Can the Positioning of Foundation Degree Art and Design in Further Education Colleges Support Progression into Higher Education for Non-traditional Students?

Yvonne Coffey

School of Social Science

Cardiff University

Doctor of Education

2024

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank both the alumni and artist/tutors who took part in this study. Without you giving generously of your time and willingly sharing your experiences, your stories and your insights, this study would not have been possible.

Secondly, I want to acknowledge and thank my supervisors Professor David James and Dr Mark Connolly whose advice, expertise and support have been invaluable in guiding my research. You have provided a depth of understanding and offered stimulating discussions on theory and interpretation which have encouraged continuous investigations and reflection, and I am hugely appreciative of your time and energy.

Thanks also go to my family. My sister Alwyn has been a constant companion on this journey. She has been steadfast in her belief that I could do this even when I did not believe it myself. Her words of wisdom have grounded me at times when I could not see the path forward. My son Bryn deserves special thanks for the time he has allowed me to give to this research, for all the weekends and holidays I have been writing up and not been with him. Your patience and understanding has made this research possible, thank you.

Abstract

This study aims to understand if placing a higher education arts foundation degree in a further education art and design department supports non-traditional students' progression to degree level study. The focus of the research is to understand the lived experience of non-traditional students and to explore influences on their consideration of higher education as something for them. Drawing on an interpretivist epistemology and qualitative approach, the data was gathered from semi-structured interviews with twelve alumni across six cohorts of foundation degree graduates, four in-post artist/tutors and three recently retired artist/tutors in the context of an art and design department within a Welsh further education (FE) college. The study has drawn on Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning concepts and Wenger's (1998) development of communities of practice to understand the social embeddedness of identity reconstruction and decision-making in progression journeys to higher education. Theoretical insights from Bourdieu (1977, 1984) provide perspective on excluding forms of capital and habitus. The study also draws on Bernstein's (1971, 2000) theory of the strategic distribution of resources and their conversion within educational settings determining social hierarchies. The role of artist/tutors' dual professional identity within the further education institution art and design department is analysed to consider the influence this has on pedagogising language as realised through Bernstein's understanding of horizontal and vertical discourse. In doing so the study has considered the impact this has on non-traditional students' identity reconstruction and development of horizons for action and the opening up of possible futures. Non-traditional students' perceptions moved away from feelings of insecurity, viewing higher education as being beyond their capabilities, and moved towards seeing progression as possible and realistic. The study shows the significance of the proximity of foundation degree students to cohorts working at lower levels, enabling them to become part of a rich community of practice. It was seen that this proximity increased non-traditional students' confidence and agency in decision-making to progress to higher education. The main recommendation of this study is that institutions, when reworking spaces and upgrading campuses, recognise the role of tutors' dual professional input and the development of communities of practice and provide the right environment and logistical support to allow these to flourish.

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List of Abbreviations

A-Level	Advanced Level
CCS	Critical and Contextual Studies
CPD	Continual Professional Development
FD	Foundation Degree
FDA	Foundation Degree in Arts
FDSc	Foundation Degree in Science
FE	Further Education
FEI	Further Education Institution
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HND	Higher National Diploma
HoD	Head of Department
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSIS	The Learning Skills Improvement Service
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
THES	The Times Higher Education Supplement
UCAS	University and Colleges Admissions Service

Chapter 1: Introduction: Purpose and Scope of the Study

1.1. Introduction

The impetus for this study was initiated, in part, when I began to reflect on my own experience of higher education (HE) after taking up a tutor role in a further education institution (FEI). I realised I was a very middle-class product of a middle-class family. I progressed through the 1980s every bit the beneficiary of the, by then, established grant system for HE. I attended university studying a BA hons degree in textiles, moving onto a Masters programme at the Royal College of Art. I then established my own studio practice exhibiting widely and grew in this environment, believing that hard work and aptitude were the only attributes necessary to achieve. It was not until I became course director for an arts foundation degree (FDA) in a further education college that I began to question the system. I was coming into contact with students presenting through the BTEC system from Level 2 and 3 or as mature students frustrated at their lack of educational achievement and hoping for a second chance.

As these students progressed through their studies, many chose to engage with higher education and transitioned onto the Level 4 and 5 FDA programme delivered in the art and design department in the FEI. The majority of these non-traditional students, as I came to understand them, moved on to take up places at university on Level 6 honours degree programmes, with some achieving first-class degrees along with distinctions for dissertation. My experience of non-traditional students in the context of the FEI art and design department in the study include those who are from low socio-economic backgrounds, first-generation university students, mature students (21 or over when starting university) and students with a disability. As this pattern of achievement and progression to HE repeated itself over several cohorts, I returned to the same question. Why, when these students were clearly capable, articulate and intelligent did they not progress through the traditional 18-year-old school leaver route with A-level qualifications straight to university? I began to consider that if foundation degrees had not been available to these non-traditional students, would they have found themselves experiencing HE at all?

These questions lingered without any satisfactory insights until I undertook my postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE). It was here I was introduced to Lave

and Wenger's (1991) situated learning concepts and Wenger's (1998) development of communities of practice theory. These approaches to learning resonated with the everyday practice and learning I was witnessing in the art and design department. I began to read more widely to understand broader discussions on access to educational progression. The work of Reay et al. (2005) and their application of Bourdieu's theoretical concept of habitus and its effect on self-efficacy, choice-making and educational opportunity offered intriguing insights into understanding more fully my own professional observations of non-traditional students within the FEI art and design department. As I witnessed successful progression of non-traditional students to HE, I noted their shift in personal perspective towards considering HE was a possibility for them. This left me with anecdotal evidence that something was affecting these non-traditional students positively, and I was curious to find out if there was any substance to my suspicions. Having written a short essay for the PGCE in response to my initial research into non-traditional students' progression to HE and the possible factors which might restrict or enhance this, I was eager to engage with a more substantial piece of research addressing my professional interest. Undertaking a professional doctorate offered the scope and structure to explore this theme more thoroughly. I also felt that if there could be something substantive supporting non-traditional students' progression to HE, by embedding the foundation degree within the FEI art and design department, it was important to understand what was happening. Developing a research-led analysis of the provision could provide strong evidence to protect and extend such provision and influence policy across the college and more broadly across the sector, with a view to enhancing progression to HE for future cohorts of non-traditional students.

1.2. Aims and Purpose of the Study

This study explores the experiences of non-traditional students who were often labelled as non-achievers on leaving school who move to a position of considering higher education as something they can achieve. The aim of the study is, firstly, to understand the contextual influences of studying art and design within an FEI on choice-making to progress to higher education. It also aims to discover if placing HE in an FE college impacts on non-traditional students' identity reconstruction and supports self-efficacy to believe degree level study is something within their imagined futures.

The study aims to illuminate meaning-making and decision-making in educational journeys. It does this by looking closely at the lived experiences of twelve non-traditional student participants as they progress through further education (FE) to HE study within an art and design context. The structure and context of their lived experiences through family, socio-cultural and early educational engagement is important to the study, and it was therefore a focus of the research to investigate students' personal narratives and subjective understanding of these influences. The contextual influence of the FEI art and design department was also central in understanding the mechanisms which influence decision-making. Tutors' dual professional identity as artists who also teach, and the logistical aspects of the learning environment were also considered significant factors in understanding the multifaceted picture of educational trajectory and choice-making for the non-traditional students. As key transmitters of knowledge and creators of the teaching studios within the FEI art and design department, seven artist/tutors were recruited to investigate how their approach to pedagogy and understanding of their professional identity as artists who also teach impacted on the non-traditional students' progression choices. The complex question of whether placing HE within an FEI art and design department is supportive of progression to degree level study for non-traditional students is therefore addressed through two perspectives: that of the non-traditional students and that of the artist/tutors.

1.3. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of nine chapters. Chapter 2 places FE in a broader historical context outlining a stratified system where educational policy structured unequal access to educational opportunity according to social class. It maps the key social, political and economic developments which have either enhanced or inhibited widening participation in HE for the working-class. The vocational nature of further education is understood in this context, and its role in widening participation draws on the introduction of foundation degrees and debates of HE in FE. The chapter goes on to give an overview of literature on art and design pedagogy, summarising the relationship between professional identity, social class and educational engagement, identifying gaps in the literature which this study aims to address.

Chapter 3 considers existing literature, outlining the theoretical approaches which have informed the research. The study draws on the theories of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) to understand the social embeddedness of identity reconstruction and decision-making in progression journeys to HE study. The theoretical framework of situated learning is augmented with insights from both Bourdieu and Bernstein. In addition to Bourdieu's concepts of capital and habitus (Bourdieu 1977, 1984) providing useful insights into excluding forms of social reproduction, the study also makes use of Bernstein's theoretical perspective on the distribution of resources and the strategic conversion of these to determine social hierarchies (Bernstein 1971, 2000). The study draws on class-specific linguistic resources as addressed by both Bourdieu (1984) and Bernstein (1971) to problematise class and educational reproduction. These theoretical approaches address forms of control, offering frameworks through which to understand the regulation of access to forms of capital.

The methodological approach is discussed in Chapter 4 and outlines the rationale for participant recruitment. The different strategies for interviewing alumni and artist/tutors are also discussed to provide detail of the focus for data gathering in relation to answering the research questions. An overview of the methodology as it links with the interpretive paradigm of the study is outlined. This involves an examination of the nature of the participants' subjective understanding of their experiences and guides the qualitative approach to data gathering (Gephart 2004). The pragmatic issues which needed to be addressed when conducting semi-structured interviews are outlined along with the impact of adjustments that had to be made in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which emerged as fieldwork was scheduled to begin. Dual positionality is also addressed in the context of a professional doctorate study, giving focus to how it informed the research and the ethical considerations along with how it influenced giving an effective voice to participant experiences.

The following four sections, Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 set out the analysis of the themes developed from the data: language; dual professional identity; space and decision-making, respectively. These draw out key points of experience as voiced by the participants and bring into focus the significant elements which inform non-traditional students' decision-making to progress to HE study. This analysis is

grounded in the detail of respondent interviews and reveals the interconnectedness of complex personal narrative, socially-situated learning and pedagogic approaches to educational progression.

Chapter 9 provides a discussion of the themes in context, with the theoretical and conceptual viewpoint outlined in the literature review. This offers an interpretation of the analysis, providing insights into the personal decision-making to consider degree level study and the broader mechanisms which support progression to HE for non-traditional students within an FEI art and design context. The chapter has concluding remarks, summarises the original contribution of the study and briefly sets out implications and a direction for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review Part One: The Historical and Pedagogic Context

2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the rationale for the research, and the focus on understanding the impact of placing HE in FE. The introduction gave an overview of my professional engagement in the context of the research, and my growing curiosity to understand the features which support the strong progression to HE for the non-traditional students in the FE art and design department in the study.

This literature review is a critical analysis of the relevant literature on education and frames the theoretical approach to the study. Using a semi-systematic approach, seminal publications provided the initial focus for the literature review. Citation searching was used to identify relevant references and track subsequent scholarly interactions with key publications and specific works. Searching relevant journal databases identifying keywords and phrases related to the research topic and concepts provided further archived and contemporary literature which informed the review.

The review has two parts. The first addresses the historical context of further education and class, then considers the development of HE provision within the sector. This section then focuses on the differing influences which inform art and design pedagogy across compulsory, post-compulsory and higher education and the role of dual professional identity within that context. The second part of the review moves on to frame the research in the context of key theoretical concepts which have informed the study.

There is research evidence that if HE in FE had not been an option, many non-traditional students would not have had the opportunity to study a degree at all (Bathmaker et al. 2018; Burton et al. 2011). The context for non-traditional students' participation is complex and has been shown to impact on effective engagement in what remains a stratified system (Abrahams 2016; Bathmaker and Thomas 2009; Reay et al. 2005). The aim of this study is to examine how placing an arts foundation degree within an FEI, and quite specifically within an art and design department, impacts on non-traditional students' decisions to progress to degree level study.

These decisions are rooted in a stratified education system structured around social class.

Exploring the social, political and economic issues that have shaped the development of FE from its nineteenth century origins will inform the discussion examining the position of educational status along class fault lines. Understanding the roots of further education today will help to contextualise the lack of equity in access to education for certain sectors of society and the divisions that persist in a stratified system. The review will also focus on the particular vocational practice within the further education sector and consider the impact of this on non-traditional students' progression to HE study through an examination of HE within FE. The review examines the intersection of curriculum requirements, institutional culture and professional expertise within creative pedagogy. It also looks at the including or excluding nature of that delivery on differing socio-economic students through the education system to consider if further education pedagogy has a particular approach which may support progression for non-traditional students to HE.

2.2. Class and Further Education: Historical Perspectives

Further education colleges today play a crucial role in a broad spectrum of post-compulsory education, offering vocational, technical and academic provision for school leavers and adult learners. The complex nature of the FE offering stems from its rich history (Simmons 2014). A hunger for education sprung from the burgeoning industrial and scientific developments of the mid-eighteenth century, and its history maps a tangled and confused pattern of social, political and economic initiatives.

Before the gradual development of state intervention in technical education towards the end of the nineteenth century, class remained a defining influence on educational opportunities (Lowe 2015; Lawson and Silver 1973). The industrial revolution, however, saw a shift in the requirements of industry. Prior to this, training in the crafts had been the province of the guilds associated with a specific speciality (Bristow 1970), but these places were very limited. The influence of technical education through the mid-nineteenth century had been limited to philanthropic and industrial involvement, but FE can trace its roots back to this period (Simmons 2014). Change came as the world displayed its technological prowess at the Great

Exhibition of 1851 in London. As Britain gloried in winning the majority of the medals, Bratchell (1968) reflects how the Great Exhibition highlighted the confidence and quality of the competitors, initiating a debate on the importance of good technical education in Britain (Foreman-Peck 2004; Woodin et al. 2013). These fears of depleted industrial prowess sparked a recognition by government that education was a necessary component for national economic growth, and three Commissions[1] looking at educational provision for different social groups were established. The 1861 Newcastle Report, the 1864 Clarendon Report and the 1868 Taunton Report followed, leading to the 1870 Forster Act (Elementary Education Act) laying the foundations for compulsory education (McCulloch 2020). However, governmental intervention in technical education lagged even further behind. In the early part of the nineteenth century, privately funded mechanics' institutes went some way to fill this gap. These institutes opened up opportunities for working-class men and 'intelligent artisans' (Bristow 1970:130) offering classes exploring the scientific ideas and methods rooted in their working practice (Walker 2013), and the movement spread into all major towns across Britain (Ogilvie 1958).

The notion of the working class being given the opportunity to study 'science, art and economics' was, however, seen by some as a threat at a time when the provision of education for working-class children was virtually non-existent. Education of the working class was left, in the main, to private enterprise. There was an underlying prejudice and suspicion towards vocational education (Lowe 2015). Dr George Birkbeck, who established the first mechanics' institute, was regarded in some quarters as 'scattering the seeds of evil' (Maughan 2021). Education for the working class was, at best, viewed as a means to enforce social hierarchy, as expressed by Robert Lowe in 1867.

[1] The Commissions were: The Royal Commission on the State of Popular Education in England, under the chairmanship of the Duke of Newcastle, appointed 1858, publishing its report in 1861. Its remit was to make recommendations for working-class education. The Royal Commission on the Public Schools, appointed in 1861, which produced the 1864 Clarendon Report. It focused on private school education for the upper classes. The Schools Inquiry Commission, chaired by Lord Taunton, appointed in 1864 and reporting in 1868 on schools for the middle class.

> If the lower classes must now be educated…they must be educated that they may appreciate and defer to higher civilisation when they meet it. (Lowe 1867 in Reay 2017:31)

It was against this backdrop that technical education remained underdeveloped (Green 1995). The establishment of The Finsbury Technical College, the first of its kind, was a milestone for further education. It opened in 1883 offering technical instruction and paved the way for similar institutions across Britain. These institutions gave working-class men a means to advance their technical and scientific knowledge (Walker 2013b). They differed from educational provision for the upper classes in that they were vocationally focused, delivering a practical application of the sciences with direct relevance to industrial practice and can be viewed as the forerunners of FE colleges today. The technical colleges suffered from the government's continuing prejudice in providing education for the lower classes and struggled with a lack of financial support. The Technical Institution Act of 1889 was, however, a recognition that a national strategy and framework in respect of technical education was crucial to halt the decline of British industry. The curriculum in the technical schools had to meet the standards set by the Science and Art Department, establishing parity of provision nationally. A further boost to funding came about with the 1890 Local Taxation Act or 'Whisky Tax', as it became known, which directed financial support to technical education institutions (Foreman-Peck 2004), and by the start of the twentieth century these had grown to over 100 (MoE 1951). These institutions were hindered in their ability to provide advanced technical and scientific instruction in light of poor elementary provision for the working classes (Foreman-Peck 2004). The Board of Education Act 1899 combining the Science and Art Department with the Education Department went some way in addressing this issue. The development of evening continuation schools, although delivering low levels of basic instruction, increased demand for higher level input, and in 1902 the Education Act replaced 2,650 school boards with 350 local education authorities (LEAs) who were fundamental in the development of FE provision.

LEAs were given powers, which allowed for control and decision making up to, but not including, university level. There was an attempt to bring cohesion to a very disparate system of education. The 1902 Education Act stated the LEAs 'shall

consider the needs of their area and take steps as seem to them desirable…to supply or aid the supply of education'. The 'seem to them desirable' element of the wording, however, led to various interpretations, and technical education institutions suffered. In the years leading up to the start of the Second World War in 1939, provision for further education was patchy, and Bailey (2002:57) returns to the problematic point that the 1902 Education Act outlined only 'a permissive power, not a duty, of LEAs' to provide further education. Consequently, some LEAs were enthusiastic in their support of technical education, but others chose to focus on elementary and secondary provision (Bailey and Unwin 2014).

Technical education had seen a surge in development in the late nineteenth century. The discretionary nature of the wording in the 1902 Education Act, however, led to inconsistencies of provision. Bailey and Unwin (2014) outline the growing national concern with the lack of technical provision in comparison to European countries, which led to the Board of Education initiating a survey of technical education in 1935. This was focused on understanding LEA provision. What emerged was evidence of vastly differing technical provision in both access and quality (Bailey 1987). Although a policy initiative, referred to as 'T drive' (Bailey and Unwin 2014:454) at the time, was initiated, concerns over imminent war overshadowed it.

The Depression of the 1920s and 1930s had also put severe financial restraints on local authorities, and as the legislation relating to provision of technical education had largely been discretionary, it was easily neglected. The 1944 Education Act aimed to address this and required local authorities to 'secure the provision of adequate facilities for Further Education' (HM Government 1944:33). The Act developed the work of the mechanics' institutions and was fundamental in establishing the British further education sector (Richardson 2007). The effort to improve technical education continued to be rooted in the governing classes' focus on industrial development and economic consideration rather than interest in progressing the opportunities of the working classes. Lowe (2015) discusses how differentiation in curriculum can be employed to steer students towards particular employment depending on socio-economic background. Through critiquing what they describe as a stratified education system, Lowe (2021) argues that education may inhibit progression of students from low socio-economic backgrounds in favour

of those already more advantaged. However, the growth of further education opened up new educational progression routes for learners from low socio-economic backgrounds through vocational training.

Two reports chaired by Eustace Percy (1945) and Alan Barlow (1946) were significant in the development of further education. The Percy Committee had a remit to identify the needs of industry and understand how higher technological education could support that. It looked to universities and technical colleges to play their part in supplying a well-trained workforce, recognising that collaboration between universities and technical colleges was important in the field of technological developments. A focus on scientific manpower was the remit of The Barlow Report, which followed one year later (Lowe 2002). It reiterated that technological education needed to be closely allied with industrial need, but raised the status of vocational education by recommending colleges should have capacity to provide 'courses of a standard comparable with that of university degree courses' (Barlow Report:11).

Although many of the recommendations in relation to the establishment of specialised technology institutions were not realised at the time, both reports laid the foundations for the FE colleges we see today. The 1956 White Paper 'Technical Education' revisited the Percy and Barlow reports, and with the support of the then Minister of Education, David Eccles, a strong structure of technical education was set in place. FE would now have a national framework funded by local authorities (Cantor et al. 1995).

By the 1980s technical colleges became increasingly known as further education colleges and represented a 'distinctive sector of post-compulsory education' (Bailey 2002:54). Their remit of vocational provision was broadening. They developed GCSE and A-Level courses, and through a lack of provision elsewhere, became providers of diverse educational opportunities for students with special educational needs, improving adult numeracy and literacy and in response to the increasing numbers of unemployed offered preparation for work courses (Pring 1995). Access courses to HE for students lacking the traditional qualifications provided alternative routes to university. The government's agenda of increasing participation in higher education and providing 'rungs in a new vocational ladder' (Parry and Thompson

2001:1) broadened further education colleges' provision, incorporating the teaching of foundation degrees.

Nationally, further education colleges vary significantly (Lucas 2004). They reflect their industrial heritage and are guided by, and understand, the demographic challenges of their local populations. The broad offering, spanning pre-GCSE and degree level study gives unique access to students marginalised from traditional educational progression routes and puts further education colleges in a strong position to offer accessible pathways on the 'vocational ladder' to higher education.

2.3. Further Education and Incorporation

In 1992 the educational landscape was dramatically altered with the Further and Higher Education Act which set in motion the transfer of further education colleges out of LEA control establishing them as self-governing independent institutions, in what became known as 'incorporation' (Jephcote and Salisbury 2007). For some it was celebrated 'as a defining moment of liberation' (Foster 2005:9) but this was short-lived. The aim was to expand post-16 participation and drive down costs, with the government believing competition would raise standards. As education was marketised colleges were compelled to compete on targets (Lucas and Crowther 2016). As funding was closely linked to performance if college results were poor, they would be forced to close or be taken over by more successful institutions. Wallace (2013:21) describes this ideology as 'the economic equivalent of Darwin's survival of the fittest'. In this predatory environment institutions focused inward and the Foster Report (2005:19) noted how incorporation had:

> 'Isolated individual teaching institutions from each other in a potentially counter-productive competitive environment, reducing the opportunities for collaborative cost-sharing, trans-provider learning pathways and the provision of learner centred advice and guidance.'

Although the Foster Report recognised the negative unforeseen ramifications of incorporation the language used remained fundamentally market driven. Further education colleges were viewed by the report as a vital provider of vocational training to supply skilled workers for the future prosperity of Britain. Educationalists in the sector, however, held on to the view that further education also offered non-

traditional students returning to education a ‘second chance’ (Wallace 2013) and access to broader spaces of learning which inform and improve individual lives.

Working-class children are more likely to leave school aged 16 and move onto FE than their middle-class counterparts. The Youth Cohort Study (Thomas 2014) although recognising that some middle-class students will progress to FE highlight that those from low socio-economic backgrounds are three times more likely to progress on to FE than those from more privileged backgrounds. It is important, therefore, to understand vocational provision within the context of social class (Wallace 2013). Looking at the historical context of further education has outlined the development of stratified ideas regarding educational status and social class. The perception that vocational education in preparation for work is less prestigious than academic pursuits still echoes today (Wallace 2013).

There has, however, been a persistent relationship between further education provision and HE level qualifications. The long history of further education colleges providing higher education has been largely hidden by the expansion of first degrees at university and the development of polytechnics during the 1980s (Parry and Thompson 2001). Further education colleges continue to increase their HE offering (Rapley 2012), and play a significant part in widening access. Considering the strategic role further education colleges play in their approach to vocational learning and unique understanding of their students’ socio-economic and cultural background, it is important to understand if they contribute to non-traditional students’ progression to HE within the context of the art and design department in this study. Therefore, the discussion will now move on to look at the development of HE within FE.

2.4. Development of HE in FE and the Introduction of Foundation Degrees

HE in FE generally focuses on vocational provision with cohorts typically composed of non-traditional students. Their profile encompasses a wide range of demographics, from mature students, single parents, first generation participants, those from low socio-economic backgrounds and students requiring part-time provision to support participation (Crosling et al. 2008). This is in stark contrast to the predominant view

preceding the 1960s that higher education was the exclusive domain of an elite few. The Robbins Report of 1963 saw the political mindset shift towards mass HE influenced by a belief that knowledge was central in Britain's economic development (Rapley 2012). Lowe (2002:83) outlines how the 'Robbins principle', that anyone with the aptitude and qualifications should have the opportunity to enter university, lay at the heart of the Robbins Report. Although Robbins advocated for a single system of higher education, following the 1964 general election, Harold Wilson's Labour government announced a "'binary policy" as a new template for any further growth' (Lowe 2002:83-84). Lord Robbins strongly opposed this direction as he spoke out in the House of Lords stating, 'Far from seeking to minimise barriers, it [the binary system] positively creates them' (Robbins 1965). Technical colleges were not incorporated into universities but developed into polytechnics (Hillman 2023). They differed from universities, however, in that they lacked powers to award their own degrees signalling the differentiation still present between universities as independent self-governing bodies and HE provision delivered through polytechnics and FEIs controlled by LEAs (Scott 2009). The Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 ushered in incorporation, established new funding councils and removed the link with LEAs.

The Dearing Report in 1997 marked a seismic change in HE provision with the introduction of tuition fees and an agenda to further expand participation. The Dearing Report concurred with the Robbins Report by rejecting the assertion that HE should be reserved for the elite few on the grounds that there was a 'limited pool of ability', instead taking the position that 'it is very often true that "*people respond to opportunities that are available*"' (Dearing Report 1997:101). Laying out its agenda to develop the work of the Robbins Report in widening participation, Dearing viewed the further education sector as central in the expansion of HE (NCIHE 1997). Co-operation between FE and higher education institutions (HEIs) was officially encouraged, heralding political recognition of HE in FE (Parry and Thompson 2002). Foundation degrees (FDs) delivered through FEIs were a central pillar in the policy for widening participation. They provided vocationally focused, short cycle higher education degrees in partnership with universities, and as with bachelor's degrees, FDs were classified by subject, for example, FDSc and FDA being sciences and arts, respectively. Designed as a stand-alone qualification studied over two years full-

time, embedded in their remit to widen participation was the option of part-time provision of up to four years. Close ties with industry made clear the link with technical skills aimed at providing vocational job opportunities. The partnerships with universities, however, offered clear routes of progression for students to top up their FD to a full honours degree by undertaking the final Level 6 year at university. Although FEIs had been delivering HE through technical and HND (Higher National Diploma) qualifications since the middle of the twentieth century (Feather 2010), this new initiative placed the sector at the centre of the government policy to increase provision and provided viable progression routes for students from diverse backgrounds to access HE (Parry and Thompson 2002).

In 1999 Tony Blair set an ambitious target of 50% participation in HE by 2007. In 2001 David Blunkett, the then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, officially launched the new FDs at the Institute of Economic Affairs in London, stating 'the future expansion of higher education "will be focused heavily on foundation degrees and vocationally oriented study"' (THES 2001). A connected system supported by school, college and HEI cooperation was designed to provide incremental steps in the new vocational 'ladder' of degree study. The Labour government's belief that education was the driver of a knowledge economy gave FE a significant role in widening access to HE, expanding its already diverse offering. The establishment of FDs, situated in FEIs was confirmation of the political endorsement of this policy (Rapley 2012). The government's widening participation agenda was further supported by particular mention of increasing participation for students from low socio-economic backgrounds in the 2003 White Paper 'The Future of Higher Education'. The unique challenges of non-traditional students engaging in HE is understood through a recognition of the distinctive contribution FEIs make to students' positive experience of HE as outlined by LSIS (2009:5). Small cohorts and strong supportive pedagogy place FEIs in a crucial position to nurture the first generation HE student, returners to education hoping for a second chance, and those from low socio-economic backgrounds (LSIS 2009).

These initiatives have given credibility to vocational routes to HE study, but Bathmaker and Thomas (2009) make clear, however, that simply placing HE within an FEI is not always enough to support progression to degree level study for non-traditional students (Bathmaker 2016; Bathmaker et al. 2018). Bathmaker and

Thomas (2009) followed students in an English dual-sector college as they moved from FE to HE in the same institution. Drawing on qualitative data gathered through student, tutor and management interviews, documentary analysis and fieldwork observations Bathmaker and Thomas (2009) identified tensions stemming from divergent institutional cultures if HE in FE provision were physically separated. The use of space was found to be significant in the development of the differing cultures or institutional habitus. It was seen to complicate transition to higher levels of study resulting in lower levels of progression within the institution. The location of, and spaces occupied by, FE and HE students have the potential to play a significant role in the development of the culture of the teaching environment and examination of the factors influencing transition to HE for non-traditional students. The aim of this study is to understand if art and design contributes to non-traditional students accessing HE. It was therefore important to consider if 'spaces to practice' are significant in breaking down barriers to progression and is addressed in Chapter 7 'Space and Proximity'.

Distinctions are set out by Bathmaker (2016), however, between 'elite' institutions and HE provision within FEI's. They outline that non-traditional students progressing though the FE system may be steered away from higher ranking universities stemming from judgements on their ability and aptitude for study. Questions are posed as to the value of HE in FE in a 'hierarchically stratified system' (Bathmaker 2016:8) but Bathmaker concludes that non-traditional students from disadvantaged backgrounds may not have gained access to HE by any other route. The FurtherHigher research project by Sheffield University examined the influence of dual-sector provision offering FE and HE. The study used qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct an in-depth analysis of four dual-sector English institutions conducting interviews with 80 students as they transitioned from FE to HE study. The study took a broad approach to the various routes classed as HE in FE and the social demographic of those students taking up these opportunities. The conclusion was that further education colleges 'make a distinctive contribution to widening participation' (Parry et al. 2008:4) for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. However, while both Bathmaker (2016) and the FurtherHigher Project agree on the positive role FE institutions play in access to HE, neither explore actual

experiences and decisions, or the underlying reasons for students progressing though these educational routes.

The impact of placing HE in FE on individual opportunity is discussed by Avis and Orr (2016) through statistical analysis of official data and engagement with key literature on HE in FE. They debate the distinctiveness of HE in FE and highlight the contribution strong pedagogic structures, small class sizes and the support of the teaching staff in FE to their HE students has on the culture of widening participation. A key question for these authors is whether placing HE in an FE context stimulates 'the reproduction or interruption of patterns of inequality in wider society' (Avis and Orr 2016:50). When judging the value of HE in FE Avis and Orr found the literature identified individual student experiences as important, highlighting the significance of wider learning, that of attitudes to trust, changing perspectives of the value of, and confidence in, knowledge acquisition and aspiration to progress to higher levels of education. The mobilisation of knowledge, in particular access to theoretical abstract knowledge, is seen as particularly central in the role HE in FE can play in non-traditional students' ability to 'think the unthinkable and the not-yet-thought' (Wheelahan 2010:9). The mediation of knowledge through uneven social access can be a means to exert power through the controlling and legitimising of certain knowledge production serving the elite (Bernstein 2000). HE in FE can help to address this uneven relationship by providing access to conceptual knowledge. Wheelahan (2010) argues, through a Bernsteinian perspective, that conceptual knowledge has the capacity to stimulate intellectual power through 'the integration of meanings' (Wheelahan 2010:21) moving from the immediate context to broader understanding. This can provide non-traditional students with a segue from tacit knowledge, through pedagogic engagement with their tutors, to new perspectives and vocabulary to think about and debate concepts. This can support conscious questioning of embedded attitudes and ways of independently testing new approaches to their own world view and in turn contribute to knowledge production (Wheelahan 2010). Such opportunities, Avis and Orr (2016) conclude, have the ability to transform individual lives with knowledge acquisition, enhancing understanding, experience and giving opportunity to gain agency. It was recognised that FEIs offer non-traditional students supportive environments and were in a strong position to deliver curriculum through vocational pedagogy sensitive to diverse

backgrounds. Tutors' vocational pedagogy stems from their subject-specific background and training in educational delivery manifesting as a dual professional identity.

Central to this research is the question of whether placing an arts foundation degree programme in the FEI art and design department supports progression to HE for non-traditional students. A key element, which emerged in addressing this question is understanding the dual professional identities of tutors who are also professional artists and the influence this has on pedagogic approaches. Consideration was also given to the possible effect this may have on decision-making of non-traditional students to progress to HE study. The review will now move on to examine art and design pedagogy and dual professional identity to understand how these play out in the context of compulsory, post-compulsory, and higher education.

2.5. Art and Design Pedagogy in Compulsory, Post-compulsory, and Higher Education and the Influence of Professional Identity

Creative pedagogy within arts education creates a particular relationship between tutors and students. The expectations and dynamics shift depending on the disposition and experience of the tutor, students' age and background, level of course and institutional culture. This section looks, in turn, at art and design pedagogy within compulsory, post-compulsory, and higher education to distinguish the significant elements, which inform student engagement. The professional identity of the teachers and tutors who deliver this pedagogy is also addressed to examine how this influences the students' experience.

2.5.1. Transitions in Art and Design Pedagogy

Risk-taking and mistake-making are recurrent themes in the investigation of art and design pedagogy through school, post-compulsory, and higher education (Hickman 2000; Graham and Zwirn 2010). Allowing a space for trial and error is an important concept of arts education. Early years arts education is considered pivotal in nurturing 'possible thinking', and the pedagogic approach should be one which facilitates agency in the child (Craft 2002). Pressures on literacy and numeracy, however, leave the quality of arts education in early years education lacking in depth and perception. This is compounded as few early years teachers have specific arts

training (Pound and Harrison 2003) and many lack the competencies and in-depth professional knowledge to engage fluently with the practices and materials they are introducing to the children (Pramling Samuelsson et al. 2009) leaving much provision formulaic with homogeneous outcomes.

The professional identity of art teachers in high school shifts, as many have subject-specific training as artists as well as educational expertise. The implication of having a dual professional identity as an artist who also teaches is addressed by Page (2012) through a research project which examined the developing identities of art teachers as they set out on their PGCE training. The research examined the impact of dual professional identity on pedagogy and the implications of operating in a fundamentally hierarchical structure of school-based education for the under sixteens.

