Sabre-Tooth Revisited: Exploring models of educational change in Study Programmes.

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ABSTRACT

The practitioner research presented in this thesis provides a specific case study of the implementation, delivery, and evaluation of Study Programmes at a Further Education (FE) college. This unique case study, carried out in a college that has been through a turbulent time with repeated Ofsted inspections, increasing financial restraint, and numerous restructures, provides an insight into models of educational change as well as models of curriculum design and development in Further Adult and Vocational Education (FAVE) contexts in England (Sarason 1971, Stenhouse 1975. Benjamin in Golby 1975). It addresses the impact of the implementation of Study Programmes through funding changes where the expectation is that students are working towards a GCSE grade 4 in both Maths and English alongside a core or vocational subject.

A striking impact of the introduction of Study Programmes is that two-thirds of students engaged in them are experiencing exam stress when repeating GCSE Maths/English exams, while improved achievement is only 12%, leading in some cases to embedding Maths and English being labelled by some tutors as “Curriculum Dumping”. Study Programmes are clearly well-intentioned but are introduced from the top-down and are evaluated through public performance tables. This thesis argues that this policy phenomenon is a classic example of a Technical-Rational approach to educational reform continually locking well-intentioned educational policy into cycles of predicable failure in practice. This thesis considers the shortcomings of such Technical-Rational approaches to curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation. It considers to what extent Dewey’s (1933) Pragmatic Epistemology, as built upon and developed by Fielding et al (2005) in the form of Joint Practice Development (JPD), may be more helpful in supporting the development and improvement of educational practice. It explores how Study Programmes might be made better in practice so that students’ access to higher level qualifications is not curtailed and neither is their opportunity to develop in a craft. This realises Wolf’s ambition where ‘No young person should be in an education or training programme which denies them the chance to progress’ (Wolf 2011: 20).

Drawing upon the notion of the ‘Saber-tooth Curriculum’ (Benjamin 1939), as a storied metaphor that the curriculum needs to be adaptable through time, this thesis uses the story of *Newfist* to discover to what extent curriculum design must engage in the social context it is created or risk quickly becoming redundant. Data collection is conducted, not from a positivist, but from a constructivist-interpretive position, with a mixed methods approach. By examining narrative accounts of experiences from staff, students, and managers, this thesis offers insights into the ‘lived experiences’ of curriculum planning, teaching and learning in relation the Study Programme courses on offer at my FE college. Findings from analysis of the data indicate that JPD offers opportunities for tutors and education leaders to make well-intentioned policy ideas ‘good’ in practice in more collaborative and co-operative ways. Accounts of the experiences of the challenges, dilemmas and possibilities encountered by FE tutors and education leaders as they work together to put well-intended policy into practice in educationally sound ways in context are also reported and discussed. This is a very personal exploration for me as a tutor and manager as I want to continue to make effective education changes in my Study Programmes that benefit my students. This challenges discourses in education ‘where the ‘wiseman’ saw no need to discuss the curriculum as it should always be done that way’ (Benjamin 1939:). The thesis closes by recommending ways tutors and tutor-leaders might harness the principles of JPD to help to address misconceptions of knowledge and support coherent and multifaceted curriculum models, pedagogies, practices that are capable of supporting educational change and improvement in more sustainable ways.

Keywords: Models of Curriculum, Further Education, GCSE English, GCSE Maths, Joint Practice Development, pedagogic principles, practice, Pragmatic Epistemology, Study Programmes, Technical-Rational worldviews.

CHAPTER 1: STUDY PROGRAMMES AND THE POLICY PRACTICE GAP.

Educational policy is (almost) always a well-intended response to a perceived educational problem. The question, however, is why so many well-intended educational policies either fail to make it into, or flounder in, education practice? This is certainly the case when considering the delivery of 'Study Programmes'. In 2011 Alison Wolf reported, 'Post-16 English and Mathematics should be a required component of Study Programmes for those without good GCSEs in these subjects' (Wolf 2011: 10-11). The rationale she gave for this was that, 'We need to ensure that students have every opportunity to gain the most important and generalisable skills, including those gained in employment. This means making certain that institutions focus on students' demands and needs, not on those of government agencies, and that the funding and oversight regime for 14–19-year-olds helps institutions to be flexible, efficient, and directly responsive to labour market changes' (Wolf 2011: 10). Wolf concluded that a Study Programme was more expansive than just a vocational pathway and should mean that 'No young person should be in an education or training programme which denies them the chance to progress, immediately or later in life, or fails to equip them with the skills needed for such mobility' (Wolf 2011: 20).

