



University of the
West of England

**Assessment practices in higher
education: the experiences of newly
appointed academics in professional
fields from a phenomenological
perspective**

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Nothing we do to, or for our students is more important than our assessment of their work and the feedback we give them on it. The results of our assessment influence our students for the rest of their lives and careers – fine if we get it right, but unthinkable if we get it wrong. (Race, Brown and Smith, 2005:x1).

Abstract

For a novice academic, the first experience of marking can be as memorable as preparing for and giving their first teaching session. Yet, while academic reflections and narratives abound for the latter, there is a paucity of literature regarding the former. This study begins to address this lack of literature through an exploration of the experiences of six newly appointed academics as they begin to mark students' coursework.

In choosing interpretive phenomenology as the methodological and philosophical influences for this study, I committed to an approach which required a search for an ontological understanding of being involved in marking as a new academic, rather than an understanding of what is known about marking.

Each participant's experience is illustrated through extracts from interviews that reflect rich descriptions of actions, behaviours and intentions, with the objective of evoking a 'phenomenological nod' that might resonate with others. Towards the end of the first year each participant reflected on the challenges in relation to their experience of unanticipated emotional effects and ethical considerations. Confidence, processes, accountability and responsibility and judgements emerged from the data as common themes.

The concept of being-in-the-world-of-marking demonstrates conceptually the experiences of the newly appointed academics as they began to come to know themselves as markers and academics; not through the learning of facts about marking, but through their understanding and self-interpretation of their own and others' marking practices. The experiences shared throughout the thesis support and further develop previous research findings, highlighting the need for additional training and guidance in relation to assessment and feedback within higher education, and reinforcing the necessity for newly appointed academics to be offered formal and informal mentorship and guidance in the theory and practice of assessment.

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Without the unconditional love and support from my family my doctoral studies would not have been achievable. Therefore I would like to first and foremost thank Gary, my husband and Oliver and Victoria, our children for supporting me and encouraging me over the past few years. Your love, support and understanding has held me together. Thanks also to all of my family and friends who have understood and accepted my hermit like existence, in particular Penny for occasionally forcing me to socialise and Dani for each candle that has been lit. I could not have done this without your friendships. I would also like to thank my supervisors Dr Theresa Mitchell, Dr Derek Sellman and Dr Brenda Clarke for their guidance. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank Mary, Alison, Fifi, Adam, Helen, and Marie for participating in the study and sharing their experiences, without their involvement this study and my journey would not have been possible.

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Heideggerian Terms at a Glance

Being there (Dasein)	Conscious awareness the meaning of existence and how sense is made of the world
Being-in-the-world (in-der-welt-sein)	The basic state of Dasein by which every mode of its Being gets co-determined.
Co-constitution	The creation of shared meaning and interpretations
Comportment (verhalten)	Human behaviour and understanding is self-interpreting through conscious and unconscious actions.
Fallenness (verfallen)	Self-interpretation that is concerned and pre-occupied with the present.
Hermeneutic circle	A continuous process of interpretation and understanding of self and others.
Projection (entwurf)	Self-interpretation that is considering future possibilities and projections.
Temporality (zeitlichkeit)	An awareness of the interrelatedness of our past, present and futures.
Thrownness (geworfenheit)	Self-interpretation that is considering past experiences when thrown into new experiences.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Health care professions such as nursing and physiotherapy are relative newcomers in higher education following their integration in response to educational reforms in the 1960s and 1970s (Barton, 1998; Sparkes, 2002; Thompson and Watson, 2001). Being newcomers has led to continued debates that surround the role and position of such practice based professions within academia (Ali and Watson, 2011; Findlow, 2012; McKendry *et al.* 2012; Shields, Watson and Thompson, 2011). Debates that have been given new emphasis by the recent move in England to a graduate entry gate for nursing which *“has reignited a broader debate about the pros and cons of ‘graduateness’ in the healthcare professions”* (Rolfe, 2012:733). This perception of being the newcomers further influences the confusion between the professional identity and the role of academics from these fields of practice. Lecturers tend to focus on their academic profiles rather than clinical currency which leads to a struggle to maintain credibility in both (Adams, 2011; Andrew and Robb, 2011; Murray and Aymer, 2009; Ousey and Gallagher, 2010). Findlow notes that the perception that moving these previous ‘non-academic courses’ into higher education has meant that:

Institutions across the world are now staffed by large numbers of ‘non-traditional’ lecturers for whom assuming an academic identity can be problematic (2012:118).

Higher education is constantly in a state of flux which makes giving meaning to ‘being’ an academic challenging as the role of an academic is simultaneously changing and shifting and ‘always in process’ (Archer, 2008). Archer (2008) also proposes that this journey to becoming an academic is neither smooth nor straightforward as it can encompass periods of exclusion and inauthenticity. For a novice academic, the first experience of marking can be as memorable as preparing for and giving their first teaching session. Yet, while academic reflections and narratives abound for the latter, there is a paucity of literature regarding the former. Through this study I hope to begin to address this lack of literature by exploring the experiences of six newly appointed academics as they begin to mark. There is little doubt about either the centrality of assessment

within the university experience or the considerable effort and time it consumes for students and staff (Bloxham, 2009; Bloxham, Boyd and Orr 2011; Craddock and Mathias, 2009; Crisp and Green-Lister, 2002; Haines, 2004). Marking, as a key element of assessment can be *“the most significant quality event in the lives of students and academics”* (Flemming, 1999:83) and one that carries an emotional burden for lecturers as they bring *“a great deal of themselves to the process”* (Hand and Clewes, 2000:12). However, assessment and marking are often regarded as chores (Smith and Coombe, 2006). Viewed as tasks for completion rather than learning opportunities, disliked by both students and teachers (Covic and Jones, 2008; Gibbs and Simpson, 2004).

Using water related metaphors to describe how newly appointed academics come to terms with a change in role and identity, Anderson (2009) refers to staff as ‘splashing in the shallows’, ‘drowning’ and occasionally ‘treading water’ when they first enter academia. There are repeated accounts of a need for instruction and guidance in the practical aspects of teaching such as marking (Jawitz, 2007; LaRocco and Bruns, 2006; McArthur-Rouse, 2008; Mutch, 2003; Trowler and Knight, 2000) as well as a need for academic staff to develop insights into and an awareness of the philosophies and theories that underpin assessment strategies (Massey and Osborne, 2004).

1.1. Research Questions

I have chosen to explore the experiences of newly appointed academics as my own experience of this time continues to evoke vivid memories. One memory in particular is of the first batch of written assessments I was required to mark: a pile of neatly typed and collated scripts, each with its own handwritten front sheet and an empty feedback sheet. I was asked to read these, making notes and comments, and to meet the other marker in seven days to consider the marks awarded. I can still picture myself sitting at the kitchen table with a pile of thirty seven essays thinking:

- What on earth am I meant to do with these?
- Who am I to be marking these!
- What am I looking for?
- What do I say to the students?

- What marks do I give and what for?

This experience made me feel anxious and vulnerable because as a nurse I also cared about the students' effort and wanted to give value to their assessments. The experience also made me realise how little I knew of the assessment process. A vivid experience early in my academic career that has led to my continued interest in assessment practices within higher education.

During my Masters in Education I explored students' and academics' perceptions of the occurrence of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism or collusion within undergraduate nursing courses. The aim of my Masters study was the identification of common incidents of academic dishonesty within an undergraduate pre-registration nursing programme. Data were collected through an online questionnaire asking students and lecturers for their perceptions of the prevalence and severity of academic dishonesty. The results from that study indicated a wide range of dishonest behaviours such as plagiarism and a student tolerance for academically dishonest practice not shared by their nurse lecturers (Sales, 2007; Sales, 2008).

My Doctoral study aims to explore the experiences of six newly appointed academics from health and social care backgrounds with the objective to increase awareness of the experiences of newly appointed academics during their first year of employment within higher education. The following research questions are explored in this thesis, through the theoretical and philosophical lens of interpretive phenomenology:

- What are the lived experiences of newly appointed academics when they are marking and giving feedback on student coursework?
- Do newly appointed academics use their own lived experience of assessment processes when marking and giving feedback on student coursework?
- Are there lived experiences that alter a newly appointed academic's perception of student assessment?

While the unique aim and focus of my study is the lived assessment experiences of newly appointed academics the following introductory discussion recognises that each of the participants in this study was also experiencing a personal role transition.

1.2. Expert to Novice

Newly appointed academics within the health and social care disciplines are often experienced practitioners, who, because of their redefinitions of self-identity and work-role transition, are described as moving from being experts in their previous roles to novices in the new academic setting (Cangelosi, Crocker and Sorrell, 2009; Duphily, 2011; Janzen, 2010; MacNeil, 1997; Murray, 2004; Spencer, 2013). Janhonen and Sarja (2005) challenge the 'expert to novice' description suggesting that there is a complementary relationship between previous practitioner and the new teacher identity. The complementary nature of previous practitioner role to newly appointed academic is further theorised by Murray and Male (2005) as moving from first order (radiographer within a hospital setting) to second-order practitioners (radiographer within a higher education setting).

Murray and Male (2005) suggest that this transition and socialisation into the new identity of the second order practitioner is a process that takes between two and three years before the new second-order professional identity is established. This redefinition of self has been described in the literature as a culture shock (Brennan and McSherry, 2007; Jones, 2012) that is confusing (Boyd and Lawley, 2009), problematic (Barlow and Anotoniou, 2007) isolating (Siler and Kleiner, 2001; Diekelmann, 2004) and stressful (Beres, 2006). Barton (2007) describes the work-role transition as a 'rite of passage' in which changes result from an assimilation of a new working identity and unfamiliar language, as well as the different expectations, values and behaviours associated with academia (Cleary, Horsfall and Jackson, 2011; Duffy, 2012; McDermid *et al.* 2012; Smith and Zsohar, 2007).

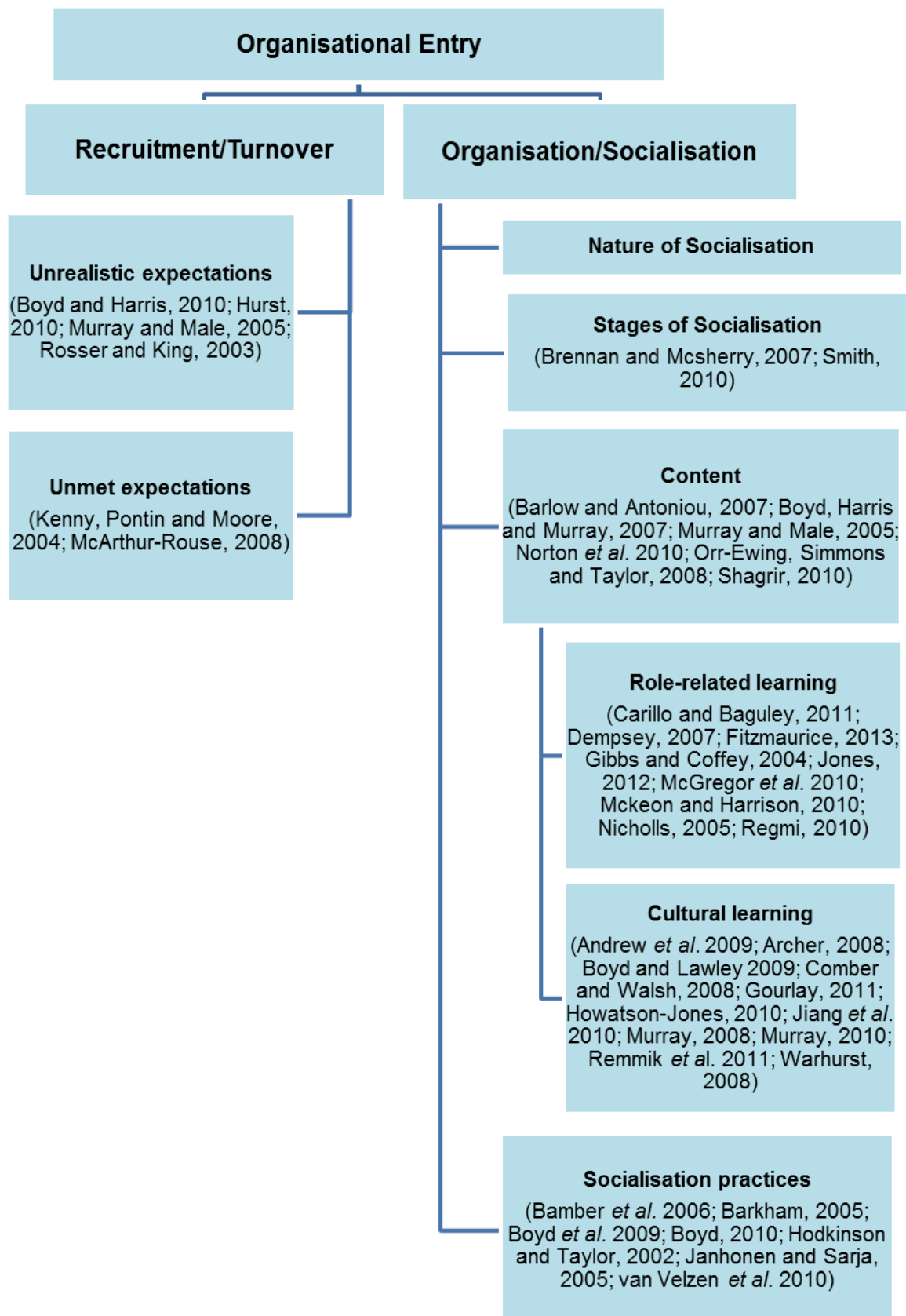
Unlike colleagues from non-vocational professions, individuals from health and social care disciplines rarely enter academia by the traditional route of doctoral study and research. Thus they may have not have become assimilated to academic cultures and values that are created by traditional modes of entry into academia (Boyd *et al.* 2009; Clark, Alcalá-Van Houten and Perea-Ryan, 2010; Gourlay, 2011).

Academics within health and social care, often enter academia through a linear transition from the National Health Service into education, after they have already been socialised into their occupational roles through professional socialization training and employment (Kenny, Pontin and Moore, 2004). This clash of professional and academic cultures can lead the newly appointed academic to feel acutely all the insecurities that come with being a novice among experts; and this is particularly hard for those used to being an expert in their own right. Thus the need for some supportive transitional arrangements seems self-evident. Indeed, there is evidence to support the idea that newly appointed academics benefit from formal and informal support in relation to “*shifting the lens*” of their existing expertise to “*lay a foundation*” on which they can build on their existing knowledge (Boyd, Harris and Murray, 2007:7).

All newly appointed academics being inducted into higher education in the United Kingdom are required to attend an accredited programme to support their transition into higher education. Successful completion of such programmes has become an accepted standard and is often a requirement of probation (Comber and Walsh, 2008; Orr-Ewing, Simmons and Taylor, 2008; Stefani, 2004). However, there has been limited exploration of the marking aspect of teaching and learning within academic development programmes as these often treat assessment as separate from teaching and learning (Stefani, 2004). Therefore, offering little to assist a ‘new academic’ with the processes of assessment and marking of written assignments.

Louis (1980) categorised the experiences of newcomers entering unfamiliar settings, such as the participants in this study, in to two dominant themes: ‘*recruitment/turnover*’ and ‘*organisation/socialisation*’, describing these inter-related themes as ‘surprise’ and ‘sense making’ as newcomers cope with work-role transitions and socialisation. I have used Louis’s perspectives on organisational entry (Box 1.1) to catalogue the literature published in the last ten years that has explored the socialisation and transitions of newly appointed academics within the context of higher education institutions in the European Union.

Box 1.1 Perspectives on organisational entry



The literature categorised in Box 1.1 is further supported by a developing evidence base from health care professions such as nursing (Suplee and Gardner, 2009), physiotherapy (Hurst, 2010), occupational therapy (Crist, 1999), midwifery (Parsons and Griffiths, 2007), social work (Manthorp, Hussein and Moriarty, 2005), and radiography (Decker and Iphofen, 2005). An emerging evidence base that alludes to the challenging processes of transition and socialisation. Yet, none of the studies that have explored these transitions has solely focused on the assessment aspects of an academic's role despite assessment being acknowledged as a substantial part of a lecturer's role (Holroyd, 2000; Quinn, 2000).

1.3. Practitioner Research and the Situated Context of the Study

This thesis is the culmination of study, with the goal of a professional doctorate. The modules undertaken in the first phase of my doctorate gave me opportunities to develop both my original research ideas as well as my knowledge and skills through attendance at compulsory research modules and option modules (Appendix A). This phase and my choices throughout have also supported the development of my enquiry as it has encouraged me to explore a range of philosophical and methodological concepts.

A common theme reported in professional doctorates, is that they are often practitioner-based research projects, which link work-related challenges with doctoral education (Drake and Heath, 2011). This focus within my own workplace has allowed me to immerse myself in my research and academic practice, positioning myself as an insider researcher who has *“some experience or insight into the worlds in which the research is being undertaken”* (Drake and Heath, 2011:1). The advantages and disadvantages of being an insider practitioner researcher are examined within the thesis because of the *“unique epistemological, methodological, political and ethical dilemmas”* (Anderson and Jones, 2000:430) that a researcher can experience when conducting research within their own organisation.

The study took place in the University of the West of England; a post 1992 university with over 30,000 students and 3,500 staff. The university supports all new staff to undertake an Academic Development

Programme. A programme that has been subsumed into the one year probationary requirement which involves mentorship, supervised teaching, and assessment against set criteria and objectives (Appendix B). This interdisciplinary course requires attendance at three core modules (Appendix C) and the structured probation period is designed to enable staff to develop as teachers.

All of the participants in this study were in their probationary period and were recruited into the research from the Departments of Allied Health Professions, Applied Health and Applied Social Science, and Nursing and Midwifery. Each of these departments has used a bespoke online assignment submission website since 2008: a site that supports the electronic submission of essays and allows staff to upload student feedback and marks. All coursework submissions whether submitted online or in paper copy are marked against assessment criteria that have been adapted from the SEEC¹ Credit Level Descriptors (SEEC 2001) into four grids to incorporate academic levels.

Assessment is an integral part of the university's learning and teaching strategy and this is clearly stated throughout the university's Academic Regulations, Procedures, and the governing principles for the assessment of students (Appendix E). The term 'assessment' has been used throughout this study using understanding that it is both a process and a practice. It is a process that evaluates "*an individual's knowledge, understanding, abilities, or skills*" (QAA, 2006:4), and a practice that:

Is about making a judgement, identifying the strengths and weaknesses, the good and the bad, and the right and the wrong in some cases. It is more than simply giving marks or grades, although that may well be a part of it. (Rust, 2002:1).

1.4. A Brief Outline of the Thesis

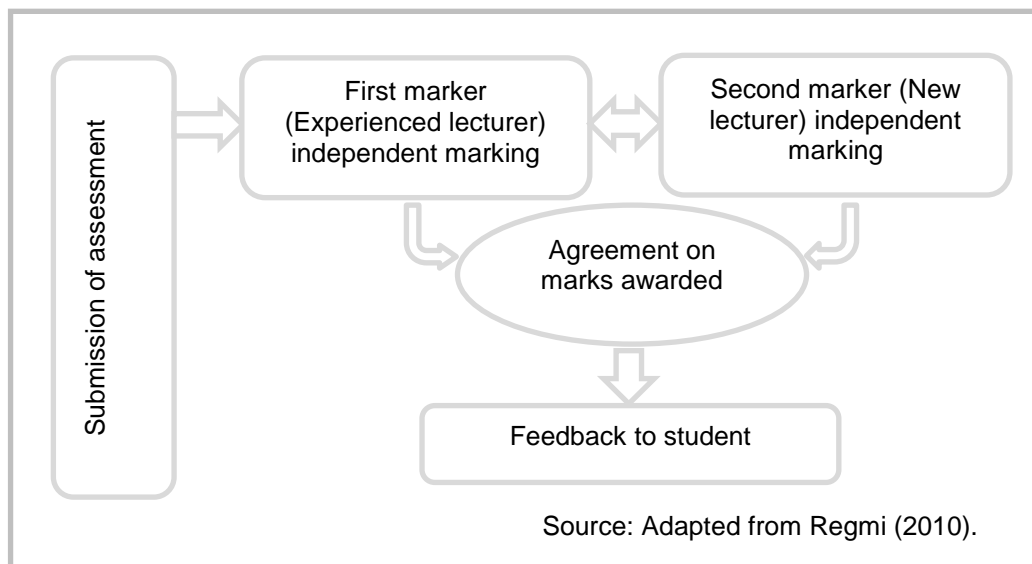
The following synopsis of each chapter offers a brief outline of the thesis; however before this structural review descriptions of my use of the terms 'coursework' 'academic/lecturer' 'marks/grades' and 'double marking' are needed.

¹ See AppendixD for an example of the SEEC Descriptors.

The term ‘coursework’ has been used to represent an array of written assessments such as essays, reports, and dissertations. The terms ‘academic’ and ‘lecturer’ are used synonymously throughout the thesis to refer to teachers and tutors who support student learning in higher education. This approach has been taken to offer clarity to and to avoid repetition of either word. The terms ‘marking’ and ‘grading’ are used interchangeably throughout in respect of the reciprocal use of these terms within the literature and the University’s Academic Regulations and Procedures, which uses the term ‘marks or grades’ but predominantly refers to marking and markers.

The term double marking has been used to describe the marking practice where no marks or comments from the first marker are shared with the second marker during marking. Regmi’s (2010) reflection of his experiences of assessing student’s essays whilst working at the university in which this study occurred diagrammatically represents this process (Box 1.2).

Box 1.2 Process of Second Marking



Chapter 2 Literature Review

In the second chapter I critically examine the literature relating to the current culture of assessment in higher education focusing on the assessment of written coursework in the context of professional education.

Chapter 3 Philosophical and Methodological Foundations

The initial sections of this chapter explore the ontological and epistemological assumptions that have influenced my study through an exploration of philosophy and methodology focusing on interpretive phenomenology drawing on the works of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. This is followed by an exploration of the rhetoric and confusions that can surround the use of descriptive phenomenology and interpretive phenomenology as these are often misinterpreted.

Chapter 4 Methodology and Method

In the fourth chapter I take the philosophical and methodological concepts introduced in Chapter 3 further demonstrating how my use of interpretive phenomenology as a 'philosophy' and a 'methodology' has shaped my study.

Chapter 5 Data Analysis: Differing Journeys

In this chapter I have used extracts from the research interviews to illustrate the participants differing journeys and experiences of marking and giving feedback on student coursework.

Chapter 6 Being-in-the-world-of-marking

In contrast to the fifth chapter, where the voices of the participants have solely been used to illustrate their experiences, I have interwoven literature into this chapter to illuminate and critically discuss the participants' experiences of marking coursework during their first year of appointment.

Chapter 7 Conclusions

In this closing chapter of the thesis I summarise the study's findings by returning to the original aim and research questions. I suggest areas for further enquiry, research, and describe how I will share and disseminate the findings, and experiences presented within this thesis.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed in this chapter focuses on the assessment of written coursework in the context of professional education with emphasis on marking and feedback. However, before these interrelated aspects of assessment can be discussed the context of assessment in higher education is explored.

2.1. The Context of Assessment in Higher Education

Assessment in higher education takes place within the context of quality reviews and these reveal poor student ratings for the assessment experience. Student surveys in general (Gibbs, 2010; NUS, 2008a; NUS, 2012) and the National Student Survey in particular (HEFCE, 2011) indicate strong student dissatisfaction with the experience of assessment and feedback. However, Freeman and Dobbins (2013) suggest that the presentation of student satisfaction in league tables through average numerical values is preventing an understanding of the complexities that surround students' experiences. Price, Handley and Millar, (2011) also indicate that these repeated low scores are leaving staff unsure and disillusioned about how to engage students in both the assessment process and feedback.

Assessment in higher education ensures that academic standards and professional standards are maintained (Leach, Neutze and Zepka, 2001). Assessment is also considered a process that both informs student learning and acts as an outcome to certify learning has taken place. Knight (2002a) further suggests that assessment outcomes such as degree classifications are used as performance indicators for departments and faculties in higher education league tables. A wide range of evidence underpins assessment practices in higher education (Ahmed and Pollitt, 2011; Clouder *et al.* 2012; Crisp, 2012; Flint and Johnson, 2011; HEA, 2012; Knight and Yorke, 2008; QAA, 2006; QAA, 2009; QAA, 2011a; QAA, 2011b; Sadler, 2013; Taras, 2007). McNeil, Borg and Tomas (2011) describe assessment as existing within a lifecycle². A description that

² See Appendix F for McNeil, Borg and Tomas's (2011) detailed description of the assessment lifecycle.

highlights the complex and interrelated processes involved within assessment processes. Assessment should be valid, reliable, fair and transparent. It has been over ten years since assessment was described as the 'Achilles heel' of quality (Knight, 2002b) arguably a description that remains applicable as assessment remains under the quality assurance and improvement spotlight.

Naidoo and Jamieson, (2005) suggest that the publication of key performance indicators and introduction of student fees has supported a move towards a consumerist framework in higher education. Newman and Jahdi (2009) emphasise that this move has had a further impact on student satisfaction, as their expectations may not be met once they have entered higher education. Lowe and Cook (2003) assert that student expectations are also influenced by inappropriate preparation before they enter higher education. Thus fostering an unrealistic student expectation, that can affect a students' perception of their university experience (Robinson, Pope and Holyoak, 2013; Surgenor, 2013).

Price *et al.* (2011) caution that it is often how assessments are managed within a broader institutional context that can impact on the effectiveness of assessment: citing seven factors that may have a negative impact on an organisation's assessment culture.

- The value placed on the scholarship of learning, teaching and assessment;
 - The extent of risk that is tolerated and therefore how much teachers can challenge students through assessment;
 - Resource constraints, which may lead to less relevant assessment tasks and effective feedback processes;
 - A strong focus of results as a means of quality assurance and enhancement, rather than on the learning process, leading students to emphasize performance;
 - Resources and systems designed around the need to deliver material rather than around creating effective learning opportunities;
 - Knee-jerk reactions to particular problems resulting in damaging unintended consequences and/or over-simplified solutions;
 - Incongruence between rhetoric of culture and reality.
- (Price *et al.* 2011:488)

Price *et al.* (2011) further question the evidence base behind institutional assessment practices suggesting that many academic policies do not take

account of the extensive body of knowledge that is available. Despite the suggestion that “*students are not always in the best position to judge what is educationally preferable*” (Huxham, 2007:609) the reported dissatisfaction of students in matters of assessment and feedback, sets the context in which this study is set.

In using ‘marking’ and ‘feedback’ to organise the remainder of this section I am able to offer a structure to the available literature on these topics that explores these interrelated aspects of assessment.

2.1.1. Marking

The validity and reliability of assessment practices within higher education is questionable due to the inherent fragility of marking practices and the variability of standards which remain largely unchallenged in the literature (Bloxham, 2009). Reliable assessment is the ability to judge different work consistently yet many challenge such descriptions as idealistic as assessing work is subjective (Knight, 2006) and value based (Shay, 2005).

