

**A Career in the Allied Health Professions: borrowing
from Bourdieu to navigate student choice, class and
policy**

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In my jargon, I'll say that it is important that the space in which discourse on the social world is produced continues to function as a field of struggles in which the dominant pole, orthodoxy, does not crush the dominated pole of heresy – because, in that area, so long as there is struggle there is history and therefore hope.

Pierre Bourdieu (1993, p. 40)

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Abstract

This study is an exploration of student education and training choice-making in the Allied Health Professions (AHPs). Rejecting the dominant and 'official' government discourse, educational choice-making in the AHPs is constructed as a form of social practice, derived from individual agency, but also the effects of institutional and social structures. Engaging with the work of Pierre Bourdieu, in particular the application of his conceptual tools of *habitus*, *capital* and *field*, I have 'borrowed' from his unique methodological approach to engage a number of inter-related stages of exploration in a specific and unique case.

At the macro level, I conduct a critical discourse analysis of a relevant policy text. This is followed by a meso-level examination of *field-specific capital*, as the basis for determining the position of each programme within the AHP education and training *field*. Finally, a micro-level analysis, using both questionnaire and semi-structured interview data is used to identify and explore how students' personal stories reveal the way that the *habitus* guides and shapes individual accounts and experiences of choice-making within Watson et al.'s (2009) diagrammatic construction of a social *field*.

Choice-making in the AHP education and training *field* was found to be a complex mix of institutional structures, processes and individual position-taking. In this milieu, economic and political motives underpinning a revised policy discourse do not necessarily support greater democratisation of participation. The effect of *capital* revealed the possibility for distinction, hierarchy and status as a reflection of the position of each programme and the valued placed upon them. Finally, the *habitus*, rather than generating static replies, was found to be capable of multiple and contingent responses. Along with other structural influences, social class, despite the emergence of its own fluidity, was nevertheless a major factor in shaping experiences and practical responses to AHP choice-making.

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List of Key Abbreviations

AHP - The term can be used interchangeable to denote Allied Health Professional/s or Allied Health Professions

BMA - Board of Medical Auxiliaries

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CPSM – Council for Professions Supplemental to Medicine was responsible for maintaining a statutory register of health professions that directly preceded HPC (now HCPC).

CODP - College of Operating Department Practitioners

DH - Department of Health

FoH – Faculty of Health

HCPC - Health and Care Professions Council (previously HPC) currently responsible for maintaining a statutory register of 16 health and care professions

HE - Higher Education

HEFCE - Higher Education Funding Council of England

NHS - National Health Service

OFFA – Office for Fair Access

SCoR - Society and College of Radiographers

SHA – Strategic Health Authority

RCSLT - Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

RMA – Registration of Medical Auxiliaries was a voluntary scheme of registration administered by the Board as a predecessor to statutory regulation.

UK - United Kingdom

White Paper - a document produced by the Government setting out details of future policy.

WP – Widening Participation

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A Career in the Allied Health Professions: borrowing from Bourdieu to navigate student choice, class and policy

1.0 Introduction to the study

This study is concerned with the concept of student choice in the Allied Health Professions (AHPs). By choice I mean the ability to access education and training programmes in a number of AHP *fields*, as a particular and specific manifestation of Higher Education (HE). From the outset however, I draw the reader's attention to the idea that exercising choice in HE is problematic. In the context of this study recent expansion in those undertaking AHP training has, on the surface, contributed to the *massification* of the HE sector as a whole, and this represents a concerted effort to respond to a concomitant demand for more qualified AHPs to deliver on increasingly ambitious National Health Service (NHS) delivery targets (Department of Health (DH), 2000b; 2008; 2012). Whilst Greenbank (2006) and indeed Kettley (2007) point to the influence of Widening Participation (WP) strategies on HE participation in general, the affect of this on AHP participation is less well understood (Mason and Sparkes 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, Marshall and Jones, 2002).

Yet if one were to examine this more closely, I suggest that, despite substantial increases in the number of those in training, this type of expansion does not necessarily mean a greater democratisation of choice for all. Whilst HE in England may be increasingly diverse, it is also highly stratified, to the point that, Bathmaker and Thomas (2009) argue, it 'enshrines structural

inequalities' rather than democratises them (p. 119). I would argue that, for some social groups, choice of education and training in the AHPs also remains unequal, difficult to access and complex to achieve.

Like others before me, I intend to develop what Diane Reay and colleagues have suggested should be a 'sociology of choice' (2005). In my study, this is an understanding of choice of education and training in the AHPs as a series of structures and practices that take place within different meanings, contexts and outcomes. Firstly, student choice is an objective measure of selectivity; in other words, having the right qualifications and, I would add, being able to demonstrate the right professional attributes to be selected for a particular profession. Secondly, choice is also a subjective measure of social and cultural classification located in the idea of self; in other words, it is concerned with aligning personal expectations with an individual orientation or 'fit' with a particular professional group. This thesis is therefore intended to assemble a broad understanding of this landscape of student choice. I aim firstly to document the diversity and complexity of who is choosing what and why, and secondly surface inequalities in the process of student choice, if and where they exist.

1.1 Contextualising the field of study

My research focuses specifically on choice of education and training opportunities in a limited number of the AHPs in a particular university setting. There is a focus on understanding the reasons why students choose a particular AHP to study, what motivates them and the experiences that they

encounter along their journey. Described as 'key players in the healthcare team', AHPs are a diverse group of professionally-trained, university-educated healthcare workers (NHS Careers, 2011). Their skills are deployed across a range of healthcare *fields* to support a variety of patients and client groups. For example AHPs work in diagnostic settings such as Radiography; in rehabilitation and therapeutic settings such as Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy; and in roles specific to some treatment settings such as Operating Department Practice (ODP) and Paramedic Practice. According to National Health Service (NHS) Careers, AHPs 'carry their own caseloads' often working as 'autonomous professionals' to assess, diagnose and treat, as well as support the recovery and rehabilitation of patients and clients (NHS Careers, 2011).

1.2 Problematising AHP education and training opportunities

The ability to sustain the rate of expansion in the AHPs is now coming under greater scrutiny. Ongoing fiscal constraints and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition's policy response has cut Government spending across the public sector, and HE is no exception. Indeed reforms contained within the White Paper, *Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011) appear to support the neo-liberal consensus of the benefits of marketisation (Deem, 2001), along with a commitment to de-regulate and reduce HE spending (Neave, 2000; Williams, 2000; Brennan, 2004).

Yet despite the prospect of significant funding reduction, the White Paper is paradoxically predicated on the pursuit of greater student choice, not less. Just

exactly how this is possible is a clear point of contestation, not least because in Clegg's (2008) view such policies appear to represent the long-anticipated realisation of state 'de-investment' as a precursor to re-aligning the financial burden toward the student, and therefore away from any 'radical pedagogic approaches' (p. 330).

Building on this potential conflict between discourse and practice, I want to suggest that from the outset the principle of choice; that is, what and where to study, can be highly problematic for a number of reasons. It has been suggested as a matter of common sense, that during the evolution of successive Government policy, mass participation will inevitably increase the opportunities for all those who have the potential to benefit from HE (Robbins, 1963; Dearing, 1997; DfES (2003). Yet despite this optimism, participation in HE for many socially disadvantaged groups remains steadfastly low (see Allen, 1998; Archer, 2003a, Archer et al. 2002; Ball et al. 2002; Crozier et al. 2008; Reay et al. 2001; Reay et al. 2005). The extent, however, to which this is also true in relation to AHP education and training is, according to Mason and Sparkes, under-explored and under-theorised (2002a; 2002b) (see also Greenwood and Bithell, 2003; Greenwood et al. 2006; Watson et al. 2009).

In the remainder of this introductory Chapter I outline a contextual basis to frame my explorations. I locate my research in my own experiences, involvement and positionality in the *field*, I then consider how this level of complexity can be understood and theorised before finally defining the focus of

my enquiry, the aims of the research questions and the structure of my study to follow.

1.3 Student choice as a contested concept

At the point that NHS spending was undergoing significant review (DH, 2010), there is little doubt that, prior to this, the number of AHP training places had seen significant increases to the overall NHS education and training budget (DH, 2000a; DH, 2000b). By 2009 the NHS reported that between 1998 and 2008, the workforce, not including doctors, had increased in number by 28% to just over 1.12 million staff (NHS Information Centre, 2009). A year later in 2010 the DH indicated that out of the entire NHS workforce now numbered 1.4 million employees, with 50% of these now classed as healthcare professionals (DH, 2010).

Given such claims in growth it is perhaps not surprising that this expansion could be interpreted as representing the positive aspects of greater access and participation, and therefore greater student choice. But beyond the headline figures, what evidence is there to support this assertion given that the expansion of numbers in training may not necessarily equate to greater educational opportunities for all social groups and backgrounds?

To begin to explore this further, I place my study firmly in the current policy context, in which the principle of student choice in HE has been elevated in importance, and is currently not only about an articulation of what students want to study, but is now also constructed as a mechanism for engendering social change. Not only is student choice intended to reform funding and

investment of the HE sector (Browne, 2010), but through the principle of consumerism, to increase the diversity of provision whilst re-locating HE accountability away from central government (BIS, 2011).

Choice, that is the idea of individuals exercising agency, is now portrayed as part of everyone's rights and responsibilities in a consumer society, whether they are parents making a school choice, patients accessing health and social care services or students deciding on their own HE trajectory. The problem here, according to Clarke et al. (2006) is that in attempting to exercise choice, there is often a disconnection between the theory and the reality of practice. For example, the Higher Education Act (2004) is an attempt to establish 'real choice', in that HE is accessible to all who can benefit from it, but in reality there is little comment as to how this can be practically achieved. Clarke et al. (2006) make the further point that choice is not only highly contingent on the rhetoric and reality of circumstances, it is also 'both mobile and relatively indeterminate' (p. 328). In this way choice can also take on different meanings according to its social context, so that choosing a school is clearly not the same as choosing your care or treatment.

Choice in a HE context, however, has become inscribed within a certain political meaning and significance and, whilst far from being universally accepted (Ball et al. 2000; Hayton and Paczuska, 2002; Hutchings, 2003), this dominant paradigm assumes that exercising student choice is a matter of strategy and calculation, based primarily on the availability of economic capacity and capability. This imagines the so-called 'rational-choice' theory

(Goldthorpe, 1998) to be a matter of preference or a 'rational' computation and by definition appears to support a 'deficit' model' for those who appear to lack the intrinsic motivation to participate in HE. This, Greenbank (2006) argues, has formed the basis for much of the recent policy on expansion of HE post-Dearing, by which the failure of mainly working classes to participate in HE is due to a lack of aspiration, and indeed application, rather than a lack of actual opportunity (see also Reay and Ball, 1997).

It is precisely these fluid qualities of student choice, namely ambiguity of meaning and application that is the principal point of contention in much of the existing literature. Whilst there has been a pre-occupation with expansion in general HE policy terms (Parry, 2006), others in fact question the validity of expanding HE choice from an institutional and student perspective (Reay, 2001; Archer and Leathwood, 2003). Indeed, it is a matter of conscience for some researchers within the wider HE *field* to highlight the fact that for some social groups, for example women and those from black and ethnic minorities, their participation remains low.

It is however participation, particularly by some disadvantaged socio-economic group that remains the most steadfast area of under-representation (Cuthbert, 1996; Archer, Hutchings, and Leathwood 2001; Archer et al. 2002; Archer, 2003a; Reay et al. 2005). This has prompted some commentators to suggest that expansion in HE (and not specifically in the AHPs) exists as a form of differential enrolment from across the social class spectrum (Gilchrist et al. 2003). In other words participation has been mainly predicated on growth from

students from distinct middle-class socio-economic backgrounds who are now likely to participate in ever-greater numbers (Hayton and Paczuska, 2002). Archer's (2003a) response to this has been to problematise choice in HE not from the perspective of how many participate, but who is participating. In many cases, class identity emerges as an important feature in both mobilising and restricting student choice (Apple, 1982; Tomlinson, 1998; Reay et al. 2001; Reay et al. 2005).

1.4 Positionality in the research

Similar concerns, but from an AHP perspective, have over a period of time crystallised in my own thoughts and personal experiences. I am currently the Head of School in a Faculty of Health responsible for a number of AHP programmes, in a large post-1992 university in the Midlands. Consequently I have become familiar with statistical information and also with evidence from a range of professional literature in relation to recruitment practices to these programmes. This literature suggests that access to some of these professions appears to be uneven, in the sense that many social groups appear to participate less, both in my own institution and in other similar HEIs.

My own personal experiences suggest to me that an hierarchy of occupations is also present, and that more academically able students and those from more affluent backgrounds migrate to the AHP professions which have a greater status, for example Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy (SLT). I am particularly aware that my own classed-position has also been an instrumental feature of my research, but also the person that I am and the HE

choices that were open to me. Although I studied at A level, the reality is that I never intended to go to university and, whilst my parents were supportive of me, I suspect that they anticipated that I would prioritise the need to find a job and earn a wage rather than extend my education. They were certainly not in a position to guide and advise me. My access to knowledge about HE and indeed the AHPs was severely limited. My route to becoming an Operating Department Practitioner (ODP) was accidental and serendipitous, and at no stage did I actively make a specific career choice.

This experience has prompted me to want to understand the complexity that lies behind other journeys of student choice in AHP education and training. In doing so, I feel I need to contest existing assumptions, to surface structural inequalities and to illuminate student choice as a lived experience through the stories of the students themselves. I am committed to orientating the research in this way in order to avoid *exclusionary* activities (Robbins, 2004) or, as in Bhaskar's (1986) case, to enable emancipatory social practices where possible. Robson (2002) notes that critical studies of this nature are particularly salient to the 'practice and value-based professions', which I suggest should include the AHPs (p. 30).

The work of Pierre Bourdieu has been seminal to this growing critical research engagement, to the point that Nash (1993) feels Bourdieu's conceptual thinking provides the researcher with a 'rich conceptual lexicon' on which to base empirical investigations (p. 322). Michael Apple (1993) has also proposed that Bourdieu operates within a post-structural critical research

agenda in which numerous embodied views situated in multiple social *fields* are possible and valid. Bourdieu's key concepts of *field*, *capital*, and *habitus* offer a lens to identify the relational and inter-connected nature of student choice (Reay, 2004; Reay et al. 2005).¹ I am also drawn to the fact that, in much of Bourdieu's work, class-based inequalities inherent within all education systems are key to understanding social context and structural practices. Moreover, I want to test whether there is any validity to Bourdieu's argument that social class is a vital determinant in the educational life history of each and every one of us (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977).

1.5 Defining the focus of the study: identifying aims and research questions

The title of my research study reflects the emerging themes that I have outlined in the introduction to this Chapter. I argue that, whilst assumptions about greater student choice pervade policy and the discourse of HE, the specific characteristics of student choice in the AHP *field* remain to be discovered. Therefore the aim of my research is to engage in a critical exploration of student choice-making in AHP education and training that is capable of accounting for a range of social structures and practices, that appear to be mediated through the prism of social class. The site for this study is the institution where I work, which I will refer to pseudonymously as the Central University (CU). My study is based around four programme areas that belong to the Allied Health Professions (AHPs). These are Operating Department Practice (ODP), Diagnostic Radiography, Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) and Therapeutic Radiography.

¹ For a detailed conceptual explanation of Bourdieu's use of *field*, *capital* and *habitus* see Chapter 3.

In order to carry out this exploration I have identified a number of specific research questions. According to Bourdieu's conceptual thinking, these define various levels of investigation, each of which involves the collection and analysis of empirical data in order to provide a thorough account of the *field* of student choice in the AHPs. My first research question asks, '*How is the 'new' discourse of student choice constructed in and between social fields?*' This question seeks to address how the macro-political level of policy construction, within what Bourdieu calls the *field of power*, influences the conception of student choice. Although not exclusively concerned with AHP education and training, this level of analysis is intended to reveal how other social *fields*, particularly that of the economic *field*, influences HE in and through political discourses that promote the idea of greater student choice.

My second research question asks, 'How are forms of social and cultural capital distributed in AHPs programmes at CU, and how does this structure student choice?' This stage of the inquiry is intended to investigate, from a meso-level of analysis, the various positions of hierarchy and power that exist within and between the four AHP disciplines included in the study. This approach utilises Bourdieu's particular concept of capital to characterise how these relative positions are shaped, in what Bourdieu terms the field, and how the distribution of these capital resources influences the structures and practices of student selection, retention and achievement at a particular moment in time.

My third research question concludes by investigating, 'How is student choice shaped by the habitus and what is the influence of social class?' As a third and final micro-level of analysis, I intend to explore the broader characteristics of student choice within the student population, before selecting case study examples of how the classed habitus can be surfaced through the individual stories of choice-making.

In Chapter 2 I intend to understand and define the *field* of study through a review of literature on student choice-making in HE and in the AHPs, which has consequently shaped the methodological approach that I have taken. Chapter 3 provides a detailed exploration of Bourdieu's particular theoretical underpinnings, particularly in relation to his principle notion of *field* as site of investigation of student choice, along with that of *capital* and *habitus* as ways of considering complex social practices that exist within and because of the *field*. Chapter 4 draws upon these conceptual ideas to detail Bourdieu's particular 'reflexive' methodological approach as a basis for this empirical investigation. Chapter 5 is a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) informed exploration of the *field of power* as the basis for the practical application of the research methodology at a macro-level. In Chapter 6 I apply the principle of Bourdieu's particular idea of a 'discursive montage', which I have constructed to detail the identification of 'indices' of the distribution of *capital* in relation to the AHP education and training *field* at a meso-level. Chapter 7 describes the approach taken to capture mixed quantitative and qualitative data from a survey of the characteristics of the *field*. This Chapter also documents the design, piloting and delivery of an online questionnaire to students enrolled on

AHP programmes in my study. In Chapter 8 I present the analysis of the data from the questionnaire to reveal the broad characteristics of choice-making in the AHP education and training.

Chapter 9 highlights how I identify and select specific case studies and the process of conducting semi-structured interviews in order to capture seven specific stories. Chapter 10 presents these stories to reveal the work of the *habitus*. This Chapter documents at a micro-level level how a number of social structures and practices, the effects of familial and educational history, and particularly social class, come together with individual agency to reveal the complexity of student choice through the degree of 'fit' with their chosen *field*. Finally Chapter 11 brings together the various elements of my research to conclude the study. I focus on key findings and provide a summary of the co-constructed nature of the complexity of student choice in AHP education and training. In this enquiry as Hutchins (2003) suggests, the effects of class positioning are revealed as nuanced, subtly and transitional but nonetheless important. I also acknowledge a number of limitations of the study, and identify key inequalities that I suggest should be addressed, before finally making recommendations for further research and future practice.

Chapter 2.0 The *Field* of Enquiry: reviewing the literature on student choice in Higher Education and the Allied Health Professions

Throughout my research I refer to the AHP *field* in a deliberate and specific sense. Borrowing from Bourdieu I use the term to describe conceptually the conditions in which student choice in the AHPs are located as a discrete *field* of enquiry. Bourdieu (1990) specifically described *fields of practice*, as interconnected social worlds enmeshed in rich, social, cultural, political and economic 'struggles for legitimacy' (of what is probable and possible) from within established social structures and practices. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1988) specifically introduced an evolving concept of *field* as a 'social space' to describe the possibilities for social change such as those that constantly take place, particularly in universities (Robbins, 1993).

My purpose in this Chapter is to begin to define the broad contours of the particular *field* of student choice at CU by examining the available literature in order to define the existing knowledge of the *field* in relation to the research aims. The literature also helps to inform the direction of the study, as well as to shape and construct the methodology and methods that I put to use later in the study.

2.1 Student choice in policy and practice

The idea of greater student choice is firmly embedded in a number of related policy strands that, on the surface, reflect the political and social desire to support the democratisation associated with greater participation in HE. Scratch the surface and, as Archer (2003b) and Hutchings (2003) suggest, the

dominant discourse has been primarily around expansion, rather than within any emancipatory principles. Linked to the idea of rational choice, Gary Becker (1993), for instance, views greater educational choice as being central to the development of skills and attributes for the workplace in the pursuit of greater economic output. Similarly, Hayton and Paczuska (2002) associate human *capital* with the economic prosperity of the nation-state. Alternatively, Kettley (2007) extends the importance of such human *capital* to the advancement of social improvement as an underlying imperative to Widening Participation policy. Warren and Webb (2007) are less convinced, and take the view that the pre-occupation with economic rationality supports the continued advancement of neo-liberal political ideas. Moreover, rather than improve educational options, these opinions act as a form of 'social Darwinism' to limit the scope of education to vocational practices that tend to be aligned to political imperatives of the day (Woodward, 2002). Currently in HE terms such policies appear to valorise student choice for its potential to determine the position of the institution and worth of the degree within the HE marketplace. BIS (2011) states that 'we want to ensure that the new student finance regime supports student choice, and that in turn student choice drives competition, including on price' (p. 14).

Bowe et al. (1995) address the indeterminacy of the language of student choice and question the basis on which it is constructed, and indeed its reliability. Gewirtz et al. (1995) subsequently found that student choice was mainly based on a series of hunches, feelings and emotions that exist within what they describe as a wider 'landscape of choice' often carved out by issues

of social class (p. 6). Reay and colleagues (2005, 58) set out to capture the 'ethnographic' qualities of student choice, with particular attention to the influence of social class. They found only limited evidence of so-called 'rational decision-making' in students from some class backgrounds.

Macrae et al. (1997) define the characteristics of student choice into a typology of 'pragmatic choosers', as a way of rationalising a lack of education opportunity (see also Ball, Maguire and Macrae, 2000). As if in anticipation of Reay and colleagues' (2005) findings, Gilchrist et al. (2003) found that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often lacked the necessary information to make effective choices and, as a consequence, the ability to take pragmatic decisions was found to be severely limited. Ball and Vincent (1998) were able to distinguish between families who accessed 'hot knowledge' gained from the informal 'grapevine' to inform their decision-making. By contrast, working class families relied on what was defined as 'cold knowledge' gained from formal or official documentary sources, such as the prospectus and more often the Internet. Ball and Vincent (1998) described how middle-class parents were able to mobilise both hot and cold knowledge to inform choice-making, whereas working-class parents were much more restricted to 'cold' sources of information.

David et al.'s (2003) research in relation to HE participation is particularly interesting in that it deliberately sets out to explore how families are involved (as consumers) in student choice. Through interview derived data, feminist ethnographies show this process to be highly gendered, in that women and

mothers tend to be much more influential in helping students to make their choices. In their study of the effects of social class on HE choices, Ball et al (2002) attempt to conduct research using a 'numbers and narratives methodology', which they argue is necessary in order to resist a 'simplistic' class analysis in favour of one that includes the effects of a wider range of economic, cultural and political factors that generate 'complex and creative responses' to HE choice (p. 54 - 55). Many of these studies, whilst sharing similar methodological approaches, tend to concentrate on younger students and their experiences of choice-making. A particular exception to this is James' (1995) research into mature students' experiences of educational choice. Likewise, Coleman (2002), writing from the perspective of research carried out in the Further Education (FE) sector, undertook a qualitative phenomenological enquiry to learn more about how mature learners gain access to AHP and other health-related training programmes.

Both Singh (1990) and Modood (1993) undertook research looking at ethnicity and participation. They postulate that attendance at university for some ethnic groups represents an investment in improving the position not only of the individual, but also of one's familial class position as an expression of greater social mobility. Whereas Gilchrist et al. (2003) argue that participation in HE by the working classes is inevitably low simply because of the lack of value that they place upon it. Archer et al. (2003) argue that whilst a 'poverty of aspiration' may be present for some working class students who at times viewed their participation in HE as a form of class betrayal. The opposite was true for middle class students who valued highly the opportunities that HE

presents (p. 106). Hart (2012) has argued that such 'diverse aspirations' can inevitably culminate in 'tension' and conflict. This could explain why working class participation in HE, whilst part of a rather opaque sense of 'fulfilment' exists within the 'realisation' of social class limitations. Whereas 'fulfilment' for middle class students is more likely to manifest in a 'realisation' of participation in higher status subjects and HEIs.

2.2 *The Allied Health Professions: choice and careers options*

Whilst some literature deals specifically with healthcare education rather than HE in a general sense, much of this tends to be concerned with career opportunities, particularly in medicine (McManus, 1998; Angel, 2000; Coker, 2001) and nursing (Hemsley-Brown and Foskett, 1999; Iganski, 1998; Culley: 2003). As Greenwood and Bithell (2003) note, similar comparative studies in AHP education and training are elusive. Like them I also found AHP-specific literature difficult to locate. What has been published varies in quality and ranges from very general careers guidance literature to specific professional journals and a limited number of academic articles.

In a series of related articles, Mason and Sparkes outline their concerns surrounding Physiotherapy education and the need to engage more fully with Widening Participation initiatives (2002a). Although not research-informed, the authors highlight the profile of the Physiotherapy workforce as being dominated by white females (2002b) (see also Jaggi, 1998). They argue that efforts to address these inequalities have not been a priority, given that most

universities continue to be oversubscribed in terms of recruitment to Physiotherapy programmes.

Similarly, articles in professional journals, such as those authored by Stapleford and Todd (1998) in the case of Speech and Language Therapy and Meghani-Wise (1996) and Rowe and MacDonald (1995) in relation to Occupational Therapy, highlight on-going issues of low ethnic minority participation. Indeed, the latter claim that their quantitative data demonstrates that only just over 12% of Asian applicants and 15% of Black applicants were successful, compared to White applicants who were almost twice as likely to gain a training place (24%).

Greenwood, Wright and Bithell (2006) also consider the issue of low ethnic minority participation in relation to career perceptions across the AHPs, and in particular SLT. In their article they specifically draw on data from a large commissioned research project that highlights both similarities and differences in attitudes between ethnic minority students and their white counterparts. They conclude that career choice is influenced by a number of factors beside ethnicity, and also cite differences in 'aspirations, academic performance, gender and cultural background' as being important features (92). Whilst they do allow criticisms of low male participation to be surfaced, other aspects of low-representative cultural profiles that they refer to are not teased out in any depth. Greenwood, Wright and Bithell (2006) do however, highlight similar findings to Sheridan's (1999) study in respect of the Physiotherapy workforce, which they also found to be in the main, white, female and middle class. Boyd

and Hewlett (2001) comment on the 'dearth' of males within the Speech and Language Therapy profession, echoing parallels with Davies' (1990) work which, using a self-completion questionnaire, found that the 'association with a female nursing image' together with poor careers advice and relatively low pay were the main reasons behind the lack of male participation in Speech and Language Therapy.

Taylor (1993) reports on a more complex picture, one in which working class women from some ethnic minorities appear likely to consider a career in some of the AHPs more than others, and ethnic minority students in general identified much more with the desire to achieve a high status and well paid occupation than did their white counterparts. The authors however, neglect to say for which professions these observations apply. The University of Central England (UCE) (2001) conducted a study entitled 'Recruitment and Retention in Nursing and Professions Allied to Medicine of individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities', attempted to make some interesting professional comparisons. Nevertheless, Greenwood and Bithell (2003) are themselves critical of the 'lack of methodological details in their [UCE's-SW] report' therefore 'making it difficult to use their findings' (p. 19). The UCE report however, does appear to support similar studies on ethnicity and participation, which suggest that studying for a degree is considered to increase personal status, career prospects and income (see Adia, 1996; Allen, 1998 and Modood and Shiner, 1994).

In Greenwood and Bithell's (2003) own study, looking specifically at ethnicity and application to AHP education and training, an initial self-completion questionnaire was used to gain quantitative data from 651 college students. Whilst the authors do not indicate the total population sample, they do acknowledge that some detailed analysis was not possible because of the low representation of some ethnic minority sub-groups. Methodologically, Greenwood and Bithell (2003) undertook what they describe as 'in-depth' interviews prior to developing a questionnaire to be compatible with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) view that the research should 'grounded' in the 'participants' experiences'. Perhaps most interestingly, the researchers also sought to establish if any of the participants had family members who were AHPs, and therefore were in a position to influence attitudes toward a particular AHP career.

Greenwood and Bithell (2005), in a further study, went on to report on the career perceptions and attractiveness of Physiotherapy. Although not seen to be as prestigious as becoming a doctor, Physiotherapy was felt to be higher status than nursing, and indeed than many other AHPs. The final article (drawn from the original research conducted by Greenwood and Bithell), this time focuses upon quantitative and qualitative data surrounding Occupational Therapy (2003). Greenwood, Kim and Bithell (2005) make a number of recommendations related to increasing school leavers' awareness of Occupational Therapy (OT) through various marketing and careers materials in order to raise the profile and information available to prospective students. The researchers again note that further exploration of career choice would need to

take account of a number of interrelated factors, including 'aspirations, academic performance, gender, and cultural background' (p. 82).

In many of these studies, whilst social class is often alluded to, it is not specifically addressed. The one exception to this that I have located is that of Watson et al. (2009) who conducted research into access to Occupational Therapy education. Importantly this is the only AHP-specific study that adopts, in the authors' own words, 'a Bourdieusian lens' to interpret longitudinal qualitative interview data. Watson et al.'s (2009) research design involved a single case study methodology, which the authors anticipate captures the complexity of a particular area of study (Yin, 2003). They claim that semi-structured interviews with 13 students toward the end of their first year are not 'unique or extreme' cases (p. 667) but act as conduits for the exploration of individual students' accounts of their early experiences of choosing to become an Occupational Therapist.

Finally, Watson et al. (2009) explain that some participants felt much more comfortable with their career choice as a result of the action of *habitus*, in which often unconscious patterns of behavior and perception are formed through experiences of a particular range of social conditions. Perhaps most importantly the research demonstrates the 'degree of fit', or 'congruence' between the existing *habitus* of the student and the practices and expectations of the new professional *field*. By empirically employing the concepts of *field*, *capital* and *habitus* in much the same way as Reay et al. (2009) have been able to do from a general HE perspective, Watson et al (2009) were able to

identify clusters of shared experiences, which meant that students found themselves ‘fitting in’, ‘adapting’, ‘resisting’ and even being ‘excluded’ from the Occupational Therapy *field*. This has a particular significance to my study, and I draw on this approach to surface how the *habitus* allows each student to navigate their educational choice, and how in turn social class influences the *habitus* in the context of the AHP professions.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that, with the exception of Watson et al (2009), few other studies adequately address what I feel are the complexities of AHP choice-making that I have personally observed or experienced for myself. What emerges from the limited AHP literature are often ‘mono-causal’ explorations, which often fall short of understanding the milieu of factors that operate specifically within particular class boundaries. In the next Chapter, my intention is to provide a more detailed account of the theories and concepts that I intend to adopt to investigate and explain a number of these related social phenomena that define the characteristic of student choice. I also begin to consider how Bourdieu’s theoretical principles can be used as a basis of thinking about how empirical investigations can be carried out in a practical sense.

Chapter 3.0 ‘Borrowing’ from Bourdieu: theorising Higher Education, class and student choice in the Allied Health Professions

3.1 *Bourdieu and Higher Education*

In this Chapter I introduce Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts to highlight his thinking on the nature and purpose of HE. My aim is to frame student choice in AHP education and training in a more complex and critical sense than has been undertaken in other studies. To do this it is necessary to enforce Bourdieu’s commitment to examining HE within its complex sociological context before defining in Chapter 4 how such a conceptualisation can be applied methodologically.

Of particular interest to my study are the ways in which Bourdieu’s work on HE is intended to illuminate how the realities of social phenomena manifest in structural practices, which appear ordered and regulated (1988, 1994, 1996a, 1997, 1999). He also reasons that such a structuring approach is apparent not only in the choices that agents make but in the act of HE itself. Indeed DiMaggio, as long ago as 1979, suggests that Bourdieu was at the vanguard of the sociological investigation of the stratification of HE in the reproduction of class inequality (p. 1463). Similarly Naidoo (2004) suggests that central to Bourdieu work ‘has been his desire to expose higher education as a powerful contributor to the maintenance and reproduction of social inequality’ (p. 457).

Although his work is synonymous with a French sociological perspective, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) claim that Bourdieu’s conceptual tools, including *field*, *habitus* and *capital*, when applied relationally, provide the basis

for homological models to create 'resemblance within a difference' that can be applied to many social context (p. 106). Despite this, his work is subject to a sustained critique of specificity that provides the most enduring reasons why he is overlooked. Indeed, a number of commentators have contested any homological claims, suggesting that he operates in a singularly Gallic style and context for a French audience (Archer, 1970 cited in Robbins, 2004; Heath et al., 1982; Delamont, 1993; Webb et al. 2002; Maton, 2008; Pelletier, 2009). Both anticipating and rejecting these criticisms, Bourdieu encouraged the researcher to reject any 'particularizing reading'; in other words, it is the actual empirical investigation itself, located in a particular point in time and place, that should be allowed to speak for itself, in what Bourdieu (1998a) claims should be constructed as a 'special case of what was possible' (p. 2).

Other commentators have suggested that his explanations are also dense and abstract (Maton, 2008). Indeed, Hammersley (1982) has gone so far as to suggest that Bourdieu's theories are 'vague and diffuse' (p. 92). In truth it is not difficult to deny that his language is often challenging to the reader and, I would add, to the novice researcher such as myself (Nash, 1999). Again, Bourdieu (1993) acknowledges his own 'stylistic peculiarity' as a deliberate act in order to break with pre-conceived ideas and the 'taken for granted' ways in which the world is conceived:

Thus the difficulty of a style often comes from all the nuances, all the corrections, all the warnings, not to mention the reminders of definitions and principles that in order for the discourse to bear within itself all the possible defences against hijacking and misappropriations. (p. 21)

In a sense his dense language is a defence of his particular and critical discourse that others have attacked as 'obscurantist prose' (Jenkins, 1992).

Despite Bourdieu's explanation it is perhaps this very lack of accessibility that has also ironically opened up his work to various misinterpretations. The most obstinate of these, Deer (2003) claims, has been the critique that his approaches to understanding social practices are overly deterministic and self-fulfilling as a result of the 'ubiquitous use of *habitus*' (p. 196). Whilst this may well be the case in his early research (1979a, 1979b, 1988), Bourdieu in fact adapted his conceptual thinking as a dynamic and evolving theory (Grenfell and James, 2004; see also Robbins, 1991; Bourdieu, 1998b; 2003; 2005) and indeed, research practice (Bourdieu et al. 1999).

3.2 *The primacy of 'field' as a mechanism for understanding change in AHP education and training*

For Bourdieu, the *field* (*le champ* in French) is not used in the sense of a pasture or meadow imagined in a British context. Rather it is more akin to a battlefield or site of conflict. Borrowing from Bourdieu's own use of the sporting analogy, Thomson (2008) draws on the idea of a sporting contest, such as football or rugby, as a metaphor for the conditions of the *field*. As a contest, boundaries, divisions and positions in the *field* are predetermined, so that individual players in the game understand the rules outlining what the players (individuals, groups or institutions) can and cannot do. Positions in the *field* shape how a player should behave or act and therefore, according to Thomson (2008), 'what is thinkable and unthinkable, expressible and inexpressible' (p. 68-69). Bourdieu (1977a) describes these structures as the 'principles of legitimation', meaning that agents (or organisations) act according to the specific qualities of *field* (p. 164 – 171). In this sense agents, or the position of agents within the *field*, act as 'nodal points' or points of necessary travel that

over-determine practices so that they dictate what is common to the *field*, what Bourdieu (1990) describes as the 'logic of practice'.

Webb et al. (2002) summarise the characteristics of the *field* to be:

[A] series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, appointments and titles which constitute an objective hierarchy, and which produce and authorise certain discourse and activities. (p. 21-22)

This is important to my study as it makes it possible to visualise hidden structures and practices surrounding forms of hierarchy, stratification and inequality of participation for some social groups in the AHP education and training *field*, between those that are delivered in elite institutions and those institutions which are less selective (Bathmaker et al. 2008). A further principle of Bourdieu's *field* theory is that, despite the existence of the competition to improve one's position in the social *field*, both agents and institutions nevertheless share a basic interest in continuing to participate according to the 'logic of practice' (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu (1993) argues that this is necessary in order to preserve the status of the entire *field* as well as the relative position of the agents within the *field*. This is because:

. . . all agents that are involved in the field share a certain number of fundamental interests, namely everything that is linked to the very existence of the field. (p. 73)

This mutuality is an investment or *stake* necessary, Wellington and Nixon (2005) argue, in order to maintain the *illusio* by which agents 'continue to play the collective game' (p. 644). Nevertheless, whilst the *field* and practices such as those that impact upon student choice may appear to remain constant, there is always the possibility for change. Bourdieu (1993, 35) describes this as 'position taking'; that is, indivisible from the objective positions that the

agent occupies within the *field*. Naidoo (2004) describes this as a state of 'permanent conflict' (p. 459).

To recap, Bourdieu establishes that over time successive actors within the *field* play to the established 'rules of the game'. This secures a chronological pattern or trend to be followed collectively to establish how things are done, what is possible, and what is not. Yet within the accepted norms of the *field* itself, agents or groups are also locked into a constant struggle for improvements capable of bringing about forms of social change through what Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) describe as 'diverse probabilities of success' (p. 102). In my research I suggest that these differences present a particularly useful way of explaining the experiences of student choice in the AHPs' *field*. The main point to stress thus far is that conceptually the *field* is also capable of generating ways of understanding social change, and not as a static system ossified in time but one that is unique to the conditions of the specific qualities of each *field* of practice. Bourdieu (2000) describes this capacity for adaptation as depending upon the ability of each *field* to *autonomously* resist or be subjected to *heteronomous* (outside) influences of other *fields* (p. 112).

The relational qualities of *field* also provide a vehicle for understanding the struggle for the networks of *capital* resources that privilege distinction and difference. This process of *status exchange* is reflected back in the value of the qualification that the graduate receives, and in relation to my study is important in the way that student choice is played out in the AHPs at CU (Marginson, 2011).

3.3 *Capital and the 'field of power'*

The field of power . . . is a space of the relations of force between the different kinds of capital or, more precisely, between the agents who possess a sufficient amount of one of the different amounts of capital to be in a position to dominate the corresponding field . . . (Bourdieu, 1998a p. 34).

As I have indicated, a *field* is a product not just of rules and structures, but also of the relationship between other *fields*, agents or collectives of people as occupiers of positions in more than one *field* at a time. Importantly each *field* can be defined by a set of distinct practices, but nevertheless, agents can interact simultaneously in more than one *field* at any one time (Grenfell and James, 2004). Bourdieu described this shared social space as a *field of power*, which can be considered to be a kind of meta-*field*, and whilst each *field* retains its distinctiveness and degree of autonomy, there are also cross-*field* effects whereby the conditions of a dominant social *field* saturate another.

Bourdieu reasoned that over time this exchange of conditions from the dominant to the subordinate *fields* was, in the final analysis, politically and economically motivated as a result of the migration of ideology from one *field* to another (1998a, 1998b; 2003; 2005). In a contemporary HE context, Naidoo (2003) argues that this process is evident in the way that traditional notions of university autonomy have been lost to an increasingly *utilitarian* pedagogy that concentrates on the potential for growth in an economic sense. This explains how HE appears highly stratified, and subject to varying degrees of success between (lower status) mass HE, in comparison with elite (high status) participation.

Thus, to clarify, the *field of power* behaves like a 'prism' to mediate between competing social *fields* (Bourdieu, 1993 p. 164) in which the ability to refract these forces is a measure of the autonomy of the *field* (Maton, 2011). What also sets Bourdieu apart from other theorists is that the idea of *capital* is more than just an expression of the ability to produce goods and consumption toward monetary profit. Moore (2008) explains that Bourdieu's appropriation of the term is designed to extend to a much wider 'system of exchanges', in which a number of different cultural 'assets' are 'transformed and exchanged within complex networks within and across *fields*' (p. 102). In turn these sites of exchange act as nodal points of *capital* and cultural exchange in social practices. Put simply, *capital* should be relationally conceived along with *field* as 'both the process within, and product of, a *field* as if it were one side of the same coin' (Thomson, 2008 p. 69).

As such Bourdieu suggests an alternative theory of social stratification to that of Marxist functional theory. Beck (2007) refers to classical Marxism as a form of class 'essentialism' and 'reductionism' where *capital* (profit) is arbitrarily appropriated to confer a position of elevated status. Bourdieu however, not only identifies *economic capital* (money and assets) but describes how further granulation is possible, including *symbolic capital* as a representation of all other forms of *capital*. This includes *cultural capital* such as knowledge, taste and aesthetics, and *social capital* that exists through group affiliations, social networks, family, religion and cultural history. The significance of this to the construction of my research is that through the milieu of educational choice as

social and cultural activities, *capital* in all of its forms can be conserved, exchanged and enhanced (Thomson, 2008).

Taking this idea further, DiMaggio (1979) describes how *capital* can be expressed as 'attributes, possessions, or qualities of a person or a position exchangeable for goods, services, or esteem' (p. 1463). This is apparent (according to Bourdieu) in the way that the accumulation of some symbolic forms of *capital* increase educational advantage by extending choices that are open to some and not others (Webb et al. 2002). Here, for example, the presence of *cultural capital* is what also makes the 'qualitative differences' that result from a *specialised habitus* within the same social group, rather than a homogenous collective class response (Moore, 2008).

Bourdieu's use of *capital* also stands apart for other important reasons. *Economic capital* alone is always considered to exist as a means to an end; that is, the accumulation of profit (Bourdieu, 1998a). In contrast, other forms of *capital* appear to exist in a state of 'disinterestedness', as forms of distinction to those that hold them. In reality the truth is that all *social* and *cultural* forms of *capital* also have some material value in their exchange or *transmutation*. Therefore *symbolic capitals* are in reality simply altered forms of *economic capital* that for Bourdieu (1993) are 'always at the root of the last analysis' (p. 33). This opens up the possibility that all 'university practices that purport to be disinterested', that is for the sake of education alone, can be analysed as 'economic' practices. As Naidoo (2004) suggests, these are directed towards maximising symbolic profit rather than for purely economic gain (p. 459).

3.4 'Habitus' and social class formation

Capital can be seen to exist in different types, *economic, cultural, social* and in a *symbolic* form, and it can also be expressed in different forms. Occupying a position between objective and embodied forms, a further manifestation of *capital* is also present in the *habitus*. This does not exist in a material sense; neither is it codified or doctrinal but is manifest only in the sense of a practice, as a way of doing something. When Bourdieu (1994) describes the *habitus* as being a *structured and structuring structure* he is attempting to unite a number of key properties that the *habitus* possesses (p. 170). Firstly it is 'structured' by individual circumstances, primarily one's upbringing, family history and education. It is 'structuring' in that the *habitus* directs our future and past actions. It is also a 'structure' that, according to Maton (2008), is 'systematically ordered rather than random and unpatterned' (p. 51). In this sense its context is at once historically, socially and individually derived. Bourdieu (1993) explains that:

[Habitus] is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated into the body in the form of permanent dispositions. So that the term constantly reminds us that it refers to something historical, linked to individual history. (p. 86)

These dispositions stay with us over time and are capable of being transferred across social contexts, and in this way *habitus* is both 'durable and transposable' (Maton, 2008 p. 51). For Webb et al. (2002) *habitus* is also a synthesis of our cultural and social histories that becomes manifest in and through certain qualities, such as:

. . . values and dispositions that allow us to respond to cultural rules and contexts in a variety of ways, but the responses are largely determined – regulated – by where (and who) we have been in a culture. (p. 36-37)

The *habitus* is a structural code, a type of habitual DNA. It defines the blueprint - not in any physiological process, but instead as a particular cultural way of embodied behaviour. Elsewhere I have suggested that this in turn generates the ways in which human actors behave according to dominant cultural rules (Wordsworth, 2009). Perhaps more eloquently, Nash (1999) describes this same quality of the *habitus* as being:

[G]enerative schema in which the form of elemental social structures come, through the process of socialisation, to be embodied in individuals, with the result that people necessarily act in such a way that the underlying structures are reproduced and given effect. (p. 177)

Bourdieu argues that social structures, such as class formation, only exist as the result of the objective position that results from the struggle for capital with a field. In this sense 'class struggle' is nothing more than the position-taking of agents or groups of agents seeking to improve their capital resources, and therefore their position within the field. Whilst this does differ from a Marxist theory of class, Bourdieu's ideas do accord with Durkheim's view of a collective and shared group experience. Indeed, Weber's notion of the monopolization of different goods and services amongst class groups also has some resonance with Bourdieu's exploration of position-taking. Nevertheless, as Crossley (2008) explains, social proximity does not necessarily mean a collective identity. Although capital resources, such as those gained from investing in education and training, are more likely to enable groups to form around shared experiences, 'outlooks and dispositions and a tacit sense of their place in the world', the *habitus* is always subject to transformation as a

form of 'class unconsciousness' (p. 93). As such social class can only exist as a theoretical model, until it is studied as a unique example in a specific field.