The Study Programme policy, therefore, was intended to enhance vocational teaching, make it more fit-for-purpose and, maybe, even make it a more holistic educational experience. Wolf also notes that 'programmes will vary in how they organise this, depending on the students concerned' (Wolf 2011: 11), but this last point begins to bring the origins of the problem to light. Essentially, if Study Programmes can 'vary' then there is no benchmark or set of pedagogic principles guiding the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of Study Programmes. If a Study Programme is supposed to be more holistic and meaningful, how will we know a 'good' one when we see it in practice? Wolf (2011) offers little advice to address the practical problems faced by vocational tutors, managers, and organisations, trying to make Study Programmes 'good' in practice. In this chapter, I will provide a detailed discussion of my further

education college but before this, I begin by looking at the key debates whirring around this topic.

Frank Coffield (2011) draws attention to the issues of putting policy ideas into practice, which is that ‘in education the response of politicians and policy-makers to any difficulty has always been to build an extension to the ‘system’’ (Coffield 2011: 2). The justification for the introduction of Study Programmes is surmised by Coffield as professionals and politicians who ‘keep making changes so that our ‘system’ catches up with, and then overtakes those judged the best in the world’ (Coffield 2011: 2). For Wolf, the main concern is that ‘Every other country in the developed world concentrates on improving the language and mathematics skills of its post-16 vocational students, and so, belatedly, should England’ (Wolf 2011: 11). However, Edwards argues that the English vocational training system is ‘a system unfit for its own purposes, and damagingly narrow in what it is intended to achieve’ (Edwards in Coffield 2011: x). The real problem is that there seems to be a gap between idea of Wolf’s Study Programme, policy, and how it is being implemented in practice.

To understand this gap, it is helpful to explore the implementation and delivery of Study Programmes. However, to do so will require an in-depth analysis of the definition of Practice. Through this analysis, we might start to see why putting policy into practice is problematic. For example, the work of Joseph Dunne (2005) defines a ‘practice’ as,

> *A coherent and invariably quite complex set of activities and tasks that has evolved co-operatively and cumulatively over time. It is alive in the community who are its insiders (i.e., its genuine practitioners) and it stays alive only so long as they sustain a commitment to creatively develop and extend it – sometimes by shifts which may at the time seem dramatic or even subversive. Central to any such practice are standards of excellence, themselves subject to development and redefinition, which demand responsiveness from those who are, or are trying to become practitioners (Dunne 2005: 152-153)*

From this definition, it is possible to see some of the problems faced by the Study Programme in moving towards their realisation in practice. Firstly, it has not evolved in a ‘co-operatively’ and ‘cumulatively’ way. Tutors are not ‘insiders’

who are working in collaborative and cooperative spaces in which they can keep Study Programmes alive in a community. Therefore, to bridge any gap between Study Programmes and their application in practice we need to not only understand the term practice but also its relationship to the co-operative and cumulative development of the curriculum in terms of context, design, delivery, implementation, and evaluation.

A serious study of how the development of a Study Programme policy could become a reality in terms of good educational practice would also need to be able to admit, drawing upon other ways of understanding knowledge and practice beyond the confines, assumptions, divisions and distinctions inherent in Technical-Rational world views. Here the work of Aristotle, informing Dewey's (1933) pragmatic epistemology, regarding how different knowledges are acquired through trial-and-error experience, reflection, and critical discourse is useful. This would also involve an exploration of if and how vocational curricula can address the multi-disciplinary imperatives of the theory of Study Programmes. Which Schwab (1964) succinctly recognises as 'one of the most difficult of terrains; investigation of the nature, variety, and extent of human knowledge' (Schwab [1964] in Golby et al 1975: 249). Schwab discusses how disciplines are built on the assumption that each body of knowledge is different. As Dewey (1933) agrees, knowledge, theory and practice have no such easily defined boundaries. Within any analysis of the Study Programmes in practice there is also a need to address the range of subjects and disciplines which are designed in a vocational Study Programme. These include success in a GCSE in Maths, and an English GCSE (both assessed through pen and paper examinations), and how these are designed into a Study Programme. This has given rise to terms such as 'embedding' and 'promoting' which are also used to evaluate successful Study Programmes. There is a question here over how effective this mixture of vocational training, subjects, disciplines and assessment regimes meets the holistic learning needs of the student. As Wolf commented, the Study Programme should meet the 'demands and needs' (Wolf 2011: 10) of the student. To explore this more thoroughly it is helpful to consider three issues while remembering how these influence and impact upon one another in a complex 'practice' in a classroom.