Rowntree (1987) describes a situation where fifteen markers were given fifteen scripts to mark using a ‘fail’, ‘pass’, ‘credit’ as the judgement criteria. This often quoted experiment is an example of inconsistent and subjective marking practices since it resulted in a wide variation of grades with more than half of the scripts being given all three grades. Highlighting that markers can bring different levels of knowledge, experience, and understanding when assessing students’ work (Yorke, Bridges and Woolf, 2000). Indeed Leach, Neutze and Zepka, (2001) suggest that this subjectivity can be further influenced by markers’ values, beliefs, health, or mood, and Owen, Stefaniak and Corrigan, (2010) suggest that fatigue, the order in which papers are marked and personal beliefs can bias marking practice.

All these factors can affect the grade given. Crook, Gross and Dymott, (2006), and Carless (2006) reported that students hold a perception of biased and subjective marking as they feel that academics are influenced by how hardworking or lazy they perceive students to be or that staff gave marks for different qualities. Proposals supported by Hunter and Dochety’s

(2011) study which also advised that the tacit assessment expectations could influence marker's judgements.

Regardless of the purpose of assessment there is an inherent power inequality between student and lecturer when it comes to assessment. Leathwood (2005) discussed how she came to realise that students also feared her (the academic) as the judge as well as the assessment. A fear influenced by the unequal relationship that has the potential to invoke negative emotions which may become a barrier to a student's ability to learn (Carless, 2006).

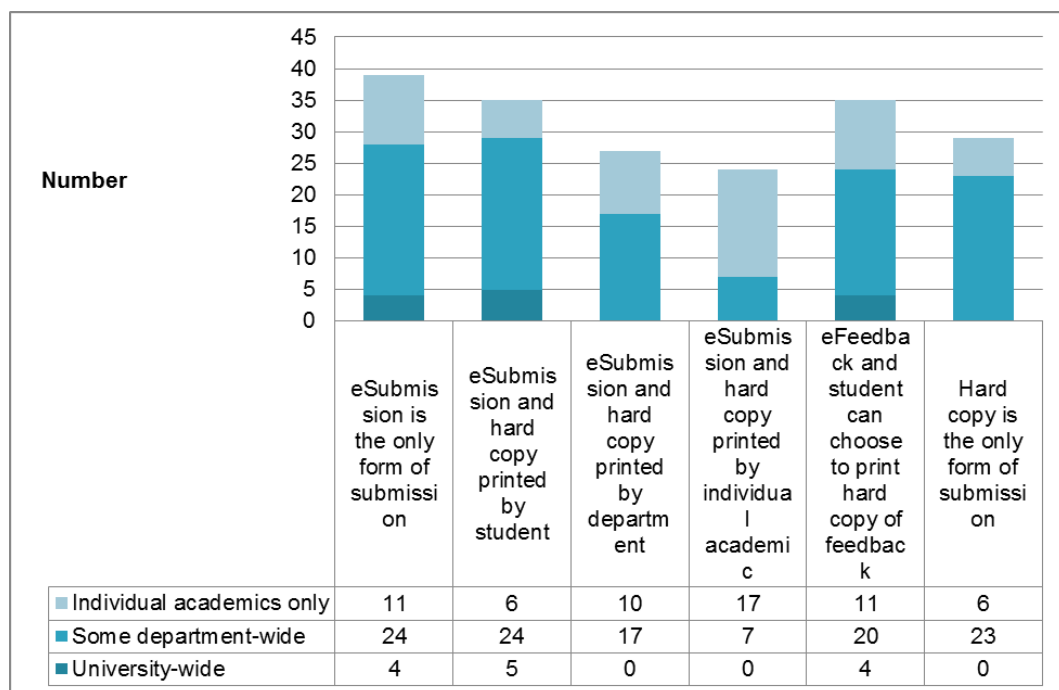
Professional education within health and social care has experienced an increase in the number of students that are commissioned to undertake such courses (Department of Health, 2000), and a move to an inter-professional approach to curriculum design and delivery (Barr, Helme and D'Avray, 2011). This has meant that teams, rather than individuals, have had to attempt to apply agreed standards when marking student work (Price, 2005). These changes have resulted in teams of academics from different discipline backgrounds assessing students using their own implicit and professionally influenced assessment criteria despite explicit departmental criteria (Baum, Yorke and Coffey, 2004; Bettany-Saltikov, Kilinc and Stow, 2009; Ecclestone, 2001; Partington, 1994).

The University of the West of England (UWE) uses double marking as a process of moderation in an attempt to address such inconsistency and to support fairness and rigour in the assessment of students work (UWE, 2009). Defined as the "*Assessment of students' work by two or more independent markers as a means of safeguarding or assuring academic standards by controlling for individual bias*" QAA (2011c:1) and used as process to mitigate against these concerns that surround the validity and reliability (Yorke, 2011). White (2010) challenges this assumption as an irrational idea that is based on the notion that two heads are better than one. Bloxham (2009) similarly highlights that such practices can waste resources and time. The assumption that internal moderation processes (such as those described in Appendix G) can ensure consistency and fairness has also been challenged. These processes remain reliant on the

subjective and value based judgements of individuals (Bloxham, 2009; Brooks, 2004; Orr, 2007), and often only focus on what happened at the time of assessment, without considering the entire assessment lifecycle (Smith, 2012).

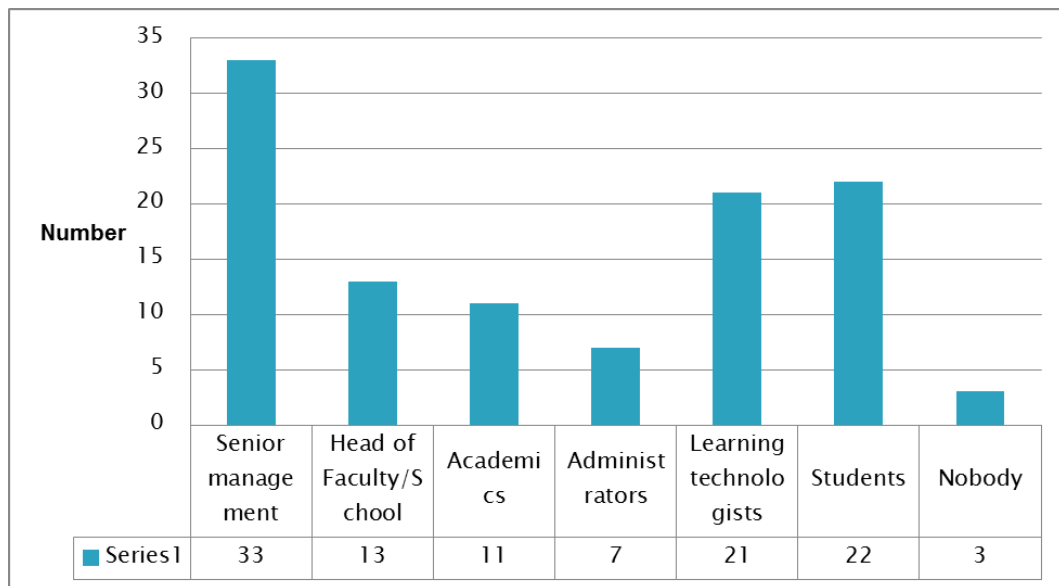
The Faculty in which I recruited participants has used a bespoke online assignment submission website since 2008: a site that supports the electronic submission of essays and allows staff to upload students' feedback and marks. Online submission and processing of assessment tasks is a relatively new concept in the United Kingdom (Hewson, 2012; Newland, Martin and Bird, 2012). A recent sample of 44 members (response rate 35%) of the UK Head of eLearning Forum highlights the mixed adoption of these online submission processes (Box 2.1). The results from this survey suggest that the increased use of online submission has been driven through management led changes that are more about efficiency than pedagogy (Box 2.2).

Box 2:1 Current practice of eSubmission in the United Kingdom



Source: Newland, Martin and Bird (2012)

Box 2:2 Who is driving eSubmission adoption?



Source: Newland, Martin and Bird (2012)

The emerging evidence base exploring online submission indicates that students perceive online submissions to be quicker and more cost effective (Bridge and Appleyard, 2008), and that academic staff recognise that it can save time (Bridge and Appleyard, 2005). Improvements in efficiency that Heinrich *et al.* (2009) similarly reported in their findings. However, technical challenges such as server crashes, local hardware and software problems that would not occur with a paper based assessment process need consideration (Hewson, 2012). Shaw (2008) summarises a large body of pilot based research into three principal themes: comparability of judgments (paper versus on screen), on-screen reading and annotation.

There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that marking work online may influence a marker's judgement in contrast to marking a paper submission (Bennett, 2003; Shaw, 2008). However, following a literature review Johnson and Greatorex (2008) state that more empirical research is needed as they believe that there may be a difference in the judgements made when reviewing protracted texts (such as essays) on line. While on-screen reading is described as less appealing than reading from paper (Enright *et al.* 2000) as screen resolution and word processing software programmes improve, reading and working on screen is becoming more

accessible and acceptable (Noyes and Garland, 2008). The ability to annotate on screen is reported as dependent on the computer skills and confidence of the marker. This reduction in confidence was also found to reduce the authenticity of the experience for the reader as the use of a keyboard may limit the annotation³ style and preference of the marker (Shaw, 2008).

2.1.2. Feedback

Assessment does not exist in a void (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). Feedback is often seen as the most important part of the assessment process, since it may affect student achievement and learning (Bloxham and Boyd, 2007; Brown, 2004; Dowden *et al.* 2013; Li and Barnard, 2011; Weaver, 2006; Yorke, 2003). For example, feedback given to students in the first year of study can act as a socialising agent facilitating integration into the university (Poulos and Mahony, 2008).

Higgins, Hartley and Skelton, (2002) and Weaver (2006) reported that feedback was not widely addressed in the academic literature. A situation that has changed since the introduction of the National Student Survey (NSS) in 2005, with a number of papers exploring assessment feedback in higher education (Duncan, 2007; Fotheringham, 2011; Hendry, Bromberger and Armstrong, 2011; Koh, 2010; Lizzio and Wilson, 2008; Nicol, 2010; Orsmond *et al.* 2013; Parboteeah and Anwar, 2009). Joughin (2008) suggests that the three primary roles of feedback are to support the learning process, judge current achievement and to maintain disciplinary and professional standards. However Li and Barnard (2011) highlight the tensions between these, as feedback may not support improvement, judgements may not be fair, and disciplinary standards are often unclear and confusing. The complexities that surround feedback exist due to the competing and often conflicting demands within lecturers' goals, institutional and education policies, and students' learning needs (Bailey and Garner, 2010).

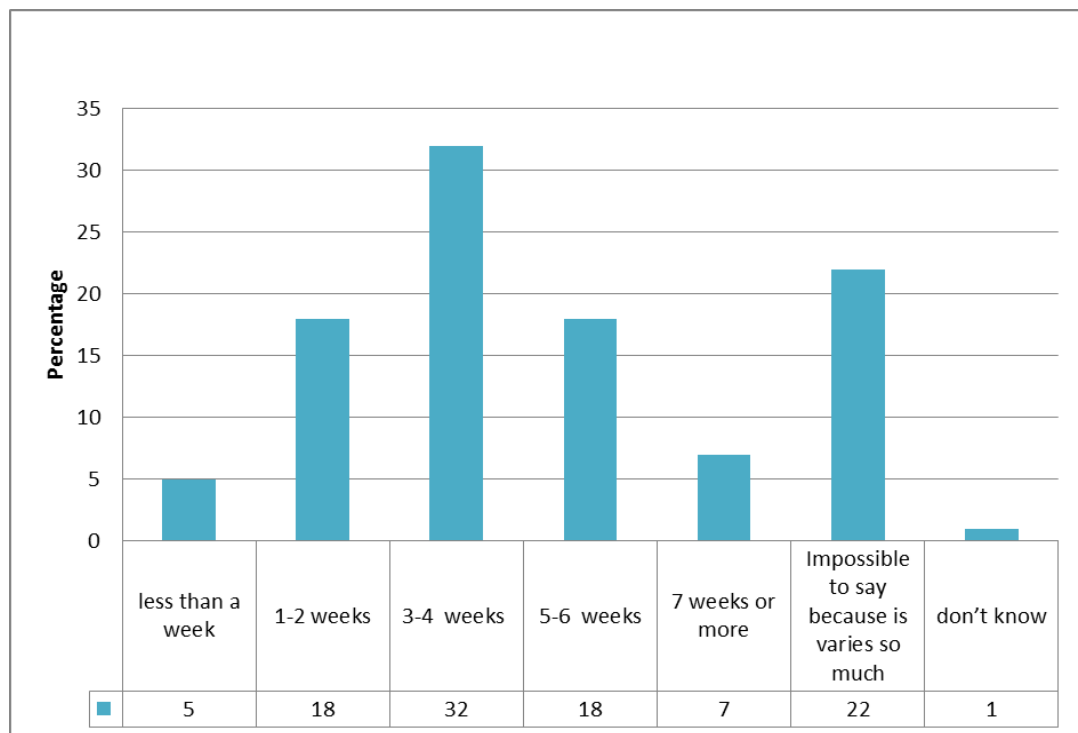
Price *et al.* (2011) suggest the quality and effectiveness of feedback depends on whether it is seen as a process of assessment or a product of

³ See Box 2.5 for examples annotation marks.

assessment, which is one directional with no interest in a response. When feedback is seen as the product of assessment lecturers may write their feedback defensively in order to justify the grade given (Li and Barnard, 2011). This is in contrast to using the feedback to feed forward in order to improve a student’s academic skills in any subsequent submissions.

Many higher education institutions have policies for feedback turnaround times for summative assessments, yet the National Union of Students student experience report (NUS, 2008a) highlighted that almost a quarter of the 2,398 students they asked had waited more than five weeks to receive feedback (Box 2.3).

Box 2.3 How long on average does it take to receive feedback?



Source: NUS (2008a)

Timely feedback is an accepted principle for effective feedback (Huxham, 2007; Poulos and Mahony, 2008). However modularisation often means that feedback is received once a student has begun their next module, resulting in feedback being received that is not perceived as useful by students and therefore classified as late (Bailey and Garner, 2010; Black and Wiliam, 1998; Bloxham, 2009; Covic and Jones, 2008; Gibbs and Simpson, 2004; Orsmond, Merry and Reiling, 2005).

Despite published good practice guidance in relation to assessment feedback (Box 2.4) there are common criticisms in the literature about the quality of feedback. Students do not identify with assessment criteria and the feedback through a lack of understanding of their meaning (Chanock, 2000; Higgins, Hartley and Skelton, 2001; Weaver, 2006). The language that is used in feedback is reported as focusing on spelling, grammar and referencing, being vague, overly critical, impersonal, as having a judgemental tone and offering no guidance or suggestions about how to improve (Carless, 2006; Duers and Brown, 2009; Ferguson, 2011; Hendry, Bromberger and Armstrong, 2011; Li and Barnard, 2011; Lizzio and Wilson, 2008).



Box 2.4 Good practice suggestions for assessment feedback

- Understandable: expressed in a language that the students will understand.
- Selective: commenting in reasonable detail on two or three things that the student can do something about.
- Specific: pointing to instances in the student's submission where the feedback applies.
- Timely: provided in time to improve the next assignment.
- Contextualised: framed with reference to the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria.
- Non-judgemental: descriptive rather than evaluative, focused on learning goals not just performance goals.
- Balanced: pointing out the positive as well as areas in need of improvement.
- Forward looking: suggesting how students might improve subsequent assignments.
- Transferable: focused on processes, skills and self-regulatory processes not just on knowledge content.

(Nicol, 2010:512-513).

Higgins, Hartley and Skelton (2002) found that 40% ($n=49$) of students they questioned found feedback comments difficult to read due to the quality of the handwriting and comments. This criticism is still evident as feedback remains overwhelmingly in the written form despite innovations in teaching and learning (Bailey and Garner, 2010). Ball *et al.* (2009) give examples from feedback samples reviewed (Box 2.5), to demonstrate the use of esoteric language in academic feedback when annotation is used.

Box 2.5 Annotation examples

- !!
- 
- What is this
- Which, which, which
- On what basis?
- Would you expect there to be?
- How?
- simplistic
- ??
- 
- No
- Yes
- S
- ✓
- Why is this all necessary
- *
- Who says?
- Why and How? Why??

Ball *et al.* (2009:285).

This can be misleading and if read out of context, or not fully understood, can leave the student with a perception of an abrupt and negative tone (Ball *et al.* 2009; Ball, 2010). However, it must be remembered that one person's judgemental criticism, can be another person's helpful suggestion (Carless, 2006). Feedback can be influenced by the same subjectivities (values, beliefs, health or mood) that can influence a marker's judgements when grading work further highlighting that a single text can be read in many different ways (Read, Francis and Robson, 2005).

The literature exploring assessment cites many barriers to effective feedback such as the time consuming nature of marking written assignments (Kuisma, 1999) and the trend toward modularisation within courses which has led to a decoupling and a depersonalisation of the relationship between student and lecturer (Crook, Gross and Dymott, 2006). The increase in the use of anonymous marking has also been cited as a barrier as this can lead to students being reluctant to approach lecturers because they do not know them (Price *et al.* 2011). Limited resources have also been reported as affecting the quality of feedback due to increasing workloads and class sizes resulting in increased marking loads (Bailey and Garner, 2010; Gibbs and Simpson, 2004).

One of the frequently cited opinions around assessment feedback is that academics consider that their time is wasted when giving feedback as students often fail to read or collect it (Crisp, 2007; Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Sinclair and Cleland, 2007). Higgins, Hartley and Skelton,

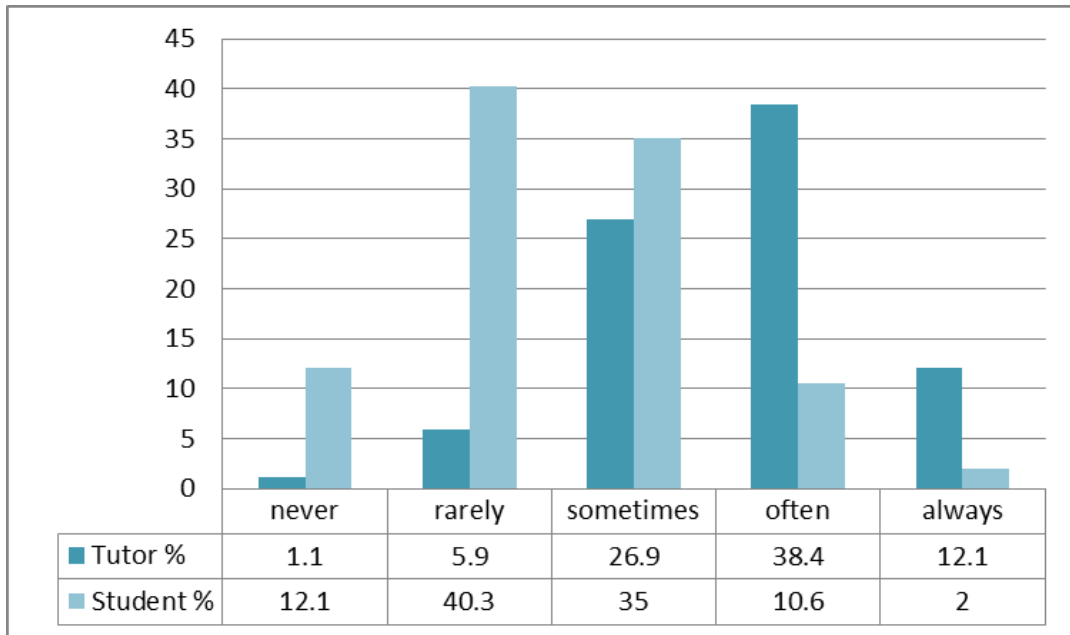
(2002) reported that 82% ($n=77$) of the students who responded to their questionnaire claimed that they paid close attention to the feedback that they received, challenging this belief. However, if students do not understand the feedback they are given, they will not engage with it. This may be because they do not find that it offers them motivation or guidance, or it is not seen as useful for their future learning. However, students may use feedback in different ways, from enhancing their motivation and learning, to encouraging reflection and clarifying their progress. These differences in perception may lead to a circle of misunderstanding and frustration for students and staff which can perhaps be seen perennially highlighted in student surveys and in the list of common errors that Greasley and Cassidy (2010) suggest “distress” and “frustrate” academics (Appendix H). These frustrations highlight the reciprocal and two way process of assessment feedback as the person giving the feedback assumes a response to their feedback such as greater understanding of academic literacy (Price *et al.* 2011). Whereas as Ivanic, Clark and Rimmershaw, (2000) suggest,

Whatever the tutor’s intentions, students are likely to read their responses for possible evaluations of them-selves. Not only that but they are also likely to expect negative evaluations and to interpret many tutor’s comments to mean ‘what you wrote is inadequate’ and by extension ‘you are inadequate’. All comments which can possibly lead to this interpretation therefore have the potential to undermine students, to sap their confidence, to increase their sense of inferiority. (Ivanic, Clark and Rimmershaw, 2000:60-61).

Bloxham’s (2009) proposal that there is divergence in how well academics think they do feedback in relation to students’ views supports Carless’s (2006) earlier survey of 460 staff and 1740, students. A survey that highlighted the contrasting perceptions of students and lecturers in relation to the feedback for written assignments, with responses to questions suggested that lecturers perceived feedback more positively than students (Box 2.6 and Box 2.7). Price, Handley and Millar, (2011) state that these differences in perception are unproductive for both students and staff and that producing more of the same types of feedback is unlikely to improve students’ perception of their feedback and could lead to dissatisfaction. One proposed way to encourage engagement with feedback is that it

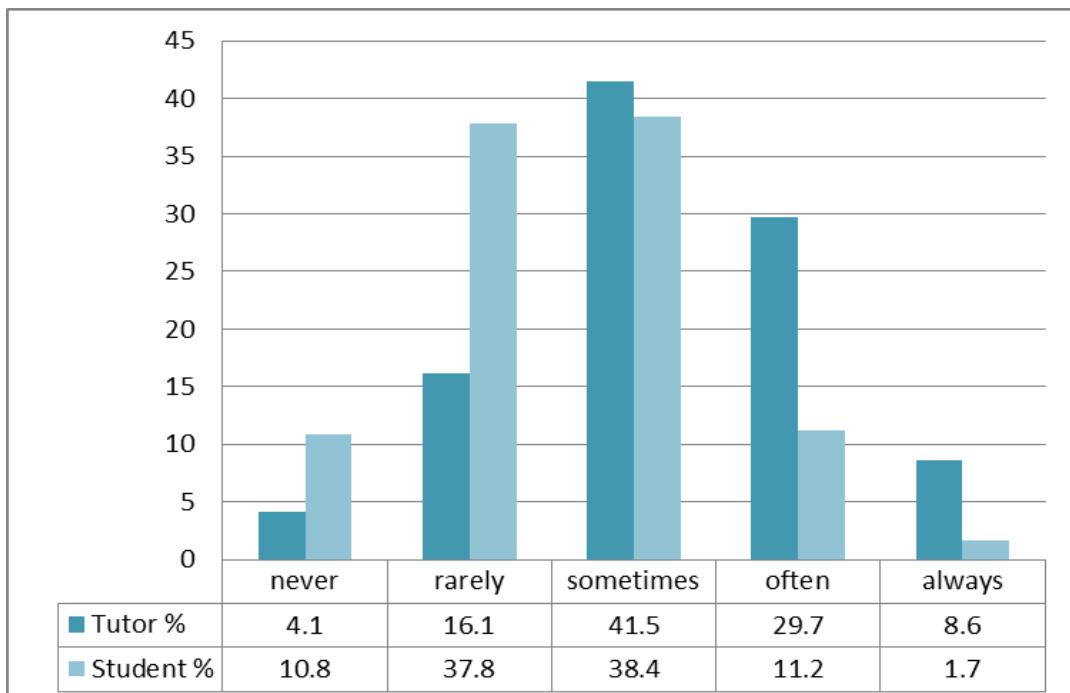
should contain feedback only and not the final grade. This may encourage engagement in the learning (Black and William, 1998; Rust, O'Donovan and Price, 2005) by removing the focus on the grade and changing the emphasis of the feedback to one of engagement and feeding forward to develop students' reflection and self-assessment skills (Cramp, 2011; Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Quinton and Smallbone, 2010).

Box 2.6, Feedback helped students' improve their next assignments



Source: Carless (2006)

Box 2.7, Feedback was followed by actions to improve student learning



Source: Carless (2006)

2.2. Assessment in the Professional Fields

Academics supporting students on courses such as nursing or social work with hidden and informal curricula are often described as 'gatekeepers' for their professional disciplines (Currer and Atherton, 2008; Gazza, 2009; Murray and Aymer, 2009; Quinn and Hughes, 2007). This is because they are seen as the experts able to make reliable judgements when assessing students' work due to their socialisation into expectations and standards of their discipline. This metaphorical use of the term gatekeeper recognises that academics in these disciplines are often on the same professional register that the student wants to enter. However, there is a tension in this role, as lecturers need to develop students and nurture their learning needs while also acting as gatekeeper and protector of future patients (Currer and Atherton, 2008).

Ilott and Murphy (1997) suggest that because of the professional gatekeeping aspects of assessment, students are under greater scrutiny than students on awards that do not lead to a professional qualification. Therefore if newly appointed academics are not adequately prepared to undertake the role of assessment, the integrity of courses that lead to professional registration can be affected (Garrow and Tawse, 2009).

The purpose of assessment in courses leading to professional practice is to ensure that those who successfully complete the course have the skills required of the profession they seek to join. However, there remains a controversy about how to assess values and behaviour within such courses (Boak, Mitchell and Moore, 2012). The assessment of these professional attributes and skills, often referred to as hidden and informal aspects of the curriculum (Arnold, 2002), is essential if students are to be prepared effectively (Clarke *et al.* 2013).

To address the need for integrated theory and practice, academics are often expected to assess coursework that is based on principles of reflective practice (Hargreaves, 2004). Yet as with any form of assessment, coursework has weaknesses such as a lack of an agreed way to assess reflection (Koole *et al.* 2011) and apprehension about the

validity and reliability of this form of assessment (Haines, 2004) due to the intangible nature of reflective practice (Burns and Bulman, 2000).

There are two main aspects of assessment for professional practice: i) that which occurs in the university and is predominantly assessed by academic staff; and ii) that which occurs in practice and is assessed by clinical mentors and assessors. While this thesis is concerned with the former there is an interesting disparity between the two. Hunt *et al's* (2012) retrospective study of 3725 nursing students across 16 universities reported students failing theory components exceeded failures in practice by a ratio of 4:1. Hunt *et al.* suggest that a reason for this difference may be that "*theoretical assessments may not test what is required of the contemporary nurse as appropriately as practical assessment*" (2012:352), that more support is given in practice or that assessors are failing to fail underperformance in practical assessments.

The suggestion that assessors are not failing students in practice is widely supported in the literature that explores assessment in professional education (Basnett and Sheffield, 2010; Cleland *et al.* 2008; Dudek, Marks and Regehr, 2005; Duffy, 2003; Monrouxe *et al.* 2011; Shapton, 2006). Yet despite theoretical assessments outstripping practice failures there is limited literature which explores the experience of academics when assessing written coursework with even less exploring the experiences of newly appointed academics.

