

**Thesis Title: ‘*An exploration of professional learning, and revised ‘internal careers’ experienced by higher education teaching practitioners undertaking the journey to the Doctorate in Education.’***

**By:**

Anne-Louise Temple Clothier

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctorate in Education

The University of Sheffield

Faculty of Education

School of Education

Submission Date: October 2016

**Abstract**

This research explores practitioners’ professional learning, and revised career expectations, as a result of undertaking the EdD. It considers the nature of professionalism, and the institutional conditions that support its development.

A new model for conceptual analysis *Ecological Positioning Theory* is developed, and used.This hybrid model draws on Bronfenbrenner’s *Ecological Systems Theory* (1979) and Harré and van Langenhove’s *Positioning Theory* (1999). *Ecological Positioning* is used to identify the various layers of engagement these EdD students experience in a working context, and articulate the subsequent, and movable, positions within these layers of discourse.

*Ecological Positioning* was used as a framework to prompt semi-structured narratives relating to the macro/exo/meso, and micro-structures inhabited by the practitioners; to assist practitioners articulate their subsequent positions within them, and identify their emotional responses to this positioning. This qualitative data was then themed against the ecological systems identified by the respondents.

What emerged in the findings was that for some the psychological contract with their employer (in terms of what is given and what is to be received) had changed, and that these changes were perceived to be impacting across the higher education sector. As a result, the terms of employment, subsequent professional identities of practitioners and ‘what it means to be a teacher and learner’ were also changing. Engagement with the EdD could be viewed as a response to what a higher education practitioner ‘should be’.

This research has two main contributions to offer. The first is the presentation, and use, of *Ecological Positioning* to understand the experiential connections which link the personal, socio-historical and situational contexts in addition to considering the diversity and dynamics of academic life. The second is the time-bound snap shot of the experiences of a specific group of higher education teaching practitioners who, for various reasons, have undertaken an EdD.

**Acknowledgements**

First I would like to thank the academic practitioners who agreed to be interviewed, without whom this submission would not be possible. I thank them for their time, their openness, and support throughout the duration of the research.

I would also like to offer my sincere thanks to my supervisor Vassiliki Papatsiba for her advice, knowledge and support. Her contributions to the development of the thesis, and my academic and personal growth, are significant.

I would also like to thank my daughter, for her unwavering support and understanding, as she thrived on neglect whilst I muttered “just give me an hour” again, and again.

[List of Tables 10](#_Toc461613887)

[1. Introduction 11](#_Toc461613888)

[1. 1 The Context of the Research 13](#_Toc461613889)

[1.1.1 Public Policy and Higher Education 13](#_Toc461613890)

[1.1.2 Quality Assurance, League Tables and Rankings 17](#_Toc461613891)

[1.1.3 Current Pressures on Professional Autonomy 22](#_Toc461613892)

[1.2 Rationale for the Research 23](#_Toc461613893)

[1.3 The Aims of this Research 26](#_Toc461613894)

[1.4 The Focus of the Research and Methodology 30](#_Toc461613895)

[1.5 Ethical Considerations 33](#_Toc461613896)

[1.6 The Structure of the Thesis 34](#_Toc461613897)

[2. Literature Review 36](#_Toc461613898)

[2.1 Overview 36](#_Toc461613899)

[2.2 Why is ‘Context’ so Important? 38](#_Toc461613900)

[2.3 Social Reality 40](#_Toc461613901)

[2.3.1 Changes within the Higher Education Sector 40](#_Toc461613902)

[2.3.2 The Rise of Managerialism 42](#_Toc461613903)

[2.3.3 The Changing Body of Students 43](#_Toc461613904)

[2.3.4 Technology Related Change 44](#_Toc461613905)

[2.4 Individual Repositioning within the Institutional Environment: Diversified Identities 46](#_Toc461613906)

[2.5 Professional Practice and Professional Identity 48](#_Toc461613907)

[2.5.1 The Primary Subject Discipline 50](#_Toc461613908)

[2.5.2 The Immediate Professional Community of Practice 52](#_Toc461613909)

[2.6 Summary 59](#_Toc461613910)

[3. Developing a Conceptual Framework for Analysis. 63](#_Toc461613911)

[3.1 Overview 63](#_Toc461613912)

[3.2 Outline of the Tenets of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) *Ecological Model*. 65](#_Toc461613913)

[3.2.1 How the *Ecological Model* proves to be a useful methodological tool. 69](#_Toc461613914)

[3.3 Outline of the Tenets of *Positioning*. 70](#_Toc461613915)

[3.3.1 How *Positioning* proves to be a useful methodological tool. 80](#_Toc461613916)

[3.4 Developing a new Theoretical Model 81](#_Toc461613917)

[3.4.1 The Chronosystem: Dimensions of Time. 84](#_Toc461613918)

[3.4.2 The Macrosystem/ Exosystem: Socio Economic Context, Changes in Public Policy and Higher Education Sector Practice. 84](#_Toc461613919)

[3.4.3 The Mesosystem, The Practitioners’ Place of Employment. 86](#_Toc461613920)

[3.4.4 Microsystems, Professional Practice and Professional Identity 88](#_Toc461613921)

[3.4.5 Why does *Ecological Positioning* prove to be a useful methodological tool? 90](#_Toc461613922)

[4. Methodology 93](#_Toc461613923)

[4.1 Overview 93](#_Toc461613924)

[4.2 Research Philosophy 94](#_Toc461613925)

[4.3 Research Approach 97](#_Toc461613926)

[4.4 Research Strategy 97](#_Toc461613927)

[4.5 Research Methods 102](#_Toc461613928)

[4.5.1 The Sample 103](#_Toc461613929)

[4.5.2 Semi-structured Interviews 106](#_Toc461613930)

[4.5.3 Recording and Verification 111](#_Toc461613931)

[4.5.4 Bias. 112](#_Toc461613932)

[4.6 Data Analysis 114](#_Toc461613933)

[4.7 Trustworthiness 117](#_Toc461613934)

[4.8 Ethical Position 118](#_Toc461613935)

[4.8.1 The Protection and Well-Being of the Participants 119](#_Toc461613936)

[4.8.2 About the Data 119](#_Toc461613937)

[5. Presentation of Findings: Responses in the Macro / Exosystem levels 121](#_Toc461613938)

[5.1 Introduction 121](#_Toc461613939)

[5.1.1 The Chronosystems Inhabited. 122](#_Toc461613940)

[5.2 Responses to Change in the Macro / Exosystem Levels. 125](#_Toc461613941)

[5.2.1 Perceptions of Change across the Sector. 127](#_Toc461613942)

[5.2.2 Changes and the Impact on Practice. 133](#_Toc461613943)

[5.2.3 Repositioning in the Sector 147](#_Toc461613944)

[6. Presentation of Findings. Responses in the Mesosystem 155](#_Toc461613945)

[6.1 Introduction 155](#_Toc461613946)

[6. 2 Internal Careers and Personal Storylines: The Respondents previous Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities. 157](#_Toc461613947)

[6.3 Internal Careers and Personal Storylines: The Initial Reasons Presented for Undertaking the EdD. 161](#_Toc461613948)

[6.4 Repositioning in the Mesosystem Storylines. 166](#_Toc461613949)

[6.4.1 Storyline: Assimilation into Studentship 167](#_Toc461613950)

[6.4.2 Storyline: Assimilating Studentship into Professional Practice. 168](#_Toc461613951)

[6.5 Repositioning within the Broader University 170](#_Toc461613952)

[6.5.1 Storyline: Changes to Duties within the University (What new contributions can be given to the broader university?). 172](#_Toc461613953)

[6.5.2 Storyline: Changes to the Rights within the University (What can be received, and how does this impact on internal career planning?). 176](#_Toc461613954)

[6.6 Repositioning within the Primary Discipline 184](#_Toc461613955)

[7. Presentation of Findings. Responses in the Microsystems 193](#_Toc461613956)

[7.1 Introduction (Professional Practice and Professional Identity). 193](#_Toc461613957)

[7.2 Changes in the most local Communities. 195](#_Toc461613958)

[7.2.1 Storyline: The respondent’s local community within the university 196](#_Toc461613959)

[7.2.2 Storyline: The EdD student cohorts 199](#_Toc461613960)

[7.3. Social Acts: Changes to Professional Practice. 203](#_Toc461613961)

[7.3.1 Social Acts: The application of advanced subject knowledge to teaching practice. 204](#_Toc461613962)

[7.3.2 Social Acts: Changes to the processes used in teaching practice. 209](#_Toc461613963)

[7.3.3 Social Acts: Changes to professional practice in terms of research. 214](#_Toc461613964)

[7.4 Reflections on the Emotional Responses to undertaking the EdD. 219](#_Toc461613965)

[8. Conclusion 232](#_Toc461613966)

[8.1 Summary of the Findings of this Research 232](#_Toc461613967)

[8.1.1 What were the drivers for engaging with Doctoral research, and how did this fit with their ‘internal careers’ (Lengel, 2001; Schein 1990; 1978) in terms of where they think they are going in their working lives? 233](#_Toc461613968)

[8.1.2 How had undertaking a research programme impacted on the practitioners’ academic professional identity, in terms of responses to changes within the academic community, recognition and resulting professional identities? 235](#_Toc461613969)

[8.1.3 What were practitioners’ emotional and stress responses to the changes encountered? 237](#_Toc461613970)

[8.1.4 What skills and knowledge development might an institution accrue as a result of practitioners undertaking an EdD programme? 240](#_Toc461613971)

[8.2 Implications 242](#_Toc461613972)

[8.2.1 Conceptual Implications 242](#_Toc461613973)

[8.2.2 Implications for Practice. 245](#_Toc461613974)

[8.3 Policy Recommendations. 248](#_Toc461613975)

[8.4 Limitations to the research 251](#_Toc461613976)

[8.5 Direction and areas for future research 253](#_Toc461613977)

[9. Reference List 256](#_Toc461613978)

List of Tables

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Figure** | **Title** | **Page** |
| Fig 1 | The Ecological Positioning Model | 80 |
| Fig 2 | Macrosystem Storylines and Repositioning | 122 |
|  |  |  |
| **Table** | **Title** |  |
| One | Mid-life, Mid-career Sample Profile | 100 |
| Two | Types of HEI Inhabited | 101 |
| Two | Types of HEI Inhabited | 118 |
| Three | Characteristics of the Respondents | 119 |
| Two | Types of HEI Inhabited | 152 |
| Four | Professional Affiliation | 181 |

1. Introduction

This research seeks to develop an understanding of the experiences of a number of academic practitioners recently undertaking a Doctorate of Education (EdD) as part of their personal or professional Continuing Professional Development (CPD). It identifies the undertaking of a mid-career doctorate as one of the ways in which academic staff, teaching in English Higher Education providers, are responding to the changes impacting on the sector.

As a 51yr old higher education teaching practitioner with over ten years’ experience as a Teacher Fellow Senior Lecturer, I would consider myself to be mid-life and mid-career. Four years ago a target from my Professional Development Review (PDR) was to undertake a doctoral programme of study. Although for me, at that particular time, it was mainly an instrumental directive to engage with a research programme, I recognize that other similarly positioned practitioners may well have other drivers determining when (and how) they embark on obtaining doctoral status. It is possible that, like me, they may have held long-term ambitions to achieve a doctorate which were thwarted earlier in life by personal career, or domestic demands. They may not have been directed by their university to obtain doctoral status, or they may have been given a directive at a time that was not compatible with their existing career and domestic demands. Therefore their reasons for engagement, and subsequent experiences, may well differ greatly.

Being part of the student cohort made me increasingly aware that other universities, like my own, were putting increased amounts of pressure on academic staff to obtain doctoral status, and that this appeared to result in some practitioners, who did not have a doctoral degree, feeling that they were in an increasingly vulnerable position. Hearing their anecdotal experiences suggested a swath of staff might be being driven by these pressures. I became interested in the potential impact on the career plans, and life experiences, of those willing to adapt to what may be perceived as new demands. Not only did this discovery help to reduce the isolation I had initially felt when beginning my own research, I became increasingly interested to know how undertaking the EdD journey manifested itself to others, and modified their future aspirations in terms of their internal careers (a subjective sense of where they see themselves going). The focus of my own research grew from this, and I hoped that by listening to the experiences of my peers I would be able to identify the range of ways that career development and teaching practice was enhanced as a direct consequence of undertaking a research programme. I specifically chose to focus on mid-career mid-life respondents as I felt it was this section of the academic community that would be most likely to have experiences similar to my own, and as a consequence most likely to provide findings that could enhance my own career development and provide pointers for others in similar situations to myself. This led to the production of a working title: *An exploration of professional learning, and revised ‘internal careers’ experienced by higher education teaching practitioners undertaking the journey to the Doctorate in Education.*

1. 1 The Context of the Research

1.1.1 Public Policy and Higher Education

My research acknowledges that the sector is continuously developing as it responds to environmental change, and restricts its focus to post-1997. This is done for two reasons: first it is possible to use the Dearing Report *The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education* (NCIHE) (1997) as a benchmark document defining higher education at that time, and second because the respondents who participated in this research entered the profession at a time when the Report was influential on the profession.

The Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997, p. 51) identified the key drivers changing the sector as being:

* Increasing economic integration across the world;
* Changes in the labour market;
* The changing structure of the United Kingdom (UK) economy;
* Public finances;
* Family finances;
* New communications and information technology;
* Social and cultural changes;
* Demographic patterns;
* Environmental changes;
* School and further education;
* Development in higher education elsewhere in the world.

What is of key significance for this research is the Report's assertion “We do not accept a purely instrumental approach to higher education. Its distinctive character must lie in the independent pursuit of knowledge and understanding” (NCIHE*,* 1997, p.51). This statement is important in that it provides an authoritative statement of the values that underpinned the sector and an indication of what those entering the profession might have been expected to align themselves with.

However, the report is also pivotal in that it recommended that universities introduce tuition fees, payable by the student. Although tuition fees of £1,000 were not actually implemented until 2003, that was the year that the number of students surpassed two million (Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), 2014), and radical changes to the funding mechanisms of higher education began. These changes to funding (for both student and university), and the continued increase in student numbers have played key roles in shaping the sector since 1997. Other key benchmarks include the 2009 commissioning of the Browne Review which had the remit to review the funding of universities and create a sustainable model. However, despite the publication of the Browne Report *Securing a Sustainable future for Higher Education* (2010) the government capped student fees at £9,000. As well as a fee increase, students also found the traditional ‘grant’ had been replaced with a new loan system. Also the Universities were required to engage with new mechanisms to draw down public funding, including bidding for grants to help fund research and some teaching. In addition, performance indicators became an integral element of the funding application process and there was a marked increase in accountability.

June 2011 saw the release of the White Paper *Students at the Heart of the System*. This paper outlined proposals for what it believed would produce a sustainable funding model for the education sector, whilst improving the quality of the student experience. This paper voiced dedication to the improvement of social mobility, using access to higher education as a means of developing employability. With attention focused firmly on students as customers needing satisfaction, rather than students as learners, it mirrored the Student Charter Group report (2012). The Student Charter Group report attempted to equip Higher Education Institutions (HEI’s) with a “good practice toolkit” to assist in the development of Student Charters. It determined that every HEI’s charter should inform students what they could expect from the Student Union, and what they may expect from the Institution, as well as outlining what was expected of them in return.

In 2012 particular attention was given to three separate facets of higher education: First Sir Tim Wilson was commissioned to appraise the correlation between higher education and industry and given a remit for developing “a world class university – industry collaboration” (Wilson, 2012). This review aimed to increase the students’ employability, with every university promoting economic growth, and the higher education sector taking a position at the centre of the economy. A second area of focus was student fees. The Government published its ministerial statement outlining the 2013/14 arrangements for higher education student finance. This outlined that the maximum tuition fees and loans were to be kept at 2012 / 13 levels; however full-time students receiving the low income grants would find them increased in line with inflation.

The consequences of these policy decisions, for the teaching practitioners working in HEIs, was that the environment had changed. In particular performance criteria, and career opportunities, were redefined. The ‘psychological contract’ in terms of “the perceptions of the two parties, employee and employer, of what their mutual obligations are towards each other” (Chartered Institute for Professional Development, 2016 para. 1), and the unwritten expectations as to what was to be given and what could be received (Lengel, 2001; Schein, 1990; 1978) had also changed.

How this has resulted in some practitioners believing that their contributions may be seen as less important is explored later in this chapter when some of the key findings of the UCU (2013) report are presented, and its relevance to my work explored.

1.1.2 Quality Assurance, League Tables and Rankings

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) which is the official “independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education” (QAA 2015, para. 1 of 7) recognizes that “The scale, shape, structure and purpose of learning provision are changing” (QAA 2015, para.4 of 7). Whilst this organization works to safeguard the quality and reputation of the higher education sector it does not produce rankings of the organizations it supports, nor does it provide reports that would signpost potential students to particular universities. However, demand for information regarding academic quality has resulted in the development of a number of unofficial university ranking systems and league tables, drawn in part from the data produced by official bodies such as the QAA. The results are used by a range of stakeholders to determine where they may find academic quality and although they are unofficial, they are very influential. Adams (2013, para 1) claims that prospective students are “increasingly influenced by university league tables when deciding where to study”.

The DfES (2003) *White Paper on The Future of Higher Education* suggested that, given the right information, student choice and free market competition would drive up academic quality in Britain. However, agreement concerning appropriate measures of success and quality remains problematic. Whilst bodies such as the QAA make assessments for the purpose of enhancing quality, the league tables do not, instead the league tables collect data from a range of sources and present it in a way that might suggest where potential students might obtain customer satisfaction.

Perhaps one of the most influential official formal indicators of student satisfaction is provided by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) in the form of the *National Student Survey* which has been collating final year undergraduate students’ opinions concerning the quality of their courses since 2005. This Council suggest their purpose “is to contribute to public accountability, help inform the choices of prospective students and provide data that assists institutions in enhancing the student experience” (HEFCE 2015, para.1of 7).

Other unofficial university rankings are provided such as the free on-line *The Guardian league table*, which amongst other criteria, uses feedback from exiting students. The other criteria for their rankings relate to: satisfaction with the course, teaching, feedback, student/staff ration, spend, entry tariff and career after six months. There has been an increase in the production of these types of independent survey and one of the most popularly used rankings in England is now *The Complete University Guide* which markets itself as ‘independent’ and ‘trusted’. Significantly this provides rankings based on different criteria. It cites entry standards, student satisfaction, research quality, and graduate prospects (The Complete University Guide University *League Table,* 2016).

Within the academic community other tables and ranking systems are equally influential, and the ones concerning research are particularly relevant to this study. The quality of research was previously officially assessed through the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) (2008), a system that was not favourably received by the University and College Union (UCU), representing membership of professional staff from both the further and higher education sectors in the UK, who responded to its implementation by stating:

The RAE has had a disastrous impact on the UK higher education system, leading to the closure of departments with strong research profiles and healthy student recruitment. It has been responsible for job losses, discriminatory practices, widespread demoralisation of staff, the narrowing of research opportunities through the over-concentration of funding and the undermining of the relationship between teaching and research. (UCU 2008, para. 1 of 7)

In 2014 the RAE was replaced by the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Based in the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) the REF is managed on behalf of the four higher education funding bodies HEFCE, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DEL) (REF 2014 para 2 of 5). It states its primary purpose as being:

* to assess the quality of research and produce outcomes for each submission made by institutions:
* The four higher education funding bodies will use the assessment outcomes to inform the selective allocation of their grant for research to the institutions which they fund, with effect from 2015-16.
* The assessment provides accountability for public investment in research and produces evidence of the benefits of this investment.
* The assessment outcomes provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the higher education (HE) sector and for public information. (REF 2014 para.3 of 5)

Again the UCU *Survey Report* (UCU, 2013) voiced dissent in the production of *The Research Excellence Framework (REF)* concluding that their concerns relating to the detrimental impact on career development, and working conditions for academic practitioners remain. They cite unreasonable expectations and the pressure to produce research outputs resulting in excessive working hours (UCU, 2013, p2).

The report suggests that UCU members surveyed did not perceive the REF to raise the quality of the research outputs produced; nor did they accept the REF as an effective indicator of the quality of research being produced. Most respondents in the survey felt that an alternative method of evaluation should be found, with over a quarter believing it “should be abolished and not replaced” (UCU, 2013, p3). In addition, the impact on the practitioners’ workload caused a great deal of concern, with more than 60% suggesting that the REF requirements could not be met without engaging in excessive working hours involving evenings, weekends, and working whilst on annual leave. The practitioners reported that the pressure to meet the requirements was stressful, and over 33% suggested that this had “negatively impacted on their health” (UCU, 2013, p4).

Some of the key findings of the UCU (2013) report that have the most relevance to my research are based around performance criteria and career opportunities. They state “A number of institutions are warning academic staff not included in the REF that they face capability procedures, denial of promotion or progression to the next grade, withdrawal of support to undertake research or transfer to a teaching-focused contract.” (ibid, p.4). The findings also suggested that nearly 25% of respondents perceived they would not remain employed, and over 20% believed they would be moved into teaching-focused roles, if they failed to meet the REF expectations. In addition, over 10% of staff in probationary periods had been told that they would be unable to obtain permanent positions without meeting the REF requirements. Finally, nearly half of the respondents “did not feel that their institution/ department provided the professional support needed in order to meet institutional expectations in relation to the REF.” (ibid, p.4).

In summation, throughout the working life of my respondents, higher education has experienced dramatic expansion, changes to funding, diversification of students, increased accountability and increased competition from the private sector. The indications suggest this pace of change will continue and perhaps increase, meanwhile the resolutions to the challenges encountered have yet to be agreed. What is clear is that the performance criteria used to measure the ‘contribution’ of the teaching practitioner has changed, and the subsequent career opportunities are being redefined. This is of key significance to my work as I explore how, mid-life mid-career teaching practitioners attempt to chart a course for their careers over the shifting landscape of higher education.

1.1.3 Current Pressures on Professional Autonomy

Recent commentary on higher education suggests that the rejection of a “purely instrumental approach” and the characterisation of higher education as the “independent pursuit of knowledge and understanding” (NCIHE*,* 1997, p.51) have been replaced by a system where:

Universities are now virtually run by the various measures of their performance. They have sacrificed the freedom to make their own choices. Instead, they have to conform to the direction and choices embodied in all these external measures set by others: politicians, the media and management “experts”. (Scott, 2015, para.1 of 17).

Scott (2015) goes on to suggest

Standards are also being undermined as top-down management enforcement, driven by (increasingly tainted) benchmark data, crowds out that sense of professional responsibility and autonomy that is at the root of creativity in research as well as teaching. Performance is degenerating into skillful compliance. (ibid, para.12 of 17).

Also, in 2015 Shaw and Ratcliffe claimed that academic reforms were “damaging the quality of education” and making practitioners’ “workloads unmanageable”. They suggest “Almost half of academics have experienced pressure in the last three years to bump up student grades or stop students failing” (Shaw and Ratcliffe, 2015, para.1of 18). Drawing on the results of the Guardian: *Higher Education Network Staff Experience survey* (2015) they highlight that, of the 2,019 respondents, “46% of academics said they have been pressurised to mark students’ work generously … while 37% did not believe teaching was valued by their institution” (ibid, para.2 of 18) concluding that “Many academics said recent reforms, which encourage universities to treat students as consumers and expand their intake, have damaged the quality of education offered to undergraduates” (ibid, para.3 of 18). In addition they report that “Half of the academics and university staff surveyed described their workload as unmanageable” (ibid, para.3 of 18). If this is the case, it is possible to suggest that the reality academic practitioners currently find themselves in, could be at great odds with what they expected when they began their careers.

1.2 Rationale for the Research

My research acknowledges that higher education is a stratified sector containing intra-sector groupings such as the Russell Group Universities, and post-92 universities, and that these groups have a variety of institutional responses to the current macro-level environment. *The Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration* (2003) acknowledged there were wide variations to be found in terms of what constituted a Higher Education Institution (HEI), suggesting that the oldest universities were traditional and based around communities of scholarly activity, in contrast the younger universities/polytechnics displayed a more executive style of management. However, this review went on to suggest that these differences in culture and management styles were being eroded. My research acknowledges that some institutions are undergoing a greater degree of change than others. As a consequence, the practitioners working within them find their “external career paths” (Lengel, 2001) bound in the mandates, roles, and practices governed by corporate policy and sociological constructs, are being redefined. Their “internal career”, which Lengel (2001) identifies as the individuals’ subjective personal objectives for their working lives, may be revised as a consequence.

My research focuses specifically on one institutional response to league table positioning and that is the adoption of doctoral level qualifications becoming the ‘entry level requirement’ to teach at some universities for which it may not have been a requirement in the past. This represents one of the current policies shaping the occupational structures (Schein, 1990; 1978) and ‘rights and duties’ (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) of teaching practitioners.

Although doctoral status may have been a prerequisite to work in research focused universities where the expectation was that academics would undertake as much research as teaching, it is now the case that some teaching focused universities, like my own, are now making a doctoral level qualification mandatory for teaching practitioners. According to my employer’s *Academic Role Framework* an applicant for a Grade 7 Lecturer requires that they “Possess a doctorate or to be in the process of submitting for the qualification or substantial professional experience (with Masters Degree)” (Leeds Beckett *Academic Role Framework*, 2015, para.1 of 5) and that a Senior Lecturer applicant “Normally must have a doctorate (or advanced professional qualification where agreed)” (ibid, para.1 of 5). Not only has this determined who can apply to work at the institution, it has also had a knock on effect for existing members of academic staff who do not hold this qualification. My own experience led me to believe that in some instances this creates a tier of staff who find they are formally or informally repositioned as the title ‘Doctor’ takes on a new significance in terms of measuring the value of an employee. Those without the degree may find that this deficit proves more defining than numerous years of experience, and evidence of both academic and practitioner competence. It is possible that new “internal careers” (Lengel, 2001) are being developed in order to survive in this new context. In my academic community (the School of Education and Childhood), many experienced colleagues are now undertaking the EdD as a means of ensuring currency and employability, and perhaps to hold onto their current roles rather than obtaining career progression. As such I suspected that this current driver for engagement with the award may be distinct from historical engagements with doctoral research in that it is needs driven, and experienced as a job related necessity and directed by a corporate mandate. In effect, this provides a distinct historical context to the research in that it is an indicator of current individual and corporate responses to sector wide changes, and this makes the research timely and distinct. Exploring the experiences and changes encountered by current practitioners as they undertake the EdD journey is central to this research.

1.3 The Aims of this Research

It may be that other disciplines, such as the sciences and other ‘pure academic disciplines’, could well be facing their own different responses to change, however I decided that restricting the focus of this research to the specific impact of undertaking the EdD would lead to sufficient respondents to provide an in-depth analysis. Given that I was trying to make sense of my own experiences, and locate them within a broader context, the research specifically focused on the perceptions of experienced academic staff who had recently (in the last five years) engaged with the EdD in order to maintain professional development. It aimed to explore the responses of these practitioners to see if they had encountered the same issues, and in particular what they had gained from their experiences; how they had applied any new learning; and what range of strategies they had developed for personal and professional success. This proved personally beneficial in that it removed some of the isolation associated with conducting research for my own EdD thesis, and allowed me to focus on issues that were both beneficial and relevant to my own professional development.

The emotional impact on the mid-life mid-career teaching practitioners, and any subsequent re-focusing of their “internal careers” (Lengel, 2001; Schein 1996) was of particular interest. Here the “internal career” is the subjective sense of where the individual sees themselves going in their working life, and it is distinct from the “external career” which is located in the institutional roles, mandates and policies which determine their repertoire of actions. The reading undertaken in the first two years of the Award led me to believe that research into the impact of these changes was limited. The university I work in is staffed with a variety of employees with working lives ranging from a few months to fifty years. Their expectations (psychological contract), in relation to employment patterns, career progression, professional practice and affiliation, may have substantial differences, yet within this collective there is now a tier of academic practitioners who are also having to deal with the actual and potential consequences of not having a doctorate, and it is this group in which I was interested. The focus was limited specifically to the experiences of staff engaged directly with teaching roles. This sample was again refined to experienced (5yrs) teaching professionals as their engagement with the EdD may be very different to those who are new to the profession.

Given that the rationale to employ doctoral academic staff must be to improve the quality of teaching, the research profile of the university, and the performance indicators which are used in the League Tables, part of my research aimed to explore the ways in which my respondents felt they were a better practitioner as a result of undertaking doctoral research. The research sheds some light on the skills, and knowledge development an institution may accrue as a result of practitioners undertaking this level of certification. Consequently, the research explores the gap between experienced practitioner and qualified practitioner and records ‘what counts’ as epistemological growth for a range of respondents.

When scoping the methodology for this research the preliminary literature reviews led me to believe that an analysis of policy documents (such as job descriptions, employee specifications and performance development review documents) to try and determine ‘what counts’ to employers would not prove beneficial in determining what an attractive employee might look like. It was rejected on the grounds that this sort of documentation lacks the detail I was hoping to discover, may in fact be outdated, and may not be meaningful to the respondents in this research. In addition, a review of the literature covering the concept of ‘professional identity’ also proved to be limited in its helpfulness in gaining an understanding of what currently constitutes an effective ‘higher education practitioner’ and the communities they assimilate into. This was because an attempt to homogenise the profession would not allow for the myriad of differing values an individual can be simultaneously ascribed in a variety of settings. In addition, I was aware of the vast range of differences between ‘what counts’ to the academic practitioners working within my own community of practice. For some, it is positive results from student satisfaction surveys; others emphasize on-line learning and engagement with technology, for others it is published research and for some it is enterprise and partnerships. For these reasons, any attempt to identify and generalize positive professional identity was rejected. Instead I became interested in the individual experiences of practitioners and hoped that hearing their journeys would provide some success stories as they fight for survival in a changing landscape.

Although the literature review did not lead me to the place from which I expected to start my research, it did however reveal two theoretical models that helped me re-define the approach I would take to view the issues I wished to explore. These two models are Bronfenbrenner’s *Ecological Systems Theory* (1979) and Harré and van Langenhove’s *Positioning Theory* (1998). *The Ecological Systems Theory* allowed me to articulate the various layers of engagement a practitioner could experience in a working context, and the *Positioning Theory* allows the articulation of subsequent, and movable, positions within these layers of discourse. Combined they provided a way of structuring both thoughts and dialogue concerning the various arenas inhabited by practitioners and their experiences within them. As a consequence, a new model for conceptual analysis was developed, the concept of *Ecological Positioning Theory*. The development of this new model freed my thought from the constraints of ‘professional identity’ and instead allowed me to explore the fragments and facets that work together to create it. I also believed it would lead to a more detailed and deep understanding of the personal values and perspectives articulated by the respondents, and provide some structure to the narratives in relation to the context within which their work took place.

For these reasons, the *Ecological Positioning Theory* was used to structure the discourse of the research, with the aim of analysing participant responses and determine what, if any, patterns could be identified. The *Ecological Positioning Theory* was used to prompt narratives relating to the macro/exo/meso and micro-structures inhabited by the practitioners, and then used to assist practitioners to articulate their subsequent positions ascribed within each, and their emotional responses to this positioning. In particular, a visual representation of the *Ecological Positioning Theory* was used as part of the interview process (see Appendix One). The information generated as a response to the interview process was then themed against the ecological systems identified by the respondents.

1.4 The Focus of the Research and Methodology

In order to explore the motives for undertaking the doctorate, and the perceived benefits encountered, this qualitative study focused on the experiences of eight practitioners who were currently undertaking, or had recently undertaken, an EdD programme of research. The rationale for this was that it would shed light on the benefits perceived by the respondents whilst undertaking their research and on reflection after completion. The respondents were employed at a range of HEIs in England, and drawn from EdD cohorts across two universities, and as such created a convenience sample. This helped anonymise the respondents and allowed an exploration of the ‘EdD experience’ rather than a specific programme of study at one institution. This was important as I wanted to avoid evaluating the experience of any singular provision or programme.

The research itself is based around four key research questions:

* What were the drivers for engaging with doctoral research in terms of what Lengel (2001) terms the ‘internal careers’ or ‘personal storyline’, and responses to new imperatives?
* How had undertaking a research programme impacted on the practitioners’ academic professional identity in terms of responses to internal divisions within the academic community, recognition and resulting professional identities?
* What were practitioners’ emotional and stress responses to the changes encountered?
* What skills and knowledge development, do these practitioners consider an institution might accrue as a result of the practitioners undertaking an EdD programme?

The ontological position taken was that of constructivism, in that the “social phenomena” which constitute the “social world” are “only real in the sense that they are constructed ideas which are continually being reviewed and reworked by those involved with them” (Mathews and Ross, 2014, p.25). This stance suggests that there is “no social reality apart from the meaning of the social phenomenon for the participants” (Mathews and Ross, 2014, p.25). It is the meanings and understandings of the sector and universities constructed by the respondents that form the focus of my research. It is also worth noting at this point that as a researcher, and part of this social construct, I will also be applying my own meanings and understanding to the research.

The epistemological position adopted was that of interpretivism, choosing to focus on the respondents’ subjective interpretations of the social phenomena and their own responses and reactions. This links readily with constructivism in that “the nature of a social phenomenon is in the understanding and meaning ascribed to the social phenomenon by the social actor” (Mathews and Ross, 2014, p.28).

The research itself is a qualitative study, drawing on the experiences of eight academic staff working within and across a number of HEIs. Respondents were selected from a range of hierarchical positions including Senior Lecturer, Principal Lecturer and Staff Lead within the institutions, and were mid-life and mid-career.

The sample was drawn from students who are undertaking / have undertaken the EdD at Sheffield University and Leeds Beckett University. This convenience sample provided a range of responses from practitioners working in Russell Group institutions, ex-Polytechnics, an ex-FE Institution and a college of further and higher education. This range provided a snapshot of data that was fitting for a comparison with the findings of the literature review. The data collection method used was a series of semi-structured interviews, using predominantly qualitative methods.

The timescale for the research was determined by the programme of study and took place between 2012 and 2016. The literature review and preliminary considerations were completed between 2012 and 2015. The interviews took place in 2015; the comparison of the data collected and subsequent submission of the thesis were completed in 2016.

1.5 Ethical Considerations

All work conducted within this research fell within the ethical guidelines of the Sheffield University who gave ethical approval to the project prior to commencement. I recognized the right of any participant to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and at any time. In the instance of any participant wishing to withdraw, verbal or written notification would result in the removal from the data collection of any submitted contributions their destruction. This research did not form any mandated part of a participant’s employment.

All data submitted was treated as confidential and anonymous. I respected the participants’ entitlement to privacy and maintained confidentiality and anonymity throughout. I complied with the legal requirements governing the storage, and use, of personal data as outlined by the Data Protection Act (1998) and all subsequent similar acts. All data generated by the research was securely stored on a password protected personal computer and in a locked filing cabinet.

1.6 The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is presented over eight chapters. Chapter Two provides a review of a range of literature that underpins this research, and leads to the development and presentation of a framework for conceptual analysis in Chapter Three. This third chapter presents the *Ecological Positioning Model* as a lens for exploring the experiences of teaching practitioners working in the higher education sector who have recently engaged with an EdD programme of study. The methodological considerations and strategies associated with my research are presented in Chapter Four, and this is followed by a presentation of the findings in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. These three chapters use the *Ecological Positioning Model* presented in Chapter Three to provide a structured thematic approach to presenting and analysing the data, they focus on the Macro/Exosystem in Chapter Five, the Mesosystem in Chapter Six, and finally the Microsystems in Chapter Seven. In each of these chapters I locate the findings with the underpinning literature discussed in Chapter Two. I conclude with a Chapter that discusses how these findings are used to inform the answers to the research questions posed in Chapter One; presents the conceptual and policy implications of my research; identifies the limitations of this research and outlines areas for future development.

The following chapter presents a literature review which considers the context and social realities of those working in HEI’s in England. It reflects on institutional repositioning and diversified identities; professional practice and professional identity, before exploring the significance of the immediate professional community for practitioners. The chapter concludes by identifying some of the limitations to using ‘the professional’, ‘the academic’ and ‘the sector’ as models for conceptual analysis.

1. Literature Review

2.1 Overview

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are staffed with a variety of academic employees whose experience in higher education ranges from a few months to fifty years or more, and it is likely that what they expect, in relation to career progression; professional practice and affiliation will be as varied as their backgrounds. Also, recently developed patterns of working, and reforms affecting the ‘psychological contract’ (Lengel, 2001; Schein, 1990; 1978) between employer and employee, add significant challenges for those attempting to ‘unify’ or manage any collective in today’s higher education sector. According to Halsey (1992), the beginning the 1960s saw the United Kingdom housing 28 comparatively well-established universities accommodating 114,000 students; however, in contrast, the contemporary higher education sector has over 100 universities accommodating 2,299,355 students (Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 2014). Within the sector changes to funding mechanisms, and the election of a Conservative government, have led Scott (2015) to predict the development of a “two tier two speed higher education” with traditional “top” universities holding the bulk of research and science benefiting from funding protection. By comparison, he suggests that post-92 universities, “with more inclusive student bodies, will suffer because they have limited research and fewer high-cost subjects.” He concludes

Those institutions that have done most to widen the social base, and maybe the educational possibilities, of higher education will be left to scramble for business in the marketplace of the brave new world. (Scott 2015, para.10).

Given that my research aimed to explore perceptions of what it means to be a higher education teaching practitioner today, this chapter draws on other people’s published material, and my own unpublished work (doctoral assignments), to examine a range of significant ‘contexts’ that are central to, and influence, the professional practice of academics working within the higher education sector.

It notes the limitations of using an ‘essentialist’ approach to determine or explain the ‘identities’ of individuals, and communities, and presents a review of a range of literature against which my findings can be articulated. A consideration of the wider (sector) and more local (institution / department) systems inhabited allows an exploration of the evolutionary nature of professional identity, revealing its multifaceted manifestations and inherent contradictions. The possible influence of these social/professional contexts are briefly explored, in recognition that it is the interplay between these communities, experienced by the individuals within them that may ultimately provide insight as to how professional identities are formed.

Beginning with the context of professional practice; changes within higher education; the rise of managerialism; changes to the student body and technology related change; the chapter explores the macro level developments shaping the sector. The chapter then explores how these changes might be felt within a university by reviewing published work relating to practitioner status and autonomy, changes to the “psychological contract” (Sparrow, 1996) and revised “internal careers” (Lengel, 2001). Finally, the chapter considers a range of literature exploring the concepts of professional practice and professional identity.

2.2 Why is ‘Context’ so Important?

Henkel (2000) attests that it is an individual’s unique history, moral and conceptual framework: coupled with the value s/he is assigned by their distinct community that determine professional identity and shapes its effectiveness. However, Kogan (2000) asserts that focusing on the moral and conceptual framework of an individual will only provide a partial explanation of the creation and formation of professional identity. I suggest that in order to get a fuller picture it is necessary to also consider the social dimensions of the communities inhabited, the ascribed roles within them, and the interplay that shapes an identity and ascribes a value to it. I note the momentous relevance of the structural features of this social world is recognised by Bourdieu (1993), and that Deem (2006) suggests that working within them creates tensions. Deem (2006) maintains that individuals strive to develop “legitimacy” by making maximum use of any symbolic capital they hold, and it is the attempts to successfully assimilate that determines the academic and professional identities that are consequently established.

In terms of assimilating into systems and structures, Kogan (2000) suggests that it involves a “continuous process” to obtain, and maintain, an effective professional identity. He maintains an effective identity can develop strength through the acquisition of experience and professional education. In addition, he proposes that individuals’ identities may be strengthened through the affiliations with various institutions and local level communities of practice, or institutions, which contain practices, structures, norms and values that positively contribute to the maturation of the professional identity. A central tenet in Kogan’s work (2000) is that professional identity is both an individual and social construct. Consequently, individuals not only gain strength from their personal/specialist knowledge and their moral and conceptual frameworks, they may also gain strength, or be valued, according to their ability to perform effectively in their designated roles within the community and institutions inhabited.

The following section of this chapter explores the social realities of these communities, focusing on changes within the higher education sector, then institutional repositioning and diversified identities, and concludes with a reflection on the implications for practitioners. By doing so, it explores the ways that changes to the context of the higher education sector are impacting on the policies that shape it, and then how this in turn, is impacting on the professional practice and lived experiences of those who teach within it.

2.3 Social Reality

2.3.1 Changes within the Higher Education Sector

The English higher education sector, and the individual institutions within it, form the context in which professional practice takes place, and as such can be viewed as what Gee *et al* (2005) would term the “the big D” storylines, or macro-level discourse, in which practitioners, according to Harré and Langenhove (1999), are positioned by themselves and by others. Kuh and Whitt (1986) have suggested that academics were united through an underlying cluster of common values that included “academic freedom, the community of scholars, scrutiny of accepted wisdom, truth seeking, collegial governance, individual autonomy, and service to society through the production of knowledge, the transmission of culture, and education of the young” (Kuh and Whitt, 1986 p.76).

If Kuh and Whitt’s (1986) beliefs were accurate, then perhaps this represented a fundamental narrative or ‘storyline’ that may have bound together the experiences of the academics practising at that time. However, it is worth noting that this essentialist approach is itself often challenged by those who maintain there is no merit in trying to homogenize this collective identity.

An equally essentialist approach that captures the bleaker side of university life is forwarded by Pelias (2004) who suggested that academic practitioners were:

teaching students who seemed more interested in grades than learning. They were working for administrators who seemed more concerned with the bottom line than quality education. They were going to endless meetings that didn’t seem to matter, writing meaningless reports that seemed to disappear into the bureaucracy, and learning that service seemed to have little effect on others’ lives. Productivity was the motto of the day, so they published article after article that no one seemed to read, particularly those who were the focus of the study. They wrote piece after piece on social issues, but none seemed to make any difference. They researched topics that got them promotion and tenure but seemed removed from who they were. They felt empty, despondent, disillusioned. They felt spiritually and ethically bankrupt. (Pelias, 2004, p.10-11)

Whether either or any of these descriptions are accurate, there is a further question: Is Deem (2006) right to assert that it is still important to make, or maintain a shared narrative, or has the community itself become so stratified that it is no longer possible to define the higher education sector as a community? Whatever the answer is to these questions, there are three key elements of change that have impacted on practice across the sector, and shaped the social reality of those operating within it. These are: the rise of managerialism, the changing student demographic, and technology. These will now be considered.

2.3.2 The Rise of Managerialism

Avis (1996) suggests that a key theme emerging from changes in higher education is the rise of managerialism bringing with it a pressure and focus on increased productivity, achieved by audit and accountability, utilising sophisticated technologies, and using economics to define success. The language used relates to economics and accountability and the advocates of this narrative stem from ‘management’ which is a different function to that of a professional academic. The key focus of the management function is on “efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness and accountability” (Robson, 1998 p.598). Robson (1998) suggests there is a tension “between the requirements of managerialism and those of professionalism” (ibid, p.598) implying that the values of mangerialism are often at odds with the more collegiate expectations of an academic, and that the intersection of managerialism and professionalism may contain tensions which can prove irreconcilable. An academic who strives for the values outlined by Kuh and Whitt (1986) may well find themselves measured in a managerial context and find themselves unfavourably repositioned as a consequence. Doctoral status for teaching practitioners is one particular managerial requirement which may well be designed to improve to statistical profile of the institution. However, it may result in the “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) of academics being changed as access to promotion, and perhaps employment, become dependent on certification.