Study Programme and perspectives of knowledge.

In vocational education, there is a need to consider the importance of how knowledge of the vocation is acquired, tested, and refined. As suggested previously, there has been a separation of knowledge so that vocational skills and the more 'academic' Maths and English curricula have been seen to reside in different disciplines or vocational/academic areas of practice (Hyland 2018). The practices employed, rightly or wrongly, have been slightly different. For Dewey (1933) this type of segregation of knowledge is narrowing and in Schwab's view 'To one degree or another, all other disciplines test the reliability of their conclusions by appealing to canons of reasoning and of evidence which are developed in the first place by a discipline of logic' (Schwab in Golby et al 1975: 250) and these 'canons of reasoning' do not fit neatly into educational subjects. This study of the nature of knowledge, its construction, and how it is shared and developed is a main issue for the Study Programme. If the Study Programme curriculum is to be truly holistic for students, then these disciplines, which contain wide-ranging sets of knowledge that are submerged in historical pedagogies of their own, need to be understood, discussed and developed in practice. It is also important to capture that there are shared epistemological elements here such as the endorsement of summative assessment as an indicator of having acquired knowledge. That knowledge in this model is measurable and testable. Although this may be different in terms of mechanism the underlying assumption of it being evidential is clear.

Knowledge as it is presented in the well-intentioned idea of a Study Programme is defined as 'Coherent Programmes of learning and activity for all young people [which] should be the centre of attention for educational institutions' (Wolf 2011: 22), but to what extent is this achievable in practice? To determine achievement, it is important to consider that 'the purposes and practices of education differ from time to time and place to place. These variations are partly due to the cultural, social, economic and political priorities of the time and partly to do with different ideas about what constitutes knowledge and truth' ([Lawton and Gordon, 2002] in Gregson and Todd 2018: 2). This is illustrated in the

notion of the ‘Saber-tooth Curriculum’ (Benjamin 1939) as a storied metaphor that the curriculum needs to be adaptable through time because if a curriculum is rigid and fixed to a historical position its impact on improving learning is severely curtailed, and does not allow for crucial adaption. Therefore, ‘Even if he (sic) is fortunate enough to learn from a skilled practitioner the danger is that he is learning about yesterday’s practice rather than looking forward to tomorrow’ (Browne and Silbeck 1968 in Golby et al 1975: 485) and this would not meet the needs and demands of the student as interpreted by Wolf (2011).

However, there is another dimension at work here which Hyland (2018) refers to as the ‘low status’ of vocational studies’ (Hyland 2018: 305). Study Programmes exist in a significant discourse around the value of vocational studies. Wolf (2011) remarks that ‘English education is also failing far too many people; and those who are ill-served are to be found, overwhelmingly, outside the conventional academic tracks’ (Wolf 2011: 21). In Coughlan’s (2015) article he illustrates that the UK has a low-percentage of young people involved in vocational studies. He begins by commenting that vocational education; ‘Everyone says it’s a good thing and it’s vital for the economy. But – and there is always a ‘but’, it’s still the academic pathway that has the higher status. As the saying goes, vocational education is ‘a great thing… for other people’s children’ (Coughlan 2015 also quoted in Hyland 2018: 306). For Wolf, the Study Programme was seen to be the solution to a problem regarding the quality of post-16 education but, particularly for vocational education. Following Dewey (1933), if all knowledge is to be respected, then the emphasis on the kind of knowledge as it is taught, learned and assessed in the GCSE versions of English and Maths in the policy implementation may be a challenge too far. In addition, there is little guidance or support let alone practical examples available, as to how the Study Programme curriculum should be integrated in practice for those students studying a vocation, or what Sennett (2008) would call a ‘craft’.