Andrews (2003) describes essays as the default genre in higher education. Yet such coursework is described as one of the most frustrating and demanding tasks that students can undertake (Elander *et al.* 2006; Gimenez, 2008; Krause, 2001). Baynham (2002) for example indicates sympathy for health and care students such as nurses who are required to write with the authority of sociologists, philosophers, scientists and reflective practitioners.

Parboteeah and Anwar (2009) assert that the requirements for success in programmes that lead to professional registration such as nursing largely rely on students' ability to successfully write and competently practice

which requires the development of “*meta-cognitive processes and psychomotor skills*” (Parboteeah and Anwar, 2009:756). This may account for the continued reliance on essays as these are seen as better predictors of long term learning than exams while offering students the ability to demonstrate high levels of academic literacy, cognitive functioning, subject specific knowledge and understanding (Clarke *et al.* 2013; Covic and Jones, 2008; Gibbs and Simpson, 2004; McCune, 2004; Ulfvarson and Oxelmark, 2012). Despite academic skills such as synthesis and analysis being described as fundamental elements in all academic disciplines (Borglin and Fagerström, 2012; Pitt *et al.* 2012), they are often misunderstood by both students and staff (Borglin and Fagerström, 2012; Elander *et al.* 2006; Harwood and Hadley, 2004; Lillis, 1999) further questioning the validity and reliability of assessment practices.

2.3. Chapter Summary

Drawing on the wealth of current literature and evidence explored this chapter has illustrated the complexities that are inherent within the assessment of coursework in professional education so reaffirming the opening quote of this thesis which states that assessment is one of the most powerful and complex tools in teaching and learning.

Nothing we do to, or for our students is more important than our assessment of their work and the feedback we give them on it. The results of our assessment influence our students for the rest of their lives and careers—fine if we get it right, but unthinkable if we get it wrong. (Race, Brown and Smith, 2005:xi).

CHAPTER 3 PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The need for novice and experienced researchers to understand and be able to define their individual interpretations of the nature of knowledge is essential to develop an awareness of the explicit and implicit assumptions that influence both thinking and practice (Clark, 1998; Cunningham and Fitzgerald, 1996; Lopez and Willis, 2004; Weaver and Olson, 2006). As Opie suggests,

it is important for all researchers to spend some time thinking about how they are paradigmatically and philosophically positioned and for them to be aware of how their positioning – and the fundamental assumptions they hold – might influence their research related thinking and practice. (Opie, 2004:19).

In recognition of this need, this chapter begins with a consideration of where knowledge might be located as this is one of the assumptions embedded in the philosophical concepts of ontology and epistemology that permeate assumptions within research. Heidegger's concept of 'Being' is introduced followed by an exploration of the rhetoric, and confusions that can surround the use of phenomenology.

3.1. Where is Knowledge Located?

Enquiries concerning the distinction between object and subject, or knowledge and knower, and the significance of these distinctions, have been a recurring theme within philosophy. Positivist and post-positivist perspectives of the location of knowledge clearly place knowledge outside of the knower (research subject), as opposed to the constructivist, interpretivist or naturalist views of knowledge which view knowledge as socially constructed (Guba and Lincoln, 2008; Robson, 2002). Fitzgerald and Cunningham's proposal that a move from dualism to pluralism means that "*knowledge is located in multiple places*" (2002:213) offers a fresh answer to the question: where is knowledge located relative to the knower? Guba and Lincoln's comparison of the basic beliefs (metaphysics) within positivism, post positivism, critical theory and constructivism in relation to their differences in ontology, epistemology and methodology, and their subsequent positions in relation to practical

aspects within research are outlined in Appendix I. Their comparison demonstrates that despite divergent beliefs there is an acceptance through epistemological distinctions of the subject and the object (Guba and Lincoln, 2008). These underpinning assumptions are embedded in the philosophical concepts of ontology and epistemology and permeate throughout the philosophical values and assumptions within research and are crucial because:

when researchers do not make as explicit as possible their (e)pistemologies, theoretical perspectives, justification/argumentation systems, and methodologies, as well as the alignment of their research designs within the decision junctures that guide research processes, their research designs can appear random, uninformed, inconsistent, unjustified, and/or poorly reported. (Koro-Ljungberg *et al.* 2009:688).

Denzin and Lincoln, when discussing contemporary research practices, refer to the end of the twentieth century as both the “*methodologically contested present*” and the “*fractured future*” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008:5) an assertion that is evident in literature championing new research approaches and contesting dominant approaches in education and nursing research (Badley, 2003; Gilbert, 2006; Halcomb and Andrew, 2005; Maggs-Rapport, 2001; Pitre and Myrick, 2007; Risjord, Dunbar and Maloney, 2001; Wellington, 2000).

Through the domination of positivist epistemological perspectives, the conventional understanding of research is the assertion of truth; with truth defined “*as the accurate representation of an independently existing reality*” (Smith and Hodkinson, 2008:413). Yet this reference to an independence of reality implies that truth exists outside of our own constructs and is capable of being discovered (Pring, 2004). Within the social sciences (from which much of nursing and educational research draws) where there is a general acceptance of a socially constructed nature of reality and knowledge challenging the dominance of the positivist epistemological perspective.

3.2. Heidegger's Considerations of Being

Heidegger's phenomenology, philosophy and ontological focus on "Being" has influenced philosophers through the resonance of his work with existentialist philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre, who also believed in the personal and subjective dimensions of human life (Collins and Selina, 2010). Heidegger rejected the dominant metaphysical traditions of his time, which suggested the nature of being as '*objects*' that are simply there as 'occurrent' and real. He emphasised that 'beings' and 'being' are ontologically different, because the structure of Being is not the same thing as looking at 'being' itself thereby reintroducing the question of 'being' into 20th century philosophy.

The question of Being aims therefore at ascertaining the a priori conditions not only for the possibility of the sciences which examine entities as entities of such and such a type, and in so doing already operate with an understanding of being, but also for the possibility of those ontologies themselves which are prior to the ontical sciences and which provide their foundations. Basically, all ontology, no matter how rich and firmly compacted a system of categories it has at its disposal remains blind and perverted from its own most aim, if it has not first adequately clarified the meaning of Being, and conceived this clarification as its fundamental task. (Heidegger, 1962:31).

Heidegger, when discussing human existence, uses the term 'Dasein' which does not have a direct translation from German to English, and is therefore interpreted as meaning 'being there' (Marquarrie and Robinson, 1962) or 'there being' (Cottingham, 2008). Heidegger suggests that in understanding the world, 'being-in' is always also understood, while understanding of existence as such is always an understanding of the world. Macquarrie and Robinson's translation of Dasein as meaning 'being there' is used throughout this thesis. Heideggerian phenomenology fundamentally considers Dasein's Being-in-the-world (in-der-Welt-sein) or what it means to Be-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world is the basic state of Dasein by which every mode of its being gets co-determined. In using the hyphen between the words, Heidegger was emphasising the connection with our being and our world, indicating that these separate elements are parts of the whole (Mulhall, 2005). Horrocks (1998) highlights that in emphasising this connection Heidegger is reversing Descartes "*I think*

therefore I am” to *“I am therefore I think”*, rejecting the Cartesian view, which separates reality from the individual. Therefore, as Cottingham suggests for Heidegger, existence as a human being is to be involved with projects and concerns stating that:

Heideggerian metaphysics thus turns out in the end to be not an abstract study of being, but rather an enterprise where understanding and valuing are inextricably intertwined. (Cottingham, 2008:115).

Heidegger further uses the term *comportment* as a verb to explain behaviour and to describe that human beings are existent through self-interpretation stating that *“these entities (Human Beings), in their being, comport themselves towards their being”* (Heidegger, 1962:67) and that:

In whatever way we conceive of knowing, it is, qua that which embraces knowing and understanding in the ordinary conception of it, a comportment toward beings - if for the while we can disregard philosophical cognition as a relationship to being. But all practical-technical commerce with beings is also a comportment toward beings. And an understanding of being is also present in practical-technical comportment toward beings so far as we have at all to do with beings as beings. In all comportment toward beings-whether it is specifically cognitive, which is most frequently called theoretical, or whether it is practical-technical an understanding of being is already involved. For a being can be encountered by us as a being only in the light of the understanding of being. (Heidegger, 1982:275).

Dreyfus simplifies this when stating, *“Human being is essentially simply self-interpreting”* (1991:23) suggesting that Dasein primordially knows itself through experience and as such, Dasein’s life, understanding and self-interpretation is temporal, through existence within the temporalities of thrownness (*geworfenheit*), projection (*entwurf*) and fallenness (*verfallen*):

Thrownness - Dasein’s being – this - ‘that it is’ – is veiled in its ‘whence’ and ‘whither,’ yet disclosed in itself all the more unveiledly: we call it the ‘thrownness’ of this entity into its ‘there’ The expression ‘thrownness’ is meant to suggest the facticity of its being delivered over. The ‘that it is and has to be’ which is disclosed in Dasein’s affectedness. (Heidegger, 1962:174).

Projection - nothing to do with comporting oneself towards a plan that has been thought out On the contrary, any Dasein has, as Dasein, already projected itself: and as long as it is, it is projecting. (Heidegger, 1962:185).

Falleness - an absorption in being-with-one-another, in so far as the latter is guided by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity. (Heidegger, 1962:220).

3.3. Descriptive Phenomenology and Interpretive Phenomenology

Phenomenology is both a philosophical and a methodological movement concerned with understanding a phenomenon and experience (Conroy, 2003; Earle, 2010; Mackey, 2005; Rapport and Wainright, 2006; Ray, 1994) which can be traced back to the 18th century philosophies of Immanuel Kant, George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Ernst Mach (Groenewald, 2004). Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the accepted founder of the phenomenological movement, focused on the epistemological nature of phenomena. Husserl's epistemological enquiry concentrated on clarification and description of phenomena which are derived from a perspective free of preconceptions. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) further developed Husserl's work through focusing on the ontological nature of phenomena. This led Ray (1994) to describe Heideggerian phenomenology as more ambitious than Husserlian phenomenology because of its goal to discover meaning and not just offer descriptive accounts of phenomena. Theorists have continued to develop phenomenological understanding (Jacques Derrida, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Alfred Schütz, Jonathan Smith, Max van Manen and Maurice Merleau-Ponty), each following the philosophical and theoretical standpoints of either Husserl's descriptive phenomenology or Heidegger's interpretive phenomenology. Though an understanding of lived experience is sought in descriptive and interpretive phenomenology, Laverty (2003) suggests the position of the researcher; data analysis and the issues of credibility and rigour provide striking contrasts between these two philosophical traditions which are detailed in Box 3.1.

Box 3.1 Descriptive and Interpretive Phenomenological approaches

Descriptive phenomenology	Interpretive phenomenology
• Emphasis on description of universal essences	• Emphasis on understanding phenomena in context
• Viewing a person as one representative of the world in which he or she lives	• Viewing a person as a self-interpretive being
• A belief that the consciousness is what humans share	• A belief that the contexts of culture, practice, and language are what humans share
• What is shared in the essence of the conscious mind	• What is shared in culture, history, practice and language
• Self-reflection and conscious “stripping” of previous knowledge help to present an investigator-free description of the phenomenon	• As prereflexive beings, researchers actively co-create interpretations of phenomena
• Research aims to explore participants’ knowing	• Research aims to explore participants experiences and understanding
• Adherence to established scientific rigour ensures descriptions of universal essences or eidetic structures	• One needs to establish contextual criteria for trustworthiness of co-created interpretations
• Bracketing ensures that interpretation is free of bias	• Understanding and co-creation by the researcher and the participants are what makes interpretations meaningful
• Meaning is, unsullied by the researchers view of the world	• Researcher as participant in making data
(Hamill and Sinclair, 2010; Lavery, 2003; McCance and Mcilpatrick, 2008; Wojnar and Swanson, 2007).	

3.4. Phenomenological Rhetoric, Realities and Confusions

Phenomenology has been described as having become a “*kind of boutique methodology*” (Lawler, 1998:108) and is seen as an easy research option due to the unstructured approach (Ashworth, 1997), yet Vallack (2002:18), cautions:

The tempting, shallow waters of phenomenology always seem to drop away suddenly to the abyss - suddenly we're dog-paddling in the deep bit again – one hand splashing blindly, the other grasping the philosophical dictionary.

Therefore, it is important to recognise the challenges that can exist for a novice researcher, such as myself, when using phenomenology due to the perception that phenomenology is not an easy methodology and the perceived reluctance of phenomenological researchers to focus on specific steps, procedures and rules (Annells, 1996; Caelli, 2001; Earle, 2010; Norlyk and Harder, 2010). The works of Heidegger and my rejection of the Husserlian concept of phenomenological reduction (bracketing) influenced the reasons for choosing an interpretive phenomenological approach, and rejecting a descriptive approach. Bracketing requires researchers to attempt positivist objectivity in their phenomenological methods through removing the influence of pre-conceptions and theoretical impositions (Dowling, 2004; Kleinman, 2004; Koch and Harrington, 1998).

Husserl and Heidegger viewed the essence of phenomenon as the relationship between subject and object through how they exist in relation to other things in the world, as well as its own existence (Corben, 1999). Heidegger rejected Husserl's assertion to separate these through bracketing through his belief that people and the world are related in their cultural, social and historical contexts and assumptions that “*we make sense of lived experience according to its personal significance for us*” (Standing, 2009:20). According to Dreyfus (1991:30), Heidegger transformed the Husserlian definition of phenomenology to a “*way of letting something shared that can never be totally articulated and for which there can be no indubitable evidence show itself*”.

Phenomenological research is defined as complex due to the esoteric and daunting nature of the language used (Kleinman, 2004; McConnell-Henry, 2009). Researchers fail to understand the different philosophical standpoints that inform phenomenology such as Husserl's (1900-1901) text, *Logische Untersuchungen* (Logical Investigations) and Heidegger's (1926) *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time): resulting in the use of language from the different phenomenological methodologies. These complexities together with conflicting descriptions of the theoretical and methodological influences which often refer to works informed by Husserlian or Heideggerian phenomenology interchangeably cause further uncertainty and confusion (Greatrex-White, 2008; Paley, 1997; Paley, 1998).

A blurring of methods can also be seen with other qualitative approaches such as grounded theory's attempt to bracket out prior knowledge (Annells, 2006) and phenomenography due to the similarity in name between phenomenography and phenomenology (Sjöström and Dahlgren, 2002). These complexities fuel the continuing confusions surrounding phenomenological research which Norlyk and Harder (2010) succinctly identify as falling into three themes: arguments of the philosophical interpretations; discussions pertaining to the different approaches with descriptive; and interpretive approaches and rigour within phenomenological research, all of which equate to perceptions of lax rigour (Wimpenny and Gass, 2000). These complexities are further confused due to various names and descriptions that are used to describe phenomenological research traditions such as those listed below;

- Phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology (Fleming, Gaidys and Robb, 2003; Laverty, 2003; Standing, 2009),
- Phenomenology and existential phenomenology (Groenewald, 2004),
- Classical and new phenomenology (Crotty, 1997),
- Eidetic and interpretive phenomenology (Dowling, 2007; Ray, 1994; Cohen, 2006),
- Transcendental Phenomenology and Interpretive phenomenology (Rapport and Wainwright, 2006),
- Descriptive and interpretive phenomenology (Lopez and Willis, 2004; Wojnar and Swanson, 2007),
- Empathetic and intuiting phenomenology (Willis, 2004),
- Interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith and Osborn, 2008),
- Hermeneutic Interpretive Phenomenology (Crist and Tanner, 2003).

Phenomenology has a strong tradition in nursing and education due to the resonance between philosophical and professional interests in researching and understanding lived experience (Crotty, 1997; Dall’Alba, 2009; Dowling, 2007; Greasley and Ashworth, 2007; Groenewald, 2004; McConnell-Henry, 2009; Norlyk and Harder, 2010; Pratt, 2012; Whiting, 2001; Willis, 2004). Recent examples of phenomenologically influenced studies have included;

- Experiences of mental health nurses (Maddocks *et al.* 2010),
- Experiences of have a parent with a mental illness (Foster, 2010),
- Lived experiences of fathers (Hollywood and Hollywood, 2011),
- Compassionate presence amongst transplant nurses (Sabo, 2011),
- Students’ experiences (McNiesh, Benner and Chesla, 2011),
- Experiences of health care journeys (Varley *et al.* 2011),
- The meaning of caring in pre-hospital care (Ahl and Nyström, 2012),
- Educational relationships (Giles, Smythe and Spence, 2012),
- Doctoral students’ experiences (Hopwood and Paulson, 2012),
- Valuing knowledge from patient experiences (Gidman, 2013),
- Experience of international nurses (Alexis and Shillingford, 2012).

Informed through interpretations of phenomenological theorists such as Heidegger, Husserl, Gadamer, van Manen, Merleau-Ponty and Giorgi, these papers all explored the lived experiences of the participants demonstrating the ongoing interest and use of phenomenology as both philosophical theory and methodology.

3.5. Chapter Summary

Through my exploration of the ontological and epistemological assumptions that have influenced this study, I have attempted to make explicit the implicit assumptions that can exist within research. The following chapter further explores these interconnected aspects to illustrate how interpretive phenomenology as a philosophically influenced methodology has shaped my research design.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

As previously stated phenomenology is a philosophy that is also concerned with methodology and method. In this chapter I take these phenomenological influences further to demonstrate my use of interpretive phenomenology highlighting how interpretive phenomenology as a methodology has shaped my research processes. The chapter concludes with a reflexive and retrospective review of the study, as this was an important aspect of the design and conduct of this research.

4.1. Phenomenological Questions

Any paradigm choice that is used in research places a demand on the researcher to ensure congruence between epistemological, ontological, and methodological choices. In choosing interpretive phenomenology I committed to an approach which required a search for an ontological understanding of being involved in marking as a new academic, rather than an understanding of what can be known about marking. The aim of my study was the exploration of the lived experience of newly appointed academics in recognition that the:

lived experience is the starting point and end point of phenomenological research. The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence – in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived experience. (van Manen, 1990:36).

My research questions are therefore about gaining insight into the phenomena of being new and marking rather than seeking to solve a problem (Cohen, Kahn and Steeves, 2000; Pratt, 2012).

- What are the lived experiences of newly appointed academics when they are marking and giving feedback on student coursework?
- Do newly appointed academics use their own lived experience of assessment processes when marking and giving feedback on student coursework?
- Are there experiences that alter a newly appointed academic's perception of student assessment?

4.2. Phenomenological Data Collection and Analysis

Literature concerned with phenomenology does not offer firm guidance on sampling procedures (Norlyk and Harder, 2010). My approach to recruitment and selection to the study was cognisant of the predominance of purposive sampling strategies within phenomenological research (Bedwell, McGowan and Lavender, 2012; Converse, 2012; Hollywood and Hollywood, 2011; Priest, 2002; Sabo, 2011). Purposive sampling, a form of non-probability sampling, allowed me to make judgements in relation to the subject area to be explored, ensuring the selection of participants who had particular characteristics and were able to share their experiences of the phenomenon. Inclusion and exclusion criteria (Box 4.1) were applied, so as not to create a homogeneous group of newly appointed staff, a sampling strategy associated with descriptive phenomenology (Crist and Tanner, 2003). Instead the inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to support the purposive sampling strategy to ensure that the staff who were invited to participate were able to discuss the experience of marking as newly appointed academics (Groenewald, 2004).

Box 4.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- New appointee with less than 1 months employment within the university,
- Active registration with a professional statutory regularity body such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the Health Professions Council (HPC) or the General Social Care Council (GCCC),

Exclusion criteria

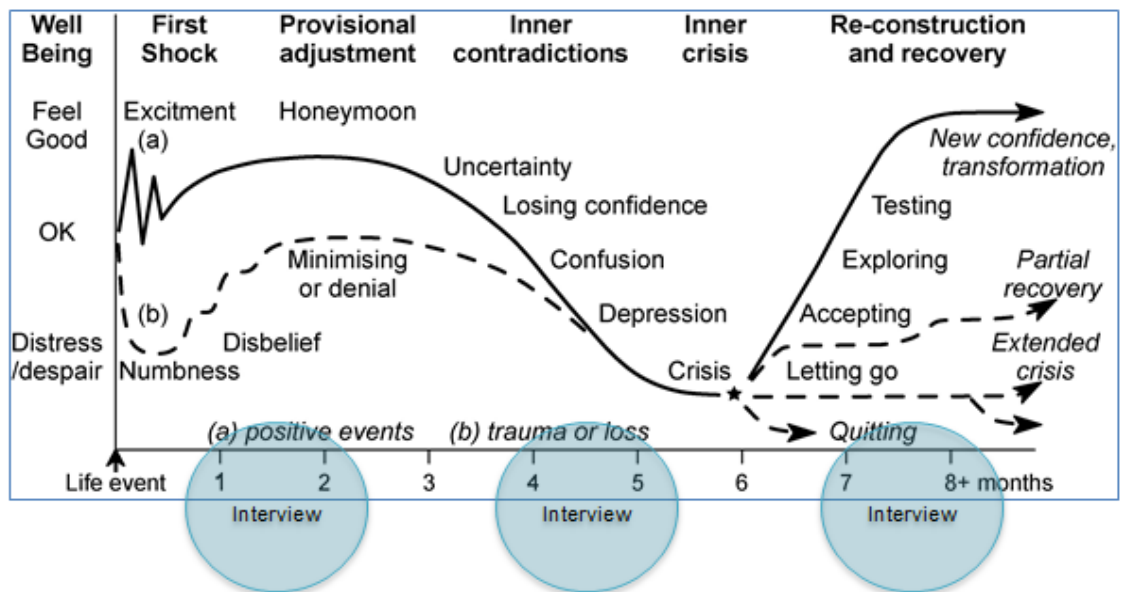
- Employment contract less than 12 months,
- Previous contracted employment within higher education or Further Education,
- Previous experience of marking student's written work in higher education or further education.

Sample sizes within qualitative research are not definable, as these are *“ultimately a matter of judgement and experience”* (Sandelowski, 1995:183). Samples in phenomenological research are necessarily small, compared to some other qualitative designs (Clark, 1998; Corben, 1999), typically ranging from one to ten, because the intention is an exploration of the unique experience of participants with no intention of generalising to a

wider population (Starks and Brown-Trinidad, 2007). A target recruitment of six was set, as it was expected that six lecturers might provide a sufficient range of experiences that would resonate with other newly appointed lecturers in the future, while also being small enough to allow for in-depth analysis during the timeframe of the doctorate.

Three interviews were undertaken with each of the six participants to facilitate in-depth explorations of their temporal experiences through repeated interviews. The timing of these interviews (end of first, fifth and ninth month of employment) was planned around Hopson and Adam's (1976) cycle of transition (Box 4.2). This was not intended to predict findings that supported Hopson and Adams cycle; rather, these timings were used to offer a structure during the imposed time frame of enquiry.

Box 4.2 Hopson and Adam's (1976) cycle of transition



The first interview with each participant was semi structured with open questions about length of qualification and previous employment history. This approach was an attempt to build rapport between myself as the researcher and the participant and to begin to establish the context of participants' experiences. The second and third interviews also used an open approach, encouraging reflection upon the first interview and then facilitated movement forward with in-depth questioning about topics that were brought to light by the participant focusing on experiences of

marking. To draw a close to each of the interviews I offered an appreciative or positive remark such “*I am genuinely grateful for your time in these interviews*” with the intention of making the participant feel valued for their involvement in the study (Hermanowicz, 2002).

4.2.1. Semi-Structured and In-Depth Interviews

Structured interviews are often associated with positivistic paradigms whereas semi structured or in-depth interviews are associated with interpretive and constructivist paradigms. This may be due to the inherent assumption that interviewing results “*in a true and accurate picture of the respondents’ selves and lives*” (Fontana and Frey, 2008:120). Yet, interviewing has its antagonists who argue that it is not possible to discover the true self of the participant, only what they are prepared to share during the interview (Alvesson, 2003). Devault and Gross suggest that these are simplistic views of such interviews as it neglects:

The fascinating complexity of human talk – the flexibility and productive powers of language; the subtle shades of meaning conveyed through nuances of speech, gesture and expression; issues of translation; the ineluctable locatedness of any moment or stretch of talk; the specialized vocabularies of particular settings and groups; the organizing effects of format and genre; the injuries and uses of silence; the challenges inherent in listening and so on. (Devault and Gross, 2007:173).

When attempting to capture these complexities, metaphors such as Oakley’s (2005:217) reference to interviewing as similar to marriage may be useful:

Everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets.

and Hermanowicz’s (2002) reference to relationships and romance are often used in an attempt to highlight and explain the complex nature of interviews and interviewing.

Prescriptive approaches to interviewing such as those advocated by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2000) and Opie (2004) were rejected as the data collection method as they do not account for the inherent ethical considerations, such as those that surround being an insider researcher.

They only tend to address traditional ethical concerns of informed consent, rights to privacy and protection from harm (Fontana and Frey, 2008).

Interviews are often described as the preferred method of data collection in a phenomenological enquiry as they allow for explorations of meaning and experience and in-depth exploration of phenomena (Groenewald, 2004; Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Kleiman, 2004; Lopez and Willis, 2004; Norlyk and Harder, 2010; Smith, Bekker and Cheater, 2011; Wimpenny and Gass, 2000). The interviews I conducted were conversational in nature, allowing for knowledge and understanding to be *“constructed through the interaction of interviewer and interviewee”* (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:302).

The interviews focused on asking participants to discuss their experiences of being recently appointed and being involved in marking. The interviews were digitally recorded conversations which were then transcribed verbatim. The process of transcribing enabled me to immerse myself, once again, in the interviews. During the data collection period, which lasted 14 months, I had wanted to outsource the interviews for transcription due to the amount of time, energy, and emotional effort required in the production of each transcript. However as the process of transcription was also integral to the process of analysis (Bird, 2005), my personal transcription of each interview kept me close to the participants' journeys and allowed me to hear each participant's experiences and journey through familiarity with the interview transcripts.

Transcripts were returned to participants, not in an attempt to enforce member checks for validity, but to encourage feedback and further discussions between participants and the researcher. Doyle (2007), Bradbury-Jones, Irvine and Sambrook, (2010) and Carlson (2010) all advocate the use of member checking in phenomenological enquiry. McConnell-Henry, Chapman and Francis, (2011) assert that member checking is incongruent with the philosophical tenets of interpretive phenomenology, proclaiming that these studies do not attempt to offer generalisable truths so the concept of validation through member checking is illogical. However the transcripts were returned to each participant as a

record of the interview to aid their own reflective journeys during their first year of employment. Standing (2009) reports a similar use of transcripts from her phenomenological study exploring the decision making process of students, when she reported that the transcripts were a useful tool to help respondents reflect on their own progress between interviews.

