with vocabularies of problem solution, and the discussion of the limitations and the values of these skills and vocabularies.

Perhaps, what might be reasonably concluded, is that on the basis of the empirical data available, persistent ‘tendencies’, including conflicting professional paradigms, have developed in the teaching of business and management over a significant period of time. On the basis of the available data, it appears that academics within business schools are ‘tribal’ in that they differentiate themselves from other ‘tribes’ within the university (Becher and Trowler 2001). At the same time business and management departments also appear to be ‘factionalised’ into distinct groups with different identities depending on career trajectories and the micro-cultures of business sub-disciplines (Macfarlane 1998).

Applying Bernsteinian theory, Beck and Young (2005) locate academic professional identity in relation to ‘knowledge structures’ and what they perceive to be an ‘assault on the professions’ by the influences of marketisation. Beck and Young (2005) contend that the boundaries around what they term the 'professional habitus', with its core properties of control over ‘expert knowledge’ or a reverence for ‘scholarship’, is being breached by influences from outside the university. In particular they focus on the influences of ‘genericism’ and ‘vocationalism’ as representing corrosive influences on knowledge and practice in the professional habitus of higher education. This position echoes the prediction offered by Bernstein (2000: 69) regarding the likely impact of marketisation on academic identities:

> And so personal commitments, inner dedications, not only are not encouraged, but also are regarded as equivalent to monopolies in the market, and like such monopolies should be dissolved. The D.C.M. [de-centred market] position constructs an outwardly responsive identity rather than one driven by inner dedication. Contract replaces covenant.

This literature review now turns to the core area of undergraduate curriculum and pedagogic practice in which the issues concerning vocationalism and genericism in higher education are considered further.

2.3 Undergraduate curriculum design and pedagogic practice (CDPP)

This section begins with defining terms, which seems appropriate, given the multiple interpretations in the literature of curriculum and pedagogy, or more precisely, what constitutes 'efficacious' curriculum and pedagogy. The discussion then proceeds to examine the critical literature on the dominance of behaviourist or instrumental approaches to curriculum design and pedagogical practice such as objectives-based curricula (Scott 2007), modularisation (Bridges 2002, McArdle-Clinton 2008) and technical-rationalist pedagogy in business education (Parker 1997).

2.3.1 Curriculum and Pedagogy

As Stenhouse (1975: 1) observed:

> Definitions of the word *curriculum* do not solve curricular problems; but they do suggest perspectives from which to view them.

Following Stenhouse's advice, this section begins with a brief discussion of the definitions of curriculum and pedagogy before examining issues relating to curriculum 'design' or 'planning'. The term 'curriculum' is subject to a variety of interpretations and intense contestation. For example, theorists such as Apple (2004), Bernstein (2000) and Margolis (2002) posit a 'hidden curriculum', where the knowledge, values and beliefs implicit in a curriculum are indicative of certain ideological agendas and where the curriculum becomes a 'site of conflicting discourses'. Kelly (2009), writing largely in the context of compulsory education, differentiates between a *curriculum* and a *syllabus*. According to Kelly (2009: 9), the mistaken conflation of these two concepts is still apparent in popular discourse:

> Many people still equate a curriculum with a syllabus and thus limit their planning to a consideration of the content or the body of knowledge they wish to transmit or a list of subjects to be taught or both.

Kelly conceptualises the curriculum as a multi-dimensional entity possessing both formal and informal properties which have generative powers. Here, he seeks to look beyond the 'planned curriculum' embodied in documentation, to the curriculum as a

'lived experience' involving 'receivers' as well as the 'designers' or 'experts'. For Kelly, the curriculum is more than a document or other symbolic reifications. Its enactment can open up a complex world of learning and imaginings for the student or conversely it can inhibit creativity and possibilities. Grundy (1987) differentiates between theoretical approaches which conceptualise curriculum and those which view it as a 'cultural construction'. From this latter perspective, curricula are socially constructed and often manifest themselves as idealised abstractions of highly subjective realities. As Giroux (1992) argues, the curriculum is a text which has to be treated as a social construct embedded in the past and therefore capable of being read within a number of other texts and structural forms.

Barnett and Coate (2005) posit three critical dimensions of a curriculum they label as *knowing*, *acting* and *being*, presented as a framework of interdependent dimensions to the creation of curricula in local contexts. Briefly, *knowing* relates to issues involving knowledge production, such as how, where and what kinds of knowledge are to be produced and their relative legitimacy. *Acting* encompasses a variety of 'actions' or mastery of 'ways of doing' that can be enabled by the curriculum. This is conceptualised as any capabilities developed by the learner in multiple contexts, for example, from 'employability skills' in work experience to the disciplinary skills of research and evaluation. *Being* is posited as a curricular ambition to develop the student to *become* what they are capable of *becoming*. There is here an implicit hope that students will *become* 'deep learners' and come to possess virtuous values and dispositions. As Barnett (2005: 118) contends, even in a narrow utilitarian sense, dispositions play a critical role:

> One cannot acquire the accomplishments of being a chemist or a philosopher unless one is brought to a particular form of *being* as such.

One of the most interesting facts about the word 'pedagogy' in both official and academic literature is that like 'curriculum', it also appears to have acquired 'missing term' status (Barnett 2005). For example, *pedagogy* is indexed once in Grundy (1987), twice in Kelly (2009) and three times in McKernan (2008). It appears that in most of the discourse, either official governmental discourse or academic discourse on professional practice, pedagogy is elided or perhaps more accurately, conflated with curriculum. The word 'pedagogy' is a derivative of the Greek word paidagōgeō

which literally means 'to lead the child'. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English* (2010), pedagogy is defined as: 'the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept'. Most educational theorists appear to identify pedagogy as involving the teacher in some form of action which connects the curriculum to the learner. Barnett and Coate (2005: 5) conceptualise pedagogy thus:

> Crudely, we might say that a curriculum is a set of educational experiences organised more or less deliberately and that pedagogy is concerned with the acts of teaching that bring off that curriculum.

Scott (2007) in his summary of the history of curriculum theory, identifies an historical episode in which some curriculum theorists such as Bruner (1960) and Vygotsky (1978) sought to foreground the notion of pedagogy and in particular, what Scott labels the 'innovative pedagogical experiment'. As Scott (2007: 10) observes:

> Bruner and Vygotsky, though with different emphases, foreground society and culture as key dimensions of learning, and this is in contrast to the imitative and didactic forms of pedagogy.

Bruner's (1960) seminal theories on the *enactive*, *iconic* and *symbolic* modes of learning emphasise pedagogy as an area of educational inquiry intimately concerned with how the learner goes about learning. From this premise, theories of learning can be developed which affect approaches to professional practice at the micro level of the tutorial, seminar, workshop or lab session.

Bernstein (1996, 2000) contributes a conceptual framework which reveals the 'invisible codes' or 'devices' critical to understanding the discursive structures which connect curriculum and pedagogy. Bernstein contends that curriculum design and pedagogic practice can be understood as *recontextualising rules* in which knowledge is *classified* and *framed* within the curriculum, which in turn informs the way that it is *realised* and *recognised* in the pedagogy (Moore *et al* 2006). In other words, according to Bernstein, curriculum and pedagogy are interconnected and interdependent in the sense that curriculum design determines how academics and students evaluate legitimate knowledge and knowledge-generation practices or

pedagogy (section 3.4 p.76). Bernstein (2000) divides curricula into two design categories, i.e. *performance* and *competence* models, which he evaluates against a range of criteria relating to properties such as 'time', 'space' and 'control' over pedagogical relations It is contended in this thesis that the outcomes-based curriculum and pedagogic practice in *UBS* actually consists of a mix of different elements from both models. This is a point that I will return to in section 7.2 (p.180).

2.3.2 Outcomes-based curricula

Outcomes-based curricula now appear to dominate curriculum design in higher education (Dearing 1997). An example of the contemporary objectives or outcomes-based approach to curriculum design is the most recent Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) benchmark statement on *General business and management* (2007). This is promoted by QAA as an 'advisory document' drawn up in collaboration with the *Association of Business Schools*, which aims to assist higher education institutions (HEIs) to evaluate their undergraduate programmes. In short, It purports to provide HEIs with general parameters regarding the knowledge and skills expected of graduates. It is the primary official government-agency document offered to HEIs as guidance to business schools for the specific purpose of designing and evaluating undergraduate business curricula.

A key assumption underpinning the QAA conceptualisation of outcomes-based curricula is that they should be underpinned by the principle of constructive alignment (Biggs 1996, 2003). Although Biggs is not cited in the QAA Benchmark Statement 2007, his principle of constructive alignment is clearly advocated. For example (2007: 5):

> There should be an integrated teaching, learning and assessment strategy, which is explicit and demonstrates the appropriateness of the teaching and learning methods used, and assessment methods adopted, in relation to the intended learning outcomes and skills being developed, linked to the mode of delivery and the student profile.

Biggs (1996, 2003) describes constructive alignment as having two aspects: the 'constructive' alludes to the constructivist learning theory whereby 'the learner constructs his or her own learning through learning activities' (Bruner 1960,

Vygotsky 1978). In this paradigm, the role of the teacher is to facilitate learning by creating 'an environment that maximises the likelihood that students will engage in the activities designed to achieve the intended outcomes'. 'Alignment' is described as a four step process in which the curricular content, pedagogy and assessment are 'aligned':

1. Defining the intended learning outcomes (ILOs).
2. Choosing teaching and learning activities likely to lead to the ILOs.
3. Assessing students' actual learning outcomes to see how well they match what was intended.
4. Arriving at a final grade.

Figure 1 Biggs's 4 step model of constructive alignment (Source: Biggs 2003)

Biggs's principle of constructive alignment makes a number of value assumptions regarding 'good professional practice' in didactics. For example, intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are presented as the starting point for CDPP with which the other elements of content and teaching and learning activities (TLAs) should be aligned. According to Biggs, ILOs should be clearly expressed in terms of pre-determined levels of performance, by which student attainment can be measured. The principle of alignment is then extended to the selection of appropriate TLAs and assessment regimes, where it can be demonstrated that these will lead to the intended learning outcomes. The overall goal of arriving at a final grade is then achieved. Therefore, in order to comply with Biggs's principle of constructive alignment all of these steps would be required to be operationalised in the curriculum.

According to Scott (2007) and McKernan (2008), the origins of the outcomes-based curricula lie with American theorists such as Popham (1972) and Tyler (1950). Kelly (2009) links outcomes-based curricula (OBC) to the influence of earlier theorists such as Bobbitt (1918) who advocated a ‘scientific’ or ‘technicist’ approach to CDPP. Although several variations in outcomes-based curricula have emerged over decades, they possess a number of core properties (Scott 2007, Kelly 2009) The most prominent is that OBC require explicit behavioural objectives in order to pre-determine the behaviours of the actors (professionals and students) involved in the educational project. Specifically, the teacher should have a clear idea

of what the learner should achieve, or 'objectives', before the teaching begins and should be able to measure the learner's achievement when the course has been run. Popham (1972: 33), aware that measurability was sometimes problematic, nevertheless advocated measurable goals as the norm:

> We need to alter the proportion so that most of our goals are of a measurable nature, thus permitting us to determine whether they have been accomplished and consequently, allowing us to get better at achieving them.

According to Scott (2007), Popham advocated that educationalists pragmatically draw upon existing taxonomies of educational objectives such as Bloom and Krathwohl (1956) as well as 'existing banks of objectives' to formulate their curricula. Contemporary advocates of outcomes-based curricula stress their rational, value-neutral and efficacious nature. The Dearing Report (1997) gave enormous authority to the case for making 'key skills as learning outcomes' central to CDPP in universities (Bridges 2002). For example *Recommendation 21* states:

> We recommend that institutions of higher education begin immediately to develop, for each programme they offer, a 'programme specification' which identifies potential stopping-off points and gives the intended outcomes of the programme in terms of: the knowledge and understanding that a student will be expected to have upon completion; key skills: communication, numeracy, the use of information technology and learning how to learn; cognitive skills, such as an understanding of methodologies or ability in critical analysis; subject specific skills, such as laboratory skills.

However, numerous theorists propose that outcomes-based curricula (OBC) are profoundly flawed as a foundation for effective professional practice (Hussey and Smith 2003, Grundy 1987, Kelly 2009, McKernan 2008, Parker 1997, Scott 2007). Their criticisms can be clustered into three types. Firstly, critics contend that OBC are philosophically unsound. For example, McKernan (2008: 74-75) argues that OBC distort the 'underlying structure of knowledge: its proper epistemology' by encouraging the fragmentation of knowledge into lists of objectives, disrupting the 'wholeness' or internal logic of the discipline. Margolis (2001) contends that OBC are not value free, they are, conversely, particularly susceptible to 'hegemonic-political control' because of their explicit and normative character. This type of

political interference in CDPP may take place at the meso level of governmental policy or within the local context in the enactment of government policy in universities through quality assurance (Bridges 2002).

A second cluster of criticisms centres on the impact of OBC on pedagogy. Dunne (1988) questions whether the stipulation of 'verification' contained in OBC is either practical or desirable in all disciplines. For example, pre-specified behaviours or competencies relating to the learner's appreciation of literature might be more problematic than a mathematical manipulation. The concern is that pedagogy and specifically assessment may be skewed towards the measurable such as multiple choice tests, which might privilege trivial knowledge over the more important (Scott 2007). From this proposition, two other propositions are posited. Firstly, that if knowledge or learning objectives are strongly framed as 'competencies', the teacher may become repositioned as a 'deliverer' of knowledge rather than a 'co-creator' (Barnett 1994, Naidoo *et al* 2011).

As OBC is framed as a means-ends project, teachers will be judged by the results or the achievement of learner behaviours that the course produces. The central criticism of OBC, therefore, is broadly one of 'epistemological closure' (Barnett 1994), where both the method and the content of teaching may become confined to the achievement of explicit, narrow and measurable assessment objectives. Again, this confinement or narrowing of didactics is antipathetic to advocates of process-based curricular design who advocate a *genuinely* student - centred inquiry or discovery approach to learning which emphasises the co-creativity of academics and students in knowledge generation (Jackson and Shaw 2006, Scott 2007, Stenhouse 1975, Tosey 2006, Wallin 2010).

A third cluster of criticisms focus on the learner and potential attitudes to knowledge and modes of learning that might be engendered by OBC. It is argued that the inherently means-end, instrumentalist character of OBC could enculture the learner into the objectification of knowledge and knowledge generation, where the intrinsic value of learning is negated. McKernan (2008) identifies a problem with presenting learning as having 'ends' or 'stopping points' (Dearing 1997) which signify that the learning process has reached its conclusion. He quotes from Dewey (1922: 223) to make his point:

> Ends arise and function within action. They are not as current theories too often imply, things lying outside activity at which the latter is directed. They are not ends or termini of action at all. They are terminals of deliberation, and so turning points in activity.

These criticisms of outcomes-based approaches to CDPP have been applied particularly to vocational education programmes which have proliferated in both further and higher education over the last thirty years. However, it is of note here, that the original proponents of competency-based curricula such as GNVQs (e.g. Burke 1995, Harrop 1995, Jessop 1991), trumpeted it as a 'progressive' promoter of student-centred learning in contrast with what they describe as the limitations of 'traditional' didactics (Burke 1995, Jessop 1991, Oates and Harkin 1995). This ideological debate provides a focus for section 2.3.3 below.

2.3.3 The impact of 'new vocationalism' on curriculum design and pedagogic practice

As discussed above, the vocationalisation of UK education has been at the core of government thinking since the 1970s (Ainley 1994, Wolf 2002). However, a growing genre of critical literature has challenged its purported contribution to economic growth (Wolf 2002) and criticised its influence on professional practice and student learning (Haywood *et al* 2011). The enormous spread of vocationalism in higher education curricula in the UK and internationally has been described as an 'educational gospel' (Grubb and Lazerson 2005) or 'educating for the knowledge economy' (Lauder *et al* 2012). Vocationalism, in the context of higher education, can be broadly defined as the introduction of work-based curricula to develop a nexus between education and employment for the purported mutual benefit of graduates and business (Billett 2009).

The pivotal concept of 'generic skills' or 'key skills' or 'core skills' or 'transferable skills' or 'employability skills' is used to provide measurable outcomes in an outcomes-based curriculum design for higher education institutions (Dearing 1997). It is interesting to note that in the 21st century official discourse on 'key skills in higher education', the conceptualisation of key skills has hardly changed since GNVQs in the 1990s. For example, 'Communication'; 'Application of

number'; 'Information Technology'; 'Improving Own Learning and Performance'; 'Working With Others; Problem Solving' were listed as GNVQ core skills in 1999. This GNVQ list of generic skills bears a marked similarity with the following checklist provided by Universities UK/CBI (2009):

- *Self-management* – readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, selfstarting, appropriate assertiveness, time management, readiness to improve ownperformance based on feedback/ reflective learning.
- *Teamworking* – respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/ persuading, contributing to discussions, and awareness of interdependence with others.
- *Business and customer awareness* – basic understanding of the key drivers for business success – including the importance of innovation and taking calculated risks and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty.
- *Problem solving* – analysing facts and situations and applying creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions.
- *Communication and* literacy – application of literacy, ability to produce clear, structured written work and oral literacy – including listening and questioning.
- *Application of numeracy* – manipulation of numbers, general mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts (e.g. measuring, weighing, estimating and applying formulae).
- *Application of information technology* – basic IT skills, including familiarity with word processing, spreadsheets, file management and use of internet search engines.
- Underpinning all these attributes, the key foundation, must be a positive attitude: a'can-do' approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make these happen.
- Frequently mentioned by both employers and universities is entrepreneurship/enterprise: broadly, an ability to demonstrate an innovative approach, creativity, collaboration and risk taking.

Figure 2 Universities UK/CBI checklist of generic skills (CBI 2009)

GNVQs were introduced in 1992 to try and solve the conundrum of how to create a coherent model of mass vocational post-14yrs education which could command parity of esteem with traditional pathways such as A levels (Allen 2004, Bloomer 2008). The impetus for this innovation, once again, emerged out of the perennial discourse of anxiety around the UK's economic performance and uncertainty. Government sought to address the issue of how education could be 're-engineered' to align with the changing structures of the UK economy and the employment market. To meet the needs of the new 'knowledge-based economy' and the threat of structural unemployment, a new type of 'flexible worker' would be required with a new set of skills (Ainley 1994, Pring 1995).

As Allen (2004: 186) contends, GNVQ was designed to address the:

> ... pressures on the education system to 'cool out' different groups of young people by excluding them from higher status qualifications, while at the same time continuing to respond to the needs of individual students to 'drift up' the system and allowing the number of entries and, as a result, passes in these qualifications to increase.

GNVQs, however, were scrapped in 2007 due, partly, and paradoxically, to the repositioning of A levels as 'GNVQ-like'. A levels, by adopting modularisation and assessment by coursework, became more attractive to non-traditional students. As A levels remained the 'gold standard' for universities, including new universities, GNVQs, therefore, appear to have ended partly due to a loss of market credibility. However, those who originally advocated GNVQs argued that they would emancipate education and training from the narrowness of traditional education. According to Jessup (1995: 42):

> A further important aspect of the GNVQ curriculum... is that students take greater responsibility for their own learning. This feature, valued by higher education and employers, allows the use of flexible and efficient learning modes... This approach to learning may be contrasted with traditional approaches... [where] [m]ost learning is accomplished through reading and classroom teaching mostly of a didactic nature.

In subsequent years, a substantial body of literature has emerged which argues that the GNVQ approach to curriculum design and pedagogy did not fulfil the progressive ambitions espoused by its original proponents (Barnett 1994, Bates 1998, Bates *et al* 1998, Bloomer 1998 and Pring 1995). According to Bloomer (1998), despite the claims of 'progressive educational values' within GNVQs extolled by their advocates, in practice student and teacher autonomy were inhibited and even negated by the outcomes-based design of the GNVQ model. Critics of GNVQs contend that GNVQs were neither truly vocational nor academic but a hybrid which satisfied neither constituency (Hodgson and Spours 1997, Pring 1995, Smithers 1997). Pring (1995) describes the GNVQ model as being in the 'prevocational' tradition. In essence, according to Pring, GNVQs were flawed as they were based on a false premise of developing competencies in educational settings

where the opportunities for students 'to do' was not available. This is a point that I shall return to in Chapter 7 (p.178).

Several theorists (Harper *et al* 2009, Moore and Young 2001, Wheelahan 2007, 2012,) contend that a paradox has arisen where CDPP based on the 'key skills-employability' agenda may actually reduce graduate employability. They contend that the linkage between graduate employability and vocational education is a complex issue that has been trivialised by the reductive, technical-rationalist approach to CDPP illustrated by the Universities UK/CBI (2009) checklist above. These criticisms are partly based on empirical data relating to the measurement of 'skills-transference capability' but also on more complex arguments relating to the closure of learner opportunities to engage with vertical discourse (Bernstein 2000) or 'powerful knowledge' (Young 2012). Harper *et al* (2009) found that the 'transfer of knowledge' based on the premise that skills or knowledge can be effectively applied across contexts, or 'transferable', is highly problematic. According to Harper *et al* (2009: 4):

> A number of empirical studies have found that barely more than ten percent, of even highly job-specific formal training, involving near transfer, is applied by learners in their practice.

They describe transferable skills and competencies as 'elusive', 'complex' concepts open to multiple interpretations and applications by employers recruiting graduates in a highly stratified, fast moving, 'flexible' employment market. Beyond these issues of reductionism and skill-transference is the more fundamental issue of 'generative knowledge'. Some theorists have challenged the instrumentalist assumption that the conscious 'embedding' in the CDPP of simulacra or mimicry of the perceived skills of managers will automatically lead to the development of these skills and capacities in graduates. For example, Wheelahan (2012) and Young (2012) borrow from Bernstein's concepts of *vertical* and *horizontal discourse*, to challenge this assumption in their critiques of contemporary vocational programmes. Bernstein (2000) distinguished between horizontal discourse which is 'everyday', 'commonsense' knowledge, context-bound and easily accessible and vertical discourse. Bernstein (2000: 157) defines vertical discourse as:

> ... a coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised in the sciences, or it takes the form of a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria for the production and circulation of texts as in the social sciences and humanities.

As Young (2008) explains, the essential property of vertical discourse or 'powerful knowledge' is its independence or autonomy. It is powerful because, unlike horizontal discourse it has the power to be genuinely applied across contexts. It is 'vertical' in the sense that it has generative power to offer a conceptual understanding beyond the experience of the 'knower'. From this position, Beck and Young (2005) criticise attempts to conflate the distinction between everyday knowledge and theoretical knowledge found in experiments in vocational curriculum design in UK, Australia and South Africa (Young 2008).

For Beck and Young (2005) 'powerful knowledge' is synonymous with disciplinary knowledge generated in the universities and under assault from the influences of 'regionalism' or 'genericism.' A *region* is Bernstein's (2000) term for the development of new vocational subjects such as business studies, marketing, tourism, public relations; journalism and media studies, which project outwards to the commercial fields of practice. *Singular* disciplines such as physics, chemistry, history and English literature are more strongly classified and are deemed to possess an intrinsic value and 'verticality'. Beck and Young's (2005) ideologically conservative stance depicts the university in classic Bernsteinian terms as a 'site of conflict' between the dominant discourse of the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the traditional autonomy of professionals in the university or pedagogic space (PRF). For Beck and Young (2005) and Olssen and Peters (2005), this conflict partly finds its expression in the denigration of 'non-useful subjects', such as medieval history or philosophy, and the celebration of the new 'regions'.

Wheelahan (2012), in her analysis of vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Australia, supports Young's (2012) thesis of the threats posed to professional practice by the genericism of competence based training (CBT). Wheelahan (2012) contends that outcomes-based or competency-based approaches to CDPP privilege horizontal discourse over vertical discourse. As a consequence students are inculcated into instrumentalism by acquiring knowledge which has explicit application to the workplace or focused on problem-solution routines.

Conversely, this legitimization of experiential knowledge results in a de-legitimization of vertical discourse. Wheelahan (2012: 157) makes this point in the following way:

> CBT translates knowledge from being general and principled knowledge to particularised knowledge, because its selection and usefulness is determined by the extent to which it is relevant in a particular context. Students thus have access to knowledge in its particularised form, but are not provided with the means to relate it to its general and principled structure and system of meaning.

Implicit within the 'powerful knowledge' thesis is the assumption that the legitimization of horizontal discourse and the de-legitimization of vertical discourse can become embedded within CDPP. In this way instrumental approaches to learning are legitimized by instrumental approaches to CDPP.

The issue of uncoupling knowledge from 'systems of meaning' in vocational curricula has been linked to the effects of modularisation on higher education degree programmes. Modularisation of higher education programmes began in the 1960s and rapidly developed in the 1980s and 1990s together with semesterisation to dominate curriculum design in UK universities, albeit in a variety of formats (Bridges 2002, McArdle-Clinton 2008, Morris 2000). Modularisation in essence means the breaking down of disciplinary areas into smaller segments of knowledge or 'units' to be taught and assessed over a short time-span. Morris (2000: 240) defines modularisation as:

> ...the process by which educational awards are broken up into component parts of a more or less standard size. These parts may then be assessed separately and independently, so that the students can study individual modules in a variety of different sequences. The marks or credit that they derive from these studies may then be accumulated and exchanged at a later date for a degree or other award.

As Bridges (2000) explains, the introduction of modularisation appeared to offer a variety of benefits to different stakeholders in the university system. For example, students could choose modules from across disciplines to flexibly construct their own programmes. Administration became easier as standardised modules could be assembled, timetabled, quality assured and assessed against standardised templates and simple credit transfer methodologies (Rich and Scott 1997, Sommerville 1996).

Academics were attracted by the flexibility offered in being able to assemble and reassemble different units of study within programmes. Modularisation also attracted employers by appearing to offer the opportunity to co-create bespoke units aimed at the needs of business, which could receive professional accreditation (Morris 2000).

However, as Bridges (2002) argues, market logics have shaped modularisation in ways which some of the stakeholders did not intend. For example, fragmentation of knowledge has occurred, where knowledge structures or 'systems of meaning' (Wheelahan 2012) have become dislocated. According to Berry (2009: 57), modularisation allied to functionalism actually diminishes the employability of the graduate:

> The current curriculum and philosophy about teaching in a business school leaves the graduate woefully unprepared for the world of work. They have a very narrow view of what business is about, little experience or knowledge of how cross functional teams operate and for what purpose. Most current business curriculums deliver a function focused curriculum with silo learning.

Other unintended negative consequences of modularisation have arisen in terms of student modes of learning. For example, accredited modules delivered as discreet units within a short time-span may develop instrumentalist attitudes amongst learners and academics, such as focusing on summative assessments and treating knowledge as 'disposable'. McArdle-Clinton (2008: 26) in an impassioned, though frequently hyperbolic, attack on modularisation describes this phenomenon as 'capsule education' and cites Zemsky (1993:17) to illustrate her point:

> Students today want technical knowledge, useful knowledge, labour related knowledge, in convenient digestible packages.

McArdle-Clinton (2008:6) argues vehemently that under conditions of marketisation, such as the repositioning of students as consumers of educational 'products' and the re-conceptualisation of departments as 'market facing units', a 'pedagogy of confinement' has arisen which limits the creativity of students. It is to the relationship between curriculum and pedagogy to which I now turn.

2.3.4 The current state of undergraduate didactics

Several theorists (Ehrensal 2002, McArdle-Clinton 2008, Molesworth *et al* 2009, Ottewill and Macfarlane 2003, Ottewill 2003, Smith 2003) have identified profound weaknesses in modes of teaching and learning practised in undergraduate business programmes. Ottewill (2003: 191) focuses on what he perceives to be pervasive traits of 'student instrumentalism' found particularly amongst business undergraduates:

> ...for instrumental students, the prime, though not necessarily the only, motivation for learning is extrinsic. Intrinsic motivators, in particular those arising from the substance of what is being studied are of lesser importance.

From this premise Ottewill (2003) goes on to list traits that he associates with student instrumentalism including: 'a high degree of dependence on tutors', 'narrowness of vision', 'a reluctance to search out and exploit learning resources, beyond those identified by tutors', 'an unhealthy preoccupation with summative assessment' and 'a disinclination to help and support peers'. Molesworth *et al* (2009) and Ehrensal (2002) confirm the prevalence of student instrumentalism in vocational programmes epitomised by a student fixation on the extrinsic goal of 'getting a good job'. As Molesworth *et al* (2009: 281) put it:

> We suspect that those students with a predominant 'vocational' orientation perceive HE as a hurdle to jump on their way to a career.

Ehrensal (2002) describes student instrumentalism as another form of 'consumer daydreaming', where students' attitudes are linked to a wider socialisation into a contemporary consumerist 'work and spend' culture. To illustrate her point, she presents interview data in which students vividly express a preoccupation with the rewards of projected careers rather than any substantial consideration for the work itself.

Williams (2010: 175) cites an attitudinal survey of 20,000 students carried out in 2008 which found that:

> ...three quarters view university as a way of improving their career potential. Money is also increasingly important to today's career minded students, with 60% saying that they are motivated to study by a desire to achieve higher salaries, compared to just 36% in 2004.

McArdle-Clinton (2008: 5), in typically forthright language, reinforces an image of undergraduates as frequently being surface learners seeking to optimise extrinsic rewards such as summative assessment or degree classifications 'with the least amount of effort'. The negative perceptions of instrumental traits attributed to the contemporary undergraduate cited in the literature above, sometimes appear to be premised on somewhat 'romantic' perspectives of how students might be expected to behave. For example, Ottewill (2003: 191) contrasts student instrumentalism with what he conceptualises as a desired student mode of 'expressive learning' defined as:

> ...expressive learners are generally keen to share their passion for the subject with others, through engagement in debate and discussion; to learn autonomously and undertake 'personal voyages of discovery'; and to develop a deep understanding of, and extensive expertise in, the subject.

However, as he also concedes, instrumentalism and 'expressive learning' are at opposite ends of a continuum with 'many learners being located somewhere between the two extremes'. Regardless of this idealised view of student learning, perhaps the more important question is not *how* university students are becoming more instrumental, for which substantial evidence appears to exist, but *why*?

Several authors pinpoint instrumentalist approaches to the design of undergraduate curriculum and pedagogic practice as, at least partly, responsible for encouraging instrumentalist and surface modes of learning amongst undergraduates. Ottewill (2003: 192) identifies a trait amongst business academics to teach in order to be able to carry out research rather than to 'research to teach'. In this mode, teaching is seen as a 'necessary evil' or 'something that has to be survived in order to undertake research which is perceived as far more rewarding and worthwhile'. This is resonant of the 'competing paradigms' phenomenon found in the work of Jawitz

(2009) where some academic professionals appeared to eschew the traditional role of teaching and orientated themselves towards commercial practice and applied research. The effect of this 'service-type' approach to teaching may, according to Ottewill (2003), encourage an instrumental mode of learning in the students.

Macfarlane (1998) classifies business academics into a variety of types such as 'nomads' who have migrated to business schools from other disciplines such as sociology or economics and 'refugees' who have migrated from business practice into academia. Amongst the latter he found that they were more likely to practise basic transmission modes of pedagogy and to design the curriculum in response to the perceived needs of employers. The *refugees*' pedagogic practice was generally guided by the business context rather than a body of disciplinary knowledge and they believed that the best way of preparing students was by keeping them up-to-date with 'contextual developments' in the business world. Teaching strategies emphasised the uncritical absorption of 'current knowledge' and selection from this knowledge pool or 'portfolio' to solve practitioner-based problems.

Ehrensal (2002) focuses on how certain types of 'knowledge' are typically legitimized in business teaching through specified 'pedagogic action'. For example, she cites the widespread use of standard textbooks, selected to underpin modules presented as the course text and valued for their accompanying 'instructor resources'. These resources, she explains, include lecture slides and standardised learning materials such as case studies with pre-prepared questions and answers. Ehrensal (2002: 104) describes the underlying orientation of these texts in the following way:

> The world portrayed in business textbooks is one of simplified certainty. There are distillations of management practice and knowledge (both folk and expert), which in the world are highly context-bound, contingent and probabilistic.

In terms of what she labels 'pedagogic authority', Ehrensal (2002) claims that teaching is normally through basic transmission modes based around lectures and tutorials where 'expert knowledge' is often presented uncritically as normative. Knowledge is described in terms of 'operational knowledge' related to business processes, legitimated by its 'being up to date' or attributable to successful 'business leaders' from the 'real world'.

According to Parker (1997), technical-rationalist pedagogy follows from strongly framed curricular outcomes expressed as ‘key skills’ or ‘content’ in which teaching becomes a technical exercise in delivering instruction or basic transmission. Technical-rationalist pedagogy encourages student learning modes which involve the passive intake of basic knowledge or the superficial application of 'know-how' rather than active, collaborative and critical engagement in the construction of propositional knowledge (Harrison 2003, Vermunt and van Rijswijk 1988). Bernstein (2000) explains this relationship between curriculum, pedagogy and learning modes described above as the *rules* which regulate curriculum and pedagogy. Critically, in Bernsteinian terms, by legitimizing or privileging knowledge as ‘know-how’ or information and learning as memorisation or ‘employability skills’, undergraduate CDPP may condition the student to adopt reproductive modes of knowledge generation.

Advocates of assessment for learning (AfL) methodologies (Boud and Falchikov 2006, Knight and Yorke 2003, Yorke and Knight 2004), contend that assessment which emphasises warranting through grading can reduce learning by focusing the student on final grades, or ‘acquisition’, rather than the intrinsic learning embodied in the tasks themselves. In an ‘acquisition paradigm’, beyond the achievement of grades, knowledge can be dispensed with, as the student redirects her attention to the summative requirements of the next module. Here, students may devise learning strategies based on ‘playing the game’, where the intrinsic value of the enquiry is reduced to efficient methods for accomplishing the task based on, for example, tutor cues or other techniques. As Yorke and Knight (2004) contend, this mentality is driven by traditional ‘high stakes’ assessment methods which isolate and disconnect the learner from the intrinsic value of the task and from fellow students and tutors.

2.4 Conclusion

As outlined above, critical theorists of undergraduate business curriculum and pedagogy point to the dominance of instrumentalist, means-ends or technical rationalist assumptions which frequently underpin them (Ehrensal 2002, Ottewill 2003, Parker 1997 *et al*). For example, Grundy (1987) and Kelly (2011) describe the outcomes-based or competency based curriculum as a ‘product’, its associated

pedagogy as 'transmission' and 'anti-educational'. The question then arises, that if, as Symes and McIntyre (2000) contend, university curricula have been vocationalised by drawing closer to the needs of the marketplace, does undergraduate business CDPP now resemble a form of 'training' rather than 'education'?