An alternative perspective is given by Avis (1996) who suggests that there is a commonality between managerialism and professionalism “In spite of all its faults, there is a paradoxical way in which managerialism carries with it a democratising impulse by raising questions of accountability” (Avis, 1996, p.113). In addition, he argues that the increasing prevalence of management culture is occurring at the same time that the demographics and expectations of the student evolve. For Harré and Moghaddam (2003), the recent changes develop new “duties” and “rights” changing the demands on practitioners, and determining new criteria for evaluating good practice. Failure to recognise these changes may result in the negative repositioning of the practitioner, or the institution, as a consequence of student evaluations. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.3.3 The Changing Body of Students

Coaldrake and Steadman (2013) note that recent intakes of students found “abstract conceptualisation” and “theoretical ideas” far more challenging than their predecessors. Scott (1995) also suggests that studentship itself had evolved, and that whereas in the past students had engaged with higher education to question theoretical ideas on traditional knowledge, there was now a far greater emphasis being placed on the relationship between qualification and employability. Lyotard (1984, p.51) also noted the trend, and termed it the “merchantilization of knowledge”. Lyotard (1984) regards the shift as a transition from knowledge based in the “grand narratives of speculation and emancipation” (ibid, p.38) to one based in “the pragmatics of optimisation” (ibid, p.38). Here the emphasis is on the development of technical and conceptual skills in order to maximise personal incomes. The increasingly diverse body of students, who are “consumer-oriented” in their engagement has been well documented (CHERI, 2007; 2011). Here, the professional academic’s practice shifts from exploring grand narrative and emancipation from the position of scholarly expert, to one of coaching employability using the relative technical literacy skills of a novice. The Wilson Report (2012) suggests the emerging demographic of customer expects teaching excellence, and chooses places to study based on which institutions are “offering good value for money” (Wilson, 2012, Ch.2). Consequently, economics and student evaluations become key to institutional positioning within the sector. Optimists may believe that the ’market’ is adept at recognising and rewarding excellence. However, a pessimist may be concerned that teaching professionals and those who seek funding for awards find themselves ‘held to ransom’ by the outcomes of student evaluations.

2.3.4 Technology Related Change

Scott (1995, p.5) suggests that the new breed of student frequently arrives with a pre-existing technical literacy, and ease with communication applications, that is greater than those held by the academic practitioner. This has resulted in the development of new delivery methods utilised within higher education. Practitioners are mandated to engage with new ranges of flexible teaching methods, requiring some to produce e tutorials, and podcast lectures (Coaldrake and Steadman, 2013; Ramsden, 1998). Within this framework, we see new directives requiring technically literate accessible academics, who are willing to become involved with, and create a diverse digital footprint. There is no doubt that for some engagement with technology results from a desire to adopt recently developed modes of communication, and that it is adopted without the need for policy. However, it is occurring at a time when policy is being disseminated specifically to encourage such engagement which is often audited through Course Reviews and Professional Development Reviews (PDRs) within institutions. Practitioners are required to use new communication channels, and engage with ever widening communities of practice.

Significantly, it must be recognised that whilst practitioners’ attempt to respond to consumer demand and adopt new technologies that impact on practice, they are housed in structures that require increased accountability. It is significant that ‘what counts’ or what is ascribed value within a managerial storyline has the capacity to be ‘at odds’ with ‘what counts’ and is valued within a departmental storyline constructed by its community of practice. In addition, views as to how to successfully meet the needs of the new requirements may differ. Consequently, irreconcilable differences, inherent tensions and multifaceted professional identities in intersecting storylines may be experienced by the professional as s/he attempts adaptation within the complex matrix structures within which they work. It is this impact, on the day-to-day working experiences of the practitioner that is now considered in more detail.

2.4 Individual Repositioning within the Institutional Environment: Diversified Identities

Nixon (1996) suggests that a consequence of changes to the higher education sector is that traditional university structures have become fragmented resulting in increased differentials between professionals in relation to status and autonomy. In addition, Parker (2011, p444) suggests that the prevalence of an audit culture has resulted in an environment where academics “have largely lost their formerly unique roles as independent professional, expert educators and research scholars operating in collegial association and co-decision-making with their university”. Sparrow (1996, p.1) suggests “organic forms of technology” and “organization” provide the core attributes of the new order, and suggests that a consequence is a change in the “psychological contract” between employee and employer in terms of “what is given and what is to be received” (ibid, p.93). If this is the case then what we are witnessing is the “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) of employers and employees changing.

Hall (1996, p.8) suggested that new psychological contracts were emerging for academics with “continuous learning and identity change” being central. Lengel (2001, p.24) also observes “employment patterns and professional identities around the world” becoming redefined as a consequence of the “information economy which has emerged from the increasing integration of commerce and communication technology”. In addition Schein (1996, sp) suggests it is a global phenomenon that workplaces themselves are changing. He suggests that regardless of whether the change occurs in terms of "downsizing," "rightsizing," or "flattening," the impact is “profound”.

Across the sector there is evidence of the rationalisation within universities resulting in both departmental closures and mergers (CHERI, 2011). Writers such as Kinman and Jones (2005) suggest this has resulted in academics experiencing high levels of job insecurity and identify this as a considerable source of stress. A review by Watts and Robertson (2011) identifies high levels of ‘burnout’ experienced by academics comparable with other ‘at risk’ groups including healthcare professionals. Winefield and Jarrett (2001) suggest it is the academics who are involved in both teaching and research who experience the highest levels of stress, surpassing those engaged in only teaching or research. If Winefield and Jarrett (2001) are correct, then academics forced to engage in teaching and research, by undertaking an EdD in order to maintain employability, run the likelihood of experiencing high stress levels. However, despite the stress involved, many experienced professionals are now engaging with this type of research-based development.

Lengel’s (2001) research develops the notion of an “internal career” which he defined as the subjective notion of what an individual determines are their personal objectives in their working life. He notes this is quite distinct and different from the “external career” which he suggests is told via the grand narrative of the institution/sector, and located in the mandates, roles and practices, defined by corporate policy and sociological constructs. It is these policies and constructs that determine what an individual might expect within their occupational structures (Schein, 1990; 1978), and in effect determine what Harré and Moghaddam (2003) term the “rights and duties” of employees. Currently, many practitioners’ “internal careers” are being re-written to ensure survival, as they accept the demise of traditional “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) and engage with new ones.

2.5 Professional Practice and Professional Identity

Henkel (2000) suggests that an individual’s professional identity is shaped by their singular history, individual morality, conceptual framework, and the ‘position’ or status s/he is awarded by their community. It could be said that it is the ‘position’ that is ascribed, by self or other, which determines the value or effectiveness of that identity. This notion is explored by Kogan (2000) who concludes that to obtain a comprehensive understanding of identity it is vital to take into account the context in which the individual works, as it is the designated roles, and interaction that shapes identity and ascribes value. In short, the context provides the storylines within which the individual discursively positions him/herself, positions others, and is positioned by others.

Ball (2004 p. 24) states that a fundamental consequence of recent changes in the higher education sector for the practitioners operating within it is the shift in “the meaning and experience of education, what it means to be a teacher and learner”. He argues that these changes go beyond a redefinition of what an academic might be, or the terms of their engagement, he asserts it is also “entering into all aspects of ... everyday practices” effecting the way practitioners’ relationships are defined with, and by others in any given social setting. His conclusion is that this evolution goes beyond that which might be labelled “reform” and instead regards it as a “process of social transformation” (Ball, 2004 p. 25). Hamilton’s (2014) comments in the Guardian (6th March, 2014) may suggest that "significant disengagement" may be a consequence in some individual experiences, whilst his remark that “I'm sorry, but this is the way it is, …there's an element of putting up with it.” may be the managerial storyline response (Hamilton quoted in, Shaw and Ward, 2014).

Rhoades (2007) notes the complexity of the concept of “professional identity”, and suggests it has many differing definitions. He proposes that in order to explore professional identity within higher education it is important to acknowledge the multiple professionals within the organization and explore the relationships and interactions across the broader community. It is within this institutional social and legislative structure that most professional /personal experiences take place. It is the setting where practitioners interact with peers both formally and informally, and their professional practice is at its most public. For that reason, the evaluation of their practice, by managers and supervisors, may play a more significant role in shaping their sense of professional identity than the macro level storylines discussed so far.

2.5.1 The Primary Subject Discipline

Deem (2006) suggests that an academics’ subject or discipline provides the key basis for their expert knowledge on which all their teaching and research is based. Using Kashers’s (2005) lens for the conceptual analysis of the ‘discipline’ reveals:

a distinct body of systematic knowledge, a distinct systematic proficiency, a practice of constant improvement, local understanding of that knowledge, and proficiency, and a global understanding of the related professional practice, which is the subject matter of the related professional ethics (Kasher, 2005, p.74).

Others, including Clarke, Hyde and Drennan (2013), agree that these discipline-based cultures are responsible for the primary socialisation of the academic practitioners. It is in these cultures that the individual develops their identity and expertise; it is also within them that an ascribed status or value is given to these attributes. Becher and Trowler (2001) suggest that membership of “tribes” provides assumptions and affiliations based on how “knowledge or, better, knowledgeability, is conceptualized” (Becher and Trowler, 2001, p XIV) whilst noting “epistemological forms are themselves subject to social interpretation and construction” (ibid, p XIV). In addition, Clark et al. (2013) maintain that each discipline will formulate a unique code, with its own values and language, which will then determine how it conceptualises success, and develops a hierarchy of status. Kogan (2000) endorses this suggestion, and adds that the historical development of the discipline or group is significant in that it determines the conceptual structures, traditions, customs and practices, and contains the distinct mythologies and languages of the communities of practice contained within it. New members are “inducted” into this code, through a socialisation process (Mendoza, 2007, p.75) whereby the values and culture of the group are transmitted to new members

The importance, and influence, of the primary discipline’s identity is also commented on by researchers such as Parding, Abrahamsson and Berg-Jansson (2012, p.300) who conclude “Professionals generally tend to have a weaker identification with their organisation than with their profession” and suggest that one reason for this maybe partly caused by the fact that practitioners are more likely to change their employer than they are to change their profession. However, many academic practitioners have indeed decided to teach the discipline as opposed to practicing within it. I would suggest that this may lead to the conclusion that the language and values ‘learned’ in the discipline may continue to have a significant influence on the professional moving into an academic arena, and the value placed on the discipline by the academic arena, will also shape the ascribed value of that practitioner.

Effective assimilation will require the learning of a new code, and the adoption of the academic community’s distinct language, and values. ‘What ‘counted’ before may well have a very different value in terms of currency within this new context.

2.5.2 The Immediate Professional Community of Practice

In order to effectively blend with the new surroundings associated with the academic arena Gee et al*.* (2005) suggest that individuals redefine and shape themselves to meet the changing demands, using new knowledge to aid assimilation. Lundell and Collins (1999) maintain that the construction of the social-self involves both the conscious and the sub-conscious, and that adaptations occur as a consequence of the everyday realities encountered. I would suggest that the professional identity of a higher education academic is both shaped by their perceptions of what a ‘higher education academic’ is, and the position they hold. In this sense professional identity is developed as a response to the ‘symbolic order’ of language, ritual, custom and representation in higher education.

Kasher emphasises that a “profession” is not what people in its community do, instead the suggestion is that professionals belong to a community when they engage with it (Kasher, 2005, p.75). Kasher (2005) suggests that “professional academics” are those who engage in the “professional practice of academics” and by definition their actions are conducted in a “context of action of a professional practice” (Kasher, 2005, p.70). It is here, in the academic professional practice, that the previous discipline “expert” encounters new values, languages and customs as they are socialised into the new university communities and the teaching discipline.

Within universities, “disciplines” are usually clustered or located together within departments, faculties or subject groups. Trowler and Knight (2000) observe that an individual’s terms of employment may also determine the membership of specific networks, including both formal and informal communities of practices; they can include teaching teams, service teams and research groups. Here affective assimilation into these groups will require the practitioner to understand, and in part adhere to, the structure and cultural conventions of the group. It is the degree to which the practitioner is capable of satisfying the expectations of the group, and adequately performing the ascribed role within it, that Kogan (2000) suggests will determine the strength of individual and lead them to develop an effective professional identity. However, Parding et al. (2012, p.301) draw attention to the suggestion that as the new members are socialised into a new community they are “not only passive receivers but also active agents who influence and sometimes challenge the organisation as well as the profession”. Here the suggestion is that assimilation involves a degree of negotiation in relation to ‘what counts’ and reminds us that the process of assimilation is not one of passive absorption and conformity into an immutable and fixed structure and culture.

Other writers note that the individual’s assimilation into an academic community may not diminish, or weaken, the practitioner’s strong original allegiances to their primary (non-teaching) discipline. Writers such as Robson (1998) go so far as to suggest that it is the “original” occupational identity that contributes to the credibility, expertise and skills necessary for the success within the new occupation of teaching. Whilst this may apply more to vocationally oriented subjects, or to professional education, the difficulty of transition and the concept of “dual professionalism” is noted by Robson (1998). Robson suggests that a new teacher “can experience stress of various kinds” as the transition is more than “the simple acquisition of new skills & knowledge (in education)” (Robson, 1998, p.596). He elaborates saying “existing cultural practices and discourses may be inappropriate to the new (education) professional context” (ibid, p.596). Therefore, the dual professional has to be given the opportunity and incentive, to be able to successfully combine the culture and skills of the first profession with those of the academic

The influence of the originating profession on the academic/faculty identity is significant. Whilst this may be felt most strongly where professional and applied subjects are taught, it is the collective of disciplines, together that form the identity of the institute. Within it the professional communities, and the academic community, each develop their own determinants of success and codes of practice. When brought together within the university this may give rise to tensions.

Becher and Trowler (2001) note the “tribal nature of academics”; they suggest that “tribes” subscribe to a particular epistemological stance, and attach values to various facets of academic venture. The tribes perpetuate these ascribed values and transmit them to new members during induction. The values are encoded within the custom and practice of the group and transmitted through discourse using specific linguistic customs and practice. Becher (1989) suggests that as well as serving to bind the group together, these customs and practice are also used to defend the group against infiltration of “illegal immigrants” and serve to protect the internal intellectual ground.

Inside universities, it is these “tribes” that form the organisation’s foundations on which the ensuing culture is constructed. Parding et al. (2012, p.301) affirms that these cultures are “context-dependent, inconsistent, multifaceted, and above all socially constructed” consequently it is impossible to identify, or construct, “*one* homogeneous and stable culture”. As an alternative, they suggest that it is the reciprocity between the range of communities of practice that advance practice and shape norms, as they assert that “the individual and the social world are co-constitutive” (ibid, p.301).

A final observation is that practitioners operate in a range of communities that develop within, and outside of, the universities that house them. It would be particularly difficult to identify their boundaries, or the power they could exert on an individual. Parding et al. (2012, p.301) note these challenges and suggests the influences are “intertwined with expectations deriving from broader social categories such as social class and gender”. They conclude that the ensuing professional identity of a higher education academic must be viewed as a continuous process requiring “interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences in professional learning contexts” (ibid, p.301).

Undertaking a Doctorate in Education can be viewed as a professional learning context for “interpretation and re-interpretation” (Parding et al. (301) and the closing section of this chapter presents a brief review of some of the literature relating specifically to that journey.

2.5.3 The Doctoral Journey

This final section reviews some of the published material relating to the student journey on professional doctorates, and the impact of ‘doctoralness’ itself. This section is significant as it provides a range of material against which my findings can be located, and triangulated, to provide “academic credibility” and show how this research extends knowledge (Matheson 2015, p.401).

Burgess and Wellington (2010) note that a “distinguishing feature of a professional doctorate is the undertaking of an original piece of research and … a grasp of research methods is required” (p.162). In addition they note, the research “is expected to lead to personal and professional development … ground in practice” (p.163). However, they caution that “possessing the right research skills is essential, but that knowledge alone will not be sufficient to achieve a doctorate” (p.163). The tensions associated with identifying “doctorateness” are explored by Wellington (2013) who suggests there are five areas “of discussion or activity” where it is possible to search for the meaning of a doctorate “the purpose of doctoral study; the impact of doctorates; written regulations for the award of the doctorate; the examination process; and the voices of those involved in it” (p.1491). My research is predominantly concerned with the voices of those undertaking it, and their perceptions of the purpose and impact of the process.

The impact of undertaking a professional doctorate, and the perspectives of students who have taken it are examined by Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2013) and the implications in terms of the impact of both “process” and “product” are explored by Burgess and Wellington (2010).

Burgess and Wellington’s (2010) paper is of particular relevance to my research given that their respondents’ “identified the doctorate directly with career development and all were established in their careers” and as such provides a useful comparison for my findings. Burgess and Wellington (2010) found that “undertaking research was empowering’ for their respondents and opened up opportunities, making them more competitive and promotion worthy” (p.168) and that those who hold professional doctorates are “highly marketable and employable” (p.168). They conclude:

that the doctorate may have a direct impact on career development; it may influence the way a student speaks, listens and writes; or it may affect their personal views, attitudes and social life. The impact may sometimes be in the cognitive domain of a person’s development (their skills, knowledge and understanding) – but equally it may be seen as part of their affective development i.e. in terms of their attitudes, feelings, self-esteem, disposition and emotions’ (Burgess and Wellington 2010, p.174).

Building on the work of Scott, Brown, Lunt and Throne (2004) Wellington and Sikes (2006) explore the motivations for choosing to undertake a professional doctorate and conclude that “ultimately, it is difficult to classify motivations as extrinsic or intrinsic” (p.732) as “the line between them is often faint” and not “mutually exclusive” (Burgess and Wellington 2010, p.163). Wellington and Sikes (2006) explore the impact of the research process on students’ personal and professional lives noting that their respondents placed a “high value on the collegiality, support, friendship and social interaction” (p.732) that featured in their professional doctorates, however the “multiple roles and the difficulty of balancing them” (p.732) were problematic. The “tensions” associated with the purpose and impact of the doctoral journey are discussed in more detail by Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011) who suggest that “emerging and often surprising tensions” characterise the process, specifically in relation to “border crossing” which “creates both connections and friction, constantly challenging values, professionalism and identity” (p.15). They suggest that their respondents report an increased ability to reflect on their professional practice, “to apply evidence bases and to challenge others with a new degree of confidence” (p.15), however they also suggest that these new attributes may not receive a favourable response in the workplace. They propose that further research is needed to develop a greater understanding of “doctoral identity” and its relevance and value in the 21st century. They question whether “Workplaces/ employers (are) involved in shaping the curriculum or the pedagogy of the Professional Doctorate in their discipline?” (p.17).

Whilst my research is specifically focused on the experiences of my own respondents, the literature presented above provides some indication of the focus of existing literature against which I can triangulate my findings. This chapter is now summarised before I present a conceptual framework for the analysis of my data in Chapter Three.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has given consideration to some of the significant changes occurring in higher education, specifically with regard to changes of governance and academic identity. It has considered some of the defining influences of the institution inhabited, in terms of culture and working practice, and has noted the duality and diversity of identity. What has emerged is a complex matrix of epistemological frameworks, affiliations, and inherent tensions when identifying ‘what counts’ or what is valued.

Giddens (1984 p.9) suggests that universities can be viewed as “power systems” perpetually manifesting the “institutional mediation of power”, and it is within these social systems that academics attempt to satisfy a diverse range of stakeholders. Rhoades (2007) also makes reference to the matrix of relationships and interactions that occur among the multiple professions housed within the organisation. Therefore perhaps the key to understanding professional identity is itself located in the mandates that the “professional” is given in terms of both the position they occupy and the way they conduct their practice. However, Becher (1989) emphasises the importance of the range of “tribes” an individual can belong to simultaneously, stressing that within each “tribe” the professional will be required to assimilate into the culture and use its distinct linguistic form. I therefore suggest that a holistic approach to defining a professional identity requires the inclusion of “contradictions that cannot be reconciled” (Brizman, 1992, p.43).

If academic practitioners are currently working in a sector that is undergoing such a radical transformation whereby the “very meaning and experience of education” (Ball, 2004) is changing, then what it means to be an academic practitioner is also under question. I suggest that if it were ever thought that conceptual analysis models of ‘the professional’ ‘the academic’ ‘the discipline’ or ‘the sector’ provided accurate representations, then the changing context of higher education itself may possibly render these models obsolete.

What has been constant throughout the literature is the notion of change; in addition we have seen that the adoption of new identities does not necessarily annihilate the old ones. Duality, diversity and engagement are all characteristics of the contemporary professional. I would suggest that whilst resistance to change is inherent in the developments of any new ideological frameworks, the strategic and operational management of a university or department and the adoption of new working practices, these power battles continue to shape the environment within which a higher education academic works.

Parding et al. (2012, p.303) suggest that it is the “intersection between what can be called traditional professional identity and new professional identities … together with other changes (that) shapes new identities, or rather changes the landscape of identities”. As a consequence they reject the notion of a stable uniform identity and suggest the truth is better represented by a “heterogeneous, conflicting and fluid organisational identity” (ibid, p.303) shaped by the constituents within it. This approach suggests that each, and every, individual participating in the process has the power to influence not only their reactions to it, but the identity of the group itself.

This exploration of the concept of identity, within the higher education sector, reveals some of the range of forces involved in shaping and determining professional practice. It provides a range of literature against which my findings can be located, and triangulated. However, whilst recognizing the value of the literature presented so far, I felt it had limitations in terms of providing an effective lens with which to effectively explore the more intimate experiences of the respondents in my research. In order to ‘delve deeper’ and uncover the individual values, perceptions and experiences of my respondents, a new framework for analysis, *Ecological Positioning,* was developed.

The following chapter presents an approach to uncovering the individual voice, and identity, within the “proximal processes” (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; 1994; 1993; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) of the practitioners. Using *Ecological Positioning* as a methodological framework provides a coherence in terms of triangulating the respondents’ perceptions against the literature presented so far, and creates a strong scaffold on which the data collection, and subsequent analysis, is built.

1. Developing a Conceptual Framework for Analysis.

3.1 Overview

The previous chapter has shown that there are some limitations when using ‘the professional’ (Lengel, 2001; Kogan, 2000; Robson, 1998), ‘the academic’ (Ball, 2004; Pelias, 2004; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Kuh and Whitt, 1986) and ‘the sector’ (Parker, 2011; Nixon, 1996; Sparrow, 1996; Scott, 1995; Lyotard, 1984) as analytical concepts. Therefore, it was important to develop a model that would allow the articulation of the multifaceted experiences of my participants, and still provide a strong structured analytical and conceptual base on which to develop a thematic approach to data analysis.

The literature review revealed that ‘context’ was of singular importance in terms of the practitioners’ development, assimilation, and the resultant professional identity. Also, the context is instrumental in determining the ascribed ‘value’ of that learning, and indeed the practitioner. Therefore a consideration of the issue of ‘value’ appeared to be another fundamental element needing to be considered in my research.

In order to facilitate a depth of exploration, and the subsequent articulation of the findings, a new conceptual framework was required. This chapter details how, by working with the complementarity of two existing theoretical approaches, namely the *Ecological Model* (Bronfenbrenner, 1999) and *Positioning Theory* (Tirado and Galvez, 2008; Yamakawa et al., 2005; Harré and Moghaddam, 2003; Harré and Gillett, 1994), I was able to harness the relevance of each, and produce a new and more appropriate tool for conceptual analysis.

Both original models are based on the same four underlying elements: Person, Interaction, Context and Time, and for that reason are relatively complementary.

Here, ‘person’ acknowledges that each individual has a unique set of characteristics and it is this that determines their interactions and perceptions within any given social situation, or context. The characteristics determine the mental and emotional responses, shaped by past experiences, and differences in temperament, and influence how the individual responds to the various roles which make up its existence. By exploring an individual’s actions and interactions (speech and social acts), in a time bound context, we are able to develop a more refined observation of the rich variations (positions and roles) that exist within the layers of ‘context’.

Both the *Ecological Model*, and *Positioning Theory* are now considered in turn, and their appropriateness considered. Then a hybrid is presented and its application discussed.

3.2 Outline of the Tenets of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) *Ecological Model*.

Built on Lewin’s theory of psychological fields (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.39) the *Ecological Model* focuses on a person’s developmental growth and the contexts within which that growth occurs. Whilst often cited as a theorist of context, Bronfenbrenner (1999) affirms it is “proximal processes” that are the key to his model, with their varying nature being dependent on the characteristics of both the individual and the context. Although Bronfenbrenner’s (1993) research was initially based on young persons’ development, it has developed to offer insights into lifelong learning and adult development and as such was worthy of consideration. A central element of his work is the emphasis on the ‘context’ in which learning takes place, or as he terms it the “ecological system”.

Bronfenbrenner provides his own definition of the model as:

The ecology of human development is the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, through the life course, between an active, growing, highly complex biopsychological organism – characterised by a distinctive complex of evolving interrelated, dynamic capacities for thought, feeling, and action - and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relationships between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded. (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p.7)

Bronfenbrenner states that “in order to understand human development, one must consider the entire ecological system in which growth occurs” (ibid, p.37). He goes on to present a model of this ecological system, composed of five socially organised subsystems which he suggests are nested “each inside the other like a set of Russian dolls” (ibid, p.39). These five systems are identified as the chronosystem, macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, and microsystem, and each are discussed in more detail, both within this presentation of the *Ecological Positioning Model* and also in the data analysis sections of this thesis.

The general *Ecological Model* itself is built on two propositions. Proposition 1 states that, throughout life:

human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate environment. (Bronfenbrenner, 1999, p.5).

These interactions, and the relationship with the specified environment, are termed ‘proximal processes’. Proposition 2, underpinning the *Ecological Model*, states that:

the form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes affecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person; of the environment – both immediate and more remote – in which the processes are taking place; and the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration, and the social continuities and changes occurring over time during the historical period through which the person has lived. (ibid. p.5).

Bronfenbrenner presents propositions 1 and 2 as theoretically interdependent and open to empirical testing, suggesting “An operational research design that permits their simultaneous investigation … referred to as a Process-Person-Context-Time model (PPCT for short)” (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998, p.996). The propositions provide an opportunity to conceptualise the environment “from the perspective of the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.38). He also draws attention to the significance that in this bioecological model “the characteristics of the person are both producer and product of the development” (Bronfenbrenner, 1999, p.5). As such, this can be seen as a contextual theory centred on the everyday activities individuals participates in. It is the complexity of the individual interactions and interconnections that are key, and the ‘context’ itself is not viewed as the main explanatory variable.

For clarity, Bronfenbrenner’s definitions of the ecological systems are presented here, along with the identification of how they will be used to identify the various contexts within which the professional practice of the respondents in my research occur.

Bronfenbrenner (1992, p.40) proposes the macrosystem:

consists of the overarching … characteristics of a given culture or subculture with particular reference to the belief system, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards and life course options. (ibid, p.40)

In my research, the macrosystem could be identified as being the broad socio economic context, developed from the end of the twentieth century, within which the current English higher education sector is located.

By comparison, the exosystem:

comprises the links and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives (ibid, p.40).

In my research, it could be the changes in public policy and higher education, as a response to the macro-level changes encountered, that form the exosystem for my respondents. Together the macrosystem and the exosystem form the context within which the respondents’ professional practice occurs.

The mesosystem “comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person, in effect it is a system of Microsystems” (ibid. p.40). In my research, I regard the university, the practitioner’s place of employment, as being the professional mesosystem.

The microsystem is:

a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment. (ibid. p.39).

For the purposes of this research, I define the microsystem as the faculty/school or local communities within which the participants work.

A weakness of Bronfenbrenner’s theory, from a contextualist perspective, is that it does not adequately address the issues of culture associated with groupings. The value and belief systems of, and within, the ecosystems shape the proximal processes (Person, Interaction, Context, Time) and determine the rights and duties within them. However, what this model does not do is illuminate how ‘what counts’ or what is valued, by one group might ‘not count’ or not be valued by another. A more ethnographic approach exploring how individuals negotiate and initiate their activities within their immediate settings, and the meanings that are ascribed to these activities, by the individuals themselves, is needed to produce a richer examination of the proximal processes in context.

3.2.1 How the *Ecological Model* proves to be a useful methodological tool.

Given that my research explores the perceptions of practitioners as they undertake a structured, accredited, programme of development, this theory has the potential to explore the impact of that learning and theme it against the various ecological systems that practitioners simultaneously inhabit. Given that the respondents “are both producer and product of the development” (Bronfenbrenner, 1999, p.5) it provides a framework against which they could reflect and articulate their experiences. In addition, the framework was also used to subsequently analyse and reflect on the qualitative data gathered. Although the ‘contexts’ inhabited by the respondents vary, there is some significant overlap in terms of the sector and country, or exo, macro and chronosystem, and by using a systematic approach to analysing their answers it is possible to identify shared experiences, perceptions and application of learning. By doing this it is possible to formulate answers to two of my research questions namely

* What were the drivers for engaging with doctoral research, and how did this fit with their “internal careers” (Lengel, 2001; Schein 1994) in terms of where they think they are going in their working lives?
* What skills and knowledge development do these practitioners consider an institution might accrue as a result of the practitioners undertaking an EdD programme?

3.3 Outline of the Tenets of *Positioning*.

Meeting the cultural ideals and values of a collective becomes necessary in terms of the individual’s sense of adequacy, Taylor, Bougie, and Caouette (2003) suggest that only those who have come the “closest to achieving the cultural ideal will feel personally satisfied” and everyone else “will feel less than adequate” (2003, p.211). However, given that cultural collective identities usually specify a variety of ways to the desired end state, each individual has a range of cultural possibilities available to them to reach the desired goals, in terms of both relationships and achievement.

Taylor et al. (2003) go on to suggest that individuals want both their group, and themselves, to be distinct from others and that they want the distinction or uniqueness to be positively valued. Therefore “the individual faces a constant tension between wanting to be unique on the one hand while being like others on the other” Taylor et al. (2003, p.211). This results in the individual using a variety of ways to negotiate the position of their personal identities within the cultural collective, and to continue to seek the most rewarding position. However, this positioning must be obtained in ways that are allowable “within the framework that is defined by the cultural collective identity” (ibid. p.211). The degree of adequacy felt as the individual negotiates each position will determine the psychological phenomena experienced as a result of positions within a specific discourse. The participants do not need to have an understanding of discourse; they are, in Foucaultian terms, already operating within a discourse, as discourse itself predates the creation of the word ‘discourse’. However, it is here that *Positioning Theory*, rooted in a constructivist epistemology, provides a lens with which to view the relationship between discourse, negotiation, position and psychological phenomena as will be elaborated below.

Harré and Gillett (1994, p.18) note that the significance of discourse and content has received increasing emphasis within the school of psychology, and *Positioning Theory* is an interpretive approach that aims to explore the relational nature of discourse. Whilst Tirado and Galvez (2007) place interaction and negotiation as its central tenet, Yamakawa et al. (2005) assert that *Positioning Theory* casts light on “the relationship between discourse and the psychological phenomena” experienced as a consequence (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2).

Tirado and Galvez (2007) assert that positioning is a discursive process, and discourse is viewed as a “collective and dynamic process through which meanings are constructed, acquired and transformed” (Tirado and Galvez, 2007, p.6). The concept of discourse used in *Positioning Theory*, in Foucaultian terms, recognises that language is both “historically and ideologically contextualised” (Simon, 2013, p.52). Simon (2013, p.52) suggests that discourses are social practices with rules “that are anonymous, historical, fixed in time and space, and that are able to define conditions for statements within a particular community for a given time”. In this context ‘conversation’ is far greater than an exchange of words, it is the context within which the words are used; contextualising the meanings; and the degree of commonality of culture and social capital shared by the individuals influencing the interpretations of those involved. As such, conversation is a hegemonical act whose meaning is mediated or even determined by the circumstances within which it occurs.

An analysis of discourse explores the conventions and norms associated with social relationships, and it is this that *Positioning Theory* seeks to explore (Tirade and Galvez, 2007). Langenhove and Harré, (1999) and Davis and Harré, (1999) suggest that conversations are central to the way in which the social world is created, and how it is experienced in terms of social relationships. Although an individual’s role may be relatively static within a particular context, it is still open to, or even subjected to, evolutionary forces. The temporary positions experienced by the participants’ impact on their personal storylines (their sense of self), and it is the conversations that contain the negotiations of the positions of my respondents that will supply the materials needed for the analysis in my research.

Yamakawa et al. (2005, p.5) suggest positioning theorists “believe that a conversation has three constituent and interactive elements: position; the social force of the speech-act; storyline”. For the purpose of my research it is important to be clear about the differences, and definitions of both ‘role’ and ‘position’, and what constitutes a ‘speech act’ and a ‘storyline’. For clarity these are now presented in turn, and then the process of positioning is discussed.

**Role:** A ‘role or ‘part’ is a fixed identity and collection of rights and duties which provides meaning and direction to an individuals’ identity. When the role is known it becomes part of the individuals’ identity and shapes the perceptions of their actions (by themselves and others) by placing them in a particular context with a shared set of meanings. In my research, the employment role of HE Teaching Practitioner gives the respondents a collection of rights and duties that remain relatively consistent on a day-to-day basis. It becomes a “central feature of identity” which tends “to be relatively stable and static once their norms have been established” (Taylor, Bougie, and Caouette, 2003, p.205).

**Position:** Taylor, Bougie, and Caouette, (2003, p.205) suggest that positioning is a process by which a person’s “identity and social world are dynamically constructed”. Whilst positions’ are temporary experiences, and the quest for long term goals is not determined by a singular moment or action (Lave and Wenger, 1991), the ‘position’ is significant in that it provides an individual with a set of rights and duties to perform which supply meaning to their actions. In this sense ‘position’ has similarity to ‘role’ in that both provide, and influence, a persons’ rights and duties. Also, position may also “include prohibitions or denials of access to some of the local repertoire of meaningful acts” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6). As a consequence, it “bounds the content of the repertoire of socially possible actions.” (ibid, p5), and “implicitly limits …what is logically possible for a given person to say and do” by determining the “repertoire of actions at a certain moment in a certain context, including other people” (ibid, p5). In this sense, a ‘position’ is very similar to the concepts of a ‘part’ or ‘role’ in that it “gives direction and meaning to the type of actions” that an individual might engage with. However, the concept of position is different in that positions are constantly shifting, and being renegotiated within a conversation. Whilst Taylor et al. (2003,p.211) note that the distinction between a position and a role can be found in the assertion “A position is dynamic, whereas role is static”, Moghaddam, Harré, and Lee (2007, p.9) stress that the distinctions between them “lies amongst a spectrum”.

Taylor et al. (2003, p.205) suggest the concept of position, rather than role, provides a more effective “central organizing construct of social analysis” because it allows the focus to be on the “more dynamic and negotiable aspects of interpersonal as well as intergroup encounters.” They suggest “positioning in conversations not only involves the ongoing construction of ‘selves’ as individuals, but also of ‘selves’ as member or representatives of groups” (ibid, p.205).

**Speech and other acts:** “Every socially significant action, intended movement, or speech act must be interpreted as an act, a socially meaningful and significant performance.” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6). As such, an act is only significant in terms of the meaning it is given within the particular incident it is part of. After interpretation “it falls under rules of propriety and standards of correctness, not only in itself but also in what are its proper precursors and consequences” (ibid, p.6). Although social acts may have multiple interpretations (Davies and Harré, 1999), they can be used to illuminate personal positioning against the storylines presented (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6). A changing higher education sector provides the context for one storyline; institutional change including the requirement of doctoral qualification provides another; and individuals redefining their ‘internal careers’ provides a range of others. It is against these that positioning was considered and social acts identified within the analysis in the research.

**Storylines:** A storyline is a specific discourse that underlies social events, including interactions. Some researchers using *Positioning Theory* use the terms narrative and storyline synonymously (Harré and Langenghove, 1999). For the purpose of my research, the description of a conversational storyline is the “context in which social acts occur” and “it is within a storyline that people discursively position themselves and others” (Simon, 2013 p.53). It is the “episode” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6), and the associated discourse conventions, that determine the meanings given to actions. The conventions are significant in the sense-making process, with actions being identified by their “then and there meanings” to those who are involved with the episode (Moghaddam, Harré and Lee, 2007, p.9). The discourse conventions, or “loose cluster of narrative conventions” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6) form the storyline. In addition, and significantly for this research, a personal storyline, the sense of self and reasoning, contains the “internal career”, a notion developed by Lengel (2001) which he defined as the subjective notion of what an individual defines as his/her objectives for their working life.

**Positioning:** Davies and Harré (1999 p.37) define positioning as “the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines”. The discourse may be between individuals or nation states (Harréet al.,2009) and positioning “is the process of assigning ‘parts’ to speakers” in the construction of storylines (Simon, 2013, p.51). Yamakawa et al. (2005) assert that “positioning is a dynamic form of social role”, and suggest participants may adopt multiple roles within a single conversation. A key assertion is that discursive practices are on-going, and participant’s positions are subject to change as the conversation unfolds. Although the participants may change roles throughout a conversation, their consequential ‘position’ in relation to ‘others’ may evolve or remain static. As Yamakawa et al*.* (2005, p.2) maintain, “Participants may position themselves, or be positioned, in different conversational locations” throughout an evolving conversation. With this in mind, in my research the term ‘status manager’ is used to denote a person, or collective, whose role it is to position others in a particular storyline, and as they attempt “to serve the interests of (its) stakeholders in the best possible way” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007, p. 5).

What emerges from this perspective on discourse is that ‘position’ is a constantly negotiated state, and obtaining, or maintaining, a desirable position is something that is not entirely under the control of the participant. Indeed, it may also be possible to suggest that in some instances the participant has little control over the conversations they are drawn into, or have the emotional literacy to deal with the ensuing psychological phenomena. Ritchie (2002) suggested that individuals may struggle with multiple positional identities, and perhaps it is this struggle that has resulted with what Hamilton (quoted in Shaw and Ward 2014) calls “burnout” or what Kinman and Wray of the University and College Union (UCU) (2013) identify as “stress” for some academic practitioners. For this reason, positional analysis may provide an effective tool to explore the complexity of the nature of evolving interpersonal relationships within a changing higher education sector.

Yamakawa et al*.* (2005) suggest that, for active and effective participation, individuals need to learn the norms, values and practices, or what Bourdieu (1993) calls “habitus”, relating to every community of practice they inhabit. If an academic institution is seen as a community of learners, then academic practitioners evidence their learning through the effective participation and engagement with that institution’s changing social and intellectual practices. Also, this paradigm of learning asserts “that identity formation is an integral aspect of engagement” within the community of practice (Yamakawa et al. 2005, p.1). Therefore ‘learning’, or the ‘learning organisation’ is viewed as a collective of activity rather than an individual activity (Sfard, 2003). By conforming to the university customs and practices, a member of staff demonstrates that s/he is a “legitimate member” (Yamakawa et al*.,* 2005, p.1). Within this setting, participants may find themselves privileged or marginalised depending on the positioning of their “funds of knowledge” (Wagner and Herbal-Eisenmann, 2009 p. 9) or “cultural capital” (Lin, 2002). Assimilating effectively can be seen as joining with the institution’s storyline, leading to an ascribed position within it. It is through doing this that the individual is ascribed “duties” and “rights” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003), and a positive (or valued) ‘position’ is acquired. In addition, the collective of practitioners become “status managers” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007, p. 5) as they shape the identity of the community, and lead to its subsequent status or position in the broader context.

Clegg and Hardy (1999, p.3) acknowledge that each organisation is a community of practice which denotes the “social arenas of situation social behaviour … fashioned consciously and unconsciously by values, beliefs”. In addition, they note that both informal and formal structures will exist simultaneously within any given organisation. Mayere and Vinot (1993, p.78) describe the informal structures as “[a]n organisation based on the existence of relationships independent of the possible existence of formalised structures”. However, according to Pascale, Milleman and Gioja (2000, p.197), it is the formal organisation, deliberately designed and structured in order to achieve the corporate aims, that is “the invisible hand that brings organisations to life and to organisations”. However, Watson (2008) notes that the organisation’s objectives and the objectives of its individual members are frequently incongruous, and in some instances the ‘official’ objectives or declared goals of an organisation are not necessarily the same as its real objectives and purpose. Watson (2008) also suggests that organisations should not be viewed as a pre-existing structure within which people are “slotted”. Instead he suggests they should be considered as an on-going and continually evolving alliance of individuals who have their own objectives, which are sometimes incompatible and contradictory, but are willing, within closely defined limits, to execute the tasks which are necessary to meet the requirements of those in authority. Whilst recognising that universities can be seen as social systems, which Giddens (1985. p.9) suggests are locked in the “institutional mediation of power”, this research recognises that issues relating to power, inequality, and attempts to influence the agenda of the organisation are all integral parts of assimilating into a university. My research acknowledges that power struggles relating to policies, structures and positioning have always existed, and chooses to focus on the changing power structure and the management of the sector in recent years.

3.3.1 How *Positioning* proves to be a useful methodological tool.

Within a university, academic staff work together to build, maintain or change the cultural practices of the community. In order to understand an individual’s position within this framework Sfard (2003) and Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest it is important to recognise the significance of a member’s social relationship within their community, as this is crucial for the formation of personal / professional identity. It is also possible to argue that a positive professional identity is dependent on the individual achieving a position where the ascribed “rights and duties” are those valued by the individual themselves, because, as Harré and Moghaddam, (2003) note, it is these that determine the ‘possibilities for action’. In order to obtain long, or short-term positive psychological phenomena (wellbeing), an individual must negotiate a position where the “rights and duties” allow appropriate courses of action to pursue personal objectives. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that a long-term goal may be to become an expert in a particular field, whereas a short-term objective may be to enjoy the day. Whatever the goal is, it is this objective that provides the individual with the motivational drive to negotiate positions with a variety of status managers. Therefore, by using *Positioning Theory* to explore local level conversations, it was possible to explore motivation and achievement, and link these to long term objectives and emotional wellbeing, in this case professional identity and development. This allowed me to answer two of my research questions, namely

* How had undertaking a research programme impacted on the practitioners’ academic professional identity, in terms of responses to changes within the academic community, recognition and resulting professional identities?; and
* What were practitioners’ emotional and stress responses to the changes?

3.4 Developing a new Theoretical Model

Both the *Ecological Model* and *Positioning Theory* are based on four underlying elements: Person, Interaction, Context and Time, and for that reason have comparable tenets and are relatively complementary. Both would recognise both the “big D” and “little d” (Gee, 2005) discourses that are currently shaping the higher education sector, and would be of assistance in terms of articulating the impact on the practitioners working within it.

Whilst the *Ecological Model* focuses on the structure of the sector, and identifies a range of systems within which the practitioner operates, it is the *Positioning Theory* that sheds light on the actions, conversations and subsequent position achieved within them. Therefore, although each model has something to offer, they also have some gaps when used individually. By drawing on both, it is possible to synthesise a third option to provide a new lens for investigation. Whilst I would maintain that it is not necessary to create a third model in any detailed sense, by pairing the two together a hybrid model of the *Ecological Positioning Model* is produced.