As the interviewer I am an important component in the process, as each of the interviews were inextricably bound historically, politically and contextually through both the researched and my prior experiences (Fontana and Frey, 2008). Heidegger referred to these experiences as three fore-structures of understanding:

fore-having: all individuals come to a situation with practical familiarity or background practice from their own world that make interpretation possible,

fore-sight: the sociocultural background gives a point of view from which to make an interpretation,

fore-conception: sociocultural background provides a basis for anticipation of what might be found in an investigation.

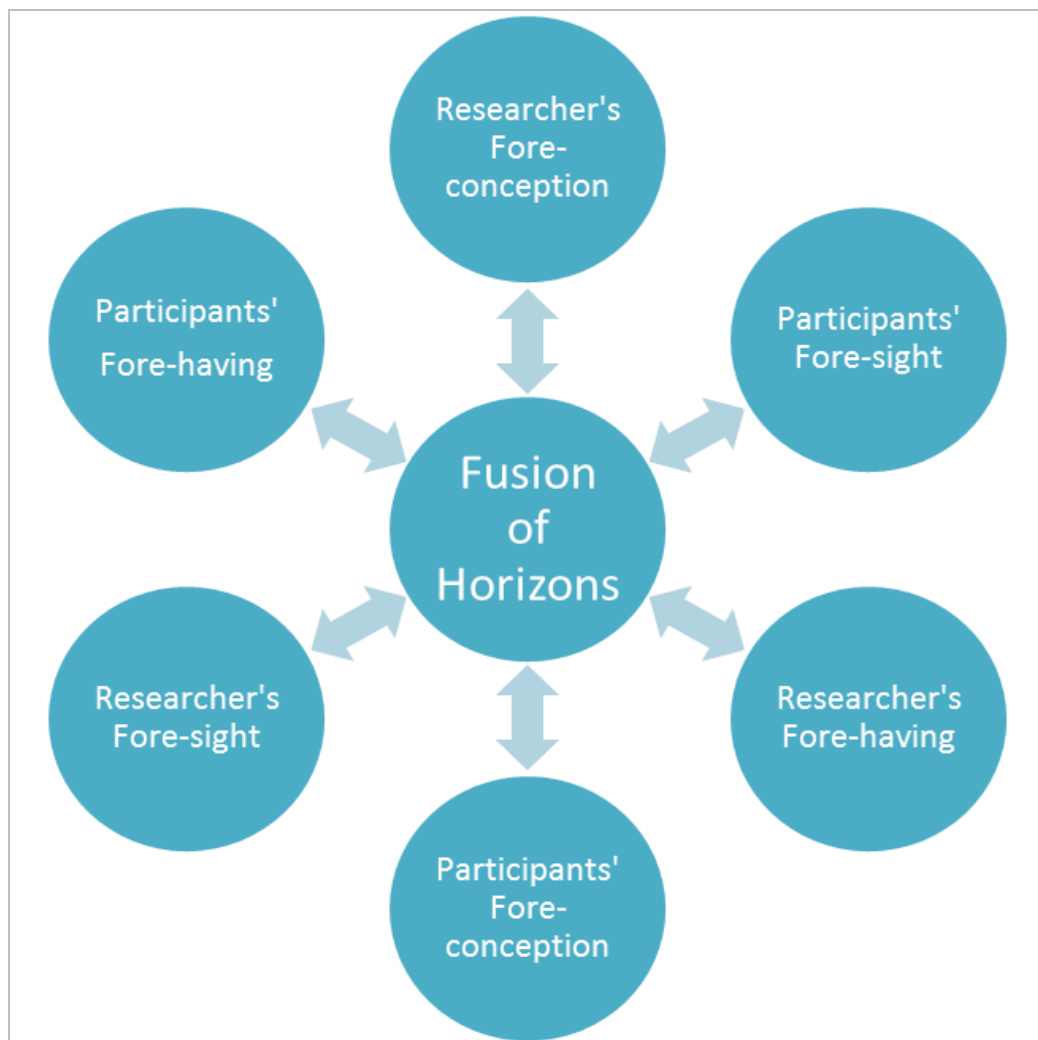
(Wojnar and Swanson, 2007:174).

These definitions suggest that as the researcher I should have insight into the history I share with others if I were to understand their experiences, thereby rejecting the Husserlian concept of bracketing and phenomenological reduction, which requires researchers to recognise and suspend their preconceptions and beliefs, to prevent these assumptions influencing data collection and analysis. Heidegger's assertion that "*any interpretation which is to contribute understanding, must already have understood what is to be interpreted*" (Heidegger, 1962:194) ensures that fore-structures of understanding are made explicit:

It is not to be reduced to the level of a vicious circle, or even of a circle which is merely tolerated. In the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing, and we genuinely grasp this possibility only when we have understood that our first, last, and constant task in interpreting is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves. (Heidegger, 1962:195).

It must be remembered that our understanding is “*never free-floating*” as it can be affected by our states of mind that can be receptive or closed off to new horizons (Heidegger, 1962:38). In developing Heidegger’s concept of the Hermeneutic circle through the notion of shared understanding, Gadamer suggests that understanding occurs when our present understanding or ‘horizon’ is developed by an encounter after which we are changed: stating, that “*understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves*” (2004:305). Box 4.3 offers a visual representation of how the fore-structures of understanding can influence a fusion of horizon between the researcher and participant.

Box 4.3 Participants’ and researcher's fusion of horizons



4.2.2. Data Analysis

The intention within my analysis was to produce texts which interpreted rich and evocative descriptions of actions, behaviours, intentions, and experiences evoking a '*phenomenological nod*' that might resonate with others (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007; Pereira, 2012) preserving "*the uniqueness of each lived experience of the phenomenon while permitting an understanding of the meaning of the phenomenon itself*" (Banonis, 1989:168).

Qualitative data analysis software was initially considered and introductory training sessions attended. However there is a danger of using computer aided analysis within a phenomenological study as this "*can divert attention in a way that over-emphasizes a concern with the 'parts' and obscures the intuition of the 'whole'*" (Holloway and Todres, 2003:350). Therefore I rejected the software on the basis that it would have prevented my full immersion in the data. I felt I would have been distracted by the software's abilities and functions, satisfying a personal interest in gadgets and applications rather than using the tool to aid a deeper analysis.

Through my immersion with the data I had to trust, as Smythe *et al.* (2008) advise, that understanding would come. I read, re-read, listened and re-listened to each of the interviews as I aimed to preserve the uniqueness of each participant's lived experience, while at the same time permitting an understanding of the sense of marking as a new academic itself that may resonate with others. I therefore entered deeper circles of understanding and interpretations through my continuous immersion into participants' experiences and my own fore-structures of understanding, which together created a common understanding through the co-constitution of understanding (Ortiz, 2009).

Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis (Box 4.4) further guided my approach as this gave me, as 'a novice researcher', a flexible structure to initially approach and re-visit the data. Fleming, Gaidys and Robb's, (2003) experiences offered further reassurance that the process of analysis could go on indefinitely, that decisions based on time, and

resources would need to limit the number of times that the process is repeated.

Box 4.4 Thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading, and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set, generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006:87)

Two phases were embraced to approach the data. The first phase involved analysing each of the participant's journeys through time spent re-reading the transcripts, re-listening to the recordings and re-writing their generated themes and sub themes: so that I was able to hear and re-experience the telling of their unique stories. All of the interviews were then thematically analysed in phase two through further repetitions to illuminate codes, subthemes, and themes that were emerging from the participant's experience (Box 4.5).

The infinite nature of interpretive analysis is circular because every understanding is temporal. My own fore-structures of understanding are not static as returning to the data can create previously unidentified meanings. This iterative process reinforces and revises perceptions about self and others through an acceptance of prior experience and knowledge

(Standing, 2009). My study is consequently an ongoing conversation that can progress and change as further insights develop. Therefore, the interpretations presented in this study are not static and may, as Koch (1999) suggests, develop over time as:

A final piece of research product or constructions is only a pragmatic outcome, one necessary for funding bodies, publication or a higher degree. An inquiry guided by Gadamer resembles an ongoing conversation and, as such, remains continually ready to alter its construction when better insights come along. (Koch, 1999:34).

Box 4.5 Thematic analysis (Themes, Subthemes, and Codes)⁴

Theme	Sub Theme	Codes
Judgements	Marks and Grades Marking with others Anonymous Marking	The one mark Range of marks Conflict Reference to old job Language Guidelines Second marking Subjectivity The ethics of marking
Accountability and Responsibility	Consequences Concern for the student Being dyslexic	Marks awarded Students Failing work
Confidence	Support Mentorship Fear of being found out	Being found out Being observed and Dissected Role/Identity Being a student Lack of support Module leaders Feedback
Processes	A Time and a Place to Mark Online marking	Time Marking at home Pressure Teams Meeting demand Volume of marking

4.3. Ethical Conduct within the Study

The trustworthiness in qualitative studies replaces validity in research involving measurement (Rolfe, 2006; Savin-Baden and Fisher, 2002). Creswell and Miller (2000) assert that the trustworthiness of qualitative

⁴ The themes and subthemes are diagrammatically represented in Chapter 6.

research has three measures: self (researcher), participant and external readers of the final report. This chapter and the supporting appendices offer a transparency to the decisions that have been made throughout my study in an attempt to ensure that, if measured according to Creswell and Miller's (2000) view of trustworthiness, it will not be found lacking.

Ethics approval was granted on first submission in July 2009 (Appendix J) before data collection began in September 2009. Researchers are responsible for the ethical integrity of their research to ensure that a study is conducted with awareness and respect of accepted ethical principles and guidance (Fontenla and Rycroft-Malone, 2006; Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2001; Tod, Allmark and Alison, 2009), their professional code of practice (NMC, 2008) and research governance frameworks (BERA, 2004; DH, 2005).

A central tenet of research is the need for participants to be fully informed about the research project before giving consent (Houghton *et al.* 2010; Walker, 2007). Therefore, as advocated with research governance frameworks (DH, 2005; BERA, 2004), informed consent was obtained through the use of the Participant Information Sheets (Appendix K) which contained comprehensive information about the study's intentions, requirements and the use of a consent form (Appendix L). Ongoing consent from each of the six participants was implied through their continued engagement with the consecutive interviews following email requests to confirm or arrange interview dates and times. This indicates that participants seemed to want to talk about their journeys through their experiences and feelings.

As the research was undertaken in the faculty in which I am employed, awareness and consideration was given to each element in the research design due to my position as an insider researcher. Particular attention was given to ongoing ethical implications, such as participants' ability to give voluntary consent, due to perceptions of an hierarchical status in my senior lectureship. Clark and McCann (2005:45) suggest that "*it is possible for consent to be informed without it being voluntary*". I also arranged that I had no direct involvement with participants in any roles that may have

evoked perceptions of power such as appraiser or mentor to prevent any feelings of coercion to consent to continued involvement in the study.

Irrespective of the research paradigm or philosophical standpoint, there is a responsibility on the researcher to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Tilley and Woodthorpe, (2011:198) suggest that these concepts should not be conflated as:

Confidentiality refers to the management of private information and anonymity refers specifically to removing or obscuring the names of participants or sites, and not including information that can lead participants or research sites to be identified.

The only condition following ethical approval for this study was that I inserted a sentence into the participant information sheet. This indicated that direct quotes, if used in publications, would be anonymised for the protection of participants' identities. This would also apply to publications and the report produced (thesis) from the study (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2001). Therefore extracts from participants' interviews were coded, anonymised to ensure that any responses were not identifiable to an individual department or programme of study. Where direct quotes have been included the research codes participant number, interview number, code number are given, as well as the participants pseudonym to allow for a sense of individuality.

Within a study such as this, which sought to gain insights into participants' experiences through detailed descriptions and illustrations, anonymity of the participant and location is of the utmost importance to prevent them from being identified (Houghton *et al.* 2010). This posed a particular challenge in respect of the insider nature of the research in an identifiable university. I needed to ensure that the participants could not be identified through references made to any identifiable aspects of their practice, such as the names of modules, professional background, courses or departments. This was done through removing such sections from the final transcripts and replacing the missing text with the following text <SECTION REMOVED TO PROTECT THE ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANT>. Anonymity of each participant's professional background was protected through the intentionally limited biographical information presented.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, all documentation was stored in locked cabinets or password protected work/home computers. Both of these computers used reputable antivirus software to prevent viruses, worms or Trojan horses from corrupting the data. Consideration was also given to where data was stored to prevent participant consent forms (containing participants' names, research numbers and agreed pseudonyms) from being kept with the interview transcripts.

4.4. Interpretive Phenomenology - My Experience

As I have worked through the often conceptually and practically challenging process of an extended piece of independent research the development of my skills, confidence and research competence have followed parallel process. During the completion of this study I have found the words of novice and experienced researchers who have used and are using phenomenology reassuring, as they have also expressed how their understanding of this research approach is not static. My understanding and appreciation, and at times, confusion in relation to interpretive phenomenology initially led me to search for an elusive methodological checklist that would support and guide my study. Whereas towards the completion of the study I realised that such a checklist would contradict the philosophical influence of Heidegger's interpretive phenomenology as this is, and was, a journey rather than a predetermined process (Smythe *et al.* 2008): a journey that Heidegger describes as having the function of discovery:

Our concerned absorption in whatever work-world lies closest to us has a function of discovering; and it is essential to this function that, depending upon the way in which we are absorbed, those entities within-the-world which are brought along [beigebracht] in the work and with it (that is to say, in the assignments or references which are constitutive for it) remain discoverable in varying degrees of explicitness and with a varying circumspective penetration. (Heidegger, 1962:101).

Therefore, I began to search for principles that could inform and guide my journey (Box 4.6).

Box 4.6 Phenomenological principles that have shaped my research

Epistemology/Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness that reality is co-constructed• Rejection of the need to bracket my fore-structures of understanding
Research Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus of the study influenced by my own interests and experiences• The questions that explore meaning
Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purposive sampling strategy• Interviews arranged at times convenient for the participants• 3 repeated interviews to facilitate in-depth explorations of the temporal experience• 1st interview used to build rapport and to begin to establish the context of the participant's experiences.• Awareness that meaning is co-constituted by researcher and participant• All interviews undertaken and transcribed by the researcher
Data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness that researcher must have insight into the history they share with others if they are to understand their experiences• Awareness of context• Themes generated from the data and not imposed by the researcher• Iterative process of analysis and interpretation
Findings and presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Textual representation of findings which aim to induce a phenomenological nod in the reader• Awareness of the significant of language e.g. referring to research participants rather than research subjects• Awareness that all interpretations are historically bound• Reflexive awareness that the end is not the end my understanding and interpretations presented within the study are not static and may develop over time• Reflexive awareness

Although defining the phenomenological principles has influenced my study I believe that I have avoided falling into the trap of accepting the philosophical underpinnings of this methodology and then using pre-determined methods without insight or awareness of the need for these to be congruent.

Reflexivity is an important aspect when designing and implementing interpretive phenomenological research (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007) and often described as a pillar of critical qualitative research (Fontana, 2004) and a process that pervades every phase of such research (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). As a reflexive researcher, I constantly located and relocated myself within the research through ongoing honest self-critique and appraisal (Bott, 2010; Fontana, 2004; Jootun, McGhee and Marland, 2009; Koch and Harrington, 1998; Wimpenny and Gass, 2000) recognising as Finlay states that as the researcher there is a need for my *“immediate, continuing, dynamic and subjective self-awareness”* (Finlay, 2002:533). Throughout the remainder of this chapter I offer a reflexive and retrospective review of the study to make any limitations of the study transparent to the reader.

4.4.1. Interviews

I can hear in my own audio recordings after the interview, anxiety about the quality of the data that I am collecting, I think it's because this was the first of my final interviews and the next stage (analysis) both excites and scares me. What if I have not captured Mary's journey, I know this is my anxiety and until the process is over I will not be able to reassure myself. I just have to have confidence in myself. Research notes 20.01.11.

Before embarking on the study I had assumed that I had the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake research interviews as I had the communication skills required by virtue of my registration as a nurse. This is an assumption often held by nurses undertaking research interviews (Jackson, Daly and Davidson, 2008). Returning to my statement of intent within the ethics application:

Each of the three sets of interviews are predicted to produce 45 minutes to an hour of digitally recorded discussion, which will be transcribed by the researcher verbatim followed by a comparison with the original recordings to ensure the 'integrity of the narratives' (Crist and Tanner, 2003). These will be personally transcribed to allow for total immersion in the data before the written transcripts are analysed

This demonstrates that I had been initially trying to follow a formulaic toolbox approach in the interviews without sufficiently considering the theoretical and philosophical connections needed to inform the interviews, which with a growing confidence I was able to do within the later interviews. I had approached the early interviews in a simplistic manner using tools and techniques from the research literature without an in-depth exploration of the theoretical and philosophical issues needed to inform and underpin them, therefore not fully recognising the complex interactions that can occur within interviews (Alvesson, 2003; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Fontana and Frey, 2008).

I noticed that in the earlier interviews, in comparison to those that I later conducted I had attempted to adopt the role of a student to the interviewee as described by Roulston (2010), as a result of trying to learn as much as possible about them and probing for clarification. I also noticed that I offered advice and guidance to help the participants for example if they were unclear about aspects of their probation. This is a common interview trait in novice researchers from nursing backgrounds (Balls, 2009).

I planned that each interview would take a day to transcribe without appreciating the extent of choices that I would be required to make (Bird, 2005; Davidson, 2009; Green, Franquiz and Dixon, 1997; Lapadat, 2000). For example, it soon became apparent that I would need to decide whether to include conversational fillers (such as 'erm' and 'mmmm') and I had to make an early decision about how to go about adding punctuation into the transcripts. These separate but interrelated processes of data collection transcription and analysis represent significant challenges in my doctoral journey and therefore form the focus of discussions in this chapter.

4.4.2. Location of the Interview

The room that was booked for all interviews was located in a postgraduate student office block. This room was booked on the assumption that the participants would be able to separate 'me the research student', from my identity as 'me the senior lecturer' with a leadership role within the same organisation. The room offered a degree of privacy, and therefore ensured that the interviews would occur in a neutral environment in an attempt to respect and acknowledge my presence in the research and the previously discussed challenges of being an insider researcher. My interview style was informed by the romantic (Roulston, 2010), emotional styles (Silverman, 2001) that reject the positivist stance of interviewer and interviewee as objects; rather I believe we are emotionally involved subjects. As the researcher, I attempted to build genuine rapport and trust between myself and the interviewee to allow for open and relaxed conversations within the interviews.

When preparing for the first interview, I was not able to access the room because of a security concern as the door lock was faulty. In the anxiety and excitement of preparing for the first interviews they were reorganised and held in my office, a location I had previously decided I would not use due to my role within the organisation. Concerned about this oversight and non-reflexive nature in my interview practice, I decided to use this as a focus within my second postgraduate research student presentation.

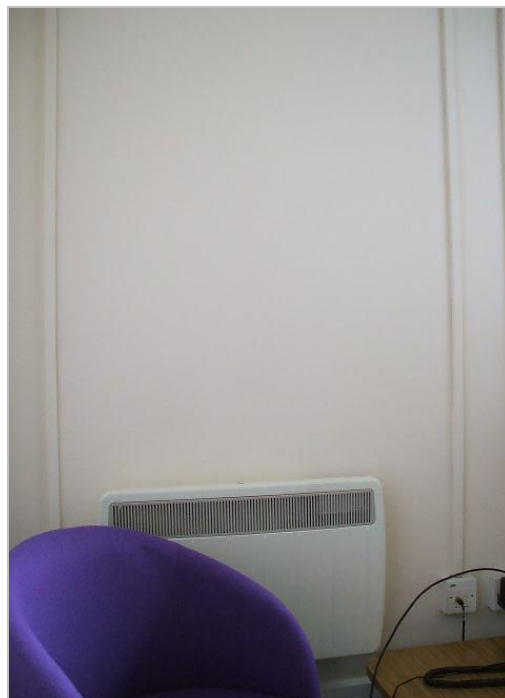
This allowed for further critical reflection, peer feedback and open discussion about the location for each research interview. The literature suggests that the researcher's own office should be avoided as this is not neutral ground and could affect the ability to build rapport within the interviews. The latter is considered vital so that participants feel able to share their experience (Hermanowicz, 2002; Jackson, Daly and Davidson, 2008). Ritchie and Lewis (2003) suggest that when conducting research interviews with professionals in their own working environments the location needs to be private, quite comfortable, and conducive to concentration. Both the interview room and my office satisfied these requirements.

In order to trigger discussions during the presentation, I shared the images shown in Box 4.7 and Box 4.8. The use of these images produced a reaction and subsequent discussion amongst the other doctoral students on the training day that I had not considered. Attendees described the interview room as looking cold and that they would prefer to have had an interview in my office.

Box 4.7 View of my office



Box 4.8 View of the interview room



Comparing the two images, my office looks frenetically messy, with my personal and professional identity stamped all over the room. I can see that markers of my identity such as drawings from my children, allowed for connections and rapport to be built up with the participants that I had not met before. This happened when they commented that we must have children of a similar age after seeing a photo or picture. I had been so concerned about my dual roles and moving between these within the organisation, that I had assumed that the location was an issue for participants. It appears that it was not a problem for the participants, who had all consented to be involved in the study and continued to assent to further interviews when approached.

In addition, while individual participants' voices and demeanours are similar in all three interviews, the difference is in my voice. I sound more

confident and relaxed in the interview room. When in my own office it was as if I was trying to conceal my identity (values, beliefs, and experiences) despite visual cues to these all around me. My voice sounded awkward and forced.

This led me to question who should feel comfortable, the interviewer or the interviewee. As previously stated, an intention within my interviews was for participants to feel comfortable, allowing open and transparent communications. I questioned whether, when I had written my application to the ethics committee for approval, I had taken a maternalistic and non-reflexive attitude to protecting the participants. Following discussions at the student presentation and with my supervisors, I decided to ask the participants for their experience of being interviewed in the different locations. Initially I approached this through the email reminder that I sent prior to each interview

Thanks again for consenting to the third and final interview, which we have arranged for Friday the 2nd of July at 10.30. I have attached a PDF of the transcript from our last interview in April so that you have your own copy.

I note from my records that when we met before we used my office 2C15 and 2B01, do you have any preference for either of these as a location or would you like to suggest another room?

All of the respondents stated no preference; Adam and Marie also shared their experiences of being interviewed in the different locations when describing my office:

It just feels like a normal room. The other one feels like an interview room a clinical type well not clinical room. Do you know what I mean? When you go into it is like when you go into the health service and you see interview rooms they are always f**king horrible aren't they? (RS YEH) They are like blank spaces that have nothing on the walls and box of drug company tissues on the table. (RS THE QUIET ROOM?). yeh it just reminds me of that. The other room that room that we were in just reminded me of that, it is just that box room isn't it? That gets used for meetings for the same reasons. So this just feels more like a normal environment I mean it is just a more comfortable space. I suppose if you held it in a comfortable room somewhere else it might not be as stark really because those rooms are pretty horrendous. but I think because you in the context of what we are talking about because we are talking

about work aren't we and work situations and I know that you are a lecturer here so it is not like as if you are coming in as an anonymous person. (Adam: 4.3.98/4.3.99).

it's probably nicer in here it's probably nicer. But I really don't mind because um I'm quite easy going with stuff anyway so I wouldn't of minded if you would have needed us to go to the other one, I think the other room is more formal and um, here's quite nice because there's a bit more of you in here does that make sense? (RS YES THAT MAKES PERFECT SENSE). It's a bit more personal isn't it? it's quite a cold room that other room, there nothing it's just two chairs and a tape recorder and we kinda sat. I didn't like the seating position because we were sat at angles to each other, you know like here we are sat, so I kinda felt like we are I think that the other room is cold, it's a small room as well isn't it. it's the seating arrangement, I don't even think it's about, cos here it's quite sweet because you've got like personal artefacts haven't you? and I haven't even noticed these ones because, even though I've noticed them now. (RS YES BUT THEY'VE MOVED SINCE YOU WERE LAST HERE). It's just a bit more personal, it's a bit more, it's warmer in here, even the colour of the wall, I'm sure it's not that colour in the other room, and the other room felt really cold. (Marie: 6.3.192/6.3.193).

The participants' perceptions of the location of the interviews challenges the dominant discourse that surrounds the location of interviews, which suggests that within insider research interviews need to be held in a neutral environment that ensures privacy and reduces the likelihood of being interrupted. On reflection, as my research notes demonstrated, I had taken the assertions in the literature at face value without considering how the participants or I would feel.

Towards the end of the interview when Mary said that she hoped that she was helping me and that she did not have an opinion as to where the interviews occurred, her comments made me think that she saw both my roles within the faculty as well as my role as a doctoral student/researcher. She said she hoped that if somebody had something to say to her that they would say it to her and that she had nothing to hide; I did not pursue this at the time I think because I did not hear it that way first time. Research notes 20.01.11.

Helen, also during the final interview, made it clear that she was aware throughout the interviews of my position in the faculty department. This was similar to Mary but this did not seem to prevent her from saying how she felt about her first year at the university.

I have considered the fact that you are senior to me. And that you have privileged access to information that under any other circumstances I would not have shared with you. So I am not an idiot I had thought about it. But then you make a decision don't you? Between what you think is the right thing. Well I do. That is how I make decisions is this the right thing to do when someone is involved in an educational process then you have to trust them that they are they're going to respect your confidentiality as a colleague you know because there are things that you know that my professional lead does not know. (Helen: 5.3.154).

I would say being someone of your position was more of an issue but you make a decision at the start do you trust someone? if I had not trusted you or if I had not thought that your intentions were positive or that your study would be worthwhile I would have just bumped you off. (Helen: 5.3.155).

I had taken into consideration the potential for harm for disclosure from the participant or myself. Yet when personal disclosures by the participants occurred in relation to their previous mental health, marital considerations or feelings of frustrations towards staff within the organisation, I was surprised and often felt privileged at the candid and open nature of the participants as they shared their experiences with me. I was attempting to protect and separate my identity as doctoral student and academic. On reflection, this feels like a dishonest separation of my multiple selves and roles which has informed my professional development and potentially the professional development of others. The participants were aware that I also worked at the university when they consented to be involved in the study. These experiences have taught me not to make assumptions as to the best location for research interviews, to explore different options and, perhaps most significantly, to offer participants a choice of location.

4.4.3. Insider Research: Relationship between Researcher and Participant

The ambiguities that exist surrounding being an insider researcher, concern the trustworthiness and rigour of research produced by insider researchers. They can be seen mirrored in the descriptive phenomenological research tradition's need for the researcher to bracket out their pre-understandings, pre-conceptions and understandings, such as those awarded through the tacit knowledge of insider research. Corbin-Dwyer and Buckle (2009), while not explicitly referring to the descriptive

phenomenological convention of reduction, used the term 'bracketing' when they suggest that what is needed is "*disciplined bracketing and detailed reflection on the subjective research process, with a close awareness of one's own personal biases and perspectives*" (Corbin-Dwyer and Buckle, 2009:59). As previously stated, I have committed to ontological enquiry informed by my personal interpretations and awareness of Heidegger's assertion that

Whenever something is interpreted [or experienced] as something, the interpretation will be founded essentially upon fore-having, fore-sight, and for-conception. An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us. (Heidegger, 1962:191).