In the hierarchical structure of compulsory schooling, identity formation of teacher and pupil can set the identity of 'self' (teacher) as a response to the 'other' (student) as in 'self-other'. In the tutor-student relationship, the hyphen, as Page (2012) outlines, can structure the relationship in the learning environment into a hierarchical discourse. The teachers' and students' identities are developed and modified in terms of how they are in contrast to the other in the often restrictive nature of state-imposed curricula within high school education focused on exam outcomes (Hickman 2000; Atkinson 2002). These identities involve power relationships in the wake of results-driven judgements of success and league table scrutiny. This positioning of teacher and learner translates into 'self' and 'other', setting one against the other. This is problematic for Page (2012) because, when 'othering' occurs, pupils lack agency to influence pedagogy in the classroom.

The large class sizes and demands for results can lead to teachers adopting a 'single class-room methodology' (Steers 2004:31) and teachers being prescriptive in funnelling students towards formulaic assessment focused outcomes. The 'us' and 'them', as Alcoff (1991) discusses, persists, with the structural reinforcement of a target-driven asymmetric relationship between pupil and teacher. Teachers strive for 'safe' work with reliable outcomes (Steers 2004). This approach leaves little room for students' own interests and finds teachers effectively talking 'for' students (Page

2012). This ‘othering’ (Page 2012) or Alcoff’s (1991) ‘us’ and ‘them’ can have the effect of silencing the ‘them’ in an uneven power dynamic.

In overcoming such structures, Baxter (2014) discusses the value of artistic practice for the ‘artist teachers’, as he encapsulates the dual professional expertise of the art teacher in high school. The struggles and insecurities of the creative process are central aspects in breaking down the ‘us-them’ divide (Baxter 2014). A dialogical approach to art and design learning is expressed by Shreeve et al. (2010) in developing a student-centred pedagogy and is helpful in moving away from a hierarchical interaction. Attempts have been made to challenge these asymmetric relationships. Page’s research involving a collaboration between Goldsmiths University of London and a sixth form art and design department showed that art and design pedagogy can develop in a fluid and reflexive milieu, which allows the identities of students and teachers to encompass and recognise the artistic modes of being. This necessitates the blurring of defined roles (Page 2012), which encourages student and teacher to learn together and identify new horizons. This was played out in Page’s research in which post-compulsory students in a sixth form environment worked with beginning teachers to construct a project. The aim was to set new environments in which a blurring of identities could be encouraged. Initially, as Page (2012) outlines, the beginning teachers were very aware of the pedagogical restraints of teacher-learner, deliverer-receiver of knowledge. There was a conscious effort on the part of the beginning teachers to disrupt this pedagogy and by addressing vocabulary, a shift in dynamics was perceived. One beginning teacher reflected on the effect challenging traditional language had on the learning space. ‘They started calling me Miss and I explained to them that I am working with them, that this is about us and that they could call me by my first name’ (beginning teacher, Dec. 2009, Page 2012:71). Although this provided a collaborative space, the exercise was short-lived and did not find traction in under sixteen provision.

2.5.2. Art and Design Pedagogy in Further Education

This shift in vocabulary is something learners coming into a post-compulsory environment take time to reconcile in their identities as emerging independent learners. ‘Miss’ can often be reverted to and calling a tutor by their first name can disrupt the identity of the student. In FE the emphasis is on post-compulsory, and as

such, the hierarchical structure can be challenged. There remains, however, pressure on successful completion of qualifications, proving the viability of courses and ensuring continued funding. The extent to which FE art and design pedagogy may offer a distinctive approach for non-traditional students will now be examined.

There is a gap in the literature in relation to art and design pedagogy in FE, although work in recent years by Rintoul (2017) has begun to look in detail at this particular environment. Their study examines the impact of the delivery of critical and contextual studies (CCS) within BTEC Extended Diploma in Art and Design courses. Five in-depth qualitative case studies gathered data through observation, the creation of visual images by students and semi-structured interviews with students and staff. Rintoul identifies how art and design courses in FEIs can be the first time young adults have the chance to study art and design full-time. This opportunity to specialise in their chosen subject, following the completion of compulsory schooling and the mandatory nature of certain subjects, can be a significant catalyst for new approaches to the pedagogic input of tutors in this learning space. Students who decide to progress to FEIs often present with varying levels of academic achievement, and the diversity of student backgrounds requires tutors to employ a range of pedagogical approaches. Although contextual studies in the art and design milieu is the focus of Rintoul's (2017) research, the individual dynamics and pedagogic input of the tutors is acknowledged as having a fundamental impact on the educational experience for the students. There is a recognition that 'at best, this variability offers flexibility: CCS can be tailored to accommodate available course resources and satisfy student dispositions along with staff specialisms' (Rintoul 2017:64). Conversely there are warnings of the slip which can occur if the pedagogic vision lacks clarity. For example, if pedagogic delivery is focused too narrowly on assessment, this reduces the content of the subject matter to a series of hoops to be negotiated without allowing for or encouraging the student to integrate the learning into their own battery of resources and skills to employ in a wider context.

This relationship between institutional expectation, teacher, knowledge acquisition and student is highlighted by the 'Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education' study (James and Biesta 2007) in which the complexity of interactions is examined. The study was one of the largest research projects into FE carried out in the United Kingdom. The 'Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education'

study looked in detail at nineteen learning sites across four English FE colleges through a nested case study approach. Data was gathered over three years, interviewing six students from each learning site at the beginning and end of each academic year in conjunction with broader questionnaire surveys incorporating all students at the FE colleges. 'Participating tutors' from each learning site were interviewed and asked to complete tutor journals and observations of teaching practice were undertaken across each site.

Tutors were found to draw on their vocational professional identity to develop curricular delivery, which brought students closer to the practices of the relevant vocational community and its culture. A finding echoed by Shreeve et al. (2010) as they outline the significance of broader communities of practice informing art and design tutors 'disciplinary knowledge, which is provisional, unstable and has constantly changing ideas about what is important' (Shreeve et al. 20010:128). Institutional pressures were, however, seen by James and Biesta (2007), as a significant player, inhibiting tutor agency to fully engage students in the vocational nature of their practice. James and Biesta (2007) cite the case of Paul, a photography tutor, who established a structure of delivery that echoed photographers' professional working practice. It was a popular approach considered by students and tutors to offer effective learning opportunities and efficient use of resources. These professionally informed pedagogies, however, clashed with institutional expectations of learning and judgements of quality. This ultimately required Paul to return to the institutional norms of traditional classroom teaching, removing students from the 'vocational culture' (James and Biesta 2007:91) he had worked to introduce.

The relationship between the professional identities of artists who also teach, and the development of rich social studio environments were found, however, in Graham and Zwirn's (2010) study to overcome some institutional restrictions, as students and artist/tutors view them as places of possibility. Over nine months Graham and Zwirn conducted in-depth interviews with, and observed, 16 artist/tutors in their teaching studios to understand the relationship between the tutors' creative practice and classroom pedagogy. Graham and Zwirn (2010) found artist/tutors use the classroom as extensions of their own studio, and as such, allow students to develop individual practices which are supported by creative and professional pedagogy. These spaces value student knowledge and experiences alongside the artist/tutors artistic and

curricular interests (Graham and Zwirn 2010). This pedagogic structure is contrasted with the conventional teaching environment in compulsory education, which can be focused on maintaining the hierarchy and order in the classroom, concentrating on a common learning outcome for assessment.

Blurring of the traditional transmission model, with the teacher as deliverer and student as receiver (Eckhoff 2013), is discussed in research into the influence tutors who are also artists have on the learning milieu. Graham and Zwirn (2010) identify this as disruptive pedagogy and view it as central in the development of spaces which are unstructured, hospitable and encourage play. A central theme which emerges is collaboration and the notion that discussion and mutually satisfying conversations allow and encourage risk-taking. These spaces of possibility find the students and tutors in an environment which values difference and has time for divergent experiences and backgrounds to find a voice. These are the places and spaces created by artist/tutors in FE as they open up possibilities for the students to develop and investigate their own narratives and expectations in an atmosphere which values their backgrounds and social experiences.

2.5.3. Art and Design Pedagogy in Higher Education

Within HE it is also common, if not an expectation, that lecturers in the art and design school have professional qualifications in their specialist fields as well as teaching qualifications. We have looked at the pedagogic dispositions of compulsory and post-compulsory art education. Distinctions have been made between the hierarchical structures in school and the more flexible multi-level interaction in FE studio spaces along with the role played by the dual professional identities of the artist/tutors. We will now look at art and design pedagogy in HE and examine to what extent this differs from art and design pedagogy in both FE and compulsory education.

Many of those responsible for art and design learning in HE would agree that the most important disposition for effective pedagogy is to have an ‘open mind’. Signature pedagogies of art and design, as outlined by Shreeve et al. (2010), incorporate expectations around students experimenting, exploring the unknown and risk-taking all of which create a culture of ambiguity or a ‘kind of exchange’ (Shreeve et al. 2010:130), but Shreeve et al. (2010) also outline that students have to

learn and negotiate these exchanges. Students' capacity to engage with such exchanges fluently can be reliant on social and cultural background. The perception of art school pedagogy and curriculum that 'anything goes' is challenged by Orr and Shreeve (2018:39). Contrasts are drawn between the outwardly liberal creative turn of art schools in HE with what can be a structured, tacitly narrow set of accepted values and aesthetic doctrines in the studio teaching space (Pollock 2011; Strickfaden and Heylinghen 2010). Higher education has been seen to privilege the traditional student (Reay et al. 2005) leaving non-traditional students feeling isolated and struggling to fit in.

Art and design educators have a profound influence on the teaching environment and the values which are privileged in the studio (Strickfaden and Haylinghen 2010). The 'design-specific capital' (Strickfaden and Haylinghen 2010:131), which is reflected back to the student cohort is significant in the acculturalisation of the student body into the value systems at play and the invisible pedagogy within the art and design learning environment. This invisible pedagogy flows through the cultural capital of the art and design educator. Strickfaden and Haylinghen (2010:131) describe this as 'the designers' toolbox or thesaurus' and outline the influence these resources have on everyday discussions, interaction and construction of pedagogy within the teaching milieu. The world view of the educator is influential in the teaching environment and has often been influenced by former teachers. As educators are professionalised into art and design value structures there is the need to question the implications of a dominant value system and the effect this has on access to, and acceptance of, such a structure, a structure which is 'often hidden, within our creative educational discourse' (Orr and Shreeve 2018:39). For non-traditional students the value structure in higher education art and design institutions can be an alien environment. These values are often tacit and left unspoken and are 'situated within structures of values that privilege and disadvantage students in different ways' (Orr and Shreeve 2018:42). The curriculum and pedagogy derive from this milieu and are inevitably biased towards the institutional and faculty disposition (Addison 2014). Barriers to full integration are prevalent for students who do not conform to the 'ideal student type' (Orr and Shreeve 2018). The stereotype of a student who has unlimited time to be in the studio developing their creative goals is 'culturally loaded' (Vaughan et al. 2008) and does not take account of the varied demands on

non-traditional students. Pedagogy within HE art and design and the values which are centred around judging the commitment of students to their studies can be 'a masculinised idea of the student unencumbered with children, financial constraints or responsibility' (Orr and Shreeve 2018:51).

In one study, non-traditional students entering art and design courses in HE were viewed as the '"pedagogised other" through the signature pedagogies of art and design and the horizontal discourse of the studio' (Broadhead 2014:42). Broadhead (2014) followed eight non-traditional post-Access art and design students over two years as they pursued their university degree courses. Data gathered through qualitative interviews within the study found that for the non-traditional students this bias led to 'othering' (Broadhead 2014). Bernstein's work (1973) on the excluding potential of curricular and pedagogy which exert control and bias influence was drawn on by Broadhead (2014). They discussed how the positioning of pedagogic values within the art and design milieu left non-traditional students feeling disempowered, undervalued and lacking in confidence. Broadhead (2014) argued that, in the studios of the art and design departments, a horizontal structure of knowledge transmission occurs.

Broadhead's (2014) study shows how HE art and design courses are marketed to stereotypical traditional school age leavers and through middle-class imagery and language. Practices which are accepted and normative are promoted and students are recruited who demonstrate and conform to these pedagogic ideals. Students who take risks and demonstrate middle-class taste in their portfolios are privileged and form the majority of the student cohort within HE (Broadhead 2014). Institutional and pedagogic norms can manifest as horizontal solidarity (Bernstein 2003) in an environment where the majority of the cohort are of a similar background and age (Hatton 2012). This can lead to the normalisation of certain learning structures, and this is reinforced by the pedagogy of tutors who also come from these legitimised backgrounds and learning norms. Horizontal solidarity, as developed by Bernstein from a Durkheimian term, is a mechanism that facilitates the distribution of knowledge of structures, pedagogies and tacit understanding through groups with similar dispositions (Broadhead 2014). These interactions are complex and subtle but can exclude the 'other'. When the non-traditional student is othered, they lack access to this important learning resource. This exclusion can be generated by students and

tutors alike and the pedagogic approach of lecturers can reinforce this isolation. As Broadhead (2014) discovered in their research, a part-time student was not given the necessary information to understand the requirements for the course and the curricular and pedagogical structure was focused solely on full-time traditional students who conformed more closely to the 'ideal type'. Students from non-traditional backgrounds may struggle to fully assimilate into these environments as they are pedagogised as 'other' (Hatton 2012). This 'othering' resonates with Page's arguments, introduced earlier in Chapter 2 (2.5.1:19) in relation to the hyphen, us-them, and self-other. Page reasons that the hyphen needs to be employed as a bridge. FEIs could be in a strong position to use the hyphen as a bridge to support a wide cohort of non-traditional students in achieve educational progression to HE.

2.6. Summary

There seems to be very little attention paid to FE art and design pedagogy in contrast to research into early years and HE practice in this area. Understanding the significance of professional identity and student engagement, along with environmental influences within FE art and design pedagogy is important to gain insights into this complex milieu and consider if it makes a contribution to progression to HE for non-traditional students. This study will examine these processes and develop a theoretical framework to consider the research questions. Chapter 3 will now set out the theoretical debates which have informed the study.

Chapter 3: Literature Review Part Two: Theoretical Framework

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter placed FE within an historical context tracing the social, political and economic influences which inform the sector today. Key political policies, which aimed to widen participation, were discussed and the role this played in providing non-traditional students with access to HE through the development of HE in FE was examined. The chapter then moved on to consider art and design pedagogy across compulsory, post-compulsory and higher education and the excluding or including nature that differing pedagogic devices have on access to educational knowledge for non-traditional students.

In order to understand these processes in the context of this study, a theoretical framework to identify and reflect on specific aspects is necessary. To create this framework the literature review will begin by considering the theory of situated learning within communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). This will provide the research with valuable insights into practice through legitimate peripheral participation in order to understand the production and reproduction of knowledge and identity formation. The intersection between institutional structures, curricular-input and non-traditional students is of interest to this study in understanding how the individual negotiates and interprets access to HE. This chapter will explore the impact of students' socio-economic background on educational engagement through a discussion of Bourdieu's key concepts of habitus and capital (1984, 1986). Advantages and disadvantages of social class in access to cultural capital and the implications this has for acquiring institutional forms of capital such as qualifications will also be considered. This will help to better understand the mechanisms which work to support or inhibit educational progression. The chapter then considers the debates on language as a control mechanism, as addressed by both Bourdieu and Bernstein, in regulating access to forms of capital. This is explored through considering links between class-specific linguistic resources and educational and class reproduction.

When considering educational progression in the context of this study, it is important to understand how the intersection of situated learning, habitus, cultural capital and language operate in the art and design studio. The art studio has been viewed as a 'pivot and gathering point of all knowledge' (Mostafa and Mostafa 2010:310) where students engage in creative practice alongside and under the supervision of specialist practitioners (Schon 1987). Many tutors within the art and design department continue to pursue their professional artistic practice despite the significant demands on time and resources and it not being a requirement of their educational roles. The impact this dual professional identity may have on pedagogy, construction of teaching studios and interactions with students is of interest to the study. In order to understand if this particular combination of actors and place has an influence on progression to HE for non-traditional students, the chapter examines the nature of dual professional identity in the context of art and design education, which has been seen in previous studies to be significant in informing tutors educational dispositions.

In summary this review considers the four conceptual areas with a direct bearing on the study, namely: a. Situated learning theory within communities of practice; b. Habitus and concepts of capital; c. The influence of language as understood by both Bourdieu and Bernstein in accessing education; and d. Dual professional identity of artist/tutors. The chapter will end by identifying gaps in the literature, which have led to the development of my research questions.

3.2. Situated Learning Theory within Communities of Practice

Situated learning is central in the discussions of communities of practice. Lave and Wenger's (1991) seminal study of tailors, butchers, midwives and non-drinking alcoholics outlined how learning is participation and is socially-situated rather than simply a cognitive process. Vygotsky's (1978) development of the theory of the zone of proximal development where a learner acquires skills and knowledge more efficiently by learning though a more experienced peer or teacher was influential on Lave and Wenger's thinking. They developed the concept of legitimate peripheral participation to theorise how new members in close proximity to experienced 'old timers' gain access to the skills, practices and regimes of competence within a community of practice. Learning, for Lave and Wenger (1991), involves socio-

cultural practices and legitimate peripheral participation and enables a learner to become assimilated into a community of practice. Learning is therefore broader than classroom instruction and encompasses rich social interactions in an authentic context, which holds beliefs and behaviours that need to be acquired by newcomers if they are to become full members of the community. Newcomers start their involvement with a community of practice on the periphery, and as they are given opportunities for involvement in the activities and practices of the community, they move closer to the centre. Prolonged engagement and access to the practices of the community inform newcomers' perspectives and influence identity reconstruction as 'part of actors' learning trajectories' (Lave and Wenger 1991:36). Wenger (1998) expands on the concept of communities of practice, applying it to knowledge acquisition and learning in a broad range of contexts. Legitimate peripheral participation is also developed by Wenger (1998) to understand the role of observation, detailed access to practice-specific processes, and meaning-making when problem solving to engage newcomers in what constitutes the practice of the community. As newcomers acquire knowledge and assimilate the dispositions of the community, there are changes in what they know and what they can do. This brings shifts in the sense of self and identity reconstruction (Wenger 1998).

Many researchers have found communities of practice to be a helpful theoretical tool to analyse complex learning environments (e.g., Lingard et al. 2022, Bailey et al. 2023). Lingard et al. (2022) draw particular attention to the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) in relation to situated learning and the rich nuanced development of practice, which can take place in 'material environments'. They explore the significance of social relationships in apprentices internalising competencies of the community, developing helpful insights into the socially-situated nature of communication between supervisors and apprentices which support learning. This, they discover, results from the development of communities of practice emerging from the field of operation. The act of participation is found by Lingard et al. (2022) to be central in newcomers' understanding of what constitutes a member of the community. Being able to internalise what 'sort' of person they need to be in order to demonstrate the competencies of the community is only fully realised through social activity while participating in the practice of the community. Modelling of behaviours and socio-cultural competencies are demonstrated by established

members through ‘verbal and nonverbal communication’ (Lingard et al. 2022). This crucially takes place within a social structure. Learning happens as newcomers observe the practices of the community. They emulate practice through engagement as the habits and values of the community are internalised. This influences identity reconstruction and a sense of becoming a member of the community of practice.

Understanding the impact on the individual of a community of practice is explored by Bailey et al. (2023) in their study of ship officers acquiring the knowledge essential in applying effective collision avoidance strategies. It was found that learning was rooted in a community of practice and went beyond the internationally shared technical model for collision avoidance, requiring officers to respond with tacit, flexible knowledge to the multitude of ambiguous information and dynamic situations presented across diverse shipping encounters. The application of Lave and Wenger’s situated learning theory identifies the tacit nature of acquiring professional literacy and the knowledge and contextual judgement to demonstrate ‘good seamanship’ (Bailey et al. 2023:14).

These social structures of learning were found to be important in the acquisition of knowledge and members’ trajectory towards full membership of the communities. Bailey et al. (2023) point out that there needs to be a recognition within the vocational training sector that learning is richer than simply conveying information. These rich mechanisms of social activity are central to the development of tacit knowledge and deep understanding of the communities’ practices. This informs identity reconstruction and needs to be acknowledged within the literature and embedded into training programmes, where space should be allocated to allow such practices to flourish. My research question has, in part, emerged from a need to understand the institutional and pedagogic structures which frame student decision-making in the context of their social background and identity reconstruction to better understand what supports or disadvantages students already dealing with a disproportionate lack of opportunity.

Research within the context of FE art and design as communities of practice is limited. Parkes (2005) details an interesting arts project with relevance to this study, which took place within an FE setting. The focus of the research, the making of a film titled *Home*, was an additional learning project providing extra-curricular

experience in an East London FEI. This was a particularly ambitious project drawing together, in the same space, professionals, teacher-artists and student participants in collaboration. What is significant is the finding that exposure of students from low socio-economic backgrounds to a broad range of experienced creatives and professional spaces of engagement developed important communities of practice. Parkes (2005) discovered that this gave students insight into progression routes and expanded their internal concepts of possible futures. A fuller understanding of the environments in which students experience learning forms an important theme in my study.

A criticism of Parkes' (2005) initiative was, however, the sheer commitment of time and energy for the tutors at the college and, although, it was a well-funded project, the extra personal resources necessary to complete the project were ultimately unsustainable. Gaining insight into what curricular, logistical, social or pedagogic influences might support or inhibit non-traditional students' progression to HE in the context of the FEI art and design department, is the focus of this study. In identifying these nuanced mechanisms in the complex environment of HE in FE, the aim is to provide a tool in the discourse of how best to provide sustainable environments which can offer non-traditional students insights into professional practice, expanding broader educational trajectories.

Immersion, within a creative community of practice, can foster 'evolving knowledge' (Graham and Zwirn 2010:222). This in turn allows students to gain understanding not through 'a discrete body of abstract knowledge' (Lave and Wenger 1991:15) delivered by a provider, but through interactions with students from various levels (Lave and Wenger 1991) and from tutors who possess dual professional identities, are experienced artists and are articulate in connecting technique and reflection to develop 'meaningful ideas' (Graham and Zwirn 2010:224). The influence of communities of practice, in the context of the FEI art and design department in the study is of interest to my research. This study will examine the practices at play in the tacit, often hidden learning in doing (Bailey et al. 2023) which contribute to individuals' assimilation into the norms of the community. Recognising the process of identity formation embedded in social learning and shifts in habitus will support an understanding of non-traditional students' decision-making when considering progression routes to HE. Analysing the value of these

communities of practice is important in understanding how to overcome the restrictions of habitus, and I will now examine what is meant by the terms habitus and concepts of capital.

3.3. Habitus and Concepts of Capital

Bourdieu's conceptual framework of habitus and cultural capital is useful in understanding the mechanisms which inform and guide students' educational progression (Reay et al. 2005). Bourdieu broke with the widely held assumption that educational achievement is solely the result of innate talent and linked it to the advantages bestowed by familial habitus in the form of cultural capital. A rich spectrum of 'competencies' (Bourdieu 1977) are transferred through cultural capital and, just as in conventional capital, it can be traded and exchanged for a range of institutional forms of capital such as qualifications (Reay et al. 2005). The unequal distribution of cultural capital can have far reaching implications for 'confidence, certainty, and entitlement' (Reay et al. 2005:20). Education provides unequal access to credentialisation of knowledge for non-traditional students if institutional habitus places higher value on cultural capital when learning is assessed (Lareau and Weininger 2003).

Habitus essentially exists as an internalised embodiment of cultural capital: not only is the 'body in the social world, but the social world is in the body' (Reay et al. 2005: 22). Habitus can lead to the reproduction of social 'norms' (Bourdieu 1993), and although Bourdieu recognises the role of individual agency within habitus, it impacts on the predisposition of individuals to orient towards certain ways of behaving (Reay et al. 2005) and can preclude involvement in unfamiliar practices. Understanding habitus as experienced by participants in the study in familial and institutional contexts is significant in examining non-traditional students' approaches to the new territories of higher education. The study aims to examine if the placing of an arts foundation degree within an FEI art and design department can challenge habitus and has the potential to support a better understanding of non-traditional students' decision-making to progress to HE.

Habitus was outlined by Bourdieu as 'socialized subjectivity' and informed through flexible 'schemata or structures of perception, conception and action' (Bourdieu 2002:27). Learning is informed through the interaction of schemata with differing

situations and activities (Hodkinson et al. 1996) and can influence developments in habitus. Understanding habitus through ‘horizons for action’, Hodkinson et al. (1996) discuss how new experiences inform fresh views of the world. This, they outline, influences knowledge transmission ‘between practical and discursive consciousness’ (Hodkinson et al. 1996:149) expanding an actor’s horizons for action at particular points in life. The expansion in horizons for action can, Hodkinson et al. (1996) suggest, have a profound influence on choice-making and possible futures. This provides a useful lens through which to examine the decision-making of the non-traditional students in my study. The capacity to understand the influences which inform decision-making for non-traditional students has the scope to avoid either a completely social-determinist perspective of future trajectories, or to view students as having complete autonomy on possible future selves. It will be used to understand the connections between capital resources, social engagement and personal experiences and how these impact on perceptions of opportunity, framing horizons for action and the influence this has on decision-making within my research cohort.

The habitus of social background, educational environment and peers that influence decision-making are not always consciously understood (Reay 1998). Decisions for educational progression are not undertaken at a fixed point but can be the result of accumulated familial and institutional habitus. Issues of ‘boundary crossing’ (Bathmaker 2006:2) are real, and for students to embrace a sense of being capable of ‘doing’ HE (Lea and Simmons 2012), notions of identity are challenged. In contrast to the developments in habitus which can occur through the schemata being exposed to stimulating and challenging experiences, horizons for action can be restricted through education ‘delegitimating and limiting the value of cultural capital of working-class groups’ (Skeggs 1997:11). Quantifying an individual’s habitus and cultural capital through institutional assessment can reinforce inequalities (Skeggs 1997) and can leave students with less cultural capital lacking in confidence (Reay et al. 2005). These structures subordinate students from low socio-economic backgrounds and reproduce class inequalities (Reay 2017), reinforcing the notion that not to achieve academically, as a working-class student, is a result of not being intelligent enough.

Abrahams (2016) found habitus to be a useful tool in conceiving of the interaction of structure and agency on decision-making for students considering HE progression. It proved useful in thinking through how individual emotion, agency and structural systems impact on already disadvantaged actors, often resulting in self-exclusion of non-traditional students from educational progression. Bourdieu's argument that decision-making is rarely conducted exclusively through a rational calculation of potential success was helpful to Abrahams (2016) in understanding how decision-making is overshadowed by habitus, which is socially constructed and rooted in access to forms of capital.

The forces at play in the acquisition of culturally-significant capital are central for theorising the socio-economic influences of class reproduction for both Bourdieu and Bernstein. Bernstein's discussion, in relation to the power struggles between socio-economic groups, is framed around the distribution of resources (Bernstein 1996, 2001). This theory has parallels to Bourdieu's (1997) concept of capital, where differing social structures give unequal access to the forms of capital, which are economic, social and cultural. These determine social hierarchies and give advantage to those social groups best placed to acquire forms of capital, subsequently converting them strategically to their advantage. Questioning the mechanisms involved in the reproduction of social hierarchies has been an important focus of Bernstein's work (Collins 2000).

Bernstein (2000) argued that a democratic education is central in overcoming class disadvantage, and that breaking down pedagogic rights into enhancement, inclusion and participation is an important tool in evaluating what power structures are at play within education systems, offering a framework through which to analyse the impact on different socio-economic groups. Drawing on Bernstein's theory of democratic education, Broadhead and Gregson (2018) outline the impact of unequal distribution of resources and the implications for the non-traditional mature students in their study as they endeavour to negotiate access to HE. The pedagogic rights of enhancement, inclusion and participation are applied by Broadhead and Gregson (2018) to understand the barriers which participants in their study had to negotiate in the context of their habitus and cultural capital in their learning and educational trajectories.

The first pedagogic right of enhancement is crucial in the development of critical insights into potential futures, where students can experience ‘tension points between the past and possible futures’ (Broadhead and Gregson 2018:44). These are important experiences for students to understand boundaries, which enhance ‘social, intellectual and personal’ engagement (Broadhead and Gregson 2018:44), giving conceptual insights into possible futures and alternative possibilities. Confidence, Bernstein argues, is a prerequisite for this enhancement to occur, and Broadhead and Gregson explore this in relation to students’ habitus and cultural capital and how this is enacted in the broader picture of their HE journeys.

Asserting some agency in expressing individual cultural perspectives and having these recognised as valid through pedagogic input, actualised through a socially-situated discourse within a community is, for Bernstein, essential for the second pedagogic right of inclusion. This is distinct from an expectation of assimilation of the students into the predominant culture of the institution.

The third pedagogic right of participation was, for Bernstein, important in allowing democracy. Students should have the capacity to participate in the ‘procedures whereby order is constructed, maintained and changed’ (Bernstein 2000:xxi). There are parallels here with Wenger’s (1998) discussion of communities of practice and the effective production and reproduction of those communities, with the newcomers being given access through legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger 1991), building on the histories of practice embedded in the communities’ regimes of competence. This is in harmony with Bernstein’s (2000) recognition of the role histories within a community play in providing rich lessons from which to build meaningful futures in the context of the communities’ shared practices and values.

Although Broadhead and Gregson (2018) find these theories helpful in their analysis as they clearly identify the pedagogic rights, which need to be present for students to experience a democratic education, they critique Bernstein in his linear approach to these pedagogic rights. They recognise, in their research, a need to view the rights of enhancement, inclusion and participation in relation to each other and to dissect the manifestation of their interactions as they occur and inform the educational journeys of their participants. They acknowledge that ‘the exercising or experiencing of these rights may be sporadic or episodic’ (Broadhead and Gregson 2018:47) and this offers

a nuanced view of Bernstein's theory. This will be helpful in the analysis of the complex interactions of participants' habitus, cultural capital, engagement in communities of practice and educational trajectories in my study.

When accessing pedagogic rights, the connection between concept and realisation is mediated though cultural capital. Language in education has been theorised by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) through the lens of cultural capital and the excluding effect restricted linguistic capital can have on students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Bernstein's parallel concept to linguistic capital is that of restricted and elaborated codes. Language as the connection between concept and realisation when communicating ideas is important, and an understanding of how language can be mobilised to mediate access to knowledge will now be examined.

3.4. The Influence of Language as Understood by Both Bourdieu and Bernstein in Accessing Education

The concept of language in education has been addressed by both Bourdieu (1984) and Bernstein (1971) by examining the influence institutional expectations of linguistic resources have on educational alienation. Both Bernstein (2000) and Bourdieu (1984) were interested in language as a form of control and a means by which access to forms of capital are regulated. Class-specific linguistic resources, as operationalised by educational curricula theorised by both Bernstein and Bourdieu, offer a useful framework through which to view and problematise class and educational reproduction.

The education system is operationalised through communication (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). The capacity to effectively process the knowledge transmitted through that communication is reliant on the 'receivers' linguistic capital rooted in class origin. The education system operates through 'a particular constellation of relay factors' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977:87) defining the ability to engage by social class. Language is theorised by Bourdieu and Passeron by analysing cultural capital in the context of a school system sanctifying forms of knowledge and language 'unequally distributed between social classes and operated as family-transmitted advantage' (Collins 2000:68). Within compulsory education Lynch and O'Neill (1994:319) identify how working-class culture within institutions can be defined as 'structurally inferior and inadmissible in education'. They identify the

importance of language in developing a voice within education but criticise a system which credentialises knowledge privileging middle-class values. As linguistic capital is cashed in through testing and transformed into academic capital, there is a steady elimination of students unable to perform to the acceptable standard, and future educational opportunities are closed to them. The 'survivors' move on and gain greater academic capital and educational success. Although there have been critics of the concept of cultural capital assuming middle-class culture is homogeneous (Erickson 1996; Nespor 1987), it is helpful in theorising the influence of educational institutions mediating access to academic credentials through the use of language. Similar concerns of assuming homogenised characteristics are voiced by James (1995) as he questions the value of a 'species' approach in understanding the complexities of mature students' experiences in HE. James (1995:456) recognises the limitations of analysis which views structure and agency as separate and advocates for an approach drawing on the work of Bourdieu that 'bridges' or 'goes beyond' structural-agency dichotomies (James 1995:457). This approach offers a course which recognises the significance of individual subjective accounts while allowing investigation into the influence of social interactions and institutional environmental determinants, considerations which have been helpful to the research approach of my study.

Language, as operationalised in academia and art and design, was of interest to Bourdieu (1984) in the manner it is deployed as a control mechanism and a structure through which dominance of a particular social group is reproduced. The relationship between the 'linguistic marketplace' and 'linguistic habitus' (Bourdieu 1984) works to advantage those with richer resources of accumulated 'linguistic capital' and excludes those with less to exchange. Class hierarchies, as played out in education, lead to an inevitable drop out of students unable to effectively 'receive' the pedagogic code of linguistic communication (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Survivors are those who possess the 'linguistic capital' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977:91) necessary to engage with the modes of knowledge transmission as established through educational institutions. These institutions function in middle-class forms of linguistic codes. Although Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) put forward that social origin and familial habitus are not totally determining of educational

success, they do outline the importance of educational pedagogy as constructed through institutional bias in favouring particular forms of linguistic competence.