3.5 *The habitus and critical voices*

Despite the growing use of Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus* as the basis for carrying out empirical investigations, it remains the subject of much contestation. Indeed DiMaggio (1979), Jenkins (1992), Webb et al. (2004), as well as Pelletier's (2009) description of Rancière's objections, have all criticised what they see as the deterministic qualities of *habitus*. This suggests that objective social structures create a structured *habitus*, such that human practices continue to reflect and reproduce the original objective structure. Indeed Jenkins (1992) has been critical of Bourdieu's structuralist background, and Nash (1999) of the mechanical qualities that the *habitus* appears to reproduce. DiMaggio (1979) has questioned the simultaneous qualities of the *habitus* to be at once durable and at the same time transformable. In his view the duality of 'stability and plasticity of personality, is one about which Bourdieu has little concrete to say' (p. 1467).

Again, in stating his defence, Bourdieu (1992) argues that, yes, the social world is a complex space where subjective agency is possible, but where objective social structures are always present. This is important to Bourdieu because:

Of all the oppositions that artificially divide the social sciences, the most fundamental, and the most ruinous, is the one that is set up between subjectivism and objectivism. (1990, p. 25)

Moreover, in recognising the consequences of this artificial separation, Bourdieu (1988: 10) suggests that the *habitus* can be put to work methodologically to resolve this longstanding dichotomy:

The relation between the [human] social agent and the world is not that between a subject (or a consciousness) and an object, but a relation of 'ontological complexity' – or mutual 'possession' – between *habitus*, as a socially constituted principle of perception and appreciation, and the world which determines it.

Ontologically speaking the *habitus* responds to external realities of the social world and is simultaneously a product of individual agency and consciousness. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the application of *habitus* to empirical investigation is also not without its critics. Indeed Li Puma (1993) argues that the *habitus* 'cannot make the connection because the relationship of individual agency to social classification is not developed' sufficiently in Bourdieu's theoretical approach (p. 24). Paradoxically Li Puma argues that Bourdieu fails to explain why the internalisation of the *habitus* appears to generate relative practices and different behaviours in agents from the same family, economic background and cultural history.

Nash (1999) however, points out that Bourdieu's theorisation of the *habitus* suggests two models of reproduction; a specific or *specialised habitus* and another more *generalised* view. In the former, agents are pre-disposed to certain thoughts, actions and attitudes that result from known 'cultural trajectories'; however human action is not necessarily deterministic and mechanically fixed because *habitus* is always 'of the moment' and is 'brought out when a set of these dispositions meet a particular problem, choice or context' so that agents get a 'feel for the game that is everyday life' (p. 178).

For Bourdieu (1993) these 'adjustments' are considered as necessities of 'adaptation to new and unforeseen situations' in order to bring about 'durable transformation of the *habitus*' (p. 87). The *specialised habitus*, Nash (1999) again suggests, 'while being the product of early experience, it is nonetheless subject to the transformation brought about by subsequent experience' (p. 176).

It is the methodological application of the *generalised* sense of *habitus* however, that has received most criticism, particularly from Nash (1999). As a so-called statistical model of class reproduction, research based on this approach suggests that members of the same class are considered to share a general class *habitus*. If this were true, one could predict student choice because members of a class would behave in exactly the same way. Like Moore (2008), Nash (1999) feels that this view of the *generalised habitus* has been incorrectly appropriated to develop what is a:

[P]seudo-statistical argument for the reproduction of a class as a whole, with no reference to what happens to particular individuals, which is then regarded as just a matter of chance. (p. 178)

In this Chapter I have explored Bourdieu's theoretical concept of *field*, *capital* and *habitus* to suggest that his thinking tools have been developed in order to present a 'theory of practice' capable of capturing the complexities of the social world. The concept of *field* offers a way of thinking about how the practices of student choice in the AHPs are maintained or adapted, through the conditions of the *field* and its conflict with other *fields*. The mobilisation of *capital* and the influence of this on the *habitus* also suggest that some students may share in

a collective sense of mutual interest in choosing a particular AHP to study, yet still respond differently and individually to these experiences.

Bourdieu is often at pains to point out the need for empirical application of these theoretical principles, and that they are at their most potent when put to use methodologically. Therefore Chapter 4 seeks to identify such a methodology that Bourdieu suggests is capable of constructing an analysis of the *field*, through various levels of engagement in order to build up a relational multi-layered picture of student choice-making in the AHPs at CU.

Chapter 4.0 Bourdieu and Methodology: a means of investigating student choice in the Allied Health Professions

So far I have suggested that as a methodological imperative, Bourdieu stressed that the application of his conceptual thinking should be in the form of an empirical study generated from experience of the social world (Reay, 2004; Maton, 2008). Moreover, these social encounters are to be methodologically observed, constructed and transformed into measurable research data in what Grenfell (2008) suggests is a 'theory as method' (p. 219) (see also David et al. 1996; Grenfell and James, 2003; Shaw, 2005; Warren and Webb, 2009). I intend in this Chapter to outline how I have adapted Bourdieu's methodological approach to address my research aim and questions. As a starting point, I demonstrate how AHP education and training is in itself a series of social activities constructed in a wider social context, independent of how I, or the participants, view this reality (Robson, 2002). I will then indicate how various methods will be used to construct relational data according to a 3-stage process in order to illuminate the reality of educational choice in the AHPs.

4.1 *Methodological reflexivity*

Working with Bourdieu in this way requires a commitment on behalf of the researcher to both theoretical reflexivity as well as empirical rigour. Bourdieu (1999) himself is trenchant in his view that:

Many decades of empirical research in all its forms, from ethnography to sociology and from the so-called questionnaire to the most open-ended interviews, have convinced me that the adequate scientific expression of this practice is to be found neither in the prescriptions of a methodology more often scientific rather than scientific, nor in the antiscientific caveats of the advocates of mystic union. (p. 607)

In this way Bourdieu opens up the possibility of employing various types of methods to capture both quantitative and qualitative data, but always orientated toward addressing the particular research questions. Along the way Bourdieu (2000) actively encourages the researcher to 'make explicit the intentions and procedural principles necessary to reproduce the work of construction' of the social reality in question (p. 607). I intend to account for this process and to demonstrate how each methodological stage is linked to a specific action and to a particular method, or methods, in order to address each research question.

For Bourdieu (1999) the act of constructing knowledge through research cannot fail to influence the outcomes of the research itself, to the extent that the data is, in some way, always a distortion of the truth. For Bourdieu reflexivity is the key to overcoming these distortions, otherwise the research is in danger of being rigid and dogmatic. Consequently, if reflexivity creates the conditions for good research then Bourdieu (1999) argues that it is not possible to remain the detached observer without some form of 'contamination' from the social world itself (p. 607).

As a starting point for further discussion on the methodological importance that Bourdieu ascribes to reflexivity, Pat Sikes (2004) has described its place in the research process as the ethical exposé of 'fundamental assumptions underlying the choice of methodology and procedure' (p. 30). Guba and Lincoln (2005) bring these assumptions that are embedded in social practices into the realm of self-awareness, or as a 'conscious experiencing of the self'

(p. 210), in order to enable what Bryman (2004) calls the 'systematic exploration of the unthought' (p. 500). Therefore the construction of knowledge is 'always a reflection of a researcher's location in time and space' (p. 500). In this study methodological reflexivity is also considered further in Chapter 7 (see Table 2, page 84).

4.2 'Constructing the object of the research'

Bourdieu argues that reflexivity is necessary to 'construct the object of the research'. This means that it is important to be clear about the research purpose, what data is needed and which methods are required, and, indeed, a number of previous studies that purport to take a Bourdieusian view have been criticised for their failure to do just this. Warren and Webb (2007) in particular have raised concerns about collecting data solely on a phenomenology of the *habitus*. They argue cogently that much of the research that utilises Bourdieu's 'conceptual lexicon' is actually restricted to the study of *habitus* in isolation and the relationship of *habitus* to *field* and *capital* is ignored (p. 14).

Warren and Webb (2007) clarify the nature of their criticism in that:

We understand the dispositions generated from within habitus as saturated with social structure. Habitus cannot be empirically researched without also mapping the fields of social practice and the resources available to people to construct their lives. (p. 50)

The effects of structures, such as social class, should, then, be an important feature of the research design, so that the methodological process should not ignore the fundamental question of both structure and agency. Therefore in my study the exploration of the *habitus* attempts to surface agency through the voices of the learners, which in turn are interpreted through the specific

structural lens of social class, in effect to 'hold structure and agency in tension' (Reay et al. 2005, p 23). For me, this begins with asking the right research questions in order to employ appropriate methods (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) and not to become pre-occupied with the collection of so-called 'superior data' which arbitrarily becomes *misrecognized* as the only way to get to the truth (Silva and Edwards, 2004). By constructing the object of the research in this way, I aim to open up a conceptual space to be able to 'question what cannot be said for lack of an available discourse' (Bourdieu, 2000 p. 168).

4.3 Studying the field: a methodological approach to researching educational choice in the Allied Health Professions

When asked to summarise specifically how he would go about the act of construction of his research design, Bourdieu suggested a 3-stage methodological approach. Grenfell (2008) has described this as a useful *aide-memoire* that specifies a particular process that I intend to employ to provide a relational and co-constructed account of student choice-making in the AHPs. This is because student choice takes place at different levels, or across strata of social reality, and not in a one-dimensional policy content. These levels or stages, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggest, should include:

1. An analysis of the position of the *field* in relation to the *field* of power.
 2. Mapping of the objective structure of relations between the positions occupied by agents who compete for the legitimate forms of specific authority of which the *field* is the site.
 3. An analysis of the *habitus* of agents; the systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalizing a deterministic type of social and economic condition.
- (p. 104 - 105)

In practical terms each stage is reported upon separately in my research. That said, Grenfell (2008) has argued that each stage should remain 'continually co-

terminus' with each other so that 'they anticipate, assume and acknowledge each other at one and the same time' (p. 227). Although not intended to offer a prescriptive blueprint of a research methodology, this does however, appear to invite the researcher to work creatively with the tools that Bourdieu has described. My particular approach has been to develop not only an overall aim to the research, but also to define three specific research questions that are individually aligned to each of the methodological stages, in order to construct a relational 'object of study' with appropriate methods of data collection. As a starting point I begin with an analysis of the *field of power*.

4.3.1 An analysis of the field vis-à-vis the field of power

Methodologically this first stage of my research design can be considered to represent a macro-level of analysis that is specifically addressed by the following research question:

- *How is the 'new' discourse of student choice constructed in and between social fields?*

This stage is crucial, as Warren and Webb (2007) explain, as it provides a way of understanding the context of student choice 'produced at the nexus of movements within the domains of the economy, culture, and politics' (p. 16). In other words, student choice takes place in what is a shared social space, a *meta-field* that I have identified as being synonymous with the *field of power*. Bourdieu (1984) stresses that, at the centre of interactions between all social *fields*, there exists a tension between the relative positions of the economic and political *fields*. I have chosen to identify recent policy initiatives that focus on student choice as a way of encountering such tensions. The way that I have attempted to do this is through the exploration of particular forms of discourse

that expose the struggles for domination and subordination between the economic, political and HE *fields*. I begin this process by reflexively creating the space to question what the purpose of this discourse is, and what the policy makers' 'real' intentions are.

My starting point is another of Bourdieu's theoretical concepts, namely *doxa*. This is the process by which common-sense views are substantiated in the way that 'taken for granted' assumptions become saturated within policy and the discourse that constructs and is constructed by them (Deer, 2008). This provides a useful way of exploring how the *field* of student choice to date is constituted in policy circles around the dominant discourse of rational choice strategies, meritocracy and 'poverty of aspiration'. Importantly, Bourdieu (2003) describes the effects of *doxa*, existing through the 'point of view of the dominant, which presents and imposes itself as a universal point of view' (p. 57), as a way of maintaining unequal relationships of power (see Taylor et al. 1997; Ozga, 2000; and Bowe et al. 1992). In this way homologies or common themes can be identified in practices and patterns of behaviour across *fields*, as well as in social agents and organisations that dominate the *field*. Therefore this level of analysis is to do with understanding how the effects of *doxa* are apparent in the economic discourse of late modernity as a structural policy feature contained in the foreword to the White Paper *Putting Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011).

By applying key principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), I aim to demonstrate how these discursive practices are part of a social structure that

reproduces existing structures. In other words, understanding this policy discourse enables a social analysis to be made as if it were a 'site of struggle' to reveal the *taken for granted* organisational *logic of the field* (Bourdieu, 1991). To make this possible I intend to bring together, conceptually and heuristically, relationships between Chouliaraki and Fairclough's 'orders of discourse' and the concept of *field*. To begin, they clarify that:

Bourdieu's account suggests that the relevant structural frame for CDA is not the individual order of discourse, but the structured configuration of orders of discourse within the field and across fields. (1999, 103)

Thus CDA makes it possible to recognise that policy-making on the one hand has the capacity to act as a communicative text and on the other exists as a social practice. Therefore the duality of this linguistic textual activity is not merely a reflection of society, but in its discursive form is part of the structure and processes of social change and transformation that takes place between social *fields*, in what Fairclough (2001) would describe as *orders of discourse*. Like Bourdieu, Fairclough (2003) also suggests that class relations are mediated discursively in the text, as relationships of power, expressed as *field* specific ideology; Marxism and neo-liberalism are particular examples of this.

I am suggesting therefore, that student choice as it appears in the HE policy context represents a particular social order (the discourse between *fields*). Using a CDA - informed approach involves identifying clusters of ideologies (*discourses*) that appear within the text as economic or political representations that circulate in the *field of power*. In other words, what I intend to discover are 'articulations of relationships between different levels of *field* - between individual *fields*' but also between the *field of power* itself, in what

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) imagine to be a '*field of class struggle*' (p. 114). Understanding student choice in this way helps to lay the foundations for understanding how practices and structures that affect choice in education and training can be seen to dynamically alter the resources students require to access education and training, as well as the response of the *habitus* to these changing social conditions.

4.3.2 Mapping the objective structures of relations between the positions occupied by institutions

Methodologically speaking this second stage represents a meso-level analysis that specifically addresses the following research question:

- *How are forms of social and cultural capital distributed in AHPs programmes at CU, and how does this structure student choice?*

This level of analysis is concerned with describing and constructing the various programmes, as well as professional and institutional positions within the AHP *field* to explore how those structural conditions inherited from the *field of power* affect student choice. To achieve this I intend to identify a range of documentary data sources that define the conditions that surround choice-making for those programmes included in the study. This analysis is constructed practically from documentary sources and internal CU data taken from recruitment information, attainment and achievement data, admission and application statistics. Taking Bourdieu's idea of *capital*, each of these sources has a symbolic value that I identify as *indices of capital*. I intend to take these as objective measures of the position of each AHP programme in the study, whereby this mainly quantitative data will provide the backdrop for constructing what Bourdieu (1998a) describes as a 'discursive montage' of the various

forms and amounts of *capital* and its effect upon student recruitment, retention and achievement.

To recap, my aim is to provide a discursive context to the structural landscape in which student choice in the AHPs takes place at CU. This is constructed according to the availability and value of the currency of exchange of *economic* and *capital* resources (*social* and *cultural capital*) and their symbolic value. According to Bourdieu, access to *capital* is important because something considered to be rare, perhaps a place at a prestigious university or on a particularly over-subscribed programme, is endowed with *cultural capital* because of the advantages that it bestows upon the holder. If it is considered valuable symbolically by the student, then this distinction is worthy of conservation by the institution itself in order to maintain its institutional advantage within the *field*. Consequently this level of analysis provides an opportunity to explore particular practices associated with each AHP programme.

4.3.3 Analysis of the habitus of agents and the systems of dispositions they have acquired

Methodologically this third stage represents a micro-level level analysis that is specifically addressed by the following research question:

- *How is student choice shaped by the habitus and what is the influence of social class?*

This level of analysis is put to work to explore the qualities of the habitus itself. It also builds on findings from the previous levels of analysis to re-construct student

choice-making not in policy terms, or as a statistical feature, but as the lived experience of those involved. This stage of the research is presented here as the third methodological level, and will include an initial online questionnaire as a means of surveying AHP students during their first year of study. Quantitative data such as this will be used to build up an ethnographically informed picture of the participants in the field for each AHP programme area (Grenfell, 2008). Key themes, characteristics and areas for further investigation that emerge from the questionnaire will be further explored using semi-structured interviews with students 'selected into' the qualitative sample as case studies of choice in the AHP field at CU.

As Bourdieu (1977a) stressed, the quantitative analysis of the habitus of agents should be harnessed to describe how collective qualities dictate 'a way of being' to indicate a particular 'predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination' (to think, feel or act) (p. 214). The intention for the kind of data generated through interviews is to reveal how the habitus shapes individual responses to choice-making and how the habitus in turn is shaped by social class. In this way semi-structured interviews are intended to reveal the qualities and responses of the habitus to the various AHP fields as a way of understanding how student choice is encountered and experienced.

In summary my chosen methodological approach involves various levels of analysis to build up a composite picture of the 'object of the study'. In accepting the opportunity to work creatively with Bourdieu's ideas I intend to develop a strategy that is designed to address specific, yet inter-related

research questions. This begins with an approach to understanding the macro policy level at the point that student choice appears to be redefined as a particular feature of Government reforms, outlined in the HE White Paper *Putting Students at the Heart of the System*. Borrowing from key principles of CDA, I intend to explore how the discourse of student choice can be read critically and how mainly economic and political ideas and concepts from one *field* spread to another, in which the *field of power* acts as a locus for the perpetuation of power, hierarchy and status. Revealing the true intent of the policy leads into a discussion surrounding a meso-level of analysis of the effects of this revised discourse on the AHP education and training *field* and therefore the distribution and the effects of Bourdieu's conceptual ideas on *capital* for each of the programmes of study. Objective measures of this *capital* from a range of documentary sources will be used to identify 'indices' of *capital*. These in turn will be constructed into a discursive analysis of the structural principles and practices that shape the choice-making activities for each AHP programme at CU.

The methodology then turns to exploring the individual micro-level of analysis of the *habitus*. Beginning with a questionnaire, a range of characteristics of the *field* of choice in the study is collected and analysed, particularly those features that pertain to notions of social class. This data not only allows broad comparisons to be made between each programme, but also enables individual participants to be identified. Semi-structured interviews are then carried out to explore individual acts of choice-making across the programmes included in the study. These case study accounts are co-constructed

according to Bourdieu's conceptual thinking, within the context of the micro and meso-level findings, to complete several case study examples of student choice as lived and social-classed influenced experiences.

Chapter 5.0 Exploring the ‘*field of power*’: applying a critical discursive approach to the policy of student choice

Based on the earlier conceptual exploration in Chapter 3 this stage of the research describes the outcomes of a discursive analysis of the foreword to the White Paper, *Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011). I have chosen to focus on this particular document for a number of reasons. Given the lack of any specific details from the Coalition Government around the future of DH funded HE, such as AHP education and training, this policy is the only contemporary representation of the future direction of HE. It also sets out the centrality of student choice within this revised landscape. Rising to Grenfell’s (2008) challenge to work creatively with Bourdieu’s methodological tools, and to address my first research question, I intend to show how the economic *field*, according to Fairclough (1993), is represented in and through various discursive practices that surround student choice, either as a semiotic analysis of imagery or, as in this case, through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the use of the language of student choice.

As a key driver for political reform, the White Paper is an important example of the way in which student choice is portrayed as a mechanism to ‘steer’ change (Neave, 2000; Williams, 2000; Douglass, 2005; Parry, 2005). Given the word length constraints of the study it would not be practical to expose the entire document (which runs to 80 pages) to this approach, therefore my analysis concentrates exclusively on the foreword, which, at around 400 words still has much to reveal (see appendix 1). I begin by firstly considering the synchronic context, in which the policy is a discursive representation of social practices

that exist and circulate within the *field of power* at this particular moment in time (Hyatt, 2005). I then go on to consider the diachronic nature of how other ideas and thoughts are maintained across a considerable period of time. Given that the *field of power* appears to act in a similar way to Fairclough's (2001) description of 'orders of discourse', I am suggesting that within any revised discourse there are both structural as well as 'interactional dimension [SW-s]' between structure and agency (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999 p. 59). Indeed, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) also point to the possibilities that CDA offers to illustrate linguistically the nature of social change within dynamic *fields* (p. 116).

In my study I have chosen to adopt David Hyatt's (2005) Synchronic Context Frame, as a particular example of the application of CDA as the most appropriate way of exploring the textual representation of student choice. He argues convincingly that by addressing the immediate and medium-term socio-political landscape, these temporal contexts can be studied at a number of levels, and this approach is compatible therefore with Bourdieu's methodological approach. Indeed Bourdieu (1991) contends that to begin to consider the future, what is said in a policy context cannot be understood without first realising the inter-connected nature of both social and political *fields*. To do this Hyatt (2005) draws together various features such as genre and discourses, to describe how ideas circulate (interdiscursively) between different *fields* within the *field of power*. I begin by presenting an account of Hyatt's textual explorations of the 'contemporary actuality' (in what I refer to as

the 'here and now'), as an account of the social conditions from which the White Paper has emerged.

5.1 The 'field of power' in the 'here and now'

Using Hyatt's (2005) heuristic it is possible to understand the immediate socio-political context in which revised ideas concerning student choice are constructed. The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition has pushed ahead the introduction of controversial reforms to the way that HE is funded, in ways in which key messages of value for money and fiscal efficiency are now afforded primacy. In accepting the majority of the recommendations of the Browne Review (2010), there has been a shift in the way that universities will receive their funding. In a statement to Parliament, David Willetts (2010), the Minister for Universities and Science, indicated that:

The bulk of universities' money will not come through the block grant, but will instead follow the choices of students. It will be up to each university or college to decide what it charges, including the amounts for different programmes.

This, then, is the immediate socio-political context in which revised political ideas and a 'new' discourse circulate within the *field of power*. Whilst setting out a clear link between the need for policy reform and economic prudence in the 'here and now', student choice appears to be completely detached from any notion of the democratisation of HE. Now the overwhelming political imperative is to deliver a recursive theme of economic reform, in which the full resources of Government have been made available to articulate, refresh and renew this new discourse in the form of political *capital* (Swartz, 1997) through

press releases, political statements, speech acts, and in a number of other complementary policy initiatives.

Fairclough's (2000) critical reading of the discourse of 'New Labour' also demonstrates how it is possible for ideologically different partners from the left (Socialists) and centre (Social Democrats) of the Labour party to unify under the recursive discourse of 'The Third Way'. Similarly my analysis shows how a specific Coalition genre is constructed as a way of revising how the social world is currently represented. As an opening paragraph to the foreword, these 'new' representations are at best only subtly alluded to. What is more, the genre that is constructed does not overtly describe 'economic imperative' as the basis for a revised construction of student choice. Instead the discourse shows how the need for reform is validated on the textual use of a certain form of justification that Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001) describe as 'warrant'. In paragraph 1, line 1, this form of warrant takes on an evidentiary approach in which certain claims evidence the current status of HE. The Coalition asserts that:

Our university sector has a proud history and a world-class reputation, attracting students from across the world.

This is presented to the reader as if it were a statement of fact. Within the text there is a suggestion that, in order for HE to maintain its reputation and to keep pace with global competition, reforms are necessary, even vital. This is achieved through a linguistic presupposition that lays claim to a clear and objective factual reputation (the UK's status as a global player in HE). Yet in paragraph 1 the basis for establishing the truth of the matter switches from factual reputation to feelings, in the form of pride.

Furthermore, in the first paragraph, a specific Coalition genre begins to take shape textually. There is a suggestion that the Government alone should no longer be responsible for continuing to fund the HE sector:

Higher education is a successful public private partnership (paragraph 1 line 2).

To add credence to the genre the authors switch to a 'political' form of justification, in which the ability to forge a public-private partnership is portrayed in the discourse as being in the interests of country and society as a whole (Cochran-Smith and Fries, 2001). What can be described as a simple co-ordination sentence is then used to textually suggest how incompatible ideas become linked together in the suggestion that 'Government funding and institutional autonomy' appear to be given equal weight and status (Cochran-Smith and Fries, 2001).

The formation of the genre also contains specific economic actions, including a greater emphasis on student choice as a mechanism to introduce wide-ranging funding reforms. The key aim of the policy is therefore expressed in paragraph 2, line 2:

. . . while doing more than ever to put students in the driving seat. We want to see more investment, greater diversity and less centralised control.

Here we see how the genre discourse is established without explicitly stating that this is the case. The text appears to suggest that student choice enables funding reforms to be based on the principles of marketisation as the engine of efficiency, and thus replaces the traditional responsibilities of the state toward HE funding and policy direction. Talk of greater diversity in this paragraph remains unclear, and is just as likely to refer to the opening up of the sector to

new providers as to a desire to re-address access and participation. In other words, the text acts as a justificatory warrant that is discursively expressed through economic principles. On several occasions the authors allude to financial imperatives to give *connective value* to the text and to re-enforce a cohesive set of principles that are presented as logical and necessary (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

Repetition of key words such as 'financial' or related words such as 'funding' 'investment' and 'low cost' are used to substitute each other as well as to co-locate with ideas that imply the need for change. Thus textually some words are used interchangeably to re-enforce the message.

- reform
- renewed
- new focus

Whilst these lexical features are meant to engender the need for change, the exact role of the Government is again not made clear. The discursive elements of the text appear to support Naidoo's (2003) view of a political lurch to a utilitarian form of government. The Coalition is thus actively withdrawing from its traditional responsibilities, thereby opening up the sector to consumerism and marketisation.

To recap, using the principles of Hyatt's (2005) approach to CDA, textual exploration identifies how the discourse is constructed from the social circumstances that exist in the 'here and now'. This discourse does not exist in isolation but in the nexus of a particular set of interactions with the economic

field in the *field of power*. The next stage of Hyatt's (2005) approach is to consider how the text is socio-politically constructed over a significant period of time, and which links ideas contained within the policy foreword to existing historical movements.

5.2 The socio-political context of choice

This section provides an account of the socio-political concepts that extend diachronically, or beyond this particular moment in time (Hyatt, 2005). Moreover, political beliefs, like the discourse that they represent, are capable of providing a 'textually mediated' window into the character of contemporary social life (Smith, 1990).

One way in which these political ideas attempt to sustain legitimacy is through the use of genres and interdiscursive discourses. Indeed Fairclough (1993) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) have demonstrated how a largely economic discourse has been inculcated into academia, as part of the consumerist society. Although a highly politicised idea, it shares a contemporary history located in earlier trends and movements, such as Thatcherism and neo-liberalism, and indeed also in New Labour's so-called 'Third Way'. According to Fairclough's (2000) analysis, ideas such as antipathy to state power, support for the quasi-market, commodification and now student choice will continue to exist from government to government as established political features of late capitalist societies. So, whilst the idea of student choice in HE may be represented in different ways, it is always a political tool that continues the credo of earlier times. The foreword contains its own

homage to such an established genre:

public-private partnership (paragraph 1)

less centralised control (paragraph 2)

. . . in return we want the sector to become more accountable to students, as well as the taxpayer (paragraph 2)

We must move away from a world in which the number of students . . . is determined by Whitehall (paragraph 5)

Our overall goal is a sector that is freed to respond in new ways . . . (paragraph 6)

Indeed the presence of genre is perhaps at its clearest in the way that the text borrows interdiscursively from prevailing political ideas that are now constructed alongside the notion of student choice:

. . . while doing more than ever to put students in the driving seat (paragraph 2)

. . . we want the sector to become more accountable to students (paragraph 2)

So we will empower prospective students . . . (paragraph 4)

This is an important textual feature because, without always being stated as such, student choice appears to become part of a unique genre, but is in fact located in long-standing ideas that remain dominant in the political *field*.

I am suggesting that, textually, student choice is incorporated into a genre style that, through the lens of a CDA-informed approach, is revealed in the culmination of a number of interdiscursive moments whereby 'one discourse of one social practice colonises another' (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999 p. 27). The implications are that, outwardly, the government is mobilising the

potential of student choice to do one thing, whereas the reality is a politically motivated imperative. Furthermore, this 'colonisation' of ideas is always presented in the text as positive and progressive outcomes intended to resonate with the reader's own assumptions. It would be difficult for the reader, to argue with the Government's intention to bring about . . . a renewed focus on high-quality teaching (paragraph 4). In this case the purpose seems to be to create common ground between the text producers and how the text is received and interpreted, through the presupposition that the reader brings to the interpretation of the text. Importantly Fairclough (2001) argues that such presupposition is linked to ideological position-taking, in that the text becomes a structurally symbolic act perpetrated by the powerful on those less so. Like the principle of *doxa*, because this is not made explicit the reader is denied the opportunity to disagree or to construct alternative meanings.

Other textual features also re-enforce the ideological effects of the document on the reader's own meaning-making. For example the main clause in the sentence 'we want there to be a renewed focus on high quality teaching' prefaces the informational nature of the sentence at the expense of the subordinate clause, 'so that it has the same prestige as research.' In this way the text producer seeks to establish with the reader a shared understanding of the quality and importance of research, whilst suggesting that, the quality of teaching at the moment is both subordinate and open to improvement.

Other elements that presuppose ideological mutuality flow directly from other texts. This material, termed intertextuality can be both obvious and opaque. For instance Hyatt (2005) has shown how intertextual features are used to legitimise a political assertion into reality. This technique is used to order the text and to foreground the essential need for reform. The entire third paragraph does this by referring at all times to other policy sources, namely student finances and the 'Browne Review' (2010). Indeed some phrases directly re-enforce the need to 'balance the financial demands of universities with the interests of current students'. Even the prospect of student debt is positively articulated in the political discourse by suggesting that 'no first-time undergraduate students will have to pay upfront fees'. Indeed by linking the White Paper to the Brown Review (2010) and to student finance reforms, the prospect of delivering previously incompatible and irreconcilable ideas, to 'deliver on savings . . . without cutting the quality of higher education' is intertextually talked into reality from one policy to another.

5.3 *The contemporary and re-contextualised nature of student choice*

I have alluded to the fact that the Coalition has predicated much of its political discourse on the need to address the current national debt crisis. This is a particular example of Government Ministers acting as political agents to influence the discourse of student choice according to the contemporary socio-political climate of the day. Indeed the next stage of Hyatt's (2005) analysis demonstrates how such agents seek to be represented within the text through the use of a number of lexico-grammatical features, which Hunston and Thompson (2000) suggest is an 'expression' of the text producer's viewpoint

or attitude (p. 5). Indeed Vince Cable (Liberal Democrat) and David Willetts (Conservative), by jointly presenting the foreword to the White Paper, attempt to build on the established justificatory 'warrant' since politicians uniting from across the political spectrum symbolically represent the absolute need for reform. Why else would they form such an alliance? Similarly, Hyatt (2005) suggests that the agency of key actors within the text is also used to exert claims to truth (see Wodak and Fairclough, 2010). One example is the way in which the ministerial authors claim that university management has been politically shaped (see Wodak and Fairclough, 2010):

We will tackle the micro-management that has been imposed on the higher education sector in recent years and which has held institutions back from responding to student demand (paragraph 5).

This, in CDA terms, is a form of recontextualisation and is rather like the Habermasian view of the 'colonisation' of one discourse into another which is also closely linked to Bernstein's (1990) description of the dialectic relationship of two sets of discourses through the voice of agents (p. 117).

In this way the language uttered by key political figures can be used to present a 'rhetoric of expectation' by which the meaning of the text is once again not what it first appears, so that the incompatible is rendered seemingly compatible (Fairclough, 2000). This is evident where certain words and phrases are structured through a listing syntax to afford equal weight to previously antagonistic ideas. An example of this is:

we want to see more investment, greater diversity and less centralised control (paragraph 2).

Furthermore, the voices of the text owners (Vince Cable and David Willets) are present in the use of pronouns such as the use of 'our' to establish ownership, but only when necessary and when the message is positive. The use of the first person plural in 'our' and 'we' suggests a conversational tone between text producer and reader. In the same way 'our university' is used to convey a shared appreciation and sense of ownership (paragraph 1). The use of 'we want' . . . to see a sector more accountable to students and taxpayers in paragraph 2 is meant to resonate further with public opinion. So too is the use of an *inscribed* form of textual evaluation evident in the way that the authors openly claim UK universities to have a 'proud history' and to be 'world-class'. The text also contains more opaque *evoked* forms of evaluation, which on the surface appear as neutral statements that may well hide a more judgemental quality. So the use of verbs such as reform, renew, empower and oversee have a dual impact, since as well as assigning warrant and justification, they add to the portrayal of positive outcomes in the reader's interpretation and establish that the text producers are justified in their particular portrayal of student choice.

Having suggested how 'voice' in the text is an important feature of constructing the discourse in this way, it is also the case that accountability and responsibility often remain ambiguous. Fairclough (2000) has demonstrated that, by not being clear about who is responsible, there is an 'advantage in vagueness' in representing processes, intention and meaning, such that agency is not always made clear (p. 5).

We want to see more investment . . . (paragraph 2)

To whom does 'we' refer, is it the Government, the authors themselves, or perhaps to society as a whole? Elsewhere in the text 'we' is used in a rather contradictory manner to denote a more active intention, even if agency and responsibility are still not clarified:

We are also . . . (paragraph 3)

We will tackle . . . (paragraph 5)

We must move away . . . (paragraph 5)

We expect this to mean . . . (paragraph 6)

Alternatively, the occasional use of the adjective 'our' denotes where Government clearly wishes to claim ownership for the actions taken: '. . . will deliver savings' (paragraph 3). In fact it is only toward the very end of the text (in paragraph 6) that agency is made absolutely clear, 'the Coalition will reform . . .' concludes by signalling not only a positive position but also one of absolute political unity.

To recap, the *contemporary* nature of a discourse can be revealed in the agency of the text producers. Although this suggests they hold a powerful and symbolic position, they may not choose to reveal this. Whilst agency can be used as a strong form of justification, in reality the discourse of student choice as it appears in the policy foreword is often unclear and this can be read as a deliberate tactic to avoid incompatible or contradictory ideas from being exposed.

5.4 Ideology within the discourse: 'the masters of mankind' (sic-SW)

Hyatt's (2005) fourth and final stage of analysis is concerned with describing the discursive 'epoch', or the way in which a society represents itself epistemologically and ontologically toward certain subjects or social practices. In other words, how ideas and concepts over a sustained period of time become ideologically driven so that they claim to represent the truth. Therefore, in the same way as the Foucauldian notion of 'episteme' (1972) operates, a discursive 'epoch' represents the way in which *a priori* knowledge exists historically, yet remains outside of any actual experience. Hyatt (2005) has also suggested that 'epoch' is also concerned with the way that a society pursues a particular ideological social identity and legitimacy, even when this is not how the world is actually experienced (p. 523). Fairclough (1993) extends this argument to suggest that 'epoch' is therefore naturally concerned with the legitimacy of the powerful:

[The] opacity of these relations between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (p. 135).

It is in this sense that I suggest that a discursive *epoch* operating within *field of power* influences student choice in its current discursive form, not always as the text initially might suggest, but hidden with themes of ideology, hegemony and power.

Chiapello and Fairclough (2002) believe ideology to be:

[A] system of ideas, values and beliefs orientated toward explaining a given political order, that legitimise existing hierarchies and power relationships . . . (p. 187).

Indeed I have chosen the sub-title to this section 'the masters of mankind' as a reference to Adam Smith's assessment of how all architects of state policy

are always naturally aligned to the business classes, and therefore to the ideology of economic rationalism. Similarly, in an article first published in *The Nation* magazine, Noam Chomsky (1993) argues that historically 'structures of governance have tended to coalesce around economic power' and therefore the continued dominance of the capitalist classes (Fairclough, 2001). My point here is that, in the text under examination, these linkages are not always made obvious and, according to Bourdieu (1977a), neither are the relationships of power and dominance in other social practices and structures.

Nevertheless, in the Weberian sense, ideological compliance requires those dominated to believe in the legitimacy of the dominant. In Althusser's (2008) neo-Marxist view, such hegemony is inevitable given that politico-economic practices colonise all social and cultural domains. Therefore, to ultimately understand the practical pursuit of student choice is to appreciate that it is always mediated through political and economic structures connected to power and dominance through the effects of social class. Indeed in Gramsci's (1971) view, capitalist values represent a coercive mechanism by which the working classes are actually complicit in accepting the 'common sense' view espoused by the political classes. Laclau and Mouffe (2001) agree that it is possible that such coercion becomes:

. . . embodied in institutions and apparatuses [of the State-SW] in which the hegemony of the collective will exist through the 'articulation of dispersed and fragmented historical forces'. (p. 67)

In this way student choice acts as part of the Government apparatus, in which the dominated are unable to mount any cohesive challenge to the collective 'common sense' view, and for Bourdieu, these symbolic forms of power and

violence are possible because they are *misrecognized* through the effects of *doxa* in the discourse.

5.5 A summary of my findings in relation to the macro-level of analysis

In summary, in addressing my first research question I am suggesting that the contemporary policy context acts as a way of understanding how the particular discourse of student choice is constructed in and between social *fields*, or what can otherwise be described as the *field of power*. My analysis reveals that whilst the idea of putting 'students at the heart of the system' emerges from within economic and political *fields* and, superficially at least, appears to suggest greater student choice, the underlying discourse is one which opens up the HE *field* to increased commodification and marketisation. Thus the reality is that the policy content, and therefore the direction of travel for the sector, is borrowed from the economic *field*, and is in fact detached from attempts to achieve Widening Participation.

My analysis shows that the penetration of these ideas and policies, that re-contextualise the contemporary effects of the economic *field* onto the HE *field*, are achieved discursively through various lexico-grammatical features such as genre and interdiscursivity. These are intended to legitimise the policy as economically unavoidable and unquestionable. My analysis also provides evidence that the current discourse has its origins in established political opinions, and in this way the text becomes a way of continuing to steer political aims (Middleton, 2000), using the policy apparatus of Government to construct 'taken for granted' or common sense ideas. These promote student demand-

led imperatives above those that are more socially orientated toward inclusive and democratic practices. In this way choice, specifically HE choice, acts as a medium for power, status and therefore stratification (Giddens, 1995). In this policy context student choice represents an unchallenged and therefore *doxic* view through what Bourdieu (1977a) describes as the 'misrecognition of arbitrariness', a process by which the social reality of the situation is obscured (p. 168). In this case the economic legitimacy of the policy appears, arbitrarily at least, to be economically more egalitarian, even where this is not necessarily the case. Ultimately however, the answer to how student choice is actually experienced emerges not from the discourse, but in the way that this is translated into the unique conditions and structures of the *field*. In Chapter 6, I move onto the exploration of the *field* itself, in which the practical conditions define the structures of how student choice is experienced.

Chapter 6.0 Exploring the *field*: the distribution of *capital* in AHP education and training programmes

In Chapter 5 I have suggested how the *field of power*, as a meta-*field*, provides a contextual background to this study, in which the discourse of student choice is re-constructed as a form of what can be described as *political capital*, as a resource to 'steer' the sector toward a particular economic position. In this Chapter the second stage of Bourdieu's methodological approach, and therefore the second of my research questions, is explored in relation to how forms of social and cultural *capital* are distributed in AHP programmes and how this influences student choice.

According to Bourdieu, objective conditions of any social *field* are constructed from the availability and distribution of resources, in the form of *social* and *cultural capital*. Therefore, the second research question is intended to consider at a meso-level how *capital*, in various forms, influences the structures of student choice at CU. To do this I describe and identify *capital* through a number of objective indicators of student choice, such as admission data, entry tariff and attrition and student completion statistics. These 'indices' as I call them, are described using Bourdieu's (2003) invitation to engage in a 'discursive montage' in relation to the way that they structure and shape selection, retention and achievement for each AHP programme. When applied to my research in this way the exchange of *capital* defines the position of each AHP in the *field*, in what Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) describe as the 'prises de position', and thus the practices of student choice for each programme in the study (p. 105).

6.1 *Indices of capital operating within the AHP field of education and training*

To summarise the AHPs included in this study are Operating Department Practice (ODP), Diagnostic Radiography, Therapeutic Radiography and Speech and Language Therapy (SLT). I make it clear that I do not intend to claim any wider generalisations to other institutions with a similar range of provision, but as Bourdieu (1998a) suggests, my intention is to explore CU ‘as a special case of what is possible’ (p. 2). My starting point for this is to identify what I consider to be ‘indices of demand’, as well as ‘indices of performance’ which represent the various forms of *capital* specific to the *AHP field* at CU. For Bourdieu (2006) it is the very structure and distribution of *capital* and its subtypes, at any given moment that ‘represents the immanent structures of the social world’ (p. 105), in this particular case, the field of student choice. To do this I start however, with a brief description of the AHP sub-fields through the lens of *social capital* as a way of beginning to locate positions in the *field*.

6.2 *Social capital in the AHP field*

Starting with SLT, I pre-reflexively associated the profession with a high status among the AHPs. As capital is accrued and reproduced over time, a brief look at the history of SLT provides a starting point to view social capital as the basis for status within the AHP field. In 1945, current members of the College of Speech Therapists (CST) were granted application to the Register of Medical Auxiliaries (RMA), a precursor to the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine (CPSM), which in turn has been superseded by the current form of statutory regulation by the Health and Care Professions Council (RCSLT,

2012a). This form of regulation imposes structural conditions on those practising, but in return confers professional status to those involved.

In 1990 the profession changed its name to Speech and Language Therapy (RCSLTa, 2012), again an act of symbolic recognition, but also representing in a practical sense the reconstitution of the boundaries of its professional scope of practice. This has widened the social group to a larger membership (at present there are 13,087 SLTs eligible to practice in the UK (HCPC, 2012), as well as strengthening the collective social connections and social capital in the field.

In the case of Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiography the rewards of shared social capital appear to still be important.² There is continuing benefit in maintaining shared social practices and collective membership of a larger Radiography group even though the two modalities have very different clinical roles. Both Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiographers are represented by a single Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR, 2012), founded in 1920. Statutory regulation however, from the HCPC comes in the form of a number of protected titles, with the distinction being made between the different modalities of 'diagnostic' or 'therapy'. Indeed, qualification for both modalities has been based on the completion of a distinct undergraduate honours degree since the early 1990s. Nevertheless, as a collective, the Radiography

² For the purpose of the research I am treating Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiography as different professions (in a Bourdieusian sense they share proximity but not the same position in the *field*).

workforce in the United Kingdom (UK) is amongst the largest of the AHPs with 26,624 registered practitioners (HCPC, 2012).

ODP as a profession is much smaller with 10,333 UK-registered practitioners. Under the then title of 'Operating Theatre Technicians' they were along with SLT, part of the RMA, but were subsequently denied entry in 1960 to the revised CPSM system. This lack of social capital (and the symbolic benefits) appears to have precluded ODPs from a university level qualification until 2002, when the curriculum finally moved from a vocational award to a Diploma of HE. This also coincided with a change of name from Operating Department 'Assistant' to 'Practitioner', and belatedly the HCPC conferred statutory regulation in 2004 (CODP, 2012). In this sense ODP appears not to have been as successful as other AHPs in developing and building on social networks, and thereby accruing the symbolic profits that Bourdieu (1982) identifies as being important in improving social position. Furthermore, the relatively subordinate position of ODPs in the professional hierarchy has been cemented by the fact that, once networks have been broken (as was the case in relation to the RMA), the capital associated with this can be difficult to retrieve. On this basis I have no doubt that many readers of this study will not be aware of either ODP or possibly Therapeutic Radiography as professions. The lack of accumulation of social capital in these two groups could explain their lack of social visibility.

In the case of SLT the influence of the well-connected social classes and elite members of society is visible. Indeed King George VI was treated by an SLT for his stammer, and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and latterly HRH

the Countess of Wessex (RCSLT, 2012a) have all extended royal patronage to the profession. In this respect, Bourdieu (2006) commented that those who hold prominent social connections are 'known to more people than they know, and their work of sociability, when it is exerted is highly productive' (p. 112). There is also an all-party Parliamentary Group on Speech and Language Difficulties (APPG) established in 2007 (RCSLT, 2012b). In this sense individual that represent the SLT profession through collective social capital exercise a power over and above their personal contribution.

6.3 Cultural capital, qualifications and 'distinction' in the AHP field

It would not be unreasonable to assume that the volume of *capital* held for each profession should depend on the extent of the network of connections. Bourdieu (2006) however, points to a much more nuanced distribution, whereby the volume of *capital* depends not only on the availability of social connections, but also on the *cultural capital* of a group (in this case each AHP programme) within the social space.

Cultural Capital exists in three forms. First it is *embodied* in the corporality of the agent within the *field*. This is evident in what Moore (2008) suggests are 'principles of consciousness', best exemplified in physical attributes such as mannerism, posture and lifestyle (p. 105). Put simply Bourdieu (2006) describes how embodied *cultural capital* exists in 'long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body (p.106), in other words in the corporality of the *habitus* itself. Perhaps this is apparent in the way that some AHP students are more likely to be drawn to professions that require personal attributes and

characteristics that they themselves possess. Some AHP roles may require practitioners to be self-reflective, some to be more practically orientated, or more dexterous, others still need to display a particular skill for communication, and so on. In a Bourdieusian sense the accumulation of embodied *cultural capital* is linked to the cultivation of what can be described as culture. Such cultural distinctions, or preferences, are acquired in varying degrees, and unconsciously as a result of social class (1984). The way that embodied *cultural capital* is accumulated however, is always personal, and this, Bourdieu (2006) points out, comes at a cost in the time it takes to accrue. In my study, this form of embodied *cultural capital* becomes apparent in the individual stories of choice-making in Chapter 10. Furthermore, these accounts bring to the surface how the investment in *cultural capital* in the AHP *field* can be complex and demanding, and comes as Bourdieu (2006) suggests, with all the 'privation, renunciation and sacrifice that this may entail' (p. 107).

Second, *cultural capital* exists in an *objectified* form, and in the context of AHP choice-making, this is in the form of material artefacts such as a specific professional curriculum, or through discipline-based academic journals. These cultural goods can be appropriated, in a material sense, through access to *economic capital*. In my study, *economic capital* presupposes greater opportunities, offers different options, and therefore affords greater access and HE choices. This, in turn, can be an exercise in generating even greater *cultural capital*, achieved from investing *economic capital* in educational strategies as a cultural advantage. This perhaps, is most obvious in some of the student stories of choice-making such as is the case in Bernadette's story.

Objectified cultural capital also offers more than just material benefits, in that it is also *symbolic*, and may well explain how in the AHP *field*, some disciplines hold a higher symbolic status than others, in my study, SLT is the most obvious example of this. Rather importantly, such symbolic hierarchies will clearly impact upon recruitment practices, and therefore the ability to exercise choice in the AHPs.

In my study however, the major sources of *objectified cultural capital* is addressed in a third form, what Bourdieu describes as *institutional cultural capital*. This, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1997) explain, originates from the qualities of the qualification itself, and the characteristics that gaining a qualification impose on the *field*. In my study I take this principle to identify the objective characteristics that define entry into the *field*, progression through the *field*, and exit from the *field* into employment for each AHP programme. Furthermore, the academic qualification, in the form of *institutional cultural capital* is, according to Bourdieu (2006), a 'certificate of cultural competence' (p. 109). Importantly, in my study, this makes it possible to compare the relative value of the qualifications for each AHP discipline, and therefore identify the *cultural capital* of the various programme sub-fields at CU. Because of the way that *cultural capital* defines the *field*, the differences between AHP disciplines that are produced are also revealed in the conversion that takes place between *cultural capital* and *economic capital* received from the monetary value gained from employment, and also in the relative scarcity of what can be described as *academic capital* received from choosing and successfully completing a qualification in the AHPs.

6.3.1 Locating institutional cultural capital in AHP programmes at CU

According to the principles of *institutional cultural capital*, I have attempted to identify the objective qualities and characteristics that define the AHP *field* at CU, through the value of the qualification itself. Again as part of the invitation to engage in a discursive montage, I have located existing internal CU documentary sources as categories of data, or 'indices' as a means of identifying the *cultural capital*, or the cultural value associated with each AHP programme at CU (see Table 1, page 76).³ Where possible, comparative data is also provided for the rest of the School in which the AHP programmes are located, as well as the wider Faculty of Health (FoH), and indeed the University itself. Where available, comparative subject data from across the wider HE sector is also included. Blank cells indicate where no data is available.

6.3.2 Indicators of demand

The following data provides a comparison of the overall demand for AHP programmes at CU, and therefore acts as an indicator of each programme's institutional *cultural capital* (see Table 1, page 76). I begin with applications per place (point 1), which highlights the degree of competitiveness involved in gaining a place on each programme, in comparison with the number of applicants for each place for the School, Faculty and the University average.

³ Statistical information for 2010/11 was provided by CU Academic Planning Department (APD). This information had already been published in various sources but I was unable to access, or locate, all of the original data sets.

Therapeutic Radiography is a particularly competitive choice given that there are nearly 10 applicants for each place on the programme, with an entry population of only 30 per year (point 2). This suggests that ODP is also a highly competitive choice with 9.3 applicants per student place (point 1), set against an entry population of 45 (point 2). Perhaps not surprisingly, student choice appears a little less competitive in programmes with larger cohorts, particularly Diagnostic Radiography, where the number of places (point 2), defines the entry population and is in excess of 140 per intake.

Table 1. Indices of Institutional Capital (Sept 2009/2010)

		BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography	BSc (Hons) SLT	Dip HE ODP	School	Faculty	University	
Indicators of demand	1	Applications per place	6.5	9.8	7.8	9.3	6.3	6.0	6.3
	2	Entry population (full-time)	142	30	68	45	967	3,575	11,161
	3	Average UCAS tariff for programmes at CU ⁴	271	325	341	230	270	239	272
	4	Average UCAS tariff for the subject <i>field</i> (England)	326	326	372	184			
	5	Population of entrants contributing to tariff score (%)	37%	43%	49%	18%	29%	27%	46%
Indicators of performance	6	Student retention for 2009/10 (%)	83%	76%	93%	80%	87%	86%	87%
	7	Average student retention for subject <i>field</i> (England)	95%	96%	96%				
	8	Completing on time (2009/10) (%)	65%	40%	51%	80%	63%	58%	61%
	9	% of students gaining 1 st and 2 nd class degrees	67%	46%	72%		60%	67%	60%
	10	% of graduate in employment or further training	98%	100%	84%	100%	78%	81%	83%
	11	% of graduates in graduate employment	93%	100%	70%	94%	69%	73%	62%
	12	Median salary in graduate type destinations	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,100	20,000

⁴ University Central Admissions Service (UCAS).

Such levels of competition also indicate that selection procedures can be difficult hurdles to overcome. The process starts with applicants having to demonstrate that they hold the necessary entry qualifications as an essential part of their application. This is done through the UCAS tariff system, which allocates points to qualifications used to enter HE. By taking the average UCAS tariff for each programme at CU (point 3) this indicates, in Bourdieusian sense, a form of distinction in previous educational achievement. SLT students hold the highest average UCAS tariff (341) and overall this would suggest that many of these students have already succeeded in what Bourdieu describes as the *scholastic market* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977a). This is also true for Therapeutic Radiography, the average UCAS tariff (325) for this programme is also higher than the School, Faculty and University average UCAS tariff. Diagnostic Radiography by comparison attracts students with an average UCAS tariff of 271, which is higher than the School and Faculty average, but not that of the University. ODP has a much lower average UCAS tariff of 230; this is perhaps to be expected as the academic level of study needed to achieve a Diploma is less demanding than other degree programmes included in the study.

The picture, however, that emerges is of a complex distribution of *cultural capital*. At CU students who choose SLT would appear to have already benefitted from past educational successes. Indeed high average UCAS tariffs seem to suggest that many applicants are academically more likely to achieve, and appear attuned to the demands of HE. This is perhaps evident from the fact that 72% of SLT graduates, higher than in any other programme, achieved

a 1st or 2nd class degree (point 9). The SLT programme, is therefore able to cement its position of status and prestige amongst the other AHP programmes in this study because it is seen to be more selective and achieves better results. The effects of *cultural capital* in the wider SLT HE *field*, however, indicate a highly complex picture of competition, status and position taking. Whilst the higher than average UCAS tariff for SLT (341) helps to maintain a dominant position at CU, it is significantly below the average UCAS tariff for the subject *field* in England (372) (point 4). Indeed this is the case for all of the programmes in my study with the exception of ODP, where the average UCAS tariff of 230, is higher than the average tariff for the subject *field* in England (184).

Again, the process of status exchange (Marginson, 2011) suggests that HE choosers with the highest average UCAS tariffs for the subject *field* (as holders of existing *cultural capital*) are attracted to the most selective universities. This allows them to build on their existing resources, which, in turn, perpetuate the symbolic effects of *cultural capital* and therefore the status of the HEI itself. Overall, lower than average UCAS tariffs at CU suggest that as an institution it is less selective and therefore, according to the effects of *cultural capital*, has less prestige and status than other HEIs operating in the AHP education and training *field*. The exception to this is ODP, where the average UCAS tariff of 230, as a measure of selectivity, is significantly higher than the average UCAS tariff for subject *field* (184).

The effects of *cultural capital* on selectivity and status are even more multi-faceted, because in most cases the population of entrants contributing to the tariff score is under 50% in all of the AHPs (point 5) and indeed in CU programmes as a whole. This means that the majority of students who were accepted onto all programmes at CU do so via specific Widening Participation initiatives, such as mature and flexible entry routes. In turn, this may influence the status that CU holds within the AHP and wider HE *field*, and therefore the *cultural capital* that it affords its graduates.

6.3.3 Indicators of performance

From the next set of data, which I have identified as indicators of performance, AHP students appear to accept that their choice to invest time and other resources necessary to improve their cultural capital is worth the commitment (and sacrifices) that they make (see Table 1, page 76). Clearly however, these varying degrees of progress and performance are typical features of trying to improve one's cultural capital via the AHP field at CU.

With the exception of SLT, student retention for 2009/10 expressed as a percentage (point 6) for all of the other AHPs included in my study, was below that of the School (87%), Faculty (86%) and University (87%). Indeed, student retention for 2009/10 (point 6) in Diagnostic Radiography, Therapeutic Radiography and SLT is significantly lower than the average student retention for the subject *field* (point 7) (figures for ODP were not available). This suggests that students find studying on all AHP programmes challenging, but that SLT students appear to be more able to use their existing stock of *cultural*

capital to cope with the demands of the programme at CU. This is evident in the high UCAS entry tariff that suggests previous scholastic success (point 3), and may be because these students possess, in Bourdieusian terms, greater distinction over students on other programmes because of existing educational attainment or orientation to HE (Ball et al. 2000; Reay et al. 2005; Bathmaker and Thomas, 2009). Evidence that some students are better prepared for HE, and therefore make a more successful transition to HE, is found later on in this study through evidence that the *habitus* is able to respond to AHP education and training choice-making because of previous educational achievements (see Chapters 8 and 9). When compared however, to the average student retention for the subject *field* (point 7), the stocks of *cultural capital* of SLT students at CU may mean they find the programme more demanding than other SLT students studying the programme at other universities.

Of the students who completed on time for 2009/10 (point 8), the lowest percentage was in relation to Therapeutic Radiography, with only 40% of students finishing their studies in the year that they should have done. Interestingly, whilst the SLT programme may be subject to greater selectivity, only 51% of students completed on time, suggesting that achievement is not just about academic success, but is influenced by a range of multifaceted, often personal, circumstances. Chapter 9 again helps to surface the individual context and the complex reasons why programme completion is often delayed, or not possible at all. Of the students on the 2-year ODP programme 80% of students completed on time (point 8). This may point to the fact that completing on time is less likely in 3-year programmes, given that the

percentages for completion on time, for all degree programmes in the School, Faculty and across the University, are significantly less than the 80% achieved by ODP students.

Again, as Bourdieu suggests, previous cultural capital is an important feature of accruing further capital; that is, previous qualifications enable students to gain further qualifications. As an example of this from the AHP field, SLT students have the highest percentage of students gaining 1st and 2nd class degrees (point 9). This is perhaps indicative of a student population that has chosen well in matching their abilities and personal characteristics to the demands of the programme. The low numbers of Therapeutic Radiography students (46%) gaining either 1st and 2nd class degrees could indicate, given that proportionally more students enter the field with higher UCAS tariffs than Diagnostic Radiography students, that this field is particularly complex to make the transition and navigation through the field (point 9).

The percentage of AHP graduates in employment, or further training following successful completion (point 10), appears to indicate how institutional *cultural capital*, in the form of an AHP qualification, enables graduates to get a job, or acts as a springboard to further study. Indeed, in the case of Therapeutic Radiography and ODP, this is as high as 100%. Even SLT, which has the lowest percentage (84%), is still above the School (71%) and Faculty average (81%), and indeed that of the University (83%). In fact, qualification in all of the AHPs in my study, more often than not leads to a high percentage of

graduates in graduate employment (point 11). Therapeutic Radiography has the highest level of graduate employment with 100%, then ODP with 94%, followed by Diagnostic Radiography (93%), and then SLT (70%). Indeed all were significantly above the University average (62%) therefore, gaining an AHP qualification represents a return on the students investment in gaining *cultural capital*, because this, as Bourdieu suggests (2006), is readily converted into *economic capital* which, expressed as the median salary in graduate type destinations (point 12), indicates access to a specific AHP labour market and salary structure.

6.4 A summary of my findings in relation to the meso-level of analysis

In relation to my second research question, the distribution of social and cultural capital presents a highly diffuse picture of the conditions of the field of student choice in the AHPs. Social capital appears to shape the way that various AHPs are viewed, understood and valued in society as a whole. Therefore choosing to study in the AHPs is a reflection of this hierarchy, and in turn of the position of each student in the social field.

The interplay of social and cultural capital also defines the objective structures and conditions that influence how each programme in each institution is valued in a complex network of prestige and status. Furthermore, the influence of cultural capital is evident in the structures and practices of student choice in the way that it defines what is desirable and therefore popular. As a result cultural capital in the AHPs has a bearing on the degree of competition, or demand, for places, and therefore the criteria used for selection. I found that at

present all of the AHPs in the study represent highly competitive admissions practices, and holding the required entry qualification is not enough to secure a place. Having a clear understanding of the role, some previous experience and the ability to be selected from interview, favours students who hold existing stocks of both social and cultural capital.

Cultural capital also appears to influence how well students are able to make the transition to HE, progress and then achieve on each programme. In turn, the value of increasing one's stock of institutional cultural capital in the form of completing an AHP qualification is exchanged for the benefits of either access to further education and training, or employment and economic capital. The distribution and effects of cultural capital, however, are not always even in the distinctions and differences it generates, both at institutional and programme level. For some 'non-traditional' students this broadens the choices that are open to them, whilst those holding more traditional qualifications may find that their choices are compromised by the way that capital structures highly stratified and elite fields in some of the AHPs.

In Chapter 7 I describe my approach to developing a questionnaire to establish an overall picture of the characteristics of the AHP students and choice-making in my study. In Chapter 8 I present my findings of the broader landscape of what student choice might look like in the AHPs at CU. Chapter 9 documents the method of case study selection, as well as describing the process of conducting the semi-structured interviews and my approach to data analysis.

In Chapter 10 I locate each case study within a conceptual field framework based on how social class and the habitus make sense of expectation of AHP choice-making with the reality of students' chosen education and training field.

Chapter 7.0 Surveying the *field* of student choice in AHP education and training

In this Chapter I describe my approach to capturing the characteristics of the student *habitus* in the AHPs at CU. A significant number of existing studies make use of questionnaires to gather data to begin to understand the characteristics of the participants within a research *field* (see Egerton and Halsey, 1993; Reay et al., 2001; Crozier et al., 2008; Reay et al. 2009). To address my third research question, ‘how is student choice influenced by the *habitus*’, this stage of my research is intended to identify case studies which contain individual stories and experiences of student choice-making. The questionnaire also acts as a means of identifying social class, in order to be able to address the question of ‘how social class shapes the *habitus*’.

Egerton and Halsey (1993) provide a particular example of using national data sets to examine particular trends in access to HE. Indeed Macleod and Lambe’s (2008) longitudinal approach to exploring participation in part-time adult education was based on national data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). Other research that has reported on national findings includes the Ethnicity, Gender and Attainment Project (HEA, 2008) and Jacobs et al. (2007) ‘Degrees of Success Project’ on ethnicity and gender. Moreover, all have adopted some form of questionnaire as a method of initial data collection. In Denscombe’s opinion, this type of approach allows access to a broad ‘panoramic view’ or ‘bird’s eye view’ of the *field* to be captured (1999, p. 6).

Questionnaires are considered to be cost-effective and efficient (Morrison, 1993), as well as less time consuming and onerous than other forms of data

collection (Polit and Hungler, 1997). These are important considerations that, as a novice and lone researcher working with limited resources, I felt I had to consider.

7.1 *Specifying the purpose of the enquiry*

In recognising the potential of this approach, the choice and application of a questionnaire is predicated on being clear about the exact purpose of the enquiry. By being reflexive in this way, I become more self-aware that the process of research itself exists as a social relationship, so that one becomes attentive to the fact that relationships between the researcher and participants are bound to affect both the process of data collection and the data itself. Engaging in reflexivity also allows self-awareness of my own positionality and of the assumptions that I inevitably bring to the research.

To do this I began by asking and returning to, as a process of reflexive engagement, a number of questions about the specificity of purpose of the enquiry (Bourdieu, 2000). These focused on the type of data and how it could be collected, along with the appropriateness of that data in relation to exploring the characteristics of educational choice in the AHPs (see Table 2, page 89).

I was able from an early stage to identify that the reflexive questions I had set myself were concerned primarily with collecting both quantitative (reflexive questions 1 to 3) as well as qualitative data (reflexive questions 4 to 6) (see Table 2, page 89). I decided on a questionnaire, in conjunction with either a semi-structured or structured interview, to test my research questions. Dunbar-

Goddet and Hubert (2007) argue that combining methods in this way produces 'robust, comprehensive and relevant' research findings (p. 13) (see also Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Bryman, 2006; Axinn and Pearce, 2006).

With this in mind I employed a questionnaire to obtain basic student information from a broad range of perspectives. A further intention was to distinguish between different student educational histories and backgrounds and to identify and categorise familial and occupational histories in order to establish social class and to explore its structural influence on the *habitus*. When considering my first reflexive question, Dunbar-Goddet and Hubert (2007) describe using an 'exploratory questionnaire' to gather baseline information. Crozier et al. (2008) in their study of student experience also identified a similar need to begin by gathering quantitative data (such as gender, ethnicity, age, subject discipline, year of study).

By way of example, Reay et al. describe how co-authors Crozier et al. (2008) initially employed a questionnaire to form a multi-method design to identify 'basic' quantitative information necessary to describe a number of student characteristics such as:

Qualifications, social class, ethnicity, gender, motivation for choice of university, subject, career aspirations; views on their university experience, both academic and social, and major challenges facing them on coming to university and through their time there. (Reay et al. 2009, p. 4)

Reay et al. (2005) also point to the use of an initial questionnaire as part of the same mixed methods research as being vital in eliciting not only accurate information, but also to provide some context to the identification of case study

data at a later stage (see Crozier et al. 2008 and Reay et al. 2009). In relation to my second reflexive question I felt it was also important to consider how it would be possible to actively select interesting cases at the interview stage, including those that would not necessarily support my own pre-reflexive assumptions. Again, a questionnaire can, in the way that Reay et al. (2005) indicate, act according to Dunbar-Goddet and Hubert (2007) as a precursor to identify participants willing to co-operate, and so 'pre-select interesting cases for interview' (p. 7).

Table 2. Methodological Reflexivity in Questionnaire and Interview Design

Qu No	Reflexive Clarification	Aims of Questionnaire/Semi-structured interview	Type of data	Method
1	What type of student information needs to be identified and is comparison possible and necessary?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify general student characteristics for each programme.● Identify willingness to be included at a latter stage	Quantitative	Questionnaire
2	Which students are to be included and do they need to be representative of the <i>field</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Distinguish between different educational histories and backgrounds.● Identify student preparedness for the programme	Quantitative	Questionnaire
3	How can social class be identified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify and categorise familial occupational profiles for N-SEC classification	Quantitative	Questionnaire
4	What are the characteristics of the student <i>habitus</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Explore student expectations and reasons for their choice of AHP● Identify how prepared they were at the start of the programme	Qualitative	Semi-structured Interview
5	What factors shape the <i>habitus</i> and how does this influence choice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Understand how various educational and social backgrounds influence choice-making in the AHPs● Detail what experiences influenced their choice	Qualitative	Semi-structured Interview
6	What is the effect of the changing social context on student choice in the AHPs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify the major challenges that have been encountered in year 1.● Describe the biggest hurdles to your career choice.	Qualitative	Semi-structured Interview

In respect of my third reflexive question, Crozier et al. (2008) locate 'class' within the sample population in order to target its exploration through a 'cross-class section of students' (p. 167). Although class has proven to be a complex and nuanced picture in the literature, my pre-reflexive position was to assume that students would be very self-aware of their class. To avoid this assumption, a series of related questions were developed to collect National Office of Statistics (UK) Social and Economic Classifications (Rose and O'Reilly 2000) of parental or mature student occupations as an objective measure of social class. This, Egerton and Halsey (1993) argue, is 'enhanced by details of parents' and 'immediate family members' education profiles', to act as a proxy for social class (p. 169).

My remaining questions of reflexive clarification (4, 5 and 6) are concerned with the specific and changing qualities and disposition of the *habitus*. Understanding the *habitus* in this way suggested to me that I needed to extend the usefulness of the mainly quantitative questionnaire, to include interview methods capable of capturing rich, individual case study accounts of both agency and the structural effects of the *habitus* on student choice in the AHPs. Whilst the research of Crozier et al. (2008) enables data categorisation, it also captures students' socio-cultural and learning experiences through interviews to 'demonstrate the lived experiences' of student participation in HE (p. 167). Again Crozier et al. (2008) used interviews to gain 'in-depth insights into experiences and attitudes' of student choice from a classed perspective (p. 169). David et al. (2003) also employed this approach to explore choice-

making with parents from the perspective of their own educational experiences (Reay, 1998; Reay et al. 2001).

7.2 *Establishing the population, sampling the field and selecting case studies*

As a lone researcher I felt that conducting too large a survey would be prohibitive on the grounds of lack of time and resources, not to mention expense. Since it was necessary to scale the task to something practical, it seemed logical that first year students from a particular year group, but across a range of AHP programmes, were best placed to discuss their choices and transition into HE, in what should still remain recent and vivid experiences. Given that a Bourdieusian exploration of *field* points to heterogeneity and difference between subjects and disciplines, these varying positions needed to be reflected in the sample.

In order to replicate the study carried out by Crozier et al. (2008) it would be necessary, according to Denscombe (1999), to ensure that it was possible to establish that the probability of selection for each participant is known, 'in the expectation and hope that what is found in that portion [of participants-SW] applies equally to the rest of the population' (p. 11). This can be achieved 'at random' if a sufficiently large enough number of participants are selected. An assumption is made that, if the selection is truly random, it is likely to provide a degree of representation of the cross-section of the total population as a whole. A variant of this technique would be to sample using an approach whereby some degree of 'systematic' selection of participants is achieved according to a ratio of say 1 in 10. I also considered whether it was necessary

to introduce some form of 'quota' or 'stratification' into the sample. Whilst remaining consistent with the principle of 'randomness' this would enable some boundaries to the sample to allow selection 'on the basis of specific identity or purpose' (Denscombe, 1999 p. 13).

By including only first year students, however, this meant that the questionnaire could be pragmatically restricted to a total population of all first year AHP students from the four different programme areas at CU ($n = 285$) (Operating Department Practice, Diagnostic Radiography, Speech and Language Therapy, and Therapeutic Radiography). Potentially difficult design decisions around types of sampling were negated (Gillham, 2000), as were issues of bias in the sample, generally taken to be the difference between the sample mean and the population mean from either incomplete information, or from the introduction of non-responses (Cohen et al. 2000). Because I was concerned with constructing, in a Bourdieusian sense, a 'special case of what is possible' (1998a, p 2), I was happy to identify what Ball and Gewirtz (1997) have termed 'qualified generalisations' about the relationships of the social phenomena being studied (p. 577).

Following on from the questionnaire, the final case study selection of students for interview was based on non-probability sampling, in which there is a departure from the principle that each student has an equal chance of being included. In the context of my study, randomness is again rejected for the pursuit of 'purposive sampling' in which cases, according to Denscombe (1999), are 'handpicked' for the purpose of the research (p. 15). Where this

approach is adopted, something is already known about the population (from the questionnaire). This allowed me to 'home in on people and events . . . critical for the research' (p. 15). Reay et al. (2001) extend this thinking further by suggesting that those interviewed may not necessarily be typical of the *field*, but nonetheless, will offer individual accounts that highlight and surface the relationship between both structure and agency in student choice-making.

7.3 Questionnaire design

The approach to the design phase of the questionnaire is based around the development of a research tool that would be most advantageous to the study, and should in addition be economical and practical to administer both from my perspective and from the participants' point of view. The decision to deploy a self-completion questionnaire became an essential feature of the overall design, since including all first year AHP students in the sample meant that it was impossible for me to be present at all times during the process of data collection (Robson, 2002). From the literature I was also cognisant that response rates to questionnaires can be particularly disappointing. Typically 75% of those who are invited to participate are likely to yield a non-response (Denscombe, 1999). Moreover, response rates tend to be at their lowest when administering postal questionnaires, and conversely highest for face-to-face interviews (Polit and Hungler, 1997).

Interestingly, Crazja and Blair (2005) claim that the use of online questionnaires yields response rates somewhere in the middle of this range. Robson (2002) also points out that in postal or telephone questionnaires there

is no way of knowing that the person completing the questionnaire is the intended participant and therefore may not be part of the legitimate sample. An online questionnaire allows participants to be targeted and to be given access to the questionnaire to complete in their own time via closed email distribution lists of current cohorts of students, or via a password protected website (Czaja and Blair, 2005). Taking these factors into consideration I chose to adopt online data collection rather than use a questionnaire embedded in an email. De Vaus (2002) and Czaja and Blair (2005) also suggest that email systems offer limited design features, whereas web-based questionnaires can present much more sophisticated opportunities for both design and data analysis. I chose to use the readily available SurveyMonkey™ package because of ease of use and overall compatibility with existing computer software (Dillman, 2000; Czaja and Blair, 2005).

I began to develop a number of key questions, starting with the identification of the programme that respondents were studying. I incorporated questions used in previous research, such as Crozier et al. (2008), like categorical information on age, ethnicity and gender. I also noted from a range of studies the need to identify entry qualifications and details of student and familial career trajectory, as well as evidence of educational *habitus* and familial participation in HE. I wanted to develop indirect questions using NS-SEC classifications (Office for National Statistics, 2010) that would act as a proxy for social class, without as Denscombe (1998, p. 98) suggests, being offensive or prone to participant misinterpretation. A further set of questions around motivation behind student choice, and previous awareness and knowledge of the profession were also

included. Participants were then asked to comment on their views of CU and to indicate their readiness for the demands of study, as well as to comment on the appropriateness of their AHP choice so far.

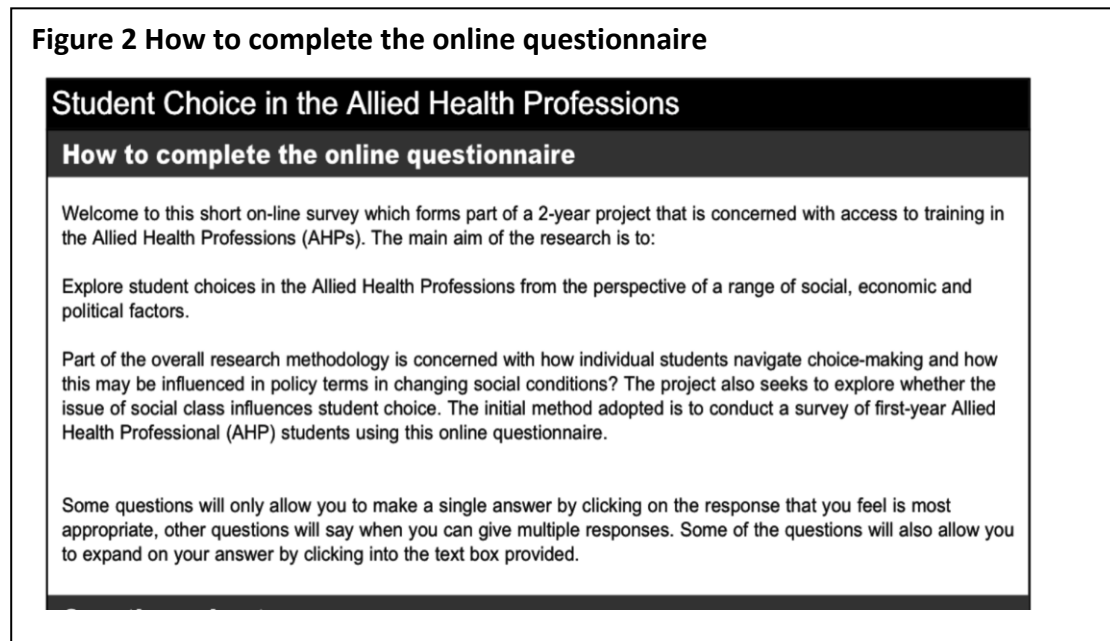
Questions were phrased in a neutral or balanced way, to allow a range of contrasting opinions and to avoid the inclusion of presumption or bias, as well as negate against being offensive. Denscombe (1998) describes a process of drafting questions and then revising or removing accordingly, to end up with questions that were ‘crisp and concise’ (p. 98) and that according to Gillham have a ‘lean and logical look’ (2000, p. 28). Those questions included in the final questionnaire were reflexively considered vital to the overall aims of the research (see appendix 2). More detailed information on question and response types that were utilised can be found in Table 3 (and in more detail in appendix 3).

Table 3. Summary of question types used

Question type	Response type	Number of occurrences
Selected – single answer	Closed	6
Selected – multiple answer with ‘other’ option	Closed/semi open	5
Specified	Open	6
Routed	Closed	1
Routed with ‘other’ option	Closed/open	1
Scaled	Closed	1
		Total 20

7.3.1 *Piloting the questionnaire*

At the pilot stage I resolved to test the questions and to ascertain how long the questionnaire was likely to take to complete (Denscombe, 1998). Moreover, piloting was used to check for consistency so that instructions on how to complete the questionnaire were made as clear as possible (see figure 1).



A number of colleagues were invited to review questions for spelling and grammar and to test whether the questions were interpreted consistently. The questionnaire was trialled on 10 students enrolled on other healthcare programmes. Five additional colleagues and family members were also invited to take part in the pilot and to provide a 'lay perspective' (Gillham, 2000). Piloting was used to test 'technical issues' and at this stage the link to the questionnaire took the participants to a 'launch page', which provided general information about the aims of the questionnaire as well as more specific details about the intention of the piloting exercise (see appendix 4). The pilot tool was also designed to allow participants to provide any electronic comments via a 'free text' box after each separate question (see appendix 5). From the pilot,

10 responses were received (see appendix 6). A summary for each question shows the small number of overall comments received. Revisions were incorporated into the questionnaire (see Table 4).

Some questions required only minor refinements to individual words, and others were changed to alter the emphasis and help clarify what was being asked.

Table 4. Summary of revisions from initial questionnaire pilot	
Qu 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time categories were included for Diagnostic Radiography, Therapeutic Radiography and Speech and Language Therapeutic Radiography. • A military category was added for Operating Department Practice.
Qu 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An 'other' category was added to capture the various qualifications that participants held, over and above those that had been pre-selected.
Qu 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to Qu 8. Re-worded to include a prompt to answer even when retired. • An 'other' category was added
Qu 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-worded and re-numbered to include 'WHAT do they do and HOW do you know them'. • Additional question added at number 12. How did you become interested in becoming an Allied Health Professional? (You may choose more than one answer)
Qu 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional category 'starting university' added to potential responses to question which asks, 'At the start of the programme how well prepared do you feel you were in relation to the following?'
Qu 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot question on general issues on questionnaire design removed.

7.3.2 Launching the Questionnaire

Having negotiated access to respondents my intention was to establish pre-questionnaire contact with all four groups of students within a two-week period and then launch the questionnaire. I prepared a PowerPoint presentation (see

appendix 7) that included information about the research and why I was undertaking the study. I discussed how respondents could take part as well as any ethical issues that may have concerned them, particularly around maintaining confidentiality and anonymity (De Vaus, 2002). I was able to timetable a 20-minute slot to meet with each student group. I spoke to both ODP and SLT first year cohorts as planned, but access to both Diagnostic Radiography and Therapeutic Radiography students proved more problematic. Due to a revision of the teaching timetable I had to re-schedule my initial appointment.

I launched the survey via a link that was uploaded to relevant pages of the university's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). I attached proof that my study had received ethical approval (see appendix 8 and also Chapter 9.2), along with a 'research fact sheet' containing information about my project and how students could choose to participate if they wished, where the data was going to be stored and what it would be used for (see appendix 9). Before meeting with the students in their year groups I reflexively began to consider how my appearance, age, social class, ethnicity, and accent are all capable of influencing the response rate (Denscombe, 1998). I did not want my position in the institution to act as a form of coercion or censorship (Bourdieu, 1999) and I introduced myself by name only and wore casual clothing, not my usual work attire.

I was also aware that the language that I used to introduce the research could lead to potential asymmetry in the social hierarchy and power that exists in the

uneven distribution of *linguistic capital* between first-year students and myself. Where possible technical language was reduced to a minimum and students were encouraged to participate in discussing the research, and in particular the voluntary nature of their involvement.

Following Dillman's (2000) advice I resolved to include not only a pre-contact meeting with students, but also a number of further follow-ups. The first was made via a Moodle posting one week after the launch and a second a week later, with a final reminder a month after launch. This also followed Czaja and Blair's (2005) advice to alternate this final attempt with a different method; in this case students were sent an email reminder to their university email account (appendix 10). Due to delays in establishing pre-survey contact with some cohorts, I resolved to keep the questionnaire open indefinitely until the response rate for each programme's sub-*fields* proved acceptable to enable the identification of case studies for interview. The questionnaire was finally closed to new responses after being available for a 16-week period, a month longer than I had originally anticipated.

In summary, guided by the literature and my own reflexive stance, I have described my approach to developing and using a questionnaire as the most practical, efficient and appropriate way of establishing the characteristics of student choice in the AHPs at CU. In Chapter 8 I analyse and present what I have found from a survey of first year student AHPs in order to select a range of case studies as examples of individual stories and experiences of choice-making.

Chapter 8.0 Analysing questionnaire data from the AHP education and training *field*

It is perhaps worth recapping that the questionnaire has a two-fold purpose. The first is to begin to map out the characteristics of the AHP *field* including the identification of social class of the participants, and the second to identify case studies for interview. In this Chapter I discuss the responses to the questionnaire and in so doing I begin to explore how the *habitus* is shaping and responding to educational choice in the AHPs.

8.1 Questions about you

The first 7 questions in the survey are designed to illicit general information about participants in the *field*. These responses provide an insight into the characteristics of those who are taking part in the questionnaire. Out of a total population ($n = 283$) of AHP students, 88 questionnaires were completed (including the following number of responses from each AHP sub-*field* (ODP full-time $n = 48$. Military ODP $n = 3$, Diagnostic Radiography full-time $n = 123$, Diagnostic Radiography part-time $n = 3$, Therapeutic Radiography full-time $n = 25$, Therapeutic Radiography part-time $n = 2$, SLT $n = 69$, SLT part-time $n = 10$). This represents a total response rate of 31% of all those eligible to participate and is therefore considered to be within normal limits for Internet surveys (Denscombe, 1998; Ronald and Blair, 2005).

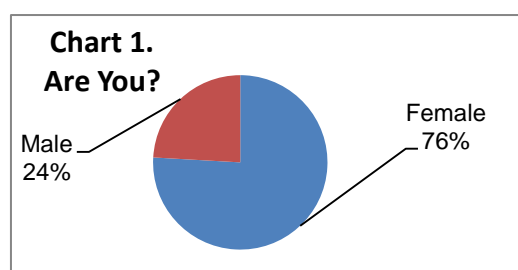
Answers to Question 1 (see Table 5) show the breakdown of the numbers of participants who responded to a majority of the questions (%), as well as the actual response occurrences from each sub-*field*. Only 6 part-time students completed the questionnaire and all were from SLT. No military ODP students

completed the questionnaire.

Table 5. Overall Questionnaire Response Rates⁵

Sub-field Options	Cohort size (no)	Number of Responses	Responses (%) per total population (n=283)	Response Rate for each sub-field (%)
ODP	48	17	6	35
ODP (Military)	3	0	0	0
Diagnostic Rad full-time	123	31	11	25
Diagnostic Rad part-time	3	0	0	0
Therapeutic Rad full-time	25	13	5	52
Therapeutic Rad part-time	2	0	0	0
SLT full-time	69	21	7	30
SLT part-time	10	6	2	60
Total	283	88	31	

Answers to question 2 indicate that 76% (66) of participants were female and



24% (21) male, whereas the actual ratio of female to male students enrolled on AHP programmes at CU is 40/30 (see chart 1).⁶ One participant

chose not to answer this question. More generally these figures are in line with gendered employment rates for qualified health professionals working in the NHS (not including nurses and doctors), which in 2011 was reported as being at a ratio off 78/22% in favour of females (NHS IC: 2012)⁷. As a typical feature of the *field* these figures also highlight the characteristics of gender imbalance evident throughout much of the AHP literature (Greenwood et al. 2006).

⁵ Percentage figures rounded up or down to one decimal place.

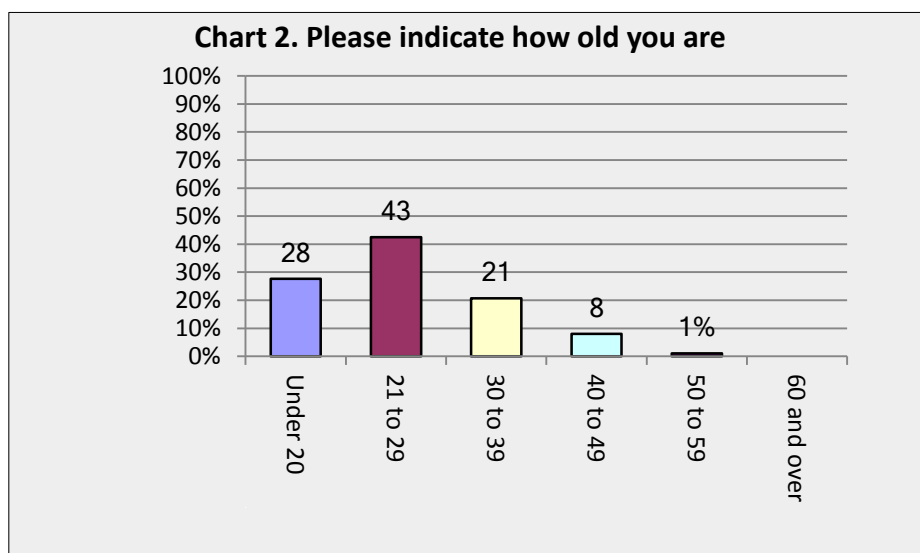
⁶ Statistical data is provided by CU Academic Planning Department (APD).

⁷The percentage quoted is for all qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff.

Moreover, Boyd and Hewlett's (2001) particular study of the SLT profession is critical of the fact that low male participation is likely to remain, given the continued paucity of male role models in training. Of those enrolled on the SLT programme at CU 92% are female.

In the context of this study there may be more complex reasons behind the structuring qualities of gender. For instance Reay et al. (2005) have noted how traditional caring roles have played a part in the feminisation of the workforce. Bacchi and Eveline (2010) have argued that, through the continued 'mainstreaming' of gender politics, society continues to designate caring responsibilities as a female role. Indeed research carried out by Bev Skeggs (1997) has documented the way in which a caring personality defines for some women not only their femininity but also their continued working class authenticity. In this way both class and gender appear inextricably linked to the *habitus* and choice.

Question 3 (chart 2) shows the age characteristics across the *field*. Here 28% (24) of students who responded are under 20 years old.

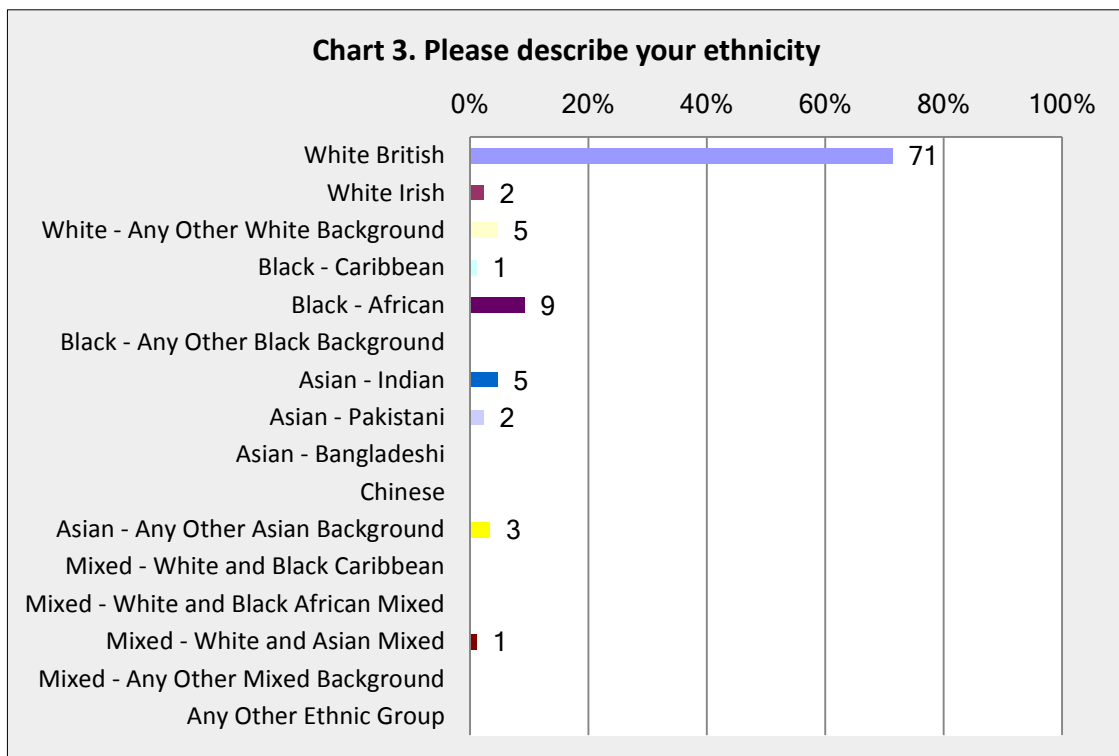


This means that 72% of the entrants can be classed as non-traditional, in that for funding purposes they are classed as mature students (over 21 for HEFCE and over 26 for the DH). Students entering the *field* are typically between 21 to 29 years old (43%) in year one of their studies. A significant proportion of them (29%) are aged 30 to 49. One Diagnostic Radiography student who completed the questionnaire was aged 50 to 59 years old. One student did not answer the question.

Not only does choosing to study in the AHPs appear to have a more obviously mature age profile to most other HE students, Ball et al. (2002) found that mature students were also much more likely to hold atypical entry qualifications, and therefore a *habitus* that might not have been shaped by formal, perhaps traditional academic success. Indeed Bourdieu and Passeron (1999) argue that achievement in what they term the *scholastic market* is historically and culturally inculcated, so much so that some students are inherently more familiar with the demands of the curriculum even before they begin their studies. Baxter and Britton (2001) lend some credence not only to the complexities that mature students often face just to catch-up, but also to the risks that they must endure to their own sense of self as the *habitus* struggles to enter a *field* that they may not be adequately prepared for (see also Johnson and Watson, 2004).

Question 4 (chart 3) demonstrates the AHP education and training *field* at CU to be overwhelmingly accessed by students who describe their origin as White British (71.3%). Black African students make up the next largest category with

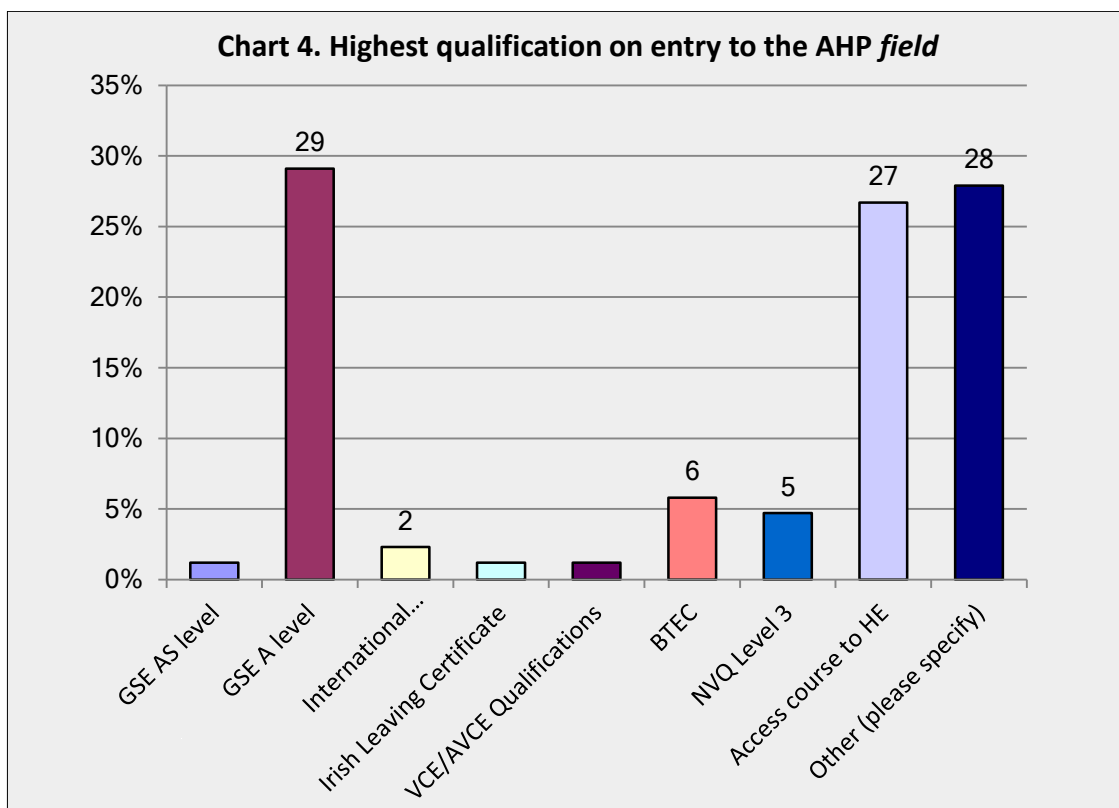
9.2% of participants and Asian Indian the third largest category with 4.6%. Other (non-white) ethnic minority students total less than 10% of the *field*. This is cause for concern given that the university is geographically located in a metropolitan area within highly diverse BME communities. Indeed part of CU's social mission has been to reach out to these members of society, and with some success in other academic disciplines.



The reason why this is not the case in the AHPs is not clear, given that BME students are, in the first instance, more likely to attend post-1992 universities (Modood, 2006). Although Connor et al. (2004) found that with the exception of Black Caribbean students, participation in HE tends to be higher in minority ethnic students compared with that of their white peers, this was not the case in my study. Similarly Greenwood et al. (2005) have postulated that this may be due to a lack of awareness about the role of AHPs amongst the BME population and, like the issue of gender participation, little seems to change without the observable presence of black and ethnic role models who act to

raise the profile of the profession itself (Hopkins, 1995).

Responses to question 5 (see Chart 4) indicate that students gain entry to their AHP *field* with a wide range of qualifications. Whilst A levels are still the most common entry route (29%), the diversity of qualifications, again associated with non-traditional backgrounds, is evident in the fact that almost as many students (27%) (23) are accepted via access routes.



This is perhaps to be expected given that Access to Higher Education (2012) indicates that in the 2010/11 academic year 45,000 students were registered on access programmes in England and Wales.⁸ Typically access students are mainly female (72%), white (71.6%) and over 21 years old (87.2%). By comparison data from the Universities Central Admissions Service (UCAS)

⁸ Statistics are based on work undertaken by QAA, the Higher Education Statistics Agency, UCAS (the universities and colleges admissions service), The Data Service, and Agored Cymru, the AVA in Wales.

indicates that Subjects Allied to Medicine, including AHPs, was the largest area to receive applications from access students (13,935 in total), and of these 54% were successful.

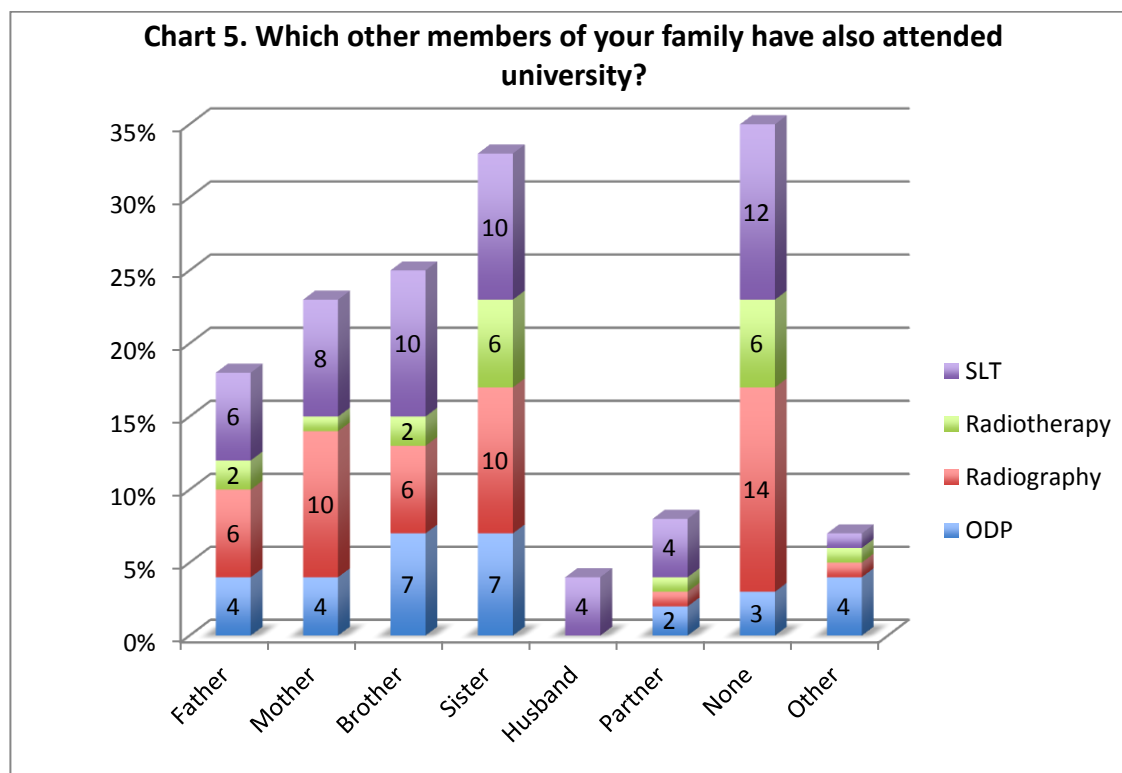
ODP students possessed the broadest range of entry qualifications with 7 different awards used to enter the AHP training *field*. This included access qualifications through to BTEC, NVQ 3, Baccalaureate and Honours degrees. Diagnostic Radiography also had a high proportion of students who entered the *field* via access qualifications 39%, compared to 32% who had achieved A level qualifications. In comparison Therapeutic Radiography students appeared much more likely to hold traditional A levels (54%). Interestingly despite my pre-reflexive assumptions, my analysis of the affects of *capital* (see Chapter 6), suggests a much broader range of educational diversity in some of the AHPs. Data from the questionnaire seems to support this, and whilst SLT students had the lowest range of qualifications, like Diagnostic Radiography, these students tended to hold either A level (33%) or access qualifications (29%).

The number of students who joined the AHP *field* with an existing degree was relatively high (19%) and as such possessed *cultural capital* synonymous with success in the *scholastic market*, although this was mainly in SLT, with 6 out of 21 participants (28.5%) having already achieved graduate status. Indeed, all six part-time SLT students who participated had achieved degrees or Masters level qualifications prior to this.

In responses to question 6, participants re-affirmed their non-traditional credentials by indicating that 50% were either in employment (48%) or were themselves employers (2%), whereas immediately before the programme 41% of respondents were studying either in School, at Sixth Form College (17%) or FE College (15%), or at University (2%). Only 4% described their status as being unemployed and 4% of participants took a gap year before entering the *field*. A further two participants chose not to answer the question.

8.2 Questions about your family

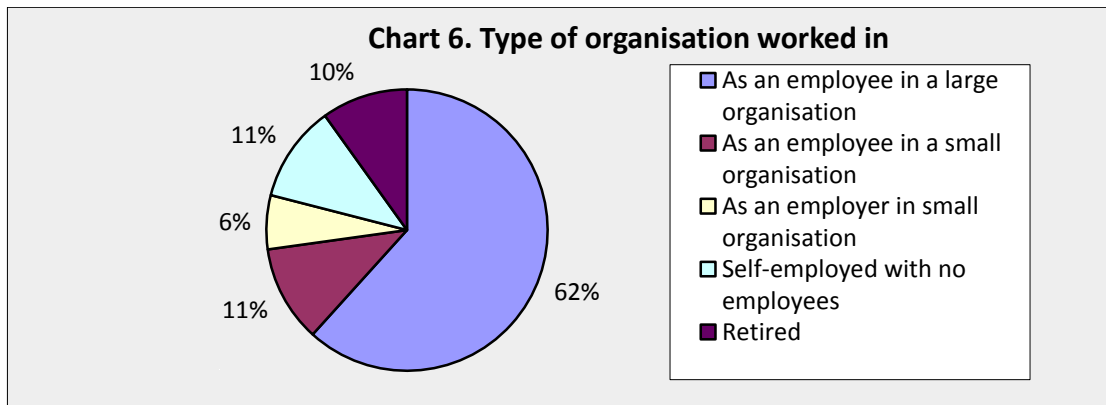
The next set of questions asks participants to provide information about their family backgrounds. This is important to establish individual educational trajectories, familiarity with HE, and any previous affiliations with the AHPs. Responses in this section are also used in part to determine the social class of participants.



Responses to question 7 (Chart 5) indicate that 65% of students came from families who have some previous experience of HE (although not necessarily in the AHP *field*). This is mainly in the form of attendance at University from siblings, either brothers (25%), or sisters (33%). Reflecting the growth of participation experienced by more recent generations, attendance at university by parents is slightly but not significantly lower (fathers 18% and mothers 23%). A smaller number of participants had either a husband (SLT only), or partners who had attended university. Responses also indicated that nieces and nephews, aunties, stepfathers and grandfathers had also attended university, suggesting that the qualities of the *habitus* are also extended throughout wider familiar associations, networks and connections. Perhaps of most significance is that 35% of students in the *field* remain the only members of their families to attend university.

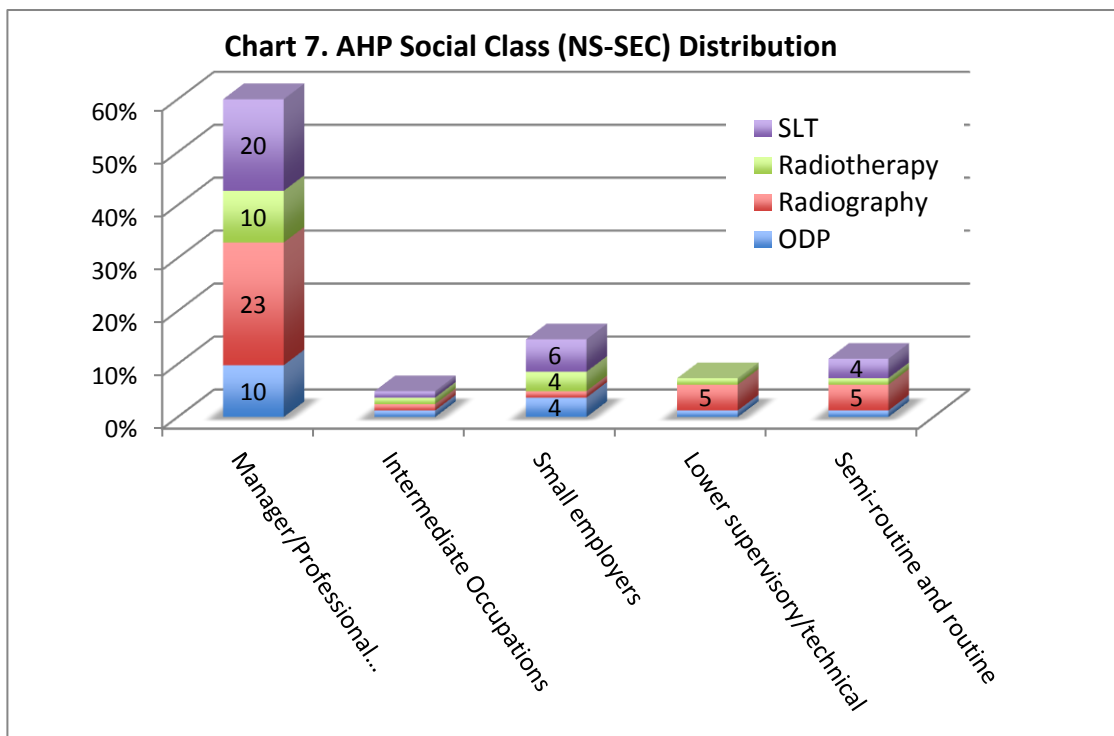
Responses for Questions 8, 9, and 10 were used in conjunction to identify social class for each participant using the five category self-coded version of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) (ONS, 2005). Whilst Male family members are likely to receive the highest financial income through salaries or pensions (over 75%), this may well result from women continuing to fulfill traditional gender roles, or as a result of continued female pay inequality. Participants are far more likely to come from backgrounds where the highest wage earner is an employee in a large organisation (62%), as opposed to being an employee in a small organisation (11%). A smaller percentage of participants came from backgrounds where either of their parents were self-employed or managed a small workforce (6%).

The questionnaire also revealed that 11 % of students come from backgrounds where the highest wage earner is now retired (chart 6).



No students come from a social background in which their immediate family members employ large numbers of people, 7 participants chose not to answer.

Chart 7 plots the distribution of social class for each AHP programme at CU.

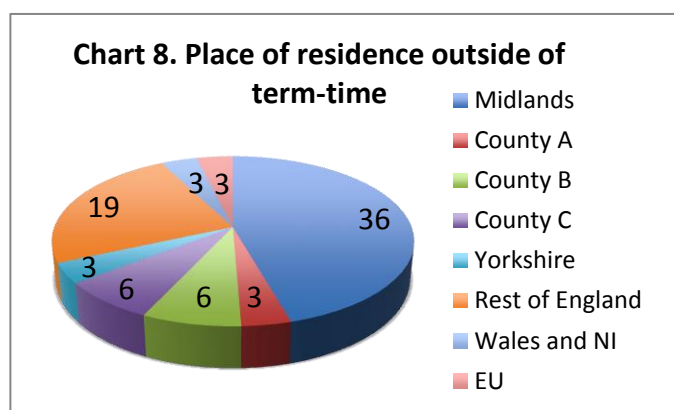


The majority of students across all programmes are much more likely to come from managerial and professional social class backgrounds typically associated with the middle-classes. In fact almost 60% of students from across

the *field* could be considered traditional HE students, at least from the perspective of their social class participation. It would seem that whilst AHP education and training at CU continues to remain popular, these programmes appear, as Archer (2003a) has suggested, too continue to recruit mainly from the middle classes. Participation from the intermediate professions, although low, is evenly distributed across the AHP education and training *field* (4%).

Indeed parents and partners are more likely to be self-employed (15%) rather than those who hold lower supervisory roles (7% and none from SLT), semi-routine or routine occupations (11%). Radiography has the highest percentage whose parents hold technical or routine/semi-routine occupations most traditionally associated with working class backgrounds. No students were from families experiencing long-term unemployment. Six participants chose not to respond to either question 8, 9 or 10 and therefore their social class remains unknown.

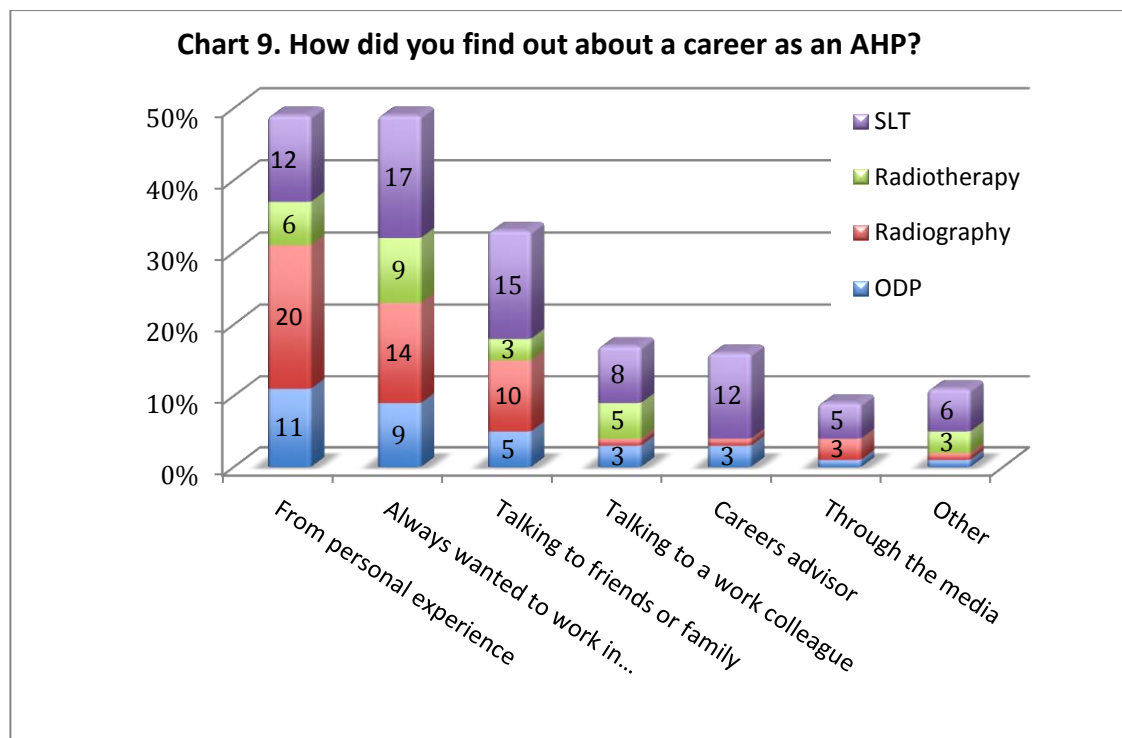
Responses to question 11 (Chart 8) provide more detail about the geographic circumstance of students entering the *field*, the majority of whom live in the Midlands



(36) and surrounding counties of A (3), B (6) and C (6). This may mean that the high number of mature students must continue to maintain other family or social commitments (mainly ODP and Diagnostic Radiography students).

These students cannot relocate and so choose to study where it is most convenient (Williams and Decker, 2009). This may be a particular feature of the AHP *field* at CU, but it may well also provide evidence of a growing trend for HE students in general to reject the traditional approach of leaving home to study. Indeed only SLT students appear to possess a *habitus* that renders them more likely to take the decision to leave home as part of their choice-making, from Yorkshire (3), the rest of England (19), Wales and Northern Ireland (NI) (3), and even a number of other European Union (EU) countries (3). Not only does this flexibility serve to strengthen some students' *social capital*, it also opens up the possibility of greater choice of HE institution and programme of study.

8.3 Questions about your choice of AHP programme



The final set of questions seeks to provide a more detailed understanding of why students made their specific AHP choice. Question 12 (Chart 9) asks

participants why they initially became interested in their profession of choice (more than one answer could be selected). In total, 126 answers were provided from 82 participants. Responses seem to support findings from the existing literature that students are first attracted to a career as an AHP from some form of personal experience (49%), or that they are acting through a long-standing aspiration inscribed within the *habitus* to work in healthcare (49%); as one participant put it, through a 'desire to help people who will need care.' This commitment to others appears as a consistent reason for choice across all AHP programmes at CU. 'Other' responses provide further insights into this reasoning. One ODP student explained that:

I always knew that I wanted to work in the NHS as I really wanted to help improve the quality of people's lives whether they were very ill or just wanting to improve the quality of their own lives.

They went on to explain that this sense of commitment was backed-up by some sophisticated choice-making strategies. This typically involved gaining a practical and experiential understanding of the profession, matching their personal schema with qualities and abilities inscribed in the *habitus* (Bourdieu, 2000):

[H]ence I did my research on the internet and choose 3 professions to shadow, ones in which I felt I could succeed to the best of my ability and something that I would enjoy as I would be in this profession for most of my life.

Similarly a Therapeutic Radiography student talked about how personal experiences appear to have shaped the *habitus* in drawing them to the role:

I was a volunteer at a local hospital, and came across the "oncology" centre; I was 16 years old and wasn't sure what "oncology" meant . . .

Alternatively, a mature student candidly suggested that 'a mid-life crisis prompted re-evaluation of what I was doing'. Here there seems to be evidence

of how the *habitus*, in times of crisis or change in the conditions of the *field*, is prompted to adapt to new circumstances, always guided by the past but nevertheless cognisant of the future.

Talking to family and friends (33%), less so to work colleagues (17%), appears to be an important source of information to applicants, particularly at the very early stages when a particular career interest is developing. This is often generated because of past family involvement in the career in question. Interestingly no Therapeutic Radiography students indicated that they had received any information from a careers advisor, neither had they first encountered the role through any form of media exposure. Of the four professions, only SLT appears to have been the subject of specific careers advice.

Most students entering the *field* of AHP education and training often have connections and networks that help them to gain *social capital* both from family and friends. The exception to this was again Therapeutic Radiography, where no students indicated that they knew any family members or friends who were part of the profession. Participants were asked, via an open question, to provide as many responses as appropriate in order to establish the exact nature of social connections to their chosen *field*. Of those that took part in the questionnaire, many students indicated that they had social connections, often family members (including aunts, uncles and cousins), who were healthcare professionals (see appendix 11).

A total of 82 students responded to question 14 that asks why they had chosen to study at CU (6 participants chose not to provide an answer). 'Open' responses were treated as qualitative data and interpreted following the guidelines for thematic analysis suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994).⁹ A number of initial topics were identified and refined further by looking for themes and patterns, and more often than not similar phrases began to emerge. The most common response I have identified was 'for convenience sake'; moreover this theme seems to link to findings that indicate that a growing number of students choose to remain living at home and to study at a local university (see question 11). The term 'convenience' refers to the proximity of the university, or placement site being close to home, and forms an important feature of their choice. Paradoxically, despite many students expressing a long-term commitment to wanting to join the wider healthcare *field* (see question 12), for many this only becomes a reality if this can be achieved without the need to re-locate. Words and phrases such as 'close to home', 'I live here' or 'convenient' sum up this need to study close to home.

Other students expanded on the importance of a 'good location', and 'minimal travel costs involved in attending placement'. Others still described the importance of benefitting from a convenient placement:

CU allowed me to do a placement at my local hospital, which, appealed to me for ease of getting to and from placement.

Here the pragmatics of convenience is aligned to the notion of the *habitus* 'fitting in' (Greenwood et al. 2006). This is both a sense of wanting to choose

⁹ See Chapter 9.2 for further details on the use of thematic analysis used in this study.

the right programme and at the same time feel comfortable with their choice (12 responses). One student suggested that:

I chose to study at CU because when I came to the open day I really felt as if it was the university for me.

'Fitting in' is also for some a much deeper sense of connection than just finding the right programme:

. . . when I came to visit, I loved the city and the Uni seemed like a friendly, laidback and good place to be.

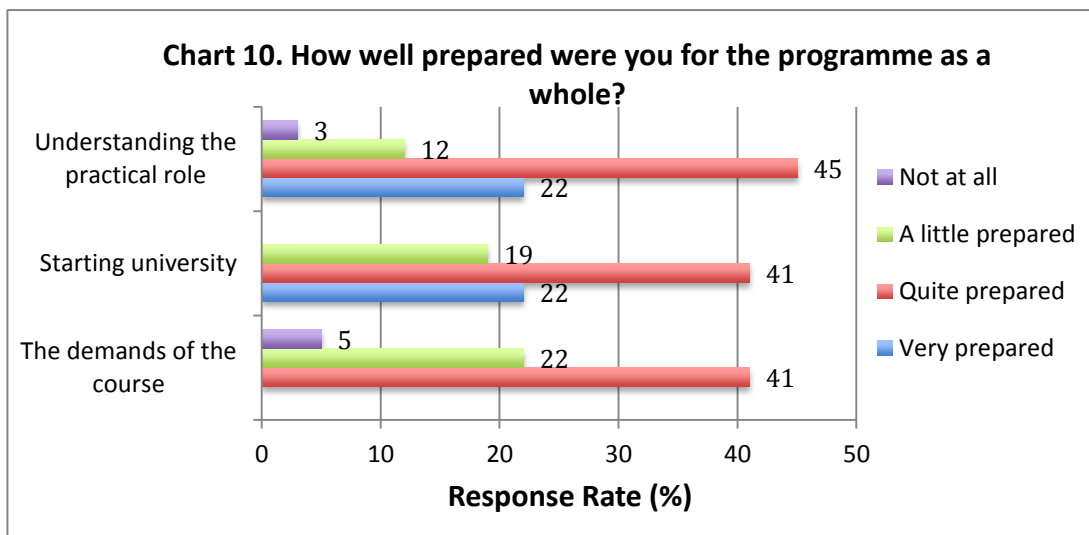
For some there was a very clear desire for their choice to fit with their own values and beliefs embodied in their *habitus*:

It had the best approach to the programme by taking a social aspect to it and treating the person as a whole.

For some participants the desire to 'fit in' was not as pronounced as their concern with what I call 'quality matters'. This theme expresses their reasons for choice of university as a measure of quality and excellence (9 responses). One student transferred to CU because it 'seemed better than my other location of study'. Similarly, another student felt 'it was a better university . . . which is why I transferred'. Some stated that it was 'because it is a good Uni at rankings' and others because of the 'track record of success in supporting students realise their career dreams'. A 'quality matters' student remarked that they made their choice because they felt they 'would receive the best teaching and career opportunities'. This approach to choice also appears to be connected with the *capital* resources that they have at their disposal, gathering information, getting close to the facts and using different sources of information and connections to confirm their choice and to invest in raising their *capital*.

The final theme that I have identified can be categorised as ‘what choice?’ Here the reasons for choosing the CU are much more opaque (9 responses). Most of these responses suggest that to some degree their opportunity to make a choice was significantly restricted. This is because ‘it was the only university that accepted me’ or ‘because this is the only choice I had’. One SLT student was being sponsored by their employer so in this respect felt that ‘it was the only university my place of work would send me to so it was really a choice made for me.’ Other students, who for whatever reason are less mobile, found that their choice was simply down to the fact that no other universities in the region offered the programme.

With regards to Question 15 (see chart 10), overall 45% students entering the *field* felt ‘quite prepared’. This may be because a number of them have



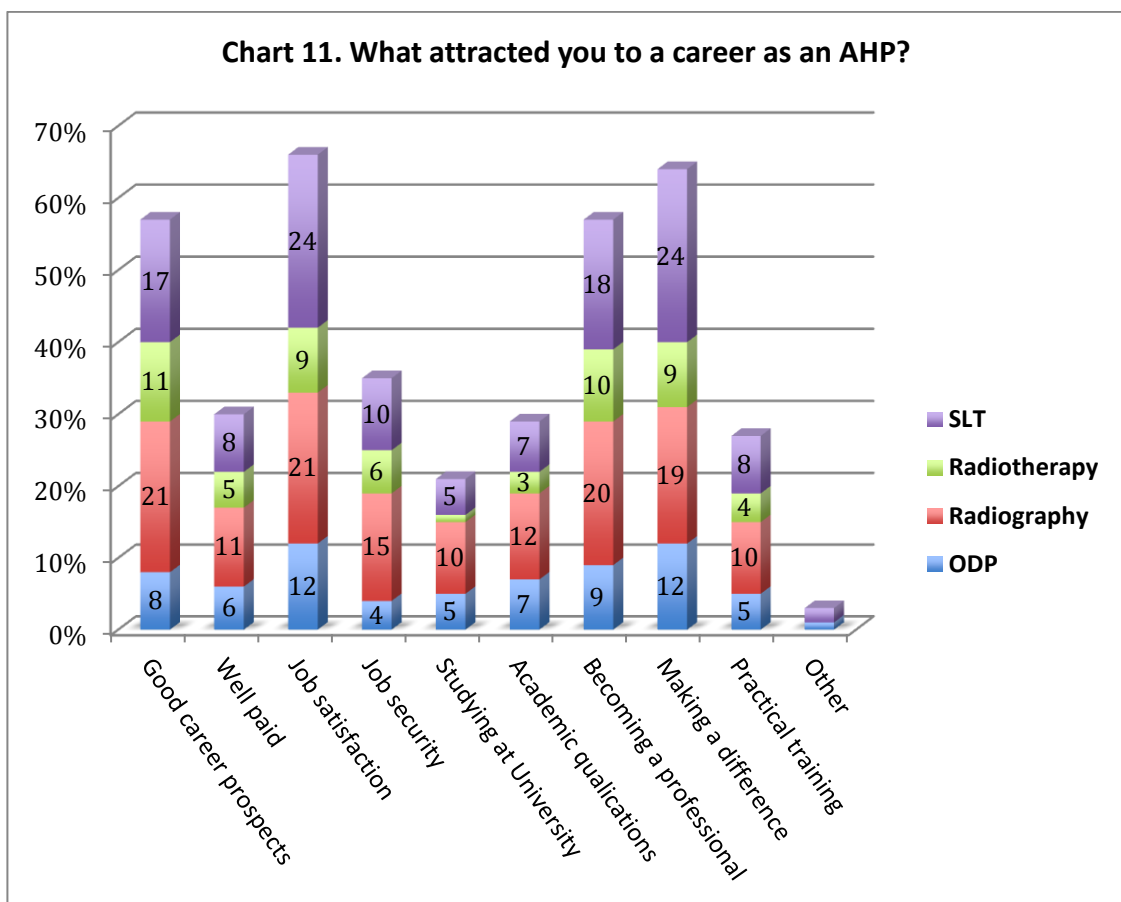
had some existing practical experience, either through working in the *field* as a volunteer, or in a ‘support’ or assistant role. Family connections and *social capital* may also mean that some students are able to undertake more detailed research about their choice, and therefore understand the nuances of the practical aspects of the role before they start their programme.

There is also the possibility that many participants with non-traditional academic qualifications may prefer practical learning to more traditional academic subjects. In fact 22% of participants felt they were 'very prepared' and only 3% of participants felt that they were 'not at all' prepared to undertake the practical role. When it came to preparation for starting university, whilst most students again felt 'quite prepared' (41%), a significant number (22%) felt 'very' prepared for the transition from one *field* to another. On the other hand a similar number of students (19%) felt they were only a 'little prepared' for university, although none of the participants felt that they were 'not at all' prepared. This would suggest that students are not as concerned about starting university as they were about starting placement, or indeed getting to grips with the academic aspects of the programme. It may even be the case that for a significant number of students staying at home makes the transition far easier than if they had chosen to re-locate.

Looking at the demands of the programme overall, none of the students felt that they were 'very' prepared to deal with the demands of the course. Somewhat reassuringly however, only 5% indicated that they were 'not at all prepared' to be able to juggle personal, academic and practical aspects of studying. Most felt 'quite prepared' (41%), whilst fewer felt that they were only 'a little' prepared (22%). In total 6 students chose not to complete this question.

When asked why participants were attracted to their chosen *field* (question 16) four categories were most commonly selected from a range of pre-selected

options (see chart 11). From the responses received the highest percentage across most programmes indicated job satisfaction was the main reason that they were attracted to an AHP career (66%). This was followed by a sense of wanting to 'make a difference' (64%) (Williams and Decker, 2008) and the next highest (joint) responses were for 'good career prospects' and 'becoming a professional' (both 57%). There seems to be a link between wanting to have a positive influence on the lives of patients and on society as a whole, whilst at the same time benefiting from the job satisfaction that this provides. Again, students felt that by joining the *field* they were doing so as part of a professional workforce, and that this brought with it important benefits such as the status from holding such qualifications.



These findings appear to support those of Greenwood et al. (2006) who found that potential AHP students responded to a *habitus* mainly orientated to

'interesting' and 'satisfying' careers based on a deeper sense of the intrinsic worth of their contribution to the needs of society (p. 88). In contrast to Greenwood and Bithell (2003, 2005) however, participants in my study considered being well paid (30%) and having job security (35%) as being slightly less important features of their choice.

Gaining an academic qualification (29%), as well as the opportunity to study at university (21%) were seen as less attractive features of a career in the AHPs. Only 1% of Therapeutic Radiography students felt that being at university was an attractive feature of the profession. Somewhat surprisingly, given that many students are first introduced to the AHPs via exposure through work experience in 'assistant-type' roles, the chance to learn practical skills did not feature as something that particularly attracted students to their chosen AHP *field* (27%).

Participants also indicated that they were attracted to becoming an AHP because they considered them to be more of a vocation than just a career. This suggests a *habitus* responding to educational choice as a propensity to act on values associated with a sense of identity and authenticity (Evans, 2009; Reay, 2001). In total 6 students decided not to complete the question.

A total of 79 students responded to question 17, which asked participants to describe how they felt about their programme so far (Table 6). Overall the majority of students

Table 6. Please describe how you feel about your career choice so far

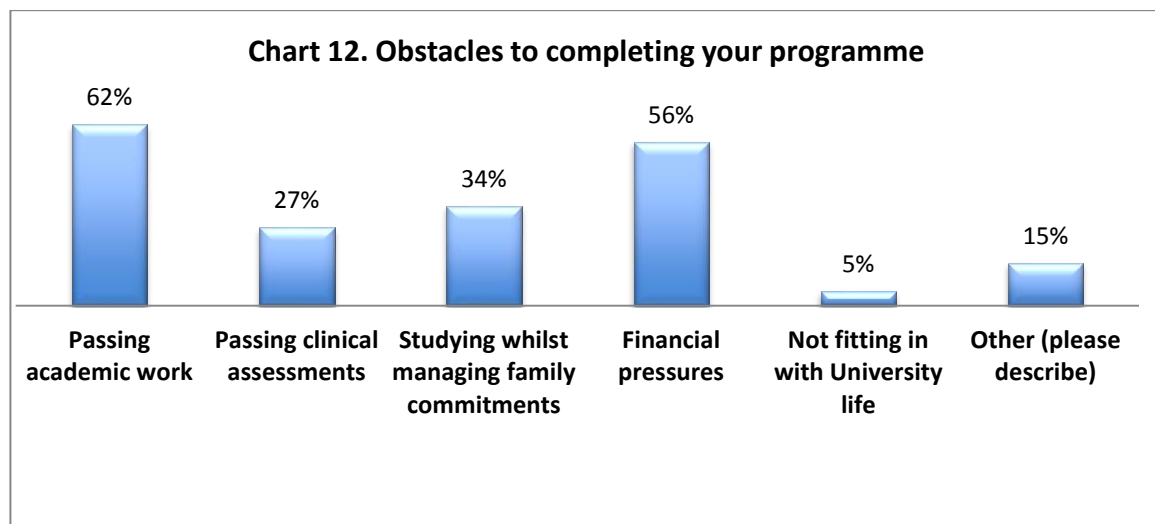
Theme	Very Positive	Positive	Satisfied	Negative
Response %	19% (15)	58% (46)	19% (15)	4% (3)

(77%) expressed a *positive* opinion about their career choice (19% of those were very positive). Words such as ‘very enjoyable, ‘interesting’ or ‘happy’ seemed to typify the language used to express such an opinion. One student suggested that:

I am happier now than I have ever been. I love going on placement and I know I definitely want to be in the health care professions . . . I love making a difference and feeling like I’m doing a worthwhile job.

Largely positive responses were also partially qualified by some degree of anxiety or concern. One student whilst commenting that she/he was ‘very pleased’ that she/he had made their choice, simultaneously admitted to being ‘a little apprehensive about jobs within the local area’. Other responses that were *very positive* went as far as stating that ‘I absolutely love it, I feel like I’ve had a second lease of life’, suggesting that students are responding to the *field* in ways that mean they are prepared to adapt and change. A final theme that emerged from the data indicates a *negative* experience of their AHP education and training choices (3 responses). These students seem to question the value of what they are doing and their ability to achieve to the standard that is expected by the *field*. One participant indicated that their choice of programme had left them feeling ‘nervous’ and ‘unsure’ about their choice.

Students were then asked to select, from a range of options, obstacles to completing their programme (question 18). A total of 86 responses were received and 6 participants chose not to complete the question. More than one pre-selected response was possible and the overall response total is represented as a percentage figure (see chart 12).



Perhaps not surprisingly, most students felt that the biggest hurdle to completing their programme was passing academic assignments (62%), and again this may be down to a previous lack of success in the scholastic market (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1999). A much lower figure of students (27%) also felt that passing clinical assessments was potentially a significant hurdle.

The second highest obstacle to achievement was less directly related to the academic and practical demands of the programme, since 56% of participants indicated that the existence of financial pressures was a significant reason for their potential non-completion. Therefore the spectre of less 'generous' funding arrangements in the future would appear to present a barrier to study, particularly for students from less financially advantaged socio-economic groups.

Given the high proportion of mature students, the challenge of studying whilst managing family commitments, is also considered to be a significant barrier across all of the programmes (34%). The least significant hurdle appears to be not 'fitting in' with university life (5%). Again this low response may result from the fact that many students indicated that they had chosen to continue to live at home. Most of the 'other' responses elaborated on the difficulties of managing to cope with academic and practical study whilst also attending placement. A small number of students also disclosed that personal health problems were a potential obstacle to completing the programme.

From the 82 participants, 52% indicated that they would be happy to take part further in the research (see question 19), whilst 48% declined to take any further part in the research, and 7% of participants chose not to answer the question. Of those that did agree to take part, 27 participants left either a contact email, or mobile telephone number (question 20).

8.4 A summary of my findings from the questionnaire

From the results of the questionnaire, a picture of student choice in AHP education and training is emerging. This suggests that a number of characteristics are identifiable as examples of AHP student choice-making at CU. Education and training in the AHPs is highly gendered (just over three quarters of participants were female). Many participants in my study are considered to be mature, and indeed the majority are over 21 years of age. Typically many of them do not come straight from A levels (those that did were

many from SLT), and in this sense many participants also do not represent a typical university student profile.

There is a broad representation of entry qualifications, from previous degrees to more vocationally orientated qualifications, a large proportion of which include access to HE programmes. This suggests a wide diversity of previous scholastic success, but also of opportunity to prepare for HE study. Participants are overwhelmingly white and middle class. Not only are middle class students far more likely to study AHP programmes, many of them belong to families who have had experience of HE, whereas many working class students, in all the AHP programmes, are still the first in their families to study at university.

What remains to be explored in Chapter 9 is a deeper understanding of how and why these characteristics and qualities might affect each individual student in the way that the data from the questionnaire suggests. The answer lies in hearing the voices of the participants through their stories of choice-making, and therefore the response of the *habitus* to both the structural influences of choice and the complex trajectories that are individually generated as a result of entering the AHP education and training *field*.

Chapter 9.0 Capturing the *habitus* in the case studies of student choice in AHP education and training

I begin this Chapter by describing the criteria used to select each of the case studies. Following this I discuss the ethical principles, which underpin my study, as well as my approach to building trustworthiness with the participants whilst remaining cognisant of Bourdieu's (1999) own methodological reflexive approach. I then describe the process of surfacing the stories of choice-making by conducting semi-structured interviews. In the second half of the Chapter I describe the process of data analysis.

9.1 Case study selection

To summarise, in this study the preliminary data from the questionnaire has been used to facilitate both the selection of case studies as a basis for carrying out in-depth semi-structured interviews, and to enable the topographical characteristics and qualities to be investigated further (see Table 7, page 126). I have chosen to adopt a case study approach to support the development of a particular reading of the complex social context and outcomes of student choice in the AHP education and training *field* at CU (Yin, 2003).

9.2 Stories and vignettes

Each case study is included as a different story of choice-making in AHP education and training, and each story represents a personal experience which is reproduced in the form of a vignette to provide the richness of data, that could be otherwise lost in the analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1984). Bathmaker and Avis (2005) found that students told stories that indicated the degree to which they had integrated into 'communities of practice', or new

social *fields*. Indeed Travers (1999) documents how the use of vignettes has also been used to explore social class. Similarly, in this study, the stories of choice-making are presented as particular vignettes, which highlight each student's individual experience of AHP education and training, including the influence of social class.

In relation to the selection of cases to be included in the study, my approach makes no attempt to introduce randomness as each case study has been selected to enable the research question to be answered in detail and in context (Denscombe, 1999). The final selection of case studies involved a purposive sampling approach that includes the following criteria:

- Inclusion from each category of AHP programme.
- Specific characteristics of choice-making, such as part-time study.
- Diverse age profile.
- Gender differences.
- Ethnicity.
- A cross-class section of students.
- Differences in educational experiences and trajectory.
- Differences in familial experience of HE.
- Differences in the familial exposure to healthcare related professions.

Some programme categories, (such as military ODP students) simply did not participate in the questionnaire, and therefore were not available for case study selection. Thereafter, selection was restricted to those who agreed to participate further. I had to however, review the students who were finally interviewed, particularly in relation to inclusion of BME participants. Although some Asian students had initially agreed to take part in the interviews a number did not respond to further contact, or could not attend the interview within the time allocated.

Table 7. Case study selection criteria for semi-structured interviews

Pseudonym	Programme and mode of study	Ethnicity	Age Group and gender	N-SEC	Pre-entry Educational level	Family Exposure to HE	Proximity to others in healthcare
Bernadette	SLT Part-time	White British	21 – 29 Female	1	1 st Degree	Mother/Father Sister	Family friend
Helen	SLT	White British	18 – 20 Female	3	A level	None	None
Nina	Therapeutic Radiography	White British	21 – 29 Female	5	1 st Degree	None	None
Barbara	ODP	White British	30 – 39 Female	4	Access	None	Mother Work Colleagues
Tim	ODP	White British	21 – 29 Male	2	BTEC	None	Girlfriend
Adele	Diagnostic Radiography	Black Caribbean	21 – 29 Female	1	Access	Mother/Sister	None
George	Diagnostic Radiography	White British	40 – 49 Male	5	Access	None	Mother/Grandparents

9.3 *Ethical principles and practices*

My study is fully compliant with the principles and procedures for ethical approval at the University of Sheffield (appendix 8). This process exists to ensure that the highest standards in educational research are adhered to at all times. As part of my ethical responsibility, whilst conducting my study I was conscious that I should not harm the participants in any way (either physically or psychologically). Neither should I act without consent, invade their privacy or involve any form of deception (Bryman, 2004). Each participant was provided with confirmation of ethical approval in advance via email, and in hard copy. After the conclusion of the research I have made a commitment to produce a summary report to be able to feedback my findings to all the students who took part.

In accordance with established ethical research principles, each participant was provided with a 'research fact sheet' via email, and again in hard copy on the day of the interview (see appendix 9). Only at this point were participants asked to complete a 'participant consent form' (see appendix 10). This clarified that they understood the purpose of my research, as well as reminded them that their participation was entirely voluntary, that their anonymity would be maintained and that they could withdraw from the study at any point by contacting me with a written request (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

9.4 *Establishing trustworthiness with the participants*

My primary focus was to enable a discussion between the participants and myself, to involve an exchange of views consisting of shared or mutual

interests. Kvale (1996) has described this act of mutuality as being essential where data exists as a result of a human or social context. Thus rather than seek objectivity, steps were taken to ensure as far as possible, that the interpretation and the findings of the research came from the participants' involvement (see Guba and Lincoln, 1995) rather than my reading of the situation (p. 301). Therefore, in qualitative research, whilst the data cannot be considered to be valid and reliable (as these are contested terms), it is felt to be trustworthy. Indeed Guba (1981) describes the need for qualitative research to be *credible* rather than valid, and *dependable* rather than reliable. Research of this nature should be able to demonstrate *confirmability*, rather than strive for objectivity, and have *transferability*, as an alternative to being generalisable. Guba and Lincoln (1985) suggest that the starting point for developing *confirmability* is that participants must have trust both in the process, and outcomes of the research. Given that my research is a unique exploration of the conditions of the *field* in a specific context of time and location, I was less concerned to ensure that the research was *transferable* to other contexts. As I describe the process of carrying out the case study interviews, and in the recording and analysis of the data, I will refer to a number of techniques advocated by Guba and Lincoln (1985) that I have deployed along the way to maintain trust with the participants.

Establishing trustworthiness began, as I have already discussed, with the time that I invested in the process of case study selection and in conducting the interviews. This process had begun much earlier at the point when I had initially negotiated contact with each programme cohort. My understanding of

the organisation supported the development of an early familiarity with the culture of the university. Subsequent to this I kept in contact via email, web-postings and telephone calls to either the population as a whole, the questionnaire respondents, or those selected for interview. Guba and Lincoln (1985) refer to this contact as a form of 'prolonged engagement' in order to 'test for misinformation' and to 'build trust' between researcher and participant (p. 301).

It has been suggested that contact of this kind can also guard against what Guba (1981) has described as 'personal distortions', that the researcher will inevitably bring to the research itself. This is acknowledged, and potentially counter-acted by reflexively recognising my positionality in the research through Bourdieu's quest to avoid the pre-constructed. Through this process I was also able to guard against my judgement being influenced by the organisational culture itself. With this in mind, each specific research question has been designed to develop a co-related exploration of educational choice in the AHPs, in order to avoid the *doxic* effects of 'taken for granted' assumptions that exist *a priori*, that is outside of knowing the full context of the social phenomena being researched. Robson (2002) has suggested that these can lead to 'respondent bias' and 'misinformation' through inaccuracies or from participants withholding information during the interview (p. 172).

Guba and Lincoln (1985) advocate the use of *triangulation* in order to establish that the emergent data can be verified and that the research is credible and dependable, given that the two are considered co-dependent. Whilst

triangulation can take different forms, in the context of my research the need for *credibility* and *dependability* is addressed through both data triangulation and methodological triangulation. Indeed the 3-stage methodology that I have adopted is intended to provide an opportunity to seek what Richardson (1996) describes as 'complementarity', as a way of cross-checking for thoroughness and to avoid participants misunderstanding what is expected of them. In addition to this the micro-level analysis of the *habitus* allows a further methodological triangulation that Dunbar-Goddet and Ertl suggest, enables one method to act as a 'source of hypotheses or assumptions' that can be tested further at a later date (2007, p. 19). In my case the quantitative (questionnaire) data was used in order to establish characteristics, test concepts and facilitate a richer (interview derived) qualitative understanding (Richardson, 1996).

9.5 *Piloting and interview schedule development*

As a novice researcher I felt that I should not conduct un-structured interviews, and that some form of guided structure, or prompts would be useful. Affording some structure to the interviews also offered the re-assurance that I could select some pre-determined questions based on testing the conceptual basis of the qualities of the *habitus* described in the literature, as well as probe in more detail responses and themes drawn from the questionnaire data. I could still, however, allow participants to move 'off topic' to allow them to expand on answers that I had not anticipated, or that I could not satisfactorily pre-determine (Robson, 2002).

In order to develop the interview questions, I held an initial focus group with 6 second-year AHP students from the same programmes as those included in the study. From the responses I was able to develop an interview schedule and question prompts (see appendix 13). I then carried out a pilot interview with a student who is not included as one of the case studies. This helped me to develop a logical sequence and allow pre-interview self-checking of questions that might be misleading or confusing. Following the pilot I developed a checklist interview schedule (see appendix 13), and I was more explicit about the need to record the interviews, and that they would last for 40 to 60 minutes, rather than 30 to 40 minutes as I had originally anticipated would be the case.

9.6 Conducting the interviews: capturing the stories of student choice

Prior to the start of the interviews, I 'checked in' with each participant to obtain their written consent, and to remind them of the interview process. During the interviews, I returned on a number of occasions to Bourdieu's (2000) specific suggestion on how to mitigate against the 'slightly arbitrary intrusions' or 'distortions' that I might unknowingly introduce into the research process (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). To achieve this Bourdieu (2000) describes the principle of *non-violent communication* in which the views of each participant genuinely need to be heard, unfettered from the actual and symbolic bias of the researcher. He describes this engagement between participant and researcher as 'active and methodological listening' necessary to actively construct a relationship of trust, in short to ensure *confirmability*. In Bourdieusian terms (2000) I was attempting to submit myself 'to the singularity

of a particular life history', and in so doing, adopt the 'interviewee's language, views, feelings and thoughts' in order to situate myself and make sense of their stories from their perspective (p. 609).

In practice this meant being careful about the language that I used so as to avoid any 'teacher pupil' overtones. In practice I also chose not to wear my 'normal' work clothes, again in an attempt to redress the potential power dynamic. I was careful not to respond verbally or non-verbally to topics that, with my position, values and background, I might not necessarily be familiar with. As I became more experienced I found myself becoming a much more attentive listener, attuned to what was being said 'in the moment'. Gradually I felt that I could engage not only in *active* listening, but also in mentally organising the responses according to the research question and the conceptual framework. This is so that, according to Bourdieu, the researcher and the data collected are 'objectively attuned to those of the respondent' (2000, p. 611).

9.4 Data analysis: drawing on theoretical concepts and themes

I began to analyse the data as soon as possible after each interview was concluded. I was aware that a further threat to the *credibility*, *dependability* and *confirmability* stems from the question over the accuracy and completeness of the data (Maxwell, 1992). Each interview was recorded in line with participant consent and then transcribed verbatim to avoid arbitrarily imposing meaning on the data and to guard against suppressing information that could prove to be important (Robson, 2002). 'Member checks' (Guba and Lincoln, 1985) were

also carried out whereby participants were contacted after the interview to ask if they wanted to listen to the recording before it was transcribed to ensure that what had been recorded (or transcribed) was what the participants intended. Only one participant requested to do so, but then subsequently indicated satisfaction with the content without changes needing to be made. Following transcription, each participant was again contacted offering the chance to comment and to correct any factual matters, or contest any interpretations. Somewhat to my surprise, none of the participants requested to see the transcripts. Guba and Lincoln (1985) also note that 'member checking' allows the researcher to become familiar with the data, and this proximity also brought about the first steps to data analysis (p. 314). My initial approach to this was to categorise words, phrases or paragraphs from each transcript according to Bourdieu's conceptual framework of *field*, *capital* and *habitus* as a fit between the theoretical framework and the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

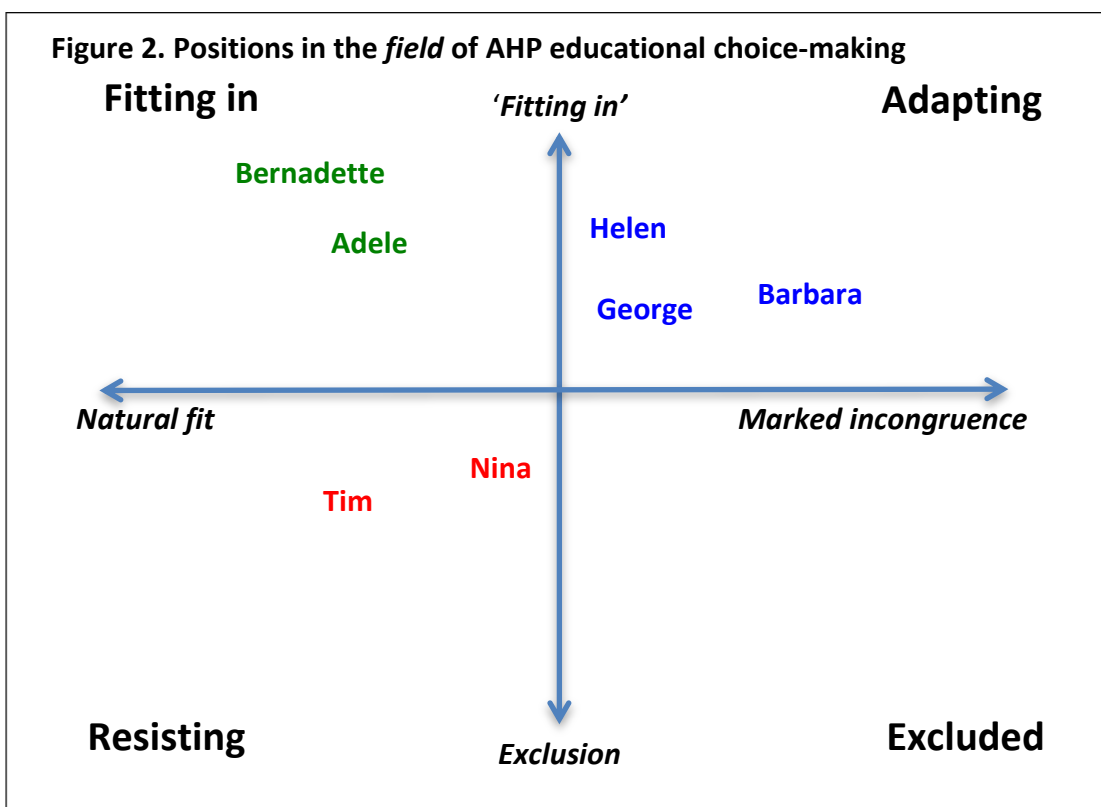
Following an initial sift of each transcript I began to apply a coding system to segments of text, the purpose being, as Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest, to 'tag' the data with 'units of meaning' (p. 57). The coding in my initial starting list was almost entirely 'descriptive'; for example, paragraph 3 of the transcript describes the *habitus*, therefore this section of the text was coded in a column on the left hand side of the transcript as Hab (see appendix 14). In the right hand column I noted down prompts that I had taken during the interview itself. Working with the data in this way, I was gradually able to apply further codes to indicate where the data was 'interpreting' the structural effects of the *habitus* on the individual; this was coded as Hab-stru. As more data from further

transcripts became available, more sophisticated 'pattern' codes were subsequently applied. This allowed sections of the data, often individual sentences or phrases, to be identified as relating to a theme, or pattern, that could be extended to other case studies. What was being described in the data was not only linked and coded to the *habitus* and its structuring qualities of the individual, it could also suggest a particular working (Hab-stru-clw) or middle class (Hab-stru-clm) pattern. As I continued this process, the codes became more detailed, interpretive and thematic (see appendix 15 for a full list of codes).

In Chapter 10 I describe the final stage of data analysis, using Watson et al.'s (2009) heuristic as a model of a Bourdieusian social *field*. In my study examination of the data led to the emergence of patterns, or themes, which in turn suggest how each case study can be located conceptually within 'clusters of shared experience' (p. 670). This enabled a total of 7 case studies to be positioned specifically in relation to the AHP education and training *field* at CU, according to the 'fit' between the students' prior expectations of student choice, and the reality of their experience of their chosen AHP programme. The key findings from each of these clusters are then considered. In Chapter 10 I also take the opportunity to review the aims of the research, as well as summarise my findings from each of the other research questions.

Chapter 10. Case study accounts of the *habitus*: the reality of educational choice in the AHPs

As explained, in this Chapter individual students' stories are presented as vignettes of choice-making in the *field* of AHP education and training. These stories demonstrate how the *habitus*, according to Robbins (1991), enables a 'practical mastery, which people possess of their situation' (p. 1). In other words the *habitus* represents unconscious patterns of values and behaviours acquired through prolonged exposure to particular social conditions, particularly the structural influence of social class.



The *habitus*, according to Grenfell (2004), also acts as a personal schema to interpret and respond to new social *fields* and the 'taken-for-granted practices' that define them (p. 670). Extending this principle to my research, analysis of each case study, is subjected to Bourdieu's key conceptual thinking, and is then mapped against Watson et al.'s (2009) diagrammatic representation of a

social *field* (figure 2). The horizontal axis represents the 'degree of fit' or congruence between the practices that define educational choice in the AHPs at CU (p. 670), whilst the vertical axis represents each participant's personal experience of their AHP programme. Therefore each case study is located in one of the 'clusters' of the AHP education and training *field* depending upon the degree to which s/he 'adapts', 'fits in', 'resists' or is being 'excluded' from the *field* (Watson et al. 2009).

I begin by presenting 7 stories as vignettes of different students who are diagrammatically represented in the various clusters as case study examples of AHP choice-making at CU. The characteristics of each cluster will be considered in turn, by highlighting examples drawn from the stories of each student. Later on in the Chapter these findings will be summarised, along with a summary of the research aims and findings from the other research questions.

10.1 'Adapting' to the AHP education and training field

This first cluster represents the majority of the case studies. In fact I found that 3 student stories act as exemplars of students who are able to 'adapt' to their new AHP *field*. Watson et al. (2009) suggest that whilst students in this cluster are typically more likely to complete their programme, there is always some 'sense of struggle' that results from some degree of 'incongruence' between the students' *habitus* and the *field* (p. 673). I begin with Barbara's story, then George's, followed by Helen's.

10.1.1 Barbara's story of choice-making: it's all about "confidence"

Barbara is a mature ODP student from a non-traditional academic background. She is in her mid-forties and lives locally with her partner and young daughter. Barbara appears to have benefitted directly from the flexible recruitment strategies that the ODP *field* accepts as part of the 'rules of the game' of entry to the profession (Reay et al. 2009). Nevertheless her journey has been long and arduous, typified by rejection and setbacks along the way.

Barbara immediately identified strongly with her working class background, which was also evident from her parents' occupations. She began to tell me why she felt the way she did about her class:

Yeah, we grew up in a working class area and down the bottom of the road was the factory, and when my parents split up, we sort of like moved around a lot.

Barbara talked about how her social class impacted upon her early experiences of school and how this set her apart from others:

Where I came from middle class kids were different because of where they lived and the fact that they went to Grammar school, whereas I attended a bog-standard primary school and then a comprehensive.

Barbara's past experiences of the education system had not been positive, at school she was labelled by her teachers as 'a low achiever', and this clearly has had a significant effect on shaping her *habitus*:

They put me in the bottom set. In the bottom sets, you always have the ones that didn't want to do anything so you really didn't learn anything even if you had wanted to.

This marked the beginning of a lifetime in which the hegemony of educational policy, and the discriminatory practices of the system itself, served to limit and

re-enforce her view of her own low social status. Bourdieu (1988) describes the structuring influence of Barbara's educational trajectory as *conatus*, that which serves to limit her personal aspiration and ambition, and as Barbara reminded me, 'I was stuck at the bottom and that's where I stayed up until now'. This trajectory, in effect, becomes part of Barbara's social class identity.

The effects of *conatus* on the *habitus* could again be heard in Barbara's inability to reverse her class-based education trajectory (Fuller, 2008).

Teachers advised Barbara that:

It wouldn't be worth me undertaking A levels because I would be better to get a job and then have a family.

In this way Bourdieu (1994) describes how the *habitus* is structured by the objective limits of the education system, and how this becomes transformed into a practical anticipation of these limits. In other words, Barbara developed a sense of her place, which led to feelings that going to university was not for her (Reay et al. 2005). Similarly Bourdieu (1986) suggests that social class as a structuring principle ensures that students study where they are more likely to be with 'people like us'.

Yet despite this, in Barbara's case the qualities of the *habitus* reflect an inner sense of wanting to pursue a career in healthcare. When I prompted her to consider where this sense of affinity came from, Barbara talked in rather vague terms:

It was always there I think even from when I was younger, I've always you know, some people often change their minds as they grow up, yet I always wanted to work in health.

Barbara seemed to indicate the presence of a 'class unconscious' as a way of behaving and acting, and according to Crossley (2008), also as a characteristic of the *habitus* orientated to a shared disposition amongst a class or group of people, yet limited by a sense of place (p. 93). Barbara's story demonstrates examples of both. When I asked if any of her family worked in healthcare, Barbara revealed that her mother qualified as a nurse, before nursing was offered as a university qualification. Whilst the *habitus* is responding to past experiences in a way that feels somewhat familiar to her, this is nevertheless countered by on-going class limitations which are never far from her story of educational choice-making. An example of this stems from Barbara's initial desire to become a nurse, but this was thwarted when she was advised by a nursing admissions tutor that, 'people like me shouldn't bother applying now that it is based in universities.' Whilst the training and status of the profession have changed, discriminatory attitudes may not have. Barbara is convinced that reference was being made to her social background yet, as is often typical of working class students, she responds in a way that Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) predict will enable her to play down this particular disappointment by responding in a way that 'it is reasonable for her to expect' (p. 226). Like other working class students, Barbara attempted to make sense of the lack of opportunity by suggesting rather stoically that, 'I always think that things happen for a reason so probably at the time, it wasn't right for me to train to become a nurse.'

The structured and structuring effects of the *habitus* mean that, whilst Barbara may have harboured career ambitions, because of her past experiences, she

did nothing to act upon her aspiration to become a nurse or other health professional for nearly 10 years. Indeed Hart (2012) has described how females are far more likely not to share, but even to suppress their aspirations.

This was the case for Barbara who explained that:

Because of what happened to me before I didn't have the confidence at all. I kept on wanting to apply to do a health course but it never went any further.

Barbara seems to have chosen to exercise her own 'self-exclusion' that Bourdieu (1986) predicts is the case with many working class students. Nevertheless, Barbara's catalyst for change came as a result of encountering a new social *field*, when she took up a post as an operating theatre support worker (p. 141). This gave her access to a new social network and to *social capital*, as colleagues encouraged her to take the next step to apply for the ODP programme. I was keen to explore with Barbara exactly why she had taken so long to get around applying to university. 'Well I guess it's down to my lack of confidence really'. When I asked her to discuss why she felt that way her, reasons soon became very clear:

Hmm, I think it was always that I've never been clever enough to do it . . . nobody ever talked to me about going to university, people from my background didn't did they? So I never expected that I would, I never got around to it because I didn't know what to expect and whether I would be able to cope.

Having finally gained a place on the ODP programme (after a number of attempts), Barbara describes her initial impression of university as a 'surreal' and 'alien' moment. Like other 'adapters', Barbara's transition to her new education *field* has not been unproblematic. Barbara reiterated that she was 'worried about how she was going to cope', and described how these concerns

became a reality because of the difficulties she experienced getting to grips with understanding what she had to do to pass academic work:

Unlike some other students I've never had to do this kind thing before, it's been so long since I was at school . . . the way to do things, references and stuff like that have changed.

In common with other mature working class students, for example those identified in Crozier et al.'s (2008) study, the passage of time since the *habitus* was exposed to educational opportunities, serves to limit students like Barbara in their transition to HE:

Yeah with the assignments, because I've never ever wrote one before . . . it was just knowing the instructions, getting you know . . . to grips with what I had to do, what my tutors meant, stuff like that.

As a mature student Barbara seems to be suggesting that she lacked the linguistic *capital* that some of her fellow students possessed (James, 1995). What is more, the 'logic' of the ODP educational and training *field* is such that despite remaining a very practically orientated profession, progress relies heavily on passing traditional academic assignments and examinations. As ODP attempts to improve its professional status and position in the AHP *field*, the *illusio* of the game, according to Bourdieu and Waquant (1992), has prioritised an academic pedagogy because 'it is worth playing' given the advantages that it brings to the profession and to CU (p. 980). Yet as Watson et al. (2009) suggest, for 'adapting' student like Barbara these conventions of the *field* are obscured and are of little relevance to them (p. 672).

The paradox here is that students like Barbara, with non-traditional academic qualifications such as an access course, are accepted onto the programme because they appear to have an aptitude for the profession, but may then be

disadvantaged in the way that the programme is structured, because students prefer to learn in different ways. In fact Barbara's *habitus* is clearly more comfortable with the placement aspects of her programme. As she suggested:

I like the practical bits best, yes. I'm better at doing stuff like that rather than . . . I think I learn quicker that way.

In the classroom, Barbara acknowledges that she does not naturally feel at home, she hints at the incongruence that stems from her educational past in the way that it has failed to provide her the necessary *capital* resources to study on a level playing *field* with some of her middle class peers (Watson et al. 2009):

Because I'm only just learning what to do, I have to have quite a few attempts to actually put academic work into a format that I'm happy with. I don't mind the revision bit, but when it comes to the exams I'm absolutely horrible . . . just like when my mouth goes dry I'm thinking, oh my God, I can't remember any of the questions. I know I have to learn this stuff but it's not what I'm used to.

Barbara's story seems to echo the findings of Crozier et al. (2008) who described how many working class students like Barbara, in contrast to their middle class counterparts, hold rather tenuous entry qualifications in relation to the demands of the programme being studied (p. 170). Ball et al. (2002) suggest that students like Barbara are always going to be playing catch-up compared with other students.

The development of a more academically aligned pedagogy has also meant that Barbara has had to adjust her expectations of the practical aspects of the role. She explains that:

The ODP programme has changed so much you know, during the years from being a City and Guilds and then an NVQ qualification, before going on to a Diploma, so every ODP that I have ever met along the way has viewed their role and their training differently.

Because the conditions of the *field* are in a constant state of change, there is a risk of a dissonance between the programme content and the practical role. This is an area for concern, given that students like Barbara may feel that their educational choice is a very different experience to the one that they had expected. Not only does this raise potentially important issues in relation to programme retention, whereby student expectations are not being met, the spectre of the theory-practice gap, which has been written about extensively in nursing, looms large (Corlett, 2000). This dissonance between classroom activities and placement learning, it has been argued, can lead to an out-dated and irrelevant curriculum with no real practical application (Dale, 1994). Furthermore poor collaboration between clinicians and university educators may lead to a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities, particularly around assessment, and clinical staff who feel they are unable to fail students even when they have not reached a competent level (Duffy, 2003).

When asked if she felt she was coping with the programme so far, Barbara's response typified the complex feelings that 'adapting' students so often experience (Watson et al. 2009):

Sometimes . . . I think it goes in swings and roundabouts really. You sort of . . . you have your good days and your bad days but if you get overly confident then you're going trip up. Then again I just have to overcome my lack of confidence and get on with it.

As Watson et al. (2009) have identified, there is always a degree of struggle, yet at the same time a sense that 'adapting' students will get there in the end by meeting the minimum requirements of the *field* (p. 673). Barbara was able to describe how she has developed her own study strategies, planning assignments in good time, sending in drafts, re-working and then meeting with

her personal tutor to receive feedback. Barbara works hard at 'adapting' and is constantly investing time and effort in developing her *capital*. Colley et al. (2003) have described this as the development of a 'vocational' *habitus*, which is a necessary part of the student experience to move toward the dispositions of the *field* (p. 488).

Nevertheless, for Barbara her choice, and development of a 'vocational' *habitus*, is also located in her predispositions that mean she has always to fit the requirements of her programme around her responsibilities first and foremost as a mother. Whilst becoming an ODP is important to Barbara, studying at university does not hold any intrinsic worth. In common with Evans' (2009) study of working class female students entering HE for the first time, being a wife and mother from a working class background is part of her authentic-self. When I asked if her experience would make her feel differently about herself, she responded:

Yes I'm starting to gain more confidence now from being at Uni, but in the end I'm still a mum who happens to be a student for now. It's what I have to do to become an ODP. I might have moments where I think "oh my God, what am I doing?, but I know it's still the right choice."

Whilst 'adapting' continues to be challenging, Barbara's achievements to date stem from her own resilience, inscribed in the *habitus* as qualities that allow her gradually to overcome class-based hurdles to align herself more closely to the *field* (Watson et al. 2009). Whilst there is always some sense of struggle, she is resilient enough to adapt to her new circumstances and surroundings, despite possibly having the least available *capital* resources on which to draw in order to 'adapt' to the logic of the *field* (Bourdieu, 1990).

10.1.2 George's story of choice-making: "changing as a person"

George is a 40 year-old mature student studying Diagnostic Radiography. Like Barbara, George returned to formal study to complete an access to health care qualification. George is the second case study of students whose experiences of AHP educational choice-making can be described as 'adapting' to the new *field*.

George's story reveals that for him, educational choice-making is a catalyst for his own personal journey of change:

It took me, really until recently to understand that I was not content with what I was getting in terms of job satisfaction. I didn't know what to do and because of my background I never thought that I would need to go to university.

As a husband and father, George has always had to work, in his own words, 'just to make ends meet, to put food on the table, pay a mortgage and stuff like that.' After being made redundant several times George felt the need to improve his job prospects. Although he had enjoyed school, he didn't consider himself to be 'studious'. He did however, describe himself as:

. . . kind of like a bit of a science geek, space and technology and stuff like that . . . one day I started putting it all together and I looked at Radiography and I just thought . . . that's the solution. I'm going to give it a go!

Whilst George's epiphany seemed unexpected, as he told his story the influence of the *habitus* began to emerge. George told me that his mother and indeed two grandparents were nurses before it became a university qualification. He volunteered that, 'I considered nursing myself, but then I thought that's not for me'. Reay et al. (2005) have suggested how a familial *habitus* can, subtly and over time lead to mutuality and shared interests. In this

way, I would suggest that because nursing features in his family, he unconsciously turned to what he, or his family knew. Although the *habitus* structures behaviours and attitudes, it also responds to agency, hence not wanting to become a nurse, but something more ‘technical and sciencey’, and more in keeping with his own personal interests, is akin to a discipline-specific *habitus* drawing him to the profession (Reay et al. 2005).

George, in common with other mature students, has a strong subject interest that orientates the *habitus* towards studying to become a Radiographer (Ball et al. 2002). There is, however, no sense of a personal desire or family resonance with studying at university, and this is not part of his normal choice biography (Du Bois-Reymond, 1998). As George explains:

If you told me ‘in five years you’ll be in ‘university’, I would’ve laughed my head off. “There is no chance” . . . I would have said. Going to university was not for working class people like me.

In fact Crozier et al. (2008) have suggested that for students like George, attending university is very much a ‘second chance opportunity’, initially rejected because of their class background; they assume in a Bourdieusian (1984) sense that it is ‘not for us’ (p. 197). In later life, HE is only encountered through the pursuit of a particular career trajectory, particularly in new professional *fields* (Reay et al. 2005). Even now George does not consider himself a ‘normal’ university student and he sounded very pragmatic about his choice; indeed Crozier et al. (2008), found this to be the case in a number of mature, working class learners.

George's pragmatism is akin to Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) 'theory of careership', and means that his expectations of the *field* are very different to some of his younger peers. Other than attending lectures on campus, George does not take part like other students because 'I'm different to most of them'.

George went on to explain:

I'm not interested in the 'University experience', the student experience, or in the social aspects of student life.

In fact George seemed to want to distance himself from many of his fellow students and therefore from the *field*; he tried to explain the reasons for this:

In fact today I found myself getting annoyed at some of the other students, you know . . . younger ones . . . people are walking in late, chatting in lectures you know . . . they just don't seem to care.

George admitted that he often experiences feelings of indifference and self-imposed exclusion from the majority of his cohort, but again he put this down to his age and the recurring theme of the influence of social class. George's instrumentalist narrative (Ball et al, 2005) appears to have much in common with other working class students who, in Crozier et al.'s (2008) study, valued access to new qualification routes above everything else. When I asked him to explain who he meant by "they didn't care as much as him", he made the distinction between himself and those students that he felt:

. . . have always had more advantages than I have . . . they just think it's okay to miss a lecture or arrive late and then make a disturbance, you know. This is my one chance and I'm not going to let anything get in the way of that. I'm not ready to partake much in the student experience, as far as you know socially. But, I just want to get a qualification.

George, like Barbara, seemed to be acutely aware of his own class background and referred to this throughout his story. His perception, however, is based primarily on restricted access to *economic capital* rather than the lack

of other cultural or social resources. Taking up the argument that Reay et al. (2005) have postulated, I put it to him that despite coming from a low-income family, his mother's occupation as a nurse meant that he was part of a developing 'novitiate middle class' (p. 15). In other words, a family in transition, moving from one class to another, as they seek to improve their position in the social *field* through access to professional occupations. Despite this his view remained unequivocal about his own class position:

I still describe myself probably as one of the lower tiers of social classes. Everything's a struggle, you know. Not only am I in fuel poverty, I even have to think about it when I put the gas on, the electric and fill the car, and all those kinds of things and it's often a struggle to do the shopping just to put some decent food on the table. I'm actually not able to get the food, let alone pay rent and bills, and things like that. So, economically, I would say life is a struggle really . . . I would say that sounds to me like I'm working class.

I asked if he felt his social class had restricted him in other ways, perhaps in his ambitions and achievements, George responded:

Yes sure I'm sure it does. I've always kind of felt a bit restricted. I always think I still do now, that having money gives you more opportunities. It opens more doors than if you don't have it.

Whilst George's participation in HE is motivated by wanting to become a Radiographer, for him this is only possible because the DH continues to pay his fees. 'It's the only way I could consider going to university without getting into even more debt.' This means however, that because the programme is not funded by HEFCE, other forms of financial student support, such as hardship funding, is not available to him. Reay et al. (2002) might describe this predicament as the result of the 'material exegesis' of many working class students; this serves to structure the *habitus*, which in turn inevitably leads to restricted choice. In other words, George interprets the options available to him

as limited and therefore constraining, based on his personal circumstances and economic resources. His ability to engage and participate fully with the course, and therefore the practical limits of his choice-making are always subject to the constant prospect of having to stop, simply because he cannot afford to continue. In George's story the limitations and consequences of his choice-making are clearly linked to the influence of social class on the *habitus*:

Yeah, I think not having enough money . . . it slams the door shut. I mean if you're at my age and you've got a family and children, and you've got to provide for them this is the only way I can afford to study. It's not even like I could go anywhere else either.

He is not alone in this respect and is typical of many mature working class students who tend to be concentrated in post-1992 universities (Crozier et al. 2008). In George's case, studying at CU makes becoming a Radiographer possible because it suits his personal circumstances, in allowing him to study and live at home.

Yeah. It's commutable. Yeah. I am 45 minutes I'd say by train, a bit of walking, it's no bother. To be honest I'm lucky that I have this choice on my doorstep because otherwise I couldn't move away.

George might be described as a 'local' chooser, with limited choice horizons (Pugsley, 1998). Not only does geography determine choice (Reay, 1998), but in George's case choice itself is determined by an 'internalized sense of the social world'. Evans (2009) argues that past experiences shape the *habitus* in such a way that the 'local' is still very much part of many working class students' behaviour and biographies (p. 346). In George's case, Reay et al. (2001) would argue that this 'working class localism' goes as far as restricting what is possible, hence studying at CU or nowhere. Even if the programme wasn't regarded as being very good, or wasn't quite what he wanted to do, George responded that:

Unfortunately it's this or nothing, it might just be important for me to get the qualification at the end of the day and accept the shortcomings.

In Bourdieusian (1997) terms, the material constraints of his education and training choices appear to be mediated by the *habitus* into a personal sense of 'what it is reasonable to expect' (p. 226).

Despite these constraints, George is 'adapting' to the *field*, he is coping with the academic and practical demands of the programme and is 'adapting' to university, but in a way that suits his personal social world. Other than the financial constraints, however, his choice-making comes with some further personal risks. His own sense of 'self' appears to be simultaneously divided between wanting to 'adapt' to the new *field*, and at the same time 'holding on' to what is familiar (Watson et al. 2009). Talking about the strain that starting the programme has put on his marriage, George told me that:

Although she [his wife-SW] can see the pay-off at the end, she probably resents me coming here as well because she thinks that going to university will change me . . . and the fact that I'm not really providing for her or the kids. I've not really noticed it myself but some have said, "you've changed and your personality has changed". I think university does that to you. I mean, my tutor on the access programme, one of the first things she told us was that you might find that your partner did not like the person you've become, for doing all this study so to speak.

In fact, the more that George has successfully 'adapted' toward the AHP education and training *field*, the further his distance (and incongruence) from his personal social *field* has become. Nevertheless, George is attempting to manage what for him is a difficult balancing act between his past life and his future prospects. Whilst educational choice has allowed him to construct a revised identity through a *habitus* in transition, he must reconcile the fact that

he is changing as a person in the construction of his own authentic self (Evans, 2009; Reay, 2001):

To me I'm still the same person that I have always been. I just think that I'm bringing someone . . . my personality out at last. Sorry but it's just been silent for years, you know and now I'm more obviously me the person on the inside.

So, whilst George is 'moving on' and 'adapting', because the *habitus* is now overcoming the class structures that have served to limit his aspirations and options, if not his ability, he is also counting the costs of his choice (Watson et al. 2009). As Reay et al. (2009) suggest, George finds himself moving between middle class experiences of HE, and a working class home life.

Unlike other mature working class students like Barbara, George is not struggling to 'adapt' academically, but in other ways there remains some sense of a feeling of incompatibility, or as Watson et al. (2009) put it, 'incongruence' with the *field*. Nevertheless, in 'getting on with it', as he puts it, George's *habitus* appears to have responded in such a way that he has personally opted for a very passive form of engagement, and perhaps the ability to 'adapt' could be made easier when there is a personal commitment to a more active form of engagement (Reay et al. 2005). Whether intentional or not, George's self-imposed sense of incongruence between himself and other students within the *field*, according to Watson et al. (2009), is a key factor in limiting the opportunity for the *habitus* to be exposed to greater *cultural* and *social capital* that HE can bring about. In a Bourdieusian sense George's choice-making, like that of Barbara, can be described as one of 'necessity' rather than 'freedom' (1984, p. 177 – 178).

10.1.3 Helen's story of choice-making: "I guess I'm breaking the mould"

Helen is a 19 year old SLT student, the third case study, who can be described, according to Watson et al. (2009), as an 'adapter'. Helen is making progress on her programme and ultimately, like other 'adapters', appears to be able to meet the demands of the programme even though there is some degree of incongruence between *habitus* and *field*.

Unusually amongst SLT students at CU, neither of her parents, or any other members of her family, have previously been to university. Although Helen's dad originally started out as a skilled tradesman, she acknowledges that his current role and his status may mean that this has changed:

Yeah, he's worked his way up from being a joiner and now he like supervises his men, he's in charge and he has the responsibility so I suppose it sets him apart, but we are still the same family.

Although Helen did not initially put a label on her own social class, she felt that her family background was the main reason why neither of her parents went to university:

I think from where my mum's from anyway . . . it's down to opportunity more than anything, going to University just didn't happen. She's like . . . right out in the sticks . . . really rural and it wasn't heard of, going to a university was for the rich kids. She went to like a village primary school and secondary school and that's as far as education went for people from the village. I think it's just their background . . . like no one they knew went to university. They just went to school and then went out and got jobs and worked their way up if they could.

In Helen's case there is no sense of Reay et al.'s (2005) familial *habitus* that is attuned to the opportunities that university might offer, therefore there was no choice to make. Not surprisingly, this shaped Helen's *habitus* and her initial decision not to want to study at university:

I was happy to do my A levels and my choices reflected what I enjoyed, languages mainly, we never really talked about me going to University at home and I never had any reason to feel I needed to go. I did what I enjoyed because I didn't want to come to university.

Helen explained that her parents, unlike those of some of her friends, did not try to force her to go to University:

I never had anything like forced onto me because I know what quite a lot of parents are like, if you don't get the grades! But no, they were really cool about it . . . just whatever I wanted to do . . .

Whilst Helen's story might appear to indicate the existence of the 'new' professional middle-classes (Reay et al. 2005), her family's educational trajectory does not yet appear to demonstrate a familial *habitus* orientated to the benefits of HE. This intra-class difference is highlighted in my study by the fact that Helen's parents, as if responding according to the vestiges of a previous working class background were happy to allow her to exercise her own agency and choice (p. 15).

Although Helen's parents were supportive of her, the main reason why she was the first 'I guess to break the mould', as she put it, and go to university was largely down to the influence of her experiences of school. Over time, Helen's exposure to what Reay et al. (2001) have described as an institutional *habitus* has changed her outlook and attitude to university, not to mention her own view of her class position (Reay, 1998). She told me that:

I know what it was . . . I think going to a grammar school changed me. It's where the rich kids go typically, and then always mingling with them that's where . . . that's how I changed my mind and came to university.

The grammar school's particular orientation to HE is what she feels set her apart from her family, 'school definitely seems to have rubbed off on me, I'm mixing with the rich kids so I started to think why not me.' In truth, for all the

participants, their educational trajectory, as Bourdieu argues, not only determines the chance of attending certain universities but, I would now suggest, the likelihood of studying some or all of the AHPs (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977a; 1977b).

Helen initially suggested that her choice to become an SLT was rather arbitrary, and was loosely based around her 'love of languages'. Listening to Helen's story, however, a much greater connection with the SLT *field*, more than serendipity, became apparent:

Yeah, like my brother he had Speech Language Therapy when he was a little dot and it worked wonders for him. Then, like my cousin who has cerebral palsy, she's also had a lot of contact with SLTs. Oh . . . my best friend's dad who was treated after a stroke, and he's also had a lot of contact with SLT. Now that I think about it . . . It's always been there in the background.

Again, past experiences appear to have influenced the *habitus* in a way that the decision to become an SLT feels right, almost effortless and definitely natural. Yet, despite achieving her expected A level grades, Helen's choice of where to study was restricted to a number of Universities that would accept her. Because of the way that *cultural capital* works in shaping the recruitment practices of the *field*, SLT can afford to be more selective than other AHPs programmes, to ensure the continuation of their position in elite (Russell Group) universities (Maton, 2005). Therefore, experiencing restricted student choice is for Helen part of a tacit acceptance of the structures and practices of the SLT *field* that act as a form of *symbolic violence* because this represents the 'natural order of things' (Bourdieu, 2006). Helen seeks to justify these restrictions, and therefore her choice of institution (Reay et al. 2009):

Although it wasn't my first choice, CU was definitely the right place to come to. The place feels right to me. I think I just fell straight into it as soon as I got here, I settled in really well and I think the girls that I am living with . . . well they're very much like me and that helped me to adjust quite a lot.

Helen recognises that she felt comfortable knowing that many of her fellow students come from similar educational and social backgrounds, and as she acknowledges 'for quite a few of us CU was not our first choice.' Helen's story appears to follow the 'people like us' principle (Bourdieu, 1986), in which gender and class have become important vectors of student choice in the SLT *field* (Boyd and Hewlett, 2001; Davies, 1990).

Unlike Barbara and George, Helen's story of choice-making contains a strong sense of wanting to study away from home, and this for her was an 'important part of the experience'. She went on to describe how:

Moving away from home to attend Uni was all part of my challenge to learn new skills and develop a sense of independence, I wanted to 'get the whole Uni experience'.

Helen is not only focusing on accruing *cultural capital* by completing a degree and gaining a professional qualification, in common with more middle class choosers she also understands the importance of developing her *social capital* for the future (Reay et al. 2005):

Like . . . moving away to Uni I have learnt so much about myself, and I have met so many new people . . . but I also wanted something a bit more . . . where I could boost my CV, and get involved in social activities whilst I'm here.

Compared to the experiences of her boyfriend, who is studying at a nearby Russell Group university, campus life at CU is clearly not what she expected:

I feel like it's a lot more for the older students . . . mature students, as there's not that much going on. I'm not saying that's a bad thing because we've got so much work like we need to do so we can't really

get involved. I hadn't realised how demanding the course would be, but I do now.

As well as social class, gender, the age related diversity of the students, there is likely to be an equally diverse set of student expectations and experiences amongst AHP students, and indeed in HEIs like CU.

Helen recognises, and accepts, that as part of her ability to 'adapt' to the new *field*, her expectations might not exactly match her experiences. When not attending University, all AHP students are engaged in extended periods of practical or clinical placement learning up to 37 hours per week, which extends beyond semester boundaries. The reality is that most AHP students may find that their opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities are severely restricted, and Helen has successfully accepted this particular practical consideration of the 'logic of the *field*'. Programme teaching teams may want to consider how the realities of these conditions of the *field* are made more overt and obvious to future students.

Helen has also been largely able to adapt to living away from home, and her new-found sense of independence. Helen however, has been surprised by how academically challenging her programme has been, for instance she has had to 'adapt' to the fact that things might be a struggle:

My assignment grades were nowhere near as good as I wanted, or was used to when I look my A levels. To be honest I'm not sure that they prepared me that well to train to be an SLT.

Despite being able to draw on the *cultural capital* from her A levels which remain the 'industry standard' to enter university, they may not be the most

effective way to initially prepare students for HE and indeed the AHPs (Leathwood and O'Connell, 2003).

Despite the inevitable setbacks, Helen is now enjoying her programme and is making progress. Helen's ability to adapt appears to suggest a *habitus* inscribed and embodied with an attitude toward developing *symbolic capital*. Helen's story represents a *habitus* open to change and to the affects of social class in transition, a *specialised habitus* responding to a particular set of circumstances (Nash, 1999). Helen describes how 'breaking the mould' means having to do things differently, considering university in the first instance, moving away from home, developing new academic and practical skills, and language, in order to improve her stock of *cultural capital* (James, 1995), which is vital to establish a greater congruence with the *field* (Watson et al. 2009).

10.2 'Fitting in' to the AHP education and training field

This second cluster of students includes two further case studies, which this time act as exemplars of students who are 'fitting in' to their new AHP *field*. Watson et al. (2009), suggest that in their study students in this cluster represent those who are positioned toward the 'natural fit' end of the horizontal axis in diagram 2 (p. 131). Despite coming from different social class backgrounds, and holding diverse pre-entry qualifications, with these students, although challenged intellectually, there is a sense that they will have the necessary resources to be able to cope with the demands of their programme. This is because they each have some existing stocks of relevant *capital*, therefore little adjustment is required for their established *habitus* to meet the

requirements of their new AHP education and training *field*. I begin with Adele's story, before going on to consider Bernadette's story.

10.2.1 Adele's story of choice-making: "Superwoman": getting there in the end

Adele is a 23 year-old Diagnostic Radiography student, who describes herself as working class and a single mum who was raised by her mother in an area she herself describes as:

'. . . very inner city and not for like rich people at all. Although our neighbourhood is nice, it can be a bit rough, lots of unemployment, gangsters and stuff and even people with guns.

I asked Adele the reason behind her choice and, echoing the potential Reay (2005) suggests, of the possibility of a discipline specific *habitus*, Adele, like George, describes herself as a self-confessed 'geek' who has a passion for science and physics. This however, is where any similarities with other working class case studies ends.

Adele had originally wanted to study medicine to become a Radiologist, and rather than being rejected by the school system as Barbara was, Adele was considered to be different, singled out for support and encouragement. As she explains, 'I was treated as a star pupil in what was a poorly performing school'. Unlike Helen's experience, where it would have been considered unusual for students not to attend University, Adele's school did not generally display the same institutional *habitus* toward orientating students to the benefits of HE (Reay, 1998; Reay et al. 2001). Adele told me that:

I could count on one hand the number of kids from my year who have gone to Uni, most just try to get a job, whereas I couldn't think of anything worse than just messing about on the streets.

She describes how she was always called a 'bright kid', who was encouraged to succeed, the antithesis of Barbara whose lack of self-confidence was perpetuated by a lack of encouragement and nurturing at school. Remarking that 'the teachers used to call me Dr Adele', she remembers being told:

"You've got such a bright future" and they would push me to work hard and to learn as much as I could . . . I was like a sponge at school. The teachers would spend lunch times with me sometimes just giving me extra hard work. Another teacher used to say to me that if you work hard "you can take on the world." To be honest most of my teachers were like that.

Adele then told me how things changed. She was doing well in her A levels and was predicted to achieve AAB grades, when a year into her A level course she discovered that she was pregnant. Adele describes what happened next during her baby's illness:

I kind of dropped . . . had to drop out when my daughter got sick and I umm . . . then I tried to get to college to finish my A levels, then she got sick again and then she had a stroke. I started to think at that point this is . . . getting to Uni . . . it's just never going to happen.

Up until this point Adele had expected to go to University and it was for her a natural next step. Attending University was in her own words, 'always a dream of mine'.

Despite her strong identification with a working class background, this 'taken for granted' attitude toward attending University is a far more typical representation of middle rather than working class attitudes and aspirations (Ball et al. 2002; Ball, 2003, Reay et al. 2005), especially in the absence of a strong school institutional *habitus*. In fact, Adele's story indicates the influence of a familial *habitus* influenced by a complex mix of traditional working class characteristics, alongside emerging middle class values and attitudes, again

typical of the Reay et al.'s (2005) account of the 'novitiate middle class' (p. 15).

Adele commented that:

Mum always made us work hard and not to waste what opportunities we had. Me and my sister were always encouraged to achieve what ever we wanted to, we sometimes even got competitive about who was the best at school.

Over time, these revised characteristics and values have become embedded in the *habitus* and in her sense of self (Evans, 2009). This is because, in families like Adele's, there is always a desire to improve upon *social* and *cultural capital* in order to replicate the distinctions of the more established middle-classes (Reay, 2001). Educational choice can be seen as a particular manifestation of this. Throughout Adele's story, social class is in transition and is observed to be intermediate and dynamic (Reay et al. 2005).

Adele's story also highlights the important role that her mother continues to play in enabling Adele to aspire to achieve her goals in life. This is not only typical of the important role that mothers often play in shaping the familial *habitus* (Reay: 1985b), but how the *habitus* in turn responds to the potential for greater educational choice in families where this is re-enforced, as subtle distinctions which establish a longer term trajectory (Reay, 1998; David et al. 1996). This steers the *habitus* to act in such a way as to improve the chances of what Bourdieu (1984) calls scholastic success. Ultimately these class fractions are what distinguish differences in *capital*, and therefore in the classes themselves.

The effects of this are already observable in Adele's family *habitus*. Adele told me that her mother had recently completed a degree in Social Work, and now

her sisters were also studying at university. Indeed Bernstein (1996) has argued that family participation in this way can be seen to have brought about the re-classification of traditional class boundaries, particularly through access to new occupations and professions (David et al. 2003). In this way HE participation becomes part of a normal biography (Du Bois-Reymond, 1998). In other words, for families like Adele's, HE becomes 'automatic and axiomatic' (Reay et al. 2005).

Even though her original 'ambition was to study medicine' at a red-brick university, Adele has been able to adjust her expectations, yet still retain her subject interest in order to 'fit' into a different *field* of educational choice, 'I knew that I always wanted to do something involved in physics and connected to medicine in terms of the health professions.' Furthermore, as a result of accompanying her daughter for treatment in the Radiology department, and then latterly seeking some work experience in a number of clinical departments, these experiences became instrumental in defining her choice of *field* (Reay et al. 2002). As Adele explains:

. . . I thought okay I will look into Radiography, it's still the combination of science and a job in health that I like.

Typical of students who are naturally 'fitting in', Adele has quickly developed an affinity for her chosen *field*, she feels 'proud' to be involved in 'a profession that I really do adore' and admitted to me that it 'really bugs me when people say . . . doctors, nurses . . . do they not realise who else works in hospitals.'

This is not to say that, as part of Adele's 'normal biography', she has not encountered significant obstacles and risks (Brown, 1997). Because of the

support and care that her daughter needs, she is limited to which University she can attend, in fact studying locally is her only option. Adele explained that she couldn't always rely on facilities like 'after school clubs' because her daughter has:

'lost a lot of her motor skills including her potty training so the staff don't always want to change her. So if she does soil herself I have to wait until I come to pick her up before she gets her nappy changed.'

Clearly Adele finds this situation distressing but will not let this get in her way of 'fitting in':

It's really hard. Umm . . . but I am trying everything in my power not to lie down and let it defeat me. I just want to make sure that I see my degree through. That way we will both benefit from a job that I love.

For Adele, the choice to become an AHP is made within the context of a significant personal commitment, and when I asked how she is able to cope, she describes herself mockingly as 'Yeah . . . well to become a Radiographer I have to be like Superwoman':

I'm really proud of what I can achieve and no matter what the challenges are I feel I manage . . . well because it's something that I always wanted to do. I feel such a buzz, a geek . . . I really, really enjoy how that feels and deep down I knew that I would.

Adele is the kind of student that finds the 'physics and maths elements of Radiography easy to cope with.' She even finds herself helping some of the other students to overcome their own difficulties. Like other students who are 'fitting in', Adele has quickly acclimatised to becoming a self-directed learner who has to structure and research her assignments independently; as she explained, 'I don't find it . . . I mean studying a problem, it all works for me, I love it'. A clear congruence between *field* and *habitus* leads Adele to comment:

I feel so at home when I am in the x-ray department . . . like it just feels normal, so natural to me. I do feel that I am like . . . I'm fitting into a

team and I don't feel like I am an outsider. To me being a Radiographer feels somewhat like I'm coming home.

In summary, Watson et al. (2009) describe students like Adele as displaying a *habitus* that transcends socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Superficially, Adele seems to have to negotiate many of the same problems that 'adapting' students face. She is, however, able to draw on *capital* resources accrued from the interplay of an emerging family *habitus* orientated to HE, and the dynamic nature of the social *field* that she now occupies. As Reay et al. (2009) observed, being academically orientated, 'bright' and 'geeky', social class becomes less important (p. 11). Overcoming obstacles, in a sense, is what sets Adele (and other students who are 'fitting in'), apart from others. She is both naturally confident and comfortable in the AHP and HE learning environment, to the extent that there seems little need for adjustment of her *habitus* to meet the structures and practices of her new AHP *field*.

10.2.2 Bernadette's story of choice-making: "This feels right to me, it doesn't feel like I'm waiting"

Bernadette is the second case study whose story suggests that, like Adele, she is also 'fitting in'. Of all the case studies, Bernadette most readily identifies with a middle class background. Originally, Bernadette lived in the south of England, but after completing her A levels she moved to the Midlands to study a four-year modern languages degree at a prestigious Russell Group University. She is also the only student in the sample who is now a part-time (SLT) student.

Bernadette's mother is a teacher who has attended university, and her father is a manager in an architectural business and has completed some post qualification courses at University. Although Bernadette fully expected to go to University, for most of her time as an under-graduate she was completely uncertain about her career trajectory. Like Helen, also a SLT student, Bernadette had chosen her degree for similar reasons; as she put it, 'because of my passion for languages'. Knowing that her experiences might not necessarily lead to specific employment and *economic capital*, in common with a number of other middle class choosers, she never felt that her degree was a waste of time, a clear example of the *habitus* investment in accruing further *symbolic (cultural and social) capital* (Reay et al. 2005). Toward the end of her programme, Bernadette describes her epiphany moment:

In my final year of my first degree, I really had to decide what I was going to do . . . then one time I just said speech therapy. I don't know where it came from really I just said it and here I am.

When I asked Bernadette to recall where the idea of becoming an SLT came from, she remembered meeting up with an old family friend who had also recently qualified as an SLT, and in fact benefitted from what Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) call those 'fortuitous contacts and experiences' that often feature as serendipitous acts of educational choice-making. Bernadette was fortunate to be able to rely on various sources to inform her choice-making. Ball and Vincent (1998) categorise these as 'cold' formal (or official) information sources, such as the prospectus, and 'hot' (informal) information gained from social connections or, in Bernadette's case, previous experience of HE. Exploiting access to different information sources, Bernadette was able

to draw on her growing stock of *social capital* to be able to meet and talk to other SLTs in the *field*.

Bernadette also displayed other features of middle class entitlement that are often missing from the working class students such as Barbara and George. She explained that 'I always expected that I would go to university' and in fact, unlike Adele who was restricted to where she could study, the decision for Bernadette was more about what to study and where to go, rather than whether she would participate at all. The expectation to go to University was second nature to Bernadette, what Ball et al., 2002) have described as a kind of unconscious 'non-decision' (p. 54), and although it can equally apply to working class self-exclusion, the same is true for middle class choosers such as Bernadette, as she explains:

I don't really remember but I think it just was an assumption. I went to a school where a lot of people did go to university and you would have been the odd one out if you didn't go onto Uni.

Clearly, Bernadette's school played an important role in establishing this taken for granted life-world of expectation and anticipation toward the benefits of HE participation. Bernadette recalled how:

The sixth form, to be totally honest, was kind of geared towards sending people to university. That's what it was there to do . . . to prepare you.

Here Bernadette describes the influence of an institutional *habitus* working to render the choice to go to university as one of expectation and necessity. The influence of trans-generational familial *habitus* is also present in Bernadette's story:

My parents . . . my mum went into university, my dad went later . . . But I think they kind of assumed I'd go as well. I think that I never made a conscious decision.

There is no sense of the need for any parental coercion, nor even any real discussion, rather a *habitus* responding to the embodied sense of the benefits of HE, described by Bourdieu (1990) as 'intentionality without intention' (p. 108).

Bernadette's story also featured other distinctions, unlike the class-related localism described in some of the other case studies. In Bernadette's case this is replaced by a high degree of fluidity of sense of place to a particular location that Reay et al. (2001) found is more likely to be the case in the biography of middle class educational choosers. This means that Bernadette had always assumed that she would move away from the family home. 'I chose the Uni that had the best course, but I also moved to a place I thought I would enjoy living in.' Even when she had completed her degree, she did not contemplate going back home to live (Savage et al. 1992).

Financial support from her family, at least in respect of studying for her first degree, meant that the cost of university and moving away was largely unproblematic. There is a sense, according to Du Bois-Reymond (1998), that this is part of Bernadette's 'normal biography'. In contrast with, say, George, financial uncertainty was never part of what Ball et al. (2002) might describe as Bernadette's 'calculus of choice', whereby the *habitus* inscribes thoughts, actions and patterns of behaviour that are 'linear, anticipated and predictable, unreflexive transitions, often gender and class specific, rooted in well-established life-worlds' (p. 57).

These same qualities however, also render the *habitus* open to change (Hatcher, 1998). Bernadette then told me how she had ended up studying at CU:

In my final year of my languages degree I took a part-time job in a neurological brain injury rehabilitation unit. I wanted to get some work experience. By that time I was thinking about becoming an SLT. To be honest by now . . . well I had kind of put down my own roots, I chose CU so that I could continue to work part-time and study.

In Bernadette's case she can readily adjust her priorities between new and existing social *fields*, in order to 'fit in' depending upon the conditions that construct them. I get the sense, however, that Bernadette is embarking on subtly different forms of decision-making and is now more likely to adopt what Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) describe as 'pragmatic' rather than 'systematic' choice-making strategies (p. 33). As she herself suggested:

Life is simply different now and this time around I think I would consider myself now less a student and more of an employee. I'm 'fitting in' to both worlds really.

When asked to elaborate and possibly consider why this has changed her priorities Bernadette explains that:

Well . . . because I've already been a student and like . . . I'm much less in the world of the student life now. I come in for lectures and that's it. I don't really see any of my fellow students outside of my course, one because I don't live here on campus, and two because I'm at work and doing other things.

Bernadette agreed with me that this sounds like a very practical compromise, as she explains:

Yes . . . well . . . this time around I need to think about how I can move between work, study and home.

According to Ball et al. (2002), students like Bernadette are happy to make a number of 'transition decisions' in order to move from one world to another with some ease (p. 56). Studying at University this time around for Bernadette

might narrow down her options and expectations, but revised choice-making is constructed from the milieu of her personal context. In the context of my research, this student from a middle class background who returns to university to gain a professional qualification adjusts her *habitus*, according to Crozier et al. (2008), towards a 'means to an end' approach more typically observed in working-class students (p. 175). In fact, Bernadette's story indicates a strategy whereby the context of choice is reflected in adjustments to her practical schema that have resulted in a situation that she finds is more than acceptable, and she told me that:

My life is actually exactly as it was apart from doing this study and it's not like I changed my life to do it. I am doing what I was before apart from I am just using my days off rather than just doing nothing . . . I'm using them to study. In terms of the fact that I wanted to qualify and keep my job then part-time study is the perfect route to do it.

Bernadette exemplified how some students in my study use their existing stocks of *cultural capital* from their family, school and University experiences, not to mention *social capital* from working with other SLTs with the *field*, to be able to span a number of social *fields*, each of which may have competing demands. Nevertheless, studying at University, learning and working in practice, is for Bernadette a largely un-problematic experience. She volunteered to me that, 'I love what I'm doing' and 'the way that I am managing to do it. It's got everything I love . . . it just works for me.' Although Bernadette's journey will take twice as long, for her to qualify through the part-time route, she has typically turned this to her own advantage:

I am understanding more and more of what's going around me at work in the speech therapy teams and so together with Uni this is building up my knowledge alongside rather than separately . . . It's kind of part of the same journey. This feels right to me so it doesn't feel to me like I am waiting.

In summary, Bernadette's story, when told through the lens of Bourdieu's theory of the *habitus* and Watson et al.'s (2009) conceptual *field*, suggests she is adept at using and constructing *capital* resources that act as a currency of exchange to improve her chances of success, accrued in previous scholastic success and in established school and family orientations. Bernadette clearly understands the 'rules of the game' of choice-making (Reay et al. 2009) and is clearly 'fitting in' (Watson et al. 2009). Maintaining this congruence between *habitus* and *field* allows her to adjust effortlessly, almost unconsciously, to the demands of choice-making in AHP education and training, but within her own changing and context-derived social universe.

10.3 'Resisting' the AHP education and training field

This third cluster of students includes two final case studies of AHP choice-making which are exemplars of students who are 'resisting' their new AHP *field*. Although Watson et al. (2009) identify a further category of students who were in the process of excluding themselves from their programme, none of the students in this study were found to be located in this cluster. Both case studies in the 'resisting' cluster represent those students who are positioned toward the 'incongruence' end of the horizontal axis in diagram 2 (p. 131).

Although both students appear to hold varying portfolios of relevant *capital*, there is a sense of dissonance between personal expectations and the educational practices of their chosen AHP *field*. According to Watson et al. (2009), the 'rules of the game are obscured and misunderstood' (p.765). Instead of 'fitting in', or even having a sense of 'getting on with it' in the

'adapting' cluster, the emphasis is on challenging and questioning the practices that the students see as irrelevant or unfair. I begin with Tim, before ending with Nina' story of her choice-making.

10.3.1 Tim's story of choice-making: 'fitting in' and at the same time 'resisting'

Tim is a 24 year-old ODP student who lives with his parents and commutes to University from a neighbouring city. Tim suggested that he always expected to attend University but, for various reasons, this did not happen. Instead, Tim drifted between various jobs before becoming aware of the ODP role. This resulted from the fact that his girlfriend at the time was a Physiotherapist, and 'she suggested to me that I should think about a job in the health service'. Tim got a support worker post in the operating theatre, which he describes as a 'common healthcare assistant's job.' Listening further to Tim's story, it became clear that his current 'resistance' was located in an underlying incongruence between an aspirational *habitus* caught within unrealistic expectations and the reality of his own situation.

Although tentatively describing himself as working class, Tim's story suggests more of a sense of aspiration and entitlement, perhaps more typical of the middle classes, or Reay et al.'s conception of the 'novitiate' middle class *habitus* (2005, p. 15). In fact, Tim's father is a director of a building firm, and he is the only case study of a student whose parent/s own their own company in my case studies. Tim told me that:

My parents always thought I would go to Uni and they were kind of pushing me to do it. They assumed I would go so they were always making sure all my homework was done and stuff like that.

Tim's parents also invested, not only in the merits of *cultural capital*, but also in financial resources to support Tim through university. In his words:

They even set aside money for me to come to Uni so I wouldn't have to worry about money and all that sort of stuff.

Things didn't go to plan, however, as he explains:

I woke up one morning and thought what's the point of doing my A levels, when what I really wanted to do was get a job. My parents weren't so keen but I couldn't see the point.

Up until this point, he agreed that he had always gone along with his parents' plans, to the point that he himself 'assumed' he would attend University. As Hart (2012) suggests, these are 'pseudo-aspirations' which whilst initially satisfying the desires of his parents, because of the structuring quality of the *habitus* Tim gradually begin to share in his parents aspiration for him to attend university (Bourdieu, 1984).

Tim's story also revealed that no one that he knew, with the exception of his girlfriend, was connected to the healthcare *field*. Tim, however, suggested in fact that he had always been interested in working in health, and later in the interview shared with me the fact that:

When I was younger I was in the St. John's for a few years but then that's when I was 10 or 11. But it's always . . . you know, the TV documentaries about . . . well . . . emergency care . . . I've always watched them, been entertained by them. I guess they fascinate me.

Tim went on to describe himself as an avid watcher of a number of TV medical dramas, which itself is interesting in the fact that ODP, his chosen education and training *field*, is rarely, if ever, featured in such programmes.

Whilst Tim has managed to get to University by completing a BTEC, his entry into the ODP *field* has not been an easy transition. Even before he applied for the programme, whilst he was working as an operating theatre support worker, Tim took time to settle into the operating theatre and the uniqueness of the 'rules of the game' that apply in a very specialised working environment:

To be honest it was completely different to what I expected I would say it was
. . . kind of you know difficult . . . I was kind of finding my feet. Then after that I started to see it as a way to progress.

Now that he is on the ODP programme, Tim shared with me how his experiences and expectations of the *field* are perhaps different from the realities of his choice. 'Now that I have got into it I don't think it's a difficult job' . . . 'I'm not sure it's what I expected.' Furthermore, Tim told me that when he qualifies he intends to work in a role that ODPs do not normally carry out, or even what he is training to do: 'The job that I'm wanting to start is a bit different to ODP really, it's actually in Accident and Emergency'.

The emergence of this dissonance with the ODP role that surfaces in Tim's story is also evident in the sense that alongside his studies he has chosen to undertake voluntary work in the ambulance service rather than to gain any experience of the operating theatre or the role of ODP. In fact, Tim feels that his future career opportunities have been enhanced, not necessarily by gaining *cultural capital* from his ODP qualification, but from this voluntary experience. Tim is therefore responding to his choice in a way that makes him stand out from the ODP *field*. Whilst he appears to want to 'fit in' to HE, he is simultaneously 'resisting' his actual programme choice, to the extent that he has begun to question the 'rules of the game'.

When I asked Tim directly if he felt he had made the right programme choice, his growing resistance was again not far from the surface. His observations of the teaching on the programme were mixed. He described some lectures as 'excellent', but at times he was less appreciative of the way that things were organised:

I mean, some of the subjects we should have done earlier on and then others we should have done later on, it was a bit mismatched. I think for the people who didn't have theatre experience like me it was quite confusing at some points. It's a good job that I know what I'm doing.

Tim also expressed an underlying incongruence with most of his fellow students:

At the beginning there were people who, you know . . . who stood out as being a bit eccentric, like they're not going to do very well. But I think now as the time progresses and these people drop out, you get to gel with other people who are more like me.

Tim seems to feel most comfortable with students who are similar to him in ability (Reay et al. 2001), and he is not ready to accept that other learners have a legitimate right to a slightly different experience than his (Bourdieu, 1986).

His growing 'incongruence' is not restricted to the classroom, and he was more than willing to tell me how he is always prepared to directly challenge the accepted practices of the *field*, or the prevailing *habitus* of the qualified practitioners who are responsible for assessing him in clinical practice. Nevertheless, he realises that this can be a risky strategy, because it alienates those who are meant to be teaching him. He told me that:

I can't help saying something when I think it's not right. They [ODP assessors-SW] don't like the fact that I challenge them.

He went on to tell me that, in his opinion:

A lot of the ODPs I've worked with unfortunately were the ones who thought they were hard done to and so they were always moaning and stuff like that.

Perhaps Tim's experiences highlight how the development of the ODP role and the system of education and training, in moving from a vocational to a university programme, has exposed a dissonance between the *field* itself and the established *habitus* of some of the practitioners, who may, themselves, be struggling with such a transition. When I asked if Tim could give an example, he suggested that:

You do get the people who did the programme you know, the old way, years ago. Then they say "no not like that" or, "it's a lot easier than it used to be". Some disagree, "no it's a lot harder now". Until you find out for yourself you don't really know yet who to believe, I shouldn't have to work it out . . . they should tell me. Yeah, sometimes . . . I think people have latched on to information that might not necessarily . . . be you know, accurate or up to date, how can you expect to be able to test students properly?

Tim is obviously very frustrated by what he sees as the lack of support he has received, and he is reluctant to understand that developing your own professional practice is part of the autonomy of HE learners. This is clearly an area where students may decide to leave the programme as a result of the perception of negative placement experiences or, as in Tim's case, conflict between expectation and reality.

What seems apparent is that, in this period of professional transition within the changing and dynamic *field* of ODP education and training, Bourdieu's (1996b) concept of the *avant garde* is apparent in programme innovation. Past experiences, however, continue to shape the responses of current

practitioners as they struggle for firstly, *recognition* of what is new, and then *consecration* (Grenfell and James, 2004) of revised practices and professional judgments that become established in a changing *field* (Ball et al. 2002). This incongruence is itself, like Tim's 'resistance' to the practices that legitimise entry into the *field*, contingent on the passage of time and the ideas that tend to stick around as 'semi-permanent positions' in the actions of the practitioners themselves. In Tim's case, his incongruence is not about whether or not he is able to progress, it is whether he feels his choice-making is worth continuing to 'resist' or accept that he must move closer to the practices, values, positions and structures of ODP, rather than any other AHP *field*.

Summarising Tim's story of choice-making involves locating a number of different experiences that betray an underlying incongruence between Tim's actual *field* position and his aspirational *habitus*. Superficially at least, Tim seems to enjoy the *capital* advantages that some other students lack. This means that, while Tim should have more of an affinity with 'fitting in', the reality is that he is 'resisting' the conditions of the *field*. The result is that his transition into, and position in, the *field* at the moment feels tenuous and semi-permanent (Watson et al., 2009).

Tim does not feel he can compromise his existing *habitus* even if that means 'adapting' to the demands of the *field*. While for the time being Tim continues with his educational choice, he does so because it is a 'means to an end' in order to move on to a new *field* as soon as possible; to do this he cannot allow himself to become immersed.

10.3.2 Nina's story of choice-making: "fighting" for what is right

Nina is the second of the case study students who, according to Watson et al. (2009), can be described as 'resisting' the *field*. She is in her mid-twenties and although she has already completed a law degree she is now studying to be a Therapeutic Radiographer. Nina's mother died when she was in her early teens; thereafter she was brought up by her father, with the help of her grandmother and uncle. This personal experience became an important feature of her choice-making:

Because of what happened to Mum . . . that's really why I'm doing the programme, actually. Because she actually had cancer that's sort of why I chose to be a Therapeutic Radiographer.

Initially Nina describes herself as coming from a 'sort of a working-class background'. She explained that her hesitation to define her class was because her work colleagues had perceptions of her that marked her out as different; even though she felt that her family were not rich, her friends said that she 'talked posh':

Really they just call me posh. I think they just like to wind me up to be honest. It's because my accent is different from theirs. So I'm forever . . . forever arguing that I am from a working class background.

Over a period of time, Nina has constructed her own personal biography in such a way that she appears to want to deflect the fact that she stands out as different to friends and colleagues (Du Bois-Reymond, 1998). Nina has chosen to adopt a particular classed position that may not be authentic (Evans, 2009).

She was keen to stress her working class credentials:

So we live in a two-bedroom semi . . . three-bedroom semi, sorry. And, yeah, Dad worked in factories and now he's a driver so I can't be posh really can I?

Yet as her story progressed, Nina started to reveal some uncertainty and class fluidity as she started to talk about her family upbringing and past educational experiences. She then confided in me that, 'to be honest I haven't defined myself yet as anything, so I'm sort of relying on my family background for that but I know it can be a bit more complicated than that.'

In fact the reality of Nina's social position means that her family had accrued enough *capital* resources for her to decide to study law away from home, which was clearly supported by a strong institutional school *habitus* toward students attending University (Reay et al. 2005):

I think I got pushed into Uni at Sixth Form. You'd have a career lesson every week. And they'd be, 'right, this is how you fill in a UCAS form, choose your universities', and you're sort of pushed into it really. You're not really given a choice . . . and if you said, you didn't want to go to university, you are sort of . . . not shunned, but they sort of just gave you less attention than those that were definitely going to Uni.

In fact Nina felt strongly that the school failed to really spell out any alternatives to going to university (Hart, 2012). She also indicated how strongly her family felt that going to university was important, although unlike some of the mothers in my case studies, Nina's father was not particularly 'hands on' in helping Nina to make her choice:

I think dad was very . . . he was more sort of wrapped up in providing for us. He didn't really get that involved with my schooling. He wasn't a pushy parent. He wasn't checking up on my homework or anything like that. I was sort of left to my own devices really . . .

As a single parent, Nina's father has focused much of his attention on working to provide economically for Nina, taking on a traditional gendered role of provider rather than nurturer (Crozier et al. 2008). He is typical of a number of fathers in other studies who have taken a more passive approach to their

children's educational trajectory, leaving Nina the opportunity to get on with her educational choice-making more or less autonomously (Dillaborough, 2004; Reay et al. 2005). Nina is the first in her family to go to university, and therefore all of her information came from Sixth form staff, and not from her family, who, despite supporting her aspirations, lacked the *cultural capital* to influence or help.

Although Nina told me that she enjoyed completing her law degree, she also revealed how, at an early stage, she began to feel 'disillusioned' by the course and, therefore, began to question her career choice. Eventually this led her to 'resist' the 'rules of the game' and the practices of law in the *field*. Because of this, Nina decided to take a year out to consider her options; she began to realise that, 'I wasn't sure at the time if my heart was in becoming a lawyer'. This proved to be an important and life-changing experience whereby she set about formally 'resisting' her first career choice (Watson et al. 2009):

I began to realise that I was more interested in working with people rather than work for big corporates . . . money-making if you like. That really wasn't a part of what I wanted to do.

Despite what University had taught her about the principles of law, Nina's practical experience practice highlighted a growing incongruence and incompatibility with the *field* and the qualities of her *habitus*:

The more I studied law and the more I learned about it, the more I realised how unjust it was . . . people weren't looked after and protected by the law in the way that it should be used.

At this point these acts of resistance culminated in Nina not only 'resisting', but in fact she 'excluded' herself from the *field*. Although she went on to pass her

law degree she made the decision not to continue with a legal career (Watson et al. 2009).

During her year out, Nina made a connection with her own personal experiences and felt that her abilities matched those that she had witnessed whilst her mother was undergoing treatment for her cancer. As she suggests:

I wasn't too focused on the details of the role but from my own experience I just felt that I could identify with the patients and with the patients' families, you know, rather than just seeing them as another number.

Even though Nina was successful in gaining a place on the Therapeutic Radiography programme, she feels surprised that things have not always gone to plan. Nina told me that, even before she started the programme, she was advised by the University to gain some practical experience by visiting a clinical Therapeutic Radiography department. To her surprise the hospital that she approached was reluctant to allow anyone in to visit. Consequently Nina found this very frustrating and therefore was denied the kind of informal and practical information necessary to appreciate the demands of the role (Ball and Vincent, 1998). She went on to explain that:

I was trying to fight to get that, to get what I needed . . . to get a place for what I felt was right in order to prepare for the role.

From the outset Nina feels this was a real disadvantage:

I didn't really get a feel for what was going on, not really, not until I went out on my first placement and that was after I had started.

This may well help to explain why Therapeutic Radiography programmes have high levels of attrition. Firstly, from the exploration of *capital* that exists in the *field*, the profession does not have a high public profile. Therefore, few people are aware of the career potential in the first place. Secondly, if potential

students are unable to find out what the job really entails in advance of joining their AHP programme, they are far more likely to arrive at the view that the programme is not for them, and this can lead to 'resistance' and 'exclusion'.

Nina's experiences of entry to the *field* via clinical placement have not been positive, particularly at the start of her programme when, critically, Nina was still seeking to affirm in her own consciousness that she had made the right education and training choice:

To be perfectly honest, I felt a bit of negativity surrounding the whole first two weeks of placement because I was given my fifth choice of where to go on placement site . . . which by the way is my last choice.

Nina had wanted to gain her clinical experience in hospital much nearer to where she lives: 'I just can't understand why I have been given a placement so far away.' Nina told me how frustrated this has made her feel, and that this has manifested through her *habitus* as a growing sense of frustration. She even sees it as, 'a personal struggle for what is right':

I'd tried to fight for it . . . my choice of placement. I just couldn't get at anybody to listen. I didn't have any children so I couldn't . . . I didn't have a leg to stand on compared to people who do. So, yeah, I got sent without any real choice.

Here the programme team, acting out of a Bourdieusian (1990) 'logic of necessity' in facilitating students who have a family the option to study at a clinical placement site close to their homes, may feel that this makes common sense. For Nina, however, it stands as a form of *symbolic violence*. This is a decision imposed upon her; unlike Helen, Nina is unable, or unwilling, to accept these restrictions as part of her schema.

In Nina's story the constraints of geography, or the distance and time it takes to travel from her home to clinical placement, serve to limit the horizons of her

choice and experiences of the programme (Reay, 1998). Nina also works part-time and the extra strains and demands of attending placement in the daytime, and working in the evening, are clearly having a negative effect upon her ability to 'adapt' to the *field*:

I'm absolutely shattered, you know, driving miles . . . it can take over an hour. I'm not used to commuting like that. I get back about 6:30 pm and then I go straight to work in the evenings. I go to bed, get up, and do it again the next day.

Nina's *habitus* is not ready to see this as anything other than injustice. Nina talks about how 'she got a sense' that she was not listened to by her programme tutors. Furthermore, structuring of the *habitus* from past negative experience of HE seems to be re-surfacing. Once again, Nina is now starting to question the value of the programme and the validity of her choice-making, and is concerned with the sacrifices that she feels she has had to put up with just to get to this stage:

Obviously, if there aren't any jobs in Radiotherapy at the end of it, there isn't another field that I could go into with this particular degree. Sometimes I wonder if it's all worth it . . . whether it was the right decision . . . it's putting me off being a Radiotherapist.

Nina also wanted to tell me about other emotionally charged experiences that have left her wondering what she has to do to get on with others in the *field*.

She does not like the way that some Therapeutic Radiographers speak to her:

. . . there are certain members of staff at my placement . . . Some can be more difficult than others. They sort of make you not want to go in some days, just stay at home. You just get one or two with every hospital I think . . . don't you. They go out of their way just to make you feel absolutely tiny. It's infuriating that a senior member of staff with that much authority can be so obstructive . . . I just don't understand why she's in that role. I want to become part of their profession, I'm here to learn, so why treat me like that.

When I asked if Nina had she taken any steps to resolve these feelings, or report her experiences to her personal tutor, she said she would rather avoid raising the matter. She explained to me that, because 'they already know who these people are. Anyway I imagine in the long run it would make my life ten times more difficult for me.' Nina felt that if she complained about the lack of support she might possibly be failed, or that particular hospital might not want to employ her.

Where this situation is the case this cannot go unchallenged. Students should be encouraged and empowered to report unequal relationships of power from agents in the *field*. Furthermore, academic staff need to feel able to advocate for the student, rather than act out of a misplaced sense of responsibility to act as gatekeepers to the profession, by 'sifting out' those that don't quite 'fit in' (Yearley, 1999, Jones, 2005). Moreover, comparative research from the *field* of nursing in particular, demonstrates that poor standards of clinical mentorship can lead to profound and lasting reasons why some students choose to 'exclude' themselves from the profession after they have qualified (Andrews and Wallace, 1999; Lloyd Jones et al. 2001; Nettleton and Bray, 2008; Andrews et al. 2010).

To summarise, In Nina's case her personal motivations for her choice-making may well have taken precedence over appreciating the practicalities of what was required. According to Watson et al. (2009), Nina's pre and post entry experiences of clinical placement, and the structures and logic of the

programme, apart from being a 'strange new world' that she was not really prepared for, have also proven to be a hostile world (p. 665).

Nina has been in this position before and, rather than benefit from this experience, the same feelings of disillusionment and injustice are beginning to repeat themselves. Once again, in 'resisting' there comes a point where the 'rules of the game' will become intolerable for Nina to accept (Bourdieu, 1990). Like Tim, there is nothing to suggest that Nina is not capable of achieving, the effects of her class position is negligible, it is just that she finds that she is always struggling to reconcile her experiences with her expectations, that is her *habitus* with the *field* itself. Whilst at present her *habitus* does not allow her to give up without a 'fight', ironically for Nina, this struggle for 'what is right' is also part of the reason why she finds that she is 'resisting', and being 'resisted' by, the *field*.

10.4. Summarising the findings of my research in relation to the micro-level of analysis

I will provide a summary of the third of my research questions, which is intended to investigate, '*How is student choice shaped by the habitus and what is the influence of social class?*'. This represents a micro-level of analysis of the *habitus* itself, its relationship with social class, and how this influences choice-making in education and training in the AHPs. In this section of the study, I have taken the conceptual framework adopted by Watson et al. (2009) to complement Bourdieu's theoretical gaze in order to understand how educational choice in the AHPs is individually experienced. To do this, students told me their stories which when presented as 7 vignettes, illustrate

case study examples of individual choice-making at CU. I begin by summarising the reasons why the qualities of the *habitus* suggest that some students in this study are located in the 'adapting' cluster of their AHP education and training *field*, likewise I do the same for those who are aligned to the 'fitting in' cluster, before ending with a similar summary of those students who are located in the 'resisting' cluster.

10.4.1 The *habitus* and 'adapting' to the AHP education and training field

This cluster of experience contains the largest number of case studies. With reference to Watson et al. (2009), Barbara, George and Helen are all experiencing a degree of incongruence between the established *habitus* and *field*. However, at this stage each of these case studies indicates a *habitus* that is not yet fixed, but is still malleable and open to 'adapting' to the conditions of the new *field* (Grenfell and James, 2004). My findings indicate that 'adapting' students transcend class boundaries, as well as defy traditional notions of being a University student. Barbara and George are both mature students, who identify strongly with their working class backgrounds. In both their stories, class features as a reason for their own initial self-exclusion from HE. In Barbara's case, in particular, her social origins have had a profound and lasting affect on her educational trajectory, and on her subsequent career aspirations and ambitions. This has affected both her material chances of attending University, as well as the confidence in her own abilities to succeed. The marginalisation Barbara previously encountered was based on the fact that she was deemed to have little potential (see Hart, 2012).

Helen initially thought of herself as working class, but her story provided some evidence for Reay et al.'s (2005) idea of class in transition, made possible through parental access to new middle class occupations. In Helen's case, however, I did not find evidence to support their view that this necessarily meant that the *habitus* was responding in a way that suggests that all 'novitiate' middle class families view HE attendance as a way to improve family *capital* and, therefore, their position in the social *field*.

The conditions and structures of the *field* are such that students continue to be able to access programmes with a variety of entry qualifications. Both Barbara and George find themselves at CU because of the way that *capital* is exchanged in their particular chosen AHP education and training *fields*; in other words, the 'conditions of the *field*' continue to rely on Widening Participation initiatives as a key feature of recruitment practices at CU. Both students are experiencing this 'second chance' because in many ways it was the only choice open to them in what Bourdieu (1984) describes as the 'choice of the necessary' (p. 372). Helen, by contrast, is mainly participating in HE because of the influence of her school and the way that educational experiences structure the *habitus* through constant exposure to new experiences and opportunities.

My findings also reveal that participants in this cluster often felt like they did not always understand what was expected of them, or appreciate, at the start of the programme, the extent of the demands that are placed upon them. In Barbara's case my research supports the view that entry to the *field* via non-

traditional qualifications suggests that she may have to 'catch-up' in comparison with other students who have already had experience of academic writing, referencing and independent study (Crozier et al. 2008). It is interesting, however, that, as an A level student, Helen was surprised by how little her A levels had prepared her for the academic requirements of becoming an SLT. Despite plotting a more traditional A level trajectory, even Helen was forced to adapt her expectations, and accept that because of the highly competitive nature of the SLT *field* her opportunities to exercise educational choice were limited to CU.

All three of the case studies in this cluster suggested some form of previous connection with their chosen AHP, and this was a significant factor in their choice-making. Nevertheless, this proved to be a much more nuanced than can be explained through just the existence of a familial *habitus* or *social capital*. Barbara was influenced by an occupational exposure to the role of the ODP as a support worker, George through his 'geeky' attraction to the subject of Diagnostic Radiography, and Helen through personal experience of the positive therapeutic benefits of SLT.

I found no evidence of the idea of a homogenous student experience. Helen was interested in benefitting from the academic, practical and social benefits of HE. These requirements were subsequently revised in the way that the *habitus* responded to 'the logic of necessity', that demands 100% academic attendance and extended periods of clinical placements. In AHP education at CU, the possibilities for students to work to support themselves through their

studies are limited. Furthermore, my findings suggest that among the AHPs at CU, the ability of students to enjoy the benefits of the social dimension of HE is so restricted as to render it almost impossible, yet for these students the *habitus* responds in such a way that these restrictions that define the student experience are readily acceptable.

Barbara and George have been largely able to 'adapt' because the *habitus* has responded in a pragmatic way by narrowing their goals and limiting their opportunities to a single focus of achieving their qualification (Ball, Maguire and Macrae, 2000). My research suggests that for mature students like Barbara and George, who have family commitments, attending University is largely unimportant. Finally, George's story, in particular, suggests that 'adapting' to the *field* can be risky and uncertain (Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2009). George is struggling to manage the financial pressures of studying to be an AHP that makes his choice-making feel rather contingent. He is also coming to terms with his own authenticity; in George's case the *habitus* is responding to George's choice-making in such a way that his experiences are changing him as a person (Evans, 2009; Reay, 2001). Barbara, on the other hand, feels she must remain true to her working class credentials and to her role as a wife and mother (Crozier et al. 2008).

10.4.2 The *habitus* and 'fitting in' to the AHP education and training field

In this cluster of students, both Adele and Bernadette represent individual case studies of students who are 'fitting in' to their new AHP education and training *field*. Both students come from very different social class and cultural

backgrounds, and both entered the *field* with differing pre-entry qualifications. Nevertheless, my findings suggest that, despite such class differences, both case studies represent a synergy between their expectations and experiences of their programme.

Adele and Bernadette appear to be able to comfortably meet the academic demands placed on them, both relish the intellectual and practical challenge, and as such attending University and indeed their transition from one *field* to another, are largely unproblematic (Ball et al. 2002). Adele and Bernadette can rely on the *habitus* to learn the 'rules of the game', and they have quickly developed a set of professional dispositions in the form of a specific vocational *habitus* (David et al. 2003). Adele and Bernadette are skilled at managing their time effectively and meet the assessment deadlines first time, every time (Watson et al. 2009). Inevitably, though, some problems do need to be negotiated. Adele's particular social universe is complex and challenging and despite the fact that, for the most part, she is 'fitting in', the consequences involved in studying in the AHPs are, for her, always a little more precarious. Indeed, as a single mother to a pre-school child, her choice in terms of where to study is always going to be restricted, as are her opportunities to experience the social benefits of HE.

My research findings add to a growing appreciation of the way that the *specialized habitus* is understood to lead to highly dynamic responses, embedded in inter and intra class differences and similarities that are transformed in the *field* (Nash, 1999). Despite different social class

backgrounds, both students always anticipated that going to university would be largely realised (Reay et al. 2005). In Bernadette's case this was part of an un-reflexive middle class response to the presence of a familial, as well as institutional, *habitus*, so much so that 'fitting in' is part of Bernadette's 'normal biography' (Ball et al. 2002). Bernadette uses her previous experience of HE from her law degree as *cultural capital*, as well as her *social capital* gained from professional SLT networks, more than any other student in my study. This advantage enables the *habitus* to adjust almost unconsciously to allow Bernadette to anticipate and prepare for the realities and challenges of studying for her qualification, attending clinical placement, as well as maintaining a job in which she feels she is flourishing.

This same sense of orientation and expectation is also true for Adele, despite coming from a different social background. Adele thought of herself as a working class 'kid' living in a working class neighbourhood, and did not necessarily benefit from the same *economic* and *symbolic capital* resources as Bernadette. Individual teachers, rather than a collective institutional *habitus*, encouraged Adele's sense of entitlement toward University. In this instance my findings do accord with those of Reay et al. (2005), and their concept of the 'novitiate' middle classes. In Adele's case, her mother is working hard to increase their *cultural* and *social capital* via her own access to new and intermediate professions (in this case Social Work), while Adele's aspirational *habitus* responds by adopting middle class educational values and distinctions that originally orientated her as far as considering a career in medicine.

My findings also suggest that both Adele and Bernadette, depending upon the current conditions of the various *fields* that they inhabit, benefit from a *habitus* that is capable of successfully adjusting what, where, or how they should study. Their stories indicate that the *habitus* responds pragmatically, more typical of working class students in my study, to the 'here and now', as well as to historical and structural influences, even when their choice is restricted. The resulting compromise still feels, to the students, to be 'natural' and the right thing to do (Watson et al. 2009).

For Adele, 'fitting in' requires a change of profession and type of institution, from Radiologist to Therapeutic Radiographer to accommodate her personal circumstances. Whilst studying law away from home, Bernadette described how she wanted to experience the freedom and independence to be gained from moving away to University, which was often not possible for a number of students in this study. Whereas, in their study, Reay et al. (2009) describe the effect of class 'localism', I found a wider sense of generalised 'localism' at play, in that students from both working and middle class backgrounds were choosing to study nearer to where they lived. In Bernadette's case, the *habitus* is not only shaped by past experiences and structures, but is also subject to a revised sense of personal agency. For Bernadette, 'fitting in' means simultaneously working and studying, whilst maintaining the benefits that she has gained from putting her own roots down, and the sense of belonging that she gets from this. This is made possible by the fact that the SLT programme at CU, unlike most other Universities, can be studied part-time. Although Bernadette's personal life-world now actually restricts her choice-making

abilities, her *habitus*, acting as a practical schema, turns this option to study part-time into an advantage.

10.4.3 The *habitus* and 'resisting' and 'exclusion' in the AHP education and training field

In this cluster of students, both Tim and Nina represent individual case studies of students who are in the process of 'resisting' their new AHP education and training *field*. Although I did not find any evidence of students who were formally being 'excluded', both of these case studies demonstrate characteristics of a *habitus* unable or unwilling to accept either the 'logic' or the practices of the *field*. Whilst, at the moment, both are not ready to give up on their choices, it is only a matter of time before either one of them excludes themselves, or finds themselves permanently excluded.

In this cluster, both students came from families whose social class was in the process of transformation brought about by access to new occupational opportunities, or it was expressed in a way that was open to ambiguity and personal interpretation. More than in any of the other case studies, the influence of class on Tim or Nina appears rather indistinct.

Superficially at least, Tim's story suggests that he holds a varying portfolio of *capital*, which has resulted in an inclination to HE, but his *habitus* is not able to 'adapt' to the *field* because he has little experience or support which he can draw upon. His rather weak affinity, and unremarkable journey to HE, was punctuated by his failure to want to complete his A levels. From this point on, his journey and transition to University is neither regular nor usual. Tim's acts

of 'resistance' seem to stem from the fact that he has to contend with the rules, values and practices of the ODP *field*, when the reality is that he would rather be in another *field*. According to Colley et al. (2003) this is not a case of the *habitus* that is 'right for the job' (p. 488). As a result, there is not only dissonance, but also a schism between his *habitus*, which is unwilling to adapt, and his loosely defined aspirations and expectations. Tim did not seem convinced about his own choice-making, and his motivations for becoming an ODP, and indeed participating in HE, are expressed as rather loose and nebulous concepts (Ball et al. 2002).

Tim not only finds himself 'resisting' in the classroom, his dissonance also extends to his student peers. Tim is now openly questioning his clinical assessors, and the way that the ODP qualification itself has changed. His 'resistance' is a personal response to his past and future context and it may also expose a wider dissonance between Bourdieu's (1996b) notion of *avant garde* practices of the *field* and the collective *habitus* of the agents in the *field*.

Nina's resistance could appear as an ordered and predictable response of the *habitus* to educational choice-making, which lacks a subtle appreciation of the rules, values and practices of the *field*. What might have initially started with class-based dissonance between the practice of law and her expectations of her role in the *field* appears to have repeated itself in her choice to become a Therapeutic Radiographer. Although, this time around, the effects of social class seem less apparent, Nina's current acts of 'resistance' are also to do with the orientation of her own 'moral compass' within the *field*. Nina is 'fighting' for

her own equality and fairness because she believes this to be justified. These discriminations, she believes, are embedded into the recruitment practices themselves, which favour those who already benefit from some experience of working in a Radiology department or have family responsibilities.

Like other students who have been found to be 'resisting' in other studies, Nina is in conflict with the way that the allocation of clinical placement procedures is enacted, which has left her feeling powerless and disenfranchised. Finally, Nina's perceived treatment by some clinical staff leaves her on the brink not only of 'resisting', but 'excluding' herself because of an irreconcilable difference with the dominant culture. Through Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977a) principle of *pedagogic action*, Nina's tutors at University, whilst appreciating the difficulties that she has experienced, *misrecognise* what is happening to Nina as logical and legitimate conditions of the *field* (Grenfell and James, 1998).

At this point in my study, having summarised my findings in relation to the micro-level analysis of the *habitus*, it is important to consider my research in the context of the overall aims, which are to produce a co-constructed account of choice-making in AHP education and training. I then review how my study has addressed both the macro and meso-levels of analysis.

10.5. Summary of the aims of the research as a whole

The aim of my research was to engage in a critical exploration of student choice-making in AHP education and training, in order to take account of both structures and practices that appear to be mediated through the prism of social class. The site for this study was the institution where I work, and my aim was to study choice-making, specifically in relation to AHP education and training. From the beginning I took the approach that educational choice-making occurs at different levels, which have different contexts and meanings. To construct what Diane Reay has called a 'sociology of choice' (2005), my study took account of Pierre Bourdieu's specific methodological approach to research inter-connected and situational phenomena associated with student choice.

10.5.1 Findings in relation to the macro-level of analysis

This first stage of my research was intended to investigate the wider macro-level of contemporary policy context. This specifically related to how revised discourse of student choice was constructed in a meta-space, in and between different social *fields*, in what Bourdieu describes as the *field of power*. My analysis supports Bourdieu's thinking that ultimately all social *fields* are subordinate to the primary economic *field*. In my study I found that the *field of power* acts as medium in which political ideas and ideologies construct public perceptions of student choice, which may appear to democratise HE participation but, in fact, support greater efforts to market and commodify the practices of HE.

I have found that the way that student choice is now being constructed promotes demand-led imperatives and recruitment practices above greater forms of inclusion. In this way choice, specifically student choice in HE, acts as a medium for greater stratification (Giddens, 1995). My findings also indicate that the concept of affording students greater choice represents an unchallenged and therefore *doxic* view, insofar as the de-centralisation of Government control of funding and scale of participation is now, arbitrarily at least, considered to be economically and socially more egalitarian even when this is not the case.

10.5.2 Findings in relation to the meso-level of analysis

This second stage of my research is intended to enable a meso-level of analysis of the specific *field* of choice-making in AHP education and training at CU. My approach utilises Bourdieu's particular concept of *capital*. To enable this exploration, I identified a range of documentary and data sources, or 'indices of choice', that objectively define the way that *capital* structures student recruitment, retention and achievement, and therefore the relative position of each programme in the *field*.

These positions rely on the complex inter-play of both social and cultural capital. The former distinguishes how each of the AHPs is understood and valued by the public. Retaining and accruing social capital is therefore important in the way that the public finds out about a career in the AHPs, and some AHPs at CU are more successful than others in attracting more applicants, and therefore can be more selective than other AHP programmes.

Cultural capital has a bearing on the degree of competition, student selection and the value of the qualification has a whole. Social and cultural capital between them define what programmes are desirable and therefore popular. Overall, my findings indicate that choosing to study in the AHPs is a reflection of this hierarchy, and in turn of the position and status of each student in the social field. I found that, through the process of status exchange, all of the programmes, to some extent, were able to trade on the value of the qualification that results from the cultural capital to be gained from their experiences (Marginson, 2011). The greater the value of the indices of capital, the greater the popularity and selectivity of the courses Using the language of the market, as a commodity, the SLT programme, in particular, is highly valued, and is reflected in the status that the programme holds in the field. In turn this status is reflected back in the form of cultural capital and, thus, position and hierarchy are maintained.

Cultural capital also appears to influence a successful student transition to HE, to their programme and the field. I found evidence, as Bourdieu puts it, that 'capital begets capital.' This is such that, for some AHP programmes, educational choice is structured on the principle that students who are more likely to gain a place will already have stocks of capital from previous educational success. I found that choosing to become an SLT was more likely to mean that these students had completed A levels (and indeed were more likely to hold a degree). They were, therefore, already in possession of cultural capital that meant they were more likely to be able to meet the high UCAS entry tariff demanded of students choosing this particular field.

I found that these existing capital resources were also important, to enable students to make satisfactory progress. In general, programmes that demand higher UCAS tariffs mean that students on these programmes tend to progress in greater numbers, and are more likely to achieve either a 1st or 2nd class honours degree. Furthermore, not only can any of the AHP qualifications lead to graduate level employment and pay, each programme appears to preserve its relative hierarchy and status within the field as a whole. This is because cultural capital, in the form of an AHP qualification, is readily converted into economic capital.

What remains in Chapter 11 is to conclude my study, offer some personal thoughts and reflections on the study as a whole, as well as summarise my findings and suggest where further research is necessary. I also offer some thoughts on the limitations of my study and reflect upon what I have learned about the subject and myself, as a result of carrying out this research.

Chapter 11. Concluding the study: my thoughts and reflections

In this concluding Chapter, I intend to summarise the study in relation to the research aim and questions. I then propose to locate my study in relation to the uniquely contribution my research makes to a greater understanding of student choice within the academy and to knowledge of the HE sector, and AHP education and training in particular. I will then go on to make a number of recommendations for policy and practice, both nationally and in relation to CU. After discussing the limitations of both the methodology and the study overall, I conclude with my own personal reflections by considering how my research has influenced my thinking and changed my own practice.

11.1 Summarising the study in relation to the research aim and questions

I came to define the aim of my study through an interest in the concept of student choice, that is, individual students exercising agency over their educational futures. This however is contested, not least because, as Clarke et al. (2006) point out, when exercising choice there is often a disconnection between the theory and the reality of practice.

In theory, student choice is considered to be part of a 'rational' and calculated series of, more often than not, linear decisions, whereby the failure to exercise choice results from a 'deficit' of ability or aspiration (Goldthorpe, 1998). On the other hand, the reality of HE choice-making is often described as complex. But what exactly does this mean? Reay et al. (2005) suggest that HE choice-making takes place within a nexus of structures and practices that have their

origins in social, cultural and political domains. Other authors are consistent in their view that social class, above any other factor, restricts HE choice because of the role it plays in non-participation (Allen, 1998; Archer, 2003a, Archer et al. 2002; Ball et al. 2002; Crozier et al. 2008; Reay et al. 2001).

Problematising this reflexively, I wanted to consider these factors from the perspective of education and training in the Allied Health Professions, given that my own personal experiences suggested that choice-making was anything but straightforward and planned. Therefore, the aim of my research was to engage in a critical exploration of student choice-making in AHP education and training that is capable of accounting for a range of structures and practices, which appear to be mediated through the prism of social class. In order to carry out my investigation, three specific, yet inter-related, research questions were developed, based on the application of Pierre Bourdieu's methodological template and conceptual tools.

11.1.1 Research question 1: How is the 'new' discourse of student choice constructed in and between social fields?

My first research question is intended to explore the concept of student choice from a macro-level policy perspective. To do this I applied the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to the White Paper, *Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011). Examining the policy discourse demonstrates that economically motivated political ideas penetrate all forms of HE, including the AHP education and training *field*. My findings identify discursive features, which are used to steer a revised political direction that appears as absolute and necessary for a particular time and place

(Middleton, 2000). My research also demonstrates that there are 'textually mediated' ideas that endure beyond a particular place and time (Smith, 1990). This is evident in the way that largely economic priorities, such as consumer choice, are now extended to HE (Clarke et al. 2006).

My investigation indicates that student choice is a highly charged political idea that has its foundations in neo-liberal political movements. Indeed, this analysis shows that student choice is synonymous with student demand, which in turn is assumed to drive educational efficiency and quality of provision. I found that student choice, in political terms, is not necessarily concerned with increasing HE participation, diversity or democratisation. It is, however, concerned with developing provider competition, as well as competition for high-demand places.

My findings expose embedded ideologically linked hegemonic discourses that may well mask the continued social injustice of unequal HE participation for some social groups. In this way student choice is subject to political and economic exploitation through what Bourdieu (1977a) describes as the 'misrecognition of arbitrariness' (p. 168). This legitimates the assumption that demand-led student choice naturally appears to make common sense because it is represented as economically sound and fair.

The risks associated with pursuing this form of student choice are that it does not necessarily accord with attempts to address unequal and uneven patterns of participation; it amplifies existing sector stratification; and it potentially

restricts choice to a number of popular disciplines and banishes others to the vagaries of the market. In contemporary HE debates, student choice is little more than a vector for the colonisation of politically driven economic ideas that dominate not only policy, but also the fundamental principles and practices of HE.

11.1.2 Research Question 2: How are forms of social and cultural capital distributed in AHP programmes at CU, and how does this structure student choice?

My second research question is intended to explore the concept of student choice from a meso-level perspective, building on Bourdieu's tenet that *capital* defines the objective structures of a social *field*. From this I was able to identify 'indices of choice' which demonstrate how the effect of *capital* structures activities such as selection, retention and achievement as a basis for understanding how student choice is constructed in the AHP *field* itself.

My findings demonstrate the complex interplay and exchange of *social* and *cultural capital* in AHP education and training. *Social capital* plays a key part in raising awareness of the AHPs, as it defines the public profile of each AHP. Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) maintains a position of prestige through long-term access to sophisticated and established forms of *social capital* that the other professions in the study have been unable to reproduce. In contrast, ODP is engaged in re-building access to social networks and resources which, when lost, appear to be difficult to reproduce. I also found that my research demonstrates that, although the two modalities of Radiography and Therapeutic Radiography represent different professional roles, they continue

to benefit from mutuality of *social capital*, and therefore the *illusio* of proximity in the same social space. A complete break between the disciplines would suggest that the symbolic benefits of mutuality would be lost.

I find that *social capital* is important for two further reasons. Firstly, as a result of its availability, or lack of it, ODP and Therapeutic Radiography have little public visibility. This results in poor role perception and arbitrarily limits choice and access to a restricted few. Secondly, a high proportion of students are drawn to a particular AHP as a result of existing social connections with family members and friends, which again has the potential to exclude many potentially competent practitioners from across the social spectrum, simply because they are not aware from family and friends of the possibilities of a career in the AHPs.

My findings indicate that cultural capital helps to explain the highly stratified nature of HE, and indeed AHP education and training at CU. This is because the distribution and effects of cultural capital are not always even in the advantages and differences they generate, thereby opening up the possibility for discriminatory practices and unequal student experiences. As an example of this at CU, SLT is more likely to be symbolically associated with existing cultural capital and, therefore, has an increased status compared to other programmes. When compared with the national field, however, the programme at CU may not hold the same value as a smaller number of SLT programmes that are offered in elite Russell Group universities. This is because the recruitment practices at CU enable greater opportunities for students with non-

traditional entry qualification to gain a place. I found that these are practical examples of the 'logic of the field ', when in fact high status, according to Bourdieu (2006), results from the rarity of cultural capital, because in the HE field selectivity is valued more highly than greater access.

Nevertheless, I found that *cultural capital* reflects what Bourdieu (1993) describes as individual 'position taking' that exists as a unique quality within each AHP programme *field* (p. 35). At this particular moment, gaining a place on any of the programmes in the study is a highly competitive process. Moreover, the *cultural capital* to be gained from an AHP qualification dictates a significant demand and competition for places. This paradox is possible because, with the exception of a few, most students who choose to study one of the AHPs at CU do not consider attending more selective universities. It seems that Bourdieu (1996) was right when he suggested that even where participation has improved, structures of 'distinction' serve to 'sort' those who ordinarily may not attend HE into a less valued place within the system. On the whole, I found that these are different students, choosing different subjects who have different expectations, and will have different experiences of HE (Bathmaker and Thomas, 2009).

11.1.3 Research Question 3: How is student choice shaped by the habitus and what is the influence of social class?

My third research question is intended to explore the concept of student choice from a micro-level perspective. From the initial application of a questionnaire, I was able to determine the broader characteristics of the AHP field at CU. In

summary, choosing an AHP programme at CU is largely the pursuit of the middle classes. Furthermore, programmes are mainly accessed by mature female students. Indeed I found evidence to support existing research that suggests that student choice-making, particular in SLT, is highly gendered in favour of females (Davies, 1990; Boyd and Hewlett, 2001). As Ball et al. (2002) note, this problem may begin in complex gendered biases that begin in schools as part of an established institutional habitus. My findings also raise concerns in relation to low BME participation in AHP education and training at CU, again evident in the literature, which as a significant inequality cannot be ignored (Sheridan, 1999; Stapleford and Todd, 1998; Greenwood, Wright and Bithell, 2006). Students who join the AHP education and training field do so with a range of qualifications. Whilst many have completed A levels, almost the same percentage of students enter via access qualifications. This acts as a reminder of the difference and diversity that exists in the educational experiences that students bring to their studies.

From this broad landscape of data, I was able to select 7 case studies, which exemplify how the specialised habitus, as a 'practical schema', shapes individual responses to choice-making in the way the habitus responds and adapts to the challenges and opportunities of their chosen AHP field. By locating each case study according to Watson et al.'s (2009) diagrammatic representation of a conceptual field, my findings indicate that in 3 of the case studies the habitus enables the students to 'adapt' to the challenges that they face. A further 2 students benefitted from a habitus already attuned to HE, and were equipped with a range of skills that meant that they were naturally able to

'fit' into to their chosen AHP field. Not all of the case studies appeared to be as successful and, although none of the students were found to have been 'excluded' to the point that that they were about to leave their programme, 2 further students were found to be formally 'resisting'. This was observed as a growing 'incongruence' between their habitus and expectations and the realities of the practical implications of the field.

11. 1. 4 The specialised habitus and social class

My findings do not support the concept of the habitus as a means of producing mechanistic and overly deterministic outcomes (DiMaggio, 1979; Jenkins, 1992). Instead I encountered a diverse range of highly dynamic responses in the way that the specialized habitus enables both inter and intra class differences and similarities, in and between programmes, when the habitus encounters, and is transformed by, the field (Nash, 1999).

In fact social class, while always an important factor in mediating HE choice-making in the field of AHP education and training, proved to be diffuse, fluid and highly contingent, so that traditional labels do not seem adequate to explain how social class structures student choice. In fact, Bourdieu (1984) described the qualities of the habitus as being a 'structured and structuring structure' (p. 170). I found this to be true in the way that social class was the principal feature in the way that the habitus is 'structured'. In Barbara's case her family's working class background had a significant impact upon her schooling and subsequent scholastic success. The same is true for Bernadette

but in reverse, since her middle class background seems to have set in motion not only an expectation to attend university, but also a smooth and successful educational trajectory. Although to her this feels normal, she is responding unconsciously to her choice-making according to Bourdieu (1990), as if she were a 'fish in water' (p. 108).

I also encountered, in Nina's resistance, what Bourdieu (1984) describes as the 'structuring' qualities of the habitus in the way that her previous negative experiences of HE seem to be repeating themselves once again. I found that Adele and Helen were unsure of their class. According to Reay et al. (2005) this is because their social class is in transition, despite wanting to hold onto the last vestiges of a former class, shaped in their family's past. The 'structuring' qualities of the habitus however, are present in both Adele and Helen, as they now find themselves responding to familial and school experiences that have orientated them toward attending university. For Helen this gave her the opportunity to move away from home, live independently and explore the social aspects of university life. Adele's personal circumstances, however, restricted her to a much narrower choice of place to study, and therefore to a much more pragmatic experience.

The habitus is also a 'structure', that is subject to agency, and is socially and individually derived, yet it responds in a systematic way (Bourdieu, 1984). Tim is notionally a middle class student reacting negatively to the realities of the field. This is because his experiences have not met his expectations. He sees himself progressing from one role to another without any indication of intrinsic

subject interest, in which his choice-making is only weakly articulated (Du Bois-Reymond, 1998). There is also a structure to his choice-making, in that he hopes it will get him where he wants to be, but he appears incapable of 'adapting', even when things are not going to plan. George is also responding according to the way that his working class background has influenced his social world, including his emotional and economic responsibilities as a father and husband. His habitus responds in such a way that he has accepted that his only approach to his studies is to be calculated and pragmatic as a 'means to an end.'

Overall, in the stories that the students told, I found that whilst students may be pre-disposed to certain thoughts, actions and attitudes that result from cultural trajectories and class backgrounds, in most cases their actions were not necessarily deterministic and mechanically fixed, because their habitus is, according to Nash (1999), 'always of the moment' and is 'brought out when a set of these dispositions meet a particular problem, choice or context' (p. 178).

11.2 This study's unique contribution to knowledge

This study's unique contribution to knowledge is evident in a number of ways. Firstly, it is the only study that I am aware of that addresses the concept and practices of student choice across a number of AHP education and training programmes. My study is particularly apposite in that it addresses Reay et al.'s (2005) concern for the 'lacuna' in our knowledge of choice-making in a part of the HE sector that is often under-explored (Mason and Sparkes, 2002a) and

under-theorised (Greenwood and Bithell). My study also gains in significance because it has been conducted during a period of policy change.

Importantly, few other studies adequately address the complexities of AHP choice-making, and in this respect I have methodologically sought to engage in what Diane Reay (2005) calls a 'sociology of choice'. Finally, in applying all of Bourdieu's conceptual tools of field, capital and habitus empirically, this study goes beyond other mono-causal explorations that typically rely on the application of the concept of the habitus alone (Reay, 2004; Warren and Webb, 2009).

Like others before me, I found Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' to be useful in providing a theoretical framework from which to: first, construct my empirical investigation and second, explain my findings (Jenkins, 1992). To a large extent, much of what I discovered in the complexity of AHP choice-making supports not only Bourdieu's theories, but also replicates many of the findings from previous Bourdieusian orientated studies. In relation to the habitus in particular, I am conscious that Reay (2004) has argued that there is a 'danger in [the-SW] habitus becoming what ever the data reveal' (p. 438). Nevertheless, in conjunction with social and cultural capital, the habitus of some students meant that their AHP choice-making was more obvious, unremarkable and successful than others. What is more, choice in AHP education and training, for some students who lack capital resources, is only possible because the logic of the field, and the practices associated with recruitment to some programmes, enable these students to participate.

The influence of the habitus, central to Bourdieusian theory, toward an orientation to HE, while often encouraged in school experiences and family trajectories was less apparent toward becoming an AHP. Instead this was expressed in some students, as nothing more specific than a vague affinity with the caring professions and altruistic feelings of wanting to help other. Moreover, this was often due to personal proximity or first hand experience of a particular AHP field that did not emanate from an historical trajectory, but from a much more recent exposure to a new social field. In this way, my study challenges Bourdieu's assertion that the habitus largely responds to an unconscious (yet patterned) response. Perhaps the best example of this, from my study, comes from middle class students, exercising what Reay (2004) describes as 'mundane reflexivity'. These students ultimately reject going to university, or change their minds about their course selection as a result of a hunch or gut feeling, even if up to this point participation had previously been anticipated and expected (p.437). In my study, as a result of this reflexivity, some students went as far as to unexpectedly reject their initial career choice in favour of becoming an AHP.

In general, I found Bourdieu's theorisation on social class particularly useful to explore the structural influences on AHP choice-making, and on HE participation in general. This disposition to HE, according to Bourdieu, is more likely to come from the availability of capital, and therefore an agent's position and social class in a social field. My research, however, challenges this aspect of his theorisation, in respect of the way that students from working class backgrounds appeared to act according to middle class dispositions, often in

advance of accruing capital, but as a result of moving in different social networks, such as in school or in the workplace. While Bourdieu is careful to suggest that social class does not really exist until it is transformed into a practical sense of one's position in a social field, nevertheless there is a danger in relying on rigid definitions of a classed habitus that do not exist in reality. Indeed, in my study, I found that some students were often unable to be specific, or were unsure about their social class, and therefore their response to its influences were more fluid and dynamic than Bourdieu seems to suggest should be the case. In this respect my study questions the idea of the classed-habitus that is primarily determined by capital. I suggest that the indeterminacy of social class is less an influence on the habitus than the qualities of the AHP field, and personal context itself.

My study indicates, for example, that despite their capital advantages and position in the field middle class mature students were more likely to adjust their expectations to those often associated with the pragmatic choice-making of working class students. The necessity of the conditions of the AHP field mean that becoming an SLT, ODP, or Radiographer can mean that choice becomes limited to a particular university, mode of study, not to mention type of experience.

11.3 Recommendations for policy and practice

Having conducted my study, I am moved to make a number of recommendations in respect of policy and practice, both in CU and the national field. I am also committed to ensuring that what I have learned from the students who contributed to my study is reflected in future improvements to the programmes at CU.

11.3.1 Specific recommendations for CU

In light of my findings on working class and BME participation in the AHPs, CU should consult on, and review if necessary, its draft Access Agreement for 2014/15 that will be subjected to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). This Access Agreement should be more explicit in stating CU's strategy to address uneven social class and BME participation. It should include a review, at programme level, of current participation rates from BME and students from lower socio-economic groups. A 'task and finish' group should then be established to work with existing students from these categories to develop a strategy and implementation plan to increase awareness, participation and programme retention. Specifically in relation to SLT, managers at CU should review programme ethnicity and diversity data, and a specific improvement plan should be developed to improve male, working class and BME participation. Students should participate in Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy (RCSLT) initiatives such as the 'Giving Voice' campaign to promote a greater awareness of the profession.

Working with possible partners to raise awareness of low participation in some social groups is also important in relation to establishing better access

agreements to support Widening Participation. CU should work specifically with 'feeder Colleges' to develop programme content and progression arrangements specifically in relation to AHP programmes. Indeed programme teaching teams should do more to influence how and where AHP programmes are marketed. Faculty and school managers should empower admissions tutors, via the performance review process, to work with stakeholders and agencies such as Schools, FE Colleges and careers advisors to enable all potential applicants to have access to up-to-date programme information in order to inform their choice-making.

As a principle, programme teaching teams must not lose sight of the role that the AHPs are able to contribute to Widening Participation, in favour of marketing practices that concentrate solely on achieving recruitment targets. Specific workshops should be developed to support staff to engage with the work of the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) in supporting the role of academics in promoting equality and diversity. All staff should be made aware of the free resources and fact sheets produced by the ECU that are available as downloadable resources and toolkits.¹⁰

Any structural forms of discrimination that may preclude some social groups from participating or progressing should be reviewed and identified by working with the Equality and Diversity team. Each team should also review any specific equality and diversity reporting and monitoring that takes place at Faculty/University level. Good practice from other areas of the university, and

¹⁰ ECU resources and materials are available for download at <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/e-and-d-for-academics-factsheets>.

from AHP programmes should also be shared and disseminated to other AHP programmes if anti-discriminatory practices are found to already exist. Furthermore, a member of each teaching team should be encouraged to engage in professional networks and conferences to raise the profile of equality and diversity matters in AHP education and training applicable to their programme area.

Participation from some social groups may also be adversely affected as a result of funding cuts. In anticipation of reduced levels of AHP bursary support in 2013, CU should make available opportunities to access University scholarships, or hardship funding for those students most in need of financial assistance. Participation in AHP education and training should not be reduced to discriminatory practices that privilege those who can afford to train to become AHPs. At the moment such funding at CU is only open to HEFCE funded students. In conjunction, programme teaching teams need to explore mechanisms to provide potential applicants with detailed and readily available information on the 'hidden costs' of becoming an AHP. This must include the cost of accommodation and travel to clinical placements. Information on the availability of social activities and campus life should be clearly explained in pre-course information, at open days and in any other outreach events.

The quality of the AHP student experience in my study was affected by the lack of campus-based facilities. The University/Faculty should review these services particularly in relation to crèche facilities. Not only might this benefit students who have children, it may well also have a positive impact on student

recruitment and retention. On the matter of retention, under current DH arrangements for quality monitoring, HEIs receive quality payments in relation to improving retention and completion statistics. CU must not allow forms of elitism to dictate recruitment policies, to the extent that only the most academically able are selected. A specific improvement plan should be developed to put in place a comprehensive student support strategy based on the recruitment characteristics for each programme.

My final recommendations for CU relate specifically to the clinical practice element of the programmes. As a priority, the Faculty must develop a 'whistle blowing policy' to empower students to report poor clinical practice and forms of discrimination in the workplace. CU must guarantee to support students who raise legitimate concerns about their clinical experience. Students also need to be assured that academic staff members are empowered to raise issues of poor student support. It seems that students are subject to both material and discursive inequalities and hierarchies of power that cannot be ignored. As a result an 'escalation policy' should be developed to allow governance and quality assurance concerns to be raised with senior clinical staff without fear of reprisal.

Furthermore, programme teaching teams should also review the policy for allocating students to clinical placement sites. This process should be made as transparent as possible, and academic managers should identify and share good practice amongst other programmes to ensure that the policy is equitably applied. In addition, faculty managers should develop specific guidelines on

how applicants can access opportunities to experience clinical departments, to enable them to gain a better insight into the practical role of each of the AHPs before the start of the programme.

11.3.2 Specific recommendations for national policy and practice

Given the likelihood of reduced Government funding for AHP education and training, CU should consider how best to influence new NHS commissioning arrangements to ensure that the number of students in training continues to reflect current workforce demand. To support this, a collective response from the Council of Deans for Health (CoDH), who represent senior managers of health education in UK HEIs, should lobby to ensure that Ministers understand how reduced bursary arrangements could potentially lead to unequal levels of participation in some social groups. The system should not privilege those with the financial means to become an AHP over those with an ability and aptitude.

In relation to specific professional areas, CU must engage with the RCSLT to explore, and work collaboratively, to address how a more socially diverse workforce can be attracted to the profession. One way in which CU can do this, is to facilitate a strategic meeting with RCSLT, with the specific purpose of information exchange in order to influence a national professional strategy to increase participation across all social groups.

11.4 Recommendations for further research

Up to this point specific plans for the reform of health education have not yet been produced. I would, however, recommend that further CDA-informed

research should be carried out specifically on this particular policy, as and when any specific policy becomes available. This research should seek to explore the complementarity (or otherwise), and therefore the degree of colonisation of the concept of student choice from the *field* of HE to that of healthcare education and training. Further research is also needed to assess the impact of the new bursary arrangements on student recruitment and retention in the AHPs. This should aim to test whether the additional structural forms of social injustice have disadvantaged some social groups above others.

Following my study, further research should be carried out to ascertain with more certainty the reasons why BME students do not access the *field* of AHP education and training. This research should test more explicitly the assumption that BME students, in the main, exclude themselves from a career as an AHP because of underlying perceptions of low pay and status.

Given that my case study design was intended, in a Bourdieusian sense, to investigate a 'special case of what is possible' (1998a, p. 2), additional research capable of developing broader generalisations applicable to a wider *field*, should intentionally be carried out in order to locate the characteristics of student choice that could apply regionally or nationally.

Given the diversity of entry qualifications held by AHP students, further research should be carried out to investigate the impact of holding non-traditional qualifications on student performance and achievement. Conversely my findings also suggest that A level qualifications may not necessarily be the most appropriate way to prepare students for practically-orientated

programmes, therefore I recommend that parallel research should be carried out in this respect. Joint research should be carried out between academics and the Student Union (SU) to establish the most appropriate means of developing campus services and activities for what is a diverse population of students, who hold very different expectations about their programme and attending university in general.

11.5 Limitations of the methodology and the study in general

On the whole I believe that I have avoided the pitfalls of what Bourdieu (1998) calls 'empty theory' above empirical investigation. Indeed I was reflexively aware that whilst I wanted the data to fit the theory I was prepared for the fact that it might not. Although much more modest in scale and ambition than much of Bourdieu's work, my study has, nevertheless, engaged with all stages of his 'road map' in a mixed-methods approach to investigate the complexity of social *fields*. My study however, has a number of methodological limitations.

Reflexively speaking my application of the principles of CDA to firstly explore the macro affects of the *field of power* is, I would suggest, a 'qualified' success. This is because getting to grips with the practical research application of CDA requires, as a starting point, a greater knowledge and experiential basis than I could hope to develop within the time constraints of my study. As a result my analysis, rather than being comprehensive, is limited to highlighting key features of the political discourse, and one which is not specifically related to AHP education and training.

Secondly, due to the timeframe and resources that I had at my disposal, I was unable, from a meso-level perspective, to adopt a system of statistical analysis (using correspondence analysis) of quantitative data to map out *capital* in the AHP education and training *field* (Bourdieu, 1998a). In truth, my approach of identifying 'indices of choice', to describe the effects of *capital* on the structures and practices that define student recruitment, selection criteria and achievement in AHP education and training, was much more modest. I focused on the effects of types of *capital* rather than on their specific volume. As a result, my analysis is based on my personal interpretation, and is therefore always going to be less objective than what Bourdieu might have intended.

My final micro-level of analysis of the *habitus*, involving both a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, is intended to replicate the 'numbers and narratives' approach of Ball et al. (2002), using different methods to surface complementary data (p. 54). However, I was disappointed with the questionnaire response rate, despite achieving comparability with other online surveys. The questionnaire did succeed in illuminating the general characteristics of choice-making in the AHPs, but I was not able to include any military AHP students, or part-time students from Diagnostic Radiography, as case studies because of a lack of responses.

Seven semi-structured interviews were carried out, and collectively they defined the characteristics and qualities of the *field* of investigation that I set out to achieve. Again, however, I would suggest that the research is limited by

the fact that although a number of Asian students completed the questionnaire, none agreed to take part in an interview. As a result I do not have the data at my disposal to add to my understanding of choice-making in this particular respect.

Theoretically, I found Bourdieu's advice on mitigating against pre-reflexive actions that he considered to be 'slightly arbitrary intrusions' that I might project onto those being researched, to be valuable if not simple to apply. Bourdieu (1999; 2005) advocates a process by which I was encouraged to suspend my own values and beliefs, and submit to those of the participants themselves. In practice, despite the best of intentions, and because of my own classed position and background, I do not feel that I was always able to locate myself within the feelings, experiences and values of those I was interviewing. I think however, the quality of the data, its trustworthiness, and what it tells me about student choice-making in AHP education and training *field* stands up to methodological scrutiny.

11.6 Reflecting on how my research has changed the way I think

I came to undertake my research because of my own background as an AHP and my position in the University. I have come to realise that these experiences and insights have afforded me the privilege and opportunity to improve the educational experience and therefore, ultimately, the patient's experience of care and treatment by tomorrow's qualified AHPs.

I set out to explore my own pre-reflexive assumptions around status and hierarchy that seemed to exist in the AHP *field*. What I now realise is that

behind these structural features are countless individual stories of those who have benefited, or lost out, as a result. Captured in each story are the details of past and present journeys, experiences and inequalities that are part of a life history and biography and are not reducible to generalisations. As a result of my research, I aim to approach my practice by always seeking to understand the specific context of discriminatory practices, to do all I can to surface these where they exist and to address them. I now understand that AHP education, as a form of HE, is not a meritocratic sorting system (Archer and Hutchings, 2000). Choosing to become an AHP, however, according to Reay et al. (2005), is 'rooted in fine discriminations' and 'classificatory judgements' (p. 160).

I have come to realise that student choice-making in the AHPs, regardless of social background, is largely a commitment to make a positive contribution to the care of others. All of us who are involved in AHP education and training should make a similar commitment, to ensure that the student population reflects the diverse communities and society in which we live. Choosing to become an AHP cannot be the preserve of those who can afford it, or those who appear to 'fit in' to HE more than others.

Furthermore, I feel that it is important to recognise the contributions of the students themselves. I heard powerful and moving accounts of risk taking, compromise and sacrifices taken to become an AHP. My appreciation of students' dedication, integrity and commitment to their career choice has been re-affirmed as a result of working with them during my research. I do not doubt

that these qualities will stay with them for the rest of their professional lives. On a personal level I have learned much about myself. I intend to carry on my research, and possibly extend this to other professional *fields*. I have learned to be more reflexive, open to new ideas, less impatient and a little less frustrated by what I cannot personally change. My final reflection, however, is reserved for Pierre Bourdieu himself, and that is to conclude that, in the corpus of his work, we are left with a blueprint to explore alternative and contemporary accounts of the social world in which we live. This is surely his greatest legacy.

Chapter 12. References

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Chapter 13. Appendices

Appendix 1. Foreword to Higher Education Putting Students at the

Heart of the System

Our university sector has a proud history and a world-class reputation, attracting students from across the world. Higher education is a successful public-private partnership: Government funding and institutional autonomy.

This White Paper builds on that record, while doing more than ever to put students in the driving seat. We want to see more investment, greater diversity and less centralised control. But, in return, we want the sector to become more accountable to students, as well as to the taxpayer.

Our student finance reforms will deliver savings to help address the large Budget deficit we were left, without cutting the quality of higher education or student numbers and bringing more cash into universities. They balance the financial demands of universities with the interests of current students and future graduates. Students from lower-income households will receive more support than now and, although many graduates will pay back for longer, their monthly outgoings will be less and the graduate repayment system will be more progressive. No first-time undergraduate student will have to pay upfront fees. We are also extending tuition loans to part-time students, increasing maintenance support and introducing a new National Scholarship Programme.

But our reforms are not just financial. We want there to be a renewed focus on high-quality teaching in universities so that it has the same prestige as research. So we will empower prospective students by ensuring much better information on different courses. We will deliver a new focus on student charters, student feedback and graduate outcomes. We will oversee a new regulatory framework with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) taking on a major new role as a consumer champion.

We will tackle the micro-management that has been imposed on the higher education sector in recent years and which has held institutions back from responding to student demand. We must move away from a world in which the number of students allocated to each university is determined in Whitehall. But universities will be under competitive pressure to provide better quality and lower cost.

Responding to student demand also means enabling a greater diversity of provision. We expect this to mean more higher education in further education colleges, more variety in modes of learning and wholly new providers delivering innovative forms of higher education.

The Coalition will reform the financing of higher education, promote a better student experience and foster social mobility. Our overall goal is a sector that is freed to respond in new ways to the needs of students.

Appendix 2. Online Survey Questionnaire

Student Choice in the Allied Health Professions

How to complete the online questionnaire

Welcome to this short on-line survey which forms part of a 2-year project that is concerned with access to training in the Allied Health Professions (AHPs). The main aim of the research is to:

Explore student choice in the Allied Health Professions from the perspective of a range of social, economic and political factors.

Part of the overall research methodology is concerned with how individual students navigate choice-making and how this may be influenced in policy terms in changing social conditions. The project also seeks to explore whether the issue of social class influences student choice. The initial method adopted is to conduct a survey of first-year Allied Health Professional (AHP) students using this online questionnaire. Some questions will only allow you to make a single answer by clicking on the response that you feel is most appropriate, other questions will indicate when you can give multiple responses. Some of the questions will also allow you to expand on your answer by clicking into the text box provided.

Questions about you

1. Please indicate which course you are studying at CU

- Operating Department Practice
- Operating Department Practice (Military)
- Radiography full-time
- Radiography part-time
- Radiotherapy full-time
- Radiotherapy part-time
- Speech and Language Therapy full-time
- Speech and Language Therapy part-time

2. Are you?

- Female
- Male

3. Please indicate how old you are?

- Under 20
- 21 to 29
- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 59
- 60 and over

4. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?

- White British
- White Irish
- White - Any Other White Background
- Black - Caribbean
- Black - African
- Black - Any Other Black Background
- Asian - Indian
- Asian - Pakistani
- Asian - Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Asian - Any Other Asian Background
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed - White and Black African Mixed
- Mixed - White and Asian Mixed
- Mixed - Any Other Mixed Background
- Any Other Ethnic Group

5. Which of the following was the highest level of qualification that you held prior to being accepted onto the course?

- GSE AS level
 - GSE A level
 - Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate
 - International Baccalaureate
 - Other (please specify)
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> VCE/AVCE Qualifications | <input type="radio"/> Scottish Higher/Advanced Higher |
| <input type="radio"/> OND/ONC | <input type="radio"/> Irish Leaving Certificate |
| <input type="radio"/> BTEC | <input type="radio"/> NVQ Level 3 |
| <input type="radio"/> GNVQ Advanced | <input type="radio"/> Access course to HE |

Student Choice in the Allied Health Professions

6. Before you started your course at CU what were you doing?

- Studying at School
- Studying at Sixth Form College
- Studying at an FE College
- Studying at University
- Taking a gap year
- Unemployed
- Employed
- Self-employed
- Employer

Questions about your family

7. Which other members of your family have also been to university? (you may choose more than one answer)

- Father
- Mother
- Brother
- Other (please specify)
- Husband
- Wife
- Partner
- Sister
- None

8. Who would you say earns the most money in your family even if they have retired? eg Father, Mother or Husband

Student Choice in the Allied Health Professions

9. Thinking about question 8, from the list below please indicate which occupational group best describes the job that they do even if they have retired?

- Modern professional occupations eg. teacher, nurse, social worker, police sergeant, software designer
- Clerical and intermediate occupations eg. secretary, PA, office or call centre worker, nursing auxiliary
- Senior manager eg. Finance Manager or Chief Executive
- Technical and craft occupations eg. mechanic, fitter, plumber, electrician, train driver
- Semi-routine/manual and service occupations eg. postal worker, machine operative, receptionist
- Routine manual and service occupations eg. driver, cleaner, waitress, bar staff
- Middle or junior managers eg. office manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, publican
- Traditional professional occupations eg. accountant, solicitor, doctor, scientist, engineer
- Not sure? Use the text box below to state their job title

10. Again thinking about question 8 which of the following best describes the type of organisation where they work?

- As an employee in a large organisation
- As an employee in a small organisation
- As an employer in a large organisation
- As an employer in small organisation
- Self-employed with no employees
- Retired

11. Please state the COUNTY that you normally live outside of university term time eg, West Midlands

Questions about your career choice

Student Choice in the Allied Health Professions

12. How did you become interested in becoming an Allied Health Professional? (you may choose more than one answer)

- From personal experience
- Talking to a work colleague
- Talking to a friend or family member
- Other (please specify)
- Always wanted to be a healthcare professional
- Careers advice
- Through the media eg. television or newspaper article

13. Do you know anyone else who is already a healthcare professional? If so say WHAT they do and HOW you know them?

14. Why did you choose to study at CU?

15. At the start of the course how well prepared do you feel you were in relation to the following?

	Very prepared	Quite prepared	A little prepared	Not at all
The demands of the course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Starting university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the practical role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Student Choice in the Allied Health Professions

16. What attracted you to a career as an AHP? (you may choose more than one answer)

- Good career prospects
- Well paid
- Job satisfaction
- Job security
- Becoming a professional
- Other (please specify)
- Practical training
- Making a difference
- The chance to study at University
- Gaining an academic qualification

17. Please describe how you feel about your career choice so far?

18. What do you think are the biggest hurdles to completing your course? (you may choose more than one answer)

- Passing academic work
- Passing clinical assessments
- Other (please describe)
- Not fitting in with University life
- Financial pressures
- Studying whilst managing family commitments

19. Would you be willing to take part in further research about your career choice?

- Yes
- No

Student Choice in the Allied Health Professions

20. If YES could you please provide your contact details:

Name

Email

Telephone Number

Thank you for taking part. Click 'finish' to submit your questionnaire

Appendix 3. Summary of question and responses types used in the questionnaire

A number of factual questions about the respondents were included that required a simple form of selected or 'closed' response (see figure 1). Denscombe (1998, p. 100) points out that it is important that straightforward questions such as these can be used to 'entice or deter' the participant to complete the questionnaire and in so doing signposting how the questions are to be completed. More importantly they may well influence the way that participants answer questions at a later stage. It is also worth noting that such questions also lend themselves more readily to computer analysis.

Figure 1. Gender

2. Are you?

Female

Male

Figure 2. Pre-course Information

6. Before you started your course at BCU what were you doing?

<input type="radio"/> Studying at School	<input type="radio"/> Unemployed
<input type="radio"/> Studying at Sixth Form College	<input type="radio"/> Employed
<input type="radio"/> Studying at an FE College	<input type="radio"/> Self-employed
<input type="radio"/> Studying at University	<input type="radio"/> Employer
<input type="radio"/> Taking a gap year	

Alternatively, participants could have been asked to provide the answers where questions were complicated by numerous possible responses. Nevertheless providing a range of answers seemed easier for the participant to complete, and again reinforces their type of response method (see figure 2).

However, some caution is necessary here so that the categories appear consistent and complete, particular where numerical values are concerned. Where respondents are asked to 'indicate how old they are' (figure 3) age ranges therefore should not overlap otherwise respondents will not know which to choose (40 to 50 or 50 to 60). Selected response questions were also used where more than one response can be chosen as long as respondents are clearly made aware that this is the case. The design phase would ordinarily have identified the potential responses; however, I was aware

Figure 3.

3. Please indicate how old you are?

Under 20

21 to 29

30 to 39

40 to 49

50 to 59

60 and over

that this might not be completely comprehensive. The addition of the 'other' category such as in question 7 was judiciously included (see figure 4) but not as an excuse for poor questionnaire development (Gillham, 2000).

Figure 4. Familial engagement

7. Which other members of your family have also been to university? (you may choose more than one answer)

Father
 Husband
 Mother
 Wife
 Brother
 Partner
 Sister
 None
 Other (please specify)

Where it was not possible to pre-select the responses a number of open questions were used to illicit a 'specified response' to a factual question.

However, such questions need to be clearly understood and interpreted in the same way by all participants. Therefore wording was devised and tested to avoid ambiguity and vagueness. The advantage being that this type of question allows responses to range from simple one-word answers (see fig 5) to a hybrid semi-open response, through to more specific and nuanced responses (see fig 6) that require a degree of complexity and sophistication not available from closed questioning alone (Gillham, 2000).

Figure 5. Home County

11. Please state the COUNTY that you normally live outside of university term time eg, West Midlands

and vagueness. The advantage being that this type of question allows responses to range from simple one-word answers (see fig 5) to a hybrid semi-open response, through to more specific and nuanced responses (see fig 6) that require a degree of complexity and sophistication not available from closed questioning alone (Gillham, 2000).

A number of questions enabled the opportunity for an open response, these were also constructed as 'routing questions' such as in questions 8, 9 and 10. In recognising the potential for confusion in such questions, they were only used where the responses demanded this to render the data meaningful, in the following example where the question was used with in combination with other to identify social class (see fig 7).

Figure 6. Perception of Career Choice

17. Please describe how you feel about your career choice so far?

Figure 7. Identifying Social Class

**8. Who would you say earns the most money in your family even if they have retired?
eg Father, Mother or Husband**

9. Thinking about question 8, from the list below please indicate which occupational group best describes the job that they do even if they have retired?

10. Again thinking about question 8 which of the following best describes the type of organisation where they work?

Denscombe (1998) also points out that this gradual shift to more complex, contentious and possibly sensitive questions make it more likely that the questionnaire will be completed. It may also be the case that a variety of different question types may also maintain a degree of participant interest and avoid falling into patterns of behaviour. It is also worth bearing in mind that even the judicious use of a small number of key open questions can require more effort in respect of analysis, and often present a degree of analytical complexity that is otherwise not encountered when using closed questions. I also included a 'scaled response' question to test their judgement on the level of self-preparedness in relation to a number of factors; starting university, the practical aspects of training, and the course itself (see fig 8).

Ordinarily, scaled questions include either 5 or 7 categories but on this occasion the neutral response (such as not sure, adequate, or uncertain) was omitted in order to 'force a choice' (Gillham, 2000 p. 32). This shows that a primary weakness of these types of question is the propensity for respondents not to use the whole of the scale. Despite such encouragement further underlying weaknesses of this type of question also exist in that responses tend to be overwhelmingly positive, and even if dissatisfaction is signalled the research still remains ignorant of the reasons why (Gillham, 2000).

Appendix 4. Information on questionnaire piloting

Piloting stage – information to respondents

At this stage before the questionnaire is launched it is vital to test its reliability, validity and practicability. Because some of the questions are designed with specific student participants in mind you may not necessarily be able to provide some specific answers.

However, please feel free to comment on the questionnaire using the boxes below to provide any feedback that you feel will help to improve the questionnaire. A box is provided below for each question so for example if you have any comments to make on question 1, please add them to the comment box for the corresponding question. Even if you cannot answer the question as if you were a student, It would be helpful if you could consider whether the questions are:

- Laid out correctly and in a logical order.
- Did you understand the instructions provided?
- Is the wording ambiguous or unclear – do the questions make sense?
- Did you understand the format of the question eg, yes/no answers, free text?
- Were the response categories complete?
- Is the questionnaire too long or too short (how long did it take you)?
- Did you find any questions intrusive or offensive?

You can go back to any of the questions at any time until you click on 'finish'.

Appendix 5. Questionnaire piloting tool

A Career in the Allied Health Professions: navigating choice, class and policy?

You are being invited to voluntarily take part in the piloting stage of a doctoral level research project that I am undertaking in order to complete an EDD thesis. This research has been ethically reviewed in accordance with the University of Sheffield, Ethics Review Procedure as operated in the School of Education and similarly by the Faculty of Health, Ethics committee at CU.

This is a 2-year project that is concerned with access to training in the Allied Health Professions (AHPs). The main aim of the research is to:

Explore student choice-making in the Allied Health Professions that accounts for a range of social, economic and political factors that appear to be mediated through the continued influence of social class.

Part of the overall research methodology is concerned with how individual students navigate choice-making and how this may be influenced by policy developments. The initial method adopted is to conduct a survey questionnaire of first-year Allied Health Professional (AHP) students using an online questionnaire.

Piloting stage

At this stage before the questionnaire is launched it is vital to test its reliability, validity and practicability. Because some of the questions are designed with specific student participants in mind you may not necessarily be able to provide some specific answers.

However, please feel free to comment on the questionnaire using the boxes below to provide any feedback that you feel will help to improve the questionnaire. A box is provided below for each question so for example if you have any comments to make on question 1, please add them to the comment box for the corresponding question. Even if you cannot answer the question as if you were a student, It would be helpful if you could consider whether the questions are:

- Laid out correctly and in a logical order.
- Did you understand the instructions provided?
- Is the wording ambiguous or unclear – do the questions make sense?
- Did you understand the format of the question eg, yes/no answers, free text?
- Were the response categories complete?
- Is the questionnaire too long or too short (how long did it take you)?
- Did you find any questions intrusive or offensive?

You can go back to any of the questions at anytime until you click on 'finish'.

Question 1

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 2

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 3

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 4

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 5

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 6

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 7

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 8

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 9

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 10

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 11

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 12

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 13

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 14

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 15

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 16

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 17

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 18

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 19

Please add any comments that you may have?

Question 20

Please add any comments that you may have?

Additional comments

Please add any other comments that you may want to make about the questionnaire, eg. Layout, usability, length of the questionnaire?

Thank you for taking part in this pilot. Your answers to the questions will not be used as part of the final data collection and will be destroyed after the pilot stage has been completed. However, your comments on the questionnaire itself will be used anonymously to improve the research methodology and may be used within the production of a final thesis.

Appendix 6. Summary of pilot questionnaire responses

Summary of Pilot Comments			
Pilot Question	Pilot Response	Pilot Question	Pilot response
Qu 1. Please indicate which course you are studying at CU	Do you need a part-time category for any of the courses? Do you need to add a part-time option for Radiography? What about military ODPs?	Qu 11. Please state the COUNTY that you normally live outside of university term time eg, West Midlands	Nil comments
Qu 2. Are you male or female?	Nil comments	Qu 12. Do you know anyone else who is already a healthcare professional?	Does WHO mean you want names?
Qu 3. Please indicate how old you are?	Nil comments	Qu 13. Why did you choose to study at CU?	Nil comments
Qu 4. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?	Nil comments	Qu 14. At the start of the course how well prepared do you feel you were in relation to the following? The demands of the course The practical aspects of the role	I was more concerned about the process of actually starting Uni.

Qu 5. Which of the following was the highest level of qualification that you held prior to being accepted onto the course at CU?	BSc Do you need to add GCSE only?	Qu 15. What attracted you to a career as an AHP? (you may choose more than one answer)	Nil comments
Qu 6. Before you started your course at CU what were you doing?	Nil comments	Qu 16. Please describe how you feel about your career choice so far?	Nil comments
Qu 7. Which other members of your family have also been to university? (you may choose more than one answer)	Do you need to include cousins?	Qu 17. What do you think are the biggest hurdles to completing your course? (you may choose more than one answer)	Nil comments
Qu 8. Who would you say earns the most money in your family even if they have retired? eg Father, Mother or Husband.	Nil comments	Qu 18. Would you be willing to take part in further research about your career choice?	Nil comments
Qu 9. Thinking about question 8, from the list below please indicate which occupational group best describes the job that they do?	Not sure of title Don't know what he does Something to do with logistics but not sure of title. What if they have retired?	Qu 19. If YES could you please provide your contact details	Nil comments
Qu 11. Again thinking about question 8 which of the following best describes the type of organisation where they work?	Nil response	Qu 20. Please add any other comments that you may want to make about the questionnaire, eg. Layout, usability, length of the questionnaire?	Layout and usability work well. Length just right and more than a couple more questions would be too much. Length ok.

Appendix 7. PowerPoint presentation: launching my research study

<p><i>A Career in the Allied Health Professions: navigating choice, class and policy?</i></p> <p>Steve Wordsworth</p>	<h3>Research Objectives</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the possible implications for student choice in the Allied Health professions following a revised and radical political discourse? <i>New policies</i>• What role do specific institutions and organisation involved in the Allied Health Professions play in student choice-making? <i>Where you study?</i>• How might individual students navigate choice-making in uncertain times? <i>Your stories/narratives</i>
<h3>Background</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 2-year research study• Forms the thesis element of a doctoral level qualification - EdD at the University of Sheffield.	<h3>Who does the study involve?</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All 1st year AHP students• ODP• Radiography• Radiotherapy• Speech and Language Therapy
<h3>What is the purpose of the research?</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>To explore student choice-making in the Allied Health Professions (AHPs)</i>• <i>Take into account social, economic and political</i>• <i>Does social class have a part to play?</i>	<h3>How will the study work?</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through an initial survey using a on-line questionnaire that you complete yourself 10 - 15 mins.• Accessed via moodle.• Interviews carried by myself with students - only if selected - up to 60 mins.

Do I have to take part?

- Your participation is entirely voluntary and if you do initially decide to take part you can withdraw at any point.
- If you wish to be considered to be interviewed you will be given a consent form.

Other ethical considerations?

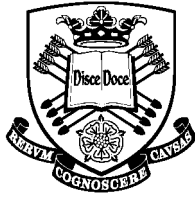
- This research has been ethically reviewed by University of Sheffield.
- All data will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

Thank You!

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or myself:

Stephen Wordsworth Tele: 0121 331 6198 Email: edr08sw@sheffield.ac.uk	Dr Simon Warren Tele: 01142 228089 s.a.warren@sheffield.ac.uk
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Appendix 8. Ethical Approval



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

The
School
Of Education.

Stephen Wordsworth

Head of School
Professor Jackie Marsh

Department of Educational Studies
The Education Building
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield S10 2JA

9 October 2014

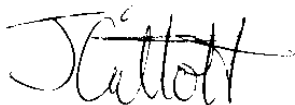
Telephone: +44 (0114) 222 8096
Fax: +44 (0114) 279 6236
Email: jacquie.gillott@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear Stephen

Re: A Career in the Allied Health Professions: navigating choice, class and policy?

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project. The reviewers have now considered this and have agreed that your application be approved

Yours sincerely



Mrs Jacquie Gillott
Programme Secretary

Appendix 9. Research Fact Sheet

The title of my research project is:

A Career in the Allied Health Professions: navigating choice, class and policy?

Please take your time to read the following information to help you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the research?

This is a 2-year project that is concerned with access to training in the Allied Health Professions (AHPs). The main aim of the research is to:

Explore student choice-making in the Allied Health Professions that accounts for a range of social, economic and political factors that appear to be mediated through the continued influence of social class.

The research also contains a number of additional research objectives.

- **What are the possible implications for student choice in the Allied Health professions following a revised and radical political discourse?**
- **What role do specific institutions and organisations involved in the Allied Health Professions play in student choice-making?**
- **How might individual students navigate choice-making in uncertain times?**

Why have I been chosen?

This study involves surveying all 1st year students enrolled on either Operating Department Practice, Radiography/Radiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy courses. Based on an analysis of this initial data, 4 students from each of the 4 AHP courses (12 in total) will be selected to participate in a further interview stage.

Do I have to take part?

Absolutely not your participation is entirely voluntary and if you do initially decide to take part you can withdraw at any point.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Although this is a qualitative research project in the main, some quantitative information will also be collected. The research methods also include an analysis of key policy documents as well as the exploration of other documentary sources.

However, the first stage of the research involves carrying out a survey using a web-based questionnaire that you can complete yourself; this will take around 15 minutes.

This will be followed by a single interview with a number of different students. If you are interviewed this will take place with only one student and the researcher present

at any given time. These interviews will typically last between 30 to 60 minutes and will be arranged at a time during the working day and at a location within the University that is convenient for you. The survey and interviews should take place between April and October 2011.

What do I have to do?

Because the initial survey uses a self-administered web-based questionnaire this can be completed at a location and time that is convenient to you. If you do agree to take part in an interview, and you are selected, please expect to answer some further questions but also be prepared to talk about your experiences of making your AHP career choice.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that I collect about you during the course of this research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

Are there any advantages/disadvantages of taking part?

There are no known foreseeable discomforts, disadvantages or risks with regard to taking part. It is hoped that you will enjoy participating knowing that your contributions have helped to understand more about the research topic.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This project is partly funded by a CU staff development award and is partly self-funded. The research is being organised and undertaken as part of a doctoral thesis.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This research has been ethically reviewed in accordance with the University of Sheffield, Ethics Review Procedure as operated in the School of Education and similarly by the Faculty of Health, Ethics committee at CU.

Contact for further information

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or myself:

Stephen Wordsworth
Tele: 0121 331 6198
Email: edr08sw@sheffield.ac.uk

Dr Simon Warren
Tele: 01142 228089
s.a.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to read this. If you decide to participate, you will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Kind Regards



Stephen Wordsworth



Dr S Warren

Doctoral Student

The University of Sheffield

Doctoral Supervisor

The University of Sheffield

Appendix 10. Case study participation: examples of request to participate

From: Steve Wordsworth

Sent: 13 August 2011 19:02

To:

Subject: [student volunteer] A Career in the Allied Health Professions: navigating choice, class and policy?

Dear xxxx

A would like to thank you for completing my questionnaire about student choice in the Allied Health Professions (AHPs). You also indicated that you would be happy to take part in the next stage of my research and I would now like to invite to talk about your choice and your experiences so far.

It shouldn't take no longer than 30 - 40 minutes to and I would be happy to meet at your convenience when you return to University in September/October.

I have attached an information sheet about the research and once you have read this do feel free to email me or ring me with any questions that you may have. I have also included a consent form which you will need to sign but don't worry I will bring a copy with me.

If you are still happy to take part all you need to do at this stage is email me back and we can arrange a time at a later date.

Many thanks for taking part so far and I look forward to meeting you.

Regards

Steve Wordsworth

From: Steve Wordsworth

Sent: 15 February 2012 9:48

To:

Subject: Re: [student volunteer] A Career in the Allied Health Professions: navigating choice, class and policy?

Dear xxxx

Last year you very kindly took part in an online questionnaire about student choice. You indicated at the time that you would be happy for me to contact you about some follow-up questions. I would anticipate that this would take no longer than 40 - 60 mins and is very informal and can be arranged at your convenience, perhaps when you are at Uni?

I very much appreciate your time so far and I hope that you can spare me just a little bit longer, feel free to email me back or call me if you want to chat this through a little further or to conform when would be the best time to meet up?

Regards

Steve Wordsworth

Appendix 11. Social connection to the AHP *field*

	Healthcare Professionals who are friends	Healthcare Professionals who are relatives
Nurses	10	17
Doctors	12	9
ODPs [†]	5	0
Physiotherapists [†]	4	0
Radiographers [†]	4	4
SLT's [†]	5	1
Paramedics [†]	3	0
Occupational Therapists [†]	0	1
Midwives	3	4
Dentists	0	2
Pharmacists	0	1
Health Visitors	0	1
Biomedical Scientists	0	1
Nuclear Medicine Technologist	0	1
Responses for each category	46	41
Total		87

Appendix 12. Participant consent form

Title of Project: A Career in the Allied Health Professions: navigating choice, class and policy?

Name of Researcher: Stephen Wordsworth

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 12th/March/2011 for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. To do so please contact steve.wordsworth@ or Tel 0121 3316198
3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.
4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
---------------------	------	-----------

_____	_____	_____
Lead Researcher	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)	Date	Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, an /information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy for 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 13. Sample semi-structured interview schedule

Student Choice in the Allied Health Professions: navigating choice, class and policy.

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Participant Number 4

Interview with 20th September 2011, 15.00 pm in Room 442.

Checklist

- Thank participant for agreeing to take part in the interview stage.
 - Explain the interview process – anticipate 40 to 60 min.
 - Check that the participant has read the information sheet and whether they have any particular questions or concerns.
 - Remind participants how they can withdraw from the study.
 - Ask them if them to complete the consent form.
 - Check recording equipment
- As a way of introduction ask participant if they are looking forward to year two
- Ask the participant to ‘tell me a little about yourself’ including family background?

Prompt – tell me about your experiences of education (School/college/HE)?

Prompt – your family’s attitude to education and whether anyone had been to university (if so when, where and what).

Prompt – How would you describe your (social) class?

- Ask participant to ‘describe their journey to becoming an (Radiography) student so far?’

Prompt – How did you find out about the course? Did anyone in particular help/ how did you get hold of the information that you needed?

- You indicated that you always wanted to be a healthcare professional – could you explain?
- Prompt – Any particular personal experiences that got you interested? (see question 12)
- Prompt – Who do you know is involved in healthcare what do they do? (see question 13)

- Ask participant 'about your experiences of university so far' is it what you expected? (see question 17). Prompt you said that you felt (quite prepared for – practical role, but only a little for demands of the course and starting Uni) could you explain?
Prompt Why CU/was the choice of Uni important/did you consider studying anywhere else? (you said that you could commute).
- Ask participant to explain why they selected the options that attracted them to their career (see question 16 responses).
- Tell me about your choice so far? (You said that loving it was an understatement) why do you feel this is the case?
- Tell me a little more about the hurdles to completing the course (you said passing academic work/family commitments/financial pressures (see question 18)).

Prompt – would changes to how your course is funded make a difference to you?

Prompt - do you still feel you made the right choice?

Conclude interview and thank participant for taking part

Appendix 14. Example of Coded Interview Transcript

Line	Speaker	Code	Interview Transcript	Notes
1.	Speaker 1		So, just tell me a little bit about yourself, maybe a little bit about your family background just for the context of the question.	
2.	Speaker 2	Hab-u-p	Okay, well, I'm doing Speech and Language Therapy as you know. I fell in to it to be almost like...my best friend's dad had a stroke so he had a lots of speech language therapy. My cousin's got cerebral palsy and she has speech language therapy. But initially, I wanted to go into like an assistant's role.	Serendipity Family exposure to SLT role
		Hab-p-lackdis	I didn't want to continue university at all. I had a year out and decided the only way I could get to do what I wanted to do was through university so I think...so, I applied and it was all really last minute but it's such a brilliant decision. I'm glad I did do that.	
		Hab-p-lackdis	Family-wise, none of my family had been to university so I'm the first one to like go into that kind of thing. No one's in the health profession and they've all...my dad does carpentry and that kind of thing. And my mum, she's in retail so...	1 st to attend
		Hab-p-lackdisahp		Hints at class
3.	S1		Yeah, completely different.	
4.	S2		It's completely different though.	
5.	S1		So, did you come to this straight from your A-Levels then?	
6.	S2	Cap-typ-eco	I had a year out. I worked in retail too and then I decided like I've got to bite the bullet and just go to university again. I did this because there isn't...I tried applying for so many different jobs but I just didn't have the experience. I did need a matter of weeks in placement so...it just wasn't.	Hints at financial resources
7.	S1		Okay, so what did you...what did you think about your school, during your time at school what did you think you wanted to do?	Not university

8.	S2	Hab-u	I wanted to join the navy.	
9.	S1		Did you, really?	
10.	S2	Cap-ir-co F-type-ahp	I wanted to join the navy, yeah. But I didn't want to commit myself because you have to sign up for so many years and I just didn't want to commit myself like at that moment in time. I thought maybe if I had like a couple of years out and then...but while researching the navy, I came across websites with speech and language therapy like as a job description kind of thing and went into it from there kind of thing.	Websites as a source of info
11.	S1		And what about your A-Level choices? What were you...? Was that all based on kind of...?	
12.	S2	Hab-p-lackdis	I was happy to do my A levels and my choices reflected what I enjoyed, languages mainly, we never really talked about me going to University at home and I never had any reason to feel I needed to go. 'I did what I enjoyed because I didn't want to come to university. But I didn't really...it just so happens I've fitted for what I wanted to do. But it was completely almost fluke how it happened, yeah.	Fitting in with habitus Again serendipity
13.	S1		What did you choose in the end?	
14.	S2		English Language, Psychology, and History.	
15.	S1		Okay.	
16.	S2		So...	
17.	S1	Hab-str-his	So, why...so...so clearly, you did your GCSEs and then you did you're A-Levels and you clearly did quite well at school. Why did you not fancy university other than...because you seem to be one of those kind of...if I dare say classic students that progresses from one to the other.	Tried to establish ed trajectory
18.	S2	Hab-str-ed Hab-str-his Hab-p-lackdishe	Yeah, I don't know. I just...it really didn't appeal to me. I think not no one in my family into university, although it was very...I went to a grammar school and it was like if you don't go to a university like, we don't...not only we don't want to know but it was very much like that's the only way we're going to push you kind of thing. And I didn't know, just been a bit rebellious. But I just didn't want to go. And I think the more they forced it on to me most likely it's not for me. And then like with the navy and that kind of thing, I really wanted to like work my way up. I didn't want to go back into education and continue. And I think like	No previous attendance Re-enforced again Rebellious?

		Cap-ir	especially choosing something...a course in the university because I didn't want it to be like too broad and find it really difficult to find something to go into after. I thought if I really narrowed it down, I'm only stuck. But as it happened I have really narrowed it down. But I think it's for the best, I'm really enjoying. I did do quite a lot of research before I did so.	
19.	S1		Okay, I'm going to ask you about that. But I'm just thinking about the school thing. So they were very keen for their students to be university students from a grammar background?	Check-source of info.
20.	S2	Hab-str-ins F-gam F-cond	Yeah, we had...like I remember in the sixth form, we had like an...not an open day but there's a quiz where people came in and then a university like lecturer or someone came in and if you could choose if you wanted to go and talk to like the people about how to make a UCAS application that kind of thing or like go into a university. There are only two of us that went into the career's side and how to do a CV that kind of jazz and everyone went into the university side of the talk.	Rule orientated to Uni with no other real option.
21.	S1		So they were all expecting at some point you to want info on going to uni	
22.	S2		Absolutely, yeah, those...yeah.	
23.	S1		So, you (Overlapping Conversation) were just took out and were you slightly different? Well, you work really very differently (Overlapping Conversation).	
24.	S2	Hab-p-lackdishe	We've got an award like there were only two people that went in the job thing because like we did actually do what we wanted to do. Instead of just like following the crowd. Yeah, that's very much like...	
25.	S1		And what were your parents' attitudes to school where you're in or your education?	
26.	S2	Hab-str-clm Hab-str-tranclass Hab-str	They don't...like my brother, he's...he only went to like a typical secondary school. He's at college now and doesn't want to go to university. They're just...they're happy. Whatever I wanted to do, they're always happy to go with it. There was...I never had anything like forced on to me or... because I know what quite a lot of parents are like, if you don't get the grades! But no, they were really cool about it . . . just whatever I wanted to do ...if you're not cut out to do that kind of thing like it's not against the world.	Novitiate middle class?

27.	S1		Yeah, so they never forced or had any views that you should go to university? Was that decision down to you?	
28.	S2	Hab-p-lackdishe	Yeah, obviously, they're supportive of it but they weren't pushing me in that direction. Not like school at all.	
29.	S1		And nobody in your family has ever been to uni before?	
30.	S2		No.	
31.	S1		So you're the first I guess to break that mould?	
32.	S2		Yeah, yeah.	
33.	S1		Why do you think that is?	
34.	S2	Hab-p-lackdishe Hab-str Hab-str-his Hab-str-ed	I think from where my mum's from anyway . . . it's down to opportunity more than anything, going to University just didn't happen. She's like . . . right out in the sticks . . . really rural and it wasn't heard of, going to a university was for the rich kids. She went to like a village primary school and secondary school and that's as far as education went for people from the village. I think it's just their background . . . like no one they knew went to university. They just went to school and then went out and got jobs and worked their way up if they could. They just went to school and then went out and got the job somewhere the way it looked like. Obviously, my dad's in the trade like, is a skilled like, workman so he didn't the grades, I think. My granddad, he was like, a lecturer at college but he didn't go to university. He's like quite in academic class then but he didn't go and then. He didn't get it either.	Localism Novitiate middle class
35.	S1		So, how would you...if you were to describe your background and your family then, what kind of...how would you...because you said about being rural and working class, are you still that? Do you feel that's your background? Because your dad's income and your job that you do would suggest, is moved up to the middle classes?	Suggests middle class?
36.	S2	Hab-str-clm	Yeah, he's worked his way up from being a joiner and now he like supervises his men, he's in charge and he has the responsibility so I suppose it sets him apart, but we are still the same family.	
37.	S1		Because you talked about the rich kids as if that wasn't you.	Evidence of Working

				class origins Standing out?
38.	S2	Hab-str-his Hab-str-class	I know what it was . . . I think going to a grammar school changed me. It's where the rich kids go typically, and then always mingling with them that's where . . . that's how I changed my mind and came to university. A lot of my friends at home had been to like the village secondary schools. They're either going to college or they got a job and worked themselves up. I think . . . school definitely seems to have rubbed off on me, I'm mixing with the rich kids so I started to think why not me.	Mingling with these kids has somehow change who she is, or what she might become? Adapting middle class values?
39.	S1		That's got you here or at least part of that journey.	
40.	S2	Hab-p-dis	Yeah, definitely, which is something like my mum and dad didn't have.	
41.	S1		Yeah. Tell me about that journey into particular speech and language therapy kind of thing. Because you said, there's part of some personal experience, if you want to share that.	Expose to SLT?
42.	S2	Hab-p-lackdisahp Cap-typ-emo	Yeah, like my brother he had Speech Language Therapy when he was a little dot and it worked wonders for him. Then, like my cousin who has cerebral palsy, she's also had a lot of contact with SLTs. Oh . . . my best friend's dad who was treated after a stroke, he's also had a lot of contact with SLT. Now that I think about it ... It's always been there in the background. But then, when...like I said, when we're researching for the navy and like coming across that, I don't know how that was related to any shape or form. And then, I think it just like brought my attention. I'd seen, how SLTs had helped like these people that are quite close to me. And then, I was actually that would be really good. There's a lot of language and that kind of thing and that's something I was really into at school, or like A-Levels, I did a project on dialect and the way people spoke and it is really all coincidence so I'm like fitted in really well.	Emotional attachment ? Natural fit with habitus and subject Serendipity
43.	S1		With you?	
44.	S2		Yeah, definitely.	
45.	S1		So you think there's a fit between the role and the profession and how you are as a person?	

46.	S2		Yeah, definitely. Yeah.	Agrees with idea of fit/disposition to role.
47.	S1		Okay.	
48.	S2	Cap-ir-co	I mean, I went to all so many advisors, connections, and that kind of thing. They were not that helpful until I found it, my own way.	Careers advice as a source of information Not useful
49.	S1		Yes I see	
50.	S2		But...yeah, I think it's worked out the best.	
51.	S1		Did anybody know about speech and language therapy that you spoke to them?	Lack of awareness of role
52.	S2		No, not very well.	
53.	S1		Was he able to answer your question?	
54.	S2	Cap-ir-co	No, I remember one man in particular whom I went to see and for about like two hours and he said, "So what you like to do and all these." He had a massive piece of paper and spider diagrams. And he was like, "Well so basically, you just got to decide what you prefer they will use." And I was like I come to you to say I have two hours and then you told me I've got to make my own decision mostly. I was looking for some guidance for that. And, yeah...	Careers advice was poor
55.	S1		When I asked the question, in the questionnaire I asked about, you know, why did you want to be a speech and language therapist. And you said that you thought you'd kind of always wanted to get into healthcare, is that right? Did you think of that one?	General sense but not specific to SLT
56.	S2	Hab-p-care	Yeah, to a degree like if I was going to join the navy, I think I would do something along that route. But not specifically, SLT. I think like I'm quite a caring because that sounds terrible. But you know...	
57.	S1		So, you think you've quite a caring disposition?	
58.	S2	Hab-p-care	Yeah, definitely. I think, I can't be cut out to do any like manager, like being a manager or anything like that. I'm really not...I'm more like a sympathetic and I'd like to...yeah, more of a soft touch I guess.	
59.	S1		But...okay, I know what you mean.	
60.	S2		Do anything like...	
61.	S1	Hab-u-f	Yeah, so you wouldn't want to do a desk job	

			or anything at all?	
62.	S2		No, no.	
63.	S1		So, this is about matching your skills you think and your personality with the role?	This is choice in the sense of habitus to role
64.	S2		Yeah, definitely.	
65.	S1		Okay, and the carer's advice wasn't generally that you spoke?	Checking on advice given
66.	S2		Not at all.	
67.	S1		But you did find out something from the navy really that...I guess...	
68.	S2	Cap-ir Hab-str-ins	Yeah, but again, that's my own research like...I guess other people find that advices brilliant and helpful but I just...I don't know. I think it wasn't, you know, and school was the same. Like again, if you do didn't want to go to university they didn't really have any suggestions.	School orientated to HE
69.	S1		Yeah, yeah, but even though you'd been in contact with Speech and Language Therapy for quite a period of your life, you never really considered it as a career option until much later.	
70.	S2		Yeah, when I thought I really have to knuckle down. And then, I was like, "Oh, yeah, that's just, yeah."	Pragmatism ?
71.	S1	Hab-str-ed	The question is about, do you know anybody else that's involved in healthcare so you didn't...I mean none of your family had been to university and none of them were involved in healthcare?	Only vague links to healthcare and not specific to AHP or SLT.
72.	S2	Hab-str-ed	No, well, it turns out that my mum's sister was a nurse or something but no, nothing like immediate.	Weak family connections
73.	S1		Okay, so theirs no one to bounce ideas off and no experience of being...?	
74.	S2	Cap-ir Cap-socnet	No, even my friends' parents are into like that or in healthcare. No, it's yeah...	
75.	S1		Okay. No, that's...that's quite unusual. But really, it still happens.	
76.	S2		Yeah, yeah.	
77.	S1		Okay, kind of different set of questions, really, which is about, I guess, your experiences so far because you've been on the course for quite a while. How do you think you have made the transition to uni and how do you fit	Clarify transitional experiences

			in? And does it feel right? And does everything work?	
78.	S2		From school?	
79.	S1		Oh, just yeah...	
80.	S2	Hab-u-pexcl Hab-u-pos Cap-typ-Soc	I thought it was going to be a nightmare because I didn't want to come and then I was like, "Oh go girl." But my friends who started before were having a whale of a time. Although it wasn't my first choice, CU was definitely the right place to come to. The place feels right to me. I think I just fell straight into it as soon as I got here, I settled in really well and I think the girls that I am living with . . . well they're very much like me and that helped me to adjust quite a lot. They were all really nice and reached out really well. So that was a major factor, I think for quite a few of us CU was not our first choice If I didn't...if I couldn't get on with the people here, (Overlapping Conversation).	
81.	S1		So is it what you expected?	
82.	S2		No, it's not what I expected. But it's...it suited me. Yeah, (Overlapping Conversation).	
83.	S1		So tell me what you expected then.	
84.	S2	Cap-typ-Soc F-type-he-el Hab-str-mat F-pos Cap-typ-eco	So much more info. I don't know if you only get out of what you put in but social-wise here, like I find...I don't know, my boyfriend, he goes to Warwick University and he's in hockey society and through that he's like exec and he's doing lots of different charity work and all those kind of thing. Whereas here, I feel like it's a lot more for the older students . . . mature students, as there's not that much going on. I'm not saying that's a bad thing because we've got so much work like we need to do so we can't really get involved. I hadn't realised how demanding the course would be, but I am now. But I always wanted to like so many opportunities and that kind of thing. But I think on this campus, anyway, it's just like Yoga and house society that's all there is at the moment. And I don't know, and then a lot of them are like religious societies and that kind of thing. Like . . . moving away to Uni I have learnt so much about myself, and I have met so many new people . . . but I also wanted something a bit more . . . where I could boost my CV, and get involved in social activities whilst I'm here.	Status and comparison with Russell Group Campus life
85.	S1	F-cond	So, it's more or less what you thought but the	

			life that surrounds it, maybe it's to do with the health professions as well.	
86.	S2	Hab-u-pos	I think you're probably right, yeah, definitely. But, yeah, no the course is so much more broad than what I was expecting. I was expecting the Speech and Language Therapy like just stammer and stroke blah blah blah. But it's like...first year, I learned about X-rays and all the body and all the bones and just, I don't know, it just seems like so vast compared to what I was expecting but...	Broader curriculum than was expected
87.	S1		Okay, when you made that transition, you fitted in quite well with staff and students?	
88.	S2		Yeah, staff (Overlapping Conversation).	
89.	S1		Because you relocated and then you moved from home. You lived near CU?	
90.	S2	Hab-u-f	I did, yeah, that was massive...massive change because like I'm from Lancashire, that time, in Lancashire. So to come here...because I've not been here before. I came here for an open day but I had an appointment in the evening so I didn't get to that round. I came for an interview and then went again and then went again and the first time I went to the city, I was like, "Where am I?" It was immense. Yeah, that was a massive transition but...yeah, I was scared, I think.	All a bit of a gamble
91.	S1		So moving away was a part of that choice you wanted to make?	
92.	S2	Hab-str-clm	Yeah, I definitely wanted. Moving away from home to attend Uni was all part of my challenge to learn new skills and develop a sense of independence, I wanted to 'get the whole Uni experience'	More typical of middle class options
93.	S1		Yeah, challenge yourself and learn new skills.	
94.	S2		Independence as well, yeah.	
95.	S1		Okay. In terms of the like academic work and the practice side, did you quickly pick up on what was expected of you? So assignments and work because sometimes students say, "I wasn't really sure what I needed to do."	Sense that she was adapting
96.	S2	F-gam Cap-Socnet	No idea. To be quite frank, my first assignment, I failed it and I was like . . . my assignment grades were nowhere near as good as I wanted, or was used to when I look my A levels. To be honest I'm not sure that they prepared me that well to train to be an SLT... and obviously, well that's about how my assignment went and stuff and I was horrified. I was like, "Where have I gone wrong_." But talking around, I know quite a lot of people in	Utilising support from friends

			the same boat so it made me feel more relaxed and see my personal theory about it and he's like, "Well let's go through it." So that was really good. I'm glad I had that support. But, yeah, I was actually mortified. And the first time I went back there I was like...	on the course as well as tutors
97.	S1		Was that the first thing you've ever failed?	
98.	S2	Hab-u Hab-str-his	Yeah, I think it probably is. Especially like...it wouldn't have been so bad if I have no idea but I was thinking that was a good piece of work. And I was like, this is going wrong but yeah, after that like, getting back on track, so it's okay. But yeah, initially, massive. But whereas in school, I think, they break down. They want this, want this, and want this. Our first like assignment was just a brief statement and write about it and I was like, okay, but obviously not having knowledge of the course. I was worried about completely the wrong things like and reference and they'll call me up as well because a school is a reference and then here, it's all about reference and I was like, "Oh, my God, just completely wrong, its about what sources or that kind of thing.	Habitus more used to positive educational experiences Adapting School was no preparation for AHP studies
99.	S1		So, once you've learned if you like the rules of what you needed to do...	
100.	S2	Hab-u-neg	Yeah, but I kind of wish that it had been set out before we'd been given this assignment so I knew that first year doesn't count toward your final grade but really knocks your confidence like you think you need to know about that anyway.	Confidence Learning to be more autonomous
101.	S1		I suppose you're not going to take it lightly though, are you? (Overlapping Conversation).	
102.	S2	Hab-str-tran	Yeah, definitely. No, like, I'm going to see where I've gone wrong and just build on feedback but yeah, it was actually . . . I don't know what to do with myself, what's going wrong?	Learning to adapt
103.	S1		I was looking...and one of the questions I asked at the start of the course, how well did you feel prepared and you said for the demands of the course, starting Uni, and understanding the role only quite prepared. Would you say that's (Overlapping Conversation)...?	How well is she adapting?
104.	S2		Yeah, no looking back.	
105.	S1		So you didn't...yeah.	

106.	S2	F-prep	But when I was like, in that position I can cope but yeah, after this I obviously wasn't that prepared. I mean now, I'm not like amazing but built on so much on the initial feedbacks and...	
107.	S1		Some would argue that's what coming to uni does to you moving and learning from one place to another.	
108.	S2	Cap-typ	For like the transition from GCSE to A-Level, yeah, it's difficult but still along the right lines. Yeah, it was massively different.	Transition Lack of capital?
109.	S1		So tell us, so why did you come to CU in the end then. I mean, obviously, you've got the grades and you came on an open day but...	
110.	S2		It was...compared to other SLT courses...	
111.	S1	F-pos	Had you tried to look...have you looked at others?	
112.	S2	F-com F-type F-pos F-type-he-post 92 Cap-typ-cult	Yeah, this one's only three years. So that was most likely. Manchester, I applied for because I had Psychology and I really enjoyed Psychology and I really enjoyed that but I didn't get into that or UAA. It was massive factor grades because not like I didn't try at A level but I wasn't expecting to come. So, I just like I'll do what I do. I mean, I think if I'd known I would have retaken stuff just so I could get in. There was more opportunity but only here and DMU accepted me and I just...honestly, I didn't have a real reason for coming here. I just preferred the sound of going to them again for the Leicester. So it would be like...especially the city a lot more like culture and that kind of thing, good for life experience. But other than that, I wasn't ready.	Arbitrary choice
113.	S1	F-gam	So you kind of achieved good grades but you needed better for some of the universities that restricted. So that restricted your choice?	
114.	S2	F-com	Yeah, it did, yeah. But yeah, I mean I tried because...and then, my friend, she got into UAA before which is where I was really I had my heart out on but I didn't have the grades that she had in the social arts.	
115.	S1		Yeah, sometimes what you planned before doesn't happen. That decision can still be quite sound. So about your choices so far, do you think, has it been a right choice? Are you still committed to it? Does it, do you feel, that you've done the right thing?	

116.	S2	Hab-u-neg Hab-u-pos	Yeah, so far so good. I really enjoy it like...and also before, it's like I had the blues but I think it's just because, I just come back from placement and you want a bit to chill out time because its' quite like full of hard work and then you've got all these assignments and then we have like four in a matter of like two months and then exam as well and this is like so much. But it was more the work than I've done the course and I am really enjoying the course.	Adapting Demands of placement Academic demands
117.	S1		So you still feel it's the right...the right choice?	
118.	S2		I can't wait to get to the next year to finish the course.	Adapting
119.	S1		Okay...and thinking about completing next year, what's the biggest hurdle to not finishing this course...do you think? So it's all you...said in the questionnaire, passing academic work.	Hurdles
120.	S2	Hab-str-gen F-pos-hier F-game	Well, it's looking better. But yeah, if it's the dissertation, I'm really looking forward to it. But then, I think the placement as well, a lot came back who came for placement and the girls we had as mentors had just qualified themselves. So they kind of...were in the same boat where I was and still learning so much and...but I know a lot of people on different placements had like quite senior staff and they knew what they were doing. It was in this routine and then I think they expected a bit too much of the students. And I think if I was in that position like next to you, even though I know more than what I did this year, I think if I'm in that position, that's going to really not come in, I think that's...when we get much for that, I think that's so, I don't know (Overlapping Conversation).	Importance of mentors to the learning experience All females Hierarchy in the field Learning what is required
121.	S1		So they still always worry that you might not pass the assignment but I guess you are worried because you've got to pass the practice?	
122.	S2	F-game	Yeah, the practical. I think like I know a lot of universities with this course have like one day a week of placement. I think that will already be beneficial especially like in first year because when you go...	Questioning course structure
123.	S1		Yeah, give you a taste.	
124.	S2	F-game F-diss	Yeah, when you go straight into eight weeks in year two, you don't...you're not really sure what's going on. Some experience in the first year I think that would have been really good, like something concrete. You can go, "Oh, I	Questioning

			can relate to that the lesson, all that fits in place now and that kind of thing.”	
125.	S1		Rather than wait until the second year before you go out?	
126.	S2	F-diss	And then, having just eight weeks to like consolidate everything and remember everything from the first year and put it all into place and...yeah, all that kind of thing.	
127.	S1		Okay, what about other hurdles like financial. I mean how do you cope with all that?	
128.	S2	Cap-typ-eco	I’m lucky like my mum’s handled all the finances And but if I hadn’t had my job last year, I would not be able to afford to come here.	
129.	S1		So have you worked?	
130.	S2	Cap-typ-eco	Yeah, I had a year out and worked full time and they’re catching on our career back at Christmas and then that kind of thing but without that, I wouldn’t be able to afford to come here. But I get the bursary and the NHS pay my tuition fees but...	Worked in advance to prepare for financial commitments
131.	S1		Would it make a difference if you had to pay your own tuition fees?	
132.	S2	Hab-str	Yeah, absolutely. I wouldn’t be able to come, especially as I’ve gone up as well, no way, I can do it. Right last year, I’d been in halls. I’ve like...it wouldn’t...what I got many ways wouldn’t cover my rent so I was just living off what I had earned the year before which was isn’t...but when it’s gone, it’s gone. But I still have my savings but I don’t want touch them because when I come out at university, I’m going to have nothing...especially if like...	Financial restrictions would limit choice. Habitus structured by financial capital
133.	S1		To get a job.	
134.	S2	Hab-u-time-risk	Yeah. If like whatever the job situation is like then. But...so yeah, I didn’t want to go into that. That is a massive issue.	Future job prospects
135.	S1		So that would be a big deal. Having to pay fees, I think that...	
136.	S2	Hab-u-time-risk	Yeah, definitely. Yeah...to be honest, when...after I applied and accepted all that, and going through the finances, I was like, “Mum, you think we can financially afford to go.” She said, “Don’t be silly. We will make sure you’ll be all right.” But like...it’s not...	Possibility of debt. Female support
137.	S1		Have your parents helped?	
138.	S2	Hab-str	They could help me. They haven’t been like so far because I don’t want them to. I want my independence. I want to be able to manage my money and that kind of thing because I think that’s also sort of how you’re getting	Wants to remain financially independent

		Cap-ty-p-eco	into university as well like life experiences, isn't it? But yeah, they would always help me out if I needed money but I'm trying to do it by myself so...	
139.	S1	Hab-p-dis	I think that was really part of the reason why a lot of students wanted to challenge them not just about the course but about like you said, living independently.	More geographic fluidity

Appendix 15. Table of Qualitative Data Analysis Codes

Key Concepts	Codes	Research Question
Habitus	Hab	3
Field	Fd	1, 2, 3
Capital	Cap	1, 2, 3
Field of Power	FP	1
Doxa	Dox	1, 3
Illusio	Ill	1, 2, 3
Characteristics and Qualities of the habitus		
Hab Structured by individual circumstances	Hab-str	
Family history	Hab-str-his	
Educational history	Hab-str-ed	
Social Class	Hab-str-class	
Working	Hab-str-clw	
Middle	Hab-str-clm	
Class in transition	Hab-str-classtran	
Habitus in transition	Hab-str-tran	
Gendered	Hab-str-gen	
Mature student	Hab-str-mat	
Institutional habitus	Hab-str-ins	
AHP Disciplinary habitus	Hab-str-dis	
Family commitments	Hab-str-com	
Hab Structuring	Hab-u	
Past experiences	Hab-u-p	
Self-exclusion from HE	Hab-u-pexcl	
Future actions	Hab-u-f	
Study locally	Hab-u-loc	
Time poverty	Hab-u-time	
Risks associated with HE	Hab-u-time-risk	
Positive experience of choice	Hab-u-pos	
Negative experiences of choice	Hab-u-neg	
Hab as a structure or pattern	Hab-p	
Disposition to HE (what and where to study)	Hab-p-dis	
Lack of disposition to HE	Hab-p-lackdishe	
Disposition to AHP	Hab-p-AHP	
Lack of disposition to AHP	Hab-str-ed	
Embodied entitlement to HE	Hab-p-emb	
Caring disposition	Hab-p-care	
Characteristics and Qualities of Field		
F Position in the social field	F-pos	
F Positional hierarchy	F-pos-hier	
F Rules of the game	F-gam	
F Site of competition	F-com	
F Conditions of the social field	F-cond	
F Prepared for field	F-prep	
F Dissonance	F-diss	

Characteristics and Qualities of Field – continued		
F	Types	F-type
F	Type HE	F-type-he
F	Type HE Elite	F-type-he-el
F	Type HE Post92	F-type-he-post92
F	Type AHP	F-type-ahp
F	Field of Power	F-fop
Characteristics and Qualities of Capital		
Cap	Types	Cap-tyt
Cap	Types Economic	Cap-tyt-eco
Cap	Types Symbolic	Cap-tyt-sym
Cap	Types Social	Cap-tyt-Soc
Cap	Social networks	Cap-Socnet
Cap	Types Cultural	Cap-tyt-cult
Cap	Institutional	Cap-tyt-Inst
Cap	Emotional	Cap-tyt-emo
Cap	Informational resources	Cap-ir
Cap	Informational resources – hot	Cap-ir-hot
Cap	Informational resources – cold	Cap-ir-co