By developing a theoretical model that focuses on the complementarity of these models, a new lens for investigation is produced. In this research I refer to this hybrid as the *Ecological Positioning Model.*

The diagram below provides a visual representation of how the *Ecological Model* and *Positioning Theory* can be combined. By focusing on practitioner positioning within the ecological framework of the higher education sector the *Ecological Positioning Model* was used as a conceptual framework for the analysis of my findings.

**Fig 1. The Ecological Positioning Model**

The following section of this chapter considers in more detail how the *Ecological Model* and *Positioning Theory* combine, and how together, they may be used to explore changes to professional practice and the careers of academics working within the higher education sector in England.

3.4.1 The Chronosystem: Dimensions of Time.

The chronosystem represents the dimension of time that influences a person’s development, and this impacts in two ways. Firstly, its significance is that it determines the very broadest of ‘time bound’ ecological influences in terms of the social, political and economic climates inhabited.

However, the chronosystem also refers to the transition through the life span of the developing individual and recognises that the position in that life-span can also effect development and responses to it. This has significance in my own research as I aim to understand the experiences of mid-life mid-career practitioners, and I acknowledge that this life-span position could be a significant influence in its own right.

3.4.2 The Macrosystem/ Exosystem: Socio Economic Context, Changes in Public Policy and Higher Education Sector Practice.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1992, p.40) the macrosystem “consists of the overarching … characteristics of a given culture or sub culture with particular reference to the belief system, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards and life course options”. In essence it is “a societal blueprint” (ibid, p.40) and it is within this, that what is termed by Gee (2005) as “big D” discourse, takes place. For the purpose of my research, the term macrosystem was used to identify the sociohistorical context of the research, noting that it takes place at a given point in history and this shapes the culture and given possibilities available to the respondents. In my research, the macrosystem is the broader socio economic context, developing from the end of the twentieth century, within which the higher education sector is located. Bronfenbrenner (1993) suggests the macrosystem is hugely significant in relation to developmental theory as “developmental processes are likely to differ significantly – not just statistically, but substantively – from one macro system to the next” (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p.25) and as such it provides a critical feature of this research model given that it locates the historical and cultural parameters of the research. My research represents no more than a snap-shot of what some practitioners are experiencing in England over the period of my research enquiry.

By comparison, the exosystem:

comprises the links and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p.40).

In my research I identify the exosystem as the changes in public policy and higher education sector practice which are a response to the macro. Together the macro and exosystems form the context in which the professional practice takes place, and as such can be viewed as the storylines in which the practitioners position themselves and are positioned by others (Harré and Langenhove, 1999).

3.4.3 The Mesosystem, The Practitioners’ Place of Employment.

The mesosystem “comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person’ in effect it is ‘a system of Microsystems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p.40). For the purpose of this research I define the practitioner’s place of employment as the professional mesosystem, and I acknowledge that within it they hold a variety of positions simultaneously. It is in this setting that they will find themselves privileged or marginalised depending on the perception of their “funds of knowledge” (Wagner and Herbal-Eisenmann, 2009, p.9).

As previously noted, some universities that did not previously require a doctorate from their teaching staff are now making it an entry-level requirement. As such, it is possible to surmise that this has a knock-on effect for the existing staff. It could be that those who already hold doctoral qualifications may be perceived to be of higher value than those without and find their “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) and position change as a consequence. Those newly embarking on doctoral research may find that Lyotard’s (1984) storyline of the “merchantilization of knowledge” and “pragmatics” takes on a new resonance. By posing the Research Question One (What were the drivers for engaging with doctoral research and where did the participants sense they were going in their working lives?), my research hoped to uncover the changes to the aspirations of the internal career of the respondents currently working in higher education.

In addition, if Winefield and Jarrett (2001) are correct, then academics forced to engage in teaching and research run the likelihood of experiencing high stress levels. However, the necessity to engage with a survival story, despite the stress involved, may have resulted in many mid-life mid-career professionals engaging with research in order to achieve career aspirations. By posing the Research Question Three (What are practitioners’ emotional and stress responses to the changes encountered?), I hoped to uncover the ‘lived experience’ of the respondents.

Within my research, the respondents’ engagement with the EdD programme can be viewed as a social act, designed to achieve the long term social action of continuous professional development within a changing sector. It may indicate an acceptance of the changing “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) associated with the current position and an acknowledgement of, and engagement with, a changing storyline. This personal storyline contains the “internal career”, a notion developed by Lengel (2001) which he defined as the subjective notion of what an individual defines as his/her objectives for their working life. He notes that this is quite distinct and different from the “external career” which he suggests is told via the grand narrative of the institution/sector, and the mandated roles and procedures determined by corporate policy and sociological constructs. It is these policies and constructs that determine what a person may expect in the occupational structure (Schein, 1990; 1978), and in effect determine the “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) of employees. However, my research is based on the premise that many practitioners’ internal careers may be being re-written to ensure survival, as they accept the demise of traditional rights and duties and engage with new ones.

3.4.4 Microsystems, Professional Practice and Professional Identity

The microsystem is:

a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p.39).

As such, it is within this context that “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) are established and position negotiated, consequently its impact on shaping professional practice and identity is profound. For the purposes of this research, I define the microsystem as the faculty/school or department within which the participants work. It is within this institutional social and legislative structure that most of their personal experiences and “social acts” (van Langenhove and Harré, 1999) take place. By this, I mean it is the setting where they interact with peers both formally and informally, and their professional practice is at its most public. For that reason, it may play a more significant role in shaping their sense of professional identity than the macro-level storylines discussed so far. It is within this setting that local “status managers” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007, p.5) determine, to some extent, the “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) the respondents receive at work, and the ownership (or non-ownership) of a doctorate may take on a different significance in this storyline. Although the macrosystem storylines impact on the mesosystem storylines, it is fair to say that the mesosystem has its own identity that is distinct from the macro, and assimilation into it is as distinct in a bid for effective positioning. The significance of assimilating into the structure and social fabric of the mesosystem world are stressed by a number of researchers including Bourdieu (1993), whilst inherent tensions caused by operating within, and around them are commented on by Deem (2006). Deem (2006) puts forward the notion that each individual will attempt to obtain “legitimacy” though using symbolic capital, or what Wagner and Herbel-Eisenmann (2009, p.9) call “funds of knowledge”. The degree of successful assimilation achieved will in turn influence the position of the academic and his/her rights and duties achieved as a result. If assimilation is the key objective, the adoption of the norms and practices of the community are vital for active participation (Sfard, 2003). Consequently, according to Beijaard et al. (2004) an analysis of individuals’ responses to “assimilation” reflects not what people are but instead casts light on what they want to be, or want to be seen as, in effect their aspirational position. By posing the Research Question Two (How has undertaking a research programme impacted on practitioner’s academic professional identity in terms of responses to internal divisions within the academic community, recognition and resulting professional identities?), I hoped to uncover the respondent’s aspirational positions, and by doing so shed light on Research Question Four (What skills and knowledge development might an institution accrue as a result of practitioners undertaking an EdD programme?).

3.4.5 Why does *Ecological Positioning* prove to be a useful methodological tool?

Both *Positioning* and *Ecological* approaches to analysis would recognise the “big D and little d” (Gee, 2005) discourses that shape the higher education sector and impact on the practitioners working within it. Each is based on the same four underlying elements: Person, Interaction, Context and Time, and for that reason are relatively complementary.

The *Ecological Positioning* conceptual framework for analysis is based on the following tenets:

* Humans are biopsychological organisms.
* Their development takes place through complex reciprocal interactions.
* The environment (both immediate and remote) has a significant impact on the developmental outcomes.
* The historical context of that learning is significant, as is the ‘lifespan’ position of the learner.
* ‘Storylines’ underlie social events.
* ‘Social acts’ can be constituted by linguistic discourse and /or non-linguistic actions.
* Positioning is a dynamic form of social role, and under constant negotiation.
* Positions result in psychological phenomena

By systematically identifying *Positioning* ‘storylines’ within the five ecological systems, it was possible to harness the strengths of each approach. *Ecological* *Theory* provided a rigid structure to thematically group narrative, discourse and ‘rights and duties’, whilst the *Positioning* allowed ‘values’ to be given the ascribed and aspirational positions contained within them.

By producing a hybrid of these approaches, it was possible to articulate the ways in which individuals simultaneously engage in a broad range of conversations, have multiple ‘positions’ and are not defined by any singular facet of professional identity. In addition, the recognition of the fluid and dynamic nature of discourse (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999) provided a valued element to this approach, as it served as a reminder that ‘positions’ are indeed temporary experiences, and the quest for long-term goals is not determined by a singular moment or action (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

The value of adopting *Ecological Positioning* as a conceptual framework for analysis in this research lies in its ability to provide structure to the data analysis and emerging themes. It also provided the respondents with comparable themes for reflection and positioning.

A visual representation of the merged theoretical approaches was developed (Appendix One) and was used to provide visual representation and stimulus for discussion during the interview process.

The next section of this thesis looks in greater detail as to how this approach shaped the methodology used and its contribution to analysing the data collected.

1. Methodology

4.1 Overview

The previous chapter of this thesis outlined the development of the *Ecological Positioning Model*; this chapter now considers how it was used to shape the methodology of the research in more detail.

Truscott et al. (2010) suggest that ultimately the methods selected for any research should be the ones that provide the most effective possibilities for answering the questions posed. The four key research questions are:

• What were the drivers for engaging with doctoral research, and how did this fit with ‘internal careers’ (Lengel, 2001; Schein 1994) in terms of where the practitioners think they are going in their working lives?

• How had undertaking a research programme impacted on the practitioners’ academic professional identity, in terms of responses to changes within the academic community, recognition and resulting professional identities?

• What are practitioners’ emotional and stress responses to the changes encountered?

• What skills and knowledge development, do these practitioners consider an institution might accrue as a result of the practitioners undertaking an EdD programme?

The research was feasible in that the sample was accessible, and the timescale for completion was realistic. Practical considerations were necessary as Cohen et al. (2007) note that research is often a ‘balancing act’:

for it requires the harmonizing of planned possibilities with workable, coherent practice, i.e. the resolution of the difference between what could be done/ what one would like to do and what will actually work/ what one will actually do, for, at the end of the day, research has to work. (Cohen, et al, 2007, p.78).

This chapter provides a detailed account of the rationale for the research methods selected. It considers in turn the Research Philosophy, Research Approach, Research Strategy, Research Methods Reliability and Validity, and finally the Ethical Position taken.

4.2 Research Philosophy

The ontological position taken is that of constructivism, whereby the ‘social phenomena’ which constitute the ‘social world’ are “only real in the sense that they are constructed ideas which are continually being reviewed and reworked by those involved with them” (Mathews and Ross, 2010, p.25). It was the meanings and understandings constructed by the respondents that form the focus of this study. In addition, it is worth noting that the researcher, as part of this social construct also in some part, applied her own meanings and understanding to the study.

Given that the researcher is a mid-life, mid-career teaching practitioner, it is fair to say that she has a ‘native framework of reference’ and as such could be considered an ‘insider’ in terms of this research. According to Irvine, Roberts and Bradbury Jones (2008) the rigour of research is enhanced “when researchers share a common language and culture with research participants and thus are considered to be “insiders” (p.35). In addition, as Macintyre (2012) suggests, the subject of this research was chosen as it is one that is “both relevant and interesting to the researcher and contextually available” (p.3). Matheson (2015) affirms that this approach is “potentially crucial when one finds oneself in the situation where one is obliged to undertake a research project as part, for example, of a degree or of further training/education” (p.401). Macintyre (2012) and Matheson (2015) both suggest that examining existing literature allows the researcher to “see what others have done” (Matheson 2000, p.40) build on it and show “how our present work is extending knowledge” (p.40). As such, a review of the existing works of Wellington (2013), Burgess et al (2010), Burgess and Wellington (2010), Wellington and Sikes (2006) and Scott et al (2004) are significant in the triangulation of my research.

The epistemological position adopted was that of interpretivism, choosing to focus on the respondents’ subjective interpretations of the social phenomena and their own responses and actions. This links readily with constructivism in that “the nature of a social phenomenon is in the understanding and meaning ascribed to the social phenomenon by the social actor” (Mathews and Ross, 2010, p.28). Anderson (2009) suggests that interpretivists do not endeavour to collect ‘facts’; instead they are interested in discovering the perceptions and opinions of others, and by doing so explore how the respondents interpret their own experiences and values. Anderson (2009) argues that these experiences and values have equal value to ‘facts’ in that they represent the reality of the respondents.

However, this approach is criticized by Walsham (1995) who notes that the subjectivity relating to the interpretation and mediation of events, by both the respondent and the researcher, are shaped by their life experiences leaving this method vulnerable to bias. They suggest that both the data collection and subsequent analysis cannot be viewed as being ‘value free’ and objective, here the researcher acts as a prism, rather than a mirror, and the data is interpreted and mediated through her life experiences. My research is not presented as ‘value-free’, and the strategies to avoid bias are discussed in detail later in this chapter. The interpretive approach is developed throughout the research methodology and methods employed in the belief that “The qualitative interview based on conversation and interaction here appears as a privileged access to a linguistically constituted social world” (Kyale, 1994, p.147).

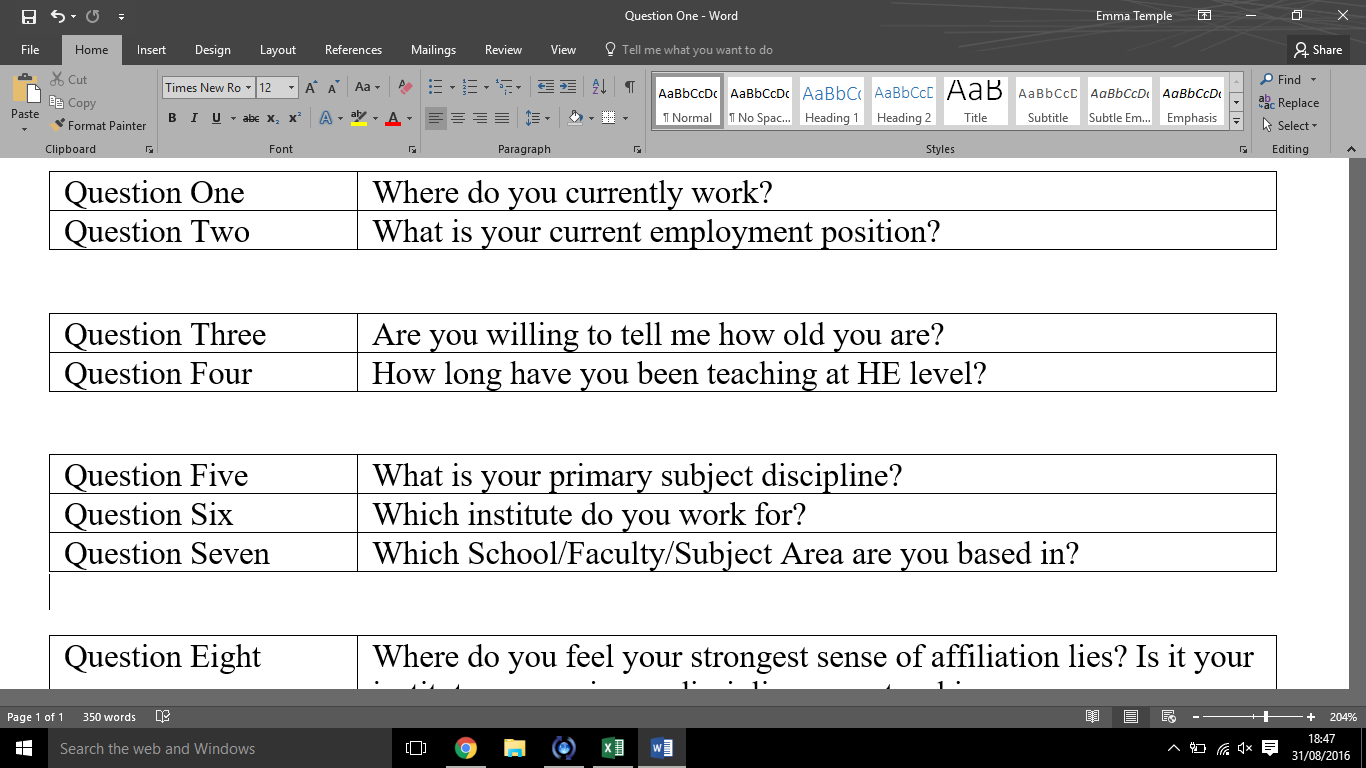
4.3 Research Approach

My research aimed to explore a “real world setting where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 1999, p. 39) and it was apparent that a qualitative and inductive approach would be necessary. I was concerned with constructing a model that would allow a structured analysis of individuals’ perceptions and experiences based around a unifying subject (in this case undertaking the EdD). In effect, I was aiming to “understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (Eisner, 1991, p.58). Gravetter and Forzano (2015, p.46) assert the notion that “induction and deduction are complementary processes”, and my work is positioned between the inductive, and the deductive. I used some pre-determined categories (deductive) for the analysis of what Babbie (2015, p.23 calls “a set of specific observations” leading “to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all the given events”.

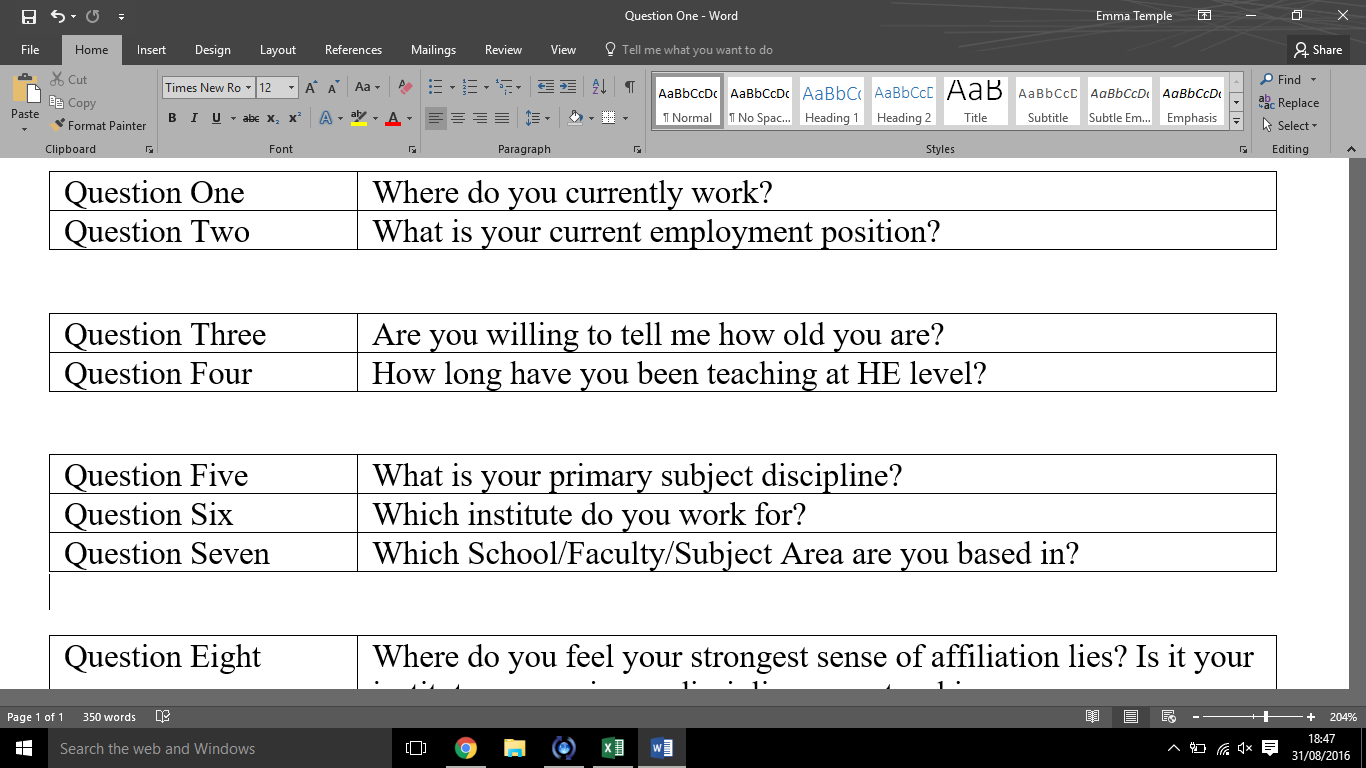
4.4 Research Strategy

The overarching aim of this research was to explore the relationship between undertaking the EdD and the “internal careers” (Lengel, 2001; Schein 1994) of the respondents. Given that the internal career, and indeed the experience of working, is complex there needed to be ways to structure the analysis both in terms of the respondents articulating their thoughts and the researchers bid to analyse them. For this reason, the *Ecological Positioning* model was developed to strategically uncover who the respondents were in terms of their current roles and aspirations, what role the EdD played in achieving these goals, and the emotional phenomena experienced as a consequence. The *Ecological Positioning* model was used in the design of semi-structured interviews, not only to create a process that would allow the respondents to relax into a position where they were willing to talk openly about their experiences, but also to begin to code the data as it was collected.

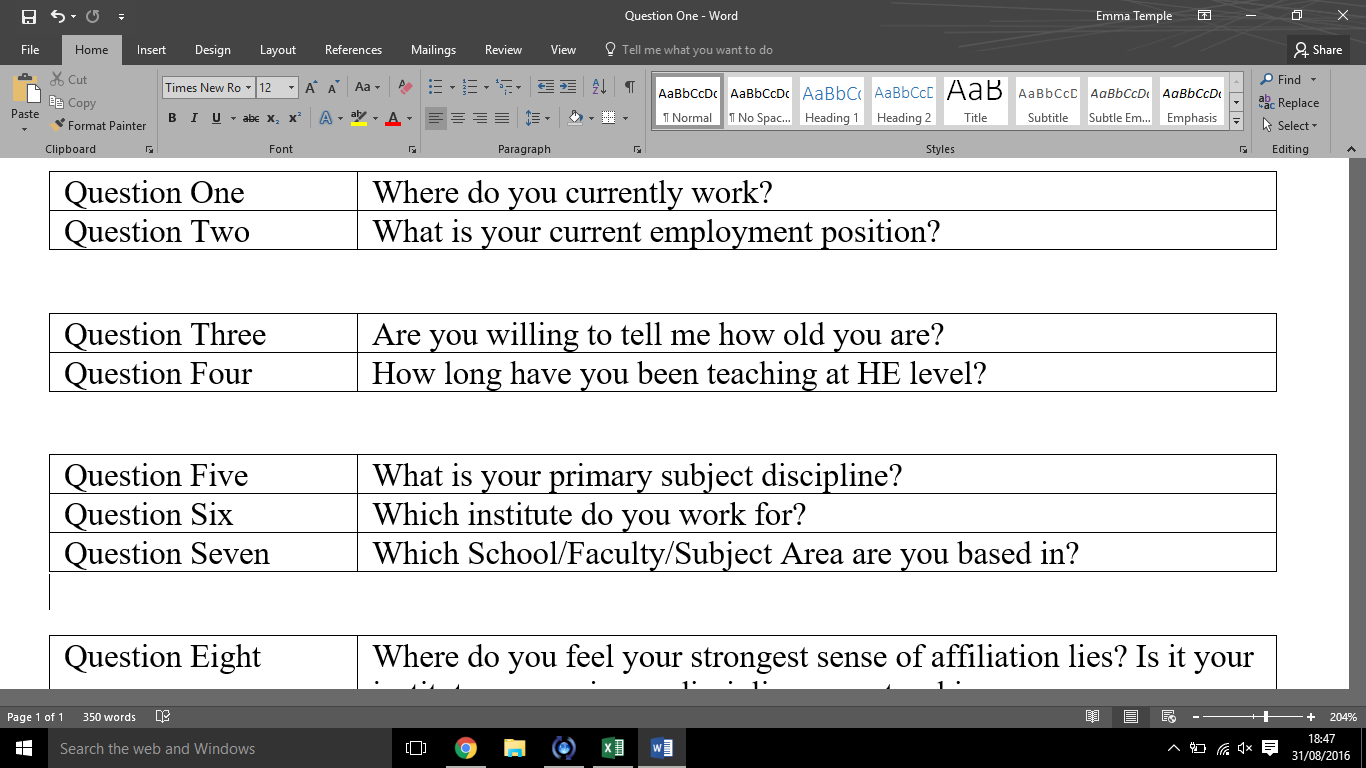
First, employment was identified:



Here a sense of where the respondents might be, in terms of the chronology of their careers, was explored though questions including:

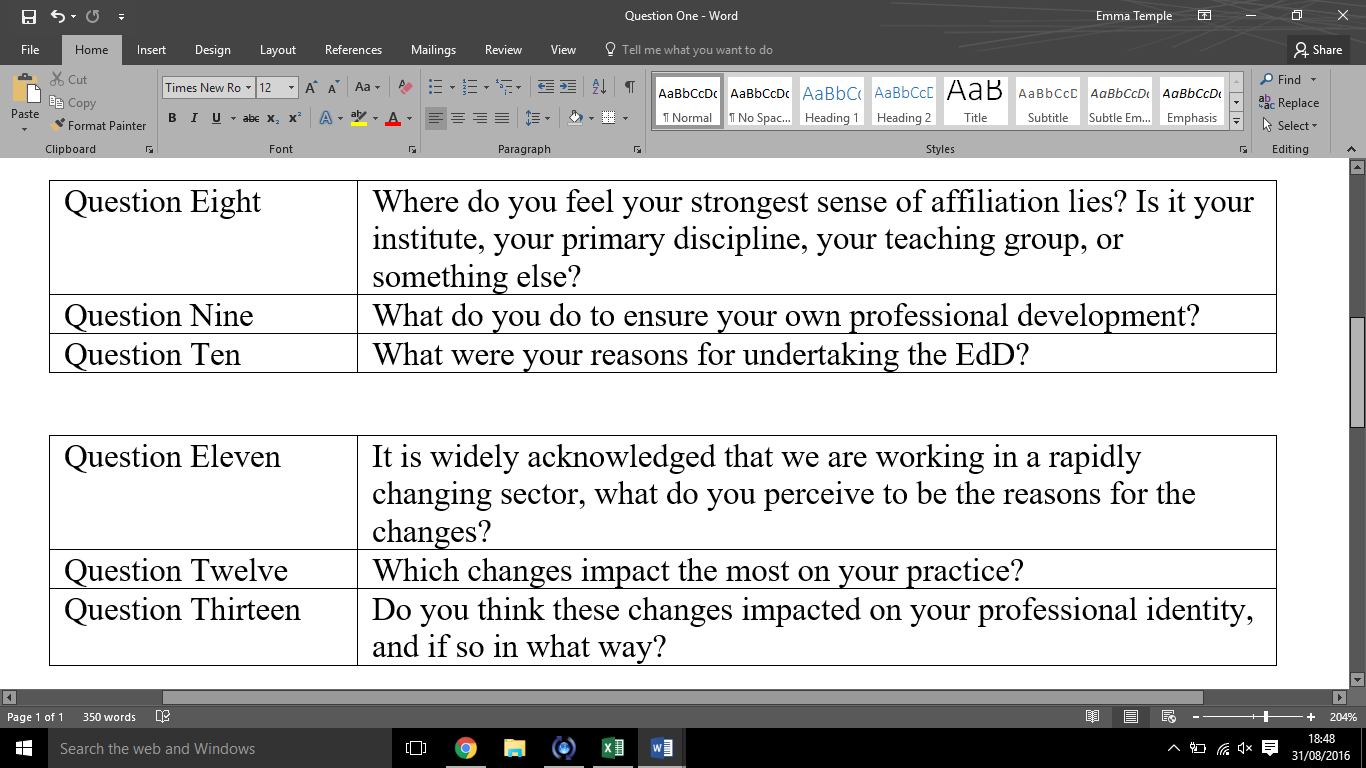


Once I had established the respondents were suitable for a sample focusing on mid-life mid-career teaching practitioners the interview then sought clarification concerning detail the respondents’ current mandated role or position within the higher education provider. Here the questions included:

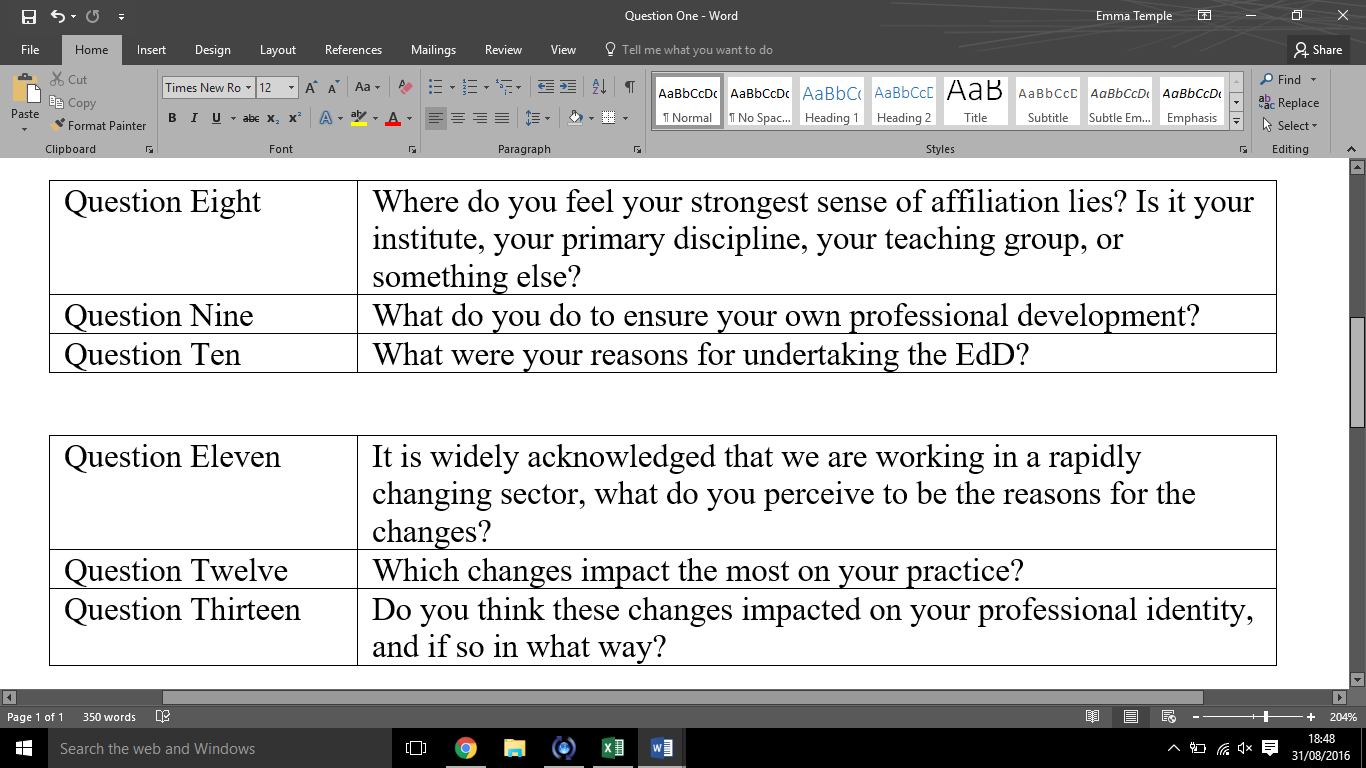


The answers to these questions were used to provide some examples of the ‘positions’ on which this research is based. The institutions hold individual status/positions within the sector, and the respondents hold roles/positions within the institutions and also in terms of their own employability across the sector.

The responses to the questions above give some insight into the formal structures and systems within which the individuals operate, but uncover very little in terms of the lived experience of the respondents. Therefore they were followed up with some broad questions which encouraged the respondents to reflect on their own professional identity and aspirations. These were:

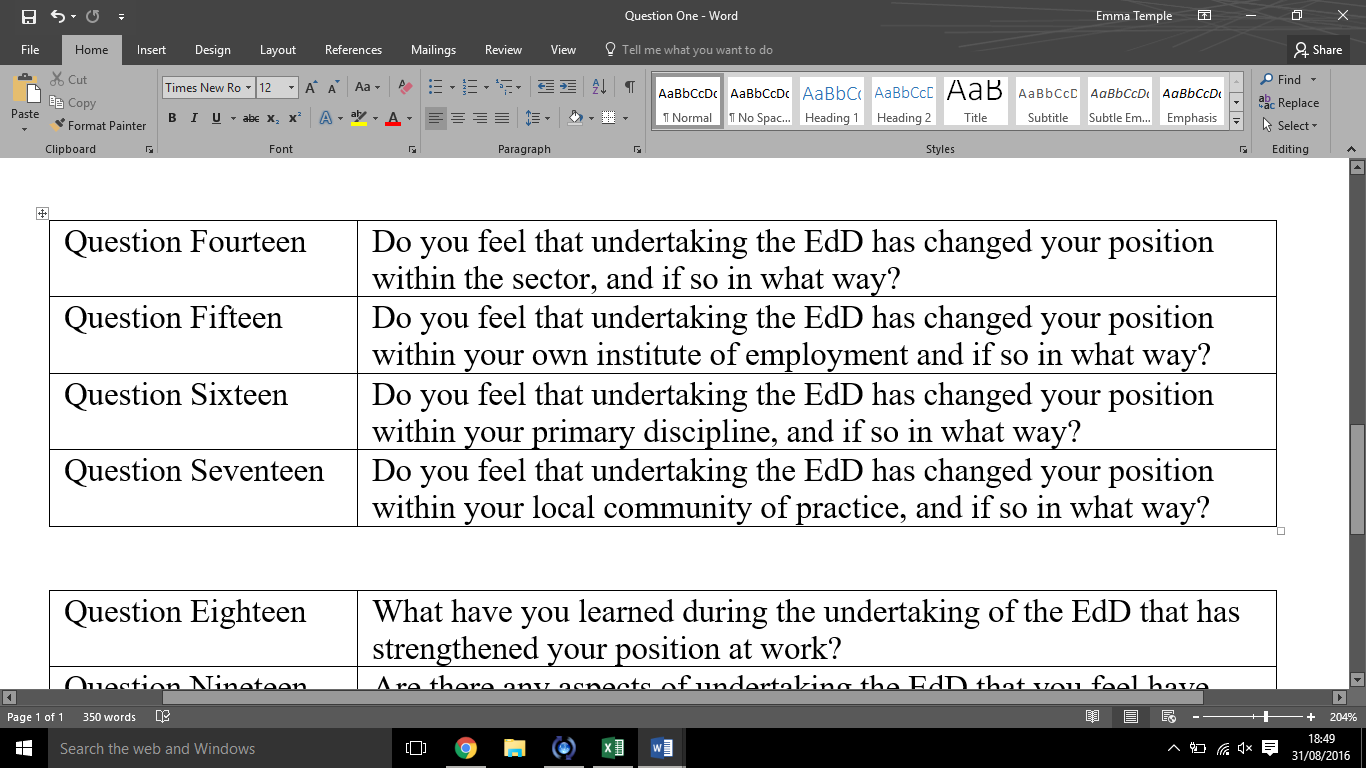


The respondents were then asked to consider their own professional practice within the higher education sector and its broader context:



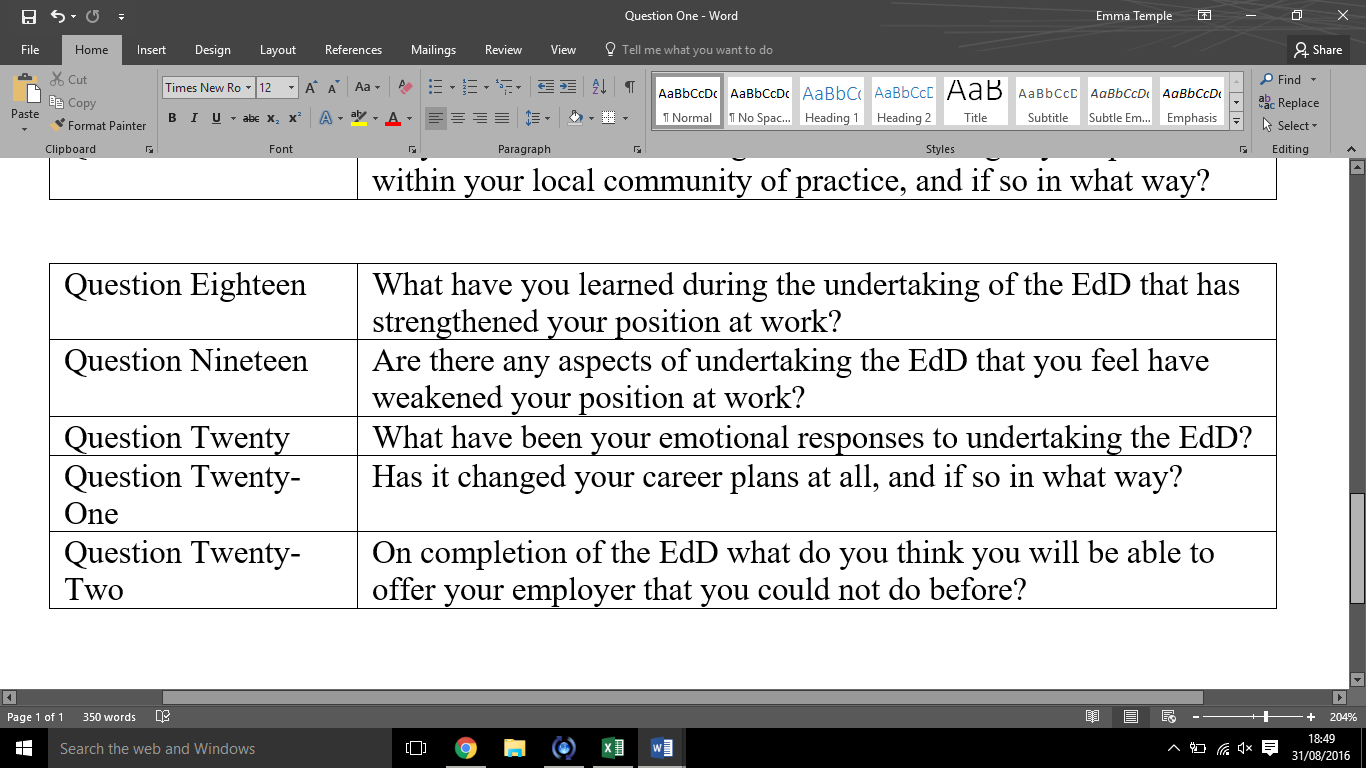
Not only do these questions act as a ‘warm up’ they also begin to uncover the perceptions as to the ways in which higher education is changing, and the impact these changes are having on the practitioners working within it. Here the subjective responses begin to reveal the emotional phenomena associated with roles that may be evolving. In addition, the answers begin to reveal the contexts in which the EdD has currency. This is significant in that the literature review had suggested that the professional identity and the future employment of the respondents would be dependent on practitioners’ affective assimilation into a series of professional social systems.

Whilst this research makes no attempt to identify all of the social systems inhabited by the respondents, it uses the *Ecological* model (Bronfenbrenner, 1999) presented in Chapter Three to provide (in broad terms) a classification for some of the stratified working contexts within which the respondents negotiate their co-presence with others. The model uses the terms macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem and microsystem to identify some of the various layers inhabited, and by exploring the respondents’ experiences within each of these contexts it is possible to collect data which allows the researcher to build “a bridge from micro-phenomena such as discourse or social interaction” to macro-notions “such as occupational careers, social indicators, dominant cultural values, and patterns of inequality” (Cicourel, 1980, p.18). In this research, the ‘bridge’ is developed from an analysis of the qualitative data collected, where the impact of the issue under investigation (undertaking the EdD) remains the same and the context within which it is considered changes. The following questions draw on the *Ecological Model* (Bronfenbrenner, 1999) to identify and code the context, and *Positioning Theory* (Tirado and Galvez, 2007; Yamakawa et al., 2005; Harré and Moghaddam, 2003; Harré and Gillett, 1994) to uncover the negotiation of position within that context or storyline:



Here the systems (macro to micro) or contexts where the respondents’ experiences occur are the focus of attention. In each of these settings the practitioner is subject to specific social rules which influence speech and action. In order to uncover the “objective reality of social facts as an on-going accomplishment of the concerted activities of daily life” (Garfinkel 1967,p.vii), an ethnomethdological approach was used to discover “the formal properties of common place … actions ‘from within’ actual settings, as ongoing accomplishments of those settings” (ibid, p.viii).

In order to provide an alternative way of reflecting on the changing professional identity and practice, the final questions place the EdD centre stage, and the responses to these remaining questions allowed for a cross referencing of the results to obtain a comprehensive picture:



Whilst this section details how the *Ecological Positioning* model was used to underpin the design of the research strategy, the following section considers in more detail why the specific methods of enquiry were used.

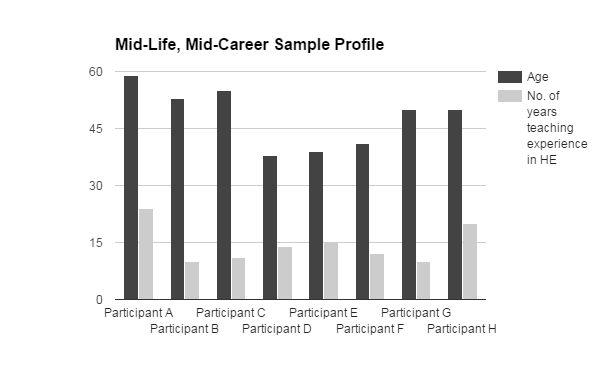
4.5 Research Methods

When choosing appropriate research methods, it was necessary to consider what would be the most appropriate way to identify and compare the assumed cause-effect relationships contained within the data collected. The following section outlines the data collection, analysis and interpretation.