The ability of language to include and exclude is a theme explored by Bernstein (1971). The way society classifies and evaluates educational knowledge, was for Bernstein (1975), fundamentally linked to social control and power through the classification and framing of that knowledge. Bernstein (1971:376) outlines how the 'stronger the classification and the framing the more the educational relationship tends to be hierarchical and ritualized'. If, as Apple and Wexler (1978) discuss, education has the power to classify certain forms of knowledge which privilege middle-class social sensibilities as legitimate, this has the effect of marginalising and excluding those unable to access that knowledge. In the educational environment Bernstein (1975) identifies curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation as the three systems through which educational knowledge is transmitted. The forms these take are negotiated through social disposition and control the classification and framing of knowledge. Classification regulates the insulation between content, it legitimatises certain knowledge over others and shapes curriculum. Framing refers to the context of knowledge transmission through pedagogy. The framing can be strong, giving little autonomy for students to control the pace and structure of learning, or weak where students can exercise greater autonomy over selection, pacing and organisation of knowledge (Bernstein 1975). Power relations are embedded in these concepts. Strong classification creates strong boundaries excluding those unfamiliar with the knowledge codes. Strong framing gives pedagogic power to the teacher to set how, when and what knowledge is transmitted.

Bernstein's (1971) work on restricted and elaborated codes examines the linguistic power mechanisms at play which can work to preclude curriculum engagement within educational settings through horizontal and vertical discourse. As with forms of capital, restricted and elaborated codes are acquired through families, and Bernstein (1971), as with Bourdieu, draws connections between family background, social origin and the reproduction of modes of power. Bernstein asserts that the effective acquisition of restricted and elaborated linguistic codes necessary to function within the horizontal and vertical discourses is neither dictated by genes nor the speaker's innate ability, but rather by socialisation. Although this is echoed by Bourdieu (1984), he approaches the debate from a different position. Bourdieu

outlines how the middle-classes work to promote an ‘ease of cultivated naturalness’, which the familial habitus of the privileged classes allows ‘to disguise what they have learned as what they have been born with’ (Jenkins 2002:139). This fosters a position of entitlement and precludes ambitions from lower socio-economic groups to aspire to perspectives of insight and understanding, which are promoted as being the exclusive domain of the middle-class. These positions, along with Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital, will be used to examine the linguistic approach and pedagogic devices deployed by artist/tutors in the FEI art and design department, to understand if these influence non-traditional students’ exposure to the vertical discourse of ‘artspeak’.

When considering the importance of conceptual approaches to knowledge-acquisition necessary for HE study, Broadhead and Gregson (2018) offer useful insights into the struggles working-class students face when confronted with the abstract language of degree study. They drew on Bernstein’s theoretical discussions of restrictive and elaborated codes to understand the limitations in progression for students who do not have ‘linguistic confidence’ to engage effectively with the academic curriculum. They make important links in their study between working-class art and design access students entering university, and the negative impact of institutional assumption of generic linguistic competence in the elaborated codes of the department. They found specific connections in working-class students’ lack of elaborated codes and feelings of inadequacy. This had serious implications for participation. Struggles with assimilation into the vertical discourse of abstract thought left many non-traditional students questioning whether they had the academic credibility to sustain their place on the course. These findings were endorsed by Reay et al. in their 2005 study, which drew out the stark differences in expectations expressed between middle- and working-class students when considering progression to HE.

Pedagogy within the context of the learning environment is a mediating factor in the deployment of language. The professional identities of tutors influence pedagogic approaches, and dual professional identity will now be considered to ground its context in this study.

3.5. Dual Professional Identity of Artist/tutors

It is acknowledged in several studies that artists who also teach inhabit a dual professional identity and their creative sensibilities have a strong influence on their pedagogy (Denmead 2011; Walker 2013a). Tutors experience a double professionalism (Beaty 1998; Peel 2005) as they are subject to the dual requirements of specific subject knowledge and pedagogic delivery (Beaty 1998). Dual professionals have an in-depth knowledge of their discipline along with educational practice and theories of learning (Walker 2013). Professional teachers must develop pedagogic strategies, which draw knowledge of their discipline into a space where novices can begin to synthesise the information and make meaning for their own knowledge acquisition (Beaty 1998).

Although not discussing dual professional identity specifically, James and Biesta (2007) note the propensity of tutors in FE to have strong identities as both tutors and professionals in their own field, drawing on these to inform pedagogic approaches. Many of the tutors in their study had had established careers in industry or the public sector, most entering FE though what they describe as ‘the long interview’ (James and Biesta 2007:128). Tutors had started teaching part-time and built up hours over months, or even years, to establish themselves in the FEI. James and Biesta (2007) offer interesting ideas around the positioning of dual professional identity in the field of FE and the commitment these tutors bring to the students’ individual educational and pastoral needs within the context of their own professional identity. They acknowledge the important influence occupational identities acquired before entering FE have on tutors as they develop an identity as an educator.

This diversity of professional identities is significant in understanding the learning cultures in FE. Although vocational learning is often co-constructed by tutors and students (Colley et al. 2003), tutors bring, through their subject-specific professional identity, approaches to knowledge acquisition and expectations of competence, demonstrating the characteristics of the vocational occupation. Identity is central in the development of a disposition for vocational practice, and as tutors model behaviour, this impacts on student identity reconstruction, and Colley et al. (2003:471) make clear links between ‘learning and identity’. By cultivating engagement in both spheres of practice, dual professionals sustain their identity and

bring depth to their pedagogy (Beaton 2020). Although tutors adapt their pedagogy to accommodate the variety of student dispositions, students' identity is reconfigured in response to the dominant attitudes and vocational expectations rooted in tutors' professional identity. These professional identities can, Colley et al. (2003:471) discuss, work to reproduce 'social inequalities'. Students orientate towards certain vocational dispositions, aspiring to embody what constitutes a good practitioner when constructing a vocational identity. Through dual professional identity, tutors are embedded in the vocational culture of their practice. Where this is impacted by restrictive social structures this can serve to limit choice for working-class students (Colley et al. 2003). Choices of progression have to be realistic for the students and fall within their horizons for action.

The impact of dual professional identity on non-traditional student experience of learning is explored in the context of an art and design studio by Graham and Zwirn (2010). They outline, in their study of artists who teach, how dual professional pedagogy can be pivotal in reinventing 'predictable approaches to schooling' (Graham and Zwirn 2010:219), which can leave non-traditional students being perceived as deficient (Reay 2017). Professionals are expected to reflect on, and be critical of, their own practice and within education have a responsibility to consider the effectiveness of their pedagogy on students (Beaty 1998). Through their investigation into artists who also teach, and the impact of dual professional identity on pedagogic approaches, Graham and Zwirn (2010) offer insights into how creating spaces in which students are able to engage in accepting environments can value non-traditional students' social backgrounds. Divergent approaches, along with the encouragement to produce individual, unpredictable outcomes rooted in issues important to students, is discussed by Graham (2009) as central in creating complex, accepting spaces for learning. Professional artists who also teach can, for Graham (2009:86), be 'troublesome and unpredictable players in education' as they encourage students to question accepted views of privilege, hierarchies of culture and 'taken for granted assumptions about power' (Graham 2009:86). Finding relevance in the lived experience and social dynamic of the students, Graham (2009) outlines, is important to the artists who teach and moves the learning from a model of passive knowledge transmission to one of questioning investigation. This, Greene

(1978:182) suggests, can 'make possible a pluralism of visions, a multiplicity of realities'. This has the potential to challenge social structures.

Understanding the dynamics of dual professional identity is significant if we consider its potential to consolidate or conversely challenge assumed trajectories of non-traditional students. The influence this may have in the complex, socially-situated learning environment of the FEI art and design department is important when considering decision-making for non-traditional students. Students and tutors have the potential to be co-creators of communities of practice (Shreeve et al. 2010) and Lave and Wenger (1991) offer strong theoretical frameworks which allow analysis of prolonged social interactions. This will be helpful in my analysis to understand if the dual professional identity of the artist/tutors, as realised in the studios of the art and design department, supports progression to HE for non-traditional students.

3.6. Summary

The social and personal complexities of decision-making to progress to HE for non-traditional students is at the centre of this study. This chapter has sought to locate non-traditional students' participation within a broader theoretical framework. Situated learning within communities of practice, concepts of capital and habitus, and the use of language as a means of controlling access to knowledge along socially stratified lines will be useful in examining the mechanisms which influence educational engagement and outcomes. The characteristics of dual professional identity have been located in the context of FE art and design and the vocational nature of knowledge transmission considered in relation to identity reconstruction. This research builds on these positions, as outlined in the literature, to understand the significance of placing HE in FE and how these impact on non-traditional students' decision-making to progress to HE. This study brings a unique perspective to understand the lived experience of artist/tutors and students in an art and design department in a vibrant HE in FE environment. Through rich narratives, artist/tutor and student perspectives will be examined to reveal the interconnected nature of their learning. Building on a socially-situated community of practice to understand these environments and their players, the study offers important insights into social, pedagogic and logistical factors which influence non-traditional students' agency and

confidence to consider HE as a possibility for them. In a time of budgetary pressure on resources and a push to increase tutor-to-student ratios, it is important to articulate, in detail, the particular interactions and environments which are significant to non-traditional students' progression in order to best defend their key features in future restructuring.

3.7. Research Questions

Although there is evidence to show that non-traditional students' exposure to professional creative practitioners expands learners' horizons for action (Parkes 2005), there is little research into how this engagement supports broader perspectives. Bailey et al. (2023) go some way in exploring the connections between tacit knowledge, social interactions and integration into a community of practice, and the shifts in identity reconstruction this entails. What are not offered in the literature are individual insights, which reflect personal narratives and backgrounds of students and artist/tutors in a creative environment. Bailey et al. (2023) call for further research into the rich learning environments of vocational training to develop an understanding of the tacit social nature of practice. This, they argue, will provide robust theoretical acknowledgement of the mechanisms which support learning beyond simply conveying information and offer insight into the role identity reconstruction and pedagogic approaches play in students' acquisition of knowledge and development of agency towards future trajectories. Therefore, the over-arching aim of this study is to consider, *Can the positioning of foundation degree art and design in further education colleges support progression into higher education for non-traditional students?* The study will do this by addressing the four research questions which emerged from the literature review:

1. What is important to non-traditional students when making decisions to study an arts foundation degree in a further education institution?
2. To what extent do the dual professional identities of practising artists, who also teach in FE colleges, influence choices of students to progress to HE study?
3. How do 'spaces to practise' within art and design studios, as constructed by practising artists who also teach, frame non-traditional students' progression?

4. Is familial and institutional habitus challenged by the positioning of arts foundation degrees in further education colleges?

Chapter 4 will now set out the methods used to answer these questions.

Chapter 4: Methods and Methodologies

4.1. Introduction

The study seeks to understand whether *the positioning of foundation degree art and design in further education colleges supports progression into higher education for non-traditional students*. The research methods selected emerged from the broader aim of the study. The study will research FE and foundation degree art and design specifically with the aim of ascertaining if there are elements of art and design pedagogy and immersion within a community of practice that give non-traditional students insights into possible progression routes to HE. The lived experiences of these non-traditional students will be explored in this milieu as they engage in decision-making to progress to HE. The 'complex interrelationships' (Stake 1995:37) embedded within communities of practice will be examined, as they inform identity reconstruction within the context of the FEI art and design department in the study. Specific aspects of art and design that will be considered are: situated learning within communities of practice; pedagogic device and the use of language; dual professional identity; and spaces to practise within the art and design department. These enquiries are reflected in the research questions laid out at the end of Chapter 3 (3.7:43).

This chapter gives an overview of the methods which were used and the rationale for a qualitative approach. The ethical considerations which had to be addressed in response to my positionality as both researcher and practitioner are discussed. The rationale for a case study approach, choice of case and analytical perspective are all considered in the context of the interpretative nature of the research. The philosophical position of the study is outlined through an examination of the epistemological position grounded in the research focus.

4.2. Methodologies

This study is concerned with social processes through which non-traditional students navigate HE in FE. The research questions ask about students' and artist/tutors' experiences reflecting an interpretive epistemology. The research is grounded in investigating the participants' own understanding of social reality (Bryman 1988). Drawing on Lave and Wenger (1991) and Bourdieu (1977), it is interested in how

being part of a learning community facilitates transition and identity reconstruction. This reflects an epistemology that sees reality as socially-mediated, which aligns with an interpretive approach. The research seeks to understand individuals' 'motivational background to their actions' (Bryman 1988:52) and recognises the subjective nature of participants' interpretation of prior understandings and experiences.

An interpretive approach focuses on description and understanding of 'the actual human interactions, meanings and processes that constitute real-life organizational settings' (Gephart 2004:455). It is an effective framework through which to examine how commonsense meanings are created and used by members for practical purposes and will support an understanding of the respondents' complex contextual and social relationships within the broader environment of the FEI art and design department in the study. Research framed by an interpretative perspective views individual reality as subjective and nuanced, rooted in human experience best studied 'within its socio-historic context' (Bhattacherjee 2012:103) and therefore requires a research method that has the capacity to explore 'hidden reasons behind complex, interrelated, or multifaceted social processes' (Bhattacherjee 2012:105). This study is interested in communities of practice, which are about social interactions. Social interactions are understood through interpreting peoples' beliefs, subjective realities and social processes. These experiences, Cooke et al. (2007) outline, are best explored through qualitative methods.

Qualitative research methods ally with the inductive nature of this research as they are well placed to uncover these hidden meanings which underpin complex, interconnected social realities (Bryman 2021). Data gathering is embedded within the context of the social setting and understanding is developed through a 'sociological analysis of interactions' (Delamont 2020:6). Interpreting and reconciling what can sometimes be diverse participant perspectives takes perceptive and detailed analysis to draw meaning-making from diverse social interactions and dense personal histories. It is incumbent on the researcher to develop skills which allow interpretation of the data from the participants' perspective, guarding against personal bias or preconceived theoretical conclusions (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). It is important for this research that insights into the lived realities of both the students and artist/tutors are captured, allowing the analysis to recognise any

patterns, experiences or commonalities (Delamont 2016). This will draw out inference of themes, which identify pedagogic, social or contextual mechanisms impacting on non-traditional students' progression to HE.

Participants included twelve alumni drawn from six cohorts of graduates across the three progression routes of textiles, ceramics and graphics offered on the FDA programme. All twelve had progressed through the FE programme from Level 3 into HE. Seven artist/tutors were interviewed: four were in-post and three interviews were conducted with recently retired members of the faculty. It was important to include these retired participants as they offered a depth of experience and a longevity of reflective insights into the HE in FE provision in the art and design department. Difficulties have been identified in gaining 'thick' descriptions and insights into particular milieus (Geertz 1973). With each of the retired artist/tutors having over 20 years' experience within the art and design department and being instrumental in the establishment of the FDA programme, they had the potential to provide the research with a rich historical perspective. Although each participant provided descriptions and a personal perspective on the development of the FDA programme, I encountered what Geertz (1973:7) identified as 'piled-up structures of inference and implication'. This was compounded by my role as colleague, as assumptions of meaning left important reflections unsaid. To overcome this, I was careful in my questioning and probed to fully explore respondents' individual experiences. Careful consideration was also given to ensure the artist/tutor group reflected the three specialist disciplines of textiles, ceramics and graphics.

4.3. Choosing a Case Study Approach

A case study approach was chosen to allow for a detailed examination of one setting in order to understand the 'complexities and contradictions of real life' (Flyvbjerg 2006:237) as experienced by players in a particular milieu. This study endeavours to explore the significance of social culture in the 'practice of the community' (Wenger 1998) in the context of the FEI art and design department and to develop theories through the accounts of the values of 'cultural members' (Altheide and Johnson 2011:582).

To uncover the underlying social processes (Denzin 1989) and personal experiences in this environment, a method was required which would examine the multifaceted

interactions, both social and cultural. Case studies have been recognised as playing a central role in ‘understanding the viewpoints and behaviour, which characterize social actors’ (Flyvbjerg 2006:236). Both Hammersley (1992) and Flyvbjerg (2006) describe that the strength of case study is its ability to make visible ‘naturally occurring’ (Hammersley 1992:192) social processes, through its intense holistic study of a phenomenon, viewing it as a much richer source of knowledge production for complex social research than large-scale qualitative projects. This approach brings to the foreground the importance of context-dependant knowledge in the development of deep understanding and how beginners in a field of learning move to become full members with the accompanying ‘virtuosity’ (Flyvbjerg 2006:221) associated with that practice. Parallels can be drawn here with communities of practice and situated learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) as newcomers acquire knowledge and skills through legitimate peripheral participation, becoming assimilated into the practice of the community. The case study, therefore, offers me the opportunity to get close to the subject and the everyday lived experience of the participant. It grounds the research in the nuanced richness of reality as expressed in real-life contexts through the voices of the non-traditional students and artist/tutors who are key players in the context of the FEI art and design department.

As with any research strategies, there are trade-offs, and Hammersley (1992) advises that, failing unlimited resources, strategic choices in approach have to be made. My choice of case selection was guided by reflecting on the aims of the research, and what type of data would best answer the research questions. Deep holistic understanding was prioritised over broad statistical occurrence. As a professional doctorate student, ‘resource demands’ will always outweigh ‘resource availability’ and a realistic approach that considered the most effective way to achieve the research goals was needed. Hammersley (1992) advises that, by focusing on fewer cases, more detail on the phenomena can be gathered. Guided by the focus of my study to examine and understand in detail the influences on progression for non-traditional students to HE, a case study approach focusing on ‘Cornhill College’ art and design department at ‘Westmount campus’ (both of which are pseudonyms) was selected and I will now discuss this choice.

4.4. Selecting the Case

The FEI in the study is in Wales, and has been given the pseudonym 'Cornhill College'. It has six sites: two of these, the city centre site and the campus at the small seaside town of 'Westmount' (pseudonym), both offer FE and HE art and design programmes in the form of FDAs. These differ, however, in significant ways. Westmount campus houses both the FE and HE art and design provision in one building. Although some studios are dedicated to FDA use, with degree students having personal desks and boards to display ongoing project development, all students can access them. HE and FE students mix in the workshops and socialise across the broader campus estate. In contrast, the city centre art and design provision is split across two buildings. The FE offering is in the main large modern building, and the HE provision is some 500 metres up the road in an older repurposed space with access via identity badges, meaning no independent access for FE students.

Analysis of progression data, from Level 3 to foundation degree, does not reveal the whole story when considering non-traditional students. There is no data on the socio-economic status of progressing students. To gain an understanding of the proportion of non-traditional students' progression in the two respective campuses of Westmount and City Centre at Cornhill College, I spoke to students to understand their backgrounds and calculated progression (see Table 1 in Appendix 1). Therefore, some anomalies may exist which were beyond my calculations. I am confident, however, that a greater percentage of non-traditional students made the transition from FE to HE at the Westmount campus compared to comparable courses at the City Centre site of Cornhill College. Understanding what was significant in supporting progression at Westmount campus is central to this study.

It was important to contextualise the HE in FE provision of visual arts foundation degree programmes at Cornhill College across the broader FE offering in Wales to allow for comparisons and consideration of case study choice. I conducted a preliminary survey of colleges, and out of twelve other FE colleges in Wales, four had both FE and FDA programmes in the visual arts. I then contacted heads of department and tutors directly and asked for information on rooming of courses, proximity of HE to FE provision, shared facilities for FE and HE students, and if tutors delivered on both FE and HE courses. There were a range of approaches to the

provision of tutors and studio facilities. There was very little crossover of tutors teaching both FE and HE, with the majority of colleges reporting no crossover at all. Rooming for courses was also varied. There was limited evidence of dedicated studios for the degree students with no personal desks or boards, although there was, however, some sharing of workshops and specialist facilities. The survey suggested that Westmount campus was an atypical case of HE in FE provision. Its unique structure offers the opportunity to explore the phenomena under investigation, namely the influence of placing HE in FE on non-traditional students' progression to degree level study. As Stake (1995:4) outlines, when choosing a case, an important consideration is 'to maximise what we can learn'. Atypical cases have the capacity to uncover rich insights into the intricate and complex range of causes, which coexist holistically in the site of investigation (Swanborn 2010). They can involve greater depth of interactions and players in the field being studied (Flyvbjerg 2006). Westmount provided a unique structure and was a strong case to study as it offered opportunities to investigate the deep, complex relationships between students, socio-economic forces, the positioning of HE in FE and artist/tutor pedagogy in a combination not offered in other settings.

4.5. Research Methods

The qualitative methods approach consisted of 19 semi-structured interviews, 12 with alumni from the FDA programme and 7 artist/tutors within the FEI art and design department at Westmount campus. Semi-structured interviews were chosen in this context as the data gathering method as they allowed for the formation of a set of topics to direct the interview, yet offered flexibility (Denzin 1989), allowing the respondent space to explore themes and experiences which were important to them. There is opportunity for the interviewer to probe for further information or to ask follow-up questions to clarify a particular point (Brinkmann 2013).

Qualitative one-to-one semi-structured interviews allowed for both closed and open-ended questions, with the use of follow-up prompts and questions to pursue lines of interest as they emerged to capture unanticipated perspectives (Denzin 1989). This approach proved valuable for both the alumni and artist/tutor interviews, as I gained insightful perspectives into areas which were not included in the schedule. Alumni talked of casual conversations and interactions which were significant in their HE

progression, and artist/tutors spoke of individual pedagogic approaches which had offered breakthroughs in student engagement. If the research method had not allowed, as Adams (2015:493) writes, the 'dialogue (to) meander around the topics on the agenda' these 'totally unforeseen issues' would have been lost to me and the study.

Differing approaches to the semi-structured interviews were adopted for alumni and artist/tutors. The focus for the alumni was a narrative biographical structure within the interview schedule progressing in a chronological order asking for descriptions of events and reflections on the personal significance of these to the participant. I structured questions to elicit stories, physical descriptions, anecdotes and changes in individual perspective. The aim was to understand the early familial and educational context of the participants and move on to engagement with FE and HE, touring though personal and emotional responses and motivations at key points of decision-making in educational and life journeys. The interview schedule for alumni contained four sections:

- family background and early educational experience
- expectations of educational progression or employment on leaving school
- experiences in FE
- understanding of HE choices and progression

The focus for artist/tutors was directed towards professional identity, pedagogic perspective and understanding approaches to student sensibilities. This framed the investigation into how artist/tutor positionality functioned within a community of practice and if particular dispositions or combinations of factors influenced student progression. The interview schedule for artist/tutors contained four sections:

- professional background, training and teaching position within the college
- experiences and approaches to creative practice
- pedagogic perspectives
- teaching across HE and FE

Separate interview schedules were developed for alumni and artist/tutors (see Appendix VI and VII) in which I adopted a flexible interactive approach (Adams 2015). I had an outline of key research-informed areas to address (Bryman 1988) yet

had flexibility to respond to participants' interests if they moved into areas important to them. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, I was able to elicit responses rooted in the participants' lived experiences and accounts of their understanding of the context in which they are situated (Scott and Usher 1999). Semi-structured interviews offered a method of eliciting detailed personal accounts of complex and often emotional journeys and are particularly effective in 'bringing subjects' own understanding into the light' (Brinkman and Kvale 2015:221). I was also aware that with sensitive material, questions can pressure respondents into providing 'acceptable' (Adams 2015:497) answers in the context of my dual positionality as tutor and researcher. To avoid this, I looked for ways to neutralise any stigma attached to questions, moving from negative input such as 'bad' experiences to 'ways things could have been better', aiming to overcome defensive responses (Adams 2015:497).

Although an interview schedule was constructed and formed the framework of the interview, I approached each engagement as unique. I gave time and space to participants and ensured they were in an environment which was private, and where they would not be disturbed. The need for privacy during the interview had been discussed in advance with all participants and each had communicated they were able to locate themselves in a room where they would be alone and not be interrupted. This was discussed again at the beginning of the Teams meeting and all interviews went ahead uninterrupted. Interviews lasted between 40 to 70 minutes, and I was mindful to give the participants focused attention and not set any time limits. These were the recorded interviews. They were bookended by pre- and post-interview conversations to relax the respondent and develop rapport and a time to answer any questions and reiterate how the data would be used.

Participants, although prompted by a question in the schedule would, on occasion, go on to discuss issues which were planned later in the interview, or respond with divergent lines of narrative with specific experiential relevance to their particular circumstances, and it was important at these points to do careful listening and be flexible to reflect this. Bryman (1988) discusses this as 'rambling' and notes how Measor (1985) sees this as an advantage to data gathering as the participant moves into areas of central significance to them which may not have been anticipated by the interview schedule. I made careful notes as I 'yielded' (Measor 1985:67) to

respondents and gave up some control of the interview structure. I was careful, however, to make a note of areas which needed to be returned to or areas which I felt needed deeper probing. This process and incorporation of divergent input would be difficult to accommodate in quantitative type survey interviews. The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they are dynamic in their approach. They offered a method which allowed insights into the underlying interactions within the FEI art and design department that supported progression to HE for non-traditional students. Semi-structured interviews accommodate a holistic enquiry into the complex connections and individual realities of cultural and social experiences. This, Stake (1995:43) outlines, is in sympathy with 'personal interpretation and qualitative enquiry', allowing for a nuanced dialogue recognising individual interpretation of the issues being discussed. This thorough, careful interpretation drew out complex context-dependant realities.

As my intention was to begin interviewing in the spring of 2020, I will briefly address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on my methods and the reflective insights I was able to gain. My planned face-to-face approach proved unrealistic as the world locked down in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As I rapidly moved my teaching online through the Microsoft Teams platform, I realised this might be an alternative approach for my research. I had, however, to be mindful of participants differing technical skills and access to technology. I approached respondents via email and followed up with a telephone conversation to ensure all were comfortable with the change in approach and were still happy to participate. All the original cohort confirmed their willingness and technical ability to proceed. All but two of the interviews proceeded unhindered by technical hitches. One interview started and had to be rescheduled due to the participant's internet connection being faulty. This then went ahead in full later. Another interview kept dropping out, and after multiple attempts to reconnect only for the connection to disappear, it was mutually agreed the video link would be suspended and audio alone would be used. As we worked to resolve these difficulties, the communal focus of problem solving created a mutual bond and relaxed the interaction. Archibald et al. (2019) highlight how these technical issues can build rapport and ease the interview process.

4.6. Piloting

Having been compelled, as a result of the pandemic restrictions, to move the one-to-one interviews online, I felt frustrated at the thought of them being an impoverished alternative to the 'real thing' of face-to-face interaction. They did, however, offer me valuable insights I would not have gained otherwise and provided me with crucial points of reflection. The interviews were recorded with both audio and visual on Teams, and as I played back the pilot interviews, which I conducted with one artist/tutor and one alumna, I found I was not only observing the participant, I was unexpectedly observing myself. The video content was invaluable. I saw myself anticipating responses and on more than one occasion offering non-verbal signals to encourage particular responses and posing leading questions to move the agenda into areas I felt were significant. As Kessa Roberts et al. (2021) outline, facing the challenges of online research can offer unique learning opportunities, and I re-evaluated my approach. The participants' voice needed the space to yield the insights necessary for the research. This helped me gain some distance from the process as I allowed the participants the agency to direct the points of interest and then probed for further details if necessary.

As an insider, having worked at the site of study for 15 years, I was aware my practitioner researcher positionality added layers of complexity to my relationships with participants (Drake and Heath 2008), who were all known to me, either as previous students or colleagues. This was a benefit in relation to access, but as I sat down in this new capacity as researcher and reflected on these relationships, I saw that I was too quick to focus in on points I found significant. I was misled by my closeness and had assumed understanding of respondents' perspectives and personal narratives. As I engaged with the pilot interviews, I became aware of the complicit nature of my, as Morriss states, 'co-narration' (Morriss 2016:529). At points where the respondents' account accorded with my own, I found myself nodding in agreement, laughing, and adding in encouraging remarks. In the interview environment I had felt these were actions that would relax and encourage the respondent to offer richer accounts of their experiences. It was not until I repeatedly listened and rewatched the interviews, and saw the interactions written down, did I gain a distance from the process. The reviewing and transcription stage within the piloting phase was important to me in finding new perspectives (Brinkmann and

Kvale 2015). I began to see how my position as a tutor and my interjections through the interview were leading respondents into closed technical responses in reaction to creative and personal opinions and approaches. This was problematic as so much was left 'unsaid' (Morriss 2016:529). Alumni, having known me as a tutor and engaged in many tutorials over the years, drifted into assumed understanding, and I was missing the individual experiences of the participants. When I reflected on the interview schedule, I understood some of the questions were framed such that they led the alumni down typical studio critique paths. I had asked one overarching question in relation to alumnis' understanding of tutors' artistic practice. In response, I received a very competent overview of artistic style, materials used, conceptual references and reflections on the tutors' work in the broader artistic community. What was missing, however, was the alumnis' personal viewpoint of artist/tutors' dual professional identity within the studio. To address this, I developed several questions approaching the topic from a student-centred perspective, asking for examples of tutors drawing on their creative practice within the studio and tutors specialisms supporting learning for the students. I also extended the introductory conversation to urge a personal instinctive response to questions encouraging a move away from the tutor/student dynamic. Following the pilot interviews, I was more mindful of assumed understanding and if, during the interviews, the tone was slipping, I would gently probe and encourage the participant to think more deeply about their personal response and perspective.

4.7. Recruitment

I selected participants who best typified the non-traditional students and artist/tutors in the art and design department at Westmount campus, ensuring a breadth of socio-economic representation and professional experience. Hammersley (1992) considers it reasonable when selecting a sample to view the participants as representative of a broader cohort: 'the proportion of the population that our sample represents is more important than the absolute magnitude of the sample' (p.189).

The rationale for selecting alumni over current students was two-fold. Firstly, the sample could be selected across several years of the FDA programme, thereby offering a representative group from a larger pool of experience. This would yield a longevity of experience to the study and allow for detailed reflection on differing

stages of education both from an FE and HE perspective and would provide rich insights into educational, emotional and pragmatic aspects of respondents' experiences and decision-making. The second reason was ethical. It was important for me to avoid conflicts of interest. Students studying in the FEI may feel compelled to respond with selective perspectives if they felt their opinions may compromise their relationship with me in my role as a tutor and is discussed further in the section on ethics (4.9:58). Artist/tutors who are currently in-post, or who have delivered in the FEI art and design department, were selected to represent the range of disciplines and experience within HE in FE at Westmount campus.

Having decided to recruit alumni for the study, I had a broad overview of how many potential participants I had access to. I formalised this initial list by undertaking a review to establish the number of alumni still in contact with the college and those who could be contacted through more informal routes. I was involved with several creative groups, galleries and studio co-ops, many of which had alumni in their ranks. I was able to contact 19 potential participants through college and contacted a further 8 following a request for alumni which I circulated among contacts I had in the creative organisations. Some of these responses were also the result of word-of-mouth as alumni passed on the call for respondents to their friends. I was able to contact the 27 potential participants directly by email with no third-party involvement and then followed this up with a telephone call outlining the purpose and scope of the research, establishing who would be willing to participate. Positive responses were good, resulting in 23 potential candidates. From this pool of alumni, I considered the composition of the FDA cohorts and recruited participants who reflected the subject specialisms, gender, age, social circumstances and socio-economic demographic of the students who have progressed through from FE to the FDA programme. Twelve alumni were recruited across six years of FDA provision. The 11 potential participants who were not recruited were telephoned to thank them for their offer to be part of the research. It was explained that selection of participants had been based on representation of overall cohorts and was no reflection on the significance of their individual experience.

When recruiting artist/tutors I looked to the whole art and design department at Westmount campus for potential participants. I approached each artist/tutor individually as the opportunity arose to chat informally about my research and their

potential involvement. There were six artist/tutors in-post at the time of the study; four delivered across FE and HE and each had a minimum of eight years' experience seeing several cohorts transition from FE to the FDA programme. I felt this experience was important as it provided a depth of knowledge and could bring a longevity of pedagogic insights across FE and HE. At this stage I made the decision to eliminate two artist/tutors from the study, as they only came over to the Westmount campus to deliver a three-hour session, once a week, within the FE provision. They were new to the college that academic year having just graduated from PGCE training. I judged, therefore, that their experience in the department was not sufficient to contribute significantly to the research. However, to add further longevity and depth of experience to the study, I made the decision to include retired artist/tutors. Several significant members of staff had retired in the last two years. They had the potential of being valuable repositories of historical and contextual insights which could provide the study with rich perspectives on institutional and pedagogic approaches. All had been players in the establishment of the foundation degree programme within the FEI art and design department. I felt this offered a good opportunity to provide the study with first-hand insights into the rationale and structural consideration of establishing the FDA. I was still in regular touch with these retired members of staff through creative networks and emailed them to outline my research and request their participation, resulting in three recruits. Tables 2-4 in Appendix II provide a contextual overview of participants' backgrounds and professional experience along with age when studying the foundation degree and length of time in-post for the artist/tutors. It also outlines the length of interview, number of transcribed words and participant pseudonyms.

4.8. Data Analysis

The aim of the data analysis was to draw out the lived experiences of the participants by giving credibility to their voice and finding the underlying connections and commonalities, which will bring a cohesive focus to the thesis (Stake 1995). Data was drawn from both students and artist/tutors, offering the advantage of multiple sources of information and unique perspective (Lin 2019), yet it was important to find a method of data analysis that could 'generate coherent knowledge' (Lin 2019:157) across diverse cohorts and participant experiences. Thematic analysis offers a flexibility of approach for qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) and

allows for theoretical freedom and versatility in the practical developments of themes in response to nuanced and complex data. Thematic analysis 'starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions… conceptualisations, and ideologies' (Braun and Clarke 2006:84) embedded in the thick data generated through interviews.