There is an abundance of literature exploring insider research (Anderson and Jones, 2000; Chavez, 2008; Corbin-Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Edwards, 2002; Galea, 2009; Hellawell, 2006; Labaree, 2002; Sikes and Potts, 2008; Taylor, 2011). Papers have been published from a wide range of professional disciplines such as midwifery (Darra, 2008), education (Sikes and Potts, 2008), nursing (Simmons, 2007) and social work (Kanuha, 2000). The majority of the methodological discussions around insider research are written from ethnographic, anthropological and action research standpoints. Writers acknowledge that descriptions of being an insider/outsider are false dichotomies (Griffith, 1998; Hodkinson, 2005) as the role exists on a continuum as:

Some features of the researcher's identity, such as his or her gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation are innate and unchanging; other features, such as age, are innate but evolving. These features provide one dimension to the insider/outside continuum. Other dimensions are provided by the time and place of the research (at both a micro and a macro-level); the power relationships within which the researcher and the research co-exist; the personalities of the researcher and specific informants; and even the precise topic under discussion. (Mercer, 2007:4).

The advantages of being an insider researcher include: providing deeper levels of understanding and consideration of participants (Taylor, 2011), tacit knowledge of the organisation and social group (Griffith, 1998; Hannabuss, 2000), and the potential for enhanced rapport and

communication (Gunasekara, 2007; Mercer, 2007). Potential disadvantages include: a lack of time resulting from distractions and work related constraints (Wellington, 2000) and the perceived risks of overlooking the importance of the familiar by taking things for granted (Coghlan, 2007; Mercer, 2007). In addition there is the possibility that personal investment in the setting might lead to a lack of rigour (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007) as well as the potential for researcher bias (Hewitt-Taylor, 2002) and role confusion influenced by fears of personal and professional repercussions (Anderson and Jones, 2000; Labaree, 2002).

These tensions are explored within the literature and in discussions surrounding a researcher's multiple roles (Gillespie and McFetridge, 2006), their role dualities (Coghlan and Casey, 2001), their double agency (Ferguson, Myrick and Yonge, 2006) and the implicit power relationships that Gillespie and McFetridge (2006) stress can exist between the researcher and the researched.

These potential power dynamics were not the only undercurrents present within the interviews as our identities and backgrounds such as gender, postgraduate student status, social class, family roles and professional identities were also present. When connections between identities were made, such as a shared interest in fashion or films, these allowed for shared understandings which encouraged the development of a conversational style (Roulston, 2010). However, Duncombe and Jessop (2002) challenge this approach in interviews claiming that it is an abuse of connections and they go on to identify 'fake friendships' and concerns with the creation of rapport similar to those expressed by Shah (2006) when she uses the term 'overrapport'. Rather than ignoring the power relations Edwards (2002) asserts that ethical research needs to pay attention to them, an assertion that reinforced the need for a reflexive approach when thinking about the way in which 'I' played a role in the development of the conversation(s) (Gibson and Brown, 2009), and recognised that the hyphen in insider-outsider is "*indispensable to researcher reflexivity*" (Humphrey, 2007:22).

4.4.4. Participant Consent

Before the research began, I was anxious about the ability to recruit to the study as this was dependent on the university appointing staff who met the inclusion criteria of the study. While these anxieties were unfounded, as the six newly appointed academics that I approached were all keen to participate, they did lead me to consider why the participants had consented to be involved in the study and continued to consent to further interviews. The reasons that Mary, Alison, Fifi, Adam, Helen and Marie gave consent were varied, yet consistent with research based literature (Carter *et al.* 2008; Clark, 2010; Garton and Copland, 2010; Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2001; Peel *et al.* 2006). Adam a postgraduate research student shared within our first interview that he had consented to be involved in the study because he knew how difficult it was to recruit participants. He was also hopeful that his participation in the study would help him to get to grips with new processes and procedures. Helen's consent to be involved, as expressed in a previous quote, was because she felt that the study was worthwhile. Carter *et al.* (2008) described this agreement as purposive and relational because participation could help the participant and others within similar circumstances. Helen's participation was also seen as altruistic as she wished to contribute to change (Peel *et al.* 2006).

Others discussed emotional and therapeutic elements to their ongoing participation, such as Alison's enjoyment of being able to share her experience. Marie found benefit from reading the transcripts and would reflect on what had been shared. Mary disclosed after the dictaphone was switched off that she felt so much better after the interview and although it was not like counselling, she had 'shared stuff'.

Throughout the study I was constantly aware of the potential power relationships present and I ensured that I did not have direct involvement with any of the participants in any roles that may have evoked perceptions of power such as appraiser, probation mentor or module leader. Fifi was a member of the same team as me, and, while I had no direct line

management within the team, I felt at times that I might need to exclude Fifi from the research as my following research notes highlight:

I really don't know if I can include her data, I have no line management responsibility for her, she is very interested in feedback and has come to assessment feedback champion meetings. Although I keep checking that she is happy it feels blurred, is this because she is very interested in the topic as well, but there are some great things coming out from our interviews, but out of all the participants she is the one that I feel I may be leading the most. However it would be unfair to stop the process as she keeps saying how useful she is finding the sessions and seems to be using these as an informal mentor support session. Research notes 17.02.11.

I discussed my concerns with my supervisors and research peers. We concluded that as Fifi was continuing to consent to the interviews and that I had continued to check that she was comfortable, sharing my observations about being in the same team during the interviews: that the interviews were mutually beneficial and that her experiences should not be excluded from the findings.

4.4.5. Pilot Study or Preliminary Interview?

Pilot studies are often associated with positivist research paradigms and studies as they tend to be used as tests for validity of tools such as questionnaires, interview schedules or feasibility (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002). To avoid methodological confusion, the term 'preliminary interview' rather than pilot study has been used in this study to acknowledge the developmental nature of my interview skills rejecting the positivist associations of testing a data collection method or scale. Sampson (2004) and Kim (2011) both support this view, suggesting that preliminary or pilot studies can be useful for novice researchers as they aid in developing confidence, allaying anxiety, and promoting confidence in the use of recording equipment. The first interview with Mary was initially considered as a preliminary interview to allow for a mock run of a research interview. An entry in my research diary captures my initial reactions to the interview, such as hearing the sound of my voice and questioning style. Mary's interview was intended as the preliminary interview for the study but her voice as a newly appointed academic has

been included within the study. This is in recognition of Robson (2002) and Arthur and Nazroo's (2003) assertions that the findings from a preliminary studies do not need to be excluded from the final study, as participants' respond according to their own frames of reference.

4.4.6. Transcription

The process of transcription during data analysis needs to be transparent, shared and congruent with the phenomenological principles of the study as *"transcripts are not simply neutral representations of reality but theoretical constructions"* (Lapadat, 2000:208). That has known pitfalls that can affect the quality of the transcripts (Easton, Fry-McCornish and Greenberg, 2000; Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999; MacLean, Meyer and Estable, 2004). This has allowed me to be close to the data, however, the phrase 'personally transcribed' does not fully capture the days and weeks that have been spent transcribing.

I transcribed each interview and the act of transcription was an integral part of my analysis (Bird, 2005). It turned out not to be the clerical task I had anticipated at the beginning. While this has allowed me to be close to my data and begin the process of analysis, it does not highlight that the choice of this method and my processes of transcription have been a series of methodological considerations.

Against my initial intentions, I had begun data reduction within the transcriptions through my decisions of what to include or exclude: for example, should the 'umms' and 'ahhs' be included. While I had opted to include these in the original transcripts, one participant shared that they found it difficult to read their transcripts because they had not realised how often they used such conversation fillers.

Punctuation had not been included within the transcriptions in an attempt to reduce the potential to change the intent, emphasis or meaning in the statements (McLellan MacQueen and Neidig, 2003). However at times, this produced transcripts which, if read without listening to the recording, had lost the depth and expression of the human voice. This meant that a decision was made to produce naturalised transcription that conformed to

written discourse rather than denaturalised text that retained links to oral discourse forms (Bucholtz, 2000); this is demonstrated in Box 4.9; using an extract from Alison's second interview.

When planning the data collection period I had envisaged that I would complete each interview and then transcribe the audio files separately, so that time could be allowed in between each interview to prevent missing any emerging themes and sub themes (Duffy, Ferguson and Watson, 2004). However, I had not taken into consideration that participant commitments could lead to two of them choosing dates close together as the best dates for them. This led to a proximity of interviews at odds with the time that I had made available for transcription.

Box 4.9 Transcription example (naturalised vs denaturalised)

Denaturalised - Alison: yes yeh very briefly umm and umm I I second marked and agreed but I I was told that a ummm the comments were fine but that probably I ummm I was a bit too kind with my comments but they both passed ummmm(RS CAN YOU EXPLAIN MORE WHAT THEY MEANT BY A BIT KIND) ummmm well maybe I was saying umm I am trying to think what was actually said ummmm actually maybe I was saying something like ummm yeh yeh this was a good attempt at an assignment and umm would have been enhanced by something but well done

Naturalised - Alison: Very briefly I second marked and agreed. But I was told that the comments were fine, but probably I was a bit too kind with my comments but they both passed. (RS CAN YOU EXPLAIN MORE WHAT THEY MEANT BY A BIT KIND) Well maybe I was saying; I am trying to think what was actually said actually? Maybe I was saying something like this was a good attempt at an assignment, and would have been enhanced by something but well done.

4.5. Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have illustrated how phenomenology has shaped my research from inception to completion. I have described the methods used for data collection and analysis highlighting the phenomenological congruence with Heideggerian and Gadamerian traditions of interpretative enquiry. To contribute to my professional development as a novice researcher I have reviewed aspects of the study that I found challenging. In offering a critical and retrospective review of these aspects of my study I have highlighted limitations within the study and reflexively explored my developing research skills.

CHAPTER 5 DATA ANALYSIS: DIFFERING JOURNEYS

In this chapter differences in participants' journeys are illustrated within subsections. As discussed in the methods and methodology chapter participants' experiences are represented through interview extracts that offer rich descriptions of actions, behaviours, and experiences as they engaged with assessment processes such as marking.

5.1. Mary

During our first interview, Mary reflected on how she felt confident walking around the campus as she was familiar with the surroundings from when she had been a student at the university. Her familiarity created additional pressures as she came to terms with her own changing identity and relationship with academic staff who had once held a position of authority over her.

I am now equal, I can't get used to that part. Not that I'm equal because I'm not in terms of experience. Do you see what I mean? (RS YEH). But I am now on an equal playing field. I am now not the student and, I think that's... I am finding that quite strange to get used to sitting at somebody else's desk and not being sat where the student normally sits. (Mary: 1.1.31/1.1.32/1.1.33).

Mary's first experience of marking was with a member of staff who had been her personal tutor when she was a student, a situation that had made her nervous. Mary's observations about the 'student chair' that exists in most academics' offices in relation to where she was sitting when she met the co-marker to discuss and agree the marks and feedback, highlighted her sense of identity in flux as she began to come to terms with her new role. Her observation has continued to resonate with me, as I note that in every academic office I enter there is a 'student chair'.

Throughout our interviews, Mary would talk about how she enjoyed working with students, and that this had led her to apply to the university when a vacancy for a lecturer was advertised. She expressed that for her it was a natural progression. She had always been interested in working with students through sharing her experiences and knowledge as a

mentor. Mary would often describe that she felt an empathy with the students when she was marking.

You don't want to let down a student, but equally you've got a set of guidelines which is really useful. Whenever you think, 'Oh I'm not quite sure' you can always go back to the guidelines and go back through everything... yep have they achieved? Is that? Is that in there? Is that in there? Is that in there?..... umm.... but still I think there's an emotional attachment. I think I was in that position once but then you must become unemotional if that makes any sense. I did tend to read them three times each one the first time marking. I read everyone three times. (RS THREE?) to make sure I was being quite fair the first time. I could tell, you know that I was quite emotional by the end of the third. (Mary: 1.1.12/1.1.13/1.1.14/1.1.15).

Her empathy for students when marking and giving feedback was heightened as she was also a postgraduate student writing her own essays. A dual identity of student and academic that led Mary to be concerned, on the one hand, about her ability to manage the competing demands and deadlines of being assessed as part of her postgraduate teaching course and, on the other hand, assessing students.

I want to do my own assessment properly. Does that make any sense? So my mind would not be on it. I think I would be unfair in the marking. I would worry that I would not mark properly and not be able to meet the deadline. (RS WHY DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD BE UNFAIR?) Because, I may be distracted, if that makes any sense and unfair, in the fact I that in time wise I may not have enough a time to read it through. I will read it through twice. I always read them through at least 2 times. Not that I have gone from 3 to 2 but to do it justice really I think and that is in the way that student is always sat on my shoulder. (Mary: 1.1.151/1.1.152/1.1.153).

Mary felt she could be distracted by this and that this might be unfair on the students as she was not solely focusing on their work. The marking load Mary was experiencing at the time of our second interview was increased by resubmissions which she had not accounted for. When sharing her frustration at the current situation, she commented that next year she would be better informed in relation to her marking commitments.

I think I am going to start getting a bit sassy, as well, when people talk about modules, I am going to ask them when their marking comes in. Because I am just finding that I finished that marking Friday afternoon and I have got marking again this week. I re-jiggled everything thing so that I could do that marking and moved it into this week and only to discover that I have got marking again this week. (Mary: 1.2.68).

Mary's frustration from the increased workload pressure of the unexpected marking was still evident during our final interview when she reflected on this period of heavy marking.

It has caused me an absolute headache because what I did not realise is, I did not calculate for. I had planned my entire year brilliantly then this came along and I was sort of going along thinking yeh I have got these essays but I just forgot about everybody else's modules that I was teaching on about asking them their marking times. And that knocked the wind out of my sails. So I had a month of pure marking, hard marking. Every time I say I will do a course now, I ask when does your marking come in. So that I can plan a lot better. That's my fault actually, but that was my naivety < SECTION REMOVED TO PROTECT THE ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANT > and didn't think I may have to mark for anybody else. (RS TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES OF THE MARKING SO THIS ONE MONTH OF MARKING TELL ME MORE YOU KNOW IN AS MUCH DEPTH AS YOU CAN GO INTO), well I was fine. I just thought ok, you know, I would finish one lot and really quite happy and along came another lot. I got on with that lot, and then we had resubs for two of those courses; I sort of got on with that. I think the bit what distressed me the most is that I had spoken to a colleague here, and I had said all the way through look right at the beginning I did actually say I don't think I will be able to do your marking. And I had said this right at the very beginning of September and you know we had had a meeting the week before and I said I really can't. (Mary: 1.3.143/1.3.144/1.3.145/1.3.146).

In the final interview when Mary talked about how marking had been one of her steepest learning curves, I asked if she enjoyed marking. There was a notable sense of surprise in her voice as she answered that she did.

It is just new knowledge seeing it from a different perspective you teach and you think yes, somebody has really got it. Somebody really understands what we have been saying and they have really got it and they might bring in something fresh and something new and, you think that is a good way and that's a good idea actually. So it is quite nice it is like new evidence and it is just knowing that you have been part of that. (Mary: 1.3.165/1.3.166/1.3.167).

5.2. Alison

Alison's interest in education developed after an experience of failing a student in practice and a role change that required her to do more teaching. These events, as well as a colleague suggesting she would be good at teaching, led her to describe the career change and her subsequent appointment as a lecturer as 'a need'. Similar to Mary, Alison had also undertaken her professional training at the university where she now works and described herself as a 'student coming back'. Initially, the thought of marking essays did not intimidate Alison.

I feel I have got the practical experience and the knowledge to be able to assess and mark. However I need to learn the guidelines and the way that it is done here. I think sometimes the expectation is that when you come in as a new lecturer that you must know everything and that you know how everything works, and I don't. It is all completely new. I am quite happy that I can look at a piece of work and think well actually no that it is not standard enough, up to the right standard, or yes, it is very good. I am quite happy about that but it is working around the processes and the guidelines from that I have got to learn. (Alison: 2.1.13/2.1.14/2.1.15/2.1.16/2.1.17/2.1.18).

However when returning to the subject of marking in our second interview Alison described that she had often felt unsupported.

I didn't have any guidance from anywhere apart from what's on the web and that, and because, I have never marked anything before in my life. But I did the two scripts and apparently I did ok we talked about it the next time. I had marking come through this month and discovered I was first marker on 25 scripts. So I went straight away and said you know, I am a little bit uncomfortable about this because not just for me but for the students as well. Because I hadn't really had much experience of marking. The teacher training hasn't materialised yet, so I have had no input about marking or anything. But was told that's ok we have all been there. But I felt uncomfortable about it. (Alison: 2.2.43/2.2.44/2.2.45/2.2.46/2.2.47/2.2.48).

Alison felt that she had had to teach herself before she requested support.

I am learning and climbing up but it is a confidence thing isn't it? I did not feel so confident at first. Am I doing right, but that's coming. I am feeling a lot better about that now. I think with the marking it is a bit of a baptism by fire. But I am getting there and it will be interesting when I meet with the second markers for the ones that I first marked. I am happy to bow to her expertise

in some ways but..., you know, and we will see how we get on with the agreeing of what I have said and what she thinks. (Alison: 2.2.103/2.2.104/2.2.105).

She did feel that undertaking the marking was educational as she was gaining new knowledge from reading the scripts. She also described marking as a tedious chore due to the number of scripts that she was expected to mark; a chore from which she felt liberated after completing large batches of marking. In our final interview Alison shared that despite her learning curve being 'extreme', 'very steep' and 'steeper' than anticipated she felt her confidence was growing.

It was a Mount Fuji in the beginning. Basically it was like whoooo, right in front of me, like a brick wall, and I am thinking aghhh. But now it has come out to yes I am prepared. So I am going to have this marking and I am starting from the stuff I have done this year. So I will have a good sort of grounding in my own knowledge, to do it. But it was a very steep learning curve, which I think you know as I say I think I would have benefited from having within the first months of being here. A morning or afternoon session you know the group of us that started new. Even just a couple of hour's session seminar about marking assessments. You know and I think that would be useful (RS YEH) and at that session there could be a little handbook on marking assessments with all the guidelines. That you can then keep that little bible with you instead of at the moment whichever comes in I think right what level is this and what type. (Alison: 2.3.175/2.3.176).

Alison had considered leaving or reducing her hours during her first year as she had not received the support she had expected. She had experienced a number of negative events, such as aggressively worded emails when she had tried to reduce her marking load or change her commitments. While she had empathised with the person who sent the emails, the tone of the communication had led her to feel unsupported and thrown in at the deep end of teaching and marking. On reflection, she realised that she was beginning to enjoy teaching and marking and that her pressures outside of work, and the delayed start to her teaching development course might have been affecting her resilience and confidence at work.

5.3. Fifi

Throughout each of our interviews Fifi had a positive outlook, such as when reflecting on her first year, which she described as feeling like coming home to a place she was meant to be. Unlike the other participants, Fifi's original training had occurred before professional education had moved into higher education. Fifi had always enjoyed the teaching and mentorship roles in practice and described how she had missed these aspects of her role when she had moved into managerial positions. When she saw the job advertisement for her current role she said that she had felt that it was a 'do or die' situation.

When describing her initial marking experiences Fifi shared her frustrations at the quality of grammar and syntax, a frustration that she had similarly experienced in her previous management role when shortlisting job applications. Comparisons that lead her to reflect on her developing marking style.

I wouldn't mind having the reputation of being harsh. If I was fair, I think I would rather be known for being fair but someone that has set a high standard. But I have not actually given it a lot of thought. I don't think I would compromise my standards really. But I think when I am not involved in the programme and I don't know the students. I don't know if that's how it normally pales out whether the first marker knows the student tends to be a bit more lenient than marker two I don't know if there is a trend in marking. (Fifi: 3.1.17/3.1.18).

During our second interview it became clear that Fifi was also concerned that her expectations of undergraduate students might be unrealistic as she had spent the past few years working with postgraduate rather than undergraduate students in practice.

I think we spoke about this in the first interview, that perhaps my expectations were a bit high and that I might be a bit tough on the marking. And I think that was true when I marked those essays I think my marks the trends was the same as the other two markers. If they had fails mine were failing. But mine were failing worse than the other two. I am still grappling with that the issue around my expectations having only really had experience with postgraduates and they have a slightly different attitude I think to their written work and lots more experience to draw on and I think possibly I need to lower my expectations without compromising standards. I still believe firmly that things

have to be correct but I do think that perhaps I was being a bit harsh. (Fifi: 3.2.27/3.2.28/3.2.29).

Fifi would frequently relate her experiences of marking to her previous management experiences. On one occasion she made a connection to a previous performance management review that she had undertaken where she had used positive and constructive feedback to support a colleague.

Feedback has always been something that I have already been interested in even out in practice < SECTION REMOVED TO PROTECT THE ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANT > I've have always been aware of the impact that feedback can have. And that how it can either create confidence in a student. Or it can completely deflate them and you know really knock their confidence. So feedback needs to be provided skilfully. I always do try and make an effort. I will always talk about the feedback sandwich. Try and start off being positive and ending on a positive. When I am providing that feedback I do always kind of try to open up with a really positive sentence you know this is a potential to be a really good, you know and then highlight what would have helped I don't know whether I have got it quite right yet I am sure there is lots to learn. (Fifi: 3.2.33).

During our first two interviews Fifi would often describe herself as a novice in relation to marking and feedback. This self-description was beginning to change by the time of our final interview when she shared how she had been able to draw on transferable skills from previous positions. When discussing the time it was taking to mark, it became apparent that it was not the marking that was taking the time for Fifi; it was often the feedback.

I think the feedback is more of a challenge, and I know I have still got some way to go as far as providing a good piece of feedback, but the feedback is, as well you know, it is an area that I am really, really interested in, and it never ceases to amaze me the power of feedback. Both the positive power of positive feedback and the negative power of negative feedback. I have had to deal with practitioners that have been victims of negative feedback out in practice. I have come across some students that are picking up on the negative so I am really, really interested in that and it is an area that I would like to try and get right when it comes to feeding back from a really important piece of work. (Fifi: 3.3.64).

Fifi had been surprised by the amount of marking that was involved in her role as an academic. It was an aspect of academia that had not occurred to her before she came to work at the university.

What was I thinking about of course there is a lot of marking that goes on? But I had not ever really thought about that until I'd started. (Fifi: 3.3.70).

In our final interview, Fifi described marking as similar to going to the dentist. Fifi stated that it was not because she did not like marking or her dentist, but it was the analogy best suited to the experience.

I kind of don't really look forward to it that much but you know that it has got to be done and actually when you have finished it has never been as bad as you thought it was going to be. (Fifi: 3.3.73).

5.4. Adam

Adam applied for the lecturer's post so that he could begin to focus on research and complete his postgraduate studies. In our first interview, Adam shared some of his experiences of assessment as a student, stating that he had had a piece of coursework returned on which he could see that the mark had been changed through second marking from 68 to 75. Adam also talked about a submission where his entire cohort had had their marks lowered following external review. Drawing on his experiences as a student in another university, Adam would often state that he felt that marking was subjective.

I suppose the difficulty is you are not quite sure if you are getting it right as it is fairly arbitrary, isn't it? You know whether you think people are incorporating the professional standards, or bringing in enough evidence is a matter of personal judgement. (Adam: 4.1.4).

Adam's initial perception and acceptance of the subjectivity of marking may have been influenced by his enrolment as a student in another higher education institute and that his immediate family were academics and teachers.

I suppose, in my own mind, I had a sense that academic marking and double marking is fairly arbitrary. For example, when I get my marks back from <SECTION REMOVED TO PROTECT THE ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANT> what they do is somebody has written a mark on it and then they put a big marker pen over it and then the second mark and then they have the agreed marks. They sort of hide what the first marker's mark was, but if you hold it up against a window you can usually see what it is because they have not photocopied it. (Adam: 4.1.8/4.1.9).

During the interviews he frequently suggested that marking had hidden conventions, conventions that he was trying to understand.

There is also this idea floating around the university that you shouldn't give something that is too close to either end. So that you are sort of discouraged from giving a 59 or a 61 for example, this is sort of a bit ridiculous really. Because it sort of knocks out one every 10 marks you are discouraged from giving either a 60 or 61 or a 69 say in a mark of the so it automatically knocks out 3 points. (RS A THIRD OF YOUR CATEGORY IN A BAND) yeh for no particular good reason other than the moderators don't like it. Because it is not clear cut enough. So I don't know, I suppose if you are marking more clearly in sort of ranges, if you are saying this is between 50 and 60 or something I can see that you have got more of a case for that line of argument. But if you are not it seems a bit peculiar to say you can't give a 59. Particularly if you are giving 20% for one bit and 30% for another, and you are then averaging it all out and you are getting an average mark of I don't know 61 let's say, and saying that's not clear enough it ought to be 62. (Adam: 4.2.51/4.2.52/4.2.53).

Adam was becoming more confident in his own marking practices as he continued to observe and reflect on the hidden conventions that surround assessment and the subjectivity of marking.

There are a couple of new things since I have spoken to you actually, we did all the dissertations. Which I had to do it with somebody else who works in a different department they were remarkably similar. I think we were only 2 or 3 per cent out on them. Which I thought was fairly amazing I thought really considering the potential disparities so that was remarkably easy really I was bit worried about it before just thinking about it because it is really hard isn't because they just seem so subjective but actually they came in quite close. (Adam: 4.3.77).

I mean generally it has not been too different, I mean there has occasionally been stuff that has been a bit out over the year, but that tends to get picked up by second marking and stuff. You tend to know the ones that you are not very sure about actually. So I think that generally when you are giving the highs and the lows and the ones that are in-between that you don't really, you are not too certain about, you tend to give in the ones that you want a second opinion. (Adam: 4.3.89).

Adam did not really enjoy marking, although he enjoyed reading students' interpretations and ideas in their essays. Adam talked about how he felt that it was useful to be self-aware when marking as he had noticed that he had needed to take a step back from marking. With one piece of written

work from within a portfolio in particular, he felt that he had needed to put it aside as he was experiencing an emotional reaction to what had been written, as he also knew the student. He wondered if this might have been influencing his judgement. When talking about this, he described an experience about awarding a mark.

It really irritated me and I was starting to feel a bit irritated with it, I thought, I will have to look at that my immediate reaction was that I thought that this is probably a fail. But then I thought if that is the case I am just going to have to leave it for a bit and I will have to look very close at the marking criteria just to make sure that it is not me getting irritated. So I probably need to do that today actually have a look at it but also try and get somebody else to have a look at it who is not connected with her. (Adam: 4.3.82).

In our final interview, Adam implied that he was beginning to enjoy being at the university although he was still not sure if he would stay working in academia throughout his entire career.

5.5. Helen

Before coming to work at the university, Helen had worked in practice development and had found the initial transitions to a new town and new work role challenging.

I am used to knowing what I'm supposed to be doing. I think there's a lot of acclimatising to this role where it is not apparent < SECTION REMOVED TO PROTECT THE ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANT >. Now I am not in charge of a stapler I am finding it a real relief. But at the same time it feels like I have gone deaf I am not having to tune out 20 demands every 10 minutes. (Helen: 5.1.15).