For critical educationalists, *training* is associated with strongly framed outcomes-based curricula specifying discreet 'units of competency' or 'skills' and from which didactic pedagogy and a limited access to knowledge on the part of the learner inevitably follow (Bernstein 2000). Wheelahan (2012) argues that vocational training programmes can result in pedagogy which reduces the learning capacity of students by rendering knowledge normative and unproblematic. Although, hypothetically, within training programmes, pedagogic freedom exists to develop student competencies, in practice competency-outcomes, pedagogy and learning modes are interdependent and co-related. In other words a gap inevitably develops between the theoretical progressivism of competence-based curriculum claimed by its proponents and praxis (Bates *et al* 1998).

Here Wheelhan (2012) offers us some critical insights into how vocational programmes can minimise the differences between experiential, tacit knowledge and the disciplinary knowledge acquired in education. As a result, theories become detached from their premises and integrated into discreet units of knowledge for the purpose of assisting the inculcation of human capital objectives. Further, that, in this process of recontextualisation, 'work-based' knowledge (horizontal discourse) becomes privileged or more valued over theoretical disciplinary knowledge (vertical discourse) because of its perceived 'value in use'. As Wheelahan (2012: 159) explains:

> A focus on specific content does not provide students with the criteria to select the knowledge needed in new contexts. Content is disaggregated so that it consists of isolated 'bits' of knowledge. A focus on specific content for a specific context means that the meaning of that content is exhausted by the context.

McLean and Abbas (2009), in their empirical research into the teaching of sociology undergraduates, found evidence that a 'pedagogy of biography' could effectively harness horizontal discourse to assist students to access vertical discourse. They

reported that undergraduates were invited to engage with issues to which they could easily relate such as the biographical issues of family relationships or social behaviour. McLean and Abbas reported that some sociology academics claimed to be able to utilise this 'pedagogy of biography' to lever students into deeper learning and engagement with generative theory. This data runs counter to Bernstein's (1999: 169) assertion that:

> When segments of horizontal discourse become resources to facilitate access to vertical discourse... vertical discourses are reduced to a set of strategies to become resources for allegedly improving the effectiveness of the repertoires made available in horizontal discourse.

Barnett (1994: 61) questions the proposition that 'transferable skills' or 'competence' offer an appropriate organising concept for higher education curricula and concludes that:

> A higher education designed around skills is no higher education. It is the substitution of technique for insight; of strategic reason for communicative reason; and of behaviour for wisdom.

Barnett's complex analysis of competence-based curricular influences in higher education, offers numerous subtle points concerning its philosophical nature.

For example, he draws important differences between 'skills' which are related to 'action' and the capacity for 'judgement' which is located in higher cognitive capacities of reflection and understanding. Education, he maintains, is more than reproducing a skill, it is about developing students' capacities to evaluate situations and reflect on which skills to select. Barnett critiques a hypothetical dualism between skills that are located in the 'world of work' and those from 'academe' or 'epistemic communities'. Here Barnett (1994) provides another critical insight into the character of the skills-based or competency-based vocationalism in the context of higher education. Barnett (1994, 2000, 2004) contends that the assumption that such skills have been rendered 'transferable' is in doubt. This is partly because, under the influence of employers, skills located in the disciplines or 'epistemic communities' have been reconfigured or displaced by explicitly

performative skills (e.g. communication or team-working) demanded by the interests of the marketplace.

However, as illustrated above in Figure 2 (Universities UK/CBI checklist 2009 p.50), some higher order cognitive skills are at least espoused in the 'skills checklists'. The critical issue may be that the aspirations to develop higher order skills or competencies or positive dispositions espoused in vocational programme curricula may be undermined by the conflicting knowledge codes which underpin them. Just as vocational programmes de-locate theories from their 'systems of meaning' (Wheelahan 2012), so competency-based curricula may create a pedagogy which subverts critical thinking, prevents access to 'powerful knowledge' and creates surface learners.

For example, the aspiration in the UK Universities/CBI checklist (2009) to foster in students: 'an ability to demonstrate an innovative approach, creativity, collaboration and risk taking' may be subverted by the CDPP of the programmes themselves. The ultimate irony of this proposition is that the flexible, adaptable skills and dispositions demanded by employers of graduates in a world of growing economic uncertainty may actually be negated by the very curricula designed to achieve them (Barnett 2000, Stacey 2010). These assertions and discussions in the literature are considered in Chapter 7, where the findings are evaluated and an attempt made to confirm or disconfirm the assertions, propositions and theses presented in the academic literature.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This is an explanatory case study designed to investigate how and why the undergraduate business curriculum is constructed. The rationale for a *Type 2 single-case* (*embedded*) *study* (Yin 2009) research design is based on three main influences. Firstly, the ethos of the EdD which stresses the development of a depth research project centred on professional practice. A case study of curriculum design and pedagogical practice (CDPP) is of great personal interest and central to my professional practice as an academic in higher education. Secondly, my research paradigm (critical realism) assumes a depth ontology containing multi-layers of structures which interact through dialectics to shape phenomena such as curriculum design and pedagogic practice (CDPP). The case study methodology is appropriate because it offers the potential to conduct depth research into complex phenomena such as *networks of social practices* (Fairclough 2004, Simons 1996).

Lastly, the department of *Systems Management* (SM) which manages the focal programmes is typical of the five departments within *UBS* in terms of its cultural diversity (56% of academic staff in *SM* are non-UK nationals, compared to 52% for *UBS*). It is also representative of *UBS* in terms of its curriculum design processes and the constraints imposed by the *UBS-QA* as well as the structural conditions, such as resources, which affect all departments within *UBS*. The specific rationale for the single case, with its embedded units of analysis (the two degree programmes) is outlined in more depth in section 1.4.1 *Issues relating to the validity of the Type 2 single-case (embedded) study design* (p.11). Section 3.1 outlines the research questions, objectives and propositions 1-5.

3.1 Research questions, objectives and propositions

This investigation was designed as an *explanatory case study* (Yin 2009) focusing on 'how' and 'why' type questions pertaining to the undergraduate curriculum design and pedagogical practice (CDPP) in *UBS*. The core question is:

What factors have combined to influence the design and enactment of the BA Business Studies and BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation programmes in University Business School (UBS)?

Secondary research questions:

1. What are the key organisational and processual influences which contribute to the design and enactment of undergraduate programmes in *UBS*?

2. How do academics' professional identities impact on their perceptions of curriculum design and pedagogical practice (CDPP) in *UBS*?

3. How might the undergraduate curriculum and pedagogy in *UBS* be evaluated in terms of both the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and academic literature on 'best practice'?

4. What are the potential consequences for teaching and learning resulting from the configuration of CDPP in *UBS*?

Research objectives

Are to:

1. Evaluate the relative impact of different influences on the recontextualisation of CDPP in *UBS*.

2. Model the relationships between academics' professional identities and their constructs of curriculum design and pedagogic practice.

3. Evaluate the *UBS* undergraduate business curriculum against theoretical perspectives on 'good practice' as defined by the literature on curriculum and pedagogy in higher education and in official government documentation e.g. QAA.

4. Make recommendations as to how the CDPP in *UBS* might be developed in line with 'best practice' as defined by both the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the academic literature.

Five propositions

The following propositions have emerged from the literature review and the documentary review:

P1. The undergraduate business curriculum at UBS has been recontextualised as a hybrid which closely resembles the GNVQ model of outcomes-based curricula

(OBC) introduced into the secondary and post-compulsory education sectors in 1992.

P2.The values infusing the CDPP are closely aligned with the dominant discourse on *key skills* and *employability* emanating from government and employers.

P3. The undergraduate business curriculum is constructed as market-focused, fragmented 'products' rather than a coherent learning 'experience'.

P4. CDPP in undergraduate business programmes are largely framed as quality assurance processes and texts which provide a rational representation of what are, in practice, chaotic and emergent phenomena in relation to CDPP in *UBS*.

P5.The CDPP in *UBS* have an instrumentalist orientation, whose knowledge codes may subvert learning objectives such as those listed in the *Graduate Attributes* (p. 177).

Section 3.2 below focuses on the critical realism paradigm and describes the ontological assumptions, platforms for knowledge claims and research orientations of critical realism. This will be done by examining critical realism in the discrete realms of ontology, epistemology and methodology. In this regard, the following section 3.2 discusses the main philosophical assumptions of critical realism as it applies to the realms of ontology, epistemology and methodology and the relationships between them.

3.2 The critical realism paradigm (CRP)

3.2.1 Ontology

At the core of critical realism's ontological position or system of beliefs about the nature of 'reality' or what is 'knowable' in social science, is the premise that social phenomena exist independently of theoretical abstraction but which can be apprehended, albeit imperfectly. It is, therefore, this fundamental assumption concerning the inherent fallibility of knowledge which partly accounts for the prefix 'critical' in critical realism. Bhaskar (1975) emphasises 'ontological depth' and conceptualises a stratified reality with three ontological domains. These are: the *domain of the empirical* which consists of the daily experiences of actors in social contexts; the *actual domain* in which the social reality is constructed as events and

the *domain of the real*, which encompasses the other two domains as well as structures and mechanisms which interact with each other and *agents* to create and shape social phenomena (see Table 1 below). The aim of critical realist researchers' enquiry is to attempt to delve beyond the domains of the *empirical* and the *actual* to glimpse the domain of the *real* in order to gain insights into causality and meaning.

	Domain of the Real	**Domain of the Actual**	**Domain of the Empirical**
Mechanisms	**X**		
Events	**X**	**X**	
Experiences	**X**	**X**	**X**

Table 1 The Domains of Reality (Bhaskar, 1978)

Ashwin (2012: 20) defines agency as 'the projects of human agents' and structure as 'the factors that enable or constrain such projects'. From this perspective, CDPP can be seen from an agentic perspective as the ways in which the actors seek to shape CDPP and the structural perspective as the generative mechanisms which enable or constrain the actors' intentions. In Bernsteinian (2000) terms, this equates to his concept of hierarchical distribution and recontextualising rules which determine the power dynamics in the *pedagogic space* (e.g. *UBS*) and govern the relative legitimacy of knowledge (see section 3.4 p.76). In this sense the *pedagogic space* is a continuously evolving site of conflict between competing discourses for the legitimisation of knowledge.

Scott (2010) citing the work of Bhaskar (1979, 1989), identifies three conceptual frameworks operating within the critical realist paradigm (CRP) which develop out of this fundamental premise. The first framework encompasses the relationship between the 'intransitive world of being' or 'ontic reality' as distinct from the 'transitive world of knowing' which is concerned with epistemology or the 'abstracted, conceptualised or idealised world'. According to Bhaskar (1989) the intransitive and transitive worlds should not be conflated as this leads to erroneous knowledge which he terms 'the epistemic fallacy'. Although not negating the belief that ontic reality is penetrable and susceptible to producing 'transitive knowledge of

intransitive intentional activity', it is contingent on the notion of 'provisional truths' and the premise of imperfect knowledge. The epistemic fallacy arises because disjunctures between the two realms can occur whereby they become unsynchronised. This, according to Scott (2010: 4), arises because:

> ... there are social objects in the world whether they are known or not; knowledge is fallible because any epistemic claim may be refuted; there are trans-phenomenalist truths which refer to the empirical world and discount deeper levels of social reality, that is, the work of social mechanism; and most importantly, there are counter-phenomenalist truths in which those deep structures may actually be in conflict with their appearances.

The 'epistemic fallacy' is to diminish the importance of the idea that there is an external ontic reality which exists beyond our capacity to fully comprehend it.
From this position of diminished importance, all possibilities of knowledge become a matter of epistemology, i.e. ontology and epistemology are conflated. The focus in critical realism is, therefore, on agency-structure relationships from the perspective of how agents shape the social phenomena and in turn are shaped by generative mechanisms (for example QAA *Codes of Practice* or government education policy), rather than on just the 'being' or 'actions' of the agents themselves. This can also be understood as a dialectical process (Sayer 2010).

Critical realists believe that researchers, in attempting to discover ontic reality, are delimited by the socialisation of human beings as they interact with the world and the conditions in which social science research can be carried out. These include the value-laden nature of human perceptions both from the researcher and the participant perspectives, points that will be explored further in section 3.3 (p.74). The researcher's endeavour is also delimited by assumptions concerning the fluidity of social phenomena. Unlike, for example, the positivist's 'scientific laboratory', the social world is not a 'closed system' where the experimental conditions can be controlled and manipulated to discover the precise relationships between dependent and independent variables. The social world is an 'open system' which is inherently dynamic and emergent.

'Open systems' is the second conceptual framework identified by Scott (2010) and contains concepts relating to the transitory properties of social

phenomena. An open system, such as a university, is a social system where causality in relation to the impact of independent variables is complex and emergent. Findings, therefore, should be treated with caution and rigorously examined for validity and reliability. According to Sayer (2010) intrinsic and extrinsic conditions for closure do not exist in open systems. The intrinsic condition is where the object possessing causal powers is passive or unchanging. The extrinsic condition is that the relationship between causal mechanism and external conditions remain constant. Neither of these conditions pertain in open systems such as universities, because social phenomena such as CDPP are emergent and fluid. Further, the influences on CDPP such as academic discourses emanating from inside or outside the university are also shifting both in terms of their meanings and relative power (Bernstein 2000). This investigation examines data relating to complex processes in *UBS* in order to try and explain their nature and causality. Complex processes exist in universities where academics interact with each other and the environment to collectively produce texts including discourses or reifications pertaining to curriculum and pedagogy. Sayer (2010: 83) explains this partly in terms of the nature of humans, as non-passive subjects to configure and reconfigure systems often with unclear motives:

> Human actions characteristically modify the configuration of systems, thereby violating the extrinsic conditions for closure, while our capacity for learning and self-change violates the intrinsic condition.

Therefore within the CRP, the evidence available pertaining to the interaction of human beings has a number of critical properties. Firstly, it assumes that because the conditions for closure do not exist, social phenomena are of an emergent nature and not reducible to predictable regularities. Secondly, because the causes of social phenomena cannot be reduced to precise measurement of the interaction of independent variables, this assumes that these phenomena are open to interpretation. Within the CRP, therefore, the ontic reality exists at levels or *stratifications* which are potentially penetrable but imperfectly apprehensible . This leads to Scott's third conceptual framework which he terms 'the ontological depth of social reality' conceptualised or abstracted as 'structures' and 'generative mechanisms'. There is a linkage here to Bernstein's (2000) *pedagogic device* which seeks to identify the invisible grammar created and realised in the fields of knowledge production

(including universities) and which are influenced by 'generative mechanisms' such as government education policy (Moore *et.al* 2006)

Carter and New (2004) explain social reality as a set of interactions and interdependencies between *agents* (e.g. actors including academics and students), *structures* (social objects/processes e.g. degree programmes) and *generative mechanisms* (e.g. Quality Assurance-driven revalidation processes*)*. The concept of *structure* has been defined variously as 'patterns of aggregate behaviour' or 'systems of human relationships' or 'collective rules and resources that structure behaviour' (Porpora 1998: 339). Scott (2010) identifies five types of 'structure' which he presents as abstracted dimensions of reality (Figure 3 p.70). Firstly, *embodied structures* which delimit the movement and actions of agents such as *physical structures*, *time* and *space*. Secondly, the *discursive structure* which contains the stories, narratives and arguments (discourses) to which the agents may be exposed within their organisational context. *Structures of agency* are the third type of structure and affect the ways in which agents can actually or potentially mediate by interacting and shaping phenomena within the constraints of external realities. These contain the properties of individual agents or multi-agents (acting collectively) themselves and are composed of elements such as personal epistemologies and capabilities. The fourth type is *institutional and systemic structures* which regulate behaviour through rules or sanctions but also through normic values conceptualised, for example, as organisational culture. The fifth structure is what Scott labels as *social markers* by which he means gender, class or race which affect the experiences of the actors as they move through social situations. These structures possess causal powers which may or may not be observable and which may or may not be actualised. These causal powers may interact with each other through dialectics to trigger events or social phenomena or they may possess the latent power to do so. This touches on the issue of determinism and represents a point of departure between some structural-functionalist approaches to structure and agency and critical realists who argue for the mediating effects of agency on structures as part of a dialectical process (Scott 2010).

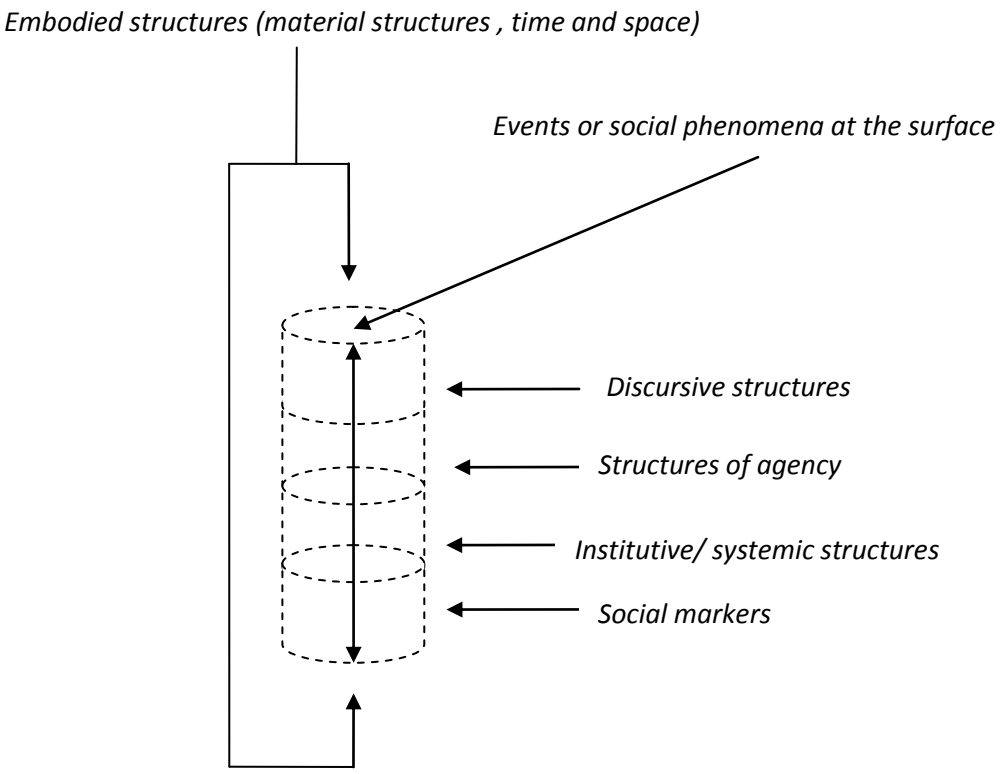

Figure 3 Critical realist concept of ontic reality as 'relational structures' (adapted from Scott 2010)

The events and social phenomena created from agency-structure interaction (dialectics) are also governed by specific types of relationships which Scott calls *vertexicality*. This refers to the results of agency-structure interactions which are governed by the way in which they come together and their inherent properties of power and resistance. A parallel here is with Bernstein's (2000) concepts of *recontextualisation* and *classification* of subject disciplines in universities, where some subject disciplines are more resistant than others to external discourses e.g. the impact of the internet on the legitimacy of knowledge (Scott 1995).

This leads us to the conceptualisation of causality in relation to structure, agency and generative mechanisms. In essence, generative mechanisms are what critical realists define as causal mechanisms which trigger social phenomena or changes (e.g. government education policy). Sayer (2010) describes generative mechanisms as 'embedded within structures' and which possess more potent and overt powers of causality in relation to a specific phenomenon than the structures which contain them. This deep and complex conceptualisation of ontic reality as

stratifications might then be modelled as a layered but integrated external reality which exists beyond our capacity or will to perfectly comprehend it (Figure 3 p. 70).

Stratification in CRP does not equate to a positivist paradigm of reducing an object to its constituent parts in order to test hypotheses or to predict behaviour. These assumptions are rejected because of the arguments concerning open systems and emergent powers outlined above. Sayer (2010) makes the point that attempts at regression analysis also miss this point about emergent powers of agents and structures and can lead to the misidentification of causality by over-endowing the importance of mechanisms displayed as simple co-variants. This chapter now turns to issues relating to epistemology within the critical realist paradigm.

3.2.2 Epistemology

Within the CRP, epistemology or the 'theory of knowledge' exists in a consciously ambivalent relationship to ontic reality. CRP assumes the complexity of a stratified ontic reality which is imperfectly apprehensible. From this basic assumption, other assumptions logically arise concerning how knowledge can be legitimately generated or 'truth claims' defended. From this perspective, I now turn to the fundamental issue of how causality is treated within the CRP.

Causality and predictability

Researchers operating in the CRP, whilst concerned with the investigation of causality in social phenomena, reject the positivist position of establishing laws which claim the power of predictability (Carter and New 2004). A hypo-deductive method, where phenomena are observed and measured and tested for cause and effect relationships, is deemed by critical realists to be flawed because it is based on an 'epistemic fallacy' that the ontic and epistemic realms are perpetually synchronised and observable. The reasoning underpinning this assertion, outlined in the above section, rests on critical realist beliefs about the transitory and emergent nature of structures and agents in open systems.

Therefore, apparent causal relations between social phenomena have to be treated as provisional because of the hidden nature of structures and mechanisms which give rise to phenomena. However, critical realists claim that it is possible to

conjecture about the tendency for a social phenomenon to re-occur due to the influence of 'powerful objects' (Bhaskar 1989). Critical realists might claim, on the basis of empirical research, that, for example, if university curriculum design and pedagogical practice (CDPP) privileges a certain kind of knowledge in teaching and assessment, this may result in the learners adopting corresponding modes of learning based on acquired [from the CDPP] codes of legitimate knowledge (Bernstein 2000). This phenomenon may not display itself in every subject (student) or in every social situation. It may, however, be identifiable as a 'tendency' and some reasonable claim to causality could be made. This is what Bassey (2009) calls 'fuzzy generalisations' or Lawson (1997: 204) labels as 'partial regularities' or 'demi-regs':

> The patterning observed will not be strict if countervailing factors sometimes dominate or frequently co-determine the outcomes in a variable manner. But where demi-regs are observed there is evidence of relatively enduring and identifiable tendencies at play.

In the social world, the power of causality may be located in individual human intention and in the random interactions of agents, structures and generative mechanisms. Even where human intention is observable or apparently observable as in espoused beliefs and intentions, the social phenomena that arise may contain unintended consequences. Some theorists argue this phenomenon of 'unintended consequences' frequently occurs in education policy.

For example, Bates (2012) argues that attempts to drive up educational standards by inspection regimes, targets and league tables may, paradoxically, have the effect of driving standards down. Generative mechanisms such as government education policy could give rise to behaviours in universities such as grade inflation (Maton 2006) and instrumentalist teaching modes or surface learning (Entwhistle 1996). In this way, a reality of *declining* standards may be masked and inverted by official discourse on 'rising standards' as evidenced by national statistics showing rising average degree classifications or National Student Survey (NSS) statistics on 'student satisfaction'. Government claims of rising standards in education resulting from its education policies appear to be at least contestable (Bates 2012). Whilst there could be a simplistic correlation made between government education policies

and ‘rising standards’, it could, therefore, be an ideological construct based on selective empirical data (Carter and New 2004).

Critical realism counter-poses the concepts of fallibility and imperfect ‘truths’ to the foundationalist notion of ‘absolute truths’. It also qualifies notions of ‘truths’ as defined by language, where the sense-relations of words attempt to capture the essential properties of objects. This is obviously less problematic in the case of physical objects than in the case of human perceptions of phenomena such as ‘educational processes’ where the use of common language may obscure diverse constructions of its meaning. This is linked to contingencies concerning context and the agency structures mentioned above. This begs the question: what research methods enable the critical realist researcher to make *any* ‘truth claims’ and address the problems arising from epistemic fallacy? This problem is discussed below in relation to critical realist notions of theory and causality.

The nature of theory

Theory is defined here both in the sense of conceptualisation of a phenomenon and as an explanation of some aspect of a phenomenon’s dynamics. Both theory creation (inductive mode) and the evaluation of prior theory (deductive mode) are considered as valid and useful within the critical realist paradigm. However, critical realists emphasise the idea that theories are as fallible as other forms of knowledge because they are in essence, abstractions or idealisations of a reality which is imperfectly apprehensible and, therefore, to be treated with caution. As Sayer (2010: 46) puts it:

> Whenever we open our eyes, the objects before us are not thereby pre-determined, although the way they are seen is certainly conceptually (and physiologically) mediated.

Prior theories are always provisional because they may be modified or refuted in the light of evidence yet to emerge. The importance of context in the use of empirical evidence to construct theory is a major concern in the critical realist position. Critical realists are sceptical of highly abstract models such as economic models which posit theories (explanations of causality) regardless of context. A good example of this application of theory is the McKinsey Report (Barber and Mourshed 2007) which claims to have devised a universal formula for creating successful education systems

from a survey of schools in 25 different countries which it now recommends for the UK. This 'ordering- framework' view of theory (Scott 2010), where phenomena from diverse complex local contexts are abstracted, synthesised and presented as a 'truth', is treated with scepticism by critical realists .

Theories are therefore fallible for several reasons (Sayer 2010). Firstly, if theory is being applied in the ordering-framework mode of theorising, it is weakened by a lack of context. Secondly, theories are created by humans whose perceptions of the world or 'thought-objects' are mediated by a myriad of agency structures including personal experience, personal epistemologies and belief systems. In other words, theorists are as value laden as their participants. Lastly, theories are demonstrably fallible if we consider the historical refutation and replacement of theories by subsequent theories in disciplines as diverse as medicine and economics (Popper 1963). This orientation is akin to Vaughan's (1992) notion of 'theory elaboration' where prior theories, models or concepts are refined in the light of new data and their interpretation.

The next section discusses research methodology within the critical realist paradigm and seeks to address issues relating to research design, data collection, display and analysis in the light of the ontological and epistemological assumptions discussed in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 above.

3.3 Research Design

The research design is an explanatory case study (Yin 2009) applied within the critical realist paradigm (Sayer 2010). This research design is a *Type 2 single-case (embedded) study* (Yin 2009: 1257), with two units of analysis being embedded within the single case (*UBS*), i.e. the *BA Business Studies* and *BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation* programmes. The two programmes (BABS and BABEI) can be treated as embedded units of analysis within the case study as they are different 'social objects or processes' possessing different as well as similar properties and powers. For example, it might be proposed that BA *Business Studies* represents a generalist degree of the traditional type recently undergoing review (2011-12), whilst BA *Entrepreneurship and Innovation* represents a more specialist degree.

This is largely an explanatory case study design because it not only seeks to describe the phenomena (CDPP) but to attempt to discover causality and explanation for their

existence. However, the case study analysis also has an *evaluative* element and, therefore, offers recommendations as to how the issues raised in regard to CDPP at *UBS* might be addressed (p.184). The case study employed a qualitative approach in which 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted with academics who taught on the focal programmes. Extensive documentary data were also analysed including: programme specifications, course specifications, teaching materials and internal policy documents as well as external policy documents such as *QAA Benchmark Statements* and *Codes of Practice*.

This case study does not seek to generalise to a statistical population. It does, however, practise Yin's (2009) principle of *analytic generalisation* in seeking to confirm or disconfirm prior theory. It also uses propositions, though not in a hypothesis-testing mode but as heuristic 'sensitising devices' (Vaughan 1992). It also attempts to create new theory (induction) relating to CDPP. Causality may be considered in the data analysis with an evaluative orientation but, again, not within a hypothesis-testing orientated research orientation. In conclusion, the embedded units of analysis (the focal degree programmes) are also felt to be sufficiently rich and interesting for the reasons outlined in section 1.4.1 (p.11) to merit a single case, though the data analysis may offer insights which may have wider utility and inspire replicated studies of other departments within *UBS*. The overarching aim of the *UBS* case study approximates closely to Simons's (2009: 21) description of purpose:

> It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and / or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action.

The case study methodology aligns with the critical realist paradigm which seeks to reveal the complex relationships and impact of dialectics which contribute to the shaping of the phenomena in question, in this case undergraduate business curriculum design and pedagogical practice. It is also acknowledged in this regard that as a general condition of research in higher education, universities consist of fluid, 'multiple constellations of practices' and that meanings asserted should be delimited to the area of practice, which in this case is *UBS* (Trowler 2012)

The following section seeks to explain the analytical framework containing the methodology applied to analyse and interpret the data from the *UBS* case study.

3.4 The analytical framework

Three main bodies of related theory have been deployed to provide conceptual underpinning for the data analysis. These are: the critical realist ontology (Figure 3 p.70) outlined in section 3.2.1, Bernstein's pedagogic device (Bernstein 2000) and critical discourse analysis or CDA (Fairclough 2004). The critical realist ontology conceptualises social phenomena as dialectics in which discourses, agents and material structures interact to shape social phenomena (*social practices*) such as curriculum design and pedagogic practice in *UBS.* Bernstein's (2000) theory of the *pedagogic device* was chosen, because as Moore (2006: 42) argues: 'the pedagogic device has the power to reveal hidden structures as in critical realism'.

In Figure 4 (p.77), *UBS* is represented as a 'pedagogic space' or a pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) where the construction of the curriculum and pedagogy is conceptualised as a 'site of conflict' in which a struggle between competing discourses takes place for control over the legitimacy of knowledge. The official recontextualising field (ORF) symbolises the state apparatus for controlling pedagogic discourse. Curriculum design and pedagogic practice (CDPP) are recontextualised by the interaction of actors (tutors, students and managers) and competing discourses from the ORF and various PRFs. The way in which these actors and discourses interact and shape CDPP can be explained by a set of generative principles that Bernstein (2000) terms the *pedagogic device.* According to Bernstein (2000) the *pedagogic device* is made up of three sets of hierarchical rules which govern the relative influences of competing discourses on CDPP.

Firstly, the *distributive rules* govern how legitimate knowledge is to be distributed, in this case, to the actors (managers and academics) responsible for formulating CDPP within a university business school (*UBS*). The *distributive rules* set the 'outer limits of legitimate discourse' or 'ideological boundaries' in the 'fields of knowledge production'.

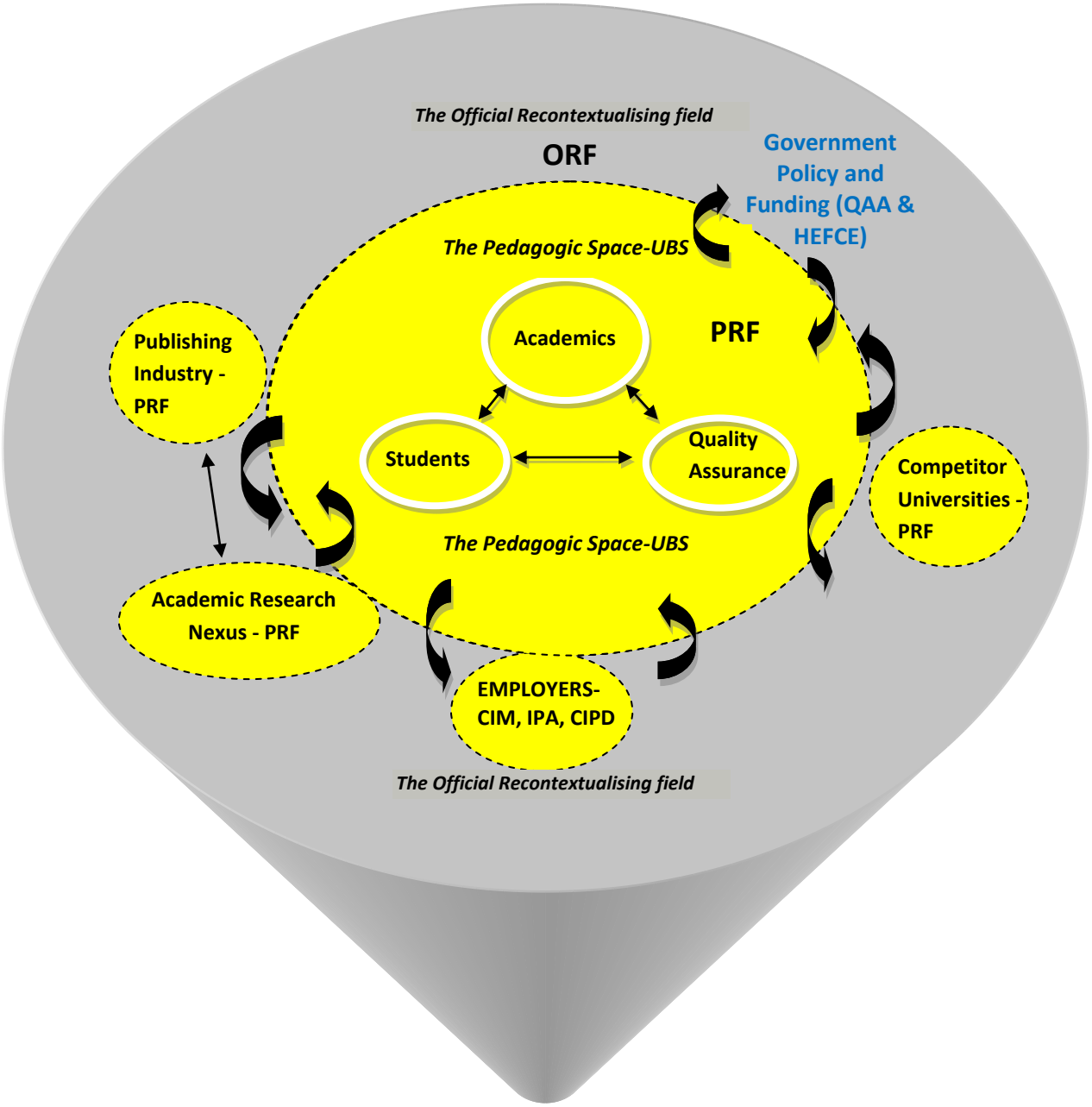

Figure 4: The relationship dynamics between the ORF and the PRF of *UBS*. (Adapted from Bernstein 2000 and Robertson 2009)

As Bernstein (2000) observed, university autonomy has been substantially diluted as a result of increasing regulation by government agencies such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). QAA is responsible for setting disciplinary benchmark statements on skills and content as well as auditing a range of processes in UK higher education, though it is recognised that universities remain powerful fields of knowledge production.

Secondly, the *recontextualising rules* establish and regulate the reification and enactment of pedagogic discourse and are derived from the *distribution rules.* Within the pedagogic space, knowledge from the knowledge fields (internal and external) is transformed into pedagogic discourse by agents and actors (academics and managers). Not only is knowledge itself recontextualised, but *how* knowledge is to be transmitted or the rules for instruction are also regulated. These are the *evaluative rules* used to create the criteria for establishing the legitimisation of knowledge, which translate into specific pedagogic practices relating to teaching and assessment.

In Figure 4 (p.77) discourses from the official recontextualising field (ORF) are labelled and their distribution across the boundary denoted by the dotted line surrounding the pedagogic space where the CDPP takes place. The competing discourses within *UBS* emanating from the ORF and the PRFs represented in Figure 4 have emerged from the interview data and the literature review. In some instances, most obviously the *academic research nexus* and the *publishing industry*, the relationships between the pedagogical recontextualising fields (PRFs) are dialogical, where knowledge is distributed back and forth across the boundaries.