I maintained the nuance of participants' responses by recording the interviews on Teams. This allowed both audio and video to be captured, providing me with multiple sources of data as I relistened and rewatched the interviews, transcribing each one by hand. This aligned well with the philosophical framework of the study and gave me the first insights and immersion into the data. The process of data analysis had, however, started during the interviews as I took down notes on immediate reflections, potential codes, participant disposition, non-verbal communication, and initial thoughts on emergent patterns in responses. As more data was gathered, I moved back and forth between data sets in an iterative, multi-staged process using written notes as an integral tool (Braun and Clarke 2006) in identifying interesting insights and relevant connections in participant discussions which may otherwise have been lost (Oliver et al. 2005). I introduced initial codes, which reflected something of interest or relevance to the research questions. I adopted an open coding approach. This avoided the restrictions of preset codes and offered the flexibility to introduce relevant codes which allowed for the examination of the underlying motivations and influences informing choice-making and participant experience (Braun and Clark 2006). I developed some initial codes during the transcribing stage, such as 'seeing HE for the first time', which occurred in several interviews and was significant to the research. I coded each section of the transcript which had a bearing to the research questions. I added new codes where necessary, and existing codes were modified if further data revealed a more relevant approach. Coding the interviews, as outlined by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), allowed the meaning of participant responses to be brought to the fore and new perspectives to enhance the analysis of respondents' particular viewpoints.

I initially coded on hard copies using a series of coloured pencils. As an artist, I found this particularly helpful for the first iteration in creating an accessible visual 'pattern' of significant responses and coding occurrences. I then used NVivo, which I found to be an effective software to expedite accurate retrieval of detailed narratives

facilitating the use of participant language, meanings and 'thick' description. NVivo was particularly helpful in allowing data to be categorised under different codes if needed, aiding cross referencing and the development of conceptual connections.

For the first phase of coding, I reviewed the data through the initial conceptual framework. I had broadly developed areas of interest such as socio-economic background, identity, and aspiration to progress to HE in the interview schedule. As I identified codes through iterative reviews of the data, these were structured into a coding frame. It was important that the process was open to this iterative process to allow unanticipated themes to develop naturally. 'Space', as a central theme, incorporated codes such as 'customising own space', 'actually seeing the next step' and 'mixing in same space'. The theme of 'language' became understood as particularly important as a bridging mechanism for non-traditional students' trajectories towards full membership of the community of practice through detailed analysis of both the artist/tutors' pedagogic and artistic approach and students' reflections and description of their experiences of tutor input.

Using coding frames allowed a flexibility, as immersion in the data required re-evaluation of initial codes and the development of new ones which best expressed the participants' own meaning (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). This approach was well placed to allow the complex and intricate socially-situated nuances of the qualitative data to be examined. As codes were identified as recurrent themes, this had an impact on the theoretical framework of the analysis (Charmaz 2006). Four themes emerged from the coding of the data: language, dual professional identity, space and decision-making.

4.9. Ethics

This research has been undertaken in accordance with Cardiff University School of Social Science research ethics committee and has gone through ethical approval (see Appendix III). The BERA (2018) framework for educational research has been used to guide the research. Participant information and consent forms (see Appendix IV and V) were sent out ahead of interviews to allow participants time to read the material and formulate any questions they had ahead of the interview. Consent forms were signed, and before the interview the parameters and purpose of the research, along with reassurance of anonymity, were covered again verbally. All respondents

were reassured that no identifying work, descriptions or images would be included, and all participants' names, institutions and departments would be anonymised. In the event participants became distressed or expressed concerns about potentially traumatising issues a list of support organisations was drawn up ahead of the interviews to be able to signpost respondents efficiently to agencies which could provide assistance. Participants were also reassured at the end of the interview that if they wished to discuss any of the issues covered they could contact the interviewer directly.

Interviewees were advised that they had free choice in the questions they wished to engage with, and that withdrawal from the project at any time, would be at their discretion. They were also advised their data could be removed on request at any stage of the research without prejudice or any reason being given.

Despite written and verbal reassurance, uneven power dynamics are an inevitable component of researcher-participant engagement (Sikes and Potts 2008). Although issues of power are embedded in educational settings this is brought into sharper focus when the researcher is conducting the study in their own institution (Czerniawski 2023). This carries with it particular ethical considerations which will now be discussed.

4.10. Dual Positionality

Whether the social scientist can ever be truly objective is a matter for lengthy debate (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). They are inescapably part of the world they study, and to this end, eliminating all contamination of the data 'from the biography of the researcher' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:15) is unrealistic.

Acknowledging the position of the researcher in the research setting is fundamental to understanding the relationships which are inherent in this milieu. The perspective of the researcher is premised on personal biography, experience, sense of self and research focus (Skeggs 2004). There is an argument that only an outsider can fully embrace the necessary distance from a subject to render an unbiased and valid account. The insider perspective could see the distance advocated by the outsider camp as rendering the researcher ill-equipped to engage with the nuances and peculiarities of the research subject (Mannay 2010). Such stark distinctions between insider and outsider fail to understand the complex nature of data gathering (Skeggs

2004) but it is important to acknowledge the central role played by the researcher in the production of knowledge.

I am mindful of my close connection and relationships within the institution in the study. As an insider there can be an established knowledge base and an intimate understanding of the case. This intimacy can, however, manifest as familiarity which, in turn, can dilute the researcher's ability to develop effective working hypotheses and make the familiar strange (Delamont 2014; Delamont and Atkinson 1995; Gordon et al. 2001). The familiarity problem as outlined by Geer (1964) can predicate assumed commonalities which render invisible insightful observation. To move outside an 'enclosed, self-contained world of common understanding' (Mannay 2010:91) can be difficult.

As a researcher working in one's own professional field, one is positioned simultaneously as insider and outsider. This can bring with it scrutiny and suspicion from colleagues if they view the research as having particularly negative judgements on performance or professionalism (Drake and Heath 2008). To pre-empt any suspicion of intention (Sikes and Potts 2008), I was transparent in my role as researcher and clear in communicating the focus of the research was on understanding the 'what's' and 'how's' of progression to HE for non-traditional students within the FEI art and design department. I was conscious to convey the approach of the research was a 'probe into the unknown' (Green 2009:13) rather that a judgemental critique.

As discussed earlier, three categories of participants were recruited: alumni; in-post artist/tutors; and retired artist/tutors. Each brought with it distinct ethical considerations, and details on the ethical approach for each group as addressed in the study are outlined below.

4.10.1. Alumni – To interview current students who are potentially reliant on the interviewer's assessment of their work would put untenable strain on the students, as they may consider their response as influencing possible grades. This would be very difficult to mitigate and would inhibit the interviewer probing for richer responses if the topics moved into uncomfortable territory. Students may be reluctant to fully disclose any criticisms or negative positions if they felt this was directed at the

interviewer or their colleagues. Interviewing alumni overcame these issues as respondents were no longer embedded in the department.

4.10.2. Artist/tutors Still In-post – When interviewing colleagues, there is the potential for responses to be affected by the relationship. With this in mind I was conscious not to interview any member of staff junior to me or who I had direct responsibility for in my team as this could lead to distortions in responses as a result of power dynamics. I was explicit and open in relation to the nature of the study. I made it clear that no evaluative judgements were attached to participants' responses and that there was no agenda to critique performance of artist/tutors or the department.

4.10.3. Retired Artist/tutors – All were senior to me when in-post and, although they were no longer working in education, the hope was they would bring a longevity of candid experience. All respondents were active members of the department when the foundation degree was first introduced and had the potential to offer insightful perspectives in relation to the rationale for the establishment of this programme. Because of their distance from the institution any potential conflicts of interest were greatly reduced.

I was, however, aware that potential anonymity may be compromised among artist/tutors as I canvassed for participants and conducted interviews. To overcome this, I was cautious in my approach to potential artist/tutor participants and requested they did not discuss their participation with colleagues. I was careful not to discuss my research in the department among my colleagues and this discreet approach has allowed the ongoing anonymity of the participants to be protected.

4.11. Summary

In order to understand if placing an arts foundation degree within an FEI can support progression to HE for non-traditional students, the focus has been on capturing the diverse, lived experiences of students and artist/tutors and applying analytical methods that draw out coherent meaning, identifying connections between individual experience and broader structural and social influences. In this chapter I have laid out the research process to make visible the interpretive tradition it draws from. Within that tradition the methodological focus will be on thematic analysis. The strength of this approach lies in its flexibility to drawing out individual narratives

and examine subjective realities to explore underlying connections and commonalities to generate coherent knowledge. The next four chapters set out the analysis of the main themes of the study: language; dual professional identity; space and decision-making.

Chapter 5: Language, Class and Artspeak

5.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the role of language in students' decisions to study, and their experience of, FDAs. I will draw on the work of Bernstein and Bourdieu; each developed theories providing insight into the complexities of social and cultural reproduction. Language for both provides a framework through which to understand the mechanisms and implications of knowledge transmission, identity creation and propagation of social position.

Language is a fundamental component of the educational milieu and a cornerstone of communication. The transmission of knowledge, culture and intellectual concepts all hinge around the effective deployment of language. Bourdieu understood the connectedness of language with access to socially-situated capitals. These capitals are advanced, or restricted, within a social arena, or field, and are informed through habitus.

Bourdieu also understood the role of linguistic capital in expressing and reinforcing class positions. This is often realised through the acquisition of educational qualifications resulting in 'the ''more'' of the middle-class receiving more and "becoming more"' leaving the working-class 'socially defined "less" receiving less and becoming less' (Bernstein 1971:175). Bourdieu's work was particularly sensitive to how the linguistic and cultural capital of culture and art can be used to reinforce social hierarchies and social distinctions (Bourdieu 1984). Bourdieu proposed that those with the most cultural capital dominate and define high and low culture. Those with less general capital regard this as legitimate and natural, accepting restrictions on differing access to forms of capital such as economic, social and educational. Within the context of the art and design education, 'artspeak' can be a barrier to accessing knowledge and conceptual clarity. Harris (2003) discusses artspeak as a set of codes which both speaker and receiver must understand in order to decode meaning; I use the term to reflect the highly aestheticised discourse first outlined by Bourdieu in *Intellectual field and creative project* (Bourdieu 1969) and developed in *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1979). Within this study I will outline the pedagogic devices employed by the tutors to mitigate against such linguistic exclusion of non-traditional students.

As Chapter 3 (3.4:38) highlights, this approach resonates with Bernstein's theory of horizontal and vertical discourse and the close links with esoteric and mundane knowledge (Bernstein 2000). I will discuss how access to these forms of discourse and knowledge are mediated through social class and realised by the acquisition of restrictive or elaborated linguistic codes. Such mechanisms of exclusion work to advantage middle-class children, leaving the children of the working-class less able to profit from formal education.

This chapter will discuss how the pedagogic practice of art and design lecturers challenges the alienating use of artspeak. It will argue that this is, in part, due to the pedagogic device (Bernstein 1990, 1996, 2000) used by lecturers, who are themselves practising artists. How artists use their specific expert knowledge, converting it through pedagogy into accessible artspeak and studio knowledge, will be explored to understand the mechanisms which support students to progress on to HE. Bernstein's framework of the 'pedagogic device' will be used to scaffold an understanding of how the knowledge of studio art practice is transformed by artist/tutors into accessible learning opportunities. This section aims to examine the linguistic bridging mechanisms deployed by artist/tutors, which draw on mundane knowledge and tacit understanding of materials and process to introduce abstract concepts and open up new areas of communication for non-traditional students.

5.2. Alienating Language

While many of the respondents spoke of language obliquely, one respondent, John, explicitly recognised how the foundation degree had acted as a linguistic bridge to HE. When asked if he would have gone straight to the university where he ultimately completed his level 6 honours degree, John said he would have been deterred because of his lack of artspeak.

> John: Just in style and delivery of lessons.
>
> Interviewer: Can you give an example maybe?
>
> John: I guess in part down to the language used.
>
> Interviewer: OK.
>
> John: For instance, if I had had Simon Anderson [pseudonym] going straight from the [Level 3] diploma to Burston Met (pseudonym), and he had been my tutor, I would have probably left.

> Interviewer: Why?
>
> John: Simon is an amazing guy, but the language he uses is so beyond what I was used to.
>
> Interviewer: Can you just talk about that a little more?
>
> John: Although he was my tutor when I went to Burston Met…I had the two years at Westmount on the foundation degree before going. I had certain, well, artspeak.

Within this extract John, a working-class mature student, argued that, without the linguistic bridging provided within his foundation degree studies, he would have probably left his degree. He explicitly referenced artspeak which, as Bourdieu has recognised, can be used to perpetuate class distinctions. Artspeak being a form of ‘cultural capital’ can translate into ‘cultural power’ (Bourdieu 1984) providing access to richer opportunities and reproducing class privilege. The alienation felt by working-class and non-traditional students in HE, has been highlighted by numerous studies, most especially the work of Reay et al. (2005) and Broadhead and Gregson (2018). This alienation can be particularly pronounced in studying art and design.

The reference John made to the language used by the lecturer at Burston Met being ‘so beyond what I was used to’ spoke directly to the use of elaborated codes in the art and design milieu. Working-class students, as outlined by Broadhead and Gregson (2018), often arrive in HE only having access to restrictive codes of linguistic communication. This precludes assimilation into the vertical discourse of abstracted thought and creative juxtaposition of ideas required of HE art students. Bourdieu (1991) critiques Chomsky and Saussure’s metaphor of language as ‘treasure’ deposited in individuals’ brains in ideal homogeneous conditions through tacit acquisition. Their lack of attention to the social and economic conditions, which Bourdieu views as fundamental to the acquisition of linguistic capital, sidesteps the crucial influence family background plays in language acquisition. John stated clearly that he would have left his degree if he had not had the advantage of the two years of socialisation into artspeak at Westmount campus on the FDA. The pedagogy of the artist/tutors in the FEI recognises that all students do not arrive in the art department pre-loaded with ‘linguistic treasure’ and the level of linguistic capital is far from homogeneous among the student cohort.

While John explicitly recognised how artspeak could be disaffecting, other respondents gave a more personalised account of their prior educational experiences

and how language and the pedagogic device used within art education in school alienated them.

> Sarah: I never thought I would be doing a degree when I started on the Level 2. I never did well at school and didn't really understand what was being said. I worried this would be the case in college and it made me worry if I should even try.
>
> Percy: The language you need for artwork like 'conceptual' or 'contextual research': I really did not know what that meant at first.

Both Sarah and Percy related how their school experiences were affected by the use of language and concepts which they were not familiar with. 'Conceptual' and 'contextual' rely on an understanding of the abstract language of vertical discourse, which neither Sarah nor Percy as working-class students had prior access to, thereby excluding them from the conversation. Sarah made explicit the associated insecurities of not being socialised into the elaborated codes of the vertical discourse and internalised her exclusion. It manifested in feelings of inadequacy and negative views of educational experiences, which were projected forward, potentially limiting life choices and educational opportunities.

While Percy and Sarah were both young working-class students, they did not make explicit the link between their lack of linguistic capital and their social position. Molly, on the other hand, outlined clearly her awareness of the difference between her and her classmates' backgrounds.

> Molly: I felt a bit clueless, always clueless. I felt behind everyone else, because I think I just did not have their background. I felt like I was this tumbleweed just going along with what I was meant to be doing but clueless.
>
> Interviewer: That's interesting, can you tell me what aspects you found difficult to understand.
>
> Molly: The lessons were just beyond me. I would make a decision when we started a new topic to really pay attention and keep up, but it just went over my head. They were talking about things I did not understand and in words they all seemed to know, but I felt really thick and would not dare to ask questions.

Molly described feeling like a 'tumbleweed', which is a perfect metaphor for what Bourdieu describes as 'cleft-habitus' whereas a working-class woman she was uprooted and culturally and socially deracinated within an unfamiliar milieu. She explained how this was reinforced by her lack of linguistic capital and how other students with different backgrounds could draw on their social and cultural resources to negotiate this new space.

For Sarah, similar experiences of displacement were expressed, as she had to relocate from a working-class West Midlands school to a middle-class institution in West Wales as her father pursued job opportunities.

> I wasn't very sociable at all. I didn't understand a lot of what went on in school and didn't get on with the people there. They seemed to come from a different place than I was used to; the way they lived was so posh.

Sarah was clearly at odds with her new surroundings and was explicit in her feelings of otherness as she described the middle-class students as coming from a 'different place' and being 'posh'. Differing social and cultural capital were evident in Sarah's observations. She was isolated from the social group as a result of the disparity between middle-class and working-class resources. Sarah rationalised her isolation as her not being very sociable. Nonetheless it still manifested in exclusion from horizontal discourse within the education cohort of her year group. This inhibited access to the vertical discourse of academic knowledge and left Sarah unable to understand much of the curricular content central to her pursuit of educational credentials.

While Molly recognised the social context which framed her school experience, both she and Alison explained how they felt personally inadequate.

> Alison: I remember liking school when I was at primary. I think I was doing OK. Even when I got to high school it was fine for the first year but then it all got a bit harder, and I just could not keep up. It sort of ran away with [from] me. I didn't understand what they were talking about. I went right off the rails; I just did not want to know and that was the end of me, round one.

> Molly: My experience was not good at school. I missed out on my GCSEs and felt like an absolute failure. I lost all my friends, and I had no identity. I felt, because I could not understand enough to even get my English exam, I would not amount to anything. That is what I believed.

Specialised language was pinpointed by Alison and Molly as creating a distance between them and the learning. The isolation felt by students in their early educational experiences was rooted in the disjunct between their socio-economic backgrounds and the institutional habitus as expressed in the language of the classroom and pedagogic device of the teachers. Language, used as a force for exclusion by dominant classes, was found by Lynch and O'Neill (1994) to prevent working-class students accessing pedagogic knowledge. They critique the model of educational discourse as one which comes from above and question the othering

which can occur if pedagogy does not understand working-class values. This was evident in both Alison's and Molly's accounts of compulsory education. The dominant cultural language, as expressed though elaborated codes, establishes the discourse, and controls the distribution of power through knowledge transmission. Agency is difficult to gain if you are excluded from the 'field of production and symbolic control' (Bernstein 1990:198) by means of social background and, by extension, familial habitus (Bourdieu 1990). Bernstein makes the explicit link between acquiring stronger grammar and gaining access to greater vertical knowledge. He extends this connection to focus on the specific advantages of specialist language and the additional richness of extended vertical knowledge structures.

Self-efficacy is negatively impacted by feelings of inadequacy, and dedication to study is demoralised. Molly missing out on her GCSEs, and Alison not knowing 'what they were talking about' and her going 'off the rails', demonstrated the unequal distribution of school sanctified forms of knowledge communicated by the pedagogic device. Elaborated linguistic codes acquired through familial habitus-transmitted advantage were not available to either Molly or Alison. The 'less' of their cultural capital translated into receiving 'less' educational capital and feelings of being an 'absolute failure' and 'the end of me'. Bourdieu describes this as 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bourdieu 1984). In this case the educational institution deploys socially stratified discriminatory actions through elaborated linguistic codes which work to maintain cultural and social domination by excluding those not socialised into the discourse. Symbolic violence translates into symbolic power as the dominated accept their position in the social hierarchy. This is expressed by Molly and Alison through internalised feelings of inadequacy as they emphasised their personal shortcomings. Looking through a Bernsteinian and Bourdieusian lens, however, the gaze shifts to the institutional use of linguistic codes. The pedagogies of the teaching milieu worked to exclude Molly and Alison from credentialising any form of educational capital.

5.3. Linguistic Bridging Mechanisms

Poor school experiences have led to feelings of insecurity and inadequacy along with a lack of self-belief in possessing the intelligence to pursue education. Many of the

alumni had left compulsory education without any meaningful qualifications and had either started families, or drifted from job to job, with little direction. Frustration at a lack of personal development, or a sense of missing out first time round led many to seek out a second chance at education in Westmount campus. When returning to the question ‘What is important to non-traditional students when making decisions to study an arts foundation degree in a further education institution?’, students differing experience of language, as deployed by the artist/tutors, emerged as significant in decision-making and emotional engagement with ideas of being capable of pursuing higher education.

Although several participants found the pedagogic device within school alienating, the approach adopted within the FEI art and design department context worked to help them overcome some of the negative associations of the educational milieu they carried with them. Percy and Mia both reported initial feelings of insecurity with the language when re-engaging with education later in life.

> Percy: I had not been in education for 15 years and not had to read anything really academic. I remember the words just seeming really unfathomable and I could not work out what was wanted.
>
> Mia: I remember the tutor talking about ‘narrative’ quite early on, this was in Level 3. I didn’t know what it was and felt really thick.
>
> Interviewer: What happened? Did you ask for an explanation?
>
> Mia: Good grief, no, I would not have dared. That would have been embarrassing.

Having experienced this initial return to feelings of inadequacy and embarrassment, further examination of the data details the pedagogy students were exposed to which supported progression to Level 4 study and ultimately degree success. I outline below a more detailed response from Mia, which has insights into the idea of ‘narrative’. It also has relevance to the importance of artistic practice in communication and acquisition of linguistic codes, which promote horizontal and vertical forms of knowledge transmission in specific educational contexts.

> Interviewer: How did things move on? Did you find out the meaning [of narrative]?
>
> Mia: Well, the tutor began to give an example and talked though some of their own work. They did ceramics and used landscape a lot to inspire them. I could see the connections.
>
> Interviewer: How did the tutor work through their explanation.

> Mia: They showed us pictures of their pieces, but because it was their work, they had it at different stages. That was interesting because I could see the development of the ideas. I remember them also showing us the landscapes they used and the sketches they had done to help them to do the ceramic pieces. It was the first time I had seen this side of an artist's making. They explained about the way their process has a story and then how the techniques of drawing, making and the materials they use all work together to create this 'narrative' as they called it. They were very good at having the actual examples of things, it was not just words. What really helped as well to understand this was the tutor got us then to bring in some of our own artwork and think about it in the same way. I have always done art on my own. It's something I have always found relaxing and distracts me if I'm stressed, so I had a lot of things I could use.
>
> Interviewer: How did this help?
>
> Mia: It was great because he sat down with us individually and talked to us about where the ideas had come from. I just thought I made it up as I went along but the tutor was good at pulling out what was really going on in the pieces. He helped me to realise I was saying something in my work and that this was the 'narrative'. I felt like a real artist, and it really helped my confidence.

Mia found access into the world of artspeak through her own artistic practice and referred to feeling 'like a real artist'. Her knowledge of creative practice as expressed through her description of 'making it up' as she went along, was grounded in her tacit knowledge and engagement with materials and process. Bernstein makes a distinction between vertical and horizontal discourse. Mia's description of her engagement with the tutor's outline of 'narrative' provides an interesting insight into the pedagogic mechanisms at work in the art and design studio in response to students' social background.

Mia's knowledge and restricted linguistic communication codes were rooted in her working-class background. The horizontal discourse of 'mundane' knowledge is context dependent and relies on assumed meaning and background knowledge between speaker and recipient. As the tutor introduces 'narrative', it draws on the vertical discourse of esoteric knowledge as expressed through artspeak in the creative milieu. This theoretical approach was difficult for Mia to conceptualise. To overcome this, the tutor made the pedagogic decision to engage in one-to-one tutorials with students allowing individual focus on the personal creative processes and the tacit knowledge students brought with them. This was recognised as important by Mia. She expressed embarrassment and insecurity at her own lack of linguistic capital, and without the pedagogic bridging by the tutor the concept of

‘narrative’ could have continued to be alienating artspeak. By bringing the conversation directly to the horizontal discourse or mundane knowledge of the students through their artistic practice, the tutor made explicit the vertical discourse, or esoteric knowledge of the art world through unpicking the artspeak of ‘narrative’ in the context of the students’ creative practice.

Horizontal discourse of mundane knowledge deals with the everyday material base and is restricted to dealing with the immediate context of shared understanding struggling to transcend the immediate experience. Vertical discourse of esoteric knowledge, however, has the capacity to manoeuvre in a more theoretical space, is not rooted in a material base and can conceptualise abstract thought. This ‘distance’ between vertical discourse and the ‘real world’ Bernstein (1996) called the *discursive gap*. He did not regard it as a weakness but as a strength. It is a space where new thoughts and concepts can emerge and is credited by Bernstein (1996:44) as a ‘crucial site of the *yet to be thought*’. It can provide movement between mundane and esoteric knowledge. This was important for Mia, as the pedagogic device of the artist/tutor drew on their artistic practice bringing the vertical abstract discourse of ‘narrative’ into view through practical examples. Mia talked of seeing the tutor’s preliminary work. This allowed Mia to see step by step, through the familiar lens of a horizontal, materially grounded process, the more abstract vertical discourse of the ‘narrative’, which was further described by the tutor as a ‘story’. The space in the discursive gap was negotiated by the tutor to allow Mia a step towards the vertical discourse which she would need to fulfil her educational ambitions on her art course.

The decision to return to education was emotionally charged for Mia. The introduction of what she viewed as ‘unfamiliar’ language brought back negative memories of compulsory schooling and feelings of inadequacy. In the pursuit of knowledge sharing, the artist/tutor recognised this and drew on their own artistic practice to enrich the pedagogic environment for the students, understanding that to simply ‘explain’ the unfamiliar territory of artspeak with further, possibly equally unfamiliar words, was not productive. Mia made plain her appreciation that the concepts were not just outlined in words, but that the practical examples were central to her understanding. The artist/tutor’s use of their own work drew on horizontal discourses of artistic practice rooted in material reality. Using visual stimuli in the form of his own artistic developments, the artist/tutor engaged with horizontal

discourse of mundane knowledge to engage students in a territory they were acquainted with. Earlier we saw Mia explain, 'I have always done art on my own. It's something I have always found relaxing and distracts me if I'm stressed.' This visual and materials-led process was an effective segue into the artspeak necessary to communicate complex conceptual ideas. It was supported by the familiarity the artist/tutor has with the metaphorical connection between imagery production and the language of art (Sullivan 2006). The pedagogy within the FEI art and design department operates within the 'discursive gap' between vertical and horizontal discourse. It is a space where students and tutors can work to bring their own values, experiences and understanding to recontextualise meaning.

The pedagogic device is aligned more closely with the experiences of the students by the application of 'narrative' in their own creative endeavours. The exemplar of the tutor's work is not set apart, it is used only as a guide for students to apply the language in their own context. By introducing this dynamic into the teaching forum the students' creative capital is recognised along with their familial backgrounds to place the learning of artspeak in a context, which resonates and has relevance to familial habitus.

The recognition by the artist/tutors at Westmount art and design department that the language of creativity is central to the pursuit and engagement of art and design, but can be problematic in its acquisition, resonates with students. The language can be a barrier to engagement, but the tutors work through a range of avenues to make it relevant. Making it relevant builds confidence, as students can bring their own values and experiences to their learning, as outlined by Jade, an art and design lecturer for contextual studies, where students are expected to engage with written work:

> Interviewer: What did you do to help students think about their language and build their confidence with the more complicated aspects?
>
> Jade: I would give them very focused writing in areas which were connected to their interests as makers and artists. I would even use things they were interested in which they had talked about in our informal conversations. I then went through the pieces of writing with them, and we discussed it with a real emphasis on it being a conversation. [There was] no pressure to write big academic pieces of work that would have scared them off and [by doing that] you would have lost them.

Jade built on the broader relationship with students. Because of 'informal conversations' of horizontal discourse she had more material to work with when

applying relevant reference points and building relationships of meaning in the discursive gap, allowing the context of students' lived experience a space to grow.

> Interviewer: When you say 'lost them', what do you mean?
>
> Jade: If you went too fast and too artsy, with what you were discussing, they would just glaze over, you have to constantly read how they are responding.
>
> Interviewer: Would you be able to do anything to address this?
>
> Jade: If I felt the room was going in that direction, I would head it off with an injection of creativity. We would get the materials out and I would get them to do visual mind-maps to get their hands working on the topic as well. Once we had broken the low energy, I would reintroduce the more complex ideas and then the vocabulary to the students.

Returning to the physical engagement was significant. 'Get their hands working on the topic' points to the tacit nature of the tutor's pedagogic approach and what Bernstein might call the mundane. Being a practising artist, Jade was conversant in the dual engagement of practical and intellectual methods of knowledge transmission. Jade was constantly reading the students and drawing on her understanding of the context of their background. Mundane knowledge is context specific and necessitates on-the-spot judgements. She is then deploying targeted practical and visually creative pathways to engage students in language development. This flips the socially-situated environment of language being a form of knowledge transmission privileged through family advantage working only to advance those students who possess larger forms of cultural capital and elaborated linguistic codes. Students who come through Jade's studio are recognised as having creative and practical skills. This is utilised to move the conceptual debate to the visual and practical forum. Through Jade's artistry and pedagogic devices, a side door to the academic world of artspeak is opened. A space is created in the discursive gap, which allows students to find another, more familiar path towards artspeak through their creative endeavours.

Artist/tutors also recognised the insecurities of the students new to the department, and when questioned on how they tackled it, Saffron, an art and design tutor, recalled:

> I remember one incident where I was managing a class discussion. This was a Level 2 first diploma group. We were having a class 'crit' and one chap was talking

> through his reasons for drawing skulls. Another, generally quite disruptive student, was talking and not paying attention. So, in order to bring him back into the conversation, I asked him what he thought of the other student's 'argument'. This really brought the boy up sharp, and he got quite defensive saying, 'I don't want to argue with him, he is my friend.'

Language is socially situated (Bourdieu 1991) and this misreading of the focus of the request is grounded in the lived experience of the students challenging a member of their own social group. When Saffron was asked how they went forward, they responded:

> It was so interesting to see the misinterpretation of the question. But it was actually a positive, because I was able to turn the class to the ideas around 'arguments' and how this is different in the different situation we find ourselves. We were able to have a really productive discussion, as a group, about how this works in everyday life and how it can be applied in art and the conversations we have about our work as creatives.

Identifying an opportunity for language acquisition, the tutor was nimble, engaged in a reflexive pedagogic approach and quickly turned the learning around. The instigation of a wider discussion and the pursuit of a deeper understanding of the contextual nature of language for the students became the focus. The application of meaning was grounded in personal experience and the skills to engage effectively in broader discussions were extended.

5.4. Familiarity and Continuity of Language

This close observation of students, and mapping of content to personal interests, is of significance when discussing the progression decisions of non-traditional students. Self-efficacy in pursuing HE was fragile for many. Building an identity as a student who can 'do' HE (Reay et al. 2005) entails insight into the shape of your imagined future. Mapping the learning from Level 3 to Level 4 came with the continuity of the artist/tutors in the art and design department and the familiarity of language introduced in earlier learning. Bernstein argued that institutions can be biased in their construction of curricular content grounded in assumptions of students' access to linguistic and cultural capital. This can work to exclude non-traditional students, who have not been exposed to vertical discourse and elaborated codes of HE art and design project briefs.

To overcome these barriers, artist/tutors worked consciously to bridge the linguistic gap between restricted and elaborated codes. This was supported by artist/tutors teaching across both FE and HE and having continuity of input with students over several years. The pedagogic knowledge acquired in socialising non-traditional students into artspeak at Level 2 and 3 built an effective framework to furnish students with the skills to read the studio brief and profit fully from its implied pedagogy (Broadhead 2015). This was of consequence to a number of respondents when choosing to study HE at Westmount campus. Artist/tutors would introduce students to degree level work. Both Percy and Lily outlined how the parallels in language between Level 3 and degree project briefs were insightful and helped to demystify degree level study.

> Percy: Well just seeing the project brief and how it was written, I understood what it wanted. It looked familiar and I was really encouraged by that. It took away the fear that the degree would be too difficult.
>
> Lily: We were shown the work of the degree students and the project briefs they were working on; I thought, honestly ‘I can do that’. Of course, it was technically better but then they had had more practice. I remember thinking I could see myself doing the project. It was not as hard as I thought.

Percy explicitly talked of the fear of a degree being ‘too difficult’. Reay et al. (2005) outline how students coming from non-traditional and working-class backgrounds are often first-generation university-goers and lack the privileged insights of their middle-class counterparts when assessing the demands of HE study. Both Percy and Lily exhibited internalised feelings of inadequacy when contemplating imagined futures as degree students. When, however, they were exposed to real-time degree level project briefs and creative output of students as pedagogised by their own tutors within the department, they moved to replace feelings of inadequacy with feelings of familiarity and realistic projections of self as degree capable students. The students’ ability to ‘read’ not only the project brief as it stands but to ‘read’ the underlying nuances of invisible pedagogy which underpin successful understanding of the brief, was supported by the pre-existing understanding of the artist/tutor’s pedagogic predisposition resulting from several years of exposure and coaching in their approach through Level 2 and 3.

The language as introduced by the artist/tutors on Level 2 and 3 drew on the horizontal discourse of the mundane practice of students to familiarise them through

repeated pedagogic linguistic bridging into the vertical discourse of esoteric knowledge. This furnished students with abstract concepts as expressed through project briefs. They began to feel like a 'fish in water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:127) and moved away from being the pedagogised 'other' of what can be a middle-class biased educational curriculum.

The artist/tutors' pedagogic approach was grounded in the tight relationship between their intellectual and creative practice. Divisive curricular-based assumptions of student access to linguistic resources were absent from the reports of students who outlined the delivery of project briefs. When asked how the artist/tutors introduced projects and how this impacted learning, Sarah (alumna) responded.

> Well, it was the tutors. They would not just give it to you. They always went through it. They would pull out the important bits and explain what they meant. They would use the language but would then relate it to what you were doing and the creative work.

Artist/tutors have the advantage when bridging the linguistic gap of delivering curricular content across FE and HE. This gives them the opportunity to ground the development of linguistic competencies in restricted and elaborated codes through an intricate understanding of students' dispositions, interests and socio-economic backgrounds across several years. This is significant in supporting progression, demystifying the requirements of HE study and making the possibility of doing a degree realistic. The familiarity of the language is related to the continuity of the artist/tutors teaching in the FEI art and design department and their ability to draw on all aspects of the students' creative and cultural capital to expand discursive horizons.

Students also gained insights into the requirements of the degree by taking advantage of opportunistic encounters with FDA students, and John (alumnus) described how this took place within shared studio workshop space.

> I saw a project brief this metalwork guy [Level 5 FDA student] had on his desk and I asked if I could see it. It was actually written by my tutor on the Level 3. She was the tutor for the FDA course as well. I recognised the language, and the degree guy said it was not that different from Level 3, which he had done a couple of years before. I was really surprised I could read through it and understand what it meant.