Helen described that for her teaching, learning and caring were interrelated within her practice as a nurse and as a teacher and that she had a personal and emotional connection to both roles.

I think nursing and teaching are very very similar. I think there are lots of overlap there's lots of humanity, who you are as a moral and ethical person. What matters to you they are very closely connected. And you should be connected, emotionally connected, to this type of work. [RS THAT IS AN INTERESTING CONNECTION]. Looking at any type of care giving, I mean education is a kind of care giving really; it is a way of helping someone to be well in their life. You have got to have meaning

and you have got to have competence and connection and you know teaching and learning and caring and being a nurse as a professional and as a person those things are all the same thing they are just different aspects of the same human urge. (Helen 5.1.33/5.1.34).

When talking about students' written work, Helen implied that despite her extensive experience of assessing students in clinical practice, it was marking students' written work which she was least confident about in her new role. While she had been engaged in learning and practice development in her previous roles, she felt that she was not clear how she was meant to use the marking criteria. She felt that it was not clear to her how the university was going to help her to develop these skills in an academic setting.

I think for me, marking always feels a very imprecise, very imprecise measure of whether somebody can do something. I think essays really should only be part of the picture. I don't even think they are the most important thing. (Helen: 5.1.18/5.1.19).

During the first interview, Helen expressed that she believed that nurse education should be more practically assessed.

I quite like problem based learning because for me you get a much better rounded individual at the end of it. Writing a good essay by yourself does not make you a good nurse. Being able to interact with people who are very linear thinkers; people who are off the wall, being able to develop assertion skills with people who are very lazy (laughter). These are things that you will need for your job these you know these are things about team working problem solving about communication those things are valuable and I think are as valid as other academic work. (Helen: 5.1.20).

She had found her first few weeks unstructured and had been left to arrange her own induction so that she knew what was expected of her. Helen was often amused by her observations of others rushing around and panicking. When referring to her previous job she commented, "*Nobody is going to die of an educational emergency*" (Helen: 5.2.40). However, later within the same interview, her comments indicated that she missed having this sense of urgency, at the same time as finding the reduced stress a relief.

There is this real sense of being new and so fair game really, for dumping on. Not understanding the system means that you can't negotiate it successfully, you know, I know the NHS back to front. Knowing people's histories, knowing how things work, you can totally understand what's going on. And I think coming back to that state of bewilderment has been, you know, "who the hell is she, why is she asking me to do that is she my boss?", who is my boss? That has been really bizarre. But it has also been kind of fun. When you know everything and there aren't any surprises, it gets a bit samey. Whereas now it is just a constant what the heck is that? Do they have the right to delegate to me? Am I helping? Or am I being taken advantage of? I can't even tell. (Helen: 5.2.46/5.2.47/5.2.48/5.2.49).

Reflecting on these experiences Helen described being overwhelmed. This was partly because she had felt that she had to say 'yes'. This meant that for a couple of months she had assumed that if help was asked for it was needed.

I said yes to everything. Obviously the marking phase was about a month ago. I just said yes to everything, anybody who sent me anything approaching a panic stricken email, I assumed was an emergency. And then I realised the reason it was an emergency was because they had been sat on their bums for like two months ignoring it. It is all part of life's rich tapestry, I will know next time. (Helen: 5.2.62).

Her sense of responsibility as a nurse remained strong throughout each interview. She described that she felt that at times she had come into conflict with some of her colleagues as her judgements were heavily influenced by her recent clinical experience whereas she felt that some colleagues no longer considered the practical implications.

During our second interview, Helen described a double marking situation where she had met up with a colleague to agree the mark on a student's essay, and there had been a difference of over 30% between their marks,

We both tried to adjust as much as possible but there is a limit isn't there? I think when you have got two people that far away from each other you do need to go to third marker. And that's fine and I don't mind that but there is something about marking that is a little bit disingenuous in that people imagine that it is a scientific process. When it is very much about personal evaluation and how you evaluate comes from what your values are, and if your values are the academic process is the most important and if your values are the nursing process is the most

important you are going to have different criteria when marking.
(Helen: 5.2.71).

Reflecting on this experience Helen shared that marking for her was a very personal experience which could be stressful.

It is not just a process it is your judgement, your emotions wrapped up in it disguised as a process activity. And I think that people every time they mark particularly if they mark in a pair are shocked when somebody disagrees with them. Or it can get very heated very quickly, and I see myself so much as a novice; I don't get that wound up about it really. I don't like to see people treated unfairly that is the only thing that bothers me but you know I make mistakes marking if I am really enjoying an essay I tend to mark them up which is a bit of a problem (laughter). (Helen: 5.2.74/5.2.75).

Helen had been surprised at how she had found marking to be such an emotional experience.

I didn't expect it to be such a personal experience which is why I am not surprised when other people say 'How did you not love that? I loved that essay.'.... you know.... and I get why the marking and moderating is such a nightmare at times because it is two peoples' passions meeting a third person's head. (Helen: 5.3.145/5.3.146).

During the final interview, Helen returned to her emotional and reflective perspectives of marking, describing that on one level, she felt marking to be an un-emotive task whereas on another level, she felt that assessors put their own stamp of professional acceptance and approval on essays.

5.6. Marie

Marie had worked in a professional training capacity before starting work at the university on a one year contract that had begun midway through the academic year. At times, Marie would describe feeling stranded, as she felt that starting midterm meant that most courses and modules had already been planned and timetabled and she was often picking up teaching and marking in modules that had already started. She described this as a 'baptism of fire', as she quickly had to learn to teach and assess subject areas with which she was not familiar. My observation of Marie's experience of starting work midway through the year meant that she had experienced larger amounts of marking in comparison to the other

participants. By our second interview, Marie had marked essays from modules from the first, second, third years of a pre-registration course in addition to dissertations and other coursework from Continuing Professional Development modules. Marie shared that in comparison to the regimented approach of her previous job, she regarded the management structure at the university as *laissez-faire*. While she was enjoying the autonomy and freedom this offered, she would often express a desire for more structured support and guidance in relation to what was expected. This was because she did not always feel that she fitted in, or that she was supported

Marie surprised me during our first interview with her disclosure about her dyslexia. She shared how worried she was about assessing students' work because of her dyslexia; she wondered if this would prevent her from spotting errors in student work.

My biggest thing about coming into academia was my dyslexia. Because I was a bit like especially marking because I won't spot a mistake if it actually shouted and went hi I'm here. (Marie: 6.1.5).

Marie would often refer to marking as correcting such as the correcting of spelling or wrong information. The use of the term correcting might have been an association with her own dyslexic experiences of education, assessment, and feedback. Marie's disclosure of her dyslexia within our first interview was so frank and open that it was clear that she did not want to see it as a problem. When discussing this further in relation to marking essays and her experiences as a student in another higher education institution, Marie highlighted that the support she received as a student with dyslexia was in stark contrast to the lack of support she was receiving as an academic with dyslexia.

It's things like spelling and grammar and can't even see it in my own. I actually have people check my assignments before I hand them in. Not that they rewrite them for me they just do a check. I am doing my masters at another university and they are fantastic they sit with me for an hour and we go through. They also help me with organisation of the essay. So from a marking perspective you know if they had five marks for spelling, I won't spot the spelling error. But I suppose if things

are electronic I have got the tools to deal with it so it is just using those tools. (Marie: 6.1.10/6.1.11/6.1.12).

Marie had received a lower grade than she was expecting on her own work before our final interview which had knocked her confidence as a student and as an academic, as she felt that she had to have a high pass to be able to teach and assess students.

What right do I have to be a lecturer if I can't and I am I not the best at what I do? <SECTION REMOVED TO PROTECT THE ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANT> I was bloody good at what I did. I feedback to students and I sit there thinking, especially to third year students doing their dissertations. I think how the hell am I doing, I am new you should not have me. I could mess your grade up having me you know so I don't think I deserve, I don't think I have a right if I had had that distinction. I think that would have been defining, and, I would have said yes. I have had a distinction, and I have a right de de but I sit there thinking am I letting these students down. I myself could not get that grade how can I help students who want those firsts and those distinctions how do help them when. (Marie: 6.3.149).

Marie had a strong sense of how her experiences of education were continuing to inform her practice and perceptions of marking as well as the grades she was giving,

I didn't know if they were on for a first class honours and I was about to scupper their first class honours. Because it was a final year module, or were they on for a 2:1; and I just scuppered their 2:1, so there all these dilemmas running in your head. They could have had all seventies and suddenly I'm giving them sixty five (R AND HOW LOUD IS THAT IN YOUR HEAD?). Very loud, because, I've had it happen to me where something had gone through the board and I'd had it ratified incorrectly (R RIGHT) and it affects your classification and only after I questioned it would have had a different classification because of it. So I've been there, done that, so that is my alarm bell going. Personal experience plays a lot I think on the marking. (Marie: 6.2.100/6.2.101/6.2.102).

She would often refer to these situations as 'ethics of marking' in relation to the processes as she would find herself thinking of the student behind the mark. This, at times, would lead her to wanting to find out more about the students she was assessing.

I suppose when you're marking there's a person at the end of that marking, you're not marking a sheet of paper, you're marking someone. And then I had someone who was a very high grade and I just wanted to confirm that they were a high grade student. So in my own little way I started finding out about all the students and that's not good either because I feel a bit vulnerable when you blind mark because you can't give them the benefit of the doubt can you. (Marie: 6.2.105/6.2.106).

Marie's awareness of the student behind the mark also meant that she gave detailed feedback. She had had three separate academics suggest that she was giving too much feedback which she felt was unfair since this was related to the ethics of marking. She believed that she had an ethical obligation to her students and that if she used her own time for marking that it was worth it. Marie was beginning to enjoy her experiences at the university; she was looking for a new job when she received confirmation that her existing contract had been extended for another year. Marie discussed how she had held high expectations of working in the university, but that at the time of our final interview these had not been met.

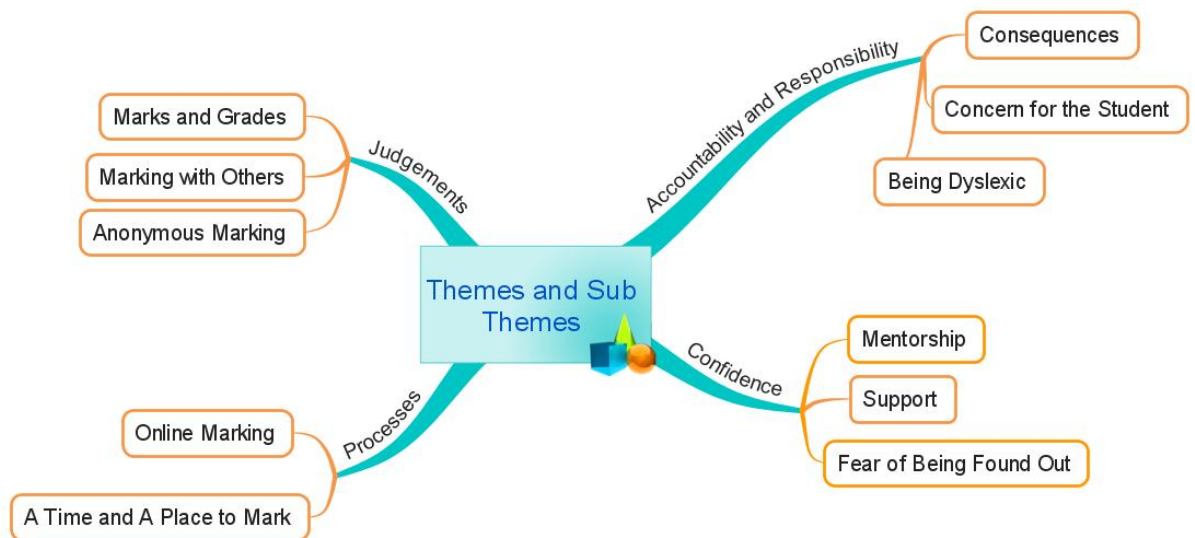
5.7. Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have represented each of the participant's journeys using extracts from interviews to capture their ongoing observations, self-interpretations, and reflections. Each of the participants in this study was a registered practitioner who, through their appointment to the university, was undergoing a work-role transition. This process involves the assimilation of a new working identity, values, and norms; as each of the participants moved from being a clinical expert in their own field of professional practice to becoming a novice educator. The following chapter further explores the concepts of marking/assessment while being a newly appointed academic through a thematic analysis of the themes and subthemes that emerged during the interviews

CHAPTER 6 BEING-IN-THE-WORLD-OF-MARKING

In this chapter the participants' experiences are further illustrated within subsections that illuminate the themes, and subthemes that emerged from the interviews (Box 6.1). In contrast to the previous chapter, I have interwoven literature into these themes to discuss the participants' experiences of marking coursework during their first year of appointment.

Box 6.1 Themes and subthemes



My use of Heidegger's term *being-in-the-world* (in-der-welt-sein) as the title for this chapter is not meant to represent a physical existence between the world of academia and marking; rather it is a representation of Dasein as being-in-the-world. As discussed in Chapter 3, Dasein is our conscious awareness of the meaning of existence and how as humans we make sense of the world around us, a conscious awareness that occurs through our fore-structures of understanding. Thus the concept of *being-in-the-world-of-marking* has been used to conceptually demonstrate the newly academics' lived experiences. In using the hyphen between the words in the title I emphasise the connection between the participants being and their world, so illustrating how the newly appointed academics came to know themselves not through the learning of facts about marking, but through their experience, understanding and self-interpretation of their marking practices.

6.1. Judgements

Ability and confidence were recurrent themes within the interviews as participants were surprised by the subjective and external factors which they felt could influence their judgements. Marking as a judgement and the role of judgement in markers' decision making receives 'scant attention' despite frequently cited concerns about the reliability of marking (Brooks, 2012).

6.1.1. Marks and Grades

Marking coursework involves more than mere checking for accuracy of content or for achievement against set criteria and learning outcomes. Students' academic and scholarship skills are also under scrutiny to ensure they have the ability to express themselves adequately. This introduces a subjective element which can affect the reliability of assessment as this is dependent on an individual marker's judgement (Quinn, 2000) and may account for Woolf's (2004) description of the assessment of academic performance as closer to an art than a science. Fifi's account of her experience of marking illustrates recognition of the frustrations caused by poor grammar, syntax, and presentation, highlighting that tacit assessment expectation could influence judgement (Hunter and Dochety, 2011).

I am reading these assignments, and I am seeing errors in grammar, errors in sentence construction. Very descriptive assignments and I am thinking I have been very hard. I hadn't actually got to the point of scoring them. I have gone through I have made comments. I have highlighted things but I haven't actually got to the point of scoring them. Because I thought maybe I would need to read several to get a feel for the standard maybe. So that is as far as I have got. I have read five and I have kind of gone through them. I have looked at them and made comments and things. I don't know they are riddled with grammar and grammatical errors and the sentence construction is not good and I am not sure whether that at undergraduate level we make allowance for that or whether we are very you know tough. (Fifi: 3.1.7/3.1.8).

Similarly the following quote from Adam highlights how he was becoming aware of how subjective influences such as presentation and a perception of student effort could affect his judgement.

I think with the dissertations what you notice was that you could tell when people had spent time doing or whether they had rushed one off in the last couple of weeks or so'... (Laughter). Because the good ones built on chapter by chapter. on what it was written before and they had some sort of... they were easy to read. Whereas with the bad ones you have to spend hours on them trying to decode what relates to what. And I think actually because there is such a low..... on the mark sheet it is quite often only 10% for sort of presentation or language that's quit..... and you have to then try and take that into account against the other things and that does not make it that easy actually. (Adam: 4.3.83).

Fifi's self-doubt about her own expectations suggests an internal dilemma that was apparent when marking coursework from students who were not able to express their thoughts coherently; a dilemma that might be felt when markers appreciate that students might interpret marks awarded as a judgement of self-worth.

I think the caring element of the nurse in me sometimes comes out. You know, what are they trying to say and the point that they are trying to get across. Then there is that dilemma they haven't said it and they have not got the point across. But how does that reflect in the marking. I think I give a bit of leeway. And again you know that has yet to be challenged it will be interesting to see you know what happens when I am doing it for real on a module. Because I think you know there is a judgement call to be made really. I think probably there is a balance to be had between not totally deflating somebody. But actually is it of the required standard to be a pass. There's this dilemma about if it's a fail, then it's a fail. Does it really matter whether it is a 20, a 30, or a 40? If it's a fail, that caring element wants to say it is failing and there is no way that that is going through, so does it really matter whether that 20 actually is a 35. (Fifi: 3.2.39/3.2.40/3.2.41).

The assumption that a student's grades can affect their self-esteem is supported in the literature as students can place their self-worth on feedback they receive and the grades they are given (Crocker *et al.* 2003; Gibbs and Simpson, 2004; Murphy and Roopchand, 2003; Young, 2000). Flint and Johnson (2011) found that the students in their study when

making such personal judgements of self-worth were making external comparisons to peers in their own tutor and friendship groups.

6.1.2. Marking with others

Participants referred to the marking criteria used within the faculty as giving a structure and guidance to their judgements. Price (2005) suggests that when using marking criteria, the grades awarded by new staff are similar to experienced markers using the same criteria. This similarity may be because novice markers rely on explicit criteria of the marking grids taking a 'rule based' approach using assessment criteria, whereas an experienced marker may initially take an intuitive or impressionistic approach using their own implicit criteria (Smith, 2001), then use the criteria to support their judgements rather than marking criteria.

Crisp's (2013) survey of 378 secondary school teachers, asked 'Do you think that you hold mental representations of what coursework on different grades/bands/levels is like?' indicates that staff with more experience report that they held a stronger opinion of what work at different grades/bands looks like reflecting a confidence in their understanding of assessment criteria; a finding supported by Cannings *et al's.* (2005) earlier study.

Each of the participants shared experiences of double marking situations where, when they met up with the second marker, they had been reassured by the similarities in the grades both had awarded. A similarity of marks between two markers does not necessarily mean that the system is reliable (Rust, 2007) as a lack of confidence may prevent a less experienced marker from questioning a marker who is perceived to have more experience and knowledge (Orr, 2007; Partington, 1994). The following extract from Alison's second interview captures how she did not feel confident enough in her own judgements to raise a student's mark.

I feel a bit blind, although I can quite easily see when something is coming in which is totally inadequate. That's fine and I can quite easily understand when somebody hasn't gone looking at the three different theories and discussing and analysing. I can understand that. It is, when it gets to the passes. The good and the very good, that's difficult for me. I think maybe I am marking

too high when I look at some others. But that will come up apparent with the second marker. Because some of the ones that I have thought very good, something on par I was looking at when I did my second marking in the last couple of days, which is much easier of course. Because the person I am working with, that I am second marking with, is very experienced. But then I am looking at what? This sort thing or something like that. I think I would have given higher too, and that we tend to down mark anyway don't we? It seems to me anyway. (Alison: 2.2.56/2.2.57/2.2.58).

Participants often referred to one script within a batch that had produced a wide variance in marks. In the interview halfway through her first year, Marie shared an experience of marking with someone who Marie felt had more experience than her.

There was one that stuck out; there was one that was a seventy five. They'd given them a forty four. This person has nine years' experience, and I have six months so we had a chat and in the end the person ended up getting quite a high sixty. They went it's been one of those bad days where I just read them, and I wasn't really concentrating, and now that you've pointed this out. I was sat there thinking. What do you mean you're having a bad day! if you were this persons only marker...., that person would have only got forty four. (Marie: 6.2.85/6.2.86/6.2.87/6.2.88).

For Marie this experience highlighted the external and internal influences can occur when marking written work.

While Helen was not surprised that two academics could come to different grades, she was surprised at the reaction of the other marker to the different marks.

I think it is very understandable. Because you are what you do aren't you? You know marking on one level. It is a task and is very un-emotive. On the other hand marking is about your judgement, your preferences. You're putting yourself, your stamp of approval and acceptance on something. And you're making your own personal public. So if someone else says 'well actually, I think you are about 20 marks out' that is harsh, it feels harsh to that person. It is the same way if I passed an essay and someone said 'this is fail, what were you thinking?' You know I would be, oh my god, really, show me, show me. But I suppose it is a different reaction isn't 'oh my god show me show me' is quite a different reaction to 'how very dare you question my authority?' (Helen: 5.3.138/5.3.139).

Helen's description of marking as "*making your own personal public*" reflects Hand and Clewes (2000) observation that markers bring a great deal of themselves into the task of marking using their own belief and value systems to assess the quality of a piece of work.

Participants were beginning to make self-judgements in relation to the type of marker they were in comparison to other academics. The following extract from Adam highlights how he negotiated a meeting with a marker who had a reputation as a tough marker.

I was trying to pull things up a bit to some degree I was sort of trying to act as a counter weight to her being overly harsh.
(Adam: 4.2.50)

Markers can be described as belonging to one of two camps: either 'Hawks' or 'Doves' (Owen, Stefaniak and Corrigan, 2010), or, 'Hard' or 'Soft' (Bloxham and Boyd, 2007). As previously mentioned Crook, Gross and Dymott (2006), and Carless (2006) report that students hold a perception of biased and subjective marking: that academics can be influenced by how hardworking or lazy they believe students to be, or that staff can give marks for differing qualities such as the quality of presentation, or accuracy, or citations and references. There is limited research evidence to support or challenge these suggestions despite a growing concern amongst students that assessment practices can be unfair (Flint and Johnson, 2011).

6.1.3. Anonymous Marking

The University of the West of England's assessment regulations requires anonymous marking wherever possible⁵ as this is seen as a key element of the quality assurance process to protect students against the possibility of bias in assessment. Owen, Stefaniak and Corrigan, (2010) suggest that anonymity in assessment is a complex issue informed by a contradiction in the evidence base regarding the relationship between anonymity and bias. Anonymity and marking was an area that Fifi was concerned about during

⁵ Examples of assessed work for which anonymity of the candidate does not apply include dissertations, projects and creative artefacts assessed by staff who have acted in a supervisory role; individual and group presentations; oral examinations and interpreting (UWE, 2009)

our first interview. She felt that knowing the students might sway her judgements.

I am wondering if there are issues around anonymous marking you know if I am actually involved in the module and know this student, and know a bit about their thinking. Does that influence my marking? is that a good thing that influences my marking or is it better to be completely objective? Not knowing the student there is a lot to learn I guess. (Fifi: 3.1.10/3.1.11/3.1.12).

The National Union of Students has been campaigning for the anonymous marking of summative assessments since 1999 in the belief that it can increase students' confidence in assessment systems (NUS, 2008b). However a counter argument is that anonymous marking can lead to reluctance to approach lecturers, diminish student engagement with feedback, and potentially break the relationship between marker and learner (Orsmond, Merry and Reiling, 2005; Price *et al.* 2011).

6.2. Accountability and Responsibility

A sense of professional accountability and responsibility was a recurrent theme that emerged from the interviews.

You've always got to remember that you are accountable and responsible... you are always aware of the <NAME OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATOR REMOVED TO PROTECT THE ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANT> whatever you sort of sign off. (Mary: 1.1.8).

When assessing coursework academics from health and social care disciplines act as gatekeepers into professions. This can mean that the written coursework of students on health and social care courses is under greater scrutiny than it is for students on other, non-professional courses (Curren and Atherton, 2008). The following extract from Alison's final interview further exemplifies this as she shared that she had initially been terrified by this when marking.

I was quite terrified, because of the responsibility not having training and not knowing what I was doing. But the responsibility of actually this is someone's future that I am looking at. If I say yay or nay to the bit of paper where does it go from here? That has got easier as the time has gone on. (Alison: 2.3.160).

This sense of professional accountability and responsibility was one of the biggest areas of challenge that the participants encountered and one they felt could only be resolved through experience and developing confidence in their academic judgements when marking student assessments. Duphily's (2011) research illustrated a similar theme as novice nurse academics reflected on the accountability that they held in preparing practitioners to enter the nursing profession.

6.2.1. Consequences

The expressions of anxiety and concern in relation to participant's experience and ability to mark students' coursework was often related to the consequences they perceived for students' academic and professional development if the work had factual inaccuracies. This aspect of the role and function of marking has received limited attention despite the recognised potential for moral tension in the professional judgements of academics who hold a professional registration (Lipscomb and Snelling, 2006; Snelling and Lipscomb, 2004), a tension that is evident in the literature that explores academic dishonesty (Collins and Amodeo, 2005; Kenny, 2007; Roff *et al.* 2011). Stern and Havlicek (1986) believe that lecturers in professional education are hypersensitive to the conduct of students on these courses particularly in relation to those who falsify work: as students who are guilty of academic dishonesty may carry that dishonesty into their practice and thus may cause harm to patients.

However despite Alison's sense of pride when she shared that "*I have managed to pick out one I think that I thought was plagiarised*" (Alison: 2.3.168) none of the other participants' talked about dishonest practices in written assessment, a finding about which I was both surprised and reassured. I was surprised as this was an area of interest that initially led me to undertake the study: and, reassured as this indicated that I had not led the participants within the interviews.

6.2.2. Concern for the student

Mary struggled when awarding students a fail grade, as she would wonder if it was something that she had or had not done. Alison similarly expressed unease and concern for the students as she felt her

inexperience might let them down and that this would be unfair on the students.

Wouldn't want to under mark someone who had done an excellent piece of work. I have had one in particular which to me is coming across as a really good piece of work. I have tended to mark good as sort of mid 60s. I haven't you know, we will see how that goes and I think I wouldn't want to not give someone the credit that they don't deserve. I wouldn't want to over credit somebody else who you know that's my concern. I feel that if I am not experienced then I am not giving them exactly what I should be giving them. (Alison: 2.2.110/2.2.111/2.2.112).

Whereas Marie had wanted to find out about a student whose work she had marked as she felt sorry for them when awarding a fail grade.

Sometimes I mark blind. But the dissertations I didn't mark blind in the end I gave people grades; I was the second marker on the dissertations. But I felt I needed to know a bit more about the person, whether they were worthy of that grade, and I thought no it shouldn't be like that (Rs NO?). For instance I failed someone, and I didn't know what the first marker had given and I failed them and I felt really sorry for them, it's my specialist area and I could pick holes through it. But then when I went fishing about this person discreetly, I thought no they're going to fail anyway. (Marie: 6.2.103/6.2.104).

The concern for students as well as the fear and self-doubt that Alison, Mary and Marie expressed in relation to work they felt to be below standard is evident in the literature concerning failing students in practice (Basnett and Sheffield, 2010; Cleland *et al.* 2008; Dudek, Marks and Regehr, 2005; Duffy, 2003; Hawe, 2003; Monrouxe *et al.* 2011; Roff *et al.* 2011; Shapton, 2006). Ilott and Murphy (1997) describe failing a student as one of most challenging responsibilities in assessment and one that is rarely "*done lightly or without misgiving*" (Ilott and Murphy, 1997:307). Mary's hesitation to fail a student's work illustrates this.