4.5.1 The Sample

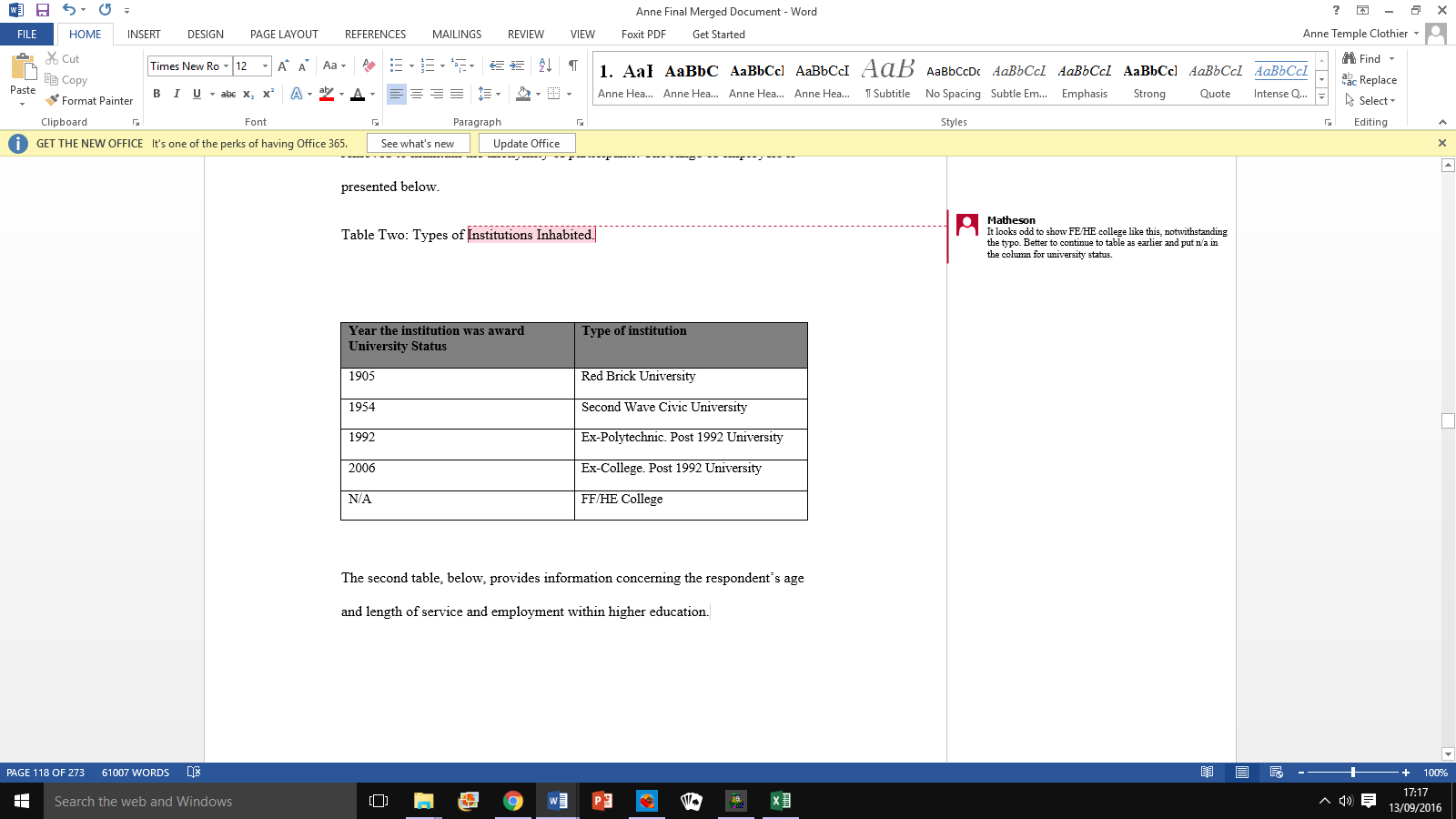
Given that I wished to research the experiences of practitioners’ causal relationships undertaking an EdD (instance) it was evident that my sample would need to be drawn from more than one EdD cohort. It made sense, in terms of access, that the two cohorts targeted would be those at Sheffield University and Leeds Beckett University. By selecting a sample from two EdD providers it allowed an exploration of the ‘EdD’ experience, rather than focusing on the responses to a specific programme of study at one institute, therefore four respondents were selected from each of the EdD provider’s cohorts. I considered this important in order to avoid any evaluation of a single provision creeping into my research, and by drawing on both cohorts it was possible to create a sample of practitioners, from a range of employers, to help maintain the anonymity of the respondents in the research. By restricting the sample size to eight, it was possible to create a convenience sample that was an appropriate size for a qualitative approach to data collection. In addition, the respondents in the sample would not usually be considered ‘vulnerable’ and therefore the research could be considered ‘low risk’ in terms of requesting ethical approval.

The breadth and range of students undertaking EdDs was considered too large for research on this scale; therefore, the focus was limited specifically to the experiences of students whose employment was predominantly based on teaching roles (this disregarded those whose deployment was predominantly based around administrative, research or service roles). This sample was again refined to professionals with a minimum of five years’ experience, as their perceptions and expectations may be very different to those who are new to the profession. Finally, the decision was made to include both current and past students in the sample as it was anticipated that this might shed light on both the perceived benefits whilst undertaking research, and reflections on the perceived benefits after completion. Their suitability in terms of mid-life, mid-career characteristics can be seen in the table below.

Table One: Mid-life, Mid-career Sample Profile

The sample contained respondents from a range of hierarchical positions including one Head of Early Years, One Lead Principal Lecturer, five Senior Lecturers, and one Lecturer from within the various institutions. In addition the final sample included respondents employed at six different higher education institutions, ranging from a redbrick university established in 1905 to an FEHE College currently aiming to obtain university status. This was deemed successful in terms of reflecting some of the wide range of institutions that make up the Higher Education Sector in England. The types of institution are provided in the table below:

Table Two: Types of HEI Inhabited.



Participants were initially contacted in person (face-to-face) and given an information sheet covering the aims of the research to take away and read. The information sheets (Appendix Two) enabled the participants to make an informed decision as to whether or not to participate. After being given the opportunity to fully read and digest the information, participants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix Three) if they were willing to participate, and an interview was arranged. No data was collected prior to the consent forms being signed. Copies of the information sheets were retained by the respondents, and a copy of the signed Informed Consent documents was retained by the researcher.

4.5.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Qualitative data was collected through hour long semi-structured, one-to-one, interviews. The interviews were held in neutral, quiet settings which had been approved by the respondent. They were audio recorded, and notes taken as an aide memoire. At no time were respondents asked to disclose anything they were not comfortable with, and it was made clear to them that they would be able to end the interview at any point, and without explanation. I did on occasion need to contact the respondents after the interview for clarification of issues, and this was possible as contact numbers had been requested and provided.

Interviews were selected as the most appropriate method of data collection given that Punch (2009, p.144) suggests that interviews are the “most prominent data collection tool” used in qualitative research. Punch supports this method of data collection by affirming “It is a very good way of assessing people’s perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality. It is also the most powerful way we have of understanding others” (ibid, p.144).

Within this versatile data collection approach, a variety of strategies are available to the researcher and Grebenik and Moser (1962, p.16) suggest interview types themselves lie somewhere on a range they term “a continuum of formality”. At one extreme is the structured interview which King (1994) suggests is characterized by “a detailed schedule with questions asked in a specific order” comprised of “questions that are mostly closed”, with the emphasis placed on obtaining readily quantifiable data, and with the researcher making “every effort … to control the way these questions are asked in order not to bias the responses of different interviewees” (King, 1994, p.15). With the interview effectively verbally delivering a questionnaire to the respondents a structured interview *might* be quantitative, but it need not be. An advantage to using structured interviews may lie in the way they produce results, making them easier to quantify, collate and compare. In addition, they are readily repeatable should additional data be deemed necessary. However, limitations to the use of this method could be found in the pre-set nature of the question schedule preventing the exploration of any unpredicted interesting phenomenon that may arise. In addition, given that I had already discarded the notion of using quantitative data this method of data collection was considered to be unsuitable for my research.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is the informal or unstructured interview which requires no pre-determined structure, are mainly comprised of open ended questions, and focus on “specific situations and action sequences in the world of the interviewee” (King, 1994, p.14-15). They have the potential to unearth a wealth of data, yet they require a far greater skill on the part of the researcher. These types of interview may appear to be no more than an interested conversation, however they require strategy and a strict methodology to obtain precise information and at the same time avoid the potential of bias. Given the limited experience of the researcher, this method for data collection was discarded, in favour of a type of interview that falls somewhere between these two extremes.

King (1994) suggests these types of interview are appropriate when there is no formal hypothesis to test, when factual data are required yet there is little certainty as to what the range of respondents’ opinions are likely to be, or how much information they will be able to provide. Given the nature of my own research I knew it would be necessary to engage with the respondents in a way that would allow me to uncover and explore their motivations, emotions and experiences in a relatively fluid manner. However, using a semi-structured format would allow me the opportunity to carefully design a series of open questions that would cover key themes in a strategic manner whilst still providing the respondents the opportunity to identify what was of key significance to them. It was also hoped that this pre-preparation, in some measure, helped to address any weaknesses caused by the limited experience /skill of the researcher as an interviewer. Cohen (1976, p.82) endorses the need for mindful preparation suggesting “like fishing, interviewing is an activity requiring careful preparation, much patience, and considerable practice if the eventual reward is to be a worthwhile catch”.

Prior to the interviews two key resources were developed, a visual aid (Appendix One), and a schedule of interview questions (Appendix Four). The visual aid had originally been developed as a conference output, and feedback from the audience suggested that it would be an appropriate tool to use to facilitate discussion in the interviews for this particular research project. Consequently, I revised the interview schedule to include the visual aid, and framed some of the questions around it. Once the draft of interview questions was complete, I conducted a pilot test on three experienced teaching professionals who already had doctoral status via non-EdD routes. This was done to ensure that the questions were unambiguous, accessible, relevant and that the information generated would be appropriate and in sufficient depth. The pilot also ensured that the timing for the pre-set questions was appropriate. The responses from the participants were then used to shape the final draft of the interview questions, and, following a few minor alterations, the design was considered appropriate. The information given in the pilot, and the content of these interviews were not audio recorded and do not form part of this final research.

Some key questions were printed as hard copies on paper, and spaces were included to allow me to record the key issues raised, in note form, as the interviews progressed. A fresh copy was produced for each interview. This was supplemented by an audio recording of the interviews, which allowed me to retain a copy of all the data collected and review and analyse it thoroughly throughout the research period. At no time did it feel as though the note taking was impeding the relationship with the respondent or what Moser and Kalton (1971, p.271) term the “conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent”. The respondents were given sufficient time to develop their answers and share their experiences, and the semi-structured nature of the format allowed the researcher to prompt and explore areas of interest when necessary. The sequence of questions was specifically designed to create a relaxed atmosphere, starting with some fairly general questions and then gently encouraging deeper reflections on their perceptions and experiences. The questions were also arranged in such a way that they prompted responses against themes that could be compared to theoretical underpinning presented in the literature review of this research.

Throughout the interviews, I attempted to maintain neutrality. I attempted to create an atmosphere resembling an interested conversation, to “capture data via a process of deep attentiveness (with) empathetic understanding” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.6). To this end, it was very important to have a general structure to the interviews carefully planned in advance, to develop coherence to the data collection; however it was also important to allow the interviews to have the flexibility to allow the exploration of the respondents’ experiences and perceptions. The interview process began with open questions that could be answered easily, and asked in an “unobtrusive and non-threatening manner” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998, p.49). The complexity and the depth of questions developed throughout the interview and the respondent was given time to relax, and a degree of rapport established. I avoided multiple questions and phrased each of the questions as simply as I could. I also avoided leading questions and consciously avoided offering my own perceptions and interpretations as the interview progressed. However, I did on occasion echo, paraphrase, summarise and check my understanding to ensure the trustworthiness of the data recorded.

Each of the interviews ended on a positive reflection on personal development, this was a conscious decision designed to proactively cause a positive emotional state as the conversation drew to a close. The respondents were also given the opportunity to make any comments they felt were relevant but that had not been covered within the interview. They were thanked for their participation and informed how the research would be published.

4.5.3 Recording and Verification

Using the *Ecological Positioning* model to inform the design of the interview questions proved effective as a method of enquiry. The structuring of themes, around the ecological systems, and the analysis of positions within them was particularly helpful in terms of coding responses.

Each of the interviews was recorded in note form, and supported by an audio recording. During the interviews the questions listed on the paper schedule provided subheadings and structure to the note taking. After the interviews the systematic preparation of both the interview guide, and the note taking, greatly assisted with the coding of the responses in specific sections. The audio recordings were invaluable in the analysis, and used to ensure accurate representation of the responses in the data presented in this research. Constant revisiting of both the notes and recordings was necessary when conducting the content analysis, not only did this allow me to check the accuracy of my note taking, but also provided the opportunity to play the responses several times to review them.

4.5.4 Bias.

Kyale (1994, p.147) suggests there are ten stereotyped objections to the use of qualitative interviews and lists them saying they are: “not scientific, not objective, not trustworthy, nor reliable, not intersubjective, not a formalized method, not hypothesis testing, not quantitative, not generalizable, and not valid.” However, he recognizes that “other conceptions of qualitative research, coming from phenomenological and hermeneutical traditions” (ibid, p.147) can be found, and goes on to suggest that “The qualitative interview based on conversation and interaction’ can be viewed as providing ‘a privileged access to a linguistically constituted social world” (ibid, p.147) and for that reason was deemed the most appropriate approach for my research.

Whilst recognizing that this approach is open to criticisms relating to subjectivity, every effort was made to ensure that the recording of data, and the subsequent analysis, was conducted in a systematic manner and was as objective as possible. However, even so it may be easier to concede that some bias may be present in the research rather than claim that it was completely eliminated. As Gavron (1966, p.159) notes “It is difficult to see how this can be avoided completely, but awareness of the problem plus constant self-control can help.” It is possible to suggest that I may have had some influence on the respondents involved in this research, and consequently this may have shaped their responses. In addition, the fact that I am the only researcher involved in the recording and interpreting the data, may make the exact nature of the influence even harder to identify. The possibility of the “response effects” both in terms of the respondents seeking to please the interviewer, and the interviewer looking for answers to support any preconceived ideas have been considered. In order to avoid this occurring great attention was given to the phrasing and presentation of the questions used in the interviews themselves. These were developed through the pilot process discussed earlier in this chapter. Although complete objectivity was the primary aim, this research acknowledges that “The characteristics of the task are the major source of response effects and are, in general, much larger than effects due to interview or respondent characteristics” (Sudman and Bradburn, 1974, p.291), with this in mind I managed what was within my control, and recognized what was outside of my influence.

4.6 Data Analysis

Millar and Crabtree (1992) identify four key approaches to data analysis: quasi-statistical, templates, editing and immersion/crystallization. The quasi-statistical approach seeks to turn qualitative data into numerical data which can then be statistically compared. This content analysis approach was used in the early stages of within my research to explore the extent to which certain phenomena’s occurred (for example the length of service and type of HE employer), but proved to be less helpful in the more in-depth analysis on which the research findings are based.

The editing approach to data analysis took the form of searching through the data to identify the significant sections and then presenting them in a format that Millar and Crabtree (1992) suggest “reveals the interpretive truth in the text”. In order to do this effectively it was essential that the interpretations drawn were constantly compared to the original transcripts so that “a position of ‘theoretical saturation’ where additional analysis no longer contributes to discovering anything new about a category” (Strauss, 1987, p.21) was reached. As such ‘immersion/crystallisation’ was only reached after a significant period of analytical reflection.

To ensure anonymity the names of individuals, their place of employment, and their place of study are not named or identified. In order to strengthen the anonymity of the findings, I have also purposefully not included any direct quotes which may lead to the identification of any individual or institute.

The data was initially grouped against the predetermined themes identified in the *Ecological Positioning Model* for conceptual analysis: the ecological systems inhabited, and subsequent repositioning. By systematically working through the transcriptions I was able to identify commonality of responses, unexpected responses and emerging sub-themes.

Although it was initially quite straightforward to collate the answers to the specific questions such as “What were your initial reasons for undertaking the EdD?” where answers included: “I’d got to the point where I decided I did want to do doctoral studies, and I was ready for it.” (Participant-B); “I just wanted to do it for me.” (Participant-C) and “I think the reasons for doing the doctorate are not linked to my work at all…I don’t think the doctorate has got anything to do with anybody else but me” (Participant-G). It became apparent during the analysis of the full transcriptions that this did not give a full picture. In other sections of the interview the significance of obtaining doctoral qualification was described by the same people as:

You will need to get it if you want to stay. So in that sense it has very real kind of meaning, ’cause it could mean the difference between having a job here or not, if they go down that road. (Participant-B)

“You need to have a doctorate, if you haven’t got one you need to get one” (Participant-C); and “So if you’re coming into teach or if you’re managing, or whatever … You either need to be working towards a doctorate, or hold a doctorate. (Participant-G)

This indicates that the reasons for undertaking the EdD are complex and driven by a range of motivations. Perhaps when asked a direct question the respondents provide the answer they would chose to be seen as, whereas later in the interviews their responses are less guarded. Alternatively, perhaps the answer to the initial question represents their primary motivation, and subsequent references are made to the secondary motivations for engagement. Whatever the reason, my analysis of the data is structured in a way that presents the stated drivers for engagement and also a cross referencing of all the related comments so that a richer understanding is presented.

When the data was coded against each ecological system, themes or storylines began to emerge. For example, the data relating to the macro and exosystems revealed most respondents perceived the change in Government to have made a significant impact on higher education, and this was experienced through changes to funding and the stratification of the higher education sector. This in turn was perceived to have resulted in a rise in managerialism, changes to the student body and its expectations, and changes in technology impacting on practice. By systematically identifying positioning ‘storylines’ within the ecological systems, it was possible to harness the strengths of both the *Ecological*; and *Positioning* models of analysis. The ecology provided a pre-set structure to thematically group narrative, discourse and ‘rights and duties’, whilst the positioning allowed ‘values’ to be given the ascribed and aspirational positions contained within them.

The findings of this research are presented over three chapters, each focusing on specific ecological systems. Chapter Five focuses on the Macro/ Exosystem, Chapter Six the Mesosystem, and finally Chapter Seven the Microsystems. The responses to changes in each system are considered in turn, and emerging sub-themes are identified.

4.7 Trustworthiness

According to Seale (1999, p.266) the “trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability.” The trustworthiness of this research, given that it is predominantly based on qualitative data, lies in the depth of the analysis of the issues presented by the respondents. It is the interpretations of these responses that are critical in terms of reliability and validity, and providing respondents with the opportunity to review the transcriptions and interpretations strengthens the trustworthiness of these interpretations. However, given that this research was based on how the respondents perceive and recount their own experiences, their sense-making is subjective, and this was analysed in the most objective ways possible. Researcher bias was minimized by attempting to identify my own presuppositions and not allow them to influence the way the data was recorded and analysed. This was particularly important in the thematic approach to data analysis.

4.8 Ethical Position

“Ethical practice is a morale stance that involves conducting research to achieve not just high professional standards of technical procedures, but also respect and protection for the people actively consenting to be studies” (Payne and Payne, 2004 p.66). These ethical principles are reinforced by the research *Ethics Policy* of Sheffield University (Sheffield University, 2016), and permission to conduct this particular piece of research was granted through the university’s formal Ethical Approval procedure. Once this approval had been granted, the approved documents concerning information about the research, and informed consent documents were used when contacting potential respondents.

The research was conducted within the approved framework throughout its duration, and as previously stated, the participants in this research would not usually be considered vulnerable’ and therefore the research itself could be considered ‘low risk’.

4.8.1 The Protection and Well-Being of the Participants

There were no issues of personal safety or potential harm to participants identified in the design of this research. However, in order to have ethical and effective strategies in place each participant was informed that in the unlikely event that they experience any unexpected discomforts, disadvantages or risks, they should bring it to my attention as quickly as possible. If this had occurred the interview would have been terminated immediately, the Unforeseen Events form (Appendix Five) would have been completed, and the procedures governing research at Sheffield University would have been be adhered to. Each respondent was informed that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time, without explanation.

4.8.2 About the Data

Full transcriptions of each interview were shown to the respondent concerned for approval before being used in this research. This was done to ensure the respondents considered the representation of the recordings, and the knowledge generated as a result, to be trustworthy. The data collected was primarily used to inform the results of this research and is published in the formal submission of my EdD Thesis. On completion, the respondents are able to access this document. It is possible that the data collected during the course of this research may also be used for associated publications.

The anonymity of participants will be maintained in all subsequent publications. The sample was specifically designed to ensure that respondents were drawn from a random range of employers and neither respondent nor employer is named in the research. This design feature was specifically built in to the research in order to assist in the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents involved in the data collection.

All the information collected was kept within the limits of the law and stored on a password-protected domestic computer. Access to the information was restricted to the researcher and supervisor associated with the research. The audio recordings made of the interviews were used only for analysis. No other use was made without the written permission of the respondents, and no one outside of the research team was allowed access to the original recordings.

The following chapters of this research present, and analyse, the data collected during the interview process. By conducting a detailed and systematic review it was possible to present the findings under a series of themed headings. These themes are now discussed in turn, and any emerging sub-themes or anomalies are identified and presented for consideration.

1. Presentation of Findings: Responses in the Macro / Exosystem levels

5.1 Introduction

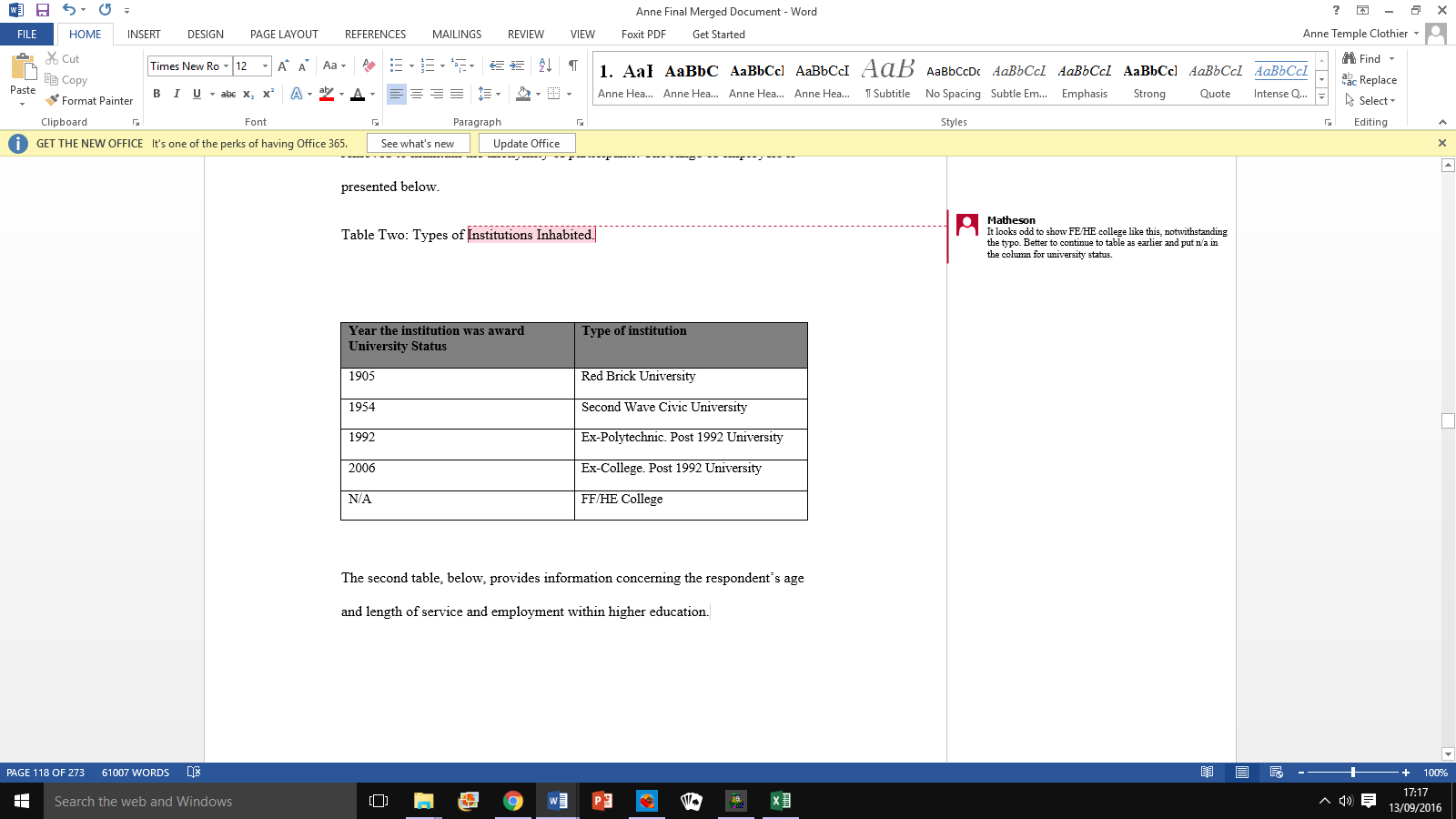
The following three chapters present an analysis of the data collected during the interview process. They use the *Ecological Positioning* model as a framework for data analysis, and the findings from eight interviews (conducted between June 2015 and October 2015) are presented. The data analysis is provided over three chapters, each of which focuses on a different ecological context for professional practice, they are titled; Responses in the Macro/Exosystem, Responses in the Mesosystem, and Responses in the Microsystem. Within each of these chapters the emerging “storylines” (Simon, 2013 p.53; Moghaddam et al., 2007, p.9; Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6) are identified.

Before considering the three ‘system’ themes it is important to reflect on the characteristics of the sample used, and determine if the chronosystems inhabited by the respondents are indeed appropriate given that the position in the life span, and career progression, may affect the perceptions, experiences and responses to professional development. The details concerning their length of service and teaching experience reveal that two respondents were working in higher education during the period of the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997), and five others began their teaching when the drivers identified by the Dearing Report were still influencing the values of the higher education sector.

5.1.1 The Chronosystems Inhabited.

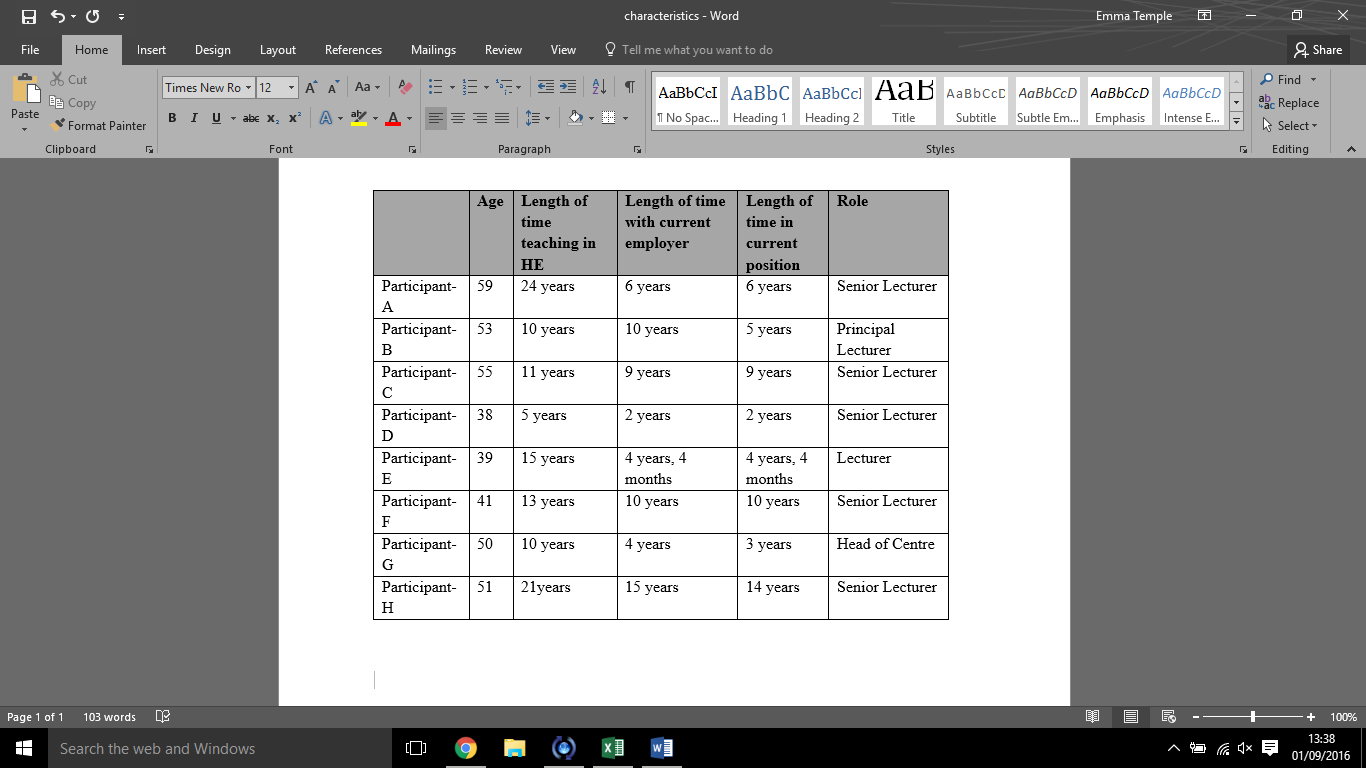
The tables below present the salient dimensions of the respondents’ experience. Participants have been anonymised using a lettering system, and the institutions they are employed in have been classified in broad terms to give an indication as to the type of their place of employment. University names have been removed to maintain the anonymity of participants. The range of employers is presented below.

Table Two: Types of HEI Inhabited.



The second table, below, provides information concerning the respondent’s age and length of service and employment within higher education.

Table Three: Characteristics of the Respondents



The sample can primarily be defined as eight experienced higher education teaching professionals currently working in higher education providers. Their roles span a range of hierarchical positions including one Head of Centre, one Lead Principal Lecturer, five Senior Lecturers, and one Lecturer and all are primarily employed as teaching practitioners.

Their professional experiences are ‘time-bound’ in a specific chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p.40), after the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997), which shaped the ecological influences encountered in terms of the social, political and economic climates inhabited. Given that most of the practitioners were assimilated into the teaching profession shortly after 1997 it is possible to suggest that they might have anticipated working in a sector that did not “accept a purely instrumental approach to higher education” (NCIHE, 1997, p.51) and believed that “Its distinctive character must lie in the independent pursuit of knowledge and understanding” (ibid, p.51). Whether this is indeed the case is explored in later chapters where the respondents’ perceptions of changing policy and personal goals are considered in more detail within the meso- and microsystems inhabited. It is in the contexts of the universities and college that the respondents mediate between policy and working conditions. It is across these places of employment that we may see if higher education teaching providers are united by what Kuh and Whitt (1986, p.76) identify as the underlying cluster of common academic values that underpin the profession, specifically those of “academic freedom, the community of scholars, scrutiny of accepted wisdom, truth seeking, collegial governance, individual autonomy, and service to society through the production of knowledge, the transmission of culture, and education of the young”.

Throughout the next three chapters, I quote directly from the transcription of the interviews to ‘give voice’ to the respondents; the chapters explore the stated perceptions and experiences of the respondents to ascertain their expectations and values. They also explore some of the changes to practice and the respondents’ internal careers which occur as a result of undertaking the EdD. Within these three chapters the emerging themes are presented and synthesised with the findings of the literature review. Together the *Ecological Positioning* model and the literature review provide a framework for the analysis and the identification of storylines. Here the storylines represent “context in which social acts occur” (Simon, 2013, p.53). What the impact of these storylines might mean in relation to my initial research questions are discussed in each of the three chapters. However, first the responses to changes in the sector are considered in terms of the macro and exosystems inhabited.

5.2 Responses to Change in the Macro / Exosystem Levels.

It is important that the analysis begins by reviewing the responses to change within the macro / exosystem given that, according to Bronfenbrenner (1992, p.40), it is within the macro system that the ‘social blueprint’, or what Gee et al. (2005) call “big D” discourse for higher education are located. It is within the exosystem that any changes to public policy or practice take place. This section begins by exploring the respondents’ perceptions of external changes shaping the sector, and their understanding of the changes across the sector itself, and then it explores their identification of changes that have impacted on their own professional practice. A dominant “storyline” (Simon, 2013, p.53; Moghaddam et al., 2007, p.9; Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6) emerged; that being ‘The changes in government have had a significant impact’. Within this three more storylines are present; these are, that there has been ‘a rise in managerialism’, ‘the student body, and its expectations, have changed‘, and ‘changes to technology are impacting on practice’. The section concludes with a discussion of “positioning” (Tirado and Galvez, 2007, p.6; Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2) within the macro and exosystems. In particular, it explores the positions of the practitioners’ universities within the macro/exosystems given that these are the contexts within which subsequent “social acts” occur (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6; Davies and Harré, 1999, p.37).

Figure Two: Macrosystem Storylines and Repositioning

It is important to note that the responses presented in this section are limited to the answers provided to two specific questions: First, ‘It is widely acknowledged that we are working in a rapidly changing sector, what do you perceive to be the reasons that underpin these changes?’ And then, ‘Which of these changes impact the most on your practice?’ This is significant because it is here that the respondents are asked to consider sector-wide issues, and what we find (particularly in response to the second question), is that when identifying which of the changes have had the most impact, the respondents often articulated these changes in terms of impact on the mesosystem (university). The impact *on* the meso system (university) is considered at the end of this section, before I move on to consider the practitioners’ experiences *within* the universities but first the perceptions of changes across the sector are explored.

5.2.1 Perceptions of Change across the Sector.

Noting that Deem (2006) questions the notion of a shared narrative across the higher education sector, if there is any unity to be found in the “social blueprint” or “big D” (Gee et al., 2005) discourse, then perhaps it is here we may find evidence of Kuh and Whitt’s (1986) suggestion of an underlying cluster of common values binding the academic community together. Also, if a “new order” (Sparrow, 1996) is emerging, and a “process of transformation” (Ball, 2004) is taking place, then an exploration of what practitioners feel necessary for effective assimilation into a changing practice might shed light on what they perceive a “higher education practitioner should be” (Lundell and Collins, 2001). Consequently, the analysis may identify what the respondents feel are the criteria for success in this new order and how practice is modified as a result.

When analysing the results of my findings no attempt was made to homogenize the academic community, however threads of commonality emerged in the responses of the participants. These are presented, and the contained storylines are identified.

**Storyline: The Change in Government has had a significant impact on Education**

The most consistent theme to emerge was the identification of the significant impact brought about as a consequence of a change in government. It was perceived as creating a significant shift in values concerning the purpose of education, and it appeared to be one that the respondents were not comfortable with. In fact, the disenchantment with the changes brought about by both the Coalition Government, and the subsequent Conservative Government, seems to represent some of the core values that bind a large proportion of this group of practitioners together. There was the perception that changes to the funding mechanisms for students, specifically increased tuition fees, had resulted in restricting the range of people who had access to universities. Concerns were raised over the relationship between education and employability, suggesting that it had created inherent tensions within the academic community. In addition, changes to the funding mechanisms for HEIs were perceived to have created changes within the universities, as the ability to draw down funding impacted significantly on professional practice.

**Storyline: The Change in Government has had an impact on funding, and access to Higher Education**

The significance of the degree of change encountered was articulated by many respondents. One participant described the transition as “I think the sector is being reeled back in after going through a period of expansion in the 90s and 2000s.” (Participant-A). This respondent suggested that the government was aiming to reduce access to higher education, and that access will be based on an ability to pay. Another said:

I’m talking politics not necessarily with a big P here; the tide has turned on what people think should be funded and what’s a sort of right. So, whilst we’ve had a growth in people believing that they themselves and their children should be allowed access to higher education as a personal right. There’s been at the same time a completely paradoxical shift in public opinion around what is society’s role is in terms of funding those things and who is responsible. (Participant-D)

Here the respondent regards the democratic election of a Conservative Government as an indicator of public opinion. If this is indeed the case, then it would suggest that the government has public support for its plans for higher education, changes to funding mechanisms and the implementation of student fees. The recognition of the move towards what Lyotard (1984) termed the “pragmatics of optimization” (Lyotard, 1984, p.51), a business model involving the systematic drive, and processes with which to maximize function, was articulated by one respondent as:

Well it’s called marketisation isn’t it? the marketisation of education. It’s also been called the new managerialism. So for me it’s the focus on universities as a business, using a business model. The focus on seeing students as customers and this is structurally built into the whole fee structure. (Participant-B)

However, the development of a business model approach to education, and specifically changes to student fees, were viewed as problematic by some:

It’s a political change. It’s to do with a change in Government …this interview is happening the day after the Budget with significant changes for the sector in terms of uncapped fees, which I see as a massive blow to equality. (Participant-D)

Far from supporting the 2011 *Students at the Heart of the System’s* commitment to improving social mobility through access to higher education the practitioners remained concerned that access was in fact being denied to those who could not afford it.

**Storyline: The Change in Government has had an impact on stratifying the sector**

Not only were concerns raised about who could access higher education, there were also concerns about the implementation of an elitist ideology with perceptions that Russell Group Universities were being regarded as ‘proper HE’ and post-92 universities being viewed as the poor relations desperately trying to adopt the characteristics of the League Table winners in order to compete. One suggested “Ideologically the Government would probably be minded to revert to a more elite system of higher education.” (Participant-A) and another respondent, conscious of the hierarchical nature of the sector, comments on the ranking of their institution “We are special because it’s HE in an FE college and there is a lack of overall status. Across the system of education we’re just the poor cousins” (Participant-E) and positions himself by saying “I do worry about universities and colleges going through periods of chasing the top table people, because they do then lose their unique selling point.“ (Participant-E)

This then suggests that, within the sector, what is perceived as ‘good education’ or a ‘good university’ is being redefined within a higher education market place.

Within this storyline, the “positioning” (Simon, 2013, p.51; Yamakawa et al*.,* 2005, p.2; Davies and Harré, 1999 p.37;) of one respondent, can be seen in her concerns relating to the restructuring of education, and its provision, in relation to Initial Teacher Training:

It’s difficult to talk about it across the sector without being specific about what I do, initial teacher education, because the Government is trying to take ITE out of the universities and they’re trying to do training on the job. Any campaigner will tell you that’s not the right thing to do. I feel that I’m a lot of the time, not banging my head against a wall, but really fighting to stop that happening. So the impacts it’s had is that I’m trying to keep my own professional integrity as a teacher with QTS, as a lecturer, as an academic, and then talk to my students because they are going to be in my community of practice. I’ve got to try and marry those things up in my delivery and my practice really which is quite difficult. (Participant-C).

Here the subjectively coherent discourse (Davies and Harré, 1999, p.37) quite clearly rejects the storyline offered by the government and reveals the “personal storyline” or “part” (Simon, 2013, p.51) of the respondent to this macro-level discourse.

As noted at the beginning of this section, the search for common values (Deem 2006) and “big D” discourses (Gee et al., 2005) to reveal a collective identity of the academic community leads to the suggestion that disenchantment with the Government’s impact on education is a dominant finding. It also suggests that the collective “part” (Simon, 2013, p.51) adopted within the discourse of government driven change is one of dissent. The strength of opinion and emotional nature of the responses can be seen in this particular description of professional practice, where the respondent uses ‘we’ to position herself within the academic community. “I’m fighting Government bureaucracy because …a lot of the Government stuff, it just goes against everything we believe in.” (Participant-C).

The storylines emerging in this section have resonance with Scott’s (2015, para.1 of 17) assertions that “Universities are now virtually run by the various measures of their performance” and “They have to conform to the direction and choices embodied in all these external measures set by others: politicians, the media and management experts”. In addition, the perception of “Increasing bureaucratization on administrative work, and paper filling for the sake of it” (Participant-H) and the suggestion that it is seen as “administrators interpreting, or in some cases misinterpreting, executive requirements” (Participant-H) suggests that some practitioners felt “They were working for administrators who seemed more concerned with the bottom line than quality education” (Pelias, 2004, p.10).

In order to obtain a clearer picture as to how change is impacting on their professional lives, in effect to uncover the “social acts” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6; Davies and Harré, 1999, p.37;) of personal positioning against storylines, the respondents were questioned about changes to their professional practice. Noting Yamakawa et al.’s (2005) assertion that “positioning is a dynamic form of social role” (2005, p.2) the responses to these questions are now explored and presented against three storylines: The rise of managerialism; The student body, and its expectations, have changed, and changes to technology are impacting on practice

5.2.2 Changes and the Impact on Practice.

This section contains issues that span changes across the macro/exo and in some cases meso systems inhabited. This is because many of the respondents perceived macro-level changes in meso terms, and by that I mean macro-level storylines were perceived to be a discourse between quality assurance agencies (Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE), and the Research Excellence Framework (REF)) the University Management Teams and consumer demand (League Tables). The respondents were aware of this discourse, and articulated how changes in the sector-wide storylines had resulted in changes to the universities they worked in. These changes shed light on the positions of the universities within the macro/exo storylines, and reveal some of the social acts they engage with as a response to this positioning.

The section presents some of the changes to higher education providers that respondents identified as being a consequence of the changing environment of higher education (macro/exo systems). The practitioners’ experiences within these organisations are considered in more detail in a later section of this chapter, under the heading of The Mesosystem.

The following section presents the findings relating to an emergence of a rise in managerialism, a change in student expectations, and an engagement with new forms of technology.

**Storyline: The rise of managerialism**

In relation to changes that impact on practice, it was changes in management style that drew the first and most frequent comments from respondents. This would suggest that Avis’s (1996) assertion that the rise in managerialism is indeed a key characteristic of changes to higher education, and one that is of key significance with regard to the respondents’ professional practice. Robson’s (1998) assertion that there is a tension between managerialism and the academic profession is reflected in a number of the responses. Current trends in managerial style are described by one respondent as “Very top down, non-collegiate. In my time in higher education, I’ve been far more used to a style of management that’s about discussing issues, taking ideas from members of staff.” (Participant-A). The theme of change was reinforced by others “Things that were very important five years ago are absolutely of no importance now” (Participant-C). In addition, the impact of the changes to the funding mechanisms for universities (Brown Report, 2010) was identified as having a significant impact on the teachers’ experiences. One participant said:

I lived through the glory years in an institution that was awash with money for learning, teaching and projects. Although the workload was massive, you were able to follow what you wanted to follow. Then as money ran out, the tide turned against learning and teaching initiatives, big lumps of money ran out, things changed very, very dramatically. We were asked to do things on an absolute shoestring and moved away from management by consensus to coercive management style. (Participant-D)

These comments suggest that the practitioners perceive that changes to funding mechanisms have resulted in teaching and learning being repositioned within the priorities of the university and that the subsequent social acts are to refocus the activities of the teaching practitioners.

The perception that less value was now placed on teaching and learning by management was seen as the basis for tension between management and the academic practitioner. This is commented on by one respondent. Interestingly, this is a manager, who in this statement aligns himself with teaching practitioners in his use of ‘us’ and ‘we’:

From the managerial perspective, it’s about being over laden with processes and systems that don’t support us, that get in the way of what we’re trying to do in terms of good quality teaching, good quality experience for the students. I’ve got to the point now where I do what I need to do to meet the university requirements. (Participant-B)

This particular respondent suggests that his way of dealing with the irreconcilable tensions between the “efficiency and effectiveness” of management (Avis, 1996) and some of the professional values outlined by Kuh and Whitt (1986) was to weave between the two. Here he is reflecting on the managerial aspects of his role. His “part” (Simon, 2013, p.51) in the managerial storyline is made explicit:

I used to get very wound up about things, there’s no point, and you just weave your way round them as best you can. You deal with the ones you can, and the ones you can’t you just swot away like flies. (Participant-B)

Another respondent with a managerial role articulated a similar frustration with impossible deadlines

Some institutional deadlines you’ve got to live with, because of the impact on student completion, if it’s an assessment, or an exam board, then you’ve got to get your act together, because that means the student or trainee is not going to graduate. Those are important. But some self-inflicted deadline that an Associate Dean might put on you just goes whoosh [over the head]. No, unachievable, can’t do it. (Participant-G)

These statements indicate an acceptance of the needs, and presence, of managerialism, and an attempt to meet its requirements; however, they also suggest a sense of resignation to the sometimes incompatible or unachievable demands of the role. The transcriptions also suggest that for some the combined roles of academic practitioner and manager, create a complex (or dual) professional identity, and as Robson (1998, p.596) notes the “existing cultural practices and discourses” of the academic practitioners “may be inappropriate” in the professional context of management. The tensions associated with dual professional identity are considered in more detail later in this chapter.

**Storyline: The student body, and its expectations, have changed.**

The second largest theme to emerge from the interviews was in relation to changes to the organisations’ student / customer base and its expectations. The storyline is that the student body, and its expectations, have changed. One participant suggested that there had been a shift in the student demographic since the early 1990s, indicating that mature students, and especially women returners used to be well represented within the student body:

When I first started nearly all the students were mature students in 1991…We had a lot of industrial workers who were trying to reinvent themselves as community youth workers; people changing careers; a lot of women who had families and the children were a bit older and they were looking for a career. These were very bright women who possibly now, if they were 18 years old, would go to university no question. But at the time they left school, in the 70s, it was less of an option for women. (Participant-A)

The capabilities of students, or changes to the capabilities of students did not appear to be a concern for respondents in this research. The practitioners offered no evidence to support Coaldrake and Stedman’s (2013) claim, that students found theoretical ideas more challenging than their predecessors. Although this does not mean that the level and depth of student engagement has not changed, it does suggest that if it has, it is not a concern for the practitioners involved in this research.

However, the practitioners were more concerned about the increase in student numbers, and their perception of the changing expectations of these students. These were the two dominant themes to emerge in this section. Indicative statements relating to the impact of increased numbers included:

Students are more anonymous, (they) do struggle to be recognized as individuals. I don’t think it’s a secret that we don’t really know students. When you teach on a course, that has 150 per year, we don’t know all the students individually. (Participant-A)

The impact of servicing large student numbers, and their expectations, is well documented (CHERI, 2007; 2011) and the reports suggest that increased workload and stress are a consequence for teaching practitioners. My respondents indicate that increased student numbers provide challenges in terms of balancing the time allocated for teaching and maintaining quality in the teaching and learning provision. The recognition that students are consumers (*Students at the Heart of the System,* 2011) needing to feel that they have had value for money is voiced by many of the respondents, one suggested:

Student expectation is a big one for us because there’s been a shift in the student as consumer in our institution, I think the £9,000 fee has a lot to do with it but that’s not everything. I think the balance has shifted towards the student experience being the be-all and end-all of everything you do. Not that it wasn’t before, but it is now. It’s very important that students have a good experience, and the external mechanisms measuring it are now in place, like the NSS. So I think that the role of student, as a consumer, is a definite change. (Participant-G)

However many also indicated that they felt unable to provide the ‘service’ expected, and indicate that this expectation is both unrealistic and inappropriate. Another respondent said:

Certainly some students, not all, are more instrumental in their approach to learning…

Some will say, “This is costing me £200. Do I need to learn this?” and they want me to say, “Yes you need to learn this,” but I can’t say that. I say, “Well you might need to know it. I don’t know. I don’t know what you do know, or you don’t know. (Participant-H)

Tones of frustration emerge in the responses, and yet there is also an indication of empathy with the student frustrations, one respondent summed up in the following way:

Students sometimes do say, “You know I pay £300 for this one hour meeting with you”, and you think, for God’s sake what pressure is that on me to deliver something to you, you’re not paying £300 to me, you’re paying it to use the university’s name, that’s what you’re paying it for. (Participant-D)

This statement also illustrates that interaction with students is being affected by the time allocated for the performance of each task, and that perhaps the “pragmatics of optimisation” (Lyotard, 1984, p.51) can be seen in the students’ demands for value for money.

It is interesting to note that the teaching practitioners appear to be sympathetic to the student expectations, and accept that the shift in student funding has resulted in ‘customers’ expecting a high return on their personal financial investment. It appears that, whilst being aware that student and teaching practitioner are engaged in the shared storyline of increased numbers, the practitioner is not able to find satisfactory social acts that will result in the positive positioning of both. One respondent reflects on the move to make students self-financing and empathizes with their expectations, whilst feeling unable to meet their demands:

There was a belief that students would begin demanding more and saying, “I’m paying for this”. And I do see students explicitly saying, “Why have I only got six lines of feedback? I pay £20,000 a year”, which I’m wholly sympathetic to, but the reason is because you get 12 minutes to mark a 1,000 word paper and give feedback. What else can you do in that time frame? But you can’t say that to the students. You just have to say, “Well because we wanted to make you independent learners” and come up with all this bullshit about throwing it back on them. “You’ve got to reflect on yourself and what you’ve done”, rather than just saying because of the time now allocated to it. (Participant-D)

What emerges from these responses is that practitioners feel that the consequences of the universities’ adaptation to macrosystem discourse has impacted on the priorities within the university (mesosystem). Specifically, that increased student numbers, and no increase in the time available for teaching, has had a detrimental impact on teaching and learning. However, there is also a sense that the practitioner is powerless to influence the storyline, and that their “part” (Simon, 2013, p.51) is determined by the university within this conversation.

**Storyline: There is a link between qualification and employability**

In contrast to this position of powerlessness, the practitioners appear to take more ownership of their personal storyline when discussing the macrosystem storyline of the link between qualification and employability. It is here that the most pertinent link between my findings and the literature review can be found in the repeated belief that there is a pressure for universities to focus on the link between qualification and employability (Scott, 1995). One respondent said “That’s been a big thing about the notion of employability and student satisfaction. Recent changes are focused on this notion of employability, it’s a generic term and the National Student Survey (NSS) has had a big impact” (Participant-H). It appears that many of the practitioners believe that this causes tensions for both themselves and students. One respondent clearly positions herself:

It’s a fight against the notion of the consumerism, and I think that’s across the sector. Students have this attitude, not all of them, but some of them that “We’re paying all this money, we want value for money” and value for money to them means “You’ve got to make sure I get a 1st and a job”, and I’m not for that. So that’s a fight and I think that’s a fight that a lot of colleagues have. (Participant-B)

The storyline is that students perceive a high exit qualification as a benchmark of a ‘quality service’, and anything less than a 1st indicates poor provision. My respondent appears to share the disappointment expressed by Pelias (2004, p.10) that students “seemed more interested in grades than learning”.

This storyline of student expectations may well contribute to a situation where pressure (or social act) is put on the teaching professional from a number of directions; from students who are paying customers, and from management who desire high NSS results and good exit classifications. My respondent went on to say:

We are very, very cautious about doing anything that might upset students, because they might give us a bad NSS rating. It means in some cases we don’t want to challenge students about something, because it might affect the NSS rating. (Participant-H).

Although none of the respondents reported any specific social acts where they had been instructed to inflate grades, The Guardian: *Higher Education Network Staff Experience survey* (2015) findings suggested that “46% of academics said they have been pressurised to mark students’ work generously” (Shaw and Ratcliffe, 2015, para.2 of 18). It is clear from my respondents that they would be unwilling to take part in a storyline which required them “to bump up student grades or stop students failing” (ibid, para.1of 18).

Providing ‘value for money’ was a recurring theme throughout the respondents’ interviews. There was an awareness that students select institutions based on their perceptions of who offers good “value for money” (*Wilson Report,* 2012, Ch. 2), and that positive student evaluation plays a key part in attracting new business. This storyline is played out on a macro-level, with the *National Student Survey* and unofficial league tables positioning universities across the sector. However, some practitioners did not appear to accept that league table positioning provided an accurate indication as to the quality of the teaching provision. This was because many students measured teaching provision by the class of degree awarded, a 1st indicating good provision, and anything less giving rise to dissatisfaction. It appears that the ‘value for money’ expressed by students was at odds with what the practitioners themselves define as the purpose of higher education. The practitioners themselves appear to reject an instrumental approach to education, and offer these perceptions instead, “What is learning and education? Never imposing any thoughts on them other than the frameworks for ideas” (Participant-E), another said “I’ve always been interested in the idea of how to create spaces for other people to become who they want to become.” (Participant-F) and a third describes his part in this storyline as “I don’t like the word lecturer because I think it implies a transmission, in one way transferred knowledge, so I just say a ‘facilitator’.” (Participant-H). Here, although the respondents are not offering a description of what they would consider to be good ‘value for money’, they do seem to refute the notion that it is their responsibility to ensure high exit qualifications, and encourage instrumental engagement with higher education. This would suggest that practitioners chose not to position themselves within a storyline based on the league table positions and NSS results, and instead collectively position themselves outside it.

It is interesting to note that these frustrations were voiced by most of the participants in this research, and as such provide an example of what might be a shared value of the teaching practitioners. This would suggest that the social acts of universities in response to macro/exo level changes have resulted in practitioners being united by a frustration at not being able to do what they perceive they should be doing in terms of ‘good’ teaching practice. The perception that ‘good’ teaching and ‘good’ student relationships require more than the current time allocation, and that attempts to embed employability in scholarly activity is having a detrimental effect. There was a shared perception that teaching and learning standards could be raised if these issues were resolved. These findings are also supported by the Guardian: *Higher Education Network Staff Experience survey* (2015) which claimed that 37 % of its respondents “did not believe teaching was valued by their institution” (Shaw and Ratcliffe, 2015, para.2 of 18).

What developed here is a storyline, reflecting the “merchantilization of knowledge” (Lyotard, 1984), where universities are positioned in a macro/exosystem storyline, partly written by students, articulated and evaluated by league position tables, and serviced by practitioners who refute the assessment criteria for positioning.

It is also interesting to note that, despite voicing frustration, none of the respondents indicated that lack of time was a new phenomenon. Whilst articulating the current consequences, and the ways in which they were being held accountable, they never suggested that things had been easier in the past. However, given that there seems to be a large divide, between what they are providing and what they felt they should provide, perhaps it is here that we see why the Guardian: *Higher Education Network Staff Experience Survey* (2015) found that “Half of the academics and university staff surveyed described their workload as unmanageable” (Shaw and Ratcliffe, 2015, para.3 of 18).

This again suggests there is a tension between the values of the academic profession and the requirements of managerialism. It may be that some of the long held values of the teaching profession contained in the Dearing Report (1997), and some of Kuh and Whitt’s (1986) values are still binding to those who assimilated into the profession before the more recent changes in the sector took place. An attempt to adhere to these values, and ensure student employability with high exit grades, may well be social acts designed to assimilate the practitioner into the “process of transformation” that Ball (2004) suggests is shaping the sector.

**Storyline: Changes to technology are impacting on practice**

Change in technology was the least cited area for concern, or initiator of change, by the respondents in this research. Although Coaldrake and Stedman (2013) and Ramsden (1998) suggest that higher education professionals are being mandated to use new methods of engagement, and provide flexible delivery, this was not identified as problematic in the research interviews. Changes in technology were the least commented on when reflecting on significant changes to practice, and for those who chose to discuss it the impact was limited. Indicative statements include:

I don’t think the changes are great…There are more requirements in terms of using the virtual learning environment, online submissions and so on. But actually in terms of relationships with students, in terms of teaching and learning, I don’t think there is a great deal of difference. (Participant-A)

Another said

We’ve had such large cohorts, for such a long time, technology has actually played quite a big role. It’s a bit of a joke in our immediate area because …we’ve been doing this stuff for years, for logistical reasons. (Participant-F)

Here, it is the universities that are presented as positioning themselves in the storyline of technological change; the requirements to use the virtual learning environment and on-line submission are its social acts as it mandates changes to practice. The practitioners position themselves within the mandates and suggest, that outside of it, little else has changed. It is also noteworthy that none of the respondents indicated that students had a greater ease with technology than their predecessors, or the practitioner. This does not suggest that Scott (1995, p.5) was wrong to suggest that the “new breed of student frequently arrives with a pre-existing technical literacy, and ease with communication applications, that is greater than those held by the academic practitioner”, however my respondents do not appear to consider it as significant a challenge as adapting to changes to managerialism, or the changing student demographic.

Throughout the previous sections the respondents have identified what they perceive to be the most significant changes occurring within the sector. What is noteworthy is that they perceive these changes as impacting on the universities (mesosystem) they work in, and it is the repositioning of these institutes within the macrosystem storyline that is explored in the closing section of this chapter. Here the work focuses on the respondents’ perceptions of the repositioning of institutes within the sector, and identifies the reasons for these changes.

5.2.3 Repositioning in the Sector

In this section, the sector wide changes (macro/exosystem) are articulated in terms of their impact on the universities (mesosystem). Within this analysis, it is difficult to distinguish unambiguously between the macro/exosystem and the mesosystem, as the respondents tend to articulate sector-wide changes, and external influences, in terms of their own working environments and employment within the sector. The perception is that the “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) of individual universities are being affected by their position within the storylines of the sector, and this in turn has consequences for employees. This data is presented here, as it is within the macro/exosystem storylines that individual HEIs are positioned. The position, and aspirations, of the individual institutes will, in turn, influence the experiences of the respondents as they go about their daily business within these mesosystems. The respondents’ perceptions of the meso position within the macro/exo storyline are now considered in detail.

The storylines in this section are responses to the “status managers” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007) of the sector, and here the terms “status manager” is used to denote a collective, whose role it is to position others in a particular storyline, and as they attempt “to serve the interests of (its) stakeholders in the best possible way” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007, p.5). Two types of status manager were identified, the official (QAA, HEFCE, REF) and unofficial (league ranking tables). These are discussed, and a recurring theme relating to the implication for practitioners is identified.

**Storyline: The QAA and HEFCE focus on the quality of Higher Education**

Whilst the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) are the official quality assurance agencies governing higher education in England, the respondents in my research did not identify them as the bodies responsible for any significant change across the sector. This does not mean that they do not influence sector wide change, however it suggests that other influencing factors are seen as more significant by the respondents.

What did emerge was that the practitioners perceived themselves to be operating in a sector where consumer demand, institutional status, and professional standing are greatly influenced by league table positions, and customer satisfaction surveys.

**Storyline: League table rankings provide unofficial, influential, information.**

In a political and economic environment, where student choice and free market economics are being used to drive up the academic quality (DfES 2003), university rankings were perceived as being very influential. The university’s position, based on HEFCE’s National Student Survey (NSS) results, and unofficial on-line university league tables were seen as key points of reference in relation to revealing the university’s “part” (Simon, 2013, p.51) within the sector.

There was a belief that university management perceived the positions published within tables such as HEFCE’s NSS results, and league tables such as *The Guardian League table*, and *The Complete University Guide* (2016) play a significant role in determining the attractiveness of a university to potential students.

An emerging theme was the notion that some post-92 universities are trying to ‘move-up’ the league table, and that research and staff qualifications will be key factors in determining success in this endeavour. One respondent summed it up by saying “The post-92 universities are all jockeying for position as not really a post 92 university, but more like a pre-92 university trying to increase their research profile, imposing the requirements of doctorates for teachers.” (Participant-A). Another said, “My institution, because it’s a mid-ranking university, is trying to move up the ranks. As is every other university, so we’ll end up exactly where we were before” (Participant-H); and a third “The institution has, because of league tables, decided that with regard to our comparative institutions, we don’t have enough staff with doctorates.” (Participant-C). These can be viewed as a mesosystem responses to macro/exosystem changes, in that these responses shows that the practitioners perceive change to be sector wide, with universities ‘jockeying’ for new positions and attempting to change their positions within perceived hierarchies spanning the sector. The universities’ desires to reposition themselves can be seen as social acts, or intentions, to obtain positions they perceives to be more attractive. There is an assumption that the “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) associated with Russell Group universities are somehow better than those associated with post-92 universities, and that an increase in research profile is the social act perceived necessary to obtain them.

**Storyline: The REF assesses the quality of research in Higher Education**

The significance of a university’s research profile was alluded to by many respondents. Here the league table ranking is linked to the qualifications of university staff, “I think our institution has got their finger on the pulse with who’s doing what, and who’s bidding for what; bid outputs, REF outputs, and we are research investment funded so there’s a very neat audit trail.” (Participant-G), and “There’s always a part of the league tables which will be on what percentage of academics have doctorates.” (Participant-A).

What these statements show is that changes to university agendas are impacting on the psychological contracts of their employees in terms of “what is given and what is to be received” (Sparrow, 1996, p.93). These changes are now discussed in more detail in the following section where respondents articulate their perception of the necessity for doctoral status within the sector.

**Storyline: The sector prefers Higher Education academic staff to have Doctorates**

What has become apparent from the responses presented so far is that practitioners articulate sector-wide change in terms of its impact on their universities. However, there is also recognition that the “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) within higher education are changing, and that having doctoral status is becoming one of the duties expected of teaching practitioners within the sector.

The respondents felt that doctoral status was one of the key ‘differentials’ in relation to status and employment, the significance of the doctoral/non-doctoral divide was described by one as:

You need to have a doctorate, if you haven’t got one you need to get one. There seems to be this implication that people are divided into certain camps, and that seems to be the most common factor. And I think it’s to do with employability. (Participant-C)

The perception that staff would not secure permanent positions without a doctorate were articulated by one as “I wouldn’t be able to get my job now without a doctorate, all new staff have to have one apart from a few part-time staff doing some very specialist things.” (Participant-H). Another said, “Having gone through that looking for work exercise a couple of years ago, a minimum standard is that you have a doctorate.” (Participant-D). The entry level requirement was articulated by another as “In terms of getting into the university you now need it” (Participant-B), and a fourth said “It’s always been there as essential … So if you’re coming into teach or if you’re managing, or whatever … You either need to be working towards a doctorate, or hold a doctorate” (Participant-G).

However, sustained employment within the universities was also a concern for my respondents. Whilst one reported “I was told off-the-record, well not off-the-record, on the record I was told that if you don’t have a doctorate there’s a good chance you will get moved onto a teaching only contract”( Participant-H). Others made statements, which mirrored the opinions voiced by 25% in the UCU (2013) report, fearing they would not remain employed (UCU, 2013, p.4) these included:

I think there is always a danger that if we don’t do the doctorate they will draw up a matrix and one of the criteria will be if you haven’t got a PhD or a doctorate that you are a higher risk. (Participant-A).

Others put it more bluntly: “So basically reading between the lines there was a good chance you won’t have a job if you don’t have a doctorate.” (Participant-H), and:

You will need to get it if you want to stay. So in that sense it has very real kind of meaning, ‘cause it could mean the difference between having a job here or not, if they go down that road. (Participant-B).

Whilst the findings of the UCU (2013) report relate to successful submissions to the REF the fear articulated by their respondents had great similarity with the respondents of my research when discussing the achievement of doctoral status in that the fear of being limited to teaching only contracts was evident. Whilst one respondent acknowledged that lack of doctoral status would not affect his salary, he did note it “would affect future chances of promotion” (Participant-H). The perception that a consequence of not achieving doctoral status may leave staff facing “capability procedures, denial of promotion or progression to the next grade” (UCU, 2013, p.4), which would in effect limit the “repertoire of socially possible actions” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.5) was a concern for the majority of my respondents. These findings have resonance with the research of Burgess and Wellington (2010) who concluded that undertaking the EdD ‘is expected to lead to personal and professional development … ground in practice’ (p.163). However it also, supports the work of Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011), specifically in their assertion that ‘doctoral identity’ and its relevance and value in the 21st century’ (p.17) needs further research.

**Summary**

What these findings have revealed is that the respondents perceive there to be new psychological contracts emerging which require “continuous learning and identity change” (Hall, 1996, p.8) from the practitioner. They also suggest that the changes across the sector are profound (Schein, 1996), with “employment patterns and professional identities” (Lengel, 2001) being redefined. The emerging theme was one of maintaining employability, and this would appear to suggest that Kinman and Jones’ (2005) assertion that academics are experiencing high levels of job insecurity may well be the case.

The “process of transformation” identified by Ball, (2004, p.25) can be seen in the mandated requirement for doctoral status, not only does it impact on day-to-day practices but it also changes “the meaning and experience of education, what it means to be a teacher and learner” (ibid, p.24).

The following chapter explores the respondents’ perceptions as to what a ‘higher education practitioner’ should be, and the positions they hold (Lundell and Collins, 2001). It also examines their decision to engage with the EdD and the impact on their everyday reality. It seeks to uncover whether knowledge obtained during that process has allowed them to redefine and shape themselves to meet new demands (Gee et al., 2005).

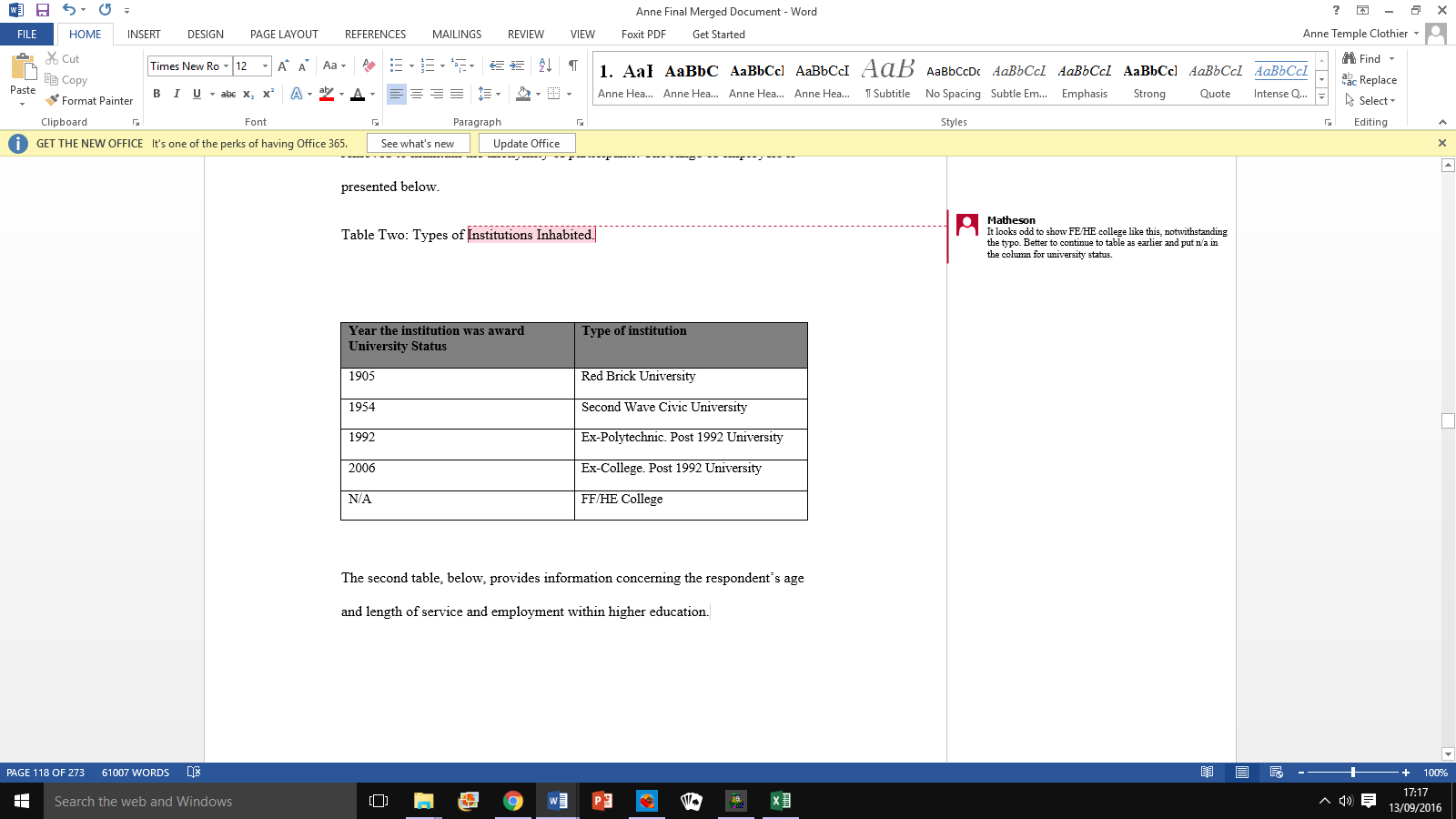
1. Presentation of Findings. Responses in the Mesosystem

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has explored some of the sector-wide changes that influenced the position of a Higher Education Institution (HEI), or provider, within the sector. It has also noted a perception amongst academic staff that doctoral status is becoming a prerequisite to the maintenance of a desirable teaching position within the sector.

This chapter acknowledges that although the macrosystem storylines impact on the higher education providers’ (mesosystem) storylines, the institutions have their own qualities and objectives that are quite distinct (from the macro). The practitioners’ effective assimilation into the identity of their own institution is also a distinct process, as is the negotiation of an effective position. Therefore, although doctoral status is seen as a macrosystem requirement, the practitioners’ experiences, in terms of their place of employment, will vary. The following table reminds the reader of the types of HEIs, which in this study represent the mesosystems inhabited by the respondents.

Table Two: Types of HEI Inhabited



The respondents have an average of 5.25yrs employment in their current positions, with an average of 7.6yrs working in their current place of employment. This would suggest that some staff have changed employment positions within their current institutions. Their posts span Head of Centre, Principal Lecturer to Lecturer, with five respondents employed as Senior Lecturers; however, this research also notes that within the ascribed positions of employment, the respondents hold a variety of roles simultaneously.

Whilst policies may determine what a person may expect in the occupational structure (Schein, 1990; 1978), it is employment within an individual HEI that will ultimately influence the membership of specific networks, and both formal and informal communities of practice (Trowler and Knight, 2000). It is both formal and informal interactions that determine the rights and duties of employees and it is to the experience of both formal and informal “positioning” (Simon, 2013, p.51; Yamakawa et al*.,* 2005, p.2; Davies and Harré, 1999 p.37) within the institution that this chapter now turns.

This section of the chapter considers three separate themes: What have the respondents previously done to ensure Continuing Professional Development (CPD)? Why did they choose to undertake the EdD? And, has taking the EdD resulted in them being repositioned within their universities?

6. 2 Internal Careers and Personal Storylines: The Respondents previous Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities.

It is possible to suggest that using doctoral status as an audit tool to determine effective professional practice and engagement with scholarly activity can be seen as a somewhat narrow indicator if it dismisses or fails to recognize any broader engagement with scholarly activity by practitioners. What has previously constituted scholarly activity and research, for the practitioners involved in my research, is explored in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

The respondents’ CPD activities (which I accept may also be regarded as an audit tool), prior to engaging with doctoral research, made it apparent that their “funds of knowledge” (Wagner and Herbal-Eisenmann, 2009, p.9) included a much deeper and broader engagement with conference delivery and publication than I had initially anticipated. Far from being the ‘launch’ into this type of dissemination of research and practice, the doctoral journey tended to be a continuation for the respondents. One respondent had previously submitted publications to the REF. However more indicative phrases relating to pre-doctoral engagement included: “I’ve presented at BERA and ECERA and TACTYC which is an early learning year’s specific organization and I present at our own conference every year. There’s an expectation that you would do that.” (Participant-G), and:

I presented twice in Canada, once in Florida, at BERA a couple of times, SRHE a couple of times, in fact one of my EdD colleagues and I are just getting a paper ready now to put into SRHE, … and now I’m a member of Local Research Ethics Committee. (Participant-C)

The theme of publication and conference delivery was also raised by others; “I’d published a sole authored book on multi-agency working … and an introductory textbook. I’d also jointly edited a book on children’s rights, and I’ve co-authored a number of academic papers on a variety of subjects.” (Participant-B). However, there was often humility about, or minimizing of, these achievements as can be seen in the following excerpt:

I’ve had papers published in two star journals. I’ve written book chapters for practitioners, an employability handbook for psychology and things like that. So in research terms all very low grade things, nothing that you’d want to put forward to the research exercise. (Participant-D)

This indicates that this respondent is measuring herself against an invisible benchmark or storyline, which I would suggest is the REF, and finds herself lacking. The benchmark is identified by another as “They’ve to be of international standard to get research funding, and the pressure is going to be on to get funding as well” (Participant-H).

The newness of having to meet the expectations of the REF, or indeed an awareness of it, was articulated by one recipient working in a Russell Group University “There hasn’t been a deliberate policy of being published, and I’ve only really understood that as something you have to do since arriving at (my HEI)” (Participant-D). However, another respondent suggested that within her Ex-college, Post-1992 University, “it’s a shift in being more mindful of which journals we contribute to. So impact factor of journals has been focused on in some staff development.” (Participant-G). Together these comments reveal that across the range of higher education providers, employers are focusing on producing peer review journal articles, and the doctoral journey is an attempt to develop staff to the point where they are able to produce them. It was articulated by one respondent as “In the last two years, the university is pushing it a lot more. Managers are now much more supportive, because I think they’ve realised that it actually ticks the boxes that they need to tick.” (Participant-F).

Clearly, the respondents have engaged in scholarly activity, producing publications and conference outputs. However, this type of engagement, when measured by the participants against the REF, shows that activities such as book publication, and text book production are viewed as being less valuable than articles submitted to peer-reviewed journals. So perhaps this indicates that when practitioners develop an awareness of the requirements of the REF, their perception changes, peer-reviewed journal articles are seen to have more value than previous methods of dissemination, and a consequence may be that practitioners change their focus. Attempting to publish in refereed journals would indicate a “social act” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6; Davies and Harré, 1999, p.37) designed to position themselves within the REF storyline. Although they will initially have a low status in this framework, it would be possible to alter that position by accruing a number of published outputs, and star ratings.

The frustration at being positioned within a REF storyline, and measured by a list of qualifications, is articulated by one respondent who feels his previous contributions and scholarly activity are negated and dismissed within these new measures of success. “I’ve presented at lots of conferences. And I suppose this comes back to being on the EdD seemed to reposition me as someone who hadn’t had that experience and I had. “(Participant-A).

Whilst many respondents suggested that their previous outputs were of a lower value than the ones they were now aspiring to produce, there was also a strong theme emerging in relation to the demands that went with it. The sense of it ‘never-ending’ was articulated a number of times. An indicative quotation is:

It feels like every time you get something, the hurdle is moving all the time. In my appraisal this morning, my appraiser was saying, “Okay well when you get that finished, then you can focus on doing some proper research”, and I’m like, “This is proper research”. And he’s very nice and he’s not meaning it like that, but already I’m being told here is the next thing you’ve got to do. It’s just never ending. (Participant-D)

These statements have significance in that they indicate that the mid-life mid-career respondents had previous experience of some of the outputs that doctoral engagement encourages. Though, as we will see later in this section, the confidence and values associated with these earlier outputs are questioned when the respondent engages with a doctoral programme.

The practitioners tended to view engagement with conferences and publication as an integral component of CPD. Significantly, undertaking the EdD was an addition to these activities, not the catalyst. This then led to questions concerning why experienced practitioners, who were currently engaging with conference outputs and publication would chose to undertake an EdD at this stage in their career.

6.3 Internal Careers and Personal Storylines: The Initial Reasons Presented for Undertaking the EdD.

What is significant about the responses, contained in this section of the chapter, is that they are the responses given when the participants answered a direct question concerning their reasons for embarking on the EdD, and in some instances they differ from the motivations and drivers suggested elsewhere during the interview process. This section has resonance with the work of Scott, Brown, Lunt and Thorne (2004) and Wellington and Sikes (2006) who explore the motivations for choosing to undertake a professional doctorate and conclude that “ultimately, it is difficult to classify motivation as extrinsic or intrinsic” (Wellington and Sikes, p.732) as “the line between them is often faint” and not “mutually exclusive” (Burgess and Wellington 2010, p.163). It is also possible that my findings reveal how my respondent would like to be seen (Beijaard et al*,* 2004) in relation to the aspirations expressed. They are considered here separately from the other, sometimes contradictory, comments relating to this question which are revealed in other sections. However, they are all drawn together in a later chapter when I address the research question: What were the drivers for engaging with doctoral research, and how did this fit with their “internal careers” (Lengel, 2001; Schein 1994) in terms of where they think they are going in their working lives?

When asked the direct question ‘Why are you undertaking the EdD?’ some of the respondents alluded to the intrinsic benefits of engaging with a doctoral programme, and others the corporate requirement for accreditation. Comments suggesting that ‘the time was right’ developed as a dominant theme with indicative statements being “I suppose I was at a point in my life where I had to actually do some things in order to further myself.” (Participant-F) and “I’d got to the point where I decided I did want to do doctoral studies, and I was ready for it.” (Participant-B).

The reasons for engagement, and the anticipated rewards were articulated by one as:

It was about reaching my academic potential I suppose. A labour of love, something of interest to me, pursuing a topic of deep interest and I think is important. So that was the focus, it wasn’t instrumental in the sense that I must get this. (Participant-B)

Similar sentiments were articulated by others as “It’s that idea of getting to the pinnacle, because no one has ever done that in my family, or anything like it. I like learning and I wanted to be challenged more.” (Participant-E) and the idea of it being a personal quest was put forward by another who said “I think the reasons for doing the doctorate are not linked to my work at all…I don’t think the doctorate has got anything to do with anybody else but me” (Participant-G).

This “truth seeking” (Kuh and Whitt, 1986) and knowledge development is a key theme in these respondents’ motivations for engagement, and for some the certification achieved at the end of the process was viewed as secondary.

These statements suggest the process holds intrinsic rewards in personal storylines, and illustrates the subjective notions and objectives that form part of the “internal career” paths (Lengel, 2001) of these respondents. However, an awareness of corporate drivers, and increasing pressure to undertake doctoral research was mentioned by others. Although some maintained this was not the reason for engagement:

I’d started doing the doctorate when this edict came in from the university to say people should have a doctorate. My motivation was not because the university expects it; it was because I just wanted to do it for me. (Participant-C)

Others indicated that effective assimilation, within an emerging university storyline, had impacted on the decision to engage with doctoral research:

The university was moving towards only employing new members of staff who had a doctoral qualification, it seemed absurd to me that I was interviewing people, rejecting people, who didn’t have a doctorate and yet here I was not having one. (Participant-B)

Here the engagement can be seen as a ‘social act’, designed to position the respondent within the jointly produced storyline of the mesosystem. Some participants were quite blunt when articulating the reason for engagement with the programme. One said:

I was told that “If you don’t have a doctorate there’s a good chance you will get moved onto a teaching-only contract” which wouldn’t affect my salary but would affect future chances of promotion… there’s a good chance I won’t have a job if I don’t have a doctorate. (Participant-H)

Another said:

There was only one, and that was absolutely to protect my job. Being in an organisation that was saying everybody has to have doctorates, you’re vulnerable if you don’t have one. I’ll just do whatever to get this done. (Participant-D)

In addition, a third noted “The irony is the job that I have now I probably couldn’t get again, because everything that’s advertised at my level would always have a mandatory PhD now, even research projects” (Participant-F). Together these three statements illustrate the significance of doctoral status in relation to different conversational locations within which the respondents are positioned. The ‘part’ played by the respondent is greatly affected by the ownership, or non-ownership of doctoral status, and the ability to maintain a ‘part’ within the mesosystem is perceived by some to be dependent on it. It may be significant that the only respondent who reported his employer’s response to undertaking doctoral qualifications was “It’s there if you want to do it. We’d like you to do it. We really would, but it’s up to you whether you want to engage it or not” was the participant who worked in the FE/HE college.

Obtaining doctoral status will allow the respondent to maintain a position within the mesosystem storyline, and their ‘repertoire of actions’ will be enhanced as a result. However, the process leading to doctoral status takes a number of years and I was also interested to discover if any significant ‘repositioning’ took place during the journey itself. I hoped to discover whether the application of knowledge gained during the programme of research changed professional practice and strengthened the practitioner whilst the development programme was ongoing. By focusing on this I hoped to determine what, in addition to the certification, benefitted the practitioner as a consequence of engagement. To explore this, I began by asking the respondents if they thought that undertaking the EdD had changed their position within their universities, and if so, in what way? The responses to this question were then considered and collated in terms of what had proved challenging, and what respondents felt had improved their position. These are now considered in turn.

6.4 Repositioning in the Mesosystem Storylines.

As respondents attempt to adhere to the structural and cultural conventions of their universities it is here that Kogan (2000) suggests the practitioner will find themselves strengthened or weakened by their ability to fulfil the role ascribed and develop an effective professional identity. The responses relating to institutional repositioning indicated that for the respondents, Lyotard’s (1984) storyline of the “merchantilization of knowledge” and “pragmatics” had taken on a new resonance. The engagement with the EdD can be seen as a ‘social act’ designed to achieve new positions within the university mesosystem storyline. However, achieving it requires the respondents to assimilate into new communities and adapt their professional identities, or as Yamakawa et al*.* (2005) suggest, position themselves in “different conversational locations” (2005, p.2) and negotiate their “part” or “personal storyline” (Simon, 2013, p.51) within them. Here the storylines are individually constructed, and the influences on how ‘identity’ is felt can be profound.

The respondent's role, or part, as a student is one example of a position within a new storyline, and it creates a new dimension to the practitioner's professional identity. In this section we see resonance with the work of Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011) who suggest that “emerging and often surprising tensions” characterise the process, specifically in relating to “border crossing” which “creates both connections and friction, constantly challenging values, professionalism and identity” (p.15). The next section of this chapter focuses on the effect of adopting this part. First the respondents’ assimilation into the role of student is explored, then the assimilation of studentship into professional practice. Finally, the subsequent repositioning experienced by the respondents within both the broader university, and their primary discipline are explored.

6.4.1 Storyline: Assimilation into Studentship

It is by conforming to the customs and practices of a group that an individual demonstrates that s/he is a “legitimate member” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.1) and my respondents appeared to initially embrace the prospect of becoming a student, and the opportunity to develop their understanding, “Yeah. I really, really enjoy being a student again” (Participant-F). However, whilst articulating an intrinsic desire to learn, others voiced awareness that the process may not always be a comfortable one:

I made a conscious decision that I was going to see it as developmental, to embrace any kind of comments and feedback and use it to test ideas, and get feedback, build on it rather than see any feedback as a negative thing. (Participant-B)

However, despite this attitude, adopting the part of a student emerged as a challenging position to maintain in a number of different contexts. In particular, the theme of vulnerability was articulated in many personal storylines, an indicative phrase was given by the respondent above who went on to say “You’re putting yourself on the line aren’t you? You’re kind of exposing yourself.” (Participant-B). The tensions associated with the position of student were felt across a range of storylines, and the various ways it was perceived to limit “what is logically possible for a given person to say and do” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.5) are explored in the following sections of this chapter.

6.4.2 Storyline: Assimilating Studentship into Professional Practice.

As noted above, the tensions associated with studentship manifested themselves in a number of ways. First the initial lack of doctoral status has resulted in some of the respondents feeling they have been negatively re-positioned by colleagues in the context of their universities. One described the impact on her day to day experiences which resulted in her feeling intimidated and inadequate:

I’ve found that it’s been used against me because I haven’t got a doctorate. I’ve found I’ve been intimidated in certain ways. The inference being people have got a doctorate and you haven’t, but they’re not being explicit about it. I feel that I’ve been intimidated and I can think of a few occasions when that’s happened. I’ve been made to feel inadequate in some contexts. (Participant-C)

It is understandable that a wish to avoid these situations might lead to the engagement with the EdD. However, it is apparent that engagement itself does not remove these tensions. It is therefore possible to suggest that the position of feeling intimidated and inadequate may well be one that remains, for some, throughout the journey. This is now explored in more detail.

The association of studentship as a position of ‘unqualified’ status proved challenging for the respondents, as being known as an EdD student in effect publicised this deficit. The perception that the role, or part, of student undermines the professional standing of the practitioner is articulated here by a respondent who feels he has been re-positioned unfavourably within the university:

There is a hierarchical notion that if you’re a doctorate student you’re in some ways a trainee academic, a rookie, a beginner. That doesn’t sit well with me in terms of my professional identify, I don’t think of myself primarily as a researcher. I think of myself as an educator. So I did feel this kind of being repositioned with a deficit. (Participant-A)

The unfavourable consequence of this repositioning in the mesosystem storyline is picked up by another, who suggests the significance of the impact is such that she tries to conceal her student status from colleagues:

It’s an interesting dichotomy, because doing CPD is about being a good professional, that’s what you do and that strength is your position as a professional. But if you undertake something that is an actual course like this, it makes you a student again. And being a student is a weaker position, so you’re like a professional lightweight, or an assistant, or a trainee, you’re less than. So I don’t tell people that. (Participant-D)

However, in addition to facing repositioning by others, the complexity of experiencing being simultaneously both student and practitioner also became a common theme. Here the difficulty of negotiating a dual identity, or “multiple positional identities” (Ritchie, 2002) was raised by another:

When are we a student? and When are we a member of staff? I think that’s an interesting area for exploring maybe, with this kind of duel existence that we have when we’re a member of staff sometimes and we’re a student some times. (Participant-B)

In contrast, other respondents reported that engagement with the EdD had had a positive effect on their positions within their institutions. One said “Yes, it’s enhanced it, and I can feel it when peers are talking to me. They ask different styles of questions” (Participant-E). He went on to say “Those that are studying EdDs are seen amongst their peers as knowing a bit more, or having a bit more structure” (Participant-E). Another said:

Within my own department yes I think it has. A couple of people have said to me that “Once you’ve got a doctorate you’ll find it’s amazing how many doors are opened for you” and I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “It’s just people treat you differently.” (Participant-H)

And a third identified why it was having an impact on a number of her peers at work:

They see that I speak to people in research (who might be quite high up) and because I am interested in what they were doing, they see the benefit of it. I wasn’t necessarily doing it strategically, I was just following the stuff I was interested in. (Participant-F)

The contexts within which these tensions were felt, or the “different conversational locations” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2) within the mesosystem are now explored. There were two key storylines that emerged as significant, one was the broader university, and the other was the primary subject discipline.

6.5 Repositioning within the Broader University

As Rhoades (2007) notes, the relationships and interactions across the broader university involve working with a range of professionals, and the practitioners’ relationships and interactions within these groups are important. When recounting their experiences of working outside their local community of practice and engaging with the wider university in different “conversational locations” (Yamakawa et al.,2005, p.2) the professional ‘part’ seemed less problematic.

Indicative comments, from respondents who had not yet obtained doctoral status, included “I would say that when I’m in other situations on a wider level of the university, I’m respected for who I am rather than whether I’ve got a doctorate or not.“ (Participant-A). The range of professional, and practitioner, relationships were described by another:

When I’m with a group of people on a wider university level, it’s what that group is about rather than whether I’ve got a doctorate or not… In those sorts of groups it doesn’t matter, I’m accepted for who I am, what I do, what I know and what I can contribute, rather than whether I’ve got a doctorate or not. (Participant-C)

In these instances, doctoral status is seen as a less significant factor in determining the positions, or status, within the groups. Although the previous responses were from practitioners who were yet to complete the EdD, one who had obtained doctoral status suggested that the accreditation had been beneficial in terms of meeting central university expectations, but had limited impact in terms of changing his interactions across the university:

I’m not sure how many people in the broader university know that I’ve done it, that I’ve got it. But I think it will (be beneficial) at an institutional level, they like you to have the doctorate because they tend to put it in front of your name at every opportunity … So I think it will give me a raised esteem or status. But I’m not sure practically it will make a lot of difference, because I don’t have an awful lot to do with the central university systems really because I tend to try and avoid them if possible. (Participant-B)

Together these responses suggest that the practitioners operating within the mesosystem storyline appear to feel reasonably comfortable with their positions, which they perceive to be determined by their ability to effectively perform their ascribed duties. Consequently, within this storyline they feel they are “legitimate members” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.1).

However, despite being legitimate members of the university it is possible that the respondents may find themselves privileged or marginalised depending on the positioning of their “funds of knowledge” (Wagner and Herbal-Eisenmann, 2009, p.9) or “cultural capital” (Lin, 2002). The next section of this chapter explores which new ‘duties’ the respondents might be able to offer the university as a result of completing the EdD programme of study. By exploring this we begin to see what changes to practice might occur as a result of engaging with the developmental process.

6.5.1 Storyline: Changes to Duties within the University (What new contributions can be given to the broader university?).

This section focuses on the responses to the question ‘On completion of the EdD, what do you think you will be able to offer your employer that you could not offer before?’ In general, the responses did not include many detailed references to changes in professional practice. Instead they focused on certification, doctoral status, and possible changes to employment roles in broad terms, and it is this that is presented in this section. I do note that many instances of change to both teaching and research practices (which might well benefit the employer) were referenced throughout the interviews, and these are discussed in detail in Chapter Seven where they are presented as the ‘social acts’ within the microsystems inhabited. In addition, it is also worth noting that given that the majority of my respondents were still working towards obtaining doctoral status, their responses were based on what they perceived they might be able to give, rather than being accounts of what they had actually given, as a result of completion.

The most common theme to emerge was a belief that ‘doctoral status’ would be the most significant outcome for the university in terms of raising the ‘staffing profile’ records within the central quality assurance auditing mechanisms. In effect the “funds of knowledge” (Wagner and Herbal-Eisenmann, 2009, p.9) of both the practitioner and the university would be visibly enhanced. This was seen, in turn, to be beneficial for the university’s ranking position in league tables and other quality assurance measures. The ‘part’ played by the respondents here is as legitimate members of the collective “status managers” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007, p.5) who shape the identity of the university. Therefore, each respondent has a part to play in determining the subsequent status or position of the university in a broader context. The ability to play these roles was articulated as “I think that having the status of the EdD would show that we, as an organisation, have a serious HE provision” (Participant-E), “They’ll be able to tick a box that somebody else has got a doctorate. “(Participant-C) and “I can offer them the bit of paper.” (Participant-D).

In addition to having a positive contribution to the audit trails of the university, doctoral status was perceived to generate other responses from some universities. One respondent suggested: “Each doctor has to have Dr on the door name“(Participant-H) and another said “They’ll have to redo my name thing; they’ll have to put Dr on” (Participant-C). This infers that the respondents believe that their universities will use their titles as a way of visually reinforcing their status within the building. This would suggest that the storyline of experienced and qualified staff is one that is important in the context of student interface as well as the external audits relating to quality assurance agencies and research frameworks. It mirrors a comment recorded earlier when Participant E recounted that “the status of EdD” indicated “serious HE provision”.

Despite being able to offer the certification and title, on the whole the respondents were not anticipating any significant changes, or immediate progression, in their existing employment roles. One said “I certainly don’t think that it will help me for any sort of promotion or reward, I’m not expecting anything out of it from the university.” (Participant-C). On the whole, their intentions were to remain in their current roles as academic teaching practitioners. This was articulated by one as “I’m only looking for a teaching position and I think I was a good teacher before; I’m a good teacher now.” She went on to suggest that:

I don’t think we should be asked for doctorates. I don’t think it’s a good measure of whether your teaching staff are good or not. In fact, I think it’s a bad measure.

If you want a good measure of whether your teaching staff are good at teaching, then watch them teach and ask the students. And look at students’ performance. Don’t ask for stupid bits of paper. (Participant-D)

Another also suggested she felt confident in her practice, again questioning whether the EdD had impacted on it “I know this sounds terribly up-myself but I think I was a really good teacher, and I think I’m still a good teacher. I don’t think my teaching practice in that sense had changed” (Participant-F). Both these respondents suggest that their duties as effective teaching practitioners may not be enhanced as a consequence of obtaining doctoral status. Instead they view it as a way of complying with university demands, in effect satisfying an additional duty in their existing roles.

What emerges from these responses is that, whilst practitioners acknowledge that ownership of doctoral status will allow them to comply with the policy frameworks of the university, it is of less significance to them in terms of teaching. In effect, they feel that in the ‘part’ they play as a teaching practitioner they already have the legitimacy necessary to carry out the roles asked of them.

What is also interesting is that, on the whole, the participants did not have the intention of changing their roles on completion of the EdD. Only one respondent suggested he was hoping to change employer “I’m coming towards the end of the EdD, and I’m actually actively looking because it feels like the right time. I can’t move up, so I need to see what other opportunities are out there.” (Participant-E). The other responses did not suggest any anticipation of significant professional repositioning; with only one other suggesting “I don’t know whether I’ll end up staying here anyway. Who knows?” (Participant-E).

If the respondents were not anticipating any significant changes in their duties, i.e. what they were giving the employer, then perhaps changes to their “rights” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) in terms of what they received, might illuminate why they undertook the EdD, and it is to this that the chapter now turns.

6.5.2 Storyline: Changes to the Rights within the University (What can be received, and how does this impact on internal career planning?).

Given that embarking on a route to obtain doctoral status can be seen as an action designed to influence the “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) experienced by the practitioners, and the findings so far have indicated that the respondents do not anticipate significant short-term changes to their duties, identifying their long-term aims and aspirations would shed light on the “internal careers” (Lengel 2001; Schein, 1990, 1978) of the practitioners. It might also reveal the role the EdD plays in the practitioner’s “interpretation and re-interpretation” of experiences in their “professional learning contexts” (Parding et al., 2012, p.301), and determine if Burgess and Wellington’s (2010) assertion that professional doctorates “opened up opportunities” making the practitioners “more competitive and promotion worthy … highly marketable and employable” (p.168).

This section seeks to uncover the perceived benefits, or “rights” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003), received as a result of obtaining doctoral status, and reveal the ways in which the certification and learning will be used. Whilst, on the whole, the respondents had indicated that they did not expect much to change for themselves, and that they expected the HEI’s to reap the benefits of doctoral status, they did offer some reflections on the personally anticipated intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

Here respondents reflect on the benefits they anticipate as a consequence of a successful completion, and how their perceptions have changed as they progress. One respondent stated “I didn’t particularly see it as a career move, but I can now, as I’m getting closer towards it, I can see that there are doors that I could possibly open with it.” (Participant-C).

Although all the respondents anticipated positive consequences as a result of achieving doctoral status, they varied in the ways in which they anticipated the rewards would be experienced. For some, the possession of the title ‘Dr’ was significant, “It’s for my own identity, and for when a student e-mails me saying, ‘Dear Professor Doctor’ as they do, so I don’t have to go, ‘Actually I’m neither a professor nor a doctor’.” (Participant-D). This response shows a desire to avoid the current ‘position’ in the storyline of student expectations. In effect, she will no longer have to commit the social act of revealing that her current status is ‘lower’ than the students’ expectations. It suggests the acquisition of doctoral status will bring with it the feeling of legitimacy in these conversations in the future.

The ‘part’ of a legitimate member of the academic community revealed which storylines held the most significance for the practitioners. The legitimacy and validation experienced as a consequence of obtaining doctoral status is described as “In terms of my professional identity as an academic, it’s given more weight to it. It’s made me feel more like a bona fide academic” (Participant-B). This ‘bona fide’ academic professional identity can be seen as necessary to maintain legitimate membership in the “new order” (Sparrow, 1996, p.1) of the academic community. In this instance the qualification is being used to neutralize the practitioner’s deficit within the university and macro/exosystem storylines. This theme was expressed by others and in the next quotation the respondent recognises, that in order to maintain her current position, she needs doctoral status, yet she does not anticipate a ‘higher’ role or promotion as a consequence. She says:

If I wasn’t on this process to get a doctorate I don’t think I would feel that I needed to prove something to somebody, or that I’d be focusing upwards. It’s probably the exact opposite of what they want you to do. They probably want to go, “Oh it’s improved your job chances and everybody’s employed in these better positions”, but I don’t care about it. (Participant-D)

What is not clear is who ‘they’ are. It could be a reference to a managerial system, or it could be a reference to the EdD providers. However the implication is that one, or both, of these “status managers” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007, p.5) might prefer to see an outcome of the EdD as being promotion or ‘better’ position as a consequence. This practitioner, like the last one, appears to be focusing on maintaining a legitimate position in the university storyline, as opposed to obtaining a new one.

The respondents perceived there to be two main options available to them in terms of external career development, and these were to become a researcher, or to move into a managerial position. The move into management did not appear to factor in their aspirations; one went as far as saying “If I went for a management role, I wouldn’t be a teacher. I don’t want to manage Teachers. Have you seen them?” (Participant-E)

The option of developing as a Researcher was given greater consideration. One participant said:

I wanted to become a Reader, because I wanted to run projects. Then I realised that I had no chance of being taken seriously in any kind of bid application, or as a Lead Researcher, or any kind of Researcher without the basic driving license of doctorate (Participant-F)

Another suggested “I would hope that the doctorate, and my thesis, would then take me on a journey” and added “I’m hoping to get quite a lot of REF journal articles from it.” (Participant-G). However, another respondent measured herself against the research teams within her university and concluded:

I’m never going to impress the people in my immediate work environment because these are some brilliant people. These are people that are world renowned and I’m never going to be, so what am I trying to do by getting up there? (Participant-D)

This would suggest that this respondent perceives that she would never obtain legitimacy within the research storyline of her university. This sense of being unable, or unwilling, to measure ‘up’ was expressed by another who concludes that being mid-life and mid-career will prevent him developing a successful career in research:

I came into educations in my early 40s, so I knew I wasn’t going to, wasn’t really interested in, reaching the dizzy heights of professor, ’cause I knew I didn’t have time really to go and get there. I was quite happy finishing my career as an academic who’d come in quite late and enjoyed the teaching, a little bit of research, writing and so on. (Participant-B)

Whilst both the previous respondents perceive they would be unable to obtain legitimacy within a research storyline, in this instance it does not appear to be one they wish to engage with. It appears that their current positions in the broader university provide positions within storylines that are of more value to them, and they do not wish to change them.

Although most respondents suggested that they themselves were not anticipating any major change of role as a consequence of completing the EdD, some had a sense that their universities were expecting to see ‘progression’. One respondent identified this as a pressure:

In my appraisal this morning they said, ‘Where do you want to be in five years?’ I said, ‘Here’. ‘Yeah but how do you want to advance?’ ‘Don’t particularly want to advance’. And you know I was left with this, ‘Well look on the website to see what the rules are about your next promotion’. (Participant-D)

Within this storyline the “status managers’” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007, p.5) expectations of the respondent are clear, ‘advancement’ is required on the ‘part’ of the practitioner. However, it appears that this part does not readily align with the part the practitioner adopts in the construction of her personal storyline. She goes on to say “I ain’t looking, because I don’t want a promotion” (Participant-D). Here the ‘part’ in the university storyline, and the associated ‘rights and duties’ is unattractive. What this reveals is that the “internal career” (Lengel, 2001) may not sit readily with the “external career” options available in the occupational structure (Schein, 1990, 1978), and for some obtaining the doctorate, and maintaining their existing role is the extent of their current ambition. It was summed up by this respondent “I’m nearly there with the doctorate. I no longer feel that I have to be saying ‘I’m on my way up’.” (Participant-D). In addition, recognition that the ‘part’ played within the university represented only one facet of the “internal career” (Lengel, 2001) was given when she went on to suggest that an increase in salary, which would have accompanied any promotion, could be generated in other ways. “Actually I’m quite good at earning money outside, I can earn a lot more money just going out and doing bits of work all over the place.” (Participant-D). This comment reveals that multiple “conversational locations” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2) provide options when personal storylines, or internal careers, are focused on goals to obtain desirable “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003).

The notion of engaging with opportunities outside the existing place of employment was only mentioned by two other respondents. The first one recognizes that the currency, or cultural capital provided by doctoral status creates opportunities, “If I was thinking of moving, which I’m not, but if I was thinking of moving to another university, clearly it would give me more. It’s a form of capital isn’t it?” (Participant-B). The other respondent is open to the possibilities that may arise, but does not have a clear goal in sight at this point. “I’d like to explore other avenues, possibly within this university and possibly outside. I think that maybe there are doors that I might be able to open, that I don’t know about yet, and I’m open to offers.” (Participant-C)

Together, the responses presented in this section of the chapter indicate that for the majority of the respondents the current goal is to maintain their roles as a “legitimate member” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.1) of the teaching profession, within their existing universities. In order to remain secure in these roles it has become necessary to adapt to the changing norms and practices of these communities (Sfard, 2003) and the achievement of doctoral status is seen as representing the “funds of knowledge” (Wagner and Herbal-Eisenmann, 2009, p.9) or “cultural capital” (Lin, 2002; Bourdieu, 1993) necessary for assimilation and recognition.

The shared need to obtain doctoral status, whatever the individual storylines might be, provides a strong indication that the changing mesosystem storylines, are impacting on what it means to be a higher education professional (Ball, 2004) and holding doctoral status is rapidly becoming an integral facet of that ‘part’ to an extent that has not been the case in some areas of university employment in the past. Here, again, I suggest that these findings support Burgess, Weller and Wellington’s (2011) call for further research to develop a greater understanding of “doctoral identity” and its relevance to the 21st century. For whilst obtaining doctoral status appears to have little to do with any desired repositioning on the part of the respondents within the broader university storyline, it may have a more significant impact on the professional practice within the primary discipline or subject area. Here the ‘funds of knowledge’ developed as a consequence of the engagement with the EdD may extend their “repertoire of actions” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.5). The following section of this chapter focuses on how engagement with the EdD has resulted in changes to practice within the primary subject disciplines.

6.6 Repositioning within the Primary Discipline

Whilst exploring the ‘parts’ played by the respondents within the storylines of the sector, profession and broader university, there were reoccurring themes of vulnerability and the need to develop and maintain legitimate membership. However, it is significant, in this research, none of the respondents identified a need to obtain, or develop legitimacy within what they defined as their primary discipline, nor were there any suggestions of vulnerability. One respondent described his motivation for engagement with the EdD as:

It wasn’t instrumental in the sense that I was thinking “Oh once I get my doctorate I can then plot my way to become a reader and professor within whatever”, it was not what I’m about or it was simply about wanting to take my understanding as far as I can really. (Participant-B)

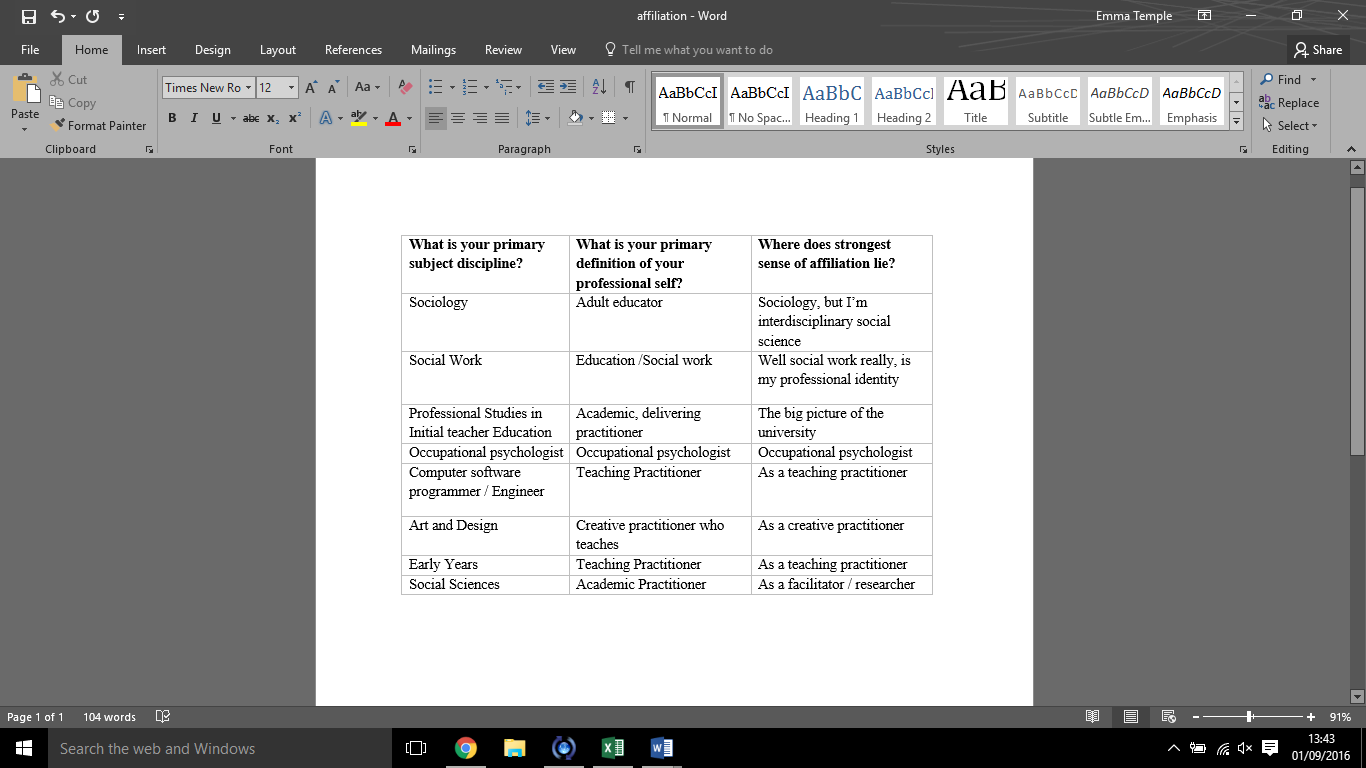
Another, articulating the way she feels about the subject of her thesis says:

It pulls my heart strings all the time. As a teacher at the beginning of my career it interested me, moving up the leadership ladder it still interested me, it still baffles me now, and as a parent the subject that I’m interested in has got lots and lots of research written about it. The bottom line is nobody agrees. (Participant-G)

Here the quest for ‘understanding’ feeds into the personal storyline, and the professional values of the academic community forwarded by Kuh and Whitt (1986, p.76). These, and the responses recorded earlier in the chapter may give the impression that legitimate membership of the academic community is central to the professional identities of the respondents. However, my findings do not support this. Whilst it is evident that being an effective teaching practitioner, and member of the academic community, is highly significant to the respondents, yet it is not presented as the most significant ‘part’ in everyone’s personal storyline.

The table below collates the answers given when respondents were asked to define their primary definition of self, and say where their strongest sense of affiliation lies.

Table Four: Professional Affiliation



What the responses show is that despite the majority of respondents primarily defining themselves as teaching practitioners, their strongest sense of affiliation is to their initial professional discipline, or the teaching profession itself. This would suggest that the “disciplines” conceptualized by Kasher (2005), do not merely provide “the ‘expert’ knowledge upon which all teaching and research is based” (Deem, 2006). It suggests that once inducted into these disciplines (Mendoza, 2007, p.75), members retain a “tribal” (Becher, 1989) affiliation, which is not relinquished when they assimilate into a new academic profession. In addition, it suggests that once assimilated into the academic profession, this again gives “tribal” membership of a culture and community that extends beyond the place of employment. One respondent described the transition as:

Over the last five or six years, I’ve really got into education as a study, and it’s the thing I want to research, rather than the computing programmes. I like programming still. I like playing with robots and things like that, but it’s secondary, it’s like a hobby now. Whereas in the past, the early time I was a teacher, it was the other way round. I was a Programmer doing some teaching. Now it’s changed, and I’m into education as a lifestyle more than anything else. All the research, the interest, and the doctorate itself, that’s how the identity has changed. (Participant-E)

The findings reveal examples of the “dual professionalism” noted by Robson (1998), and the problematic “border crossing” identified by Burgess et al (2011), with respondents having affiliation with both their primary discipline and the academic community. Perhaps what some of my sample represents is a range of practitioners who teach, as opposed to a group of teachers who draw on their primary discipline to underpin that teaching.

One respondent alludes to a tension between the ‘tribes’ of the practitioner based disciplines and the research/academic community, suggesting that some teaching staff perceive their practitioner experience to be of a higher value than research driven teaching; “They do this rationalisation where they go, ‘You know I don’t want to be an academic. I don’t want to do that because I’m a practitioner and I’m out there and I understand things from a practitioner focus’.” (Participant-D). In addition a further tension was identified by another respondent who suggests that those engaging with research may be at odds with other teaching practitioners who were not. He said:

I’m seen to be somebody doing a doctorate, and somebody who will have a doctorate, and there are a few staff who aren’t doing it. One of them, on a teaching only contract, is getting a bit pissed off because it’s like “These people are doing doctorates, and I’m still doing the teaching, and its teaching that brings in the money.” In my institution there’s a lot of people who do a lot of teaching. I still do a lot of teaching; I teach 9 or 10 modules a year. There is a strong feeling that it’s the teaching that brings in virtually all the funding for my department. About 7% of funding comes in from research, the rest from teaching and yet people doing research are doing no teaching. So there’s a strong sense that it is the teachers who are subsidising the researchers. (Participant-H)

And here some of the tensions identified by Robson (1998, p.96) and problematic “border crossing” (Burgess et al. 2011), between disciplines become apparent. The suggestion is that the teaching practitioners ‘who do’ are seen to be at odds with the academics ‘who research’ and the simplistic stand-off between the two groups is revealed in the suggestion that “all those people in academia in their ivory towers, they’ve got a deficit ’cause they can only do that” (Participant-D). However, whilst noting these tensions, this respondent positions herself by saying that the accusation of the ivory towered academic “absolutely isn’t true” and “it certainly doesn’t fit with what the case is now. “(Participant-D)

The “tribal” (Becher, 1989) nature of the academics may be based around the disciplinary cultures within which the primary socialization of the professional occurred (Clarke et al., 2013; Mendoza, 2007). In addition, these disciplines may continue to have a great significance in the formation of personal / professional identity (Lave and Wenger, 1991). The next section of this chapter focuses on the findings of my research in relation to impact, and consequences, of undertaking the EdD on the practitioners’ positions in relation to their own primary disciplines.

For most respondents, the opportunity to focus on subject matter relating to their initial primary discipline represented the most personally rewarding element of undertaking the EdD. The intrinsic rewards for ‘delving deeper’ were articulated in a number of ways. Although each of the respondents believed they were a good, or at least adequate teaching practitioner before undertaking the EdD, they believed the course had enhanced their practice. For some, the development of the subject knowledge strengthened their position within a teaching practice storyline, for others it strengthened their position within the primary discipline. Indicative comments include one practitioner’s suggestion that undertaking the EdD had allowed him to bring more of his primary subject into his teaching practice, “All my reading about politics over the years has been just out of general reading. I think I’ve brought that much more now into my subject discipline.” (Participant-A)

Another would be “I think the different knowledge I’ve gained has influenced my teaching in terms of seeing the bigger picture, or grander concepts, the grand scheme of things” (Participant-H). What this suggests is that developing their knowledge and being able to embed more of it into their teaching practice has created a more comfortable alignment between the practitioners’ teaching practices and their research interests. Another respondent also provides an indication that the learning and research associated with the EdD has allowed him to consolidate twenty years’ worth of learning and to develop a deep understanding of an area associated with his primary discipline:

For me it was about the study, the learning and the topic, and the thesis in itself was important. It was about wanting to get deeply into an area of work that I care about, that I’ve been involved in right back to my social work days really, back to the 90’s. So it feels like the culmination of twenty odd years of slow burn. And in that sense it’s significant because I feel that I’ve got this very thorough deep understanding. I mean it’s a tiny dot, one little tiny area, that’s just gone very deep, that I understand much more about than I did. (Participant-B)

Here there is also a sense that the very deep understanding has raised his position within his primary discipline. In each of the instances cited above, the respondents have reinforced the significance of the learning as opposed to certification, and I would suggest this is an indication of its significance within their personal storylines of development. The pursuit of understanding has more value than the certification, and this is significant in terms of the felt experience of the journey. In addition, it is worth noting that each of the respondents is from a social science background, and as such may adapt readily to working within the social science framework of the EdD.

However, not all my respondents came from a social science background, and given that each discipline formulates its own code and “determinants of success” (Clarke et al., 2013, p.1), those that were not from the social sciences may not have the same ease of “assimilation” (Mendoza, 2007, p.75) into the EdD processes and its requirements. Here there is evidence of some of the problematic “border crossing” identified by Burgess et al. (2011). Whilst this proved unproblematic for most, it was not the case for all. A respondent, from a psychology discipline, articulated the tensions felt as she attempted to work within two very different communities, the social science element of the EdD and the positivist scientific culture of psychology. Here her ‘part’ in the psychology discipline is at odds with her ‘part’ as a social science researcher:

I’ve come from a series of qualifications which are science based, very much quantitative methodology, objective approach, scientific method. … and I really have genuinely undertaken a massive shift in my own belief around what it means to know something or to understand something, or of the benefits of undertaking different types of research. I would’ve laughed at subjective pieces of research. So I’ve massively changed, massively changed on that. (Participant-D)

The “dual identity” (Robson 1998), or “multiple positional identities” (Ritchie, 2002) and “border crossing” (Burgess et al. 2011) cause tensions for this respondent over approaches to epistemology, and it is evident that the “existing cultural practices & discourses” (Robson, 1998, p.596) of each community are inappropriate to the other. Here the “tribal” nature (Becher and Trowler, 2001) of attaching value to differing elements of academic endeavour results in inherent tensions that cannot be reconciled. In this instance, the tensions do not lead to a ‘conversion’ from one discipline to another, instead a “dual identity” (Robson, 1998) is adopted. Here, she explains why:

What’s interesting is I haven’t changed, I haven’t combined those two things. It would be nice if I’d become this really well rounded person that had a good insight knowledge. Actually what happens is, I’m doing a constant flip flopping thing, where I’m going, “Oh my God I’ve been taken in by all this qualitative crap. I’m meant to be objective and rational and I’m meant to be this thing”, and then going, “Oh my God now I’m believing all of that stuff that I was taught to begin with”. And I’m just arguing with myself all the time (Participant-D)

**Summary**

This chapter has revealed the broad range of CPD/Scholarly activities undertaken by my respondents. It emphasizes the significance of ‘audits’ of this work, the pressure to obtain doctoral status, and for some, the reasons for engaging with the role of student.

What has emerged in this section is that the “multiple positional identities” (Ritchie, 2002) and “border crossing” (Burgess et al. 2011) necessitated by being a university employee, a student on the EdD and an academic or teacher maintaining an affiliation to his/her primary subject discipline leaves most respondents with more than a “dual identity” (Robson, 1998). This “creates connections and friction, constantly challenging values, professionalism and identity” (Burgess et al. 2011, p.15). It appears that although the respondents feel they are legitimate members of their primary subject discipline, and the EdD cohort, some feel they need doctoral status in order to obtain/maintain a valued ‘position’ as a university employee. The EdD is being used to reduce the feeling of vulnerability associated with not having the appropriate “cultural capital” (Lin, 2002) within the macrosystem storylines encountered. However, engagement does not reduce the feeling of vulnerability, and in some cases adds new “conversational locations” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2) where the feeling may occur.

How the participants position themselves, or are positioned by others, in their most local or microsystem level storylines is considered in detail in the following chapter. It is here that we find evidence of changes to practice as respondents “interact and negotiate” (Tirado and Galvez, 2007) and subjectively participate in the “jointly produced storylines” (Davies and Harré, 1999, p.37) in their most local communities.

1. Presentation of Findings. Responses in the Microsystems

7.1 Introduction (Professional Practice and Professional Identity).

The previous chapter focused on changes to the respondents’ mesosystems, and as Parding et al. (2012, p.301) suggest, it is not possible to identify or construct “*one* homogeneous and stable culture” within a university. Each university is built on, and shaped by, a matrix of socially constructed and context dependent microsystems. According to Bronfenbrenner (1992, p.39) the microsystem is “the immediate environment” of the developing individual. Within the university it is the faculty/department, and the subject groups within them, that form the microsystems within which the daily “rights and duties” of the individual (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) are established and positions negotiated. In addition, undertaking the EdD, requires interaction with supervisors and the student group, which in turn form microsytems. It is here, in the professional practice and scholarly activity, that most of the personal experiences and “social acts” (van Langenhove and Harré, 1999) of my respondents take place. Consequently, their impact, on shaping professional practice and identity, is profound.

Kasher (2005) suggests that participation in a community binds the members together. Not only does it provide the “context of action of a professional practice” (p.70), it also provides a storyline. Kogan (2000) asserts that effective professional identity is, in part, a consequence of a practitioner’s ability to perform their ascribed roles, and Yamakawa et al. (2005, p.1) agree “that identity formation is an integral aspect of engagement” within a community of practice.

In this research, the respondents, undertaking the EdD as part of their professional development, were asked to consider the impact on their professional practice. This section focuses on their experiences within, what they consider to be, their most local communities associated with their professional life, and reflect on their experiences within them, given that it is here that their professional practice is at its most public. Consequently, the local community may play a more significant role in shaping a practitioner’s sense of professional identity, rather than the macro/exo, and meso-level storylines discussed so far. It is here that local “status managers” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007) determine to some extent, the daily “rights and duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) respondents receive for their work, and the ownership (or non-ownership) of a doctorate may take on a different significance in these storylines.

It is important to consider the responses to status managers, and perceived positions in *both* the place of employment and the EdD journey, as *together*, they shape the professional identity of the practitioners. For many of the respondents, undertaking the EdD is seen as an integral part of their working lives, and their professional standing is determined by the symbiotic relationship of the two roles/parts of practitioner and student.

By exploring the storylines associated with these groups and the “psychological phenomena” experienced as a consequence (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2) it is possible to explore the ways that ”the individual and the social world are co-constituted” (Parding et al., 2012, p.301) and new practices developed. In this section I explore the key themes of the practitioners’ experiences as they position themselves, and are positioned, in different “conversational locations” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2) within their most immediate settings. It is here that “jointly produced storylines” (Davies and Harré, 1999, p.37) reveal changes to professional practice, and in particular the respondents’ perception of what skills and knowledge development their institution might accrue as a result of them undertaking the EdD programme. The responses to each of these themes are presented in turn.

7.2 Changes in the most local Communities.

Trowler and Knight (2000) note that whilst terms of employment dictate membership of specific networks, practitioners actually work within both formal and informal communities simultaneously. It is possible for these communities to be both within and outside of the institution, with varying strength of affiliation. This section focuses on the local communities identified by the respondents. Given that the respondents are practitioners who are undergoing a process of development, whilst working, their identification of their most intimate communities exist within and outside of the institutional context. Two main types of group were identified as providing the micro-system storylines, and these were the teaching/subject group, and membership of an EdD student cohort. These are now presented in turn.

7.2.1 Storyline: The respondent’s local community within the university

Here the storyline is the perception of the most local community, within the institution, as defined by each respondent. However it was defined, this represented a group within which the respondents felt they were legitimate members. Despite one respondent recalling “Initially in the microsystem, my immediate managers and course leaders were slightly suspicious, or hostile, about me doing the doctorate in the sense of ‘How is that helping the course?’” (Participant-F) she concludes “I think they’ve realised that it actually ticks the boxes that they need to tick. So that’s made it easier for me to be doing it” (Participant-F). On the whole the respondents suggested that at this local level they felt supported, and the sense of belonging was evident in the open nature of the interactions described. It is here that the greatest resonance with Becher and Trowler’s (2001) description of the “tribal” nature of academics was found as the “subjectively coherent participants” jointly produced storylines (Davies and Harré, 1999, p.37). Here there is a feeling of warmth in the descriptions of the interaction “So in terms of the microcosm, the subject group, what’s been really nice is how lovely everyone in the team has been about it” (Participant-B). The comradely approach to “I’ve shared my journey with them” (Participant-B) shows the voluntary nature of the discourse, and presence of an ongoing individual and socially constructed (Parding et al., 2012, p.301) developmental process. The result of the social act of ‘sharing’ the challenges encountered during the EdD programme appears to result in obtaining empathetic support, and a communal pleasure at the achievement “I talk to people about what I’m up to and the struggles I’m having. And I think that’s been appreciated and I think people have felt, genuinely pleased that I’ve had a successful outcome.” (Participant-B).

However, what also emerges is a sense that the group adds to the learning process by sharing knowledge and, in some sense, becoming a developmental team by “having conversations, sharing things with me when they found out what I’ve been looking at” (Participant-B) and by being supportive and encouraging. One respondent went so far as to say “just to be able to concentrate on this thing I am learning… is really liberating…That’s one of the reasons why I’d like more of my fellow colleagues to do this kind of higher study” (Participant-F). This would suggest the “context of action of a professional practice” (Kasher, 2005, p.75) is instrumental in supporting the practitioners in order for them to meet the changing demands (Gee et al., 2005), and that perhaps there is a conscious and a subconscious element (Lundell and Collins, 2001) to this adaptation for all involved in the process. This appears to support Sfard’s (2003) assertion that “learning”, or the “learning organisation” is a collective activity rather than an individual activity, and also has resonance with Kuh and Whitt’s (1986) assertions that academics are bound together as a community of scholars. In addition, it is possible to suggest that these communities reflect the character described as “the independent pursuit of knowledge and understanding” (NCIHE, 1997, p.51) described in the Dearing Report. In addition, recognition of a more general move towards research informed practice was articulated by one respondent as “I think there’s been a shift to research informed teaching, but not everybody has to do a doctorate. It’s been ‘How is your teaching informed by research?’”(Participant-G).

The rejection of a “purely instrumental approach to higher education” (NCIHE, 1997, p.51) can be seen in the group’s responses to the doctoral status requirements. However, the respondents recognise an ongoing pressure to obtain doctoral status, and an indicative comment is provided by one as “I think, from what I’ve seen from other groups and things that I’m involved in, it is still a worry. And my feeling is that it’s possible that other people feel as I do at local levels” (Participant-C).

An empathetic response from colleagues was again recounted with warmth by a respondent who described his teaching team’s reaction to hearing he had achieved his doctorate “When they heard I’d passed it, you know warm congratulations and so on. So that’s been really nice” (Participant-B).

The concern for other people at a local level clearly reveals a theme of collegiate empathy (Becher, 1986) and affiliation (Kuh and Whitt, 1986). There is also a sense that the members of these academic groups have a collective identity that readily incorporates learning and research (Kasher, 2005). In this setting, the individual professional identity sits easily within its context and does not appear to be problematic for the respondents (Kogan, 2000). The position of legitimate member within the storyline of these communities suggests that the respondents’ positions within these groups are satisfactory, and the social relationships (Lave and Wenger, 1991) within these communities are collegiate.

The effective assimilation into a community setting is also reflected in respondents’ reflections concerning their experiences within the student cohorts, and this is presented in the next section of this chapter.

7.2.2 Storyline: The EdD student cohorts

The sample used in this research was drawn from a number of student cohorts from two EdD providers. The respondents span different intake years and are at various levels of completion. When discussing their involvement with the formal student cohort, the respondents showed appreciation of the opportunity to engage with a variety of teams, and here we see resonance with Wellington and Sike’s (2006) assertion that practitioners placed “a high value on the collegiality, support, friendship and social interaction” (p.732) that was a feature of professional doctorates. One said “I enjoy the weekends because there’s a good social aspect and camaraderie.” (Participant-H); and another “Yes it’s definitely enhanced discussions, networking, being involved in the sessions and thought processes, it’s made me think and reflect.” (Participant-G). They also gave many examples of the emerging use of smaller social groups, which were characterized by voluntary membership and had developed informally throughout the EdD process. These informal clusters, or learning sets, represent the most intimate communities where the respondents articulate their experience of being both student and researcher. Here the storyline is based around satisfying the requirements to complete the programme of study, and the ‘part’ played by each is as student.

Within this storyline, the respondents again talked warmly about their experiences of being part of a student cohort. As legitimate members they found that sharing their experiences provided support for the individual members and reduced the isolation by “talking to other people and realising that I’m not on my own “(Participant-C).

Here again, Sfard’s (2003) proposal that “learning” is a collective activity has resonance. One respondent characterized her learning set as “There were five of us, and three of us get together regularly, five of us try and get together about every two months or so.” (Participant-C). This was similar to other descriptions of the emerging sub-groups. Here the respondents independently managed their own learning by developing social relationships with peers to pursue their knowledge and understanding in a way that reflects the values identified in the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997, p.51). The groups are described here by Participant-C “it’s really nice to get together to say, ‘How’s your methodology going’? and ‘What epistemology are you using?’“. There is a sense of equity with the other members. The respondent went on to say that there was a strong sense of affiliation with this group “It’s like this special thing,” and that there would be a sense of loss when it was no longer needed “And I think that when I’ve got the doctorate, I won’t have that any more. “(Participant-C). This statement, like many other responses relating to the relationships within the student cohort storyline, suggest that the true value of membership within these groups was often perceived to be the “collegial association” identified by Parker (2011, p.444).

The respondents’ position within the EdD student cohort did not appear to change significantly throughout their journeys. However, it did appear to strengthen the personal storyline of the practitioner. By providing emotional support within a collective activity of learning the respondents were able to meet the “duties” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) associated with the demands of the EdD. Here the focus is on the development of the practitioners, no evaluation of an EdD programme was asked for, or offered; and as the sample was drawn from two EdD providers, these results do not reflect the experiences of a particular cohort, or course.

Like the jointly produced storylines of the respondents’ local community in their universities, the storylines of the EdD student cohorts suggest that my “subjectively coherent participants” (Davies & Harré, 1999, p.37) are comfortable with their positions within them (Wellington and Sikes, 2006, p.732). This might suggest that they feel able to meet the expectations of their peers in terms of being an effective colleague and an effective student.

The next section of this chapter explores the practitioners’ application of new learning within their professional practice. By uncovering how the respondents apply their new “funds of knowledge” (Wagner and Herbel-Eisenmann, 2009, p.9), we begin to see what the respondents identify as appropriate to professional practice; or as Deem (2006) suggests how they attempt to obtain “legitimacy”. Here changes to practice, can be seen as social acts designed to negotiate positive positions, as such they indicate how the respondents ‘repertoire of actions’ have been enhanced by undertaking the EdD process. The section sheds light on “doctoral identity” and its relevance to the 21st century (Burgess et al, p.15). The following section focuses on these social acts, and is divided into three themes; the application of advanced subject knowledge to teaching practice; changes to the processes used in teaching practice; and changes to professional practice in terms of research.

7.3. Social Acts: Changes to Professional Practice.

Using a storyline to define the context within which speech and social acts occur, it is then possible to consider the ‘actions’ of the participants. By this, I mean consider what they do, or what they say they do. Changes to practice, or the application of learning, reveals how the respondents are using the EdD experience to negotiate favourable positions, and also “doctoral identity” and its relevance to the 21st century (Burgess et al., p.15).

This section recognizes that the epistemological growth achieved by undertaking the EdD may result in practitioners perceiving that previous “cultural practices and discourses may be inappropriate to the new professional context” (Robson, 1998, p.596) and adapting accordingly (Mendoza, 2007). Given that adopting the norms of the community is vital for active participation (Sfard, 2003) it is possible to suggest that the respondents will adopt new behaviours that they now perceive to be appropriate in that context (Deem, 2006; Kogan, 2000). However, the individual and social construction of the norms is a dynamic co-constructed process (Lundell and Collins, 2001), and it is important to note that the practitioners are “not only passive receivers but also active agents who influence and sometimes challenge the organisation as well as the profession” (Parding et al., 2012, p.301).

Thematic analysis of the responses suggested that there were three main areas for the development of changes to practice. Each of these is now considered in turn. Areas where the respondents felt strengthened at work are identified, challenges are considered, and changes to professional practice are discussed.

7.3.1 Social Acts: The application of advanced subject knowledge to teaching practice.

The intrinsic reward relating to the development of the subject, or expert “knowledge” (Deem, 2006) required to produce the thesis was thought to provide one of the most pleasurable elements of undertaking the EdD. Some respondents suggested that developing this knowledge was indeed one of the primary motivating factors when deciding to undertake the process. One described it as:

I’ve done Art History, and a certain amount of Art Design Theory, and it’s very specifically linked to practice. To engage in the Humanities in the way that we do via the EdD, and philosophy, and all those things that I’m really excited by make me feel like I’m 20 years behind someone who’s been in humanities from an early stage. There’s all this knowledge I’ve not previously come across. So if I write an essay on artistic knowledge all of a sudden I’m looking at all this material I never knew existed. It’s been exhilarating because of that, but it’s also been very, very mentally challenging. (Participant-F)

Subsequently, many of the respondents then applied this new “distinct body of systematic knowledge” (Kasher, 2005, p.74) to their teaching practice. The acquisition of this new knowledge, and the experience of undergoing the processes of the EdD, had resulted in the respondents developing their ability to conceptualize their ideas, condense their work, and feel more secure when developing and identifying a line of argument. This has resonance with Burgess et al.’s (2011) assertion that their respondents reported a increased ability “to apply evidence bases and to challenge others with a new degree of confidence” (p.15). How this impacts on teaching is now described in more detail by the practitioners.

One respondent said:

During the first year it had a negative effect on my teaching, because I started to get picky about students’ referencing, grammar and spelling. I thought “I can do this, I can get the referencing right” but they’re third year students who don’t know the difference between here and hear, there and their, where and were, they can’t use apostrophes or can’t use apostrophes very well and I’d think “I’m teaching school kids”. Then I thought “They’re a lot younger than me, I’m doing this at doctorate level, they’re still at undergraduate level” but I’m still trying to stretch them. I also think the different knowledge I’ve found has influenced my teaching in terms of seeing the bigger picture, or grander concepts. (Participant-H)

Developing a conceptual and theoretical understanding was identified by a number of respondents. One affirms that her research has informed her practice when she says “most of what I have learnt I have somehow brought back into teaching” and she continues:

The thing that’s helped the most, in regard to my teaching is that I’m much better at naming things for students or saying “Actually this thing that you’re describing here, this is what it might be, and you might want to look at that, and that might be why it’s like that.” So I can probably conceptualise things in ways that I couldn’t before (Participant-F)

She concludes by saying “I feel like I can give them more in the sense that I can point them into more interesting and different directions than I previously could”. In addition, another respondent said that in his opinion “The visualisation of complex theories and frameworks has improved whilst doing the EdD” and he described the subsequent impact on his teaching as “It’s more informed. The detail we’ve gone into on research methods, on models and frameworks. The items I’ve read have really informed practice, and changed a lot of what I deliver” (Participant-E). He attributed this to:

Having to explain over and over again what your research is about, when half the time I’m not clear myself exactly how to present it. So thinking of different ways is good. The posters we’ve done and sitting down trying to explain to others by scribbling on a bit of paper becomes a development point, which is then fed back into practice (Participant-E)

He concludes “That repetitive process of explaining something complex is one of the most useful things I’ve learnt in the entire thing.” This might suggest that the newly acquired “funds of knowledge” (Wagner and Herbal-Eisenmann, 2009, p.9) have resulted in the respondents feeling relatively privileged in a new and valued position. Here although Burgess and Wellington (2010) caution that “possessing the right research skills is essential but that knowledge alone will not be sufficient to achieve a doctorate” (p.163), they do anticipate that the “funds of knowledge” (Wagner and Herbal-Eisenmann, 2009, p.9) developed will “lead to personal and professional development … ground in practice” (Burgess and Wellington 2010, p.163).

Affirmation that the research process resulted in improved teaching practice, or led “to personal and professional development … ground in practice” (Burgess and Wellington, 2010, p.163), was articulated by another who also explained “It’s made me a better teacher, because I can communicate things very clearly, it’s fed into some of my teaching directly in terms of the content and the way I approach it.“ (Participant-B). In this instance the enhanced performance of duties was linked to the recently developed ability to summarise complex information and was described as:

It’s good practice reducing, condensing a 60,000-word thesis into a 20 minute presentation. It’s quite a challenge augmenting your skills, summarising complex information in a short space of time, making it intelligible to an academic audience. I think it’s a good discipline in terms of honing skills. (Participant-B)

The ability to condense information was referred to by others. One said “The thinking process of the EdD, and thinking about how to present my data in an interesting and clear way, has informed and changed my practice.” (Participant-E); and another “I think writing a good 6,000 words is sometimes more difficult than writing a good 12,000 words … clarity of communication, saying something in less space is something I respect” (Participant-F). However, it was not only the summarizing of complex information that had impacted on professional practice, the ability to develop, and identify, a line of argument was articulated by one as:

I see the argument developing, or not developing, much more clearly. That’s a definite improvement. In the past I didn’t quite know what I was looking for. I was trying to explain what ‘the argument’ is, or how to develop a discussion with real depth. Now I can see if the development and the argument flow in the writing. Is it in keeping, with the themes bouncing off each other? Now I feel more confident when I see it. (Participant-E)

These statements support the findings of Burgess et al. (2011) who suggested that their respondents report an increased ability to reflect on professional practice and “apply evidence bases and to challenge others with a new degree of confidence” (p.15). Whilst most of the respondents articulated a belief that their new subject knowledge, ability to conceptualize, and condense their work, and develop a line of argument had enhanced their academic delivery, it was not always the case. The following respondents are very hesitant to suggest that the content of their research has improved their teaching practice. First one said “I can’t say that it has really. I’ll think about it for a minute” (Participant-G) and then another:

The actual content of what I’ve learned hasn’t. I haven’t thought about applying any of the content, I’ve only thought about applying processes, how funny. That’s really odd. I must’ve engaged some of the content and done something differently but I can’t think of an example. (Participant-D)

However, whilst these respondents suggest that the subject content of their research is not used, the second respondent does indicate that the processes encountered developing her own research have led her to reflect on the processes involved in her own teaching. The theme of ‘process’ impacting on teaching, and the student/teacher relationship, was in fact referred to by many respondents and for that reason it is the next theme presented in this chapter.

7.3.2 Social Acts: Changes to the processes used in teaching practice.

Going through the process of the EdD has resulted in the respondents reflecting on the process and outcomes of learning. Each of them articulated the various ways in which their teaching practice and interactions with students had evolved as a consequence. The responses tended to fall into two distinct themes; that of teaching practitioners reflecting on their practice, and that of students reflecting on their personal experiences whilst undertaking the EdD. Whilst both groups reference changes to their teaching practice there is a marked difference in tone. These are now considered in turn.

The responses given when the ‘position’ or ‘part’ of the respondent was that of practitioner resulted in the following indicative comments, “I’m more reflective, and I don’t take things at face value anymore”, the respondent continued:

In the beginning, no matter what I was doing, whatever the definition of being an active researcher is; if I read something in the very, very beginning it might make it so [true]. I read now with more criticality, now I’m always thinking that there’s an alternative. (Participant-G)

Another respondent articulated how his approach to education and teaching had changed:

What is learning? It’s about getting everybody to talk, and start to form opinions. It’s about never imposing any thoughts, other than frameworks for ideas. I think the EdD has allowed me to do that, because I can see that you could write a paper, or a book, strongly justifying the position, but it’s still just your position. The next book on the shelf is someone countering it with other positions and values, but it’s fine to have a debate. I pretty much say, “Well this is one way it could be,” or, “This is another way I’m afraid.” There are no answers, instead I let them create their toolbox and find their own way through it with their own values, and their own beliefs. Because that’s what learning and education is. (Participant-E)

A third suggests that this approach is liberating “It’s definitely given me a greater sense of personal freedom” (Participant-F) attributing this to developing frameworks for her ideas during the EdD process “how to frame it and think about it, the doctorate has helped me do that”. Here there is resonance with the findings of Burgess and Wellington (2010) whose respondents suggested that “undertaking research was empowering” (p.168). It is significant to note that what binds these three responses together is that they are from respondents considering their experiences from the ‘part’ or ‘position’ of a teaching practitioner, and as such suggest the EdD has developed and changed their conceptualization of education and their own teaching practice.

Whilst these comments may suggest that the EdD process had reframed these practitioners’ approaches to their professional practice, increased their confidence and developed their framework for analysis, they were not outcomes shared by all the respondents. Other reflections made by respondents reflecting on their experience from the ‘part’ or position’ as a student reveal less favourable outcomes.

We have clearly seen in earlier sections of this chapter that the position of ‘student’ holds inherent tensions for many of the respondents. This is experienced in terms of “the multiple roles and the difficulty balancing them” (Wellington and Sikes, 2006, p.732) and the tensions associated with “border crossing” (Burgess et al. p.15). The uncomfortable uncertainty associated with being a student was referred to by one respondent as he recounted his experience of developing his research. “One of the really important things I learnt about the process doing the EdD was not to get anxious about not knowing, or feeling as if you were walking through a fog, or treading through kind of treacle” (Participant-B). Here the process is characterised as a potentially challenging emotional experience requiring resilience when faced with few clues to determine one’s own position. This uncertainty about position was reflected in other responses with practitioners suggesting that during the process, as students, they were attempting to produce a ‘level’ of work, without being quite sure what that ‘level’ was. One participant said “I remember a couple of years ago I was told I need to write at a more doctoral level and I’m like, and that would be what?” (Participant-C). This was a recurring uncertainty, and a number of respondents suggest there was a sense of communal bewilderment as to what specifically was being asked of them. One respondent suggests:

We’re all trying to look for this secret, we feel there’s a secret how to get it. And that once you’ve got it, you know the secret, you’re not allowed to tell. So it’s like we’re trying to find this secret, that’s how it feels. (Participant-C)

The statement suggests that the quest to discover the elusive ‘secret’ binds the student group together, and unifies them in a position of deficit as they seek initiation. It reveals a perception that ‘the knowledge’, perhaps the “distinct systematic proficiency” identified by Kasher (2005, p.74), is shared amongst the “status managers” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007, p.5) of the doctoral community but is not always explicitly disclosed to those hoping to join them. The key to uncovering the hidden measure was identified as “You know it when you see it.” and “Its ‘doctoral loveliness’ again isn’t it?” concluding with frustration “Because none of these things can be quantified.” (Participant-C).

These findings have resonance with the work of Wellington (2013) as he attempts to define “doctoralness”. Whilst he suggests there are five possible areas to search for the meaning of a doctorate, signposting “the purpose of doctoral study; the impact of doctorates; written regulations for the award of the doctorate; the examination process; and the voices of those involved in it.” (p.1491) these do not appear to make explicit the ‘level’ of work required from the respondents in my research.

Searching for clues as to how this ‘level’ could be reached, or the key to successful “induction” (Mendoza, 2007, p.75) at doctoral level, was articulated in terms of engagement with the feedback process encountered during the EdD. Anxiety became a reoccurring theme,

You know everybody I talk to who’s doing a doctorate says, “You put your heart and soul into something and then it’s given back and, well it’s got cut out, or somebody’s written all over it” and the emotional response is “God you know I sweated blood to do that. (Participant-C).

Despite the rationalization that “The people who’ve done that aren’t nasty people, and I think it’s part of the doctoral journey, of needing to argue it” (Participant-C) the emotional response remains “But inside, I can’t look at feedback for at least a week. I just can’t.” (Participant-C)

Some of the respondents’ own emotional reactions to the feedback process they had encountered led them to develop a more empathetic understanding of students within their own teaching practice. Recognition of this was articulated by one, when asked what she would change about her own teaching practice as a consequence of undertaking the EdD, “Would that be timely feedback? [*laughter]*. That sort of changed my empathy and sympathy with students about those types of things. “(Participant-D)

After reflecting on her own reaction to not getting as much feedback as she would have liked she said “I’ve always been slightly suspicious of this model of give people the resources and send them off to do things by themselves and they’ll be okay.” (Participant-D). She went on to say that her experience on the EdD “Made me think a little bit more about the psychological impact of doing that. What it means for people to be uncertain, and the stress” (Participant-D). Consequently, she reviewed her teaching practice and said that although previously “with masters students and I’ve given them projects to go and do with very little guidance, you know problem based learning, go find the solution to this.”; she concludes that although “they ultimately come back with some brilliant answers, actually that’s not enough because you’ve made them really unhappy for weeks because they didn’t know what they were meant to be doing, and that is a problem.” (Participant-D). As a result, the changes made to professional practice were identified as:

In the past I would’ve just gone “Off you go”. Now I put in more structured periods of time, actually “Okay I just want to have a chat with you about this, we’ll have half an hour once a week around where are you at this stage.” And if they come in and go, “Everything’s fine, we’re on target”, brilliant. But they might just come in for the psychological reassurance. (Participant-D)

Both of the previous sections of this chapter have focused on how undertaking the EdD has resulted in changes to teaching practice. The following section focuses on changes to professional practice in terms of research. In the previous chapter I presented findings in relation to the practitioners’ previous engagement with Continuing Professional Development and noted the extent to which they present at conference, publish and develop other research outputs. The following section collates the responses of the practitioners when they describe the impact that undertaking the EdD has had on these activities.

7.3.3 Social Acts: Changes to professional practice in terms of research.

Most respondents suggested that the professional development relating to their ability to write and disseminate research “ground in practice” (Burgess and Wellington, 2010, p.163) was a positive outcome. An indication that the ‘tools’ of research were identified and improved was cited by one who said “It’s definitely sharpened up my thinking, the way I think about all sorts of things, ’cause it does give you those general theoretical tools to be able to really hone a concept or an argument.” (Participant-B). The ways in which these new skills develop the practitioner as researcher are now considered in more detail.

The practitioners’ ability to review literature, and utilize it in their own work was discussed by two respondents. The first talks about how his attitudes to literature, and references, have changed:

Prior to this I might do a slide for students and say it’s from this author. But now I wouldn’t feel comfortable putting something in if I hadn’t read it, because I know you can read things at different levels and you can read something and think “Oh yeah that makes sense” but there’s also a different meaning. Also you can sometimes read papers and look at a reference and find it might be misquoted, or they’ve done something different. I won’t use secondary sources now. (Participant-H)

The second respondent focuses on how his approach to using published work has developed, leading to a more critical consideration of the context and research methodologies used:

One of the things I’ve done is read lots of literature on literature reviews. I knew what a literature review was, or I thought I did until I really read the critiques of literature reviews, and the concepts of it. That’s made me think in a lot more detail about developing an argument…Finding the argument is not just a matter of finding two differing viewpoints, it’s about really going into depth and talking about maybe the methods that they’ve used in the journal, talking about the context it was written in versus the context of other pieces. So that definitely improved. (Participant-E)

The development of a deeper understanding of research methodologies, and the acquisition of research language, or “possessing the right research skills” (Burgess and Wellington, 2010, p.163) were perceived to provide some of the key benefits of undertaking the EdD. They are examples of the ‘funds of knowledge’ or ‘cultural capital’ necessary for successful “assimilation” or “induction” (Mendoza, 2007, p.75) into the research community. One respondent said “Now I can converse around methodologies, theories and theoretical frameworks in a way I couldn’t do twelve months ago” (Participant-E), and another “I can articulate it in a way I couldn’t before” (Participant-F). This was also reflected by another who said “I think what has been very good, what I wasn’t quite prepared for, was how much it would teach me, and give a much more in-depth understanding of research principles and ideas” (Participant-B). The application of this learning is shown in the subsequent description of work based interactions:

I’m much more confident speaking to them about some of these nefarious things like ontology, things I didn’t even know what they meant before, it’s magical theory. I can now just articulate it in a perfectly formed sentence. (Participant-B)

This description suggests that not only are the respondents engaging in new “conversations” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2), they are also experiencing a more positive ‘position’ as a consequence. This is reinforced by Participant-B, he concludes “It’s certainly given me more knowledge, experience of research, and I’m now much more confident about doing research.” The increased confidence and commitment to research can be seen in the responses of these participants who suggest “I hope the doctorate, and my thesis, would then take me on a journey to continue to be a bit more specific, or even widen, my research” (Participant-G) and:

I want to continue to research in a way that creates a product. I’ve never created a concrete product from beginning to end, because I’ve gone on to the next thing. Now I’m thinking, “I want to write this up, with the literature review, and research to justify it”. (Participant-E)

In addition to this increased confidence, the perception that ‘positions’ within the university and local level storylines had improved appeared to be shared by most of the respondents. They suggested that undertaking the EdD has strengthened their position at work by familiarizing them with the language of research. They also suggested that the collegiate nature of research had resulted in the development of new partnerships, which had in turn impacted on their research outputs. These partnerships often developed within the EdD student community of practice and indicative comments included “One of my EdD colleagues and I are just getting a paper ready to put into SRHE” (Participant-C). The new partnerships were not restricted to peer groups and outputs were also developed with the respondents’ EdD supervisory teams. One respondent reported they had “ One paper on methodology, which is going to be a joint paper with one of my supervisors, has been submitted to a journal, I’m not sure it’s going to be accepted but it’s been submitted “(Participant-B). In addition to co-producing work, the respondents suggested that the targets for the dissemination of their work had also changed. The tendency was to aim to produce articles for peer review journals, which allows recognition within the Research Excellence Framework (REF). One respondent said “I’m hoping to get quite a lot of journal articles from it that are certainly REF ones” (Participant-G), another:

What the EdD would allow me to do, is to focus on narrower peer reviewed academic journal articles, sole authored, which I don’t have so much of. It would take my publishing, in a different direction perhaps. (Participant-B)

It was acknowledged that the production of the EdD thesis played a significant role in developing publishable material, and volume of publications was also seen as a target, “I’m looking to get four papers out of the thesis. I’ve got one; actually it’s going to be published next month actually so I’m pleased about that.” (Participant-B)

Here we can see that “the distinguishing features of a professional doctorate … (and) the undertaking of an original piece of research” where “a grasp of research methods is required” (Burgess and Wellington, 2010, p.162) have had a positive impact. My respondents’ comments suggest that they are now aspiring to be active participants in the REF storyline, which contrasts with the CPD activity undertaken prior to undertaking the EdD. It is significant as it would suggest that a consequence of engagement with the programme has expanded the “conversational locations” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2) within which the practitioners position themselves, and their social acts have consequences. Collectively, these individual contributions to the REF might result in changes to the university positioning within that framework. An acknowledgement that this was recognized both by the individual, and the university, was seen in the descriptions of institutional pressure to build, and maintain, a research profile. One respondent said “Our institution has got its finger on the pulse with who’s doing what, and who’s bidding for what; bid outputs, REF outputs. We are research investment funded so there’s a very neat audit trail.” (Participant-G) and another:

They keep a log of all the conferences and then publish on an annual basis or semester basis…again its esteem factor for the university that people are going to these national conferences …So I suppose you would call it social capital, building good social capital networks that just get your name known. (Participant-B)

Before moving on to explore how the information presented in this chapter provides the answers to the initial research questions, this section concludes by presenting the respondents’ summing up of their emotional responses to undertaking the EdD. The section is used to establish the trustworthiness of the respondents’ previous descriptions of the process and establish “the relationship between discourse and the psychological phenomena” experienced as a consequence (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2).

7.4 Reflections on the Emotional Responses to undertaking the EdD.

Previous chapters have explored the practitioners’ initial reasons for undertaking the EdD, and the trustworthiness of their responses has been explored in detail within the various ecological systems of their professional practice. Within the ecological systems, I have explored the ‘social acts’ the respondents have undertaken, which Taylor et al. (2003) suggest is to negotiate their identities and obtain the most rewarding positions. This closing section focuses on the respondents’ ‘over all’ emotional responses to taking that journey. It is significant as the conceptual framework used for this analysis recognizes that ‘positioning’ will itself determine the “psychological phenomena experiences as a result” (Taylor et al., 2003, p.211). This section uses the *Ecological Positioning* lens to view the relationship between discourse, negotiation, position and the psychological outcomes for my respondents. The section includes relatively longer quotations from the respondents in order to provide a rich and accurate representation of their perceptions. These findings consider the full range of emotional responses expressed throughout the interview process, in order to provide a comprehensive analysis with which to answer the initial research question.

The literature review, presented in Chapter Two, suggested that I might expect to discover a degree of discomfort amongst full-time teaching practitioners experiencing the additional undertaking of a doctoral programme. In particular, if Winefield and Jarrett (2001) were correct, then academics that engage in teaching and research will run the likelihood of experiencing high stress levels, with “multiple roles and the difficulty of balancing them” (Wellington and Sikes, 2006, p.732) possibly leading to what Watts and Robertson (2011) term ‘burnout’. The No doubt the respondents in my research might have anticipated elevated levels of stress prior to engagement; however, despite this they decided to undergo a process with the intention of achieving doctoral status. Whatever their expectations were, the following comments reveal the ‘felt’ experience of the journey.

Although none of the respondents suggested they were experiencing the ‘burnout’ predicted by Watts and Robertson (2011), their comments suggest they were very aware of the impact on their workload. One said:

Sometimes when I do a lot of work, within a couple of minutes of finishing, I suddenly feel really tired and have to have a sleep. You get very tired, you get eye strain, and you can spend a whole weekend not speaking to anyone just doing that and thinking, “Oh God is it me?” (Participant-H)

Another described it as “I feel I’ve got a weight, I feel very much that there’s this burden” (Participant-C) suggesting that the process added an uncomfortable dimension to her workload. This respondent went on to say that the process left her feeling “Quite vulnerable” which echoes many of the responses presented earlier in this chapter. However, this was not a unanimous experience as another respondent was more pragmatic in her response to the demands of the EdD:

I’m okay because it’s something that I wanted to do. I picked the time that I wanted to do it … I know I’ve got to do it. Sometimes I get tired and a bit grumpy with my peers when I’ve got deadlines at work and blah, blah, blah, blah. I just think I’ve to prioritise. I get grumpy because I think others might not know that this thing is important to me, but it is. Sometimes the deadlines don’t match up, but other than that I’m okay. (Participant-G)

However, there were many indicators that for some the process is indeed a stressful and emotional one. The extent of the impact is described by one as, “It’s stress. It’s some mad fits of weeping at times, and how do you fit this in?” (Participant-D). Tears of frustration were a recurring theme, here articulated by another:

I’ve had times where I have wanted to pick up my laptop and throw it through the window. I’ve had times where I’ve been fighting tears because I just think I’m getting it all wrong. I’ve had times where I wanted to cry in frustration. (Participant-C)

In addition to citing frustration and vulnerability, there was an acknowledgement that emotional resilience was necessary to successfully complete the programme. The emotional rollercoaster associated with producing work was described by one as:

Painful, you know I’m only just starting my thesis. I’m really excited about that, but for the first two years we get a subject, I’m really excited, I start looking into it, I’ve got lots of “aha” moments, then I start writing. I think it’s going to be alright but it’s disastrous, then I realise how much I don’t know, then I somehow soldier through and finish the assignment and I’ve passed. (Participant-F)

Others, again acknowledging the endurance required, responded differently to the challenge. Here the response is positive, with the respondent giving himself the ‘part’ of a motivated athlete in his personal storyline:

It’s like an athlete, pushing themselves, their training and knackering themselves. Someone says “Well why don’t you just stop doing it? If it’s that hard just stop.” Well cause actually at the end of the day it’s what I get out of bed for, I want to do it even though I find it hard. (Participant-B)

Despite the pressure, enjoyment is experienced by others, “The overriding feeling is that it’s a pressure, and I think that’s unfortunate because I do really enjoy it, when I’m in it, I really enjoy doing it” (Participant-D) however she goes on to suggest that the corporate pressure regarding the timing of her doctorate had consequences and affected her engagement with the process:

The whole thing could be marvellous and I sometimes think, ‘What a waste, I’d have really enjoyed taking three years and doing a PHD and arsing about like they do’, and going to seminars, doing a bit of this and a bit of that, I’d really enjoy that. And I haven’t been able to enjoy it. (Participant-D)

Here the opportunity to select from a range of learning opportunities, and do something marvellous, has been replaced with a less enjoyable experience. Acknowledgement that institutional pressure to undertake an EdD has consequences for practitioner engagement was articulated by another “There’s a difference where someone is doing something simply because they’re made to do it. You can probably do the EdD, but whether you enjoy it is a different question under those circumstances.” (Participant-B). This may well be the case as other respondents, who maintain that their undertaking of the EdD was not connected to corporate pressures, report “I really, really enjoy being a student again” (Participant-F) and another responds:

I love my work, love my research, love my children and my family more. So it’s all quite finely balanced. If anything happened to the family and I had to stop then I wouldn’t know whether the job would go, or the EdD would go. (Participant-G)

And third states “The EdD journey has been a personal challenge… a quest to produce a really good one… even though I don’t really know what a good one is.” (Participant-E)

What is emerging here is that when mandates drive engagement enjoyment is not expected, or seen as an entitlement, and it is viewed as a second class experience. This suggests that there may be two major narratives regarding engagement with the EdD; one driven by instrumental engagement (without the expectation of enjoyment), and one driven by the “independent pursuit of knowledge and understanding” (NCIHE,1997, p51). Two respondents, who maintain they had independently determined the timing of their EdD’s, described their approach as “I’m really excited, it’s been exhilarating but it’s also been very, very mentally challenging.” (Participant-F) and another as “I’m putting myself through this pain, not because I was told to but because I actually enjoy it and I want to do it.” (Participant-B). However, although the timing of this respondents research was initially presented as being without institutional directive, there is still a suggestion that the university’s position on doctoral status had been influential as it provided an opportunity; “It was certainly strongly encouraged and supported. To be fair, the university’s paying the fees, so it’s the only chance I’m probably going to get that’s not going to cost me a significant amount of money.” (Participant-B)

An appreciation of the opportunity to develop something new, and valuable, was a theme repeated by many respondents. One suggested:

I’ve really liked the taught elements they were really important to me. I didn’t quite understand why I needed to do them. I was teaching some of the stuff that we were getting taught. Then at the weekends I felt like I actually knew nothing, and I needed those elements. I could have quite happily finished after those taught elements, knowing I’d learnt so much. The value was there, and then getting let loose on your own dissertation, your own thesis. The beginning of it was exciting because I had a target, I had it all planned. I knew exactly what I was doing, so I was off and running, and I loving that bit. (Participant-E)

However, managing “multiple roles and the difficulty of balancing them” (Wellington and Sikes, 2006, p.732) reveals the additional responsibility and meeting pre-existing work demands, resulted in a significant emotional impact on the respondents. One described it as:

I’ve not yet reached the point of despair, or panic, or thinking I can’t do this. I was struggling but I overcame that. It’s been hard work; literally I’ve given up three out of four weekends to spend more time writing and have given up a lot of my social life just to do this. I just know it’s going to be worth it to get the doctorate. (Participant-H)

However, others were not so positive and used motherhood as an analogy to illustrate the intensity of feelings. Here the respondent uses her ‘part’ as mother in two personal storylines to compare a sense of loss, of ‘missing out’:

This is a very similar process to having a baby and working at the same time. All of those things that a full time mother does; going to the mother and toddler group and all of that, you do some of that stuff but you do it in a much more compressed way… the EdD feels a bit like that. Read this, think about that, 10 minutes to think about it, and none of the enjoyment in the process. (Participant-D)

The respondents’ desire to slow down and focus on the doctorate is clear, the process is obviously valued, yet she feels she is missing opportunities, and enjoyment, due to time constraints and conflicting demands. Another respondent uses a motherhood analogy to compare the production of a thesis to caring for a baby:

This EdD, is like a baby. Nobody else wants to know about it, and nobody else cares really. But we want to be able to say, “He didn’t sleep through the night” and I know it’s not my fault but everybody will judge me. It’s continually feeling that you’re being judged by the deficit model, because your baby isn’t perfect, because it’s not doing what a baby should because it’s not doing all the things the book says. (Participant-C)

Here the ‘part’ of mother in these storylines, articulates a sense of frustration, isolation, inadequacy and vulnerability. Not only is this felt in the context of the EdD when “being a student reminds you how painful the feedback can be” (Participant-F) but also impacts on the professional identity of the practitioner within the context of their employment. Participant C explains “I find it really difficult because there’s this continual power thing going on…When somebody treats me without dignity and respect, because I haven’t got a doctorate, that’s not so good.” (Participant-C). This response indicates that the multiple ‘parts’, within a variety of simultaneously occurring storylines, cause a continual shift in the sense of self, and unpredictable conversations and ascribed positions.

Although intense and powerful emotions were recurring themes, the reactions to them varied. Some used their emotions to provide focus and to drive their efforts:

It’s a personal challenge to produce something I’m really satisfied with. I know I’ve got a target and I want to finish, and I will finish, because I’m determined that I want the doctorate. I want to be a Dr. I’ll be well cool and my mum will be happy. (Participant-E)

The respondent who has completed the award says:

It’s been a very positive experience for me. Very, very powerful journey. I went into it deliberately, I embraced it and did it in a very structured way; I structured my time at home, weekends, and evenings. I’d a routine and a system for doing it. It was a labour of love, I didn’t find it a drudge because I was engaged in it. It was something I was interested in. (Participant-B)

Here there is a sense of the positive, powerful interest that has driven the practitioners to build the research programme into their daily life. The need to systematically incorporate it was picked up by others:

You’ve got to be tactical about this. When you’re reading something you’ve got to think “Actually where does this come in? Am I just reading this for fun?” Because I’m not allowed to read things for fun or because I’m interested. Does this directly fit somewhere in my research or not? (Participant-D)

Here the respondent suggests that the practical engagement leaves no time for ‘fun’ as she prioritizes the production of her research.

The ‘process’ of undertaking the EdD frequently appeared to contain ‘unpleasant’ elements with an indicative comment being “It’s quite an unpleasant process, with two steps forward and one step back. It does mean that I’m going forward.” (Participant-C). It was the anticipation of completing the process that provided the motivation to continue. Here, summed up by one as “I think about all the time I’ve invested in it. It doesn’t make sense to stop now.” (Participant-E), and another “It’ll be a huge sense of achievement, huge sense of achievement.” (Participant-C).

It is possible to suggest that the emotional responses to the EdD may be viewed differently with hindsight. After completing the process the memories may be reframed by the participants in this research, and some of the experiences forgotten. However, the analysis of the data collected has provided a rich insight into the lived experiences of those who are two, three and four years into the process.

**Summary**

It is apparent that the psychological phenomena experienced whilst undertaking the EdD are profound; it is indeed a ‘powerful journey’. Whilst most respondents reported feeling vulnerable, stressed, frustrated, and pressured, they also suggested that the process included elements of enjoyment, excitement, and exhilaration. The key challenge was “multiple roles and the difficulty of balancing them” (Wellington and Sikes, 2006, p.732), specifically balancing the demands of teaching and research (Winefield and Jarrett, 2001), and this was met with a sense of ‘quest’.

Whilst feeling vulnerable, many of the respondents reported feeling supported within their most local communities at work, and the student cohorts. Though these formal and informal communities are never defined, it appears that within them the members are comradely, empathetic, and the learning is shared. This supports Sfard’s (2003) suggestion that learning is a collective activity, Kuh and Whitts’s (1986) belief that academics are indeed bound together as a community of scholars, and Wellington and Sikes’ (2006) assertion that respondents place a “high value on the collegiality, support, friendship and social interaction” (p.732) that featured in their doctorates. Respondents talked warmly about these groups, indicating they were comfortable with their positions within them.

These communities, or storylines, were comfortable places to be, with the respondents applying elements of their learning, as social acts, and changing their teaching practice. The respondents believed they had become more reflective, critical and conceptual in their approach to education and student interaction. Many suggested that their confidence had grown and consequently they felt better able to frame, identify and justify an argument. Whilst a number of them reported that the position of student had left them feeling vulnerable and uncomfortable, this had in fact strengthened their teaching practice by renewing their empathy with their own students. They agreed that resilience and perseverance were key attributes necessary for successful completion, and that emotional responses to feedback can be challenging.

An enhanced knowledge of the “research methods” (Burgess and Wellington, 2010, p.162) was a key development for most of the respondents. In addition to reporting that the EdD had sharpened their thinking, respondents suggested that the ability to review literature and utilize it in their own work had resulted in them using more precise referencing, engaging with a more critical approach to using and reading literature, and a consideration of both the context and the methodologies used by other researchers. The respondents’ development of a richer understanding of the language of research, and the range of research methodologies available, were identified as some of the most significant benefits of undertaking the EdD. Not only did this increase the confidence of the respondents, but also resulted in them feeling strengthened in their positions within the universities.

In addition, the respondents reported engaging with new conversations and networks. The respondents developed new research groups, and informal learning sets, both in the work based settings and within the student cohorts. Here the respondents suggest they are now aiming to produce published outputs, in peer review journals, which ideally would count in the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Whilst the doctoral thesis plays a significant role in developing the publishable material, it is not the only focus for outputs, and the respondents suggest that there will also be an increase in co-produced papers with their colleagues. If this is the case then collectively these individual contributions to the REF might result in changes to the university positioning within that framework. Here the collective activity develops a “learning organisation” (Sfard, 2003) where the collective of practitioners act as “status managers” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007 p.5) as they attempt “to serve the interests of (its) stakeholders in the best possible way” and by doing so shape the identity of the community, and influence its subsequent status or position in the broader context. Ultimately they may have become “empowered” and “highly marketable and employable” as Burgess and Wellington (2010, p.168) predict. However, whilst this may indeed be a long term consequence of doctoral engagement, the short term consequences were not always as favourable.

What this research has revealed is that the positions respondents hold within the evolving storylines associated with the EdD journey, and their internal careers, are indeed complex, and interrelated. The social act of undertaking the EdD has ramifications for the practitioners’ sense of self, and reasoning, or personal storyline and their subsequent positioning within the various ecological systems of the profession. The implications of this research, recommendations, and limitations are presented in more detail in its closing chapter

1. Conclusion

8.1 Summary of the Findings of this Research

The previous chapters have used the evidence collected in the data analysis, and the literature review, to generate *An exploration of professional learning, and revised “internal careers” (Lengel 2001; Schein, 1990, 1978) experienced by HE teaching practitioners undertaking the journey of the EdD.*

What appeared to bind my respondents together was the appreciation of ‘learning’ and the intrinsic benefits of undertaking doctoral research. In particular, the development of subject specific knowledge and a deeper engagement with research methodology were highly valued on both a professional and personal level.

Indications were that for most of the respondents undertaking doctoral work had been a long-held intention, and that the current engagement was a consequence of “the time being right”, and part of “reaching their full potential”. However, an awareness of the changing significance of doctoral status, and institutional pressure to achieve it, was also evident. At least two of the respondents clearly indicated that undertaking the EdD was perceived as a necessity in order to protect their jobs, and feel secure with regard to future employment. Here doctoral status is not only an imperative for what Lengel (2001) and Schein (1990, 1978)define as the “internal career”, it is also a requisite for the “external” one located in institutional frameworks and policy.

Given that the road to doctoral status is a long one, it was important to find out what effect the journey had on the practitioners throughout its duration. Did the respondents think that undertaking the EdD had changed their position within their macro, exo and microsystems, and if so, in what way? The answers to these questions reveal in more detail how the internal careers are experienced at various points of engagement.

This final chapter ties together the various issues raised, in the discussion sections, to provide answers to the thesis research questions. These are considered in turn, before the implications of this research are presented. Finally, I offer recommendations for policy within higher education institutions, before identifying the limitations of the study, and direction and areas of future research.

8.1.1 What were the drivers for engaging with Doctoral research, and how did this fit with their ‘internal careers’ (Lengel, 2001; Schein 1990; 1978) in terms of where they think they are going in their working lives?

Section 6.3 of this thesis presents the initial reasons given for engagement with the EdD, and reveals the rewards anticipated at its conclusion. Whilst some respondents maintain that the undertaking, and timing, of the EdD was a choice free from corporate mandates and pressures, for others it was necessary in order to maintain some control over their “positions” (Taylor, Bougie and Caouette, 2003, p.205), within their place of employment, and the broader higher education sector. As such, these findings support Scott et al. (2004), and Wellington and Sikes’ (2006) assertion that “ultimately it is difficult to classify motivations as extrinsic or intrinsic” (p.732) as “the line between them is often faint” and not “mutually exclusive” (Burgess and Wellington, 2010, p.163).

Whilst both motives illustrate the position the EdD holds within their internal careers, the instrumental engagement illustrates how revisions in the internal career have occurred as a response to the new imperatives and requirements made on practitioners by universities (Burgess and Wellington (2010), and in this instance indicates personal, or “positioning” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2) responses to policy change. What also emerged was that for some the “psychological contract”, in terms of what is given and what is to be received (Sparrow, 1996, p.93), has changed, and that these changes are impacting across the sector. As a result, the terms of employment, and subsequent professional identities of practitioners, are also being redefined. Given that “what it means to be a teacher and learner” (Ball, 2004, p.24) is changing, EdD engagement can be viewed as a response to the changes in perceptions of what a higher education practitioner should be. How this fits with the individuals “internal careers” (Lengel, 2001; Schein, 1990; 1978) is a much more complex and personal issue, however my findings have shed some light on “doctoral identity” and its relevance and value in the 21st century (Burgess et al., 2011, p.17).

What emerged is that the majority of respondents were not anticipating any major changes to their current employment roles. Continuing to define themselves as teaching practitioners, they appeared to reject the possibilities of pursuing a career based solely on research, or a move towards a more managerial position in the future. In this sense, undertaking the EdD can be seen as “positioning” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.2) to ensure professional security within the existing roles of the practitioners.

8.1.2 How had undertaking a research programme impacted on the practitioners’ academic professional identity, in terms of responses to changes within the academic community, recognition and resulting professional identities?

My respondents shared characteristics of those involved in the work of Burgess and Wellington’s (2010) research in that they were already established in their careers, and my findings mirror theirs in that my respondents “identified the doctorate directly with career development” (p.168). My practitioners identified a range of changes within the “storylines” (Simon, 2013, p.6) of their academic communities, most notably a pressure to produce ‘REFable’ research outputs, and the need for doctoral status. All of the respondents indicated they were willing to attempt to adapt to these new requirements in order to continue working within the sector.

The respondents indicated that, for them, the current ‘goal’ is to maintain legitimate membership of the teaching profession, within their existing universities. In order to remain secure in their “roles” (Taylor, Bougie and Caouette, 2003, p.205) it has become necessary to adapt to the changing norms and practices of these communities, and the achievement of doctoral status is seen as necessary for assimilation. In addition, the notion of being a ‘bona fide’ academic is central to their responses, with the acquisition of doctoral status bringing with it a sense of validation and achievement. Not only was this seen as desirable in terms of the internal career, it was also viewed as necessary in order to remain a legitimate member of the “new order” (Sparrow, 1996, p.1) of the external career within the university.

Although the respondents were not anticipating changing their roles, it was apparent that they had considered the possibility before rejecting it. They believed there were two main options for them in terms of the external career paths available, but neither seemed to match their current internal career choices. The options were perceived to be either to move into a managerial position, or to aspire to becoming a researcher. The reasons for rejecting these possibilities are now considered in more detail.

Becoming a researcher was dismissed for a number of reasons, the main one being that the respondents did not feel they could achieve the level of work required for successful assimilation into that community. Some suggested that they would never obtain legitimacy in that field because their current mid-life and mid-career position would render them uncompetitive. Others suggested that they did not believe that research would not be as personally fulfilling as teaching. However, on the whole there was a sense that the anticipated sense of legitimacy within their own role was far more attractive than a less legitimate position within a new community of practice. Therefore it is the current positions within a broader university context that have the most value in personal storylines and internal careers.

Whilst my respondents did not appear to be considering changing their roles, this does not conflict with Burgess and Wellington’s (2010) findings that “undertaking research was empowering” (p.168) or that completing a doctorate “opened up opportunities, making them more competitive and promotion worthy” or “highly marketable and employable” (p.168) as a consequence.

8.1.3 What were practitioners’ emotional and stress responses to the changes encountered?

It is evident that the changes to the sector, the profession, and professional practice contained inherent tensions for the practitioners. High workloads, and changing demands brought with them increased stress levels for the respondents, and the process of undertaking the EdD appears to demand emotional resilience, specifically with regard to “border crossing” (Burgess et al., 2011, p.15). However, this journey was mainly met with a sense of ‘quest’.

Although most respondents referenced the challenges of undertaking both research *and* teaching (Winefield and Jarrett, 2001), they noted the support of their local communities (Kasher, 2005; Kuh and Whitt 1986; Wellington and Sikes, 2006) who they characterized as communities of scholars. Within these communities the values of the Dearing Report, specifically “the independent pursuit of knowledge and understanding” (NCIHE, 1997, p.51) appear present.

Whilst all respondents were aware that doctoral status was desirable, Lyotard’s (1984) concept of the “merchantilization of knowledge” had a greater resonance for some. Respondents reported that when corporate pressures drive engagement, then ‘enjoyment’ is neither expected, nor seen as an entitlement, and the learning experience itself is regarded as a second class option. What *Ecological Positioning* revealed was that it was the current “positioning” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.5) within the “mesosystem” (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p.40) that caused tensions for these respondents, as in this context the lack of doctoral status had its greatest influence. In terms of chronology, this suggests that the recent pressures to obtain doctoral status are, in effect, changing the student experience, and “doctoral identity” (Burgess et al., 2011) for some. The mid-life, mid-career respondents in my research, who were pressured to engage with doctoral study, appear to find the doctoral journey difficult in terms of time and workload (Wellington and Sikes, 2006) less enjoyable (than those who chose the time of their engagement), and experienced a greater challenge to maintaining their internal careers.

Most respondents experienced some tensions associated with “dual identity” (Robson, 1998), “multiple positional identities” (Richie, 2002), and “border crossing” (Burgess et al., 2011), whilst being a student on the EdD, a HEI employee and a teacher. Satisfying the requirements of a range of “status managers” (Branco and Rodrigues, 2007, p.5), including Supervisors, Managers and Students, brought with it a range of challenges relating to personal identity.

Whilst feeling personally vulnerable, many of the respondents reported feeling supported within their most local communities at work, and the student cohorts. Although these formal and informal communities are never defined, it appears that within them the members are comradely, empathetic, and the learning is shared. This supports Sfard’s (2003) suggestion that learning is a collective activity, Kuh and Whitts’s (1986) belief that academics are indeed bound together as a community of scholars, and Wellington and Sikes’ (2006) findings that respondents place a “high value on the collegiality, support, friendship and social interaction” (p.732) associated with the journey. Respondents talked warmly about these groups, indicating they were comfortable with their “positions” (Yamakawa et al., 2005, p.5) within them.

The intrinsic rewards associated with “undertaking an original piece of research” (Burgess and Wellington, 2010, p.162), developing a deeper subject knowledge is undoubtedly the most rewarding aspect, for my respondents, of undergoing the EdD process. Although doctoral status is one of the primary objectives, it is the pursuit of knowledge that characterizes the richness of the journey. How this is applied is considered in the following section of this chapter.

It is worth noting that, on completion of the EdD the participants anticipate a great “sense of achievement” and this intrinsic reward is highly valued. Here the doctoral status, and professional identity of ‘bona fide’ teaching practitioner, has positive implications for both the individuals, and the institutions within which they work.

8.1.4 What skills and knowledge development might an institution accrue as a result of practitioners undertaking an EdD programme?

Whilst obtaining doctoral status appears to have little to do with any desired repositioning within a broader university “storyline” (Simon, 2013, p.53), it may have a more significant impact on the professional practice and specifically the teaching and research conducted by the practitioners. Here the knowledge developed as a consequence of the engagement with the EdD may extend their “repertoire of actions” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6) and lead to changes in the way their duties are conducted.

The majority of the respondents suggest that their professional practice had changed as a consequence of engaging with the EdD. This supports the findings of Burgess et al. (2011) who report their findings show an increased ability to reflect on professional practice, and “to apply evidence bases and to challenge others with a new degree of confidence” (p.15). My respondents suggest they have developed a more reflective approach, the development of critical and conceptual frameworks, and a greater ease with the language of research as the key skills developed. A more in-depth understanding of the specific area of research “ground in practice” (Burgess and Wellington, 2010, p.162) was seen to be the key knowledge development, which in turn, was perceived to strengthen the practitioners’ teaching. As a consequence, an institution might accrue research-led teaching, a greater number of research outputs, an increase in the quality of the research outputs, and a broader network of collegiate working groups.

Further reinforcement that the employing institutions will benefit from the investment in the EdD process can be found in the respondents’ desire to remain in their current roles. The notion of engaging with “storylines” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.6) outside the existing place of employment was only mentioned by two respondents. The first recognizes that doctoral status creates opportunities, the other is open to the possibilities that may arise, but does not have a clear ‘goal’ in sight at this point.

The implications of these findings are now discussed in more detail.

8.2 Implications

This section of the chapter considers the conceptual and practice implications resulting from the discussion of the topic, before moving on to present the recommendations for policy within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

This research has elements that provide an addition to knowledge. The first is the presentation, and use, of the *Ecological Positioning Model* as a conceptual tool for analysis. The second is the time-bound snap shot of the experiences of a specific group of higher education teaching practitioners who, for various reasons, have undertaken an EdD. Throughout this thesis I have identified how this particular piece of research builds on the existing work of Wellington (2013), Burgess et al. (2010), Burgess and Wellington (2010), Wellington and Sikes (2006) and Scott et al. (2004) to develop a greater understanding of “doctoral identity” and its relevance in the 21st century (Burgess et al., 2011, p.17). First I consider the conceptual implications of my research, then the implications for practice.

8.2.1 Conceptual Implications

The original *Ecological Model* and *Positioning Theory* are both centred on four elements: Person, Interaction, Context and Time, and therefore have relatively complementary tenets. Both recognise the “big D and little d” (Gee, 2005) discourses currently shaping the higher education sector, and both are helpful when analysing the impact of contextual changes on teaching practitioners. However, although each of these models has something to offer, each also has some gaps when used individually. By drawing on both approaches, it was possible to synthesise a third option and provide a new lens for investigation.

By putting the hybrid *Ecological Positioning Model* into practice I tested its effectiveness at handling data. Clegg and Hardy (1999, p.3) note that organisations are “social arenas of situational behaviour” simultaneously consisting of both formal and informal structures, with Mayere and Vinot (1993, p.78) noting the “existence of relationships independent of the possible existence of formalised structures”. In addition, Waton (2008) asserts that individuals within an organisation frequently have objectives that are incongruous with those of the organisation itself, and practitioners should not be viewed as ‘slotted’ into a role but instead as participating in an on-going alliance, to achieve corporate objectives whilst still attempting to satisfy their own personal goals. I would suggest that it is this co-existence of structural and affective realities that is explored using the *Ecological Positioning Model* in orderto get closer to an understanding of the realities of the respondents in this research. By combining the structural analysis of the *Ecological Model* with the fluidity of the discursive approach of *Positioning Theory,* I was able to derive a fit-for-purpose analytical tool with which to conduct the analysis of my data. This allowed me to harnesses the strengths of two ontological perspectives in order to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of the respondents. The *Ecological Model* provided one level of analysis, allowing me to identify and code the systems inhabited by the respondents. However, a more detailed picture was obtained by analysing the experiences within these structural layers using the *Positioning Theory* lens which then revealed the relatively rapid, and perhaps temporary, fluctuations in professional identity. By using both analytical tools it was possible to reveal the dynamics of the social role, patterns of tensions, and uncover how structured, and at the same time complex, the respondents’ experiences are. It also revealed some of the fluctuations of professional identity, “multiple roles and the difficulty of balancing them” (Wellington and Sikes, 2006, p.732) that occur in the various “conversational locations” (Yamakawa et al*.* 2005, p.2) that make up the respondents’ working lives.