The analytical framework also deploys Bernstein's key concepts of *classification* and *framing* to explain how the influences of competing discourses on CDPP relate to one another. *Classification* here refers to the location of the boundaries between disciplinary knowledge discourses and the nature of the boundaries themselves. In Bernstein's (2000) terms this is a function of *power*, which defines classification in terms of degrees of 'insulation'. In other words how strongly classified a discourse becomes (+/- C) is a function of the extent to which it has insulated itself from the influences of competing discourses. Classification contains within it *recognition rules* which provide both the academic and the student with the means to discriminate between 'knowledges' in terms of their relative legitimacy (Singh 2002). The concept of *framing* refers to the degree of regulation (+/- F) relating to the selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria in pedagogical relations (Daniels 2006). The concept of *framing* contains within it *realisation rules*, which, as Singh (2002: 579) explains:

> ...enable students to produce legitimate texts within the parameters established by specific pedagogic discourses.

Fairclough (2004), explicitly operating within the critical realist paradigm, provides the 'analytical tools' or methodology (critical discourse analysis or CDA) for analysing and interpreting discourse or 'texts' and, therefore, also providing the methodology for operationalising Bernstein's theoretical concepts described above. According to Fairclough, discourse represents and influences *social practices* in a dialectical relationship with other elements which may include agents and material structures e.g. institutional processes. Fairclough (2005: 10) describes CDA in the following way:

> Clearly, a critical discourse analyst will approach research topics with a theoretical predilection to highlight semiosis, but since this is inevitably a matter of initially establishing relations between semiosis and other elements, the theorisation of the research topic should be conceived of as an interdisciplinary (more specifically, transdisciplinary in the sense I have given to that term) process, involving a combination of disciplines and theories including CDA.

Fairclough's method is to analyse discourse as a way of 'meaning-making' from two perspectives, i.e. the 'internal relations' of texts and the 'external relations' of texts. Briefly, Fairclough's method (Critical Discourse Analysis) enables the researcher to understand the 'rules' governing the structure of discourse/texts within the texts themselves and in relationship to external structures both material and discursive. The external relations perspective, therefore, refers to the relationships that a text has with other texts (intertextuality) and with other structures and social practices that the texts express or construe as language, which Fairclough (2009) labels as 'dialectical-relational'. For example, textual representations of undergraduate courses could be seen as recontextualisations of other texts or material processes, such as those emanating from the quality assurance function in a university.

In conclusion, the rationale for applying these three bodies of theory could be summarised as, firstly, the critical realist ontology which conceptualises what is knowable in terms of material, discursive and agentic 'structures'. Secondly, Bernstein's *pedagogic device* offers conceptual understanding of the rules by which discursive structures pertaining to curriculum and pedagogy become recontextualised in the pedagogic space (*UBS*). Lastly, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides the methodology for detailed analysis and interpretation of the

discourse contained in the documentary and transcript texts, including their dialectical relationship to *social practices* as depicted in Figure 3 (p.70). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) offers an approach to operationalising Bernstein's theories, which Bernstein does not provide (Fairclough 2004: 222) and which is summarised in Appendix 6 (p.215). The next section outlines the data collection methodology.

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

24 semi-structured 45-60 min interviews were conducted on the main campus in a private location and within working hours (see Appendix 4 p.213 on the interview schedule and Appendices 8 and 9 pp.217-222 on interview samples). The main interview topics were:

- Participant career/background
- Participant perceptions of their academic identity
- Participant perceptions of the structure and design of the focal degree programmes
- Participant perceptions of the pedagogical practice underpinning their courses
- Participant perceptions of the learning styles and dispositions of students they teach or have taught

This semi-structured approach aimed to ensure that the focus of research was maintained throughout the interviewing process but with a conscious attempt to try and create sufficient spaces for participants to raise and discuss issues which interested them. Care was taken to alleviate participant anxieties around disclosure by offering more information through an extensive *Participation Information Sheet* (Appendix 1 p.210) and by pre-interview conversations with the prospective participants. The beginning of each interview was conducted with a view to building rapport and trust with the participant and turning the interview into a 'warm situation'. This was done partly by clarification of my research objectives and also by allowing the participant to introduce themselves with a brief description of their career history. Interview questions mainly focused on 'concrete' issues such as the courses that the participant had designed and or taught. This was found to be a reassuring line of questioning leading to an opening up or enlivening of the

participant responses. Within the main questions were probes relating to issues such as examples or 'stories' connected to these courses.

The repetition of questions across the interviews formed an important part of the interview protocol which was used to ensure continuity and provide part of a reliable framework for triangulating the data (Yin 2009). However, a narrowing down or ‘progressive focusing’ into specific areas within this framework occurred as 'interesting' or 'critical' issues emerged (Cresswell 2007, Simons 2012). Each interview was analysed immediately after completion to determine which 'interesting' or 'critical' issues merited more attention in subsequent interviews. As might be expected, some participants were candid and forthcoming, whilst others required gentle probing to get a meaningful response. Care was taken to try and maintain a rapport with the participant by being mindful of the psychological security of the participant.

The digital recording of these interviews was deemed to be of critical importance for a number of reasons. It enabled the capture of the data in its entirety, including the tone in which the participant spoke the words and, therefore, the ability to detect nuance. It also enabled further detailed analysis of the interview after the event and facilitated effective content and construct analysis through NVivo 9.2 (see Section 3.6 *Data Analysis* p.82). Transcripts of the 24 interviews were created as promised by the *Participant Information Sheet* (Appendix 1 p.210). and offered to the participants in the process of member checking which is discussed in greater detail in section 3.8.3 (p.87).

3.5.2 Interview Sample

This sample of 24 full time (FT) academics (Appendix 4 p.213) represents 75% of the full-time academics in *SM* and all of the *SM* academics who taught on the focal degrees (*BA Business Studies* and *BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation*).

3.5.3 Documentary Review

As Yin (2009) points out, one of the strengths of a case study design is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. Data from several documentary genres (Fairclough 2004) were analysed including *UBS* policy

documents, programme reviews, programme specifications, course specifications and course materials e.g. course guides pertaining to the focal degrees. External documents such as government policy documents were also analysed and compared with the internal documents to identify similarities and differences in the constructions of the discourse. The documentary review had two main aims: firstly, to assist with the process of triangulation with the interview data in order to verify the perceptions of the participants and enhance the reliability of the data. Secondly, to compare the 'public transcript' (Scott 1998) expounded in *UBS* policy documents with the discourse in the interview transcripts to evaluate the degree of convergence/divergence on issues relating to, for example, cultural values within *UBS*. The above sources of data were collected and stored in a *case study database* on NVivo 9.2. The *case study database* (Appendix 5 p.214) has been organised into classifications of data, i.e. the interview transcripts, documentary data set 1 *Internal Policy Documents and Minutes of Meetings* and documentary data set 2 *Course Guides , Programme and Course Specifications (QAA Levels 4-6)*. This protocol assisted the cross-referencing of the documentary data itself and between the documentary data and the interview data as part of the analysis as well as the triangulation process (Yin 2009).

3.6 Data analysis

According to several theorists (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, Cresswell 2007, Miles and Huberman 1994), data analysis starts from the point that the researcher begins to code the data. The coding is, therefore, more than just organising the data, it is the first step in trying to conceptualise them and interpret their meaning. This can be conceived as a *spiral of analysis* (Figure 5 below), in which a series of procedures are followed, sometimes simultaneously, and revisited over time in an iterative mode. The data analysis process followed here could be summarised as: data from the transcripts were assigned initial codes derived from prior theory and the propositions 1-5 (p.64).

The initial coding was then used to undertake a construct analysis followed by pattern-matching designed to analyse the degree of convergence/divergence in the constructs offered by the participants. The initial coding also provided a tool for reconceptualising data by cross-referencing the participants' responses. This initial

coding was later refined in a re-coding of the data as the analysis unfolded. The interpretation and synthesis of the data were conducted by applying the techniques of critical discourse analysis (Appendix 6 p.215). The documentary data were analysed in conjunction with the interview data for the purposes of triangulation and to assess to what extent managerial discourse had been inculcated into the participants. As part of the process to synthesise the data and develop meaning, some theory building was also attempted.

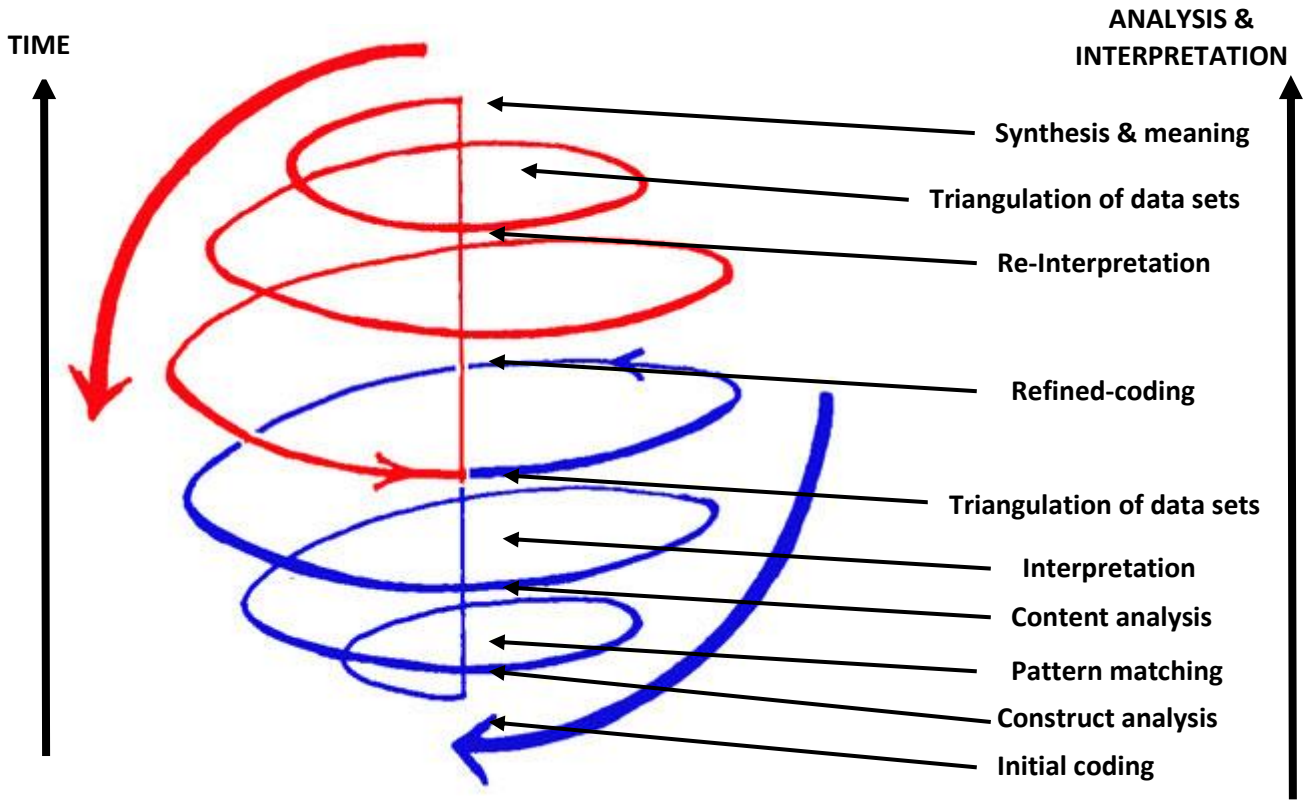

Figure 5 Modelling data analysis as a spiral (adapted from Cresswell 2007)

NVivo 9.2 was selected as a tool for the qualitative data analysis as it has been recommended by a number of authors on the subject (e.g. Cresswell 2007). *NVivo 9.2* was used primarily as a tool for storing, indexing and retrieving data and therefore conforms to Kelle's (1997) analogy of qualitative data software programmes as 'database technology' rather than 'analytical technology'.

Therefore, unlike the statistician who uses computer software to analyse numbers as raw data and converts them into various formats to represent 'analysis', the software

was used in this thesis mainly to manage large amounts of textual data. This methodology, therefore, conceptualises software as an 'enabler of analysis' rather than an analytical tool in its own right (Coffey and Atkinson 1996).

3.7 Data display and interpretation

The data have been displayed and interpreted within a basic structure of three data analysis chapters, i.e. Chapters 4-6. These chapters examined three dimensions relating to the case. Chapter 4 *UBS: A network of social practices* analyses the official representation of CDPP communicated through textual genres relating to managerial discourse. This managerial discourse is then compared with the discourse of the participants. Chapter 5 *Curriculum design: an interplay of rational and emergent processes,* displays the representation of the curriculum in *UBS* documents and also analyses participant perceptions of how the curriculum is constructed and for what purposes. Chapter 6 *The 'pedagogy of confinement'* analyses the participants' perceptions of their pedagogic practice. Chapter 7 is concerned with the meaning of the data in terms of the secondary research questions, the propositions 1-5 (p.64) and the significance of the data for prior theory or *analytic generalisation* (Yin 2009). Section 3.8 now turns to the issues of the validity and reliability of the data.

3.8. Validity and reliability

An essential difference between the positivist paradigm and the critical realist paradigm rests on the realist assumption that our understanding of human phenomena is only partially apprehensible and therefore fallible (Sayer 2010). This assumption leads to a methodological approach that takes account of the complexities of human phenomena e.g. by adopting heuristic conceptualisations of phenomena rather than law-like generalisations. Critical realism promotes a case study methodology precisely because it offers a vehicle for capturing the complexity of human processes and the contexts in which they take place.

Rather than trying to generalise the findings to a wider population (statistical generalisation), the critical realist seeks to generalise to extant theory (*analytic generalisation*) so as to confirm, disconfirm or add to knowledge about the external

world. Validity in this context, broadly aligns with Angen's (2000: 387) definition as concerned with 'a judgement of the trustworthiness or goodness of a piece of research'. It is to this issue that I now turn.

3.8.1 Construct validity

Construct validity is a methodological problem in case studies where the constructs acquire common labels to become essential devices for facilitating analysis, i.e. comparing the evidence from various sources to elicit meaning, understanding and causality. This is problematic because participants' constructs of key concepts or ideas may share the same language but diverge in meaning. To try and manage this problem, codes or labels are created relating to constructs which have emerged through a comparative analysis of the constructs used by participants themselves, between participants and documentary data and between participants and prior theory (triangulation). The process of achieving construct validity is complex and one of the most problematic (Yin 2009), yet vital in enabling the valid comparison of evidence from various sources in order to reach conclusions and build theory. The methodology for managing this problem could be described as follows: the approach to operationalising the constructs in this research is a 'relational' rather than a 'definitional' one. This means that the concepts are not being treated as literally identical but are 'closely related'.

The constructs being operationalised were defined or coded as clearly as possible from the outset and then refined as the data analysis progressed. Secondly, the case study protocols facilitated effective construct analysis in two ways. Firstly, by allowing me to probe for clarification of constructs through the interview process and secondly, by facilitating the triangulation of evidence in order to confirm construct validity. For example, assertions by a participant about constructs such as 'employability' were verified by probe interview questions, member checks and triangulation with textual data, e.g. *Programme Review* documents (Cresswell 2007). One further complexity is that the researcher who interprets the research data cannot be value free. Part of the methodology for reducing the risk of researcher bias is in the development of researcher reflexivity. One additional problem was the issue of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the participants. In interpreting the transcripts,

some serious reflection was given to the mediating effects of cultural diversity and the diversity of educational experiences (Appendix 4 p.213).

3.8.2 Reflexivity

Richardson and St. Pierre (2005: 963) offer the 3D image of a crystal as an alternative to the 2D image of the triangle (as in triangulation) to conceptualise an approach to validity. As they explain:

> Crystals are prism that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns and arrays casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of response-not triangulation but rather crystallisation.

Although the context for their thinking is poststructuralist ethnographic research, their concept of *crystallisation* offers a useful perspective to enhance the trustworthiness my research. In brief, the insight of *crystallisation* is to point to the complexities in the experiences, perceptions, realisations and personal epistemologies which lie behind the 'voices' of both the participants and the researcher. This has implications for the issues of validity which are bound up with the concept of reflexivity and its practice by the researcher. Richardson and St. Pierre (2005: 964) frame the act of reflexivity as a series of questions that the researcher asks himself/herself, for example:

> Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgements about the point of view? Does the author hold himself or herself accountable to the standards of knowing and telling of the people he or she has studied?

Although the voice of the critical realist researcher is the 'skilled researcher', some of the complexities of *crystallisation* can also be addressed by reflexivity within the critical realist paradigm. Critical realists would, for example, recognise that critical researchers are not 'value free' nor 'value laden' but 'value aware' (Healy and Perry 2000). Also, that although there is an external reality which is discoverable, there are also the multiple realities of individual subjects as they move through social

structures and processes. Given these assumptions, I, therefore, have tried to be reflexive in a variety of ways, acknowledging that the data and their analysis is a co-construction by the researcher and the participants. With trustworthiness in mind, I posed questions to myself during the research, using the *reflexivity framework* provided by Weis and Fine (2000) cited in Cresswell (2007: 180):

- *Should I write what people say or recognise that sometimes they cannot remember or choose not to remember?*
- *What are my political reflexivities that need to come into my report?*
- *Has my writing connected the voices and stories of the individuals back to the set of historic, structural and economic relations in which they are situated?*
- *How far should I go in theorizing the words of the participant?*
- *Have I considered how my words could be used for progressive, conservative and repressive social policies?*
- *Have I backed into the passive voice and decoupled my responsibility from my interpretation?*
- *To what extent is my analysis (and my writing) an alternative to common sense or the dominant discourse?*

In addition to this list I would add:

- *What is it that I don't know about what biases me?*

These questions were used to help to reflexively guide my analysis and interpretation of the data and are followed, to the best of my ability, in constructing the data analysis chapters.

3.8.3 Reliability

The issues of reliability and validity are overlapping. For example, reliability is being interpreted here as pertaining to an evaluation of how well the research design has been constructed and executed within the chosen paradigm (critical realism) which, therefore, impacts on the validity of the data interpretation and analysis. This means that techniques such as *member checks* are as intrinsic to the issue of reliability as they are to validity. My approach to achieving reliability was conceptualised as *reliability in data collection* and *reliability in data analysis.* These latter objectives were assisted by the construction of a *case study database* which

was used to organise all data relevant to the project e.g. interview transcripts, documentary data and a reflective journal (Appendix 5 p.214).

The positivist notion of reliability of how far this research design could be repeated by another researcher elsewhere to reach identical results, does not apply for all the reasons outlined above, though the same recorded methodology, if carefully designed and executed, could inform replicated studies which might produce similar findings. The following protocols were observed in order to enhance reliability in data collection*:*

- An audit trail was compiled detailing the overall chronology of the research including interview schedule together with key participant profile characteristics (Appendix 4 p.213).
- The participant sample was comprehensive and representative of academics who taught on the focal programmes.
- Participants were offered reassurance as to the integrity of the research through pre-interview conversations and participant information sheet, an informed consent form and transparent opportunities for member checking.
- The interview questions were replicated and largely consistent in each interview though critical and emerging issues relating to pre-designed topic areas were pursued in more detail as they emerged.
- The interviews were analysed immediately to identify areas of emerging interest and subsequently to account for reflection in the light of subsequent evidence.
- The interviews were digitally recorded, leading to complete records/transcripts of the interviews and the creation of an electronic database (NVivo 9.2).
- All data, including documentary data and interview transcripts were stored and analysed on NVivo 9.2. as part of the c*ase study database* (p.214) and used in the triangulation process.
- Examples and events referred to by participants were cross-referenced with their fellow-participants and written documentation (triangulation).

The following protocols were observed in order to enhance reliability in data analysis and interpretation:

- Data analysis was conducted in a systematic and iterative way (Figure 5 p.83) focusing on the progressive development of initial and refined codes.
- Construct analysis was carried out as part of the analysis and interpretation protocol (Figure 5)
- I applied the *reflexivity framework* (p.87) provided by Weis and Fine (2000) as a way of checking my analysis and interpretation.
- *Member checking* was applied where participants were given interview transcripts and asked for comments (Appendix 4 p.213).

Chapters 4-6 demonstrate how this research design was applied to the data collected from the semi-structured interviews and the documentary review.
It is to this part of the thesis that I now turn.

UBS: The recontextualisation of a pedagogic space - an explanatory note on the data analysis Chapters 4-6

The approach to data analysis adopted in this thesis is, to a large extent, based on the dialectical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) developed by Fairclough (2004, 2005, 2009) which is, itself, premised on the critical realist paradigm discussed in Chapter 3 and represented in Figure 3 (p.70) and Table 1 (p.66). According to Fairclough, discourse analysis assumes texts as subjective representations of structures or imaginaries of how social actors, as mediators, perceive reality. They are also conceptualised as 'objects' such as curricula or strategy documents which have the power to change structures (both discursive and material). CDA is, therefore, primarily concerned with analysing texts, from a transdisciplinary perspective, with a view to explaining how social practices, such as curriculum design and pedagogical practice in universities, manifest themselves and with what possible consequences (see Appendix 6 p.215). As Fairclough (2005: 924) explains:

> The objective of discourse analysis, on this view, is not simply analysis of discourse per se, but analysis of the relations between discourse and non-discoursal elements of the social, in order to reach a better understanding of these complex relations (including how changes in discourse can cause changes in other elements).

This approach is premised on a critical realist ontology (Bhaskar 1979) which views reality as stratifications or 'relational structures' comprised of both material and discursive structures which interact with each other in dialectics to cause events and shape phenomena (Figure 3). Insight into how these structures interact with each other is possible through discourse analysis working in conjunction with other theory. For example, the sociology of education (e.g. Young 2008, Bernstein 2000) and organisational behaviour (e.g. Mullins 2007, Stacey 2007) discussed in the literature review. Power relations reproduced within organisational structures are fore-grounded in CDA. This case study examines how power relations play out in *UBS* as a 'pedagogic space' and a 'site of conflict' (Bernstein 2000)

The data analysis is divided into three chapters: Chapter 4 *UBS: a network of social practices* focuses on how *UBS* is represented through 'internal texts' including the key *UBS* strategy document *Plan A 2010-13*. The aim here is to

analyse how *UBS* has been constructed in terms of *UBS* management's imaginaries of organisational processes, goals and strategy and compared to participants' constructions of their own professional identities. This chapter will evaluate the extent to which the values underpinning managerial discourses have been internalised by the participants. Chapter 5 *Curriculum design: rational and emergent processes* compares formal representations of the curriculum contained in *UBS* programme and course specifications with the perceptions of participants about how they construct the curriculum. Chapter 6 *The 'pedagogy of confinement'* is concerned with examining how participants enact the curriculum in their professional practice. Chapter 7 on *Conclusions and Recommendations* seeks to draw together the meanings expounded in the previous sections and focus explicitly on the research questions 1-4, propositions 1-5 (see p.63) and confirmation/disconfirmation of the prior theory discussed in Chapter 2. The main focus of the latter will be on theory relating to outcomes-based curricula in the 'prevocational' tradition (Pring 1995).

Chapter 4 *UBS*: A network of social practices

4.0 Introduction

An examination of texts emanating from *UBS* management partially reveals how managers 'imagine' organisational reality to be in the present and how they envision it in the future. These texts included *Plan A 2010-13* (henceforth referred to as *Plan A*), the *UBS* Executive committee minutes, the *SM* Departmental minutes and the *School Board* minutes. Sitting within these texts are assumptions and assertions which attempt to rationalise managerial processes in relation to power and control. In one dimension, *UBS* can be conceptualised as a pedagogic space where didactics are created and enacted. However, it is also constructed by managers as a managerial imaginary, rationalised or represented by formal structures and processes. Within these structures lie forms of power and control which order the relationships between actors in the network of social practices that is enacted within *UBS*. According to Fairclough (2005: 17):

> Organisational structures are hegemonic structures, structures which are based in and reproduce particular power relations between groups of social agents, which constitute 'fixes' with enduring capacity to manage the contradictions of organizations in ways which allow them to get on with their main business more or less successfully.

Bernstein's (2000: 5) definitions of power and control are applied in the following data analysis. Briefly, power is conceptualised as operating at the boundaries between different categories of actors to define and legitimise the nature of the boundaries themselves. Control is concerned with establishing legitimate discourse appropriate to the different categories of actors in the network. These assumptions also lie at the root of the conceptualisation of the *pedagogic device* discussed in Chapter 3 and applied in Chapter 6 below.

4.1 The formal representation of power and control

UBS can be abstracted, albeit simplistically, as a classic hierarchical organisational structure and a system of command and control with vertical lines of power and responsibility cascading down from the top to the bottom (Figure 6 below). This representation has been constructed from a variety of texts including *Plan A*, the *UBS* Executive Committee Minutes, the *SM* Department meeting minutes and the *UoS* website (Appendix 5 p.214).

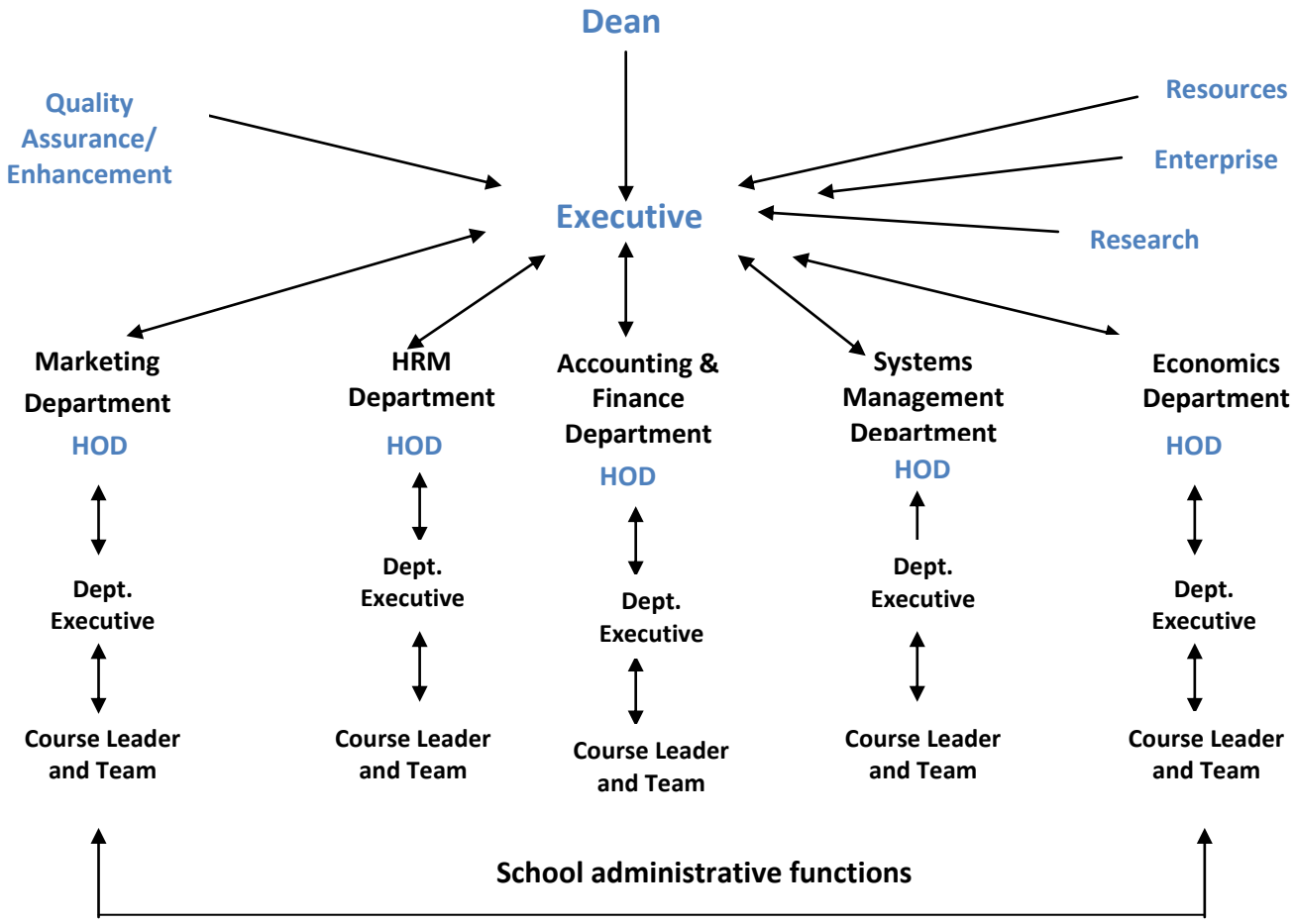

Figure 6 Simplified organisational structure of *UBS*

This structure is designed to rationalise the organisational processes for regulating income generation and expenditure, knowledge generation, the verification of student progression and final degree classifications in *UBS*. It is also a rationalisation of power and control (Bernstein 2000, Fairclough 2005). The

Executive is chaired by the *Dean* who represents the most powerful person in *UBS* and is composed of the heads of the five departments (HODs) together with the Directors of the 'strategic functions' such as 'resources', 'quality', 'research' and 'enterprise'. The *Executive* meets on a monthly basis to consider issues of 'strategic importance' such as school resources, internal projects and school-wide performance issues (*UBS* Executive committee minutes 2011-12). The management of the undergraduate programmes is formally undertaken by the five departments overseen by the *UoS* and *UBS* quality assurance function (*UBS-QA*). The latter operates under the leadership of a *Director* who chairs a quality committee comprised of 'quality officers' from the five departments.

The *Executive* is, therefore, constructed as the most powerful school-based entity responsible for the performance of the school and the formulation of *UBS* strategy and decision-making. The detailed implementation of strategy through the management of the degree programmes is carried out at departmental level by the five departments. Each department is managed by a *HOD* working with a small team of academics including the programme leader(s). At the bottom of this structure and system of power are the departmental *course teams* who interface directly with the students and are responsible for course design, teaching and assessment.

A number of observations on the possible significance of this organisational structure seem pertinent at this stage of the analysis. Firstly, although overseen by a common set of school-wide processes, the five *UBS* departments, to a large extent, operate in 'silos' (see Figure 6 p.93). Little daily physical or virtual contact is required to take place between academics across and within *UBS* departments as they set about 'delivering' their programmes. Further, little physical space is available within *UBS* to facilitate interaction between academics on an informal basis except the refectory which is shared with the students.

Secondly, the management of *UBS* is, in some respects, manifested as a 'discourse of power' emanating from the top and cascading to the bottom. This style of management is typical of the 'new managerialism', introduced into the higher education sector in the 1990s in the context of the New Public Management model, and which subsequently became universal. Deem and Brehony (2005: 220) describe the characteristics of 'new managerialism' in higher education as:

> ... emphasising the primacy of management above all other activities; monitoring employee performance (and encouraging self-monitoring too); the attainment of financial and other targets, devising means of publicly auditing quality of service delivery and the development of quasi-markets for services... Finally, 'new managerialism' is associated with new kinds of imposed external accountability, including the wide-spread use of performance indicators...

The latter point concerning external accountability is particularly relevant in the context of the *UBS* quality assurance function where HEFCE funding regulations (Higher Education Funding Council for England) and QAA *Codes of Practice* are recontextualised In *UBS*. It is also relevant in terms of the technologies of the quasi-market of higher education such as university league tables. The influence of these external texts is also discussed as part of the analysis which follows.

Apart from the role of the 'Dean' which is a traditional academic title, the other titles are drawn from the business world e.g. 'director', 'executive', 'leader' which explicitly signify managerial power and authority and are, therefore, symbolic of power relations. Discourse on *UBS* strategy is largely confined to the *Executive* and disseminated through *Plan A* as well as through the heads of department (HODs) in a variety of genres, including formal department meetings. It is also disseminated through the *School Board.* The *School Board* meets twice in a semester as the only formal meeting of all of the academics in *UBS* ('the faculty') and attendance is regarded as 'compulsory' unless it clashes with legitimate alternatives such as teaching. The *School Board* is always immediately preceded by a meeting of the *Executive* to develop a shared understanding of the agenda items for the *School Board*. The *School Board* lasts for approximately two hours and is chaired by the Dean.

The ostensible aims of the *School Board* are to disseminate School strategy or to report on cross-school projects. However, the *School Board minutes* suggest a monological discourse and the absence of critical debate. The discourse in these meetings as reported in the *School Board* Minutes (2011-12) can, therefore, be seen as a reification of the power differentials implied by the hierarchical organisational structure of *UBS* (Figure 6 p.93). These structures also contain the potential to construct power relations predicated on a top-down regulation of curriculum design and pedagogic practice (CDPP). Power relations can also be understood in Bernsteinian (2000) terms as the 'recontextualising rules' which regulate the

reification and enactment of pedagogic discourse in the 'pedagogic space' in which discourses compete for legitimisation. Fairclough (2004) similarly, expresses this as a power relationship which he terms 'governance', by which he means any activity within an organisation directed at regulating 'networks of social practice'.

The following section examines the internal textual relations contained in *Plan A* to evaluate in what form and with what possible consequences, managerial discourse is legitimised in *UBS*. Two issues are considered in this evaluation: Firstly, what does the strategy document, *Plan A,* suggest about the assumptions underpinning the aims and purposes of *UBS*? Secondly, how has management discourse represented by *Plan A* been recontextualised by the participants in their social practices and with what possible consequences?

4.2 'Seeing like a business'

A*s* a strategy document *Plan A* is, therefore, a set of imaginaries or projections of reality at a point in time and also an envisioned 'future state' based on an extrapolation of the past. It represents a discourse of deliberate planning constructed as a rationalised abstraction, removed from the emergent complex processes that are enacted in various domains within *UBS* such as CDPP (Stacey 2007). It also indicates the existential assumptions (what exists), propositional assumptions (what is or can be or will be) and value assumptions (what is good or desirable) of senior management in *UBS* (Fairclough 2004). Of note here is that *Plan A* represents the only text of this genre emanating from within *UBS* for the regular dissemination of school strategy, including teaching and learning strategy. For all intents and purposes, teaching and learning strategy formulation and dissemination reside almost exclusively in the wider domain of 'the university'.

Specifically, teaching and learning strategy falls within the remits of a Deputy Vice Chancellor, the Educational Development Unit (EDU) and the Human Resource Management (HRM) office whose roles are to disseminate 'good practice' on a university-wide basis. Participation by academics in EDU and HRM initiatives is deemed by management to be 'voluntary'. The governance of teaching and learning within *UBS* is framed almost exclusively as a 'quality' issue with the emphasis on compliance to regulations (e.g. *Programme Review* documents).