Not only did the deciphering of language support progression, but it helped students to stick with their studies once on the degree. When asked if the early work on

decoding the projects and language of the art and design department had helped with degree study, the alumni saw the experiences on the Level 3 course as significant.

> Percy: Well, I credit doing the Level 3 with a lot because it taught me how to read the projects, and the tutors were really good at going through it with us.
>
> Alison: Oh yes, I think because it was the same tutors as well, I was able to understand their style and the things they meant in their writing by then. There was sort of a pattern you get used to and the level they want you to work to. They have also shown me how to look at the wording of things and to find out how to decipher it, so I became less self-conscious if I did not know something. The tutors would sometimes say they did not know something, and they would Google it or find a way of understanding it through some research. So, you realised you are always learning and that really helped my confidence.
>
> Anna: I think being in the same institution helped me a lot as well as I was comfortable with the rhythms of the teaching and the way they did things. I was being pushed with the different levels and I was able to get to grips with the language as I went along.

Alumni talked of 'deciphering', 'rhythms' and a 'pattern' emerging. Elaborated codes were being identified. As students moved through their art and design education, they repositioned their relationship to restricted and elaborated codes. Through the horizontal pedagogic discourse, as nurtured by the artist/tutors in Level 2 and 3, students were able to access the vertical trajectories, which mapped out imagined futures in higher education. The language took on a familiarity as projects and discussions which employed artspeak became natural bedfellows for the students, who were socialised into the landscape of the art and design department through their creative and intellectual pursuits.

> Percy: It's funny really to look back and think I got so worked up about it, but when you do look back, you realise you have learnt so much. And now I do it really naturally.

5.5. Summary

All the alumni come from working-class backgrounds and reported negative compulsory schooling experiences. All but two left school with little or no meaningful qualifications. The two who did, failed to progress to university level study through lack of support from school or parents and were unable to gain any meaningful understanding of the progression process. Some working-class students moving out of compulsory education carried legacies of low self-confidence, which effected self-efficacy to pursue any other education paths. These feelings of

inadequacy were, in part, grounded in the use of socially-situated language within the classroom. Disjuncts between institutional application of privileged language, which favours middle-class discursive resources, disadvantaged and excluded working-class students from access to the elaborated codes necessary to engage with the curriculum. These insecurities did not necessarily dissipate over time and accompanied students into further education as they returned for a second chance. The acquisition of artspeak was deemed as important by artist/tutors and daunting by students but proved key in decision-making by Level 3 students to progress to HE. Decisions were focused on the decoding of language and the familiarity with the artist/tutors' approach. There was continuity for cohorts progressing to HE within the institution, as artist/tutors often taught across levels. This manifested in a continuity of language and access to vertical forms of knowledge, providing insights into higher levels of study and demystifying the codes of access to artspeak. This approach was grounded in the artistic pedagogic insights, reflexive practice and an engagement with students' social milieu by the artist/tutors. The dual professional identity of the artist/tutors was important to the effective development of linguistic bridging, and this dual professionality will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: The Significance of Dual Professionalism and Student Experience

6.1. Introduction

This chapter will consider the dual professional identities of the artists who also teach in the FEI art and design department and examine how this affects their practice and impacts students' experience. The discussion will explore the dynamic relationship between the dual professional identities of artist and educator and how, if at all, this impacts on student learning, identity reconstruction and decision-making at critical points of progression. We have already seen the significance of dual professionalism as discusses in Chapter 3 (3.5:40). Dual professionalism is a characteristic feature of working in FE colleges, but this study illustrates a different and nuanced view of its impact on non-traditional students. Following an exploration of the formation of dual professional identities and how they are negotiated, the discussion will turn to how these inform pedagogy in the studio. It will illustrate how artist/tutors convert, or pedagogise, practice-based knowledge into effective classroom knowledge and how tutors develop strategies to transfer this knowledge through student/tutor discourse, curricula structure and meaningful engagement. The nature of learning taking place for the non-traditional students in the art and design department will also be examined. The discussion will consider how central the materials and process-led focus of the artist/tutors' practice is to the development of the pedagogic device as deployed in the teaching studios of the FEI. Finally, this section will consider if this particular pedagogic device provides non-traditional students with a 'roadmap' for learning and tools to negotiate identity reconstruction which may influence decision-making to progress to HE. Bernstein's (1996) theory of the production and reproduction of knowledge through the pedagogic device will be used to frame the discussion and understand the consequences of tutors' artistic practice in the transmission of knowledge and creation of spaces for alternative possibilities. The discussion will now move on to understanding how the artist/tutors' dual professional identity was established.

6.2. Development of a Dual Professional Identity

The development of a dual professional identity as artist and educator for the seven artist/tutors interviewed in the study was generally reported as a gradual process. The data illustrated a strong, well-established identity as an artist. Artist/tutors and alumni consistently used the term ‘artist’ when referring to their own and others creative practice in preference to terms such as commercial artist or practice researcher. There was, however, reference to the materiality of practice for example ceramicist or textile artist. Respondents cited their artistic practice, and engagement with the material world, as central to their identity as professional artists. This narrative was discussed in detail with evidence of a long-standing commitment to their artistic practice and far-reaching connections within a broader artistic community. Identities as tutors took longer to emerge for many following the classic route into further education teaching through ‘the long interview’ (James and Biesta 2007:128), where tutors build up hours over a period of time, often starting on a part-time basis.

When artist/tutors sought to explain their artistic identity, they found it within the material world of practice. Both Tina and Jade outlined the importance of making and engaging with the materiality of their practice.

> Tina: I am a practising artist. I have a degree and an MA in ceramics, and I have been running my own studio since I graduated.
>
> Jade: Making is something I have always done. I do have a degree in textiles, but I see myself as a professional more because of the commitment I have to what I do. I constantly try to improve my practice and I have my studio.

Tina and Jade’s statements started with a focus directly on the making and practise of their artistic identity. Both mentioned the qualifications associated with their specialist education, but quickly moved on, bringing the focus back to the site of materials and process.

Tina has established roots within the broader creative community and cited specifically her recognition by peers as being significant in her identity as an artist.

> I exhibit regularly in professional galleries and sell my work. I also belong to several professional organisations which you have to be selected by your peers to join, and I feel that gives me credibility in the community. It is something which is such a part of me. I couldn’t imagine not doing it.

Tina demonstrated the development of a specialised identity (Bernstein 1996). Her identity as an artist had, in part, been formed through her degree and MA. She did, however, express a deeply internal aspect to her identity as she outlines, ‘it is something which is such a part of me’. There was an inward commitment to her creativity, the knowledge of her practice being an external ‘expression of an inner relationship’ (Bernstein 1996:87). Tina’s inner relationship with her practice formed her identity to such a great extent she can’t ‘imagine not doing it’.

Jade also aligned her professional artistic identity with a focus on materials and process and a self-declared commitment to ongoing development and refinement of her practice. Embedded in her description, however, was a relationship with broader communities beyond her immediate environment which informed her identity.

> I commit to working on commissions. I think of it as a job in some ways and although there is very much the creative side, I feel [I am] a professional because I am prepared to work to deadlines and understand my material and process intimately because of so many years’ experience.

Tina’s identity was equally informed through engagement and recognition by the broader creative community. Bernstein (1996) recognised this space of identity forming and re-forming as ‘the dynamic interface between individual careers and the social or collective base’ (Bernstein 1996:73). This has parallels with Lave and Wenger’s situated learning theory (1991) which suggests that learning is socially situated and that the community of practice (Wenger 1998) can play a significant role in acquiring knowledge and finding a place within that community. Both Tina and Jade’s identity, as professional artists, stemmed from a dialogue with process and materials, and was recognised in Jade’s narrative by the importance placed on developing an ‘intimate’ or tacit understanding of her practice. The ongoing engagement with practice development was expressed by other tutors as ‘being current’, a sentiment echoed in Graham and Zwirn’s 2010 study stemming from engagement with the broader artistic communities. David, a ceramics tutor, outlined that ‘By being a professional artist, you know what’s going on. You see what the galleries are doing. You’re not relying on what you did in college, you’re out there, you’re current.’

Tina and Jade’s identity, however, was also shaped by other identities in the field of operation and placed them in a community of practice. Bernstein understands this

‘through relations which the identity enters into with other identities of reciprocal recognition, support, mutual legitimization and finally through a negotiated collective purpose’ (Bernstein 1996:73). For Tina and Jade, these ‘other identities’ and communities of practice were fellow artists, professional galleries and specialist organisations. These communities of practice and engagement with the materiality of process were shown in the data to be influential in shaping artist/tutors’ pedagogic device. The focus will now turn to a discussion of the pedagogic device and explore its orientation as influenced by the artist/tutor’s dual professional identity.

6.3. The Pedagogic Device and Dual Professional Identity

All the tutors in the study were practising artists and had established professional studios of their own. The data has shown that external artist-related discourse in the broader community of artistic practice in the form of exhibitions, publications and peer-reviewed professional bodies has a strong impact on artistic identity. The dialogue with materials and practice has been shown to be central in the development and maintenance of professional artistic identity. In interviews, artist/tutors talked of the ongoing nature of their artistic practice and the interaction this had in informing pedagogic device. David was explicit in his understanding of the connections between his own studio practice and the pedagogic device he constructed for his students.

> Being able to do your own work I find important for teaching. It’s actually quite handy, because you’re actually sort of finding technical problems, and I used to find technical problems all the time. Like, for example, with throwing. I would get students to throw pots to work with the more physical side of it, because I know I’ll do the same. I know by working through different materials I will know how they react. I then get them [students] to physically carry them [processes and techniques] out, so they have a roadmap of how the materials work, because within the ceramic curriculum you still have to follow pathways and not just come up with outcomes. There are rules you have to follow, but it’s being able to get them to have the confidence. And it’s mainly lots of problem solving, which is important. But it’s giving them the confidence that they can actually sort of find their way.

David was developing work in parallel to students’ creative endeavours and made clear his pedagogic role in the transmission of practice-based knowledge. David’s pedagogic framing was purposefully weak. It gave space for students to set the sequencing and pace of their learning. The students were expected to play their role in the acquisition of process and material understanding: ‘I would get students to

throw pots to work with the more physical side of it'. There was an acknowledgement, through tacit knowledge of ceramics, that the physical engagement with the process was crucial to developing a legitimate narrative of creative expression: 'I then get them [students] to physically carry them [processes and techniques] out, so they have a roadmap of how the materials work'. The distinction between the tutor's knowledge, and the development of autonomous lines of enquiry for the students was blurred. These complex dynamics, fostered through dual professionalism, are described by Graham and Zwirn (2010:220) as intricate 'ecosystems' which foster 'co-adaptations' within an environment responsive to tacit, cultural and social knowledge. David pedagogised knowledge by building a structure or scaffold (Vygotsky 1978) through which students could process content and reflect on their developments with some reference points informed through support from a more experienced practitioner. These reference points were rooted in David's artistic practice and guided by his ongoing development and reflections as a professional artist. David was developing work in parallel to the students' creative endeavours. Referring to 'technical problems' indicated the materials-focused, real-time investigations David engaged with in his artistic practice. This iterative process corresponded to students' own investigations with the material and provided a unique perspective from which students could observe critical points of reflection and conceptual judgement by professional artists. Students developed an understanding of the connection between the material/mundane and theory/esoteric in their creativity.

Framing the pedagogy as a 'roadmap' bore relation to David's ongoing practice as a ceramicist and his understanding of the disciplinary knowledge communicated through this metaphor. A 'roadmap' gave a range of options, and the navigator, or student, must make autonomous judgements and decisions to find a way forward. David made clear that there are, however, 'rules' which he expressed as 'not just coming up with an outcome', but emphasised the importance of process, placing equal importance on both the conceptual development and material development of a piece.

The discussion has outlined three examples of how artist/tutors' dual professional identities influence the pedagogic device and create a space where students have a unique perspective on professional artistic practice and specialist mundane and

esoteric knowledge transmission. This was found to be typical of the artist/tutors' practice across the art and design department at Westmount campus. It was also found that all artist/tutors exercise autonomy in the development of learning spaces and conceptual metaphor with a focus on providing students with a roadmap to develop agency and confidence in decision-making and tacit understanding of process and material application. How these approaches affect students is of interest to the study, and the discussion will now turn to consider how the dual professional identity of the artist/tutors influences the nature of student learning and decision-making at points of progression.

Former students described the professional artistic status of the tutors as a significant factor in their learning experience through the development of trust and dialogue. Molly, a mature student, who had progressed through Level 3 onto the FDA, had an awareness of the lecturers' artistic pursuits and reported this as giving gravity and legitimacy to the relationship and learning environment she experienced through her studies. She reflected on her expectations of the teaching staff when asked about their artistic backgrounds.

> Molly: I think I would not have trusted a tutor who was not practising [as an artist]. I know that sounds odd.
>
> Interviewer: No, that's really interesting go on.
>
> Molly: Say they had just studied the academic side of an artistic process…how would I be able to trust their input on my education? They don't even have to be 'sellable' artists. Just the fact that they are practising helped because they know the struggle. They know the research involved. They know the experimental process, they know what it is like.

The 'it' in this comment speaks to the tacit knowledge artists have of their practice, which emerges from material engagement. Molly's willingness to 'trust' tutors, who negotiated these same territories, recognised their shared journey and that she was in safe hands. Molly's trust in the artist/tutors grew as a result of shared tacit knowledge and creative endeavour. Developing trust reinforced mutual respect and acceptance within the community. Maggie, another foundation degree alumna, who had progressed from Level 3, relayed the class 'crit', where tutors would encourage mutual discussion of each student's work and comment on the progression of pieces, as being like 'artist talking to artist'. This speaks to the professional artist identity of the tutors and expresses the mutually shared space of creative development through

practice and material-led exploration. Ada, also an alumna of the FDA programme, remembered how she experienced the dual professional role of the tutors and how it enhanced her learning through shared experience and respect.

> As a teacher they are above you and senior, but as an artist they are equal. So, when they are making suggestions on things, I didn't feel patronised or anything like that. It's like they were saying it from the same level.

Expressions of mutual respect were evident along with a recognition that there were common elements of experience leading to progression in creative practice. Gaining insight into tutors' professional practice was discussed by the majority of alumni as significant in the development of their learning and own artistic identity. Lily, an alumna of the FDA programme, outlined the connection she felt was necessary to understand the tutors' creative process was like 'breathing'.

> Because it's breathing, isn't it? It's like, you want to know the depth of somebody and what their knowledge is. So it's nice to know what they've experienced themselves.

This analogy is an elegant representation of the integrity of the relationship between the artistic identities of artist/tutor and student and highlights the importance of authentic professional identity. There was a recognition by Lily that tutors were a repository of knowledge, and she was eager to access this. There was also an intimacy to Lily's curiosity: an intuitive sense that to understand the elusive spaces of creativity you need to 'know the depth of somebody'.

Artist/tutors were willing to go to these intimate places to provide roadmaps for student learning and clearly articulated in the interviews an understanding of their own insecurities within their creative practice and how they drew on this to inform pedagogic approaches. Tina made explicit the connection between her own creative process and her approach to students.

> There are so many times when you are making, you think, I'm not sure, I'm not sure, I'm not sure, and then at the end everything goes ping and makes sense. And I think it's really, for me, important when I'm teaching to kind of get that across to students early, so they are not fumbling through.

Through the privileging of narratives of uncertainty by communicating her own moments of 'I'm not sure', Tina's pedagogic device drew on the three interrelated rules of pedagogy: distribution, recontextualisation and evaluation. As Tina shared her artistic insights and methodologies of approach within the teaching studio she

was facilitating the distribution of selected knowledge, which orientated the pedagogic discourse towards ideas of insecurity. These pedagogies of the not-yet-known were found, by Denmead (2011), to be central in promoting spaces which gave students the conceptual skills to explore the unknown and unexpected. By recontextualising this approach in the teaching studio, Tina promoted the acceptance of 'not knowing' as legitimate and an encouraged form of self-development. Sarah, an FDA alumna, gave an insightful account of her learning and experience of this recontextualisation when describing the pedagogic approach of Saffron, a textile tutor.

> Saffron encouraged us all to test it, destroy it, do something different with it. How many times can you use and reuse something? It was all learning through, sometimes, your mistakes, sometimes your happy accidents, but we were always encouraged to try different ways of doing things. Get out of your comfort zone. Always get out of your comfort zone.

The imperative of artist/tutors encouraging students to get out of their 'comfort zone' refocused the pedagogic discourse from its original site of production (Bernstein 1996), that of Saffron's own experimental discoveries with the materiality of her practice in her own studio and converted it into new pedagogic communication. This gave validity to students' own progression into the unknown.

Validating this pedagogic device of understanding insecurities, exploring new territory and being prepared to go into the unknown was reinforced through the evaluation process. Artist/tutors outlined in the interviews how the experimentation element of a project was part of the assessment process. In response to Sarah's description above of Saffron's pedagogic device within the teaching studio, Saffron was asked to comment on how this approach dovetailed with assessing learning.

> There is an expectation that students will really interrogate the materials they are working with. There is always an element of the project brief which asks for test pieces, samples and maquettes. The students are asked to reflect on them as well and understand how they can move forward. They are not all going to work but it's the understanding of what has gone on which is important. I want to see they [students] are building a vocabulary with their experimentations, their own sort of technical library.

The evaluative process required the recognition of what was considered valid evidence of acquisition of specific curricular content. The tutors and students were operating in the field of academic accreditation. This was recognised within the

structuring of evaluative documentation. The requirement to experiment, and process conceptual responses, was formally written into course outcomes. Saffron understood the students' learning as 'building a vocabulary' and developing a 'library' of technical material processes. These concepts spoke to the metaphor of the 'roadmap' and the scaffolding of learning through building agency of decision-making by pedagogising points of understanding and independent discovery. These staging posts of learning were accumulated by students and drawn on with ever increasing autonomy at future moments of creative decision-making.

Molly, an FDA alumna, described her change in approach to her own learning as she gained insights into the workings of her tutors' artistic practice. Her tutor outlines the iterative nature of the development of work and Molly shares her reassurance as to the uncertain explorative nature of creativity.

> I suppose making mistakes is not an issue. If you do make mistakes, then they [artist/tutors] have all been there. It is part of the process, yeah, there is no judgement. It's a case of 'look it happened to me', it's totally normal. You have to go through this cycle of these peaks of getting so many ideas it all goes wrong and then you hit an 'uuhh' and then it's fine.

The artist/tutor drew on their own artistic practice to pedagogise the process of concept generation and technical development. Although not explicitly referenced, the materiality of the process was expressed in the making of mistakes. Generating ideas was recognised as a rhythmic and dynamic process. As the artist/tutor shared their own practice, Molly read this as 'cycles' of ideas generation. This reflected the tutor's pedagogising of 'the design cycle' and gave validity to the mistakes, which would be an inevitable part of the process. Tutors were central players in the production, and reproduction, of knowledge within the college environment. Artist/tutors' dual professional identity was fundamental in the development of fields of transmission. The tutors' artistic identity informed the production of tacit knowledge, grounded in the materiality of the process, often working in tandem with students' own creative pursuits. The artist/tutors' educational identity recontextualised this knowledge and reproduced, through student engagement, meaningful learning.

The artist/tutor was transferring the disciplinary knowledge by pedagogising their own creative rhythms, which had in turn been inherited through their involvement in

the broader ‘work of the community’ (Bernstein 1996:44), rooted in their professional identity as an artist. This reassured Molly, and she found a place for the ‘uuhh’ moment, the moment of ‘alternative realisation’. This is where the mundane butts up against the esoteric and the ‘yet to be thought’ finds a voice (Bernstein 1996). There were interesting points of similarity between Molly’s description of her ‘uuhh’ moment and Tina’s expression of ‘ping’ being the space which produced the realisation of concept and process.

These points of sharing, and knowledge transmission, trigger spaces of tension between the mundane and esoteric, the material and the theory, and provide fruitful pedagogic discourse (Bernstein 1996). They open a space between the language that describes the material and the internal theory (Bernstein and Solomon 1999:209). The ‘potential’ within this space is negotiated through the relationship between the material/mundane and theory/esoteric and can provide a place for ‘alternative possibilities’. Having a space for ‘alternative possibilities’ has the potential to offer non-traditional students alternative perspectives in their decision-making to progress to HE. Developing these spaces within the fields of the pedagogic device requires the artist/tutor to apply pedagogic strategies to transmit specialist artistic and academic knowledge. The conversion of knowledge through pedagogic communication ‘acts on meaning potential’ (Singh 2002:573). What knowledge is made available to be transmitted, and acquired, is privileged through the pedagogic device. Artist/tutors’ pedagogising of the conceptual and material world is realised through the alternative possibilities of creative production, and artist/tutors draw on analogies of creating and refining of process to conceptualise the decision-making process of students at crucial points of progression, as Pam, a ceramic tutor, described.

> It’s part of the learning journey. It’s a bit like saying, right, you’re gonna make a ceramic pot. It’s a step-by-step process. You learn how to make the ceramic pot. Then you go back, refine the ceramic pot, and so on. You keep revisiting it. A one-off conversation is never going to be good enough.

This process of revisiting and refining in order to progress underlies the reflective process integral to developing the necessary critical engagement to stimulate ‘alternative possibilities’. The step-by-step process offers ‘boundary points’, which Bernstein views as moments of tension (Bernstein 1996). Students go through a personal journey of ‘individual enhancement’. This is a means of gaining critical understanding and operationalising ways of thinking about new possibilities.

Bernstein goes further on this point and suggests that the right to 'individual enhancement' is a condition for confidence and without confidence the ability to capitalise on opportunities is restricted. Alumni articulated the tensions between confidence and critical understanding of decision-making at moments of progression, when asked if they had imagined they would go on to study at degree level.

> Alison: No, if you had said I would be doing any of the stuff I had done, I would have thought I am not qualified, or I am not talented enough, or you know, especially the academic stuff as well. The skill level, academically, I would have thought I would not be able to do. So yeah, it was like I said, each step I was thinking, okay I will try and get through this one. Then I would do it and go onto the next and then I think I will go on, but I'm not sure if I'm able to do this, but I did it.

> Lily: I'm not even sure why I thought I was capable. I think it was more the tutors persuaded me that I was capable of doing it. I had mentally gone through tough times thinking about the degree. You just feel incapable of doing things. One part of your brain just thinks you can't do it. Then I saw tutors' work and students' work on the course; I thought, yeah. I never thought I'd still do it though. I still thought I'd be really bad at it, but something happens. You can actually get through things. It's just little steps.

Both Alison and Lily expressed deep insecurities and lack of confidence in their projected selves. What came through for both, however, was an iterative process of self-discovery and boundary points, which necessitated personal courage to move into imagined futures and identity reconstruction. Low self-efficacy when asked directly about imagined selves as degree students was expressed as not being 'talented enough' and feeling 'incapable'. The alumni were conscious of hurdles, which needed to be crossed in order to progress. Alison was aware of trying to get through moments of decision-making and Lily outlined similar thoughts in her reflection that 'You can actually get through things'. These were moments of 'individual enhancement', 'condensing the past *and* opening possible futures' (Bernstein 1996:6). How the artist/tutors' dual professional identity supports students at points of decision-making and moments of insecurity will now be discussed.

6.4. Dual professionalism supporting progression

Lily credited the artist/tutors with 'persuading' her to do HE. The role artist/tutors played in supporting students to reconceptualise the past emerged through the interviews as important in students' decision-making at each stage of progression. Heidi, an experienced art and design tutor, recognised that the development of a

student's individual voice worked in parallel with the development of an identity as an artist and was an incremental journey embedded within a community of practice. The community, within the art and design department, as constructed through the artist/tutors' dual professional identity, recognised the iterative experience of multiple cohorts and the necessity for newcomers to work within communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). This empowered students struggling with identity reconstruction in relation to HE to take advantage of previous students' identity reconstruction through reconceptualising the past. Understanding of the students' socio-economic backgrounds and their familial narrative grounds the discourse of collective understanding of the insecurities embedded in non-traditional students' views of their future selves as university students. Heidi, an art and design tutor, outlined this well.

> I think going back again, to the demographic of our students, they are not going to go to college with us, do Level 2, and then say I'm going to uni. For them they're looking to find out who they are. And at the same time, they are finding out about themselves as artists working through the levels…becoming a student with a degree in art, I think, it's just a whole holistic journey and takes place in the community.

The distribution of knowledge needed to experience boundaries was grounded in the discovery of self and artist and was pedagogised through Heidi's dual professional understanding of both artistic creativity and academic achievement, which credentialised educational attainment. Valuing creative growth and learning as central in knowledge acquisition was understood by Heidi as significant. She also acknowledged the importance of recognising the credentials which accrue from academic achievement, as without these students cannot progress to further levels of knowledge and growth.

Heidi developed this to outline the significance of the broader community in allowing students access to an understanding of what acquiring these credentials looked like 'on the ground'. The community, in part, was constructed by the pedagogic device of open studios and students from different levels mingling with each other, sharing insights, gossip and challenges. This was identified in the data as an important feature in decision-making and is discussed further in Chapter 7 'Space and Proximity' (p 93). Making visible future possibilities through fostering vibrant communities was also outlined by Anne, another art and design tutor.

> Because I think, again, it's having an end goal. And I think if you're talking to students about something they never see it's like the pot of gold and the rainbow, but they're never going to find it. I think it's nice to see the reality of the work of an artist and of students on other levels.

This metaphor moves the discourse of enhancement beyond the individual to the community. On an individual level, the student is exposed to and conceptualises increasingly developed cultural, creative and academic knowledge. By involvement with, and insight into, the broader artistic community, this cognitive engagement becomes a reflective process igniting positive shifts in self-efficacy, identity reconstruction and can redefine traditional familial narratives, which 'draws the individual beyond themselves' (Vitale and Exley, 2016:21). The enhancement of students going 'beyond themselves', supported by artist/tutors' dual professional identity, is crucial in glimpsing the 'pot of gold' and gaining agency in decision-making to progress to HE.

6.5. Summary

The discussion has made links between the dual professional identities of the artists who also teach, their creative practice and the influence this has on pedagogic discourse through the pedagogic device. Artist/tutors' dual professional commitment as artist and educator widened the opportunities of students to view and critically engage with the broader community of creative discourse. What has been demonstrated is an ethos of experimentation where students were invited into places of insecurity but provided with 'roadmaps' to begin negotiating their own narrative in response to the stimulation of the creative process. Artist/tutors drew on their own artistic practice to inform pedagogic approaches and were open in sharing their insecurities. As artists, tutors were engaged with confronting moments of insecurity, boundary crossing and creating models of persistence and risk-taking for their students. Artist/tutors brought a richness of experience to pedagogic communication, expressing strong identities as professional artists and teachers and making explicit the interconnectedness of this dual engagement. Artist/tutors wove rich connections of meaning, opening pathways of understanding and validating non-traditional students' experiences. Tacit knowledge of materials and process proved central in establishing staging posts of trust and mutual respect between students and tutors. Drawing on their professional identity as artists, tutors were conversant in the

iterative process of ideas creation and the uncertainty of outcome. When moving into the territory of decision-making and identity reconstruction in relation to progression in general, and HE in particular, artist/tutors pedagogised points of tension. Artist/tutors developed spaces for students to experience 'individual enhancement' through moments of insecurity and provided frameworks for critical reflection. By allowing students a viewing platform through which to profit from past experience and embrace possible futures, students developed agency in artistic and individual identity. This provided a space for students to reflect on their prospective futures and muster courage to 'think the yet to be thought' and move to considering HE as an option for them. As Bernstein outlines, 'all experiencing carries a pedagogic potential, but all experiences are not pedagogically generated' (Bernstein and Solomon 1999:267).

Chapter 7: Space and Proximity

7.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the significance of positioning the arts foundation degree programme within the FEI art and design department at Westmount campus will be examined, and what impact, if any, this has on non-traditional students' understanding of what it is to do a degree. I will draw on Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation theory to understand the interactions played out in the studios of the FEI between learners at different levels. These theories will be used as an analytical tool to understand the nature and impact spaces, as constructed within the art and design department, have on reproducing progression to HE study. I will also look at Wenger's (1998) developed outline of communities of practice, and use of 'imagination' as a conceptual stepping stone for non-traditional students, to scaffold shifts in identity in response to authentic discourse within the studio spaces. Through legitimate peripheral participation, Wenger (1998:193) argues, 'boundaries are experienced very participatively'. The participatory nature of engagement with the communities of practice in the art and design studios of the FEI will be examined to determine if this impacts on the agency of the non-traditional students to imagine themselves 'in a completely different context' (Wenger 1998:194), namely, that of HE students.

As set out in Chapter 3 (3.2:28), Lave and Wenger (1991) offer a radical rethink of the concept of learning by repositioning the notion of knowledge transmission. Learning is recontextualised as essentially a social activity requiring time, context and practice. They understood learning as being positioned in a 'participation framework' (Lave and Wenger 1991:15) incorporating wider social and historical practices within a community. We have seen that, as newcomers increasingly participate in a community's activities, they can assess their understanding of the mechanisms at play, building an appreciation of the broader context for learning and reflect on their own position within the community.

The literature review outlined Wenger's (1998) theory of communities of practice, highlighting the mechanisms of knowledge acquisition and the importance of proximity and sustained interaction over extended periods of time. It has been shown that communities of practice are not intrinsically a force for good but can equally

have potential for 'real transformation' (Wenger 1998:85) through the sharing of knowledge and negotiation of meaning in practice and developing imagination. The practice of the community is a dynamic process. Wenger puts a strong case forward that through '"imagination" we conceive of new developments, exploring alternatives, and envisioning possible futures' (Wenger 1998:178).

As discussed earlier, the organisation of the provision at Westmount campus was unusual in that degree level and pre-degree level students were in close proximity. How, and to what extent, this is significant in influencing decision-making is outlined in this chapter but first the discussion will address the significance of dedicated FDA studio and desk spaces in providing non-traditional students with authentic demonstrations of degree level study, and the influence this has on decision-making to progress to HE.

7.2. The Significance of Dedicated Spaces to Practice

On establishing the FDA programme, the head of the art and design department deemed it important to furnish the HE students with their own studio and personal desks. These are exclusive working spaces within the FDA studio, allocated to degree students at the start of their studies. They usually consist of a desk surrounded on three sides by vertical boards (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: FDA student's personal desk with boards populated with ongoing project development ideas.

The rationale for this was partly to provide parity of experience with the sister university, providing a place for materials and equipment and a physical space to make, store and display work. There also emerged a recognition from the artists/tutors in the department of the importance of personal space to fully engage creatively and conceptually in being an artist. Tina, an artist/tutor, outlined how her own studio space helped her get to a different place of engagement.

> Everyone likes their own studio. And when I go into my studio space, my head goes somewhere else. I become a different being if you like by entering that space. Because that can impact on you subconsciously too if you're working in that space. So yeah, I think that's very important. An artist needs their space.

Tina made explicit the impact her studio space had on her creativity. As artists, tutors applied their professional working space ethos to the studios for the students and gave them autonomy to create the environments they found supported productive engagement. John (alumnus) explained how he felt the freedom he was given to develop his own working space in the art and design department was rooted in the tutors' own professional creative practice.

> Yeah, he [head of ceramics FDA] basically, not let us get away with things, but he allowed us to just experiment and try things and make our space our own. His studio, where he is, would have been laid out for himself and he allowed us to just create our own spaces.

Students also found their dedicated space where they could have materials and doodlings up and around helpful in subconscious musings, as expressed by Lily, an alumna.

> And those are the times that need to be more of sitting around the desk, and just bouncing those ideas backwards and forwards: I think that's when people get comfortable to even say the most silliest things. But sometimes the most silliest things are the best things. It's just getting that little bit of your brain cell working, because it sits dormant too much, doesn't it? It doesn't have that spark. You know, it doesn't normally get that spark, because we're not in that environment every day…when I come into the studio my work is out, my sketches from last week and the tests I was working on. I don't have to spend time remembering where I was, it's all there and I can pick up on my thoughts.

Lily expressed the 'comfort' she found within her own working space as creatively productive. She got a 'spark' of creativity by being in the environment of her desk and found a voice to 'say the most silliest things'. Lily was a busy single parent of three and found the transition in cognitive focus necessary to engage with her degree,

facilitated through the occupation of her space. She could develop a dialogue with the collected materials and concepts laid open on her boards providing continuity of thought. She was able to get 'that little bit of…[her] brain cell working'. This, in some way, echoed Tina's suggestion that her 'head goes somewhere else'. Lily and Tina were able to access different levels of thought through these dedicated creative spaces.

This talked to the creation of genuine ideas and processes made possible by the point of continuity created through the provision of personal desk space. Lily valued not having 'to spend time remembering where' she was. Her personal space gave her creations a protected environment where she could re-enter it and 'pick up…[her] thoughts'. Having a repository for collected imagery, tentative sketches and ephemera conjoining in unconscious patterns can be a powerful resource, and it was one that was also appreciated by artist/tutors when working with FDA students in these spaces. Art and design tutor Saffron explained the productive discourse which could develop when engaging with students in these spaces.

> When you are doing a tutorial with them [FDA students] it's great if they have an interesting board. You can have a good discussion with them and sometimes see different connections and ideas emerging. It can be like they have their brains out on display, and you never know what you will find.

The boards, as referred to by Saffron, were the spaces around the personal desks of the students which housed the developing ideas and contextual references of their ongoing projects. These were personal in nature and current by intent. Saffron recognised the making visible of internal dialogues as important in stimulating conceptual debate and development of new connections and emphasised this with the metaphor that the students 'have their brains out on display'. Tutors in the study of signature art and design pedagogies by Shreeve et al. (2010) spoke of the value of the visibility of students work, of it being 'outside of their head' (Shreeve et al. 2010:131) and how it was fundamental in stimulating discussion between either student-to-tutor or peer-to-peer. These intimate spaces go beyond the practical and offered rich resources for creative growth. Although these spaces were personal and deeply relevant to the students, they were not constructed, or nurtured, by purely individual endeavours. Saffron went on to outline how she drew on these spaces of ideas generation for 'class crits' where the whole cohort would comment on the developments and connections constructed in these spaces. There was the

involvement of the community in establishing the ongoing relevance of the narratives and emerging output of the spaces. Heidi, an artist/tutor, highlighted the importance of these spaces in promoting growth and placing one's practice in the broader community by reflecting on the impact of not having access to them in her university experience.

> I think they [students] actually need it. I think when I was in uni, I didn't have it. And I think you became quite insular. You need people to bounce off. It's good to work in an environment where you can look at what other people are doing. But I also think we are visual people, aren't we? You need visuals, you need things up, you need things around you, to inspire you or to prompt ideas if you've got nowhere to go. If you are packing stuff up and going away and coming back and getting your own little hub of work out, you're never going to grow, you're not going to learn how to stimulate ideas.

Heidi's reflections on the absence of dedicated space highlighted the significance of making visible the internal narrative of the creative process. Heidi went on to outline the importance she placed on the role individual spaces of the FDA students played in their creative development: 'I think you need to be free to be a creative person. You need to be comfortable within your own space, in your environment, without judgment.' Tina, an artist/tutor, echoed this sentiment: 'I think it is incredibly important to have your own space as an artist that you feel comfortable in and not judged.' The link between comfort and lack of judgement was discussed by several respondents along with the understanding that the spaces were places for ongoing development of process, conceptual investigation, and discovery of unexpected creative connections.

As Heidi discussed how she engaged with student spaces within her teaching role, her approach revealed specific pedagogic input which supported students' creative development and promoted open dialogue among peers.

> There is no right or wrong on their boards, it is their space. I try to get them to respond to things intuitively in the first instance. Just put up what you like without thinking too much about it. This can be anything: clippings, drawings, found objects, samples they are working on, just something off the street can be interesting. As these spaces build, it is really interesting to sit down with the students and talk about the connections which are emerging. I get them to stand back and see their own discoveries. It is a very different situation to their sketchbooks as it is all out and can be taken in at once. These spaces are real ongoing areas for the students to think through their ideas and where they are going.

Heidi went on to outline how she not only sat with students individually to discuss their ideas within these spaces, but used them as a productive pedagogic device to stimulate peer reflection, as Saffron discussed, within a group crit. These sessions, Heidi emphasised, were 'a place where students reflect on where they are creatively and how they respond to peer feedback. I instil in the students the supportive nature of these sessions and they are always really positive.' This approach to the ongoing engagement by FDA students, with their spaces as a tool for creative reflection and development, applies to the individual for growth, but also provides, more broadly, a space for situated learning: an open vista for students from lower levels to be in legitimate peripherality to the ongoing workings of the FDA.

What is on display are not intimidating, finalised masterpieces from final year students with no contextual narrative to ground the process of creation. Crucially, these are spaces of provisional, and sometimes faltering, moves towards innovative resolutions of concept. They are jigsaws of capability in what being an HE student looks like. Level 2 and 3 students are privy to the unfolding of this journey as they traverse the intimate spaces of the FDA on a daily basis.

The proximity of the spaces occupied by students to each of the various course levels in the art and design department was discussed by many respondents as significant. The discussion will now move on to outline the implications of the positioning of dedicated FDA studios within the FEI art and design department, and if the visibility of the FDA students' individual work desks encourages engagement with HE progression.

7.3. Making Practice Visible

Anne, the head of the department which instigated the development of the arts foundation degree programme, outlined in her interview how the provision of dedicated studios and desks for the FDA students proved a much richer space for student engagement with HE than had been envisioned.

> Anne: We thought it very important they [FDA students] had a base room and they also had their own desks. Level 2 and 3 would be seen talking with FDA students. They knew who they were because they saw them in these spaces, they were definitely visible.

> Interviewer: And how important do you think having the HE in the FE environment was in allowing that?
>
> Anne: It was really interesting to see because it wasn't something I had thought about before, but the other levels [Level 2 and 3] would be interested, and I would talk to them about the FDA because of it.

The practical aspirations of the original rationale manifested in visible and open practice. This, coupled with the proximity of the HE and FE art and design courses at Westmount campus, blossomed into evidence of rich interconnected relationships and communities of practice which flourished in nuanced social communication. David, a ceramic tutor, talked of how he saw these interactions taking place in the studios.

> I think having the degree students around made a difference, because they [Level 2 and 3 students] were able to see the work that they [degree students] were doing. They were able to see their spaces.

Artist/tutors observed how students from different levels found opportunities to mingle in the studio spaces, and as Lave and Wenger (1991:93) outline, 'where the circulation of knowledge among peers and near-peers is possible, it spreads exceedingly rapidly and effectively'. These environments were central in the promotion and transmission of ideas, skills and concepts. David went on to demonstrate how students were able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the placing of HE in the FEI art and design department.

> They [students] have said that, crucially, when they were coming up through Level 2 and 3, they could just talk to an FDA student and go, 'Oh, you're doing the degree.' Maybe they knew them from outside college and went, well, actually, if you can do it, I can probably do it. And it gave them that confidence.

The phrase 'just talk' indicated the informal nature of these interactions and the student-led nature of the communication. Students were given the space within the studio to engage on their own terms in a low-stakes encounter. The visibility of art and design practice was also seen by Shreeve et al. (2010) to support legitimate peripheral participation through social engagement with the practice of the studio. Students at Westmount were able to gain valuable insights into what a degree might involve. Individual student learning intersected with the broader community, giving them opportunities to 'respond to the physical, cultural and social environment' (Graham and Zwirn 2010:220). Students could see their broader social environment reflected in the community of the degree, and this, David observed, gave legitimacy

to notions of self as being able to do HE study. Seeing the self reflected offered points of insight which can stimulate identity shifts.

The proximity of the HE and FE students prompted opportunities for artist/tutors to involve lower-level students in HE workshops. The extract from John (alumnus) below outlines the focus of the initiative by the ceramics tutor as process-led, but communicates a richer encounter as he engages meaningfully with established FDA students. John, reflecting on his Level 3 experience, talks of his decision to do HE. He cites the artist/tutor's willingness to mingle the student levels as beneficial for his understanding of the FDA course.

> John: There were three foundation degree students, and they were super helpful in getting some information.
>
> Interviewer: Where would that happen?
>
> John: The tutor had a lesson in throwing on the ceramic wheel for the foundation degree students and he was aware I was interested in learning. I had trawled all the information I could on YouTube. I was on the Level 3, but he invited me in. He was very open to that sort of thing. Even though I had only been doing it for a few months I was actually better at throwing than they were. So I got to know the FDA students and we would share things and talk and they showed me what the degree was about.

Students sharing spaces in the workshops, and the process of making, allowed for conversations. The lower levels' familiarity with the FDA students promoted casual but meaningful interactions. Degree students on the FDA programme encountered the lower levels, and legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger 1991) provided a structure for knowledge acquisition. This offered Level 2 and 3 students a vantage point from which to observe, and be involved in, the practices of the community and learn as a result of this proximity. This intimate dynamic occurred because the students were in the same department on the same campus and had the opportunity to share spaces.

Heidi, an art and design tutor, was aware of the importance of this relaxed access for FE students to view the options available for progression. She observed how, within the studios, 'they [students] have those conversations and see the path': the path being, not only the pragmatic route to HE, such as accruing UCAS points through credentialisation and negotiating the application process, but the conceptual and emotional one. As discussed in Chapter 5 (5.2:66), students expressed deep-rooted

insecurities regarding the level required to study a degree. These, in part, were dissipated through regular low-stakes exposure to what it meant to do a degree.

Artist/tutors outlined how they would use the FDA spaces and desks as a resource for showing lower levels the scope of the degree, or supporting a particular interest of a Level 2 or 3 student. Anne, an artist/tutor, explained:

> I would take lower levels to talk with FDA students if there was something specific they were doing, or take them to see their work. That's why their desks were good because their work would be on it, and I could give a Level 3 student a quick tour and show them what the degree looked like.

These desks were in close proximity to Level 2 and 3, facilitating a 'quick' visit. None of the work was particularly resolved, but the spaces served as places for the FDA students to collect and reprocess creative interests. Alison, an alumna of the FDA programme, saw the boards around her desk space as a place where 'it feels like my thoughts get thrown up on the board'. This is a space where the intimate workings of the creative student's reflections were laid open to view, exposing FE students to the context of the degree and providing a unique insight into the embedded labour and lived experience of a degree student.

It has been shown that the positioning of HE students within the FEI art and design department provides a space in which communities of practice can develop and legitimate peripheral participation can occur. The discussion will now move on to exploring how this proximity has implications for inter-level communication and decision-making to progress to HE study.

Data from the alumni interviews revealed a rich network of informal communication and conversations between FE and HE students. Importantly these interactions took place over extended periods of time. What was seen was a depth and proliferation of encounters. They proved important in the decision-making process of students on lower levels progressing to HE.

Molly, a mature alumni, outlined how interactions with FDA students were 'really helpful' in understanding how the degree worked when she was on her Level 3 art and design course.

> I would see them [FDA students] upstairs and all around just coming in and out. It was incredibly useful to see others further on in their education than us and have a little gossip and a 'nosey' at what they are doing. It was really helpful.

These encounters were informal in nature and opportunistic in timing, happening regularly over the duration of Molly's Level 3 course. They were possible as a result of the positioning of the FDA degree in the FEI art and design department at Westmount campus. Legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger 1991) is at play. The proximity of the HE community 'is the crucial locus and preconditions' (Lave and Wenger 1991:15) for these moments of engagement.

The FDA rooms themselves stimulated interest and engagement in what it was to do a degree allowing non-traditional students to imagine being an HE student. Both Grace and Sarah (alumni), remember, as Level 3 students, being intrigued by the FDA spaces and having opportunities to engage in conversations which allowed insights into doing a degree.

> Grace: When I would see a class that had their own classroom, it was kind of special because, up until the degree level, you are moving around. You're moving to the tutor's rooms rather than having your own. I think seeing this class, that have their own room let you see the work they did on a degree and talk to them.
>
> Sarah: There's always this element of mystery, oh you know, what goes on in there. And it was quite nice to kind of talk to them. And I think it's the journey you have every single year. You want to do the next step, because you're more grown, naturally more knowledgeable. And I think that the fact that you could stick your head in the door and go, 'Oh what are you doing?' it gave you a glimpse of what it was about.

The location of the FDA students' studio spaces within the FEI art and design department allowed legitimate peripheral access for FE learners and promoted rich opportunities to process what it was to be an HE student. The very practice of the FDA art and design students fostered potential insights and structures of being a degree student. Interactions over extended periods of time have the potential to reposition the students' internal dialogue towards an acceptance that HE 'is' for people like them. Molly (alumna) outlined how seeing the degree students regularly in close proximity engaging in their studies stimulated a reimagining of her own identity as someone who would be capable of studying at degree level.

> Interviewer: Did you speak to any of the students that were already doing the foundation degree?
>
> Molly: Yes, I remember Richard and Connie who were there always a year or two ahead of us. So I remember looking at them and thinking they are doing it; I wish I could do that. They seemed to be happy, so I would say, 'Are you enjoying it? What

> are you getting to do?', and they would be like, 'It's brilliant, we get to do this, or we get to choose that', and I thought, well that's what I want to do now.
>
> Interviewer: What sort of environments would you see them in?
>
> Molly: They were always pottering around us, flitting between the ceramic room and the foundation degree room. I would see them just around and I thought, 'Gosh what they are doing seems exciting.' I thought it would be so unachievable. I used to think 'degree' meant I could not possibly fathom any of it. It would be too difficult, but they seemed to still be doing what we were doing, i.e. hands-on creating and making on top of writing work and the academic side. It seemed a lot more accessible than I initially thought, achievable even. I started to feel like I could actually do what they were doing now, rather than 'Oh no, I could not do that.'

Molly was able to access privileged knowledge-in-action through her proximity to the comings and goings of the FDA students. As a newcomer, her 'legitimate peripherality' (Lave and Wenger 1991:95) not only provided her with the chance to observe the workings of a degree, but also to participate in similar activities in the creative sphere. The realisation that the degree was involved in 'hands-on creating and making' indicated that Molly was 'absorbing and being absorbed in – the "culture of practice"' (Lave and Wenger 1991:95). There was a sense of surprise but also relief that the degree retained a practical, process-led element. This familiarity, made explicit by the proximity of the degree students' working spaces, reinforced Molly's existing understanding of herself as a fellow maker and creative thinker. This gave her experience of identifying with degree students.

Grace (alumnus), a mature student, talked of her return to education after a 14-year gap and the comfort she felt within college and how the exposure to the FDA students gave her the first taste of what doing a degree might entail. This then encouraged a brave decision. Grace also outlines how the journey towards degree level study involved exposure to students already studying and demystified the process and work involved, dissipating ingrained insecurities of capability.

> The two years back at college meant I was back in my comfort zone doing art, I suppose, but out of it because it's a different ballgame being on the other side, being taught. But I got to know the tutors and degree students. And I think that helped in terms of gaining the experience I needed. It also gave me the first insight into the degree: I saw what they were doing, and it felt doable. I set my mind to it then and said, 'that's what I'm doing. …It's a journey'.

The narrative from both Grace and Molly revealed the importance of extended access to the FDA students within the art and design studios at Westmount campus.

Grace outlined how it was a journey, while Molly stated the significance of seeing the students always a 'year or two ahead'. The longevity, and consistency, of legitimate peripherality allowed students the opportunity to internalise the culture of the FDA, to understand the intricacies, and demands, of the experience for the students engaged in the practice they were observing. Over time, their regular encounters with HE students began to build an overview of what constituted studying at degree level and they learnt some of the realities of doing HE and 'what constitutes the practice of the community' (Lave and Wenger 1991:95).

Real-time experiences were laid open on the desk spaces, developing boards and studio workings of the FDA students. With prolonged engagement between Level 2 and 3 and the FDA students came an acknowledgement from Grace and Molly that the more experienced students were a valuable resource in the navigation of personally uncharted territories of rethinking the self in relation to the HE community. Wenger (1998) considers imagination important when rethinking the self and conceives it as 'a process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves' (Wenger 1998:176).

As Grace was exposed to the day-to-day workings of the degree, she used imagination to rethink herself and experienced an identity shift. She already understood she was not completely without academic merit: 'I knew I was reasonably intelligent. I did okay in school, I just didn't have the application', but her years out of education, and poor school experience, left her unwilling to view herself as HE material. Viewing the journeys of the degree students offered insights into her own journey. Grace was able to shift her perception and understood that being a degree student was a process, an incremental acquisition of knowledge, and was willing to commit to that journey herself within the community of practice.

These communities of practice provided glimpses of the workings of the FDA in more nuanced gritty detail than prospectuses or short presentations. Pam, an experienced art and design tutor, recognised this when describing the importance of having the HE courses embedded within the FEI art and design department.

> Whereas if that was off campus, if that wasn't actually in the same sort of studio area, then our Level 3 [students] would never necessarily see that progression route. I think for our Level 3, it can help them to see where to go next, and they are visual learners. Whereas if you think about degrees at universities and you say, 'here is a

> piece of paper, read about it'. There is going to be nothing better than that student physically standing there, physically in that studio talking to the students [FDA] and seeing their work develop over time. How else do they get that experience?

With legitimate peripheral participation, FE students were able to sketch the landscape of the community of HE. They could construct an outline of day-to-day activities. As Pam stated, the students are 'visual learners', and as such, having the FDA students' studios, personal desks and boards available to view allowed them to see what constituted achievement and what outcomes and processes demonstrated degree level engagements. The pedagogic device of allocating dedicated desks and boards is an accepted tool for promoting individual space for personal narrative and creative development for HE art and design students. For Level 2 and Level 3 students it had the unexpected benefit of offering consistent insights into real-time journeys of HE study which would otherwise be beyond their experience and would only be imagined in the abstract. Level 2 and 3 students processed this through exemplars of project development and visual responses, stimulating conversations between FE and HE students, and came to the conclusion, as Grace did, that a degree is 'doable'. With reflection, non-traditional students confronted insecurities to begin to imagine an image of self being a HE student.

7.4. Summary

This chapter set out to explore the impact placing the FDA programme within the FEI art and design department had on progression decisions for non-traditional students to study HE.

The location of the FDA studios among the FE students proved a catalyst for new ways of learning and was fundamental in creating the conditions where communities of practice supported transition to HE for non-traditional students. The development of communities of practice, stimulated through student-led encounters within the studios and workshops, has been shown to be central in supporting non-traditional students' understanding of what it is to do HE. Artist/tutors and alumni reported the proximity and visibility of the FDA programme as central to many of the encounters and interactions between HE and FE learners.

Importantly, the placing of the FDA students within dedicated studio spaces, and embedding these spaces alongside FE provision, made visible the FDA programme.

These rooms were located on the same campus and rooted within the art and design department and proved crucial in allowing opportunities for casual student-led interaction. This, coupled with dedicated desk spaces for the FDA students, fostered spaces of authentic engagement and creative development. Degree students talked of having their 'minds' up on their boards, which gave students from lower levels a unique insight into the mechanisms of doing a degree. Laying open the reality of HE study provided a resource for non-traditional students to follow nuanced journeys of creative degree level study. It gave realistic points of reflection for reimagining 'self' as a degree student.

The longevity of these encounters was seen as significant in giving a space for legitimate peripheral participation to develop and allowing informal communities to foster a rich dialogue of 'social learning'. Non-traditional students, over time, disclosed how, through sustained exposure and engagement with the authentic experience of HE study, were able to build trust and identify a plausible picture of being a degree student. This allowed the FE students to project an image of themselves into the world of HE. The imagination builds a framework of the degree and places the self in it. Discovering moments of commonality within the studios and workspaces had a significant impact on FE students' reimagining of self-efficacy. This in turn adjusts identity to imagine HE as something 'doable'.

Chapter 8: Decision-making

8.1. Introduction

The data has provided insights into the mechanisms which made students aware of the FDA and shifts in identity reconstruction helping non-traditional students to view HE as something for them. Identity reconstruction is never context-free and progression decisions are made within horizons for action. This concept, developed by Hodkinson et al. (1996) and Hodkinson (1998) draws on Bourdieusian thinking and refers to the range of options that appear realistic. These concepts will be used to identify the interaction of habitus, horizons for action and socially-situated learning and the impact this may have on decision-making to pursue a degree within the FEI art and design department in the study.

The data showed multiple factors working to shape the students' decision-making when facing the choice to study HE at Westmount campus or progress to university. This chapter will explore what is important to the non-traditional students when selecting institutions for progression and aims to understand Level 3 art and design students' attitudes to decision-making when considering degree level study.

It has been shown that students experience what it is to do a degree through legitimate peripheral participation situated in communities of practice within the FEI at Westmount campus. This allows students to see the workings of HE study, and what it means practically and conceptually to study at degree level, demystifying the process and expectations of 'doing' HE. Communities of practice are built as a result of the positioning of the FDA programme within the FEI art and design department and the pedagogic input of artist/tutors. This is central in offering opportunities for different levels to come into contact with each other. The data revealed how students' exposure to HE study, as a result of the FDA programme being embedded in the FEI art and design department, supported identity reconstruction and supported non-traditional students to consider HE as something for them through expanding horizons for action. Students developed a belief that they too could participate in this educational space, which may have otherwise been felt to be 'out of reach'.

Horizons for action are constrained and expanded by both what is externally available in the form of opportunities but also internally by 'dispositions of habitus'

(Hodkinson et al. 1996:149). This will be discussed in the context of authentic encounters of learning, between different levels in the community of practice within the art and design department, facilitated by exposure and absorption into the culture of practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) outline that engagement in the cultural practice and knowledge of a community brings validity of understanding and argue that knowledge transmission is socially situated. Understanding the mechanisms at play in the reproductive cycle of the community can provide insights into the social interactions, which contextualise the transmission of knowledge and learning. This, in turn, informs decision-making to progress to HE in the FEI. Wenger (1998:276) discusses the 'generational encounters' within communities of practice as significant in developing 'histories of practice' and discusses 'regimes of competence' (Farnsworth et al. 2016:145) which grow from 'social histories of learning' as central pillars in transmitting the knowledge of the community. These, he argues, are important structures in developing an identity as a member of a community through shared histories and gives legitimacy to tutor/student relationships. Histories of practice and regimes of competence build through long-established engagement and support learners in understanding the workings of pedagogic practice and curricular requirements. They also give students a space to demonstrate their own commitment and accountability (Wenger 1998) to the community through sustained achievement in their studies. These will be used to frame the discussion and understand the processes at play which inform the decision-making of Level 3 students when deciding which institution to progress to for degree level study.

Alumni reported that pedagogic, environmental and social influences impacted on their decision-making to continue studying at Westmount campus when transitioning to HE. Students' reasons to pursue the FDA at Westmount campus were centred around pedagogic approaches by trusted artist/tutors and socialisation into the histories of practice already embedded within an established community of practice. This was expressed through consistent and effective academic and pastoral support combined with flexibility in course structure. The data also revealed evidence of strong social relationships among peers and different levels across cohorts, combined with discussion by alumni of feelings of familiarity and comfort, in the knowledge of institutional culture and artist/tutor pedagogy. Being able to 'concentrate on learning'

and not having to confront unmapped, vast institutions were important and widely shared perceptions.

What emerged from the interviews were complex narratives of decision-making, which outline the motivations for choosing to study HE in the FEI setting. Students referred to a range of reasons why they chose Westmount campus to progress to HE. These fell into three main areas for analysis: familiarity with tutors within a community of practice; peer support within a community of practice; perceived lack of support at university, compared to Westmount campus. These areas will now be addressed in turn.

8.2. Familiarity with Tutors within a Community of Practice

Familiarity with tutors, and 'how they did things', impacted on students' decisions to progress on to the FDA at Westmount campus. Feelings of 'comfort' within this environment were also expressed by several respondents as important considerations when imagining themselves as HE students. Both Ada and John were explicit in the role comfort played in their understanding of the suitability of Westmount campus as a place they could fit into when transitioning to degree level study.

> Ada: I was comfortable here [Westmount campus], the tutors were nice. …I was used to the way tutors delivered things and they all taught on the degree. I did not have to get to know a whole lot of new tutors, and cope with the stress of hoping I got on with them; I already knew I did.
>
> John: I had become friendly with all the staff at Westmount campus. I had got to know all the tutors and felt comfortable with the environment, and how they did things. They were all the people who would be teaching me on the degree. I just could not have coped with having to get used to a whole lot of different things.

These comments revealed that identity reconstruction, and having to renegotiate the 'self' in new territories and institutions with unfamiliar tutors, was concerning. Significantly, artist/tutors at Westmount campus taught across levels and programmes delivering FE and HE modules. Both Ada and John talked of this in their interviews. Students built up good relationships with tutors at Westmount campus and expressed how this translated into them feeling understood and the context of their broader selves being accepted. Ada expressed her comfort in having established these relationships with the tutors and that she was used to 'the way tutors delivered things'. The notion of multiple new territories, which would need to be negotiated in a new institution, was too much for Ada to contemplate. She was

unsure if she would get on with the tutors, and this was a point of concern. Moving to a new institution, with new cultural practices, would entail establishing new relationships, ones that Ada feared may not materialise. Sticking with the already established communities of practice offered a safer, more comfortable environment in which to tackle the business of HE.

When discussing educational engagement, Wenger (1998) cites the importance of long-standing relationships within the community of practice in supporting knowledge and learning trajectories and states that continuity of social engagement is important in building commitment to the shared practice of the community and to individuals within it (Wenger 1998). Ada was aware, because of her familiarity with the workings of the FDA due to its positioning within the FEI art and design department, that the tutors straddled delivery across FE and HE. She would be taught by the same staff members on the HE programme. Ada and John appreciated the artist/tutors' commitment to their students and established productive relationships with them over the course of their Level 2 and Level 3 studies. They had developed 'shared practice', giving Ada and John established modes of engagement and rhythms of response from trusted artist/tutors.

Tutors, Wenger (1998) puts forward, are rich sources of learning opportunity. This is, in part, generated through pedagogic input, but also manifests through their membership in communities of practice. Artist/tutors' dual professionalism, as discussed in Chapter 6 (6.3:82), outlines how dual identity supports students' learning and legitimate peripheral participation in the community of practice within the art and design department at Westmount campus. This, in turn, gives a point of familiarity with practice-based pedagogy and gives an additional element of legitimacy in tutor/student relationships. Alison (alumna) outlined how the Westmount campus art and design department manifested a culture of inclusivity, contrasting this with her school experience.

> Being in art college was very different to school. The campus is warm and welcoming, very artistic and aesthetic. It suits the artist, laid back, not overpowering. A really creative space with everyone doing their thing. Tutors would talk about their work and there was always someone to talk to and throw ideas around with.

Alison described the campus as ‘warm and welcoming’ and how it was ‘a really creative space’. She linked this to the artist/tutors being open to discussing their own work as artists. The tutors’ role, and senior status within the community of practice of the art and design department, was given greater weight as a result of their broader membership within creative and artistic communities. These rich interweaving identities built generational interactions and creative histories of practice (Wenger 1998) within the FEI. These, as Wenger (1998:276) describes, are important mechanisms in establishing ‘mutual engagement and accountability’ within the learning milieu. As students observed the continuity of these cultures spanning FE and HE provision, the accountability, as realised through both student performance and artist/tutor recognition of students’ histories of practice, played a part in decision-making to pursue HE at Westmount campus.

Histories of practice were important platforms for students to build, what they saw as, ‘credibility’ with artist/tutors. Students who had demanding personal commitments or special educational needs valued the history of practice they had established through their studies on Level 2 and 3. Both Sarah, a single parent of a child with special educational needs, and Percy, who had autism, expressed how their long-standing relationship with artist/tutors in FE transferred into the HE context.

> Sarah: I already know the tutors and they know me. I would not have to explain myself again. I felt like they understood my situation with [son] and that they know I would always do the work even if I could not be in the studio all the time or if I had to miss sessions. I had consistently got good grades through my Level 3, and I felt that gave me some sort of credibility, some sort of background. I know the tutors taught on the HE courses, so I’m not starting from scratch.
>
> Percy: Tutors were helpful. They showed me what to do and gave me extra help with briefs. They reassured me I was capable of doing a degree. They know me from Level 2 and 3, and I didn’t have to keep explaining myself. They showed me the levels in comparison to the others as I went through. The tutors helped me to look at my own work and gave me different ways to understand how my own work could move on.

Both Sarah and Percy used the same phrase of not having to ‘explain themselves’ as they discussed the importance of the relationships they had with their tutors. Their experience stemmed from the continuity of artist/tutors delivering on FE and HE programmes and was significant in the establishment of trust and mutual understanding. Hoelscher et al. (2010) found that Level 3 students, when deciding

which institution to progress to for HE, were incentivised to progress within the same institution as a result of long-standing positive relationships with artist/tutors on their FE courses they knew would be teaching on the HE programme. These relationships for the students at Westmount campus translated into histories of practice, through which Sarah specifically cited that her background in achieving ‘good grades’ gave her ‘credibility’. She felt this could support her as she moved into the uncharted territory of HE study. Percy understood histories of practice through the artist/tutors patiently showing him ‘the levels in comparison to the others’ as he progressed and the artist/tutors knowing him ‘from Level 2 and 3’. It was a journey of discovery for both students and one which could only move forward as artist/tutors provided trusted guidance on this pathway, a path which held many possibilities. The trust grew from the longevity of the tutor/student relationship and the authenticity which grew from the iterative process of understanding the students' individual circumstances and ways of learning.

Sarah was aware that her caring responsibilities had the potential to pull her away from the institutional expectation of full attendance and visibility within the studio. Sarah understood her accountability to the community's regimes of competence as developed through its ‘social history of learning’ (Farnsworth et al. 2016:145). Wenger understood learning as essentially experienced on a human level and socially situated. Sarah established insights, over time, through social interactions, of artist/tutors' regimes of competence (Farnsworth et al. 2016) as constructed through the community of practice. Sarah felt understood, on a human level, with the pressures of her caring responsibilities being accommodated. She took comfort in having established ‘credibility’ and ‘some sort of background’, through consistently achieving good grades, but more importantly had confidence that the artist/tutors valued her commitment and recognised that her, sometimes enforced, absence from the studio did not manifest in her being any less aware of her accountability to the regimes of competence necessary to achieve in her studies. Sarah's socialisation into, and understanding of, the implications of regimes of competence had been built through the social history of learning within the community of practice. This was a result of the longevity of authentic and generational encounters within the studios of Westmount campus. This would only serve as a support mechanism going forward

into HE within the art and design department and was a significant factor in both Sarah and Percy choosing to continue their HE study at Westmount campus.

8.3. Peer Support Within a Community of Practice

Peer support within the community of practice was shown in the data to be significant in building an environment in which non-traditional students found like-minded learners and could relate to their struggles in this context and benefit from the friendships which developed over a period of time. In Chapter 6 (6.3:90), it was shown that non-traditional students went through a process of identity reconstruction when considering HE study as something for them. Wenger (1998) makes important connections between the development of identity and the influence of the community. Outlooks and perceptions are all influenced by engagement in social communities and, as such, students are not considering the possibility of progression in isolation. Their perceptions, and reference points, are socially interconnected and images of self, as an HE student, resonate within the complex reality of lived identity reconstruction (Wenger 1998) as mediated though communities of practice. Students' schemata (Hodkinson et al. 1996) are incrementally influenced by nuanced experiences accumulated over extended periods within the community of practice. These have the capacity to modify the habitus and extend horizons for action. By interacting within the art and design department at Westmount campus, students engage in meaningful exchanges, build relationships and gain understanding of mutual focuses as 'individual and social developments enhance each other' (Wenger 1998:147). Students' interplay across levels, made possible by the placing of HE within the FEI art and design department, developed rich supportive networks, which helped focus decision-making to pursue a degree at Westmount campus, as Alison (alumna) described.

> Having people who were doing the degree helped. I had got to know Beth, who was already on the degree. We were just sat on a bench outside the canteen at college having lunch. It was so open, everyone talks to each other. She said, 'Just do it [foundation degree], try all the materials, you will love it. It will really suit the way you work.' She was a good influence and it helped me have the confidence that the sort of work I did might be good enough for the degree.

Getting to know a student already on the foundation degree, and consequently the FDA student understanding Alison's own working practice, led to a productive exchange with thoughtful and frank insights. For Alison this was a catalyst for

identity reconstruction, where she began to believe she too could do a degree. We have seen in Chapter 6 (6.3:90) how these shifts in identity reconstruction are a result of complex lived experience developed over extended periods of time. This influenced Alison's decision that a degree was for her, and she decided to progress on to the FDA programme at Westmount campus.

It is the interplay of these individuals, within the community of practice of the FEI art and design department at Westmount campus, which allowed meaningful engagement in social communities (Wenger 1998) to refocus non-traditional students' horizons for action to encompass degree level study. Alison, in her discussions with Beth, a first-year degree student, talked of the 'openness' of interactions. Beyond the specific lunchtime encounter, a rhythm of engagement had, however, been a long-standing affair with Alison being aware of Beth for the past three years and observing her moving through from Level 3 to the degree programme. There was evidence that Beth was familiar with Alison's practice and offered this to justify her assertion that Alison 'will love' the degree. When discussing Alison's thoughts on progression to the degree, Beth argued 'It will really suit the way you work.' This was not an off-the-cuff statement. It was grounded in the ongoing dialogue and social engagement, which emerged through well-established peer relationships within the community of practice. Wenger (1998) understands that there can be tensions between the individual and the collective and that conflicts may arise, which restrict individual aspiration within conformist groups. He also acknowledges that the individual can profit in learning and identity reconstruction by being exposed to the field of lived trajectories of possible future selves, reconfiguring horizons for action through the broader community. Alison, as Wenger (1998) would identify, was on an 'inbound trajectory' towards peripheral participation as an FDA student. Beth along with other FDA students were established members of the community of practice within the art and design department at Westmount campus. Alison's friendship with them enhanced her individual notions of identity reconstruction and progression to HE study and her social engagement furnished her with valuable insights (Wenger 1998), extending her horizons for action.

Alison went on to explain that once she had developed the mindset to progress to the degree, she turned her attentions inward to her own friendship group. One student

was contemplating curtailing her studies at the end of the Level 3 course. Alison, enlisting the energies of another member of the friendship group, contrived an intervention, and encouraged their friend Emma to progress with them on to the FDA.

> Alison: I made Emma come back as well. She was ready to stop but I knew she was good enough and would regret it if she stopped at Level 3. So, me and Hannah worked on her and persuaded her to give it a go and she did great. Growing up, I didn't get much encouragement. Being together has helped, we are like sisters. We had that time outside college as well to speak because we are all friends.

Alison's own insights helped to reconstruct her identity with a focus on the 'inbound trajectory' towards becoming a full participant as a student in the FDA community of practice. Although her present participation was peripheral, her identity was invested in her future self as a degree student. Alison's schemata had been incrementally influenced by her social engagement with the established members of the FDA community of practice. New information nuanced through routine encounters within the studio result in the habitus embracing new horizons for action. Alison, having reconfigured her horizons for action and establishing her projected self as an HE student supported by the insights and knowledge of the community, was then in a position to turn her thoughts to her friend Emma. Alison's newly reconstructed identity brought some reflection on her past as she outlined how she was not encouraged to progress. This statement indicates the influence of the past informing the present. The lack of encouragement in Alison's formative years was in contrast to the insights and conversations stimulated within the community of practice. Understanding how this influenced her own decision-making and confidence, she recognised Emma's need for support if she is going to progress to HE.

These bonds had been established over an extended period of time and involved a deep understanding of the individual's practice and disposition. The group, although having formed a connection within the FEI community of practice, appeared to have developed a bond beyond the institution's bounds. Work by Thorley (2008) has found that such bonds are pivotal in the persistence of students continuing their studies at times of crisis. The bond within Alison's friendship group was clearly strong. The multiple layers to these communities, Wenger (1998:161) outlines, build social bridges and 'weave multiple trajectories together'. This, in turn, allows for multiple approaches to viewing the self in different projected futures. Horizons for

action are expanded through the schemata being challenged by persistent and affirmative experiences which have the capacity to nudge the habitus to encompass a view of HE being a viable option. Alison was exposed through her friendship with Beth to the community of practice within the FEI. This informed her response to Emma's anticipated trajectory, and she mobilised a broader church of experience and knowledge through her multi-membership of communities and enlisted Hannah, who with Alison, 'worked on' Emma to alter her restricted horizons for action and manoeuvred her trajectory towards the FDA. This proved a successful intervention. Emma progressed onto the FDA, achieved a 2:1, completed her PGCE and is now teaching in a primary school. A different trajectory she had anticipated of being a nursery nurse.

Friendship bonds, formed within the communities of practice, were important factors in students wanting to progress to HE study within Westmount campus. Maggie outlined how her positive experience within Westmount art and design department contrasted dramatically with her school experience, where she had been bullied. When asked why she chose Westmount campus to study her degree, she stated the continuity of peer relationships as an important factor.

> Maggie: The first thing was I didn't want to leave because, well I, we were all having so much fun. I think it was Margaret and Sue and everyone.
>
> Interviewer: This is very different from your experience at school. What were the elements that changed that for you?
>
> Maggie: There was more freedom at college. In school you have to go to different lessons and meet different people all the time, and of course you are not with the same people all the time as well.

Maggie talked of her positive social experience with her peers while progressing through FE to completing Level 3. These social connections and the friendships were clearly important to her, and she was eager to progress to HE within Westmount campus to continue these relationships. Maggie had reported earlier in the interview that her school experience was negative, having been subjected to severe bullying, resulting in her leaving school early with no formal qualifications. When asked to outline what she felt were the significant elements which allowed her to engage socially and enjoy her learning at Westmount campus, she was clear in the continuity of the cohort and the peer support that encouraged her engagement. In school, she felt the constant challenge of rotating subject cohorts stressful, and she emphasised

her focus on the ever-changing nature of secondary school timetabling as problematic. Maggie referred by name to two members of her friendship group, who offered significant peer support. They had been part of the same cohort for the four years Maggie had been attending Westmount campus. Their intention to progress on to the FDA was a significant influence in Maggie's decision-making in choosing Westmount as her destination for HE study.

8.4. Perceived Lack of Support at University Compared to Westmount Campus

When reflecting on choices of where they might pursue HE study, students expressed concerns as to the size of universities. The data indicates that small class sizes, and one-to-one tutor input, were significant factors in students choosing to stay on at Westmount campus. This contrasted with the perceived lack of tutor involvement and large cohorts at university. Maggie (alumna) made clear her understanding of her viable choices between institutions and then went on to rationalise her choice in choosing to stay on at Westmount campus for her degree.

> Maggie: Because I knew it was either stay in Westmount or go up to Burston Met and I was still too scared to go up to Burston Met.
>
> Interviewer: What worried you?
>
> Maggie: Big scary place, it's massive. I didn't think I was ready. I wanted to stay in Westmount for a bit more. I was not ready to give up all of that. The support, tutors were always around when I needed it, that would not have been there at Burston Met. So, yeah, the location and that familiarity and the small groups, that was important.

Molly echoed Maggie's concerns regarding the size of university. There is also the expression of the importance of the availability of the artist/tutors and the smaller cohorts being a contributing factor in Molly's decision-making.

> Molly: I was too scared, daunted, put off by going straight to uni. I thought no, I can't do that. I was much happier being at Westmount…I needed a gentler approach, the way we had it at Westmount campus. It was necessary for me and I'm sure a few others as well.
>
> Interviewer: When you say gentler approach, can you explain that a little more?
>
> Molly: There was no judgement. I always felt I could go to the tutors when I needed to and get a one-to-one. They were very patient if I did not understand something. They didn't make me feel stupid.

The size of the institutions was of significance to both Maggie and Molly as they reflected on the support structures, which they identified as being of importance to them in their academic success to date. They understood FEIs to have strong provision in place, which established supportive learning environments (Bathmaker et al. 2008). Open-door policies, and rich regular feedback mechanisms, all contributed to strong, trusted relationships between the artist/tutors and students. These were intensive undertakings for the artist/tutors and were made possible by the small cohorts and the artist/tutors' understanding of individual student dispositions built up over several years.

Molly talked of a 'gentler approach', expanding on this to outline the patience of artist/tutors and the lack of judgement. This then helped Molly to avoid the insecurity of feeling 'stupid'. Not only were the teaching environments deemed 'gentler', but students saw the transition from FE to HE as a 'softer' step, as John outlined:

> The transition from Level 3 to foundation degree was much softer than it would have been from Level 3 to bachelor's degree.

Alison, went on to describe the foundation degree as a 'bridging' process, socialising her into the ways of HE but within a familiar supportive environment.

> I think it is the perception I had of university before I went. I thought it was highly academic, highly educated place and I would not have thought I would have fitted in there [university] or I would be able to reach that level [degree]. But doing the foundation degree at Westmount was kind of like a bridge from doing the Level 3 to going to Burston Met, that was kind of in the middle.

Maggie, went even further in her reflections on the process of progression from FE to HE within the FEI art and design department, seeing it as a very small step.

> I didn't actually see the difference between the higher level [foundation degree Level 4] and what I was doing on Level 3. So, it was kind of like a very small transition sort of thing. So yeah, it wasn't too shocking, wasn't too different an area to place myself in. We were all interacting with each other already.

The structural positioning of HE provision in the FEI art and design department at Westmount campus impacted on the decision-making of the students. Maggie outlined how she felt the transition to be minimal, as she was already 'interacting' with the broader community of practice of HE students. John went on to describe the

FE to HE progression route at Westmount campus as 'transparent', resulting from his day-to-day engagement with FDA students.

> So, you see, those transparent roots of progression are nice and obvious to students. So, it isn't this mystery of this great big school in Burston Met, and it's really obvious how you do it [progress to the FDA].

The social structures of learning (Lave and Wenger 1991) were embedded in both Maggie's and John's statements. They acknowledged the necessity of the community in their understanding of progression opportunities and what it entailed. Level 3 students' horizons for action were extended in response to their engagement and 'interaction' with the community of HE learners. The concept of horizons for action is helpful for keeping in view the dual nature of social practices in play. On the one hand, through the positioning of HE in the FEI art and design department, students are made aware, through the visibility of the programme, that HE is a possible progression opportunity. On the other hand, and simultaneously, students' subjective perception of themselves frames their agency because they can 'see themselves' fitting into the degree course. They are in close proximity to, and socialising with, the degree students. Maggie and John are, as Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss, participating in the reproductive cycle of the community. Students are exposed to, and engaging in, the cultural practice of the community. They have witnessed the practice of small cohorts, ongoing artist/tutor support, and constructive non-judgemental feedback. The open-door policy extends beyond FE provision to the HE teaching, and as students' horizons for action manoeuvre towards viewing themselves participating in HE, they begin to position themselves within that environment. As a result of the atypical nature of Westmount's FDA programme embedded within the FE art and design department and the provision of dedicated studio and desk spaces for the degree students, as outlined in the Methods and Methodologies chapter (4.4:49), the cultures of FE and HE are rendered less distinct than they would normally be. In this process of alignment, non-traditional students are able to reflect on their position as FE students and project themselves into their imagined futures (Bathmaker et al. 2008). Legitimate peripheral participation within the community of practice provides non-traditional students with 'the interpretive support necessary for making sense of its heritage' (Lave and Wenger 1991:98), providing a useful perspective to contextualise their subjective understanding of their place within the HE programme at Westmount campus.

8.5. Summary

The research found that the internal 'dispositions of habitus' (Hodkinson et al. 1996:149) students arrived with, influenced by familial and cultural background, worked to either constrain or expand individual's horizons for action and decision-making on educational progression. The data suggests that the interaction of these complex cultural and social mechanisms in combination with three main areas identified in the study informed student decision-making to transition to HE in the FEI art and design department at Westmount campus. These were tutor/student relationships, peer support, and familiarity with Westmount art and design department.

Tutor–student relationships were structured through long-established histories of practice and generational interactions. There was evidence of intimate and strong social ties and peer support, which provided durable support networks and encouragement to progress to the next level of study by influencing schemata, nudging habitus and extending horizons for action. Familiarity and comfort with Westmount campus and 'ways of doing things' was contrasted with fears of moving to large unknown universities, with little understanding of institutional cultures. Students reported that the credibility they had built up with artist/tutors over several years of engagement was something they valued. Students expressed how they hoped this would sustain the belief artist/tutors had in their commitment to their studies, if outside responsibilities meant periodic absence from the course. Students believed that they had reached an understanding with artist/tutors in respect of personal circumstances, whether that be caring responsibilities or learning difficulties, and these were already understood, and they would not have to keep explaining themselves. They have confirmation through experience that the artist/tutors worked with their issues. There was no guarantee this would be the case in a new institution, and this was a risk.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1. Introduction

The impetus for this study is rooted in the dichotomy I witnessed between non-traditional students' lack of achievement in compulsory schooling and subsequent educational success and progression to HE in the FEI environment. I struggled to reconcile the bright, engaged, creative students I taught on a daily basis with the profile of non-achievers that most of them had presented in their early engagement with the college. Following the introduction of the FDA within the art and design department, there were cohorts who had moved through to HE study and achieved first-class honours within their field. As this pattern repeated itself, I became increasingly curious to understand whether there were specific processes and practices in the FEI which supported and enabled such progression.

Central to this research is the question of whether the placing of an arts foundation degree programme in the FEI art and design department supports progression to HE for non-traditional students. To answer this the study has used situated learning as an overarching theoretical perspective to investigate communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) and the personal experiences informing decision-making to progress to HE. It has also drawn on elements that have animated that perspective from the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein.

By aligning communities of practice to Bourdieu's (1984) sociocultural theory of a stratified social-class system, this study has sought to examine non-traditional students' decision-making from both an individual and situated learning perspective. Education in a hierarchical system may reproduce or challenge social-class structures, and therefore, a learning theory as presented by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) compliments Bourdieu's theory of stratification as both are rooted in practice-based experience. There are, however, important differences in the locus of philosophical interest. Where Bourdieu uses 'cultural capital', Wenger's counterpart is 'competence'. While both are interested in social learning, Wenger's work does not include a critique of how social class can affect these learning processes. Wenger, however, nuances Bourdieu's concept of 'field' as he contends that viewing it as 'a landscape of different practices…providing a more textured view of the geography of competences' (Wenger 2013:113). This offers a richness in

understand the complex interactions of situated learning. There are also benefits to considering Bourdieu's concept of habitus in relation to Wenger's approach to identity. Habitus, encapsulating the notion of internalised dispositions, is helpful in understanding the domination of lower classes in a stratified system. Bourdieu, however, has been criticised for being determinist. Drawing on Wenger's identity reconstruction concept of 'learning as becoming' (Wenger 2013:114) allows my study to consider the role agency can play in the development of habitus.

Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory looks at the social processes where students work together through legitimate peripheral participation within a broader community of practice. This provides a theoretical frame through which to apply Bernstein's theory of pedagogic rights of enhancement, inclusion, and participation to the experiences of non-traditional students. Bernstein's approach, however, proved to be overly linear to support satisfactory insights into the complex workings of the art and design department in the study. For a more integrated model of the application of Bernstein's theory, I looked to Broadhead and Gregson (2018), who propose an approach that recognised the messiness of lived experience. Bernstein (1971) offers a further set of tools through his understanding of horizontal and vertical discourse and application of mundane and esoteric knowledge, to analyse, in detail, the everyday interactions and lived experiences of artist/tutors and non-traditional students within communities of practice. Bernstein's theory of horizontal and vertical discourse informed the discussion on artspeak which was then used in relation to Bourdieu. This has proved particularly helpful when approaching the often tacit practice-based engagement within the creative context of the art and design department.

This study makes an original contribution to the literature in both the sociology of education and art and design pedagogy. It does this by identifying how the particular combination of artist/tutors' dual professional identity and the proximity of HE to FE cohorts within the art and design department develops rich communities of practice, allowing non-traditional students to experience HE 'up close' for the first time and expanding horizons for action. It did this in several ways. Firstly, the study has contributed to the literature on FE art and design pedagogy by examining the artists/tutors' dual professional identity. It offers a new dimension in that it shows how that dual professional identity works to overcome social class inequalities

through the use of bridging mechanisms grounded in a practice-based tacit approach. It has been shown that this engaged non-traditional students with the language and conceptual demands of art and design. Secondly, the study has highlighted how institutions choose to locate HE within FE matters. It has shown clearly how this can have a significant impact on non-traditional students' understanding of possible progression routes. Thirdly, it has demonstrated a crucial link between the proximity of HE to FE and the dual professional identity of artist/tutors in the development of rich communities of practice. The study has discovered the importance of socially-situated learning models giving non-traditional students agency in considering HE as something for them.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (2.4:15), the work of Bathmaker and Thomas (2009) suggests that simply placing HE within an FEI is not always enough to support progression to degree level study for non-traditional students (Bathmaker 2016; Bathmaker et al. 2008). What this study wanted to reveal were the implications of the institutional decision to offer HE within an FE setting and understand the lived experiences of both non-traditional students and artist/tutors as they negotiate progression to HE in the socially-situated context of the art and design department. If the ambition of placing HE within FE is to support social justice, then Bathmaker and Thomas (2009) make clear there are a whole range of other factors which need to be considered. These need to be understood in order to make explicit the mechanisms which either inhibit or smooth the path to HE for non-traditional students in the HE in FE context. This led my study to consider if there was something specific about the field of art and design which offered non-traditional students particular insights and pathways into HE.

To understand if HE in FE is effective in these senses and to investigate if art and design offers particular mechanisms which support progression to HE for non-traditional students, a detailed study was necessary. Westmount campus offered a rich field of investigation, with the research interested in both the artist/tutors' and students' lived experience of their engagement in art and design communities of practice. Four main areas emerged in the study as significant in influencing progression of non-traditional art and design students to HE study within the FEI. These were: non-traditional students' acculturation into the vertical codes of artspeak supporting identity reconstruction and membership of the community; the dual

professional identity of the artist/tutors; space to practice, both within the FEI for students' and artist/tutors' own studio practice; and the decision-making process for non-traditional students considering the FEI for their degree studies.

Key findings suggested that the proximity of the FDA programme to FE provision proved important for non-traditional students to experience, for the first time, HE study at close quarters. This exposure to HE was enhanced by tutors' development of individual desk spaces and dedicated studios for FDA students. The provision of these spaces made FDA students accessible to cohorts from lower levels and gave visibility to the range of activities, pedagogic practices and creative expectations surrounding degree level study through legitimate peripheral participation. It was also found in the study that artist/tutors' dual professional identity was central in bridging strategies which sought to address the social and cultural gap often embedded in the linguistic codes of artspeak. These findings support Broadhead and Gregson's (2018) study into working-class students' linguistic struggles within HE. 'Othering' language was seen by Broadhead and Gregson (2018) to marginalise working-class students and highlights the importance of this study in understanding the pedagogy which strives to overcome this.

The study at Westmount campus demonstrated how artist/tutors, through their dual professional identity, were able to draw on tacit and material knowledge within their own creative practice to scaffold linguistic mechanisms between horizontal and vertical discourse, opening up artspeak for non-traditional students. Bernstein's (1996) theory of horizontal and vertical discourse has been useful to this study in understanding the interplay between mundane and esoteric knowledge and non-traditional students' increasing linguistic confidence. Artist/tutors were able to draw on the everyday material understanding of the non-traditional students' own creative practice and use this shared understanding to introduce the vertical esoteric knowledge central to abstract thought. The data revealed that the acquisition of artspeak emerged as a staging post in the students' developing identity as artists and gave them confidence to participate in the community of practice within the FEI art and design department. For this study, it highlights the potential of art and design pedagogy to counteract some of the determinist social hierarchies Bourdieu (1984) understood were reinforced through the dominance of the middle-classes' linguistic capital and the use of esoteric artspeak as a vehicle of social distinction.

What has been seen in the study is the importance of the transparency of practice and the real-time nature of engagement with artist/tutors and HE cohorts. As students engaged more broadly in the community of practice, it allowed legitimate peripheral participation for non-traditional students to witness the emotional and conceptual engagement of degree study over extended periods of time. Non-traditional students have been shown in several studies to view HE study as risky (Reay et al. 2005; Bathmaker 2016; Broadhead and Gregson 2018). As tutors pedagogised the insecurities of creative practice through modelling their own process and decision-making, students had a roadmap to embrace the risky business of venturing into the unknown. Students found effective strategies to confront moments of uncertainty in their creative work through extended exposure to these formative experiences. This challenged their schemata and their 'own subjective perceptions' (Hodkinson et al. 1996) that degree study was a fearful prospect, opening up alternative possibilities by expanding non-traditional students' horizons for action as they aligned their own skills with those of FDA students. They had many opportunities to experience and reflect on their own imagined futures as degree students. Imagination nudged the habitus as they were able to 'try on' the risky prospect of degree study and picture it as something for people like them.

The discussion will now move on to look more closely at the four main themes of the study: language; dual professional identity; space; and decision-making, to understand the connections and influences which support progression to HE for non-traditional students.

9.2. Language

We have seen that analysis of alumni interviews detailed how many had experienced linguistic alienation as they progressed though compulsory education. Feelings of personal inadequacy stemmed from disparities in social and cultural capital. The data revealed artist/tutors demonstrated a keen understanding of students' limited social exposure to vertical linguistic codes and worked through recontextualising their own artistic practice to develop a pedagogic device of inclusion, which scaffolded accessible artspeak. Strong links between language, creative techniques and conceptual fluency are discussed by Sullivan (2006) in their study of contemporary artists and use of language as a metaphor for bridging connections between materials

knowledge and illusive conceptual development. Drawing on a discussion by the mixed media artist Donna Baspaly (2001:37–40), who states that working with different media expands her 'creative vocabulary', Sullivan (2006:3) develops the concept by implying 'each medium or technique is a word, not a language'. Following this logic, Sullivan goes on to assert that larger vocabularies map into enhanced repertoires for creative expression and give agency to the artist to create their own narrative. Understanding the acquisition of vocabulary within the context of the art and design department at Westmount campus is important to this study if we take seriously Bourdieu's (1984) contention that the language of culture and art can be used to exclude differing social groups from acquiring effective conceptual insights to function successfully in the educational field.

The study brings a unique perspective by demonstrating a link between the pedagogic device of artist/tutors bringing in working examples of personal sketchbooks and ephemera, which orbited and fed their creative practice, and students beginning to internalise the 'social practice' (Lave and Wenger 1991:53) of the community through the acquisition of vocabulary. This was cited by students as a fundamental segue into their own identity reconstruction in 'becoming' an artist and developing their own language. Bridging strategies that drew on visual and practical examples allowed for access to artspeak and the vertical codes of creative practice and conceptual understanding. These findings highlight the distinct difference between FE art and design pedagogy and the research by Steers (2004) into pedagogic approaches in high school, as discussed in Chapter 2 (2.5.1:19). Art teachers in school, contending with large class sizes and result-driven scrutiny, were left with no room to nurture students' own interests. The focus had to be on 'safe', strongly directed, reliable outcomes (Steers 2004), leaving teachers effectively talking 'for' students (Page 2012) in a hierarchical power relationship. Students in high school may acquire some 'words' but are not given the agency to develop an effective language of their own in these constrained environments. This study found that, in contrast, in FE with smaller cohorts, extended contact time and artist/tutors having greater autonomy to develop studio practice, opportunities to engage students in collegiate relationships were evident. As artist/tutors drew on individual students' work to explore artspeak, students gained confidence in the efficacy of their artistic credentials as they built their own understanding of conceptual and developmental

processes through tacit and materials-based processes as modelled by the artist/tutors.

Acquiring the linguistic fluency to fully engage in HE learning was found in the study to be important in encouraging progression to HE. Reay et al. (2005) draw similar conclusions in their study and describe the insecurities and implications for limited progression which can result from exclusion. The significance of 'linguistic fluency' in my research is read as 'linguistic confidence' in Broadhead and Gregson's (2018) study of HE access students. They highlight the necessity to develop 'linguistic confidence' to fully engage in the intricacies of the curriculum. Institutional assumptions of homogonous student linguistic competence left the non-traditional students feeling inadequate, with some considering abandoning their courses all together. My study revealed similar sentiments reflected by alumni at Westmount campus. Many reported they would have been marginalised within the university setting through the use of unfamiliar artspeak if they had progressed directly to university. Similar reports have been cited by Burgess and Burgess (2021) of exclusion situated around language emerging from working-class students as they entered university art courses. It is useful here to return to Bernstein's discourse on pedagogic rights to reflect on the second principle of inclusion and the connection between non-traditional students' lack of linguistic fluency and disenfranchisement from education success. These findings highlight the important pedagogic bridging strategies artist/tutors at Westmount campus employed to overcome non-traditional students' diverse backgrounds and disparate socially-situated linguistic roots.

The data revealed that the acquisition of artspeak was important in articulating conceptual and theoretical approaches to creative practice. Language helped to support an appreciation of the social and cultural context of the histories of practice. This is only acquired through social activity in a socially-situated community of practice. Lingard et al. (2022) observed similar links and concluded that observation of, and participation in, shared practical activities were pivotal in novices' socialisation into the community and meaning-making of the specific language of that community. It was seen as fundamental to internalise the 'habits and traditions of a community' (Lingard et al. 2022:3) to undergo the identity reconstruction necessary to construct an inbound trajectory towards full membership of the community of practice. This was seen at Westmount campus as non-traditional

students witnessed themselves effectively engaging with the tasks, competencies and language within the social context of the community. Analysis revealed links between developing levels of linguistic acculturation and non-traditional students reporting shifts away from feelings of inadequacy. Their horizons for action expanded as they internalised 'what kind of person' a HE student was. Students reported identifying as 'real artists'. This was validated through broader exposure to the practice of the community, rooted in the artist/tutors' pedagogy of modelling practice and exposure to the application of artspeak. Access to established HE students' everyday activities within the art and design department at Westmount campus served to enhance this identity reconstruction by providing students from lower levels exemplars of applied artspeak, helping them to contextualise it within their own creative practice.

Language was not developed in isolation, however. It emerged from, and was pedagogised, in response to artist/tutors' dual professional identity. Understanding the role this played within the art and design department is important to the study and will now be explored.

9.3. Dual Professional Identity

We have seen that the artist/tutors in the study functioned professionally in a broad community of practice, offering, as Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss, deep-rooted socio-cultural connections which nurtured their own identity as artists and gave them access to ongoing socially-situated narratives. The analysis demonstrated how artist/tutors modelled behaviours and legitimised students' own creative endeavours and, as Bernstein (1996:78) outlines, 'this mutual collective purpose' is an important factor in the establishment of ongoing bonds developed in a community of practice.

This study looked at the dual professional identity of the artist/tutors at Westmount campus and drew clear connections between the rich resources of experience and knowledge stemming from this dual identity and specific pedagogic approaches. While other studies have looked at dual professional identity within the creative milieu (Graham and Zwirn 2010; Budge 2016), this study offers a new dimension by examining artist/tutors' pedagogic approach as influenced by their dual professional identity within an HE in FE art and design context. It also uniquely explores the

impact of this pedagogy on non-traditional students, offering new insights into identity reconstruction and decision-making to progress to HE.

Throughout this study I have argued that the application of Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory can be a useful tool in understanding if there are particular factors in placing HE in FE which support non-traditional students to choose HE as a possible progression route. Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Wenger's (1998) development of communities of practice has helped to unpick the ways in which non-traditional students undergo identity reconstruction within community-based learning outside the formal theoretical scope of traditional notions of tuition. Considering the work of Bailey et al. (2023), who apply the concept of situated learning in a maritime context to understand the nature of identity construction in a vocational field, has proved helpful in thinking through the processes experienced by the non-traditional students at Westmount campus. Bailey et al. (2023) identified how trainee mariners would strive to demonstrate what was considered 'good seamanship' encapsulating the identity reconstruction necessary to fully internalise the tacit 'reasoning-in-practice' required to become a member of the community of practice. Applying this notion within the context of my study has provided unique insight into the workings of non-traditional students' identity reconstruction. My research identifies non-traditional students' growing understanding of what constitutes the 'kind of person' (Lave and Wenger 1991:53) understood to possess the character, disposition and knowledge to operate effectively in the community of practice of the FEI art and design department, demonstrating the competencies of 'a real artist'. These insights go beyond knowledge acquisition and require learning within the socially constituted norms of the community to acquire the tacit understanding necessary to respond meaningfully to complex creative problem-solving.

The study has revealed how non-traditional students embracing what it took to demonstrate the 'competencies of the community' helped them develop feelings of becoming a 'real artist' and influenced identity reconstruction. This was outlined in the study through an examination of pedagogised 'roadmaps' rooted in artist/tutors' dual professionalism. This addresses the second research question *2. To what extent do the dual professional identities of practicing artists, who also teach in FE colleges, influence choices of students to progress to HE study?* Non-traditional

students were provided with pathways to develop creative responses rooted in their personal approach. This allowed students to gain insights into their academic and artistic identity as artist/tutors dual professional approach was adept at recognising the importance of developing non-traditional students' confidence in their creative abilities as a segue to stimulate a recognition that their academic abilities are equally valid. Practice was modelled by the artist/tutors, to encourage a reflective and resilient approach to learning. Students were given a framework to think deeply on actions and results and developed an awareness of how their creative decisions impacted on artistic outcomes. The data demonstrated that, as students engaged in repeated cycles of the creative process, they developed increasing competence in understanding how their actions played out in unpredictable and uncertain creative situations. They learnt through modelled behaviour and increasing involvement in the socially-situated community of practice, how building knowledge and personal resilience allowed them to move forward into unknown territories, promoting identity reconstruction that reflected the norms of the community.

My research findings suggest that artists/tutors' honesty about their personal insecurities with the creative process proved important in building trust and dialogue between tutors and students. Embracing the unknown has a long history within artistic practice (Jones 2013). The value to artists of '*Not* knowing' is outlined by Jones (2013) as a central catalyst in the creative process. They offer that 'not knowing constitutes on the one hand an inevitable effect of the perspectival limits that allow us not only to think, but to exist at all, as the temporarily individuated entities that we are; and on the other, a condition of becoming, of the possibility of the not-yet and still-to-be,' (Jones 2013:16). As professional artists, the tutors at Westmount are familiar with these feelings of uncertainty, recognising them as essential processes of development and socialise students into these ways of thinking.

The study has revealed explicit links between the honest expression of artistic vulnerability, as detailed by the artist/tutors, and the students' willingness to trust the tutors' experiences as valued sources of knowledge. Although other studies (Brookfield 2001; Denmead 2011) have done much to explore the significance of risk-taking, not knowing and open-ended creative practice in mitigating the risk of failure, my study brings these concepts into the HE in FE art and design forum. New

insights have been offered into how honest and open demonstrations of experience from artist/tutors eases students' anxiety around failure and supports progression to HE. Art and design pedagogy within HE in FE progression offers non-traditional students a framework through which to encounter the unknown as a positive process of becoming. As non-traditional students express uncertainty in relation to degree level study they are acculturated within the art and design department to bring a reflective approach and recognise the 'individual enhancement' they have experienced. Students and artist/tutors acknowledge that progression to HE is an iterative, incremental process with moments of not knowing. This acknowledgment has been stated by alumni as important in encouraging persistence in their HE journey when they faced pivotal moments of insecurity in their ability to succeed. Non-traditional students in my study outlined how the 'roadmaps' and insights into artist/tutors and FDA students' response to failure established a flexibility of approach in uncertain situations. As they witnessed artist/tutors and FDA students establish strategies within their artistic practise to successfully confront the unknown, this furnished the non-traditional students from lower levels with skills to articulate their internal insecurities. This helped to overcome blocks to educational progression often inhibited by fear of their own failure.

In addition, this research highlights the significance of exploiting the 'unknown' and 'yet-to-be-thought' to push students out of their 'comfort zone', realised though acts of pedagogised deconstruction of materials to points of complete destruction, followed by supportive debate and expectation of meaningful reconstruction of creative responses. This metaphor, of deconstruction and reconstruction, has been shown by Jeffrey (2005), through creative pedagogy, to furnish students with agency to break down accepted norms and 'question, act upon and reconstruct knowledge' (Jeffrey 2005:3).

The study contributes to the body of literature in this area by positioning the research within artist/tutors' dual professional identity in the context of HE within an FEI art and design arena. The unique study design not only examined the pedagogies as developed by the artist/tutors in detail, it also sought to understand the non-traditional students' lived experience in response to these pedagogies and implications for the development of communities of practice. These were found to be central to the situated learning which this study has found fundamental in supporting

non-traditional students' progression to HE study. The pedagogising of space which made FDA students visible to lower levels, was also found to be important for progression and will now be considered.

9.4. Space

Analysis of the data made explicit connections between students from lower levels studying within a broader community of practice incorporating HE art and design, and expansions in their horizons for action stemming from identity reconstruction. The data revealed the significance of the HE students' practise being made visible through the placing of HE in the FE art and design department at Westmount campus. The provision of individual desk spaces facilitated this visibility supporting shifts in identity reconstruction as non-traditional students witnessed the lived representation of 'doing a degree' over extended periods of time.

Wenger has provided helpful insights into understanding the process at play in the art and design department at Westmount campus, as he makes clear the connections between space and time and identity formation through learning (Wenger 2010). He outlines how identity formation is conceived through time and space and is in constant development. The temporal notion of identity is important to Wenger. They assert that a person develops their identity in response to ongoing experiences; these importantly happen in a social dimension or space. Wenger reinforces this spatial aspect of learning by conceiving it as 'the geography of competence', then makes links with regimes of competence which become associated with a particular community of practice being 'a sort of colonisation of the social space' (Farnsworth et al. 2016:150). With the unique application of situated learning theory and communities of practice within an HE in FE art and design context in my study, I have shown how we can view the art practice of students and artist/tutors as a visual manifestation of this proposition. As FDA students and artist/tutors developed work in the physical space of the studios, it stimulated rich social engagement. Access to these activities within these socially-situated learning spaces exposed non-traditional students from lower levels to the regimes of competence of the HE community. Students witness the 'kind of person' or what 'being a real artist' entails through legitimate peripheral participation. They learnt new activities, extended competencies in challenging tasks and gained new understandings and insights. As

Lave and Wenger (1991:53) outline, a ‘person is defined by as well as defines these relations’. Within this study, students experienced shifts in their perceptions of self as they moved closer to full membership of the community. The activities, competencies and understandings were not developed in isolation; they emerged as part of a broader social system. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that social participation is pivotal in learning and learning entails ‘becoming a different person’. In this study it is seen in the identity reconstruction of the non-traditional students as they begin to understand, align themselves with, and believe they can achieve, the regimes of competence of the community. This expands their horizons for action as they begin to imagine themselves as degree students.

Wenger outlines that identity reconstruction is rooted in imagination, this being a crucial starting point ahead of alignment and engagement (Farnsworth et al. 2016). Eisner’s (2002) assertion that imagination allows us to engage emotionally and articulate ‘what we make’ (Eisner 2002:xii) of our experience in the world, also supports the concept of imagination being the catalyst for alignment and engagement. Wenger argues that these all need to be present to form an identity which enables full participation in a community of practice (Farnsworth et al. 2016). This will allow a member to negotiate meaning and internalise ways of being, through changes in habitus, necessary to assimilate the communities’ regimes of competence. The study has shown that, for the non-traditional students at Westmount campus, imagining being a degree student and ‘wishing’ to be a degree student turned to thoughts of alignment, as alumni reported assessing what needed to be done to progress. The data revealed links between the placing of HE in the FEI art and design department and students’ rejection of deficit identities of being unable to achieve a degree. This was clearly seen through the analysis as repeated reports of witnessing the workings of the degree dispelled assumptions by the non-traditional students that a degree was something ‘other’, was too academic and beyond their imagination. This addresses the third research question *3. How do ‘spaces to practice’ within art and design studios, as constructed by practicing artists who also teach, frame non-traditional students’ progression?* Artist/tutors pedagogised spaces where the FDA students were made visible by the provision of dedicated studios and individual desk spaces. Artist/tutors also provided rich opportunities within workshops for degree and FE students to work alongside each other. By providing

these interwoven ‘spaces to practice’ where differing levels naturally mingled the reality of the tacit and material orientation of the degree programme was made explicit to non-traditional FE students. This was central to many of the students’ realigning their identity in response to this real-world exemplar of an arts foundation degree. This has brought a fresh perspective to understanding widening participation through the lens of tacit and materials-based study offering unique insights into the issues of supporting progression to HE for non-traditional students. Identity reconstruction is orientated towards doing a degree as schemata are challenged and habitus shifts. Engagement in the practice of making reinforces self-efficacy that a degree is achievable for the non-traditional students. HE study moves within the non-traditional students’ horizons for action as the tacit and material orientation of the degree programme resonates with their own sensibilities. They are already engaged, albeit at a lower level, in similar modes of creativity and this is central in their identity reconstruction. This legitimate peripheral participation in the community of practice allows access to this possible future, and the non-traditional students find they are more aligned to degree study than they foresaw.