The new model’s key contributions lie in its ability to structure the inquiry, code the data, and the presentation of the findings. Systematically using *Positioning* to identify ‘storylines’ within the *Ecological* systems, allowed me to harness the strengths of both approaches. Whilst *Ecological* *Theory* supplied a structure to the thematically grouped narratives, discourse and ‘rights and duties’, it was *Positioning* that allowed the ‘values’ to be identified concerning the positions contained within them.

The hybrid of these approaches allowed the articulation of the ways in which the respondents simultaneously engage in multiple conversations, “multiple roles” (Wellington and Sikes, 2006, p.732), have a range of ‘positions’ and cannot be defined by any singular facet of professional identity. Also, the recognition of the fluid and dynamic nature of discourse (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999) provided an important element to this approach, because it served as a reminder that ‘positions’ are by their nature temporary experiences, and striving for long-term goals is not determined by a singular moment or action (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

The hybrid approach provided a strong scaffold on which to locate macro level policy changes, the impact on the universities, consequences for practitioners, and in my research the perceptions of the respondents. I believe the qualitative data underpinning this work reveals a very human and professional picture, which I hope I have analysed in a way that draws attention to the intentions and experiences of the respondents. It is the *Ecological Positioning Model* which unifies the approach to each respondent and by doing so creates a systematic approach to presenting the perceptions of a non-homogeneous group.

8.2.2 Implications for Practice.

This research has focused on how some practitioners are attempting to control positions in their internal and external careers, and their personal storylines. It has focused on practitioners currently undertaking a Doctorate in Education (EdD), and whilst I would suggest that an increased pressure to undertake doctoral work may result in higher student numbers on the EdD, it may also change the ways in which these new students behave and shed light on “doctoral identity” and its relevance to the 21st century (Burgess et al., 2011, p.17).

Although for some, engagement with the EdD was a choice free from external mandates and pressures, for others it was more instrumental. The indications are that the requirement of doctoral status will remain, and that those teaching practitioners without one will feel increasing pressure to obtain one.

The research has shown that the degree of change encountered, by mid-life mid-career practitioners, may be felt more strongly by those employed within post-92 universities as these universities increasingly make doctoral status an entry level qualification for teaching practitioners. I would suggest that within these institutions, existing staff without doctoral status will experience increasing vulnerability, as the status of “doctoral identity” shifts in the 21st century (Burgess et al., 2011, p.17). I note that the prospect of undertaking a programme of doctoral study may prove too daunting for some, and as a consequence these professionals may reconsider their career in teaching. Others who chose to engage may do so in an instrumental way; however some will enjoy the experience and discover an aptitude for research.

Whilst my respondents indicated that they had intended to undertake an EdD ‘when the time was right’, there was also an awareness that the institutional frameworks and policy requirements for doctoral status is becoming more common place. This implies that what it means to be a teacher in post-92 universities is changing, and some practitioners will experience job insecurity as a result. Not only was the acquisition of doctoral status seen as bringing a sense of validation and achievement, in some instances it was seen as neutralising a deficit in order to become a ‘bona fide' academic. I would suggest that, within post-92 universities, as the proportion of teaching practitioners holding doctoral qualifications increases through the use of entry level qualifications in recruitment and existing staff engaging with doctoral research, those who are without it will feel an increased sense of vulnerability and experience the ‘trainee’ or ‘illegitimate’ status alluded to by my respondents.

Completion of the EdD does not appear to be linked to any significant anticipated changes to employment for my respondents. The implication of this is that it is within their existing roles, with their current employer, that any developments and improvements to practice will be experienced. Consequently, any employer funding (or part funding) the EdD as a staff development opportunity is likely to reap the benefits of that investment as the funds of knowledge developed as a consequence lead to changes in the way that duties are performed.

If the EdD produces confident, resilient, reflective and critical teaching practitioners (Burgess et al., 2011, p.15) with a renewed empathy with students then the institutions who employ them should be strengthened as a consequence. In addition, if Burgess and Wellington (2010) are correct, then completion of the award will result in practitioners finding it has “opened up opportunities, making them more competitive and promotion worthy … highly marketable and employable” (p.168). Scholarly endeavours, on an individual and collaborative basis should reveal a more critical approach to literature and methodologies, and be confidently articulated in the language of research.

If my respondents’ aspirations are realised, completion of the EdD will result in an increase in published outputs, ideally located in the Research Excellence Framework (REF). If this occurs, then it may in turn contribute to the repositioning on the university in its broader context.

This work is time-bound in that the interviews, conducted in 2015, record teaching practitioners' responses to that specific period of time. Changes in government, funding and direction mean that this is a time like no other, and I am not aware of any other research that is attempting to capture the implications for mid-life mid-career teaching practitioners, specifically with regard to their engagement with the EdD and its impact on their internal career.

8.3 Policy Recommendations.

In Chapter One I acknowledged that, for me, engagement with the EdD was largely instrumental and that I had felt pressured to obtain a doctorate in order to feel secure at work. I was also uncertain about the reasons why teaching practitioners were being encouraged to undertake such research, and how exactly it would prove beneficial. This research has provided some answers to these questions. My research shows those teaching practitioners undertaking this research process believe that they do indeed develop many desirable skills and attributes that will enhance teaching. Whilst Burgess et al. (2011) find that their research leads them to question whether “workplace/employers (are) involved in shaping the curriculum or the pedagogy of the Professional Doctorate in their discipline?” (p.17) my research leaves me asking Are institutions explicitly aware of these benefits to teaching, and is that the reason for encouraging teaching practitioner engagement? Alternatively, they may see enhanced teaching as a by-product of a teacher’s enhanced research capacity. Is the primary intention of the employing institution to assimilate their existing teaching practitioners into a researcher community, or is it to enhance their performance within the teaching community? If it is to enhance teaching, then I would recommend that alternative routes are explored and presented as comparable options. A focus on the pedagogy needed to create group learning skills for both staff and students would be helpful.

I am very aware that, despite being strongly encouraged to undertake this programme, no-one has ever actually explained to me what my employer hoped to achieved by encouraging me to do so (other than increasing its doctoral footprint, and perhaps the production of REFable outputs). I would therefore recommend that institutions consider, and make clear, their rationale for encouraging teaching practitioners to undertake this particular developmental route. This is particularly important as my research indicates that instrumental engagement may well be more commonplace in the future. I also recommend that the institutions communicate their expectations to the staff they support on doctoral programmes of study. I believe there would be a benefit to developing a greater interplay between the institution and the practitioner to determine what the intended outcomes are, before the course is entered into. This dialogue may include alternative, and equally challenging, scholarly activities or pedagogic development projects. Although the focus of this recommendation is slightly different to that of Burgess et al. (2011) I would suggest that we both conclude that “workplace/employer” involvement … in shaping the curriculum or the pedagogy of the Professional Doctorate” (p.17) might prove beneficial.

Providing clear guidance in terms of what the institution might see as a desirable outcome may allow the practitioner to steer their experiences to meet them. I am in no way suggesting that an employing organisation should dictate what should be researched, and how. However, by identifying the types of performance improvements the institution wishes to see the practitioner may be helped to shape his/ her development in more meaningful ways. To simply refute this, and say “at doctoral level your research is your own, you own it” seems to be a denial of reality, the changing roles of education, and the experiences of those working within it.

In addition, if we are to see a rise in instrumental engagement with EdD providers, then this needs to be recognised, and accepted, by the providers themselves. It may require changes to the provision in terms of access and communication, and requires a clear contract between the student and supervisory team. No doubt the respondents in my research had access to such documents however their lived experiences as a student, led them to reflect on their own relationships with their students, and as a consequence revisit their teaching practice and attempt to bring the heart of the Student Charter closer to its centre. I would recommend EdD providers reflect on this, and identify what it is that leads to these consequences.

These recommendations recognise that the Student Charter, provides a necessary and helpful structure around which the student experience is built. It is insufficient on its own to provide the most successful learning experience for students. It is the way that practitioners ‘flesh out’ this experience, through developing and providing the social and interpersonal elements of learning, that form the current character of education. If the values of “the independent pursuit of knowledge and understanding” (NCIHE*,* 1997, p.51) is evolving into something new, the educational establishments need to be mindful that policy alone will not determine the outcome, it is the practitioner who is the status manager in terms of customer service i.e. student learning.

8.4 Limitations to the research

This section identifies and considers some of the limitations to my work before going on to identify directions and areas for future research. The research has presented, and tested, a new conceptual framework of analysis *Ecological Positioning*, and I believe it has allowed me to advance theory by formulating a new methodological model, and to obtain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of my respondents than could be obtained using either the *Ecological Model* or *Positioning Theory* alone.

Chapters Three and Four have already identified that some might suggest that the hybrid model of *Ecological Positioning* creates tensions, suggesting that the ontological position of the *Ecological Model* would deny the premises of *Positioning Theory*. Whilst I would dispute this and maintain that structural and affective realities co-exist I accept that not everyone would agree. My justifications for maintaining this position are outlined throughout my research.

In addition, I note that the qualitative nature of the research would also be rejected by those who view it as impressionistic and question its objectivity, reliability and validity. The ability to replicate and verify my findings may also be questioned. However, here I would suggest that, whilst my research seeks to uncover the realities of practitioners in a particular contextual setting, it is their responses that reveal which phenomena are present, and this strengthens the reliability to justify making claims about it.

I am also aware that my position as a mid-life mid-career higher education practitioner may well have had some influence on the way that I approached both the respondents and the data. Throughout the process I was mindful of this and made every attempt to avoid making assumptions, or influence the respondents. Throughout the data collection I stressed that there were no ‘right’ answers, and that their responses would allow me to complete the same formal learning process (the EdD) that they themselves were on. Whilst I believe that this may have made them more willing to participate, and help-out a fellow student, I do not believe it influenced what they said about their own experiences, and to that end I accept the influence, but am unable to say what limitations it makes in this context.

A further limitation to this research was its scope. It was restricted in terms of the number of respondents, the number of EdD cohorts accessed, and the timescale allocated. It is addressing these limitations that provide direction and areas for future research, which are outlined in the concluding section of this chapter.

8.5 Direction and areas for future research

This research has provided a snap-shot picture of the experiences of eight higher education practitioner, and as such is a small scale piece of research. As it currently stands, this research has generated data and ideas which can be used to develop material for publication, or conference dissemination. The findings relating to the lived experiences of mid-life mid-career academics in Higher Education may be of interest to journals focusing on Further and Higher Education, and an article that outlines *Ecological Positioning* as a methodological approach might be of interest to journals focusing on qualitative research.

One obvious area for future development would be to repeat the research with a larger sample to see if the patterns of response are indicative across a wider range of practitioners. In addition, some aspects of the findings could be explored in more depth, for instance the impact of gender, or ethnicity. However, conducting the same research with less experienced, or younger, practitioners undertaking the EdD would also allow for a comparison with the mid-life- mid-career sample and perhaps shed light on the ways in which the chronological position in life shapes the practitioners’ perceptions.

It would also be interesting to conduct follow up interviews with the participants of this research, perhaps in two years’ time, to discover if their perceptions of the EdD journey change after having completed the process. In addition, re-visiting this sample would also allow an investigation into the impact completion has on both the respondents’ internal and external career.

Another area for development may be to repeat this research method, with a different sample group, and focus on the transferability of the *Ecological Positioning* Model and its ability to explore similar contexts. By doing this on my own, or in collaboration with others, it would allow me to explore whether I have created a conceptual model that others could use to structure their data collection and subsequent analysis. If this occurred, then it could lead to adjustments to the model and potentially improve it.

1. Reference List

Adams, R. (2013) Prospective university students ‘swayed by league tables’ *The Guardian* Friday 5 April 2013 Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/apr/05/university-league-tables> [Accessed: 5th April 2013]

Anderson, V. *Research Methods in Human Resource Management. 2. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, 2009. 385 s*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cipd.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4FC54E8D-7070-4D2F-A59E-DA319599E75F/0/> [Accessed: 1st June 2014]

Avis, J. (1996) The enemy within: Quality and managerialism in education, in Avis, J., Bloomer, M., Esland, G., Gleeson D., & Hodgkinson D. (Eds) *Knowledge and Nationhood*. London, England: Cassell.

Babbie, E. (2015). *The practice of social research*. Boston, Massachusetts: Cengage Learning.

Ball, S. J. (2004). Education for sale! The commodification of everything. *Department of Education and Professional Studies Annual Lecture, Institute of Education, London (June 2004)*. Retrieved from: <http://sys.glotta.ntua.gr/Dialogos/Politics/CERU-0410-253-OWI.pdf> [Accessed: 10th May 2013]

Bassey, M. (1981). Pedagogic research: On the relative merits of search for generalisation and study of single events. *Oxford review of education*, *7*(1), 73-94. Retrieved from: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003143.htm> [Accessed 3rd June2014]

Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers’ professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20,* 107–128. Retrieved from: <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/11190/10?sequence=1> [Accessed: 10th February 2014]

Becher, T. (1989) *Academic tribes and territories: Intellectual enquiry and the culture of disciplines.* Buckingham, England: Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE)/ Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press.

Becher, T., & Trowler, P. (2001). *Academic tribes and territories: Intellectual enquiry and the culture of disciplines*. Maidenhead. England: McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative Research in Education*. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.

Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural production*: *Essays on art and literature* Cambridge, England: Polity.

Branco,C.M., & Rodriques, L. (2007). Positioning stakeholder theory within the debate on corporate social responsibility. Retrieved from: <http://ejbo.jyu.fi/pdf/ejbo_vol12_no1_pages_5-15.pdf> [Accessed: 10th June 2014]

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1992). *Ecological systems theory*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1993). The ecology of cognitive development: Research models and fugitive findings. *Development in context: Acting and thinking in specific environments*, 3-44. Retrieved from: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=WtrgAwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA295&dq=Bronfenbrenner,+U.+(1993).+The+ecology+of+cognitive+development:+Research+models+and+fugitive+findings.+Development+in+context:+Acting+and+thinking+in+specific+environments,+3-44.&ots=4QWYQTPloJ&sig=76wLTKz-tZPEPuc54c3l-IRHZRU#v=onepage&q&f=false> [Accessed: 14th October 2015]

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. *Readings on the development of children*, *2*, 37-43. Retrieved from: <http://www.psy.cmu.edu/~siegler/35bronfebrenner94.pdf> [Accessed: 14th October 2015]

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1999). Environments in developmental perspective: Theoretical and operational models. *Measuring environment across the life span: Emerging methods and concepts*, 3-28. Retrieved from: <http://www.uncg.edu/hdf/facultystaff/Tudge/Bronfenbrenner%201999.pdf> [Accessed: 14th October 2015]

Bronfenbrenner, U. & Morris, P. A. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology, Vol. 1: Theoretical models of human development* (5th ed., pp. 993-1023). New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Browne, J. (2010). *Securing a sustainable future for Higher Education an independent review of higher education funding and student finance*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/422565/bis-10-1208-securing-sustainable-higher-education-browne-report.pdf> [Accessed: 19th September 2013)

Burgess, H., & Wellington, J. (2010). Exploring the impact of the professional doctorate on students’ professional practice and personal development: Early indications. *Work based learning e-journal*, *1*(1), 160-76.

Burgess, H., Wellington, J., Weller, G., & Lima, C. (2013, April). Border Crossings in the Process of Writing. In *Papers* presented at the International Conference on Doctoral Education: Organisational Diversity and Differences in Practice. University of Central Florida, Morgridge International Reading Center, Orlando, Florida, April 16-18 2013 (p. 56).

Cable,V. (2011) *Department for Business Innovation and Skills. Higher education Students at the heart of the system.* Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31384/11-944-higher-education-students-at-heart-of-system.pdf> [Accessed: 19th September 2013)

Chartered Institute for Professional Development (2016). *The Psychological Contract*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/psychological-contract.aspx> [Accessed: 10th August 2016)

Clarke, M., Hyde, A., & Drennan, J. (2013). Professional identity in higher education. In *The academic profession in Europe: New tasks and new challenges* (pp. 7-21). Springer Netherlands.

Cicourel, A. V. (1980). Language and social interaction: Philosophical and empirical issues. *Sociological Inquiry*, *50*(3‐4), 1-30. DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-682X.1980.tb00015.x

Clegg, S. and Hardy, C. (1999) *Studying Organisation: Theory and Method.* London, England: Sage

Coaldrake, P., & Stedman, L. (2013). *Raising the stakes*. Brisbane, Australia: University of Queensland Press.

Cohen, L. M., & Manion, L. l. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*, *6*. London and New York: Routledge

Cohen, L. (1976). *Educational research in classrooms and schools: A manual of materials and methods*. London, New York: Harper & Row.

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1999). Positioning and personhood. In R. Harré, & L. van Langenhove, (Eds.) *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action.*(pp 32-52)Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers

Dearing, R. (1997) The national committee of inquiry into higher education: Higher education in the learning society. *Report on National Consultation.* London, England: Higher Education Quality Council.

Deem, R. (2006). Changing research perspectives on the management of higher education: can research permeate the activities of manager-academics? *Higher Education Quarterly, 60*(3), 203–228. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2006.00322.x

Denscombe, M. (1998). *The Good Research Guide*, Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.

Denscombe, M. (2007). *Good research guide: for small-scale social research*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press

Eisner, E. W. (1991). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York, New York: Macmillan.

Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, USA: Prentice-Hall

Gavron, H. (1966). *The captive wife: Conflicts of household mothers*. Oxford, England: Humanities Press.

Gee, J. P. (2005) *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and* method (2nd ed). London and New York: Routledge

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Univ of California Press.

Gravetter, F., & Forzano, L. A. (2015). *Research methods for the behavioral sciences*. Andover, England: Cengage Learning.

Grebenik, E., & Moser, C. A. (1962). ‘Society: problems and methods of study' in Welford, A T, Argyle, M, Glass, O & Morris, JN (eds) *Statistical Surveys*. London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hall, D. T. (1996) The new role of the career practitioner. In D. T. Hall (Ed.), *The career is dead – long live the career*: (pp 314–336) San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.

Halsey, A. H. (1992). *Decline of donnish dominion: The British academic professions in the twentieth century* (Vol. 27). Oxford University Press, USA.

Harré, R. Gillett, G. (1994) *The Discursive Mind*. London, England: Sage Publications.

Harré, R and van Langenhove, L. (1999) *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of*

*Intentional Action.*Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers

Harré, R., & Van Langenhove, L. (Eds.). (1998) *Positioning theory: Moral contexts of international action*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.

Harré, R., & Moghaddam, F. M. (Eds.). (2003). *The self and others: Positioning individuals and groups in personal, political, and cultural contexts*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Harré, R., Moghaddam, F. M. & Cairnie, T. P. et al (2009) Recent advances in positioning

theory. *Theory & Psychology* 19(1): 5–31. Retrieved from: <http://fathalimoghaddam.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/1256625732.pdf> [Accessed: 22nd November 2014]

Harré, R., & Moghaddam, F. M. (Eds.). (2003). *The self and others: Positioning individuals and groups in personal, political, and cultural contexts*. Westport, Connecticut, USA: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Henkel, M. (2000) *Academic Identities. Policy Change in Higher Education,* London, England, and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Higher Education Funding Council (2015) *National Student Survey.* Retrieved from: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/nss/> [Accessed: 1st August 2016]

Higher Education Statistics Agency. Retrieved from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/> [Accessed: 1st August 2016]

Irvine, F., Roberts, G., & Bradbury-Jones, C. (2008). The researcher as insider versus the researcher as outsider: Enhancing rigour through language and cultural sensitivity. In *Doing cross-cultural research* (pp. 35-48). Springer Netherlands.

Kasher, A. (2005). Professional ethics and collective professional autonomy: A conceptual analysis. *Ethical Perspectives*, *11*(1), 67-98.

King, N. (1994). Qualitative methods in organizational research: A practical guide. *The Qualitative Research Interview*. 17. Retrieved from: <https://scholar.google.co.uk/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=D2AiexAAAAAJ&citation_for_view=D2AiexAAAAAJ:ZeXyd9-uunAC> [Accessed: 7th November 2015]

Kinman, G., & Jones, F. (2005). Lay representations of workplace stress: What do people really mean when they say they are stressed? *Work & Stress*, *19*(2), 101-120. DOI: 10.1080/02678370500144831

Kinman, G & Wray S. (2013) *Higher Stress. A survey of stress and well-being among staff in higher education*. UCU . Retrieved from: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/5911/Higher-stress-a-survey-of-stress-and-well-being-among-staff-in-higher-education-Jul-13/pdf/HE_stress_report_July_2013.pdf> [Accessed: 25th August 2015]

Knight, P. T., & Trowler, P. R. (2000). Department-level cultures and the improvement of learning and teaching. *Studies in higher education*, *25*(1), 69-83.

Kogan, M. (2000). Higher education communities and academic identity. *Higher Education Quarterly, 54*(3), 207–216. Blackwell Publishers Ltd. DOI:10.1111/1468-2273.00156

Kuh, G. D., & Whitt, E. J. (1986). *The invisible tapestry: culture in American colleges and universities* (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, No. 1). Washington: The George Washington University.

Kvale, S. (1994). Ten standard objections to qualitative research interviews. *Journal of phenomenological psychology*, *25*(2), 147-173. DOI: 10.1163/156916294X00016

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Lambert, R. (2003) *Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration*. Retrieved from: <http://www.vinnova.se/upload/dokument/Verksamhet/Kommersialisering/Nyckelaktorer/lambert_review_final_450.pdf> [Accessed: 19th March 2014]

Leeds Beckett. (2015) *Academic Role Framework*, Retrieved from: <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/assets/images/hr/academicframework/pdf/academic-role-framework-lecturer.pdf> [Accessed: 22nd August 2016]

Lengle L. (2001), The Information Economy and the Internet, in OUR FRAGILE WORLD (OF) *Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development* Volumes I,II, pp24 - 44, Oxford, England: Eolss Publishers. Retrieved from: <http://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c04/e6-33-03-01.pdf> [Accessed: 7th March 2014]

Lin, N. (2002). *Social capital: A theory of social structure and action* (Vol. 19). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Linehan, C., & McCarthy, J. (2000). Positioning in practice: Understanding participation in the social world. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *30*(4), 435-453. DOI:10.1111/1468-5914.00139

Lundell, D. B., & Collins, T. (1999). Toward a theory of developmental education: The centrality of discourse. *The expanding role of developmental education*, 3-20.

Lyotard. J F (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge,* (Trans G Bennington, B Massumi) Manchester, England: Manchester University Press. Retrieved from: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/idav/documents/Lyotard_-_Postmodern_Condition.pdf> [Accessed: 7th March 2014]

Macintyre, C. (2012). *The art of action research in the classroom*. Routledge. London and New York

Matheson, D. (2014). *An Introduction to the study of education*. Routledge. London and New York

Matthews, B., & Ross, L. (2014). *Research methods*. London, England: Pearson Longman Higher Ed.

Mayere, A., & Vinot, F. (1993). Firm structures and production networks in intellectual services. *Service Industries Journal*, *13*(2), 76-90.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Drawing valid meaning from qualitative data: Toward a shared craft. *Educational researcher*, 20-30. DOI:10.3102/0013189X013005020

Miles, M.B & Huberman., A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. London, England: Sage.

Miller and Crabtree (1992) *Doing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications

Moghaddam, F. M., Harré, R., & Lee, N. (2007). *Global conflict resolution through positioning analysis*. New York, New York: Springer Science & Business Media.

Moser, C. A., & Kalton, G. (1971). Survey methods in social investigation. *Survey methods in social investigation.*, (2nd Edition). London, England: Heinemann.

Nisbett, J., & Watt, J. (1978). Case study. Redguide 26: guides in education research. Nottingham, England: University of Nottingham School of Education.

Nixon, J. (1996) ‘Professional identity and the restructuring of higher education,’ *Studies in Higher Education*, 21 (1): 5-16. DOI: 10.1080/030750796123331381417

Office of Public Sector Information (1998). *Data Protection Act* 1998 (c.29) London: HMSO Retrieved from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/pdfs/ukpga_19980029_en.pdf> [Accessed: 9th July 2015]

Parding, K., Abrahamsson, L., & Berg-Jansson, A. (2012). New conditions for identities, cultures and governance of welfare sector professionals: The teaching profession. *ephemera*, *12*(3), 294.

Parker, L. (2011), ‘University Corporatization: Driving Redefinition’, *Critical Perspectives on Accounting,* Vol. 22, No. 4*,* pp. 434-450. DOI:10.1016/j.cpa.2010.11.002

Pascale, R.T., Millemam, M., and Gioja, L. (2000) *Surfing the Edge of Chaos*, London, England: Texere Publishing Ltd

Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health services research*, *34*(5 Pt 2), 1189. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1089059/?page=1> [Accessed: 12th August 2015]

Payne, G., & Payne, J. (2004). *Key concepts in social research*. London, England: Sage.

Pelias, R. (2004) *A Methodology of the Heart*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.

Punch, K. F. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*. London, England: Sage.

Quality Assurance Agency (2015) *Safeguarding Standards and Improving the Quality of UK Higher Education*. Retrieved from: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us> [Accessed: 9th July 2015]

Ramsden, P. (1998) *Learning to Lead* London, England: Routledge

Research Excellence Framework (2014) *REF2014* Retrieved from: <http://www.ref.ac.uk/about/> [Accessed 17th March 2015]

Rhoades, G. (2007). The study of the academic profession. In P. J. Gumport (Ed.), *Sociology of higher education. Contributions and their contexts* (pp. 113–146). Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ritchie, J., & Spencer, L. (2002). Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. *The qualitative researcher’s companion*, *573*, 305-329.

Robson, J. (1998) A Profession in Crisis: status, culture and identity in the further education college.*Journal of Vocational Education and Training*. 50.4 pp 585-607 DOI:10.1080/13636829800200067

Schein, E. H. (1978) *Career Dynamics: Matching Individual and Organizational Needs*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

Schein, E. H. (1990) *Career Anchors, Trainers Manual.* San Diego, California: Pfeiffer, Inc.

Schein, E.H. (1996) *Career Anchors Revisited, Implications for Career Development in The 21st Century. Society for Organisational Learning* (Online) Retrieved from: <http://www.solonline.org/res/wp/10009.html#ref> (Accessed: 24th April 2014]

Scott, D., Brown, A., Lunt, I., & Thorne, L. (2004). *Professional doctorates, integrating professional and academic knowledge*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Scott, P. (2015) ‘Stop treating universities as if they were a football game’, *The Guardian*, Tuesday 3rd February 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/feb/03/universities-league-tables-distorting-research> [Accessed: 3rd February 2015]

Scott, P. (1995) *The Meanings of Mass Higher Education.* Buckingham, England: SRHE and Open University Press.

Seale, C. (1999). Quality in qualitative research. *Qualitative inquiry*, *5*(4), 465-478. DOI: 10.1177/107780049900500402

Sfard, A. (2003). There is more to discourse than meets the ears, In C. Kieran, E. Forman and A. Sfard (Eds.)  *Learning discourse: Discursive approaches to research in mathematics education*, (pp 13-57) New York, Boston, Dordrecht, London, Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers13-57.

Shaw,C. and Ratcliffe, ‘Academics under pressure to bump up student grades, Guardian survey shows’ *The Guardian*, Monday May 18 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2015/may/18/academics-under-pressure-to-bump-up-student-grades-guardian-survey-shows> [Accessed: 18th May 2015]

Shaw, C and Ward, L. (2014) Dark thoughts: why mental illness is on the rise in academia. *The guardian professional* *Higher Education Network* 6th March 2014 Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2014/mar/06/mental-health-academics-growing-problem-pressure-university> [Accessed: 6th March 2014]

Sheffield University. Research Ethics. Retrieved from: <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/research/ethics> [Accessed: 14th June 2015]

Simon, A. (2013). *The Social Positioning of Supplementary Schooling*. Retrieved from: <http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/4160/1/Simon13PhD.pdf> [Accessed 2nd April 2015]

Slocum, N., & Van Langenhove, L. (2003) Integration speak: Introducing positioning theory in regional integration studies. In R. Hare & F. Moghaddam (eds.) *The self and others: Positioning individuals and groups in personal, political and cultural contexts,* (pp 219-134) Westport, Connecticut: Prager.

Sparrow, P. R. (1996), Transitions in the Psychological Contract: Some Evidence from the Banking Sector. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 6: 75–92.DOI:10.1111/j.1748-8583.1996.tb00419.x

Strauss, A.L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Student Charter Group (2011) *The Student Charter Group Final Report.* Retrieved from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32420/11-736-student-charter-group.pdf> [Accessed: 1st May 2015]

Sudman, S., & Bradburn, N. M. (1974). *Response effects in surveys*. Chicago: Aldine.

Taylor, D. M., Bougie, E., & Caouette, J. (2003). Applying positioning principles to a theory of collective identity. In R. Harre & F Moghaddem (Eds.) *The self and others: Positioning individuals and groups in personal, political, and cultural contexts* (pp. 197-215). Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.

The Compete University Guide (2015) Retrieved from: <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/> [Accessed: 17th August 2016]

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2003) The *Future of Higher Education*. Retrieved from: [file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Administrator/My%20Documents/Downloads/DfES\_HigherEducation.pdf](file:///C:\Documents%20and%20Settings\Administrator\My%20Documents\Downloads\DfES_HigherEducation.pdf) [Accessed: 17th August 2016]

The Guardian University league table 2015 – the complete list Monday 2 June 2014 Retrieved from: <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/> [Accessed 14th August 2015]

Tirado, F. and Gálvez, A. (2007) Positioning theory and discourse analysis: Some tools for social interaction analysis. Forum: *Qualitative Social Research*, 8 (2). Retrieved from: <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/248/547> [Accessed: 11th August 2014]

Truscott, D. M., Swars, S., Smith, S., Thornton‐Reid, F., Zhao, Y., Dooley, C., Williams, B., Hart, L., & Matthews, M. (2009). A cross‐disciplinary examination of the prevalence of mixed methods in educational research: 1995–2005. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *13*(4), (pp 317-328) Retrieved from: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/section?content-a913708351&fulltext-713240928> [Accessed 23rd March 2015]

University and College Union (2013) *The Research Excellence Framework (REF) UCU Survey Report.* Retrievedfrom: [http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/0/q/REF-survey-report-September-2013.pdf](%20http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/0/q/REF-survey-report-September-2013.pdf) [Accessed: 12th May 2016]

Van Langenhove, L., & Harré, R. (1999). *Introducing positioning theory.* Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishing

Wagner, D. and Herbel-Eisenmann, B. (2009) Re-mythologizing mathematics through

attention to classroom positioning. *Educational Studies in Mathematics,* 72 (1): 1-15 Retrieved from: <http://www.academia.edu/2013057/Wagner_D._and_Herbel-Eisenmann_B._2009_._Re-mythologizing_mathematics_through_attention_to_classroom_positioning._Educational_Studies_in_Mathematics_72_1_1-15> [Accessed: 14th August 2014]

Watson, T.J. (2008) *Sociology, Work and Industry,* (5), London, England: Routledge.

Watts, J., & Robertson, N. “Burnout in University Teaching Staff: A Systematic Literature Review,” *Educational Research,* Vol. 53, No. 1, 2011, (pp. 33-50). DOI:10.1080/00131881.2011.552235

Walsham, G. (1995). The emergence of interpretivism in IS research. *Information systems research*, *6*(4), 376-394 DOI: org/10.1287/isre.6.4.376

Wellington, J. (2013). Searching for ‘doctorateness’. *Studies in Higher Education*, *38*(10), 1490-1503.

Wellington, J., & Sikes, P. (2006). ‘A doctorate in a tight compartment’: why do students choose a professional doctorate and what impact does it have on their personal and professional lives? *Studies in Higher Education*, *31*(6), 723-734.

Wilson, T. (2012) *A Review of Business-University Collaboration* Retrieved from: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/13842/1/wilson.pdf> [Accessed: 1st August 2014]

Winefield, A.H. & Jarrett, R. (2001) Occupational stress in university staff. *International Journal of Stress Management,* 8 (2001) (pp 285-298) DOI:10.1023/A:1017513615819

Yamakawa,Y., Forman, E. & Ansell, E. (2005). Role of Positioning: The role of positioning in constructing an identity in a third grade mathematics classroom. In K. Kumpulainen, C.E. Hmelo-Silver & M. Cesar (Eds). (Tran), *Investigating Classroom Interaction: Methodologies in Action* (179-201) Sense Publishers. Retrieved from: <http://cresenciafong.com/wiki/ref:yamakawa2005role> [Accessed: 9th August 2014]

Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publishing

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

**Participant Information Sheet**

**1. Research Project Working Title :** ‘*An exploration of professional learning, and revised ‘internal careers’ experienced by HE teaching practitioners undertaking the journey of EdD’.*

**2. Invitation paragraph**

I am inviting you to take part in the research project that will underpin the thesis for my EdD. So that you can make an informed decision it is important that you understand why the research is being done, and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me for further details if there is anything you would like clarifying or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part and thank you for reading this.

**3. What is the project’s purpose?**

I am currently in the third year of the EdD programme at Sheffield University and this research forms the basis for the final thesis output.

The research, as a whole, will involve me interviewing up to ten HE academic practitioners who are either undertaking the EdD or have recently completed it. The sample will be drawn from current and previous cohorts studying at either Sheffield University, Leeds Becket University and Lincoln University. The research will take place between 2015 and 2016 and the information will be collected through a series of semi structured interviews. This information sheet explains each participant’s rights, and details how I will ensure that these are observed. It has been devised to enable participants to make an informed decision whether or not to participate.

**4. Why have you been chosen?**

You have been chosen because you are, or have, recently undertaken an EdD programme of study at either Leeds Beckett University, Lincoln or Sheffield University.

**5. Do you have to take part?**

Although I am hoping you will agree to take part, the decision is yours. Participation is entirely voluntary and should you decline to participate there will be no penalty. If you do agree to participate you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. If you do wish to withdraw at anytime you will not be required to give a reason.

**6. What will happen to you if you do take part?**

I would like to conduct a semi structured, one-to-one, interview with you (in a neutral setting) to explore your perceptions and experiences of undertaking, and perhaps completing, the EdD. I would anticipate that each interview would last an hour, and it will be audio recorded to allow for part transcription and coding of themes after all interviews have been concluded.

At no time will you be asked to disclose anything you are not comfortable with, and you are able to end the interview at any point, without explanation.

I may need to contact you for clarification after the interview, and as a consequence would like a contact number.

**7. Are there any possible disadvantages and risks to taking part?**

I am not aware of any possible disadvantages or risks involved in taking part in this research. However, should you experience any unexpected discomforts, disadvantages or risks, you should bring it to my attention as quickly as possible.

**8. Are there any possible benefits to you for taking part?**

In truth, not really. However whilst there are no immediate benefits for those who chose to take part in this research, it is hoped that this work will contribute to the body of knowledge relating to staff development and the EdD experience. You may also find it useful, or pleasurable, to consciously review your own experiences and reflect on your recent internal career development.

**9. What if something goes wrong?**

If for any reason there is an unforeseen event that causes you distress or concern, an ‘unforeseen circumstances’ form will be completed and submitted to the awarding university. A copy of this form is available on request.

If you wish to make a complaint about either your experiences associated with participating in this research, either with regard to your treatment by the researcher, or if something serious occurs during or following your participation in the project (e.g. a reportable serious adverse event).You should inform the researcher as soon as possible.

In the first instance you should inform the lead researcher (A Temple Clothier), alternatively you can contact the Supervisor directly (Dr Vassiliki Papatsiba). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction (e.g. by the

Principal Investigator or Supervisor) you can contact the Head of Department (Professor Cathy Nutbrown), who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. All contact details are provided at the end of this information sheet.

**10. How will your confidentiality be maintained?**

All the information collected, from any of the respondents in this research, will be kept strictly confidential and access to the information will be restricted to the researcher and supervisor associated with the research. The audio recordings made of the interviews will be used only for analysis. No other use of will be made without your written permission, and no one outside of the research team will be allowed access to the original recordings.

The anonymity of participants will be maintained in all subsequent reports or publications. The sample has been specifically designed to ensure that respondents are drawn from a random range of employers and as such neither respondent nor employer will be named in the research. This design feature is specifically built in to assist in the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents involved in the data collection.

**11. What type of information will be sought from you and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project’s objectives?**

You will be asked questions about your experiences relating to undertaking the EdD, specifically in terms of professional learning, and possible involving revisions in personal ‘internal career’ paths.

This research seeks to uncover the lived experiences of these students and identify the costs and benefits to undertaking the research programme. It also seeks to identify the skills and knowledge developed as a result.

At no time will you be asked to disclose anything you are not comfortable with, and you are able to end the interview at any point, without explanation.

I may need to contact you for clarification after the interview, and as a consequence would like a contact number.

**13. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The results of the research will be the formal submission of the thesis for the EdD. It will be published on-line by the university on completion in 2017. You will be able to access this document on publication. You will not be identified in this report and subsequent publication.

Data collected during the course of this project may also be used for associated publications or subsequent research, however again you will not be identified in these outputs.

**14. Who is organising and funding the research?**

I am independently undertaking the EdD at Sheffield University, and although my employer is part funding this undertaking it is not involved in the research project itself.

**15. Who has ethically reviewed the project?**

This project has been ethically approved via The School of Education’s ethics review

procedure at Sheffield University.

**16. Contact for further information**

If you wish to obtain further information about this project you can contact either

The Lead Researcher : A Temple Clothier, Email [A.Temple-Clothier@LeedsBeckett.ac.uk](mailto:A.Temple-Clothier@LeedsBeckett.ac.uk), Telephone (+44) (0) 113 812 6114, Or Supervisor: Dr Vassilliki Papatsiba, Email [v.papatsiba@Sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:v.papatsiba@Sheffield.ac.uk). Telephone **Tel:** (+44) (0)114 222 8152

**Finally … Thank you for reading this information sheet, I hope you will agree to participate in the research. If you do, you will be given both a copy of the information sheet, and the signed consent form to keep.**

Appendix 3

#### Example Participant Consent Form

|  |
| --- |
| **Title of Research Project:** *‘An exploration of professional learning, and revised ‘internal careers’ experienced by HE teaching practitioners undertaking the journey of EdD’.*  Name of Researcher: **Anne-Louise Temple Clothier**  Participant Identification Number for this project: Please initial box   1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated *1.2.15* explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. The contact person to notify I wish to withdraw is A Temple Clothier who is the lead researcher. 3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.   4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research   1. I agree to take part in the above research project.   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Name of Participant Date Signature  (*or legal representative*)  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Name of person taking consent Date Signature  (*if different from lead researcher*)  *To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Lead Researcher Date Signature  *To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*  Copies:  *Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project’s main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.* |

Appendix 4

**Interview Questions.**

**Section One.**

Gender?

Are you willing to tell me how old you are?

Where do you currently work? And what is your current employment position?

How long have you worked for your current employer? And how long in your current position?

How long have you been teaching at HE level?

**Section Two Ecological Positions**

What is your primary subject discipline?

What is the institute you work for?

Which school / faculty / subject area are you housed in?

Where do you feel your strongest sense of affiliation lies, is it your institute, professional body, the school, or something else?

What do you do to ensure professional development?

What were your initial reasons for undertaking the EdD?

**Section Three. Repositioning**

It is widely acknowledged that we are working in a rapidly changing sector, what do you perceive to be the reasons that underpin these changes?

Which changes impact the most on your practice?

Do you think these changes have impacted on your professional identity, and if so in what way?

Do you think undertaking the EdD has changed your position within the sector? If so, in what way?

Do you think undertaking the EdD has changed your position within your own institute of employment? If so, in what way?

Do you think undertaking the EdD has changed your position within your primary discipline? If so, in what way?

Do you think undertaking the EdD has changed your position within faculty / school? If so, in what way?

Do you think undertaking the EdD has changed your position within you most local community of practice? If so, in what way?

What have you learned during undertaking the EdD that has strengthened your position at work?

Are there any aspects of undertaking the EdD that you feel has weakened your position at work?

**Section Four. Responses to Change**

What have been your emotional responses to undertaking the EdD?

Has it changed your career plans at all, and if so in what way?

On completion of the EdD what do you think you will be able to offer your employer that you could not have done before?

Appendix 5

**Research Ethics**

**~ Unforeseen Event Report Form ~**

This report form is for use if and when an unforeseen event occurs, during a research project’s lifetime, which has significant ethical implications and/or which might challenge the ethical conduct of the research and/or which might provide the grounds for discontinuing the research project. The form should be completed by the Principal Investigator of the research project (or by Supervisor in the case of supervised-student research projects) and agreed with the Head of Department.

Guidance notes are included at the end of the report form (the form’s boxes can be expanded).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Research Project Title:** | *‘An exploration of professional learning, and revised ‘internal careers’ experienced by HE teaching practitioners undertaking the journey of EdD’* |
| **2. Academic Department:** | Education |
| **3. Principal Investigator/Supervisor:** | A Temple Clothier /Dr Vassiliki Papatsiba |
| **4. Is this a supervised-student project?** | Yes |
| **5. Who initially discovered the unforeseen event?** |  |
| **6. When was the unforeseen event reported to the Head of Department?** |  |
| **7. When did the unforeseen event occur?** |  |
| **8. Where did it happen?** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **9. What actually happened and what was the impact of the unforeseen event?** | |
|  | |
| **10. Why did the unforeseen event occur?** | |
|  | |
| **11. Describe what action(s) have been taken to address the impact of this specific unforeseen event:** | |
|  | |
| **12. Describe what action(s) have been taken or are planned to limit the risk of a similar event re-occurring (add any general notes here to qualify the information given elsewhere in the report):** | |
|  | |
| **Agreed and authorised by:** | |
| Name of Principal Investigator/Supervisor:  A Temple Clothier /Dr Vassiliki Papatsiba  Signature: | Date:  *insert date here* |
| Name of Head of Department:  Professor Cathy Nutbrown  Signature: | Date:  *insert date here* |

**Guidance Notes:**

1. Unforeseen events should be reported to the Head of Department as soon as possible: normally within **5 working days**.
2. Once complete this report should be kept in the project’s main written record of research evidence (e.g. project file, site file) for reference and a copy sent to the U-REC’s Secretary (Mr Richard Hudson, Quality Assurance Manager, University of Sheffield, Research Office, New Spring House, 231 Glossop Road).
3. Advice and guidance on completion of the report, analysis of the unforeseen event and potential actions may be obtained from the U-REC’s Secretary.