As Fairclough (2004, 2005) points out, strategy and policy documents usually exhibit a number of characteristics. For example, they are low on dialogicality as they are designed partly as a promotional genre to synthesise conflict and justify a set of decisions. This document is circulated to academic staff and presented at the *School Board*. Secondly, these documents are often expressed in terms of categorical assertions grounded in assumptions about organisational values and purpose.

Lastly, they are often premised on a 'problem-solution' relation where certain problems are stated or implied and the solution expressed as 'a logic of appearances' (Fairclough 2004) rather than offering explanatory accounts of how change will take place in terms of causal relations. *Plan A* is written in the style of a 'business unit plan' (Stacey 2007) which assumes 'market relations' as the dominant strategic concern of *UBS*. A content analysis reveals that *Plan A* is 4,193 words and 20 pages in length and contains the following references:

References	**Word count**
Curriculum	7
Pedagogy	0
Teaching	6
Learning	30
Research	29
Graduate attributes	6
Skills	2
Employability	2
Strategy	9
Income	14
Developing	15
Performance	9
Market (s)	24
Efficiencies	5
Student numbers / recruitment	19
Deliver	15

Table 2 Content analysis of UBS document Plan A 2010-13

The three highest recurring words in the *Plan A* are: 'learning' (30) ‘research’ (29) and ‘market’ (24). 'Learning' constitutes the most frequently recurring word in the document, with references to objectives such as the creation of 'a high quality student learning experience' and a 'stimulating learning environment'. However, most references to 'learning' are contextualised in the corporate language of income and performance. For example:

> In a market driven environment the University must also actively and effectively communicate and promote its services. This approach also calls for more flexible space management to create a professional and stimulating learning environment.

The discourse on 'research' is, itself, largely market or income-orientated as illustrated by the following example:

> Research revenues rose by X% [...*] in 2009/10 but more significantly the value of contracts awarded rose by YY% to £UVWK [...*]. The amount of research funding gained externally continues to be relatively small, however the rate of bidding activity has more than doubled over the past year and it is anticipated that the increased experience in bidding will increase contract award. The School will also focus on bidding for larger contracts as the experience and confidence of staff grows.

Research, as with other aspects of professional practice, is construed primarily as ‘income generation activity’ which contributes to the *UBS* balance sheet. The corporate language of the opening statement in section 2 of *Plan A* sets the tone for the remainder of the document:

> In the context of the Browne report and the changing funding model for HE the School will focus on curriculum developments that will differentiate it from competitors in a potentially price sensitive market and that will provide closer relationships with employers and professional bodies.

The propositional assumption expressed here is that that *UBS* is positioned in an increasingly competitive higher education market and that the solution to the ‘problem’ is to become more ‘market focused’ or ‘differentiated’. Here the

curriculum design is abstracted exclusively in marketing terms as a product or commodity being traded in a 'price sensitive market'.

Later in the document this commodification theme is reprised in the context of organisational efficiency e.g.

> We will also focus on operational efficiencies and so some programmes that have not demonstrated good recruitment potential will be discontinued.

The curriculum is defined by *Plan A* solely in transactional terms such as its capacity to win 'customers' from the competition. The collocation of 'curriculum developments' and 'closer relationships with employers and professional bodies' also connotes a market-driven rationale for curriculum design. Here, the legitimacy of the curriculum is being partly predicated on employer accreditation which offers additional market competitiveness.

The reference to the Browne Report (2010) at the beginning of *Plan A* signals a foregrounding of the new conditions for universities brought about by the huge shift of funding from the state to the student in the form of higher tuition fees. The dominance of market-orientated discourse in *Plan A* could be accounted for by these new financial imperatives. However, the strategy document: *Plan X 2009* is an identical genre which predates the Browne report (2010) but exhibits a similar structure, focusing on similar issues and with many of the same discursive characteristics. The following extract typifies the orientation of *Plan X 2009:*

> Enterprise will be a major development focus for the School over the next three years. We will focus on:
>
> - delivery of executive development products for the local financial services sector at XYX [...*]
> - development of the Centre [...*] to include innovation and involve other Schools in entrepreneurial teaching
> - establishing the UVW [...*] to offer development programmes to the global events management sector.

A flagship curricular strategy known as the *Graduate Attributes Initiative* (henceforth referred to as *GAI* see p.176) is fore-grounded on six separate occasions in *Plan A*. The *GAI* forms a centrepiece of the *UoS* document *UoS Learning and*

Teaching Strategy 2012-16 and is discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7. Essentially, the *GAI* is a promotional text or an *imaginary* designed to project an idealised *UoS* graduate. In the discourse on the *GAI* in *Plan A* students and academics have become depersonalised, excluded and objectified. The following extract from *Plan A* exemplifies these particular discursive features of the text:

> The School has set up a project team to embed graduate attributes into the curriculum across all programmes. The initial phase of reviewing current practice will be completed in December 2010. In January, the team, working with the Educational Development Unit, will review specific skills-based courses with the aim of embedding aspects of graduate attributes for delivery from September 2011. In the following two years, as specific programmes come up for review, explicit reference to graduate attributes will be made to further embed them into the curriculum.

The references to 'The School has set up a project team' and 'reviewing current practice will be completed' use nominalisation and passive voice with the dual effect of excluding both academics and students from the initial review process. In addition, responsibilities for decision making on these matters is obscured behind the anonymity of the 'project team'. The use of the verb 'embed' in this context objectifies graduate attributes as *some-thing* that will be 'embedded into the curriculum' or 'delivered'. In this way, a process of 'embedding' or 'delivering' is reduced to an abstracted outcome divorced from the social actors by whom and for whom the *Graduate Attributes Initiative* is to be enacted, i.e. the academics and the students.

The above extract from *Plan A* suggests asymmetrical power relationships in the proposed development of *Graduate Attributes.* For the students, the *Graduate Attributes* are framed as something that 'will happen' to them' or 'be delivered' to them. For the academics, it is a process in which they (the 'staff') will take part but whose role and power appears diminished as the process is directed by 'experts' located in the 'project team' and the Educational Development Unit (EDU). The following extract repeats the same pattern:

> We are implementing changes in the delivery of learning to make it more inquiry based and interactive. A learning enhancement task group has been set up to incorporate the latest learning techniques into course delivery.

Here, ironically, the 'delivery of learning' has been collocated with 'inquiry based and interactive' pedagogy. Again, experts, imagined as 'a learning enhancement task group' will incorporate the new pedagogy into courses, with the exclusion of academics clearly signalled. The above extract signals an assumption that academics are not experts in pedagogy, though the word pedagogy never appears in the document having being substituted by the words 'delivery of learning'.

The personal pronoun ‘we’ is used 25 times in *Plan A* which appears to signal inclusion. However, 26 references to ‘staff’ construe ‘staff’ as objects of passive clauses, framing academics as the passive recipients of commands to be performed. Their professional status, which could be labelled as 'academics', 'tutors' or 'lecturers', is 'in absentia' and substituted by the collective noun 'staff'. This implies a homogenous body of 'workers' indistinguishable from other university 'workers' such as university administrators or caterers. Academics do not appear in the discourse as agentic actors who are taking or will take action or as co-agents in decision-making and implementation. The following extract from *Plan A* again exemplifies these discursive characteristics:

> The Centre (...*]was relaunched and a new Director [...*]appointed. His focus will be on winning KTP contracts and developing management development courses. Some Business school staff will move to HH [...*] to bring together staff with experience in the consultancy and short course training area. This venue will be used as the hub for the centre to allowing it to market commercial services effectively. Staff have been identified for the move and plans are in place to implement the move over the next three months.

The sentence: ‘Staff have been identified for the move and plans are in place to implement the move over the next three months’ is a particularly striking example of semantic relations where an agent-less passive [institutional] voice is combined with imperatives or commands. The repetition of the modal verb 'will' in the above extract signals overt power differentials which assume that ‘staff’ have little say in the matter and are expected to comply with the decisions of a greater authority (i.e. senior management).

Taken together, the data on the organisational structure (Figure 6) and *Plan A* appear to represent *UBS* as a 21st century neo-Fordist enterprise (Boden and

Epstein 2006) whose systems are resonant of Frederic Taylor's (1911) theory of scientific management. Taylor's ideas found application in the assembly line techniques pioneered by Henry Ford's motor company based in Detroit (USA) at the beginning of the 20th century. Overt top-down management and centralised planning; a clear division of labour; standardisation of processes and products; prevalent systems of quality control and an emphasis on efficiency, outputs and targets are all neo-Fordist characteristics of managerial discourses in *UBS*. In *Plan A* there are 14 references to 'income'; 9 references to 'performance'; 5 references to efficiencies and 19 references to 'student numbers/ recruitment'. The following extract from *Plan A* encapsulates the focus on outputs and performance:

> At the end of the three-year planning cycle the School will have achieved the following targets:
>
> Graduate unemployment: less than X% [...*] across all departments.
> Overall student satisfaction: above Y% [...*] in all departments.
> Student retention for the School: above Z% [...*].
> Students attaining 1st or 2i degrees: above U% [...*]for all departments.
> Each department will have one part–time work-based learning programme.
> The executive development centre will contribute £Xm [...*] income to the School.
> Fifteen international partners will contribute a minimum of £X,000 [...*] each in income to the School.

References to online didactics through the *virtual learning environment* (*Moodle*) or marking (*Grademark*) are framed entirely in the discourse of efficiency. In a further imaginary *Plan A* envisions that:

> The School will have a reputation for delivering high quality programmes efficiently with a streamlined and focused offering that meets local and international market demands, and has a professional and vocational orientation.

The discourse in *Plan A* constructs *UBS* as a 'machine' (Morgan 2006) operating on the principle of organisational efficiency and led by teams of 'experts' to deliver products to 'customers in local and international markets'. It is also a construed as a space in which actors who are central to the organisation (academics and tutors) have been divested of agency and become passive objects of managerial processes. Online

courses and grading are valorised by *UBS* managers not for pedagogical reasons, but for their capacity to deliver programmes to greater numbers of customers at lower cost. The word ‘streamlined’ signifies ‘fast’, ‘focused’ and ‘efficient’ delivery of courses by minimising ‘resources’, including time, classrooms and presumably academics.

A set of value assumptions (Fairclough 2004) is suggested by the discourse of *Plan A* in terms of the organisational nature and the raison d'être of *UBS*. It is constructed primarily as a business designed to maximise revenue and minimise costs. It also assumes a technical-rationalist paradigm of ‘cause and effect’, ‘problem and solution’ (Schön 1987). Knowledge is commoditised and academics or 'staff' , whom the discourse metaphorically 'appends to the *UBS* machine', *will deliver* the solutions to the students/customers created by managers and experts and regulated by the quality assurance function.

The technical-rationalist nature of *UBS* management structures and processes may be partly explained by the powerful influences of government through educational reform such as the Education Act 2011, HEFCE and the QAA responsible for setting the management agenda in universities. *UBS* management structures and processes may also be understood as the recontextualising of discursive and material structures governed by the distribution rules set by the dominant discourse from the official recontextualising field (Figure 4 p.77). The following section 'emergent obsolescence' offers a brief explanation of how *UBS* managerial discourses have been colonised by the dominant discourse from the official recontextualising field (ORF, Figure 4) and why the dominant discourse has simultaneously been appropriated by *UBS* management.

4.3 Emergent obsolescence

A great deal of managerial discourse and activity at *UBS* is taken up with organising responses to the conditions created by government policy agendas such as 'employability' (Boden and Nedeva 2010) and the ‘market frameworks’ of league tables, tuition fees and competition for research funding (Naidoo *et al* 2011). A large proportion of managerial discourse also appears concerned with the 'management of appearances' (Scott 1998). For example, *UBS* managers appear to be preoccupied with the *National Student Survey* (NSS) which is cast as a critical

event because of its perceived influence on the strength of the *UBS* 'brand' as reflected in its league table position.

Great efforts are put into enhancing student satisfaction with 'Improved Student Satisfaction' pinpointed in *Plan A* as one of the six 'major strategies' for the achievement of performance targets. 316/4193 words are devoted to the issue of the NSS and student satisfaction whilst 307/4193 are on 'recruitment, retention and student performance'. *UBS* management processes are, by necessity, shaped externally by HEFCE funding mechanisms linked to student recruitment and QAA regulations. *QAA Codes of Practice* and regulations must be met in the management of programmes, such as the implementation of robust processes for the review and validation of programmes and academic awards. QAA periodically audit *UoS* to evaluate how well these processes are being managed and issues a 'confidence verdict' which QAA (2013: Glossary C) describes as:

> A judgement by a QAA review team that 'confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of an institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards and/or of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students' (two separate judgements for standards and learning opportunities). Alternatively, the team might express **limited confidence** or **no confidence** in these issues. (2)

Failure to comply with QAA standards will call forth further QAA measures and more frequent inspections. At its most catastrophic, failures of compliance to HEFCE and QAA requirements can severely impact on funding as spectacularly illustrated by the case of London Metropolitan University financial crisis post 2008 (Attwood 2010). Also of note, in passing, is that the QAA inspection regime in higher education is essentially an auditing exercise entirely focused on managerial and administrative processes. It does not, for example, encompass the direct observation of pedagogic practice as in the case of its counterpart *Ofsted* in the compulsory sector. In terms of Bernstein's (2000) *distributive rules*, this exemplifies the power that government agencies have in setting the 'outer limits of legitimate discourse' or 'ideological boundaries' for *UBS*.

(2) The words underlined and emboldened appear this way in the original text.

This influence may also, therefore, impact on the way that CDPP is constructed in the pedagogic space (*UBS*), particularly in relation to their 'purpose'. It could, however, reasonably be argued that 'organisational survival' is a legitimate concern given the current market conditions which appear to be rendering obsolete the business model that the *UoS* developed in the 1990s. In particular, the government shift from a widening participation agenda to increased stratification. The rise in tuition fees in 2011 combined with the mass graduate unemployment of the 'Great Recession' post 2008, appear to be potentially 'life threatening' for *UBS*. This is because of the potentially severe impact on demand from non-traditional home students, a major segment of the *UBS* undergraduate cohort, who are now being forced to re-evaluate the opportunity costs of going to university.

For example, these conditions have brought into sharp focus the relative value of the 'graduate premium' in lifetime earnings in a market of mass graduate unemployment (HECSU 2012). Further, the genericist undergraduate programmes which dominate the *UBS* curriculum appear, increasingly, to belong to an era when graduate unemployment was low and the narrative of graduate 'flexibility' for a buoyant labour market seemed credible. It is now a recurring theme in the dominant discourse from the official recontextualising field (Figure 4 p.77) that success in the graduate employment market is now more closely bound up with the brand strength of the university (Chapleo 2010). In these new market conditions, it seems logical that external economic and financial pressures have become fore-grounded in the discourse of *UBS* management.

However, whilst *UoS* is now attempting to reposition its brand to a 'top 50 university' (*UoS Strategic Plan* 2012-17), it remains unclear as to what extent the new market conditions have fundamentally altered organisational processes and managerial style within *UBS* in recent years. Even in the 'boom years' of the 1990s and early 21st century, *UBS* management faced the problem of operating in the same tight regulatory environment together with the combined pressures of the rapid recruitment of large numbers of non-traditional students and providing programmes on the basis of limited human and physical resources.

However, it seems probable that, even in the previously buoyant market conditions, these pressures significantly shaped the current style and substance of *UBS* management practice. Indeed, it could be argued that central government discourse on the university-knowledge economy nexus over the last thirty years, has

continually been construed as a rational response to the 'threat from global economic competition' and the relative weakness of the UK's economic performance. Dearing (1997: Section 4.15) provides an illustration of this discourse:

> The relevance of education to economic survival has been recognised by successive governments over the last century and has been a major influence on their education and training policies. With the global approach to production and service provision, the factors which will determine the economic future of the UK will be the quality, relevance, scale, and cost-effectiveness of its education and training.

The rationale for the recontextualising of organisational structures and processes in *UBS* appears, therefore, in certain fundamental respects, to have remained constant over the last sixteen years in response to pressures to compete in an atmosphere of perpetual economic-financial crisis. In other words, *UBS* has been colonised by the 'discourse of economic survival', whose language has also been appropriated by *UBS* management to frame CDPP as 'performance driven by external contingencies' (Bernstein 2000: 70).

Whatever the impact of recent changes in the 'terms of trade' for *UBS*, a key issue in this thesis is the impact of formal representations of *UBS* in managerial discourse on the participants' professional identities. More specifically, how far do the values and perceptions of participants converge with or diverge from the managerial discourse exemplified by *Plan A*? The following analysis of academic professional identity begins by briefly focusing on the management rationale for the formation of the department of *SM* in 2006.

4.4 The creation of the department of *SM* in 2006: a case of emergent planning?

The focal programmes were managed within the department of *SM* which was created in 2006 to add to the existing four departments (Figure 6 p.93). Nine out of the twenty-four participants worked in *UBS* when the department of Systems Management (*SM*) was created (Appendix 4 p.213). Of these nine participants, only *Joe* and *Kevin* as senior managers (both based in *SM* and current members of the *Executive*) claimed to possess any direct knowledge of the rationale for the creation of *SM*. According to *Joe*, the creation of *SM* was driven by the former Head of School as part of a formal reorganisation of the departmental structure of *UBS*. *SM*

was partly formed by transferring academics from two other departments. Some academics with operations management backgrounds were transferred to *SM* from a department called 'marketing and operations' together with others who were perceived to be 'strategists' from the department of 'management'. The disciplinary core of *SM* was described by *Joe* as academics with a 'systems type' background such as logistics and information technology (IT) but that, overall, it fundamentally lacked coherence. Joe described it as a...

> ... 'doesn't fit anywhere else' department. That's the way it's seen. You've got the IT people, you've got the strategists, operations, you've got Dr P who's transport studies, you've got logistics, supply chain, remodelling, sustainability. All thrown into one department.

Of note here is the hyperbolic quality of *Joe's* language and in particular his use of the vivid colloquialism 'All thrown into one department'. This implies both the diminished agency of the academics being 'thrown' somewhere they might not have wished to go. It also assigns an approach to management decision making which might be labelled as 'irrational' or 'pragmatic'. Again, according to *Joe*, two academics found themselves in *SM* with no logical connection to a 'systems type' background:

> In a way, it [SM] always felt like it was a dumping ground for those that we don't quite know where else they belong.

The use of the verb 'felt' suggests a non-rational evaluation by *Joe*. Secondly, the use of the personal pronouns 'it,' 'we' and 'they' once again signals power differentials in which the agency of academics ('they') is diminished and the power of management ('we') to 'dump' them appears omnipotent. *Joe* made the point that because of the prevalence in *SM* of academics with certain types of specialist knowledge, such as 'advanced statistics', academics from *SM* serviced other departments disproportionately. *Joe* extrapolated from this that because *SM* was seen by 'others' as a service arm of their own department, this further weakened *SM*'s departmental identity from the perspective of academics from other departments.

Kevin stated at the outset that he was not 'closely involved' in the creation of *SM* but as a senior manager in *SM* subsequently he 'could reflect on it and think about what we have and speculate on a rationale behind that'. *Kevin* stated that:

> Supply chain management is one discipline of management; it's again whilst you get people who are involved in logistics management, purchasing supply, again not quite the same kind of identity. So we do suffer from that, but that's not to say that the individual courses and programmes within the department aren't coherent.

In this extract, *Kevin*'s language becomes opaque and apologetic. For example, opaque as in 'we suffer from that' (what?) and apologetic in defending the department's coherence in the last sentence. Kevin's post-rationalisation focused on the discourse he could remember, much of which related to the dynamics of the pre-2006 *UBS* departments. For example, he claimed that the 'old management department' ... was getting a little bit too big'. This manifested itself in a disproportionate number of staff and that it contained two 'big undergraduate business degrees' which would 'benefit from being managed in separate departments'. *Kevin* also said that a department of *SM* was 'logical' in the sense that it facilitated both a research and professional focus not available in the pre-S*M* arrangement. *Kevin* summed this up in the following way:

> The next level rationale or reason for it could be around research clusters, and that certainly was a, I think somebody might have had that view in the past, that each department should have a research cluster. And we had supply chain management. So each department's got something there. And that's our one. And if we try and identify a particular vocation, we could focus on the Institute of Purchase and Supply, Institute of Transport and Logistics. So they are vocations which we could sort of reflect.

However, even as a post-rationalisation by a senior manager in *SM* who was not directly involved in the creation of *SM, Kevin's* discourse displays a degree of incoherence and uncertainty. For example, the use of hedges such as 'could be' , 'I think' and 'sort of' appear to signal a lack of clear thinking or hesitation. Similarly, the sentence 'so each department's got something there' appears as an obscure rationalisation of the organisation of research in *UBS* objectified as 'something'.

The following extract from *Kevin* in answer to a question on the influence of various cross-pressures on curriculum design, provides further illustration of these discursive characteristics:

> Those are all resource issues, you know down to staff availability, staff skill sets, room availability or whatever. All of those shape the curriculum. But I would suggest they've always been an issue in any university, and in the past curriculum development it happened, it was going on. But an awful lot of universities allowed it to be much more laissez faire in terms of 'oh this person happens to have an interest in the motor industry, and because they like cars,' and next thing you know they've developed a course and a module in marketing in the motor industry or whatever. ..so the overall programme of study was less thought through then maybe than it is now, partly because it was shaped by the academics and their personal interests.

In this extract *Kevin* uses *intertexuality* (Appendix 6 p.215) to justify the way that *UBS* develops its curriculum now is better than it was in the past and at 'other universities'. The references to 'any university' and 'an awful lot of universities' makes claims to an abstracted external reality which may or may not have existed, but which is asserted to emphasise the authority of his claims and signal a difference with the current *UBS*. The difference is defined as curriculum design based on 'laissez faire' or the 'personal interests' of academics, which are assigned a negative connotation, and the positive situation that currently pertains in *UBS* where programmes are 'thought through'. Yet even this latter assertion is diluted by the hedge 'maybe' signalling that *Kevin* is uncertain. The discourse from *Joe* and *Kevin* on the rationale for the creation is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it signifies the recurring characteristic in managerial discourse of an apparently normative view of power differentials, where the agency of academics and the students appear to be absent.

Secondly, it signals incoherence and distance in matters pertaining to curriculum design. In terms of distance, this may translate as the commodification of CDPP by framing it as 'something', an object to be managed, rather than a 'living experience' created through generative processes. This is a theme that will be developed further in the Chapters 5 and 6. This discussion now turns to the participants' perceptions of their professional identity. A point of analysis is to compare the values and assumptions of managerial discourse with those explicit or implicit in the participants' discourse.

4.5 Convergent values /divergent constructs: influences on academic identity formation

The interviews generated data which indicated a variety of constructs of professional identity, expressed both explicitly and implicitly by *UBS* participants. (3) For example, there were brief explicit statements of professional identity made by the participants in response to a question on the topic. The 24 participants stated their identities as follows:

Identity descriptors	**Number of participants**
'Researcher' as the primary descriptor and added 'Lecturer' as an secondary descriptor	11
'Lecturer' as the primary descriptor and added 'researcher' as a secondary descriptor	4
'Practitioner-lecturer' as a combined descriptor	2
'Senior manager'	2
'Teacher-researcher' as a combined descriptor	1
'Academic-consultant' as a combined descriptor	1
'Lecture-technologist-programme manager' as a combined descriptor	1
'Pedagogic engineer'	1
An 'equal blend of lecturer-researcher-manager' as a combined descriptor	1

Table 3 Content analysis of participant identity descriptors

In what is, in many respects, a diverse group of academic professionals, some dominant objective characteristics of the participants' academic profiles are apparent. For example, there is a high percentage of non-UK nationals (58%) and a high percentage of participants who had been with *UBS* for less than five years (62%). Only 3/24 participants had worked at *UBS* for more than 10 years and two of these were senior managers. Although, in terms of academic disciplines there was a predominance (58%) of traditional 'hard' subjects such as engineering and Information technology (IT), a total of 12 different academic disciplines were stated by the participants in the sample (Appendix 4 p.213).

(3) Professional identity in this context can be broadly defined as the values underpinning professional practice (Harley 2002, Henkel 2005, Nixon 1996, Randle and Brady 1997, Winter 2009) discussed in section 2.2.1 p.30.

This profile of the *UBS* participants represents a complex assemblage of disciplinary backgrounds and personal epistemologies typical of business schools (Macfarlane 1998). In terms of attitudes and behaviours, the review of the *BA Business Studies* (BABS) programme in 2011-12, in some respects, serves as a microcosm for how CDPP is constructed in *UBS*. As a consequence of the BABS programme review in 2011-12, the decision was taken at senior management level to replace BABS with a new *BSc Business* programme in 2012-13. According to the new programme's designers, the decision was based on four main factors: firstly, it was felt that recruitment to BABS was in a slow decline which needed to be addressed; secondly, the employment statistics for BABS graduates (DLHE) revealed high levels of graduate unemployment and high percentages of graduates in non-graduate jobs; thirdly, a random survey of 6000 graduate level jobs by the programme leader found that most graduate jobs fore-grounded numeracy in their specifications and lastly, it was felt that BSc Business would attract higher calibre applicants and differentiate itself from the rest of the *UBS* portfolio of generic business programmes. As *Zita* explained:

> ... One thing that 'J' mentioned today in the meeting is to improve employability. And based on all the data that we have got in the past and in the past 3 or 5 years, the data might not be the most accurate to reflect reality, however it shows something over there like students are doing relatively non-professional jobs. They're working in sales; they're working in reception... So one main thing that I and a group of job shoppers, what we have done is we've researched over 6,000 job advertisements from the internet, and their job descriptions. Understanding what they are after from graduates. 70% of them are after highly numerate graduates who can help them to plan business... to be able to deal with data, to be able to help them plan business and development business plans for the future. So that's why we changed from BA to BSc, because BSc is perceived to be more scientific.

The introduction of *BSs Business* is illustrative of some of the dominant patterns of discourse found in *UBS* in relation to CDPP. For example, the centrality of *employability* in curriculum design was broadly shared by participants. 21/24 participants fore-grounded *employability* as the core purpose of didactics in UBS. In this respect, participant discourse appeared to reflect the extrinsic values explicit in *Plan A.* However, whilst evidence of value-congruence was evident in this regard,

little consensus appeared to exist around what precisely this meant in practice. 'Employability' was constructed variously by participants as: giving students 'business skills' ; giving students knowledge of the 'real world'; improving students' CVs; making students numerate; preparation to be a 'manager'; preparation for management in a 'large corporation'; developing 'real competencies'; preparation for management in a 'small business'; preparation to be an 'entrepreneur' ; having accreditation; possessing 'useful knowledge that employers want'; and developing 'attitudes that employers want'. This is a point that I will return to in more detail in the analysis of pedagogic practice in Chapter 6.

Secondly, the new *BSc Business* programme was entirely designed by three colleagues, one of whom was the BABS programme leader and the other two being senior managers. Only after the new programme had been created in terms of ethos and general course design, were course leaders (exclusively) invited into the process to flesh out course content and specifications. However, whilst some dissonance might have been expected on the part of participants, resulting from their exclusion from the BABS review process, little appeared in the interviews. The responses found in the participant discourse on this topic were manifested as a mix of silence, compliance or apparent indifference, with the almost complete absence of a dissenting voice. One exception was Peter. Asked what adjectives he would use to describe the introduction of the BSc Business programme in 2012-13 he responded:

> Rushed. Necessitated. So I'm saying rushed but I'm not saying the pressure came only within the department about time limits, it came because of our annual review and QA procedures, and it wasn't me who was necessitating this. It was the university deadlines, it was the review of the programme.

The other participants did not challenge the review process either in response to a question on the topic or at points in their interviews when the theme of programme design was being discussed. Yet, whilst low levels of dissent on exclusion from the review process and high value-congruence appeared in relation to the market orientation of programme design, participants frequently expressed high levels of dissonance in relation to the enactment of didactics. In sharp contrast to their 'public transcripts' espousing commitment to their professional roles as 'lecturers', discourse

analysis of the interview data would suggest various levels of the disesteeming of teaching by the participants. It is to this phenomenon that I now turn (4).

4.6 'I am just a cog in this wheel' : the concept of 'dissociation'

Margaret, describing her modus operandi in professional practice, at one point applied a 'machine' metaphor in the following way:

> Because I am just a cog in this wheel, my attitude to any course that I'm involved in, my attitude is the best I can do is to widen their experience.

The expression 'I am just a cog in this wheel' appears to signal a feeling of diminished agency, in the form of perceived powerlessness or disconnection from the organisation or both. Dissatisfaction with their teaching experience at *UBS* was expressed by 22/24 participants in a variety of forms which I have conceptualised as *dissociation* (see Table 4 below). The *Oxford English Dictionary* online defines 'dissociation' as: 'the action of disconnecting or separating or the state of being disconnected'. It is also described as a theory in psychiatry involving the: 'separation of normally related mental processes, resulting in one group functioning independently from the rest'. In the context of chemistry, dissociation is defined as ' ... the splitting of a molecule into smaller molecules, atoms, or ions, especially by a reversible process'. The notion of splitting off into smaller atoms is explored below as a metaphor for professional self-identity (Giddens 1991). The notion of it being 'a reversible process' will be returned to in the recommendations in Chapter 7. *Dissociation*, in this context, refers to patterns of discourse in which participants consistently suggested behaviours linked to 'disconnection' or 'splitting away' from *UBS* as a community of practice (Wenger 2006).

(4) As referred to in Chapter 2 (p.27) 'public transcript' (Scott 1998) refers to discourse used in the public domain for the 'management of appearances' as opposed to private transcripts which refers to discourse made 'off stage'.

Table 4 below presents a typology of dissociation based on the data. Each of these types will be examined in turn.

	Types	Examples
1	**Isolation**	*Reported examples of low levels of collegiality such as the absence of team work and course planning*
2	**Alienation**	*Feelings of exclusion or powerlessness in decision making on aspects of professional practice*
3	**Disengagement**	*Inability or unwillingness to articulate aspects of professional practice*
4	**Cynicism**	*Bemoaning student behaviour*

Table 4 Typology of dissociation amongst participants at UBS

Type 1 Isolation

Trevor, who described himself as a 'pedagogic engineer' and who held a place on the *Executive*, appeared, by exception, scathing in his views about attitudes to teaching amongst other *UBS* academics:

> Many of them will use the research thing to actually get out of teaching. The first thing I see, I've seen it here, the first thing people ask is can I do less teaching and more research? Well, why?

The objectification of research as 'the research thing' suggests a negativity towards research activity which the participant also describes as:

> ...basically intellectual masturbation. I mean people turn the handle to get their articles out of a dataset, they do what they have to do; they know how to play the game. The point is that people don't read it or use it, which is most of the stuff... I just don't see the point.

Other participants referred to a lack of collaboration or collegiality amongst colleagues in terms of joint planning and the teaching of shared courses. For example, *Daria,* a young inexperienced lecturer, expressed feelings of isolation in regard to a year 2 course that she had been asked to teach. *Daria* reported a number of issues that had troubled her in her first year at *UBS*. These included a lack of

briefing by her course leader as to the ethos and organisation of the course and its context in the programme. For example, she could not understand why a simulation game used in a year 1 course was repeated in her year 2 course on the same programme. *Daria* also described how academics on the same teaching team regularly communicated contradictory messages:

> The main thing will be a lack of consistency. When you go for instance, when you are in the class and you hear students saying that 'the other tutor said this,' and you're now aware of that issue, you haven't heard about it, and you feel like you are not connected with the rest of the team. Or there is a lack of communication or misunderstandings. That makes it a bit difficult... I think if we can meet at least twice a term, that would be a huge help.

Brian said that, in terms of the Year 1 course *Personal Development Planning* (PDP), that academics were not prepared to commit themselves to teaching the course properly. As to their lack of apparent motivation *Brian* conjectured that:

> ... some of it may be down to academic-based tutors who perceive it as some fairly basic practical skills type course. And therefore, well it's a little bit beneath what I teach, and there could be that mentality. Some of it could just be they find teaching first year students sometimes quite demanding, so therefore the extra demands of that role may be invasive of their time.

Implicit in *Brian's* assessment is that 'academic-based' tutors, using the pronoun 'they' to signal difference, were either incapable of or unwilling to commit to teaching PDP. *Brian* repeatedly described himself in passionate language as a 'practitioner coming into academia':

> Practitioner, really, coming into academia. So it's bringing the experience of a predominantly business-related career into the university and environment, and then developing as an academic from there.

Brian's practitioner identity was continually reinforced during the interview in terms of how, in his teaching, he was able to introduce students to the 'real world' , a phrase he repeated seven times. Though *Brian* stated that academic-based tutors were

'equally important' , the inference was that 'academic-based' tutors might be more concerned with theoretical knowledge or academic research than tutoring students in practical matters. In this regard, both *Brian* and *Trevor* appear to exemplify the identity schism identified by Macfarlane (1997, 1998), Harley (2002) and Winter (2009) where academic professional identities divided along distinct 'academic' / 'practitioner' lines in relation to CDPP. A point I shall return to in Chapter 6. For some academics, disassociation was also caused by feelings of exclusion or powerlessness, which I have termed *type 2 alienation*.

Type 2 Alienation

Six participants cited the problem of 'inheritance' of courses as a causal factor in poor teamwork and course planning. This was the practice of timetabling academics to teach on or lead courses as *a fait accompli* rather than by negotiation. Several participants expressed resentment that they had been timetabled for courses, sometimes at short notice, in which they had neither experience nor an epistemological base. As *Noel* reported:

> Well actually I was not asked the question 'what would you like to teach?' I was just given a timetable.

Frank described how he:

> ...basically took over the courses like, well it was sort of they had the revalidation, it was sort of like a week or ten days before, and I had to sort of really do it quickly without having the experience of teaching the course.

Peotric appeared to infer that de-motivation of both academics and students could be a possible consequence of the 'inheritance problem':

> Of course it depends certainly on lecturers who are well trained in constructivism, could probably deliver many courses which they may not even have a high interest level in and still keep the students interest levels, which it's still very difficult to do.

Another practice in the organisation of didactics reported by two of the participants, was the overloading of course leaders with disproportionate responsibility for managing their courses. The course leader was responsible for producing the course guide, designing the course structure, organising the course schedule, devising the assessment regime and, in most cases, delivering most, if not all, of the lectures (*Course Guides 2011-12*, *Course Specifications 2011-12*). Other academics on a course were mainly assigned to 'cover' [*Brian's* word] tutorials which were based on a *Tutorial Handbook*, again produced by the course leader, which contained the weekly tutorial activities. When the course was finished, the course leader was also responsible for collating the course grades. These, together with student feedback and other miscellaneous items, were presented by the course leader in a report to an end of year course review meeting (*Subject Assessment Panel* or *SAPs*), also attended by the external examiners (*Academic Regulations for Taught Awards 2012*).