I am really reluctant to fail someone. I think 40, I will give them 40. Just enough to pass and then I look at the guidelines and I think it clearly says this is the formula that I have got to follow. You have got to stop putting the emotion in there i.e. you want the best for your students. You have got this format, use it as a tool and then you know, I know in my heart that I have got to fail it, but part of me, you know, ohh its awful failing someone. But when I read the guidelines it makes me think, this is the

justification I can see the weakness in what they have set out.
(Mary: 1.2.119/1.2.120/1.2.121/1.2.122).

The following quote from Alison represents a further concern expressed by participants in relation to both marking and failing coursework that was exploring an area of professional practice about which they had limited experience.

There are some that fail. That I would have gone down right lower rather than fail at 38. I would have failed at 30 or, you know, so it is a learning process, but it did not feel comfortable for me and it did not sit comfortably with me for the students' point of view, being a first marker on something which is not my area of expertise. (Alison: 2.2.58/2.2.59).

6.2.3. Being Dyslexic

My surprise at Marie's frank disclosure of her dyslexia made me realise that I had not previously considered the possibility of academics with dyslexia despite being aware of many students with dyslexia. At the time of the interviews the contrast between the support for students with dyslexia and the lack of support for academics had not occurred to me. However, I began to reflect on this dichotomy and to explore the literature on dyslexia.

While there is an emerging evidence base exploring dyslexia amongst students in the health professions (Murphy, 2011; Tee and Cowen, 2012), there is limited literature and research exploring the experiences of academics who are dyslexic in further or higher education (Burns and Bell, 2010). Higher education is familiar with support mechanisms and reasonable adjustments for dyslexic students. According to Burns and Bell (2010) dyslexia is a hidden disability amongst academics because people often choose not to disclose any difficulties they are having for fear of being judged. In contrast to Marie's frankness, academics with dyslexia often refer to the tools that they use such as word processors, scanners and software packages (Gosling, 2007; Horne, 2009) yet remain reluctant to highlight their needs for fear of criticism about their abilities to manage their workload (March, 2009).

6.3. Confidence

All participants in this study were undertaking an academic development programme during their probation period. These programmes are designed to support newly appointed novice academics during their probationary period. However, similar to other programmes in the United Kingdom there is limited exploration of the marking aspect of teaching and learning as academic development programmes often treat assessment as separate from teaching and learning. Only one performance standard from the programme upon which the participants were enrolled overtly refers to assessment (Appendix C). Thus, the academic development programme on which the participants were enrolled, offered limited assistance to them as new academics in regard to the process of marking written assignments: and without effective staff development staff may continue to adhere to existing assessment practices (Price *et al.* 2011; Gibbs and Coffey, 2004).

Each of the participants in this study repeatedly expressed how their confidence in their ability to be competent at work had been reduced as they were learning new ways to build on their existing professional skills during their probationary period. There was no one experience that can be highlighted as having a significant impact on the confidence of the newly appointed academics. However, participants would refer to the support that they were receiving from working with others. The following quote from Adam captured the essence of his growing confidence amidst personal uncertainty of his own ability, as he reflected on his marking experience during the second interview.

Would I do anything differently? I think I have got to. There is a sort of comment from other staff that I am giving more feedback than other people. So there is a sort of bit of pressure not to give as much actually. I won't worry about that overly, but I will probably have to cut it down just in terms because I won't have as much time next year. For example but I will also probably get a bit quicker at it. I mean I keep trying to give sort of concrete examples. I try not to use jargon too much. But also I think if I am having to mark something, ideally what I would like to do? If I am going to mark something about say <SECTION REMOVED TO PROTECT THE ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANT> to have gone to that particular lecture. But that is quite often that is impractical in

terms of your availability and all the rest of it. So I don't know really. I can't say I feel totally confident that the way I am sort of marking things is brilliant. It is difficult because the other staff seem to think it is ok. But you never get that, you don't get tonnes of feedback really. You don't tend to get people sit down with you so much; it is all so that your marking looks ok as a whole. What you are getting really is people second marking your mark and saying I agree with that or I don't agree with that. You don't get enormous amounts. I suppose of support in how to mark when you are in the formative stages I mean you get a bit of general support in the first year of academia. (Adam: 4.2.55/4.2.56/4.2.47/4.2.58).

Participants were often unsure about how much feedback to give and talked about using the feedback of others as templates. As illustrated in Chapter 5 participants tended to give very detailed feedback that other colleagues would then comment on suggesting that they were giving too much. Participants shared examples of giving very detailed feedback without knowing if they were giving too much, not enough or, the right amount.

6.3.1. Mentorship

Similar to Barlow and Antoniou's (2007) findings, participants in this study felt that the formal induction processes were an exercise that needed completing rather than bespoke learning tools for their development. Although each participant valued the allocation of a probation mentor, they often mentioned that they did not fully use their mentors as they tended to use other informal support mechanisms. The use of informal support mechanisms rather than the allocated probation mentors suggests that the mentorship needs of the newly appointed academic are not being met by the current mentorship systems.

Tensions are often reported for both the mentor and mentee such as lack of time (Le Maistre and Paré, 2010), a lack of commitment from the mentor (Billings and Kowalki, 2008) and non-compatible personalities and value sets (Anibas, Brenner and Zorn, 2009). Yet, effective mentoring of newly appointed staff in the workplace is recognised as benefitting both the individual and the organisation (Box 6.2).

Box 6.2 Individual and organisational benefits of effective mentorship

Individual benefits for the mentee	Individual benefits for the mentor	Organisational benefits
Smooth transition Empowerment Support Increased confidence	Reciprocal learning Personal development	Increased productivity Employee retention Improved communication
(Barkham, 2005; Davey and Ham, 2010; Huybrecht <i>et al.</i> 2011; Quinn and Hughes, 2007; Remmik <i>et al.</i> 2011; Roberts, 2000; Suplee and Gardner, 2009)		

Dunham-Taylor *et al.* (2008) believe that effective mentorship can ensure the development and retention of newly appointed academics. The new academics in this study described wanting a mentor and role model similar to Anderson and Shannon's (1988) description of classical mentoring. That is, a mentoring relationship that becomes a nurturing process, where a role model counsels and assists the mentee with their personal and professional development. Overall the participants in this study felt probation mentors followed a role definition that could have been interpreted as instrumental; meaning that the relationship was structured to guarantee particular levels of knowledge and competence were reached (Colwell, 1998). The newly appointed academics' perception of the functional nature of their mentorship may have been influenced by the additional workload and commitment that is required of mentors and may not have been accounted for. Boyd, Harris and Murray, (2007) propose that this situation can be avoided if the work involved in being a mentor is recognised and accounted by those who determine the workload allocation of an academic who is also acting as a mentor.

6.3.2. Support

Levels of support varied. For example, Adam felt supported and knew he could contact his mentor at any time; yet the following quote represents his reluctance to do so as he did not want to feel that he was imposing. This was a common theme amongst participants, as they would often create their own support networks to supplement the formal systems during their probationary period.

I am sure she would not mind me dropping by and just saying that I have got this question, can you answer it for me? Although I try not to do it too often because it gets a bit irritating, having been that with practice students doing it every morning.

There are other people that I can ask quick questions too. But she will also be observing me doing some practice things, that's the sort of agreement that's set down. I suppose there are some people in the department that have been more supportive than others. I mean there are some that you definitely get a feel for who will give you a relative amount of information, but then you feel that you are imposing if you ask too much, so I suppose you get a feel for who is likely to be more helpful. (Adam: 4.1.20/4.1.21/4.1.22/4.1.23/4.1.24).

Participants shared their experiences and perceptions of the support they were receiving in their new roles. Price (2005) found that module leaders varied in the amount of support and guidance they give to markers, and this is reflected in the experiences of the participants in this study. Only two of the participants experienced structured support and guidance in relation to their marking and feedback from a module leader. Fifi would often refer positively to the module leader who had encouraged her to mark five scripts from a previous cohort, so that she could familiarise herself with the assessment in a simulated context. An experience that made her feel supported, as it encouraged her in thinking about the responsibility of marking in a simulated environment, without the fear of her novice judgements impacting student's degree classification.

I have a person who is like a mentor, but they are very close to me if you know what I mean, in terms in the fact that the feedback I get is like that went alright didn't it? You know we don't meet formally as such I have had my sessions reviewed, but then I booked them in; I was like these are the sessions that I want reviewing. So obviously I picked the things that I thought I would be least crap at obviously. But you know when I am mentoring people. I'm maybe I am intrusive, I can't tell, now that I look back on it maybe I am like some absolute you know harridan I am like what is your most confident subjects you know how are things going, check in on me let me know how you are, what are your plans? What are your hopes what do love? What do you want to expand? This is the organisational framework you need to be able to understand. (Helen: 5.3.127/5.3.128).

Helen experienced the support that she received as unstructured and jokingly said that at times she felt that she was stalking her mentor; a similar sentiment to Adam's earlier extract when he described that he tried not to ask his mentor too many questions as he knew how irritating this could be. Reflecting on her high expectations of becoming an academic

and the role of her mentor, Marie felt that she had put academia on a pedestal as it was something she had always strived for and the lack of support had surprised her.

I feel that because everybody else in the department is used to it, they just kind of crack on with it, don't they? (RS YEH). I have also had to find, kind of at the beginning, I was a bit bogged down by it all really, think "what the hell have I let myself into here?" and it is really strange. <SECTION REMOVED TO PROTECT THE ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANT>. I have identified someone in the department who is good to go to who is quite. Not mumsie, but really great for support, and now that I have identified that I am here to teach, and I have got that into my head. And I am learning teaching trade, my craft, this person has actually been a really quite good support, but until I had that person I was quite lost because my mentor is not really interested in this. (Marie: 6.3.133/6.3.134/6.3.135).

6.3.3. Fear of being found out

Do you know what my biggest fear is? I think that, I am going to say this on tape now that I feel that I am going to be caught out in some way. That they are going to realise that Mary shouldn't actually be here. Do you see what I mean? (RS WHAT IS IT THAT). I don't know, I have spoken to several lecturers and they have said exactly the same, they feel that they are going to be caught out and actually they are not really for the job sort of thing, but then that is why I am being assessed. (Mary: 1.2.86).

Remmik *et al.* (2011) suggest that the experiences of an academic's socialisation and transition into higher education can influence their identity as academics as well as their concepts of teaching and learning. The fears that Mary expressed when she described 'waiting for a tap on the shoulder' are a common theme in the literature exploring transitions in to higher education. Such feelings are often described or labelled as an imposter syndrome or phenomenon (Carrillo and Baguley, 2011; Clemans, Berry and Loughran, 2010; Forbes and Jessup, 2004). Zorn (2005) suggests five factors within academia contribute to early career academics feeling like an imposter in their role: aggressive competitiveness, scholarly isolation, highly specialised fields of practice, process valued over product and a lack of mentoring. Clemans, Berry and Loughran, (2010) suggest that such feelings of being an imposter are often evident when professionals who held a self-belief and sense of identity as an expert within one field of practice, move to a new field of practice.

6.4. Processes

I had heard him discussing dissertations with somebody else. Maybe two people but definitely one other lecturer, they had obviously marked a load of things together. I overheard them having the conversation about they did this very well, they seem to have missed that bit out and then they sort of swapped and the other person said what they thought and they come to agreement. So in a sense I suppose I got an idea of the convention of how those things are discussed, does that make sense. (Adam: 4.1.8).

One of the challenges of assessment processes in higher education is that everyone who has been through it *“has picked up approaches to it, by observing what colleagues do”* (Koh, 2010:208). When discussing the practical aspects of marking, the participants would use the interviews as opportunities to voice their developing understanding and critical observations of their own and others marking practices.

6.4.1. Online Marking

Some of the participants had experience of using the online submission software during their first year, as this was becoming the accepted norm within the faculty. Interestingly, none of the participants discussed or compared their experiences of marking online to paper submissions and the effect this might have had on their judgements. Instead there was an acceptance in their observations that marking could be done online. Participants disclosed that they were initially printing off the work to read as paper copies so that they could repeatedly re-read the scripts and review their comments. Alison’s and Fifi’s quotes below demonstrate their sense of achievement and their growing confidence in using the online submission software as they described their initial experiences of online marking rather than printing off paper copies of essays.

I am starting to do more online. The first couple of lots I printed everything out and that was it. The last lot that I did, I did some of them online and just read them through and then did the marking, and that was ok, I don’t know if I will be able to continue with all of that to be able to do it online but, umm, I am getting into that mode more. (Alison: 2.3.161/2.3.162).

I don't expect it will be the way that I do it forever because I am quite IT literate so umm it mostly timing I think umm I fully expect that I will do it all online fairly soon but I am not there yet. (Fifi: 3.2.51).

6.4.2. A Time and a Place to Mark

Consistent with a study by Siler and Kleiner's (2001), all of the participants in this study expressed surprise at the amount of marking that they had been given as new members in the teams. During each of the interviews, the allocation and planning of marking was frequently the topic of conversation. Towards the end of each of the participants' first year they were beginning to develop their own strategies to manage the marking, such as allocating protected time and making a note of the time frames for resubmissions. Mary described how she was planning to use her existing skills to prioritise and manage her workload.

I just think all of the paperwork that has been put in front of me. You want to do this and you need to do that and don't do this and don't do that and. So far I have not been able to achieve half of what people have sort of said to me but I just think it will come. You know it will be done. I got a list of what I need to do, prioritise same as on the ward, you prioritise and that can change from one hour to another you may have to change your priorities. That is how I look at it, if it gets done, it gets done, but sometimes it won't get done and as long as it is not an essential. (Mary: 1.1.42/1.1.43/1.1.44/1.1.45).

Alison's reflection on her first year shared how she was still developing ways to manage the fluctuating workloads that she had experienced.

I think one of the things which I still haven't got quite on board. I need to write down the times when the marking is coming. Because I was not aware of when they were. A colleague of mine said the same thing. We had no idea when the marking is because when you go onto a module it is 'oh yes, come onto my module, do this, do that'. But nobody actually if you are new to the whole system, nobody actually says well of course in May and in June or April/May you are going to have all of this marking. You don't realise until a couple of weeks before and well, these are coming in, and that coming in. I have learnt now that I have got to look and write down when I am going to be marking. (Alison: 2.3.154/2.3.155).

When first marking, participants attempted to mark in their offices but found this distracting, nevertheless there was a sense of uncertainty about

marking off campus or at home. Participants expressed a sense of uncertainty about the need to seek permission to mark at home as the level of autonomy in relation to when and where to work was a concept with which they were unfamiliar in their previous roles.

I have been given very clear advice about slotting it in my diary marking days. I am assuming everybody does. But I guess as you get nearer to those days it is very easy to put something else in. And think well the marking will slip ...a lot of the marking gets done at home. I mean actually it is good place to do the marking at home because you don't have the same distraction. But I think a lot of the marking gets done in home in personal time at home. (Fifi: 3.2.30).

6.5. Chapter Summary

In contrast to the previous chapter, where the voices of the participants alone illustrate their experiences, material has been interwoven into the themes and subthemes discussed here, to illustrate the essence of being-in-the-world-of-marking. The participant's experiences resonate with the limited evidence that discusses newly appointed academics experience of assessment. However, it was interesting to note that it was only within the theme 'accountability and responsibility' that the participants professional status as registered health care practitioners and the professional and academic context of the assessment of students in professional education became evident.

The themes and subthemes explored in this chapter relate to how six newly appointed academics within a professional educational context came to know themselves as novice academics not through the learning of facts about marking but through their experiences and understanding and their self-interpretation(s) of assessment practices within higher education.

The similarities expressed often focused on practical considerations that related to developing new skills and using new processes. While I am making no claims to generalisability, I have used extracts from the experiences of six newly appointed academics with the intention of evoking a 'phenomenological nod', which may resonate with others. The themes and sub themes have been influenced by these experiences and by my extended exploration and engagement within the research based

literature that surrounds assessment and the socialisation of newly appointed academics. However as discussed in chapter four, the interpretations presented in this study are not static and should represent an ongoing discussion that may develop over time as new insights emerge.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this thesis I have focused on ‘assessment practices’ as this was an underexplored aspect of being a new academic. Through the lens of interpretive phenomenology the shared experiences of newly appointed academic staff from health care professions adds to the available literature and this can be used to inform an understanding of assessment practices in higher education. In this closing chapter I conclude the study by returning to the original aim and research questions summarising what can be learned from the experiences of the participants. I have chosen this approach to ensure that the concluding sections of the thesis reflect the practitioner research ethos within my study and the integration of my professional learning and transformation.

7.1. Returning to the Research Questions

In choosing interpretive phenomenology as the methodological and philosophical influences for this study I committed to an approach which required a search for an ontological understanding of being involved in marking as a new academic, rather than an understanding of what can be known about marking. The questions posed therefore explored the lived experiences of six newly appointed academics.

7.1.1. What are the lived experiences of newly appointed academics when they are marking and giving feedback on student coursework?

The probation requirements within the university in which this study was undertaken required newly appointed academics to demonstrate competence in the design, implementation and interpretation of assessment as well as a demonstrated ability to give feedback and mark against assessment criteria. The probation documentation suggests ways to demonstrate this competence, such as the inclusion of examples of marking, peer review, and external examiners’ comments. However these were passive acts. They did not encourage an in-depth self-exploration of the experience of marking and giving feedback to students. The four themes that emerged from the data, judgements, confidence, processes, accountability and responsibility, and the individual experiences shared, highlight that there is a need for the introduction of staff development

opportunities for new staff focusing on assessment practices **in order** to promote a positive transition into higher education.

7.1.2. Do newly appointed academics use their own lived experience of assessment processes when marking and giving feedback on student coursework?

Feedback is an important and challenging aspect of the assessment process since it can affect student achievement and learning. The findings from the experiences shared in this thesis suggest that despite the increased significance of assessment feedback in response to continued student dissatisfaction, new staff needed and wanted guidance on what is meant by effective feedback. It has not been possible to describe in detail the level of professional experience that each of the participants had before entering the university in order to protect their identity. However it was evident throughout all of the interviews that it was the experience of being assessed rather than being an assessor that they drew upon, highlighting that learning was temporal and influenced by their experience and understanding of assessment and marking. When discussing the practical aspects of marking, participants often used the interviews as opportunities to voice their developing understanding of their own and others marking practices. Frequently expressing surprise at how the external and subjective influences they were experiencing could influence their judgements. Further illustrating how each of newly appointed academics came to know themselves not through the learning of facts about marking, but through their experience, understanding and self-interpretation of marking practices.

7.1.3. Are there lived experiences that alter a newly appointed academic's perception of student assessment?

While there was no one experience that can be stated as altering respondents' perception of student assessment, each participant grew in confidence and repeatedly expressed how their existing confidence in personal ability had been affected. Towards the end of each of the participants' first year, they began to develop personal coping strategies. There was also recognition that they were again learning new ways to use their existing professional skills through experience and time. Through

illustrating the participants lived experiences of being-in-the-world-of-marking, this thesis adds to current evidence informing our understanding and awareness of the needs of newly appointed academics working in professional fields. This is significant as this group of academics also act as 'gatekeepers' for their professional disciplines ensuring that the standards expected of new entrants are maintained and upheld.

7.2. Implications for Practice

The experiences detailed in this study are consistent with literature that suggests that mentorship is the key to a newly appointed academic's successful induction, transition, and socialisation into higher education. However, it must be noted that the extracts from participants' interviews shared are not intended as representative illustrations of all newly appointed academics; rather they are examples of six newly appointed academics' experiences within a post 1992 university. The experiences represented and shared in this thesis have been selected with the intention of evoking a 'phenomenological nod' that might resonate with others: highlighting through personal insight and reflection what can be learned for developing assessment practices. The extracts used in Chapters 5 and 6 illustrate the unique experiences of the participants as they began to mark and give feedback on student coursework.

Throughout the thesis, the centrality of assessment for lecturers and students has been recognised supporting the assertion that assessment remains a significant event in the lives of students and academics: and a key performance indicator within higher education. Despite the significance of assessment, there has been limited exploration of this practical aspect of teaching and learning from the perspective of newly appointed academics. Reflecting on a comment Alison made during her final interview about the need for staff development sessions, sessions that would focus on the theory, practice, and regulation of assessment, I began to consider developing an in house staff development. Rather than wait for the conclusion of my doctorate to develop such a workshop the first workshop was delivered in February 2011. These workshops support new staff through encouraging an:

- Exploration of assessment regulations
- Exploration of National Student Survey (NSS) results in relation to assessment and feedback
- Discovery of what the literature says about assessment and feedback
- Discussion of marking and feedback with peers

Eight newly appointed staff attended the first workshop. This gave me an opportunity to discuss and explore the themes that were emerging from my study to see if they resonated with newly appointed academics. Feedback from the first and subsequent events has been positive, with attendees describing these sessions as 'light bulb moments' and workshops that give the 'bigger picture' contextualising what is needed. These sessions have also been described as extremely helpful, as attendees have described that working in an environment where everyone appeared to know what they were doing, that it was reassuring to express anxieties and know other staff felt the same. These workshops supplement the current trend in higher education for interdisciplinary academic development programmes which allow experiences to be shared from a diverse range of professional and disciplinary perspectives.

7.3. Further Enquiry

Influenced by my experiences of undertaking this study there are several areas of further enquiry that I would like to develop. The first area is methodological. I want to undertake an exploration of the researcher's experiences of using different locations to interview to support the existing literature that tends to focus on the experience of the interviewee rather than interviewer. Due to time limitations imposed by the structure of the professional doctorate, it has not been possible for a longitudinal study review over a three to four year period. Further work is therefore needed to explore the challenges that exist for new staff after they have overcome their initial shock of transition; as the findings presented in this study only focused on the first year of employment. Such a study could also cover wider aspects of assessment such as examinations or presentations. Further enquiry might also explore the experience of academics with learning needs such as dyslexia in relation to both their identity as academics and their experiences of assessment.

7.4. Dissemination and Knowledge Transfer

The findings from this study add to the available literature and evidence that informs current understanding of the experience of being a newly appointed academic yet for the findings to be able to enlighten practice they need to be disseminated. The practice orientated applications and recommendations made within the study have been shared with the executive leads for staff development and assessment and learning and presented at an internal conference (Sales, 2013), Further abstracts drawn from the material in this thesis have been accepted at external conferences. Abstracts for papers exploring the following aspects of this study are also planned for submission to peer reviewed journals to support my ongoing professional development as an early career researcher:

- The marking experiences of newly appointed academics,
- Philosophical and methodological congruence in qualitative research,
- The location of interviews considerations for insider-researchers.

7.5. My Journey Continues

Before commencing the Doctorate, I had anticipated that completing the study would be challenging and rewarding. However, I had not anticipated the emotional and intellectual resilience required throughout the past six years. I have kept a research diary which has allowed me to vent my frustrations and fears as well as capture my achievements and challenges. Reading these scribbles and occasional rants, I can appreciate the positive impact that my study has had on my practice as an academic researcher and marker and on the experiences of others around me. Therefore, in conclusion, despite the past six years being the hardest years within my career to date, I hope to continue to develop my research interests through, as Balls (2009) suggests, a level headed, practically reflective approach informed by a good sense of humour and an ability to admit mistakes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix [A] Phase 1 Professional Doctorate in Health and Social Care

Phase 1 (Year 1) 2007-2008		
Module Code	UZVS7C-20-M <i>Compulsory module</i>	20
Module Title	Contemporary Policy and practice in Health and Social Care	
Assessment	4000 word paper exploring governance as a form of contemporary policy and practice within health and social care	
Submission	29.04.08	
Module Code	UB1M4X-30-M <i>Compulsory module</i>	30
Module Title	Research Methods	
Assessment	Split focus assessment, research design proposal 3000 words and two further 1500 exercises exploring quantitative (SPSS) and qualitative research (Documentary analysis)	
Submission	12.05.08	
Module Code	UFQETE-10-M <i>Optional module</i>	10
Module Title	Understanding statistics in Public Health Research.	
Assessment	Split focus assessment paper, the first section of the paper offered a statistical critique of the paper. The second part of the report offers a detailed review of the analysis and statistical conclusions from within the paper concentrating on the χ^2 tests the t tests.	
Submission	01.05.08	
Module Code	UTLGGQ-30-M <i>Optional module</i>	30
Module Title	Philosophical Issues in Educational Research	
Assessment	Two component assessment 10 minute presentation surrounding the researcher-researcher relationship and a 4000 word assessment exploring the question 'How do we know what we know'	
Submission	03.06.08	
Phase 1 [Year 2] 2008-2009		
Module Code	UBIM4Y-30-M	30
Module Title	Research Practice <i>Compulsory module</i>	
Assessment	Two component assessment, research proposal title An exploration of professional socialisation on the marking practices of neophyte nurse academics, and a group project to design a research module	
Submission	12.01.09	
Module Code	UZVS7D-20-M <i>Compulsory module</i>	20
Module Title	Theories, Themes and concepts in health and social care	
Assessment	3000 word assessment exploring the recurrent debate that surrounds the entry of nurse education into Higher Education change the social construction of what it means to be a registered nurse?	
Submission	27.04.09	
RD1 approved at the June 2009 FEC approval obtained July 2009		
Module Code	UZURBG-20-M <i>Optional module</i>	20
Module Title	Evidencing work-based learning	
Assessment	Preparation of a paper for publication topic 'an exploration of honesty and its meaning within nurse education	
Submission	18.06.09	
Total M Level Credit		160

Appendix [B] Probation Requirements

<p>Knowledge of academic subject area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must have appropriately up-to-date knowledge of your subject/discipline and this knowledge must be of an appropriate breadth and depth. You must have appropriate knowledge of current good practice/literature in relation to teaching and learning. You must have appropriate knowledge of the relevant award/regulatory framework across an appropriate range of programmes 	<p>Evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated through contribution to subject group/faculty debate on subject/discipline/interdisciplinary developments. Evidenced by CPD activity and content of teaching materials. Demonstrated through contribution to subject group/faculty debate on teaching and learning strategies. Evidenced by appropriateness of teaching materials to student group and ability to clearly articulate the application of sound teaching and learning strategies in relation to these. Demonstrated through ability to identify relevant documentation and appropriate familiarity with content. Evidenced by application of regulatory frameworks to practice and the ability to clearly articulate the application of regulatory frameworks to decision making.
<p>Teaching and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning. You must demonstrate competence in programme planning (modules, units, series of teaching sessions, short courses, as appropriate). Planning must clearly relate to appropriate teaching and learning outcomes. Conducting Teaching and Learning. You must demonstrate competence in: the conduct of an appropriate variety of teaching and learning sessions; the provision of appropriate academic and pastoral guidance; the use of teaching and learning methods appropriate to the subject/discipline and the students (including designing, selecting and using appropriate learning resources and CandIT. Assessment. You must demonstrate competence in: the design, implementation and interpretation of assessment schemes and methods for appropriate programmes; the giving of feedback to students in relation to a range of work; the appropriate marking against assessment criteria of submitted work. Review: You must demonstrate the ability to reflect critically on your teaching performance and improve your practice. You must be able to adapt to external changes, opportunities and constraints and to adopt appropriate innovations. 	<p>Evidenced by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidenced by examples of appropriate programme planning documentation covering: intended teaching and learning outcomes; teaching and learning methods; assessment criteria. Demonstrated through the formal observation of a variety of teaching and learning sessions. Evidenced by examples of teaching materials, student feedback, peer review. Demonstrated by the ability to clearly explain: the application of assessment criteria to actual marks/feedback given; the relationship between assessment criteria and assessment regulations. Evidenced by: inclusion of clearly articulated assessment criteria in programme planning documentation that are appropriate to the student profile, programme level and mode of study; examples of consistent and rigorous marking; peer review, external examiners comments. Demonstrated by the ability to explain: the development of your current practice in relation to outcomes from critical reflection; plans for future development. Evidence by: personal development plan, examples of the use of student feedback/peer review to guide and develop practice; examples of programme modification in response to external influences.