Sennett (2008) views the development of craft as involving ‘about ten thousand hours of experience [that] are required to produce a master carpenter or musician. Various studies show that as skill progresses, it becomes more

problem-attuned, like the lab technician worrying about procedure, whereas people with primitive levels of skill struggle more exclusively on getting things to work' (Sennett 2008: 20). Ultimately the question is, can the Study Programme nurture the development of the coherent and well-rounded practice of a 'craftsman' (or woman)? Linking back to Dewey's discussion of the role of trial and error in creating knowledge, what is key here is that a student is not only given the information of about the knowledge, skills, routines and traditions of vocation but also the freedom to create new knowledge and practices that improve and advance the craft. This would include applying the crucial numeracy and literacy skills of that craft, as well as the discourse and dialogue in which to critique and challenge its authenticity. If this development is critiqued, then perhaps the delivery mindset needs to develop problem-finding and problem-solving teaching practice to align with Dunne's understanding of practice development as a more collective process.

The risk, however, in the Study Programme, in practice, is that curriculum design for English and Maths is more 'academic' than 'vocational' because of the importance placed on the assessment of English and Maths understanding through GCSE exams. Whereas vocations are frequently tested through how knowledges and skills are applied as part of a craft. For Sennett (2008) 'there can be no skilled work without standards' and he expands upon this through a trial-and-error process until practices become ingrained. At no point is English and Maths' knowledge seen as unimportant but the refinement comes in the forms of knowledge needed to perfect a particular craft. Sennett (2008) discusses embedding as a way of uniting delivery of different skills in craft manufacture thus removing the disciplinary boundaries as documented by Schwab ([1964] 1975). There is a need to understand to what extent there exists an academic-vocational conflict within Study Programmes.

Joe Nutt (2018) also discusses the danger of 'Curriculum dumping' where a tutors's delivery includes a wide-range of topics but without the standards discussed by Sennett. This 'curriculum dumping' Nutt argues is largely to fulfill a perceived societal need. Due to a lack of clarity around how teaching practice can be developed to support a students' achievement in GCSE English and

Maths, there has been a focus, by Ofsted, to assess in the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) the quality of embedded or promoted Maths and English information within vocational teaching. Rather than ‘curriculum dumping’ this Hyland contends should result in a space ‘where one type of craft may involve meticulous planning and systematic execution, another spontaneous creation, another novel use of materials, and yet another theoretical inventiveness and imagination’ (Hyland 2017: 308). The result is that a craft may transcend disciplines and in models of habits of mind ‘by transcending, we mean that there is no ‘subject matter’ [as] the separation of the disciplines may deter transfer’ (Costa and Kallick 2009: 3). But is this ‘ideal’ of the Study Programme where ‘Coherent Programmes of learning and activity for all young people should be the centre of attention for educational institutions’ (Wolf 2011: 22) possible in practice. For Gregson and Todd, this process is more about how practice first imitates, then modifies and adapts and subsequently transcends current traditions and practices to ‘create a new practice or craft’ (Gregson and Todd 2018: 15). Particularly at a time when educational institutions are also ‘facing outcomes-based qualifications and tick box approaches to assessment [that] are now deeply entrenched and pervasive in systems and practices of vocational education’ (Gregson and Todd 2018: 4) that all have their own specifications or tick boxes. It is important to question this approach to the evaluation and improvement of Study Programmes and to ask to what extent they are or can be truly successful bearing in mind how the curriculum is currently understood, planned, designed and assessed.