It is contended in this thesis that these asymmetrical contributions to the teaching and management of courses together with a disproportionate allocation of workload points (*Workload points formula UBS*) may have compounded some participants' feelings of dissociation. This suggests, for example, that, in terms of workload allocation, academics are disincentivised to becoming involved in the courses beyond teaching the weekly tutorials. *Rose* described how coherence was maintained in the teaching of a course for which she is course leader and provided a vivid illustration of how these asymmetrical relationships might work:

> They [academics] are adopting what I spell out to them, that this is how you deliver the course... through my briefs to them. They do not have to produce any materials. All materials are only mine, and they have to... follow strictly on that. I do give them freedom for the teaching style, but they have to fulfil the core things that I want them to fulfil.

Other forms of alienation included participants' feelings of powerlessness in terms of designing courses. This found expression in relation to the tight control which the Quality Assurance function (*UBS-QA*) was perceived to exercise on course innovation. *Dennis* typifies a perception held by some participants of being restricted by *UBS-QA* regulations:

> It's a matter of procedures; it's a matter of what kind of power we have in our own hands. For example if you want to change a course that will be taught in February 2013, you need to make the changes a year before.

Dennis went on to point out the irony of teaching a dynamic subject like business within an administrative 'straightjacket':

> Yes, but during this year there might be changes in what we said before, business is a very dynamic environment. You cannot, if you are not allowed to change and get things updated or even the title, update the title of your course whenever you want, whenever you believe you can justify this change. This is something very, very important; we need to become more agile. We need to become more agile and we need to have more power in decision making as teachers. Because I have a feeling that we have less power.

Whilst an overwhelming majority of participants were able or willing to discuss their professional practice in terms of CDPP, some were not. This category of dissociation is labelled *type 3 disengagement*.

Type 3 Disengagement

Compared to types 1 and 2, type 3 dissociation through *disengagement* appeared to exist but is more difficult to communicate in this context (5). Again, the application of Fairclough's (2004) principle of 'in absentia' was used to try and capture the meaning of disengagement evidenced in the data. There was participant discourse which suggested low levels of awareness of the content of a programme beyond the course that they were teaching. Some participants could not, for example, comment on how or if the courses in the programmes were structured in terms of integration or progression. Two participants were unsure of whether students were required to have passed any pre-requisite courses to take the courses that they were teaching. In mitigation, three of the participants who exhibited type 3 dissociation, had been working at *UBS* for less than two years and in one case less than one year.

(5) For reasons of sensitivity I have completely anonymised all references to specific participants to the point of not indicating their pseudonyms.

All three had relatively little teaching experience, with employment profiles that could be described as 'career researchers,' which reflected considerable time spent on post- doctoral research projects. Two participants, each with several years of teaching experience in higher education, reported that they could not really 'see the point' of the BABS programme per se. One of these participants stated explicitly that she would not recommend young people to take BABS as a first degree, because she questioned whether it was 'really applicable to anything in the real world'. The last category of dissociation is *type 4 cynicism*, to which I now turn.

Type 4 Cynicism

All 19 participants who were asked questions concerning 'student attitudes to learning' at *UBS* responded negatively. *Jack* recounted his experience of teaching year 1 students 'three or four years ago' and being 'appalled at the level of students that were coming in'. *Trevor* bemoaned student attendance at lectures, describing it in the following way:

> Attendance at lectures here is shocking. And then you ask the question they find it difficult to get here or whatever else, well actually inspired and motivated students by and large tend to attend. If they're not inspired they vote with their feet, they don't say anything, they've learnt the game, and that's what they do.

Trevor's use of the metaphor 'learnt the game' to describe students behaviour is a theme taken up in more detail in Chapter 6 (p.160). Three participants described students as 'lazy'. *Nelson* typified participant cynicism about the state of student learning on undergraduate courses describing how:

> A number of them [students] give the impression that studies are a second you know pastime, something that they do because they don't have anything more interesting. I mean for example you would find them texting their friends, always on the phone, as if there is something important going on!

Edith described the students as 'passive' in tutorials:

> It's a very passive learning. So there's not much interaction is going on. Depending on the tutors of course, they're trying, we're trying our best to interact with our students and so on. But it's not enough, I

> really don't think that's enough... they are not demonstrating what they're learning. It's just a one way, it's passive learning.

Dave felt that approximately 20% of students on his Year 3 course were 'not engaged'. *Bruce* thought that students were 'not being pushed hard enough' in their programmes and that many were 'not good students'. Both *Maria* and *Daria* expressed frustration and incredulity concerning the lack of student engagement in tutorials. *W*hen asked why she thought students were disengaged *Maria* replied:

> I don't have this answer for you, I'm sorry. To be honest, it's something that I really don't understand, so every time I enter a classroom and I see this kind of behaviour, I really don't understand why. It's really something so far away from me that I cannot understand why. I see them sitting there wasting their time like this because… I don't know.

Other participants offered a variety of explanations as to the low level of engagement of students with learning. *Daria* and *Bruce* suggested that other tutors may not be interesting the students enough because they were not contextualising the theory and or not contextualising the theory by reference to up to date examples or 'stories'. This latter view was shared by *Trevor* who bemoaned the quality of case studies being used on the basis that they were either 'out of date' or ignored SMEs or were just 'uninteresting'. *Rose* said that the lack of student engagement was caused by wider cultural factors linked to students being set inappropriate expectations about learning prior to coming to university:

> The culture, everywhere. Just achieving a small thing and they are told 'excellent! You've done very well.' Now when I hear that phrase 'you've done very well,' I question it. What does it mean that you have done very well?

Harrison voiced incredulity about the number of students who appeared simply unaware of the importance of research as part of their learning. He inferred that this might be attributed to poor pedagogy:

> Well I would say that some students have shown that awareness, first of all. I would say that my comment is more that there are too many that haven't, I've come across too long a tail. I'm not generalizing and

> saying ‘the students don’t know anything about research,’ that’s not the case because some are.... But there’s a long tail of students who just don’t seem to have either cottoned on or been encouraged to see their studies as capable of being informed by even dipping into the occasional issue of the Journal Management Studies, which for any degree student in Management or Business and Management has to be fundamental or a prerequisite.

It is contended in this thesis, that a culture of didactics may exist within *UBS* which could promote a vicious circle of academic dissociation and low student engagement. The underlying causes of this dynamic are located in the complexity of discourses surrounding CDPP and professional identity discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.7 Conclusion: atomisation as a state of professional identity

One of the most striking paradoxes in *UBS's* organisational culture is that, despite the overt power differentials signified in the hierarchical structure, managerialist processes and managerial discourses, participants are granted certain powerful forms of professional autonomy and development. Unlike the disciplinary techniques employed in many modern organisations (Stacey 2012), academic workers in *UBS* still remain, to a significant degree, in control of their working time. For example, according to participants, it is custom and practice for academics, having met the demands of teaching, compulsory meetings and nominal 'office hours' to work for long periods of time beyond the campus, ostensibly free of direct surveillance.

Research, especially applied research, is valorised in managerial discourse and bidding for research grants is communicated by management as a highly esteemed activity (e.g. *Plan A*, *UoS Strategic Plan 2012-17*). For example, significant resources, such as dedicated support units, are devoted to the training of academics in the skills of bidding for research grants. Participants are permitted to 'buy themselves' out of teaching to conduct funded projects.

Research and publications are rewarded in a formula whereby all participants can be granted up to 20% of workload devoted to research activity. Participants are also encouraged, through generous funding, to present academic papers at UK and International research conferences (*UBS Conference database*). In terms of continuing professional development (CPD), all *UBS* participants receive 100% funding and workload allowance in the pursuit of PGCHE and doctoral programmes

within *UoS*. Therefore, in terms of power and control, a dichotomy appears to arise where *UBS* participants are highly regulated by quality assurance in certain organisational domains such as curriculum innovation, yet appear to be empowered to freely engage as individuals in professional activities beyond the campus such as research or knowledge transfer. Interview data suggest that academics are constituted as 'virtual workers', spending large amounts of time way from the campus and connected by digital technology. Grading of assessments (*Grademark*), daily communications with colleagues (*Microsoft Outlook*) and some degree programmes are conducted online (*Supported Open Learning* or *SOL*). From *Plan A* it is clear that research, especially applied research, has become a critical aspect in the *UBS* management agenda in terms of income generation, branding and the realisation of QAA recommendations and expectations (QAA 2009 Annex sections 91-93).

It, therefore, seems probable that academic autonomy in this specific context is accepted by *UBS* management for a number of reasons. It may be regarded as a necessary accommodation to achieve the 'entrepreneurial university' (Barnett 2013) or reposition the university in the 'top 50' (*UoS Strategic Plan* 2012-17). It may also be, as a concomitant of the latter, linked to recruitment, whereby young academics with a strong research orientation need to be attracted to *UBS*, as evidenced by the participants' profiles (Appendix 4 p.213).

Conversely, in terms of didactics, managerial discourse subordinates participants to the designs of 'experts' such as the Educational Development Unit and the quality assurance function (*Plan A*). It is contended here that one unintended consequence of these social practices could be an organisational culture in which participants share the business ideology of management, but, to varying degrees, have become dissociated from their core professional activity of teaching. Academics, in the context of CDPP, are construed in managerial discourses primarily as highly qualified technicians who 'deliver' objectified knowledge for purposes that lie outside the university. Therefore, a consequence of managerial discourse that signifies teaching as less esteemed than research, may be that academics construct their professional identity accordingly. May (2006: 340-341) describes this phenomenon in the following way:

> Claims to autonomy then centre upon a particular liberal-individual sense of the term that leads to a separation between an idealised

> conception of a right and its necessary institutional enablement (Butler 2006). It also produces isolation because environmental opportunities, such as the pursuit of research grants, have less transformative capacity because they are translated into internal accumulations in the pursuit of peer recognition.

This thesis contends that participants within *UBS* have reconstructed themselves as 'atomised academics'. Atomisation in this context is a negotiated self-identity in which the academic is referenced to and references him/herself to the singular activity of commodity-knowledge generation through research rather than to the practice of didactics. The examples of dissociation amongst *UBS* academics described above may also be symptomatic of anxieties triggered by the absence of 'relational understandings' in professional practice. The overt privileging of research over teaching expressed by 46% of the participants (Appendix 4 p.213) may also represent research activity as both a form of 'therapy' in the absence of ontological security (Giddens 1991) or 'micro-emancipation' from a culture of commodification (May 2006, Naidoo and Jamieson 2005).

In the case of *UBS*, the main causal factors which may have contributed to the creation of 'atomised academics' are: strongly framed power differentials which categorize participants as technicians or 'deliverers' of educational 'products' or 'objects' who are subordinate to 'experts' and managers ; managerial discourse which reduces CDPP to market imperatives and administrative processes; an organisational infrastructure characterised by departmental silos and 'virtual relationships' conducted online. Lastly, an organisational culture which valorises professional activity that visibly impacts on the *UBS* brand such as applied research or knowledge transfer, whilst at the same time disesteeming the invisible, complex and messy, day-to-day realities of CDPP in undergraduate programmes.

The data also seem to indicate that *Joe's* assertions concerning *SM*'s weak departmental identity are not shared by the participants. For example, despite numerous opportunities to do so in both the initial interviews and the member checks, no participants expressed the view that they felt alienated from *SM* itself nor that they should be in another department nor that their professional practice was inhibited or distorted by their membership of *SM*.

One additional factor in the dynamics of CDPP in *UBS*, thus far not considered, is the influence of the undergraduate students themselves. *UBS* was

formed in a period of expansion in the 1990s based on widening participation, with large numbers of non-traditional home students recruited on low UCAS tariffs (Haggis 2006). According to the participants, a combination of large student to staff ratios and students who were often perceived as lacking robust numeracy and literacy, social capital and confidence, have presented *UBS* with some specific challenges. This factor will be considered in further depth in Chapter 6. The focal programmes which have emerged from the structures and dialectics analysed in Chapter 4 now provide the focus of the analysis in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 Curriculum design: an interplay of rational and emergent processes

5.0 Introduction

According to Stacey (2007) managerial discourse in many large organisations is predicated on management anxieties surrounding issues of social order, performance and accountability. Strategy planning and quality assurance are, therefore, in this paradigm, manifestations of management's attempts to shape and control the organisation. In a sense, managers seek to rationalise what are the inherently chaotic social practices found in any large organisation. Stacey (2007: 152) defines rationality as: 'a method of deciding that involves clear objectives, gathering the facts, generating options and choosing one that maximises or sacrifices (i.e. approximately satisfies) the objective.' Technical-rationality is the practice of selecting predetermined outcomes on the basis of some measure of predictability and organising for their achievement. It is premised on the behaviourist assumption that planned decisions will generally cause a desired effect.

However, according to Stacey (2007) technical-rationality is, in a number of respects, fundamentally flawed because the future cannot be easily predicted nor can organisations be effectively run by command and control styles of management such as managerialism (Deem and Brehony 2005). As with critical realists (Bhaskar 1978), Stacey argues that the social world is an open system containing structures which are fluid and emergent and interact with each other in complex dialectics that frequently produce unintended consequences. As demonstrated in the previous chapter beneath the veneer of rational structures and processes in *UBS* lies an emergent and chaotic reality. It is to this apparent paradox that I now return.

5.1 The core structure of the focal programmes

The *BA Business Studies* (BABS) and *BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (BAEI) programmes, henceforth referred to jointly as 'the focal programmes', are the embedded units of analysis in this thesis (Yin 2009). Both programmes were managed by the department of Systems Management (*SM*) within the common *UBS-QA* regulatory framework of programme innovation and validation *(Academic*

Regulations for Taught Awards 2012*).* They are identical to other *UBS* undergraduate programmes in terms of their core structure and design (See Table 5 p.127). The focal degrees form part of a BABS suite of programmes in *SM* comprising 27 different programmes, 25 of which combine business with a range of other disciplines. These include eight languages, four social sciences e.g. sociology and thirteen specialist degrees such as BA Business with Finance. These specialist degrees are taught in collaboration with other departments within *UBS* or other Schools e.g. Humanities (*Programme Review* 2011).

The fundamental structure of the focal programmes could be summarised as follows: they align with the common UK higher education credit transfer system and are valued at 360 credits (Table 5). These usually consist of three year programmes (full-time), but include the opportunity to extend the duration of the programme to four years to incorporate a sandwich year. The three individual years of the programmes are termed by *UBS* as years 1-3 and equate to QAA levels 4-6. Each year is made up of 15 and 30 credit courses (modules in national parlance) (6) amounting to 120 credits. Progression from years 1-2 and 2-3 is determined by a programme assessment board (PAB) on the assumption that students have achieved 120 credits. However, within the regulations, a range of outcomes are permitted, whereby failure to pass course assessments and achieve the required credits can be waived. The PAB is designed to administer and enhance the progression of students through the programmes.

15 credit courses are taught over one semester and 30 credit courses are taught over two semesters (Table 5, p.127). The first semester runs from September to December and the second semester runs from January to May with a combined total of 34 teaching weeks. Each 15 credit course is taught in one 60 minute session per week whilst each 30 credit course is taught in two x 60 minute sessions per week, which are aggregated to a maximum of 8 hrs contact time per student per week. Most 30 credit courses follow a rigid one x 60 min lecture and one x 60 minute tutorial format per week.

(6) Modules are referred to as 'courses' in the discourse in UBS. The antecedent of this word lies in the choice of the software programme to administer the degree programmes, which refers to modules as 'courses'.

BA Business Studies 2011-12 (anonymised)

Year 1	Year 2		Year 3
PDP1 (15 credits)	PDP2 (15 credits)	OPTIONAL SANDWICH YEAR	PDP3 - STUDENT PROJECT (30 credits)
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (30 credits)	SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT (30 credits)		BUSINESS STRATEGY (30 credits)
BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT (30 credits)	CREATIVITY & DECISION-MAKING (30 credits)		ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR 2 (15 credits)
INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS (30 credits)	QUALITY MANAGEMENT (15 credits)		OPTIONS: • SMALL BUSINESS (30 credits) • INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (30 credits) • CONTEMPORARY ISSUES(15 credits) • INNOVATION 2 (15 credits) • PROJECT MANAGEMENT 2 (15 credits) • E -BUSINESS (15 credits) • INTERNATIONAL HRM(30 credits)
ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR 1 (15 credits)	PROJECT MANGEMENT 1 (15 credits)		
	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (15 credits)		

BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation 2011-12 (anonymised)

Year 1	Year 2		Year 3
PDP1 (15 credits)	PDP2 (15 credits)	OPTIONAL SANDW YEAR	PDP3 - STUDENT PROJECT (30 credits)
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (30 credits)	ENTREPRENEURSHIP (15 credits)		BUSINESS STRATEGY (30 credits)
BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT (30 credits)	CREATIVITY & DECISION-MAKING (30 credits)		ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR 2 (15 credits)
INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS (30 credits)	QUALITY MANAGMENT (15 credits)		INNOVATION 2 (15 credits)
	INNOVATION 1 (15 credits)		SMALL BUSINESS (30 credits)
ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR 1 (15 credits)	PROJECT MANGEMENT 1 (15 credits)		
	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY(15 credits)		

Table 5 The Focal Programmes (*Programme Review* 2011)

All programmes are mandated by internal QA to carry discrete personal development planning courses (PDP) running in all years 1-3. PDP, along with other courses, are in the core. Optional courses appear mainly in Year 3 with some limited choice in Year 2. Programmes are reviewed, revalidated or replaced on a 5 year cycle (the Quinquennial Review). The focal programmes are accredited by professional bodies such as the Chartered Management Institute (CMI).

5.2 'Loaves and fishes '

It seems pertinent at this point to draw attention to one or two salient characteristics of this description of the focal programmes and the administrative architecture in which they sit. One of the most obvious features is the remarkable range and scale of the number of programmes offered in *UBS*, of which the 27 programmes mentioned above represent only a fraction. The first obvious question is how does *SM* manage to offer a portfolio of 27 programmes with an establishment of approximately 28 full-time academics and a small number of part-time academics? The answer is in three parts: firstly, some of the resource is supplied by other departments and Schools who admit students from the focal programmes into some of their existing courses. Secondly, when recruitment to programmes falls below minimum thresholds they are discontinued. Thirdly, within the BABS programme suite, which includes the focal programmes, there is a large common core of courses and a small number of options. Large numbers of students (e.g. *Rose* reported 300+) will usually attend these common core courses.

The high ratio of core courses to options is a marketing technique referred to in marketing parlance as 'bundling'. 'Bundling' enables the portfolio of courses on offer to prospective undergraduates to be expanded by brand differentiation at least possible cost. For example, if the *BA Business Studies* (BABS) is compared with the *BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (BAEI) (Table 5), the Year 1 courses are identical, the Year 2 courses are also identical with the exception of two 15 credit options not available to BABS students and one 30 credit core option not available to BAEI students. Year 3 is identical with the exception of two courses that appear as core on BAEI but only one of which can be taken on the BABS (*Programme Review* document 2011). In other words, little substantial content separates the two

programmes as they are essentially differentiated by title and accreditation. According to the *Programme Review 2011*:

> The BABS programme suite operates in concert with 23 other combined honours programmes ..., with the BABS degree providing the 'spine' and the other programmes sharing the majority of teaching provision and programme management resources. The suite's shared use of the core provided by the Business Studies degree is a deliberate attempt to ensure the smaller named degrees can exist despite relatively low student numbers.

It is of note, that despite the ethos of the two programmes being ostensibly different, i.e. BABS being a general business degree and BAIE being a more specialised degree, the content of the two degrees considerably overlap. Further, as will be explored in Chapter 6, the pedagogy employed in the two degrees is also very similar. This appears anomalous, particularly as 'innovation and entrepreneurship' strongly signals a practical, creative and action-based programme.

These data appear to confirm the primacy of market demand in curriculum design, predicated on an imaginative application of modularisation. However, as some theorists have contended, modularisation can lead to a fragmentation of knowledge in ways that could be detrimental to learning (Bridges 2002, Naidoo 2005). Before analysing the possible consequences of modularisation and the outcomes-based design of the focal programmes, participant perceptions of how and why the focal programmes have emerged are examined.

5.3 Key ideological influences on the design of the focal programmes

The influence of marketisation on the curriculum has already been discussed in the context of *Plan A*, and mentioned in the contexts of value-congruence around employability and the strategy of programme 'bundling' evidenced in the *Programme Review* 2011. The marketisation of universities over the last twenty years has, in effect, transformed the ethos of universities and fundamentally altered the relationship dynamics between the actors and between the actors and their professional practice (McArdle 2008, Naidoo *et al* 2011).

'Marketisation', in terms of critical discourse analysis, also represents a 'nodal discourse' (Fairclough 2005) which can be defined as a discourse which both

subsumes and articulates several other discourses. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, marketisation relates to the 'technologies of marketisation' such as league tables; the commodification of knowledge and the repositioning of students as 'consumers of objects' (Brady 2012). In terms of curriculum design, the ideology of marketisation appears to be, with some exceptions, at least accepted and in many cases embraced by the majority of the participants in *UBS*. The following analysis of participant discourse on marketisation and the purpose of the curriculum is clustered around the two related themes of 'employability', and a 'markets-driven curriculum'.

5.3.1 *'Employability, employability, employability'*

21 out of 24 participants in 54 separate references, identified 'employability' as the core purpose of the focal programmes and courses. Only three participants explicitly and implicitly relegated employability to a secondary aim of the curriculum. For example, *Harrison* espoused the importance of civic virtues:

> I would accept that any business school's mission, it could be any university's mission, is to turn out well developed graduates who are capable of taking their place in society in all its manifestations. So they're good citizens, they treat the environment well, they treat each other well, they work well with others, they're good at their jobs. And we can help them become those things.

The semantic relations in this extract signal the agency of both academics and students. For example, the discourse begins with the use of the agentic 'I' to signal that *Harrison* takes ownership of his value assumptions and assertions. Students become included in the discourse, personified as graduates with agency who 'will take their place in society... work well with others' etc.

Diana argued that it was important to try and balance out the technicism of the 'business world' with more critical perspectives. In the context of a Year 2 course on innovation, *Diana* highlighted the need to introduce students to the potential 'impact of innovation on communities', 'community engagement' and 'evaluating success and failure of innovation beyond the financial terms'. *Diana*'s discourse displays the same discursive characteristics as *Harrison*.

For example, in talking about how she teaches innovation *Diana* explained:

> It's a field called science technology and society. So I started with critical studies of science and then moved more to critical studies of technology. So although here it's a business school, we thought it would be good to give a more nuanced perspective since particularly when students go into a business world and are not going to see much more of the critical perspectives.

Again, the use of the agentic 'I' is evident, signalling a confident ownership of her assertions, which are categorical and free of hedges. Students are included and given agency to 'go into a business world'. Implicit in *Diana's* assertions is the value assumption that a 'nuanced perspective' is not something that she associates with the business school. The association of business with normative thinking becomes explicit in reference to students entering the 'business world' in which they 'are not going to see much more of critical perspectives'.

Nelson stated in more abstract terms, that there was little clarity at all concerning the core purpose of the curriculum and lamented what he perceived as a lack of critical debate on the issue:

> I wish there was a meeting of all these course leaders together. And some other interested parties, people who are so many times called the stakeholders, to come in and say 'well, why do we have this particular course?' So it becomes a task to us to explain to these people [students] the meaning of these... I thought that the people were supposed to own education. Because education should be about the values of the people.

The same discursive characteristics are in evidence in this extract as in the other two. However, what is also of interest in *Nelson's* discourse, is his implication that his colleagues ['course leaders' or' stakeholders'] are absent from the discourse on curriculum design. This appears to be resonant of the earlier discussion of dissociation and the atomisation of academics at *UBS* in Chapter 4.

These three perspectives stood out in the data from the dominant participant discourse on curriculum which privileged technicist, utilitarian values frequently expressed as enhancing the employability of students. Why these three participants privileged 'community values' over 'market values' is obviously a matter for

conjecture. It may be of significance, in terms of personal profiles, that *Diana* and *Harrison* had been working at *UBS* for less than twelve months and that their stated identities were primarily as academic researchers, researching 'sustainability issues'. *Nelson* was in his second year at *UBS*, but was a 'career academic' who, earlier in his career, had taught in secondary education as well as in a teacher education department in another university. As the data appears to indicate, there may be some correlation between technicist or non-technicist positions and disciplines, career backgrounds, personal interests and the values of the participants (Macfarlane 1998).

Aside from the three examples above, the 'mantra of employability' as the primary purpose of the curriculum appeared to prevail. The following three examples of discourse are more typical of the dominance of instrumentalism in the participants' perceptions of the core purpose of the curriculum. *Dennis,* whose general discourse on discourse on didactics was otherwise frequently insightful and expansive, argued that the curriculum should be organised primarily to meet employer needs and improve student job prospects:

> I think it would be much more proper to try to organize what kind of knowledge we need to give to the students. In what kind of market these students have more possibilities.

Here *Dennis* legitimised the framing of knowledge in terms of its commodity or exchange value. Knowledge becomes objectified 'to give to the students' in order that they can 'have more possibilities' in the market place. *Maria* made a similar assertion:

> The job requirements these days, I mean the objective of students doing a degree is to get a job at the end really, at the end of the degree right? So you need to prepare them, to make them ready and able to get a proper job. So in order to do that you need to understand which is the knowledge required by the jobs that might be suitable.

The words 'I mean' is an aside that sits inside text that reduces students to a set of objectives focused on employability. Students become objectified in the use of the verbs 'prepare them' and 'make them ready' [for employment]. The 'learner' or 'student' is substituted by 'jobs', where knowledge is 'required by the jobs that might be suitable'. Lack of confidence in her assertions is indicated by the word 'right' in

the second sentence which is partly rhetorical but also signals uncertainty. *Rose* asserted that:

> ... most of the students they come in here to get their degree to improve their employability. That's the practical sense of it. You want to get a reasonable job that is good in that sense; you have to have the university degree. And this is a stage they are passing through, really.

All three of the above extracts conceptualise curriculum in a similar form. Firstly, learning is assumed to be universally accepted, in stark instrumentalist terms, as primarily concerned with students 'getting a proper job'. The categorical assertions regarding employability are expressed as ontological assumptions about the nature of higher education and as propositional assumptions about what is required by employers. Both *Dennis* and *Maria* also represent employability as a value assumption, i.e. that it is desirable to organise the curriculum for this purpose. Legitimate knowledge is assumed to be knowledge that is 'useful' in the sense of 'knowledge required by the jobs that might be suitable' (*Maria*) or organising 'what kind of knowledge' in collocation with 'what kind of market' (*Dennis*). However, critically, these are assertions about the purpose of curriculum that these participants do not seem to 'own', which may signal an element of dissociation.

Whilst legitimising knowledge as knowledge which is 'useful to employers' or 'required by the market', little consensus existed amongst the participants about what this meant precisely. The word 'skills' was used a total of 237 times by the participants, mostly in the context of enhancing student employability. Again, as with 'employability' itself, the precise interpretations by participants of the links between skills and employability were diverse. *Brian*, *Dave* and *Trevor* referred to the need to 'embed' particular skills relevant to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). *Dennis* stated that he impressed on his students that: 'one skill that they need to acquire when finishing business programmes is to be able to recognize a problem'. *Frank* referred to the teaching of: 'Analytical skills. But also sort of more general skills like sort of building a case, presenting their work, that type of thing'. *Margaret* asserted that 'university life' gave the students: 'great communication skills and great skills of teamwork... skills of making relationships with people that they maybe only meet, they've only just met that they can get on with'.

Most of the participant discourse on skills and employability was normative. Only *Harrison*, *Noel*, *Nelson* and *Deirdre* attempted to problematise the teaching of skills. For example, *Deirdre* said that generic skills were not as useful as practical [my word] skills such as those she had taught in IT: 'these skills in [IT] are nice and clear and straightforward. Knowledge of different programming systems, they are clear and they are recognizable everywhere'. *Peotric* and *Noel* said that some performative skills were being fore-grounded in *UBS* at the expense of cognitive skills such as critical thinking. According to *Peotric:*

> ...to be able to think academically from a critical perspective is most important, and I think that has been sidelined in relation to basic communication or basic other skills which are surface level skills which should have been taught at A-level or below.

Both *Noel* and *Peotric* said that a lack of attention to critical thinking was located in the assessment of courses. *Noel* described this in the following way:

> So if that learning is not matched with the expectation that is there in the assessment, then it's a mismatch with the assessment on one end. Which is fine as far as the course guide and course book is concerned, but in practice it's a mismatch and it doesn't fall into place.

Asked how they would align curriculum design to the needs of employers, a variety of answers was forthcoming: *Kevin* and *Deirdre* emphasised the views of professional associations such as the *Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply* or the *British Computing Society; Bruce* suggested: 'doing surveys and questionnaires' and going to logistics companies and 'interviewing managers'. *Dave* also suggested surveying specific managers about their requirements for specific jobs: 'say for example project management. Some employers might want, say 23 people in 2013 who should have project management skill or knowledge'.

Jack suggested that employers and the university should collaborate more closely on a commodity-exchange basis:

> Well what I think you've got to do is go out and find out what companies want, and that may be a case of going to well HSBC, there and Container lines over there and a trucking company and you know

> Sainsbury's and whatever and just say 'what actually do you want out of our students?'

The impression given by all of the participants in the discourse on the views of employers, was that research into the needs of employers was essential but they were not actually engaged in or aware of any relevant research data. There was, for example, no mention by participants of the *Employers Forum* which consisted of a few employer representatives who were engaged in discussion on a regular basis with *UBS* representatives on issues such as 'what employers want'. Therefore, whilst the 'needs of employers' were deemed by most participants to be a kind of 'acid test' of 'useful knowledge' for the *UBS* curriculum, the discourse was, again, notably absent as to precisely what this might mean for the courses that they taught.

It is contended in this thesis that the 'mantra of employability' serves as a motif for a pedagogical discourse which is confining or limiting in vision, to which many of the participants 'paid lip service' but whose discourse did not signal ownership. What is also of note here, is that the participants' approach to curriculum design appears to be premised on its legitimisation by 'others' outside the university. When asked how they would go about reconstructing their courses, most participants fore-grounded the notion of 'analysing the market'.

5.3.2 *Markets-driven curriculum: curriculum determined by 'others'*

From the perspective of *UBS*, the external market consists of three main networks of social practice: the employers who recruit graduates; the competition, i.e. other universities or providers of higher education and the 'buyers', i.e. students in the secondary schools or further education colleges and their parents (see Figure 4 p.77). *UBS* also competes in an internal *UoS* market with other *UoS* Schools for a share of the university budget. Because individual Schools within *UoS* are discrete cost centres, their income is determined by their capacity to recruit student numbers. Therefore, *UoS* Schools are careful to differentiate and ring-fence their programmes for fear of appropriation by other Schools. As *Trevor* explained:

> The way we allocate money doesn't encourage students to go to another area [curriculum]... The money goes to the students. So if your students go to another area, the money will flow with them, there's an

> outflow. So from a Dean's point of view... it's in your interest to keep the students being taught in your faculty.

The significance of the internal market for student choice and modularisation is discussed later in this section on the evaluation of the outcomes-based design of the focal programmes.

Dave, *Dennis*, *Peter* and *Kevin* fore-grounded the proposition that curricular innovation involved researching what other universities were doing in their course design. *Dennis* contended that *UBS* imported curricular ideas from other universities as a concomitant of the recruitment of academics:

> On an undergraduate level... I think we are trying mostly to copy or follow, try to follow paths that are already paved from other universities. Because there is a lot of change of professors and staff.

One of the dominant characteristics of this discourse on influences on curriculum design is the self-exclusion of academics from the curriculum design process.
23/24 participants were asked about influences on curriculum design, but only *Harrison* conveyed a meaningful sense of the agency of academics:

> Well, I suppose your starting point would be to think about what kind of expertise we have to teach subjects, and what kinds of expectations of us are there from professional bodies, QAA and all those other agencies. What kinds of expectations are there within the university higher up, and then I'd probably try and work out where the mismatches are. And then get some advice from colleagues about what to do about these mismatches if they recognize them as such. And after a series of meetings trying to find out where the gaps are and where the mismatches are, maybe we'd try and draft up an idea of what ideally a curriculum should consist of, that can best make sense of these various conflicts.

Harrison's discourse of 'inclusiveness' connoted by references to 'advice from colleagues' and agency connoted by 'we'd try and draft up an idea of what ideally a curriculum should consist of,' sits in stark contrast to the dominant discourse.
The latter references curriculum design to asking employers 'what they want out of our students' (*Jack*) or 'trying mostly to copy or follow' (*Dennis*).

Together with the managerial discourse on the role of 'task groups', 'project teams' and the EDU (*Plan A*) the meaning which emerges appears to be a 'curriculum

determined by others'. For example, several participants made references to the primary need to take into account the views of 'employers', 'professional associations' and 'the market' on curriculum design. The inescapable impression given by the participants' discourse is of academics, to varying degrees, dissociated from the processes of curriculum design. These data, therefore, also lend weight to the theory of the 'atomised academic' outlined in the conclusion to Chapter 4. This theme of the atomisation of academics perpetuated by the meanings underpinning the discourse on CDPP in *UBS*, is developed further through an evaluation of the role of quality assurance and the outcomes-based design of the focal programmes.

5.4 The discourse of control: the influence of quality assurance processes on curriculum design

The three extracts below (*Texts A, B* and *C*) are taken from the *Academic Regulations for Taught Awards 2012* pertaining to *UoS* and frame the raison d'être of quality assurance in *UoS* (and its devolved QA office in *UBS*, which is regulated by *UoS* centre) (7) in the following way:

Text A

> In exercising the power to grant and confer academic awards, the University [...*] will be required to demonstrate that it has the capacity and resources to establish procedures for the initial validation, approval, regular monitoring, periodic review and modification of its courses and
> programmes. Its quality assurance system will adhere to the QAA Code of Practice, and it will be ready to demonstrate its capacity and effectiveness as a self-critical academic community, and the responsiveness to peer review of its processes and procedures for academic quality assurance.

Text B

> ... the Academic Council's policies have been successful in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and the student experience through the promotion of developmental activities, the arrangements for the identification and exchange of good innovative practice, and responsiveness to course and programme teams.

(7) To avoid confusion the internal quality assurance office in *UBS* will, henceforth, be referred to as UBS-QA to distinguish it from the *UoS* central Quality Office and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). QA is used as generic term to denote a reference to 'quality assurance'.

Text C

> Whilst the standard[s] and learning outcomes of an academic award should conform to what is acceptable throughout the United Kingdom, the route by which these are achieved by students should not be rigid. The advancement of education and the extension of educational opportunities demand the availability of a variety of modes of study and programme structures. The curriculum, structure, teaching methods and forms of assessment of a programme should be such as to ensure the realisation of its aims and learning outcomes.