Research and Scholarship	Evidenced by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning. You must be able to develop appropriate plans for research and/or scholarly activity that will, where appropriate, raise the profile of the Faculty, contribute to teaching and learning, generate income and contribute to RAE. • Conducting Research and Scholarship. You must be able to demonstrate competence in the conduct of appropriate research and/or scholarly activity. • Evaluation. You must demonstrate an appropriate willingness to subject your research/scholarly activity to critical review and to use such feedback to guide and inform planning and the development of research/scholarly practice. • Consultancy/ professional practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated by the ability to clearly explain the relationship between and relevance of planned activity to personal/subject/discipline/interdisciplinary/faculty context. Evidenced by: appropriately detailed research/scholarly activity plans including appropriate and realistic timescales; successful identification/negotiation of necessary resources and support. • Evidenced by: the successful completion of all or parts of planned activity within appropriate timescales and to a standard that enhances the profile of the individual and faculty; the achievement of planned income targets, where appropriate, and achievement of agreed publication or other outputs. • Demonstrated by the ability to clearly explain the development of plans/practice in relation to feedback • Evidenced by: the successful gaining and delivery of contracts, client feedback etc.

Professional Conduct	Evidenced by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal Relationships. You must demonstrate the skills and ability to: build and maintain effective working relationships with others (eg. staff of the faculty and University, students, clients, representatives of external bodies/organisations); establish yourself as an effective team member; influence and negotiate with colleagues in an effective and appropriate manner in order to achieve objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate through informal observation of contribution to meetings, debate, and discussions. Evidence by: examples of feedback from students/peers/clients/external contact; achievement of successful outcomes following a need to influence/negotiate with others; the absence of inappropriate and unacceptable incidents of interpersonal conflict.

Professional Conduct	Evidenced by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Organisation and Effectiveness. You must demonstrate the skills and ability: to organise your time effectively to meet reasonable deadlines; to prioritise tasks/activities appropriately; to organise and provide information in an appropriate way; to use and manage resources appropriately to fulfil your role effectively (eg. CandIT, Library resources, other staff); to participate effectively in meetings and, where appropriate, to be able to chair meetings successfully. • Leadership (as appropriate to role, and normally of particular significance for research staff). You must demonstrate the skills and ability to lead and develop your team successfully. • Professional and ethical behaviour. • Personal Development. You must demonstrate the ability to take responsibility for your personal and professional development. • Flexibility. You must be able to demonstrate a flexible attitude to work appropriate to the degree of change inherent in the HE environment. • Equal Opportunities. You must be able to demonstrate that you recognise and accept the diversity of society and act to foster and maintain dignity at work in relation to all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidenced by: consistently meeting deadlines through effective time management; feedback from peers/academic leaders; examples of effective information provision; examples of the appropriate and effective use of CandIT resources, feedback from the relevant Subject Librarian in relation to personal use and application of library resources in relation to personal development, research and scholarly activity, teaching and learning • Evidenced by: feedback from team members/peers/senior managers; achievement of team objectives; examples of successful management processes (e.g. effective planning and co-ordination, performance management, conflict resolution, development plans • Evidenced by: absence of problems, feedback from peers etc. Evidenced by: the identification of personal and professional development needs based on a process of self-critical appraisal; appropriate development planning; achievement of development objectives; undertaking development activities • Evidenced by examples of: making a positive contribution to debates on change; personal adjustment to meet changing demands; leading by example; supporting others through change; demonstration of personal resilience when managing the consequences of change.

(UWE, 2003)

Appendix [C] Academic Development Programme

Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

The Programme takes the form of a year of part-time study that is designed to support probation whilst enabling development as a teacher and in respect of other key roles of an academic member of staff. It requires attendance for a total of 20 afternoons, plus some directed study and a series of activities making use of various facets of your work (such as peer observation of teaching). Details of the three modules that go to make up the qualification are outlined below. Please note that the course operates fully within the same University Academic Regulations and Procedures that apply to students. A brief description of each module

Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

This module focuses on the twin themes of learning and teaching. Whilst it includes some introductory material for those course members with little or no previous teaching experience, its overall goal is to enhance the professional competence, self-awareness and understanding of academic staff as teachers and in terms of their responsibilities for others' learning. A philosophy of critical reflective practice underpins the module, implying that the starting-point for course members is their own past and contemporary experience as learners and teachers. The experiences form the basis for individual, group-based and directed study activities. Course members will be encouraged to participate actively in the sessions.

Investigating Academic & Professional Practice in Higher Education

This module offers an opportunity to design and implement a small-scale empirical investigation which is intended to develop academic and/or professional practice. The module aims to provide frameworks within which lecturers can critically explore research into higher education whilst considering their own skills and potential as researchers. Participants draw on HE research reflexively for their own professional practice, and consider an appropriate applied educational research method for their investigation. It also seeks to build an understanding of the structures and mechanisms within which the academic operates as researcher, administrator, manager and teacher, including those concerned with the measurement of quality.

The Practice of Teaching in Higher Education

This module focuses directly on your own practical teaching. It involves the logging of a significant amount of your teaching, the evaluation of key aspects of this teaching and the identification of opportunities for consolidation, change or improvement. The principal mechanism for this takes the form of visits from an experienced colleague acting as 'tutor' and a number of other colleague visits in a mutual arrangement with a peer. Such visits are followed by feedback using a small number of criteria. There is also a short written component requiring reflection and connection with relevant ideas in the literature.

(UWE, 2011)

Appendix [D] SEEC Credit Level Descriptors

September 2009

Undergraduate Marking Grid adapted from SEEC Guidelines – LEVEL 1

Percentage	0-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100
Overall Descriptor	Very Poor	Poor	Inadequate	Acceptable	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent	Outstanding
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING									
Knowledge Base: has a relevant factual and/or conceptual knowledge base with emphasis on the nature of the field of study and appropriate terminology	Little or no relevant material &/or significant factual errors	Insufficient relevant material &/or factual errors	Some relevant material but significant omissions &/or factual errors	Some relevant material and adequate understanding, but some omissions.	Relevant with a satisfactory level of understanding but some omissions	Substantial and appropriate use of material	Comprehensive selection and utilisation of material	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Exceptional depth and understanding
Ethical Issues: can demonstrate awareness of ethical issues in current areas of study and is able to discuss these in relation to personal beliefs and values	Little or no awareness &/or discussion	Insufficient awareness &/or discussion	Limited awareness &/or discussion	Evidence of acceptable awareness but limited discussion	Satisfactory awareness and debate	Substantial awareness and debate of issues	Comprehensive awareness and debate of issues	Extensive awareness and ability to debate issues	Exceptional awareness and debate
INTELLECTUAL SKILLS									
Analysis: able to break a topic down into the component parts to demonstrate understanding of the topic as a whole. Can analyse with guidance.	Little or no analysis	Insufficient analysis	Descriptive, little evidence of analysis	Evidence of acceptable analysis but somewhat limited	Satisfactory analysis	Substantial analysis evident	Comprehensive analysis evident	Extensive and detailed analysis	Exceptional level of analysis and awareness of complexities and contradictions
Synthesis: can logically pull together ideas and information to a relevant purpose	Little or no synthesis	Insufficient synthesis	Limited synthesis	Evidence of acceptable synthesis but somewhat limited	Satisfactory synthesis	Substantial evidence of synthesis	Comprehensive synthesis evident	Extensive synthesis	Exceptional synthesis, demonstrating creativity and imagination
Evaluation: Can make judgements regarding the value of materials toward a relevant purpose	Little or no evaluation	Insufficient evaluation	Limited evaluation	Evidence of acceptable evaluation but somewhat limited	Satisfactory evaluation	Substantial evaluation	Comprehensive evaluation	Extensive evaluation	Exceptional evaluation throughout
Application: can apply relevant concepts/tools/methods effectively and begin to demonstrate understanding of complexity of the issues	Little or no application	Insufficient application	Limited application	Evidence of acceptable application but somewhat limited	Satisfactory application	Substantial application	Comprehensive application	Extensive application	Exceptional application

Percentage	0-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100
Overall Descriptor	Very Poor	Poor	Inadequate	Acceptable	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent	Outstanding
TRANSFERABLE SKILLS									
Management of Learning Resources: can manage information and collect appropriate data from a range of sources. Can reference material appropriately.	Little or no evidence of appropriate management of learning resources	Insufficient evidence of appropriate management of learning resources	Limited evidence of appropriate management of learning resources	Evidence of acceptable management of resources but somewhat limited	Satisfactory evidence of range of resources	Substantial range of resources used	Comprehensive selection and use of a range of relevant resources	Extensive selection and use of a range of relevant resources	Exceptional selection and use of a range of relevant resources
Communication: can communicate effectively in a format appropriate to the topic	incoherent and/or incomprehensible	Insufficient and/or unclear	Limited expression	Generally acceptable but some limitations	Satisfactory communication	Clear and concise, with effective signposting of ideas	Effective, appropriate and professional	Excellent communication and presentation	Exceptional ability to communicate and structure effectively
Group working: can work effectively with others as a member of a group and meet obligations to others	Little or no evidence of appropriate working skills	Insufficient group working skills	Limited group working skills	Evidence of acceptable group working skills but somewhat limited	Satisfactory group working skills	Substantial evidence of appropriate group working skills	Comprehensive evidence of effective group working skills	Excellent group working skills demonstrated	Exceptional group working skills demonstrated
Self evaluation: can evaluate own strengths and weaknesses within set criteria	Little or no evidence of self evaluation	Insufficient self evaluation demonstrated	Limited self evaluation demonstrated	Acceptable self evaluation demonstrated but somewhat limited	Satisfactory self evaluation	Substantial evidence of self evaluation	Comprehensive evidence of self evaluation	Excellent self evaluation demonstrated	Exceptional self evaluation demonstrated
Autonomy: can take responsibility for own learning with appropriate support	Little or no evidence of appropriate autonomy	Insufficient autonomy demonstrated	Limited autonomy demonstrated	Acceptable autonomy demonstrated but somewhat limited	Satisfactory autonomy demonstrated	Substantial evidence of autonomy	Comprehensive evidence of autonomy	Extensive evidence of autonomy	Exceptional autonomy demonstrated
Problem solving: can apply relevant tools/methods effectively to a problem and can begin to appreciate the complexity of issues relating to the solution of that problem	Little or no evidence of appropriate problem solving	Insufficient evidence of appropriate problem solving	Limited evidence of appropriate problem solving	Acceptable evidence of appropriate problem solving but somewhat limited	Satisfactory problem solving evident	Substantial evidence of appropriate problem solving	Comprehensive evidence of appropriate problem solving	Excellent problem solving demonstrated	Exceptional problem solving demonstrated
PRACTICAL SKILLS									
Application of skills: can operate in predictable, defined contexts that require use of a specified range of practical skills	little or no evidence of appropriate application of skills	Insufficient evidence of appropriate application of skills	Limited application of skills	Acceptable application of skills but somewhat limited	Satisfactory application of skills	Substantial evidence of appropriate application of skills	Comprehensive evidence of appropriate application of skills	Excellent application of skills demonstrated	Exceptional application of skills demonstrated
Autonomy in skill use: is able to act with limited autonomy within defined guidelines and with appropriate supervision	Little or no evidence of appropriate autonomy in skill use	Insufficient autonomy in skill use demonstrated	Limited autonomy in skill use demonstrated	Acceptable autonomy in skill use demonstrated but somewhat limited	Satisfactory autonomy in skill use demonstrated	Substantial evidence of autonomy in skill use	Comprehensive evidence of autonomy in skill use	Extensive evidence of autonomy in skill use	Exceptional autonomy in skill use

Appendix [E] University's policy governing the assessment

The University's policy governing the assessment of students is based on the following principles:

- that assessment is an integral part of a dynamic learning and teaching process and not separate from it
- that assessment plays a key part in the rigorous setting and maintaining of academic standards
- that all students are entitled to parity of treatment
- that for assessment purposes, in relation to the same module, there should be no distinction between different modes of study
- that progression is achieved by credit accumulation and the completion of pre-requisites and co-requisites
- that due attention is paid to the assessment requirements of professional bodies
- that different module learning outcomes should be recognised by and reflected in different forms of assessment
- that explicit criteria against which student performance is assessed should be available to students in advance of their assessment
- that all students should be afforded maximum opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, competencies and overall strengths through a variety of assessed activities
- that assessment practice is scrutinised by external examiners in order to maintain and monitor standards and to ensure consistency and comparability across modules in the fields to which they are appointed
- that the outcome of assessment at programme level is monitored by a chief external examiner in order to ensure consistency and parity of approach across all programmes offered by a faculty
- that all students are consulted and kept fully informed about expectations, processes and the outcomes of assessment
- that all methods used to assess student performance are fair and fit for purpose and are compliant with extant legislation
- that the assessment process is carried out by appropriately qualified and competent staff.

Academic Regulations and Procedures 2009-2010 (UWE, 2009)

Appendix [F] Assessment Lifecycles

Stage	Sub Stages
Creation of the assessment task	Writing, revising and/or moderating the assessment task. Creating guidelines. Sourcing data. Case study materials. Reference materials
Supporting students with the assessment	Providing documents online, e.g. assessment brief and criteria. Deadline. Exemplars. Formatting information. Facilitating discussions of the assessment and expectations (peer and student-tutor). Facilitating peer and/or tutor feedback on work in progress
Assessment event	Preparing for assessment event. E.g. setting up testing environment or systems to receive submissions. Accepting submissions. E.g. essay or poster or running an assessment event. E.g. examination or oral presentation. Managing deadlines: late submissions and extensions. Tracking submissions. Submission to plagiarism detection software (TurnitinUK). Safe and secure storage. Anonymising submissions
Managing the marking and moderation process	Pre-marking moderation by the team. Facilitating communication within marking team. Distribution of marking to team
Marking and feedback production	Marking Producing feedback
Moderation	Moderation or double marking Indicating progress in marking Communication with external examiner
Record keeping	Collating and aggregating marks Storing marks Exporting module lists of marks to the institutional record system (Banner)
Feedback to students	Return feedback to students Return assessments and/or feedback to students Provide group feedback Provide opportunities to discuss feedback
Quality and standards	Comparison of marks across cohorts, assessments and modules Future moderation considerations Evaluation of effectiveness of the assessment Feed into module development
(McNeil, Borg and Tomas, 2011:E24)	

Appendix [G] Moderation of Marks

F5	<i>Definition: Moderation can be defined as a specific process that seeks to ensure consistency, fairness and rigour in the assessment of students. A typical outcome of the moderation of the marking process might be a rescaling of a whole batch of student outputs relating to a module.</i>
F5.1R	All Level M dissertations shall be double marked with no marks or comments from the first marker visible to the second marker.
F5.2R	All Level M projects shall be double marked with no marks or comments from the first marker visible to the second marker.
F5.3R	All level 3 projects shall be double marked with no marks or comments from the first marker visible to the second marker.
F5.4R	All level 2 projects shall be double marked with no marks or comments from the first marker visible to the second marker.
F5.5R	A presentation which counts for more than one quarter of the total assessment weighting of a module shall be assessed by more than one member of staff.
F5.6R	Sample double marking shall be carried out at element level (or component level where there is no sub-division into elements) for all other modules at all levels. Exceptions, for practical reasons are:
	(i) the practice component of professional practice modules (ii) any team taught element or component for which the work of an individual student is jointly assessed by more than one member of staff (iii) placements.
F5.7R	The sample to be double-marked shall reflect the full range of performance for each cohort on each module version run.
F5.8R	The basis for sampling shall be determined collectively under the guidance of the field leader; the process shall be organised by the module leader who shall report to the field board any action taken to moderate marks as a result of the sampling process.
F5.9R	Tutor-marked coursework and examination activities undertaken for formal assessment purposes at any level by any student of the University may be included in the sample from each module which is to be double-marked, drawing on the informed judgement of at least two appropriately qualified members of staff in the field owning the module.
UWE (2009)	

Appendix [H] Sources of Frustration When Marking Assignments

Poor language, grammar and expression

- Poor grammar, punctuation and spelling (especially when there's a spell check on the word processor)
- Not bothering to proof read so the essay contains sentences that make no sense at all
- Failing to proof read assignment for typos, spelling mistakes, grammar, etc.
- No paragraphs or single sentence paragraphs
- Acronyms used without full explanations being given first

Poor referencing and references

- Missing references- references that do not appear in reference list and vice versa
- Incomplete references- bad referencing – anything from missing page numbers, misspelled author names
- References not correctly formatted (following the guidelines)
- Failing to reference or failing to reference/site correctly despite being given an assignment guide which details how to reference.
- Reference lists not in alphabetical order
- Referencing, particularly brackets not being in the right place
- Absence of references within the text
- Arguments not referenced properly (e.g. no references)
- Poor references
- Using weak references e.g. Readers Digest, 9 o'clock news etc.
- Web references
- Using too many internet sources. A small number may be ok, particularly when they come from reputable sources, however copious unrecognised sources will not do.

Presentation

- Assignments with no page numbers
- Poor binders that make it difficult to read
- Headings appearing at the foot of the page with the relevant text appearing on the next page
- Putting the wrong module name down
- Small/ illegible fonts. Neglecting to double space, paginate essays...
- Putting every sheet of paper in a separate plastic cover (I know it is not about marking but it is irritating nevertheless)

Other sources of frustration when marking essays

- Too much description, too little critical analysis
- Describing rather than critically analysing – this is particularly significant given I generally mark level 3 and masters work
- Not providing some sort of critique of, or reflection on, the work they have read (i.e. assuming because it is in print it must be "right")

Poor introductions and conclusions

- No clear introduction or salient conclusion to the assignment
- Not introducing to the reader the content of the assignment or the context
- New information in the conclusion
- Things talked about in the conclusion that were discussed in the body of the text leaving me to go back to see if I missed it

Not following guidelines for presentation and word limits

- Not adhering to student guidelines on presentation of assignments
- Incomplete front sheet
- Not adhering to the word limit

Poor structure (organisation/use of headings)

- Poor structure which means that you comment on the absence of detail when the relevant detail appears later on
- Essays lack structure and seem to hop from one theme to the next at random; no sense of flow, very little/ if any signposting

Inappropriate use of appendices

- Appendices that are not referred to or discussed in the assignment or have little point for being there
- Poor use (almost any use) of appendices, usually an attempt to gain more words
- Appendices which include masses of information that is not referred to in the text and failure to guide the reader through them

Failing to answer the question

- Writing an abridged version of the essay question on the front page (and then of course failing to answer the question or task set)
- Failing to answer the question or task set/writing off topic

Over use of quotations

- Overlong direct quotations
- Using too many direct quotes

Failing to read the relevant literature

- Not using up to date references/poor reading round the subject
- Failing to engage with literature
- Not reading widely enough to give a basis for the arguments (or assertions)

Problems with tables and figures

- Tables and figures that appear from nowhere – without introduction and, worse still sometimes without any explanation
- Tables and figures not numbered or discussed

Greasley and Cassidy (2010)

Appendix [I] Paradigms Comparison

Basic Beliefs (metaphysics) of alternative inquiry paradigms				
<i>item</i>	<i>Positivism</i>	<i>Post positivism</i>	<i>Critical Theory</i>	<i>Constructivism</i>
Ontology	Naïve realism- 'real' reality but apprehensible	Critical realism- 'real' reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible	Historical realism- virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystallized overtime	Relativism-local and specific constructed and co-constructed realities
Epistemology	Dualist/objectivist; findings true	Modified dualist/ objectivist; critical tradition/ community; findings probably true	Transactional/ subjectivist; value- mediated findings	Transactional/subj ectivist; created findings
Methodology	Experimental/ manipulative; verification of hypothesis; chiefly quantitative methods	Modified experimental/ manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypothesis; may include qualitative methods	Dialogic/ dialectical	Hermeneutical/ dialectical
Paradigm positions on selected practical issues				
<i>item</i>	<i>Positivism</i>	<i>Post positivism</i>	<i>Critical Theory</i>	<i>Constructivism</i>
Inquiry aim	Explanation; prediction and control		Critique and transformation; restitution and emancipation	Understanding reconstruction
Nature of knowledge	Verified hypothesis established as facts or laws	Nonfalsified hypothesis that are probable facts or laws	Structural/ historical insights	Individual or collective reconstructions coalescing around consensus
Knowledge accumulation	Accretion-'building blocks' adding to 'edifice of knowledge'; generalizations and cause-effect linkages		Historical revisionism; generalization by similarity	More informed and sophisticated reconstructions; vicarious experience
Goodness or quality criteria	Conventional benchmarks of 'rigor'; internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity		Historical situatedness; erosion of ignorance and misapprehension; action stimulus	Trustworthiness and authenticity, including catalyst for action
Values	Excluded- influence denied		Included-formative	Included-formative
Ethics	Extrinsic; tilt toward deception		Intrinsic; moral tilt toward revelation	Intrinsic; process tilt toward revelation; special problems
Voice	'Disinterested scientist' as informer of decision makers, policy makers, and change agents		'Transformative intellectual' as advocate and activist	'passionate participant' as facilitator of multivoice reconstruction
Training	Technical and quantitative; substantive theories	Technical; quantitative and qualitative; substantive theories	Resocialization; qualitative and quantitative; history; values of altruism, empowerment, and liberation	
Accommodati on	Commensurable		Incommensurable with previous two	
Hegemony	In control of publication, funding, promotion, and tenure		Seeking recognition and input; offering challenges to predecessor paradigms, aligned with postcolonial aspirations	
(Guba and Lincoln 2008:257-258).				

Appendix [J] Ethics Approval

Our ref: SE/lt

04 August 2009

Rachel Sales
UWE
School of Health & Social Care
Glenside
Room 2C15

Dear Rachel

Application number: HSC/09/07/34

Application title: An exploration of the transition and professional socialisation of neophyte academics

Your ethics application was considered at the School Research Ethics Sub-Committee meeting of 28th July 2009 and based on the information provided was given ethical approval to proceed with the following conditions:

1. A15. Your supervisor is the sponsor of your research.
2. Participant information sheet.
- Please add a sentence to indicate that direct quotes may be used in publications but that they will be anonymised.

If these conditions include providing further information please do not proceed with your research until you have full approval from the committee. You must notify the committee in advance if you wish to make any significant amendments to the original application.

Please note that all information sheets and consent forms should be on UWE headed paper.

If you have to terminate your research, please inform the School Research Ethics Sub-Committee within 14 days, indicating the reasons for early termination.

Please be advised that as principal investigator you are responsible for the secure storage and destruction of data at the end of the specified period. A copy of the 'Guidance on Managing Research Records' is enclosed for your information.

bettertogether

University of the West of England, Bristol
Vice-Chancellor Professor Steven West

Appendix [K] Participant Information Sheet



University of the
West of England

Researcher: Rachel Sales
Institution: University of the West of England
Tel: 0117 32 88612
Email: rachel2.sales@uwe.ac.uk

An exploration of the transition and professional socialisation of neophyte academics. Participant Information Sheet 16.08.09 Version 4

Dear

I would like to invite you to take part in the above study which has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences (28.07.2009). However, before you decide it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

Who am I?

I am a senior lecturer at the University of the West of England. I am undertaking this research as part of my Professional Doctorate in Health and Social Care supervised by Dr Theresa Mitchell and Dr Derek Sellman.

Background

Newly appointed academics with limited experience of teaching in the health and social care disciplines are often experienced practitioners moving from being experts in their previous roles to novices in the academic setting, through the process of transition and professional socialisation.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study will explore the influence that role transition and professional socialisation has on newly appointed academics. Focusing on assessment and the impact that a professional identity in transition may have on judgements when assessing students' written work.

Why have you been selected?

You have been selected to participate in this study as you are a newly appointed academic who meets the following criteria.

Inclusion criteria

New appointment with less than 1 months employment within the university
Active registration with either the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the Health Professions Council (HPC) or the General Social Care Council (GCCC),

Exclusion criteria

Employment contract less than 12 months,
Previous contracted employment within HE or FE
Previous experience of assessing student's written work in HE or FE
Where will the research take place? And what will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be invited to three interviews which will be held at Campus, University of the West of England. The first interview will be arranged for the end of your first working month. The second interview will be arranged for the end of your fifth working month and the final interview will be arranged for the end of your ninth working month. Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes to an hour be digitally recorded and transcribed; your identity will be kept anonymous throughout the transcription through the use of an agreed pseudonym.

What are the potential benefits and risks of taking part?

The potential benefit of participating in the study is the development of your awareness of assessment in Higher Education. However it is important to acknowledge that sharing information always carries the risk that it might evoke difficult feelings or experiences such uncertainty during your transition and initial probation period. If this should occur, you are able to use any of the support mechanisms available within the faculty such as your colleagues, your line manager or the employee assistance programme.

Will my participation in this study be kept confidential?

Yes, any information collected during the study will be kept confidential. You will be identified by a unique number and an agreed pseudonym. The unique research number that connects you to your interview data will be kept separate and secure to the interview transcripts by the researcher. Any information which could identify you from the interview transcripts will be removed so that you cannot be recognised.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings will be submitted for publication to academic journals, conferences and professional fora adding to the emerging literature base exploring the social transition of newly appointed and neophyte academics in health and social care education. I also hope to use the findings from the study to inform the support and induction process for new academic staff within the School of Health and Social Care. No data within these will be identifiable to any individual department or programme of study. Direct quotes may be used in publications but these will be anonymised.

Although your participation in this study will be greatly valued, you are not required to participate. You can withdraw your involvement and data from the study at any point. A decision to withdraw or a decision not to take part, will not affect current or future employment prospects in any way. If you have any questions about the study, or would like more information please feel free to contact me or either of my supervisors.

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to give your consent by completing and returning one copy of the enclosed consent forms.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. M. J. Bell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thank you for reading this information.

Appendix [L] Participant Consent Form



University of the
West of England

An exploration of the transition and professional socialisation of neophyte academics.

Participant Consent Form 16.08.09 Version 4

Please initial each box

- 1) I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet 17.08.09 Version 4.
- 2) I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- 3) I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw my consent and interviews at any time, without giving any reason, and without my current or future employment prospects being affected in any way.
- 4) I agree to participate in each of the interviews.
- 5) I agree to the interviews being digitally recorded.
- 6) I understand that the findings from the study will be shared with colleagues through internal staff development events external publication and conferences.

Participant's Name

Date

Signature

Rachel Sales

Researcher's Name

Date

Signature

Participant research number for this study:

Participant pseudonym to be used in the study: