

***Work-Based Learning Pedagogy for Increasing Social Agency in Higher
Education***

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the University of
Greenwich for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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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 Doctor of Philosophy 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”

Signed (student):

Signed (supervisor):

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the effectiveness of a work-based learning (WBL) pedagogy, which was informed by understanding knowledge as incorporating practice. Seventy-six students on a WBL programme using this pedagogy were surveyed, and 20 respondents were interviewed. The study showed how dialogue was used to gauge the learner's prior experience and to connect ongoing learning to it. It further explored: discontinuities between developing identities and practices, and how new practices could emerge; how learners, through critically evaluating real-life outcomes over time, could be engaged; and how confidence in critically acting and influencing was developed. It emerged that the facilitation of ongoing study of practices and their impact over time was central (evoking Heidegger's 1968 term 'to let learn'), developing a productive and critical social dialogue in the practice setting. This, in turn, increased student confidence in their critical reflection and the viability of their ongoing agency.

CONTENTS

DECLARATION	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
ABSTRACT	4
FIGURES	12
1. INTRODUCTION	15
1.1. Thesis outline	15
1.2. Applied professional studies as a programme.....	18
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	27
2.1. Section introduction	27
2.2. What is work-based learning?.....	27
2.2.1. Higher education WBL as understood by this thesis and as underpinning the Applied Professional Studies programmes.	29
2.2.2. Work-related learning – a distinction.....	37
2.2.3. The model used by the programme that is the subject of this thesis	39
2.3. Ontology and Epistemology: Knowledge as inherently situated	44
2.3.1. Knowledge as complete and absolute.....	45
2.4. Data, information and absolute knowledge, and the building of history	48
2.5. Unity seen as external and absolute knowledge (in and of itself) and as the building blocks of progress	50
2.6. The ethical challenge to knowledge as absolute and external to the human intellect and of stultifying effect	53
2.7. Knowledge as transitory and situated.....	56
(multiplicity of knowledge and human agency)	56
2.8. Learning as a creative process and the importance of independent thought and knowledge creation	60
2.8.1. Knowledge as embedded in practices	61
(collectively held – individually realised).....	61
2.9. Knowledge as lived experience – human agency and access to discourse.....	63
2.10. Personal being – knowledge as collectively held but individually realised and the implication for the development of the self and the collective	65

2.11. The importance of the critical indwelling of knowledge and knowledge as social evolution	68
2.12. Critical Being – the student as an identity project and the will to learn	76
2.12.1. Values, autonomy and commitment to learning	76
2.13. Knowledge creation and autonomy	81
2.14. Knowledge – the ability to be and to act – the importance of relevance	84
2.15. Identity and difference – learning as personal being and collective belonging and the commitment to both	85
2.16. Towards a new pedagogy – dialogue not pedagogue? APS negotiated learning pedagogy in practice	89
2.16.1. The purpose of education as promoting agency – re-awaking a sense of inquiry	91
2.17. Ownership of the learning – negotiating the programme	97
2.18. Work-based learning projects – Negotiated Studies	98
2.19. Negotiated Studies work-based projects – facilitating learning through reflection on, in and for action and experience	100
2.20. The mechanism of negotiation – the learning contract	105
2.21. Ensuring academic worthiness at the start	109
2.21.1. Tutorial dialogue – negotiating the project	115
and supporting the ongoing learning	115
2.22. Praxis and authority – the role of the tutor as a partner in learning	120
2.23. Assessing the learning	124
2.24. Recognising and building on prior experience as a way to start situating learning and develop confidence	125
2.25. Section summary	127
3. METHODOLOGY	113
3.1 Section introduction	113
3.1.1. The researcher’s narrative (in brief)	113
3.2 Research questions	118
3.3. Overview: Mixed methods – pilot, survey and interviews	119
3.4. The survey	121
3.4.1. Pilot study	121
3.4.2. The main survey	122
3.5. The interviews	125
3.6. Analysis	127

3.6.1 The pilot study analysis.....	127
3.6.2. The main survey analysis	127
3.6.3. The interview analysis	129
3.7. Ethics.....	130
3.8. Pilot study – initial indications	131
3.8.1. Gender and age impact profiles	132
3.8.2. Reasons for coming on to the programme	133
3.8.3. Perceived issues with the programme	136
3.8.4. Perceptions of social agency and empowerment.....	136
3.8.5. The impact of the programme on confidence	137
3.8.6. Knowledge creation – personal practice transformation and workplace transformation	140
3.8.7. Motivation and the will to learn	141
3.8.8. Empowerment.....	143
3.8.9. Recommendations for the main study	144
3.8.10. Pilot study summary	144
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	146
4.1. Section introduction	146
4.2. Main survey basic analysis.....	147
4.2.1. Gender demographic.....	147
4.2.2. Respondent prior qualifications and work situation	148
4.2.3. APS programme undertaken and structure.....	151
4.2.4. Access to dialogic tutorials and the supportive nature of them.....	160
4.2.6. Perceived impact on personhood.....	166
4.3. I would not recommend this programme to anyone! Lessons learned from six dissatisfied students.....	171
4.3.1. The National Student’s Survey.....	173
4.3.2. Access to tutorials.....	173
4.3.3. Perceived support from tutorials.....	175
4.3.4. Perceived ability to negotiate learning.....	176
4.3.5. Perceptions of personal change	181
4.3.6. Summary of the initial analysis.....	183
4.4. Dialogue as the foundation stone of the negotiated work-based learning in Applied Professional Studies	188

4.5. Access to regular tutorials	190
4.6. The link between dialogic tutorials and negotiation, control over learning, relevance and supportiveness.....	191
4.6.1. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having been able to negotiate a programme relevant to their work life.....	192
4.6.2. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials	193
and the learner's perception of having control over their learning	193
4.6.3. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of the supportiveness of tutorials	193
4.7. The link between dialogic tutorials and learning outcomes.....	195
4.7.1. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having gained literature research skills.....	195
4.7.2. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having gained skills in using evidence to change practice as a result of the programme	198
4.7.3. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having developed work-related knowledge	199
4.7.4. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having gained skills in the articulation of written argument	199
4.7.5. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having gained skills in empirical research, debating and spoken argument.....	200
4.8. The role of situated learning – its perceived impacts on the opportunity to learn	203
4.8.1. Impact as a programme catering for learners in diverse situational needs	203
4.8.2. Learners' narratives directly prior to coming onto APS.....	218
4.9. Degree structure and impact	222
4.9.1. Programme make-up and honours awarded.....	222
4.10. The relationship between being able to negotiate learning relevant to work and the learner's perception of having gained critical thinking skills as a result of the programme	227
4.10.1. The relationship between being able to negotiate learning relevant to work and the learner's perception of having gained empirical research skills.....	229
4.11. Motivation and the will to learn – a question of situational relevance?	231
4.11.1. Ownership and engagement – making it relevant to real-life	231
4.11.2. Benefits in practice – publication	234

4.11.3. The relationship between the learners’ perceptions of having gained empirical skills and the learners’ perceptions of having gained skills in the articulation of spoken argument.....	235
4.11.4. The relationship between the learners’ perceptions of having gained empirical research skills and the learners’ perceptions of their work or colleagues having benefited from their study.	236
4.11.5. The relationship between the learners’ perceptions of having gained skills in the articulation of spoken argument in their workplace and/or colleagues having benefited from the learner undertaking the programme.	237
4.11.6. The relationship between the learners’ perceptions of having gained empirical research skills and having developed critical thinking skills.....	241
4.12. The confidence to act: personhood through empowerment.....	248
4.13. Section summary	254
5. CONCLUSION	257
6. FUTURE WORK	267
7. REFERENCES	268

TABLES

Table 1: Types of workplace learning (Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2004, cited in Hager 2013).	28
Table 2: Work-based learning models and attributes (Costley and Dikerdem, 2011)	35
Table 3: Advisory role in the facilitation of WBL (Boud and Costley 2006:7).	35
Table 4: Detailed narrative interview schedule - learner	127
Table 5: <i>Dollard's adapted criteria</i> (cited in Polkinghorne 1995:16-18 and adapted by the author of this thesis)	130
Table 6: Respondent designation, programme and level, and sex	131
Table 7: Pilot study responses to the question concerning the choice of APS over other 'taught' degree programmes.....	134
Table 8: Responses to the question of skills gained as a result of the programme	136
Table 9: Length on programme and perceptions of self.....	139
Table 10: Benefit of learning to workplace and/or colleagues.....	140
Table 11: Respondent typology.....	150
Table 12: Respondent time on programme.....	152
Table 13: Dissatisfied learners' programmes	171
Table 14: Programme structures for dissatisfied learner sample group.....	172
Table 15: Comparison between levels of satisfaction nationally and on APS.....	173
Table 16: Access to dialogues as perceived by dissatisfied student sample group	174
Table 17: Respondents from the dissatisfied learner sample group who felt their tutorials to be unsupportive	175
Table 18: Dissatisfied learner sample group perceived ability to discuss learning at tutorial	176
Tables 19a and 19b: Dissatisfied learner sample perception of negotiating learning relevant to work and life needs	177
Table 20: Dissatisfied learner sample perceptions of developing work-related knowledge	178
Tables 21a and 21b: Dissatisfied learners sample group perceptions of impact on work practices and the benefit of learning to colleagues	179

Tables 22A and 22b: Dissatisfied Learner sample group perceptions of personhood and confidence	181
Table 23: Breakdown of respondents' access to tutorials	190
Table 24: Breakdown of respondents' perceptions of discursive tutorials.....	191
Table 25: The correlation between the perceptions of discursive tutorials and the perceptions of the ability to negotiate a work-relevant programme.....	192
Table 26: The correlation between perceptions of discursive tutorials and the perception of control over learning	193
Table 27: The correlation between perceptions of discursive tutorials and the perceptions of the supportiveness of tutorials	194
Table 28: The correlation between perceptions of discursive tutorials and the perceptions of gaining literature-based research skills	196
Table 29: The correlation between perceptions of discursive tutorials and the perceptions of being able to use evidence to support practice	198
Table 30: The correlation between perceptions of discursive tutorials and the perceptions of developing work-related knowledge	199
Table 31: The correlation between perceptions of discursive tutorials and the perceptions developing written argument skills.....	199
Table 32: Learner Typology of survey participants	205
Table 33: Initial and secondary reasons given by learners categorised as 'Returners to HE'	207
Table 34: Initial and secondary reasons given by learners categorised as 'Career Builders'	211
Table 35: Initial and secondary reasons given by learners categorised as 'Second Chancers'	212
Table 36: Initial and secondary reasons given by learners categorised as 'Re-trainers'	213
Table 37: Initial and secondary reasons given by learners categorised as 'Personal Developers'	216
Table 38: Initial and secondary reasons given by learners categorised as 'Employer Workforce Development'	218
Table 39: Breakdown of awards classifications by programme structure, with initial analysis alongside	224

Table 40: The correlation between perceptions of the ability to negotiate a programme relevant to work needs and gaining critical thinking skills.....	227
Table 41: The correlation between perceptions of the ability to negotiate a programme relevant to work needs and gaining empirical research skills	229
Table 42: The correlation between perceptions of gaining empirical research skills and gaining skills in the articulation of spoken argument.....	236
Table 43: The correlation between perceptions of gaining empirical research skills and colleagues' benefit.....	237
Table 44: The correlation between perceptions of gaining spoken argument skills and colleague's benefit	238
Table 45: The correlation between perceptions of gaining empirical research skills and gaining critical thinking skills.....	241

FIGURES

No table of figures entries found.

This is an automatic table of contents. To use it, apply heading styles (on the Home tab) to the text that goes in your table of contents, and then update this table.

If you want to type your own entries, use a manual table of contents (in the same menu as the automatic one).

Figure 1: A representation (by the author of this thesis) of the process of categorisation to produce information (often taken as the process of making knowledge). Information is differentiated from data (represented by Bateson as information). Information in this model is represented as data plus meaning. information is not to be equated with knowledge which could be represented in this scheme as items of information plus significance for action.....	49
Figure 2: The dialectical creation of absolute knowledge and the formulation of history moving toward completion	52
Figure 3: Identity/knowledge development (Harré, 1983)	67
Figure 4: The learner as a situated subject (thesis Author's diagram)	69
Figure 5 Visual layout of Negotiated Learning of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) showing links between theory and practice.....	102
Figure 6 Progressive critically reflective cycles	119
Figure 7: Perceived changes in self alongside the ability negotiate	138

Figure 8: Gender makeup of respondents.....	147
Figure 9: Qualifications of respondents on entry to the programme	148
Figure 10: Respondents' work at entry to the programme	148
Figure 11: Programmes undertaken by respondents at the time of the survey.....	151
Figure 12: Programme structures of respondent by percentage.....	153
Figure 13: Respondents' preferred programme structure	153
Figure 14: Respondents who did not prefer more taught courses	154
Figure 15: Respondents who would have preferred more taught courses.....	157
Figure 16: Respondents' access to regular tutorials (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	160
Figure 17: Perceptions of Dialogue at tutorials (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	161
Figure 18: Perceptions of tutorial support (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	162
Figure 19: Perceptions of control over learning (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	162
Figure 20: Perceptions of ability to negotiate learning relevant to work (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	164
Figure 21: Perception of ability to negotiate learning relevant to life (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree).....	164
Figures 22a and 22b: Perceptions of difference to work-practices (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree).....	165
Figure 23: Perception of colleague benefit.....	165
Figure 24: Perceptions of confidence building at work (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	166
Figure 25: Perceptions of developing personhood (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	167
Figure 26: Perceptions of having developed critical thinking skills.....	168
Figure 27: Perception of gaining literature research skills.....	168
Figure 28: Recognition of own skills and experience	168
Figure 29: Perceptions of improvement in the articulation of spoken argument	169
Figure 30: Perception of being able to use evidence to change practice	169
Figure 31: Perceptions of gaining empirical research skills	169
Figure 32: Perceptions of developing debating skills	171

Figure 33: Comparison of BA/BSc awards between mostly taught and an all work-based programme structure225

Figure 34: Comparison of foundation degree awards between mostly taught and all work-based programme structure226

Figure 35: A model of Work-Based Learning – the development of critical social agency (note: the diagram depicts a single work-based learner over time).....264

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Thesis outline

This thesis argues that an understanding of knowledge as situated, transitional and embodied in the knowledge holder's 'being in the world,' can inform a pedagogy that can effectively increase learners' critical social agency. The overall aim of the thesis was to address the question of whether, from the perspective of the learner, the pedagogical approach used by the Applied Professional Studies (APS) programme, a work-based learning programme based on this approach to knowledge, was an effective one, and if so, why.

A survey of 76 current and previous students on the APS programme was carried out. This was followed up by interviews of 20 randomly chosen respondents to get more explicit qualitative perspectives on the perceived impact of the pedagogy. The research demonstrated how dialogue can be used to:

1. Gauge and connect learning to the learner's prior and developing experience in a real and relevant way (negotiated learning);
2. Explore the discontinuities between the learner, their community practices and theoretical standpoints, creating new viable knowledge and practices;
3. Engage the learner through its relevance and use in life;
4. Engage with the learner's will to develop their identities in their social contexts;
5. Increase their confidence in their ability to critically act and influence;
6. Maintain a critically reflective approach to their learning, their actions and their social impact.

In addition to this, the study also illuminated the limitations of tutor/learner dialogue and highlighted the importance of the tutor facilitating wider discussion beyond the learning institution in the learner's practice settings. It showed that for learning to be most effective it must also include the facilitation of ongoing empirical study of learning and its social impact over time – in effect, it must develop a wider critical social dialogue in the practice setting. This increased the likelihood of learners being metacognitively conscious of, and confident in, their critically reflective processes,

and the viability of their ongoing practices and agency. This has led this thesis to propound a further aspect to this pedagogy, that of 'to let learn' (Heidegger, 1968) – to allow learners to go away and study the impact of their learning in practice for themselves.

The programme from which the study participants were drawn is called Applied Professional Studies (APS) and is part-time and aimed at adult working learners. It is offered by the University of Greenwich as a foundation degree, a bachelor's top-up to the foundation degree (or equivalent credit), and then a postgraduate certificate, that can in turn be topped up to a postgraduate diploma and then a master's degree. The programme is described in more detail in the next sub-section.

After this introduction, the thesis will move onto what has loosely been termed as a 'literature review'. A warning is required here because although the review explores the theory and practice that underlie the APS programme, it is by necessity more than just a review resulting in a research question. It is used, as the reader will see, to set out the underlying theoretical standpoints and resultant theoretical practices which inform the way the programme is delivered at all levels. This is necessary so that the reader understands not only the direction and scope of the resultant empirical study, but also the 'why and how' of the programme delivery, so that what is being measured is understood in depth. It is not just that the programme works in the view of the learner, it is also that the underlying philosophy and practice is also valid in this respect, and realised in terms of its consequences.

The literature review therefore firstly outlines a general understanding of work-based learning. In this field of practice definitions differ, but the argument is made that in all cases, and for the purpose of the Applied Professional Studies Programme, that work-based learning means negotiated study that is focused on and thrown up through, real-life experience and practices. In this way, it is situated and tailored and combines the study of theoretical standpoints with situated practices, potentially resulting in the development of the two. The next main section of the review goes on to justify the situated nature of work-based learning by arguing that knowledge itself is situated, both in its creation and the way it is individually held within varied communities of practice. It strongly argues that knowledge held as absolute, 'writes' history or

discourses in the name of those who are empowered to judge it as absolute, and that by taking a more transitory and situated approach to knowledge, how it is acquired through learning and how it is created, can lead to a less oppressive and more engaging form of learning and teaching. The following sections argue that learning can be a creative process which is deeply embedded in the developing identities of individuals and their communities of practice, not to mention society as a whole.

Through a process of learning and teaching as a lived and embodied experience, it argues that the critical being of individuals can develop and that they will occupy and contribute to critically aware and reflective communities of practice. It also argues that the relevance of learning to practice engages with the learners' motivation and will to learn, through enabling their learning to be directly connected to the ability to act. Through this process of research and trial in practice, the following sections argue that the learners' real-world capabilities are developed alongside their abilities to critically reflect on and test their actions in terms of their consequences. This in turn develops their confidence to act – their social agency. The mechanism by which this process is facilitated, through negotiation, the structure and processes of work-based projects etc. are then discussed in the closing sections. This, hopefully, will leave the reader able to understand the programme and its pedagogy and practices, and the areas' predicted outcomes and impacts of the learning that the thesis seeks to measure and test in the following empirical study.

After the so-called literature review, the reader will be taken through the methodology, which is based upon a mixed quantitative and qualitative survey and then interviews that seek to elicit the qualitative perspectives of the learners in terms of their learning journey and their development of the skills that lead to and include social agency. The central aim of the research was to answer the question of whether or not the pedagogy employed by Applied Professional Studies is an effective one in developing its learners' social agency, primarily from the perspective of the learners' confidence and ability to act.

The subsequent sections proceed to analyse the data to build a picture of the learners' perspectives of having achieved the educational objectives of the programme. The study will examine perceptions of ownership and engagement with the programme

and how the pedagogy operates, from the learner perspective, to promote ownership and engagement. It will look at the role of negotiation and tutorial dialogue in promoting ownership of learning, relevance of learning, awareness of learning, and the development of skills which lead to critically reflective practitioners. It will look at the relationship of this dialogue to perceived motivation and will to learn, personal change in terms of confidence, and the ability to act. It will also look at the impact of a lack of dialogue in the programme, where that has arisen. The analysis of the data will also take account of emerging themes which illuminate further the mechanism by which the pedagogy has impact on learners.

1.2. Applied professional studies as a programme

Applied Professional Studies is a suite of work-based learning programmes (ranging from Foundation degree to Master's) at the University of Greenwich. It is offered at Foundation degree level, Bachelors level, and then as a post-graduate certificate topping up to a post-graduate diploma and then Master's.

Applied Professional Studies is offered part-time only, and is primarily aimed at learners who are in full-time work. The awards outlined above offer the learner a pathway of progress, aimed at developing effective reflective practitioners. The foundation degree begins the process by developing practitioners who are able to apply theory to practice. The aims and outcomes as listed in the programme validation document for level four are:

'Outcomes for level [H.E. 4]: equivalent to a Certificate of Higher Education (Cert. H.E.)

Students who pass [level 4] should have demonstrated:

- knowledge of the essential concepts, principles and assumptions associated with their profession and subject area(s) and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of the workplace and their own professional development;
- an ability to present, evaluate, and interpret a variety of evidence or data, to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.

Typically, they should be able to:

- communicate the results of their study and work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments;
- access and use a range of learning resources;
- use a range of established techniques to retrieve and analyse information;
- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment,
- and should have:
- qualities and key skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility when working with others.'

(University of Greenwich, 2005:4).

At this first level, the aim is primarily to develop a practitioner knowledgeable in the underlying principles of their practice, and to be able to apply that knowledge, and argue for it effectively. In this respect, it is similar to any other programme that values knowledge, and has built into its learning the principles of employability (the notion that higher education [HE] learners are skilled in ways, useful to their ability to be employed). Where it does differ at this level is that it is cross disciplinary, recognising that there are practices and knowledge bases of particular areas of work that can sometimes be very contextualised and specialised. It is, therefore, specifically tailored to the learner's work needs, thus also beginning to develop the learner's sense of responsibility for their learning and practice.

At level five, the outcomes start to develop the learner beyond the application of theory to practice, and the basic knowledge underlying practice. The programme begins to develop a practitioner who is beginning to see the limits of existing knowledge and therefore the potential for its development and who is able to begin to think about improving practices and creating new theory. The programme document states:

'Outcomes for level [H.E. 5]: equivalent to the Foundation Degree (F.Deg)

Students who pass [level 5] should have demonstrated:

- an understanding of the well-established principles and knowledge of their profession and subject area, the ways in which those principles and that knowledge have developed and relevance to the workplace and their own professional development;

- knowledge and application of the main methods of enquiry in their profession or occupation, and ability to select appropriate approaches to solving problems in these;
- an ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including the application of those principles in the work-place;
- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Typically, they should be able to:

- effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis, in a variety of forms, to specialist and non-specialist audiences using a vocabulary appropriate to both;
- exercise autonomy and initiative in tackling tasks and problems and consider alternative approaches;
- adopt a broad ranging and flexible approach to study and professional development, identifying strengths and learning needs and follow activities to improve performance;
- undertake further training, develop existing skills, and acquire new competences which enable them to assume responsibility within their workplace,
- they should have the qualities and key skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making, particularly within a working group.'

(Partnerships Division, 2005:4-5)

By the end of the foundation degree, the learner should be beginning to develop an independent sense of responsibility, capability, autonomy and initiative, alongside basic decision-making and problem-solving. They should be becoming an effective reflective practitioner, who is beginning to be able to contribute to the development and transformation of wider workplace practices.

Level 6, offered as a single level top-up to the foundation degree (or equivalent credit), again develops the critically reflective nature of the learner, producing an honours level practitioner who is able to integrate and embed academic study and new formal research into the workplace. They are also able to take responsibility for the direction of their professional development and academic learning. The programme document states:

'Learning Outcomes.

Descriptor for level [H.E.6]: Bachelor's degree with Honours (B.A./B.Sc. (Hons) in *Applied Professional Studies*.

Honours degrees are awarded to students who should have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, some of which may be informed by the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline, profession or occupation
- an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline, profession or occupation and apply these to the workplace and their own professional development
- conceptual understanding that enables the student to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems
- to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline, profession or occupation
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge

Typically, holders of the qualification should be able to:

- manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (e.g. refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline, profession or occupation)
- effectively communicate complex information, ideas, problems, and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; to discuss uncertainties and ambiguities clearly
- interact effectively within their workplace or professional group using initiative and personal responsibility
- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding; and to initiate and carry out projects
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete); to formulate judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions – to a problem, and should have qualities and key skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - the capacity and enthusiasm for seeking new knowledge and applying this to work-related tasks
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts, and
 - the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.'

(Partnerships Division, 2005:8)

The final outcomes of this level are that the learner/practitioner becomes an effective and critically reflective practitioner, able to apply existing research in the workplace and to take that research forward. Autonomy and self-direction, in learning and professional development, are central, as is the ability to make decisions and problem-solve independently and as part of a team, in complex and unpredictable circumstances. Autonomous and critical reflection, leading to the ability to respond to changing circumstances, affects positive (i.e. helpful in some way to themselves and/or others) change. This kind of reflection develops and transforms both personal and collective workplace practices, in an informed way, in ever more complex contexts, and is the overall aim at this level.

The postgraduate or level 7 programmes are offered as a series of free-standing but linked awards (Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's in science or art). The aim is to encourage graduate professionals to enhance their continuing professional development and lifelong learning through the negotiation of learning contracts, specifically developed work-based learning initiatives and post graduate level academic study. The programmes document states:

'Learning Outcomes

Award holders will be able to enhance their continuing personal and professional development by:

Post Graduate Certificate:

- effectively planning personal continuing professional development by linking professional endeavour and academic scholarship;
- strategically linking advanced professional practice and academic achievement;
- exploring and effectively developing inter-professional and trans-professional working;
- demonstrating critical awareness of the value of research informed practice.

Post Graduate Diploma:

- effectively planning personal continuing professional development by linking professional endeavour and academic scholarship;
- strategically linking advanced professional practice and academic achievement;
- exploring and effectively developing inter-professional and trans-professional working;
- demonstrating critical awareness of the value of research in informing practice and influencing strategic decision-making.

MA/MSc:

- effectively planning personal continuing professional development by linking professional endeavour and academic scholarship;
- strategically linking advanced professional practice and academic achievement as a way of leading and sustaining change;
- exploring and effectively developing inter-professional and trans-professional working;
- systematically planning and executing a major piece of independent work which informs and advances professionalism and influences strategic decision-making.

Typically, holders of APS postgraduate awards should have demonstrated:

- their own specialised knowledge in their professional field or area of study and its use as a basis for original thinking and future development;
- knowledge and understanding of the contemporary issues in their professional field and at the interface between different fields.
- the ability to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in their sector or discipline;
- the capability of evaluating methodologies and developing critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses;
- the ability to take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and for its strategic application;
- the capacity to seek new specialist knowledge and demonstrate originality in the application of this knowledge;

- how established techniques of practice, research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the profession and across discipline boundaries.
- the facility to transfer study into complex work contexts and which require a new strategic approach;
- the ability to develop specialised problem-solving skills required in research and innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields.’
(Partnerships Division, 2005:10 -11)

The model used in APS is inspired by a number of theorists both philosophical and educational. Knowles’ (1983, cited in Quinn, 1994) model of andragogy, has been influential and though there is a preference not to use his title, the APS team aim to adhere to the principles of teaching adults laid out within it. This model differs from the older ‘pedagogy’ model (in its sense of a ‘science of teaching children’), by:

1. Valuing the self-direction and responsibility of the student.
2. Giving credit and recognising the breadth and wealth of students’ experience
3. Understanding that the will to learn is related to the individual student’s needs
4. Valuing and emphasising the internal motivation of the student.’
(Knowles, 1983, cited in Quinn. 1994:57)

For the APS student, the workplace becomes the focus of learning and the subject matter is driven by the student’s needs. As Heidegger (1968:15) stated, ‘Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn’. The role of the tutor in APS is to inspire or to "nurture ‘the student’s ‘pedagogical excitement’ in order to ‘will’ themselves on" (Barnett, 2007:118). In APS, the situation may be more challenging than that which Heidegger alludes to, in that the programme allows autonomy in the subject matter too.

The programme is fully negotiated by the learner. The learner is able to design a programme, through negotiation, based upon their learning needs as a professional practitioner. The context of the degree is negotiated as part of a learning contract or agreement, and uses the career, social aspirations, and developmental needs of the learner as its driving force. The student may base their programme on two main

sources of learning – taught courses or work-based learning projects (but must have at least 25% of the latter). Taught courses are lectured, and are offered by the faculties in the University. Work-based projects, known as Negotiated Studies, use the work-setting and its constituent practices and problems, as the focus and content of the learning.

The pedagogy employed is one that recognises the situated nature of knowledge, and therefore the situated nature of the learner (and these factors are discussed in the literature review). Central to the programme is the educational philosophy of the need for learning to be directly relevant to the learner. It supports the situated learner through the developing process of their being in the world, and how they form, a sense of selfhood and agency. The purpose of this thesis is to see if the pedagogy employed by APS is effective in helping the learner to produce a sense of critical being, one that is capable and able to be critically autonomous and productively transformative, both of themselves and the social context in which they operate.

The literature review examines the nature of negotiated work-based learning, and how it manifests itself in the Applied Professional Studies programmes. It examines the theoretical and philosophical arguments and assumptions which inform the programme, starting with an argument of knowledge as being transitory and incomplete, dependent on the time and spatial situations of the holders of that knowledge. It argues that for knowledge to be held as knowledge, as opposed to being held merely as facts, then those facts must come together in the knowledge holder in a way that enables action. In other words, for knowledge to be knowledge, it must have some significance for some kind of action or result, or it remains simply factual or academic. As already mentioned, the literature review will argue, that how it comes together is also timely and spatial, or in other words dependent upon the contextual variables (both private and social) in which the knowledge-holding subject is situated. It therefore holds that knowledge cannot be merely passed on to the learner in a truly effective way, but must be learned in a way that is situated and where the significance for action is available. The relevance of this learning, the review argues, is connected with the subject's will to learn, a will based on a set of intrinsic and extrinsic values and motivations that are connected with the desire for the learner to 'become' a person in the world. It also argues that the role of the tutor is less about passing on knowledge

but more to do with facilitating learning that is meaningful and situated. Negotiation, therefore, is the preferred method of creating a programme of learning, and the argument is put forward that it leads to ownership and a sense of independence and responsibility. The theory suggests that situated study and the trial of learning through real-life experiments, embodies capability and most importantly the confidence to act. This entire argument is situated in a value system that sees independent, capable and productive individuals as a driving force for a socially more-equitable society, where discourses that shape societal practices are more accessible to all.

The study that follows this theoretical argument, sought to see if, by following a pedagogy that recognises and applies the above outlined theoretical stances (discussed more closely in the literature review), APS has an impact on learners' social agency. The study was initially a survey of all APS learners past and present (of whom 77 responded) and then to follow up the survey through the interview of twenty respondents chosen at random. The idea of the survey was, firstly, to see if the overall impact of APS and its pedagogy had an effect, and to what extent that impact was from the perspective of the learner. Through looking at correlations between various categories of questions, and by examining the narratives of a smaller sample of learners at interview, it was hoped to see the mechanism by which a learner is able to develop a sense of social agency. Through the survey, and also the follow-up interviews, how that agency might play out in their lives will also be examined where possible. By beginning to understand the mechanisms in play in more detail, it is hoped to identify the boundaries of the effectiveness of the pedagogical techniques employed, and where they might be developed or improved.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Section introduction

As already mentioned, this literature review is by necessity more than just a review of the existing research in the field, but also develops the philosophical, ethical and educational argument for the type of pedagogy employed by the APS programmes. It also includes an explanation of how the pedagogical practices manifest themselves in the delivery of APS. Beginning with an explanation of work-based learning and how the programme interprets that for use, it goes on to argue for a change in the way knowledge is seen to be, both in its formation and how it dwells in individuals and informs their practices. It argues from a philosophical and ethical point of view, that when knowledge is treated as absolute, it stereotypes and stultifies agency and creativity. It reasons that this approach to knowledge supports and dominates forms of discourse because it allows for a privileged set of 'intellectuals' to arbitrate on what is admissible as knowledge. The review makes the case that more open forms of negotiated and situated learning are less oppressive. It goes on to argue that learners who are able to see the relevance of their learning and are able to apply it, are more likely to be engaged with their learning as the learning will itself be connected to their will to develop themselves as social individuals. It also claims that learners who are able to independently research and test theory in practice are able to develop not only strong theoretical knowledge, but are also able to adapt it, and challenge both theory and practice, making them more capable and critically reflective people. These skills lead to social agency which is not only more socially equitable but also important to a healthy democracy. The review goes on to explain how this is applied to the pedagogy and learning approach employed by the APS programmes, as a preliminary to the main study which seeks to answer the question of 'What is the impact of APS on its learners' perceptions of social agency?'

2.2. What is work-based learning?

There is no single definition of work-based learning. Portwood (2000), argued that work-based learning was a field of study, a discipline allied to the social sciences.

Where to some extent this may be true, others argue for a more cross-disciplinary approach, where the learning is demanded by the needs of the student, and their workplace. According to Boud and Solomon (2008) (and echoing Dewey's (1938) call for cross disciplinary education to be based on experience, and for experience, and resulting in experience), a definition of work-based learning could include learning *at* work, learning *through* work, and learning *for* work. This might suggest an embedded form of learning, whereby multiple standpoints, rather than a single disciplinary approach, may be applied to work and tested and developed in work, through the development of practice.

	Intentional/planned	Unintentional/unplanned
Learning that which is already known to others	Planned learning of that which others know	Socialisation into an existing community of practice
Development of existing capability	Planned/intended learning to refine existing capability	Unplanned improvement of ongoing practice
Learning that which is new in the workplace (or treated as such)	Planned/intended learning to do that which has not been done before	Unplanned learning of something not previously done

TABLE 1: TYPES OF WORKPLACE LEARNING (HODKINSON AND HODKINSON 2004, CITED IN HAGER 2013).

Therefore, generically the term 'work-based' learning' (WBL) can be taken to cover a range of learning in the workplace that may range from highly informal "on the job" training, through planned training, to heavily-structured and planned, guided or mentored training.

The one thing that is constant is that the learning arises from, or is based in, practice. At a higher education level WBL is an attempt to marry university level learning with

experiential learning. According to Jarvis (2007), this learning is a lifelong and continuous exercise and takes into account the whole of the learner including the body, the mind, the social and material aspects that the learner is embedded in, and their biography (Jarvis, 2007). It is a flexible form of learning that recognises and starts from different attainment levels within a variety of situated contexts and responds to the learner's changing needs over time through varying methods of delivery (Roodhouse, 2016). Where "education is a condition of economic survival for most if not all" (Jarvis, 2001, p. 25) significant and transformative learning through and for paid or unpaid work (Garnett, 2005) is an essential. In theory it allows for the development of knowledgeable action and the creation of actionable knowledge by not only people whose job is to be an academic but also by those who practise.

2.2.1. Higher education WBL as understood by this thesis and as underpinning the Applied Professional Studies programmes.

Practice is a central concept that is fundamental to all forms WBL. According to Hager practice is not only peculiar to WBL but has a long tradition in philosophy from Aristotle, to Wittgenstein (and this thesis draws on the works of Nietzsche, Adorno and the Frankfurt School, Heidegger and other philosophers to further the argument of 'situated and emergent' ontological aspects of epistemology). Other philosophers, such as Dewey (1910, 1938) and social theorists such as Bourdieu (1977, 1990) and Giddens (1984) have made much of practice and experience as being central to effective learning.

There are many approaches as to what practice might be, but at a fundamental level 'practice is where nature and society and the space between them are continually made, un-made, and remade" (Pickering, 1992: 21). In Harré's (1983) model (see section 2.10) this occurs where there is a tension between the individual and collective, and private and public, as the individual appropriates (from collective practices/ knowledge), adapts and develops knowledge into practices which they then offer back to the collective. This cycle goes on regardless, consciously or unconsciously, reflective or unreflective, continually and incrementally producing change.

Practice in the workplace may develop in a number of ways and as Hager (2013:86) puts it, it is not a 'unitary phenomenon'. Workplace learning may be very diverse, ranging from on-the-job training, informal learning, emanating from unpaid work and domestic work, institutionalised or non-institutionalised, and ranging from formal learning arrangements to informal ones (Hager 2013). The learning may also happen or be distributed in a diverse number of ways.

MacIntyre gives a holistic and contextualised account of practices (cited in Hager 2013) that also provides a way to understanding the scope of work-based learning. He argues that conceptually there is a distinction between the internal and external aspects of learning at a conceptual level. He calls these aspects 'goods'. Both internal and external goods are displayed in practice or the outcomes of that practice. Practice or its outcomes simultaneously exhibit both internal and external goods – some are realised in the practitioner, others in the outcomes of the practice.

Higgins (2003:287–289) analysed MacIntyre's account of practices to include:

- 'Outstanding work or performance (which the practitioner *appreciates*)
- What it is like to be engaged in the practice (which the practitioner *experiences as good*)
- An excellence of character (which the practitioner *displays*)
- A 'biographical genre' – what it means to live as a practitioner (which *shapes the practitioner's life*).

These 'goods' are contextualised. MacIntyre (cited in Higgins 2003) states that:

'Individuals characteristically find themselves participating in a number of types of activity, each with its own set of goods. When therefore they seriously ask themselves the question 'what is my good?' one of their concerns in answering

it must be to become able to put in order the various goods which they acknowledge, finding for each its due place in relation both to other such goods and to their own overall good. And this they can only succeed in doing in company with those others who participate with them and with each other in various practices, and who also participate with them in the common life of their whole community (1994, p. 288).’

Thus, the flourishing of a practice requires a holistic symbiotic relationship between the internal and external goods that characterise the practice. This, this thesis holds, can also be a model for professionalism. Professionalism of practice contains both a critically reflective awareness of the practitioner in the internal and external natures of their practice – themselves as a fulfilled practitioner, and the outcomes of their practice as a contribution to the standards and practices of the society they live in. In critical thinking terms, this equates to the professional not only examining their practices from the point of view of the reason, values, conventions and knowledge that underlies them, but also in terms of the consequences to which they tend (see the discussion surrounding critical reflection and reflective practice.

Professionalism for Markauskaite and Goodyear (2012) is innovative, and situated around developing a ‘personal epistemology’ where the boundary between thinking and acting is removed. The title of their apt term situates this goal as the ability to innovate, through ‘knowledgeable action and actionable knowledge’. This grounds the professionalism in the ‘structure’ of that profession or area of practice (see the later discussions on the relationship between ontology and epistemology, becoming and being, structure and change) enabling the individual to ‘think like’ a professional but *also* to ‘act like’ a professional in a changing social and material world. As von Foerster (2003:293-4) articulates it, professionalism is an interaction of stable knowledge and that which is emerging from it, and he criticises the opposition of the two,

“Am I apart from the universe?” Meaning whenever I look, I’m looking as if through a peephole upon an unfolding universe; or, “Am I part of the universe?” Meaning whenever I act, I’m changing myself and the universe as well. [...] Whenever I reflect on these two alternatives, I’m surprised by the depth of the

abyss that separates the two fundamentally different worlds that can be created by such a choice. That is to see myself as a citizen of an independent universe, whose regulations, rules and customs I may eventually discover; or to see myself as a participant in a conspiracy, whose customs, rules, and regulations we are now inventing.'

The definition of 'professional' that this thesis uses is therefore one where the professional actor is situated in a contextual structure that simultaneously constrains but also enables their action.

Professionalism is therefore both creative and constricted. But it is also centrally a moral one. According to Carr (2014:14),

'...the very idea of professional service is a fundamentally moral one; that issues and questions about the promotion of this or that aspect of human good or flourishing are central to the conduct of any and all occupations meriting professional status; and that any theoretical or technical knowledge which professional agents may indeed require for the effective prosecution of the various moral ends or goals of professional service are at least normatively secondary to or subservient of such ends.'

Eraut (2008) also noted, 'Although the workplace appears to be primarily concerned with your capability (what you do and how you perform), it is equally important to be able to do the *right* thing at the right *time* [emphasis added]'. He argued that to make the right decisions the professional learner needs to be able to understand both the general and the specific contexts of the issue (and presumably the impacts or consequences of any action in these settings). They need also to be able to decide what needs to be done by themselves and possibly others, and to be able to implement either alone or collectively what needs to be done through a series of actions, (again, presumably evaluated in the light of the contexts and the impacts upon those contexts).

Therefore reflection is central to the professional and is therefore a central aspect of the WBL delivered by Applied Professional Studies. According to Carr (2014:19) a professional is:

‘a pro-active agent who is prepared to take time – outside any and all minimally prescribed working hours – to engage in discussion, enquiry and research regarding the progressive development of professional principles and procedures ... to assist with the education and training of junior colleagues, to take individual responsibility and initiative ... in circumstances of professional uncertainty and dilemma.’

The last clause is indicative of the situated nature of the professional or any other agent. They are situated in an ever-changing material and social world, what Viall (1996:20) characterises as ‘permanent white water’, that requires them to take time and to think about what they are doing and, from an ontological aspect, who they are or are becoming as an actor (Viall, 1996). Disappearing now are the certainties and knowledge and that it can lead to worthwhile action in all circumstances – the knowledge/practice environment is changing and is already diverse from a time and special perspective (this aspect of knowledge and practice is developed in more detail later on when the thesis tackles the relationship between ontology and epistemology and arrives at knowledge and practice as ‘emerging’ in temporal/spatial contexts).

In order to stop and think, conscious ways of knowing need to be developed. Firstly, uncertainty needs to be made explicit and authentic in the mind. Modes of knowing that are absolute, heavily structured, certain, or disciplinary may lead to the undue limiting of action and to a lack of robustness and viability in producing practices which are valuable to the actor and to the social and material world. This notion of ‘authentic uncertainty’, put forward by Barnett (2009), this thesis suggests, gives a way, at least in part, to conceptualise the necessary critical reflection required by effective social actors and professionals. Actors are in a dilemma but also authentically confident about their abilities and also their abilities to navigate their way to effective action. This critical reflection is also based upon a criterion for action that is centred on the robustness of the knowledge that supports action and its viability in terms of its consequences for the wellbeing of the actor, and the material and social world and that those consequences themselves are further subject to this process of critical reflection.

At a higher education level therefore, critical reflection, including the application and challenging of theory and prior experience and knowledge in practice, is perhaps the primary additive to these models of WBL that distinguishes it. After that, it is perhaps distinguished by the fact that WBL may often be delivered as part of an extended degree programme, the content of which is negotiated, often individually or with the input of the employer. The grid below shows the models of WBL put forward by Costley and Dickerdem (2011:12) though after the Degree in Cohorts' row it is veering more towards work-related learning (i.e. learning content designed by educational institutions (perhaps with the input of the employer) delivered in relation to the work in question but inside the academy (see the paragraphs following this section). Applied Professional Studies, even though is it partly delivered as a foundation degree, falls within the first category with the potential to fall into the second too (though this did not happen in practice at the University of Greenwich as cohorts of this type were never raised).

Models	Typical attributes
Work-based studies degree (for individuals) [includes Foundation Degree such as Applied Professional Studies]	Content negotiated by learner, P/T degree programme, F/T employment
Degree in cohorts	Content designed with contribution of employer, P/T degree programme, F/T employment
Foundation degree	Content designed by HE in relation to employer, F/T or P/T degree programme
Sandwich year	Content designed with employer, 1 year F/T work as a part of a degree programme
In-house training (e.g. NVQ)	Short courses to contribute to job roles during employment
Conventional degree programme to support work role (e.g. MBA)	Content designed by HE, P/T or evening degree programme, F/T employment

	Specific outcomes to be delivered for the programme of study
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TABLE 2: WORK-BASED LEARNING MODELS AND ATTRIBUTES (COSTLEY AND DIKERDEM, 2011)

Although work-based programmes such as Applied Professional Studies involve more structured courses such as those that develop learning agreements and planning and WBL study skills, and that ‘taught’ or lectured modules may be chosen as electives, the main method of delivery of work-based content would be through work-based projects. These are facilitated with the tutor taking an advisory role. These characteristics of WBL were outlined by Costley and Boud (2007 and cited in Costley and Dickerdem 2011):

Advisory role in the facilitation of WBL
Three-way relationship: often mediated between student, adviser, work supervisor
Commonly involves parties other than the student, adviser and work supervisor
Multi-mode contact
Negotiation of topic and process
Plan negotiated at start
Formalised three-way learning agreement
May be assessed by practitioner
Products highly varied, but typically including a reflective component
Learner is an insider and expert in subject area/context
Adviser expert in frameworks/levels of achievement
Adviser expert in epistemology of practice (including linking knowledge)
Adviser and learner have distinct areas of expertise

TABLE 3: ADVISORY ROLE IN THE FACILITATION OF WBL (BOUD AND COSTLEY 2006:7).

When one considers that WBL may be largely or even mostly based upon WBL projects, the mode of facilitation therefore differs from traditional discipline-based learning in that it is often delivered in multi modal ways, often outside of the academy, its content is negotiated and thrown up by situational practice rather than a single discipline, and its outcomes may take multiple forms. The relationship between the learner and the tutor is also different from the traditional model and this offers a way

to distinguish work-based learning from work-related learning (that tends to use a traditional method of delivery even if modules can be chosen or constructed directly in line with the work-place requirements). When advising on work-based learning the tutor recognises the learner as the developing expert in the field rather than taking the expert role themselves. Where the advisor is expert is in how to recognise and measure the levels of achievement, the frameworks and epistemology of knowledge connected to practice and in overlaying these areas of expertise onto the learner's learning. Rather than a transmittal method of learning, the tutor and the learner have distinct but complementary roles in identifying and acquiring the learning. This sits in opposition to traditional learning where the responsibility for the learning to be acquired lies with the tutor and the learners 'follow' in theory development by acquiring the knowledge being transmitted to them. In the words of Costley and Dickerdem (2011:38), the adviser works 'alongside the student to develop rather than divert students' understanding' or become 'controllers or patrollers' of knowledge (Savin-Baden and Major, 2004:xxx).

According to Gheradi (2012) practices are as opaque to the practitioner as they are to the researcher. Traditionally, independent, objective academic researchers have been tasked with researching practices and producing papers on what that practice should be, what Gheradi terms 'prescribed work'. This form of research can be aligned to the arguments posed later in this thesis surrounding the production of knowledge as abstract and by those approved to do so, such as formal dialectical and abstract thinking (the arguments of Adorno and the Frankfurt school), dominant discourses (Foucault) and the production of structure that prescribes action (Sewell etc.). Gheradi (2012:) argues that there is a gulf between 'prescribed work', that is, how it should be done, and 'real work', that is, how it is actually done. This is a 'space' in or of research that if occupied by the practitioner as an insider researcher could be empowering to them, as according to Gherardi (2007:51), this research would be based on practices rather than just pre-existing knowledge that is imposed upon action, and that it can also avoid 'prescribed learning'.

2.2.2. Work-related learning – a distinction

Although many definitions of work-based learning exist, and all rely to some extent in connecting learning with practice and experience, this thesis draws a distinction between 'work-related learning' and 'work-based learning'. The prior term is sometime placed within the work-based learning domain: this thesis argues that work-related learning, although attempting to connect learning with experience (Brennan and Little (1996) argue that since the fifties there has been an attempt to reintroduce into higher education, through the 'sandwich principle' and blocks of work placements, the experiential element lost through the demise of apprenticeships), it is still 'instruction led' (Brennan and Little, 1996:4). Hills *et al* (2010:211), higher education practitioners, argue for the gap between higher education and the workplace to be closed and suggest that 'a conceptual framework for HE practitioners is presented that could be used when designing curricula to better map programme learning outcomes onto graduate employment.'

However, the University Vocational Awards Council (2005) state that,

'As such, work-based learning can, and should be, distinguished from the notion of work related learning; the latter, in the form of vocational programmes designed to prepare people for employment which often includes employer-determined competencies e.g. occupational standards, and does not necessarily require significant areas of the curriculum to be completed in the work-place itself. Neither should it be assumed that work-based learning in the higher education context is specifically about training; work-based learning may take many forms and be undertaken for a number of different purposes; it is not restricted to performance-related learning in a narrow sense. Instead, the emphasis is on identifying and demonstrating learning which has occurred through work-based activity, wherever and however this may have been achieved.'

Brennan and Little (1996:5) state,

'Where work-based learning is part of a primarily instruction-led programme designed by the higher education institution (perhaps in collaboration with professional/regulatory body and/or particular employer), or where a campus

delivered programme has been 'translated' into a form which can be delivered in the workplace, there may be no scope for individual negotiations about the overall design of the programme of study, and there may be only limited scope for negotiations about the intended learning outcomes of the work-based learning element/s. Moreover, the programme's overarching parameters of knowledge, scholarship and values will be those of the university (and discipline).'

No criticism is meant of work-related learning and its value in bridging the gap between learners and potential work is valued in higher education particularly for those who are young inexperienced and not yet in work, or require a heavily discipline-based knowledge. It does go some way to relating learning to action and may throw up, all be it limited, challenges to abstract theory. However, for those in work, older, with experience of life and work and those consciously wishing to develop themselves in the world, there will be no sense of ownership and a still limited sense of direct relevance to their life and work and its outcomes. According to Boud and Solomon (2008), work-based knowledge does not flow from the disciplinary frameworks traditionally organised and ordered within universities but in many cases represents more local knowledge which emerges first from the particular time-and-space-based contexts and situations of work.

Also, real-world work tends not to be neatly divided along disciplinary subjects and approaches but more often than not, requires a transdisciplinary approach to developing practices (take for example a nurse who may well require clinical knowledge and practices but also need to have an understanding of social and personal aspects of human life in their dealing with patients, not to mention management and administrative skills, and to be able to quantitatively and qualitatively analyse the impact of their practices). Gibbs (2015:2) argues that 'transdisciplinary knowledge lies in the liberation of reason from formality and in the multi-realities of the presenting problem.' It may also centre therefore less on what is learned but how the learner learns and in making them much more holistically aware of the skills involved (Rogers, 1983, Savin-Baden and Major, 2004, Major, 2005,).

One other thing disciplinary approaches to learning might ignore is the tacit dimension of learning and the development of experience. Jonson and Burden (2003:39) carried out research with employers and felt that:

‘...many of the employability skills that employers are seeking can only be learned in ‘real life’ situations, even on a temporary basis such as work placements of two or three weeks . . . there is a limit to the extent to which educational establishments can ‘teach’ the necessary skills and attributes, even where extensive efforts are made to simulate the work situation.’

The employers in question were referring to learners aged between 18 and 21 on average, but it does illuminate the store put on experience by employers and a tacit acknowledgement that theoretical learning is not enough on its own. That learning is embedded throughout WBL may also set it aside from work-related learning that either relates disciplinary and theoretical learning to the theory of practice or attempts to embed it in practice via placements taken separately from the theory as part of the course in a more limited way.

2.2.3. The model used by the programme that is the subject of this thesis

Gherardi (2007) argued that learning based on practice cannot be prescribed so easily and practitioner-learners occupying this research space would be empowered, giving them access to the discourses that shape the structures that in turn shape action. MacIntyre (1984:273) argued that practice is the site from which new ‘ends’ emerge and dismisses the notion that prior knowledge and practices lead to pre-defined outcomes only;

‘What this framework omits from view are those ongoing modes of human activity within which ends have to be discovered and rediscovered, and means devised to pursue them; and it thereby obscures the importance of the ways in which those modes of activity generate new ends and new conceptions of ends.’

Additionally, MacIntyre (2010:66) argued that this should be the site of individual ethical reflection as ‘...for each individual there is the question of whether for him or her that the goods [outcomes] of that particular practice should have should have this or that place in his or her life. And for every society there is the question of whether it

is good for that society that the goods of this or that particular practice have this or that place in its common life.' This individual reflection distributes the role of deciding what is good for society more equitably within that society and through practice should enable individuals and the collective to respond viably to the changing social and material environment. It makes situated learning, that is learning that is based on work, a valuable learning experience helping to produce what Gherardi (2007:51) terms 'sensible knowledge'. This knowledge incorporates the ontological aspect of being and becoming into the knowledge, incorporating the abstract with the actual and also introducing a 'sense of safety' (Gherardi, 2007:173-175) which foresees the future of a practice but which also requires the embodiment of knowledge in experience, sometimes very tacit experience.

The model of WBL used by the Applied Professional Studies was one that employs an epistemology that sees knowledge emerging as simultaneously ontologically anchored. It situates learning at the interface between being and becoming at an individual and social level. It rejects knowledge based on an absolute equivalence of what something is and what it can be understood to be, realising that much of how we understand the material world and how we can act in it is to do with social structures rather than absolute truths. However, it does not discard that structure and all the mechanisms that make it up, arguing that change should be conscious and viable and always up for review. It operates on the principle that while multiple approaches to knowledge and practices may be possible, not any knowledge is permissible and not any practice is acceptable, however distributed the means of knowledge creation becomes. Therefore, although the APS programme is negotiated, it is not from a relativist perspective but from a perspective that the learning be situated in order to best explore the viability of practices in and to social contexts. In this practice it employs dialogue and critical reflection, alongside theoretical perspectives to ensure that the emergent knowledge and practices are as equitable to the varied stakeholders as possible, and can be reviewed and changed as necessary.

Therefore, the programme is based on trying to develop and contribute to communities of practice, a term coined by Lave and Wenger (1991, Wenger, 2000, Wenger *et al*, 2000) who see individuals as operating as parts of larger collective social groups. However, as Gherardi, Nicolini and Odela (1998:279) argue that communities of

practice are not just a performative grouping where its members learn how to operate from each other, or where new members are merely socialised into its dominant practices to produce fixed group behaviours. Rather it is a social grouping, based around a joint activity (Osterlund and Carlile, 2003) where a process of learning and change is being driven by the differences in knowledge and practices between members and between practising communities (Brown and Duguid, 1991). It is more about the recognition of difference and the synthesis of those differences into something new, rather than stagnating change by encouraging conformity. The model of WBL used by APS recognises this process and incorporates its principles of into its own dialogic teaching (see the later sections on dialogue and pedagogy).

As will be seen from the arguments made in the next section, knowledge is perhaps only fully developed when it includes an ability to act upon it (a significance for action) and that this always, to some extent, has a localised experiential element to it. As a practice-based process of learning, WBL offers a way to answer a number of problems not addressed or perhaps even produced and reproduced by other pedagogical traditions, particular the predisposition to prefer the mind-over-matter approach and to theoretically organise the world in terms of 'irreducible dualisms between actor/system, social/material, body/mind, and theory/action' (Nicolini, 2012:2). In any case, the argument is that work-based learning should always be embedded in contextual experience and, therefore, involves the learner not only understanding the abstract principles of the learning but also challenging it in localised and contextually relational actualisation. This moves the process beyond passive learning into a realm of activity, development, relationships and creativity.

Eraut (2008) argued that there is ample scope to identify and enhance learning, and it is in this role, as a facilitator of learning and a mentor in the learners' critical approaches to learning, that the role of the tutor might well lie. The process of critical reflection is one that is central to the nature of work-based learning. Kolb (Kolb and Fry, 1975) developed the Experiential Learning Model composed of four elements: a) concrete experience, b) observation of and reflection on that experience, c) the formation of abstract concepts based on the reflection and d) the testing of the abstract concepts gained in new experience. These four elements are the essence of a spiral of learning which can begin with any one of the four elements but typically starts with

a concrete experience. His model was developed predominantly for use with adult further education but has found widespread pedagogical implications in higher education. Boud (2008) argued that the tutor is there less to 'teach' the subject but to facilitate the learner in their learning using these critical reflection tools.

This critical reflection (what Barnett, 2007, calls 'authentic uncertainty') is something that in work-based learning, and in particular in APS, is practised not only by the learner and encouraged by the facilitator, but also practised by the facilitator and those that manage the programmes. Schön (1991) was largely responsible for introducing the concept of reflective practice which is a continuous process and involves the learner considering critical incidents in his or her life experiences. As defined by Schön (1991), reflective practice involves thoughtfully considering one's experiences in applying knowledge to practice. In education, it refers to the process of the educator studying his or her teaching methods and determining what works best for the students. He additionally argued that organisations and individuals should be flexible and incorporate lessons learned throughout their lifespans into what is now a well-established discipline in management and business studies: organisational learning. This is the kind of flexibility that is normally inherent in work-based learning programmes and APS builds in the negotiation of degree structure, content and assessment, and the way in which learning is best carried out and validated by the learner in their work situation. This is done in a critically sound way using critical reflection, by both the tutor and tutee, on their working relationships with each other and their work colleagues, and how they face problems that arise. This exemplifies the flexible nature of work-based learning in that it must adapt to needs and circumstances, but also maintain a critical approach to the learning and the assessment of that learning.

Therefore, Durrant, Rhodes and Young (2009) summarise work-based learning as the learner being able to:

- 'see direct relevance between studying for a qualification to work-based learning and their role in the workplace;
- obtain support from their employers;
- develop the programme around their own professional development needs and individual interests;

- negotiate the focus, context, timescale and assessment of their work;
- fit this flexible form of study into their working and personal lives;
- view studying for an accredited qualification as evidence of commitment to their professional role;
- seek career progression and the potential for increased earnings.'

In addition, this should be supported, as has been discussed, through the facilitation of learning. This is done through the tutor supporting the identification of learning opportunities and the mentoring of the learner through their learning. This should be carried out with a level of flexibility that allows for the focus of the learning to be on work (and life) situations. It should facilitate a critically reflective approach to learning and the critical development of capable practitioners, able as Harré (1983) put it, to publish knowledge and practices in a way that is productive to themselves and others.

The APS curriculum is therefore situated in the learner's material and social context. The learner is at the centre of the negotiation and direction of the learning and in their relationship with the tutor, takes on the subject specialist role. The tutor takes on the role of advisor and brings to bear their knowledge of academic levels to challenge the learner's critical approach to themselves and their practices and the consequences to which they may lead. It is therefore a very dialogic process. The definition of dialogue is more closely attended to later, but suffice it to say here that this thesis will argue that the ability of the tutor to take on this advisory role is fundamental (as Costley and Dikerdem 2011:39 point out 'advisers who are used to being 'the expert' or 'the professional consultant' may have difficulty in changing to this different role.')

and breaks down if it is not present. Also that dialogue also facilitates – through advising the student on various learning strategies including work embedded empirical study as illuminated by this study (as alluded to by McIntyre in his comments above about practice in the company of other practitioners and indicated in Boud and Costley's (2006) list that included three-way negotiations and other party's voices in communities of practice – the important wider conversational/contextual part of learning that is important to the development of confidence and professional social agency.

As pointed out in the brief section about the distinction between work-related learning and WBL, and this distinction also marks out WBL from most traditional classroom

based forms of learning, is that it is embedded in experience. At HE level it is perhaps even more than this, in that it actively takes advantage of the 'insider' nature of the learner and the research they can carry out. According to Costley *et al* (2012), insider researchers (i.e. those who are studying a community of practice that they are part of) occupy a unique position of being able to study a specific question to a great depth and with special knowledge. This does raise questions of objectivity but as Carr and Kemiss (2004) argue the insider researcher must live with the consequences of their study and amongst those it affects and so it might also provide an imperative for engagement with strong ethical and critically-reflective considerations that involve not just the critical reliability of the knowledge created but the consequences to which it tends. (This theme arises numerous times throughout the thesis). WBL at HE level tends then to involve work-based projects using such methodologies as action research with real-life outcomes.

Many of the concepts outlined in the last two paragraphs are perhaps nebulous and are discussed in much greater depth in the following sections. Suffice it to say that this provides a very basic outline of the model of WBL used by APS, enough to frame the following sections and to allow the reader to have an outline of the programme whose pedagogy the study will be examining in practice, from the perspective of the learner.

2.3. Ontology and Epistemology: Knowledge as inherently situated

APS is a suite of Higher Education work-based programmes which is situated within an epistemological foundation that sees knowledge not as unchangeable truth but as transitory, and that achieves its status as knowledge through its links to wider concerns and practices. It becomes fully formed as knowledge when it has the significance for action included within it. In this respect, knowledge is created by practitioners in varying communities of practice (and not just by academics in abstract disciplines of knowledge) and is not universal or existent outside of its context. Knowledge and learning are therefore not abstract but are situated and have very real, multidimensional, and plural significances. APS, therefore, situates its teaching and learning in the student's social context, and the context of work. This thesis aims,

through an examination of the narratives of students, to ascertain the ethical worthiness and pedagogical effectiveness of the APS programmes in developing a sense of social agency in its learners. The impact its use of situated learning has both on its learners and, to some extent, their communities of practice will be examined. It is hoped that the thesis will generate more thought as to whether universities should capitalise on the intellectual capital of its learners by redefining them as partners in knowledge creation, by seeing its practising students as partners in the knowledge creation system, and using its expertise to support the learning process in real-life contexts with actual outcomes, wherever possible. However, knowledge is often not seen as situational or changeable, and is often treated as complete or absolute and the same for all instances of use. The contention of this thesis is that this leads to the suppression of thought, and the oppression of the individual, and in the context of learning leads to teaching along the lines of 'banking', the injection of knowledge into individuals for use later (without much help for the learner to see how it may become relevant). This is oppressive because it suppresses the ontological aspects of ownership, the transfer of knowledge (the ability for the learner to recognise the relevance of their learning to their social situations) and in turn, the motivation and will to learn through the creative use of learning in real-life situations.

2.3.1. Knowledge as complete and absolute

The drive of the Enlightenment was one of emancipation. However, the systematic method of thought and the conceptualisation of knowledge as complete, and the advance of learning as the historical process toward absolute knowledge (Hegel, 1979), has become seen as problematic. Postmodern thinkers have come to see it as a system that enables knowledge to be conceptualised in a way that makes it easily quantifiable and manageable, but also unchangeable. As Stambaugh puts it in her introduction to Heidegger's (1974:16) *Identity and Difference*,

'In the epochal clearing of Being reached with Hegel, Being has become the absolute concept grasping itself, the "absolute" has become the absolute *Idea*. The absolute *Idea* moves through history toward the absolute, total result of history in which all individual distinctions are at once negated as being merely individual, preserved in their essential being, and elevated into the higher reality of the whole.'