These texts are quoted at length, because they offer vivid illustrations of theoretical contradictions in the pedagogical discourse, which may have important consequences for CDPP in *UBS*. Firstly, *Text A* represents quality assurance (QA) in *UoS* as performing a 'neutral', 'functionalist role' in ensuring the 'quality' of programme provision in *UBS*. The use of the term 'establish procedures' signifies value-free activities relating to 'validation', 'monitoring', 'review' etc. It also cites the authority of the *QAA Code of Practice* to further legitimise its role (intertextuality). The use of the verbs 'promotion' and 'arrangement' also suggest the notion of the 'facilitation' of activities implemented by 'others'.

However, according to Bernstein (2000), QA could be described as a mechanism for setting the *recontextualising rules* in *UBS*, derived from the *distributive rules* framed by QAA (together with the 'others' described in section 5.3.2 p.135). The *recontextualising rules* are what Bernstein (2000: 32) describes as the 'regulation of the pedagogic discourse' by making a distinction between the 'transmission of skills' and the 'transmission of values', thus deliberately disguising their essential inseparability. In terms of Bernstein, QA's value-free positioning in pedagogic discourse and its enactment are illusory. This is because by creating pedagogic codes for pedagogic relations, QA, inevitably sets the rules for the transmission of underpinning 'values' as well as 'skills'.

Crucially, as Bernstein argues, the *recontextualising rules* set by QA in turn determine the *evaluative rules* which shape the pedagogic practice deployed in the enactment of the curriculum. Therefore, in *Text C*, the assumptions expressed in the sentence: 'The advancement of education and the extension of educational opportunities demand the availability of a variety of modes of study and programme structures', may, paradoxically, be subverted by the pedagogic codes underpinning *QA-UBS* discourse on regulations and processes.

Discourse which ostensibly represents procedures also has the power to shape or be constitutive of other discourses and actions. Fairclough (2004: 29) refers to the latter as a discourse which has been 'dialectically internalised in genres and styles'. Therefore, although the *UoS* quality assurance office may espouse the value in *Text C* that: 'the route by which these [learning outcomes] are achieved by students should not be rigid', in practice, QA frameworks may, paradoxically, have the opposite effect. This path of analysis will now be developed by examining the influence of *UBS-QA* in framing the focal programmes as evidenced by the programme documents relating to the *BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (henceforth referred to as BAEI). (8)

5.5 The impact of generic UBS-QA frameworks

As *Texts B* and *C* above illustrate, the quality assurance function at *UBS* also aspires to promoting 'the advancement of education'. According to Biggs (2001: 222) this means that the institutional quality assurance framework also aspires to 'quality enhancement'. Quality enhancement is not only concerned with 'assuring quality' in the sense of implementing accountability procedures for measuring performance and administering programmes, but also with the 'continuing upgrading and improvement of teaching'. Biggs, therefore, makes a distinction between 'quality assurance' which is a rational, retrospective approach to managing quality and 'quality enhancement,' which is a prospective approach aimed at improving pedagogic practice. *UBS-QA* also aspires to quality enhancement (*Academic Regulations for Taught Awards 2012*).

(8) Please note that for the purposes of analysis, the programme specifications for the *BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (BAEI), is a lengthy document which has been broken down into manageable sections. In doing so, care has been taken to accurately represent the meaning of the document. Please note also that, because of the template form of these documents (*UBS-QA*), a large proportion of the text found in the *Programme documents* for the *BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation* is replicated in the *Programme* documents for *BA Business Studies.* As explained in section 5.2 (p.128) and Chapter 6, a large tranche of the content and much of the pedagogy in the two programmes were similar.

The following discussion of *UBS-QA* generic frameworks is based mainly on documentary data relating to the focal programmes, i.e. The *Programme Specification* for the *BA Entrepreneurship and Management* (henceforth referred to as the *Programme Specification*), a related *Course Specification,* a related *Course Guide* and the *QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: General Business and Management 2007* (henceforth referred to as the *QAA Benchmark Statement*). Two applications of *UBS-QA* generic frameworks are specifically considered here:
Firstly, how do they frame *Programme* and *Course Specifications* and with what possible consequences? Secondly, what consequences might follow from the framing of the programmes as modular structures? (Table 5, p.127).

5.5.1 Outcomes-based curriculum design

A comparative analysis of the programme documents and the *QAA Benchmark Statement* would suggest that the latter is implicitly predicated on Biggs' principle of constructive alignment (1996), whilst the *Programme Specification* is explicitly predicated on the *QAA Benchmark Statement* (p.158). The *Programme Specification* references the *QAA Benchmark Statement* guidelines as providing critical theoretical underpinning.
For example, the following clause appears near the beginning of the *Programme Specification* (9):

> *Benchmarking statements for the subject you are studying define what a student is expected to learn from studying that subject. They are defined by academic staff in the field and provided to students and universities by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)...* The programmes falls into General Business and Management group defined by QAA.

(9) A pivotal assumption here is that *Programme Specifications, Course Specifications and Course Guides* are a chain of texts (Fairclough 2004) strongly regulated by the *UBS-QA.* They, therefore, exemplify texts which are based on generic *UBS-QA* templates relating to curriculum design and as such seek to transmit specific approaches to pedagogy, underpinned by a specific set of values. The values are implicitly and explicitly derived from the QAA as well as the other market-based influences on the recontextualisation of pedagogic discourse within UBS discussed in previous sections and illustrated in Figure 4 (p.77)

The *Programme Specification* then proceeds to quote verbatim the list of *threshold standards* and *typical standards* outlined in the *QAA Benchmark Statement*.

The *QAA Statement* (2007: 3) also places 'skills' and employability at its centre, stating that:

> Business and management degrees are strongly related to practice and therefore there should be a strong link between the development of skills and employability of graduates.

Again The *Programme Specification* follows suit by placing the goal of employability at its centre:

> This programme is about entrepreneurial learning in the work related context. It aims to prepare students to behave entrepreneurially in micro-enterprise and SME start-up and development.

The *QAA Subject Benchmark Statement* lists ten recommended 'skills expressed as outcomes' to develop in undergraduates including, for example:

...graduates should be able to demonstrate:

- cognitive skills of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis. This includes the capability to identify assumptions, evaluate statements in terms of evidence, to detect false logic or reasoning, to identify implicit values, to define terms adequately and to generalise appropriately.
- effective communication, oral and in writing, using a range of media which are widely used in business such as the preparation and presentation of business reports.
- effective self-management in terms of time, planning and behaviour, motivation, self-starting, individual initiative and enterprise.

Figure 7 Sample of 'skills expressed as outcomes' (*QAA Subject Benchmark Statement* 2007)

Again, the *Programme Specification* also locates 'skills expressed as outcomes' at the centre. Indeed, it contains four distinct lists (A-D) of 26 different 'skills expressed as outcomes' plus a summary list of 8 skills, which account for 734/1834 words, (40%) of the document. For example:

A. *Knowledge and understanding* [5 skills A1-A5]

- understand the global environment in which entrepreneurial organisations operate and its effects upon management of entrepreneurial organisations, include the political, economic, technological, social, ethical and environmental factors.

B. *Intellectual skills* [10 skills B1-10]

- synthesise information from a number of sources in order to gain a coherent understanding of multifaceted business problems.

C. *Subject Practical skills* [6 skills C1-6]

- apply qualitative and quantitative business tools to analyse, evaluate, and make decisions for a wide range of international scenarios and problems.

D. *Transferable/Key Skills* (5 skills D1-5]

- gain relevant personal transferable skills e.g. oral, written, analytical, problem-solving, teamwork skills, and time management skills applicable to a range of job opportunities including self-employment.

Figure 8 Sample of 'skills expressed as outcomes' (*Programme Specification* 2011)

It is clear from these comparisons, that the design and content of the *Programme Specification* is based on a generic *UBS-QA* framework which attempts to apply the recommendations of the *QAA Benchmark Statement*. However, in doing so, the *Programme Specification* makes little attempt at constructive alignment. Beside each list of 34 skills are two generic statements that have been 'cut and pasted' and inserted into all of the programmes described in the *Programme Review* (2011). These are:

Teaching and learning methods:
Interactive lectures, face-to-face and web supported seminars, guest speakers *Directed and independent self study, group or web based discussions,* *Supervised laboratories, Excel demonstration Case studies, problem solving activities, research activities, company visits, guest speakers, consultancy projects, business simulations, and group based research and presentations*
Assessment methods:
The assessment methods are work related and emphasise the applications of knowledge, including a mixture of portfolio based reports, presentations, business simulation scenarios/reports, information technology software demonstrations, consultancy reports, dragons' den type assessments involving local employers, seen/unseen examinations, and time constrained assignments.

Table 6 Statement of pedagogy (*Programme Review* 2011)

Within the *Programme Specification*, there is no attempt to either implement or signal the importance of constructive alignment between the 34 'skills expressed as outcomes' (Biggs's step 1), teaching activities (step 2) and assessment (step 3) according to Biggs's (2003) model (p.46). *UBS-QA* generic frameworks link together a chain of documents for specifying the programmes and the courses contained within them. *Programme Specifications* provide the platform for individual *Course Specifications*, which in turn provide the platform for the *Course Guides* which are designed to communicate the course structure to the students. It is in the *Course Specification* , where we might, perhaps, logically assume that the principle of constructive alignment is most likely to be found. The *Course Specification* is a text which is concerned with specifics in relation to content, teaching and assessment. However as the following abridged specification for *'Innovation 1'* illustrates, these elements are also not aligned in the *Course Specification* as illustrated in Table 7 below.

Course Specification [abridged version]								
School	Business							
Department	SM							
Code								
Course Title	Innovation 1							
Course Coordinator								
Level (*please tick*)	4		5	√	6		7	
Credit	15							
Pre-requisites	None							

Aims [Stated in full]

1. Demonstrate that to be entrepreneurial in taking ideas forward into business start-ups or new venture creation within organisations is about innovation.
2. Provide information about the activity of innovation and what the essential processes are with respect to specific types of innovation, without which entrepreneurs may fail to exploit their ideas to their full potential.
3. Ensure that context, models and processes for innovation are properly understood, focusing on the various aspects of the innovation process covering all stages from idea generation to commercial exploitation, concepts, types and models of innovation
4. Foster discussions around key issues such as strategic innovation; organisational conditions that foster/hinder innovation; leadership styles and personal qualities for innovation success;

Learning Outcomes [Stated in full]

On completing this course successfully you will be able to:

- Analyse the various types of models for innovation.
- Explore the conditions and circumstances which favour and lead to innovation.
- Apply appropriate strategies identifying appropriate routes to creativity and innovation.
- Determine what the conditions should be to aid taking innovation into organisations.
- Distinguish between different types of behaviours and innovation likely to arise out of them.

Indicative Content

Innovation types and models, knowledge management strategies, firm organisation for innovation, new technology based firms

Learning and Teaching Activities [Stated in full]

The course is arranged around lectures and tutorial sessions. These will include participative case study analysis and preparation for the assessment. Library and on-line searches will be necessary as will synthesis of course materials. Lecture slides, tutorial notes and recommended reading will be available digitally.

Assessment Details:

Methods of Assessment	Presentation	Essay		
Grading Mode	Summative	Summative		
Weighting %	20%	80%		
Pass Mark	40%	40%		
Word Length	20 mins. max.	3,500		
Outline Details	Group work	Topic given in class		

Indicative Course Materials and Reading:

ISBN Number	Author	Date	Title	Publisher

Table 7 Sample Course Specification (*Programme Review*

All of the *Course Guides* are required by *UBS-QA* regulations to address the four skills lists A-D (Figure 8 p.142) outlined in the *Programme Specification* by applying them to the specific course. According to *UBS-QA* regulations, course leaders are required to create a *Course Guide* to be distributed to students based on the *Course Specification.* In addition to the information in the *Course Specification*, the *Course Guide* contains information on elements relating to areas that fall within the *UBS-QA* remit, such as the teaching schedule, plagiarism, extenuating circumstances and course. For example in *Innovation 1* skills are expressed in the following way:

2.2.1 Knowledge and understanding
Introduce the major theoretical explanations of different innovation types.
Different personalities and leaders needed for innovation and the management of innovation.

2.2.2 Intellectual Skills
Demonstrate the conceptual understanding of different theoretical explanations to innovating and managing innovation.
Discuss key concepts in chaotic organisations which create opportunities for innovation.

2.2.3 Subject practical skills
Analyse, interpret information on contemporary issues in innovation strategies.
Learn to debate controversial issues relating to innovation processes and strategies.

2.2.4 Transferable skills:
Monitor, review and evaluate progress of strategies to implement innovation.
Apply entrepreneurial strategies, tools, techniques and methods learned during the course to innovation.

Figure 9 Sample of 'skills expressed as outcomes' (*Innovation 1 Course Guide*

It is clear that, whilst the *Course Specifications* and *Course Guides* might be expected to constructively align the elements of course content, teaching and assessment, there is no attempt to do so. It is also of note that outcomes-based curricula are, according to their exponents, assessment-led. However, the *Course Guide* for *Innovation 1* was typical in that it provided scanty information concerning its assessment regime, though the volume of detail regarding assessment varied throughout the course guides (10). This is a point that I shall develop further in Chapter 6 which examines pedagogy and assessment in *UBS*.

(10) Both Supply Chain Management (Year 2) and PDP3-Project (Year 3) provided a relatively greater volume of detail on the assessment regime. In the case of PDP3-Project, it could be conjectured that the inherent complexity of the focus (a research project) and the size of the cohort demanded detail.

The critical point here is that whilst the programme documents present themselves as texts designed to lead to 'strategic action', i.e. the implementation of the BAEI, they contain little generative meaning. The *UBS-QA* generic frameworks that provide the format for the *Programme Specifications* and the *Course Specifications* do not appear to be connected to a pedagogic process for their enactment. Instead, the pedagogic discourse in these documents restricts itself to disconnected, frequently random lists of 'Learning Outcomes' together with 'Indicative Content' and the' Learning and Teaching Activities' which are, in almost all cases, so concise as to be practically meaningless. Semantic relations expressed as 'lists' are conceptualised by Fairclough (2004) as instances of *elaboration* in texts where the opportunity for 'explanatory logic' is substituted by a 'logic of appearances'. Fairclough (2004: 89) describes this as representations that:

> ...often do not go any 'deeper' than listing appearances which *evidence* change, rather than offering explanatory accounts of change in terms of causal relations.

Therefore, whilst the ordering of the lists of 'skills expressed as outcomes' in the *Programme Specification* has the superficial appearance of rationality, as in the segmentation of skills into 'types A-D', their underlying relationship is random and incoherent. For example, there is little attempt to rank the relative importance of 'outcomes expressed as skills' (as implied in the *QAA Benchmark Statement*) nor to indicate how they might signify progression or development over the three years of the programme cycle.

Therefore, whilst these 'skills expressed as outcomes' may satisfy QAA regulations, by being disconnected from 'a system of meaning', they are reduced to 'words on the page'. One upshot of these semantic relations may be outcomes that are viewed by academics and students as bureaucratic 'hurdles to be cleared' (Hussey and Smith 2003). Another may be that academics and students conceptualise the curriculum as an 'objectified entity' which is static and frequently incoherent. Crucially, academics may also perceive a process of curriculum design in which their agency has been obviated and which signals a lack of trust in their professional capacities (Gibbs and Iacovidou 2004). This analysis now briefly considers the *UBS-QA* generic framework: programme modularisation.

5.5.2 Modularisation and the fragmentation of knowledge

The following analysis of the modularised structures of the focal programmes (see Table 5 p.127) is, at this point in the thesis, limited to an overview of their salient characteristics. Chapter 6 presents a detailed analysis of the enactment of the focal programmes through pedagogic practice which also takes account of the impact of modularisation. (11) It is contended in this thesis that, at the meta-level, the modular programmes (Table 5) are, in a number of ways, 'fragmented', partly caused by the market logics which have driven curriculum design in *UBS*. As discussed in Chapter 4, curriculum design in *UBS* was governed by business principles associated with growth, resource-based management and marketing. The strategy for growth in the 1990s was, therefore, predicated on maximising student recruitment within limited physical, financial and human resources. Modularisation facilitated a strategy for enabling programmes to be 'bundled' for the purpose of offering multiple programmes differentiated by title but sharing a high ratio of core to optional courses. This enabled the development of a large portfolio of programmes as described earlier in the chapter. Programmes could then be managed separately across the *UBS* within the five departments but, where it was deemed appropriate, courses could be added to programmes which were offered by other departments. This approach to curriculum design appears to have contributed to a fragmentation of knowledge and a distortion of pedagogy . Firstly, because of limited resources, the focal programmes have been confined in a course structure in which each course attracts only two hours of contact time per week and an aggregate of eight hours per week per programme. Secondly, Heads of Department (HODs), driven by both external market competition and internal market competition between *UBS* departments and other Schools for income streams, have claimed ownership of courses and largely ‘fenced them off’.

(11) it is also contended here that fragmentation of knowledge also occurs within the courses for pedagogical reasons. These are discussed in detail in Chapter 6 'the pedagogy of confinement'.

The effect of this is, with some exceptions (12), to close off opportunities for cross-disciplinary curricular development, either in terms of business sub-disciplines or collaboration with other Schools. Thirdly, at the meta level, the courses within each of the focal programmes appear, to some extent, to have developed in isolation from each other. It is to this third issue that I now turn.

5.6 'In search of coherence'

The data from the interview transcripts appear to signal that the participants found it difficult to develop a coherent and shared understanding of the structure of the focal programmes. The focal programmes contained a mix of courses, many of which, according to the *Course Guides* 2011-12, did not appear to be linked pedagogically or epistemologically to each other. Most courses were discrete, focusing on disciplinary knowledge ranging across economics, IT, operations management, marketing, human resource management, statistics and finance. By exception, *Dennis* reported that *Project Management 1 and 2* were developmental, with *Project Management* 2 conceived of as an advanced course which arose out of *Project Management* 1. However, other participants reported that discrepancies arose mainly in Year 3 courses where some students appeared to exhibit an unusual deficit in their knowledge base compared to others. *Maria* described her perception that in her Year 3 tutorials:

> ...there are many differences in their educational backgrounds. So there are some of them that are very good at some things because they already know about those things, and others that have never heard about those same things. So there are very big differences... Sometimes some of them have attended some courses, others haven't and then it's very difficult to create a common phase.

The disconnected structure of the programmes was partly caused by market logics which impacted on design in a number of ways. For example, direct entry recruitment to the programmes in Year 3 was, by necessity, premised on accessibility to the courses. If direct entry students to Year 3 from other universities were to be able to engage with the knowledge and assessment within Year 3 courses, the courses were required to be discrete and not dependent on prerequisites. Conversely, however, two participants identified instances where direct entry students from other

(12) According to the *Programme Review* 2011 many of these collaborations e.g. with Humanities in foreign language provision have been earmarked for discontinuation due to low student demand.

universities had access to Year 3 courses, which they said disadvantaged them in relation to the rest of the cohort, because they lacked prerequisite knowledge. *Margaret* described the issue in relation to *Innovation 1* (Year 2) and *Innovation 2* (Year 3):

> There is a difficulty between these two [courses] because obviously if everyone on this course [*Innovation 2*] had this [*Innovation 1*], this course [*Innovation 2*] would take a completely different track.

The problem of lack of prerequisite knowledge was exacerbated in *Innovation 2* by a combination of its high popularity and the modular relationship between the programmes. Modularity meant that students from other programmes could elect to study *Innovation 2* as an option without any prerequisites. *Harrison* also taught this course and reported that:

> ...the Entrepreneurship [programme] people should have done the second level course [*Innovation 2*]. So those people have come across innovation before, innovation in competitive environments. But most of my class, which is nearly two hundred strong, is not those people. Most of the class are coming from BA Business Studies and the other general programmes. So you have to remember that for the people that I'm teaching, this is basically their first exposure.

All participants were shown Table 5 (p.127) as a prompt and asked if they could identify any patterns in the way that the programmes were structured. Most participants found it difficult to identify relationships between the courses beyond those with similar titles such as *Organisational Behaviour*, *Project Management* and *PDP* 1-3 which were clearly marked in the programme schema. *Jack* conveyed a strong sense of uncertainty and confusion concerning the thinking behind the focal programmes:

> What I'm not sure is how some of these courses have been created. And I'm not even sure that anybody even really understands what they're trying to achieve.

Deirdre said that there was a clear link between PDP2 and PDP3-project because students could utilise their work experience in PDP2 with the work-based project in PDP3. She then qualified this by adding, that if they did not have work experience in

Year 2, then there was no link. *Margaret, Frank, Dennis* and *Bruce* asserted that a pattern was discernable where Years 1 and 2 courses were concerned with 'basic knowledge about business' or 'basic understanding' or 'the fundamentals' which provided a platform for specialising in Year 3. In Year 3 students would then apply this knowledge in their PPD3-projects or in 'more complex' or 'theoretical' courses. *Frank* said that *BA Business Studies* 'works as a structure' but appeared unsure of his answer by adding: 'Well, again, you know without knowing in more detail'.

Some participants stated that there were various links across the courses on the programmes. For example, *Zita* stated that:

> Business planning has links, business creativity has links. And you have introduction to business processes linked with value chain as well, because that's operations and marketing. And this is operations, so there is a linkage. And you will have work based, work related learning in second year, so that's actually based on what you have learnt in other subjects, so that you can apply what you have learnt to this course.

Dave stated:

> But if you want to see a connecting thread between all these courses, the connecting thing is developing their overall knowledge just like a general MBA in 3 years of time. So you study value chain, you study project management, you study consultancy, so all this knowledge needs to be summed up at some point.

Zita's and *Dave's* answers contain similar discursive characteristics. Both extracts rely on assertions that there are 'linkages' between the courses, but they are abstracted into simplistic relations expressed in opaque language, which typifies their discourse on this topic. Neither participant 'took ownership' of their assertions which signals a lack of commitment to the ideas being expressed. For example, both *Zita* and *Dave* substitute the agentic 'I' with 'you' as in*:'* 'you will have work based, work related learning' (*Zita*) or 'you study value chain, you study project management, you study consultancy' (*Dave*). *Dave* objectified the curricular link as 'the connecting thing' which he then vaguely likened to an MBA. Beyond these vague statements that links existed by framing the answer as 'what' neither of these participants attempted to explain 'why'.

Also notable for its absence is the concept of 'development' or 'progression' in terms of knowledge, skills or understanding of the learner. A point that I will return to in section 7.3. (p.184).

Some participants articulated a mix of frustration and incredulity at what they perceived as poor curriculum design, though not all shared the same views. *Trevor* blamed a commoditised approach to curriculum design:

> Well these [courses in the programme schema] were designed presumably at a time when student numbers were increasing, it was quite competitive, you tried to make attractive programmes that were good for the outside market. I mean, by and large this university's successful in doing that. It doesn't look below... then you recruit them in, that sort of programme will look good to recruit in.

However, *Trevor's* prescriptions for improving curriculum design were based on a greater alignment between pedagogy and market requirements. For example, *Trevor* asserted:

> If we're saying that we want to turn out people who are entrepreneurial to develop small business, the question is: are we actually giving them the skill-set, competency set to do that? My guess is probably not'.

In other words, the problem of poor curriculum design as *Trevor* saw it, was not that it was driven by the market per se, but that it did not develop the necessary skills or competencies that students were required to possess by the market. Ironically, given the 'entrepreneurial' aim expressed here, students in this discourse have, again, been rendered non-agentic as 'people' who are to be 'turned out'. Again, Trevor appeared to confirm that the pedagogy employed in the BAIE programme was similar to the BA Business Studies. *Deirdre* expressed scepticism that students could, in any case, be taught to be entrepreneurial:

> But my concern again as somebody objective who's not a businessperson, is how do you teach somebody to be an entrepreneur? And how do you teach innovation?

Harrison expressed incredulity that there was, as he perceived it, so little coherence in the BAEI programme:

> Of course. It's bizarre. There should be a theme of innovation running right through the programme. I can't remember the details of the revamped programmes, but basically if you were starting from scratch you'd have innovation 1, innovation 2 and innovation 3.

Peotric, *Dennis* and *Margaret* were posed the question: 'If you think back to your own undergraduate education, can you discern a logical pattern in the structure of your programme over years 1-3?' All three were able to speak fluently on this topic. For example, *Dennis* (30-35yrs) described his perception of the structure of his first degree in Agricultural Science:

> Yeah, for example I would have food engineering in year 1, where you would have all the physics and mechanics in food engineering, how liquids flow in pipes and things like that. Then in year 2 I would have liquid food engineering, looking in more depth at how liquids are moving and things like that. You would have introduction to microbiology in the first year, then you would have in year 2 food safety, looking at using lab work by looking specifically at how they grow and things like that. You cannot follow; you cannot pass exams without knowing, without having a solid knowledge of the theory from year 1.

Peotric (30-35yrs) described his perception of the structure of his first degree in Political Science:

> ...it would be difficult because it's been so many years to trace back and to look at the comparisons between the two [programmes] in detail. I could say that [his first degree] did accomplish it [coherence] because of the drive to hone ever increasing critical analysis skills until you got to the level of creativity and innovation on Bloom's taxonomy. And you were capable of creating your own theory through a thesis that started to hone everything. We do have a thesis here [UBS] in the third year. The connection however needs to be stronger in the first and the second year in the development of critical analysis. I don't buy the argument that 17, 18, 19 year olds are too young to study higher level critical analysis early on.

Both of the above extracts focus on the role of theory as a starting point for constructing curriculum, a point I will return to briefly in the conclusion to this chapter. What is also remarkable about the discourse in both these extracts is how they contrast with the discourse of other participants such as *Zita* and *Dave*. Of the 24 participants, 10 seemed able or willing to conceptualise CDPP rather than simply describe it factually. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, of these 10 participants, a minority were able to talk about how they had attempted to innovate in terms of pedagogy on their courses.

That all of the participants found difficulty in identifying logical patterns of pedagogical relations in the structure of the focal programmes is not surprising. Apart from the fact that all of the courses were 'relevant to business' and that one or two shared similar content, few discernable patterns of pedagogical relations appear to have existed between them. As the discourse above suggests, this incoherence in CDPP was reflected in the diverse and sometimes incoherent constructs of CDPP by the participants themselves. This thesis contends that part of the explanation for incoherence lies in the theoretical antecedents of the *UBS* curriculum. It is to these that I now turn.

5.7 GNVQ: 'the ghost in the machine'

At no point in the interviews did any of the participants mention 'GNVQs' nor did 'GNVQs' appear anywhere in the documentary data. There is, therefore, no explicit evidence that CDPP in *UBS* is connected in any way with GNVQs. It may also be entirely coincidental that 1992 was the year that GNVQs were introduced into the secondary and post-compulsory sectors and that *UoS* was incorporated as a university. However as Edwards (1994) and Jessop (1995) forecast, the remarkable growth in student numbers in higher education in the 1990s was based on widening participation to non-traditional students enrolled at the new universities. Many of these non-traditional students' pre-university post-16 education was based on courses such as Advanced GNVQs in Business and Finance or Leisure and Tourism. It does not seem improbable that *UBS* might have anticipated their new student 'market' by designing a curriculum that these students would recognise.

Added to this possibility are the post-1992 recontextualising influences of the intense 'new vocationalist' rhetoric of governments (Conservative and New Labour),

the CBI (Figure 2 p.50) and Dearing (1997). Thus, whilst no explicit connection of GNVQ to the *UBS* curriculum can be found, the conditions in which a deliberate adaptation this could have taken place are evident. However, whatever the precise nature of causality, the 'ghost' of GNVQ appears in various texts relating to pedagogical relations within *UBS*. Figure 10 below illustrates the approach to curricular design of GNVQ, whilst Figure 11 (p.155) summarises the salient characteristics and assumptions of the GNVQ model are based on the academic literature:

GNVQ Advanced Business and Finance

The mandatory units are:

- 1 Business in the Economy
- 2 Business Organisations and Systems
- 3 Marketing
- 4 Human Resources
- 5 Production and Employment in the Economy
- 6 Financial Transactions & Costing and Pricing
- 7 Financial Forecasting and Monitoring
- 8 Business Planning

The optional units of our choice are:

- 10 Behaviour at Work
- 11 Financial Services
- 12 Statistics for Marketing
- 16 Living and Working in Europe

The key skills units are:

- Communication
- Application of number
- Information Technology

Figure 10 GNVQ Advanced Business and Finance (Source: City & Guilds 1993)

There are some obvious distinctions to be made between the GNVQ model, outlined in Figure 10 and the *UBS* model. The most obvious is that GNVQ was developed for the secondary and post-compulsory education sectors. Secondly, GNVQ was part of what Bates *et al* (1998) refer to as 'controlled vocationalism' by which they meant high levels of government regulation. It is clear from the data that whilst government (QAA) seeks to regulate the *UBS* curriculum, it does not, as yet, actually prescribe it. Some operational differences between the GNVQ and *UBS* models are also apparent, for example, the higher level of autonomy afforded to both academics and learners in the university model.

Outcomes and performance criteria or 'evidence indictors' were outlined in great detail in GNVQ as opposed to the more loosely defined skills and outcomes provided in the *UBS programme* and *course specifications* described earlier (Figure 8 p.142 and Table 7 p.144). Overall, however, the design of the two models are very similar in terms of their extrinsic aims and, as Chapter 6 (p.157) will demonstrate, the framing of 'the teacher', 'the student', 'knowledge' and 'pedagogy' described in Figure 11. This thesis contends that the issues described in section 5.6 relating to curricular incoherence have their theoretical antecedents in the prevocationalist

Model	Teacher	Student	Knowledge & Curriculum	Pedagogy & Assessment
GNVQ	• teacher as facilitator of learning strategies • teacher as a disseminator of 'choices' • teaching as a set of technical procedures	• student as autonomous learner • student as self-responsible • student as 'life-long' learner • student as 'learner-worker' • student becomes a 'market-player'	• experience and knowledge as inseparable • knowledge expressed as transferable skills • knowledge as a projection of business practices or 'know-how' • transdisciplinary knowledge privileged over disciplinary knowledge • knowledge is contextualised as focus shifts to skills • knowledge valued for its extrinsic rather than intrinsic properties • modularisation through 'units' to facilitate credit transfer • outcomes-based curricula underpinned by measurability	• pedagogy is student-centred • pedagogy is assessment-driven • coursework represents the core of the assessment regime - formatted as 'portfolios of evidence' • rewards mastery of key skills rather than disciplinary knowledge • pedagogy is normative in orientation

Figure 11 Salient characteristics and assumptions of the GNVQ model

curriculum (Pring 1995) exemplified by GNVQs which emerged in 1992 (see pp.49-56). This incoherence was partly caused by curriculum design and pedagogic practice based on the contradictory influences of conservative, instrumentalist and

constructivist approaches to CDPP (Wheelahan 2010). This theme is developed further Chapter 6 and the conclusions outlined in Chapter 7.

5.8 Conclusion

From a critical realist perspective, the recontextualisation of the curriculum in *UBS* described in Chapter 5 can also be understood in terms of the complex dialectics that occur between discursive and material structures (Fairclough 2004). For example, the market logics that have driven CDPP in *UBS* contributed to a modularised curriculum design which fragmented knowledge and inhibited a coherent approach to pedagogical relations. Secondly, *UBS-QA*, in their control of the discourse on CDPP, presented generic frameworks for curriculum design composed of incoherent elaborations. One consequence of this may have been that academics internalised the notion that *UBS-QA* processes obviated the need for them to deeply engage with processes to develop CDPP. For example, *Daria*, *Michele*, *Brian*, *Peter* and *Nelson* reported a lack of regular interaction within the course teams for the purpose of curricular enactment. Thirdly, by being excluded from curriculum design at key points in its development (e.g. *BSc Business* 2011), participants, in many instances, appeared to accept a role of passive 'deliverers' of objectified knowledge and become dissociated. Lastly, because 'business knowledge' and the purposes of 'business knowledge' were perceived by most participants as essentially 'practical' and extrinsic in nature, the focal programmes became reflective of the complex, incoherent and random imaginaries of the business world (Stacey 2012). This last factor relating to legitimisation of knowledge is conceptualised by Bernstein (2000) as the *classification* and *framing* of pedagogical relations within the pedagogical space. These concepts are now considered as part of the analysis in chapter 6 'The pedagogy of confinement'.

Chapter 6 'The pedagogy of confinement'

6.0 Introduction

The focus of the interview questions relating to pedagogical practice was broadly on how the participants perceived the teaching and purpose of their specific courses on the focal programmes. The answers provided insights into what Bernstein (2000) conceptualises as the recontexualisation of knowledge generation in a 'pedagogic space' (section 3.4 p.76). Bernstein's pedagogic theory contains concepts aimed at revealing the pedagogic 'rules' which underpin CDPP. *Classification* refers to the location of the boundaries between disciplinary knowledge and the nature of the boundaries themselves. In Bernstein's (2000) terms this is a function of *power*, measured by the capacity of the disciplines (+/- C) to insulate themselves from the influences of competing discourses. Bernstein argues that the development of the new business sub-disciplines or 'regions' in the universities is more likely to be projected outwards towards the business world and therefore weakly classified.

Bernstein's concept of *framing* is a function of *control* and refers to discourse as a form of control which 'regulates and legitimises communication in pedagogical relations... relations between transmitters and acquirers' (Bernstein 2000: 12). The concept of *framing* refers to the degree of regulation (+/- F) relating to the selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria used in pedagogical relations. It should be noted, however, that within this rule, the strength of framing can vary in relation to different aspects of pedagogy. For example, participants revealed strong internal framing relating to the pacing, sequencing and assessment of teaching and learning, but weak framing in terms of its relationship to the workplace. This thesis contends that in *UBS* disciplinary knowledge is weakly classified and pedagogy strongly (internally) framed resulting in a pedagogical relations confined by the dominant discourse of 'employability' and 'skills' which took root in UK education in the 1990s (Barnett 1994). How and why these pedagogic codes influenced didactics in *UBS* now provides the focus for the remainder of this chapter.

6.1 Whatever happened to competencies?

In both the documentary data (*Programme Specifications* and *Course Specifications* 2011-12) and the interview transcripts, knowledge and 'knowing' have been conflated into the language of 'outcomes'. Knowledge was frequently expressed as performativity or 'demonstrating how to' usually in terms of 'skills'. Knowledge was assumed to possess practical utility, to be linked to 'action' and construed almost entirely within the nodal discourse of employability. An interesting characteristic of the discourse in both the documentary data and the interview transcripts is the almost complete absence of the word 'competence'. For example, if we compare the *Programme Specification* for *BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation* with the *QAA Benchmark Statement: General Business and Management* 2007, and the *QAA* (2008) *Framework for higher education qualifications for England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, we find that the frequency of the words 'competence' and 'skills' as:

Descriptors	**BAEI Programme Specification**	**QAA Benchmark Statement 2007**	**QAA Framework 2008**
'SKILLS'	19	27	23
'COMPETENCE'	2	1	3

Table 8 Frequency of use of the words 'skills' and 'competence' in UBS and QAA quality assurance documents

Of the two instances in which 'competence' is used in the *BAEI Programme Specification* one is a verbatim quotation from the *QAA Benchmark Statement 2007*. The infrequent use of the words 'competence' or 'competency' in the above examples of discourse on vocational higher education may signal a simple re-labelling of educational policy discourse. It could also be a reflection of the decline of NVQs and the extinction of GNVQ in 2007, in which statements of competence and associated performance criteria underpinned the measurement of 'outcomes'. It might also signal a conscious discursive manoeuvre by advocates of outcomes- based curricula (OBC) to counter criticism of OBC as narrowing the learning experience by disguising its NVQ roots (Barnett 1994, Hussey and Smith 2003, Grundy 1987,

Parker 1997, Scott 2007, McKernan 2008, Kelly 2009 *et al*). Of the three instances in which 'competence' is used in the *QAA Framework 2008,* one is to qualify the meaning of competence in this context as:

> The word '**competence**' is used in the descriptors in its broadest sense, allowing for gradation of abilities or skills. It is not used in the narrower sense identified solely on the basis of a 'yes/no' assessment.

There appears to be a sensitivity here to the notion that the measurement of competence may have a narrowing effect on pedagogical relations. This may be because as (G)NVQ competencies proliferated in number, specificity and complexity, the principle of 'generalisability' was subverted (Ainley 1994). It is contended that assessment that re-labels competencies as generic 'skills' or 'graduate attributes', circumvents this contradiction but does not fundamentally alter the pedagogical relations created by an outcomes-based approach.

By premising pedagogical practice on a pre-defined and measurable assessment of 'performance', the pedagogic codes underpinning this approach frame didactics in a particular way. In other words, in OBC, regardless of any apparently progressive assessment criteria, the didactics inevitably become narrowed (Pring 1995). This point will be developed further in the context of the *Graduate Attributes Initiative* discussed later in this chapter. The next section analyses the participants' discourse on knowledge and pedagogy to evaluate the assumptions that underpin their pedagogic practice.

6.2 Constructs of knowledge expressed as metaphors

The metaphors used by the participants to describe their teaching provide the organising structure for this section of the data analysis. Fairclough (2004) differentiates between 'lexical' metaphors as words which represent one part of the world being extended to another and 'grammatical' metaphors where actors and processes become represented as 'things' through nominalisation. An example of the former would be the use of the sporting metaphor 'global race' to describe the dynamics of economic competition . An example of the latter would be the use of the crude theatrical metaphor 'bums on seats' to describe the recruitment of students to a programme. These metaphors may signal a particular set of assumptions about a

phenomenon by the users if they are repeated or used consistently. They may, therefore, offer insights into how the participants conceptualise phenomena such as 'knowledge' (Alvesson and Spicer 2011, Fairclough 2004). Analysing 'knowledge', in this context, is aimed at understanding how participants conceptualise knowledge in terms of its inherent properties. It is also concerned with how 'knowledge' is then constructed or imagined as part of pedagogical relations. In other words, what do the participants' use of metaphors reveal about how they construct the purpose of knowledge in teaching and learning? Analysing metaphors in this way, is both deductive and inductive in orientation. It is deductive because it analyses the metaphors used by the participants and differentiates them. It is inductive because in analysing the participants' metaphor usage, 'root metaphors' are drawn from the data that attempt to connect up the participants' use of metaphors. Root metaphors connect up metaphors that appear to have similar underlying properties or symbolic meanings. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009: 126) define root metaphors as:

> ... metaphors that underlie whole discourses... and... are an important form of preunderstanding, and by this token also a natural field of interpretative studies.

Two prevalent root metaphors relating to pedagogical practice emerged from the data, which when taken together constitute an apparent paradox. These two root metaphors are 'the game' and the 'real world'.

6.3 'The game' - 'real world' paradox

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2010) defines a 'game' as: 'a form of play or sport, especially a competitive one played according to rules and decided by skill, strength, or luck'. The notion of pedagogic practice as a kind of 'game' recurred in the discourse of the participants. The essential properties of 'the game' metaphor are: firstly, pedagogic activities governed by a set of rules that are transmitted by pedagogic practice and *realised* by the acquirers (Bernstein 2000). Secondly, 'the game' is designed to produce a predefined set of outcomes for the 'learner-player'. Thirdly, the activities or 'moves' in 'the game' by the players [academics and

students] are designed to simulate or mimic the 'real world' of business practices within *UBS*.

The 'real world' root metaphor is a collection of imaginaries or projections of business at the micro level of how organisations are constituted and the macro level in terms of the dynamics of markets and economies. For the participants, the 'real world' and 'the game' were conceptualised as separate domains and the core aim was to devise pedagogies for aligning the two. Here a paradoxical 'catch-22' was proposed in which CDPP was perceived as a 'game' being enacted in the domain of *UBS* for the purpose of preparing students for the domain of the 'real world', the latter predicated on experiential knowledge which students could not access. The precise ways in which the participants conceptualised the relationship between the 'real world' and 'the game' appeared to shape their pedagogic practice. Some participants appeared to share a common set of assumptions concerning the relationship between the two domains. I have labelled this group the 'ardent practitioners'.

6.4 The 'ardent practitioners'

Brian, *Jack*, *Rose* and *Trevor* stood out as a discernable group of participants whose discourse displayed a similar set of existential and value assumptions. All explicitly privileged knowledge that was deemed to be 'practical' and 'useful' in the context of the 'real world'. Brian used the word 'practical' 17 times in his interview and typically collocated 'practical' with 'experience':

> ...you've got to look for opportunities to draw on as much practical experience as you can, because I think in something like strategy [a course] you can, there are people [students] that are working in various areas, there are people [students] who have got family businesses, just try and draw more from how these things work. It may be limited but it's still the real world.

Jack conveyed the same notion of 'useful knowledge' as synonymous with 'practical experience' in critiquing a course he taught:

> I think it's [the course] a bit too academic, what it needs is some more practical experience. And maybe the trick would be to take students

> out and meet small entrepreneurs, so we go and see. I know a couple of small entrepreneurs around here. Go and spend a day or a week with them, actually in the business. Go and get them to start a small business. Running the marketplace down here would be a great place. You just say to the students 'right, every Saturday I want you to run a market stall in there.'

The use of the gaming metaphor 'trick' signals a recurring tendency in *Jack's* discourse to reduce pedagogy to simple practical prescriptions. Jack added that students who pursued practical activities such as 'running a market stall' would benefit from interacting with 'real people'. *Rose* also privileged knowledge which was deemed to be 'practical':

> ...because I'm teaching a course which I think is useful for students. So I am seeing it, the way I built my course, it has to do with my background, and I am trying to see how students can actually be facilitated through this stage, and go into industry and actually be practically useful. In industry I have hired and fired as head of a regional office in IT.

Brian, *Jack* and *Rose* all stressed their own practitioner backgrounds in imagining themselves as intermediaries [my word] between the 'real world' and *UBS*. In a common imaginary, they brought their practical experience from the 'real world' and 'gave' it to the students. *Jack* used the metaphor of 'feeding' his experience into *UBS*, whilst *Brian* imagined that he was: 'bringing the experience of a predominantly business-related career into the university and environment'.

Trevor recounted a 'business village' project that he had led in a previous job at a different institution:

> It [teaching] needs to much more practical, it needs to be much more engaging. We need to be looking at development of skills, attributes, competencies, as well as knowledge. And I still think that the whole way that we teach and what we measure is based around knowledge, not skills, competencies, and behaviours. And at the end of the day if you're going to run a small business... what you need are my 'business villages' where there's progression, where you can put them in and you can support and develop them in actually building a business.

All of the 'ardent practitioners' appeared to privilege practical experience or know-how over theoretical knowledge. *Trevor* in his interview of 9,823 words never used

the words 'theory' or 'theoretical' on a single occasion and spoke of wanting students to: 'do the academic work as well, but... you know I've said to you before I'm really interested in work-related and work-based learning as a pedagogy... which... we measure'. The 'ardent practitioners' articulated their notions of pedagogy using directive language signifying a behaviourist orientation. *Trevor* in the above extract nominalised students as 'them' and spoke about 'putting them' into his 'business villages'. Trevor's description of his 'business villages' invoked an image of a kind of 'biosphere' in which the conditions of the 'real world' could be recreated on campus (the 'unreal world'). *Brian* used a cricketing metaphor to explain that pedagogy without 'practical experience' inhibited effective learning:

> ...because it's like saying to somebody, to use a sports analogy, it's like saying 'this is how you track a ball, this is how you take a wicket,' and you drum it in over three years but you never actually take them to the pitch. There are some things that you just have to do, you can never replace that experience in the business world, fully.

The verb to 'drum it in' signals a behaviourist mode of didactics and resonates with *Rose's* use of the 'pushing' metaphor which she repeats five times in her interview. For example:

> And then in year 3, I'm actually pushing them a little bit more harder, because I'm thinking of preparing them for the workforce.

Brian's use of the metaphor 'pitch' seems to straddle the separate domains of 'the game' and the 'real world'. *Brian* appears to be positing a pedagogy which takes them [the students] to the 'pitch' ['real world'] having coached the students in the rules of 'the game'. Here he appears to be imagining a pedagogical dynamic of 'giving' students the knowledge about 'how business works' and then getting them to test it in the 'real world'. The data did not suggest that another coherent group such as the 'ardent practitioners' could be discerned amongst the other 19 participants. However, there were distinct 'patterns' or 'tendencies' which provided insights into how the participants perceived the nature and purpose of knowledge and didactics. It is to these 'patterns' or 'tendencies' to which I now turn.

6.5 The rules of the game: 'step one, step two, step three'

Nelson's description of his pedagogic practice did not appear to differ significantly from other participants in terms of teaching his courses within the common *UBS* lecture and tutorial format. However, in his conceptualisation of the nature and purpose of knowledge, he expressed a particular form of dissonance concerning the students' learning, which he described as 'only going to the surface'. Nelson partly attributed this to what he perceived was a flaw in the predominant pedagogy in *UBS* based on leading students through predictable problem-solution routines. He described this phenomenon in the following way:

> We're always wanting these people [students] to come to points so they are kind of forced to agree to what we think should be the correct answer. 'Yes, yes, that's what I expect. Why am I to take a longer route and come to a solution that has never been seen before?' But it's like, even in a course like this one, even in a course like [business strategy], we expect certain answers to take off.

For *Nelson*, the surface learning of the students was something in which they had been conditioned even before coming to the university: 'A lot of them are coming from a background of rules, structured rules'. *Nelson* argued that it was the design of didactics with predetermined outcomes which inhibited deep learning. This was because it was knowledge that was contextualised which prevented the students from transferring it across contexts or courses. As Nelson explained:

> ...step one do this, step two do this, step three. Now, that is not necessarily applicable to another course. Because it is situational, it is contextual, it has been limited by certain theories and whatever... it's just like problem solving in mathematics. If somebody learns how to do differentials, how is he going to use that in managing strategy?

Nelson, *Peotric* and *Harrison* were the only participants to question the possible effects of a pedagogy based on tightly structured problem-solution routines.

Thirteen participants cited the use of case studies as the main technique in their repertoire of teaching techniques. Case studies were used in tutorials and in some instances to provide a focus for summative assessment. For example, *Dennis* described how case studies: 'give a snapshot of the real world to the students'. *Dave*

fore-grounded case studies as the primary teaching technique on the Year 3 course *Business Strategy*. Case studies were of various lengths and were usually tackled by the students working in groups. The principle underpinning the case study was 'application of theory to practice' where the case study outlined a scenario in which a real or hypothetical company faced a problem or issue. The task of the students was to identify the appropriate theory or practical solutions that they had acquired in lectures or tutorials to suggest a 'solution' to the 'problem'. Case studies appeared to be drawn mainly from textbooks. Each course was required by *UBS-QA* to recommend a course textbook. These frequently came with course materials such as lecture slides which were sometimes used by participants.

Most participants conceptualised pedagogic practice as consisting of a staple diet of lectures and tutorials. Participants described lectures as consisting of traditional monological expositions of topics based on a mix of theory and information. Some participants reported that they would use videos, or guest speakers or in the case of *Peotric*, occasionally try and make the lectures 'more interactive'. *Peotric* explained he had used the 'bead experiment' as a way of explaining the principles of total quality management:

> what you're essentially doing is that you first give it to individual participants and they will select out the beads and they have to funnel it from one tray into another, and they have to get a certain number of the red beads out of all these beads that are in there. And then of course we have them working in teams as well to perform the same experiment, and what it starts to show is that cooperation and teamwork actually produces a better result.

Although the use of interactive 'experiments' appeared to be unusual in the context of *UBS*, it was also premised on the same behaviourist principles underpinning problem-solution routines, albeit is a more entertaining way as a kind of 'game'. *Daria* reported an instance where an academic whom she had observed as part of her PGCHE course at *UBS* used drama in a tutorial:

> For instance in one of the sessions, the colleague was using I think some sort of drama. It was like playing something to engage the students... He was playing himself, like an actor... he was trying to engage students more, in the sense that not work them, entertain them, but at the same time transfer the message... [it was about] something

> that would damage the reputation of the company... Where you are in a store, and how the sales associates behave towards the customer.

This reported use of drama is described as being something to 'entertain' the students to 'transfer the message', which again signalled pedagogy as a transmission mode of didactics where the students were engaged as spectators and not as actors.

Some participants sought to connect the students to the 'real world' through simulation games. Simulations were computer games which attempted to re-create or simulate some of the conditions or dynamics of business which were projected to exist in the 'real world'. The key organising principles of the simulations could be summarised as: students are organised into small teams of four or five members which constitute a hypothetical company or unit within a company; they are given hypothetical resources with which to play the game; they are required to make regular decisions about the allocation of those resources; these decisions then result in a positive or negative effect on their aggregate resources calculated by the computer software. The team that accumulates the greatest amount of aggregate resources at the end of the decision cycle wins the game. *Bruce* explained the purpose of his supply chain simulation game:

> I think I want them to learn how to respond to some special situation in business. For example when the inventory goes up, what do to when you don't have enough inventory to satisfy your customer, what you need to do... They have to deal with this situation because they have to manage the total cost after the game.

Bruce described the game's scenario as rooted in the 'real world' by reference to the game's focus as 'a special situation in business'. He went on to explain that the students learnt about:

> ...the trade off between inventory and cost, because inventory goes up, costs increase, and also you have to think about new customer service, customer satisfaction, because if you don't have enough inventory you can't satisfy your customer.

Here students were being taught that business outcomes are based on rational decision-making where the computer game is pre-programmed to reward 'correct' decisions and penalise 'incorrect' decisions. In most of the teaching activities

described by the participants business was framed within a technical-rational paradigm of single cause and single effect. The message appeared to be that the efficient and effective application of the 'rules of the game' guaranteed the successful delivery of a predetermined set of outcomes. The data also suggest that as a concomitant of this technical-rationalist paradigm, theory is constructed as just another 'technique' for 'solving a problem'.

6.6 The conflation of theory and practice

Dominic, Trevor, Kevin, Daria and *Michele* did not use the word 'theory' at any point in their interviews whilst *Frank* used the word three times, *Margaret* twice and *Joe, Noel* and *Peter* used the word once. Those participants who did speak of theory at any length tended to conceptualise theory as something that should be used instrumentally like a 'tool' harnessed to practice. For example, *Brian* asserted that students should be encouraged to:

> ...use that theory as a tool that they wouldn't have known about before, when they're actually assessing let's say a small business, a competitive firm, that's a tool that they can use and apply.

Maria also used the metaphor 'tool' to describe theory:

> ... a bit of application as well it's not just theory, it's more theory first, it's telling you why we need to look at the market environment, why we can use it, how we can use it, and then here you can use all these tools together to analyze a real complex company, with all these things.

Edith described the purpose of theory as being inseparable from practice:

> Well the logics behind it, they need to understand it. They need to understand that first of all how it can be applied to practice. The logics.

Dennis also used the word 'logic (s)' to explain the relationship between theory and practice:

> I don't think that we properly use the term theory in business. I think it's, you know, practical, something that has been tested in practice and seems to work. It's not the same thing, you know. Theory in science and theory in business. When I'm teaching students, saying that supply chain is a link, a chain of companies, that are linked together and collaborate in order to provide the final product. So it's something logical you know. What we do is to teach the logic behind the way that businesses do business.

Both *Dennis's* and *Maria's* use of the word 'logic (s)' signals a technical-rationalist orientation in relation to theory which appears to suggest that 'theorising' was mainly concerned with illustrating a 'logical' process or a 'formula'. The only 'theories' that were referenced as examples by the participants in the data were 'Porter's 5 forces' , and PEST analysis, though *Diana* made references to 'theories of innovation' and *Peotric* referred to theories of Total Quality Management (TQM). 'Porter's 5 forces' was referenced by six of the participants, including both *Edith* and *Dennis*, in the context of four separate courses. Both 'Porter's 5 forces' and PEST (political, economic, social and political) analysis are essentially frameworks for the 'logical' ordering of possible market factors which might impact on a company (Jobber 2009). With the exception of *Nelson*, *Harrison* and *Diana*, the impression given by the participants was that theory was not central to their teaching and was used for the narrow purpose of illustrating correspondences or relationships within business processes. There was scant evidence in the data that theory was used in didactics to deepen or problematize issues or relationships or to explore causality.

This conflation of theory and practice was also apparent in assessment tasks, with *Peotric, Noel and Nelson* asserting that assessment tasks were likely to reinforce surface learning. For example, *Peotric* stated that:

> I mean basically what I've seen is the assessments in the first and second year before I even revised my courses; the assessments which were set were basically tapping surface learning, especially in XYZ [...*]. They were taught to create a portfolio, they weren't told in depth to use high level critical analysis skills, or that they would be assessed on critical analysis skills. So what they were being told to do was to put together an assessment of a company, but they weren't going in

depth to analyse the success or failure of that company or something tangible.

In the focal programmes, the summative assessment of courses appeared in the following formats in the following frequency (13).

Case Study	Business Plan	Analysis of company/ market data	Reflective report	Timed assessment	Simulation report	Presentation	Essay
3	**3**	**4**	**4**	**7**	**5**	**7**	**8**

Table 9 Summary of course assessment formats in the focal programmes

There was scant evidence in the documentary data (e.g. *course guides*) of assessments that had been constructively aligned (Biggs 1996). Performance or marking criteria frequently consisted of generic frameworks provided by *UBS-QA*. The following is a typical example applied frequently in the course guides:

Marking Criteria
Focus: Does the essay set up a clear essay question to address? Does the essay stay within and fulfil the topic parameters?
Synthesis: Does the essay bring together the literature in a significant manner that addresses an essay question?
Soundness: Does the essay indicate a comprehensive understanding of the topic area and literature discussed?
Clarity of structure: is the essay well organised and logically constructed to achieve synthesis while being mindful of the needs of the reader?
Mechanical Soundness: Is the essay clearly written, spell checked and grammatically sound and referenced appropriately?

Figure 12 Sample of *UBS-QA* assessment template for essays

(13) Most course assessment regimes contained a mix of these formats sometimes referred to as a 'portfolio'. These assessments relate to both core courses and options.

Table 10 illustrates an example where the above *UBS-QA* assessment template has been customised to a business plan and weighted. This appeared in the course guide to *Planning & Development* (Year 1).

Marking Criteria	Weighting
Focus: Is there use of persuasion with regard to the business plan? Does the plan form around a centralized mission? Does the rest of the plan conform to the company's stated mission and objectives? Have the students posed and answered any research questions/hypotheses with regard to data collection that are on topic to the theme of the business plan?	**25**
Synthesis: Is there theoretical evidence in support of a financial analysis such as a cash flow forecast which shows that this type of product or service would be profitable? Is there theoretical evidence of a marketing strategy and competitor analysis? Would this plan elicit funds from an investor? Is there critical analysis of any survey data reported?	**25**
Soundness: Did the student use appropriate literature to support the business plan? Does the literature help to identify a need for the product or service?	**20**
Clarity of structure: Is there synthesis where sub-paragraphs and sentences clearly tie together? Did the student use technology within Microsoft Excel to properly format tables/graphs to summarize descriptive statistics? How is the presentation of the business plan?	**15**
Mechanical Soundness: Is the plan clearly written, spell checked and grammatically sound and referenced appropriately?	**15**

Table 10 Sample of assessment criteria customised from *UBS-QA* assessment template

The following sample of assessment criteria for a group presentation of a business plan appeared in the course guide to *Small Business* (Year 3):

Group Business Plan Presentation

As a preparation for submitting the business plan, your team will have the opportunity to present your business idea in front of a panel of 'investment dragons' at the end of Term 1. In groups, you are required to present your business plan, preparing 4-5 slides to assist you in doing this (10 minutes). This should be targeted at potential investors, covering key elements of the plan. You are also required to answer questions from the panel after the presentation (5 minutes). You should be able to elaborate on the plan and defend your analysis.

Figure 13 *Small Business* assessment task

The marking criteria which accompanied the task, were not typical of the assessment criteria found in most course guides in that they were produced by the course leader and weighted:

Criteria	Percentage	Explanation
Originality	10.00%	How original is your business idea? (For example, the idea of an innovative online service will be marked higher than that of opening a corner shop.)
Scope	40.00%	Does the plan draw from the literature in a significant manner that addresses the key components of a business plan? e.g. feasibility analysis, competitor/industry analysis, financial analysis
Depth	40.00%	Does the assignment demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the topic area and literature discussed? Are the decisions made concerning the proposed business realistic?
Presentation and referencing	10.00%	Is the assignment well organised and logically constructed? Has the work been referenced appropriately?

Table 11 Business Plan assessment criteria

The reference to 'investment dragons' in Figure 13 provides an example of media genres (in this case the BBC programme 'Dragons' Den') which were sometimes used by participants in support of their teaching. Again, the references to 'literature' or 'theory' in Tables 10 and 11 were typical in that they appear to be mainly conceptualised as techniques or 'tools' relating to financial analysis or frameworks for ordering factors in market analysis. All of the assessment tasks found in the documentary data were technicist and normative in orientation as illustrated in Tables 10 and 11 above. For example, the notion of 'research' as an element in assignment tasks usually meant searching for information on company processes or performance on websites, as opposed to exploring articles in academic journals. This technicism also extended to assessment tasks relating to 'reflection' including PDP 1 and 2 which were courses designed for 'personal development'. The following example (Figure 14), linked to the business plan in Table 11 demonstrates how technical-rationality has been extended to the process of reflection:

2. Individual Reflective Report

You are required to submit an individual reflective report (1000 words), based on your experience working in a group on your Business Plan, and incorporating feedback from your group presentation of the plan. This accounts for 20% weighting towards your assessment of the course. The report should cover the different stages of the development of your plan, including idea initiation, plan development, generating the presentation and the presentation and feedback (see details below). You should aim to include academic references in your work and ensure that these are properly referenced using the Harvard system.

Your reflective report should include the following elements:

I. Team Work
The roles, specializations, and contributions of team members; the team forming process, and the efficiency of team work

II. Process of Idea Initiation
How did you come to the idea of the business plan? How did you choose between possible ideas? Reflecting on the process of idea initiation, what have you learned?

III. Presentation Experience
Why is it important to present the business plan instead of just submitting paper documents? What have you learned from presenting the plan to the panel?

IV. Alternative Scenario
You have predicted the growth of your business in the business plan. Looking back, do you think your prediction was optimistic, pessimistic or just about right? Have you considered alternative growth trajectories in your business plan? If not, how would the inclusion of alternative scenarios help to make a better plan?

V. Other areas
Any other areas that you would like to comment on the process of developing the business plan.

Figure 14 Sample of an assessment task designed as a 'reflective report'

In this text the 'self' has been nominalised in various instances to evaluations.

The directives 'you are required' and 'how did you come to the idea...' signal a confinement of reflection to instrumentalist outcomes which, to a significant extent, have been prescribed in advance. These are resonant of Biggs's (1996, 2001) 'intended outcomes' which automatically narrow the nature of enquiry in advance. The section IV 'Alternative Scenario' has become closed, i.e. 'optimistic', pessimistic or just about right'. This example is indicative of a wider issue, where theory, by being conflated with practice in this instrumentalist way, became separated from the 'system of meaning' or 'body of theory' from which it originated. The result of this may have been to trivialise or even distort the original theory itself, as in this case of

assessing reflection (Schön 1987). In a sense, this conflation of theory and practice 'turns critical realism on its head' as the domains of the 'real' and the 'actual' became subsumed into the 'empirical' domain of events and experiences. Figure 14 is illustrative of the formulaic approach to pedagogy described as following the rules, 'step one, step two, step three'. In this example, the summative task of reflective practice is likely to be realised by the students as a superficial summary of their group process. The topic of assessment brings this thesis to issue of the influence of students as a factor in the recontextualisation of pedagogy in UBS (Figure 4 p.77).

6.7 Realising the rules: student strategies for 'winning the game'

Bernstein (2000) theorised that the pedagogic codes which underpin the classification and framing of CDPP not only legitimise certain types of knowledge but also shape the dynamics of pedagogical instruction. Bernstein (2000: 17-18) described the latter as the *recognition* and *realisation rules*:

> The recognition rule, essentially, enables appropriate realisations to be put together. The realisation rule determines how we put meanings together and how we make them public. The realisation rule is necessary to produce the legitimate text.

In terms of the pedagogic practice in *UBS* described above, the students as 'acquirers' (Bernstein 2000) were exposed to a strongly framed pedagogy based on a well defined set of assumptions or recognition rules. These assumptions included: the privileging of practical knowledge over theoretical knowledge in the production of 'legitimate texts' such as case study answers or assignments; learning premised on reproducing solutions to problems by applying pre-rehearsed formula and the framing of 'successful learning' primarily in terms of outcomes expressed as grades or degree classifications. In Bernsteinian terms, *UBS* pedagogic codes by being confined to rigidly sequenced 'step one, step two, step three' approaches to the achievement of predetermined outcomes, were likely to generate 'reproductive' rather than 'productive' knowledge. This thesis contends that the pedagogic codes underpinning the framing of didactics or the recognition and realisation rules in *UBS* could, potentially, have contributed to a student culture of surface learning and low levels of student engagement. Negative views of student learning by participants

have already been cited in relation to *Type 4* dissociation (cynicism p. 119). *Bruce, Noel, Dominic, Trevor, Dave, Edith, Harrison and Maria* reported low levels of student engagement. Participants offered a variety of causes for this phenomenon including uninteresting teaching and assessment by colleagues (*Bruce, Trevor*) and student 'laziness' (*Maria, Edith*). *Rose* suggested that the students had internalised a societal culture where the fear of failure had been removed and thus their willingness to properly engage. She described her perception that:

> ...students lack the general knowledge, lack the awareness, and they don't read so they don't know what's happening out there.

Dave suggested that some students had substituted 'game playing' for authentic engagement with learning. He described how students haggled over coursework grades by:

> ...negotiating marks with you. They even shop around, assignment 1 assignment 2, they resort to all sort of clever practices. They sometimes don't have a very good academic involvement, so we are failing to teach them. We are forcing them to become clever.

The sentence: ' We are forcing them to become clever' appears to infer that in some ways *Dave* was succeeding in combating adversarial students. *Rose* said that the students' engagement was predicated on grades: 'I give them grades for doing that. Because I find that if you ask them to do things without rewards, they won't'.

Edith appeared to confirm the necessity of motivating students by linking activities to summative assessment: 'Because they don't get any grading for any tutorial activities, so probably that's not really motivating them to attend tutorials'. Of all the participants, only *Noel, Peotric* and *Harrison* suggested that there might be systemic problems underpinning low student engagement and surface learning. *Noel* was unique in explicitly attributing the problem to students exercising 'customer power'. As *Noel* explained:

> I think good institutions, elite ones, successful ones, the top ones in the whole world, are the ones which lean on the critical thinking, critical education, critical analysis. And they don't lower the standards. And that's how they stand out in the whole world. They're key to getting into those institutions. But in an institution like ours, the goals are of course satisfaction. And the goals are that students come first and we

> should bend and we should modify things to suit them. Because if we don't then that's not acceptable. Full stop really.

As to why *Noel* was the only participant to state explicitly that assessment was influenced by concerns about student 'satisfaction' is not clear from the data. However, given the pedagogic codes underpinning the classification and framing of curriculum and pedagogy, it could be conjectured that low student engagement or surface learning could result from CDPP which were instrumentalist in nature. The eclipse of intrinsic values by privileging practical experience or 'know-how' over theoretical knowledge, may have created an 'epistemic void' at the core of the student learning experience in *UBS*. Students' access to the 'real world' was, by necessity, confined to vicarious experiences or 'snapshots' or short work experiences. Simultaneously, grade and degree classifications were coded in pedagogic relations as prerequisites for success in the 'real world'. Further, that this success was signalled as 'guaranteed' if students followed the rules...'step one, step two, step three'. The intrinsic value of learning, therefore, may have been negated by contextualised knowledge that did not transfer across courses and could be regarded by the students as 'disposable'.

The following quotation from *Edith* appears to evidence the notion that an 'epistemic void' may at least have been partly attributable to the nature of CDPP. *Edith* contrasted her experience of teaching on an IT programme with the teaching of business by stating:

> You are creating something [in IT], you are developing a web database, you are creating a website... you are building something. Things that you can actually show 'this is what I have done'. So it's very motivating... that is the weakest area, that we really don't know how we can show our business students... once you've finished you don't have a product, the product is going to be yourself.

The inference here appears to be that it is difficult to motivate business students because there are no objectified 'end products' in business degrees and that all that is left are 'themselves'. The logic of the statement that: 'once you've finished you don't have a product, the product is going to be yourself', appears to be that the 'self as a learner' in business degrees is invalid. If there is no 'end product' and the undergraduate is by definition not part of the 'real world', then what is left?

There is some data to suggest that senior management at *UoS* may have perceived that all may not have been well with the undergraduate curriculum. The introduction of the *Graduate Attributes Initiative* (*GAI*) in 2011 was a policy initiative emanating from the senior management in *UoS* in conjunction with the EDU, ostensibly designed to provide direction in the development of university curricula and pedagogy. The *GAI*, however, illustrates the contradictions that appear to exist between the aspirations of the university for student learning and CDPP in *UBS*. It is to the *Graduate Attributes Initiative* (2011) that I now briefly turn.

6.8 The Graduate Attributes Initiative

The *GAI* was launched in 2011 and later appeared in the *UoS Learning and Teaching Strategy 2012-16*. It is a promotional genre which posits a set of aspirations of what *UoS* would like the ideal *UoS* graduate to become (see Figure 15 p.177). The value assumptions which underpin this text are explicitly committed to a progressive, creative and interdependent approach to CDPP aimed at developing graduates as independent thinkers who are also agentic and creative. This thesis contends that CDPP in *UBS* is rhetorically but not existentially aligned with these aspirations. At the core of this contradiction is the technical-rationalist thinking or the pedagogic codes (Bernstein 2000) which underpin the classification and framing of CDPP and which may actually subvert the aspirations of the *GAI*. In Bernsteinian terms, CDPP in *UBS* is typical of 'regional' programmes in that the curriculum was weakly classified and the pedagogy strongly framed. For example, the pre-defined learning outcomes, legitimised through *UBS-QA* frameworks, diverted pedagogy into narrow assessment-led didactics based on problem-solution routines, which represent the antithesis of creative or critical thinking. According to Bernstein (2000), in these pedagogical relations students are being taught to recognise and realise legitimate knowledge as the generation of reproductive knowledge texts. The fragmentation of the curriculum into discrete, disconnected, contextualised modules also negates the possibility of 'drawing connections' or engaging with a 'system of meaning' (Wheelahan 2010).

The UoS Graduate - Our Vision for the Institution and its students:

The UoS Has always aimed to provide an environment that allows students to maximise their potential. In meeting the challenges of today's tough and challenging world our consultation with staff and students resulted in defining distinctive characteristics for the UoS Graduate. These explicit behaviours, values, skills and dispositions that we expect our students to develop will best prepare them for their future careers and help us to reshape student learning and assessment activities.

Scholarship and Autonomy

The University is committed to developing graduates who:

1. Have an informed understanding of their discipline or professional practice, and the ability to question its principles, practices and boundaries
2. Think independently, analytically and creatively, and engage imaginatively with new areas of investigation
3. Appreciate disciplines and forms of professional practice beyond their own, and draw connections between them
4. Are intellectually curious, responsive to challenges, and demonstrate initiative and resilience

Creativity and Enterprise

The University is committed to giving its graduates the confidence to:

1. Recognise and create opportunities, and respond effectively to unfamiliar or unprecedented situations or problems
2. Generate new ideas and develop creative solutions or syntheses
3. Communicate clearly and effectively, in a range of forms, taking account of different audiences
4. Make use of familiar and emerging information & communication technologies
5. Seize and shape the opportunities open to them on leaving university

Cross-cultural and International Awareness

The University is committed to producing graduates who:

1. Engage effectively in groups whose members are from diverse backgrounds
2. Appreciate the importance of behaving sustainably
3. Move fluently between different cultural, social and political contexts
4. Value the ability to communicate in more than one language

Figure 15 The Graduate Attributes (2011)

The curriculum is predominantly technicist in orientation with little attempt to address alternative socio-political perspectives. CDPP in *UBS* presents a vision of the 'real world' as a place of work and enterprise in which the concepts of 'society' or 'civic identity' are conspicuously absent. The curriculum and pedagogy, I would contend, are not designed to promote learner dispositions such as curiosity or agency, but rather to satisfy the human need for economic certainty in 'today's tough and challenging world'.

I now turn to Chapter 7 which focuses on the process of *analytic generalisation* (Yin 2009) and also offers recommendations as to how *UBS* might address the issues raised in chapters 4-6.

Chapter 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.0 Introduction

This chapter now re-focuses on prior theory in the light of the analysis that has emerged from the data in Chapters 4-6. This approach is in line with Yin's (2009) concept of *analytic generalisation* in which the data from the case study are compared with prior theory for the purposes of theory confirmation or disconfirmation. The specific focus of the *analytic generalisation* here is on the GNVQ model and its critique by contemporaries (Allen 2004, Barnett 1994, Bates 1998, Bloomer 1998, Pring 1995, Smithers 1998) introduced in section 2.3.3. This thesis contends that the weaknesses in the GNVQ model identified by its critics, have been replicated in CDPP in *UBS* and for similar reasons. The second part of this chapter proceeds to offer broad recommendations as to how the issues raised in Chapters 4-6 in relation to CDPP in *UBS* might be addressed.

7.1 The 'conflicting ideologies' in outcomes-based curricula

Claims by the advocates of GNVQs (Burke 1995, Jessup 1991, 1995) that they were 'progressive' rested on a number of assumptions (Figure 11 p.155). Firstly, 'the teacher' was reconstructed as a 'facilitator of learning' and the student as an independent or 'autonomous learner' or group of learners. The pedagogy was, therefore, 'constructivist' in orientation because students were being encouraged to carry out research and construct their own knowledge, often in groups, and teachers could no longer rely on the transmission model. Secondly, the curriculum was experientialist and transdisciplinary and, therefore, not confined to the traditional teaching of disciplinary subject knowledge. Disciplinary knowledge became 'underpinning knowledge' and useful only in terms of complementing 'experiential learning'. By combining theory and practice in this way, the GNVQ advocates claimed that students were being encouraged to become more 'critical' in their thinking. However, according to the GNVQ critics, despite these aspirations, GNVQs were in practice pseudo-progressive and the claims of progressivism were hollow (Bates *et al* 1998, Bloomer 1998, Pring 1995). For example, Bates (1998)

describes the 'learner autonomy' in GNVQs as a form of 'limited empowerment' in which dependence on the teacher was reduced and where the student could choose their own learning activities. Her research indicated that a wide variety of responses by students to the new condition of 'limited empowerment' obtained. Paradoxically, students frequently realized their power by becoming resistant, preferring to remain passive and teacher-directed or neglecting their studies altogether. As Bloomer (1998: 178) described it, students exhibited: ' conformism, retreatism, innovation, rebellion or strategic compliance'. Bloomer's research found that students frequently interpreted their research activities as 'data retrieval exercises' where they became simply 'hunters and gathers' of 'information'. Critical thinking also appeared to be limited as evidenced by student assignment evaluations which were reproduced using 'stock formulae'.

Bates *et al* (1998) also explain the dissipation of the progressive aspirations for GNVQs in terms of pressure to become more of a 'packaged commodity' for the purposes of employability. As Bates *et al* put it (1998: 120):

> Perhaps because of the central metaphor of business within controlled vocationalism, this ideology became associated with an instrumental purpose for education, and that prime purpose in relation to GNVQ is assumed to be job acquisition and performance.

The critics of GNVQs, therefore, identify deficiencies in their implementation and evolution which resonate strongly with the various aspects of instrumentalism in pedagogic relations in *UBS* explored in Chapters 5 and 6. According to Pring (1995) the philosophical contradiction at the core of the GNVQ model was centred on the attempt to base GNVQs on the NVQ principle of 'competence'. NVQs were designed to assess 'competence' in the workplace and as Pring (1995: 57) explains, students were required to:

> ...*demonstrate* their competence, not to talk or write about it - theoretical understanding is shown in intelligent practice, not in separate talking about that practice; undertaking an apprenticeship or a college course is of no consequence, only the demonstrated capacity 'to do'.

However, the opportunity 'to do' was, in the context of schools and colleges, removed from the learner, as they were not yet members of a workforce or linked to a workforce, except through limited 'experiences'. Instead GNVQs, like CDPP in *UBS*, were designed as a programme of learning premised on outcomes and simulacra in the absence of experience of the 'real world'. Learning in GNVQ could not be based on disciplinary knowledge because that had been negated by the practical, 'to do' nature of the outcomes and reduced to fragmented 'underpinning' or 'useful' knowledge. Pring (1995) described GNVQs as neither 'vocational' nor 'academic' but part of a 'prevocational tradition' of programmes of learning which were about 'relevance' and generic 'process skills' such as communication, numeracy and teamwork, but not specific occupational training.

7.2 CDPP at *UBS*: a continuation of the 'prevocational tradition'

This thesis contends that proposition 1 [*The undergraduate business curriculum at UBS has been recontextualised as a hybrid which closely resembles the GNVQ model of outcomes-based curricula (OBC) introduced into the secondary and post-compulsory education sectors in 1992*] is confirmed, but with qualifications. The evidence that the *UBS* curriculum closely resembles the GNVQ model and a continuation of the prevocationalist tradition, appears compelling. The technicist orientation of the content and assessment regimes; the focus on prevocational skills in place of disciplinary knowledge; the absence of occupational training and the primacy of outcomes-based assessment would all seem to evidence the proposition that the *UBS* curriculum closely resembles the GNVQ model.

However, perhaps the term 'hybrid' is suggestive of a neat post-rationalisation. It may be more meaningful to suggest that the CDPP in *UBS* is a recontextualisation of disparate elements that have their antecedents in various influences such as conservative, instrumentalist and constructivist approaches to CDPP (Wheelahan 2010). For example, in terms of Bernstein's (2000: 44) pedagogic models of 'performance' and 'competence', CDPP in *UBS* exhibits a mix of the two models. In terms of 'performance' characteristics, pedagogic practice is strongly framed by the regulation of time and task and performance objectified by grades to facilitate the ranking of learners. In terms of 'competence' characteristics, knowledge is weakly classified and the principle of progression diminished as

knowledge becomes contextualised and the focus becomes the individual learner's 'transferable' skills or 'competencies'.

Proposition 2 [*The values infusing the CDPP are closely aligned with the dominant discourse on key skills and employability emanating from government and employer*s] would appear to be confirmed. The managerial discourse and the discourse of the participants on the purposes of the curriculum are dominated by the employability agenda, though as noted in section 5.6 not in a coherent way (p.148). The documentary data also confirmed the counter-discourse to the espoused link between vocational degrees and enhanced employability found in the academic literature.

Proposition 3 [*The undergraduate business curriculum is constructed as market-focused, fragmented 'products' rather than a coherent learning 'experience'*] would also appear to be confirmed by the data. *Plan A* is illustrative of the commoditised nature of the programmes which are literally labelled as 'products' to be delivered by academics to the 'market' (Naidoo *et al* 2011, Naidoo and Jamieson 2005). *UoS* and *UBS* within it, appear to embrace the model of the corporate or 'entrepreneurial university' (Barnett 2013). The overt and prevailing extrinsicality of the curricular aims and the subsequent framing of pedagogic relations as instrumentalist and confining, are pivotal to understanding the weaknesses of CDPP in *UBS* analysed in Chapters 4-6 and resonant of GNVQ.

The modularised construction of the 'learning experience' resulted in programmes where the pedagogic concepts of process and progression appeared to be lost in disconnected courses underpinned by random lists of transferable skills and discrete packages of knowledge. Because underpinning knowledge was contextualised and transferable skills were unaligned, the pedagogical aim of progression was negated. This also meant that underpinning knowledge received by the students may have been coded as 'disposable' because subsequent understanding of 'new' knowledge was not dependant on the understanding and retention of knowledge from previous courses. Again in this regard, CDPP at *UBS* appears to echo the criticisms of GNVQ as incoherent in both its design and enactment. As Bloomer (1998: 174) found in his empirical research:

> ... students gave numerous further examples of the fragmentation of GNVQ course knowledge. Penny Ham, for instance, was not alone in

> suggesting that her teacher's 'mechanistic' approach to assignment organisation stressed the unitary, decontextualised and fragmented nature of course knowledge and the importance of means over ends.

This incoherence was exacerbated in the case of *UBS* by a further disconnection of the principal actors (academics) from the curriculum design and to some extent its operationalisation. These latter phenomena were evidenced by the interview data and the data on managerial discourse relating to curriculum development (*Plan A*). For example, the re-design of the *BA Business Studies* programme leading to *BSc Business programme* described on pp. 111 appears symptomatic of the exclusion of academics from curriculum development. It is of note here, that few academics expressed dissonance in terms of the instrumentalist orientation of CDPP. As the interview data demonstrated, there was limited evidence of the kind of professional identity schisms found in business schools (Macfarlane 1998) discussed in section 2.2.3 (p.38)

Proposition 4: [*CDPP in undergraduate business programmes are largely framed as quality assurance processes and texts which provide a rational representation of what are, in practice, chaotic and emergent phenomena in relation to CDPP*] is partly confirmed. The data displayed in section 5.6 'in search of coherence' (p.148) illustrated the perceived problems of knowledge duplication and knowledge deficits experienced by students due to poor planning. This was partly caused by a lack of knowledge on the part of some of the participants about the overall construction of the programmes. However, the notion that *UBS-QA* only performed the role of rationalising incoherence is misleading. The key point in relation to the influence of *UBS-QA* is that its discourse of control was also *constitutive* of pedagogic relations and in particular may have signalled the obviation of academics from engaging at a deep level with CDPP (Fairclough 2005).

Proposition 5 [*The CDPP in UBS has an instrumentalist orientation, whose knowledge codes may subvert learning objectives such as those listed in the Graduate Attributes*] appears to be confirmed. This thesis contends that the aspirations to develop graduates to become 'creative', 'independent' and 'critical thinkers' are incommensurate with the 'pedagogy of confinement' described in Chapter 6. This phenomenon is resonant of the GNVQ experience described by the critics of GNVQ as caused by 'conflicting ideologies' (Bates *et al* 1998).

In Bernsteinian (2000) terms, the rules for realising and recognising legitimate knowledge privileged certain types of 'useful' knowledge for instrumentalist purposes. The pedagogic codes underpinning the classification and framing of CDPP are antithetical to the aspirations of the *Graduate Attributes* for all the reasons outlined in Chapters 5 and 6.

Finally, the core issue signalled in the title to this thesis on whether the focal programmes reflected 'education' or 'training' as their principal orientation, has been partly addressed above in the discussion of prevocationalism. 'Training', whilst, in the general sense, is clearly an important aspect of learning in any programme of study, is not to be found, in the overtly vocational sense of being 'occupation-specific'. It might be posited, however, that a broad training orientation is to be found in the behaviourist emphasis on performance. I would contend that, for all the arguments outlined in section 2.3.3 (p.49) and the conclusion to Chapter 2 (p.59), that the diminishing of theory in vocational education, to a significant extent, confines learning to a generic form of training in performative skills.

Therefore, in terms of 'education', the focal programmes fell short of the generative quality of didactics that might be expected of a university degree. Here, I return to the concepts of 'vertical discourse' (Bernstein 1999) and 'powerful knowledge' (Young 2008, 2012). Unlike performative skills, theoretical knowledge has the generative power to offer the learner a conceptual understanding beyond the experience of the 'knower' and which is genuinely transferable across pedagogical contexts or even domains (Wheelahan 2010, Young 2008, 2012). As Barnett (1994: 77) contends of the NCVQ philosophy:

> This is not so much a philosophy of technicized reason as of technicized performance. It is a philosophy devoid of enlightened and critical (and self-critical) reason.

This thesis now turns to the recommendations as 'lines of thought' on how the issues highlighted in Chapters 4-6 might be addressed.

7.3 Recommendations

7.3.0 Introduction

The following recommendations are offered in the context of this type 2 case study design, which although mainly explanatory in nature, possesses an evaluative element (Yin 2009). This is also in line with the professional ethos of the Doctorate of Education. Given that my thesis focuses on the potentially detrimental consequences of an outcomes-based model of curriculum design, a detailed, prescriptive set of recommendations would obviously be inappropriate. The following recommendations, are, therefore, offered as 'lines of thought' on curricular reform which seek to address the issues raised in Chapters 4-6. They are not presented as sequenced activities, but do assume that effective change can only come about by first addressing the complex issues related to organisational culture (Stacey 2007, 2012). Above all, the interdependent nature of effective curriculum design needs to be acknowledged at the outset, though clearly curricular reform involves multiple activities taking place in parallel. The following recommendations for curricular reform are framed in terms of concise outlines for action based on the concepts of: 'inclusivity, 'connectivity', 'creativity' and 'criticality'.

7.3.1 'Inclusivity'

The data on dissociation and atomisation discussed in sections 4.6 and 4.7 appear to indicate that academics perceive themselves to be, in some respects, 'outside' the processes of curriculum design. The underlying causes of this may be related to managerial discourses which diminish the academic's sense of agency, as well as the educational purpose of the curriculum itself. This thesis recommends that management reflect on the current 'default position' of allocating curricular tasks to programme leaders, 'experts' and 'project teams'. This process might begin by considering ways in which academics can find themselves at the centre of processes for curriculum design.

This thesis recommends that:

- Managerial discourse on curriculum design be re-orientated as an 'educational' project rather than just a 'business' project.

- The principle of inclusivity should be applied at key points in curriculum design such as the validation or revalidation of undergraduate programmes by including more academics in the process.

- The asymmetrical responsibilities associated with the role of the course leader need to be distributed to a course 'team'. A special focus on the cultural task of creating dedicated teaching 'teams' as opposed to disparate 'groups' of academics might begin by examining the current workload formulae.

- The PGCHE was not held by a significant proportion of the participants (42%). Closer integration of the PGCHE and the needs of *UBS* through joint planning with the School of Education should take place.

- Management might consider whether there is scope within the quality assurance frameworks to 'loosen' what some participants perceived be a restrictive *UBS-QA* regime.

There appears to be within *UBS* a widespread assumption that academics are primarily 'deliverers' of a curriculum created by 'others'. It seems obvious that few of the following recommendations are likely to come about unless the dissociation and atomisation processes discussed in sections 4.6 and 4.7 can begin to be reversed.

7.3.2 'Connectivity'

'Connectivity', in this context, refers to the fragmented nature of the curriculum discussed in Chapter 5. In order to address the issues of modularisation and the contextualisation of knowledge, a fundamental paradigm shift is required. Again a reorientation away from thinking of programmes as primarily 'products' for sale in the market place would appear to be pivotal to opening up the possibilities of curricular change. 'Piecing together the fragments' of the curriculum might involve the following actions:

- The principle of 'progression' needs to be applied to CDPP where levels of understanding of theoretical knowledge and mastery of 'skills' are treated as relational within an overall curricular framework. Unless this principle of

progression is applied in pedagogical relations, students are likely to realise knowledge as 'disposable'.

- A more sophisticated set of organising principles for integrating the curriculum is required in order to reverse the highly contextualised and discrete nature of the courses. A thematic, process-based approach to programme and course design is recommended which seeks to develop student learning in a coherent and emancipatory way.

- PDP should be embedded into other courses and not be taught as a discrete course. PDP represents a microcosm of the problems associated with forms of contextualisation. In this case PDP is *de*contextualised from a system of meaning in a hollow, instrumentalist way as a 'skills course'.

The dominant technicist orientation of the curriculum should be re-orientated to take account of alternative disciplinary perspectives. The disconnection of the curricular themes of employment or business from 'society' or politics would appear to undermine the aspiration of the *Graduate Attributes Initiative* to promote 'Cross-cultural and International Awareness' or according to the GAI (p.176) develop graduates to: 'Appreciate disciplines and forms of professional practice beyond their own, and draw connections between them'.

7.3.3 'Creativity'

The aspirations within the *Graduate Attributes Initiative* to promote 'Scholarship and Autonomy' as well as 'Creativity and Enterprise' are also likely to be inhibited by the pedagogical practices analysed in Chapter 6. The 'pedagogy of confinement', in all its forms, would appear to represent the antithesis of pedagogic codes designed to develop students as 'intellectually curious', or 'independent' or 'creative thinkers'. The irony of an undergraduate programme devoted to 'innovation and enterprise' which largely confines learning to transmission modes of pedagogy and assessment based on predefined outcomes seems inescapable. The following recommendations are offered:

- The influence of assessment on CDPP should be reduced by removing aggregate classifications of 'performance' from Year 1 of the undergraduate programmes. Progression to Year 2 should be contingent on effort measured by participation rather than summative assessment measured by grades.

- Students should be invited to collaborate in the design of their own learning by designing their own assessments as open-ended projects and assessing them, partly, by methods associated with assessment for learning (Boud and Falchikov 2006, Knight and Yorke 2003, Yorke and Knight 2004).

- Creativity might be encouraged by developing group projects which have a genuinely action-based enterprise orientation such as the creation of websites or online journals or forums for the discussion and dissemination of ideas. Ways in which theory and practice can be more meaningfully related should be explored.

- Curricular innovation is dependent on finite resources. If change is to occur, a strategic decision will need to be made in which quantity is rebalanced in favour of increased quality. Curricular innovation will be restricted if it remains within the narrow confines of the existing contact time in undergraduate programmes.

Finally, pedagogical practice in *UBS*, despite the aspirations of the GAI and the espoused aims of participants themselves, appears to limit the development of 'criticality'.

7.3.4 'Criticality'

Curiously, the word 'criticality' is absent from the GAI (p.176-7). It is argued here however, that developing criticality in student learning is, or should be, a central aim of higher education (Barnett 1997). However, the GAI does advocate that graduates: 'Have an informed understanding of their discipline or professional practice, and the ability to question its principles, practices and boundaries' The following recommendations are offered in this regard:

- The dominant discourse of knowledge which frames knowledge as just 'know-how' or 'practical' experiential knowledge or just information should be rebalanced to take proper account of theoretical knowledge. This might be promoted by a conscious attempt to explore academic literature in a critical way and to relate theory to practice in a critical way, rather than harnessing theory to practice analysed in section 6.6.

- All of the actors in *UBS* might consider questioning the widespread assumption that pedagogy should be premised on the transmission of content in Years 1 and 2 and a move to criticality in Year 3. For example, there is, in my view, no insuperable barrier to Year 1 students engaging with genuine academic research methods as opposed to 'hunting and gathering' information.

- CDPP should consider perspectives that examine business practices in a genuinely critical way. The current re-evaluation of capitalism currently being played out in the media affords an opportunity for business schools to question business paradigms based on technical-rationalism and normative assumptions (Stacey 2012).

In conclusion, the progressive reform of curriculum design and pedagogic practice in *UBS* always remains a possibility. *UBS* is a faculty composed of people who are powerful knowledge workers drawn from every continent in the world and who possess infinite creative potential. However, the starting point for any reform, project or initiative is being able to question and deeply analyse the history and assumptions upon which the present state of affairs is based.

As Richard Shaull (1996: 16) put it:

> There is no such thing as a *neutral* educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity *or* it becomes the 'practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

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Appendix 1

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear [...*],

I am writing to you in the context of my EdD thesis which is now at the data collection phase. Between now and August 2012, I aim to conduct 24 semi-structured interviews with colleagues in SM focusing on the 'construction' of the undergraduate curriculum. This is a case study research design concerned with how UBS conceptualises, designs and teaches courses focusing specifically on the BA Business Studies suite and the BA Entrepreneurship and Innovation programmes. Even if you have not been directly involved with their design at a course or programme level, your perception of their nature and purpose of courses currently taught or taught in the past, is of great interest to me in the context of this research. It is envisaged that the interviews will take place in a private location on campus and conducted in the tone of an informal conversation of a maximum of 60mins duration. In advance of our meeting, I would ask you to reflect a little on the specific courses you teach on in the relevant programmes and in particular their design and purpose. Data collection also includes a review of course and programme documents such as course specifications and programme reviews. It is envisaged that one outcome of this research will be for the project's analysis and recommendations to feed into future processes such as programme validation.

This research has been approved by the University [...*] Research Degrees Committee (RDA), the Research Ethics Committee (REC) and HOD [...*]. All ethical issues will be addressed according to the rules stipulated by the REC. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and can be withdrawn at any point. In order to protect participant anonymity and confidentiality, all interview transcripts and other data will remain anonymous by being coded; the anonymity of the participants being further assured by the use of pseudonyms. The final version and wording of interview transcripts will be negotiated with the participants following the interviews. All data will be stored on my laptop, which is password protected. Paper copies of consent forms, letters or any other data collected in the course or research will be kept to a minimum and stored in a locked drawer in my office.

Findings will be submitted to two research supervisors (School of Education) and the Doctorate of Education examiners. Prior to this, details which might put participants' anonymity at risk will be omitted from the final version of the doctoral thesis. It is also hoped that parts of the study will be submitted for publication in peer reviewed research journals and presented at academic conferences. If you have any questions regarding this research please do not hesitate to contact me. Yours faithfully,

Appendix 2

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

The consent form **must** be signed by the actual Researcher concerned with the project after having spoken to the participant to explain the project and after having answered his or her questions about the project.

To be completed by the participant		**Yes / No : circle the chosen answer**
1.	I have read the information sheet about this study	**YES / NO**
2.	I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study	**YES / NO**
3.	I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions	**YES / NO**
4.	I have received enough information about this study	**YES / NO**
5.	I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study:	**YES / NO**
	• At any time	**YES / NO**
	• Without giving a reason for withdrawing	**YES / NO**

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings.

Participant Name …….

Participant Signature ……

Researcher Signature.....

Date ……

Appendix 3

THESIS TIMELINE

Thesis activity	**Dates**
Epigeum tests completed	**Dec 2011- Jan2012**
Research Degrees Committee approval	**Jan 2012**
Research Ethics Committee approval	**Jan 2012**
Research methodology	**March - April 2012 (Draft 1)** **October - Dec 2012 (Draft 2)**
Literature Review	**Feb 2011 - March 2013**
Data Collection	**March 1 - June 19 2012**
Data analysis	**Dec 2012 - March 2013**
Write up	**Dec 2012 - March 2013**
Thesis submission	**March 26 2013**

Appendix 4 Participant profiles / Interview schedule

Appendix 5

UBS Case Study Database

Interview Transcripts

1. Zita (17/6845)
2. Joe (7/3076)
3. Harrison(19/7924)
4. Trevor (19/9823)
5. Bruce (16/5809)
6. Maria (14/5224)
7. Frank (18/5514)
8. Margaret (15/6844)
9. Rose (18/6435)
10. Peter (15/6694)
11. Nelson (16/6370)
12. Dominic (5/1826)
13. Mazia (16/5907)
14. Michele (14/5519)
15. Jack (14/6016)
16. Noel (22/8941)
17. Dave (20/7943)
18. Brian (16/7960)
19. Edith (15/5977)
20. Diana (12/8459)
21. Dennis (19/8473)
22. Deirdre (17/6772)
23. Peotric (18/7961)
24. Kevin (15/8243)

Pages - total = 377 /
Words - total = 160,355

Documentary Data Set 1
Policy Documents and Minutes of Meetings

- DHLE stats 2007-
- QAA Subject benchmark statement: General Business and Management 2007
- QAA Enterprise and entrepreneurship education: Guidance for higher education providers 2012
- UoS website
- UoS Strategic Plan 2012-17
- UoS Learning and Teaching Strategy 2012-16

- UBS School Board minutes 2011-12
- UBS Executive committee minutes 2011-12
- SM Departmental minutes 2011-12
- Plan A UBS 2010-13
- UBS Vision statement 2012
- Plan X UBS 2009-12
- Academic Regulations for Taught Awards 2012

(*) **Please note that in UBS parlance 'Courses' refer' to 'modules'. This remains unchanged so as not to disrupt the meaning of the interview transcripts.**

Documentary Data Set 2
Course Guides (*) , Programme and Course Specifications (QAA Levels 4-6)

- BA Business Studies Programme Suite - Programme Handbook 2011-12
- BA Business Studies Programme Review 2011

- PDP1 Course Guide and Course Specification 2011-12
- Business Development Course guide and Course Specification 2011-12 (L4)
- Introduction to Business Course Guide and Course Specification 2011-12 (L4)

- PDP2 Course Guide and Course Specification 2011-12
- Supply Chain Management Course Guide and Course Specification 2011-12 (L5)
- Entrepreneurship Course Guide and Course Specification 2011-12 (L5)

- PDP3 Course Guide 2011-12
- Course Guide and Course Specification 2011-12 (L6)
- Innovation 2 Course guide and Course Specification 2011-12 (L6)
- Small Business Course guide and Course Specification 2011-12 (L6)
- Project Management 2 Course guide and Course Specification 2011-12 (L6)

Appendix 6

GLOSSARY OF TERMS - CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS - MAIN CONCEPTS APPLIED (Fairclough 2004, Machin and Mayr 2012)

Assumptions: The implicit meanings in texts: existential assumptions (about what exists), propositional assumptions (about what is or can be or will be) and value assumptions (about what is good or desirable).

Collocation: Regular or habitual patterns of co-occurrence between words.

Dialectics: The enactment of 'exchanges' between structures from which phenomena are created and shaped. Structures are inherently heterogeneous and contradictory. Changes to phenomena arise from of these contradictions.

Dialogicality: The extent to which different 'voices' are represented within the same text.

Discourse: Discourse refers to any genre of text which seeks to communicate with an audience by offering representations of the world. These texts are based on the use of language communicated as mass media, printed or the spoken word.

Genre Chain: The linking together of various genres for the communication of a message to various audiences e.g. linking the genres of official government documents, press releases or television interviews.

Governance: discursive and material activities in an organisation aimed at regulating social practices.

Ideology: Representations of the world based on assumptions and aimed at maintaining power relations.

Intertextuality: The importing of other 'voices' from other texts into a text most commonly seen in policy documents and reported speech.

Legitimisation: a process by which discourse which seeks to privilege a set of assumptions or an ideology.

Metaphor: mapping across of one concept to another for the purpose of communicating meaning.

Modality: the relationship between the author and the text in terms of 'commitment' to their statements. For example, the use of modal verbs can signal strong attitudes or behaviours.

Nominalisation: Representing processes as nouns. By abstracting in this way, certain actors can be excluded and their agency diminished. This is linked to the use of passive voice where an actor is replaced by the subject of the sentence.

Personal Pronouns: The use of the personal such as 'I', 'we' and 'they' can signify inclusion and exclusion relationships of actors to processes , power differentials and ownership of statements.

Social Practices: this refers to discourses articulated within a structure, organisation or a community. Social practices exhibit ways in which certain structural possibilities are selected and others excluded. The network of social practices defines the domains in which these social practices occur and can be connected to other networks through discourses.

Appendix 7

NVIV0 9.2 NODES / CODES

Initial codes:

- T1 Potted History
- T2 Perceptions of professional identity
- T3 Purposes of the degree programmes
- T4 Influences on the design of the degree programmes
- T5 Purposes of the modules
- T6 Influences on the design of the modules
- T7 Pedagogy and Assessment
- T8 Student Learning modes

Refined codes

- Branding and marketing
- CDPP as extrinsic value
- CDPP as intrinsic value
- Compensation for deficit mode
- Customer power
- Dissociation
- Employability
- Fragmentation theme
- Graduate attributes
- Inheritance of courses
- Instrumentalism
- Knowledge types
- Learning outcomes
- Moodle migration project
- National student survey
- PGCHE
- PPD
- Progression issue in the CDPP
- Quality assurance or enhancement
- Real world reference
- Resources issue in didactics
- Skills
- Theory and practice
- Training
- Transmission mode of teaching

Appendix 8

EXTRACT FROM ONE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview with Dennis, May 28 2012

NB: I'm interviewing colleagues to get their perceptions of how they construct, how they think about their teaching, and basically looking at individual courses, looking at how the curriculum is put together. To sort of to warm us up what I normally ask then is if you could give me a little potted history of your career, starting really from when you did your first degree.

Dennis: Yeah, that is between 1994 and 2000. My first degree was in agricultural science in *my homeland [insert]*. It is 5-year cycle, which is considered as a masters level, so practically I don't have any bachelor. I went directly to a masters level, which was very intensive. We had many lab work, we had many assignments to prepare and submit, we had more than 55 different courses to attend. All of them with exams. So with assignments, the assignments were something to add up in our marks.

NB: Examinations, what do you think about that, if you think about how you teach now and what you're doing here in UBS, big difference isn't there?

Dennis It's huge. It's a completely different system there because you have students that are forced to as I told you give exams in 55 different courses. It's a lot of them.

NB: 55 exams?

Dennis 55 exams, minimum.

NB: Over the 5 years?

Dennis Over the 5 years. Over the 4 and a half years, because last semester is about preparing your dissertation.

NB: What do you think about that? What do you think about that way of assessing people?

Dennis In all schools in all universities like mine back in *my homeland [insert]*, because it's an old university, and you allow the educators to repeat themselves in what they teach and how they prepare the exams and everything. You have in that kind of environment, you have people producing, identifying the patterns of these exams, producing documents like booklets, you know, with all the possible questions and answers.

NB: You say people, which people?

Dennis Bookstores, small bookstores. Small local bookstores that print out notes.

NB: Like A-levels here?

Dennis Yeah. For the different courses. So a student instead of attending the class and instead of making some effort in order to understand what it's all about, he gets a list of all the potential possible questions and the answers, he goes through the questions and the answers over the weekend before the exams, and he has very good chances to succeed.

NB: So is the inference there that this is a negative?

Dennis Of course it's a negative.

NB: Memory and regurgitation?

Dennis Fortunately I didn't have any courses with exams here. I only have assignments. I think that the more effort required by the educator in order to organize the course and the assessment system and everything, the more valuable it is for the students. Because exams is something you know for us, it's easier to produce exam topics, it's easier to mark than the assignments. But it's less valuable for, it's less useful for the students. Because students when you ask them to prepare an assignment, students need to work in their own time, and they need to do let's say productive and creative reading and thinking and reflecting, instead of memorizing. Because when you have exams at the end, most students will memorize things. But when you ask them, when the course is more interactive, you ask for their opinion in what kind of subject they might find interesting to work as assignment, you make them think about what is being taught in this course, you make them feel part of the whole process. Of course there will be lazy students, you give them the subject, give them the handbook, they will read the handbook, I will give exams and that's it. Don't bother with anything else. But you will win the students that, the good students will always be there to make extra effort, because the good students will always be the good ones. I think that you will gain the average students by working with assignments instead of exams.

NB: So when you finished your MSc, is it called an MSc, they're not called the same thing in *my homeland [insert]*.

Dennis The first one it is called *my homeland [insert]*.

NB: Okay, it's specifically *my homeland [insert]*.

Dennis Yes. But it's a 5-year so it is recognized as a masters.

NB: So from there?

Dennis: From there I did some consultancy work for a year....

...NB: So how would you describe your identity, what would be your professional identity, what would you call yourself?

Dennis: My professional identity is I believe I can consider myself a teacher, educator, because I used to teach apart from that I was teaching on a masters level to foreign students in another private college. I have a lot of teaching experience, but at the same time I was working a lot, I was doing a lot of research and consultancy. I was providing consultancy services but mainly focused on research. So I think if I could describe myself, I would with 2 words, if I need to prepare a business card, I would write 'applied researcher' or something like this.

NB: Applied researcher. But within that context you see yourself as a teacher as well?

Dennis: Yes. It is a part of what I do.

NB: Would you be happy to be called an academic?

Dennis: I think that, I don't know. My background makes me a little bit reluctant in calling someone an academic very easily. I believe that calling someone an academic is like calling someone wise. I believe that we should be more respectful towards some specific contexts.

NB: Because in general parlance in the UK as you know, academia, university academia, you know in discourse we're talking about is academics- tutors, lecturers, academics. But you feel that the word should be considered more than just that?

Dennis: Exactly. Because in the 50s or the 60s it was very difficult to become a professor at a university, it was very difficult to get all the knowledge, it wasn't everything you know easy, accessible and available with the Internet. You need to dedicate yourself and your life in reading, finding your resources. It was very difficult to do research; you weren't two clicks away on whatever has been written on the subject that you want to investigate. I believe that these people were the real academics.

NB: The scholars?
Dennis: Exactly.

NB: Interesting that your first degree is broadly scientific isn't it. It is a science degree. So you've experience in the science area, and now you're teaching at a business school. Bit of a difficult question- what do you think that the difference in those 2 disciplines if you like is? What do you see the differences between what you were learning back in *my homeland [insert]* in that first degree and what you're doing now as an academic in UBS? What do you see the difference in what you're doing?

Dennis: I think if you want to be a good teacher, it is much more difficult to teach something so dynamic as we do here in the business school. I mean that knowledge in science is much more well established than the knowledge in business. If you teach microbiology for example, there are not many things changed in the last I don't know how many years. You don't need to update your curriculum every year. You know when you teach how to identify microorganisms or how to identify bacteria, there are some specific methods, there is specific lab work that needs to be done which is more or less the same for how many years. And if something changes, changes on a very low pace, let's say if you have the knowledge, if you are a well trained researcher, it is easy to provide this knowledge to your students. You know what I mean.

NB: As opposed to business?

Dennis: As opposed to business where the hot topics, the trends change not every year, probably every few months. Do you believe that 3 years ago everybody would be talking about how to embed system ability in their teaching? Or the environmental issues, or green logistics or the cloud systems. You need to keep yourself updated.

NB: Updated and modern. However, when we talk about knowledge, we're using knowledge in our conversation here in a very broad kind of way, and of course being up to date with sustainability is about knowledge, type of knowledge. Understanding why, I don't know anything about agricultural science, but understanding why certain crops fail in certain environments say, requires a different type of knowledge. And a different type of understanding. What do you think the difference is between those two things?

Dennis: As I said it is a much better established knowledge. When you conduct laboratory experiments you see things and by repetition you can prove of reject something. It is much more easy, it's much better established knowledge. So it is easier for you to give this knowledge, provide this knowledge. Certain crops cannot be grown in these types of soil because of the chemical composition of the soil. It is well-established knowledge and clear to be given.

NB: The knowledge itself is established in terms of the theories about why the crops fail in these conditions say. But is the students' engagement with knowledge different in this subject?

Dennis: Yeah because there are not many things to be questioned let's say by the students when you give them that type of knowledge. When you are lecturing on what type of plants can be grown in soils with that kind of chemical composition or the other kind of chemical composition, you do not leave too much room for debate between you and the students. So it is mostly one way, right. So on the other hand when you talk about something dynamic, something that changes- what makes a company sustainable? We know a few things, but probably something else will come

up before the end of the term you know. So you have to have interaction, we have much more interaction with the students. The worst thing that someone can do teaching, in my opinion, which I'm not so much experienced, I've had only had a few years of teaching experience, is to try to apply teaching methods used in science in business. If you try to teach with a style of a teacher in science or medicine, if you try to teach with such a style using such methods in business, which is a dynamic topic, a dynamic area, it's not going to work, you know what I mean?

End of Extract

Appendix 9

SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(T 1-8 denote the 8 themes which were used to create the *initial codes/nodes*)

T1 Potted History

- So Deirdre [insert] what we normally do to warm up is we just talk about if you could give me a potted history of your career, starting with your first degree. As short as possible, so first degree BA in whatever, and then just run through until how you got here. Just put it all together.

T2 Perceptions of professional identity

- So if you were to, you know we talk about academic identity in the modern university and people call themselves all sort of things, you were talking about 'C' and he's very much into third stream and enterprise. How would you describe your own academic identity, how do you see yourself?

T3 Purposes of the degree programmes

- I'm very much interested in tutors' perceptions of undergraduate teaching. What do you feel is the purpose in a general sense about, why do you think our undergraduates come to us to do business degrees, what's your feeling about that?

T4 Influences on the design of the degree programmes

- Contemporary issues is year 3 and so they've already done 2 years. What do you think is the connection between contemporary issue and other courses?

T5 Purposes of the modules

- Moving to the bigger picture, what do you think this course is for? What is it for or where does it fit in?

T6 Influences on the design of the modules

- What would be the core difference between these 2 courses [year 2 and year 3 courses] would you say? What are they doing that's different?

T7 Pedagogy and Assessment

- So what you're saying is that you're conjecturing that maybe one of the reasons why it's not sticking [student understanding of a concept] is because it's not been contextualized?

T8 Student Learning modes

- Could I just ask you, this is solely on undergraduates because it's these two programmes [looking at the programme schema]. What is your impression about the state of learning that you see in the classroom. What is your kind of impression of the student attitudes to learning here?