The implication of placing HE study within FEIs and the impact this has on progression, or insights into possible futures for non-traditional students, is under-researched. What has been shown in this study is that for effective progression of non-traditional students to HE, the establishment of sustainable communities of practice is necessary. Strong communities of practice were also shown by Parkes (2005), in his study of an FE arts project, to extend non-traditional students’ imagination of possible futures. However, with resistance from management and conflicts with curricular delivery being cited by Parkes (2005) as barriers to establishing future projects, another approach is needed. I show a model, which is sustainable, and in harmony with curricular and assessment requirements. This model can be embedded into departmental and institutional cultures, dovetailing with histories of practice.

These are important considerations to address, as one-off projects are never going to be enough to build rich communities of practice. My study revealed how the sustained nature of the provision of HE in the FEI art and design department at Westmount campus built a community where visibility was given to possible futures in ways which the non-traditional students would not have had any other access to.

This stimulated deep-rooted shifts in habitus, which influenced identity reconstruction to support progression to HE and has important implications for social justice.

Understanding the contribution of placing HE in FE settings has on providing non-traditional students with distinctive opportunities for participation in HE has been the focus of this study. The evidence has demonstrated that within Westmount campus art and design department, students found pathways through to HE that were accessible and supportive. Some students reported seeing little distinction between HE and FE because they were already mixing with the HE cohort, were familiar with the way tutors did things, and understood the culture of the institution. To identify how the dual professional identity of the artist/tutors, the pedagogising of language and the utilisation of space within the FEI interweave to influence progression to HE for non-traditional students, an understanding of the decision-making process is helpful.

9.5. Decision-making

The influences on decision-making, which emerged as significant in altering the schemata of non-traditional students, were both structurally and socially-situated. These straddled engagement in the community of practice and curricular frameworks and have been seen as a process of 'becoming' by Colley et al. (2003). They frame their discussion around the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) to contextualise the complex relationship between the 'social, cultural and emotional' (Colley et al. 2003:475) influences of learning. Their study, as with the data from Westmount campus, draws attention to the identity reconstruction necessary for vocational students to develop the disposition to fit into a particular field or occupation. Identity reconstruction, they suggest, is a strong transformative processes of 'becoming', but can also restrict trajectories which can 'reproduce social inequalities'. Indeed, Bourdieu (2006) outlines how educational influences can work to diminish students' perceptions of future opportunities. Colley et al. (2003) discuss that students' identity shifts need to be compatible with their established horizons for action to be credible. The findings in my study would not disagree with this position or the statement Colley et al. (2003:471) put forward, that programmes of vocational education 'transform those who enter them'. Profound transformations were evident in the data

from Westmount campus informing the identity reconstruction the non-traditional students experienced. These were found to be essential moments of 'becoming' informing decision-making to progress to HE within the FEI.

Colley et al. (2003:488) state that in some 'lower level' FE programmes, including engineering and childcare, the 'vocational habitus' orientates students towards restrictive horizons for action as they co-construct 'choosable' identities. I argue that these mechanisms can instead extend choice-making by expanding horizons for action, which in turn enhance trajectories. My study challenges the restrictive notion of 'vocational habitus' by understanding the impact placing HE in FE has on non-traditional students' identity reconstruction through prolonged exposure to HE cultures and observation of degree students' real-time engagement with their creative practice.

While other studies have recognised that foundation degrees can offer progression from lower levels of study to HE (Bathmaker et al. 2008), they argue there are often unhelpful assumptions of 'seamless' progression. This is grounded in the belief that offering HE in FE will be sufficient to break down 'traditional boundaries' (DfES 2003:63), easing non-traditional students' access to HE. Bathmaker et al. (2008) put forward interesting discussions which understand progression through boundaries, but this was from an institutional perspective. By drawing on my professional experience and engagement with students, my research adds to the discourse on widening participation by looking particularly at the well-established relationships within the community of practice at Westmount campus across cohorts and levels. The research has highlighted the importance of communities of practice in the art and design environment providing rich resources for non-traditional students to observe the real-time, lived manifestation of the regimes of competence and histories of practice which support identity reconstruction. It has uniquely done this by encapsulating perspectives from artist/tutors and non-traditional students across FE and HE cohorts and contextualising them within the environment of the art and design studios. Chapter 8 has demonstrated what non-traditional students experience practically, and emotionally, to consider themselves capable of being an HE student and what influences the decision-making process to study a degree at Westmount campus. Within the communities of practice, non-traditional students gained

knowledge of, and experienced a model of, the histories of practice and regimes of competence to frame their own imaginings of 'self' in the HE environment.

What was important in the analysis was evidence that non-traditional students were able to 'try on' their own practice, demonstrating to themselves their ability to function effectively within the FEI art and design community. This addresses research question 1. *What is important to non-traditional students when making decisions to study an arts foundation degree in a further education institution?* My findings demonstrate how understanding histories of practice and regimes of competence brought strong feelings of comfort and familiarity, which influenced decision-making to continue studying at Westmount campus. The non-traditional students understood the institutional and pedagogic expectations and felt they had built credibility within the community of practice. Considering doing a degree was a risky undertaking for the non-traditional students (Reay et al. 2005). In decision-making, worries of having to renegotiate the 'self' and build a raft of new relationships, which may not develop, were important considerations when choosing to study HE within the FEI art and design department.

Through legitimate peripheral participation, students reported witnessing the pedagogic approach artist/tutors applied within the HE context. Significantly, these artist/tutors also taught within the FE provision. This meant students were familiar with the artist/tutors' methodological approach, allowing them to align their identity with what has to be done to progress onto the degree course. This close proximity, and observation of nuanced interactions and expectation of regimes of competence of HE study, bridges the gap of understanding at points of decision-making, allowing non-traditional students' schemata to shift, undergo identity reconstruction and imagine degree level study as something for people like them (Reay et al. 2005).

Socially-situated influences on schematic dispositions are used by Hodkinson et al. (1996) to examine 'careership' decision-making for young people transitioning from school to work. Of interest to my study is answering research question 4. *Is familial and institutional habitus challenged by the positioning of arts foundation degrees in further education colleges?* The relationship Hodkinson et al. (1996) outlines between the development of conceptual structures, or schemata, and Bourdieu's theoretical framework of habitus provides a framework to understand how the FDA

within the FEI offers opportunities for non-traditional students to experience alternative futures through informing schematic perspectives. The schemata are influenced through the context and activities of learning and this results in shifts of habitus reproduced within the family environment (Hodkinson et al. 1996). This is seen in my study as non-traditional students negotiate the potential for ‘alternative possibilities’ in the spaces, which open up between the material/mundane and theory/esoteric as played out in the communities of practice of the FEI. This was shown in the study to bring new possibilities into focus, specifically HE, in the decision-making process of what progression options are ‘credible’ for the non-traditional students.

Data has shown that institutional habitus in secondary school left many of the non-traditional students feeling inadequate, lacking in confidence and isolated from the institutional knowledge necessary to credentialise their educational engagement, resulting in limited progression. This limited progression was shown to stem from the non-traditional students’ lack of cultural and linguistic capital rooted in familial habitus and an institutional focus on privileging middle-class linguistic codes and cultural experiences. When the schemata are challenged, by the placing of HE in FE offering the opportunity of incremental persistent experiences, as seen through the artist/tutors’ encouragement of students to go ‘out of their comfort zone’ and embrace risky places of creativity, transformations of knowledge ‘between practical and discursive consciousness are likely’ (Hodkinson et al. 1996:149) breaking down the influence of institutional habitus to exclude. Non-traditional students learnt that venturing into unknown territory through their creative practice, although risky, could also be a productive exercise. They witnessed this pattern repeat itself through their learning and through the experiences of their peers. The study has highlighted that significantly, as a result of FE students’ proximity to FDA students they were in a unique position to observe the practise of doing a degree through the FDA students’ trajectories which expanded their own horizons for action and supported decisions to progress to HE. This study has brought new insight to this discourse by showing how non-traditional students’ lack of self-confidence to progress to HE is mitigated through exposure to the ‘risky places of creativity’. Chapter 6 (6.3:89) discussed the common expressions of insecurities and lack of self-efficacy among students in their ability to perform academically at degree level. What was discovered, however, was

the students' reflexive approach towards acceptance of not knowing if they would be good enough but trusting in the iterative process of becoming a degree student as experienced through their socialisation with artist/tutors and FDA practise. They witnessed this through legitimate peripheral participation as a result of the FDA being positioned in the FEI art and design department informing a rich community of practice.

The positioning of the FDA programme within the FEI art and design department at Westmount campus has been shown, in the study, to have had a significant impact on the confidence and decision-making process of non-traditional students to progress to HE. There was evidence of the efficacy of artist/tutors' teaching across both FE and HE provision, building rich networks for communities of practice. This provided continuity of regimes of competence across FE and HE situated in the culture of the institution, giving stability of progression for students already processing the emotional labour and identity reconstruction for transition into HE study.

9.6. Summary

The intricate structures and relationships which have been shown to be central to the progression of non-traditional students to HE within the FEI, need to be recognised for the important role they play in widening access. They are, however, largely uncharted in the literature and were found in the study to be held only in tacit understanding and the lived experiences of the FEI art and design department. The institutional memories, which hold these organic interwoven trajectories in meaningful communion, are rooted in the dual professional identity of the artist/tutors and communities of practice which spring from the longevity of physical proximity.

The imperative to give theoretical rigour to the ephemeral mechanisms at play within the art and design department, which are so critical to the non-traditional students' expansion of horizons for action, are of interest to this study. There was little evidence of recognition, within Cornhill College's broader managerial structure, of the role communities of practice played in fostering identity reconstruction for non-traditional students and the input artist/tutors had on positive trajectories towards HE study.

As the research approached completion, plans were announced that would move the art and design provision to a new site. There is a delicate set of logistics and social interactions which could very easily be unravelled. It brings into focus the need to communicate clearly what exactly is going on with HE within the FEI. This will allow for an argument to be articulated for the reproduction of favourable conditions to encourage effective continuity of communities of practice and histories of practice in the new environment.

If we consider supporting changes in trajectory and widening access to HE important for social justice, we have to pay attention to what happens when HE provision is placed in FE settings, and this study is an example of what has happened. It is a particularly interesting and rich example but is largely the product of how these professionals approached their practice and see it as a continuum within their pedagogy.

This study has uncovered what was an organic process in the development of communities of practice within the FEI art and design department and translated it into a model of learning, which has detailed and rich examples of the efficacy of placing HE within the FEI setting. These are to be celebrated. Clear connections between language, dual profession identity, space and decision-making have been made explicit in this study. The hope is this can be replicated and provided for in other vocational settings. Healthcare could be a good candidate, where there is scope for course levels to have more transparency and experiences between cohorts and tutors modelling practice to be made visible.

Other institutions, when reworking spaces and upgrading campuses, need to take account of the affordance allowed by the dual professional input of tutors and the development of communities of practice which can flourish only with the right environment and logistical support. This study is an attempt to articulate that.

9.7. Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The study has provided a context for management and stakeholders who are interested in widening participation to recognise how the provision of an arts foundation degree within an FE art and design department provides unique opportunities for non-traditional FE students to observe, through legitimate peripheral participation, HE study over extended periods of time, influencing

horizons for action and decisions to progress onto degree level study. The close proximity of FE and HE students provided crucial opportunities for situated learning and the development of rich communities of practice. These were found in the study to be central in creating an environment where non-traditional students could interact with degree students and develop the meaningful social interactions and engagements which encouraged individual agency to believe HE was a possibility for them. By identifying the mechanisms which support progression to HE the study offers management a framework to understand how to protect and nurture communities of practice and to recognise the central role spaces to practice and dual professionality play in providing a milieu where socially-situated learning can flourish.

The study found that the dual professional identity of the artist/tutors was central in the development of communities of practice which support non-traditional students' progression to HE within the FE art and design department. My first recommendation is that although artist/tutors in the study undertook individual creative development within their own practice, this should be recognised and supported by management as central in the development of strong inclusive pedagogies that provide non-traditional students with rich progression opportunities. The provision of continual professional development (CPD) needs to not only focus on the educational role of artist/tutors but requires space and time to be given to their artistic identity to fully reflect the dual nature of their role and effectively serve the needs of the diverse student cohort.

The proximity of HE students to FE cohorts within the same campus and department has been shown in the study to play a significant role in the reproduction of progression to HE study for non-traditional students. Embedding FDA provision alongside FE made visible the practice of the degree students and this was cited by both artist/tutors and alumni in the study as creating valuable opportunities for casual interactions, giving FE students on Level 2 and 3 unique insights into the mechanisms of doing a degree and providing insights for non-traditional students to imagine themselves as HE students. My second recommendation is therefore, when the provision of HE in FE is proposed, spaces to practice and the logistical consideration of the proximity of HE to FE students is given serious thought by management. The work of Bathmaker and Thomas (2009) outlined that simply

placing HE in FE is not enough to support widening participation and can produce barriers to HE progression for non-traditional students if there are differing institutional structures and cultures between FE and HE provision. In a time of budgetary constraints, it could be tempting for management to cut dedicated spaces for individual students. It must be recognised that the consistency of workspaces provides invaluable touchpoints of reference for students from lower levels to observe, over extended periods of time, the development of degree level work and to engage with students on HE courses in low stakes, everyday encounters which make the sometimes impenetrable world of HE accessible to non-traditional students. These spaces and the development of studios where FDA and FE students practice alongside each other need to be prioritised as crucial hubs for the development of communities of practice.

My third recommendation is that not only in art and design, but in vocational education more broadly, tutors and practitioners need to consider how best to make visible their own practice and that of their students across differing cohorts and levels to make possible progression routes transparent through social learning. They also need to be creative in how they capitalise on this visibility by pedagogising engagements between cohorts to encourage social bonds and provide spaces where meaningful interactions can support an understanding of the emotional and practical implications of degree level study. These social interactions have been shown in the study to be pivotal in non-traditional students HE progression decisions.

9.8. Limitations of the Study

The study has generated rich data and insights into the influence placing an arts foundation degree within an FEI art and design department has on progression to higher education for non-traditional students. The study does, however, have limitations. The first of these relates to the ethically motivated decision to recruit alumni and not current students. This was grounded in my dual positionality as tutor and researcher. As outlined in the dual posisionality section of Chapter 4 (4.10:60) interviewing current students would have put an unacceptable strain on the student-tutor relationship if students felt their participation had implications for project outcomes and grades. Alumni therefore offered ethical access to the experiences of students progressing through FE to HE within the art and design department at

Westmount campus. In order to represent the demographic of students progressing through the FDA programme alumni were recruited from six cohorts with the implication that some participants were being asked to reflect on historical experiences up to six years in the past. Remembering, Zacks et al. (2022:22) outline, 'is the formation in the mind of a representation…the processes that produce it include not only mechanisms of retrieval and inspection, but also of synthesis and inference'. This has the potential for participants recollections to be influenced and reconfigured through subsequent events. This does not mean participants understanding of their experiences was unreliable (Zacks et al. 2022). It does, however, imply that specific events may be influenced in recollections by subsequent events and outcomes.

The second limitation of the study is grounded in the availability of alumni. It was only possible to recruited alumni from those still in contact with the college or who answered the call for participants. This resulted in the recruitment of alumni that had successfully completed the Level 4 and 5 FDA programme at Westmount campus and then progressed onto Burston Met to top up their degree to the Level 6 honours. The data gathered from alumni conveyed a particularly positive and progressive attitude to their experiences on the FE and HE programmes. It is recognised that these participants were the ones who had a positive experience as they all successfully completed the foundation degree progressing on to Burston Metropolitan University achieving their BA hons degrees. This, however, may not have been the case for all students progressing through HE in FE provision.

9.9. Future Research

Understanding the intricate connections between tutors, students, cultural background and space which interweave to influence decision-making to progress to HE for non-traditional students is an area which warrants further research. Applying socially-situated learning theory within the context of an FE art and design department has provided particularly rich insights into how legitimate peripheral participation helps non-traditional students experience the realities of studying HE for the first time. These insights were augmented in this study by perspectives from both Bourdieu and Bernstein identifying the pedagogic, social and cultural mechanisms which influence progression. This approach could usefully be applied,

not only within art and design, but more broadly across other vocational fields by those interested in better understanding how to engage learners from a range of social backgrounds and establish what needs to be in place to support non-traditional students to believe HE is something achievable for them.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Non-traditional Student Progression from Level 3 to Foundation Degree.

Table 1. Percentage of non-traditional students progressing from Level 3 art and design courses to Level 4 foundation degree programmes at each of the two campuses at Cornhill College.

Year	City centre campus (%)	Westmount campus (%)
2018	23	29
2019	22	34
2020	25	31
2021	29	35

Appendix II: Contextual Participant Information.

Alumni commonalities: although each participant is an individual and this study has endeavoured to recognise this, for the sake of clarity, the following commonalities are worth expressing for ease of interpretation. All participants are working class with no other members of their families or friends having attended university. Although not all participants went to schools in working-class areas, where students were mainly from low socio-economic backgrounds, the majority did, and this will not be reiterated in the table. Where this differs, an outline will be given. None of the participants when enrolling on FE art and design courses at Westmount campus had planned to progress to degree level study.

Table 2. Contextual participant information: alumni.

Alumni					
Pseudonym	Educational and family background	Age when studying on the FDA	FDA subject studied	Length of interview: minutes	Number of transcribed words
Percy	They did not excel at school, struggling with the academic work and the family not valuing education. Left with no formal qualifications and enrolled onto the Level 1 art and design course having always 'been good at drawing'.	21	Graphics	41	5743
Molly	Although Molly lived in a working-class area, her parents fought for her to go to school in a middle-class area, which she had to travel a long distance to attend. This left Molly feeling at odds with her environment and with no friends locally. A traumatic family bereavement compounded Molly's difficulties and led to mental health problems. Molly was unable to cope with school pressures and left education with no formal qualifications. As she became a mother and got involved in her children's school, a teacher recognised her creative abilities and suggested she attend the FEI to develop her confidence and gain	32	Textiles	40	5581

	some qualifications. She applied to the Level 3 art and design course.				
Alison	A single parent with three young children. Ill health and several major operations had prevented academic success at school. At one point they were told by the careers advisor they would never work, so why bother to get qualifications? Leaving school with no formal qualifications they returned to FE as a result of boredom, choosing Level 3 art and design, as this had been a constant source of enjoyment.	41	Textiles	46	5392
Lily	Felt out of step with school requirements and suspected she had some underlying learning issues, although these were never diagnosed. She gained some qualifications, but these were basic. Although she had ambitions to go to art college, her family persuaded her to enter secretarial training, as her mother had done, as it would provide 'security'. Carrying feelings of failure, when she became a mother of three, she wanted to return to education in order to gain qualifications and be in a stronger position to support her own children, and applied for the Level 3 art and design course.	34	Textiles	48	5881
Mia	Left school at 15 with very few formal qualifications. Went straight into work as a hairdresser, as she had been assisting as a Saturday job while in school. As her children were grown up, she was looking to re-engage with her creative interests from	51	Ceramics	52	8024

	her youth and returned to FE on the Level 3 art and design course.				
Maggie	Severely bullied at school, she effectively self-excluded and did not attend any meaningful education from the age of 15, leaving with no formal qualifications. She went through several ineffective government training schemes. Creative engagement had always been a core element of her identity and choosing to pursue art and design at the FEI on the Level 1 course had been a hope to re-establish some self-confidence following her negative school experiences.	26	Textiles	55	7326
John	Having learning difficulties left feelings of disassociation in compulsory education. The system, they felt, had abandoned them and this, combined with a lack of application on their part, resulted in no formal qualifications. Years drifting in disparate jobs followed. A near-fatal accident galvanised their view that they needed structure and a focused goal, choosing the local FEI to enrol on a Level 3 art and design course.	43	Ceramics	70	8719
Sarah	She had moved from a working-class school to a middle-class school when the family relocated for work. Although academically able, she was isolated socially and struggled to acquire the necessary understanding in her new environment. She reported teachers focused on the middle-class pupils when supporting progression. Feeling sidelined, she	42	Textiles	48	7246

	acquired some GCSE qualifications but decided not to pursue further study. After becoming a mother for the second time, she attended some adult education courses then progressed to Cornhill College to pursue the Level 3 art and design course.				
Grace	Early education attainment had been relatively straightforward, but when considering A level study, Grace admits she did not apply herself and was asked to leave the sixth form. She went into employment, following her father into his workplace. Her child, born with a severe disability, required a lot of time and attention. To gain some personal interest and confidence, Grace decided to enrol on what she felt was something of a recreational course. She enrolled on the Level 3 art and design course at the FEI as creativity had always provided interest and enjoyment for her.	34	Ceramics	40	6570
Emma	Emma had plans to do a course in childcare when at school with a view to become a nursery school assistant. She did not obtain the necessary grades and decided to enrol on the Level 1 art and design course with a view to a second chance at obtaining the necessary qualifications to get on the Level 2 childcare course. She had always enjoyed art, and this was one of the few qualifications she had achieved.	21	Textiles	45	6721
Hannah	Came from a dysfunctional family with a history of intergenerational	24	Textiles	42	6673

	unemployment and criminal involvement. She was given little support through her education and left school early with very few qualifications. She lived independently from a young age and fought to get to FE college, starting on the Level 1 art and design course, as this had been her favourite subject at school.				
Ada	Ada had enjoyed education and particularly art, but following traumatic childhood events, she experienced a personal crisis and school was not able to support them. She left with very few qualifications as she was unable to engage effectively in the formal exam process. Her self-confidence was shattered. As she rebuilt her emotional stability through arts therapy, she was looking to re-engage with education. Through researching institutions, she could travel to independently she decided on Westmount FEI enrolling on a Level 3 art and design course.	25	Ceramics	41	5299

Table 3. Contextual participant information: artist/tutors in-post.

Artist/tutors in-post					
Pseudonym	Artistic practice and tutor role	Years in-post	Subject specialism	Length of interview: minutes	Number of transcribed words
Pam	Course tutor for Level 3 and extended diploma art and design, also delivering on FDA ceramics. Practises as a 3D multimedia artist from her own studio.	8	Ceramics and 3D	40	6671
Heidi	Tutor for FDA graphic design. Course tutor	12	Graphic design	47	7012

	for Level 1 and 2 art and design. Undertakes commissions and pursues her own work.				
Tina	No course tutor responsibilities but delivering across all levels as needed. Maintains a studio within an artist cooperative, exhibiting in professional galleries and internationally.	15	Ceramics and fine art	50	8022
Saffron	Tutor for FDA textiles. Also delivers across Level 2 and 3 art and design. A member of selected professional bodies, and maintains their own studio. Exhibiting regularly and working to commission.	13	Textiles	50	8178

Table 4. Contextual participant information: artist/tutors retired.

Artist/tutors retired					
Pseudonym	Artistic practice and tutor role	Years in post	Subject specialism	Length of interview: minutes	Number of transcribed words
Jade	Tutor for FDA textiles. Also delivered on Level 2 and 3 art and design. Came to post through the 'long interview', gradually building up hours while still practising as a textile artist in her studio.	22	Textiles	54	8919
David	Tutor for FDA ceramics. Also delivering Level 3 in art and design. Was recruited to support the establishment of the FDA programme. Has their own studio and a long-established career as a ceramicist, exhibiting internationally.	21	Ceramics	40	6866
Anne	Responsible for establishing the foundation degree programme. Delivered on Level 2 and 3	22	Fine art	45	6961

	Maintained their practice throughout their role. In retirement they continue to exhibit and pursue their creative career.				

Appendix III: Ethics Approval Letter.

School of Social Sciences
Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol
Head of School, Pennaeth yr Ysgol
Dr Tom Hall

Cardiff University
Glamorgan Building
King Edward VII Avenue
Cardiff CF10 3WT
Wales UK

Tel +44(0)29 2087 5179
Fax +44(0)29 2087 4175

www.cardiff.ac.uk/social-sciences

Prifysgol Caerdydd
Adeilad Morgannwg
Rhodfa'r Brenin Edward VII
Caerdydd CF10 3WT
Cymru, Y Deyrnas Unedig

Ffôn +44(0)29 2087 5179
Ffacs +44(0)29 2087 4175

www.caerdydd.ac.uk/social-sciences

06 May 2020

Our ref: SREC/3655

Yvonne Coffey
Professional Doctorate Programme
SOCSI

Dear Yvonne,

Your project entitled *'Can the positioning of foundation degrees in further education colleges overcome negative influences of habitus for art and design students from non-traditional backgrounds and support progression into higher education?'* has now been approved by the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Cardiff University and you can now commence the project should all necessary forms of approval been received.

If you make any substantial changes with ethical implications to the project as it progresses you need to inform the SREC about the nature of these changes. Such changes could be: 1) changes in the type of participants recruited (e.g. inclusion of a group of potentially vulnerable participants), 2) changes to questionnaires, interview guides etc. (e.g. including new questions on sensitive issues), 3) changes to the way data are handled (e.g. sharing of non-anonymised data with other researchers).

In addition, if anything occurs in your project from which you think the SREC might usefully learn, then please do share this information with us.

All ongoing projects will be monitored and you will be obliged periodically to complete and return a SREC monitoring form.

Please inform the SREC when the project has ended.

Please use the SREC's project reference number above in any future correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Professor Alison Bullock
Chair of School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Registered Charity, no. 1136855
Elusen Gofrestredig, rhif 1136855

Appendix IV: Participant Information Sheet.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Research Project: Student Experience on Foundation Degrees in a Further Education College

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others, if you wish.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of this research project?
The project is being undertaken as part of doctoral study. It is interested in understanding the experiences of art and design students who have studied a foundation degree. The aim is to gain an insight into the way art and design studios and lecturers support study in higher education.

Why have I been invited to take part?
You have been invited because you have either studied or taught a foundation degree in an art and design discipline.

Do I have to take part?
No. Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, we will discuss the research project with you and ask you to sign a consent form. If you decide not to take part, you do not have to explain your reasons and it will not affect your legal rights.
You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in the research project at any time, without giving a reason, even after signing the consent form.

What will taking part involve?
You will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview. This will take approximately one hour and will be audio/video recorded.

Will I be paid for taking part?
No. You should understand that any data you give will be as a gift and you will not benefit financially in the future should this research project lead to the development of new methods.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There will be no direct advantages or benefits to you from taking part, but your contribution will help us understand progression to higher education and support students in the future.

What are the possible risks of taking part?
Every effort will be made to anonymise participants by using pseudonyms and changing identifiable information. There may be a risk that your identity will be worked out.

Will my taking part in this research project be kept confidential?
All information collected from (or about) you during the research project will be kept confidential and any personal information you provide will be managed in accordance with data protection legislation. Please see 'What will happen to my Personal Data?' (below) for further information.

There may be circumstances in which the research team may need to over-ride confidentiality e.g. in exceptional cases, the research team may be legally and/or professionally required to over-ride confidentiality and to disclose information obtained from (or about) you to statutory bodies or relevant agencies. For example, this might arise where the research team has reason to believe that there is a risk to your safety, or the safety of others. Where appropriate, the research team will aim to notify you of the need to break confidentiality (but this may not be appropriate in all cases).

What will happen to my Personal Data?
Your personal data will be stored on encrypted computers with only the research team having access to it. Personal data will include date of birth, address telephone and email contact information. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the analytical phase of the research.

Cardiff University is the Data Controller and is committed to respecting and protecting your personal data in accordance with your expectations and Data Protection legislation. Further information about Data Protection, including:

your rights
the legal basis under which Cardiff University processes your personal data for research
Cardiff University's Data Protection Policy
how to contact the Cardiff University Data Protection Officer
how to contact the Information Commissioner's Office

may be found at https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/policies-and-procedures/data-protection

Your personal data will be processed over eighteen months. After eighteen months the research team will anonymise all the personal data it has collected from, or about, you in connection with this research project, with the exception of your consent form. Your consent form will be retained for five years and may be accessed by members of the research team and, where necessary, by members of the University's governance and audit teams or by regulatory

authorities. Anonymised information will be kept for a minimum of five years but may be published in support of the research project and/or retained indefinitely, where it is likely to have continuing value for research purposes.

Personal data collected up until the point of participant withdrawal from the research project will be destroyed. Note that it will not be possible to withdraw any anonymised data that has already been published or in some cases, where identifiers are irreversibly removed during the course of a research project, from the point at which it has been anonymised.

What happens to the data at the end of the research project?
At the end of the project data collected will be anonymised and be stored in an encrypted computer. Any further use of the data will be restricted to requests. Any personal data will be removed before any sharing takes place.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
It is our intention to include the results of the research project in a doctoral thesis, publish them in academic journals and present findings at conferences. Participants will not be identified in any report, publication or presentation. There will be verbatim quotes but these will not include any statements which could lead to the identification of participants.

What if there is a problem?
If you wish to complain or have grounds for concerns about any aspect of the manner in which you have been approached or treated during the course of this research, please contact Yvonne Coffey, CoffeyYM@cardiff.ac.uk. If your complaint is not managed to your satisfaction, please contact the School of Social Sciences Socsi-ethics@cardiff.ac.uk for the attention of Prof Alison Bullock and Prof EJ Renold

If you are harmed by taking part in this research project, there are no special compensation arrangements. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, you may have grounds for legal action, but you may have to pay for it.

Who is organising and funding this research project?
The research is organised by Yvonne Coffey and Dr Mark Connolly, School of Social Sciences in Cardiff University.

Who has reviewed this research project?
This research project has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, Cardiff University.

Further information and contact details
Should you have any questions relating to this research project, you may contact us during normal working hours:

Yvonne Coffey
School of Social Sciences
Cardiff University
Glamorgan Building

King Edward VII Avenue
Cardiff
CF10 3NN

Thank you for considering to take part in this research project. If you decide to participate, you will be given a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and a signed consent form to keep for your records.

Appendix V: Consent Form.

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: Student Experience on Foundation Degrees in a Further Education College

I………………………………………………… voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that participation involves taking part in a one-to-one semi-structured interview.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being recorded.

I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in a dissertation, conference presentation or published papers.

I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

I understand that signed consent forms and original recordings will be retained on encrypted computers and only the researcher and supervisor will have access to

these. The data will be retained until the exam board confirms the results of their research dissertation.

I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for five years from the date of exam board.

I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

-- ----------------
Signature of participant Date

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

--- ----------------------
Signature of researcher Date

Appendix VI: Alumni Interview Schedule.

Prep/Introductions

Foundation Degree Textiles/Ceramics/Graphics

Mode of attandance full-time part-time

Age

Introduction to the project and explanation of interview structure. Emphasise the interest in the participants' personal responses and individual reflections. Revisit consent form.

Family background and early educational experience

Can you tell me a little about your family background.

Probes:

- Where did you grow up and where did you go to school?
- What did your parents do for a living and what was the highest qualification they got?

I would now like to get an understanding of your school experience; can you give me an idea of how you found it?

Probes:

- Can you give me an idea of your school experience?
- How old were you when you left school?
- What qualifications did you leave school with?
- Had you thought of studying HE when you were at school?
- Did you get any information on HE when you were at school?

Expectations of educational progression or employment on leaving school

Probes:

- What did you think you would do after leaving school? Was it what you wanted to be doing?
- What were your perceptions of schools' expectations for you when you left school?
- What were your perceptions of your family's expectations for you when you left school?
- Did you get any careers or educational advice at school?
- What did you do when you left school?
- When and why did you decide to do an art and design course at Westmount campus?

Experiences in FE

Probes:

- Can you tell me a bit about your experience of coming to Westmount campus to study art and design.
- Did this differ in any way from your school experience?
- Can you describe the learning spaces in the art and design department?
- Were you aware of the tutors' artistic practice?
- Did the tutors ever talk about their own artistic work?
- Do you think this influenced their teaching at all?
- If so, can you give me any examples?
- Can you give me a picture of your life outside college?

Understanding of HE choices and progression

Probes:

- Had you thought of studying HE when you were at school?
- What made you want to go on to higher education?
- What were your family's/partner's/friends' opinion of you wanting to study HE?
- Why did you decide to study a foundaton degree?
- How important was it in your decision-making that the foundation degree course was at Westmount campus?
- Did you consider any other courses?
- What were your sources of information when thinking about studying HE?

Thank you, that is the end of the interview. Is there anything alse you would like to say about what we have discussed or any questions you would like to ask?

Appendix VII: Artist/tutors Interview Schedule.

Prep/Introduction

Introduction to the project and explanation of interview structure. Emphasise the interest in the participants' individual responses and reassure that no professional judgement is being made. Revisit consent form.

Professional background, training and teaching position within the college

Firstly, can you tell me about your professional qualifications and what your position is/was at Westmount campus?

Probes:

- What is/was your role at Westmount campus?
- What qualifications do you have?
- What is your creative specialism?
- What subjects do/did you teach at Westmount campus and what level are these?

Experiences and approaches to creative practice

I would like to ask you about your creative practice and what your personal approach is to that (ask as an open question to elicit individual narrative and probe with questions below if necessary).

Probes:

- How would you describe your artistic practice?
- Would you describe yourself as a professional artist? If so, can you tell me a little more about this?
- Where do you produce your creative work? Is it important where you make your work?
- What are/were your main sources of inspiration and support creatively?

Pedagogic perspectives

Now can we move on to talk about your pedagogy and how you approach teaching. Can you tell me about your role at Westmount campus and what you consider on a day-to-day basis when teaching your subject within the studios.

Probes:

- How would you describe your teaching/pedagogic philosophy?
- Do you think your practice as an artist influences your teaching approach? If so, could you tell me a little more about this?
- Can you tell me about the spaces you teach in at Westmount campus?
- How do you organise these spaces? Why do you organise them like this?
- How do the students use the spaces at Westmount campus?

Teaching across FE and HE

As you teach across FE and HE, I would like to get an understanding of your experience of this.

Probes:

- What subjects do you deliver at FE and what subjects do you deliver at HE?
- Where does the FE and HE teaching take place?
- Can you talk me though the spaces where FE and HE are delivered and how you work within these?
- Are there any similarities or significant differences in your delivery across FE and HE?
- Do you support students with progression to HE? If so, can you tell me how you do this?