In other words, once each idea or concept has been fully identified with its object, it becomes unchangeable, measurable and countable and forms a realm of validated knowledge that is hard to challenge without authority. Difference is merely there for the purpose of categorisation, and concepts are to be used in situations that are also predefined or categorised. Concepts cannot be changeable because the resultant actions based on them would be unpredictable and viewed as irrational. It has been argued by postmodern philosophers, really from Nietzsche onwards but post-war from Adorno and the Frankfurt school onwards, that this has led to a reified notion of knowledge as to an extent a commodity external to humans, in the same way that the concept of time is seen as external of humans. In this respect, the notional knowledge this system of thinking produces imposes complete and unmovable identities rather than taking into account the unknowability of the ontologically situated and contextual subject, and the situation that the knowledge will be used in. It may make actions seem irrational. However, if the singular nature of the context and individual, and the way in which the knowledge resides in them in that context, was taken into account, actions might seem less irrational.

It has been argued by theorists such as Freire (1993:54) that we now have a teaching system where few people are officially permitted to create knowledge or judge its value. Those that do, do so at an abstract level, making 'knowledge' in and for itself, independent of ontological context and even humanity (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997). This system, where learners are filled up with information in the hope that they will apply it in later situations, is analogised as the 'banking' model of teaching (Freire 1993). Each student is a 'bank account' and the items of knowledge are the 'deposits' to be saved for later with no real meaningful way of recognising its use at the time, or of recognising the particular situation as being appropriate for its use. Knowledge cannot be that self-contained or abstract. When it is created, it is created by people situated in all sorts of tacit knowledge, desires, needs and values and identities which differ from person to person and community to community. In turn, it is also accepted and appropriated and adapted, for use by learners situated in similarly complex circumstances.

This notion of 'situatedness' is supported by Burwood (2006). He makes two interesting points: firstly, that the principles of anything cannot be anything other than superficially learned, if they are learned in isolation from practice and experience. For him, they remain 'merely a sterile and unproductive knowledge of maxims; where all that is required is to learn them by rote and recall them at will (Burwood 2006:119).' What this implies is that 'depth' of knowledge, and its utility, requires experience. The second point he makes is that whilst abstract principles or precepts can be taught to provide a superficial knowledge, the notion that knowledge as 'de-contextualised precepts' (lacking an ontological dimension) can be transmitted in a meaningful and significant way to an 'unsituated subject', where the subject itself is treated as a de-contextualised precept, is erroneous (Burwood 2006:120). The later conceptions of knowledge have therefore led to seeing it as transitional and situated, and as being created by situated practitioners, albeit it affected by dominant discourses. This has, therefore, also led to a reassessment of the status of teachers and learners.

Because knowledge, in its deepest meaning, is situated, learning in an abstract way is divorced from students' real lives, and a purpose of negotiated study, such as practised by APS, is to re-engage the student by contextualising it. Avraamidou and Osborne (2009) in evaluating school science teaching, claim that it 'estranges' students in that its principles and conceptions are represented as objective and absolute truths, realities in and for themselves, abstract from any real-life context and a student's life experiences. Teaching by negotiated study involves students using theory in a contextualised and situated way. Therefore, it can be all the more accessible to the student, and foster a will to learn because the learning, and its constituent knowledge, has real-life meaning and direct application and worth.

Negotiated forms of work-based learning recognise the ontologically situated nature of learning and the interlinked nature of practice and theory (praxis). The status of knowledge therefore in work-based learning is that it is transitional, situated in time and practice. It is created by practitioners resulting in negotiated forms of tutoring (rather than a 'banking' style of teaching) which sees the role of the tutor more as a guide to independent learning through its necessary processes and the quality of critical reflection and argument, instead of as the arbiter and supplier of facts. It sees learners as responsible, as part of social communities of practice, for the cause and

influencing of changes to practices, for the ethical outcomes of those changes and the improvement of their learning, skills, and capabilities.

2.4. Data, information and absolute knowledge, and the building of history

The story of knowledge (at least from the point of view of this author!) appears to be a story of relationships. At the beginning of the story is the relationship of the mind to external material or data. Therefore, the first problem for philosophers in trying to define knowledge is how we come to comprehend information or, as Ogden and Richards (1923) put it, how we move from simple sensations (what we receive through our senses in the immediate) to conclusions about what we perceive. For Helmholtz, who is cited by Ogden, *et al.*, (1923) and whom they claim to be heavily influenced by Kant, information appears to us as signs of external objects (data), received via the sense organs. For Bateson (2000, p. 315), 'A "bit" of information is definable as a difference that makes a difference.' These two points of view imply therefore, that the difference in itself is not much at all unless there is something to which it can make a difference, and Bateson (2000, p.xxxii) acknowledges this; '... mental processes, ideas, communication, organisation, differentiation, pattern, and so on, are matters of form, not substance'. These signs are not qualities of the object; they are merely manifestations of the human senses as stimulated by external objects. Therefore, at the very first stages of the development of knowledge (i.e. the stage where information results in basic meaning), there exists the necessity of a relational situation of things to each other (identity and difference), and to the sentient being that perceives them.

According to Ogden and Richards (1923), similar objects give rise to similar sensations, or to put it another way, different objects give rise to different signs, and then the signs are useful in giving similar identities to similar objects. In this way, data (the raw material of the object) and meaning (the signs that the object stimulates in the senses), in turn provide the means of distinguishing the object from other objects, or placing it in a group, or category, with similar objects. In fact, the very way in which the object takes on its identity as an object and is categorised – becomes information (see figure1). How this physically happens is still a matter of debate for neurologists

(and other scientists), and philosophers too. However, it appears, at least, to be a function of perception, rather than innate in the object itself. This further strengthens the fundamental nature of the relationship of the object to other objects and to the thing that perceives them. Therefore, in a strange way, what stimulates the senses is not wholly separate from the senses, not independent or fully external to the thinking mind, as it requires the thinking mind to identify it. This is not to say that information or objects, living or otherwise, do not affect other objects without the presence of sentient minds. However, perception, identification and classification requires a mind. And the conundrum of whether or not two planets colliding actually happens, or has any consequence, if there is not sentient being to perceive it, will be left to other philosophers!

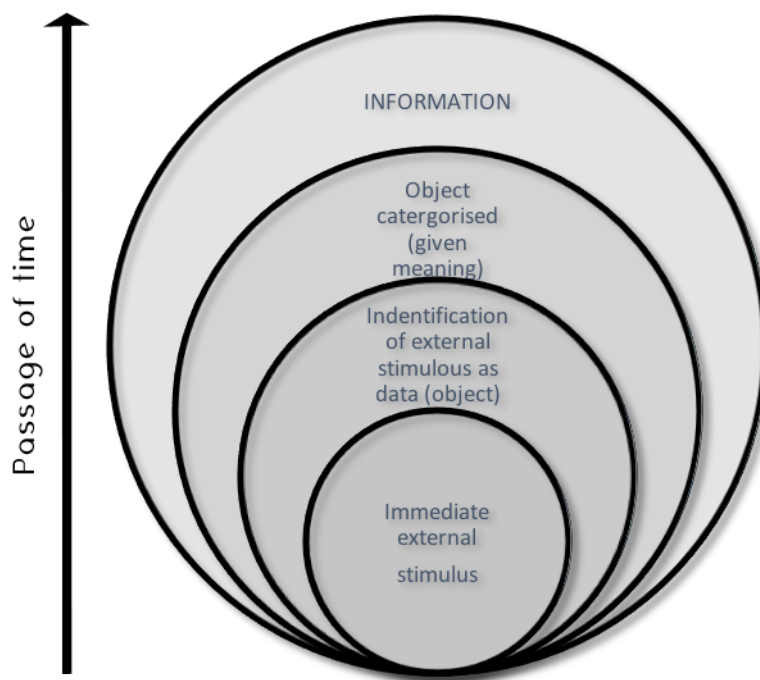


FIGURE 1: A REPRESENTATION (BY THE AUTHOR OF THIS THESIS) OF THE PROCESS OF CATEGORISATION TO PRODUCE INFORMATION (OFTEN TAKEN AS THE PROCESS OF MAKING KNOWLEDGE). INFORMATION IS DIFFERENTIATED FROM DATA (REPRESENTED BY BATESON AS INFORMATION). INFORMATION IN THIS MODEL IS REPRESENTED AS DATA PLUS MEANING. INFORMATION IS NOT TO BE EQUATED WITH KNOWLEDGE WHICH COULD BE REPRESENTED IN THIS SCHEME AS ITEMS OF INFORMATION PLUS SIGNIFICANCE FOR ACTION.

Kant (2000) described the ability to comprehend unity (an object as a unified object as different from other objects), as an *a priori* ability; the pre-existing ability to identify unity. In other words, to be able to identify an object (or any item of information) as a

separate unit distinct from the 'soup' of all other data, is an innate ability of all humans. What that object may be, required mediation for it to be placed in relation and distinction to other objects in the external world within the mind, with the concept in the mind being identical with the object in the external world.

Kant (2000) drew a deep distinction between how objects are given to us in the 'immediate' and what can be then *thought* about them. He used the term 'intuition' to describe the way objects are given to us immediately, and at the level of intuition they are 'particular' and 'chaotic', in other words, meaningless. However, 'givens' could be 'mediated' into concepts – in other words, we have a process by which we can relate unmediated objects to others, linked by some commonality or distinction from the other object, to enable us to make sense of them. 'The former [intuition] is immediately related to the object and is singular; the latter [the concept] is mediated, by means of a mark, which can be common to several things' (Kant, 2000:399). Therefore, particulars were in a relationship to, or at least arranged under, overarching concepts. Furthermore, Kant saw this as imperative, because 'thoughts without content [objects/information] are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind' (Kant, 2000:193-4). Thus, Kant had articulated a staged transformation. This stage moved from information given immediately (without mediation), which was then thought about (mediated) and placed under an overarching symbolic concept. In other words, it was categorised, and from this concept/category, the significance is drawn – this collection of bits of wood, nailed and glued together, have the common mark of a table and thus can be used as such.

2.5. Unity seen as external and absolute knowledge (in and of itself) and as the building blocks of progress

Kant's (2000) system of organising things as concepts and then into categories (turning them from empty facts and realising their potential as knowledge) was based on the innate ability (*a priori*) of human beings to recognise unity and to be able to identify things by a comparison with what they were not. The object, plus its contradictions, are brought together to form the absolute concept of the object, with the object being identical to its concept (except one is physical (object) and one is

metaphysical (concept)). Note that Kant, earlier, claimed that objects may be arranged under concepts, thus making all objects under that idea, identical to the concept and therefore, each other. This process, known as the dialectic, was therefore for him a rational move, and to err from it was irrational. The act of identifying something and categorising it by comparison to what it was not, was to understand it fully, and was based upon non-contradiction (the rule that states that a thing cannot be itself and something else simultaneously, while bringing both of those ideas together to form the fullest concept). It was only barely based on experience. The sense perceptions lead to categorisation and, therefore, the significance of things (in other words, how they relate to other things and become useful items of knowledge) are limited, well defined and fully formed and are external to human beings (though it took a sentient being to comprehend them). Information, with the addition of rational and logical mediation, moved towards a conception of knowledge, because the understanding of the truth of objects and their relationships to each could provide the basis for all rational action and thought. As data, once mediated, and differentiated and identified, becomes information, so too does information become knowledge once it enables the recognition of its relationship to other things, and, therefore, brings ever-growing knowledge of how the world works and how to rationally operate within it. In this sense, data has become information and meaning that enables identity. It has then developed into knowledge – facts that come together that form significance that enables action.

Similarly, and perhaps even more influentially, the Hegelian dialectic (Hegel, 1977) is also a schema that produces discrete 'essential' knowledge and is also a process which describes history. Hegel described knowledge as the reconciliation of intuition with the concept. This is arrived at through a long process of cognitive mediation, starting with intuition of the now (the intuition of something being something), through various stages that pose opposites against opposites, i.e. what the thing is against, what the thing cannot be, and arrive at a synthesis of them. At this point, absolute knowledge of the thing is arrived at. Simply explained, this is the thesis (what the thing is) plus the antithesis (all that the thing is not) added together to make a synthesis, the fully developed concept, which incorporates knowledge of what it is and what it is not which make it absolute. The synthesis is held as a higher form of knowledge than the preceding thesis and antithesis, the full identity of the thing being understood, the fully formed concept that is identical with its object. This synthesis, in turn, becomes a new

thesis which is posed against another antithesis and so on. In this way, the dialectic describes the process of history, moving to ever higher understanding and eventual freedom. Figure 2 represents, in diagrammatic form, this process.

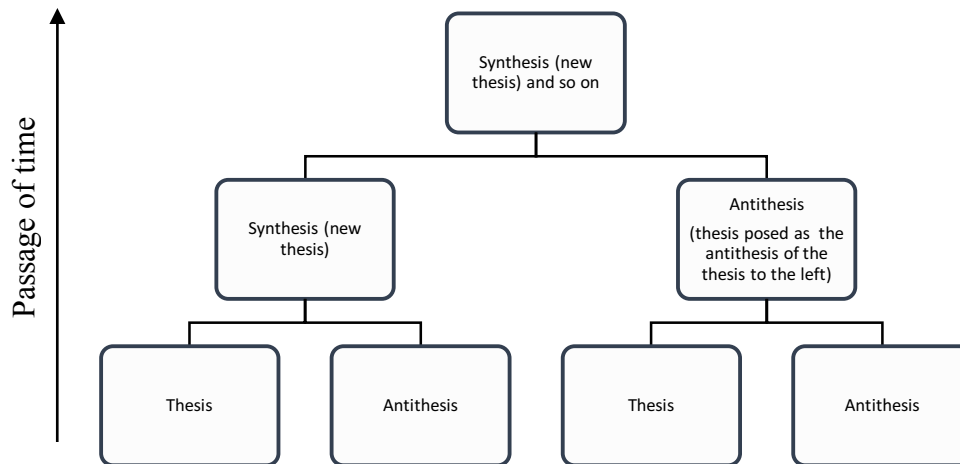


FIGURE 2: THE DIALECTICAL CREATION OF ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE AND THE FORMULATION OF HISTORY MOVING TOWARD COMPLETION

Knowledge, as discrete and immutable truths, as the building material of a history that rationally unfolds, moving towards its perfect end, is analogous to a wall being built, moving towards its own completion. This is a concept of the historical progress of human learning which is commonly held. As Stambaugh puts it in her introduction to Heidegger's (2002:16) *Identity and Difference*, mentioned earlier, the concept, or 'absolute idea' then governs any future interpretation of the object, negating any possibility of alternative understandings. The concept, which overlays and governs all perceptions of the object, become preserved in aspic. It is measurable, countable and interchangeable, and therefore a commodity.

These 'solid blocks' of knowledge, form the foundations upon which the wall of further knowledge is built, and this 'build-up' becomes a quantitative (numerical) force, bringing about a qualitative change, one period of history moving on to the next superior one. Each subsequent period is considered a higher stage of civilisation than the previous. In the world, this historical forming of knowledge is therefore seen as rational progress, and again, to think otherwise would be irrational. Both Kant and Hegel are, perhaps, the most influential thinkers, in this respect, in that many people still find it hard to accept any other notion of knowledge with its the resultant narrative

of progress. This is perhaps the model on which university levels are still based – the idea that items of knowledge can be passed on in the 'essential' form and built up in the student year on year. The implication from the preceding argument is that this method of learning can be oppressive and therefore demotivating, and not inducing individual creativity and thought.

2.6. The ethical challenge to knowledge as absolute and external to the human intellect and of stultifying effect

In the post-modern, post-structural age, as has been alluded to previously, notions of the straightforward accumulation of rational, self-contained, and fully formed and absolute notions of knowledge resulting in positive historical progress, have been challenged. This questioning has not least by the thinkers of the Frankfurt School after the Second World War. For Adorno (1959:320), the historical process seen as a whole, made up of fragments of absolute knowledge being subsumed into the whole, constrained thinking and produced suffering, rather than led to freedom:

'Universal history must be construed and denied. After the catastrophes that have happened, and in view of the catastrophes to come, it would be cynical to say that a plan for a better world is manifested in history and unites it. Not to be denied for that reason, however, is the unity that cements the discontinuous, chaotically splintered moments and phases of history – the unity of the control of nature, progressing to rule over men, and finally to men's inner nature. No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb'.

What the standard approach to the dialectical system (i.e. one that arrives at absolute knowledge) may deny, is that historical change may lie in the tension between the individual and the whole, the object and the concept, human and humankind. It might lie in resistance, conscious or otherwise, to solid identities. It denies that individual difference is, in fact, changeable and not identical with how it is cognitively grasped or stereotyped, and therefore, both the object and concept (knowledge) may change. It denies that there can even be a space between object and concept, where difference between the two may occur and create change.

A non-absolute approach to knowledge and its formation is something which is very different and much less predictable than a teleological unfolding of truth. Foucault (1972) was later to portray institutions such as prisons, workshops, courts, schools and universities as disciplinary institutions where the dominant discourses on the world were taught, and the 'irrational' were punished. Part of this system is the university and its associated academics, who are charged with the judging of persons as being qualified to create knowledge, and if that knowledge 'rationally' counts as such.

Adorno (1959) was critical of Kant's and Hegel's notion of knowledge as complete and universal and unchanging, based as it is on *a priori* human rationality that is independent of conditions. Adorno (1959:28) claimed that,

'what conflicts with [this], however, is that these synthetic *a priori* judgements are simply full of elements of every conceivable kind that are drawn from experience and about which I could know nothing in the absence of experience'.

He argued that 'invariants' cannot be made out of variables as though all facts were present at the time, and a total judgement could be made. What he is arguing is that at the time of creating knowledge not everything can be known in that instant. Therefore, the knowledge that springs from these objects can never be complete and unchangeable. Knowledge, as it dwells in a person, will be different by varying degrees, dependent upon that person's experience, values, and social situation and a host of other variables, at any particular time. Therefore, the meaning of data, to form information, cannot be fully defined as absolute knowledge, as it relies on how the individual perceives them. This perception is affected by their values, which are acquired through experience. Any object of data cannot be fully known, in and for itself, at any particular time – knowledge when it comes into being in the individual is always situated.

The form of dialectical rationality predicated by Kant (and Hegel could be included), according to Adorno (1959), suppresses creativity because it limits the connections between objects of information, and therefore their potential significance or potential for allowing action at a given time. Because all objects become subsumed under overarching concepts, their significance is already set out and cannot be rationally

altered. These problems manifest themselves in the imposed identity of things, for e.g. the concept of women has led to the limited forms of action permitted of women. 'Dialectical reasoning reduces the individual to a mere example of a rational administrator, to an "I think" scenario, but to a nonetheless "I follow" and definitely not an "I create" (Adorno, 1959:362). For Adorno and Horkheimer (1997), the Enlightenment project's wish to produce the free-thinking individual had failed; science produced knowledge in this systematic way and education was merely the transfer of information dressed up as knowledge which can be swallowed like little pills, and regurgitated as needed with little or no reflection (what Friere (1993) was to describe as the 'banking model' of education). These values, according to them, were further instilled by the media and the overall system stultifies the mind (see the discussion below on dominant discourses).

The result of instrumental dialectical thinking that produces universals, is that it results in stereotypes, which are then in turn used in a dry and emotionless way with little or no intellectual labour or reflection. Absolute concepts/knowledge about what particular things are, produces a false immediacy – things are already fully formed into knowledge – they include their own significance and have no intrinsic value of their own, as individual and ontological things. Real things become almost exclusively conceptual objects and lose all value except to the rational process of thinking,

'Representation [of individual particulars] is changed for the fungible – universal changeability. An atom is smashed not in representation but as a specimen of matter, and a rabbit does not represent [itself] but, as a mere example, is virtually ignored by the zeal of the laboratory (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997:10).'

Cruelty results because the physical becomes so identical with the conceptual, that it loses its individual identity. When the physical is a living thing this takes on even greater importance. In *Negative Dialectic*, Adorno (1959) mentions the ease, during the Holocaust, in which humans were transported in cattle trucks and assigned numbers, on their way for disposal.

According to the logical system which has pre-identified things into concepts, wider perspectives which may change with the prevailing conditions, are not permissible as

knowledge. The most inhuman result of this, according to Adorno and Horkheimer (1997), is that it is not just inanimate objects that get conceptually stereotyped. Living things also become conceptual models of the system that are usable, repeatable, interchangeable, consumable and replaceable. Thinking, learning and knowledge creation, becomes mathematical, a mere calculation of givens. It becomes the arrangement of pre-formed building blocks. Learning of this nature can become merely the remembering of facts, and if thinking goes further than that, it is merely equivalent to carrying through mathematical formula. However, as Nicolini (2012:7) argues: 'we need [experiential and practice based] theories that take into account the heterogeneous nature of the world we live in, which includes an appreciation that objects and materials often bite back at us and resist our attempts to envelope them with our discourses'. The strict dualisms – the divisions between epistemology and ontology, mind and body, theory and practice – need to be rethought.

2.7. Knowledge as transitory and situated (multiplicity of knowledge and human agency)

For Adorno and Horkheimer (1997), the ability to critically reflect lies in negation. The negative was the part of knowledge that could not be captured by the dialectical reasoning which sought to produce absolute knowledge. In other words, the differing possibilities of significances and values of information, reside in individuals as situated subjects, in the individual variables that cannot be universally known. If meaning can be plucked from time and place (for Hegel and Kant, the immediate), it can logically, therefore, differ according to time and place. The understanding of any information (i.e. facts turning into knowledge by the addition of significance) must take into account that not everything about a thing can be known in an instance, or by an individual, or else it will lose its ability to be adapted to new circumstances. 'True madness lies in primarily immutability, in the inability of thought to participate in the negativity [the future possibilities/creativity/change] in which thought – in contradistinction to a fixed judgement – comes into its own' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997:194). Adorno and Horkheimer were looking for a more human system of thought that allowed for individual agency and fulfilment through critical thinking, change, and creativity and

multiple perspectives – the re-inclusion of the ontological aspect of knowledge. This method of thinking would avoid the cruelty that so often comes from the lack of ability to reassess values and ideas. The Enlightenment project may have failed in producing the free and self-directed individual, but subsequent theorists, and educationalists (and some before them too), have kept this as a central consideration.

For example, Polanyi (2009), also saw knowledge as ontological facts in relationship. An entity, be it a concept or a thing, for Polanyi (2009), is made up of the particulars that attend to it. The tacit knowledge of the particular he calls 'proximal'. The knowledge of the entity he calls 'distal'. He describes the act of knowing as the attending from something, to attending to something else. The meaning of facts or information occurs in their relationship to something else (and to each other), in other words, coming together in a relationship they create significance. Therefore, knowledge (posed by Polanyi as truth – the combination of facts and their meaning or significance) is the product of relationships, or even resides in the relationships of facts to other things. Furthermore, according to Polanyi (2009), it is our awareness of something that allows us to relate it to something else, and this awareness may be in part tacit (i.e. cannot be universally known and dependent on place and time). This 'tacitness' may be dependent on variables that may be quite specific to the individual holding the knowledge, and be based upon values, biases or even senses such as touch and taste. He argued that our awareness of something may not be fully articulated, or specifiable: truth for him has elements that cannot be fully known. Harré (1983) was to call this 'true belief' – true, because it is more than just fancy, but belief because in addition to evidence, it must contain something of the unknowable. This can be compared to Barnett's notion of 'authentic uncertainty' discussed later.

This differs from the Enlightenment version of truth as fully formed, in and of itself. The facts have been learned, but how they come together and/or relate to other things to produce their significance, may not be fully consciously known as they are held in conjunction with experience that may not be fully understood or be fully conscious. It develops Adorno's notion that not all things can be known and cannot be absolute. It suggests that knowledge within the individual may not be fully conscious, and this further implies that values that affect how facts are perceived as significant may exist. Knowledge, (the arrangement in the mind of facts that allow action) is created in the

individual, and although it may be held collectively in similar ways, it differs for each person. Therefore, knowledge is situated in relationships and also in practice and experience, where tacit knowledge is an important element, all of which may vary from person to person.

Regarding learning and teaching, the role of the tutor is perhaps less concerned with the transfer of already formed knowledge, but with instilling in the learner the skills of situated inquiry – a kind of cognitive apprenticeship for the learner (Collins, Brown, and Newman, 1991). Research by Blumenfeld *et al.* (1991) indicates that there are ways to enhance students' ability through negotiated project-based learning, through the rigorous practice of critical processes or "scaffolding" (learning resources, models, strategies) that encourage the mastery of inquiry skills.

"The master-apprentice relationship is used as an analogy for the teaching-learning situation...like masters, teachers should scaffold instruction by breaking down tasks; use modelling, prompting, and coaching to teach strategies for thinking and problem solving; and gradually release responsibility to the learner" (Blumenfeld *et al.*, 1991:371).

In this cognitive apprenticeship model for teaching, students are encouraged to learn the "crafts" of subject matter areas such as writing, and reading and even mathematics, in the actual context that they will use these skills (Collins, Brown, and Newman, 1991). Therefore, a large amount of practice is also required. Learners gain feedback from tutors who are expert in metacognitive skills research, critical thinking, and argument and on their use, and the application of learning in practice. The emphasis, then, is on the acquisition of skills that the learner will use in acquiring and applying what knowledge they gain through inquiry, and what they learn through the application and testing of it in real-life situations. The learner gradually becomes the master in these skills.

The perceived influence of contextualisation of the cognitive quality of learning has also stimulated a good deal of research. This has been concerned with the importance of authenticity and autonomy engendered by real-life orientated learning. According to research on "situated cognition" (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989), learning is increased if the context for learning resembles the real-life context in which the to-be-

learned material will be used, and that this is maximised if the context for learning actually *is* the context in which it will be used. Conversely, they claim that learning is also minimised if the context in which learning happens is not the same as the context in which the learning is likely to be applied.

Other research on contextualised learning has also suggested that if it is important for learners to be able to apply learning, then learning in the context of real problem-solving and decision-making is valuable because it is likely to be retained and used again. Such learning is also seen as being more flexible than the inert knowledge that is acquired as a result of more traditional didactic teaching methods (Burwood, 2006). Therefore, so that learning engenders independent capabilities and skills, including the independent acquisition of further skills and practices, this kind of learning is key. It is, therefore, less of a model concerned solely with comprehension of existing knowledge, but more the creation of knowledge and practices to be used in life and often in particular contexts.

In this section of the literature review, it has been argued that despite the traditional beliefs that knowledge is pre-existent (*a priori*) and independent of humans, and that ability to comprehend this is an *a priori* ability, what we take to be fully formed and absolute knowledge is in fact situated. Although knowledge may be collectively held, it is individually realised, and the way that is done is contingent on the individual's framework of existing knowledge, experience, values and needs for action. Because of this, what is held to be true is never reproduced as a carbon copy within the individual and never results in exactly replicated actions, but changes according to the variable that act upon the holder. It is in this difference that change and creativity may have the possibility of coming into being. In this way of understanding it, the development of knowledge is less a historical process, but perhaps an evolutionary one (see the discussion in the next section). It is a process where knowledge is not static once 'discovered', but changeable dependent upon what is acting upon it and how this affects how it is used in practice. The discussion begins to advance the argument that teaching should not be didactic but flexible and negotiated to make the most of what situated learning can offer, that is the adaption of knowledge to specialised or areas of practice and the creation of knowledge and practices in a meaningful way.

2.8. Learning as a creative process and the importance of independent thought and knowledge creation

The previous sections discussed knowledge and its formulation as being situated and dependent upon time, context, and being transitory and changeable. This section of the review, argues that the possibility of change comes through the localised nature of knowledge leading to significance for action in that context. Learning is the process through which change occurs, and change is the stimulant for learning. Because knowledge is situated and adapted for use in situated contexts over time, learning should be too (if it is to be as effective as it could be). This section begins with reviewing the literature that argues for knowledge as being embedded in practice and embodied by students in their developing identities and practices. It goes on to discuss how learning is a negotiated process. It looks at how a learner may accept or reject knowledge unconsciously and what they learn is determined by the student's unchallenged biases, beliefs/values or external influences, regardless of the intentions of the teacher. What the learner deems, rightly or wrongly, as relevant and worthy of retaining, in an uncritical or unsituated way of learning, may be based on these biases. Instead the argument is presented that learning can be deeply connected to the individual's 'personal being' or 'being in the world'. This can be enhanced through the embodiment of critically reflective practices that judge theory for and by its outcomes in use, further test it, and modify it in real-life practice. How learners form themselves and connect to the wider context and communities they operate within, and acquire and use knowledge and how they challenge pre-conceptions, can itself be used as the subject of critical enquiry. What they value and how they perceive themselves as people, or whom they want to become, is a valid focus for critical cognition and study. It acknowledges that as time goes on, and the horizon of information that the student is exposed to widens, the way they engage with learning and their personal life changes. This in itself is a valuable source of learning opportunity, in the development and creation of new knowledge and practices, and the development of independent and critical thought. It postulates that learning is closely connected with social agency, both what to learn and the motivation to learn it, and how to critically and independently

influence agendas and discourses that affect their lives and the communities they live and work in.

2.8.1. Knowledge as embedded in practices (collectively held – individually realised)

This notion, of knowledge as being embodied in the individual and embedded in practices as well as wider situations, mentioned at the end of the previous section, is supported by Burwood (2006). He made two points; the first one was that the principles of anything cannot be anything other than superficially learned if they are learned in isolation from practice. This chimes with Adorno's view that the notion of absolute knowledge independent of human experience is erroneous. For Burwood (2006), they remain sterile and an unproductive knowledge of maxims where all that is required is to learn them by rote and recall them at will. What this implies is that 'depth' of knowledge, and its utility, requires experience and application.

The second point Burwood (2006) makes is that abstract principles or precepts can be taught to provide only superficial knowledge and for it to be deeper, more is needed. As discussed earlier, claims that the notion of knowledge as 'de-contextualised precepts' can be transmitted in a meaningful and significant way to an 'unsituated subject', where the subject itself is treated as a de-contextualised precept, is wrong (Burwood 2006:120). Using the example of the subject of philosophy, he claims that teaching philosophy cannot be done by the tutor, it actually needs to be done by the learner, in the first stage through imitation. The student is not unsituated, but is in fact, 'dwelling in knowledge' (Burwood, 2006:124). Learners are not just absorbing facts and instructions from the tutor, but are observing the whole range of practices, body language, perceived significance and values of their tutor. Burwood claims successful tutors use themselves as a kind of aid to teaching. These practices become embodied in the student (becoming part of their being). This is a social process that happens in other social settings where individuals learn informally too (though perhaps less critically). Much of this knowledge is tacit. This principle of 'in-dwelling' or using embodying knowledge (knowledge as embedded in the learner's practices, values, agency and self-identity) has implications if abstracted from Burwood's educational

context and applied to individuals situated in the wider social world. It would mean that any individual is in fact situated in an incredibly complex network of experience, skills and values. Knowledge, then, as it comes to people, is accepted and used by people, and is passed on, is always more than can be said – it is also contained within mechanisms through which it is practised (Bhaskar 1986, MacIntyre 1984). Principles, precepts, and knowledge cannot be isolated, discrete or de-contextualised or remain complete and absolute. When they are embedded in an individual they are more than the sum of their parts and are changeable in their significance as the experience and values of the individual, and the environment they are in, develops or changes.

Nonaka (1994:15), while adopting a definition of knowledge as a 'justified true belief' (see Harré's (1983) 'true belief' earlier), also disagreed with the traditional notion of knowledge as associated with a truth that is absolute and unchanging, preferring the view that sees knowledge as dynamic.

'While the [traditional view] naturally emphasises the absolute, static, and nonhuman nature of knowledge, typically expressed in propositional forms in formal logic, the latter [non-traditional or post-modern view] sees knowledge as a dynamic human process of justifying personal beliefs as part of an aspiration for the "truth."'

Machlup (1983 cited by Nonaka 1994) states that there is a difference between information and knowledge. For Machlup, information is a flow of messages that may add to, restructure or change knowledge. Entities of information are therefore in dynamic relationships to each other, and the knowledge they yield is therefore dynamic.

Dretske (1981:44 cited by Nonaka 1994:15) argued that 'Information is that which is capable of yielding knowledge, and what information a signal carries is what we can learn from it.' However, it is not just a matter of an individual receiving messages and inferring from that information the only conclusion possible – the information received or held by any individual always differs. Knowledge is identified with information-produced (or sustained) belief, but the information a person receives is relative to what he or she already knows about the possibilities at the source (Dretske 1981 cited by Nonaka 1994:15). This means that the information the individual receives may result

in different significances (or none at all) than those of others, dependent on what they already know (experience) and in this lies the possibility for non-recognition of significance or the creation of new knowledge. Deep learning will therefore be an individual process.

The notion of knowledge as absolute and discrete, that it provides its own immediate grounding and contains its own significance and all-encompassing identity, as dialectical thinking postulates, was criticised even during the enlightenment period by Nietzsche (1984:103) in the following aphorism entitled '*Perfection* [absolute knowledge or truth] *said not to have evolved*':

'When something is perfect, we tend not to ask about its evolution, delighting rather in what is present, as if it has risen from the ground by magic. In this regard, we are probably still under the influence of ancient mythological sentiment.'

For Nietzsche, there can be 'neither a selfless act nor a completely disinterested observation' (p13). Facts and their significance are always grasped not through immediate intuition that then forms the foundation for a later complete knowledge, but always already in relation to the observer's pre-existing framework of knowledge and values – their experiences. This is why it was argued earlier that all learning is in effect negotiated, as it is never accepted in a disinterested way. Its significance for action is, therefore, multiple and contingent – knowledge is not passively obtained by the individual but actively created in the process of it being grasped in the light of existing interests and experience, and this is a time-and-space specific process.

2.9. Knowledge as lived experience – human agency and access to discourse

Burwood (2006) also saw meaning as something that cannot be codified or set apart as absolute, unchangeable, and existing independently of human minds. Facts and information may exist this way or not, but in any case, for Burwood, meaning comes about through immersion in a practice. This is an immersion in discourse where the multitudes of facts, skills and competencies, and information come together in time-and-location-specific situations to form a significance for action. Discourse is not just spoken but lived, and all of the connections internalised from that discourse, uniquely

in an individual, are what help to give meaning to the information. The meaning of things, then, is not just facts, but their relationships within discourse, making meaning changeable as the discourses or situations change. This means that individuals may contribute to discourse, and it is argued that they inevitably do, but access to discourse in this way is not straightforward.

Meaning, or significance it can be argued, can retain a duration in the individual and collective minds, giving it the illusion of immutable truth. Knowledge, according to Foucault (1972), is any discourse or any version of events that has received the stamp of truth. Foucault said that knowledge is power, but he did not mean that the more knowledge a person has, the more power the person has. Rather, power is inherent in knowledge, or knowledge has 'power implications', as power is exercised rather than possessed (Foucault, 1972). In this view, power is exercised by drawing on knowledge that allows actions to be presented in an acceptable light, or to define the world or a person in a way that allows things to be done (Ahl, 2008). Power in relation to meaning, is the power of it to endure by it being investing in, in the collective discourse. In other words, knowledge is attached to values that may be, at least in part, individual, or collective if they are to become dominant. In a non-critical learning environment, the learner may be influenced by this 'stamp of truth' and take it on without challenge, thus strengthening its durability as 'truth'.

Dominant discourses, therefore, can make 'truth' or something that appears to be it. Also, access to discourse (i.e. the ability to influence it or contribute to it) may also be controlled. It is argued by Foucault (1972) that universities are just one of a number of institutions which discipline their subjects in this way.

'For Foucault, power and knowledge are not external to each other, nor are they identical. Instead, they are intertwined in a correlative relationship, which is determined in its historical specificity. For power to operate, it needs to be grounded in knowledge about the things it operates on and in relation to. Knowledge of the subject is the basis for the operation of power and power defines what knowledge is legitimate' (Nicoll and Fejes, 2008, p. 14).

In this way dominant discourse can control what can be thought, and it can influence individual values and therefore what individuals accept as knowledge (or indeed as truth). Coupled with an uncritical investment in discourse as truth by individuals, this

makes discourse immensely powerful. In this sense, discourses are hierarchical – certain groups in the collective exercise power over discourses and cause meaning and beliefs to be credited because of the authority they lend it. Their stamp of truth gives it durability and slows creativity and changes down. All learners are immersed in these discourses, as are tutors, but what may be questionable is their ability to challenge or transform them effectively.

2.10. Personal being – knowledge as collectively held but individually realised and the implication for the development of the self and the collective

Harré (1983), in his book *Personal Being*, distinguishes between resources (knowledge) and action (practice). On the face of it, he argues, knowledge, though it may be collectively deployed and collectively stored, is individually realised – he argues that if knowledge is 'true belief', then individuals have similar beliefs rather than collectively identical ones (Harré, 1993). In this sense, knowledge is incomplete, though may be so similar between individuals that it appears to be complete (absolute for Hegel) and independent of any single knower. In other words, resources for practice or action, that is, knowledge which underlies a practice or action, or knowledge of the practice or action itself, may be derived from the collective/public spheres (see figure 3) but be embodied and interpreted in the private individual spheres, possibly re-emerging (published) into the public collective in a slightly different form dependent on how the individual is influenced to invest in or challenge it. In this sense, because knowledge can never be whole, the new practices and even the opportunity for creativity may be available, putting the individual and the collective in a constant tension between change and the durability of 'true belief' (knowledge) and practices. Practitioners are the co-creators of knowledge through their learning processes (which is also their process of forming their self-identities as social agents) – and if learners are transforming knowledge, even if they are heavily influenced or uncritical, this is perhaps the seed of growth for a more developed and critical learner.

Knowledge resources and practices are also judged and distributed hierarchically, as discussed. For instance, an apprentice may be instructed or coerced in the use of knowledge. Of course, throughout society, this may be the case where groups hold

some power over the distribution of knowledge, and the identification of knowledge as valid for practice (think of lecturers in this respect, but also of propagandists and advertisers). In other words, knowledge, and therefore the resultant practices, are influenced within the individual by social factors and power relationships. However, this is not a one-way street, as has been touched upon. Knowledge used in practice requires individual interpretation of the resources (knowledge) which underlie the practice, and the intention and investment on the part of individuals. In this way individuals are not only influenced by the collective but also invest in collective beliefs and practices, thus determining, collectively, the duration of those collective beliefs.

This movement is described in Harré's (1993) diagram (see figure 3 below where arrows represent the movement of knowledge). The individual appropriates conventional knowledge or practices for their needs. These are taken on according to the individual's values, which in turn are affected by collective values, also appropriated. They are then transformed, through differences in interpretation, adaption for similar (but not entirely the same) use, or because the individual values require that it is transformed in this respect, to fit a pre-existing value framework or to challenge dominant values/discourses. The individual uses their knowledge, thus publishing the knowledge, or practices which are based on knowledge in its adapted form. If there are sufficient bodies of people in the collective who witness and adopt similar knowledge or practices, then they will be conventionalised, to greater or lesser extents (this is a reflexive process called 'morphogenesis' by Archer 2016 and Centre Critical Realism Network 2016). In this way, the individual and collective are indivisible and operate inside of one another and structure is simultaneously a constrainer and an enabler of change (Giddens, 1984, Sewell, 1992). Other dichotomies are also called into question, such as the divide between knowledge and practice, belief and absolute knowledge and values and knowledge.

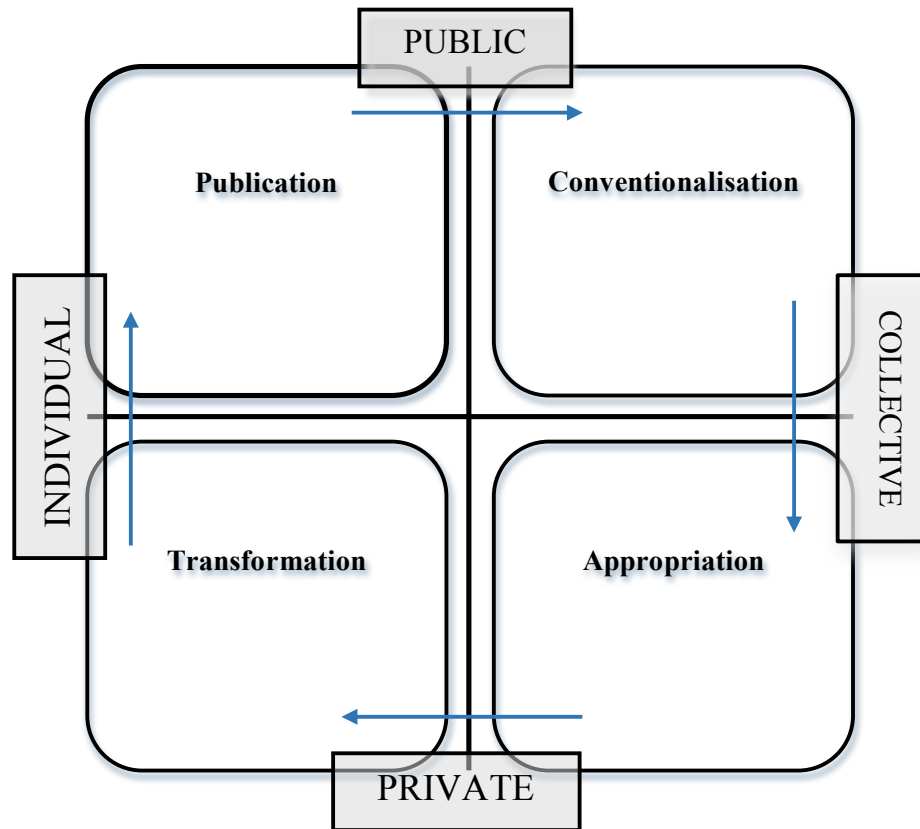


FIGURE 3: IDENTITY/KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT (HARRÉ, 1983)

The relationship of information (and its formulation into knowledge) to individuals' action, commitment and involvement in their own specific context, is what Polanyi calls 'tacit knowledge' (Polanyi 1966 cited in Nonaka 1994). This is part of knowledge, how it relates to and is reproduced by and taken on by individuals, that cannot easily be codified and conveyed. It is how knowledge 'indwells' in the body. Tacit knowledge, according to Nonaka (1994:16, citing Johnson-Laird 1983) is partly made up of cognitive elements which centre on what Johnson-Laird calls 'mental models', where individuals create working models in their minds based upon analogies. These models 'include schemata, paradigms, beliefs and viewpoints that provide "perspectives" that help individuals to perceive and define their world' (Nonaka 1994:16). This is the 'indwelling' tacit knowledge that shapes how individuals take on information and knowledge, and re-create it for themselves (which is in turn re-published). Nietzsche's (see section '2.8.1. Knowledge as embedded in practices' above) comment on disinterested observation is resonant here. This relation of information and knowledge to the individual's tacit knowledge, their 'image of reality and visions for the future' (Nonaka 1994:16), is central to the creation of new knowledge. If the creation of new

knowledge and practices are deemed to be an important aspect of a democratic society, then learning in a formal way must enable the individual to engage in these aspects in a critically reflective way.

2.11. The importance of the critical indwelling of knowledge and knowledge as social evolution

Knowledge and power, according to the preceding arguments, rest not solely on epistemics, but also on social arrangements. Knowledge, and the power that flows from it, is perpetuated by a network of elites whose members seek each other's professional recognitions, and who communicate knowledge through informal as well as formal communications, and recruit new talent appropriately (Kogan, 2005). One explanation of differing value and knowledge frameworks, and how they might be controlled, is given by Harré's (1983:48-50) argument, that knowledge and information are hierarchically organised and accessed along social lines,

'The human collective through which a body of knowledge is distributed might be a structured society, the persons making it up being ordered in some way. We would expect, then, if a corpus of knowledge were distributed through the collective and the collective were structured, that the corpus of knowledge should be treated as having a structure dependent on that order. If knowledge is socially organised, then the possibility of differential access has to be considered.'

Nonaka (1994, citing Eigan 1971 and Shimizu 1978) argues that in order for humans to make sense of information, there has to be a parameter in relation to it. The parameter here is some need, purpose or value, that enables a conclusion to be made from the information. Ultimately, this parameter would be survival, but on the more immediate level this could be to live well in some particular way, or to improve the particular circumstances in which the individual or others live. However, it is through the investment of the individual in the apparent truth of such matters, that discourses are maintained or 'indwelled' within the individuals who make up the collective. Individuals, therefore, cannot make sense of information without a framework for making value judgements. Dominant values and discourses may be 'in-dwelled' but not necessarily challenged or critically validated by all, and these may 'colour' the way

information is seen and acted upon (see Figure 4 that shows the learner as situated within a range of social influences, concerns and interests).

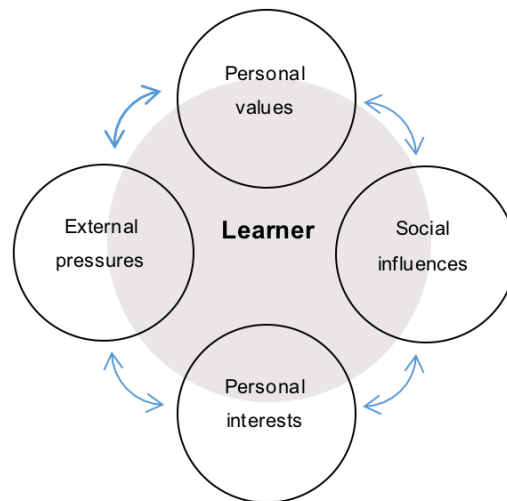


FIGURE 4: THE LEARNER AS A SITUATED SUBJECT (THESIS AUTHOR'S DIAGRAM)

Alternatively, Sewell suggests that resources, the material or other things that allow action, come from structure (structure being the social norms that make up collective practices) but also reproduce structure. People act in accordance with structure and produce resources (the results of those actions) which reproduce and re-establish the structure. Bourdieu (1977, 1990) calls the internalising and embodiment of structure and the practice that result 'habitus'. Structure therefore has a duality – but as Giddens (1976:161) argues: 'structures must not be conceptualised as simply placing constraints on human agency, but as enabling.' Structure and the rules it contains, it may be imagined, constrain agency, and therefore innovation and change. It is this that this thesis argues was the 'cruel' aspect of an epistemology-based link to an ontology where existence was absolute and the method of arriving at that knowledge could only rationally arrive at a metaphysical concept identical with the 'real world' one. From this arises a 'chicken and egg problem' - what comes first, the ontological existence or the knowledge of it. An *a priori* ability to comprehend existence forms the foundation of the absolute knowledge which is identical with it. This for Bhaskar (1986) is actually no more than sense perception, and for this thesis abstract metaphysical knowledge would result in a belief system equivalent to religion because it excludes evidence outside of the mind (except for little more than sense perception) and the

systematic thought procedure produces a rigid structure which cannot be diverged from, thus closing down practice possibilities.

Sewell develops the potential of Giddens's argument that if structure enables actions, all be it constrained, it might also enable innovations. That change occurs to social structures and modes of acceptable behaviour is a matter of historical record, so at least some form of agency is possible. A static method of arriving at knowledge, or a static culture, or a static social structure has never been achieved in reality, though many have tried, and is also a matter of historical record. Therefore, it seems reasonable that Nietzsche, Adorno, Heidegger, Foucault, Giddens, Sewell (just to mention those referred to in this thesis) have sought for a way to make structure less rigid and cruel and these have been based on developing new epistemologies and approaches to ontology. Apparent in their writings to varying degrees in that they were not searching for pure constructivist or relativist positions, or revolutionary binaries, but were looking for ways to incorporate change, creativity, fairer distributions of power into social discourses without catastrophic and polar change or anarchy or chaos – multiple discourses are good – but not any discourse.

Knowledge practice is closely associated with identity (and in this respect it acquires duration both individually and collectively). As Polanyi (2009) states, in order for it to come into existence, it requires commitment so that knowledge within the individual is based upon, and affirms, the individual's values. This is not to say that as a result of the process of knowledge creation the individual cannot change, but they must invest in that change. Heidegger (2002) similarly argues that individual identity is constantly in flux due to a tension between the individual's will to maintain identity and also to be different. This he framed as the tension between 'Being or becoming (p.145)'. He also described this tension as 'The *egō* tarry[ing] with the horizon of unconcealment' (Heidegger, 1977:145). It means that the individual stays a while, achieves belonging or selfhood, and therefore does not challenge the knowledge, which if it were changed or adapted, would challenge the existing values and therefore the security of the self-identity. Change only comes about through perceived need.

Heidegger (1977) writes about the changeability of truth, but that it also has a duration. Possibilities of change come from concealed possibilities being revealed when a

change, or opening in circumstances, allows them to come into being. The ego, tarrying as it is on the horizon of unconcealment, may be challenged. This bringing forward of possibilities into reality in a new set of circumstances Heidegger (1977, p. 197) calls a 'challenging-forth',

'That challenging happens in that the energy concealed... is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is in turn distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew. Unlocking, transforming, distributing and switching about are ways of revealing. But the revealing never simply comes to an end. Neither does it simply run off into the indeterminate'.

Knowledge is always in a tension between its identity (sameness in all instances) and its difference (in varying contexts). Likewise, people, and learners, are in a tension between being something, and becoming new. The tutor, can facilitate revealing by helping the learner to see the possibilities, and to help them respond to the 'challenging forth' in a critically reflective way.

This ongoing development is reminiscent of Harré's (1983) cycle (Figure 3), where the individual is in relation to the collective and the private to the public and knowledge formation goes through many changes as each of them has an influence. The changing collective environment creates a need within the individual to solve a problem. If the new practice that is invented to solve the problem is published by the individual, and is then conventionalised into the collective and further internalised by individuals, during all of these stages it will undergo change. This describes the tension in the relationship between individuals and the collective. People are conforming, but also challenging and changing collective practices, either deliberately or less consciously. Nonetheless, change is always springing from the difference between collectively held ideas and practices and those held by individuals, both influencing each other.

In this respect, learning, or knowledge production and creation, can be seen as evolutionary. Nonaka (1994) cites Eigen's (1971) theory, that evolution means the acquisition of information for better adaption. Knowledge, it could be argued, is created, re-produced or adapted, in order for humans to better adapt to their environment, or to adapt the environment to themselves, and ultimately to survive.

However, it can also be used to maintain dominant discourses and the status quo (to influence others' actions and practices) which can run counter to survival (and survival, it could be argued, is not merely just to exist but to live in a fulfilling way). Harré (1993:50) argues knowledge should be more usefully thought of as 'mental states' and 'behavioural dispositions'. Knowledge is an 'active' process, and it does not passively stand outside of individuals and social systems (Harré 1983:49). It involves an active participation on the part of the individual, in what Harré (1993:49) calls their 'moral understanding' of a matter (bearing in mind that all individuals' knowledge and value frameworks may differ). The individual is required to commit to the knowledge as a belief. Collectively, this can help to explain the duration of 'truth', its duration being governed by the size of the critical masses which are influenced in some way to invest in, or challenge, any item of 'true belief' or knowledge. It also begins to shed light on the way students learn, effectively making all learning negotiated and to some extent, knowledge creation. In order to make survival a more likely outcome, how students critically take on information and create knowledge to see more objectively what their best interests are, and how tutors facilitate learning, is crucial both to education and to how knowledge evolves socially as power and fulfilment are distributed equitably.

The process of knowledge developing through the appropriation of conventional knowledge, and then its re-publication in response to changing circumstances, whereupon it can become conventionalised again, can be seen as evolutionary. Nonaka (1994) cited Eigen's (1971) theory that evolution means the acquisition of information for better adaption. Knowledge, Nonaka and Eigen argue, is created, reproduced or adapted in order for humans to better adapt to their environment and ultimately to survive. This is not just about mere survival, but also about better adaption which, it could be argued, is the ability to live well and in fulfilment – the latter indeed, perceived as a need for which adaption is required.

Bateson (2000) points out that evolutionary theory concerns genetics and holds genetic variation to be random in the first instance. However, when connected with natural selection, it can give direction to collective changes, making some changes lead to success, and others to failure and non-repetition. In other words, over many years, adaption to the environment occurs by the selection (the success of) certain organisms with advantageous variations. Any proposed equation of learning theory or

knowledge creation, to evolutionary theory, has been controversial (Bateson, 2000), because of the notion that learning would be reduced to merely acquired characteristics. However, this has been challenged and developed upon, by other theorists starting here, with Butler.

Butler (cited in Bateson, 2000) equates knowledge creation to hereditary memory. He argues that the phenomenon of invention is close to the phenomenon of heredity, in that newer inventions' adaptive behaviours eventually become habit and sink deeper and deeper into the organism, becoming less and less conscious, and less and less under voluntary control. He even went so far as to assume that this process could go even to the depth of becoming embedded in the chromosomes, to form the genotype of individuals. Whether or not this is true at the level of chromosomes, the adaption of individual behaviour, itself an adaption of collective behaviour to fit a changing environment, then goes on to influence collective behaviour. That in turn may cause changes in the environment, and so influence further physical environmental and cognitive adaptations. This seems to show a relationship between learning and evolution, making evolution seem less accidental on one level, and placing cognitive development, practice and knowledge creation and learning as part of the evolutionary process, a process described in Harré's (1983) diagram. As we have seen, Nonaka (1994, citing Eigan 1971 and Shimizu 1978) argued that in order for humans to make sense of information, there has to be a parameter (some need, purpose or value that enables a conclusion to be made from the information) in relation to it. This is the tacit dimension to knowledge creation; the intention and commitment of the knowledge-creating subject. As Nonaka argued, this intention related to how individuals form their approach to the world and try to make sense of their environment. The environment (or environments) provides the context (or contexts) in which knowledge creation takes place. How individuals relate to their context is to do with their existing values, variety of experience, desires and needs. Invention is a deliberate learning process involving research, reflection and testing, and the quality of it is dependent upon these learning processes. And the quality of it may affect its outcome.

Changes, despite the values which might be held by individuals that may appear, at least on the surface, to reject the want for change, happen inevitably. An external dimension to the individuals' commitment to create knowledge [learn], is that the

external environment fluctuates (Nonaka 1994). Changes to the environment may cause discontinuity, chaos or upheaval which in turn may provide opportunities for individuals to re-assess and to re-align the values that drive their commitment and intentions. This has a transformative effect on the individual, and in turn, the collective to a lesser or greater extent. Fluctuations are the changes that occur in the external world (chaos and discontinuity) that change how individuals interact with it. 'Individuals create their own systems of knowledge to take account of ambiguity, redundancy, noise or randomness' (Nonaka 1994:18) generated by their environment. Fluctuations in the environment and the patterns of reactions of individuals to it, and therefore the new knowledge and practices that are created, are hard to predict, according to Nonaka (1994). This is because individual values, commitment and knowledge vary, and so the reaction of individuals to changes in the environment, and the new ways of thinking and acting that they generate, are not the same for each person – not absolute or universal. This means that the path of evolutionary knowledge is not fatalistic or directed. Chaos and discontinuity give the opportunity for individuals to re-assess their relationship to the world, their values, habits and tools, which cause a realignment. In this way new knowledge is created which may take on a wider significance in the wider social context – equating learning again with knowledge creation. Therefore, the importance of highly educated and skilled people is evident, as a productive, creative, and equitable society relies on their learning and hence their actions.

In the theory that resulted in Harré's (1983) diagram, 'People and their modes of talk are made by, and for, social orders, and social orders are people in conversation' (Harré 1983:65). He argued for an understanding of this relationship as 'a thorough going reciprocity between the social and the personal'. Harré is arguing here that the relationship is not hierarchical but affects each other. Perhaps he leaves out the relationship of the physical environment to this too, but it illustrates how the environment individuals find themselves in, can fluctuate because of the effect individuals have on it, which then causes a readjustment of individuals to it, which causes a change in the environment and so-on. Changes to the physical environment brought about by human activity, also cause readjustment (and the creation of knowledge). This is what learning is all about and for, and requires criticality and reflection in individuals for it to be as successful as possible.

The aim of this section was to explore how learning can be equated with knowledge as created within situations, and for situated reasons. Its nature and creation was discussed, in order to distil from it implications for the practice of Higher Education (and eventually to provide a foundation for the teaching practices employed in the APS programmes, the effectiveness of which will be the object of the thesis). Information, it was argued, is data plus meaning, that enables some distinction between entities. Knowledge, it was argued, is a more developed form of this, where information comes together in patterns and can form a greater significance enabling some form of action. Knowledge as absolute and discrete, and the building blocks of history and progress, was challenged, not least because progress has not really manifested itself in history in a way that could be construed as a positive progress. Though the movement away from 'rationally' produced chunks of discrete knowledge began before, since the Second World War, and as a result of it, a more complex approach to understanding knowledge has developed.

The previous section of the review placed knowledge creation in a situational context, situated in the learner, and in the learner's wider situation. Both the learner and their social context provide variables on how existing information is taken on board by the individual and its significance for action is realised. Through various thinkers and across disciplines, knowledge has come to be seen as less certain and more dynamic in nature, and may no longer lend itself to a mathematical 'building block' approach to teaching or the lecturing of abstract principles or ideas. The division between practice and theory has lessened or even been replaced with the notion of knowing subjects in-dwelling in knowledge and that knowledge being based on and situated within complex individual and collective experiences, practices and values, often tacit. All of these variables are developmental and transient, sometimes with collective durability but always transforming and sometimes decaying away. Harré's and Burwood's argument concerning the learner undergoing a transformation, an 'identity project', implies the heavy involvement of values (albeit sourced or adapted from the collective) in what the individual accepts as significant (i.e. as knowledge rather than information) and the way in which it manifests itself in individuals and in their published practices. These in turn transform the collective and so the cycle continues. Because of the many variables in how information becomes embedded within an individual and acquires its significance, all learning, it has been suggested, is knowledge creation. It is through

the flow of these mutations from individuals into the collective and back again that knowledge develops. It was argued that knowledge is therefore a process of evolution, and evolution is based upon viability. The next section will argue that for the health of the individual and the health of society, the learner must become a critical being in the way that they validate their knowledge and practices, becoming aware of their own situations and what is acting upon them in the way they develop their identities as social agents.

2.12. Critical Being – the student as an identity project and the will to learn

The previous section discussed the situated nature of knowledge creation, and equated knowledge creation to learning. That is, that learning is not just a passive process but an active one contingent upon the individual and their social and environmental situations, which result in significances and practices in some small way special to that context. This is because all learning is dependent on the learner's existing experience and knowledge, and is influenced by their needs and values. These are in turn situated in their social environment (their developing selves as social agents). This can give us insight into why learners want to learn and why, or why not, they may be committed to their learning. This section will review arguments that learning is deeply connected with personal being and being in the world – the learner's developing self as a social agent- and that this is the key to understanding the learner's will to learn. It will discuss how learners can be supported in this way and how this philosophy underpins APS. This will be in preparation, in the following section, for a review of how Applied Professional Studies supports learning.

2.12.1. Values, autonomy and commitment to learning

Individual commitment is closely associated with the need for individual autonomy. According to Polanyi (1974:308), 'a person asserts his rational independence by obeying the dictates of his own conscience, that is, of obligations laid down for himself by himself.' This could give us insight as to why many students choose to study, and have the will to carry it through.

Individual commitment may not be rational and may be based on tacit understandings of the world by the student. Barnett (2007), claims there is a fundamental difference between motivation for study and the 'will' to study. Motives, for him, are rational and have an end and may be coerced or influenced. Motives call upon the intellect to give a reason for learning. 'Will', for Barnett however, may be irrational and not necessarily connected to the intellect. Whereas the motive may be external to the person, the will is situated within the person and may be more general in nature, and be connected to personal drives, or the way an individual wishes to see themselves as being in the world. The motive may be particular, and more importantly instrumental, but the will, may be connected to internal drives and urges, and may be inarticulate or not understood, and may be for its own sake. It may be about simply 'being', and more often than not, being *something* (see Heidegger in the previous section) which is a vital thing in itself. This might produce creativity, and non-instrumental/systematic thinking, and is centrally valuable in this respect. It also gives the beginning of a distinction between negotiated learning and simple work-related learning.

Polanyi (1974:270) argues that Kant's, and perhaps even the whole of the Enlightenment's, wish for 'an incontestable estate of reason' was not realised. However, the urge to 'doubt', or to take a critical approach to life, has lived on, though Polanyi is critical of how this often manifests itself in thought. He argues that people who refuse to believe in anything that has doubt attached to it, are misleading themselves into believing that what they see as 'truth', i.e. that without doubt, is in fact based upon complete and absolute foundations. However, what seems to make someone believe in something is not so much that it is without doubt, but that there is an urge of commitment on the part of the believer. Perhaps critical thinking lies not only in the critical examination of the foundations for 'truth' or knowledge, but also in an individual's commitment to it – *why* she/he are committed to it. This locates knowledge and its justification within the individual and its relationship to the wider world and makes the critical examination more holistic. It places a larger emphasis on the consequences of actions, rather than just the foundation upon which the knowledge that leads to the action is based.

So, if there is not such a thing as a disinterested observation or commitment to knowledge on the part of the learner, likewise, the notion of education as an objective

and value-free enterprise is therefore also a false one. According to Barrow (1999:137),

'the fact remains that education is a value-loaded business: working out what is educationally relevant remains, in any theory (including an extreme subjectivist one), partially and crucially a matter of working out what are our educational values: What is worth studying, given that we, as human beings, value generally, and what we think it is to be human? Probably most of us do value the idea of caring and critical adults, but the important question now becomes what do we want them to care and be critical about? Only those who sincerely believe, not that different people do have many different subsidiary values, but that it does not matter what people value, can avoid this question.'

This appears to be privileging the tutor again, placing him or her in the position of educating people in what we believe should be valuable to them. However, the alternative reading of this could be that what educators can help learners embody is a critical approach to what *they* choose to value and what learning *they* choose to pursue.

Barnett (2007) talks about persistence or commitment to the student's 'becoming' (also we discussed Heidegger's (2002) notion of this, briefly in the earlier section). Commitment for him, is central to HE and the student's staying the course, and this is tied up with their need to identify and to be different (what Heidegger (2002) called being and becoming). For Barnett (2007) that commitment is an investment, but much more than just an instrumental calculation of investment against risk and return (presumably if the student is committed more than just on an instrumental level). In this sense the student's commitment is based on their 'ethical qualities' (Barnett, 2007:49), not only their integrity and courage in expressing themselves in thoughts and actions but also to 'press' themselves. They are not permitted to merely repeat, but be sincere in judgement – to become the person that they are ethically committed to being is not just a matter of identifying with something but also being critically aware of the person they are becoming.

The criticality of the 'becoming' is important. A student may be opinionated (as Barnett (2007:50) puts it, 'saturated in their own world' to the point that they exclude other

standpoints, or self-indulgent in that they do not engage with other views (Barnett, 2007). In such students, if they cannot be helped to develop critical skills, the potential for their commitment (i.e. what can usefully come of it) is lost. A lack of intellectual capital, perhaps more especially in those that have no other forms of capital, equals a lack of social agency.

For Barnett (2007), to commit to learning is to reach for freedom (autonomy), and this makes it authentic because it is sincere, and in and of the student – they own it. It is what makes them; they are breaking their own mould and fashioning new people who have at the same time, social value. Barnett also frames this person as being 'authentically uncertain' – uncertain because they must continuously reflect on themselves, their values and the validity of their existing knowledge and practices, to ensure that what they become can be ethically argued for. Therefore, learning is central to the student's very self-being and their social being (though the two cannot be that easily distinguished).

Knowledge is organised by the flow of information and takes hold in the individual by becoming 'anchored' in their pre-existing 'commitments and beliefs' (Nonaka, 1994:15). This taking on of 'knowledge', relies on these conditions and helps explain why students 'don't seem to get it', or why they discard information or knowledge, or why they develop or adapt information. Therefore, this could give us insight into why students disengage, engage, or even become creative, in their learning. It also promotes the need for authentic uncertainty where students can challenge their values and knowledge to enable them to move on.

Therefore, the role of education is to allow people to think, to have knowledge and to use it, in other words to access all discourses, to acquire the knowledge critically and to be able to think independently. However, as Foucault (1972:351) pointed out:

'Education may well be, as of right, the instrument whereby every individual, in a society like our own, can gain access to any kind of discourse. But we well know that in its distribution, in what it permits and in what it prevents, it follows the well-trodden battle-lines of social class and the powers it carries with it.'

Discourses are not as free and uncontrolled as they might appear to be, and act as frameworks that govern what can be admitted to the dialogue, acting as disciplinary formations rather than freely discursive ones. This is why student ownership of learning and dialogue which is based on critical examination of knowledge, and critical reflection on practice, its foundation and formation, along with its uses and consequences, is paramount. It is directly connected to responsibility, independence and motivation, because it is so closely associated with empowerment.

However, constant critical reflection on discourses and social structures does not come without hazard and part of the ontological dimension of reflection is strong reflection on the learner's part on their own position in those structures and the consequences to themselves of the changes in mind and action that the reflection brings about. This must form part of the critical criteria for reflection. According to Brookfield (1994), learners undergoing critical reflection may experience strong feelings of dissonance as they develop knowledge and practice standpoints that differ from social structural norms which they may have previously taken for granted (and this thesis also holds that good critical learning will by its nature produce this). This can result in an existential crisis where the learner can suffer from a range of isolating feelings ranging from feeling like an imposter through the loss of innocence, to feelings of ambiguity engendering a desire to return to conservative safe ground (Brookfield, 1994). Brookfield (1994) argues that critical reflection must also contain an element of restructuring – those that survived these emotions did so because of a dialogue with others who had experienced and understood the same sorts of dissonance (Brookfield, 1994). This dialogue was not to do with resolving or reconciling newly formed relationships with the world but with managing or coping with them in a way that was viable to the learner and their social and worldly relationships. Although critical reflection bears the mark of independent learning and autonomy, this does not negate the interdependent nature of the things that make up the material and social world, and for human individuals critical reflection must involve careful consideration of the way they are in the world and the role of the tutor as facilitator and as part of the dialogic process which is discussed later in the literature review).

2.13. Knowledge creation and autonomy

Knowledge creation is related to action. Gruber (1989, cited by Nonaka 1994) talks about 'strategic knowledge' that guides actions and the development of tools to acquire it. (This thinking has come about in relation to artificial intelligence). This hints at knowledge being in relationship to the strategy by which individuals live their life. It has been argued that all learning is knowledge creation, the taking on of information and the coming to of conclusions in relation to an individual's commitment and belief. This gives lecturers a clue as to the actions of their students, why they take up information, ignore it, or understand or not understand the significance of it, as the tutor might understand it. It is subjective and 'deeply rooted in the value systems of individuals' (Nonaka, 1994:16). This further implies that all learning is 'negotiated' regardless of the intentions of the tutor.

In line with Polanyi's claim that we know more than we can say, Bateson (2000) argues that human language has not replaced other, often considered more primitive, forms of communication which are employed by animals etc. We have, instead, evolved these alongside language into complex forms, such as music, art, visual movements and body language which operate alongside worded messages. 'The logician's dream that men should communicate only by unambiguous digital signals has not come true and is unlikely to do so' (Bateson, 2000:418). In a rather nice example, a girl listening to a boy tell her he loves her, would be sensible to take note of his non-verbal communications, as much as, if not more than, his verbal message. Every lecturer knows that it is often impossible to communicate complex feedback, say on writing styles, point making, or another complex academic issue, via a phone call or email, preferring to meet with students face to face. Many students must have at some point, received written feedback and have misunderstood that feedback. They may have been confused or even upset, not been able to understand something in the feedback without the lecturer physically showing them or being able to draw on other sources of information to make comparisons or connections and demonstrate relevance of something in relation to something else. Passing messages may not be easily done in written or even spoken language, without other forms of communication. And this is even without the consideration of how learners interpret messages and the information within is coloured by their own pre-existing experience and values.

Boud and Solomon (2008) argue that knowledge and how learning happens cannot be divided as opposing 'facets', and that one aspect should not be privileged over another. This, therefore, calls for a repositioning of the lecturer's (and university's) role, and a reassessment of identities of the lecturer and learner and what counts as knowledge. Barrow (1999:131) argues that there is a questionable divide between what he calls the 'intellectual' and the 'banalistic' (the practical and considered mundane or not elevated to intellectual levels), dating back to Plato. He thinks that there ought to be an earnest debate as to how authentic the division is, or the relative value of one over the other. Learning and knowledge creation are indivisible because they are so connected to practice and in practice are contingent on the context within which the learner finds her or himself. It is also driven by his or her need to become a person who can act.

In the context of situated WBL, based as it is in practice, it is important to understand that it does include knowledge creation and is not merely about the application of knowledge. Gibbons *et al* (1994 and also revisited in Nowotny *et al*, 2001) considered knowledge to be either Mode 1, relating to the customary view of disciplinary knowledge where knowledge is institutionalised within universities and is abstract, or Mode 2 where knowledge is trans-disciplinary, produced in wider social and economic situations and functions within the context of application. On one level this distinction is useful in that it refers to knowledge creation, practice, and situations and sees knowledge as embedded in ways of being (thus closing the gap between epistemology and ontology). What is especially unhelpful about this division of the two types of learning is that it assumes that Mode 1 knowledge has no role in application or practice and ways of being however slight that might be. Furthermore, it divorces WBL and other practice-related learning from the institution suggesting that disciplinary learning may have implications for Mode 2 (which is cross disciplinary) but that Mode 2 is exclusively in the domain of 'vocational learning' and cannot play a part in the learning institution itself (Major 2001). This runs the risk of making a hierarchy and alienation of the two types of knowledge whereas they are perhaps variations of the same thing. Whilst the argument that runs through this thesis (and that is especially evident in the discussion and findings of the study that situates learning in ongoing studies in the workplace) is that in-depth learning also happens outside of the learning institution; it

does not argue that the institution does not or cannot play a foundational role in that learning.

According to Major (2003),

'The 'theory' implicit in any 'application' may be considered as a pre-investment of knowledge but, nevertheless, the theory is integral to the process of application and cannot be divorced from it. On this ground it could be argued that applied knowledge is a more advanced form of knowledge than pure theoretical knowledge, in that it is a demonstration of the absorption of theory in practice. However, it could also be argued that, through application, the knowledge itself is developed and enhanced. (The view that knowledge is somehow degraded or diminished as a result of application is not only outmoded but totally unacceptable and clearly fallacious. Outmoded, too, is the view that knowledge-in-application is somehow of a different status or order to knowledge in abstract thought.)'

Instead of separating Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge, this thesis agrees with Major (2003) in that knowledge and practice creation may lie at the intersection of these two categories, making them less categorical and perhaps more a spectrum, a range of levels of knowledge that may take their place in supporting the critical reflective stages – for action, in action and on action and round again in a continual development of knowledge which does not privilege theory above practice or *vice versa*, but acknowledges their mutual value to the further creation of knowledge and practices.

However, creativity can be sticky as a concept. According to Barrow (1999), creativity is often aligned with the word relevance. In other words, what is creative, can only be seen as such when it has significance. However, Barrow argues that we should be asking also asking whom it is relevant to. Again, this highlights the value of both modes of knowledge in the creation of critical being and critical acting (social agency). This again raises the question of who is entitled to be the judge of that, and traditionally it is the educator. An argument for negotiated forms of study is that it can be the student who judges this – the role of the tutor here is to help the student embody the know-how of how to judge it critically and to argue and articulate it effectively. In this way, their creativity and autonomy is valued.

2.14. Knowledge – the ability to be and to act – the importance of relevance

Studies show that the relationship between theory and practice is important to learners. Kember, Ho and Hong (2008) discuss the demotivating effect of abstract learning. In their study, they received comments from participants about not liking abstract theory on a course that was taught wholly by theory. This was because, they argued, it was too abstract or did not elicit actual purposes that enabled the students to create a way of acting or being in the world. Likewise, they saw that students felt it difficult to frame questions about abstract theory, to make it more understandable, because of a lack of prior knowledge. This made it hard to get any grasp on the problem. They further claimed that silence was often the outcome rather than risking inappropriate or stupid questions. Therefore, the learning was less effective than it could have been, on a number of levels, to do with engagement.

Kember, Ho and Hong's (2008) study participants, all HE students, claimed to prefer to be able to apply theory to real-life situations. This made the relevance of the theory more visible (which was liked) and also enabled some room for creativity, which also went down well with their respondents. Even the relations of theory to the tutor's experience, was deemed more engaging than the purely abstract. One interesting comment was made by a maths student who said that they had to memorise certain maths procedures. They thought it doubtful that those who did not use these skills in everyday life would remember them, or that they were even very useful to them after being learned. The learners' commitment to what they were learning seemed to suffer here.

Burwood (2006) states that the still common view of the learner (or of the 'self') is that of what Heidegger describes as the 'worldless I' or the 'idealised absolute subject', that has no more than an uncritical 'surveying glance', merely totting up external truths (if they bother at all). Truth, in this model, is absolute and without change, and exists as part of a total reality which the subject must observe, uncover and absorb. According to Burwood (2006) this model has a long history, from the ancient Greek, to modern liberal notions of abstract individualism. Kember, Ho and Hong's study (2008)

indicates that learners need not be ontologically alienated from their learning, but can connect with an urge to improve themselves as life practitioners.

This is recognition of the learner's alternative role as a knowledge and discourse creator, as already discussed, but also with the added aspect of being able to create knowledge with an un-alienated significance to themselves. This is connected to what Barnett (2007) calls the 'will to learn'. As noted earlier, he claims there is a fundamental difference between motivation and the 'will' to study. Recognising the will to learn, also recognises individual identities and the connection of learning to them, and the aspect of learning and knowledge which is connected to individual identity and self-fulfilment. It also recognises an underlying uncertainty in the student's drive to learn, and the values which shape what the learner considers to be valid knowledge. This, incidentally, is also mirrored in the uncertainty in the status of absolute knowledge – in the tension between individual being and the wider belonging, without subordinating either to the other.

2.15. Identity and difference – learning as personal being and collective belonging and the commitment to both

Anderson, Boud and Sampson (1998) argued that students need to be able to negotiate their learning to ensure that it is relevant to their world situations. In being able to negotiate their learning and take charge of it, they would likely engage and take ownership of it to a higher degree. The notion of ownership was important to their students, who have been able to negotiate their learning. Typical comments from their study were (Anderson, Boud, and Sampson, 1998:80):

- "It's your idea, you have ownership of the experience"
- "The greatest advantage to me is the way the course is relevant to you and your own situation;"
- "You are meeting your own needs and in this way the course is more relevant to you;"
- "I am able to learn in depth about a particular area of study I am interested in;"
- "For me, this is where the real learning takes place. If the topic is relevant and I need to know it, I really learn;"
- "It is certainly the best way of completing any course. I found most of the traditional essay/exams I have done on other courses totally irrelevant"

to the real world. All the [negotiated learning] contracts have been interesting and have built into a useful resource, not only for now but also in the future;"

- "The real learning starts at the end of the course when you embark on a lifetime of self-directed learning using the skills and confidence acquired here. It's not the teacher's achievement, it's your own!"

The above is compelling evidence that from these learners' points of view, ownership and relevance of learning to the real world and also in the developing of themselves as capable people with real world skills, and with social and intellectual capital, is important.

Acknowledging the situated nature of the student, acknowledges their role in the real world, making critical and relevant independent learning a valuable social project. Nonaka (1994:14) exemplifies the role of the individual within the collective, at the level of the organisation. Knowledge creation for him, is the result of continuous dialogue between 'tacit' personal knowledge and explicit collective knowledge, that which is in the public sphere; though the creation of knowledge may be the work of the individual, the organisation has a role of 'amplifying' it. This reminds us of Harré (1983) and his diagram of knowledge/identity development (Figure 3), and the movement of ideas from the collective, through the individual and its publication back into the collective known as conventionalisation. It also chimes with Heidegger's ideas of becoming and belonging, where there is a tension between the drive for autonomy and the will to operate and to identify as part of a collective, where both the individual and the collective rely on each other to produce change. This happens, it seems, in the university, the workplace and society at large and seems to happen regardless of other understandings of the individual or collective knowledge process.

Boud and Solomon (2008) argue that knowledge and learning cannot be divided into opposing 'facets' and that one aspect should not be privileged over another. This is because the significance (the ability to allow for action) of facts, which are in a particular relationship and context, is always slightly different each time it is reproduced in another person. Knowledge, which the author holds to be fact/information plus significance for action, is always recast anew, meaning that knowledge develops, rather than being static and true for all instances. It is always in a battle of identity and difference. Therefore, learning and knowledge creation are not divisible, and likewise, a critically aware student is also aware that they, as an item of

knowledge themselves, are also in a battle of identity and difference, of becoming and belonging. All learning, for it to be fully engaged with, must be seen in the context of the learner's life and practices. The learner's will and motivation for learning are contingent upon the relevance of the learning to the person they are, and the person they want to become, which is in turn affected by what they learn.

Archer (2016a) claims reflexivity is vital to society. Reflexivity is the process through which people make decisions about how to act or how to be in life. The resultant practices fold back on the structures that enable them and are changed too (the process described in Harré's (1983) diagram). Without it, she claims, society cannot negotiate its way through problems of conflicting interests – without reflexivity society is left with subjects being merely pulled by structural constraints or by enablers. However, for Archer (2016a) agency is left out of the question, it merely being a matter of which pulls the hardest. By agency Archer does not necessarily mean 'critical agency' but she is claiming that agency, the individual making decisions good or bad, is part of the process of social reproduction or social change.

Individual being and agency are often left out of academic discourse, and the role of knowledge creation (see earlier sections) as abstract and mind situated have enabled this. According to Sewell, 1992:2), 'Structures tend to appear in social scientific discourse as impervious to human agency, to exist apart from, but nevertheless to determine the essential shape of, the strivings and motivated transactions that constitute the experienced surface of social life'. Archer (cited in Critical Realism Network, 2016b) argues that structural 'social forms are only influential through people's actions' and are also changed by them. This process she calls 'morphogenesis' whereby the structure provides the constrictions on and enablers of change and is in turn itself changed through the resultant actions and resources created as a result of that action (it should be noted that this is a material as well as social process, or to be more exact, a socio-material process). Agency is part of this and is central to the reflexive movement individuals, knowledge and practices make in the Harrés (1983) model – individuals are inseparable from the collective and in developing collective behaviours.

Nonaka (1994) also claims that knowledge and practice creation has this ontological dimension. Organisations (Nonaka was writing about organisations but it seems this could equally be relevant to societies) cannot create knowledge or practices without individuals. Good knowledge creation means that individuals must be supported. By default, the organisation provides the context for that knowledge production. 'Organisational knowledge creation, therefore, should be understood in terms of a process that 'organisationally' amplifies the knowledge created by individuals, and crystallises it as part of the knowledge network of the organisation' (Nonaka, 1994:17). The role of negotiated study is wide – to encourage students to use the context of their organisation and improve their practices. By helping students to publish those practices in well-argued and critically thought out ways, it will have the knock-on effect of the organisation (or other communities of practice) bringing this into their knowledge base and practices.

Nonaka (1994) also differentiates the cognitive elements of tacit knowledge from the technical. The technical side of tacit thinking is to do with the skills and crafts associated with specific contexts. This is very much a central role of the tutor, to somehow convey the skills of critical reflection and reflexive practice, expression and organisational skills, associated with academic work and useful to work-life. Some of this can be codified but much of it has to be learned through 'indwelling'. Therefore, practice is paramount – learning at its most powerful is learning that is lived.

The learner, therefore, is a knowledge creator. The most fundamental form of learning that they are undergoing (though perhaps implicitly) is learning about themselves. Through learning, the students are developing their sense of self, what it means to be an individual and, at the same time, what it means to belong to various communities and society as a whole. Regardless of any formal teaching, most individuals are committed to creating themselves – they have a will to become. Whether or not this is consciously or critically done, is another matter. For education to be of value, it must recognise that criticality is not just objectivity in a dry theoretical and unemotional sense, but also connected to the learner's will to *be*. While practical experience may be gained through unsystematic reflection on what and how something is achieved, a rational understanding of practice, that is where the practitioner is not only aware of the what and how but also of the why (perhaps even the why not) can only be

developed in an authentic way by the practitioners themselves (Carr and Kemmis, 2004). This knowledge is what Polanyi (1974) calls 'personal knowledge'. This form of knowledge transcends the objective and the subjective, simultaneously being both (Carr and Kemmis, 2004 , Polanyi, 1974). According to Carr and Kemmis (2004) the authentic reflective practitioner is one that realises that only they can be the final arbiter of the truth of an action but that that consideration must include other standpoints when (and only when) they bear on his or her own authentic personal knowledge (Carre and Kemmis 2004). This provides a criterion through which critical reflection can be judged as being authentic as such, and which avoids it degenerating into relativity or being susceptible to persuasion at the cost of his or her own interests. This criterion recognises that individual practices must be viable for the individual and the collective (and also in the wider material world).

Education should embody in the learner an uncertainty (or the constant need of inquiry) – authentic in that it is connected to the situated self, and uncertain in that the learning should always be questioned on an ongoing basis – it is never absolute. Learning moves, therefore, from being a passive intake of knowledge to an active indwelt and lived experience. The next section deals with how pedagogy can be such that it can recognise the uncertainty of knowledge and the authentic uncertainty of the individual. It also looks at how it can recognise the multiplicity and situated nature of knowledge and learning, promote critical being in the autonomous learner, and help them to gain access to discourse and become constructively transformative. In other words, how they can gain constructive social agency.

2.16. Towards a new pedagogy – dialogue not pedagogue? APS negotiated learning pedagogy in practice

The first section looked at the nature of knowledge making the argument that knowledge is not just facts, but facts that come together to form significance – i.e. that they enable some form of commitment to action. It argued therefore, that knowledge is not fully formed or independent of humans, but situated in human values, practices that are affected by variables of experience, and values of the individual, and the influences and pressures of the context they are in. The second section examined the

learner as a situated practitioner using and appropriating knowledge in those situations, and producing and publishing new practices and knowledge through a process of adaptation. The will to learn, it argued, is also connected to learning being relevant to the learner and connected to their own personal being in the world. It also examined how the existence of prior experience and values shaped that process, and argued for the need to embody critical being. It contended that learners need to live their learning, to be able to make connections and practise what they learn. This was imperative for the equitable and constructively balanced development of social practices. It reasoned that even in traditional forms of learning, the situation of the learner always shaped what knowledge they disregarded or grasped, and how they grasped it. By allowing learning to arise from life, and to be practised in life, learners were also able to challenge their own being in the world and to develop it through a kind of indwelling.

This section develops on that discussion, by considering how this theoretical standpoint can inform practice in Higher Education aimed at mature work-based learners. This pedagogy is based on negotiation and dialogue which can recognise and cope with the situated nature of knowledge, and tap into the learner's will to develop themselves in a relevant way. It is an independent style of learning, based upon the tutor being more of a critical friend to the learner's independent and critical acquisition of learning and how it forms them as a social person, rather than prescribing what will be learned. Because of this independent approach, centred on critical reflection and critical acquisition and application of knowledge, followed by creative theory and practice creation, it should, in theory, engender in the learner the ability to constructively challenge dominant beliefs and values in themselves and society. It is not a method of passive learning, but also an exploration of how knowledge forms identity and how learners will become social agents in the world, what Mezirow (1978, 1991, 1997) calls 'transformative learning', the ability to change one's perspective and personal and world view through critically reflective learning.

2.16.1. The purpose of education as promoting agency – re-awaking a sense of inquiry

The acquisition and creation of knowledge and practices can be ideologically controlled or influenced by dominant discourses/ideologies. Polanyi (2009) refers to the ideological 'purpose' of knowledge. In communist Russia in 1935, he asked Bukharin, a politburo member, and editor of *Izvestia*, an official newspaper and organ of the Soviet government, about the pursuit of pure science in Russia. He replied that there would be no pursuit of science for its own sake, the scientists in Stalinist Russia would be taken up with researching the problems of the five-year plan (Polanyi, 2009). This is comparable to stances taken at various times by more democratic governments (see the Research Excellence Framework which awards funding for research which meets criteria based on its immediate economic, social or cultural impact beyond academia). Government is interested in the utility of learning and research according to criteria based on what they see as valuable, and not necessarily on a more democratic system of knowledge creation based on the input of individual critically reflective and autonomous contributors. This thinking permeates down the layers into all levels of teaching and learning, and follows the unfolding of history according to ideological narratives (see the discussion on the formulation of absolute knowledge as a historical process). Certain people know best, and others cannot be trusted or be encouraged to think independently, and this is what prompted Friere (1993) to call traditionally prescribed education the 'pedagogy of the oppressed', because it negates the need for any real dialogue with the learner and potentially alienates them.

In the section "what is work-based learning?" the notion of the limitations of disciplinary approaches to knowledge were introduced. One element of dialogue is the ability to cross disciplines. According to Kreber (2009), when trans-disciplinary dialogue is encouraged students cannot stay within the comfort of their disciplines. Drawing on Barnett's (2000, 2007) characterisation of a world increasingly uncertain in terms of actors acting with increasing feeds of information and the information and requirements to act, they need to be able to encompass more than one discipline's point of view. Instead the incompatible traditions and dogmas of thought underlying the customs of 'thinking and practising' (Kreber, 2009:16) students are required to critique existing frames of reference including their own underlying values and

assumptions (Rowlands 2006, Kreber 2009). This level of engagement starts to go beyond what is merely disciplinarily possible but also starts to start a dialogue with the self, beginning to promote a level of independence (Mezirow, 1997).

Prescribed learning, however, is not a universal approach, and autonomy is seen by many as advantageous to knowledge creation. According to Crome, Farrar and O'Connor (2009), the minimal definition of autonomous learning is unproblematic and is simply the ability to think for oneself. Nonaka (1994) states that all individuals have their own personality and have intentions that differ from those of their organisation (Nonaka 1994), or, it could be added, their wider social context. This is not necessarily a threat but provides the possibility of 'unexpected opportunities' (Nonaka 1994:18 and a theme forwarded by Bahktin 1986 and Wegerif 2008 discussed later in this section). This is a positive thing, as it can result, with critical reflection, in positive change for individuals and the wider environment and collective. Education can play an important role in this process, by recognising that supporting the learners in achieving criticality, is key in the learner's role as a contributor to collective knowledge and practices.

Crome, Farrar and O'Connor (2009) give two more complex definitions of autonomous learning. One is where the student is given minimal information and then goes off to the library to do their own research. This might be merely telling the student to go away and find sources that give a balance of views on a particular subject and to try to use them in their own academic work. Another view would be that the role of the tutor may be to show the student how to do something, and then get them to try it for themselves (e.g. show a student how to critically analyse a text by Descartes and then get them to do the same thing on a text by Hume). It would appear, that truly independent learning may be a mixture of both, and this is more in line with Polanyi's model of 'embodied' learning. Once the students learn the rules by which to approach something, they could then even challenge that process – experience is what is needed. Crome, Farrar and O'Connor (2009:120) see autonomous learning, or thinking for oneself, as an 'acquired habit' rather than an innate trait, and this means it needs to be encouraged and nurtured in learners. This perspective helps us to redefine the tutor as an assistant to the learner rather than as a teacher of facts, in helping them achieve critical being. The practical methods for doing so, that embody

dialogue and reflective process, and the principles of critical being, are discussed later in this section.

Polanyi (2009:30) argues that tacit knowledge is 'interiorised' experience, or if we break down experience into its component parts, it is the knowledge of the parts which make up entities that act ontologically to enable us to comprehend those entities. In other words, experience gives us the framework by which we understand what we subsequently see or sense, and what we do and why we do it. In life, this comes about by interiorising thought processes, values and practices, and using those as a basis on which to understand further experiences.

In education, this process may become formalised in the form of the learner (apprentice) imitating the tutor's (master) practices (seen initially as a master performance), or indwelling by interiorising the values and practices of the master, whereby the student can come to be a rival (Polanyi, 2009). The how, of how the student came to learn what they learned, will not be fully explicit, but picked up through this observing, indwelling and practice. In a model of education based mainly on the acquisition of knowledge, the learner may come to rival the tutor in the knowledge they have acquired. In a mode of education where the tutor focuses on the criticality of the student's approaches to learning, and using and embodying knowledge, the learner may come to rival the tutor in critically creating knowledge and practices. Therefore, in this latter mode, discourses and dominant beliefs or forms of knowledge and what constitutes knowledge, can be challenged – they are not immovable but adaptable or even able to be destroyed or displaced – the student is not embodying the tutor's knowledge, but embodying their practice as a critically reflective practitioner. As opposed to being a passive learner, the learner must engage with the external in a critical way, if they are to get anywhere near ensuring that what they learn and the practices they develop, are constructive and valuable, and are in their interests as well as others. If the tutor is to be positioned as the master, it is these skills of autonomous critical being that the master must hope to enable the learner to embody and critically develop. Again, as discussed later, the nature of work-based learning as dialogue, and highly focused and situated learning that requires individual research methods and research embedded in a reflective process, promotes autonomous and critical abilities.

Over the last twenty years or so the idea of critical reflection has been the focus critique especially in regards to WBL. Barnett's (1997) *Higher Education : A Critical Business*, Brockbank & McGill's (1998) *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, and Moon's (1999) *Reflection in Learning & Professional Development*, have developed the debate and have helped to place critical reflection as a skill central to WBL. According to Major (2002), critical thinking, that has always been highly prized in HE, suggests a degree of detachment and objectivity. This, in this thesis' view, again abstracts the knowledge being considered from life. Critical reflection however, 'seems to carry with it the weight of critical thinking but brings the self into the equation' (Major, 2002:42). Dialogue must therefore support and engender critical reflection in an attempt by the student to 'examine the implications for the self (and, therefore, to make (construct) or to remake (reconstruct) meaning for oneself) in relation to whatever it is that is under critical scrutiny (Major 2003:42). Perhaps then, critical reflection incorporates the ontological, a move towards critical being (Barnet, 1997), while critical thinking may stay almost exclusively within the epistemological domain.

Learning as being embedded in experience is something that is recognised from childhood (but perhaps turns towards the more theoretical or abstract later in life). Piaget (1970) saw learning from a 'constructivist' perspective, where learning is a process dependent upon the child's acting in the world and gaining experience, where gaining feedback allows for notions to be tested and revised. This idea itself has been revised and expanded to recognise the even wider situation of the learner's experiences in wider social situations as the learner grows.

Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning is enmeshed in social contexts and is more like a 'cultural apprenticeship' rather than autonomous experiential development where the tools, practices and values of the community, are also brought to bear. It is in the tension between the individual building on their experience (where personal experience may affect how the individual makes sense of new information), and the appropriation of communal practices (taking part in activities with specific others but not *all* others), where both shared understandings and transformed practices may develop. They are shared, because practices and values which have been handed down may be spread, and transformed, because each makes sense of new

knowledge, and therefore, new practices in a way that is in some way unique to themselves and the situation they are in.

Vygotsky's arguments on the nature of learning as being situated in social contexts via dialogue is helpful in situating the learning at least in social contexts. Though his 'zone of proximal development' (cited in Fernyhough, 2007), the area of learning that another may reach with input from an expert, may begin to give an idea of the tutor helping the learner to proceed. However, arriving at a form of resolution or 'shared' knowledge may not be unproblematic as it may be akin to reproduction rather than change. Citing Bakhtin, Fernyhough (2007:233) argues that 'dialogue is the phenomenon whereby differing perspectives on reality, manifested in sign systems, come into ongoing and open-ended conflict.' For him, as it is for Bakhtin, it is in this ongoing discussion around conflicting perspectives where new meaning is formed. A point of view forwarded by Wegerif (2008) who argues that dialogue can actually slip into a verbal form of the Hegelian dialectic (see earlier discussion on absolute forms of knowledge) if the dialogue is based merely on the internalisation of existing ideas by the learner. For Vygotsky, according to Wegerif (2008), dialogue is about arriving at resolution – an understanding of something that is identical with what it is. Wegerif (2008) agrees with Bakhtin that it is in difference where the formation of new meaning originates. According to Bakhtin (1986:147),

'Take a dialogue and remove the voices (the partitioning of voices), remove the intonations (emotional and individualising ones), carve out abstract concepts and judgements from living words and responses, cram everything into one abstract consciousness - and that's how you get dialectics.'

Without the situation of dialogue in contextualised selves, social relationships and material environments, the ontological outcome is reduced from being and becoming to just being. Agency other than to reproduce is curtailed – the learner's self-becoming Adorno's (1959:362) "I follow" and definitely not an "I create".'

This way of thinking about learning, enables the ability to reframe it as a shared and socially interdependent activity. Society and social contexts provide the conventional wisdom and practices which are in turn transformed by the active participation of

individuals over time (Harré 1983). As mentioned above, this is not directly happening but is mediated through individuals acting alongside particular others and at particular times, allowing for differences of spatial contexts too. Therefore, teaching and learning cannot be seen as a mass enterprise, where every learner can be provided with information and practices that will be universally accepted or appropriate in action at all times, and in all contexts. In being both able to learn and act, the learner must be seen as a situated being, developing in specific time and spatial contexts, and be treated as such. The tutor must be the same – not a subject expert but offering their experience in the process of learning and the application and development of critical reflection.

The above helps to illuminate what has been discussed earlier, that commitment to learning is related to learning being in the learner's personal and social interests, and therefore, relevant and engaging to them. As has already been argued, personal values and practices are situated not just in the individual, but in the wider social contexts that the individual is situated (Harré, 1983, Vygotsky 1978, and Adorno 1957). Teaching that starts from the theory may be too abstract for the student to make sense of, as it may not be easily connected to, or seen to be relevant to the student's experience and socially situated framework of cultural values and practices. Engagement will only happen and be maintained in any depth, where the relevance to action or to the ability to transform practice can be readily seen (i.e. where it is connected to the learner's situated goals). This does not mean that the learner does not still have to engage willingly with the learning or the possibility of transformation – but they will more readily do so if the point, and benefit of it, is seen. i.e. that is necessary for life.

Dewey (1938:89) argued that experience should be the 'means and goal of education'. Rather than imposing knowledge, he adds, the teacher that receives the older student should find a way of recreating the engagement with learning that 'nature accomplishes' in their early years (chiming with Piaget's notion of the child acting in the world – see above). This suggests therefore, that the driving force of learning should be 'inquiry'. The role of the educator can be to help the student to select from their experiences those which might have the potential to present new problems, by

encouraging the student to observe and judge them in new ways, thus expanding their experience, capability, and knowledge. This form of teaching does not see knowledge as discrete and in and of itself, but situated in the student and their context and offering the only constant of growth. The above has led to the idea, to which APS subscribes, that learning activities have as their object significant problems that arise from the learner's experience and context. This is not just knowledge of facts but, as Cohen, McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) argue, knowledge as springing from, and orientated towards, individually and socially productive action or self-agency.

2.17. Ownership of the learning – negotiating the programme

Dialogue is the central principle of any learning that is going to be based on inquiry, and that sees the foundation of education, its content and purpose as being experience. This has to be introduced at the earliest level, at the very foundation of the programme itself, and is done in APS (as it is in most work-based or experientially embedded programmes) through the negotiation of a Learning Agreement. Programme learning agreements are useful in that they allow the learner and the tutor to build a personal profile of the learner, their existing qualifications and areas of experience, their existing skills, competencies, and personal and career goals (Anderson, Boud, and Sampson:1998). This audit allows a programme to be negotiated, that is centred on the student's needs and practices, and builds out from the learner rather than starts with the knowledge. The learner takes control and ownership of the learning to be undertaken, and the responsibility to justify it (though this is assessed). The agreement allows a record of the proposed learning to be kept and referred to by all parties, along with the facilities and resources that will be needed along the way (Anderson, Boud, and Sampson:1998). In this way, from the very beginning, the student is taking responsibility and exercising a level of autonomy. The aim is that this will engender a sense of ownership – the proposed learning is justified and relevant to the learner and their situated needs, promising to be engaging because of its relevance and actively engaging the student in independent and autonomous reflection in the justification and planning of the learning and its assessment. They are beginning to practise self-agency.

The process of reflection is started by asking the learner to argue how the elements of the programme will link and how they develop the learner professionally. For example, a student may be required to argue why a taught course was chosen and how the theory in the taught course might support subsequent work-based learning or professional development. Another example might be how various work-based learning projects will add up to the desired professionalism and abilities sought by the learner. This process embodies critical reflection 'on action' (Schön, 1991) in that it asks the student to evaluate critically pre-existing understandings, experience, and knowledge that will be developed upon. It also requires reflection 'for action' (Cowan, 2006) in that it also expects the student to evaluate, albeit with tutorial guidance, the best methods and resources to be used to get to where they want to be in terms of their learning. These principles then carry on in the next layer of learning, that of designing the work-based projects (Negotiated Study), through learning contracts, that the learner will undertake as part of the programme (the aims of the already established courses will govern any taught course the students takes, learning outcomes, contents and assessment).

2.18. Work-based learning projects – Negotiated Studies

Work-based learning, especially delivered as real-life situated projects known as Negotiated Studies in Applied Professional Studies, can be seen as a way to ameliorate the monopoly that academics and other powerful interests have over the production of knowledge. Boud and Solomon (2008) argued that knowledge and learning cannot be divided into opposing facets and that one aspect should not be privileged over another. This, therefore, calls for a repositioning of the lecturer's (and university's) role, and a reassessment of the identities of the lecturer and learner and what counts as knowledge. Learning and knowledge creation are not divisible, and this calls for the learner to be recognised as a knowledge creator.

The engendering of critical thinking takes place through tutoring learners through their problem solving, understanding the transient and situated nature of knowledge and the often tacit nature of internal drives, identities and values, and should engender a critical being, or as Barnett (2007) frames it, critical, or authentic, uncertainty.

Authentic uncertainty keeps alive in the student the notion of doubt in their knowledge and practices that require the embodiment of a constantly reflective individual. This person can adapt to new and changing circumstances (rather than follow a notion of learning based on a rigid and systematic accumulation of knowledge leading to eventual stasis) and also able to see the potential danger of 'absolute knowledge' that is seen as immutable or not adaptable enough to changing circumstances.

According to Barnett (2007:118), good learning should be the opening up of an ontological disturbance – the disruption of the sense of safety which is found in the apparently known, secure and unchanging foundations of knowledge. Students may not automatically leave the safety of pre-existing assumptions and values, but may have to be 'beckoned into the new room' (Barnett, 2007:118). The situated learner requires therefore, not lecturing, but sympathetic thought-challenging dialogue, to help the learner to fathom critically and justify their learning needs, their precepts, the nature of what is being learned, and the critical quality of what is being learned and the assessment of the actions or outcomes to which the learning tends. This is orientated in real life (as Dewey (1966) puts it, and to repeat him again, experience is the means, content and the ends of this kind of education. Real learning constitutes real freedom of thought, and real depth of learning.

As discussed, work-based learning falls therefore within a style of teaching that can help prevent the development of unchecked ideologies, by allowing the input of practitioners. It could be argued that practitioners are where the original observational data of many theories put forward by social scientists and philosophers, originally springs from in any case. Work-based learning can employ the skills of academics, not so much in dictating what subject knowledge is acceptable, but in facilitating practitioners' study to a level of critical quality which would improve the output, and the effect of that output. Although criticism has been levelled at Freire for his lack of ability to overcome his concerns in his own practice (Smith, 2002), his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1993), does put forward relevant ideas concerning alternative methods of teaching and learning. His criticism of learning and teaching as 'banking', treating students like bank accounts with teachers designing curriculum without consulting students and thus using their professional authority to stifle the freedom of the student, chimes with Foucault's ideas on dominant discourses and how they are

formed. It also chimes with his notion of educational establishments as disciplinary institutions (Foucault, 1972). In this, traditional education mirrors, according to Freire (1993:54), the 'oppressive society as a whole' where students are not encouraged to be critically aware, through being transformers of the world they live in. The book talks about the need for mutual respect between teacher and learner and the development of dialogue. This thesis argues in the following paragraphs, and has hinted strongly at already, dialogic learning mirroring what happens in much of the real world despite the efforts of the powerful discourses to dominate. Dialogue gives a chance for learners to challenge discourse internally and externally in their communities of practice. In this respect, academics would become an important part of communities of practice and study, rather than the 'unsituated' arbiters of them – or people that support the critically reflective and creative changing of structure rather than the imposition of structure on action and experience.

2.19. Negotiated Studies work-based projects – facilitating learning through reflection on, in and for action and experience

Negotiated Study projects may, ideally (and this thesis concurs with Costley *et al* (2012) that this would be nearer to an ideal than an actuality in all cases), may be characterised by the following list, courtesy of Reed and Proctor (1995:195):

- 'a social process undertaken with colleagues;
- educative for all participants in the project;
- imbued with an integral development dimension;
- focused on elements of practice in which the researcher has some control and can initiate change;
- able to identify and explore social-political and historical factors affecting practice;
- able to open up value issues for critical enquiry and discussion;
- designed to give a say to all participants;
- able to exercise professional imagination and enhance the capacity of participants to interpret everyday action in the work setting;
- able to integrate personal and professional learning;

- likely to yield professional insights which can be conveyed in a form which make them worthy of interest to a wider audience.’

The value of study like that can be easily seen and the reflective dialogue that exists between the tutor and learner centres around developing the skills needed for such study, perhaps starting with developing skills – basic skills associated with action research developing to *bricolage*, the deployment of a full set of methodological skills.

Work-based projects are situated in real-life learning and, as practitioners, learners are situated inside the communities they study and are constituents of practices they are addressing. As touched on earlier, insider research raises questions about the neutrality of the research, research having traditionally been carried out by ‘outsiders’. Reed and Proctor (1995) argue that insider researchers actually occupy a hybrid role on the continuum of outside and inside research (they are not entirely familiar with what they are studying and are often working with community sub-groups with whom they may not occupy an inside position – possibly hence the study) but nonetheless they run the risk of favouring people they know, choosing respondents that will support their hypotheses or being subject to other forms of bias to do with relationships. However, Rose (1985:77) argued there is no real impartiality, only greater or lesser consciousness of one’s biases. She also argued that if a researcher does not realise the strength of what they omit, then they are not fully understanding what they are doing. Therefore, critical reflection is not only crucial to work-based learning projects and insider research, but also provides a space and imperative for in-depth and robust engagement, lest the consequences are suffered by the learner.

The Negotiated Study WBL projects are divided into four main assignments that represent reflection for action, reflection in action and reflection on action:

1. Learning contract. This a plan of the project that is to be undertaken (akin to a proposal). In the contract, the learner must design and justify, through negotiation, the intended learning outcomes in the context of their professional practice, and design and plan the methods by which the learning will be undertaken and assessed (already discussed);
2. Annotated bibliography. This helps the student to gather and manage research in a structured way and engages them in reflection in action through the process

of managing source material and primary data and then using it to create a plan of the project report, and which also enables the student to present ongoing research for tutorial discussion;

3. A project report and portfolio. This discusses and evaluates the project and provides evidence of outcomes that engages the student in reflection on action, demonstrating the learning and evaluating the success of the outcomes;
4. A reflective journal. Encompassing all three of the types of reflection, it is specifically aimed at incidental learning that occurs during the process of undertaking the project, not covered by the project outcomes which are nonetheless important and in danger of becoming tacit or forgotten.

IN THIS WAY, THE ASSESSMENT IS DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUTONOMOUS AND

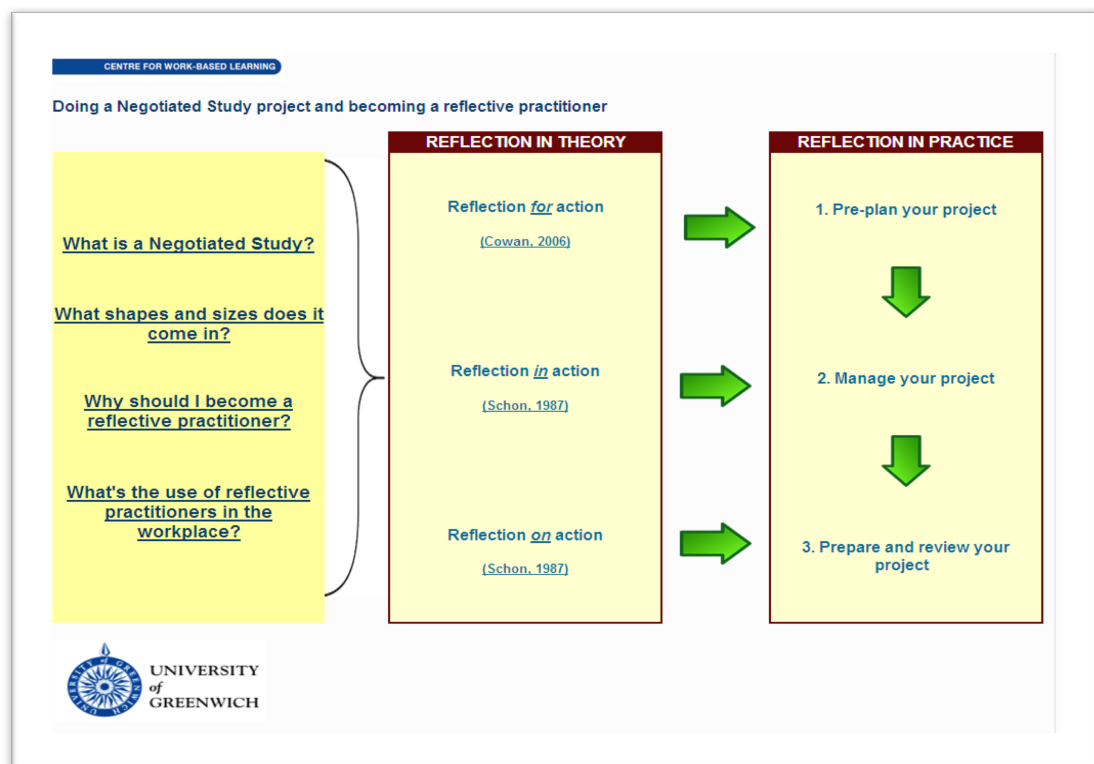


FIGURE 5 VISUAL LAYOUT OF NEGOTIATED LEARNING OF VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (VLE) SHOWING LINKS BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

reflective practitioners, who think about their thinking and practices before, during and after. In other words, they go through a process of 'metacognition' (Cowan, 2006:41) where they think about how to do things but also why they do them in that particular way, and for what purpose and outcome. Tutoring through the process aims to help the student engage with this, by building in various teaching and learning theories and models. In the process of reflection, the learning contract provides the space for reflection for action and begins to engage the learner proactively in the reflective process and their own learning development. All of the assignments facilitate the creation of a dialogue between the learner and tutor, both in allowing the learner to have input into the content and assessment of the learning, and also to gain critical feedback and be engaged in critical reflection.

In order to ensure that students, when going through this process, are fully aware that they are becoming reflective practitioners, each stage is signposted as a part of the reflective process. Each stage is linked to the theorists (Schön and Cowan) who provide an underlying structure for reflective practice. According to Race, Brown, and Smith (2005), assessment should contain no hidden agendas; the purpose of the learning and what is being assessed should be apparent to the student, and this is taken also to mean the process of learning. Knowing that the purpose of this type of learning is to produce reflective and capable practitioners, should positively impact on motivation as the student can engage in what is trying to be achieved because it should be evident that the process, as well as the content, is appropriate and valuable to them. The transparency of purpose further removes any notion of the tutor operating a 'mysterious art' on the student and puts the student in control, if they are prepared to accept the notion of independent reflection. The learning contract needs to be firmly situated in this as the first proactive step. To this end, the online virtual learning environment (VLE) page for Negotiated Study projects, visually maps the theory of reflective practice onto the actual practice of carrying out a work-based project (figure 5). Reflection, in theory, is linked to each stage of the process, and students can click on the links to read excerpts from the theorists. Cowan's (2006) reflection for action is linked to the pre-planning of the project, and when students click on that link, they can read theoretically about Cowan's ideas in this respect. They can then follow the arrow to click on 'pre plan your project', that will link them through to the Learning Contract template, and documents covering the principles of creating a learning contract.

Likewise, Schön's (1991) ideas on 'reflection for action' are linked to managing the project once underway. The link takes the student to guides and tools (annotated bibliography, again discussed later in this thesis), for managing and organising the research. Schön's (1991) reflection on practice, is linked to guides for the preparation and review of the project, to be published in the project report and evidential portfolio (the major part of the Negotiated Study assessment). Implicit in this review is the further link to 'reflection for action', again linking the project to further development if need be, thus promoting continuity of learning. The whole thing is bolstered by links to material on the right-hand side, that underlie the value of reflective learning as embodied in Negotiated Study to lifelong learning, and how it relates to developing capability in:

- learning as effecting change;
- when and how and what to learn (how to effect valid, timely and pertinent change);
- critical reflection – knowing when learning has taken place and how it stands up to external perspectives as well as individual experience;
- capability – knowing what they have learned/practices or knowledge they have developed and its value.

As mentioned, Negotiated Studies are work-based projects and are normally centred around addressing a workplace issue or element of professional development, or about examining a prior experience.

It may be supposed that this is a totally independent process. However, though independence is an aim, it is not seen as something that is disengaged with the world and the notion of tutorial dialogue reflects this. Jacques (1984:87) eloquently states the notion of tutorial dialogue as facilitation:

'it should not be supposed that the facilitator role represents a laissez-faire style of leadership: rather there is a sense of shared or developed responsibility for learning. It usually requires the tutor to be learner centred, helping students to express what they understand by respecting them for what they know rather than for what they should be.'

As discussed earlier, effective learning is likely to be challenging to the learner. The role of the tutor is to support the learner through the facilitation of dialogue (between

the tutor and the learner and the learner and their peers) that enables them to manage the new identities and relationships with the world they are forming. Brookfield (1994) warns of the dissonance experienced by learners involved in critically reflective learning. The learning contract is the foundation stone and prime site of the facilitation of independent learning through a work-based project and the beginning of dialogue surrounding that learning. It represents the foundation on which all else in the unfolding of the project and its assessment are based, and is where the cornerstone of the facilitator's role lies. It contains not only the learning that will be undertaken but also give prior warning of and the ability to plan for any hazards the learner may face.

2.20. The mechanism of negotiation – the learning contract

Autonomy in learning, and the development of practices, can be encouraged by making the student more responsible, as part of the reflective process, for the design of the project and for what will be assessed. This is done by ensuring that they reflect and justify the needs for the project, challenging any pre-assumptions, and also by thinking ahead (reflection for action). This is difficult. Firstly, as Brodie and Irvin (2007) point out, the student must be aware of the need for learning (i.e. be able to identify a focus for change and understand that affecting positive change in some form or another, is what learning is about). Initially, by asking the student to situate the need for the project in their real-life needs, interest in the benefits and relevance of the learning can soon be ignited, and the sense of responsibility and ownership for learning that may well be important to them is begun to be developed.

Negotiated Studies are centred on addressing a workplace issue or element of professional development, or about examining a prior experience to examine how something was done or how it could have been done better. The facilitation of learning can be seen as creating an opportunity for learning to take place, and maintaining an environment for learning (Kirk and Broussine, 2002). In work-based learning, this is not easy as the facilitator has to manage a myriad of power relationships (Kirk and Broussine, 2002), inside the workplace, between the facilitator and the student and also within the facilitator's own organisation (especially regarding justifying the learning). It is imperative that before the learning opportunity takes place, significant

thought is put into planning the learning, so as to manage the quality (and the potential objections to it), and the worth of it to the learner and other stakeholders. It is also important to plan for foreseen or unforeseen events (including methodology and ethics), so that the environment remains open for learning and remains in-line with the student's overall programme objectives. The learning contract, which includes the spaces to negotiate the aims and learning outcomes, the justification, the project design (methods and resources) and the output to be assessed, is the site for this to happen and be recorded for future reference by the student and the facilitators, and for assessment purposes. In this latter respect, it provides the yardstick, through the aims and learning outcomes agreed, as to whether or not the learner has achieved the learning to be measured.

The first step of the learning contract asks the learner, with the help and feedback of the tutor, to create an overall question for the project, and then to break this down into what they will need to learn (learning outcomes), in order to answer the question in full. The aim and all the outcomes are written with a stated context ensuring that the learning is situated and that they begin to indicate the links to overall aims of the programme as a whole.

In producing the learning outcomes, the learner discusses with the tutor what would need to be learned to answer the question. Once this has been agreed, the learner has to write up each learning outcome, by choosing a verb that describes what they will do in that context. What seems to be a great advantage, quite apart from ensuring that the learning is directly relevant, is that by having to understand what is to be done (what the verb requires) and what learning needs to be demonstrated in order to answer the question, means that by the end of the process the learner has spent some considerable time in understanding what they need to do. In order for the aim and learning outcomes to be agreed, they must be written in a way that can be mapped against the generic level learning descriptors of the University. Through designing them, the learner will have worked out the range, scope context and content for the project which enables them to proceed with the learning process with considerable focus on their design and relevance.

An interesting, though perhaps only anecdotal, paradox that has been observed by myself and my colleagues is that younger students, coming directly from school, have an abundance of confidence but perhaps very little experience, but that more mature students have lots of experience but not much confidence outside of their immediate working and life contexts. APS as a work-based programme tends to take on experienced learners, but they often rate their knowledge and abilities as merely what they do for a living without understanding how important it is and how they might need to develop or change it. This underrating of experience and knowledge could be seen as the flip-side to authentic uncertainty, in that it represents a kind of inauthentic certainty about the mundaneness of practices. According to Brodie and Irving (2007:13), important aspects of WBL are,

‘that students understand and are able to learn; that they are aware of what behaviours/capabilities are changing; and that they have the tools of critical reflection to interrogate their learning and their behaviours. The pedagogical position that has developed is that there is both an interdependence and an interrelationship between these three components and that all of these need to be addressed for work-based learning to be successful.’

These aspects, which cover the need to learn, and learning to learn, are therefore the necessary underpinning of how assessment is designed in work-based learning. The learning contract enables, in the justification section, for these issues to be gone into in depth. This results in a document that not only allows students to explore the importance of their learning before they undertake it, but also to provide themselves with a more ‘visual’ picture or plan of they are about to do – starting with the “why” and the “how”.

As discussed above, the theory of reflection underlies the overarching structure of Negotiated Study work-based projects. It is also recognised that this cycle of reflection also happens during the project, and the learning contract is an embodiment of this. Schön (1991) divided reflective practice into two main categories, reflection on action and reflection in action. The first is characterised by the practitioner reflecting on what happened, evaluating the situation, and what might be improved, and this is built into the Justification section of the contract. The negotiation dialogue during the creation of the contract embodies reflection in action. Although Schön's forms of reflection are for a reason, that of action, Cowan's (2006:52) ‘reflection for action’ makes this more

explicit as an idea, focusing as it does on subsequent action. The learning contract also provides the space for and examination of the potential research methods and resources which will be used in the project. This capability of developing critical thinking skills in connection with planning ahead, is a vital life skill, as well as an academic one, and is designed to instil in the learner that confidence and capability.

Kember and McNaught (2007) advise the establishment of relevance in education. They were discussing 'taught' courses rather than work-based learning projects but the principles arising from their observations are relevant. They encourage the establishment of relevance in four main ways:

- Using real-life examples;
- Drawing cases from current issues;
- Giving local examples;
- Relating theory to practice.

Work-based learning, in general, is able to supply these elements in a very real way, and the way it is conducted in the APS programmes, attempts to embed this in every aspect of its pedagogy through the use of student-designed learning contracts and the embedding of learning in work practices with real life outcomes.

The model used in APS is inspired by a number of theorists, both philosophical and educational (as have been acknowledged throughout this literature review). Knowles' (1983, cited in Quinn, 1994) model of Andragogy, has been especially influential. Andragogy, is characterised by:

- Valuing the self-direction and responsibility of the student;
- Giving credit and recognising the breadth and wealth of students' experience;
- Understanding that the will to learn is related to the individual student's needs;
- Valuing and emphasising the internal motivation of the student.

For the APS student, the workplace becomes the university, and the subject matter is driven by the student's needs. As Heidegger (1968) stated, 'Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn'. The role of the tutor in APS is to inspire or to 'nurture' the student's 'pedagogical excitement 'to 'will themselves on' (Barnett, 2007:118) and to support them on their learning journey through periods that will contain feeling of dissonance as they renegotiate their being in the world (Brookfield, 1994). Central to APS is the notion that because learning is

situated and the learner takes an active role in the creation of their learning and knowledge, then the learner is less alienated from their studies and is motivated by ownership and a sense of creativity.

2.21. Ensuring academic worthiness at the start

A major complication is how learning is to be measured as equivalent in quality to mainstream HE level learning. As Boud and Solomon (2008) state, the challenge for tutors is how to work within the accepted educational framework and recognise and accredit learning that takes place largely outside of the institutions. The negotiation process is therefore something that both the learner (and sometimes the line-manager), and the tutor have to go through together. It is to this end that some time is spent on the learning contract – the justification for the project, its aims and outcomes and the methods and resources that will be used to complete it, but also used to prove its worthiness to external examiners.

Aims and learning outcomes are now fairly conventionally used in designing courses in HE institutions. As Moon (Gosling and Moon, 2002:50) points out, clearly laid out aims, objectives and assessment, provides ‘direction and orientation’ for tutors in designing or evaluating the content of a programme or course. Likewise, as Rowntree (1985) points out, they enable the student to evaluate the programme or course in terms of its appropriateness to their ambitions and its workload. In a Negotiated Study learning contract, the aspects mentioned above are equally important for both learner and tutor, and both need to evaluate the study in terms of its appropriateness and ambition. However, the learner is much more involved in the designing of the direction and content. Rowntree (1985) also points out that in conventional course design other stakeholders, such as line managers, are privy to this process to enable the cross-fertilisation of ideas and to ensure a holistic view is taken. This is no less relevant to work-based learning projects where at this stage all students are encouraged to involve their line manager who will already have been involved at the programme level learning agreement stage.

As mentioned above, to help the student and tutor negotiate the learning outcomes a clear overall aim for the project needs to be arrived at. As Rowntree (1985) argues, an aim gives the overall education intent or the overall change that is desired. He also argues that to get there, people may vary in their interpretation of the learning and processes it breaks down into. It is, therefore, important to settle between the student and tutor what the overall aim is, so that the process of writing learning outcomes can be embarked upon. In my experience, it has been easier for both the tutor and student to set up the aim as a question. This is because it appears to more easily engender an evaluative approach as to how the question be best addressed rather than a descriptive approach that might be prompted by a statement. For example, a project with the aim of investigating classroom behaviour management and how it might be used might lead to a descriptive approach of theories and practices, which results merely in a collection of ideas. A question such as 'How can I improve the effectiveness of my classroom behaviour management?' might lead to an approach that evaluates the values of various theories in practice, and the establishment of an internal dialogue within the learner. The learning outcomes (i.e. what has to be learned to accomplish an answer to the question) will, therefore, engender a more investigative and evaluative approach, and the learner will be motivated in doing so because the learning is directly relevant and important to them. By using a question, the aim becomes more acute and clearer, engaging the student metacognitively in the 'why' of the project, and with the outcome of the project (i.e. what it will solve) becoming more apparent to all stakeholders.

Designing a question also relates it clearly to a problem to be answered, and this is important in work-based learning as it explicitly links the learning in the student's mind to their professional situation by helping them to identify a workplace problem to be solved or a professional development issue to be addressed. This is related to the earlier discussions on the transparency of what is to be done, and is expected, and motivation and the purpose of learning. It also means that from the beginning the learner is involved with taking responsibility for their lifelong learning. It demonstrates that the learning is less about an authoritative transmission model (as criticised by Friere), to one where the student constructs knowledge and contributes to practices in a pertinently situated way. This is what Knowles (1986) referred to as the shift from Pedagogy to Andragogy – the teaching of adults.

The real innovation in work-based negotiated styles of learning, and possibly the most significant departure from traditional teaching in HE, is that the learner designs the learning outcomes (a job normally assigned to a course designer in a traditionally taught course). This is also one of the salient points of criticism as has been evident in verbal criticisms levelled at Negotiated Study, and APS colleagues at the University have questioned the authority or skills resident in students to be able to take on designing the learning outcomes on which they will be assessed, and by implication, the evidence they will present for assessment. In order to plan, manage and measure learning resultant from negotiated work-based learning and to ensure its commensurability with expected learning at the appropriate HE level. It was necessary to embed in the learning contract, the following sets of tools:

- The means by which volume of credit can be standardised
- The means to establish the appropriate levels of the learning outcomes
- The criteria by which the work-based learning may be judged and graded. (Boud and Solomon, 2008:173)

The first two of these tools is embedded into the learning contract by necessity, as they must be settled before the undertaking of the work-based project by the student. The last, although used by the tutor after submission to ascertain the grade, is also useful at the planning stage as it informs how the focus, methods, use of literature, etc. will be judged. The crux of the assessment relates to the learning outcomes, as it is from those that the scale and credit values and the level of the work will be judged on completion.

To judge the level of learning outcomes and to ensure parity across the University, it is necessary to understand the University's level criteria. The University, in line with other universities, has drawn up level descriptors by which it expects holders of awards to have achieved at each level. These are based upon the QAA (2008) *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England and Wales*, thus helping to achieve parity across institutions. The framework descriptors, including QAA's and the University's, focus mostly on the complexity of knowledge and understanding, the related cognitive skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation, etc. and also include elements to do with employability and autonomy (as do the University's). In

the focus section of the learning contract, the student is instructed to design the approximate number of learning outcomes per the amount of credit/size the project being undertaken represents. To do this, it has been found that a learning outcome constructor, designed by Wailey (2002), is a useful tool. This constructor forms the core of the guide on writing learning outcomes for Negotiated Studies. By using a list of verbs matched the university level descriptors, the learner can construct learning outcomes by also providing an object that the verb will act on, and a context in which it will take place. Through tutorials, the outcomes are constructed around a breakdown of the overall aim, into what would need to be learned in order to solve it. Thus, the scope can be measured by the amount of outcomes needed, and the level can be ascertained through the verb complexity.

The early tutorials are therefore based on dialogue around the following steps. Firstly, the overall aim question is broken down into issues that would need to be covered in order to address it. Then, dealing with the verb first, as the level descriptors refer to the level of cognitive skills, it is possible to design an outcome with a verb that requires evidence of the cognitive skill being demonstrated. To this end the list of verbs, which is based on Bloom's taxonomy (cited in Anderson *et al.* 2001) and Moon's (cited in Gosling and Moon 2002) associated verbs, and which also map well onto the University level descriptors, is used with the constructor. The constructor then asks for an object that describes the subject area to be worked with, and the tutor and learner work together to find the suitable words for these. Then, the context in which the learner wishes to embed the learning is discussed. This process helps the student and tutor understand the level of cognitive skills to be employed and helps the student understand what they plan to do exactly, while helping to ensure relevance to the workplace and professional setting and employability, and also indicating the level of capability and independence/autonomy.

Judging the credit value (i.e. how many learning objectives [LOs] correspond to how many credits) has been more of a subjective exercise, originally based upon professional judgement and honed by experience. We have found over the years that when LOs are written with carefully designed LOs that include an appropriate level verb, subject and context, the resultant project is comparable, if not exceeding, the work expected of other students in the University, though it would be misleading to

suggest that any systematic study has been undertaken into this question and we rely mostly on judgment, extensive second marking and moderation, and the input of our external examiner. Anecdotally, the responses to our more experienced students by lecturers taking them for optional taught courses, have been positive and even complimentary, and from our own observations, we have seen the progression of students in their workplaces and in their academic work (this was often highlighted in the interviews in the empirical study for this thesis – see latter sections). On a basic level however, our student-designed learning contracts are comparable to the learning specifications of taught courses for similar credits and levels, in terms of the complexity of learning and size of the undertaking – but this would again need to be the subject of a systematic review for any hard and fast claims to be made.

In teaching, it could be argued that what is often taken for knowledge is really just facts or information, because it is taught in an abstract and theoretical way without real grounded significance to life and to action. As discussed, for Burwood (2006) abstract knowledge in isolation from practice is superficial. What this implies is that ‘depth’ of knowledge, and its utility, requires experience for it to be truly deep and productive learning. Both the subject and the learning must be seen as contextualised (Burwood, 2006). Along with the aim and learning outcomes, the justification section helps to ensure this contextualisation in that it requires the student to explore the grounds for which the learning that they wish to undertake, is useful to both them, and their workplace.

The evidence of achievement section, also included in the contract, also helps to contextualise, as it gives the student a space for thinking about the value and impact of what will be produced in the workplace (Anderson, Boud, and Sampson, 1998). The development of these sections provides the basis of the tutorial dialogue and negotiation, and helps the learner in taking responsibility for their learning and development. The document provides the opportunity for both the facilitator and the student to assess this and to take stock of what will need to be produced. It also provides a clear set of outputs, which aids in gaining input from the employer. Once completed, the learner, and all other parties, should be in no doubt as to what the overall and specific goals of the learning are, and how that should manifest itself in a concrete yield, both for assessment and for utility in the workplace.

Designing the project in terms of methods to be used is of primary importance, especially as work-based learning students are often undertaking self-developed projects from a very early stage. Once the aim and goals of the project are settled, it is imperative that the student knows how to achieve each of them (Anderson, Boud, and Sampson, 1998) and the methods that are appropriate, and the learning contract is the place for the review of these methods (Lyons and Bement, 2001). This is the case for all students who negotiate projects or dissertations, but an added complication for work-based learning students is that they may be working across a range of subjects, and may therefore need to employ a range of transdisciplinary methods (Lyons and Bement, 2001). For example, within my experience, I have had teachers and nurses using projects to develop management skills and knowledge, and to implement and evaluate management strategy which has required them to mix research in subject areas and contexts that they are familiar with, and also with research in contexts that they are not so familiar with. They may need to use methods that may be very new to them. This is again, the very definition of facilitation, with both the learning contract as a tool and the research experience of the tutor to augment student planning.

The other aspect of this design is to ensure a balance of theory with practice, and in designing the methods to be used, it is a purpose of a work-based learning contract to be a place where the tutor can help the student ascertain, based on the aim and learning outcomes and rationale for the learning, just how far the project should be embedded in practice. As Anderson, Boud and Sampson (1998), point out, the first point of call for a learner embarking on research will be books, but these are not always the best or only sources available and the student can be encouraged to think about this (and this is why the section has been included in the contract). They put forward a list of possible resources which range from academic books and journal articles, through subject matter experts and trade journals, to supervisors, managers and colleagues with a range of data gathering methods to suit. It is likely in the work situation that many of these resources will be used and it is important that the student is helped to articulate how they imagine this mix will manifest itself in a way that ensures academic rigour coupled with practical outcomes and applications. The

dialogue entered into this way, will help the learner to develop supported decision-making and ensure that a balance of perspectives inform action.

2.21.1. Tutorial dialogue – negotiating the project and supporting the ongoing learning

Good facilitation of the student's negotiation and writing of the learning contract is important. My experience of tutoring work-based learning projects and creating learning contracts coincides with Anderson, Boud and Sampson's experience (1998), where students (and also employers) familiar with the landscape that their learning takes place in, may initially sometimes have problems identifying areas for new learning. This can also happen sometimes towards the end of a course, where learners have sometimes claimed to be 'projected out'. This is where facilitation really takes on the mantle described by Kirk and Broussine, earlier in the section. The facilitator must challenge the student to think beyond the immediate context, and this is where involvement of other advisors such as mentors and line managers, can help in trying to divine a focus for the project. This can be especially so, as I as facilitator have often felt uncomfortable advising on study areas that are well outside my areas of practice (something also pointed out by Anderson, Boud and Sampson (1998). I have often found it useful to get very broad subject ideas from the various parties and then advise the student to do initial reading around the subject (as Anderson *et al* state there are often specialist librarians or other external subject experts the student can refer to, too). This reading often throws up issues that the learner identifies in the workplace as a problem to be addressed. I sometimes also advise some work on the justification section before the overall aim and learning outcomes are set as thinking about the reasons for needing to tackle a problem, and using the reading to support those reasons, can often highlight what would need to be learned in order to solve the overall issue. Apart from providing a rationale that situates the learning, the justification section (discussed later) can also be used as a starting point. This shows the types of dialogue a learner and tutor are likely to go through when negotiating projects and how the learner is helped to explore their potential learning prospects and reflect on them.

In situated learning, know-how and theory are integrated, to generate new knowledge,

as problems are solved at work. As Boreham (2002) argues, this knowledge is created through the process of problem solving, in a dialogue between the two forms of knowledge, and this is where the inconsistencies between theoretical predictions and practice are explored. This is in line with Friere's (1993) dialogue model that he opposes to the banking model. Therefore, ongoing tutorial support is also a dialogic process, where through discussion with the learner, the learner is supported in this critical process of assessing their experiences and learning in theory and practice as the project unfolds. It can be seen that this is not a passive process, but one that asks the learner to actively test theory in practice and to make something of their successes or to see further learning opportunities where inconsistency is identified.

As already touched on, not all instances of experiential 'learning', are necessarily good, especially if they are not holistic in their critical reflectivity (Brookfield 1994). Part of the role of work-based learning is to encourage a critical and informed quality that in turn may be stimulated in the communities the learner is working or living within. According to Watkins and Marsick (cited in Jarvis, Holford, and Griffin, 2003:142), good experiential learners are good at:

- '“surfacing” tacit theories;
- identifying assumptions and associations we have made about other people or situations, and looking for examples which will support or challenge these assumptions;
- problematising situations: taking familiar situations and thinking about them as though they were problematic or unfamiliar;
- engaging in deliberately reflective, transformative learning;
- seeking public support or disconfirmation of our private theories;
- trying to take a holistic, long-term view of a problem or task.'

As study is about recognising inconsistency between theory and practice and structure and personal being, this will result in dissonance in the learner as discussed (Brookfield 1994). The tutor, and the wider educational team, should be in a good position, through open and respectful dialogue with the student in the design and the production of their work-based learning, and in the joint practice of holistic critical reflection, to engender these rigorous practices.

A further and important aspect of work-based learning is for it to have real-life consequences (hence the importance of the critical approach). Although the work is used for academic assessment, it also has outcomes in practice and the practices and documents produced can contribute to a knowledge base, in the communities of practice. To do this, the dialogue must include the student's managers in the organisation, where the organisation encourages interactions in reflective development, or by encouraging the student to try to pass these skills and knowledge to their communities through their work and developing practices. This is what Harré (1993) would call 'publication'. This situated nature of learning (knowledge creation as situated, and learning therefore as situated) requires dialogue on the part of both the tutor and learner. This is, to reiterate, in order to critically examine and quality assure the nature of the learning that is being articulated and assessed, and that this is recorded in the learning contract both as a plan for the learner to follow and as a measure for later assessment of achievement.

Heron (1983) created a multidimensional model to explain learning, dividing learning into three types. Firstly, he described the hierarchical mode, where the tutor decides the objectives of the learning, decision-making and planning, interpretation and selection of key concepts, and the input from the learner along with its value. Secondly, he outlined the cooperative mode, based upon negotiation where the tutor works with the learners in sharing ideas. Finally, he described the autonomous mode where power is divulged to the learner who can exercise full determination, but where the facilitator carefully creates the conditions where self-determination can take place. APS, and Negotiated Study projects in particular, take a position somewhere between the latter two, in that the learning and assessment are negotiated, but the learner has to play a large part in deciding what is to be learned.

According to an argument put forward by Karlsson (2001) dialogue in the Socratic or more ancient sense might be an activity that is instrumental and bound by objectivity, and is concerned with producing something or a state of affairs that is discrete and of itself. This aligns critical evaluation with the process of being a craftsman where the knowledge involved in the process is technical and the product static or unchanging. However, although the practice of critical evaluation has technical elements and skill involved (and this may vary by context), Karlsson (2001) argues that evaluative

practice has more to do with how one behaves individually and as a member of society (see figure 3, Harré's (1983) cycle). It is connected with one's will to behave ethically and morally, and how one wishes to interact with others. The product of critical evaluation is therefore interconnected with a myriad of outcomes, rather than just a problem solved or thing produced that is bounded and isolated, or to put it another way, has no clearly separable outcomes as such. And as such, critical evaluation is an activity in itself, an ongoing dialogue with oneself and one's actions and interactions – of becoming oneself and belonging, in an ever-unfolding way. In this respect, the project mirrors this. As it unfolds, it presents new challenges and learning opportunities along the way that require reflection and critical dialogue to make the most of it, or to overcome it. This incidental learning is recorded in the reflective diary, and is often in excess of the stated learning outcomes. The reflective diary, and the dialogue it enables, creates in addition the ability to discuss not just the learning that is taking place, but how this is lived in the participatory sense – it is a discussion about the journey, not just the destination (or outcomes).

Dialogue, in the work-based learning tutor-learner relationship, may be less power related than in traditional conceptions of the apprentice-master model. 'In a genuine dialogue, forming the "I" and the "you" as a mutual and reciprocal relationship is an integral part of the game. "I" enter into the dialogue to gain knowledge and "you" do the same, and thereby we form a "we" (a companionship) that can help us learn' (Karlsson, 2001:211). Dialogue may not necessarily be aimed at arriving at a consensus, or the learner coming to the tutor's point of view but will aim at engaging both parties in the critical evaluation of their own and each other's arguments and standpoints (Wegerif, 2008). This positions the tutor as part of an evaluative and creative community of practice, rather than as an authoritative supplier, or judge of knowledge.

The practice of critical dialogic reflection on the APS programmes, involves the learner and the tutor (and with peers through discussion facilitated by the tutor):

- conducting a discussion with themselves;
- exploring experiences to gain new understanding;
- creating more conscious knowledge from tacit knowledge;
- informing and guiding future action through higher level thinking;

- planning new strategies with due reference to published authorities;
- planning new strategies with due reference to themselves and their relationships with the world (ethical and viable).

This is done to challenge the student, through a Socratic method of dialogue, to go through their learning in a critical reflective way improving the quality of what they do.

I have produced the following diagram:

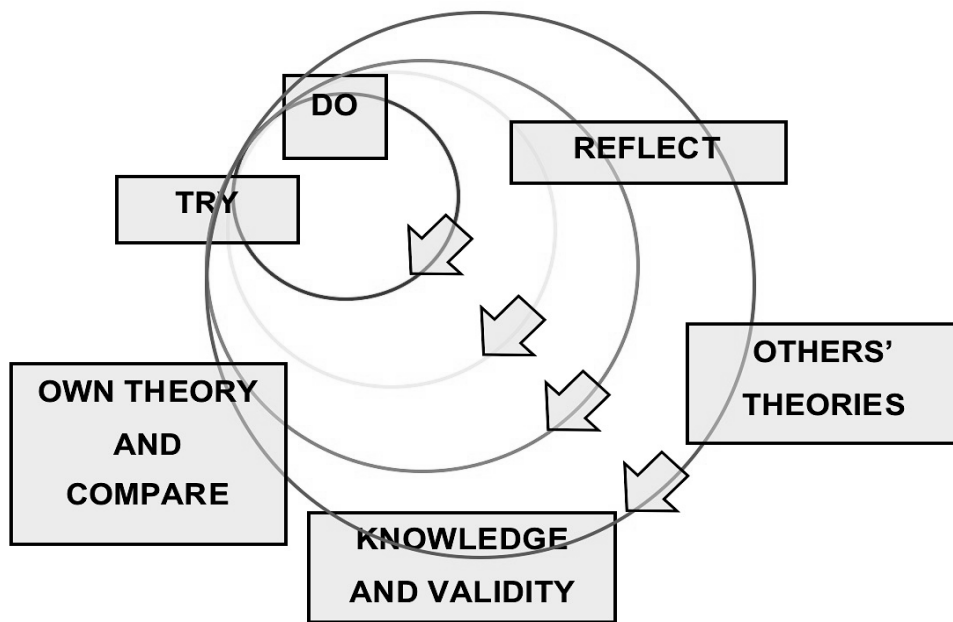


FIGURE 6 PROGRESSIVE CRITICALLY REFLECTIVE CYCLES

The learner passes through the cycles as the process of the project goes on and they work towards their aim and learning outcomes. It might be added here that this begins to happen from the outset, not just in the period between the project starting and its completion. The dialogue challenges the learner to challenge their ordinary way of doing things, and to develop (moving from the inner circles to the outer one) the critically reflective nature of their learning.

A way that this can be practically carried out by the tutor has been developed by Meakin (No date) at the University of Chester, using the SALVAGE model, and this is used by APS tutors:

‘Smile!

Acknowledge learning needs/styles
Listen actively to yourself and your student
Verify that you have understood – mirror/rapport
Act where necessary to help facilitate the student achieving their needs
Guarantee that the learner stays in charge of their learning
Encourage the asking of searching questions of themselves, their studies and you.'

By following this model through various stages of the project at tutorials, students are able to question their research and reflection and its real-life outcomes, as they play out, without the dialogue reverting to a didactic dialectic. To facilitate this, learners fill out a research grid that contains notes from research (reading and empirical) and the significance to the project. They also keep a learning journal (reflective diary), that enables issues that arise to be recorded and discussed, and the outcomes recorded too. The process is built upon through various projects, until the notion of critical uncertainty, the need for ongoing critical reflection (Barnett, 2007), is embodied not only in their academic practices but in their life practices too. It is here, where if the dialogue does not exist or lacks quality, that the programme will fall down (and this was born out in the study). The benefits discussed in theory earlier on, such as motivation and the will to develop, will not be capitalised on if the learner does not have this fundamental aspect in place.

2.22. Praxis and authority – the role of the tutor as a partner in learning

The above dialogic approach has been taken because it is recognised, as has been discussed, that learning, and none more so than work-based learning, is situated. APS is also based on the philosophy that learning, especially when connected to practice, equates to knowledge creation. According to Burwood (2006:119), the principles of things, if learned in isolation from practice, cannot be anything other than superficially understood – they remain abstract 'maxims.' He also states that while abstract precepts can be taught to provide a superficial knowledge, the notion that knowledge as 'de-contextualised precepts' that can be taught in a significant way to an 'unsituated subject' is wrong. What this suggests is that 'depth' of knowledge, and its utility, requires experience and, therefore, work-based projects or similar types of experience-based learning, where the student creates a project with a real-life value. This also recognises that knowledge (i.e. the significance and utility of information) is

also situated in the student's world and is therefore adapted, tailored or created specifically for that world. As Boud and Solomon (2008:36) state, 'all workplaces are potential sites of knowledge production.' Work-based learning, as practised by APS, recognises this and the process of the learning contract is designed to facilitate this in a way that can result in learning that can be measured and accredited. This dialogue is continued throughout the project, where the learner is challenged to examine unfolding experience in the light of the research being applied to it. Dialogue is required to facilitate situated learning – without it, it cannot happen, and without it being situated it is hard for learning to be in depth.

Friere (1993), talked about the importance of praxis – the informed action of individuals. In line with Harré, he sees these individuals as operating in communities of practice. However, as Harré (1983, pp. 48-50), again echoing Foucault, points out:

'The human collective through which a body of knowledge is distributed might be a structured society, the persons making it up being ordered in some way. We would expect, then, if a corpus of knowledge were distributed through the collective and the collective were structured, that the corpus of knowledge should be treated as having a structure dependent on that order. If knowledge is socially organised, then the possibility of differential access has to be considered.'

The rights to create knowledge, judge it as valid, and to challenge it, are not equally distributed. To begin to counter this, learners need the right to be able to independently drive their learning, and the direction it takes, forward in an informed way. Here negotiation and then critically reflective dialogue leading to critically reflective practice, takes on its importance.

It is again the contention of this thesis that formal research, carried out by objective external academic observers, often results in academic papers that appropriate observed practices and turn them into published theory, giving the academic, rather than the practitioners, the kudos of creating the knowledge. This further creates the appearance of theory informing practice, that is, practitioners being informed by academics, instead of the reality of a two-way dialogue. However, Carr and Kemmis (2004) argue that the 'outsider' researcher may decode, decipher and inform practices, but takes only a surface or exteriorised view. However, the real investigation and transformation of practices are tasks primarily for the practitioners who not only

have to analyse, and reconstruct and adapt practice but have also to live with the consequences, that is, what it means to live the practices and what those practices result in. As Freire (1993:87) puts it, 'the investigators [academics] and the people (who would normally be considered objects of that investigation) should act as co-investigators' or co-creators of knowledge'. The dialogue that APS facilitates, also facilitates the mechanics that allows this to happen.

The upshot of this is that the role of the tutor is less that of a teacher, assessor and validator of knowledge, but a facilitator and critical friend, co-involved in the production of knowledge. Ashwin (2005:26), describes work-based learning as having a

'...close attention to learning processes in problem-based learning and an emphasis on learning to be an effective professional learner. The underpinning philosophy of constructivism is apparent through the use of problems to prompt learners to engage deeply with the subject matter to address the problem so as to make knowledge their own. The philosophical foundations of work-based learning, while sharing some common threads with problem-based learning and self-directed learning, come from a re-appraisal of what constitutes legitimate knowledge and a questioning of universities' control over it. In some respects, it is post-modern in that it questions the canon of academic discourse. In other respects, it is very modernistic in that it assumes that there is such a notion as "working knowledge" which can be learned and enhanced.'

The tutor, in work-based learning, moves more toward the aspect of guidance (Costley and Dikerdem, 2011), using their professionalism in encouraging practitioners to see themselves as researchers, knowledge creators and problem solvers, and adapting their role to the support and facilitation of that process in learners, as a quality-enriched one. In this way educators would become more akin to participators in communities of knowledge and practice, helping to ensure good research practices, and the use of wider perspectives from outside the practitioner's immediate work environment.

Vigotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), gives us a way to visualise the role of the tutor under this conception of knowledge, as being co-created by practitioners in a social context using dialogue as a central tool. Although specifically

thought about by Vygotsky in connection with teaching children in the earlier half of the last century, the approach is a 'constructivist' one where learners construct their own learning and eventual understandings, or solutions to student situated real-life problems. In children, it was the guidance of the tutor in encouraging critical reflection on the issue through discussion and guidance. Similarly, the role of the tutor here is to 'nudge' the learner (to use the words of Cowan, 2006:48). As has been alluded to, this is done through dialogue that challenges the learner to critically appraise and validate their knowledge practices and research as it unfolds, to a level of and quality of learning that the student may not have managed on their own. Again, as has been discussed in an earlier section, Fernyhough's (2007) and Wegerif (2008) development of Vygotsky's notions of dialogue away from a role of helping the learner to reconcile their views with those of the "expert tutor", to that of using dialogue to recognise the conflicts between the theory and their practices and to keep this conversation open. Instead of using the 'banking' method, the tutor encourages reflection, research and critical assessment of evidence and argument both from the source material and in the student's work, and how to apply it to situated practice. The reflection process, therefore, widens the student's learning to encompass critically multiple perspectives not only from inside the institution or the inside the workplace or even inside the self, but beyond across these boundaries and from a breadth of sources. The role of the tutor is not, therefore, to tell the student what they should know. However, it does engender independence of learning in a critical fashion and helps the student to improve the quality of their output – all the more important because the learning may well have an impact, and hopefully will, on practices within the communities of practice and knowledge that the student is situated in. The ongoing nature of reflection also incorporates the nature of knowledge as transient and requires an ongoing challenge to justify it as remaining valid in its context but also recognising the varied nature of the learner and their needs for action in the social and material world. Therefore, the role of facilitator in this respect, is to support the learner to critically research and challenge the resultant practice – an enhancement of the student's learning and critical being in the world.

As has been mentioned, knowledge and practices, though separated in this paper for ease of discussion, are a false binary. The thesis has argued that knowledge is not just a collection of facts, but a collection of facts that come together to produce a

significance. In other words, they produce the possibility of action. Therefore, knowledge and practice cannot be divided. However, Gibbons *et al.* (1994:3) have in fact divided knowledge production into 'Mode 1' and Mode 2' categories. Mode 1 knowledge is created to solve academic/theoretical problems that are the concern of a particular academic/disciplinary community. Knowledge here is 'hierarchical and preserves its form'. However, in Mode 2, knowledge is transdisciplinary and production is carried out 'in the context of application' (p3). It does not maintain a hierarchical superiority to practice and may, therefore, be transient in nature. Specifically, the production of knowledge is carried out by a heterogeneous set of transdisciplinary practitioners coming together to solve a problem in a localised and particular context (p3). The later definition is perhaps useful in that it shows knowledge as transitory, because its significance changes as per the situation it is used in, and that real action would call for information to be drawn from multiple disciplines. The aim of work-based learning, or situated learning in general, is to close the gap between abstract concepts (theory) and practice, so rather than coming under the latter of the modes of knowledge, it perhaps bridges them. Therefore, coaching the student to define a set of methods (project design) that is thought through and demonstrates how the information acquired is expected to support their decision-making is important. It helps close the gap between 'knowledge' and 'practice' and encourage experience and theory as informed by each other (which in turn, it is hoped, raises their quality). This, in turn, provides the development of capability. (The study proved to be interesting in this aspect, as it brought the importance of the embedded empirical nature of learning to the fore – the critical monitoring, testing and development of practice – in a way that had not been fully recognised through the review of the theory here, see the latter results sections.)

2.23. Assessing the learning

The first method of assessment is to mark the work in accordance with the learning contract. As already discussed, the contract was created with care, the negotiated learning outcomes being aligned with the University level criteria. The contract is that if the aim and the learning outcomes are met then the credits will be awarded. The extent to which this is has been achieved is gauged (as is common practice and is

recommended by Boud (2008) earlier), by grading according to criteria. The criteria are based on a hybrid assessment method.

With hybrid assessment (Bryan and Clegg, 2006), the student, through the learning contract has the right to say how some of that assessment will be manifested. That student is involved in the process of designing assessment as a manifestation itself of the social constructivist approach, and is important in producing practices within communities (Rust, O'Donovan, and Price, 2005). To this end, situated work-based learning projects such as Negotiated Studies assessment contains:

- academic and professional learning;
- theoretical and experiential learning;
- a project report and evidential portfolio;
- assessment that must be matched to situated outcomes that the student negotiated.

The central notion of full learning, and knowledge, as discussed in the preceding pages, has been that of the vitality of knowledge as specific to the situated subject and their practices, enabling agency. To this end, the project report enables a reflective but academic write-up to be produced, that allows the learning to be discussed and argued for in a supported and critically reflective way. It can also be gauged according to marking criteria that ask for the standard academic rigour, but also a demonstration of how the theory drawn upon, is embedded and tested in practice. The student also provides an experiential portfolio in support of this report, that demonstrates the ability to apply the theory in practice and may also demonstrate positive outcomes. The marking criteria used are based on gauging the quality to which the above is done. In this respect, it encompasses normal criteria such as the quality of focus, structure, presentation and argument, but also the application of theory and the validation of knowledge in practice.

2.24. Recognising and building on prior experience as a way to start situating learning and develop confidence

The re-examination of prior experience is a way to start learners off in the process of situated learning. It gives the students the space to construct and deconstruct their learning experiences (Taylor, 1997) and APS has more formal (but still tutored as

opposed to lectured) courses that enable this, and can also construct retrospective Negotiated Study projects.

However, to avoid this kind of work becoming a superficial self-congratulation on experience gained, as Taylor (1997) goes on to point out, it must undergo two types of critical re-examination. She states that firstly it must undergo testing and be reviewed in the light of formal theory. Being encouraged to view learning as valuable with recourse to theoretical and research material, perhaps for the first time, can be as engrossing to the student as it is helpful in developing their critical analysis. Secondly, she states the scrutiny of experience and the assumptions that arise from it should be researched across a broad base so that controversy or agreement can be evaluated. In the first instance, use of prior experience for learning can be useful in that it provides a familiar – at least in the beginning – space for the student to get started on academic learning which may be fearful for them. However, it can also introduce the process of critical analysis and evaluation in a very situated and individually relevant way, while also maintaining a criticality to practice that supports a healthy democracy.

Using prior experience as a focus for learning has long been part of the work-based learning arsenal that has attempted to close the binary separation between theoretical reflection and practice and has been APS since its conception. In accordance with Taylor (1997), our view of re-examining prior experience is that realising that their previous experience is of value has had an empowering effect on learners. It is, therefore, the aim of APS to try to use experience as a way re-evaluate it and learn from it, thus situating the learning in the students' practices and enabling them to take a more critically reflective approach to what they had learned. In this way, by asking the student to critically re-evaluate their experience with recourse to wider perspectives, they were able to produce a new piece of work, using experiences as evidence of the foundation for further critical reflection. This, in turn, leads to new understandings of how to approach similar problems, or how to use now validated practices in similar occurrences. It means a consciousness of the ability to act. This kind of learning is mentioned here because it forms one of the methods used in Negotiated Study projects, or some early work-based structured courses, that can be used to ensure that the learner realises the importance and future potential of their

experience rather than just dismissing it as part of what they do every day. It enables them to start to see the situatedness of their learning and the value of developing it begins to build confidence in their actions and academic abilities, initially, at least, in a safe subject area.

2.25. Section summary

This section, the literature review, argued against knowledge as absolute and the same for all occasions, and held identically in all people. It argued that knowledge was taken on by individuals in a way that was contingent upon existing values, experience and needs. Though knowledge could be collectively held, it was individually realised. It was situational. Through this tension of conventionally-held knowledge and individual appropriation, transformation and publication, new practices and new knowledge is created. The learner was not just passively learning but taking on knowledge according to its utility, application, or consequence to themselves and their communities. The situated nature of the learner as a knowledge and practice creator, and the will and motivational aspects of the learner as a developing social agent, could be embedded in educational practice. To teach as though knowledge were whole and was merely filling a deficiency in the learner (the banking model) was potentially oppressive as it negated this creativity. The teaching and learning methods explained take into account the need for autonomy and capability among life practitioners, and workplace practitioners, and the methods are formulated to encourage this and result in the social and intellectual capital that can make the learner an effective and independent social agent. The focus was on the importance of dialogue, which appears to be crucial to the negotiation of a meaningful and relevantly situated programme and the design of its constituent projects, and how dialogue is used to support the continuing unfolding of learning through holistic critical reflection. The programme has been employing these methods for ten years, and the next chapter will outline the study that will attempt to see if the pedagogy this thesis espouses is an effective one in reaching these aims.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Section introduction

This section outlines the methodology used in the study. After presenting the research questions, it will outline the reasons for the mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology employed. It will describe the methods used – the survey and interviews, including the pilot study – and how they are structured. It then goes on to explain the methods of analysis. Included in the methodology section is the pilot study itself, along with its findings, and the implications and resultant changes needed for the main study are discussed before the Section 4 dealing with the study itself.

3.1.1. The researcher's narrative (in brief)

My story is one of an adult learner coming late to higher education. Cultural, political and identity issues all played a part in my delaying of going to university, and once there, they have all played a part in what I chose to study and how I came to understand my studies. My first degree was in Humanities, a cross-disciplinary degree which has enabled me to see things from many perspectives and to see information connecting with other information to make multiple significances. I also took an interest in political philosophy which still underpins my values, and drives my work. In particular, I was interested in people being able to articulate their ideas and to be able to take action, regardless of their social standing, and in their ability to do so critically and in an informed way.

My standpoint on the formulation of knowledge, and who is privileged to create it and to disseminate it, is laid out in the literature review. Based on that argument, I think that teaching at higher education level should not privilege just the 'intellectual thinkers,' but also include the practitioners, who after all, often create the practices that academics observe and publish as theory. Practitioners, as members of society, are often ideally placed in the process of creating knowledge as they embody the values, experience and tacit knowledge of the communities in which the knowledge is to be applied. They also publish their informal practices, but this may sometimes lack the critical reflection from which it could benefit. Practitioners are, in my experience, often talented in what they do and the way they solve problems and improve practices. However, as members of

society, the critical quality of their thinking or their ability to acknowledge or acquire underlying research and other perspectives to aid their thinking, may require improving. Likewise, the ability to communicate and disseminate their ideas effectively may also require improvement.

This was certainly my story, and continues to be as I make efforts to reflect on my practices. It is in this aspect that I think that university teaching may be able to come into its own, and this was why I was attracted to teaching on APS. This was because it focuses very much on this notion of mentoring students through their independent and situated studies, hopefully allowing them to develop their capacities and improve their lot. This mentoring is the facilitation of work-based learning. It enables learners to theoretically validate their practices and improve them through action. The methodology for this thesis is based upon the same principle and is part of my story as a reflective practitioner – how can I be sure the programme to which I contribute is effective and valuable in encouraging social agency in its learners?

3.11.2 The underlying ontological and epistemological approach of this thesis

This thesis is written and the data collected is evaluated from a critical realist standpoint. Ontologically the underlying assumption is that reality is a thing that is simultaneously 'out there' but in its interpretation, meaning is influenced by us as thinking subjects. In critical realism, that things 'exist' independently of humans or any other sentient being, is not problematical. What is, is the notion that the causal relationships between them and other things – that when two 'things' come together with other things, the meaning they produce in conjunction with each other is generative – it changes the then relationships between those things and others things. This Bhaskar (2009) calls 'mechanisms' and that the results of these mechanisms might not be observable, it does not mean that they do not exist or that the result may not potentially happen. For Bhaskar (2009), mechanisms may happen, may exist but not be activated, or may be activated but the results not observed, ignored or understood, or the result cancelled out by the mechanisms in operation. This therefore goes against notions of being as being absolute, and in for itself, in any circumstance. A positivist/realistic/absolutist approach may see the cause and effect mechanism as being constant. Critical realism instead places them in historical and special contexts and sees meaning as continually emergent or in flux. Statements are made about the being of things that describe them as in and for themselves and in total are, according to Bahskar (1975), ontic fallacies as they are really knowledge statements

based upon a dissociated epistemology – they are nothing more than raw perceptions. According to Bhaskar (1975) ‘Neglect of this activity merely results in the generation of an implicit sociology, based on an epistemological individualism in which men are regarded as passive recipients of given facts and recorders of their given conjunctions. They ignore the cognitive and social mechanisms by which knowledge comes about. This can lead to inauthentic being, and Foucault argues that dominant discourses are often, in effect, disciplining thought through posing knowledge as absolute and thus disciplining the possibilities of being. A critical realist ontology is therefore deemed by this thesis as being more emancipatory.

Epistemologically this means that the view of this thesis is that how we come to know things is not absolute. The things we come to know are not ‘out there’ in and for themselves, though they retain their substance and the information and data that make them up. Knowing something is complex. A known thing is always more than the sum of its parts. It contains a further significance that lifts it beyond its immediacy as a collection of data or its more mediated form that gives it meaning as something separate from something else. The significance of knowledge, and what makes it truly knowledge in the view of this thesis, is that it has a significance that is, that the fact that it differs from other things matters in some way – that it can result in some kind of action (ranging from thought to physical). That individuals might be able to achieve a more critical being that allows for actions positive to themselves individually and socially, is underlying the emancipatory thrust of this thesis.

3.11.3. Interpretive paradigm

As mentioned, this thesis takes a standpoint somewhere between critical theory (that sees knowledge as not being value free) and constructivism (that people construct their own reality and that multiple interpretations of knowledge, practice and being exist). It is perhaps nearest to critical realism (perhaps a midpoint between the two?) in that it sees knowledge as being based on data and information that is ‘out there’, but whose meaning and significance is influenced by the knower. Hegel argued that something could be known by knowing what it was not. However, this paper argues that no one person can

know everything that something is not and that their knowledge is based upon their prior experience. Therefore, knowledge can be collectively held, but this should not be understood without caveat. Collective knowledge may appear to be identical in each knowledge holder, but perhaps 'similar' is a more accurate way of thinking of it. Because the experience of each individual may not be identical with the next person, the way knowledge is held and realised in practice may have some individuality to it (Harré 1983). This is because individuals are historically (time) and geographically (space) situated.

It is through this tension between the collectively-held knowledge and individuals grasping and acting in different times and spaces, that new practices are developed. It is in the relationship between identity and difference that new practices emerge. The other strand to this paradigmatic stance is that practice is not subordinated to knowledge (in fact the thesis argues that they are as inseparable as time and space – two sides to the same coin). From practices, new knowledge can emerge and so-on. This emergence is both fearful and necessary. History has shown us (and continues to show us) the cruelty and even devastation that can be wrought from non-critical approaches to being and knowing. These approaches have been shown in many cases not only to be dangerous and cruel to others, but also to the communities or groups that the approaches have emerged from. Adorno's and the Frankfurt school's arguments on this are particularly powerful on this subject (see the sections in this thesis that deal with this and Adorno's (1957) powerful paragraphs under the heading 'After Auschwitz' in *Negative Dialectics*.) For them, absolute knowledge reduced being (including human and animal) to emotion-free items, lacking any ontological dimension. This brings us to the last of the paradigmatic strands, firstly that an underlying assumption of this thesis is that it sits to some extent in a liberal tradition in that it values democracy, liberty, and equality of opportunity. It does not believe that all people are equal in the sense that we are all identical (as can be grasped from the above and throughout the literature review) but that where a person can take an opportunity, that opportunity should be as available to that person as it may be to any other. It holds that for society to realise its fullest potential and to safeguard its future, it requires the creative input of as many people (with all their diversity) as possible to the discourses that govern us and that those discourses (which are based on emergent knowledge and practices) are also emergent. It also holds that the creation of knowledge and practices (that input just mentioned) be critical: that is, that it is created and evaluated with a view to individual and social safety as far as can be predicted through solid research and learning.

Data and information may exist independently of the human being. It exists in and of itself and this is what Bhaskar calls the intransitory dimension. The philosophers of the enlightenment, such as Hegel, referred to in some depth early in this literature review, may see this at the immediacy of sense perception. However, Bhaskar and the other philosophers discussed at length (such as Nietzsche, Adorno, Heidegger, Foucault and Harré and others not mentioned) may already see this as moving towards being mediated. That something is a unity is not perhaps an *a priori* ability (Kant) but perhaps the 'item of being' moving towards becoming an 'item of knowledge'. This is the epistemological realm (what Bhaskar call the Transitive Dimension), what Heidegger calls the movement between being and becoming. That emergence is based on experience (as argued by Adorno) and that emergence, though it may be similarly held (but not always) is to some extent initialised in its practice because the individual is situated in localised discourse values and experience and knowledge frameworks. Therefore, the emergence of knowledge, and knowledge of the self, one's own being, is always in a tensional relationship between what at an immediate level it is and what it might become. There may well be a component of absolute reality, but this would be immediate or unmediated and therefore of little value – the epistemological realm is always mediated and the mediation can vary and being in flux. One could argue therefore that there is a need for a metacritical or metacognitive dimension within each of us that examines and evaluates the other two dimensions. These are what we perceive of knowledge critically and reflexively approached from the point of view of what is safer or productive for us, and our social contexts and society as a whole. The thesis asks that if a pedagogy – based on a more equitable relationship between the tutor and learner, that is dialogic and situates the what is to be learned on the learner context, relates and embeds learning in practice and critically tests those practices against criteria based on the safety and health of the learner and their social groups – will enable the development of critical social beings who can perceive their own emergent selves as social agents.

Therefore, the methodological approach employed in the empirical part of the study, looks to gather information about how learners perceive themselves as emergent social beings having undertaken a programme, the pedagogy of which is informed by the ontology and epistemology outlined above and argued for in more detail in the thesis itself. It looks to see how they can be known as emergent social beings and this is measured by their self-perceptions of qualities such as their ability to critically approach their learning and practices, authentic confidence in their practices, and confidence to act and influence others.

3.2 Research questions

The overall aim of the thesis is to address the question of whether, from the perspective of the learner, the pedagogical approach used by APS was an effective one, and if so, why.

The literature review presented the underlying argument for situated learning that in turn required the learning to be negotiated and dialogic. It also argued that negotiated, dialogic and situated learning would lead, through its direct relevance to their lives, to being learners who were engaged with their learning and able, through the application and testing of learning in real-life scenarios, to lead to becoming critically reflective practitioners empowered and confident enough act. That is, learners with social agency. To answer the above question in depth, the following thematic questions were arrived at from the theoretical discussion:

1. What was the programme demographic and was it effective in providing learning opportunities to those who would not necessarily find it easy to take up higher education?
2. Was the programme effective in producing engaged learners?
3. Was the programme effective, from the learners' perspectives, in helping them to develop skills, such as critical thinking and reflection, literature research skills, empirical research skills, written argument skills, debating and spoken argument skills that would support the development of social agency?
4. Did learners, as a result of the programme, feel different as people? Had they changed their perceptions of themselves as people?
5. Did the programme, in the perspectives of the learners, help them develop the confidence to influence or benefit their colleagues?
6. What was the mechanism by which these changes came about? For example, what role did dialogic aspects of the programme play in having an impact on the self-perceptions of learners having been involved with the programme?
7. Where there any other aspects of the programme, its pedagogy or facilitation, that played an important role in the programme's perceived impact in its learners?

It will be noted here that the study is interested in examining the aspects of the programme from the learners' perspective. This is because agency requires practitioners in some way to see themselves as agents for change. In the theoretical argument a

conversation with Race was cited (see the section 'The confidence to act: personhood through empowerment'). He mentioned that social agency was contingent upon confidence. Without the learners having perceived themselves as having been empowered through confidence to act, then they could not act and social agency was not possible. It was also important to see from their perspective what it was that gave them that confidence (hence themes 6 and 7 which involve the analysis of correlations between the perceived value of aspects of the programme and perceived outcomes. Although, at interview, learners would be encouraged to give concrete examples of social agency in the real world, the thesis wanted the perceptions of agency, and its links to the programme, to come qualitatively from the learners rather than rely solely on a more positivist interpretation of events.

3.3. Overview: Mixed methods – pilot, survey and interviews

Very few studies have been carried out to assess the impact of this kind of teaching and learning and those that exist are mostly theoretical. An interesting framework has been put forward by Stewart (1997) that deals with the notion of intellectual capital and recognises that HE institutions are no longer the sole producers of knowledge. He divides intellectual capital into three broad areas:

1. Human capital. This relates to the knowledge and capabilities of individuals and groups of workers (what Wenger (1998) calls Communities of Practice). It has an emphasis on practices being shared and developed (and the making explicit of tacit knowledge, or the passing on of knowledge and practices in direct and less codified ways). It is also about how an individual's personal identity grows to encompass a role as a knowledge and practice creator, and as an individual consciously capable of transforming their surroundings and community practices;
2. Structural capital – the means by which organisations and groups capture, codify and share knowledge so that it be effectively used;
3. Client capital – systems and processes by which organisations tap into human and structural capital of client organisations.

The first of these three categories is what this study is concerned with, in so far as how its facilitation of learning cannot only lead to the development of knowledge, practices and skills that lead to human capital, but really how on a metacognitive learning level, human capital can be self-perceived and how it might lead to social agency.

Social agency, to reiterate and to put it simply, is the ability to act in a way which is both in the individual's interest and that of the social whole. It requires not only the skills and knowledge needed to change practice in the individual and at a social level, including metacognitive and critically reflective thinking skills, but also the confidence to do so. Firstly, there is a need to see statistically if the programme was likely or not, to have a perceived positive impact on learners in a variety of ways that contribute to social agency. That would give a simple statistical overview of the impact of the programme and its pedagogy. Then it was necessary to gain quantitative data that would enable the identification of correlation between aspects of the programme pedagogy and facilitation, and the perceived impacts on the learners both in terms of skills they perceived themselves as having. However, these data on their own would give indications of likelihoods on how one aspect of the learning impacted on another. A qualitative element was needed in order to understand why from the learners' points of view, one aspect had a bearing on another. In this way, a stronger sense of the learning mechanism could be understood.

Another reason for the mixed approach was that it was deemed necessary to allow respondents to contribute to a wider understanding of the impact of APS, rather than just respond to questions that sprang from the thesis's theoretical predictions. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), a set of weaknesses of a singularly quantitative research approach is that the researcher may choose categories, theories or hypotheses that do not reflect local constituencies' understandings. As a result, the research may miss phenomena because of the focus on testing theory rather than generating or identifying hypotheses. As the overall research questions call for an examination of the impact of APS and its pedagogy on learners' social agency, it did not want to restrict findings merely to those it predicted, in case those predictions were incomplete or erroneous. It also wanted to illuminate the mechanisms that learners perceived as working by, and it did not want to stop learners from contributing their perceptions of those through narrow quantitative questioning.

Mixed methods enable the numbers of people to be ascertained in relation to set questions that arise from theoretical research, but also allows for a less abstract understanding by finding out the qualitative reasons for responding in one way or another. In addition, where views are sought in a less structured way (i.e. through the use of narrative elicited from semi-structured interviews), it allows for the emergence of understandings that are not restricted by the theory being tested. 'It's logic of inquiry

includes the use of induction (or the discovery of patterns), deduction (the testing of theories and hypotheses), and abduction (uncovering and relying on the best of a set of explanations for understanding one's results) (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004:17).¹ This approach is ideal as the study wants to test the application of theory in action, to see whether or not it has an impact on the view of the learners it has been applied to, but also wants to see if that coincides or differs from the learners' understandings of the impact of their learning. It also wants to test if the theory predicts how the impacts, if they happen, come about (the dynamics and mechanics of the process), to see if phenomena observed can confirm, develop or challenge the theory and practices being tested on terms of its perceived impact on learners.

Therefore, a survey that veered more towards the quantitative (though qualitative questions were included) was decided upon to ascertain the numbers of people that had particular opinions on varying aspects of the programme. This would allow for an overall picture of the impact of the programme to be ascertained in accordance with its aims and the underlying pedagogy employed. A few open questions would be included to gain more qualitative insights, but these were mainly to give reason for the way a previous question had been answered.

In order to allow other themes to emerge from the study subjects' perspectives (rather than as a result of questions resulting from the theoretical arguments) a follow-up interview schedule was designed that was based upon an open narrative approach, where subjects could offer their stories in an unencumbered way. This qualitative approach allowed for a less abstract interpretation of the quantitative data to be made (not just that something happened but why it happened). It was also to allow themes as yet not considered to emerge.

3.4. The survey

3.4.1. Pilot study

The link to the online pilot survey was emailed to four randomly-chosen past or present participants of the programme. Although the survey enabled possible correlations to be explored between the negotiated structure of the programme, the age of the respondents, experience or time on the programme and the ability to negotiate learning, etc., it did not ask about access to tutorials or whether they were perceived to be supportive or

discursive enough. This meant that negative perceptions of the impact of the programme could not be explored fully from the dialogic perspective (i.e. as to whether positive or negative perceptions of tutorials correlate with positive or negative impacts). As dialogue is a central part of the pedagogy, it was decided to add two questions, the first being about access to tutorials, and the second being about the ability to discuss learning and about how supported they were perceived to be by their tutor. These were included in the main survey.

3.4.2. The main survey

The first element, notwithstanding the pilot, of the empirical study was the survey. All students who were currently on the programme, or had previously been on or graduated from the programme, were sent the link to the online survey and asked to complete it. Of the 350 emailed, there were 77 responses. Overall it was deemed that this was a big enough sample to produce a representative set of data.

The study aimed to gauge APS learners' perception of themselves as capable and knowledgeable individuals and as members of groups of workers, Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice, with an emphasis on practices being shared and developed. Overall the aim was to gauge the impact of the programme on learners' perceptions of themselves as social agents. It was interested in how individuals' personal identities grow to encompass a role as a knowledge and practice creator and as an individual consciously capable of transforming their surroundings and communities of practices. Overall it wanted to measure the learner's self-perception of social agency as a result of being an APS learner.

There were, therefore, three broad aims of the survey. Firstly, it was to identify who would be prepared to take part in follow-up research, mainly in the form of interviews. The second aim was to build up a general picture of the nature of the programme as experienced by individual learners. This included such aspects as their reasons for coming to the programme, their programme structure (ratio of work-based learning to formal taught courses), their length of experience on the programme, their age on the programme, their gender, and the dialogical nature of their programme (access to tutorial support and their control over learning). The final aim was to measure the learners' perceived impact of the programme (and the pedagogy it employs) regarding their development as practitioners and their confidence and agency (human capital). From the

data, correlations that indicate influential or causal links were examined in subsequent sections.

The main themes of the survey were as follows:

1. The range and diversity of practitioners on the programme (to get an idea of the demographic affected by the programme);
2. Reasons for choosing a work-based learning programme;
3. The extent of the experience of the programme (length of time on the programme);
4. The individualised nature of the programme in terms of ratios of work-based learning to formally taught elements;
5. The ability to negotiate and discuss learning on the part of the learner (the level of dialogue experienced between learner and tutor);
6. The level of perceived academic achievement concerning various study skills such as research, written argument, debate and use of evidence to change practices;
7. The levels of perceived achievement or development as a result of being on the programme or having completed it, especially in terms of perceived personal changes, agency (ability to change and influence work) and confidence;
8. Changes in work position perceived to have been influenced by participation in the programme;
9. The causal or influential relationship of these elements in changing the levels of impact of the programme on individuals, for example:
 - a. Length of time on the programme and perceived changes to practices and agency
 - b. Structure of the programme (ratio of work-based to taught courses) and perceived changes to practices and agency
 - c. Access to dialogue and control over learning or the perceived supportiveness of tutorials and perceived changes to practices and agency
 - d. The perceived utility or benefit of combining theory with practice and the impact that had.

In order to gather details of the learners at the time of coming onto the programme, closed questions were used. These questions focused on eliciting details such as qualifications prior to joining APS, such as age, gender, programme registered on and programme structure. These employed either multiple choices or tick box grids (where more than one answer was reasonable). Some questions were with simple yes or no answers, with the ability to respond 'don't know', or 'maybe,' where appropriate. This latter inclusion was to

ensure that respondents were not forced to make a positive binary answer if they were unsure. In addition to these questions, this section also contained open textual answers that were mainly used to allow respondents to expand on set answers. These allowed respondents to describe their work or to give reasons in support of an answer. This would allow a picture of the demographic and footprint of any perceived impacts of the programme. It would also give a picture of time on the programme, the make-up of learning and other aspects that could have a bearing on the impact of the programme and could be explored through correlations.

For questions concerning the respondents' experience on the programme or as a result of the programme, Likert-style questions were employed. They used statements where the respondents could agree or disagree, showing the strength of their opinion, 1 being strongly agree, 3 being neutral and 5 being strongly disagree. Neutral was included to allow truthful answers from those who were unsure or did not have an opinion, and the range of agreement/disagreement and strongly agree/disagree was included to allow respondents to express opinions either more mildly or more strongly in relation to each question. These statements were centred on perceptions of the students' programme facilitation or how it impacted them, for example, 'I was able to negotiate a programme relevant to my work needs' or 'I felt that I had control over my learning' to 'I don't really feel that the programme helped me to develop work-related knowledge'. The statements were varied as to being positive or negative statements, to help in preventing automatic responses conditioned by previous questions. This enabled the survey to build a picture of how learners' programmes helped them to engage with learning and if they had perceived changes in their practices, confidence or influence at work. Correlations were explored to see if there were any causal or other relationships.

For questions concerning the perceived acquisition of skills as a result of the programme, 'yes', 'no', 'maybe' answers were employed. The skills being investigated were those such as critical thinking, spoken or written argument and research skills etc. An example of a question is 'Do you feel that you gained critical thinking skills?'. This enabled the survey to build a qualitative picture of the skills perceived to have been gained and allowed for any correlations to be sought between them and other aspects of the survey.

In order for survey respondents to give an idea of their general thoughts on the programme an unrestricted comments opportunity was included so that respondents

could either expand on a previous question where no option was directly given or give any other thoughts on the programme.

3.5. The interviews

Twenty interviews were arranged. Interviewees were randomly chosen from survey respondents. When respondents submitted their survey, part of the confirmation and 'thank-you' message asked if they would be happy to be contacted to participate in further study through interview. The interviews could not be anonymous, so permissions were recorded on a separate spreadsheet in order to sever any link between the survey response and the identities contained in the contact details.

The interview was a narrative style interview. It 'consisted of a free[ly] developed impromptu narrative, stimulated by an opening question – the 'narrative-generating question' (Hopf 2004:206). This question asked the interviewee to tell their story about why they came onto the APS programme, their story as a working learner on the programme and their story as a working practitioner after having completed the programme if this stage had been yet reached (see figure 7 below). Hopf suggests, in order not to lead the narrative, that the narrative be not interfered with, and only after the narrative is complete may the interviewer use follow-up questions. These questions, according to him, should not direct the answers too much, but be based on (p.206):

1. Steering towards a particular life-phase: Could you tell me a little more about this time (e.g. childhood)?
2. Steering towards a situation mentioned in the main narrative: You mentioned earlier (the relevant situation) Could you give me a little more detail about this situation?
3. Steering a sample narrative towards an argument: Can you still remember a situation (in which your father was authoritarian, in which you lost all belief in being able to succeed, and so on)?

In practice, the interviews relied only on steering questions based on the first two example questions above, after the main narrative was completed. For example, interviewees, at the end of the interview, might be asked to give more detail on an area skipped or sketched over, such as one of the periods before, on, or after the programme. Alternatively, there might have been a particular situation mentioned where more detail might be invited, such as if a student mentioned a particular impact of an aspect of learning and might be invited to give more detail on that aspect. In order not to lead, interviewees were not asked about particular arguments they were making, and no particular impacts or emotions or values stated were directly mentioned by the interviewer who relied solely on merely asking for more details, referring only to the time period or situation, but never its potential implications.

The narrative approach produced data that consisted of actions and events that came together to produce stories (Polkinghorne 1995). This is important because it gave expression to the context and the process of development and also allowed the stories to develop, without the limitation of the themes already discussed. In other words, along with a paradigmatic approach (that is, looking for the indications and predictions raised from the aims of the programme and the predictions of the underlying pedagogical approach and practice), the wider narrative analysis will also allow the emergence of themes or issues not considered. (In practice emerging themes, especially surrounding the importance of empirical study in facilitating learning truly based in the workplace that had already emerged from the correlations, gave a nice triangulation).

The structure of the interview followed the schedule as outlined in figure 7 below. The interviewees were prompted along the lines outlined and only after they had finished their narrative, were they asked to provide more details or asked to say more about areas skirted or sketched over (see discussion above).

Before commencement of studies on the APS programme

- **Prompt learner to recount their story of beginning the APS programme in their individual context of motivation and external drivers**

During engagement with the APS programme

- **Prompt learner to recount their story of studying on the APS programme in the context of their professional practice**
-

After completing the APS programme

- **Prompt the participant to recount the story of what their professional experience is like having completed the APS programme**
-

TABLE 4: DETAILED NARRATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - LEARNER

3.6. Analysis

3.6.1 The pilot study analysis

The pilot survey was analysed simply with answers being collated by question (i.e. being content to look for potential correlations without actually making any), from the four respondents. The data was analysed in terms of the basic impact of the learning and also in terms of external influences around the subjects of demographics etc. The data was also looked at in terms of the ability to find causal or relational correlations. This was a particularly useful exercise as it highlighted the fact that more information would be needed in the main survey if the above relationships were to be explored. Please see the pilot study analysis and conclusions at the end of the 4. Methodology section.

All four respondents were able to attend interviews. These were carried out in the same fashion as outlined below in sub-section 3.6.3.

3.6.2. The main survey analysis

The opening sections of the survey dealt with personal details such as gender, age, programme registered on, programme structure (balance of work-based learning to taught modules) and prior qualifications. It also dealt with the work position of respondents on coming onto the programme and on leaving, and their reasons for choosing APS. A straightforward analysis of the data gave a good sense of who APS catered for and how and this enabled a picture of the impact of the programme as a flexible one in terms of time and content. Using the framework of flexible learner typologies produced in a study by the University of Greenwich (Jiwa, 2013), the study was able to analyse how a flexible programme could potentially have an impact on a range of typologies, though the reasons given for coming onto the programme often fell

within multiple typologies that indicated the real situatedness of learners and resisted all-encompassing categorisation of learners.

It was also analysed in terms of changes to the learners' working positions, although this was only a partial picture that indicated that change often happened. Correlations were investigated between the make-up of the programme and the educational outcomes achieved. Correlations were also explored between honours achieved and the structure of the learners' programme make-ups.

Data from the questions surrounding the perceptions of dialogic and supportive were analysed in the first instance simply in terms of numbers of respondents responding in a particular way. They were also analysed in terms of their correlations to other data gathered, such as data concerning perceived educational and skills outcomes or changes to personal development such as confidence or the ability to act in the workplace. This was done using pivot tables facilitated by computerised spreadsheet software. A similar analytical treatment was given to the latter two categories (educational and skills outcomes and personal development) where they were analysed simply in terms of numbers of types of response to questions and then as correlations between themselves and data from other categories.

Correlation results were tested using the Chi Square test. The Chi Square test works on the principle of proving, or disproving a 'null hypothesis'. In other words, the null hypothesis predicts that there should be no difference between theoretically predicted figures and those that occur in observation. For example, there are two groups, group A consisting of 50 men and group B consisting of 50 women. They are observed over the course of 24 hours as to how often they visit a toilet, to see if there is a difference in behaviour between the two groups. The null hypothesis would hold that there is no difference between the two groups and that the numbers observed would be similar (the null hypothesis discounts the likelihood that being male or female would make a difference). However, if there is a statistical difference, the Chi Square test tells us if that difference is significant, and indicates if the statistical difference is likely or not to be due to actual differences between the two groups, in this case something to do with being male or female, or if it could merely be chance. In the analysis the figures were presented in a table. For each actual observed figure, the predicted figure is presented alongside its statistical difference. The test calculates the overall significance of the statistical difference between the two groups presenting this as a 'p' number. This number, shows

the statistical probability of whether or not the difference in the figures between the two groups is due to the actual difference between the two groups being examined or whether it could just be chance. The higher the number, the less probable the outcome; the lower the number the more probable. The benchmark of 0.5 is generally accepted as the measuring point, so a statistical significance of less than that (for example, 0.1) would suggest that the difference in figures for the two groups was due to the actual differences in the two groups being examined, rather than just due to natural variation based on chance. Therefore, testing in this way helped interpretation of the figures by making it clearer if the statistical difference observed was based on real phenomena rather than chance fluctuations.

Before the main survey went out, a pilot study was conducted. This study highlighted deficiencies in the questions that would have limited the ability of correlations to be investigated. Please see the discussion of the pilot study before the end of the methodology section.

3.6.3. The interview analysis

The survey analysis was designed to give a picture of the overall impact of the APS programme and then to see if there were any correlations that gave a sense of the dynamics of that impact (i.e. what interactions or processes that were taking place that contributed to that impact). The questions were designed to be as wide as possible to enable correlations to emerge that might not have been considered prior to the survey, though they were nonetheless based upon examining impact in line with the programme outcomes and the predictions from the theoretical argument. Therefore, the purpose of the interviews was twofold: firstly, from a highly personal and contextualised qualitative perspective to put flesh on the bones of the survey finding (especially concerning the dynamics of the learning that had, or had not, an impact on the learners) and serve to triangulate that findings. Secondly, because the comments of the interviewees were not constrained or guided, other than by the initial narrative prompting comments discussed and below, to allow for other themes to emerge.

To understand the social agency aspects of the narratives, they were analysed paying attention to Dollard's criteria for the analysis of the components of life history, in the context of the APS course and the interviewees' communities of practice. Polkinghorne (1995) suggests that the criteria be used as a guide to assessing the development of

narrative and it seems appropriate to assessing the areas of study in the thesis (see Table 7). The idea was to get a sense of the process of personal change the learner had gone through, and the mechanisms that caused the changes and the order they happened in and the impact on the individual, in terms of social agency that was the result.

-
- **The cultural context of the narrative events including values, social rules and meaning systems**
 - **The 'embodied nature' of the central character including factors that might influence their personal goals and 'life concerns'**
 - **The influence of 'significant other people' affecting the actions and goals of the central character through dialogic interactions**
 - **The choices and actions of the central character and their movement towards outcomes and what had a bearing on those movements or actions**
 - **How the narrative happened in a 'bounded temporal period' with a beginning, middle and end i.e. starting from a position, going through change and coming to some kind of conclusion**
 - **That the narrative provides a meaningful explanation of the characters responses and actions**
-

TABLE 5: *DOLLARD'S ADAPTED CRITERIA* (CITED IN POLKINGHORNE 1995:16-18 AND ADAPTED BY THE AUTHOR OF THIS THESIS)

3.7. Ethics

Ethical considerations of the research concern the confidentiality, privacy and potential for conflicts of interest, especially where both the learner and line manager or other representatives of the employer are involved. These issues were fully considered in the design of questionnaires and interviews. The study began only after approval from the University of Greenwich Ethics Committee.

All participants in the survey were anonymous and were not individually identified. All interviewees were assigned anonymous designations from the outset. This will allow for the individual narratives to be tracked by the reader without being able to identify the actual respondent, or other such things as workplaces, professional backgrounds, or other people etc.

3.8. Pilot study – initial indications

The pilot survey was sent out to five randomly-chosen learners studying on the APS programmes. By chance, the five students were all studying on the undergraduate programmes (Foundation degree in APS and Bachelors top-up). Four responses were received.

Of the four respondents, all were interviewed in a follow-up session. The respondents will be named A, B, C and D. Respondent A, was a learner progressing from level 4 to level 5 of her foundation degree. Respondent B, was approaching the end of her Foundation programme at the time of the survey, and respondent C, had graduated with Merit from her foundation degree. Respondent D, had graduated with a B.A. in Applied Professional Studies with First Class honours. He had come to the programme at level 6 after obtaining 240 credits at levels four and five elsewhere.

Respondent designation	Programme and level	Sex
A	Foundation degree end of level 4 moving to level 5	Female
B	About to complete foundation degree (end of level 5)	Female
C	Graduated -Foundation Degree with Merit	Female
D	Graduated – B.A. APS First Class honours (top up from previous credit taken elsewhere)	Male

TABLE 6: RESPONDENT DESIGNATION, PROGRAMME AND LEVEL, AND SEX

3.8.1. Gender and age impact profiles

From the random sample of five, one was a male and the others female (see figure 9 above). All students were mature. As APS is aimed at mature students, the resultant 100% of subjects being mature, that is, aged over 21, was therefore not a surprise. The 80% of subjects being women is also not a surprise, given our experience of applicants to the programme mostly being women. What is interesting is that the demographic represents a possible impact, if the APS is proved to have an impact, in a particular social sector.

Trends in HE show a higher participation of women in most subjects. In a study carried out by Universities UK (2012), it showed that subjects such as veterinary science, subjects allied to medicine and education were populated predominately by female learners, while engineering and computer sciences were predominantly male. Although APS is not subject related, using as it does, the learner's workplace as the focus of study, the sectors they come from seem to mirror this. Of the five randomly chosen subjects, four were female and three of those were in education jobs (with the remaining subject being in the voluntary sector but pursuing business-related subjects), and one was a male who was in the private sector and working in the IT department of his firm. The full study did reflect this gender profile.

As mentioned, the ages of the four respondents placed them squarely in the HE definition of mature learners, as being over 21, and in also the more generally accepted definition of mature, ranging as they do between 34 and 52 years of age. According to Universities UK (2012), the number of students above the age 30 was significantly dropping off from around 740,000 in 2004 to approximately 690,000 a year towards the end of 2011 (an approximate drop of 50,000 learners. Also, the number of students aged between 25 and 29, though consistently rising until 2009, stayed the same between then and the end of 2011. The Office of Fair Access (2013) have warned that part-time students, including large numbers of mature students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have dropped significantly (by 105,000 or 40% in 2012/13) prompting their director, Professor Les Ebdon, to state that this was an important concern. If the study proves APS to have a positive impact, then this impact will have been focused on part-time and mature learners which will, in turn, have a wider social impact.

In line with the growth of numbers of women in education, there has been a growth of women in the workplace, and though there is greater representation of women in some areas of work (as discussed above), there is an unequal representation of women in managerial positions. In October to December of 2012, the figure for women in management was 34.8%, higher than the EU average but lower than the potential for women's participation at this level. In that figure, there was a higher representation of women occupying management positions in the lower skills occupations (Office of National Statistics, 2014). While the attitudes of those responsible for recruitment need to change, empowerment of women to enable change is central too. For Kabeer (2012:7), empowerment of women concerns (among others things) the two aspects mentioned below, which are also central to the ethos and educational purposes of APS:

‘First of all, there [is] a focus on women’s subjectivity and consciousness (‘the power within’) as a critical aspect of the processes of change. Secondly... emphasised [is] the importance of valued resources (material, human as well as social) to women’s capacity to exercise greater control over key aspects of their lives and to participate in the wider societies (‘the power to’).’

Empowerment is related to the changes in women's lives (and women do not represent a homogenous group), their self and social identity, their willingness or not to accept their social positions and stereotypes, and their ability to take control over their life strategies. It is related to the ability to re-negotiate their relationship with those who are important to them, and their capability to participate on an equal scale to men in reforming and reshaping the societies they live in, which in turn will encourage a more democratic distribution of power and possibilities (Kabeer, 2012). Given the representation of women on the APS programme, if the programme does have an impact on their agency, then its impact will be further focused on this important group.

3.8.2. Reasons for coming on to the programme

Reasons for coming to the programme seem to align with two main drives – one is the flexibility to fit learning around work, and the second is the ability to focus that learning directly on work and life requirements without having to study irrelevant areas that just happen to be there as part of a structured programme. This may be part of the reason for the drop in part-time learners, as this kind of flexibility is not available to the extent offered by APS elsewhere. A comment made by UK Universities (2012) indicates that provision of more flexible learning that enables people in full-time work to take up study may help

to start to reverse this trend. The Office for Fair Access (2013) have also stated that flexibility and the ability of HE institutions to work with employers and communities in creating this provision, will be central to their considerations to funding access initiatives. Therefore, part-time mature students and those in work have been highlighted as an important area that needs to be represented in HE. The make-up of the respondents in the pilot survey seems to echo this.

Did you consider doing a fully 'taught' programme (e.g. a pre-existing programme such as a B.A. in English or some such), and what was your reason for choosing work-based learning instead?
D: Work-based learning could be tuned to my actual work-based projects.
C: No. The foundation degree gave me a flexible option to undertaking further learning around subjects relating to my work. I liked the idea of working at my own pace and still being able to do my job and earn money.
B: I did consider a fully taught programme of a business management nature. However, I would have to study areas of business management that were of no interest to me. I would not have been able to develop business knowledge from the perspective of civil society activities.
A: Yes I did but was unable to find one that I could fit in around work and could afford.

TABLE 7: PILOT STUDY RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE CHOICE OF APS OVER OTHER 'TAUGHT' DEGREE PROGRAMMES

As can already be seen from figure 10, flexibility is seen as a primary drive for coming onto a work-based negotiated programme. This flexibility concerns two things – content and time. The programme was attractive to respondent A because she was able to fit it in around her work (and it is assumed that she means in terms of time). Respondent C also thought that time was a significant aspect preferring to learn whilst working. For three of the learners (for two of them exclusively – B and D), the flexibility of content was important; that the programme could be personalised and made directly relevant to their work situations. The subject areas of structured and lectured programmes were seen as too broad, or not specific enough.

This latter point was again brought up and developed during the interview. Respondent C stated that having a programme that would 'feed' into the knowledge and practices she required for work was important. Respondent D developed this, stating that control of the programme itself was important:

'...because I think without it, I would probably lose interest because I'm getting topics presented to me to learn about, what to research about that are not necessarily connecting with it because it's of no particular personal or professional interest me. That for me was like a real huge plus – I had found a degree where I could select the subjects I wanted to study, the subjects I want to learn about, so that hopefully they will steer me in the direction that I want to go professionally and also socially as well.'

These views suggest that before coming onto the programme learners perceived that the utility and relevance of learning were important. Respondent D was even more positive in this in that he saw relevance was particularly linked to his motivation, or what Barnett (see the earlier chapters) might call the will to learn. For D, it was a personal thing related to his life and work situation, and this highlights that specific relevance was imperative to him and was perceived as being one that would sustain him; an important enough aspect for him to want to be able to exercise some control over it.

The other area of flexibility that was flagged up by one of the respondents, was the ability to use prior credits. APS is possibly unique as a programme in that it accepts credit, treating it as an indication of 'graduateness' rather than merely an indication of subject knowledge. Respondent D had recently completed the BA top-up part of the programme and stated that he felt that he had previously let himself down by not completing his degree. D went on to explain that since having the degree, he has been able to participate more confidently and have his views more readily listened to (resulting in some work success to be discussed later) in meetings. D also agreed with the earlier respondent that the nature of the programme 'fitted like a glove' to his requirements. D was to carry on with a 'computer' course but decided the relevance of negotiated study would be more convincing to D's employer (who would be paying), and directly relevant to him. In this case, it has been important to not only build on D's existing qualifications, but also to directly relate the learning to D's aspirations at work. It will be interesting if the theme of motivation through flexibility, credit accumulation and development (the asset model), will continue through the wider survey, in the rationales for coming into the programme and also as a sustaining force for the learners during the programme.

3.8.3. Perceived issues with the programme

Only one respondent, respondent C, directly mentioned an issue with the programme's delivery in the survey and interview. She mentioned that early in the programme it lacked structure, and she indicated that more guidance and more structured courses would help a learner in the initial stages due to the complexity of the programme being daunting in its early stages. Once she had understood and practised the more negotiated forms of learning (i.e. work-based projects), she felt that she was then able to be more independent. This is perhaps indicative of the phenomenon that learning through experience takes time.

The other issue mentioned was administration. APS is a non-standard degree and as with any other similar programmes, it does not always fit pre-existing administrative structures, which are often computerised and inflexible (as is the one that administers APS). Although this has not really been included in the remit of this project, dealing as it does with the effectiveness of the programme as exercising a pedagogical and philosophical approach to learning, it is predicted that the wider survey will highlight some colouring of the efficacy of the programme in the perceptions of some respondents, related to the issues of administration.

3.8.4. Perceptions of social agency and empowerment

Do you feel you have gained in any of the following skills as a result of your involvement in the programme?	Yes	No	Maybe
Research (empirical - such as interviewing, questionnaires, observations)	3	0	1
Research (literature)	4	0	0
Debate	3	0	1
Recognition of own skills and experience	3	0	1
Articulation of spoken argument	3	0	1
Articulation of written argument	3	0	1
Using evidence to change practice	2	0	2

TABLE 8: RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION OF SKILLS GAINED AS A RESULT OF THE PROGRAMME

As the above responses suggest, overall the respondents had a positive perception of their acquisition of the skills listed, with no respondent replying 'no', indicating that they perceived themselves to have not gained any of the skills. Again, the two students with less time on the programme were the most unsure. It could be interesting to link answers to level (length of experience on the programme), to see if confidence rises with time. The pilot seems to indicate that students perceive themselves as having skills that would influence abilities in the workplace.

Harré's (1983) model, shows the learner as developing their identity through the intake of knowledge and practices from the conventional wisdom of the collective, and appropriating it and adapting it to their own circumstances. Once done, this is then 'published' through practices in the public sphere of the workplace or other community spaces. Knowledge and practice deemed worthy are then absorbed back into the collective, developing the collectively held knowledge and practices in turn. To transform one's practice and have them recognised positively by others should, it could reasonably be argued, have an effect on confidence, and the following seems to bear that out.

3.8.5. The impact of the programme on confidence

Figure 12 below, shows the responses to questions concerning the respondents' perceived changes in themselves, alongside their ability to negotiate a programme relevant to their work and lives. One student, respondent A, did not see themselves as a 'different person'. The respondent in question was half way through the foundation degree at the time of the survey, and so it would be interesting to link answers in the main survey to time on the programme to see if there is a general correlation. The remaining three students saw themselves as having undergone change (one agreeing and two strongly agreeing) – again there seems to be a suggestion that this answer is linked to seniority on the programme.

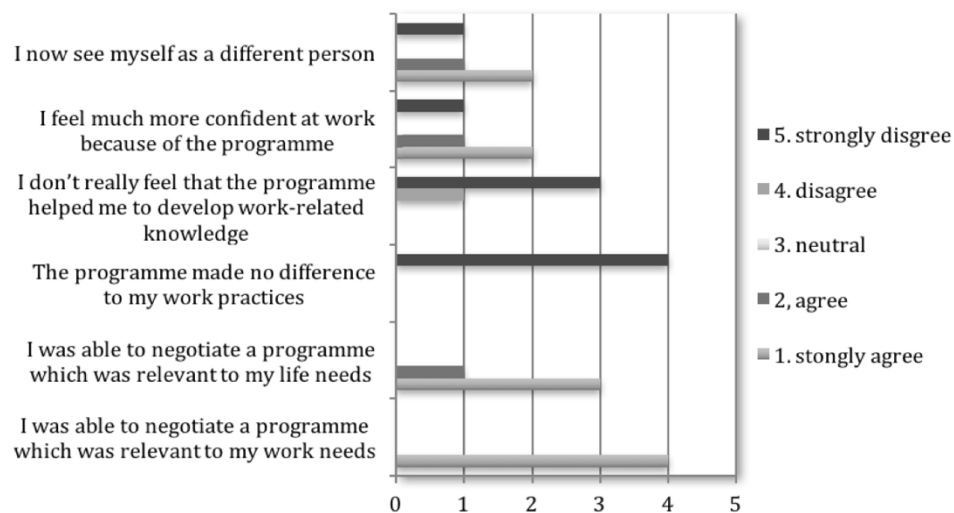


FIGURE 7: PERCEIVED CHANGES IN SELF ALONGSIDE THE ABILITY NEGOTIATE

Feeling confident at work appears to mirror the previous question. The implications may be similar too, and it would be interesting to see any correlations with the length of time on the programme in the larger study. At the interview, the learner (respondent A), that claimed to have been least changed as a person, stated that she now had the confidence to give advice, based on the knowledge she had gained thus far on the programme. Respondent C, who had completed her foundation degree, stated:

'It's all very well that you know the theory, but unless you can get out there and do it, then you're always going to be held back. As a result of knowing I did this, and knowing I can achieve this and working to the standard I did, yes, this has given me confidence'.

This appears to link theory with practice, and that confidence is born of being able to test knowledge in practice, and be able to see it working. Both students appear to have achieved a greater level of empowerment through being confident enough to act and to see perhaps the real-life outcome of that action.

When it came to the statements 'I feel much more confident at work' and 'I now see myself as a new person', the answers were similar. One respondent agreed, to both statements with two respondents strongly agreeing with both statements. One completely disagreed with both of the statements. This exception was either an anomaly (the student chose the wrong option), or it could indicate a correlation between positive responses and time on the programme. The three that gave positive responses had all completed their programmes (two had completed the Foundation Degree, and the other one had completed the B.A.). The negative answer came from the respondent who had spent the least time on the programme. In the main survey, it would be interesting to see if the

correlations play out over the larger sample, showing if experience on the programme has to build up for it to have a visible impact on the student self-assessment of confidence and identity. This is important as it may help to confirm a central tenet of the programme that experience is central to learning.

What programme were you/are you on?	When did you complete your studies?	If completed, what award did you receive?	I feel much more confident at work because of the programme	I now see myself as a different person
D: B.A./B.Sc. APS	03/2012	B.A./B.Sc. with 1st class honours	2	2
C: Foundation degree APS	current	Still on programme/awaiting award	1	1
B: Foundation degree APS	06/2013	Still on programme/awaiting award	1	1
A: Foundation degree APS	current	Still on programme/awaiting award	5	5

TABLE 9: LENGTH ON PROGRAMME AND PERCEPTIONS OF SELF

Confidence also seemed to be an issue, either explicit or implicit, in the responses to the question, 'Do you think your workplace and or colleagues have benefited from you doing the programme?', and its follow-up question of why they may have benefited. The confidence to put forward creative ideas (i.e. a confidence based on learning, experience and skills facilitated by the programme), is explicitly present in two of the four responses. All of the respondents answered yes to the initial question on whether the programme has had an effect on their workplace colleagues. This is also very important regarding social agency, and the programme's aim for learners becoming not only knowledgeable but also capable and able to effect change, improve practices and solve problems, but also importantly to pass it on – to publish practices (Harré, 1983).

3.8.6. Knowledge creation – personal practice transformation and workplace transformation

Do you think your workplace and/or your colleagues have benefited from you doing the programme?	With regard to the above question, can you briefly explain how your workplace and/or colleagues have benefited? Or why not?
A: Yes	I can articulate myself far better and am more confident when discussing issues plus I feel I can guide the students more as I can help them understand the need for education and as my awareness of education has grown I can pass this on. I understand in depth aspects of students and colleagues so can work better with them.
B: Yes	Definitely benefits all round. Overall confidence. My ability to put forward more creative ideas as a result of learning more about the subject matter. Academic writing skills. Ability to research and investigate to find out answers to problems.
C: Yes	The workplace and colleagues have benefited by gaining relevant information that was previously unknown to them. In addition, staff became aware of new and more effective work practices.
D: Yes	The projects affected marketing to consumers for the websites, generated additional sales and guided the whole corporate identity of an 18m company. I can say they definitely had a positive effect.

TABLE 10: BENEFIT OF LEARNING TO WORKPLACE AND/OR COLLEAGUES

In the pilot survey the responses were unanimously in agreement that the respondents were able to negotiate a programme that was relevant to their work needs and were only slightly less emphatic about it being relevant to their life needs. The responses indicated a general view that work-related knowledge was developed, and a difference had been made to personal work practices. They also indicated that the general perception of the relevance of the programme to individual needs was good.

When asked if colleagues had benefited from their learning on the programme there was a unanimous response of yes. The nature of situated learning and teaching on APS appears to have been valuable to the respondents. Communication and articulation in the workplace, and specific to the workplace, appear important along with the application. The ability to pass on new and creative ideas and practices also seem important and alludes to the development of new knowledge in specific contexts. The responses indicate not only a perception of personal ability in relation to colleagues and the workplace but also the ability to move beyond the personal and to influence practices.

3.8.7. Motivation and the will to learn

Relevance seems to be important to all of the learners surveyed and interviewed. Respondent B, stated that 'I was starting out with this high level of enthusiasm simply because I thought I could design this degree to my area of interest. I'm free to do it, so I can select the topics.' All of the students seem to have valued or value their learning being situated in the workplace. The responses shown in figure 14 seem to show a perceived benefit for the learners' workplaces ranging from transforming practices and influencing events and developments, to the ability to articulate themselves in speech and writing and to be able to put forward creative ideas. That these things may be sustained motivational forces is born out in respondent D's interview comment:

'This is something I love doing, being asked to teach people in the company. I was asked to set up a programme in America for other people looking after the websites there. I had weekly seminars where I taught them to optimise the sites. I like to pass on the knowledge – I haven't just held it all in to me. I get a kick out of seeing the effects elsewhere in the company too.'

Relevance, therefore, must be a sustained motivation to learn even more so when combined with real-life positive outcomes and recognition as discussed earlier. It is also attached to how the learner wants to see themselves as a person – the will to become.

Allied to this, is the motivational force provided by growing confidence in ability and capability. At interview, respondent A recounted her experience of previous study (at NVQ level) where an empathetic tutor had helped her to reflect on the importance of her job and had raised her self-esteem. This, in turn, had given her the confidence to apply for higher education, and to overcome a fear of failure. She was able to develop that confidence on the APS programme,

'The fact that the programme has given me the confidence to voice what I want to voice is huge to me. I have sat in on parent-governor meetings, and a book or writer has been mentioned, and I think, I've read that! I would have previously thought though, I'm not that person, I'm not you, the big head teacher, clever... but now I have the confidence to join in.'

Relevance is also perceived to be embedded in the development of confidence. According to respondent C earlier, it was not enough to be theoretically strong, you had to be able to use it and this she identified with the development of her confidence.

Respondent D also mentioned at the interview the confidence to participate in a board meeting and his identification of himself as a capable person, because his work had a real effect and was recognised as having been positively transformative. Therefore, the intertwining of relevant theory and practice resulting in the building of confidence, has been a deep motivational force for learning for these initial respondents.

Attached to the development of knowledge, is the development of identity. If knowledge is seen as the identification of the significance of facts and information to specific contextual requirements and values, then identity, which is just knowledge about oneself, is also highly contextual. Respondent A, indicated through her interview narrative that there was a gulf in the perception of qualified teachers (degree holders) and non-qualified teaching assistants (T.A.s), with T.A.s being taken less seriously. Getting her degree is part of the drive to improve her identity in that respect – to be taken seriously,

‘I wanted to prove to the people that I have a degree, that I could do what they were doing. It has now become personal – at the beginning it was a piece of paper, but now I know it is lots of pieces of paper! I know myself, and I could not put myself through this if it was not for me. I have come to respect it for what it is and what it means about me.’

This is despite her saying in the survey that as a person she felt unchanged. This was also resonant in D’s response about being taken seriously and being pleased about being able to take part in board meetings, and that his views were listened to and acted upon. Respondent C, identified herself as the ‘go to person’ in her department. All four students identified themselves as capable individuals who were able to have an impact on their workplace, evident across a range of survey questions and interview narratives outlined above. Barnett argued that the will to learn went beyond simple motivation – motivation he argued could be external and related to external pressures whereas will, was more intrinsic to the student in the sense that it may or may not be rational and was related to the student’s developing identity in accordance with their existing and developing values. This ‘will’, appears to be evident in the respondents who wish to identify as capable people and wish to see themselves as people who can affect change. It is hoped that the main survey and interviews will show a similar trend.

The literature review positioned the notion of ‘authentic uncertainty’ within this developmental process as an important part of learning – an ability to critically and developmentally reflect on practices and their value. This seems to be present too as all

of the respondents at some time or another, have positioned their learning as essential to their developing practices. At interview, respondent A said her learning informed her interaction with her pupils and was able to contribute to a similar standard to her colleagues (previously referred to as 'clever'). Respondent B, was able to relate her learning and study directly to her work in a charity, producing guides informed by her study for others to use, and said that the reflective skills she had learned were a big thing for her. Respondent C, was able to use the programme to improve and develop her knowledge on employee engagement and was able and confident enough to disseminate this to her vice chancellor in her university (where she is employed in human resources). Respondent D said he wanted to 'back up' his knowledge and practices, and improve his credibility in the workplace as a result. All of the students are demonstrating a willingness to develop firstly their knowledge and practices, secondly to validate their knowledge and experience through research and study, and then lastly, to put that resultant knowledge into practice. In short, they have all to some extent shown an awareness of the value of their learning directly to themselves and their communities of practice, which has been important to their developing identities within those communities. This appears to be a motivational force.

3.8.8. Empowerment

All of the respondents over the period of this discussion have claimed developments in their knowledge, communications, skills practices and confidence, qualities that can reasonably be deduced to have empowered them in their communities of practice. Respondent B perhaps put this most powerfully at interview:

'When you had actually got the practice and the theory together, it somehow brings you to a place where you consolidate your understanding of how things work. And I like that. It's a matter of depth. And it feels empowering as well because you have the knowledge of something but when you have the environment in which to exercise that knowledge, you had the opportunity to build on that knowledge, build your skills. You learn to sort of work out problems as you go along because the programme is also integrating that aspect of problem-solving. So, because you have those elements of problem-solving within the degree programme, you're gaining your knowledge and you have your practice, and you're marrying the two together identifying solutions, so that you can become more competent and confident about what you're doing and be able to contribute something in a competent and confident way in the working environment. Ultimately you can be of some value.'

She echoes the views of respondent C, in the section about confidence above, who says that unless you can actually 'do it' you would be held back. She felt that she had been able to pass on new and effective practices, and saw an ability to offer creative ideas. Respondent D felt that he had been taken seriously and had been able to influence quite substantial areas of his company practice, including the online publication of their core values and the way they run their websites, which had spread beyond his immediate context to subsidiary companies. This range of influence indicates, at least across this small sample, the ability of the programme to enhance the learners' influence at work and thus empower them through their enhanced knowledge, ideas and practices.

3.8.9. Recommendations for the main study

The pilot survey identified where the programme worked well. However, more questions were needed not only to identify if aspects of the programme were a success, but also by what mechanism this happened, or as the case might be, did not happen. The ability of students to address the content of the learning, the structure of the programme and the ability to use the learning in practice was there, but apart from two questions on the ability to negotiate a programme, there were not many questions about the way in which dialogue supported learning. This was a rather an omission given that dialogue is argued as being central to a pedagogy such as the one employed by APS. It was therefore decided to add questions to the survey that delved more deeply into the scheduling and quality of tutorials in line with the programme ethos of negotiated and contextualised learning. This would allow correlations to be made that would help identify the mechanisms of learning on the programme.

At interview, the respondents were able to indicate in some instances where their learning had had concrete outcomes. In the main survey, the interview schedule will be slightly amended to encourage interviewees to provide examples of social agency where possible.

3.8.10. Pilot study summary

The literature review argued in a theoretical way that knowledge was more than just facts, but were facts and information brought together to form a significance for action. It argued that the way knowledge is formed in the individual, is specific to their own contextual

'being' and therefore situated. Therefore, learning, the turning of information into knowledge that enables action, it was argued, is also situated. The argument that followed from that, was that teaching and learning should be seen as situated in learners' contexts using it as a focus for their learning. The APS programme aims to use these arguments to inform the way it facilitates its learners to learn. It was hoped that by situating the learning, by giving the learners the control to negotiate programmes of learning directly in line with their needs and work requirements, that this would tap into the learners' motivation and will to learn and enhance the depth and actual utility of their learning. This, in turn, would strengthen their standing in the workplace and empower them to be able to transform positively their workplace through the study and application of relevant, situated and creative forms of knowledge and practices.

The pilot study was a very small sample, and the results must be viewed in this light. However, the sample was randomly chosen, and any continuity, or discontinuity, may well be indicative of the wider survey carried out over a much larger sample. The pilot study seems to indicate positively the efficacy of the programme as a pedagogy using the situated nature of knowledge creation and application as a central influence on the way it facilitates learning. The respondents all appear to have benefited from the situated nature of their learning, firstly in its application, and then in the depth of learning that includes the ability to act (capability). A sense of developed confidence seems to have run through their responses, alongside a sense of motivation based on the relevance and application of their work. Social capital has been indicated but further interviews will ask interviewees to support their claims with examples, when social capital or agency is mentioned. It is hoped that enhanced questions concerning tutorial quality in accordance with the programme's pedagogical principles of dialogue, may highlight any issues, positive or negative, in the way this works. Empowerment seems to be a central issue, and the pilot seems to have flagged this up as a primary benefit of the programme, i.e. the increase in social agency. It is hoped that the wider study will further illuminate this and the way it comes about.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Section introduction

The main study is basically analysed in terms of its initial findings. In other words, a relatively simple analysis is made of the answers to the survey questions in order to get an overview of the respondents (who they were, what programme they were on and how it was structured, reasons for study and their perception of the impact of the various elements of the methods of facilitation and learning). As part of this analysis, the group of eight respondents who would not recommend this programme to others are also basically analysed as a separate group. This is so as to get an initial overview from that perspective and to ensure that it was not drowned out by the overall findings that turned out on the whole to be positive.

After a brief summary of the basic analysis, the study moves on to examine correlations. Firstly, the study looks into the role of dialogue as a cornerstone of this type of pedagogy. It assesses access to tutorials and then looks at the links between dialogic tutorials and learners' perceptions of control, ownership and relevance of learning, and of perceptions of support. It also looks at the links between learners' perceptions of their tutorials and the learners' perceived achievement of learning outcomes and the development of skills. The role of situated learning that dialogue facilitates is then examined in terms of the opportunities and initial engagement it provides across a range of student typologies. The stories of the interviewees begin to emerge here as their narratives at the time of coming onto the programme are looked into in relation to the importance of situated learning to their learning aspirations. This part of the study begins to reveal the impact of APS as a flexible pedagogy that engages learners in their specific life contexts.

The study then looks at the relationship between the way learners' programmes were structured (the ratio of taught to work-based learning modules) and their achieved awards, and the ability to negotiate a degree relevant to work and its resultant impact on critical thinking skills and empirical study skills, that appear to be linked. The study then goes on to look at the relationships between the motivation and will to learn and relevance to practice in real-life. Themes under this sub-heading include aspects that arose in the theoretical discussion such as ownership and engagement (motivation and the will to learn), the publication of practices, the relationships between skills and their outcomes in

practice. In the examination of these themes of motivation/will to learn and relevance, the relevance of empirical skills to the development of crucial thinking begins to emerge in earnest. The study ends with examining how the various impacts of the programme and its pedagogy discussed, result in social agency, that is, the confidence to act.

4.2. Main survey basic analysis

This initial analysis enabled an overview to be gained to the questions of whether or not the pedagogy employed by APS programmes, had an impact in the ways described by the research questions and the demographic upon which that impact acted. The questions were, in the first instance, simply analysed in terms of the basic numbers who answered one way or another to each question. The survey covered three main areas, firstly to do with the nature of the learners coming onto the programme – their demographic and reason for study on APS (this latter being analysed with the help of the typologies mentioned in the Methodology). The second dealt with access to and supportiveness of dialogic tutorials and the ability to control and negotiate relevant learning. The third area covered the perceived benefit of learning in the workplace and development of skills that support social agency, such as research skills, spoken and written argument, critical thinking skills etc. Perceptions of changes to personhood and confidence to act were also basically analysed.

4.2.1. Gender demographic

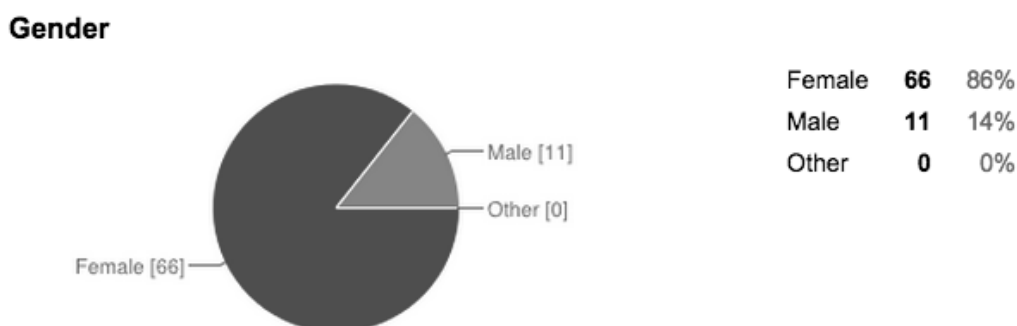


FIGURE 8: GENDER MAKEUP OF RESPONDENTS

Age range: Youngest 21-oldest 64. Most respondents were in the 30-50 range. The majority were female perhaps indicating a desire to return to study after childcare in many instances. Even so, the demographic is working learners, who are mature and require

part-time learning, and possibly flexible learning. This is significant as a programme that offers flexible, work-based learning may be an important offer to a demographic that is considered under-represented by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and also that it contributes to life-long learning.

4.2.2. Respondent prior qualifications and work situation

What was your highest qualification level before coming onto the APS programme?

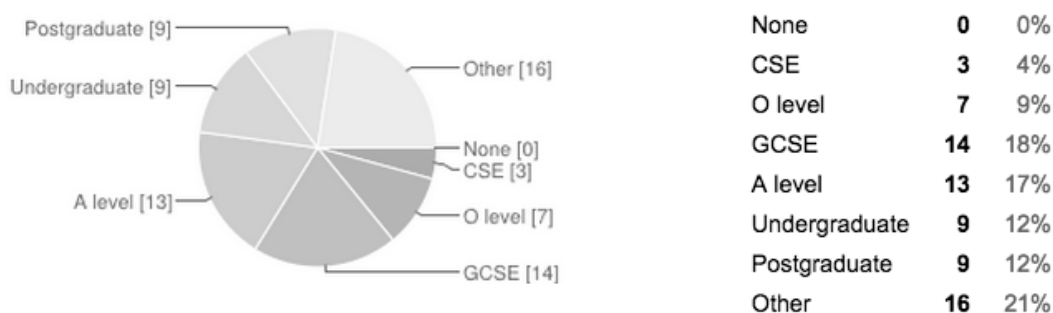


FIGURE 9: QUALIFICATIONS OF RESPONDENTS ON ENTRY TO THE PROGRAMME

As might be expected, there is a spread of prior qualifications. To come onto the postgraduate programmes, bachelor degrees, or postgraduate qualifications or equivalent, would be needed and so it is no surprises that GCSE, A-level, undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications are represented. This also reflects the varied professional levels that learners are drawn from.

Work on coming onto programme

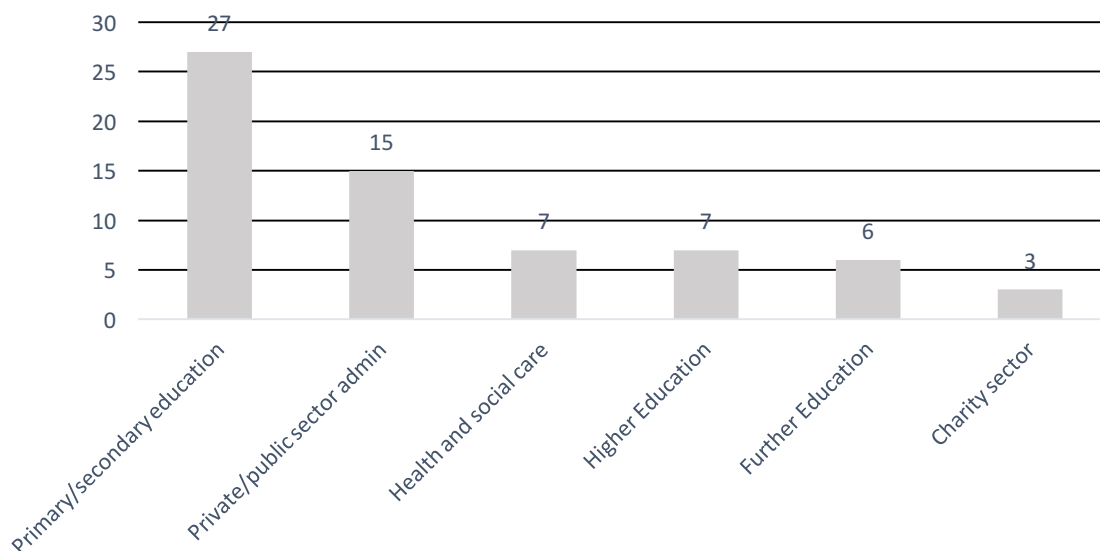


FIGURE 10: RESPONDENTS' WORK AT ENTRY TO THE PROGRAMME

65 of the 77 respondents gave their working practices at the start of their programme.

The programme supports a variety of working practitioners:

- 27 respondents, by far the largest group, were engaged in primary and secondary education, in roles ranging from teaching assistants/higher level teaching assistants, unqualified and qualified teachers, through learning support (special educational needs) and behaviour management specialists and pastoral managers, to a head teacher. The biggest section among these was those who were unqualified teachers or teaching assistants.
- The next largest group worked in varying organisations, business and public sector, in administration or related posts. Respondents in this group were 15 in number. These ranged from general administration, through financial administration, to HR and training, to project controlling. This group also included a web-marketing administrator.
- The next two groups in size, each numbered seven respondents. The first group was from the health and social care sector. Practitioners included nurses, senior nurses, a mental health care practitioner, an oral health care promoter and physiotherapist. The second was made up of respondents working in higher education (HE) either as lecturers, quality assurance managers or laboratory managers.
- After that a group of six respondents were in further education having a similar make-up to those in the HE group.
- Three respondents were in the charity sector, one a volunteer, another a development worker and the final one a senior charity executive.
- The final group of three were in generic senior management and consultancy roles.

These results show that the programme has attracted a fairly broad range of practitioners with potentially a broad set of reasons for coming onto the programme. It also gives an idea of the impact footprint in practitioners who are looking to gain higher qualifications in line with their work. The number of women in the particular jobs, if they can be accurately allied to subject areas, broadly matches that of the general university distribution of women in subjects. However, where the footprint of impact differs, is that it caters for mature students who are working and whose actual work roles, do not fit entirely into neat subject areas. In other words, it caters for mature students who are actual practitioners, as opposed to subject specialists. The vast majority of those who are on the programme, are women. Therefore, the added impact is that the programme allows for women, who

have perhaps previously been looking after children, to re-enter education whilst being in work.

The reasons for coming onto the programme were fairly varied. In 2013, the University of Greenwich Centre for Work-Based Learning, carried out a study of its learners to classify them into typologies (University of Greenwich, 2013). The purpose of this study was to improve the University's offer of flexible learning opportunities (of which the APS suite of programmes form a part). The typologies of flexible learners developed has provided a useful set of categories that help build a picture of APS learners.

Respondents were asked their initial reasons for coming onto the programme and their answers were mapped to the typologies as presented in the table below.

Typology:	Description:	Number of respondents:
Returners to H.E.	Returning to HE to obtain a higher-level award.	10
Career Builders	In work, looking for career progression and recognising new skills and qualifications are essential. Seeking new knowledge to meet perceived needs	27 – gave only career building as their reasons (therefore differentiated from personal developers)
Second Chancers	No previous HE experience but seeking access to qualifications and personal improvement.	3
Re-Trainers	Change of career path.	1
Earners and Learners, as an alternative to traditional HE	Earn and learn while in employment as an alternative to full-time higher education.	0
Personal Developers	Driven by personal interest to extend their knowledge. Learning is a priority and 'serious leisure'. The qualification is not so important; the experiential aspects of the intellectual journey and social ambience are paramount.	22 – personal reasons were given as primary drives to learn, though the knowledge of work was also often central and so this category may be closely aligned to career builders
Employer Workforce Development	Employers seeking to up-skill employees to deliver strategic business improvement objectives. Would like to co-create curriculum or influence content.	10

TABLE 11: RESPONDENT TYPOLOGY

Only one respondent, mentioned a change of career path (re-trainer), indicating that the majority were looking for work-based learning, thus justifying the situated nature of the programme in work. Most of the respondents were actively seeking to learn, being career builders, personal developers, 'second chancers' or 'earners and learners' with a smaller but significant group of twelve, who stated employer-led development, as their main driver. It could be argued that all learners on the programme, wanted work-based learning for some reason or another (or they may have chosen another part-time degree programme), ranging from personal, career-related, or employer demanded or encouraged. The typologies range from intrinsic to extrinsic pressures, thus justifying the situated nature of the programme. All of the respondents seem to mention reasons of flexibility in the subject area, the application of theory to practice, or life orientated or time and cost orientated reasons. APS's flexibility therefore, impacts in a range of ways; it allows a range of learners, who come under the mature part-time category, to access HE level education. This begins to give an idea of how APS as a negotiated and flexibly delivered programme was able to cater for, and therefore have an impact on, a diverse range of situated learners. Later, in sub-section 4.9, these reason were compared to the reason given for not choosing a taught programme, and the picture that emerges there demonstrates even more the complexity of learner situations.

4.2.3. APS programme undertaken and structure

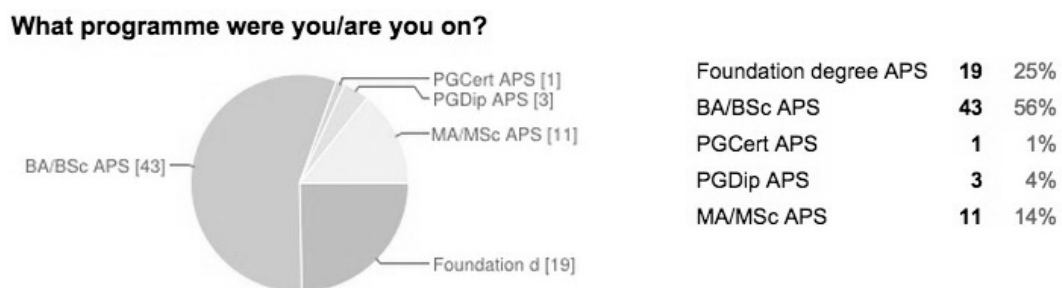


FIGURE 11: PROGRAMMES UNDERTAKEN BY RESPONDENTS AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY

Over half, 56%, of the respondents are, or were on, the B.A./B.Sc. top-up stage of the programme. The next largest proportion is the foundation degree at 25% of the respondents. The postgraduate elements follow a similar ratio, but with significantly smaller numbers. This may have some implication for the continuing impact of the programme. As part of the discussion of results, reasons for this, such as possible market changes or issues around the introduction of full-cost fees, will be explored.

The figures also show that responses came from across the range of programmes, and the large number of B.A./B.Sc. indicates that many of these students will have had some experience of the programme they are on. The table below gives a breakdown of respondents by the length of time on the APS programme. This data provides an idea of the experience that the learners had had. It shows that there were a variety of entry points and therefore, a variety of years spent on the programme. It should be understood that those coming on to the programme with advanced standing would have prior experience of getting HE credit, but would likely not have experience of a programme that employed a work-based and negotiated style of pedagogy, such as that used by APS This again backs up the potential impact of a programme that has the flexibility to accept learners at various stages and with general credit, thus enabling them to continue to study where it may not have been necessarily possible on conventional programmes.

Programme	Previous APS programme or advanced standing	PT year of study	Approx. PT years on programme	Number of respondents	Total per programme
FD	Advanced standing	Completed	2	2	
FD	Advanced standing	Continuing	1	2	
FD	No previous programme	Completed	4	6	
FD	No previous programme	Continuing	Between 1 and 3	7	17*
B.A./B.Sc.	Advanced standing	Completed	2	6	
B.A./B.Sc.	Advanced standing	Continuing	1	3	
B.A./B.Sc.	FD APS	Completed	6	17	
B.A./B.Sc.	FD APS	Continuing	5	16	42**
PGCert	Bachelors APS	Continuing	6.5	1	1
PGDip	APS degree and PGCert	Completed	8	3	3
MA/MSc	Advanced standing	Completed	1	1	1
MA/MSc	Bachelors APS plus PGDip APS	Completed	9	9	10
* 1 respondent withdrew in the first term and is not included					73
** 2 respondents withdrew in the first term and are not included					

TABLE 12: RESPONDENT TIME ON PROGRAMME

Another question that is raised by this is whether respondents developed their agency over time. In the subsequent sections, the correlation between length of time on the programme and the level of perceived impacts of the programme, will be examined to see to what extent ongoing experience of the APS pedagogy improves learner outcomes.

How was your programme structured?

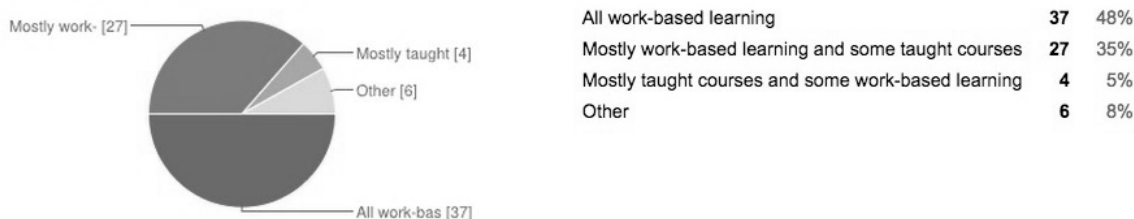


FIGURE 12: PROGRAMME STRUCTURES OF RESPONDENT BY PERCENTAGE

Half of the respondents had a programme that was all work-based learning, while 35% also had a mostly work-based learning structure. Only four respondents said that they had a mostly taught-course structured programme. The programme regulations stipulate that students must undertake at least 25% work-based learning, and so 'all taught courses' option was given in the survey).

Thinking about the structure of your programme now, would you have preferred more taught courses?

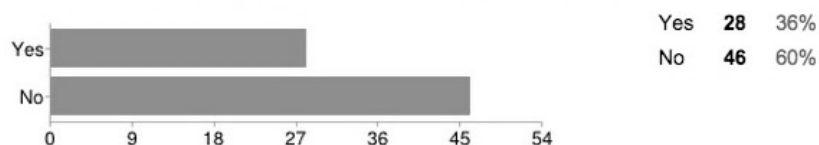


FIGURE 13: RESPONDENTS' PREFERRED PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Respondents were also asked if they would prefer more taught courses. The majority said no, but a significant proportion, 36%, said yes. The correlations between structure and other questions asked such as those surrounding engagement and perceived attainment both academically, personally and in the workplace will be examined later.

Breakdown of 46 respondents who would not have preferred more taught courses

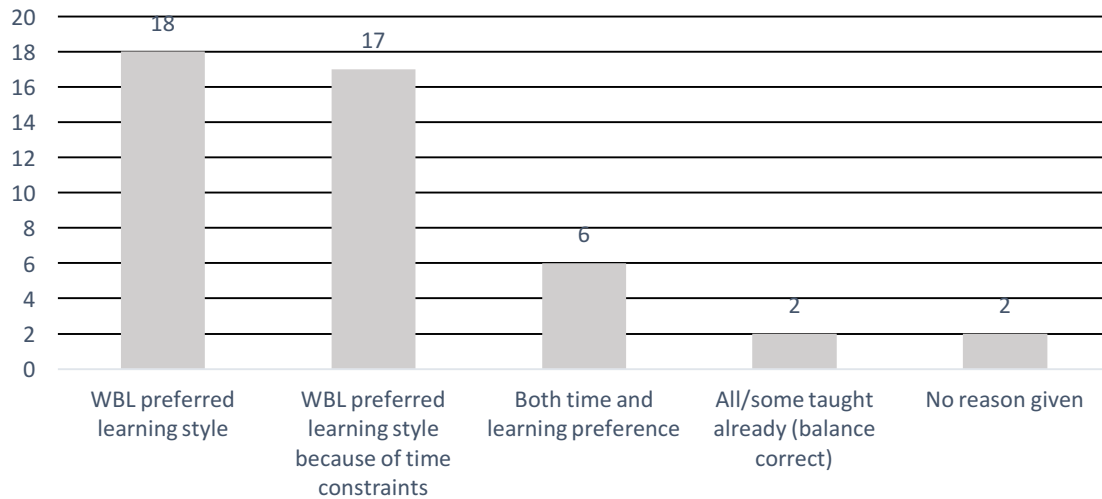


FIGURE 14: RESPONDENTS WHO DID NOT PREFER MORE TAUGHT COURSES

Forty-six respondents replied that they would not have preferred more taught courses. Their reasons fell into three main groups. Firstly, it was that work-based learning was their preferred style (40%), then that time constraints meant that structured taught courses requiring regular attendance were not feasible (38%). Finally, it was that the flexibility in terms of both issues, time and type of learning/teaching style, suited them (13%). Two respondents attended taught courses and thought that the balance was right and would therefore not require more taught courses. One respondent answered both yes and no, stating that at the beginning taught courses would have been good but as they undertook work-based learning projects, these became preferable. Therefore, overall, the majority were almost evenly split, between those who wanted a programme structured around work-based learning, and those who wanted a programme that allowed them to learn flexibly around available time.

In the group that saw work-based learning as a preferred method of learning, typical comments were:

‘I have based it on my work and found it valuable to do so.’

‘It made it much more relevant to my work to solely study work-based projects.’

'I am a self-directed adult learner, and I am happy to find out information for myself rather than be fed (taught) all the time. Balance between lessons and reading/discovering is good, but too much classroom work is not my preference.'

'I enjoyed researching my work-based projects and observing the impact of my learning in my workplace.'

'The projects I chose were all relevant to me and will be useful when I finish my PGCE later this year.'

'I chose it in order to apply work-based learning.'

'The work-based learning projects I was able to choose around the current work affairs, so I felt I was able to review and reflect as a practitioner as well as deepening my knowledge of the subject.'

'I am of the view that the work-based learning mode of study has as much academic and professional value as the traditionally taught courses. First of all, all activities are underpinned by academic skills development – analytical and evaluative skills, reasoning, problem-solving, decision-making, project management, planning and implementation, in addition to the development of essay and report writing skills – to name a few.'

'There are of course instances where taught courses will enhance the reliability of certain types of expertise in a manner that work-based learning may not. For example, the area of medical science, where memorisation of medical information is a necessity to medical practice – for obvious reasons such as administering medical care to save lives.'

'A critical point – the development of practical experience combined with professional knowledge aids professional competency. This is invaluable to many employers across all sectors. Furthermore, increasing numbers of employers desire graduates with work experience.'

'For the type of work I do, it is quite specialised, and I don't believe there was a taught course that would have covered my needs at the time. After being able to

gather and digest information for myself and apply it to my projects, I feel I had the right skill set to complete my work-based projects.'

This shows that there was a level of consciousness amongst this group as to the desired situated nature of their programme as relevant to their perceived learning preferences and learning needs. It demonstrates the ability of the programme to cater for a diverse range of reasons for learning. It also indicates that a learner's awareness of him/herself as an 'acting person' is also at play and is an area where the programme may help learners develop. Engagement is also indicated as an area where the programme may have an impact on these learners.

The needs of the group that cited time constraints were no less real, if more pragmatic in nature,

'Working part-time and doing two full-time jobs, finding time to attend taught courses would have been extremely difficult. With my MA as a supported on-line course it, meant that I could sort of work at my own pace but seek guidance from tutors as I went when required.'

'All work-based projects meant that I could study flexibly around my full-time work and home life. It was perfect way to study for a degree without having to commit to attendance at a taught course.'

'I would like to do some taught courses but with working and childcare issues it would be tricky.'

Family and work commitments were foremost in this group's thoughts when choosing a flexibly delivered programme. It is evident that the programme was able to provide for these learners, perhaps where other programmes could not.

A small number of respondents felt that it was important that both these issues were addressed by the structure of their programme:

'I would not have been able to attend more taught courses due to work commitments. In addition, the project work made the degree more 'real' and easier to apply to the workplace.'

'I prefer learning through my work I undertake, and also find researching in my own time a benefit to me.'

‘As I was working full time, it would have been difficult to attend taught course. Working independently on topics of my choice relevant to my job was more [therefore more] prevalent.’

Therefore, flexibility in terms of time and content was important with the programme being able to provide learning both relevant to workplace needs and flexibly enough to cater for work-based and time-poor learners.

Breakdown of 28 respondents who would have preferred more taught courses

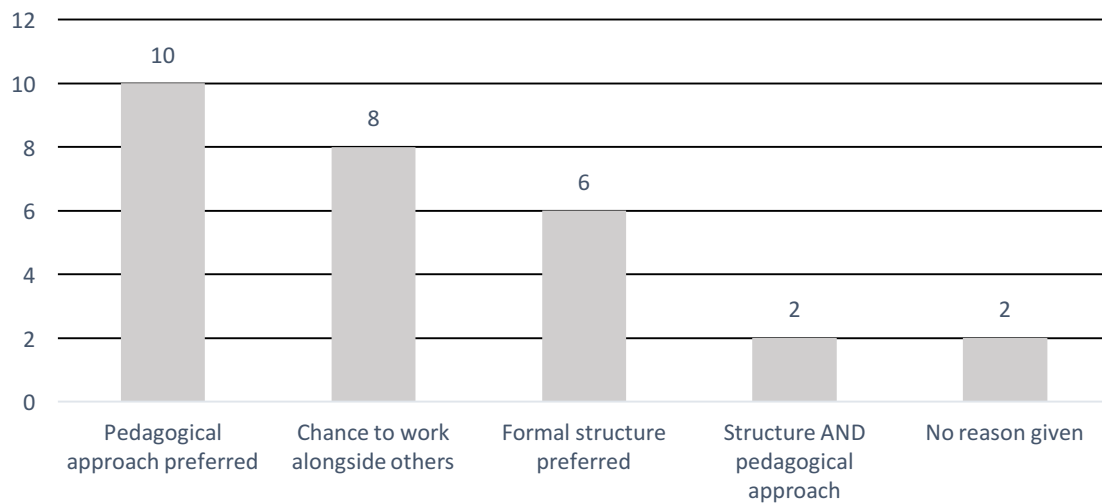


FIGURE 15: RESPONDENTS WHO WOULD HAVE PREFERRED MORE TAUGHT COURSES

Twenty-eight respondents indicated that they would have liked more taught courses. Of these, ten gave reasons to do with the desirability of the input of subject knowledge from lecturers in the field. Typical comments were:

‘I enjoy taught courses for the new elements that they bring.’

‘I needed more professional perspective, knowledge, understanding and input from a class structured programme.’

‘More guidance around subject reading and a greater understanding of the subject.’

‘My learning was limited to my research ability, and I would have loved the opportunity to be challenged by knowledgeable professors.’

‘In my case, the taught course focused information and was helpful in mastering academic writing skills in short essays.’

‘Although I liked the flexibility of the distance learning, it would have been interesting to have some taught sessions.’

‘It was quite difficult to stay on the right path for this although my tutor helped to keep me motivated. I think if you are on a taught course you have a better understanding of what is expected of you. Also, your tutors have more in-depth knowledge.’

On one level, there is a sense of a want of balance between work-based learning (based on projects) and more formal types of learning. Overlying this is an understanding of the lecturer as ‘subject expert’, an authority relationship not operated on the APS programme. Perhaps, where the relationship is not managed as well as it could be, there may develop a perception of the APS tutor as not being able to guide, support or challenge the learner. There is also the possibility of the notion of the practitioner as not being qualified to push their own learning agenda forward; as we have had learners who identify themselves as being independent and self-actuating, there are also those who may need to be more subordinate to the ‘expert’.

These results, though only a small percentage overall, may indicate on occasion a lack of the tutor’s exploration of roles with the learner, their role as a critical appraiser and challenger of the learner’s work and their knowledge as critical reflectors and researchers etc. that may have been used to give the learner a more supported experience. The value of theoretical courses that are used to underpin later work-based learning can also be explored through the analysis of how these learners applied their knowledge (at interview).

The next group, eight in number, amongst those who expressed the desire for more taught courses were those who felt there were issues around isolation. This is an issue that has arisen in the responses to other questions and may have a bearing on attainment in certain areas. Typical comments were:

‘It would have been nice to have been able to study with other people for some of the course, rather than working solo all the time and to be able to pass ideas/thoughts around and get other perspectives and views on things.’

‘Completing a work-based learning course is a very lonely way of working. It was more enjoyable to be able to discuss ideas etc. with others in the same position while attending taught courses.’

'I would have preferred more taught courses as by interacting with other students you get more support and know what is going on. As I have mostly worked on work-based learning, it took me longer to understand what I was doing wrong and how to amend my mistakes. I have enjoyed and attended all symposium events, which were very beneficial. I would like more events like these as I learned many things.'

'The taught courses allowed for collaboration with others while learning. It also confirmed the standard achieved was of a good level.'

The sense of isolation is strong amongst these respondents. One interesting comment is the one about debate and it is interesting to see (below), that debate does not score as highly as other skills that were perceived as having been gained as a result of the programme. For a programme that works with practitioners and recognises their authority as such, a lack of peer connectivity may be an issue in achieving its aims of creating a well-connected and capable practitioner, able to share their ideas and develop workplace and community practices. This appears to be a matter of facilitation, and the symposiums or similar events have proved to be successful in this area. Again, the issue of tutorial support is raised, as there is a sense in one learner about the lack of understanding about 'what is going on.' This would suggest that a discussion between tutor and learner about roles and responsibilities, and the learner's role in designing the learning, has not really happened. Therefore, two areas of negative impact particular to the style of pedagogy applied by APS can be seen: isolation and poor dialogic tutorials.

Six of the respondents who would have wanted more taught courses, cited structure as their reason. Typical comments surrounded the need for deadlines, poor organisation of support on work-based projects and that it was perceived that more structured taught courses would provide initial support for learners. Some of the comments are represented here:

'Initially, yes. I found the programme documentation at the time of entry too overwhelming and complicated. Something simple and practical which could have been explained in a taught course as a prerequisite to commencing the course, would have ensured that everyone gets off to a good start. Also, as my last academic qualification was taken many years ago (O-Levels), I did struggle with some of the academic basics. A taught course focusing on strengthening these skills would have been extremely useful.'

'With regard to other taught, courses, maybe something on work-based learning and how it can be used, benefits, etc. or something on how organisations work that would complement the You and Your Workplace component.'

‘Did not complete the course [programme] - would have preferred more taught courses and less self-guided study.’

‘It took me a while to come to terms with the structure of the programme and some modules/taught courses would have enabled me to grasp the meaning of being a student and work academically faster.’

‘Too long out of learning, need for structure.’

Statistically, these comments may not indicate much about the programme itself – the experiences mentioned are very individual. However, it does highlight a need for advice and guidance and perhaps the learners here may have suffered from a lack of effective counselling before entering the programme. It again indicates that the programme can have a negative impact if the support, through strong dialogic tutorials and planning, is not in place. A further two respondents, cited both structure and isolation, as their reason for desiring more taught courses, giving combined comments in a very similar vein. Three students did not comment or made comments that did not illuminate their reasoning, and so have not been included in the above groupings.

The second portion of the survey dealt with the student experience to further get a sense of the impact of negotiation and dialogue on the quality of the experience and the learning outcomes of the respondents.

4.2.4. Access to dialogic tutorials and the supportive nature of them

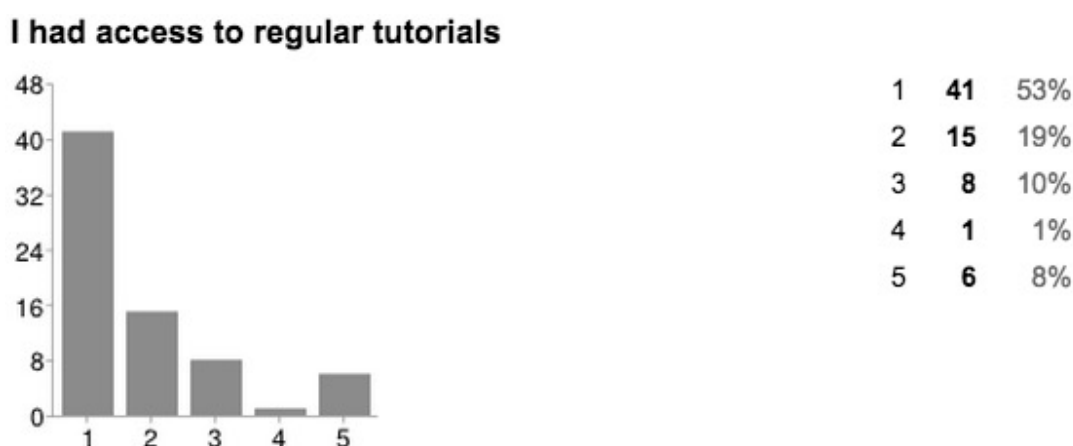


FIGURE 16: RESPONDENTS' ACCESS TO REGULAR TUTORIALS (1 STRONGLY AGREE – 5 STRONGLY DISAGREE)

The majority of respondents, 72%, were in agreement that they were able to access regular tutorials. Forty-one, 53%, of respondents strongly agreed that they were able to

access regular tutorials while a further fifteen, 19% agreed. This indicates that regarding organisation the programme was largely successful in providing the opportunity for dialogue to take place and should therefore set the conditions for further attainment.

However, a significant number, fifteen respondents representing 16% of the total, did not agree. Five (10%), were neutral, while one disagreed and six strongly disagreed (totalling 7% combined). Questions that arise from this are to what extent access to regular tutorials (or not) had an impact on other aspects of dialogue such as perception of the ability to discuss learning, control over learning, and the ability to negotiate a relevant programme to life and work. This will give a picture of the perceived nature of dialogue and the impact that in turn has on learning, personal development and agency.

I was able to discuss my learning at tutorials



FIGURE 17: PERCEPTIONS OF DIALOGUE AT TUTORIALS (1 STRONGLY AGREE – 5 STRONGLY DISAGREE)

In a programme where the development of agency is a foremost aim, it is important that dialogue in tutorials allowed for the learner to take control of their learning. The survey asked about the ability to discuss learning at tutorials, and the vast majority thought they were able with 55% strongly agreeing that they had the ability to do so, with a further 22% also agreeing. This indicates that dialogue, on the whole, was a strong aspect of the programme with learners seeing themselves on the whole able to take part actively in their learning. Five per cent were neutral, with 8% strongly disagreeing and 1% disagreeing. The 8% directly corresponds to the 8% who strongly disagreed that they had access to tutorials and this sheds light as to why they feel they may not have been able to discuss their learning. In both the positive and negatives response groups, it would be illuminating to see the correlations between the respective respondents and their answers to other questions surrounding achievement, confidence and change. An analysis of the general comments invited from respondents may also shed more light.

Again, a small number of respondents said that they were unable to discuss their learning at tutorials. Of that seven, there was a ratio of five to two between strongly agreeing that the respondent had no control over their learning and strongly disagreeing. This polarised result indicates that of the group that strongly agreed that tutorials were unsupportive, they were also likely to agree that they had no control over their learning.

Four out of the seven also strongly disagreed that they were able to discuss their learning at tutorials, the remaining three strongly agreed that they were able to discuss their learning – again a polarised result. Similar to the previous two statements, respondents overwhelmingly felt that their tutorials were supportive of their learning, with 65% strongly disagreeing/disagreeing with the statement, against 17% who felt that their tutorials were unsupportive. Nine per cent were neutral. This indicates that the programme was largely successful in providing tutorials that were perceived as supportive, and the large number will provide the opportunity to explore correlations between this and other responses.

I felt my tutorials weren't particularly supportive of my learning



FIGURE 18: PERCEPTIONS OF TUTORIAL SUPPORT (1 STRONGLY AGREE – 5 STRONGLY DISAGREE)

I didn't feel as though I had control over my learning



FIGURE 19: PERCEPTIONS OF CONTROL OVER LEARNING (1 STRONGLY AGREE – 5 STRONGLY DISAGREE)

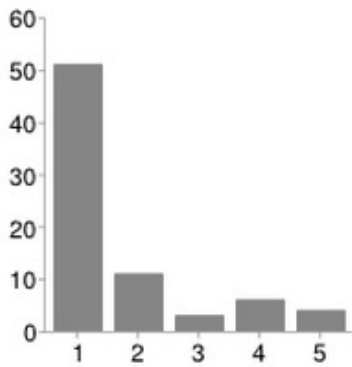
However, the number that felt that their tutorials were unsupportive, though small, is not insignificant and may provide the opportunity to indicate a correlation between tutorial support that was perceived as poor and other outcomes. Alongside the more positive answers, this may help to make linkages between tutorial dialogue perceived as supportive and areas of achievement and change such as confidence, knowledge, and agency.

One of the central aims of the programme is to allow learners a level of control over their programme, its content and assessment. They were therefore asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that they did not have control over their learning. Fifty-five per cent. strongly disagreed with the statement and 19% disagreed. This means that 74% of respondents, fifty-seven out of the seventy-seven respondents, felt that they had a level of control, over their learning.

On the other hand, 16% strongly agreed that they had no control over their learning while a further 4% agreed. This means that 20% felt a lack of control over their learning (15 of the 77). A further 4% (three respondents) were neutral. This indicates that the programme is fairly successful in achieving its aim of giving control to its learners, and the interesting thing to investigate in terms of this, are the correlations between the various categories of answer and the levels of perceived achievement represented in some of the other question responses.

Sixty-six per cent of the respondents felt that they strongly agreed with the statement that they were able negotiate a programme relevant to their work needs. A further 14% agreed with the statement, making a total of 80%. This indicates success in achieving the aims of the programme. Four per cent, numbering three respondents, were neutral in their feelings, with 8% disagreeing and a further 4% strongly disagreeing.

I was able to negotiate a programme which was relevant to my work needs

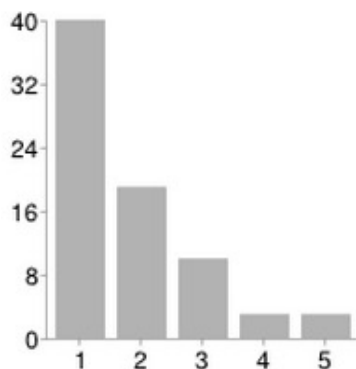


1	51	66%
2	11	14%
3	3	4%
4	6	8%
5	4	5%

FIGURE 20: PERCEPTIONS OF ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE LEARNING RELEVANT TO WORK (1 STRONGLY AGREE – 5 STRONGLY DISAGREE)

Apart from demonstrating a level of success as a negotiated programme, these figures may be more meaningful when viewed alongside responses to other questions to see what correlations arise. In particular, it would be interesting to see the correlation between these responses and questions around perceived achievement and workplace influence, and qualitative comments made about the programme.

I was able to negotiate a programme which was relevant to my life needs



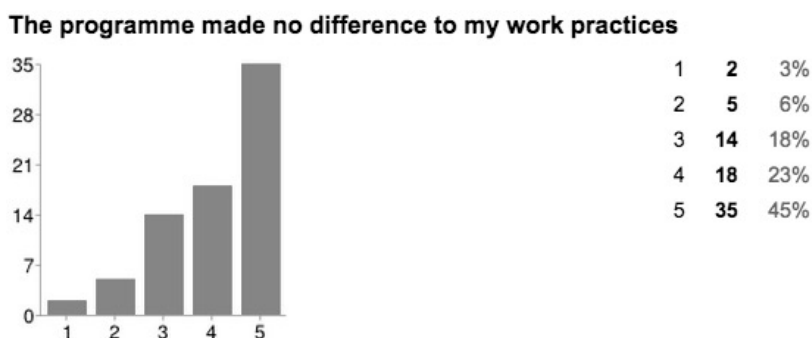
1	40	52%
2	19	25%
3	10	13%
4	3	4%
5	3	4%

FIGURE 21: PERCEPTION OF ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE LEARNING RELEVANT TO LIFE (1 STRONGLY AGREE – 5 STRONGLY DISAGREE)

Responses to the question as to whether or not they were able to negotiate a programme relevant to life needs, were similar in the negative range to the previous question with those who strongly agreed, though, dropping to 52%. Those who agreed however rose to 25% whilst the neutral responses rose to 10%. Whilst the positive range was much higher, it was smaller than that for the previous question. This may indicate that the main focus of learners was on their work, though it was recognised by many that the

programme still had an effect on their personal life. Again, correlations between this question and other answers, may be informative in answering the question as to what extent the programme ‘changed’ the individual as a person, or affected their identity.

4.2.5. Impact of the programme and its pedagogy on skills and practices



FIGURES 22A AND 22B: PERCEPTIONS OF DIFFERENCE TO WORK-PRACTICES (1 STRONGLY AGREE – 5 STRONGLY DISAGREE)

The largest two responses to the statement (Fig. 32a), ‘the programme made no difference to my work practices,’ were ‘strongly disagree’ (thirty five in number), and ‘disagree’ (eighteen in number). Together these represent 68% of the respondents, and shows that the programme, to a large extent, perceived an impact on workplace practices of the respondents (i.e. said that they disagreed with the statement).

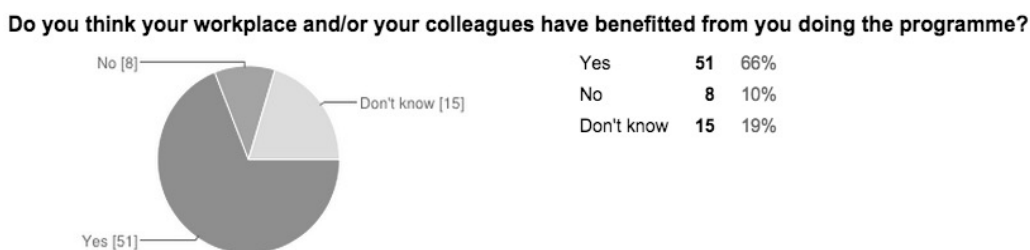


FIGURE 23: PERCEPTION OF COLLEAGUE BENEFIT

A similar picture is developed in the analysis of the responses to the statement (Fig. 32b), 'I don't really think the programme helped me to develop my work-related knowledge'. Overall sixty disagreed that with the statement, forty of whom strongly disagreed. This means that the majority thought that the programme did help them to develop work-related knowledge.

The above table shows that the majority of respondents thought that their colleagues had benefited from them doing the programme – 66% answered yes to the question. The now predictable 10% said no however, and a fairly significant percentage of 19% did not know. The follow-up interviews dealt with impact in the work-place and they may shed some light on workplace influence. Correlations between the above answers and answers to other questions around dialogue and negotiation, and skills developed may also give indications as to the causes of these responses. The programme therefore appears to have an impact on the majority of learners' perceptions that the programme had an effect on their work-place. The interesting question that now remains, is as to what the mechanisms that lead to the various perceptions are. This will be explored later.

4.2.6. Perceived impact on personhood

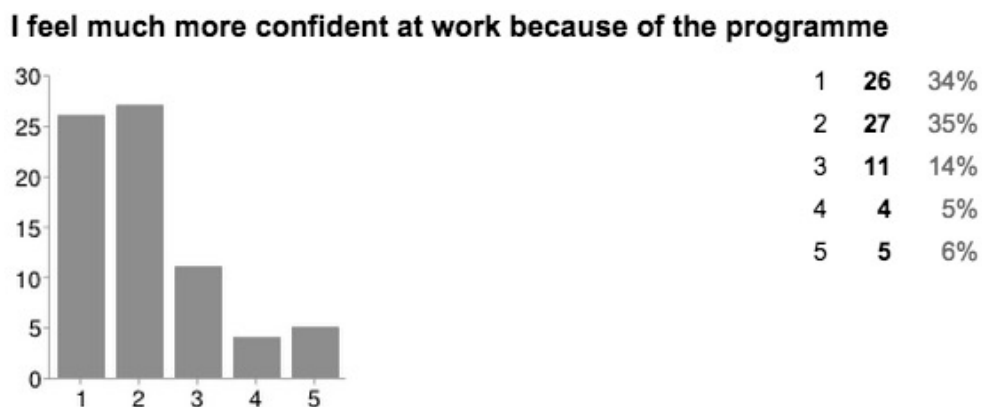


FIGURE 24: PERCEPTIONS OF CONFIDENCE BUILDING AT WORK (1 STRONGLY AGREE – 5 STRONGLY DISAGREE)

The table above shows that confidence building has been a success of the programme, though the figures suggest more could be done. Confidence is important because without it agency is limited. Of the seventy three respondents to this question, twenty six, or 34%, strongly agreed with the statement that they felt more confident at work because of the programme. Slightly more, twenty seven, or 35%, said they agreed. Overall, this accounts

for 69% of the respondents. A significant proportion was neutral on the question, numbering eleven, or 14%, while four (5%) disagreed and five, or 4%, strongly disagreed (totalling 11%). This latter figure is roughly consistent in numbers with the other negative responses across the board and were, in fact, the same respondents on the whole.

What can be drawn from this is that the programme is successful overall in terms of work confidence building. Although it could be developed, the pedagogy is more than likely to produce a positive effect than not. Again, the question that arises is to do with the mechanism by which this happens, or in the case of the negative respondent, the mechanism or by which it does not. To what extent does good dialogue contribute to the development of confidence or are other elements of learning at play within the pedagogical approach?

I now see myself as a different person



FIGURE 25: PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPING PERSONHOOD (1 STRONGLY AGREE – 5 STRONGLY DISAGREE)

Very similar responses to those above, were seen to the statement, 'I now see myself as a different person'. Of the seventy seven respondents, seventy three responded. Twenty-four, or 31%, strongly agreed with the statement and twenty five, 32%, agreed. Thirteen, or 17%, were neutral; two more than with the question of confidence. Slightly more were in disagreement, with five, or 6%, disagreeing and six (8%) strongly disagreeing. This shows that overall, the programme and its pedagogy were largely successful in having an impact on identity, and also hints at a correlation between confidence and identity. This, in turn, indicates that the identity change was positive. This and other correlations similar to those mentioned for the previous question, will be explored.

Critical thinking [Do you feel you have gained in any of the following skills as a result of your involvement in the programme?]

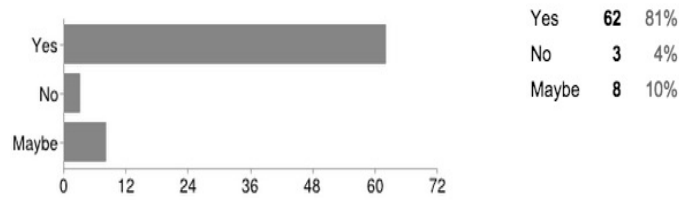


FIGURE 26: PERCEPTIONS OF HAVING DEVELOPED CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Seventy-three of the seventy-seven respondents, answered the question to do with the perception of having developed critical thinking skills (fig. 36). The responses seem to suggest that the programme pedagogy was perceived as successful in developing critical thinking skills with sixty-two (81%) answering yes, three (4%) no, and eight (10%) maybe.

Research (literature) [Do you feel you have gained in any of the following skills as a result of your involvement in the programme?]

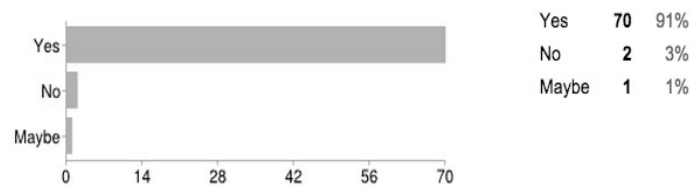


FIGURE 27: PERCEPTION OF GAINING LITERATURE RESEARCH SKILLS

Similar, if slightly stronger results, also appear to show the programme as being perceived as successful in developing literature-based research skills. Seventy-three of the seventy-seven responded with seventy, or 91%, answering yes to the question, with only two, or 3%, answering no, and one, 1%, answering maybe.

Recognition of own skills and experience [Do you feel you have gained in any of the following skills as a result of your involvement in the programme?]

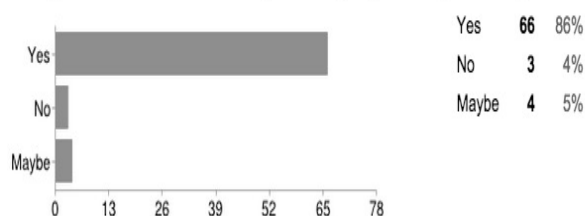


FIGURE 28: RECOGNITION OF OWN SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Again, another strongly positive response was received as to whether the programme developed in the learner, the ability to recognise their own skills. Of the seventy-three that responded to this particular question, sixty-six or 86%, said yes to the recognition of their own skills, with three (4%), saying no, and four (5%), undecided.

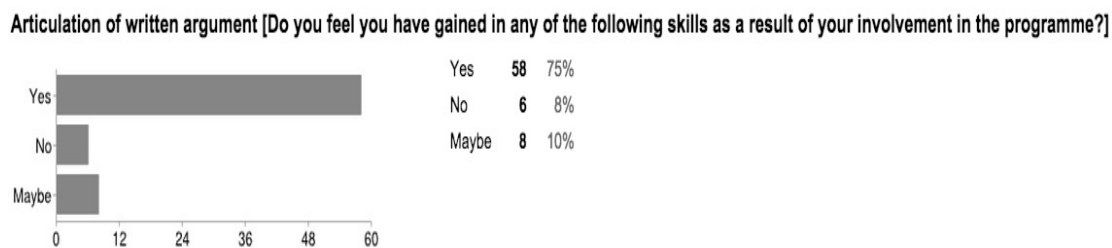


FIGURE 29: PERCEPTIONS OF IMPROVEMENT IN THE ARTICULATION OF SPOKEN ARGUMENT

It was also largely agreed by respondents who responded (seventy-two in total), that the programme was perceived as developing skills in the articulation of written argument. Fifty-eight, or 75%, answered yes with six (8%) answering no, and eight (10%) undecided.

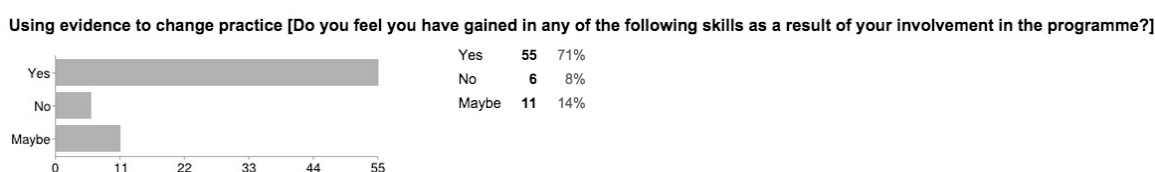


FIGURE 30: PERCEPTION OF BEING ABLE TO USE EVIDENCE TO CHANGE PRACTICE

Questions of interest that arise from this are the links between:

- Were learners more likely to answer these questions in accordance with the way their programme was structured (i.e. more work-based or more taught)?
- Did access to tutorials and dialogue, have a bearing on how they answered this question?
- Does acquiring one skill, have a bearing on the perception of having acquired another?

These questions will be explored for each of the skills in the following sections.

The following two questions produced results different enough to raise additional questions.

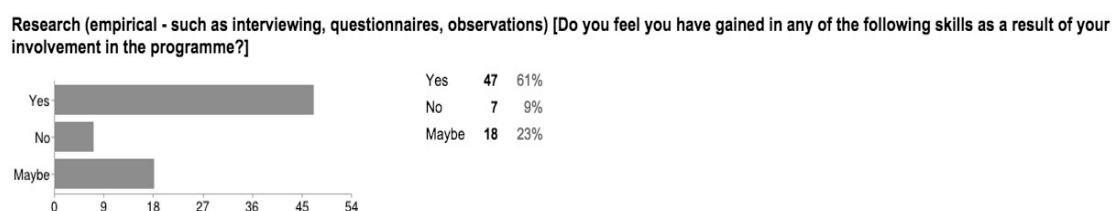


FIGURE 31: PERCEPTIONS OF GAINING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH SKILLS

In terms of the acquisition of empirical research skills, there was a significant rise in the number of learners that were uncertain, whilst those who said yes, dropped in comparison

to the responses to the other skills related questions. Forty-seven, 61%, thought they did acquire empirical research skills, whilst seven, 9%, said they did not. Eighteen were unsure. Whilst this shows that overall the programme did have an impact on the majority in terms of the perception of gaining empirical skills, and that the number of those who said no were in the same region as the other questions, respondents seem to be more uncertain on this question.

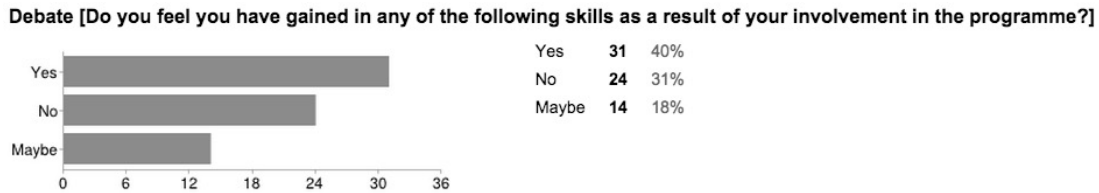


FIGURE 32: PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPING DEBATING SKILLS

When it comes to the question dealing with perceptions of developing debating skills, the programme seems less successful, with a smaller ‘yes’ contingent of thirty-one, 40%, a much larger ‘no’ response of twenty-four, 31%, and a significant ‘maybe’ response of fourteen, 18%. Earlier answers were given as to why learners structured their programme the way they did, and many chose taught courses because of reasons of isolation. This was also sited elsewhere in the questionnaire where qualitative feelings were sought. In addition to the general questions, the question arises as to whether isolation could have been a causal condition, and correlation between these will be examined.

4.3. I would not recommend this programme to anyone! Lessons learned from six dissatisfied students

Q. What programme were you/are you on?	
Programme	Total
BA/BSc APS	2
Foundation degree APS	2
MA/MSc APS	2
Grand Total	6

TABLE 13: DISSATISFIED LEARNERS’ PROGRAMMES

Before proceeding to the examination of correlations, it is perhaps timely to examine the group of respondents who were emphatic in expressing dissatisfaction with the programmes. Although the tutors were not identified in the survey, the geographical location of the student suggests that they saw a single tutor based at that location. The ultimate measure of dissatisfaction with the programme and its pedagogy was measured by the survey question ‘Would you recommend work-based learning as a good route for other people?’ Six respondents, 8% of the seventy-six who filled in the survey, said that they would not recommend APS as a route for other people. It was decided to examine this group and why they were so dissatisfied. The group has been labelled the Dissatisfied Learner Sample Group.

The six respondents to this question ranged across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, with two respondents from the foundation degree programme, two from the BA/BSc programmes, and two from the MA/MSc programmes (fig. 43). Furthermore, all but one respondent had completed at least one programme. One did not complete their programme, leaving during the first module. This indicates that the dissatisfaction was not isolated to earlier programmes but across the board, meaning that the non-traditional programme not meeting initial expectations was not necessarily the only factor, but that the dissatisfaction was due to wider or more fundamental issues.

Four of the six respondents answered that they had received the lower pass classification, three for their foundation degree, one for the MA/MSc, while one received a first for their bachelor's degree. Another respondent did not complete their foundation degree, leaving during the first module. The first notwithstanding, whatever the cause, overall those who stated that they would not recommend the programme to others did not achieve the highest-grade ranges. This was an initial indication that whatever caused the dissatisfaction may have had a negative impact on attainment. However, at least, one of the group achieved a first-class honours degree. This is the same respondent who chose to negotiate a mostly taught programme (fig. 44). This may have been a strategy that paid off, and might initially indicate that poor access to tutorials, or a lack of dialogue, was the reason, as this would have impacted on the work-based learning modules, to a greater degree than the taught modules.

Q. How was your programme structured?	
	Total
All work-based learning	2
Mostly taught courses and some work-based learning	1
Mostly work-based learning and some taught courses	2
(blank)	1
Grand Total	6

TABLE 14: PROGRAMME STRUCTURES FOR DISSATISFIED LEARNER SAMPLE GROUP

4.3.1. The National Student's Survey

Questions	National Student Survey 2013 Satisfied*	Satisfied
The teaching on my course	86%	87%
Assessment and feedback	72%	72%
Academic support	80%	81%
Organisation and management	78%	78%
Learning resources	84%	85%
Personal development	82%	82%
Overall satisfaction	85%	86%

* The percentage satisfied is calculated by combining the 'strongly agree' and 'mostly agree' responses.

TABLE 15: COMPARISON BETWEEN LEVELS OF SATISFACTION NATIONALLY AND ON APS

In the National Student Survey (NSS) for 2013 and 2014 (TES Global, 2014), the figures show that there is a relatively high level of satisfaction (roughly reflecting the APS survey results). Nationally though, there are issues for a small percentage of learners. They make an interesting comparison to the survey responses of the dissatisfied APS learners. In the NSS, learners were most likely to be dissatisfied with, in this order: assessment and feedback, organisation and management of their courses, and academic support. All these aspects rely on the learner understanding and knowing what to do – a strong dialogue between tutors and learners. The responses of the six seemed to suggest that organisation, academic support and assessments were problematic for them, and these seemed to start with poor organisation in terms of tutorials.

4.3.2. Access to tutorials

The APS learners survey asked some questions in connection with support and organisation, the first of which was to what extent they agreed to the statement 'I had regular access to tutorials'.

S. I had access to regular tutorials	
1 = Strongly agree - 5 = strongly disagree	Total
1	1
3	1
4	1
5	3
Grand Total	6

TABLE 16: ACCESS TO DIALOGUES AS PERCEIVED BY DISSATISFIED STUDENT SAMPLE GROUP

Of the six dissatisfied respondents, one strongly agreed that they had access to regular tutorials (incidentally, the same respondent with a mostly taught structure), whereas one was neutral, one disagreed and three strongly disagreed. This indicated that access to tutorials was an issue.

At interview three of the respondents elaborated on this,

‘Although this programme has worked well for me eventually, I would have reservations about recommending it to colleagues. I struggled with getting timely tutorials, my tutor was changed three times during the programme.’

‘I would only recommend people undertake this course at Greenwich with grave reservations. The tutorial support I received from Greenwich, when I was trying to write my thesis, was next to non-existent.’

‘Work-based learning needs a lot of tutor support, which was not forthcoming.’

It is perhaps obvious that tutorial support on such an independent learning programme, would be central to the learners’ positive experience. This is particularly important, because unless other measures are in place, individual supervision may be the only contact the learner has, and so peer feedback can be limited. If there is a problem with tutorials as indicated, then timely feedback, which is just good teaching practice, would be missing.

Raelin (2008) asked the question of how participants in this kind of learning recognise the effectiveness of their knowledge and competencies. He stated that they needed feedback on milestones and achievements from their tutors and peers who must be present to give ongoing readings of their performance. Therefore, timely feedback and continuity of the tutoring relationship are important, especially if peer support is missing and this seems borne out by the responses. No specific feedback was given by the respondents as to

peer¹ support, but isolation has been mentioned as an issue, and it does indicate that if tutorial support is missing then, this was doubly compounded if another form of support was unobtainable². The three respondents seem to indicate that organisation of tutorials was an issue.

4.3.3. Perceived support from tutorials

When the dissatisfied learners were asked about how supportive their tutorials were perceived to be, they answered as follows (one student declining to rate the statement):

S. I felt my tutorials weren't particularly supportive of my learning	
1 = Strongly agree - 5 = strongly disagree	Total
1	4
4	1
(blank)	1
Grand Total	6

TABLE 17: RESPONDENTS FROM THE DISSATISFIED LEARNER SAMPLE GROUP WHO FELT THEIR TUTORIALS TO BE UNSUPPORTIVE

One respondent disagreed, but four strongly agreed that tutorials were not supportive. This indicates that the problem of a lack of access to tutorials, was exacerbated by tutorials as not being seen as being helpful, when they did happen.

Only two respondents agreed that discussion of learning was a central aspect of their tutorials. One was neutral while three strongly disagreed.

¹ Peer support here is taken to mean other learners on the programme; however, in work-based learning, peers can also mean colleagues. Though not really a theme that arises in this discussion of dissatisfied learners, it does crop up later in relation to the mechanisms by which conversation in the work-place might be facilitated. Although this mechanism does not rely solely on tutorial support, it does rely on it as part of the facilitation process through the embedding of empirical study in learning – please see the later discussion.

² At the time of the five-year review in 2008, the programme was criticised in a survey carried out for the review document for its lack of peer interactivity and networking. This has also been an ongoing criticism from external examiners and has only recently been consistently addressed due to staff shortages.

S. I was able to discuss my learning at tutorials	
1= Strongly agree - 5 = stringly disagree	Total
1	1
2	1
3	1
5	3
Grand Total	6

TABLE 18: DISSATISFIED LEARNER SAMPLE GROUP PERCEIVED ABILITY TO DISCUSS LEARNING AT TUTORIAL

According to Friere (2000), dialogue must be a central part of a negotiated programme. Dewey (1938:89) argued that experience should be the 'means and goal of education'. Rather than imposing knowledge, he adds, the teacher who receives the older student should find a way of recreating the engagement with learning that 'nature accomplishes' in their early years. This requires dialogue to enable the facilitation of the exploration of experience and learning – a critical dialogue aimed at evaluation. The responses indicate that discussion was poor for at least four of the learners which, it may be surmised, contributed to their lack of engagement, but also leads on to other issues around the sense of support, feedback, clarity and ownership, relevance and the purpose of assessment.³

Four respondents directly mention a lack of support. One respondent gives some more detail in their response, saying that the tutor was changed three times and that tutorials were hard to organise with the tutor. Two other respondents stated that support was 'next to non-existent' or not forthcoming. As this was not a universal theme amongst all of the respondents of the research, it would appear that the problems point to a localised breakdown of organisation and dialogue between the tutor and tutee. What it does start to signify is the importance of dialogue as a site of facilitation of learning on APS, from its initiation to its continued success.

4.3.4. Perceived ability to negotiate learning

³ Again, this discussion indicates that dialogue is a foundation stone of this kind of pedagogy. The dynamics of how dialogue can facilitate truly embedded learning is a theme that arises in the discussion of the correlation between empirical skills and other perceived skills development, later on in the thesis.

A benefit of negotiated learning, is that it is in theory, directly relevant and tailored to the learner’s learning. This should, in turn, connect with their will to learn and result in motivation and engagement. According to Bondi (2013), relevance is a key factor in maintaining a learner’s interest levels, retention of knowledge, and continued pursuit of understanding. She also states that she sees negotiated learning runs counter to the ‘dominant power hierarchy where teachers tell students what to do and students are expected to comply’ (Bondi, 2013:5). Barnett (2007), refers to the ‘will to learn’, the internal need for most learners to learn to change themselves and develop their agency in the world. Relevance therefore, is one of the major keys to engagement, but it takes confidence on the part of the tutor to run counter to dominant kinds of practice in learning – to move outside of their own subject specialisations and hard-fought identities as experts, and to allow the learners to follow subjects associated with their own needs.

On the question of whether they could negotiate learning which was relevant to their life needs, one learner stated that they agreed, while four were neutral, and one strongly disagreed.

S. I was able to negotiate a programme which was relevant to my life needs	
1 = Strongly agree - 5 = strongly disagree	Total
2	1
3	4
5	1
Grand Total	6

S. I was able to negotiate a programme which was relevant to my work needs	
1 = Strongly agree - 5 = strongly disagree	Total
1	1
2	1
4	2
5	2
Grand Total	6

TABLES 19A AND 19B: DISSATISFIED LEARNER SAMPLE PERCEPTION OF NEGOTIATING LEARNING RELEVANT TO WORK AND LIFE NEEDS

When asked to what level they agreed with the statement ‘I was able to negotiate a programme relevant to my work needs, the result was slightly better with one strongly agreeing and one agreeing, however two disagreed and two strongly disagreed. Overall these two questions indicated a middling-to-negative result as to how these learners perceived their degrees to be relevant to their needs. This would have had an effect on

how they engaged with their learning, meaning that the opportunity to engage these learners in their learning, was largely lost.

One of the central stated aims of the programme, is to develop critically reflective practitioners. That the dissatisfied learners did not have a chance to influence their programme in a way meaningful to them is borne out by responses to the statement 'I don't really think that programme helped me to develop work-related knowledge' (fig. 50).

S. I don't really feel that the programme helped me to develop work-related knowledge	
1 = Strongly agree - 5 = strongly disagree	Total
1	2
2	1
3	1
4	1
5	1
Grand Total	6

TABLE 20: DISSATISFIED LEARNER SAMPLE PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPING WORK-RELATED KNOWLEDGE

Two respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while another agreed, making it half of the learners who did not think positively about the programme's ability to act in this way. A further one was neutral. Out of the six, only two thought that the programme did positively develop work-related knowledge, with only one of the two strongly disagreeing with the statement. This further supports the earlier conclusion that learners were not, on the whole, able to influence their learning as their perception of the effect on their knowledge is limited overall.

APS learners were asked if they agreed or not, as to whether the programme had made a difference to their work practices. They were also asked whether their colleagues had benefited.

Q. Do you think your workplace and/or your colleagues have benefitted from you doing the programme?	
	Total
No	4
Yes	2
Grand Total	6

S. The programme made no difference to my work practices	
1= Strongly agree - 5 = strongly disagree	Total
1	1
2	1
3	2
4	1
5	1
Grand Total	6

TABLES 21A AND 21B: DISSATISFIED LEARNERS SAMPLE GROUP PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT ON WORK PRACTICES AND THE BENEFIT OF LEARNING TO COLLEAGUES

As expected, of the six, the figures were again very similar, with four strongly agreeing or being neutral to the first statement, and four answering no to the second question, supporting the previous conclusions. If tutorials are difficult to come by, or are not timely, and they do not permit dialogue, choice, or negotiation; in a work-based degree programme it is not surprising that the learners report that the outcome for themselves and their workplace was limited.

One respondent, at interview, expanded on their reasons for dissatisfaction. 'I was just writing about stuff I was already doing or already knew. I didn't really learn much to be honest.' She went on to assume some of the responsibility for this herself; 'My tutor was very aware of my learning style, through frustration he persevered with helping me to understand the criteria I was working towards in assignments. I feel this was a difficult task when I was not coming to him with new learned experiences from lectures or classes etc.' This indicates that the tutor was unable to explain the benefits of re-examining a past experience and that the learner was not able to negotiate learning outcomes that they saw as relevant.

Critical reflection on prior experience as in this case, or unfolding experience, gives the students the space to construct and deconstruct their learning experiences (Taylor, 1997). As discussed in the theoretical sections, this critical reflection takes considerable dialogue to support, from setting the learning up, through the continuing support and supervision of the research process to the challenging of ideas through tutorial conversations. From this it can be understood that if the learner is guided through the

process properly and is aware of the benefits or researching and evaluating experience, the process should not be just a case of the reiteration of prior learning or unfolding learning – it should have a recognisable value to it. However, this takes some expertise and knowledge of facilitation on the part of the tutor to make it clear to the learner through explanation and that critical reflection is current and valuable learning. The lack of this indicates that the learner is correct when a lack of support is perceived.

According to Race, Brown, and Smith (2005), assessment should contain no hidden agendas; the purpose of the learning and what is being assessed should be obvious to the student, and this should also mean the process of learning. Knowing that the purpose of this type of learning is to produce reflective practitioners, should positively impact on motivation, as the student can engage in what is trying to be achieved because it should be evident that the process, as well as the content, is valuable to them. Tutorials should be based upon instilling reflection on the value of the learning from whatever source. That the student only recognised the 'formal' learning environment as being valid meant the student was not challenged in this view by the tutor, who seems to be solely concentrating on the assessment.

Of course, the responsibility to engage is not all one-sided. One of the respondents at interview said the following:

'Tutors [are] not honest when giving out the information. All the university is interested in is making money, they don't care about the people who are striving to improve themselves and the prospects for their family. I gave up before I had finished the first module.'

Whilst this learner may have had legitimate concerns about their study, the fact that they left the programme during the first module means that, whatever the issue was, there was not time to develop dialogue and to rectify misunderstandings or unfairness.

The poor ability of learners to negotiate their programmes in a way that was obviously relevant to their situated learning spaces, and would result in development, would predict a poor result when asked about the level of control they had over their programme. Four dissatisfied learners strongly agreed that they did not have control over their learning, while two disagreed/strongly disagreed. Therefore, at least four learners of the six felt that they did not have control over their learning, which for a programme that is based on independent learning, is what they would have been led to expect. The sense of

ownership would have been lacking in these learners, and this indicates a lack of ability on the part of the tutor to facilitate this. Therefore, because of the poor outlook on what outcomes have been achieved through learning it was possible to predict that a sense of change in the students would be limited. The responses to the following two statements seem to bear this out.

4.3.5. Perceptions of personal change

S. I now see myself as a different person	
1= Strongly agree - 5 = strongly disagree	Total
1	1
3	1
4	1
5	2
(blank)	1
Grand Total	6

S. I feel much more confident at work because of the programme	
1 = Strongly agree - 5 = strong disagree	Total
1	1
2	2
3	1
5	2
Grand Total	6

TABLES 22A AND 22B: DISSATISFIED LEARNER SAMPLE GROUP PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONHOOD AND CONFIDENCE

Perception of personal change was limited in this group of respondents. Lawrence (1999:92) defined self-esteem as confidence, writing that 'confidence is self-esteem in practice and has two aspects: (a) confidence in abilities and (b) confidence in personality'. Owens (1993) viewed self-esteem as being comprised of general self-confidence and general self-deprecation; he explained general self-confidence regarding positive self-evaluation. Norm and Hyland (2003) stated that the research they had carried out indicated that although the individual learner can affect her/his own level of confidence, tutors, peers, and workplace situated mentors and managers could assist increasing the learner's confidence through support, encouragement, and productive feedback. Most importantly, 'Such learning support needs to unpack meanings of confidence in task-specific contexts to overcome particular dispositional barriers' (Norma and Hyland, 2003:13). In other words, the tutor must have the ability to focus the learning in work, or other learner situations This is to ensure that not only do they receive timely and

constructive feedback from them, but also their work is 'published' in the learner's social and work situation so that learning can be tested in action and feedback for peers, mentors and supervisors can be obtained⁴.

As we have seen, Barnett (2007) has put forward the notion of 'authentic uncertainty' and the author of this paper has developed the idea to include 'inauthentic certainty'. The role of the tutor is to help the learner to embody 'authentic uncertainty': authentic because it is about the student learning for themselves in direct response to their needs and aspirations, and uncertain because the learner never dispenses with critical reflection on themselves and their practices, in order to preserve the ability to develop (Barnett, 2007). The opposite of this, 'in-authentic certainty' is where the learner either in-authentically sees themselves as bad at things (due to poor confidence or self-esteem often induced in social interactions), or sees themselves as knowledgeable and having achieved a state of practice where development is no longer possible or required. Situated learning that helps the learner to re-examine situations, or to learn about unfolding situations and act appropriately in a critically supported way, can help the learner embody this kind of reflective stance and see the effect of their learning in practice. However, the tutor must be able to be confident enough to manage this and help the learner interpret their experiences and social feedback in constructive ways.

The importance of social interaction as a factor in increasing confidence was emphasised by participants in the wider survey and there is much support in general learning theory for the notion that, as Harkin, Turner and Dawn (2001:52-53) put it, 'effective learning is facilitated by social interaction' and that learning 'has its basis in the relationships which exist between people'. Guile and Hayton (1999), criticised isolated solitary learning, such as they observed in I.C.T., because it hampered the effectiveness of the learning because it failed to help the learner see learning as a socially interactive process. From this it can be understood that, if learning is not socially interactive, then the practice that results from it may not be either. The respondents examined in this group of dissatisfied learners show that little effect of their learning was perceived in their workplace, or as having benefited their colleagues, meaning that the ability to build confidence and agency through practice was hampered. The result of this is not surprising, that the learners' opinions whether or

⁴ Later on, in this thesis, the role of empirical study as part of the learning process is discussed in this regard.

not they saw themselves as having changed or as being more confident, was veering towards the negative or was middling.

4.3.6. Summary of the initial analysis

Overall the programme has shown itself to be a successful one regarding having an impact on its learners. The early part of the survey confirmed the sample as being representative of the broad make-up of the programme in terms of the typology of students and the demographic. Women make up the larger part of the responders and the typology of students is made up of learners who require flexibility as an essential part of their programme. This indicates that the area of impact is a relatively niche one, affecting learners who are adults and part-time and who are mostly in full-time work. It provides HE opportunities for 'second chance' learners, those who are not 'time rich' or those who need to 'earn and learn'. It also provides an opportunity for those who may perceive a value to situated learning, or who require tailor-made and specific learning packages.

Another area of impact was indicated by the range of prior qualifications. Thirty-four per cent of learners were without formal qualifications, or qualified to GSCE/O-Level standard. This means that APS was able to cater for a section of learners who were recognised as eligible for HE level learning through life/work experience rather than academic qualifications and that the programme was able to have a positive effect overall (although there are some areas where it was less successful or there appears to be some uncertainty over perceptions).

Other learners were able to use prior qualifications as contributing toward their programmes. This flexibility, also common on other programmes, though perhaps with a more rigid subject specific approach, allows for learners to be recognised for prior learning. The biggest difference between APS and other programmes has been the recognition of 'general' credit that is judged according to its 'graduateness' rather than its subject-specific nature. This is in line with the programme's emphasis on critical reflective skills leading to critical appraisal and use of knowledge suitable for situated learning, rather than the 'accumulation' of knowledge. It places emphasis on the process and metacognitive skills that have been acquired by prior learning rather than just the subject knowledge. This means that learners have been able to use credit recognised in this way

that may have been rejected elsewhere, again giving access to a wider range of learners than might normally be the case.

All learners on the programme are, by default, adult and working. They are largely women and so the programme impacts in the demographic area of adult part-time learners, in work, with a significant impact in sub-categories such as career development in women, and across a range of learner typologies, all of which were in some way benefiting from the flexibility of the programme. Typologies ranged from, from the larger to the lesser: career builders (25), personal developers (22), employer workforce development (12) returners to HE (10) and earners and learners and second chancers (both at 4 each) and finally re-trainers (1). This vindicates the programme in terms of its aim to be flexible in terms of focus of study (situated learning), and in time and cost (the ability to work and earn and use prior qualifications). It enables a small number of second chancers to have a go at HE, and as a degree that builds on work and experience, it also caters for adult part-time learners and as a sub category of that, a large contingent of female part-time adult learners. The initial analysis above, has shown that overall, with a couple of areas of uncertainty or lower results, the programme has a positive impact on this demographic.

Entry points to the programme were also shown to be varied. The secondary responses support the importance of the flexibility of the programmes in giving learning opportunities to those who might not necessarily find it easy to commit to study, in that it provides opportunities to resume study rather than start over, use varied types of existing credit in this and to save time and money by accepting prior general credit. It also gave an indication as to the length of time the respondents have spent the on programme, i.e. exposed to the pedagogy. The small number of withdrawals tended to be very early in their respective programmes, and this indicates that experience of the programme may influence its perceived benefits. This is perhaps not controversial, but with a programme that is designed by the learner, it is likely that time and tutorial support is needed before the learning and experiential benefits of the programme become truly clear.

The second part of the survey gives a picture of the way learners negotiated their programmes. It showed that the majority of learners negotiated programmes that were based mainly, or all, on work-based learning. A small number opted for mostly taught courses. The reasons for this are illuminated by the reasons for coming onto the programme. The programmes provide for a varied typology of learners many of who are time restricted as working learners and want a situated style of learning. The unanswered

question is whether or not there is a correlation between the way the programme was structured and the programme's impact on skills, knowledge and agency. It is perhaps safe to suggest that a positive impact was experienced by most learners, who were by default mostly work-based oriented in structure. However, did a mostly taught course structured programme produce different results on average?

Related to this, a small number of learners said that they would have preferred more taught courses. The reasons for this were almost universally to do with adding more structure, especially to the early stages of the programme, mainly because of reasons of confidence with study and academic skills. Although a small number, this indicates an area where perhaps the programme could be improved (and in fact the programme does now have a study skills taught element). Answers to the question outlined above, as to whether taught structure was a better option or not, would also support the need for further development as it would indicate if these learners were really at a disadvantage.

Access to dialogic tutorials, and the supportiveness of them, is the central principle of the programme pedagogy, most importantly including the ability to negotiate a relevant programme, and was the next broad area to be dealt with. Only a small minority felt dissatisfied with the access to, and quality of, dialogue and negotiation. This shows the ability for the programme to have a positive impact on a range of learners in a situated and tailored way, fulfilling the stated ambition of the programme. How dialogue and negotiation contribute to the success of the programme will be investigated by exploring the correlations and causal links, and perceived impacts between it and other aspects of the programme pedagogy, and also skills, knowledge, and agency.

The programme clearly had a positive effect in terms of the learners' perceiving themselves as having acquired skills. The skills categories were critical thinking, research (empirical and literature based), written and spoken argument, debate, and using evidence to change practice. All questions in this area received positive results showing an overall impact. Where the responses were a little more ambiguous was in the area of debate. Although learners that thought the programme had an impact were still in the majority, a far greater proportion were less sure than in other skills categories. There was also greater uncertainty for many respondents over the acquisition of critical thinking skills and spoken argument skills. The lower positive results for the perceived acquisition of debating skills appear to be due to the individually negotiated nature of the programme leading to isolation. The survey comments certainly appear to support this. The positive

results for this question seemed to convert directly to negative results. In relation to the question of perception of critical thinking and spoken argument skills, there is a greater rise in uncertainty. Respondents were more likely to state 'maybe' than in other questions, and so reasons for this will be explored in the following sections.

The survey then looked at how learners now perceived themselves as people and as practitioners in the work-place, having been on the programme. Again, when it came to seeing themselves as a different person as a result of the programme, or having built confidence at work or having benefited colleagues through their learning, then the responses indicated that APS did in fact have a positive impact, though neutral responses did rise a little and the positive responses were more evenly split between those who strongly agreed and those who agreed. Correlations between this and perceived quality of dialogue or perceived acquisition of skills along with interview responses may also shed light on the dynamics of this.

The programme also appears to have a positive impact on the demographic described, from the point of view of the learners that undertook the learning. On the whole respondents appear to be motivated, applying learning and perceiving themselves to have an impact in the work-place and in life in general. Where the respondents show themselves to be unimpressed by the programme appears to be connected to poor tutorial availability, or attendance by themselves or the tutor, or to a lack of dialogue in tutorials, either in support of learning or in the ability to negotiate it in the first place. The mechanism by which this happens is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Many questions arise from this initial analysis. For instance, the question as to why certain impacts seem to be perceived while other are less emphasised, for instance, surrounding critical thinking skills or spoken argument skills. What are the links between the aspects of learning surveyed, and what facilitates the perception of impact, and could be developed? Do dialogic tutorials solely facilitate the perceived development of skills and engagement or are other aspects of the learning process at play? Is the development of things such as critical thinking, spoken argument, confidence etc., dependent on ability to discuss learning or do other circumstances play a part? Responses to these points seem less empathic, whereas the importance of dialogic tutorials seems more certain. Is there another aspect, perhaps more neglected by APS, that impacts on the perception of these two things? These links, amongst others, will be explored through the analysis of

the correlation between responses to the survey questions and the narratives provided in the twenty follow-up interviews.

The responses for the six respondents who would not recommend APS, have highlighted a number of underlying reasons why they were disenchanted with the programme and why they might have disengaged. However, a central issue that appears to have the most impact seems to have been communications with their tutors. According to Boud (2001), and Nixon *et al.* (2008) the individual work-based 'curriculum' emerges out of the experience of the learner, their work situation and their 'communities of practice'. None of this can be ascertained without dialogue and the 'curriculum' cannot be formed without negotiation. Before anything else can happen, organisation must permit the time for these discussions and the tutor must be supportive and confident enough to negotiate, listen and discuss learning in an even-handed way.

From the idea of the purpose and content of learning as experience and the curriculum growing from the learner's situation and context, has risen the awareness of work-based learning as a transdisciplinary mode of learning that sits outside subject frameworks. It has its own epistemological practices and set of norms (Portwood 2000; Costley and Armsby 2007). As work-based learning, in this transdisciplinary sense, departs substantially from the disciplinary framework of university study (Boud 2001), it needs to be accompanied by appropriate methodologies and practices for organising individual programmes of learning, recognising existing skills and understanding, and supporting and assessing learners (Costley and Lester 2010). These may run counter to traditional modes of delivery and, as our respondents have shown, if those mechanisms and methodologies are not present or the tutor is not versed in being able to organise and facilitate work-based or negotiated/situated forms of learning, the student experience will suffer along with their outcomes for learning.

The respondents examined here isolated their problems initially as being a lack of access to tutorials and a lack of support from tutorials. This had resulted in a lack of dialogue or a quality of dialogue that was wanting. The knock-on effect was that properly situated learning, with its benefits of developing and publishing capability, the instilling of ongoing reflective attitudes and the growth of confidence through knowledge and practice, has suffered. This appears largely due to the practices of a tutor – poor organisation, poor dialogue, possible lack of confidence to embed learning in situated scenarios, and a lack of ability to allow learners to take control of their learning and to tap into their 'will to learn'

and self-motivation. This evidence supports the ideas discussed around the importance of the dialogic nature of the programme, the ability to negotiate relevant learning, for the learner to have ownership and be motivated by these things. It seems that without this, the programme is seriously compromised in its effectiveness. It also begins to highlight that tutorial dialogue is part of the learning process, but does not represent the whole process. What the discussion above highlights is that dialogue is essential. What it does not shed light on is the mechanism by which dialogue is successful in promoting learning of a situated type. The following section takes up this discussion starting with the correlations between dialogue and perceived development.

4.4. Dialogue as the foundation stone of the negotiated work-based learning in Applied Professional Studies

Friere (1993) argued, and so did Foucault (1970), that educational institutions, and for Foucault, other institutions too, are sites where thought, and therefore action, are disciplined. If well situated individuals were able to publish to greater audiences and wider communities, and if those communities believed that truth was absolute, then, in Friere's (1993) view, they were being oppressed. The channel for this was education and other disciplinary places. He argued that a negotiated form of learning was called for, as that would firstly enable education to be suited directly to individuals. Through this process, they would become aware of when knowledge was being formed in the interests of others – in other words, become critically aware. A further argument put forward by educationists such as Dewey (1938), and Kolb (1975) etc., that critical reflection on how knowledge was usable, and the consequences to which it led, would make them aware of how it affected others and ultimately themselves.

Learning therefore could be set in experience. Dewey (1938), claimed that experience should be the purpose of education, its content and its result. Strong dialogic-based learning, for him, could instil in learners' critical reflection skills, by embedding learning in real-life, by challenging learners' views, their argument, their development of new skills and practices, and their communication of those developments. Through this, they themselves would embody the critical skills needed to validate their own learning. Barnett (2007) called this process of reflection 'authentic uncertainty', a continually critically reflective approach to knowledge and practices. Learning of this nature, which is strongly discursive and embedded in experience, would improve learners' critical reflection and

engagement with knowledge, and its development and translation into practice both in the individual and the wider community of practice.

Gadamer (1979) described conversation as a process. Knowledge was not a fixed commodity, rather it is created as part of that process of interaction. We each have a 'range of vision' or 'horizon' of knowledge. In discursive encounters we all bring our own pre-existing understandings, bias and prejudices, to bear – that is, we bring to bear that which we can see from our particular 'vantage point' (Gadamer 1979:143). Using these pre-judgements we engage in the discussion, and put to the test our opinions and prejudices. Bernstein (1994: 4) stated that only by engaging with others can our own viewpoints be critically engaged with. Gadamer (1979), argued that this discussion was not necessarily a way of coming to agreement, but the process of the to-and-fro of conversation, and enabled each party to learn from the other – we effectively seek to discover and use others' viewpoints and horizons and add them where possible, and in an inevitably modified form, to our own. In work-based learning, the learner is asked to engage with other viewpoints through their academic research, but this conversation may lack the to-and-fro of dialogue with a tutor (but it will also be noted later, that the to-and-fro of discussion perhaps has to be facilitated through empirical research on the ground too).

However, the criticality or rigour that is applied to this engagement, is solely in the hands of the learner and should be able to be enhanced, if it is opened to discussion and challenge through tutorials that apply the critically reflective process. This operates on the principle of Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, whereby a learner may achieve more through their interaction with a tutor than if they were alone. Through guidance, encouragement and expertise, the tutor can 'nudge' the learner further. This was originally postulated as a process for helping younger children to learn, but also represents a good framework for understanding the effect of dialogic tutorials where the tutor helps the learner to reflect on and validate their emerging knowledge and practices, and which hopefully embodies in the learner the wish to seek this kind of discussion, not just at tutorials, but in wider appropriate discussions. Here, the expertise may be based on the embedded reflective and critical process, and guidance be based upon research skills and the acquisition, appraisal and adaptive application of theoretical and other standpoints. Therefore, the prediction is that those who have access to tutorials, who experience them as discursive and find them supportive of their learning should achieve the learning objectives of the programme and perceive a positive change to themselves

and the way they operate at work (and in life) and the influence they have over their work-place (Archer's (2016)'morphogenesis').

Therefore, in order to have a programme that is negotiated, then dialogue would apparently need to be a central part. Tutorials should enable the negotiation of learning, a sense of control over learning, and the relevance of learning to the individual learner. They should also encourage wider conversation in the practice setting and help the learner to influence their work-place setting. As well as doing these things, they may embody a reflective nature and encourage critical reflection in the learner. It is not the intention of this section to establish exactly how dialogue contributes to this – these themes will be dealt with in subsequent chapters. The main purpose of this section is to get a sense of the link between dialogue in the respondents' perceptions of negotiation and control, relevance, academic support, wider community dialogue and critical reflection skills. The dynamics of how this works, or can be improved, is a task for subsequent chapters to examine.

4.5. Access to regular tutorials

Fundamentally, dialogue through tutorials and then all of the benefits of that dialogue that may follow, are dependent upon access to tutorials in the first place. Of the seventy six respondents to the survey, seventy one responded to the statement 'I had access to regular tutorials' (see the table below). As can be seen, most, fifty six in number, strongly agreed or agreed that they had access. However, eight were neutral, and one disagreed or strongly disagreed and six strongly disagreed. It appears that when respondents disagreed, they were likely to strongly disagree indicating a strong perception of a problem with access to tutorials.

Count of I had access to regular tutorials	
	Total
1 strong agree	41
2 agree	15
3 neutral	8
4 disagree	1
5 strongly disagree	6
Grand Total	71*

* 6 did not answer

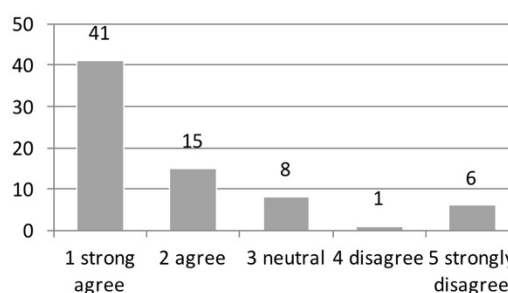


TABLE 23: BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS' ACCESS TO TUTORIALS

The seven that disagree, are the same group that consistently answer negatively about their tutorials in the coming tables that deal with discursiveness of tutorials, control overlearning and supportiveness. This indicates, perhaps unsurprisingly, that in order to perceive any of these things positively, access to tutorial was the fundamental requirement.

4.6. The link between dialogic tutorials and negotiation, control over learning, relevance and supportiveness.

I was able to discuss my learning at tutorials	Total
1 strongly agree	42
2 agree	17
3 neutral	5
4 disagree	1
5 strongly disagree	6
Grand Total	75

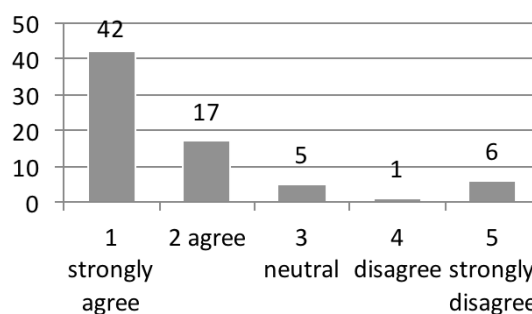


TABLE 24: BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISCURSIVE TUTORIALS

Seventy-one of the seventy-six respondents gave their opinion on the statement, 'I was able to discuss my learning at tutorials'. Forty-two strongly agreed with the statement, and seventeen agreed. Five were neutral, whilst one disagreed and six strongly disagreed. These latter respondents, were the same ones as those who stated access to tutorials was an issue. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those that did not have regular access, also thought the discursiveness of tutorials was an issue, however the five that were neutral might also suggest that the conduct of tutorials was not as affective for them as it could have been. Reasons for their neutrality were not given. However, over all, the result positively showed tutorials were perceived as discursive. Therefore, a lack of access seems to be the reason for perceiving a lack of discursiveness though, a small but significant number were indifferent, indicating on occasion there has possibly been a problem with the quality of tutorials.

4.6.1. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having been able to negotiate a programme relevant to their work life

Statement: I was able to negotiate a programme which was relevant to my work needs						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Row Totals
Group 1: I WAS ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	44 (39.33) [0.55]	10 (9.83) [0.00]	2 (1.79) [0.03]	2 (4.47) [1.36]	1 (3.58) [1.86]	59
Group 2: I was NOT ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	0 (4.67) [4.67]	1 (1.17) [0.02]	0 (0.21) [0.21]	3 (0.53) [11.50]	3 (0.42) [15.64]	7
Column Totals	44	11	2	5	4	66 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 35.8446. The p -value is < 0.00001 . The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 25: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE PERCEPTIONS OF DISCURSIVE TUTORIALS AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE A WORK-RELEVANT PROGRAMME

In order to see if there was a potential link between being able to discuss learning at tutorials, and perceptions of an ability to negotiate a programme relevant to work needs, respondents were split into two groups. Group 1 those who had previously responded, 'I was able to discuss my learning at tutorials', and Group 2 had responded '*I was not able to discuss my learning at tutorials*'. The neutral respondents were not included as a group. Unsurprisingly, the above table shows a strong link between being able to discuss learning at tutorials, and being able to negotiate a work relevant programme. The majority of Group 1 strongly agreed or agreed, whilst the small group two proportionally was the opposite with most disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement. As Friere (1993) states, perhaps obviously, dialogue is central and pivotal to the success of a negotiated programme – no dialogue, no negotiation.

The ability to negotiate is important, as this would have an implication for the learners' perceptions of control over their learning and the relevance of it to their needs and practices. At interview one respondent spoke positively about the ability to negotiate,

'My tutor has ensured that the negotiated nature of the programme has been well supported, and I have felt reassured that my study has been adapted to meet my professional needs.'

This comment hints at the importance of the negotiated nature of the programme to learners and the reasons for this will be explored in more detail in subsequent sections.

4.6.2. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having control over their learning

Statement: I didn't feel as though I had control over my learning						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Row Totals
Group 1: I WAS ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	6 (8.94) [0.97]	2 (2.68) [0.17]	3 (2.68) [0.04]	13 (11.62) [0.16]	35 (33.08) [0.11]	59
Group 2: I was NOT ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	4 (1.06) [8.15]	1 (0.32) [1.46]	0 (0.32) [0.32]	0 (1.38) [1.38]	2 (3.92) [0.94]	7
Column Totals	10	3	3	13	37	66 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 13.701. The p -value is .008313. The result is significant at $p < .05$

TABLE 26: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF DISCURSIVE TUTORIALS AND THE PERCEPTION OF CONTROL OVER LEARNING

Group 1 was much more likely to disagree or strongly disagree with the statement than group two, strongly indicating that the ability to discuss learning was linked to a sense of control over learning by the students (the result being statistically significant at $p > .05$).

A comment given in the survey hints at the value of control over learning to the learner. Interviewee 4 stated;

'I would highly recommend work-based learning as a route to professional development – developing professional competencies. This mode of learning is a great confidence booster – without having to compromise on the development of academic skills. Even more, you have much control over study topics because you get to design your degree. It is highly motivating, rewarding.'

This further suggests that the dialogic aspect of the learning is a foundation stone that facilitates the sense of control over learning, which in turn links to a sense of motivation, engagement, reward and confidence. This of course can only happen if the dialogue is meaningful and supportive.

4.6.3. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of the supportiveness of tutorials

Statement: I felt my tutorials weren't particularly supportive of my learning						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Row Totals
Group 1: I WAS ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	3 (6.23) [1.68]	6 (5.34) [0.08]	3 (3.56) [0.09]	8 (8.02) [0.00]	37 (33.84) [0.29]	57
Group 2: I was NOT ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	4 (0.77) [13.66]	0 (0.66) [0.66]	1 (0.44) [0.72]	1 (0.98) [0.00]	1 (4.16) [2.40]	7
Column Totals	7	6	4	9	38	64 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 19.5819. The p-value is .000604. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 27: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF DISCURSIVE TUTORIALS AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE SUPPORTIVENESS OF TUTORIALS

The table above shows that Group 2 was much more likely to see their tutorials as not being supportive, with over half of the much smaller Group 2, thinking this. Four of the seven were emphatic, with one being neutral, one disagreeing and one strongly disagreeing. The importance of feeling supported is borne out by comments made by the interviewees, starting with interviewee 1:

‘Perhaps it was my experience of the OU [Open University] – I always thought I was never very academic. With the OU, it was about trying to motivate myself and be interested in it. It lacked support – my tutorials are very visual here – I can discuss my work and get another opinion about this bit here, or that bit there. Dialogue is absolutely essential. With the OU thing, it wasn’t a personal relationship, it was just a person on the end of an email – I didn’t even know who they were. It was never specific to me. That first thing [course] I did [with APS], I kept saying, I’m not and academic but the tutor got to know me and said that I was. Think about your writing and set it down – then think about it and you will learn how to write. The tutor made it like writing was a thing to learn in itself. He said think about the subject and then we’ll work on how to write it up, and all that stuff about critical thinking. With the OU, they couldn’t help me directly, because there was not a personal conversation about my work specifically.’

Interviewee 14 said that,

‘I think what happened with me, was that my tutor knew I was capable of a little bit more, and instead of accepting what I had done, pointed me in the right direction and made me go and do things I really didn’t think I could actually do. I really enjoy being on the programme and got the opportunity to reflect on my personal development and skills, to challenge myself to develop academic skills, to gain confidence and the awareness of being a self-directed learner.’

Interviewee 3 added;

'I think it is very important for the tutor to know people's individual learning styles and also to know how to push somebody forward without over-fazing them. So it's about self-esteem, and not falling at the first hurdle and thinking "that's it".'

Echoing Vigotsky (1978), these comments support the idea that discursive and supportive tutorials enable learners to go beyond what they might do otherwise, and these comments demonstrate the reflection and development that can be facilitated. The comments hint at the developing sense of identity as learners and the move towards a metacognitive way of being in the world. (These themes are discussed in much more depth in subsequent sections.)

Overall the findings indicate – perhaps unsurprisingly – that students were likely to feel supported if they had regular tutorials. This is perhaps even more significant than it might be for traditionally-delivered lecture programmes, given that tutorials were a primary source of contact in lieu of lectures, etc. It does therefore further indicate the centrality of tutorials and dialogue to the programme, and the overall responses indicate that the tutorials were on the whole able to result in students feeling supported. Dialogue appears to have a role in the development of the identities of the individuals as learners. The question that this raises is if supportiveness, from tutors and peers, is a pre-requisite of learner success (motivation, understanding, critical reflection etc.) and this will be explored in subsequent sections.

4.7. The link between dialogic tutorials and learning outcomes

The discussion of dialogic support has painted a picture of the importance of it to fostering a sense of control and relevance, and the importance of that, has been hinted at in turn (and will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections). Negotiated work-based programmes such as APS, have a tendency to have a large if not exclusive amount of work-based projects that are facilitated through supervisory tutorials. Lectured elements are less relied upon, and so the question arises as to the quality of academic achievement, at least as perceived by the learners themselves.

4.7.1. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having gained literature research skills

Question: Do you feel you have gained literature research skills as a result of your involvement in the programme?				
	Yes	No	Maybe	<i>Row Totals</i>
Group 1: I WAS ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	59 (53.64) [0.54]	0 (0.89) [0.89]	0 (4.47) [4.47]	59
Group 2: I was NOT ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	1 (6.36) [4.52]	1 (0.11) [7.53]	5 (0.53) [37.67]	7
Column Totals	60	1	5	66 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 55.6286. The p -value is < 0.00001 . The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 28: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF DISCURSIVE TUTORIALS AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF GAINING LITERATURE-BASED RESEARCH SKILLS

Group 1, who perceived themselves as having been able to discuss their learning at tutorials, were also unanimous in their response that they gained literature research skills as part of their involvement on the programme. Group 2 were much less certain with the majority, five, answering ‘maybe’, with one saying ‘no’, and another saying ‘yes’. Overall this would suggest a successful programme in this respect, but the link between dialogue and the perception of having gained the skill seems strong. The assessment would have required the use of literature research, hence the sense of uncertainty rather than outright certainty that the programme did not help in this respect. However, the ability to discuss learning seemed to produce a set of responses that were emphatic in showing the very high probability of a link between the two (statistically significant at $p < .05$).

At interview, respondents gave further insight into the link between tutorial dialogue and gaining research skills. Interviewee 10 was not positive about the ability of the tutor to direct their reading and pass on subject knowledge, saying that, ‘More guidance around subject reading and a greater understanding of the subject’ was needed. This demonstrates, that for whatever reason, the roles of learners and tutors in a work-based learning programme had not been discussed or understood, perhaps on both sides.

However, other interviewees were more positive. Interviewee 3 stated that, ‘[My tutor] knew I was capable of a little bit more research and instead of accepting what I had done, pointed me in the right direction and made me go and do things I really didn’t think I could actually do.’ This perhaps illustrates a differing approach where the learner has accepted a level of responsibility and the tutor had encouraged the learner to research further.

When asked about what they may have taken away from the programme, two interviewees (4 and 5), who had completed their programmes, claimed that research skills and the use of multiple perspectives and support for argument had been important. The first one (interviewee 4) talked about the way they had incorporated the process into their working practices,

‘The APS programme structured the way I look at things and do the research. Although I don’t have access to that University resources anymore I still find other ways to do my research. I want to try to stay on top of the game in my area of work you see. I have kind of emulated the kinds of processes and resources I had at University – different sources of information and resources that I now access as routine that I wouldn’t have originally.’

The second (interviewee 5) also thought the processes they had been tutored through were important, ‘It’s the process. When you’re undertaking anything it is good to be able to step back and look at it, do the research and look at it from different perspectives. I think academic training you get here facilitates that.’ The facilitation of the development of these skills starts in tutorials and supervisions, and is scaffolded through them. The interviewees show this through the discussion of the processes and how and why it is relevant. However, the discussion enables the facilitation of the application of study and the recognition of its importance and embeddedness in practice, and is just part of the learning development journey.

4.7.2. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having gained skills in using evidence to change practice as a result of the programme

Question: Do you feel you have gained skills in using evidence to change practice as a result of your programme?				
	Yes	No	Maybe	Row Totals
Group 1: I WAS ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	47 (45.59) [0.04]	3 (5.36) [1.04]	9 (8.05) [0.11]	59
Group 2: I was NOT ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	4 (5.41) [0.37]	3 (0.64) [8.78]	0 (0.95) [0.95]	7
Column Totals	51	6	9	66 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 11.2992. The p -value is .003519. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 29: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF DISCURSIVE TUTORIALS AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF BEING ABLE TO USE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT PRACTICE

The role of dialogic tutorials and embedded learning is highlighted here. In Group 1, respondents were more likely to answer yes, and less likely to answer no, to the question of gaining skills in using evidence to change practice. Again, the notion that dialogue through tutorials scaffolds this, is supported by the two groups' responses. In group 1 the responses to 'yes' were higher than predicted (based on the null hypothesis – that is where there is no difference in the effect of the variation between the groups), whilst the responses in Group 2 were lower. Similarly, there was a significant difference between the two groups where Group 1 respondents in the 'no' category were less than predicted and in Group 2 were higher than predicted. Therefore, although Group 2 were still slightly more likely to say that they gained skills in the ability to use evidence to change practice, they were still significantly more likely than Group 1, to say that they hadn't. This strongly suggests, with a statistical significance of $p < .05$, that there was a link between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and perceiving the development of skills in using evidence to effect change. However, it appears that tutorial support alone may not be the only influencer, as Group 2 were still more likely to perceive themselves as having gained the skills in question than not.

4.7.3. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having developed work-related knowledge

Question: I don't really feel that the programme helped me to develop work-related knowledge						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Row Totals
Group 1: I WAS ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	0 (2.68) [2.68]	3 (2.68) [0.04]	6 (5.35) [0.08]	14 (15.17) [0.09]	35 (32.12) [0.26]	58
Group 2: I was NOT ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	3 (0.32) [22.18]	0 (0.32) [0.32]	0 (0.65) [0.65]	3 (1.83) [0.75]	1 (3.88) [2.13]	7
Column Totals	3	3	6	17	36	65 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 29.1727. The p -value is < 0.00001 . The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 30: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF DISCURSIVE TUTORIALS AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPING WORK-RELATED KNOWLEDGE

The perceived ability to develop work-related knowledge is strongly linked to the ability to discuss learning at tutorials, as shown by the above table. This further supports the idea that dialogic tutorials were foundational in supporting the development of theoretical research and its application and relation to work situations.

4.7.4. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having gained skills in the articulation of written argument

Question: Do you feel you have gained skills in the articulation of written argument as a result of your programme?				
	Yes	No	Maybe	Row Totals
Group 1: I WAS ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	49 (47.29) [0.06]	1 (3.57) [1.85]	8 (7.14) [0.10]	58
Group 2: I was NOT ABLE to discuss my learning at tutorials	4 (5.71) [0.51]	3 (0.43) [15.32]	0 (0.86) [0.86]	7
Column Totals	53	4	8	65 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 18.7111. The p -value is .000086. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 31: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF DISCURSIVE TUTORIALS AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPING WRITTEN ARGUMENT SKILLS

According to Reznitskaya *et al* (2001), theirs and other's studies show written argument benefits from strong dialogic exposure. Dialogic tutorials augment, or encourage, a critical

approach to arguments that come about through reading and research, and the link between tutorials and the articulation of written argument seems strong. Group 1 is more likely to be affirmative of the idea that they developed written argument skills, than Group 2. Likewise, Group 2 is markedly more likely to say 'no' to developing these skills than Group 1. This is an important part of the notion that learners need to be able to 'publish' in a convincing way if they are to effect change. And to some extent this represents the end of a chain, from the negotiation and situation of learning, through tutorial support to the presentation of written argument to wider audiences. However, written argument and good writing skills are not the only form of publication and in other areas the link seems less equivocal.

4.7.5. The relationship between being able to discuss learning at tutorials and the learner's perception of having gained skills in empirical research, debating and spoken argument

The link between discursive tutorials, debating and spoken argument, and empirical skills was also explored but the result for these were less clear in suggesting a link between them. In the initial analysis of the figures, it was shown that although more respondents were positive about gaining these skills the respondents were nonetheless divided overall. It was therefore predictable that the difference between Groups 1 and 2 would be less emphatic; however, the relationships were explored all the same. In each case, the figures suggested a marginal difference between the groups suggesting a positive effect of discursive tutorials. However, the probability, after Chi Square testing, was not within the $p > 05$ threshold. This is important because although the dialogue has been linked strongly to ownership, negotiation and support, of the use of evidence to effect changes at work and to the development of work-related knowledge, there is an inconclusiveness over its link to the development of the skills outlined above.

In all instances, Group 1 showed a slight tendency to be more positive about the development of skills, whilst Group 2 was less likely to be so positive. However, the differences did not show a statistical probability that was high enough to conclude that the difference was due to the dialogic tutorials, as opposed to another variable. This varied however, when the overall sample was split along different lines and this is part of the ongoing discussion in the subsequent section, and perhaps where some really interesting findings emerged.

Logically, the three skills areas appear to be linked; debate and spoken argument are perhaps more obviously linked in that they may both involve dialogue with wider audiences, than that offered by one-to-one tutorials. Tutorials may also have focused more on the production of written assessment, and lost to some extent the opportunity to explore and encourage conversations that had happened in wider contexts. This links with empirical skills – if tutorials did not focus on empirical data gathering in the workplace from human subjects, they may have also discouraged those wider conversations from taking place, not to mention the development of the critical thinking techniques used to test the operation of theory in real-life settings. Alternatively, it may be that the tutorials were not necessarily the main site of these activities and learning developments, and that other parts of the situated learning process may have had a greater influence.

In the case of debating skills, one-to-one tutorials are perhaps obviously demonstrated as most likely not to be the main site of learning, though they may play a part in facilitating it elsewhere. The staff who ran the programme were aware that isolation was a problem, from student feedback gathered at the time of the programme's five-year review in 2010. As a result, a limited number of all student symposiums were instituted in order to improve networking and the exchange of ideas. However, due to operational reasons, these were few and irregular. At interview the following comments were given by six of the respondents:

- 'It would be good if there was [sic] more group tutorials and symposiums.'
- 'The programme was sometimes a challenge – especially in the first year, but was, on reflection, a very positive experience. As mentioned before I really enjoyed the taught course and also the symposiums as this gave me a chance to meet other students.'
- 'Topics on taught courses are challenging because [the] tutor is aware how to push, encourage and guide students, as well as phrasing questions in a way that encourages critical debates. Work-based learning is also challenging – however working and learning with others can help stimulate ideas.'
- 'You have to be happy to be an isolated, independent, learner who is very self-motivated. Unfortunately, I prefer a social learning environment.'
- 'It can be lonely.'
- 'I enjoyed it, but it was quite arduous and at times frustrating, because you worked so much on your own. But I gained a lot by doing this.'

The sense of isolation, or the need for working with others, perhaps casts some light on the reasons for a perceived lack of debating skills gained. Whilst tutorials would help discussion, a sense of wider debate may be missing to some extent, through the lack of contact with peers, or perhaps because other methods of creating discussion with colleagues were not encouraged.

This perhaps, is the same rationale for the responses on spoken argument being inconclusive. Although dialogue appears to be happening in tutorials, spoken argument and debate in the wider context of work practice may not be so obviously linked to the tutorials. It may be the case that encouraging wider discussion and empirical data gathering is due to the limited range of dialogue in tutorials, and it may be linked to other aspects of the learning that are perhaps not being facilitated with as much continuity as they could be. The discussion and figures above seem to show a strong link between a sense of support, the perceived ability to negotiate learning, a sense of control over learning and the ability to develop certain skills. Literature research would have been a conventional topic of discussion in the review of written work, so it is perhaps unsurprising that it is developed through tutorials, as it is a basic requirement of academic work. A link was also shown between dialogue and the ability to effect change using evidence. Dialogic tutorials therefore, enable the learner to decide what learning they want to undertake, in connection with the context that they desire to develop in, alongside discussion of theory and application. However, tutorials may not always consistently play a part in the facilitation of other conversations or methods of learning that stimulated the exploration of ideas and practices through the wider community.

This suggestion of a sense of ownership and control over learning and its relevance to application, was linked to motivation and the will to learn in the theory discussed earlier (sub-sections 2.12-15 and 2.17), and will be further explored later (sub-section 4.7). Therefore, dialogic tutorials appear to be vital as a foundation to learning. However, the inability to link them conclusively to a sense of achievement in terms of other skills such as debate, argument (written and oral) and empirical research, suggests that other aspects of learning, such as the use and validation of learning in real life (situated learning), might still have a bearing.

4.8. The role of situated learning – its perceived impacts on the opportunity to learn

The previous sub-section looked at the role of dialogue and dialogic tutorials in APS. It showed strong links between dialogue and support, and especially showed them to be fundamental to a learner's sense of being able to negotiate a relevant programme in their work-life. It also showed a link between some learning outcomes, such as perceived literature research skills, articulation of written argument, and the development of work knowledge and its application. It indicates – at least in the perception of the research participants – that dialogic tutorials were an effective site of development of these skills. Where it was less emphatic was on the question of softer skills, skills that might have more of a site of development away from, or less dependent on, one-to-one dialogic tutorials. The need for dialogue, especially in a negotiated degree based on work-based study, is of course so that learning can be situated in that context. The situation of the learning will have a part to play, and also provide, in theory, an important site of learning and development alongside academic tutorial support. The following sub-section discusses the situated nature of the learning and the impact it had on APS learners, starting with the learners' reasons for choosing a situated programme (the impact on their ability to choose a programme suitable for them), and then the ongoing impact of their learning from the point of view of it being situated.

4.8.1. Impact as a programme catering for learners in diverse situational needs

As discussed in the literature review, flexibility is a central property of work-based learning. The term 'situated learning' may primarily seem to refer, especially in work-based learning, to the learning being situated or embedded in the work situation. However, being situated perhaps has an even wider connotation in that the learning is also embedded in the learner's personal circumstances, values, beliefs, and frameworks of reference. As the workplace is situated in a social context, then so is the learner and it is perhaps in this way that work-based learning differs from 'work-related learning'. Work-based focuses on the actual work practices as embedded in social contexts, as opposed to learning subjects that relate to work, normally in the learning establishment and away from the social context.

In line with this, APS is designed in a way that takes into account the situations and aspirations of learners, from the beginning. In the main survey's basic analysis (sub-section 4.2), the initial reasons for learners to come onto the programme were codified using a typology of flexible learners developed at the University of Greenwich (Jiwa, 2013). This gave a simplified overview of the situated nature of the learners on coming onto APS. However, when the reasons for initially coming onto the programme were compared with the reasons for choosing APS as opposed to a taught programme, a more complex picture in terms of learner typology emerges. Classification, including the reasons for choosing APS above a taught programme, was not without its difficulty, as many people cited different motives from their initial reasons for coming onto the programme, which fell within multiple categories. It was, therefore, decided to classify based on the first initial reason given for joining the programme. In a sense, this was a helpful exercise for it demonstrates the limitations of trying to rigidly classify learners and their situations, and supports the need for a degree programme that recognises the individuality of the learners' individual situations. This is perhaps particularly highlighted by the zero number given to 'earners and learners', in terms of choosing the need to earn and learn as their reason for doing the programme. Although none stated this as their first reason, many mentioned the constraints of time and money, and the need to earn and learn, as an additional, or secondary, reason for choosing the programme. When the question as to whether a taught programme was considered, this number grows further still – in fact the need to earn and learn was a factor that affected the majority of respondents – they chose not to do taught courses dependent on attendance at lectures because of their need to work and to continue earning.

The complexity of both primary and secondary reasons for undertaking the programme, also highlights another deficiency in the typology list, that of learners who wanted to apply learning directly to their work experience and have explored theory that is relevant, applicable and usable in work experience. This theme arises in a significant number of comments made by respondents as a reason for coming onto the programme, highlighting that flexibility and relevance of content is important.

Typology:	Description:	Number of respondents:
Returners to HE	Returning back to HE to obtain a higher-level award.	10
Career Builders	In work, looking for career progression and recognise new skills and qualifications are essential. Seeking new knowledge to meet perceived gaps.	27 – gave only career building as their reasons (therefore differentiated from personal developers)
Second Chancers	No previous HE experience but seeking access to qualifications and personal improvement.	3
Re-Trainers	Change of career path.	1
Earners and Learners, as an alternative to traditional HE	Earn and learn whilst in employment as an alternative to full-time HE.	0
Personal Developers	Driven by personal interest to extend their knowledge. Learning is a priority and 'serious leisure'. The qualification is not so important; the experiential aspects of the intellectual journey and social ambience are paramount.	22 – personal reasons were given as primary drives to learn, though the knowledge of work was also often central and so this category may be closely aligned to career builders
Employer Workforce Development	Employers seeking to up-skill employees to deliver strategic business improvement objectives. Would like to co-create curriculum or influence content.	10

TABLE 32: LEARNER TYPOLOGY OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The table above was, therefore, only possible to compile if the first, and only one, of the given initial reasons for choosing the course was taken. It therefore represents an oversimplification of the nature of the learners who took part in the study. When the categories are again looked at, with the full reason presented, a more complex picture arises of learners falling into multiple categories simultaneously and with this caveat, the codified groups are presented as follows.

Returners to HE.

Ten returners to HE were identified. APS is structured to allow learners back into learning at different levels. This is a more flexible approach than many programmes for two main

reasons. Firstly, the programme accepts credits as 'general credit'. This is the recognition of prior certificate of credited learning (RPCL) deemed as indicating 'graduateness' rather than subject-specific knowledge. Secondly, the programme is divided into a foundation degree, and then a bachelor's top up, followed by a postgraduate certificate that can be topped up to a postgraduate diploma and then master's. This, fairly uniquely, offers a range of entry points that recognises previous HE credited learning wherever it is gained.

That this was perceived as important, is reflected in the initial reasons for coming onto the APS programme given by these learners:

Initial reasons for joining the programme	Did you consider doing a fully 'taught' programme (e.g. a pre-existing programme such as a BA in English or some such), and what was your reason for choosing work-based learning instead?
I had previously completed my studies to HND level and just needed a top-up year in order to gain a degree, which would then enable me to become a trainee teacher. I was... able to use APEL [RPCL].	I looked at taught courses but I wouldn't have been able to make the commitment away from my children or my work.
[I] took my Dip HE in Youth and Community work and should have finished the degree but circumstances changed, now having the chance to top up and finish my degree so that I can move into professional standing.	I am already working in a school environment so what I needed was to put what I know into project-based assignments and get recognition for it.
I could use my qualifications gained in my employment towards my degree.	I needed to work to pay for my course and to fit in with looking after my children.
Initially I wanted to upgrade my teaching qualification from a Cert Ed to a full degree but enjoyed the programme so much I decided to return to do the MA.	I needed the flexibility of a work-based programme as I was working full time, frequently until very late in the evening so it was almost impossible to complete a taught programme.
[I wanted] to top up a postgraduate diploma to a master's. I needed a master's to improve my credibility as a teacher in HE. As a staff member I didn't have to pay a fee. Because the University of Greenwich gave me a lot of CATs credit for my diploma. Because it was very flexible in terms of attendance. Because it was	I was also interested in doing a taught/blended learning master's with, for example, University of Stirling. This would have been more expensive and more time consuming.

very flexible in terms of being able to apply prior learning.	
I needed to complete a degree that I had started at another University.	No. I needed to stay working full-time to earn a wage and I was improving my professional development at the same time.
To convert my P.G. Dip. [postgraduate diploma].	Work-based option was the only programme that fitted in with my work schedule.
I didn't undertake a degree after my A Levels and decided I was ready to return to studying part-time. This was partly for myself, partly for future work prospects (and also something to do!) :)	Yes, but I already had done two business management courses which could be cashed in against the equivalent of a foundation degree so I would only need to do the final year of the degree course to obtain my degree. Also I could not possibly have afforded to pay for a full 3 year course myself and as I work full time it would have been difficult to attend taught classes on a regular basis.
I wanted to do an MA and my work funded me - and was also a sister college of University of Greenwich.	It was available to me and paid for and it helped me at work - I was able to put systems in place at work and claim credits for them.

TABLE 33: INITIAL AND SECONDARY REASONS GIVEN BY LEARNERS CATEGORISED AS 'RETURNERS TO HE'

APS, as a work-based learning degree, recognises 'graduateness' and experience of higher education (HE), over the subject itself. The acquisition of HE credit should, at least, indicate the acquisition of critical learning skills, in line with the work-based learning aim of producing critical reflective practitioners able to recognise their learning and independently develop it. Therefore, a general learning skills approach, rather than a subject-specific approach to prior learning, enables the programme to admit learners in line with the development of their learning skills. Taking account of the situation of these learners has enabled APS, as a flexible work-based learning degree, to offer opportunities to gain HE qualifications that might not have been viable, or might have been punitive in terms of time and money, had the only alternative been to repeat prior study.

Career builders

At twenty-seven respondents, Career Builders was the largest category of all. This group recognised that qualifications and skills were important to career progression and this was reflected in their reason for coming on to the APS programme:

Initial reasons for joining the programme	Did you consider doing a fully 'taught' programme (e.g. a pre-existing programme such as a BA in English or some such), and what was your reason for choosing work-based learning instead?
I found out about the programme from a friend who was promoting the course when it first began. It seemed ideal for my position at the time as there was not a specific degree associated with my then profession - Oral health promoter. It appealed to me also as I could work, studying around my working day.	I didn't think that I would be able to take off the time from my working week that I could complete the number of hours needed to attend lectures. With APS it was more flexible to fitting in with working full-time.
I wanted to undertake degree-level study to improve my career but my work role and working hours made conventional degree programmes unsuitable and impossible to attend. The APS programme addressed those issues.	Yes, [but] work commitments prevented attendance on a fully taught programme, and none appeared to fully address the needs of my work role. The APS programme enabled me to study subjects relevant to my specific role.
I felt it would improve my career prospects and enhance my knowledge of my work related area.	No. I work full time and my organisation was paying for my qualification. I would not have been able to attend such a programme.
I want to further my education with hopes to improve job opportunity.	I never thought of doing a fully taught programme. I started work-based learning as I could balance it with full time work.
I was in education for 15 years without a proper qualification (as a music specialist) and wanted to move on. APS was the perfect path for achieving what I needed to become – a qualified teacher.	This was the only option suitable for me at that time. I had to still earn an income and learn at my own pace. Having to work and raise a family.

<p>I am taking the APS for my professional and career development and be able to deliver effectively in the area of management.</p>	<p>I have considered doing a fully taught programme, but due to my current employment status, it will be impossible to do that, hence, the APS is a suitable programme to gain academic qualification whilst learning, also, these days most jobs/employer prefer people with experience rather than people with just academic qualifications but without any work experience in the chosen field</p>
<p>I wanted to develop and gain a degree. Important for future work prospects.</p>	<p>No - it seemed to be accessible and enabled me to convince employers it would be viable to undertake.</p>
<p>I needed a degree for my professional/career chances. I chose APS as I had undertaken previous academic studies but they were not part of a programme leading to a degree.</p>	<p>I did consider doing a taught programme and attended a University of Greenwich open day to discuss this with the various Schools. You ask for honesty, here goes!! The School of Health were pompous and disregarded my earlier studies stating that I would have to undertake a whole BSc programme from scratch (in spite of having completed modules within this school). The School of Education/Training suggested my experience, knowledge and skills related well to the APS programme and put me in contact with [APS]. The rest, as they say, is history. The flexibility offered by this programme and the recognition of my recent studies made this the programme of choice for me.</p>
<p>I was working as an unqualified teacher and needed a degree I could do on the job around the subjects I was teaching.</p>	<p>I never considered it as I needed to put the theory into practice, which was important to do. It helped me to become a better teacher as I understood the need for this balance in my lessons too.</p>
<p>Career progression.</p>	<p>No, cost and time. Work orientated.</p>
<p>I wanted to further my education, gain a degree and complete my teacher training.</p>	<p>I couldn't afford the time or the finances to undertake that sort of degree.</p>
<p>I wanted to become a qualified teacher, but couldn't afford to stop working.</p>	<p>Mostly financial - needed to work at the same time. I also liked the flexibility of the APS programme.</p>
<p>I wanted to get awarded with degree level of study for my work as a nurse to ensure I was able to progress with my career.</p>	<p>It was flexible and I could work it around my full time job.</p>

Developing my opportunity for promotion within the training and learning team.	Yes, Foundation degree in The Technical Age, but unfortunately the course I wanted was no longer running.
I wanted to improve my chances of becoming a qualified teacher and was told this degree could be done whilst working.	I was unable to consider a fully taught programme due to getting time off work. The work-based learning allowed me to work at my own pace, to fit in with my work life.
I wanted to become a qualified teacher and needed a degree around my work.	No as I wanted a course around the work field.
Development opportunities for administrative staff are quite limited. There is a 'Cinderella effect' and I saw this as an opportunity to develop and increase my chances of securing a better job. Also, I was unable to go to university when I left school so this was a chance to improve my skills from an academic perspective. Undertaking the FD (Foundation Diploma) was fully supported by my manager at the time.	No. The FD gave me a flexible option to undertaking further learning around subjects relating to my work. I liked the idea of working at my own pace and still being able to do my job and earn money.
I needed a degree to further my career.	Yes I did but was unable to find one that I could fit in around work and could afford.
To become a qualified teacher I needed a degree.	No
It seemed a Degree that was relevant to what I was doing. I also saw it as a way to progress within my place of work. I believed it would also provide me with a greater insight of the pedagogy that underpins my current and future employment. I hoped that it would help me to acquire the skills to become a more confident and knowledgeable practitioner.	No. I would not have been sufficiently academically qualified to have undertaken a traditional BA. I believe that I would not have been confident to have attempted Higher Education. either. Possibly not as motivated as I am now. I would love to continue with Higher Education, once I have completed my studies.
I needed a degree.	<i>Question not answered.</i>
I wanted to complete a degree in order to gained qualified teacher status (QTS) in school.	Could not afford to complete a fully taught programme
I need a convenient way of study that would incorporate workplace knowledge, learning.	I had considered a taught course, however it would not have been a good way to study as it required me to be away from work one day every week, with a work-based course I could customise my study schedule to synchronise with my work schedule.
It was work-based	I did but could not get on one
Flexible way to combine study and work and more affordable	No as I could not afford to lose a day's salary to commit to other ways of study.

I work in the University of Greenwich with postgraduate students and wanted to get a qualification at the same level as them. Also I had learnt a number of new skills in my role and it was an opportunity to gain a qualification recognising the learning I had done.	I wanted recognition for the learning I had done.
I am teaching foundation degrees for Greenwich at a partner college and feel that I need to continue my CPD with my master's being the next level.	I have previously been through a taught BA honours programme. I am employed as a teacher trainer and am in a position to implement ideas in to my workplace.
I needed a degree to become a teacher. I already had an HND I wanted to study part time	No the work-based learning fitted in best with work and family life. I found it manageable which I don't think a taught course would have been.

TABLE 34: INITIAL AND SECONDARY REASONS GIVEN BY LEARNERS CATEGORISED AS 'CAREER BUILDERS

As can be seen, career development was a central reason for coming on to the programme. However, this in itself did not provide a reason for the need for a flexible or work-based learning degree, which took account of and was designed for the student's situation. However, many elaborated in their answers concerning the consideration of a taught programme instead of APS illuminates the complexity of learners and their reasons for studying. ****

The majority, between the two sets of comments, expressed a need for a degree that would take into account their financial constraint, and then the time they had to carry out study due to, firstly, time constrictions placed by work, and then family and other commitments. After that, there was a significant sense that the flexibility of the APS programme in terms of content was attractive, with some responses very clear on the desire to combine learning with previous or unfolding work experience, and a programme of learning directly relevant and applicable to their specific work role. A sense is also present, that other more traditionally delivered and organised programmes would be unable to deliver these attributes.

Second chancers

Three of the respondents were classified as 'second chancers' (though some classified in other categories also cited this as a secondary reason).

Initial reasons for joining the programme	Did you consider doing a fully 'taught' programme (e.g. a pre-existing programme such as a BA in English or some such), and what was your reason for choosing work-based learning instead?
The main reason is because I felt I really wanted a degree. I've always felt that I should have continued studying when I was younger but due to life circumstances my path took a different direction.	No. The appeal of APS was that I would be able to convert previous learning to credit so hopefully reducing the length of time to complete the degree
I wanted to get a degree as I did not have the opportunity when I was younger to go to university and my employer was offering to pay 50% of the fees. Also I felt it would be useful to have on my CV should I wish to progress my career.	Yes, but I already had done two business management courses which could be cashed in against the equivalent of a foundation degree so I would only need to do the final year of the degree course to obtain my degree. Also I could not possibly have afforded to pay for a full 3 year course myself and as I work full time it would have been difficult to attend taught classes on a regular basis.
Because I felt it was time to earn a degree and this option gave me the flexibility I needed.	No. I wanted to experience a more progressive method of learning, a break from tradition if you like. And if I experience it first-hand then I can support the others in my workplace who will no doubt follow my lead.

TABLE 35: INITIAL AND SECONDARY REASONS GIVEN BY LEARNERS CATEGORISED AS 'SECOND CHANCERS'

A sense of changing circumstances comes across in these answers, which in turn leads to a feeling of the learners 'becoming ready'. Although three of the responses do not give any particular reason for needing a flexible degree, they do give a sense of the learner perhaps having gained experience or maturity, and for this reason the flexibility of context and application to experience (i.e. not abstract), may have been attractive. The second to last response, does give a real sense of experience and the wish to formalise or validate it. The negotiation of content, and embedding of learning in experience was vital, meaning that APS may have been an opportunity not necessarily offered in many other places.

Initial reasons for joining the programme	Did you consider doing a fully 'taught' programme (e.g. a pre-existing programme such as a B.A. in English or some such), and what was your reason for choosing work-based learning instead?
I wanted a career change and decided to embark on an honours degree to improve my chances. I felt I was not qualified enough to compete with today's market therefore, I applied for a foundation degree in Applied Professional Studies, however, I still felt that this is not quite enough so I decided to carry on for an honours degree.	Reason for doing work-based learning is because I needed to work full time for financial reasons.

TABLE 36: INITIAL AND SECONDARY REASONS GIVEN BY LEARNERS CATEGORISED AS 'RE-TRAINERS'

Re-trainers

The perceived need for a degree was the primary reason for this single respondent categorised as a re-trainer, and does not say much about APS as a choice in itself, but the secondary reason does highlight the work and financial situation as necessitating flexibility.

Earners and learners

No learner gave earning and learning as their first reason for coming onto Applied Professional Studies. However, it would be totally misleading to think that this was not a central issue to learners. Most of the respondents gave earning and learning as a secondary reason, and this number rises significantly when the question of whether respondents considered purely taught programmes. This then becomes the most common reason for doing so (see the comments on the other typologies where virtually all learners at some stage cite reasons of time and money). This highlights the dangers of trying to 'pigeon hole' learners, and also helps to demonstrate the complex nature of learner situations, where learners may be learning for specific reason, but may also be taking into account very practical aspects of their situations such as time and finance.

Although the initial typology proved itself inadequate as a rigid classification system, it does have a use in understanding learners if they are allowed to inhabit multiple

classifications. However, even then, there are still more reasons for the need for flexible work-based learning than merely career building. It should also be understood that practitioner learners, in addition, are often looking for bespoke forms of learning that are directly relevant and applicable to their work situations. Returning to HE, second chancers, re-trainers, career builders and personal developers, and work requirements are all valid reasons. However, perhaps underlying and important to these typologies, are reasons of relevance and applicability of content, the recognition of prior experience and the practicalities of balancing time and finances with learning. Therefore, APS has appeared to have an initial impact on making available the opportunity for HE level learning on a range of working learners for a range of reasons.

Personal developers

The personal developers' category is closely aligned to career builders. However, the responses tended not so much to focus on career progression, but on personal development within their role. There were twenty-two in number. These learners seemed concerned with more internal identification, with themselves as robust practitioners, or that their experience and learning is validated formally. As per the other categories, the further answers to the second question illuminate a more complex state of affairs that demonstrates again the over simplicity of strict categorisation. What it does indicate, at least in some of the answers, is the desire for learning not to be abstract but connected with or developing on experience or practice.

Initial reasons for joining the programme	Did you consider doing a fully 'taught' programme (e.g. a pre-existing programme such as a BA in English or some such), and what was your reason for choosing work-based learning instead?
Personal development and for professional development	My first choice programme became unavailable (Degree in Education) and this programme was offered to me as the best alternative.
I had lots of experience but no degree and wanted one. The APS programme was being delivered to a cohort in Canterbury and my boss agreed to funding.	Yes. I couldn't get the time off work required at the time.
I was working at a school that started two colleagues on the APS the year previously to me	It enabled me to draw on what I know and made me reflect on my practice and appreciate the job I

and when I expressed an interest in studying for a degree they put me in touch.	was and then moved into, its importance to the students and colleagues.
I work in humanitarian aid and development and needed a course that did for the most part focus on my area.	I chose this course for a number of reasons mainly because I could fit much of my day-to-day working practices into the course.
I wanted to develop my work knowledge and needed a degree	No. Not considered appropriate whilst working.
I wanted to challenge myself and improve my skills	I did not consider a fully taught programme due to the time restrictions of my job and thought that work-based would be more suitable
I wanted to undertake a degree but still work so the APS was a good option so that I could gain knowledge in my field	I wanted to do work-based learning as it was relevant to my future career path
I wanted a degree with modules in English Literature because that is a great interest of mine.	It was a more flexible course, and allows me to integrate my work, interests and studies.
I wanted to continue my studies. I also have to undertake a lot of work-related projects and conducting them with academic rigour helps me complete my work to a higher standard.	I didn't consider anything. I can't really see what other option would be viable when working full time.
I had always wanted to formalise my experience by gaining a degree - to prove something to myself.	No. There is no way that I could have afforded the time and I also felt that work-based learning enhanced what I was doing in my job.
I am keen to further my education and life chances by gaining a degree	This suits my style of learning.
The degree provided an opportunity to facilitate personal development and address key career aspirations.	I did consider a fully taught programme of a business management nature. However, I would have to study areas of business management that were of no interest to me. I would not have been able to develop business knowledge from the perspective of civil society activities.
I wanted to back up the work I was doing academically.	Work-based learning could be tuned to my actual work-based projects.
I wanted to be more informed about the work I was doing at the time.	Initially I did not think that I was intelligent enough for a BA. I wanted something to show that I had a basis for the job I was doing at the time. When I started I had the choice to categorise the area in which my foundation degree would cover, we negotiated what the qualification would say and this would be written on the Foundation degree qualification.
I wanted to study further but wasn't committed to a particular area of study. As this was work-based it	I wasn't committed to a particular area of study.

met my needs. I am also a member of University of Greenwich so course was free.	
I had always wanted to formalise my experience by gaining a degree - to prove something to myself.	No. There is no way that I could have afforded the time and I also felt that work-based learning enhanced what I was doing in my job.
I felt it was time to earn a degree and this option gave me the flexibility I needed.	No. I wanted to experience a more progressive method of learning, a break from tradition if you like. And if I experience it first-hand then I can support the others in my workplace who will no doubt follow my lead.
I wanted to develop my work knowledge and consider what I was doing in an academic frame.	No, possibly I'm too old to be studying one topic, this would have had to be for purely personal interest if I had chosen one subject
I wanted a degree and upgrade my knowledge as a social pedagogue.	NO, I never considered a taught course only as I am working and would not have the time nor money to be a full time student. Furthermore I liked the idea of a tailored programme that fits my life
For personal development - to gain academic recognition for the level of work I carry out on a daily basis - and to improve my knowledge of issues I deal with in work.	I needed the flexibility of a work-based programme as I was working full time, frequently until very late in the evening so it was almost impossible to complete a taught programme.
I wanted to develop my existing knowledge and gain strategies to use within my current field.	If a fully taught programme had been available, I would possibly have chosen to register for the course. However, the fact I work full time may have been an issue. The taught courses I have undertaken were held at the end of the day, which made it possible for me to attend.
I wanted a degree	Yes, but this was the only sponsored course available to me.

TABLE 37: INITIAL AND SECONDARY REASONS GIVEN BY LEARNERS CATEGORISED AS 'PERSONAL DEVELOPERS'

A strong theme of wanting to connect learning with experience and to improve and prove the value of experience runs through this group. There is also a sense of the need to directly tailor learning to the work being undertaken without the need to do elements that happened to be part of a 'nearest fit' programme. In other words, the learning is situated in experience and practice and not abstract – relevance and application is important. Perhaps an inkling of the idea that work is often multi-disciplinary is beginning to emerge

here. The learners here also have a sense of want to challenge themselves not only in knowledge but also in practice. A couple of students mentioned their learning style or the desire for an alternative type of programme and also, as with other categories, the need to earn and learn (time and cost).

Employer Workforce Development

The drive for these respondents to come onto the APS programme emanates in the first instance from their employer. There were ten respondents. For a couple, the reasoning appears to be wholly external. However, answers to the second question reveal in some cases a personal interest or the appeal of the programme in being work-based and relating to their work role directly. The strongest theme that arises from the second set of responses is that of combining work and learning for practical reasons such as time and cost. Again, individual respondents who have been classified by their first answer also appear to have the concerns in varying degrees of other respondents in other categories.

Initial reasons for joining the programme	Did you consider doing a fully 'taught' programme (e.g. a pre-existing programme such as a BA in English or some such), and what was your reason for choosing work-based learning instead?
I was offered the chance to study for a degree as part of my CPD. Most of my colleagues have similar qualifications so this gave me an opportunity to study to a similar level, improving my own self confidence and improving my chances of promotion.	I didn't consider for one moment a fully 'taught' programme as the prospect of examinations as a means of assessment frightened the life out of me.
I wanted to take the opportunity of employer supported study, improve my CV and stretch my personal development.	Yes, I was led to believe APS would be more manageable but I do not think I had the focus for what was essentially a continuation of my usual work and responsibilities. Would have preferred to undertake a course for personal interest.
I started studying for the postgraduate certificate as a result of an appraisal recommendation from my Line Manager.	I did consider taking a taught programme but it wasn't practical as I work full time - Work-Based Learning enabled me to do this.
I was encouraged to start the APS programme by my then head teacher as he was concerned	I was already working full-time as an unqualified teacher and was not prepared to take time out of work to complete a fully taught programme.

that future head teachers would not be happy employing unqualified teachers.	
Recommended by my line manager.	No.
Wanted to get a degree my wish to become a graduate and was encouraged through my employers hence did the APS course.	No I was encouraged through work for work-based learning and my local borough who were initially paying for the course.
Local and was advertised through the hospital. It was also fully funded and work-based learning.	No as I work as a physiotherapist I needed it to be work-based.
Offered a funded place by Lambeth council.	I had already studied with the OU but was finding the cost prohibitive to my continued studies. I was offered a place through a programme Lambeth Council was running for higher level teaching assistants. As I was unable to get release time for study from the school I worked at, and could not afford to lose my income to do a full time course, APS was a fantastic solution.
It was recommended by my employer. I was able to undertake the foundation degree and the BA honours in APS.	No.
It was suggested by my manager and it was suitable as the course style fitted around my workload.	Work-based learning fitted around working full time.

TABLE 38: INITIAL AND SECONDARY REASONS GIVEN BY LEARNERS CATEGORISED AS 'EMPLOYER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT'

For one respondent, attending the programme may have merely been an instrumental response to their employer's wishes. The answers given are minimal. However, the other respondents show that although employers may have been the catalyst, there were other complex reasons. These ranged from improving self-esteem, the wish to be a degree holder and perhaps 'rank' with co-workers, personal developer style learning interest, alternative methods of learning and being assessed and the ubiquitous concerns over time and cost.

4.8.2. Learners' narratives directly prior to coming onto APS

At interview, interviewees were not asked a direct question, but were each asked to recount their stories prior to coming onto the programme (see sub-section 3.5 for the interview structure),

Interviewee 7,

'I heard about the programme through word of mouth. I had got mixed reports on it. What I did know was that I could use the programme to improve skills, self-development, and the timing was right. It was a good way of learning about the job I was doing. I saw it as opportunity. Options at the University are limited – the university generalises too much. I chose the programme because of the options available to cater for a wider range of career pathways. The foundation degree was an opportunity to get the word 'degree' in my CV. There were too many time hurdles in doing taught courses, and personally I wanted to improve writing skills in my work practice. I lacked confidence in that area and wanted to see if I was capable. The programme was also able to 'feed in' to the kind of work I was doing. The research was tailored to my role and it helped me to make a greater contribution and to increase my confidence. I wanted to be able to do things and volunteer for them without being timid about it.'

Interviewee 19,

'Three years ago, I was sat in my office feeling a bit stagnant, and clearly I had always regretted not having finished my degree. There were a lot of areas that I was working in, where I really wanted to academically back it up, such as in search engine optimisation or in areas where I had a lot of knowledge and a lot of techniques that I employed. I wanted to know academically that it was the right way to do it. I managed the corporate identity of the company, you know, with all the bits and pieces [projects] that I've done on the APS, the programme. Again, I wanted to academically back up, I wanted to show with proven academic references, that this was the right way to do things within our company. So, I'm sat there stagnant, so many years doing my own thing. I started 'Googling' the 'University of Greenwich courses' and I was actually looking at a computer course to be quite honest. It had all the website bits and pieces I wanted, but not all of the other bits and pieces I wanted to do. I called the University and they said hang on a minute, we might have a course that could be moulded to what you want to do. So I came in and saw you guys, and it sounded like it was going to fit like a glove because the corporate identity, the website, the HE study that I did, and the search engine optimisation I did, I could backup academically. There were books I could pull up on it and reference, reflect on it and the study skills as well, gave me a good basis within my job. Although I would always go away and study and look at things, it kind of taught me to think about things more critically, to question things and try to look at things from another angle, you know. Maybe I was bit naïve before you know. I always regretted not having a degree. My sister had a degree, though I'm not trying to be competitive, but I did regret not finishing it off. People are taken more seriously if they have a degree.'

Interviewee 5,

'At the time I was pretty much unemployed, my past career was as a human resources office manager and after being made redundant it was a time for me to really stop and review, about where I wanted to go with my life. It was going to be a couple of years before I realised my real ambition to go back into HE I have had

a very sort of chequered education if you like. I've had highs and lows, successes and failures, and what I learned from both the successes and failures was that I really needed to anchor myself in something that would interest me; where I can see myself staying the course, because I often did things but never really pushed myself further. I thought, well, I'd like to help people, that's very much me and I need something that's diverse in terms of the job description – it needs to be professionally stimulating so I like diversity – and the charity, the third sector, came up very high for me on the list. So I thought okay, if that's what I'm going to do I don't want to be sort of back into work without some professional skills and training and qualification. And so, I started a search and lo and behold Greenwich came up with the applied professional studies programme offering. I had a look at that and I thought that looks interesting and I also thought it would suit my learning.

'The fact that I could take control of the content of the degree was important. Rather than having it all set out for me I could design it myself so that could be greater amount of control over what I was learning and to some extent over how I was learning it as well. It was flexible – there was not this rigid programme saying you'll have to learn this, this and this in relation to your charitable interests. The fact was that I could go away and find out about what I wanted to learn, that was very appealing for me.

'It's important to me because I think without it, I would probably lose interest because I'm getting topics presented to me to learn about what to research about that are not necessarily connecting with it because it's of no particular personal or professional interest me. That for me was like a real huge plus – I had found a degree where I can select the subjects I want to study, the subjects I want to learn about so that hopefully they will steer me in the direction that I want to go professionally and also socially as well. I knew that I could select just the studies that I wanted to do and knowing that I had a sincere interest in it I knew that was almost half the battle in a way. So I thought I was starting out with this high level of enthusiasm simply because I thought I could design this degree to my areas of interest. It's about acquiring knowledge and learning skills that you can use in a practical way but it's underpinned by understanding the principles of what you're doing, the principles of what is involved in doing something.'

Interviewee 1,

'I had started working in a school. Before that I had been in educational coaching. Previously I wouldn't do anything that would have involved the possibility of failure. So I stuck to catering, then became an educator (technician) in catering. I had a good tutor for my initial teaching assistant training programme (HLTA). It opened up the possibility of doing riskier things. Tutor was holistic. He showed me the wider picture of my job. He gave examples and role-plays that helped me understand 'scenarios'. He also made me aware of the importance of my job and the need for a critical approach to the reality of my impact as a teaching assistant. That helped me to build confidence in myself and what I did and could do, but I also began to feel the difference between me as a non-degree holder and the teachers with degrees. I believed that I wouldn't receive recognition unless I had a degree and a degree would open doors as all jobs I wanted to do needed a degree. It was not just that though, had the internal motivation to prove to myself that I could do it – I needed to know that I could. I also knew that I only had the internal motivation to do a degree that was related directly to me – relevant you know. I couldn't put myself through the degree if there wasn't internal motivation.'

The first thing that strikes one, looking at these narratives, is the very personal nature of them. Central to them is a sense of a developing self – a sense that learning is not just about being able to know about something, but also becoming someone. This also extends to a need to do something that is connected with the self and not abstract from it.

The narratives show the desire for the content to be applicable to the learners' interests in work and life. This they connect to internal motivation, or perhaps a will to learn, and perhaps it also suggests a will to become less alienated from their learning, from their work practices. There is also a sense of 'being in the world', whereby validation and recognition is important. Then there is a sense of the practical necessities of life for a working learner, and how this can be addressed by a flexible learning degree. These themes are present in varying amounts in many learners, and the one thing that the above demonstrates is the plurality of learner situations and learning needs.

The exercise of strict categorisation, based on the first reason given for entering the programme, has in itself been only partially illuminating. Other reasons given for the first question already show a certain level of complexity that defies a single category. One reason that appears to affect a very large proportion of respondents, that of needing to earn and learn, did not show greatly as the first reason for coming onto the programmes. However, when asked if they had considered taught programmes, time and cost became very important to the learner. Career building alongside the need to work and earn, therefore, seem the biggest drives, with the ability to tailor and apply learning also being important to a lesser degree. After that, personal development was important with learners wanting to not necessarily advance their career, but become better at what they do, challenge themselves or increase their self-esteem. Thus the manageability of the course in being able to earn and learn was important. In this category, the ability to relate and embed learning was very important.

A hint of the want of control over learning, is also present. Work-place development initiated by the employer is the third largest category, and again earning and learning was important (or funding by the employer), and then the ability to tailor the learning to the job role. Returners to HE also thought that the flexibility of accepting existing credit was important and the time and cost aspect was important too. The second chancers felt that it was time to make up the perceived deficiency of having a degree programme under

their belt, having missed out earlier. However, also important to these respondents was the flexibility of the programme to accept credit (similar to the returners to HE). Therefore, although many themes are common, the range of reasons and drives for learning in individual learners can be fairly wide, and highlights the impact that an individually-negotiated and designed programme can have in providing learning for a diverse range of practitioners. The pedagogy that APS uses means that the programme does not have to be a 'one size fits all' programme, but can have a direct impact on a wide range of learners, in this case those who are also part-time working adults, in a very embedded and individual way.

4.9. Degree structure and impact

In order to cater for such diverse learner situations and needs, as discussed in the previous sub-section, APS is a negotiated programme and in the survey respondents were asked about the make-up of their individual study pathways. These pathways fell into four groups; mostly 'taught' modules with some work-based modules, an even mix of the two, mostly work-based modules with some 'taught', and *all* work-based learning. The following sections of analysis look to see if a link can be established between the make-up of the programme and the perceived impacts that the programme had on the learner.

4.9.1. Programme make-up and honours awarded

Awards received by respondents that undertook programmes wholly made up of 'taught' modules		
		Total
B.A./B.Sc.	with 2:2 honours	1
Grand Total		1

Only one respondent said that she/he had followed an all 'taught' programme, that is a programme negotiated so as to contain traditionally delivered lectured modules. The result achieved by the respondent was a bachelor degree with 2:2 honours. Though not statistically significant in terms of indicating what standard of degree this type of learner was likely to achieve, it does further indicate the likelihood of learners wanting a

work-based programme in some form.

Awards received by respondents that undertook programmes mostly made up of 'taught' modules with some work-based learning modules		Total
B.A./B.Sc. with 2:1 honours		1
Foundation degree (pass)		2
Still on programme/awaiting award		1
Grand Total		4

A slightly larger group of four is made up by those who had followed a programme comprising mostly 'taught' modules (including one who is still following their programme). Again this small number is likely due to the reasons outlined above, that work and learning for time reasons was important. No first class honours were awarded, but numbers are too small to come to any definite conclusion about this being due to the make-up of the programme, if these figures are taken in isolation.

Awards received by respondents that undertook programmes made up of an even number of 'taught' and work-based learning modules		Total
B.A./B.Sc. with 2:1 honours		2
Grand Total		2

Again, the number of respondents who undertook an even blend of 'taught' and work-based learning modules is small. Both learners achieved 2:1 honours but statistically, and on its own, it is hard to come to any concrete conclusions as to whether this was due to the make-up of the programme.

Awards received by respondents that undertook programmes made up of mostly work-based learning modules		Total
B.A./B.Sc. with 1st class honours		7
B.A./B.Sc. with 2:1 honours		5
B.A./B.Sc. with 2:2 honours		1
Foundation degree (pass)		3
Foundation degree with Merit		3
MA/MSc (pass)		1

This group is the second largest with twenty-eight respondents, who have either completed or who are undertaking a programme made up of mostly work-based learning, with a small contingent of 'taught' modules. Seven respondents achieved first class honours and this represents 35% of the group, when

Still on programme/awaiting award	8
Grand Total	28

the eight that are still awaiting award are removed from the calculation.

Awards received by respondents that undertook programmes wholly made up of work-based learning modules	
	Total
B.A./B.Sc. with 1st class honours	5
B.A./B.Sc. with 2:1 honours	3
B.A./B.Sc. with 2:2 honours	1
Foundation degree (pass)	3
Foundation degree with Distinction	3
Foundation degree with Merit	3
MA/MSc (pass)	2
MA/MSc with Distinction	2
MA/MSc with Merit	3
PGCert (pass)	1
PGDip (pass)	1
Still on programme/awaiting award	12
Grand Total	39

The largest group of all, with a total of thirty-nine, belongs to those who undertook or are still undertaking a programme wholly made up of work-based learning. The large size of this group is due to the reasons given earlier, that of being able to earn and learn, and to follow a programme that is directly related and applicable in practice. Five respondents reported having gained a first class degree and this represents 19% of the group minus those who are still undertaking their programme. This is a smaller percentage than the previous group who had some ‘taught’ elements as part of their programmes. However, a further three gained foundation degrees with distinctions representing 11%; and two gaining distinctions at master’s level represent a further 7%.

TABLE 39: BREAKDOWN OF AWARDS CLASSIFICATIONS BY PROGRAMME STRUCTURE, WITH INITIAL ANALYSIS ALONGSIDE

The chosen make-up of the programme reflects the reasons given by learners for coming on to the programme. Given the importance of time and money, and the need for tailored learning directly applicable to the workplace and the learner’s career, it is perhaps not surprising that the numbers for all taught programmes, mostly ‘taught’ with some work-based, and evenly mixed programmes, are so small. This further supports the need and potential impact of a negotiated, and work-situated programme, such as APS.

Making a comparison between groups as to their likely outcomes in terms of honours awarded is also difficult. The numbers who took wholly or mostly 'taught' elements are too small to be statistically significant in that respect. However, perhaps a sense of differing achievement may be gained from the two largest groups, that may give some insight as to the optimum make-up of the programme.

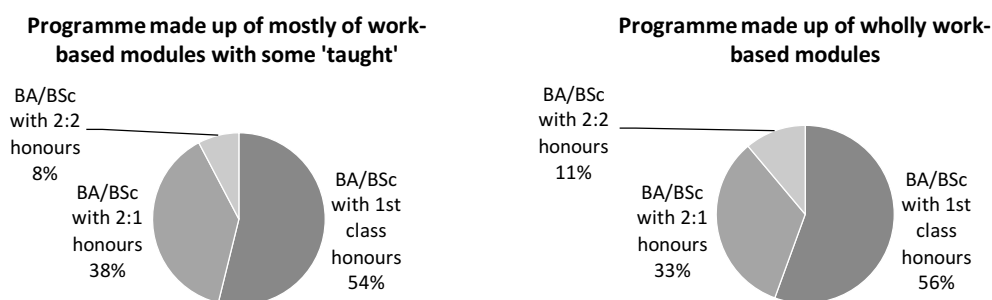


FIGURE 33: COMPARISON OF BA/BSc AWARDS BETWEEN MOSTLY TAUGHT AND AN ALL WORK-BASED PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The two largest groups were: 1) mostly work-based learning with some/taught' elements and 2) wholly work-based learning (the latter being the largest). Taken as a percentage, it seems that respondents were slightly more likely to receive a first class degree if their programme was all work-based learning. However, those in the mostly work-based learning group were slightly more likely to get a 2:1, and slightly less likely to get a 2:2 than those who had wholly work-based learning programmes. Overall then, the fully work-based option was likely to produce more first classes by percentage but slightly less overall of the top classifications (first and 2:1 combined). The numbers are small and statistically it is hard to claim them as significant. However, it does at least indicate a parity between the work-based and work-based-and-taught mix.

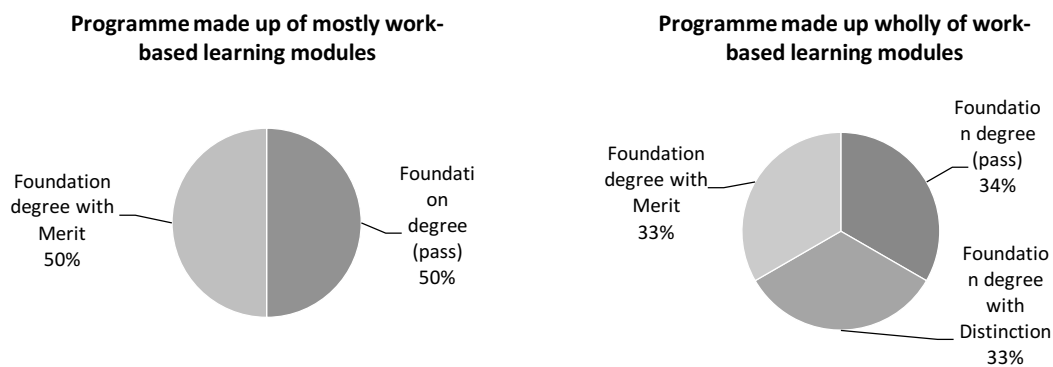


FIGURE 34: COMPARISON OF FOUNDATION DEGREE AWARDS BETWEEN MOSTLY TAUGHT AND ALL WORK-BASED PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Again, though small numbers are being looked at, those who took a wholly work-based learning programme were more likely to receive a foundation degree with distinction, with one third of the group receiving that award. One third also received merits whilst the remainder received passes. Therefore, it appears that the fully work-based learning option was likely to produce more distinctions and overall higher classifications, that is, distinctions and merits. However, with such small numbers, percentages can sometime be misleading and statistically the numbers involved make it hard come to any firm conclusions, even if a more work-based programme is hinted at as having more impact when achieving higher classifications.

Nonetheless, the ratio of higher classifications to the lower ones in both groups, does tend to suggest that as a model, work-based learning appears to be a successful one. The hypothesis of this thesis is that the nature of negotiated work-based learning as being situated and tailored in terms of access and content, and with the built-in ability to apply and test theory in practice, should produce learners who are motivated and who are becoming capable. The dynamics of this will be discussed later.

The situated nature of the programme proves to be a common motivation for coming onto the programme, reiterated by the comment below from interviewee 5,

‘If I did something subject specific, I would have a huge amount of work because I was coming through change in code of practice etc., and I wasn’t sure if I would actually have enough time to be able to carry on with my work and cope with that workload and do a degree that was completely separate from my work. Actually what I wanted to do was to become more professional, and to become more informed about my work and the nature of my work into become a more effective facilitator and educator. So, When I found out about Applied Professional Studies,

I could actually give my projects (when I looked into it) to my work that I was doing at the time, or what I would be needing to do in the future. I would therefore actually be able to incorporate my learning with my work.'

The programme also appears to show a high proportion of higher classifications from those who have completed undergraduate degrees, with over 50 of completed respondents getting a 2:1 or above where work-based learning played a prominent part. The direct application of learning to real life seems to be an important motivation and the following sections will look at how this may have had an impact on motivation and the will to learn.

4.10. The relationship between being able to negotiate learning relevant to work and the learner's perception of having gained critical thinking skills as a result of the programme

Question: Do you feel you have gained critical thinking skills as a result of your involvement in the programme?				
	Yes	No	Maybe	Row Totals
Group 3: I WAS ABLE to negotiate a programme which was relevant to my work needs	54 (52.29) [0.06]	1 (2.61) [1.00]	6 (6.10) [0.00]	61
Group 4: I was NOT ABLE to negotiate a programme which was relevant to my work needs	6 (7.71) [0.38]	2 (0.39) [6.76]	1 (0.90) [0.01]	9
Column Totals	60	3	7	70 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 8.2028. The p -value is .01655. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 40: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF THE ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE A PROGRAMME RELEVANT TO WORK NEEDS AND GAINING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

In the previous sub-section, the relationships between various aspects and outcomes of learning were discussed, and the need for dialogic tutorials that allowed for the negotiation and ownership of learning alongside strong learning support, was established. It showed a positive relationship between tutorials and the development of such hard skills as literature research and the articulation of written argument. Although a positive relationship was hinted at, the difference between the groups could not positively indicate a statistical probability of the positive influence of dialogic tutorials in the respect of gaining critical thinking skills, spoken argument skills and empirical research skills. This

perhaps indicated that tutorials were not conducted in a way to encourage the development of these skills, or were not necessarily the only site of the development of these skills, or both.

The overall sample was reconstituted and divided into two new test groups – those who answered in agreement to the statement ‘I was able to negotiate a programme relevant to my work needs’, Group 4, and those that were not in agreement with the statement, Group 5. If students were able to structure a programme more relevant and applicable to their work needs, this might make them more likely to have perceived the development of critical thinking skills, a skill central to effective agency. Likewise, there might also be a correlation between being able to negotiate a relevant programme (which is likely to be more based in practice) and the development of empirical skills.

In the case of critical thinking skills, Chi Square testing indicated that the relative differences between the estimated figures and the actual results was a positive correlation that was statistically significant. Those that answered ‘maybe’ for Groups 3 and 4 were as would be expected if there had not been difference between the groups (the Null Hypothesis⁵), indicating that the difference between the two groups bore no influence on this section of respondents. However, slightly more in Group 3 answered ‘yes’ than was predicted under a null hypothesis, and slightly less in Group 4. For the ‘no’ category, Group 3 answers were slightly less than expected under a null hypothesis, while in Group 4 they were over double the expected number. Although the numbers are small, the probability of a correlation is statistically significant at $p < .05$ (see the table below). Therefore, it would appear that if there was an ability to negotiate a work-relevant programme, then there was also a higher likelihood of the learner perceiving themselves as having developed critical thinking skills.

⁵ The Null Hypothesis refers what would be predicted to happen if nothing was acting on either group, that is, if there was no correlation or causal link between either groups, and the further effect being examined.

4.10.1. The relationship between being able to negotiate learning relevant to work and the learner's perception of having gained empirical research skills

The chi-square statistic is 6.2565. The p -value is .043793. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

Question: Do you feel you have gained in any of the following skills as a result of your involvement in the programme? [Research (empirical - such as interviewing, questionnaires, observations)]				
	Yes	No	Maybe	Row Totals
Group 3: I WAS ABLE to negotiate a programme which was relevant to my work needs	42 (40.00) [0.10]	4 (6.09) [0.72]	14 (13.91) [0.00]	60
Group 4: I was NOT ABLE to negotiate a programme which was relevant to my work needs	4 (6.00) [0.67]	3 (0.91) [4.77]	2 (2.09) [0.00]	9
Column Totals	46	7	16	69 (Grand Total)

TABLE 41: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF THE ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE A PROGRAMME RELEVANT TO WORK NEEDS AND GAINING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH SKILLS

When the correlation was looked at between the perception of a negotiated programme and the development of empirical skills such as interviewing, questionnaires and observations etc., a statistical significance was found at $p > .05$. Roughly two more respondents in Group 3 answered 'yes', as opposed to two less than predicted for group 4 under the null hypothesis. Contrary to this, for the 'no' category, Group 3 was just under two less than predicted, and Group 4 was just over two predicted. The 'maybe' category responses came out roughly as predicted under the null hypothesis. Therefore, a positive correlation, that is, that Group 3 was more likely to have perceived themselves as having developed empirical skills than group 4, is statistically likely at $p < 0.5$.

Critical reflection skills are perhaps some of the hardest transferable skills to develop, and a perception of them is perhaps less convincingly gained by the learner through dialogue alone, as it may be through actually practising them that they become more obvious. The fact that learners perceived themselves as able to negotiate a programme relevant to their work, suggests that their learning was embedded in work issues and practices. These students were also more likely to say that they had developed empirical research skills, that is research from human subjects in the workplace, which further embeds learning in practice.

Adorno's (1957) argument, that 'absolute' understandings of knowledge were erroneous, applies here. He claimed that the idea that knowledge could be full and complete for everyone was wrong, because it always dwelt in the mind of the holder in a way that could be understood and applied in the holder's specific situation only. It could not be knowledge for all situations, as this would require the holder to know everything, which is impossible. This aligns with Eraut's (2008) comments on work-based learning, that knowledge is not just about being able to perform in some way, but also about knowing the right thing to do at the correct time, appropriate to the context. This can also be aligned to critical thinking or reflection. Acquisition of general concepts through secondary research is required, but knowledge of specific contextual issues is also required in order to implement a course of actions either individually, or collectively but rarely without consequence (that is, without causing any change). The consequence also highlights the need for further empirical study, to truly understand what the outcomes of any applied theory are. This, for Eraut, signifies a very deep form of learning, combining knowing how to do something but also why to do it in that particular situation, making it substantially critical. The embeddedness of learning combined with tutorials that consider the critical implications of applying that learning are important, and these results both perhaps signify this as an important benefit of this type of learning and also an area in which APS and its tutors could improve. It signifies that dialogic tutorials must also lead to strong critical thinking in practice, perhaps through the facilitation of empirical research.

In terms of the structuring of the degree, if the learner were able to negotiate a programme that was relevant to their work, then they were more likely to perceive themselves as having developed critical thinking skills, and here is also an indication that this was similar for empirical skills. This suggests learning, to a greater or lesser extent based on work and in the workplace, is likely to mean that empirical skills are developed and this may be linked with the development of critical thinking and other skills. For instance, where empirical skills have been perceived as having been developed by a respondent by that respondent, the respondent is more likely to have perceived the development of spoken argument skills; and where empirical skills were not perceived as having been gained, respondents were emphatic that they did not gain skills in the articulation of spoken argument (see sub-sections 4.10.3-4 below). Although the programme may have been a little less successful in engendering empirical study in its negotiated project work overall, where it did, there appears to be a greater likelihood of having developed spoken argument skills, and where they did not, they perceived that these skills were not developed.

4.11. Motivation and the will to learn – a question of situational relevance?

4.11.1. Ownership and engagement – making it relevant to real-life

In the survey the vast majority of learners had, first and foremost, quite instrumental reasons for coming onto the programme. These were often to do with the flexibility of the programme catering for their need to work full time, that is, the ability of the programme to combine learning and work and not require lecture attendance thus making it feasible in terms of time, and money - the ability to earn and learn. However, a significant proportion cited the need for a tailored degree programme relevant to their work and aspirations as a primary reason for joining this particular programme. Further to this, secondary motivations for coming on to the programme were also, for a significant number, the need for a tailored programme. This hints at a sense of learners searching for a programme they could have some ownership of.

During the interviews, the interviewees alluded to their need for a degree that was relevant and their need to have some control over the content. Interviewee 3 stated she had an instrumental reason for having to undertake a degree, but also had a less instrumental approach to the learning,

‘New legislation came in where a SENCO [Special Educational Co-ordinator] had to be a qualified teacher, and in two years I had to be on my qualified teacher programme. Before I could even think about that, I needed to start a degree programme and, luckily, that fitted in with my personal goals as well. That’s what motivated me to find a degree that was appropriate, and I didn’t particularly want to do a degree that was a subject like history or English (though I’m really interested in history and English). I wanted it to be work related, and so this was one that was recommended [B.A. in APS].’

Interviewee 1 mentioned that she had started a degree programme that contained compulsory elements that were not relevant, and that were hard for her to engage with, and that it actually led to failure,

‘I did try to do an Open University course; a Foundation course in History or something. It just didn’t interest me and I failed the first assignment. I was not interested in history and it was not relevant to my job. Because the degree I wanted to do was education, and as this came under Humanities, everyone had to do a foundation course in history and it just didn’t interest me at all, so it was disastrous.’

Interviewee 5 explained that having control over the content and the method of learning was important to her which begins to show how a sense of ownership is valued,

‘The thing that appealed most was the fact that I could take control of the content of the degree. The fact that I would be allowed to design my own degree programme, you know, instead of having a programme of topics to study set. Rather than having it all set out for me, I could design it myself so that could be greater amount of control over what I was learning and to some extent over how I was learning it as well. I knew I would be in a position to go off and spend some time researching into what I wanted to study. It was flexible – there was this rigid programme saying you’ll have to learn this, this and this in relation to your charitable interests. The fact that I could go away and find out about what I wanted to learn, was very appealing for me.’

For interviewee 12 a sense of ownership was also crucial,

‘For me, control was important. I needed a programme of learning that I owned, and I had control over. To undertake learning dictated to me by another, would have made life unbearable. The study was for me and directly related to my role and how I could improve myself within it and have a greater impact. APS was an ideal choice for me, because it was flexible. I wanted to experience a more progressive method of learning, a break from tradition if you like. And if I experienced it first hand, then I could support the others in my workplace who will no doubt follow my lead.’

The sense of ownership here is linked to the development of the self. There appears to be a need to work towards having an effect or impact, to be a person who can contribute, that is linked not only to knowledge but experience, as an authentic way of being.

Interviewee 6 develops this again, by connecting the need for the learning, to it being useful. She had the external motivation of needing a degree, but also an internal motivation to prove that she could complete it. However, she also felt that unless it was useful, her internal motivation would fail,

‘I thought a degree would open doors. All the jobs I wanted to do needed a degree. However, there was also an internal motivation to prove to myself that I could do it. It needed to be useful too for that reason. I couldn’t put myself through a degree if there wasn’t internal motivation. I now see the degree as more than a piece of paper – it is about developing myself and what I do. You can see then, the motivation had to be internal, my own.’

Barnett’s (2007) theory of the will to learn, connected with the individual’s will to become, to develop a meaningful identity, chimes with above comments. This runs through many of the interviews: nearly all suggested that the ability to become a capable person, and

to be seen to be so in many cases, was important – see the following interview excerpts. It suggests that alongside external motivations, there is an internal drive that pushes learners on to become a person in line with their values and aspirations. It is interesting to consider here Harré's (1983) theory of the development of knowledge and practices alongside identity. It contains not only the will to learn, but also the need to develop an identity, and the publishing of the practices that makes up that identity. Identity is developing, and it is in that development that a dialogic and negotiated programme can facilitate critical reflection, not only theoretically, but in the reflection, based on empirical research, on practice outcomes. This is what Barnett (2007) calls 'authentic uncertainty', a culture of revision and critically reflective craftsmanship. However, the real point here is that learners have been attracted to the programme because of the ability to make learning directly relevant to their situations and that learning is connected to their will to develop as people and to that as such, the flexibility of the learner to make learning directly relevant to this is a large part of the learner's motivation to engage. They are developing themselves, not 'ticking learning boxes' for someone else.

4.11.2. Benefits in practice – publication

The tutor accompanies the learner on their journey of critical reflection. According to Tretten and Zachariou (1995:8),

"Students, working both individually and cooperatively, feel empowered when they use effective work habits and apply critical thinking to solve problems by finding or creating solutions in relevant projects. In this productive work, students learn and/or strengthen their work habits, their critical thinking skills, and their productivity. Throughout this process, students are learning new knowledge, skills and positive attitudes."

In the earlier discussion we saw that the development of critical thinking skills, which as Tretten and Zachariou argue lead to problem solving skills, could not be attributed to dialogic tutorials alone, even if they are crucial to their facilitation.

It was argued earlier, that programme negotiation and dialogical tutorials have reflective learning and strong engagement with specifically applicable and relevant learning at the core. The tutor accompanies the learning in their journey and helps them to develop critically reflective skills. However, the tutorial has not been the only site of this learning – it is also connected with action, and testing, in real life. This has, alongside the discussion of tutorials, enabled reflection on the action and the validation or development of knowledge held and acquired by the learner. Therefore, the practice element in real-life, has facilitated further tutorial discussion and support, and that in turn facilitates more real-life application and testing. In other words, the process becomes the reflective cycle with the addition of support and challenge from the tutor, augmenting the real life discussion that is going on. So, the discussion also happens in the workplace, or other community of practice, through what Harré (1983) called 'publication'. Through publication, learners are fed back to by colleagues or others who observe their practices, and learners can see the influence that their published practices have on others or how their community develops its collective practices. This can be augmented through instilling in the learner critical and empirical research skills.

One of the ways that interviewees expressed the need to publish, was that it would lead to the self-identification of being equal or measurable with their peers in terms of intellectual prowess or credentials. As Interviewee 8 explains:

‘It [doing the APS programme] certainly changed my personal identity if you like, because I tend to use my professional and academic qualifications after my name in my signature for example. So just on a very mundane level, I’m telling the world I have got an MA and that I am a fellow of my professional institute. I was always conscious that I had only taken a first degree and I wanted to have that academic route in addition to the professional fellowship. There is a sense of self-achievement that was a big motivator. I do actually identify with it and I like putting MA after my name. It’s a lot of work to put two letters after your name, but it was worth it! It is the acknowledgement of the level I am working at, both internally for me, but also for my colleagues – people across the University – and outside the university as well – knowing that there is someone here with a higher degree. That does make a difference – it does give me a bit more confidence I’d say. Everybody needs more confidence. Most of the people I interact with at least have a doctorate.’

However, many went beyond this to include not just the kudos of the qualification, but also recognised their very actions spoke for the kind of person that they were.

In the case of interviewee 15, study helped her role to evolve in practice,

‘I have gained a greater depth of understanding of many of the strategies and legislation that allowed my role to evolve. It is an incredible opportunity for those of us who were not as qualified as they would have hoped, to be able study for a recognised qualification. It might not always lead to career progression, but it certainly enhances your own feelings of self-worth.’

Although career progression may not have been identified by this learner, she had developed self-esteem, and this appears to be important to this her. She sensed a worth to others that comes about through having the qualification – that it signals capability.

4.11.3. The relationship between the learners’ perceptions of having gained empirical skills and the learners’ perceptions of having gained skills in the articulation of spoken argument.

The sense of worth discussed in the previous sub-section perhaps initially comes about through the learner’s perception of having developed the skills that lead to problem solving and the negotiation of change within a community of practice. That problems can be researched and solved, that they can be articulated and the solutions argued for, and that they can be identified as having been accepted and that they are successful, comes through the embodiment of empirical learning in project work. Empirical study at the site

of the issue being researched, should in theory, fully embed the learning in experience which tests and further validates that learning in practice.

Question: Do you feel you gained skills in the articulation of spoken argument as a result of the programme?				
	Yes	No	Maybe	<i>Row Totals</i>
Group 7: Empirical skills perceived as being gained.	29 (25.10) [0.61]	3 (2.60) [0.06]	13 (17.31) [1.07]	45
Group 8: Empirical skills perceived as NOT being gained.	0 (3.90) [3.90]	0 (0.40) [0.40]	7 (2.69) [6.89]	7
Column Totals	29	3	20	52 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 12.9422. The p -value is .001548. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 42: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF GAINING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH SKILLS AND GAINING SKILLS IN THE ARTICULATION OF SPOKEN ARGUMENT

When survey respondents were split into those who perceived they had dialogic tutorials and those that did not, the relationship between the development of spoken argument skills and critical thinking skills, though suggestive that dialogic tutorials helped, could not be statistically proved. However, when respondents were split between whether or not they felt they had gained empirical research skills a much stronger correlation appeared, as can be seen in the above table. It seems clear that if empirical research skills were perceived as having been developed (Group 7), then it was likely that spoken articulation skills were perceived. In Group 8 where empirical research skills were not perceived, then no-one perceived spoken argument skills to have been developed. Therefore, it would seem that the perception of the acquisition of empirical research skills would also mean the likelihood of a perception of having developed spoken argument skills, strongly suggesting a link between those two aspects of the pedagogy. It would seem likely spoken argument skills were likely then to develop through the process of using empirical research skills, possibly due to the nature of empirical research often involving human conversation. This causal hypothesis was given more weight in the interview responses discussed in 4.10.5.

4.11.4. The relationship between the learners' perceptions of having gained empirical research skills and the learners' perceptions of their work or colleagues having benefited from their study.

If empirical study is likely to have engendered a perception of spoken argument skills, it is therefore important to see if the learners were able to perceive themselves as having had some effect on their colleagues and workplace. Given a null hypothesis, the expected number of respondents in Group 7 to answer 'yes', that their studies have benefited their colleagues, would have been around thirty-six, whereas it actually came out at three more. The situation was around the other way for those that answered not from group 7, with three less than expected have responded 'no'. In Group 8, the picture is reversed, with three less saying 'yes' and three more saying 'no'. This appears to show a link between studies having a benefit to colleagues and having developed empirical study skills. This hypothesis is also supported by the interview excerpts in the next sub-section (4.10.5.).

Question: Do you think your workplace and/or your colleagues have benefited from you doing the programme?				
	Yes	No	Maybe	Row Totals
Group 7: Empirical skills perceived as being gained.	39 (35.69) [0.31]	1 (4.35) [2.58]	7 (6.96) [0.00]	47
Group 8: Empirical skills perceived as NOT being gained	2 (5.31) [2.07]	4 (0.65) [17.33]	1 (1.04) [0.00]	7
Column Totals	41	5	8	54 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 22.2924. The p -value is .000014. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 43: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF GAINING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH SKILLS AND COLLEAGUES' BENEFIT

4.11.5. The relationship between the learners' perceptions of having gained skills in the articulation of spoken argument in their workplace and/or colleagues having benefited from the learner undertaking the programme.

Survey respondents to the question of whether or not spoken argument skills were gained, were split into those who answered 'yes' and those who answered 'no'. Those two groups' answers were looked at in relation to the question of whether or not they thought their colleagues had benefited from their study. As the table below shows, in Group 9 around two more than predicted said yes, and around three less said no. Those who were unsure were slightly more than predicted according to the null hypothesis. Therefore, if the learner perceived they had gained spoken argument skills, then they were slightly more likely to have perceived that their workplace and/or colleagues had

benefited from their study (compared to Group 10). The numbers here are very small, and though statistically significant, may be too small to make a firm judgement and can be seen as a possible indicator only. The interviews do add more weight though (see paragraphs below).

Question: Do you feel you have gained in any of the following skills as a result of your involvement in the programme? [Articulation of spoken argument]				
	Yes	No	Maybe	Row Totals
Group 9: My workplace and/or my colleagues HAVE benefited from my doing the programme.	26 (24.12) [0.15]	2 (5.12) [1.90]	10 (8.77) [0.17]	38
Group 10: My workplace and/or my colleagues HAVE NOT benefited from my doing the programme.	7 (8.88) [0.40]	5 (1.88) [5.15]	2 (3.23) [0.47]	14
Column Totals	33	7	12	52 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 8.2359. The p -value is .016278. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 44: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF GAINING SPOKEN ARGUMENT SKILLS AND COLLEAGUE'S BENEFIT

As a group, Group 10 respondents were still more likely to perceive their workplace and/or colleagues to have benefited, but slightly less than would have been predicted under a null hypothesis distribution. Those that said 'no,' were three more than predicted, whilst those that were unsure were about one less. Although as a group they were still more likely to perceive a benefit, overall they were slightly less likely to perceive a benefit than Group 9, and considerably more likely *not* to have perceived a benefit, indicating a link between the positive perception of gaining argument skills and the positive benefit of their study.

Overall then, what is suggested is that the development of empirical skills is linked to the likelihood of being able to effect change, and may play a big part in embedding learning in the workplace and effecting change there. In turn, perceived empirical skills seem also to be linked to the perception of having developed spoken argument and in turn, are linked, if perhaps less emphatically, with the workplace and/or colleagues having benefited from the respondents' learning.

These elements, alongside dialogic tutorials and the ability to negotiate relevant learning and other academic skills, such as literature research and written argument skills, appear

to paint a fuller picture of how learning may be developed to a depth great enough to affect practice and the workplace. Interviewee 18 stated that,

'I have learnt so much more about teaching and learning. I carried out training sessions for staff and created resources that colleagues used with their teaching. I also researched whether it could be viable for the school to offer a particular course, which helped the school management make the decision of whether to offer it or not. We later checked the success of the course and were vindicated in offering it'

Empirical research forces the interaction with other colleagues and also results in feedback on knowledge. Initial understanding through literature research has to be presented, and the connection with the situation and what the consequences might be, argued over. Interviewee 1 said that,

'My interactions with other members of staff have also changed completely, because I have evidence, researched through literature and in the workplace, to back up what I am saying. When I was doing my attendance project and my boss was saying this, that, and the other, I said yes but 'research suggests that...'. That's my favourite phrase now. I sat in a meeting about differentiation and I could refer to four or five different people and to evidence I had gathered on site, that didn't necessarily agree with what was being said. My head of faculty at the time was then saying things like, 'let's write that down', and we actually used that evidence as a department to oppose what we thought were bad practices. So I have been able, through my research, to influence what has been happening in my department. I think they listened to me more, because I could quote other people or facts and figures I had gathered from surveys and interviews etc. in the workplace. Also, when I have spoken to parents on attendance, I have been able to present the statistics that I would not have normally known. Because of my subject, I might come across as a ditzzy performing arts teacher, you don't need a brain for that, so when you can come across and say that in terms of education this person says this and that person says that, and this is why I am doing something, it stops them in their tracks and they take you seriously. [This is] because others might not be up to date, they may not be armed with any information that is relevant. They haven't looked at anything. I can show I am up to date.'

From this form of publication, learners can start to develop an idea of the influence they are building and the strength of their ideas. Coupled with the validation of ideas in practice, they can start to build a self-perception of a person able to contribute in a self-supported and sustained fashion.

For interviewee 19, the strength of the underlying study alongside studies carried out inside the organisation was important to the employer, who according to this description, benefited widely from the work done by the learner;

'My workplace got something from the beginning of it, I had to pitch this course to my directors. I told them what the course was all about, and outlined to them what I wanted to do, and I sold it to them as in the company will be getting something from this. They did get a lot from it. The whole corporate identity. If you come to our website, we've got new logos, a new site, and all of the literature there has been revamped. The corporate values, the whole lot, has been redesigned and has a new feel. I have, as part of my studies, developed the whole site of the company so they really have had a lot from it. I did the corporate identity as a Negotiated Study [work-based project]; I did the website usability study as a Negotiated Study and I also did a study on the search engine optimisation. If they [the company], were going to get somebody from outside to do their search optimisation, it would have cost an awful lot of money. I don't think I would have been able to do that to the level I did it without the support of APS I just told them what I wanted to do, change the core identity and values, the website, the logo. I don't think they would have just taken my word for it without an extensive study to back it up. APS gave me the ability to do that. On my own, I would have just looked at the obvious things. I don't think I would have got it to the level that we got it, without the academic support of APS programme. It structured how all these things would be implemented within our company and gave it a lot of weight. The directors liked it, because they had written content that they could show to justify why they had done things. People can't argue with that can they? For instance, a survey that I did on the corporate values of the company, that survey and the charts and stuff, were used in the company presentation at the end of the year and they went out to my boss's bosses. Because it was an academic study and it was relevant to the company and carried out inside the company, it was used as a vehicle to get things done within the company. People took my work seriously.'

The work done by the learner, already ambitious in its scope of change, was subsequently used on a wider basis to justify the changes that the learner's bosses had overseen. The survey showed that there was a statistical correlation between spoken argument and benefits of their learning to colleagues with the perceived gaining of empirical research skills. The interviews seem to suggest that the practice of carrying out empirical research is causal of these two aspects because validity of empirical data (alongside secondary research) supported the publication of their work.

4.11.6. The relationship between the learners' perceptions of having gained empirical research skills and having developed critical thinking skills.

Do you feel you have gained critical thinking skills as a result of your involvement in the programme?				
	Yes	No	Maybe	Row Totals
Group 7: Empirical skills perceived as being gained.	42 (39.92) [0.11]	1 (2.60) [0.99]	3 (3.47) [0.06]	46
Group 8: Empirical skills perceived as NOT being gained.	4 (6.08) [0.71]	2 (0.40) [6.49]	1 (0.53) [0.42]	7
Column Totals	46	3	4	53 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 8.7814. The p -value is .012392. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

TABLE 45: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF GAINING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH SKILLS AND GAINING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

The perception of having gained critical thinking skills could not to be put down to dialogic tutorials alone, so it was decided to see if there was a correlation between the development of this skill and the development of other skills. It became clear that there was a link between critical thinking skills and empirical research skills. Group 7, who thought they had gained empirical research skills, were more likely than predicted under a null hypothesis, to think they had gained critical thinking skills (those that answered yes were higher than predicted and those who answered no, lower). In contrast, Group 8 was less likely to perceive the acquisition of critical thinking skills, though they were still more likely to have, than not. This suggests that, overall, respondents were more likely than not to perceive themselves as having gained critical thinking skills but there appears to be a link between having gained empirical research skills and critical thinking (at $p < .05$) possibly because empirical research involves the validation of practice and the theory that underlies it. This hypothesis was backed up by the comments given at interview (see excerpts in subsequent paragraphs).

In addition to the publication of knowledge through dialogue or spoken argument with colleagues, knowledge and the potential practices they lead to can be tested through their practice. This too is a form of publication that will lead to the recognition within the learner of the validity and value of their work and the critical reflection skills that make it possible. As Adorno argued, knowledge is incomplete unless it is situated and has significance in that time and place. Theory does not come fully formed and applicable in all situations but needs relating to those circumstances and testing and adapting for practice. This means that the process must be both critical and creative. According to Dewey (1910:6)

critical thinking is the 'Active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds which support it and the further conclusions to which it tends'. The correlation between critical thinking and empirical research skills, at least as perceived by the learners themselves, suggests empirical study of practices in action facilitates the process of critical reflection. It is more than just the application of theory to practice, it is the actual study of that application empirically and critically combining what the practice is and what consequences it leads to.

Glaser (1941:5) expands this to suggest critical thinking is a way of being, an attitude and that it includes the use of intellectual skills,

[Critical thinking is], 1), an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that come within the range of one's experience; 2) knowledge of the methods of logical enquiry and reasoning; and 3) some skill in applying those methods. Critical thinking calls for a persistent effort to examine any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the evidence that supports it and the further conclusions to which it tends' (Glaser, 1972:5).

Ennis (1993:179) simply states, 'Critical thinking is reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do.' He thought that this definition was a little vague, and so added to it a list of things to do, including the more obvious judging of one's sources of information and developing an argument, but also planning and designing tests. Critical thinking then, is not just about supporting views and actions, but also applying reflective and intellectual processes and standards that in addition includes not only factual correctness but also considers the implication of the knowledge and the action it can justify and enable, and the validation of that knowledge through practice (testing). This therefore strengthens the link between empirical skills and critical thinking, as sources will include empirical sources, and testing will include empirical methodology.

Interviewee 8, a post-graduate working in a university, outlines the application of the critically reflective process when talking of a project to review the University's intellectual property policy,

'The work I did reinforced the view that I had, that there were plans being considered to change the relationship between intellectual property developers, their research department and faculties and the University centre. The theory of this exists, but to make the most of it, the University situation needed reviewing - to review the apportionment of income or royalties between those three elements.

What was being done, was being done without any evidence at all of what was good practice or how it would work, or what effect it had, or would have, on both income streams in each of those constituents, and what the overall impact that effect might have had.

What I did, was provide some evidence to show what impact there might be at whatever level, on the income streams of various constituents, and then review what [the University] was doing. Actually, we came out as being in the top ten in terms of the generosity from the centre, towards individual developers at their faculties and departments. It was being proposed that we flatten out the apportionment of income. That would actually have had quite a negative effect on those people who are actually developing the intellectual property and we would have lost our attractiveness to other universities supporting research. One further issue that my research led on to was the effect certain differing levels of apportionment might have on research activity. If you get the generosity of 'Oxbridge' for example, and they can afford to be generous in terms of their policy, compared to the centralisation of income in some other Universities, within those extremes you could see trends as to where people are attracted to go. If you are a research active academic who might actually make a fortune in this world, you might be attracted to go to an institution that has a more generous policy towards its research active staff.'

He was therefore able to influence, through his general and localised research, the future practices to which the University committed itself. This involved a more critically reflective approach that was hitherto used, a skill recognised by the respondent's colleagues in the fact that the recommendations were adopted. The respondent also went on to say that the processes learned and tested in this project would facilitate further study, showing that his practices were now being embedded in his general work practices and forecasting further influence in the workplace.

Interviewee 3, a bachelor's level learner, also illustrated a similar process. In this example, she showed how previous learning had helped her to be confident about taking it further, and into places that had hitherto been fearful for her. She describes how her work was critically reflective and multi-faceted leading to a more holistic view, resulting in useable resources and influencing future practices – not only hers, but of her colleagues;

'I was asked for help by a former assistant head at our school who does teaching for "Teach First" as a consultant. She was doing a whole day on special educational needs that she doesn't know very much about, and she asked me if I would go down and help deliver the programme to 30 "Teach First" students at Christchurch College. I would have been really fazed by that beforehand and said no, but I thought I have actually done a lot of research. Having done BA APS I have a lot of research already there that I can draw up on, as I kept it all. I put it into a presentation that I delivered with this woman. On the day, we were observed and we were asked to do it again the following year. They said that I delivered with confidence, and it is funny that by having done so much research you retain it in your head and when questioned, you are able to draw it out.'

The sense of achievement and pride in the contribution that was being made is evident. There is also a sense of quality based firstly on the underpinning research, secondly on the sense of developing a bigger and more multi-faceted picture of the area of operation and finally, through its adoption at what the learner considers to be a high level.

This illustrates again Harré's (1983) ideas on publication and also the beginnings of the process of conventionalisation, where the practice has been observed and is then begun to be adopted by others;

'And to be able to do it to 'Teach First' students who are all first class degree holders and very, very, articulate and bright, I needed to back it up with the research and to signpost them to further research. I don't think I would've had those skills to be able to do that, unless I had done this course [APS]. That was something I was particularly proud of and I developed a booklet, which had a lot more in. The booklets that I developed called the *Learning support department booklet* for our school, contained lots of information about the different conditions and difficulties that different pupils have, how you can spot them, how you can support them with strategies etc. Having done the Applied Professional Studies course, I added a lot more about the environment in the classroom. In all the projects I did, I picked out pieces and put in there what I thought was really valuable and not just about the children's difficulties but also what you can do to make the learning environment better for everybody. This had come from researching how the theory I had gathered could be applied, and what its outcome was once applied. I had done a project about the classroom environment and another about experiential learning. For example, next week we are taking our lower group out to reinforce their numeracy working at year three level maths, taking them out to plant bulbs and to make measurements of the compost, to work out the quantities of the bulbs in rows etc., so I am still learning and putting that learning into practice with students now. I have learned the skills to test what I do and record and analyse it. I can reflect on it and make changes. I can even write papers that tell others what has happened! I think that I have become more holistic in trying to look at the wider picture. It is not just about the children with difficulties, but that if I realise, and the staff realise, that the environment and the methods of learning also have a large part to play for all students, learning difficulties might not arise in the first place. I am not blowing my own trumpet, but the lecturer that observed us has also taken a copy of the booklet away, and uses it for training. He said this is something

we should be talking to the Teach First students about, as it is not just about the behaviour of the children, but the holistic environment of the school.'

The sense of achievement and contribution, plus the sense of skills gained is tangible. The process of reflection and testing is also hinted at. The fact that this happened after the learner had left the programme also demonstrates a change to metacognitive practices that is enduring in practice.

The perception of critical thinking is also shown to be an important element of the process for this learner, interviewee 18,

'I honestly do not think there is a day that goes past without me using or remembering something from the course. I question myself a lot more when I am writing or talking to people – how do I come across? Is it valid? Can I support what I'm saying with robust evidence? It is about having that confidence. Every day I look at the way I write things, can I justify it, can I support it, am I using the right words, am I being concise and precise or am I waffling? I use some other things that I developed skills in, such as project planning, using things like Gantt charts. I plan more effectively I think. I look at data in a completely different way, I analyse it better than I ever did before. I use data because I am more confident that I know what it is all about – what I try to do now is every time check things using data. Say, when I am doing performance reviews of my staff, when they say I've had quite good written results with my National Curriculum levels or my teaching, I would have said 'yeah that's great'. Now I ask what they mean by good results? If they put down that three children got twelve month's progress in their reading, I say that's great if it three out of five, but not so good if its three out of a hundred, so I ask them to be more specific and accurate. It's like, oh my God, it's my tutor talking to me! So now I am passing these practices on to my staff because I'll say that if it's more precise it will read much better and more accurately if it goes to the head because it 'demonstrates' something. So I'm aware of what I'm writing, and because I'm more confident in myself, I'm able to get my staff to get proper empirical evidential support into their writing.'

There is a sense here of the need not only to back things up theoretically, but also empirically, and that the analysis of this data should be of some quality. There is also a sense of confidence that emanates from this – the confidence to use and present such data, knowing it will have more 'power'. This has led to a desire and the confidence to influence others in this respect.

Interviewee 5 recounted a similar story of multiple research approaches leading to creative influence on practices and articulates how the embeddedness of the learning was a part of the process:

‘This project was a real journey involving an awful lot of learning about research techniques, especially centred around interviews in their various types and forms. It went really well, but that brings me back to APS because without that, and the academic support I’ve got from it, I don’t think it would’ve gone anywhere near so well. I was learning at a very early stage, with some good tutorial help, to do some action based research. It ended up with the training guide that the charity I work for were very happy with, and I was able to open the project and make it my own. I was able to develop new practices that they had not previously employed. It all ended up with my stories being used in a major bid to procure funding, to fund a major national campaign to raise awareness of sleep apnoea, which I think is absolutely excellent. Incidentally the campaign resulted in twenty Members of Parliament signing up their support.’

The process was a creative one, as it resulted in new practice and a solid, real-life result that was an improvement to her work-based practices. It helped drive its objectives forward and this illustrates the importance of knowledge having the ability to act incorporated into it.

This creative process is one embedded in critical reflection for interviewee 5,

‘It’s about acquiring knowledge and learning skills that you can use in a practical way but it’s underpinned by understanding the principles of what you’re doing, the principles of what is involved in doing something. So, you work, you’re at work, you do a job, it’s probably been the same for you too, in the past. You do a job, you do well or not so well, whatever. But often we do things we are not aware of, or not fully aware of the principles behind what we’re doing, or why we should be doing something a certain way. So, with the APS programme, one of the things I thought and I still think, which is why I have opted to continue my studies, is that I have learned new skills. I’ve learned how to think more about how I approach working life, and my life in general and I can apply those skills, those critical thinking skills, to my everyday life, to my work life and, obviously, to my student life. And one of the great things that come out of the, you know, the training, that I am now able to step back, think about what I’m doing, what I want to do and what I hope to get out of it. Then once I have done it, I can look at what I have done, and measure its success. I can then go on to develop it further if need be.’

The thought process described contains a sense of planning, reflection in and on practice. This chimes with Dewey’s (1938) and Glaser’s description of the critical thinking process and also Ennis who brought into the equation the ability to decide effectively what to do. It chimes too with Kolb (Kolb and Fry, 1985) and Schön (1992) and the reflective process that combines an ongoing critical reflection, or authentic uncertainty.

The site of learning in the major part of APS is the work-based learning project. Interviewee 5 describes how she embedded the learning in practice and how it added up to something new,

'Work-based projects – that figures majorly for me. You can do things where it's not, sort of, completely abstract. I like the idea that I'm learning about something – there's the theoretical learning – and I have a tangible environment in which to set and test that learning. That for me was a major thing. I could combine the two together and for me it almost goes without saying, that if you have the theoretical skills, or theoretical knowledge, but that it is underpinned with practice skills, it really reinforces, I don't know, your understanding or the things that you grasp in your working life. When you have actually got the on the ground practice and the theory together it somehow brings you to a place where you consolidate your understanding about how things work where you are. And I like that. It's a matter of depth. And it feels empowering as well because you have the knowledge of something, but when you have the environment in which to exercise that knowledge, you have the opportunity to build on that knowledge, build your skills, you learn to sort of work out problems as you go along, because the programme is also integrating that aspect of problem-solving and ongoing testing.'

Adorno (1959) argued that knowledge, treated as complete and passed on as discrete and fully formed and unchangeable chunks, was oppressive as it limited action and the development of practices. For similar reasons, Friere (1993) argued that teaching, where the curriculum was set and taught in the model of the learner 'banking' knowledge was also oppressive. However, the sense from this learner is one of empowerment, where the learning can be used and built upon in local environs to develop and change practices. There is not a sense of an imposing of theory onto practice, but the feel of its application as an ongoing process of adaption and development.

As a result, interviewee 5 begins to hint at a developing sense of personhood;

'So, because you have the elements of problem-solving within the degree programme, you're gaining your knowledge and you have your practice observation and you're marrying the two together, identifying (a) solution so that you can become more competent and confident about what you're doing. You are the able to contribute something, in a competent and confident way in the working environment, that ultimately will be of some value. If the two elements of the practice and theory were not married together, you might be of less value on a professional scale – that could be argued. However, I believe if you have got the two, and those two elements are developed, then I think you have a lot going for you.'

The embedding of learning results, therefore, in new and creative practices that are specifically used in the work situation and lead to suggestions or proposals by learners. Their ideas are assessed and fed back on, and adopted and validated through use. The result of this appears to be the development of the confidence to act, and a sense of self that is one of ability and skill.

4.12. The confidence to act: personhood through empowerment

At a recent conference, I was giving a presentation about work-based learning and the critical review of prior experience by learners. I mentioned, almost in passing, that confidence was a by-product of being able to evaluate experience and then relate it to theoretical perspectives. The purpose was to illustrate how learners can become more willing to engage in academic study. The presentation was seen by Professor Phil Race, who took up the subject of confidence with me afterwards. He advised that confidence was not a by-product but a central requirement of learning. It was not just concerned with confidence to learn academically, but also it was imperative that the learner would have the confidence to employ the learning and to develop it. Without confidence in this way, learning would come to naught.

Interviewee 1, gives an insight into a developing sense of self as a confident and skilful learner and practitioner, who will willingly participate in the process of constructive criticism and has also developed a sense of self as a person willing to engage in multiple perspectives before arriving at a conclusion or decision,

‘I have come from somewhere near the bottom of the pile at school, to someone in a higher position both in practice and job. I think the programme has made me confident that I can continue to do that. I can apply research skills. I can look into things. I can think critically about things, and I can analyse and reflect on things. Something else it has made me realise is that I am a reflective practitioner that will reflect on themselves before someone else, and as long as I keep that, I will be able to stay fresh with the things that are happening because I have the confidence to be able to say to myself that I am getting stale. I have the tools, if you like, to do that now, that I didn't have before. And the confidence as well. Before I didn't have the confidence, I wasn't prepared to be told I was wrong, for instance, with my practice observations, I would run round trying to make things perfect to avoid critical comments. Now I invite them as feedback. I still hope what I am doing is already right and the research I put into it, and the self-evaluation I do, helps me to be confident, but I also accept feedback now too and accept it critically, in that I will not just change but look into it too. So the projects I started with were kind of safe, on thing like schemes of work – I already had schemes of work, they were things I had already done – I had already got it and was comfortable with it and could therefore write about it. I guess in my own mind, I was worried about it, I didn't want to find any research, or I don't even think I understood that researching it could change my thinking. I would say that is different now. I have an idea and I don't know if that is the right idea or the wrong idea, and I am much more open to that now. I use research to validate my ideas. Initially I was looking for information that backed up what I already thought, and the idea of finding research that might prove me wrong was frightening. I guess for me the 'rewards' [work-based] project was the real turning point, because it flipped my thinking on its head

and now I am very much a case of researching to find out. What's more, I encourage my own students to research to find out if anyone agrees or disagrees with them, and what could be different in their thinking. I think that I am now a better teacher, because of the way I have learned to think and the way I have learned not to just rely on my own opinion. I can then pass that to my students and try and draw it out of them. My brain is like a sponge now – I never just accept that my ideas are right but also others. I won't just accept one opinion anymore.'

The sense of maturity is developed in this narrative. The learner not only acknowledges their progression in their workplace, but also the skills and cognitive approach they take towards the development of their knowledge and practices. It was seen as a turning point, a sense of becoming someone else (remember Harré (1983), who sees knowledge development as an identity project and Heidegger's (2002) and Barnett's (2007) sense of becoming) – a confident and able practitioner.

Again, a sense of a more developed self is present in the comments of Interviewee 3,

'Since being on the programme, my role has developed. I have taken over the running of inclusion room, and I also have taken on the line management of the special needs centre at the school, which is a specialist resource base. Whereas before, I would not have been asked to do that, we have now got a new head who has not been at the school for a very long time and is not bothered that I have not got qualified teacher status. The chair of governors, who is an employment lawyer and who is very hot and 'on the ball', was worried that when OFSTED comes in, there won't be a special educational needs coordinator with qualified teacher status. He had a meeting with me a couple of weeks ago and asked me some very in-depth questions. He said that he did not think that the school or the children, had been disadvantaged by the fact that I did not have qualified teacher status, because I was knowledgeable and well organised, and could demonstrate it. The way I presented to him was well-organised and knowledgeable, because that was the way I have had to be on the programme. I think towards the end [of the programme], I was more organised and more proactive and in this experience with the governor, he was impressed because I had e-mailed prior to the meeting, to ask him what he wanted to know so that I could ensure I had the data ready for him. Because I was so ready and knowledgeable at the meeting, they had assumed that I am also like this in my work practices. As a result, they have given me the line management position I have mentioned. As I have said, it is a specialist resource unit concerned with autism. I suppose that as a result of the programme, I had the confidence that my employers would have confidence in me. We have just become a trust and have a new overall head and new chair of governors who don't know me and have not judged me based on historical friendship but on what [is] timetable[d] to demonstrate what I know, and can do. Also what was nice was that when they were asking me what my qualifications were I was able to say I had recently completed a bachelor of arts in Applied Professional Studies in my own time, and that I had achieved a first. He put that in his report. It was only this week that I got a copy and to see that in writing, that he highlighted that APS has had a positive [effect] and he said that it was linked to my work, to me was better than seeing I had the history degree that I originally tried to do. That's because it is

actually demonstrated that I know what I am talking about to a particular level. Having a degree in history or English would have been good, but I beamed when I saw it, as he has obviously thought having a work-based degree was important enough to point out [to] other governors. It is also important to me because I don't have qualified teacher status, but I do have a qualification directly linked to my work.'

The identification with a new and more capable person is not just seen in themselves but also reflected in others. This is validated by the sense of being 'ready', of having become a mature thinker and practitioner. The sense of ownership that started in the learning, is transferred to the ownership of the resultant knowledge and practices, as part of the self.

The confidence to move forward was a skill that Interviewee 5 perceived as having been developed. Previously, interviewee 5 had spoken of the approach to learning that she had developed and this had translated into a confidence for future action, based on an ability to sustain that action:

'So the ability to set some clear goals in my personal life, and also in my professional life, that's really good. It's given me the confidence to set some goals. That is really important, but also to know I have developed a bit of discipline to see some things through.'

Similarly, this opening up of horizons is highlighted by Interviewee 7;

'The programme has given me ambition. I want to be creative. I now see the possibility of being able to effect change. I have developed lots of generic transferable skills such as communications, report writing and thinking 'outside the box'. In particular, it's about having the confidence to do it. It's all very well that you know the theory, but unless you can get out there and do it then you're always going to be held back. As a result of knowing I did this, and knowing I can achieve this and work to the standard I did, yes, this has given me confidence. I feel as though I have bankable skills, but the most important thing is the confidence. People ask me now if I can help them. It's not necessarily the 'tick box' thing that came out of doing this particular degree, but that people now know that I am a 'go to' person now. In other words, that's not necessarily on recorded paper – a certificate doesn't say that I'm a 'go to person' – but it is the upshot of doing this particular degree'.

The sense of development included a 'bank' of transferable skills that have been developed through prior study, through the researching and validation of idea and knowledge through practice which has resulted in a sense of creativity and ambition. This is a sense of confidence in the ability to breach the divide between theoretical learning

and turning it into a creative action, a crossing not always easily achieved in more traditional forms of learning.

For the learner, this can result in personal advancement in terms of work progression as Interviewee 9 relates, 'After completing the foundation element of APS, I gained the confidence and skills to go for a promotion which I successfully achieved. This was a positive step forward, and I believe down to what I had gained from the course.' This is a sense of achievement we have seen in other respondents, but here the sense of confidence comes through – the ability to do, to actually realise ambition.

Interviewee 12, highlights the importance of practice as part of the learning process in relation to building confidence and chimes very much with Ennis's definition of critical thinking that includes the ability to critically form and defend an argument. 'By being able to practise stuff at work, it builds confidence. I can say that I not only know things which in itself is great and a real boost, but I can actually do things. This allows one to win or earn more in the negotiations at work.' The confidence to influence other is also a development,

'I think that I am now an improved manager of staff. My knowledge has directly affected the service we deliver and continues to develop for the future. My example is encouraging others to believe in themselves, achieve what they had believed was beyond them, and to recommence learning in bite-sized chunks.'

The skills learned are being transferred into practice and are being used to develop others. The sense of contribution is strong and this publication has led to change,

'My profile within my organisation has changed. I am far more visible and my opinions are noted and considered by those of the most senior level of my organisation. I personally am a far more confident public speaker, although it is still something that I have to work upon, the bigger the audience the bigger the fear factor which needs controlling. I lead on projects and to support that I am now a budget holder with an increased authority.'

The ability to act, to influence, and to contribute, are there as a result of the practice-based learning, and the confidence that embodies in the subject.

The sense of life as a series of experiments that include risk is something discussed at length by writers on reflection (such as Dewey, Kolb etc.). In an open lecture Nicholls (2016) likened the learning cycle put forward by proponents of reflective practice to the

scientific method of Bacon. Critical reflection calls for continual small and incremental life experiments that are well researched as to this validity in knowledge and the consequences that might arise. The ability to do this leads to the development of confidence to take small risks, as the likelihood of disaster is mitigated by informed critical reflection and preparation. The sense of empowerment is very strong in Interviewee 11,

‘Taking APS enabled me to study subject areas relevant to my work and of personal interest, in a manner which would not have been possible with a conventional degree programme. I was made redundant about six weeks after completing the degree, but the confidence and new skills gained from having achieved the degree enabled me to set up a new business with my co-director. The business is now in its 3rd year of trading and doing very well, having won Best New Business in Bexley in 2013, been finalist in the Guardian Small Business Network and in the South London Business Awards 2013, and we have just been advised that we are finalists in the Bexley Business Awards 2014 in the two categories we entered! I would not have been able to progress in my previous organisation, so redundancy definitely did me a favour, even if it didn't feel like it at the time. I would not have had the confidence to or been prepared to take the risks associated with this, prior to undertaking the degree in APS’

Being equipped to take risk in the course of life, has given confidence for this learner to move forward. Confidence, as a result of the learning, is an enabler, beginning as it did with applicable and relevant learning, and standing the learner in good stead when adversity required. The transferable skills were able to re-emerge in new circumstances and resulted in not only the learner being able to make good her job loss, but become an independent business person and to have her efforts recognised.

The feeling of the dynamism of situated and actionable learning is portrayed in the final excerpt from Interviewee 19. The initial lack of creativity and stagnancy is evident in the comments. There is a sense that the respondent was aware of the level they were expected to work at, but were ill-equipped to do so, and lacked the ability to creatively contribute, leaving a feeling of standing still. There is also a sense that perhaps their efforts were not taken seriously because of this, making it harder to influence or contribute in a meaningful way.

‘Three years ago I was sat in my office feeling a bit stagnant. There're a lot of areas that I was working [on] where I really wanted to academically back it up. In search engine optimisation I had a lot of knowledge and a lot of techniques that I employed, but I wanted to know academically that was the right way to do it. I manage the corporate identity of the company, you know. Again, I wanted to academically back it up, I wanted to show with proven academic references that

this was the right way to do things within our company. So, I'm sat there stagnant, so many years doing my own thing.'

He goes on to comment on how his work has become not only 'backed up', but that his approach to unfolding projects at work has changed, indicating that this differed from the way it had been done on a previous HND,

'Now, the way I manage my projects at work is structured differently from how I used to manage it. The way I was taught on the HND lasted a while, but then you just tend to just get on with it. You firefight. However, the APS course structured the way I look at things and the way I do the research. Although I don't have access to the University resources anymore, I still find other ways to do my research, and I do a lot of 'on the ground' study too, you know, amongst the people [I] actually work with. I want to try to stay on top of the game in my area of work you see. I have kind of emulated the kind of processes and resources I had at University – different sources of information and resources, that I now access as routine that I wouldn't have originally. It has structured the way I research information and apply it in a project I'm working on – researching possible resolutions, planning, managing the project in action and testing the theory to see if it works, and reflecting on possible improvements when the dust has settled. As a resourceful person, I feel that I've got a bit more power at work and people take me a bit more seriously as a person who thinks things through and gets things done. Whereas before I did a bit of the website and IT blah, blah, blah, it was now 'you've done these projects – you have a bit more credibility now'.

Again, the publication of enhanced practices has led to recognition and a drawing of the learner into the running and creative processes of the business with more responsibility, and a readiness of the organisation to use his skills not only in the respondent's own work but also through the training of others. In this way an information management system is beginning to evolve,

'My managing director at my site is aware of me and so is his boss. I have actually, and this is something I love doing, been asked to teach people in the company. I was asked to set up a programme in America, for other people looking after the websites there. I had weekly seminars where I taught them how to optimise the websites. I like to pass on the knowledge. I haven't just held it all in to me. I get a kick out of seeing the effects elsewhere in the company too. This hasn't just been within our subsidiary company, but also within the other companies. It's great that our president has seen that within me. Further to that, I might add that if anyone wanted proof, I have a portfolio of evidence. I have a whole collection of projects that not only show the theoretical knowledge I have, but the process I went through to get it, to judge it, to test it, and if necessary, to develop it in practice. It's a record of enhanced experience and shows the kind of person any employer can expect, if they take me on.'

Whilst the organisation has recognised the learner and his skills, the programme and its style of learning results in a tailored and meaningful record of professional development. It provides evidence of achievement in pursuance of their career and aspirations. However, paramount is that through the recognition of knowledge as being situational and involving situated action, work-based negotiated learning has facilitated motivation and a will to learn through a sense of personal development of self and identity, and an interaction with the real world that develops confidence through the practice of knowledge and the publication of those practices. This leads to learners who embody critically reflective approaches is what they do, and in the consequences it has, potentially making them valuable contributors to democratic society.

4.13. Section summary

The basic analysis of the survey indicated on the whole a successful programme that in the perceptions of the learners had a positive impact. It catered for a demographic of learners who would not always get the opportunity to learn in other ways at HE level, or would have to make extensive sacrifices in terms of their ability to earn and work, or repeat learning or study irrelevant subjects (research question 1 – you can see the research questions either in Section 3 Methodology above or in Section 5 Thesis conclusions below). Again learners were mostly engaged, perceiving ownership through the ability to negotiate their programmes and finding dialogic tutorials supportive (research question 2). As part of this analysis, the group of eight respondents who would not recommend this programme to others were also basically analysed as a separate group. It appeared from this group that the lack of dialogic tutorials seemed to be the central reason why they were dissatisfied, giving more weight to the importance of dialogic tutorials to this kind of programme. The survey respondents, with the exception of the eight member of the dissatisfied group, were able, on the whole to perceive a development of skills such critical thinking and reflection, literature research skills, empirical research skills, written argument skills, debating and spoken argument skills that would support the development of social agency (research question 4). Likewise, the survey respondents and interviewees mostly saw a change in themselves as people (research question 5). They reported that they were more likely to perceive themselves as being more confident and that their learning benefited their work-place and that they could use evidence to change practice. This initial and simple analysis indicated that the programme was successful in its aim to have a positive impact on its learners' social agency.

Research questions 6 was concerned with the mechanisms by which successful outcomes occurred. Firstly, the study looked into the role of dialogue as a cornerstone of this type of pedagogy. Dialogue had already been indicated in the initial analysis that it played an important role because when in the case of the eight dissatisfied learners dialogic tutorials did not happen for one reason or another, then all other learning outcomes and positive impacts were almost certainly to suffer. It found that access to supportive dialogic tutorials was linked causally to learners' positive perceptions of control, ownership and relevance of learning. It also suggested a positive causal link between learners' positive perceptions of their tutorials and the learners' positively perceived achievement of learning outcomes and the development of skills. The importance of negotiation in facilitating flexible learning was further indicated in terms of the opportunities and initial engagement it provided across a range of student typologies. Although the initial analysis also indicated a positive impact in catering for a diverse range of learners, when compared to their reasons for not choosing APS above a traditional programme, the complexity of the situatedness of learners was revealed in more detail. The importance of a flexibly-negotiated programme was shown in the programme's ability, through dialogue, to provide flexible learning for individual learners that had multiple needs ranging from the need to earn and learn, to finding learning directly relevant and applicable to their life and work requirements.

The study went on to look at relationships between the motivation and will to learn and relevance to practice in real-life. Themes under this sub-heading included aspects that arose in the theoretical discussion such as ownership and engagement (motivation and the will to learn), the publication of practices, the relationships between skills and their outcomes in practice. The interviews revealed a real sense of commitment to meaningful study that was relevant to work and life. In the examination of these themes of motivation/will to learn and relevance, the importance of empirical research skills to the development of crucial thinking began to emerge (research question 7). Though dialogic tutorials were the foundation stones of APS as predicted by the theory, the role of empirical research as a facilitator of publication in the work-place was not fully appreciated before (even though it may have been implicit in the theory all along). The survey results and the interviews began to paint a picture of empirical research being the process by which learning is fully embedded and tested in practice. This in turn suggested a causal link between empirical research skills and the perception of the development of critical thinking, spoken argument skills and the development of

confidence, so important to the ability to act socially. Through this analysis and discussion of results, the effectiveness of APS and its negotiated pedagogy in its aim of producing learners with social agency was revealed.

5. CONCLUSION

Applied Professional Studies is a suite of work-based learning programmes and the stated aims surround the development of capable reflective practitioners able to operate viably, in their own and the wider social-material world's interests (which the thesis hold to be inseparable). To do that, it employed a pedagogy that was underpinned by an approach to knowledge that combined a deeper relationship between epistemology and ontology. It understood knowledge as being fully formed when it held significance for practice and saw knowledge as transitory because it was situated in real-life, in its creation and application. Effective learning therefore, combined theory and practice, the learner's need to learn, an examination of their existing values and how learning developed identity. It was embodied in the self, and how the learner could therefore develop critical social agency. Rather than adhere to the traditional transmission or 'banking' approach to learning that seeks to pass on knowledge and perpetuate its form, it argued for a pedagogy based on dialogue and the recognition of differing perspectives that could lead to creativity and changes in behaviour and practice. This placed learning not only as a theoretical mind based process but also recognised the impact of that learning on the individual and their wider social circles.

The literature review argued that knowledge had been relegated to an activity almost exclusively of the mind. Whilst knowledge may have still retained the hint of an ontological root in the dialectical modes of rationality that arose from the Enlightenment, it was not much more than intuition, with the resulting rationality merely folding back to become its own origin – a mind based exercise. In this way, the epistemological and ontological domains of the item of knowledge became identical to each other and produced the only way of thinking about that thing. To think differently became irrational and knowledge and ways of thinking became socially structural. The review looked at arguments that the status of knowledge was not absolute and true for all places and occasions and that the way knowledge was formed in the individual was reliant on all sorts of experience of the social and material world that was contingent on the knowing subjects historical and spatial situation (that is, the social and material part of the world they were embedded in and was embedded in them).

It followed a line of argument that if information was to move beyond the status of facts, facts had to combine to enable the creation of significance for action and that the significance for action was in turn contingent upon the knowing subject's situation – their internalised values and existing knowledge/experience/practices and their requirements for acting in their changing local social and material environment. This challenged the notion that individuals were so identical in terms of their situated needs for action that absolute knowledge would suffice them in supporting their practices whilst also ensuring that the practices were individually, and collectively viable. It argued that knowledge and practice was creative and that effective learning, that is learning that could result in viable action, should reflect this.

Based on the view of knowledge as outlined above, and of individuals as situated beings, the literature review went on to review theoretical arguments on how a rigid historical development of absolute knowledge could be harmful, and lead to oppression. The likes of Adorno (1957) argued, that inflexible 'knowledge' became stereotypical and lead to suppression and even mass murder, as embodied in the holocaust. For him, knowledge, and even living things, were reduced to objects of study and evaluative classification – they lost their real-world value – their ontological aspects. They became subsumed, as did all other things, under unchangeable concepts. Postmodernists such as Foucault (1972) and theorists such as Harré (1983), claimed that elites could authorise the creation of absolute knowledge and thus dominate social discourses for all people and in all circumstances (i.e. could become too rigidly structural). For Foucault (1972), institutions such as prisons, schools, universities and other places, took on disciplinary functions that inducted people to the discourses and embodied in them the systematic method of thought that formed the backbone of those discourses.

For Friere (1993) this was too rigid and oppressive. However, Giddens (1984), Sewell (1992), Archer (2016) and others argued that although structure constrained action, it also enabled it. Because of the temporal and spatial variations in which individual experienced life and internalised values and practices. As the environment changed around them, there was inevitable discord between themselves and the new values, practices and ways of being they found themselves in. For theorists such as Bhaskar

(1975, 2009) Bahktin (1986), in addition to Archer (2016), Giddens (1984) and Sewell (1992) (and chiming with Adorno's (1959) negative version of dialectics), this difference was where possibility for change lay – as Heidegger (2002) would argue, in the tension between being and becoming. Therefore, learning that negated this became shorn of any real ontological aspect and became instead rules that must be obeyed with the human will being removed from the equation.

Friere (1993) called for a pedagogy that did away with the authority of the tutor and called for a greater emphasis on the learner to control the content. Under this kind of teaching and learning method, students would take more responsibility for their learning and the tutor would act more as a mentor than as an arbiter of knowledge. The role of the tutor would be much more in line with supporting the learner in their learning journey, encouraging them to challenge themselves onwards. The tutor's role was less about passing on knowledge, and more about helping the learner to acquire the critical metacognitive skills needed to make good quality learning happen and facilitating the space for this learning to happen in (let learn). This learning was judged according to its significance for action in the learner's particular situation (environmental, social and personal), and the testing and adaption of that knowledge in use.

Friere (1993) argued that traditional teaching was oppressive, because it attempted to fill learners with knowledge, and to judge them on their retention of it. This he argues, took away from them the right to create knowledge and practices and eventually resulted in dissent and violent struggles for control. He argued that seeing items of knowledge as discrete chunks, that could be stored and used later like money waiting in a bank account, was alienating to the learner. This model made no attempt to make the learning less abstract, or use it to develop the learners existing experience or to make it relevant. It instead relied on the learner to be able to have enough experience to be able to imagine its use, whilst simultaneously not making any effort to connect it to, or to use it to develop, existing frameworks of reference there was not critical dialogue, relying instead on a teacher monologue. This, he argued, lessened the individual input to the learning and lessened any challenge to the theory through practice, or any challenge to the learner's values or practices, relying instead on the tutors, or other accepted theorists', authority to validate it. The learner was subjugated

by the theory. Likewise, practice, observation and experience, when it happened, would be more likely to be subjugated by the theory, real-life being made to fit the conceptual. History, argued Adorno (1959) was littered with examples of injustice, of real-world things that had been identified and made identical with its conceptual equivalent, losing their individual value and potential.

The literature also explained how APS was designed in such a way as to take account of the situated nature of learners, and employ a pedagogy that mentored learners to develop critically reflective learning skills. Based on the notion of knowledge as transitory, developmental and situated, Harré (1983) had developed a theory and model of how knowledge and identity, developed through a process of individual absorption of collective practices and ideas, and the adaptation and republication of them back into the collective. This process happened – but how it happened could be critically or non-critically undertaken, by the individual. Because individuals shaped the collective, this process was important and it was in the role as a critical mentor that the tutor could play a part. The role of the tutor in APS is to facilitate situated learning in the workplace, and was less interested in judging the validity of the knowledge per existing discourses, but more in judging it according to the critical challenges and researches that the learning and resultant practices were subject to, by the students themselves.

To do this, APS was firstly based upon a dialogic model (originally suggested by Friere, 1993). The content and direction of the programme was negotiated. APS was largely based on research projects that incorporated or led to further research that also included validating the knowledge in practice. The theory outlined above, suggested that the relevance and application of the learning would make it motivational and connect with the learner's will to develop as a person. The literature review applied practice-based theory to the practice on the programme. Although the importance of the use and testing of theory in practice was alluded to by the theory, the main message it has given to the programme tutors is that negotiation and the dialogic consideration of theory in practice through ongoing tutorials, was the central practice of the programme. Thus, the programme had level plans and project learning contracts that allowed a central part to be played by the learner in deciding what was to be learned, followed by activities, such as the annotated bibliography and project

report etc., that facilitated reflective discussion through ongoing tutorials. It enabled tutorials to go through the processes of reflection for action, in action and on action.

The subsequent study was designed to see the impact of this pedagogical approach on the learner, in terms of their motivation and engagement, and the perceived outcomes of their learning as a social agent. Those outcomes were to some extent based upon the traditional desires of learning, such as the acquisition of critical thinking and other academic skills such as argument, and debate and research skills. In line with the programmes stated aims and underlying theoretical standpoint, it also wanted to see impact on the learner's ability to act – their social agency.

In order to answer the question of how effective the APS pedagogy was in promoting social agency in its learners, the following research questions, informed by the theoretical review and stated programme aims (see the thesis introduction), were arrived at:

1. What was the programme demographic and was it effective in providing learning opportunities to those who would not necessarily find it easy to take up higher education?
2. Was the programme effective in producing engaged learners?
3. Was the programme effective, from the learners' perspectives, in helping them to develop skills, such as critical thinking and reflection, literature research skills, empirical research skills, written argument skills, debating and spoken argument skills that would support the development of social agency?
4. Did learners', because of the programme, feel different as people? Had they changed their perceptions of themselves as people?
5. Did the programme, in the perspectives of the learners, help them develop the confidence to influence or benefit their colleagues?
6. What was the mechanism by which these changes came about? For example, what role did dialogic aspects of the programme play in having an impact on the self-perceptions of learners having been involved with the programme?
7. Where there any other aspects of the programme, its pedagogy or facilitation, that played an important role in the programmes perceived impact in its learners?

That the programme had impact, seemed to be clear from the basic analysis of the survey. The nature of the programme, situating learning in the learners' context, gave it a flexibility that allowed a group of adult working part-time learners, predominantly women, come or return to higher education learning, where they might not have been able to otherwise. The programme also provided, the ability to negotiate content, specific and situated learning to those adult learners who wanted to career build, and have a programme tailor made and directly relevant to that, and to a significant number of those who wanted to personally develop. Through the comparison of the initial reason for doing APS and the reasons for choosing APS above a more traditionally structured and lectured programme, and the narrative interviews, it became apparent that being able to situate the programme, and its learning possibilities in the learners' varied practical situations, learning needs and aspirations, was an important part of the programme.

These initial connections between the learners and the programme, appeared to also influence their motivation and the will to learn. The relevance of the programme to application to work and to personal development, was perceived to be important. A real sense of commitment to learning emerged from the narrative interviews. Skills areas such as the use of evidence to effect change, critical thinking, written argument skills, literature research and empirical research skills, and the ability to influence or benefit colleagues seems to have been positively impacted, with most respondents indicating a positively perceived outcome in these aspects. Self-esteem, and the confidence to act and seems also to have been a perceived result of these skills. Therefore, social agency has been positively impacted by the programme overall.

Correlations between varying aspects has shed light on the dynamics of how the above increase in confidence and social agency has come about. It was clear from the dissatisfied group, that if the access to dialogic tutorials was poor or they were not dialogic in nature if they did happen, then for all but one of the group the overall outcome seems to have been poor too. The one member of the group that received a first seems to indicate that this may have been a result of them being able to undertake a lot of taught modules not delivered by the tutorial staff on APS. Therefore, dialogic tutorials and the ability to negotiate and direct learning and be supported and mentored in the process of it, in the way described in the earlier pedagogical sections, appears

paramount. It is the foundation of facilitation that all else appears to rest, and confirms the theory that it should have a positive impact. This is borne out by the opposite correlation, where students who perceive that they had good dialogic tutorials were also much more likely to perceive good outcomes in terms of the acquisition of skills, work contribution and influence, and confidence.

However, perhaps the most illuminating aspect of the research has been in the re-affirming that the tutorial, crucial that it is, is not the only site of learning. This was perhaps quite clear from the theoretical discussion, which called for the application of knowledge in the workplace. However, what was perhaps not fully understood, was the mechanism by which to most effectively facilitate this. Emphasis was placed by tutors on the negotiation and setting up of projects, and the challenging of learners through supportive dialogue that perhaps focused more on the literature based support of argument, than the testing of theory in practice through empirical study. Most respondents were sure that they had developed literature based research skills and perceived overall, good written argument skills as having been developed. However, the development of empirical research skills was less emphatic as was the development of debating skills and spoken argument skills. Where empirical research skills were perceived as having been gained it was more likely that the more verbal skills were deemed as having been developed. The interviews also seem to bear this out with many a narrative seeming to base confidence at work on the ability to now 'speak out', based itself, on the perception of the learner as having good underpinning knowledge and experience of using their learning in practice. Likewise, it was more likely that if empirical research skills were perceived as having been gained, then critical thinking skills were also perceived. Again, this is borne out by the narratives suggesting a link between trying things out, and being confident in the knowledge and practices gained.

Therefore, in conjunction with strong dialogic negotiation and ongoing dialogic tutorial support, is the need for the facilitation of deep learning through empirical study, a kind of deep learning through primary research. Where traditional programmes have perhaps been a little reliant on abstract learning and the practice looking after itself, APS, though it has encouraged the application of learning to practice, had been guilty

of letting the real validation of that practice take care of itself too (at least for a proportion of the research subjects. Where empirical work had been facilitated, it

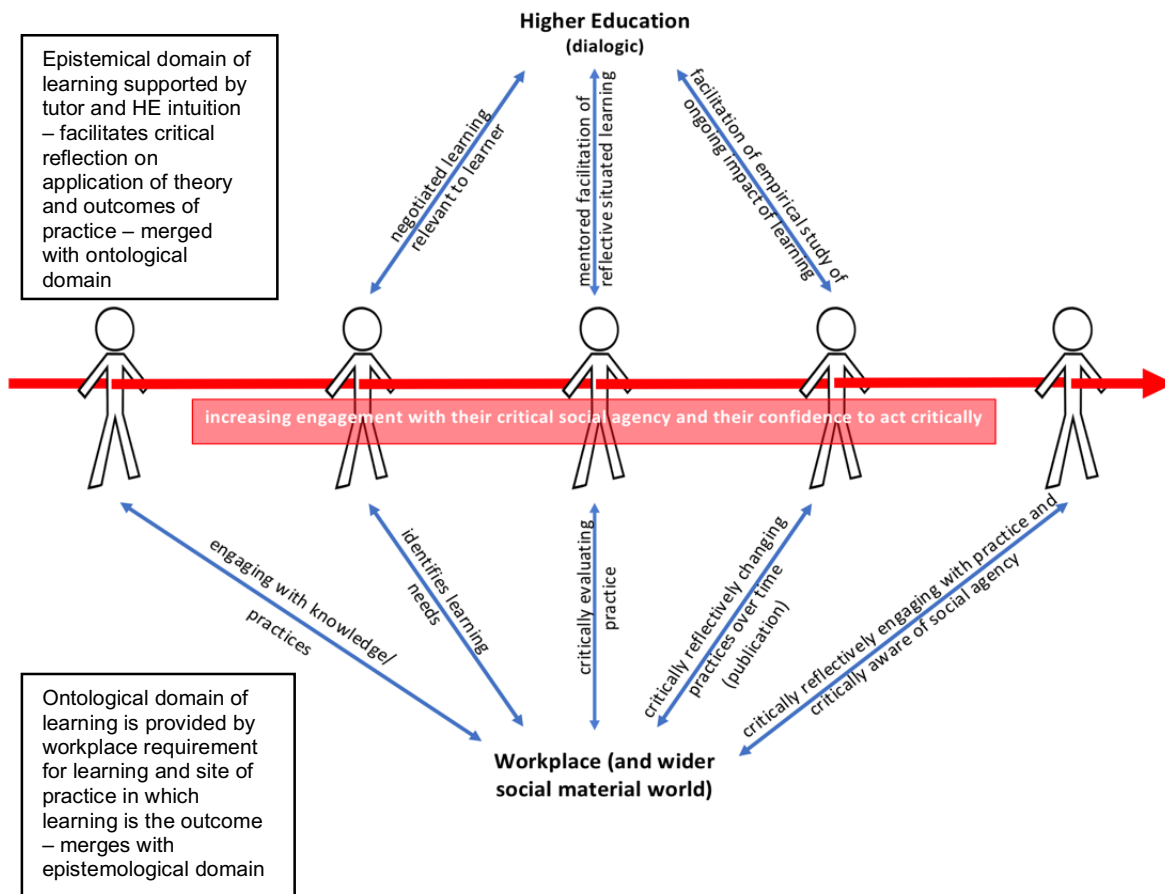


FIGURE 35: A MODEL OF WORK-BASED LEARNING – THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL SOCIAL AGENCY (NOTE: THE DIAGRAM DEPICTS A SINGLE WORK-BASED LEARNER OVER TIME)

appears to have had a stronger impact on the development of critical reflection and in turn, the recognising of capacity and strong practices in the learner. It has reconnected learning not only to the critical prediction of its outcomes and consequences, but to them in ongoing practice – critical reflection actually seeks to evaluate the ongoing impact of practices that stem from actionable knowledge, which in turn, folds back to modify that actionable knowledge. In the learner practitioner, this has the effect of improving the self-esteem and confidence levels to act critically (and therefore their critical social agency). This is depicted on the diagram (Figure 76) where a single learner is depicted as engaging with their workplace (and the wider socio-material world), perhaps exhibiting a will to learn, who then subsequently undertakes situated work-based learning and is able to identify their real-life learning needs and negotiated a programme embedded in that; be mentored in the critical evaluation of their practices and the critically reflective application of study to that practice; be coached in the

application of empirical methodologies that allow them to critically evaluate their learning over time and publish it through practice to their wider communities; and become embodied with lifelong critical reflection.

Empirical study therefore, in a programme based on applying learning to practice, seems to also embody the development of critical reflection and critical self-reflection (if the two can be separated). It lessens the divide between the theoretical or epistemological learning and the ontological domain of being and acting in the world. This is not to suggest that tutorials are not a crucial part of the pedagogy, but it also highlights the role of ongoing engagement with practice and the importance of the ongoing dialogue with the colleagues and other stakeholders that the practice affects. Dialogue of the nature discussed in this thesis, that is, dialogue that creatively sees the possibility of difference and discontinuity rather than trying to resolve it with existing ways of thinking (diminishing it to reproduction), is not only situated in the domain of the learning institution but must also be facilitated safely in the wider world of practice. Not only should the application of theory happen in the workplace, but this application and its results should itself be facilitated as the focus of study too. Publication was a central aspect of the teaching and learning method. The workplace becomes the site of publication, feedback, and confidence building, and this can be facilitated through empirical study and supported and developed through tutorial dialogue and mentoring. It embodies the critical evaluation of practices and makes the critical thinking skills developed clear to the learner. It not only develops their capabilities but also how they identify themselves, by formalising the study of the outcomes of their practices, and making it a focus of the learner enabling the recognition of these outcomes and the role they play in further reflection. This much seems borne out by the interview narratives. The critical conversation with the workplace must also happen and empirical study, through interviews and observation, and other empirical measurement may also be a crucial aspect that maybe has not been missed before, but has perhaps not been the central focus or been given enough emphasis hitherto.

This study has demonstrated that the pedagogy employed APS can have a very positive impact on the self-perception of critical social agency. By taking an approach to knowledge that includes in it the ontological aspects of both its potential to be held by the knowledge holder and its potential for that knowledge

holder's action in a context, it has seen the learner as a central actor in both the creation and application of knowledge. To do this the programme of learning has the flexibility to be bespoke and relevant to the learner and their practice. This in turn has a positive effect on their motivation and the will to learn. By marrying the ontological aspects of being and acting in society with the epistemological process of learning, it supports learners, through dialogue, to apply their learning and to achieve real-life outcomes that develop their self-esteem, confidence and social agency. Not only does it combine theoretical thought process and predictions of practice, it goes further, through the critically reflective process, to evaluating its outcomes and impact in practice over time.

What is apparent in this thesis is, is that the pedagogy is complex and its full potential has not perhaps hitherto been fully understood. This has been in the context of fully understanding the facilitation of the application theory in practice and the development of and creation knowledge, critical life skills, confidence and self-esteem that support critical social agency. The role of negotiation and dialogue has been recognised, but perhaps not enough emphasis has been placed on the facilitation of dialogue in the community of practice, through the undertaking of empirical research that reinforces the critical reflective practices and social agency, that APS is trying to instil in its learners. The central actor in the dialogue is the learner, not the tutor, and the sites of dialogue are not just the learning institution but in the workplace and wider social and material world. Firstly, the dialogue is not about resolving practice with theory. From the discontinuities between the actor and the theory and practice knowledge, dialogue leads to new, creative, and most importantly, viable forms of action. Where this has happened, and where the learner has been able to evaluate that learning in action, the pedagogy appears to have had an even greater impact on the learner's perceptions of critical social agency and confidence. The role of the dialogue between tutor and the learner has been to facilitate critical reflection and the acquisition of tools that allow for the critical creation and evaluation of practices in the workplace – to 'let learn'.

6. FUTURE WORK

One of the limitations of a study such as this is the likelihood that in any survey or interview schedule, the respondent will inevitably be drawn from those who are more positive about the subject and most likely to respond. That said, the survey did have a small representation of negative respondents and a proportion of those also came forward for interview. Though this group existed, it should still be borne in mind that this bias to the data may still to some extent be there.

One of the themes that emerged from the study was the role of empirical research as a facilitator of learning and a promoter of the skills and confidence that lead to agency. A recommendation for future work would be to look at that role, perhaps through the observation of a cohort of students. This methodology may to some extent ameliorate the bias discussed above and add weight to the finding of this thesis that dialogic tutorial coupled with strong facilitation of learning on the workplace through the learners use of empirical research methods, is an effective pedagogy for promoting social agency. In any case, the mechanism of how empirical research promotes work-place dialogue and publication, critical thinking and the promotion of confidence to act, both in terms of creating personal change and in influence of the environment, requires research in more detail.

Although the thesis gives a strong indication that the empirical study of the impact of learning in the workplace over time leads to greater confidence in the learner of their critical approaches to knowledge and practice, another area for research could be around the critical criteria of viability of action and what the actual mechanism is by which learners consciously compare the evaluation of their practices to a criteria of viability.

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