It is also useful to consider Inglis’ ([1974] 1975) observation that ‘it is in the first place too reductive to describe all human action as impelled by ‘need’, unless ‘need’ is to turn out on examination to be a hopelessly elastic and slippery term.’ (Inglis 1974 in Golby 1975: 37). Therefore, while education addresses a need, such as the shortage of engineers, there must be a curriculum in place that understands how practice develops so that students can, through trial and error, develop new and better practices. This expands then on Wolf’s analysis that we meet the ‘needs’ of the student which are ultimately governed by economic pressures. Inglis would prefer practice to meet the ‘needs’ effectively and so for Study Programmes, tutors should be supported to bring together

different knowledges, some entrenched in historic pedagogical certainties, to deliver the Study Programme. At the moment such support is lacking, and for vocational post-16 learners Adams (1933) recognises ‘all education must affect our future life either adversely or favorably, and to that extent, all education is vocational, as preparing us for the vocation of life’ (Adams 1933 in Hyland 2017: 308). Dewey (1933) concurs with this point and if there is no continued discussion and exploration of how the Study Programme works in practice then we risk again delivering to students a ‘Saber-tooth Curriculum’ (Benjamin 1939), and this cannot meet the ‘student demands and needs’ (ibid) as Wolf intends. If then, the design of Study Programmes were to dissolve the false dichotomy of the historically, socially and culturally constructed oppositional distinction made between the ‘vocational’, and ‘academic’, then potentially this could be beneficial in realising the Study Programme into practice in educationally sound ways.

Study Programmes and Policy.

Educational policy change in the last few years has been nothing if not swift, interesting, and at times frenetic. Tutors have to constantly reflect and make judgements about difficult and complex situations in line with these fluctuations as they try to support students to achieve their very best. Trying to encourage and enhance the lives of students is for the majority of tutors certainly something they do day-to-day without any real conscious thought and undoubtedly with joy and a sense of privilege. To see a student progress is the rewarding ambition of most tutors and their students across the FAVE sector. The challenge for tutors of vocational education is to constantly respond to change in a way that has a positive impact on student lives and furthermore supports their progress in an ever-changing and at times challenging environment. What I want to investigate most in this research is the impact of the introduction of Study Programmes upon students and tutors. The new ‘hard problem’ (Hyland, 2018) of vocational teaching.

For Wolf (2011) the Study Programme ‘means making certain that institutions focus on students’ demands and needs, not those of government agencies’

(Wolf 2011: 10) but in practice, there is the possibility that Study Programmes have become an indicative characteristic of the function of Foucault's 'governmentality'. Stephen J. Ball (2003) and Frank Coffield (2008) separately discuss the subject of 'performativity'. This is where the tutor's role is measured based on rewards and sanctions. The importance of 'performativity' for Ball is asking who controls this judgement. For Coffield, education is becoming impacted by competitive economic forces that link to performativity which he concludes are not 'likely to inspire staff or students' (Coffield 2008: 59). For Study Programmes there is a need to explore how far knowledge is being commodified and what knowledge and practices are being rewarded by policy-makers.

For Foucault 'governmentality' relates to the power structures that mold and create citizens. In this sense, the ideological discourse works across both the state and civil society to offer an illusionary choice. In neo-liberal constructs, this becomes a free-market economic race to the top. 'In the same time that a market-oriented accountability is demanded of institutions, likewise the fundamental rationalities of competition and entrepreneurialism increasingly organise our relationships as individual to others and to ourselves' (Lissavoy 2016: 189). Lissavoy relates this governmentality impact to Friere's marginalised subjects. They are marginalised through the structures placed and the discourses surrounding them, and in the end, power is ultimately removed from the subjects in a neo-liberal government structure. This paradox of ideas of being liberal without being free is in education one of the key problems facing pedagogic discourse according to Lissavoy. Within a neo-liberal structure, there is the illusion of freedom and the structure of choice. Therefore, when Wolf discusses the way 'programmes will vary in how they organise this [areas of study including Maths, English and work readiness], depending on the students concerned' (Wolf 2011: 10-11), this is incompatible with a neo-liberal economic model of the 'needs' of students as defined by a restrictive economic, cultural and social structure. Students choose their vocational pathway, their craft, but they are subject to conditions that are ultimately economically driven which prioritise someone else's need before theirs.

Emerging from Wolf's report, the Study Programme in actuality, and recently revised in papers from BIS (2017) and DFE (2016), may position tutors simply as the conduits for this process of 'governmentality'. Lissavoy discusses how this establishes anxiety and he refers to Appaduri (1996) 'At the existential level, increasingly, global and unpredictable flows of capital, information, and technology threaten stable senses of community and identity' (Lissavoy 2018: 189). However, perhaps this flow down of discourse does not fully satisfy. As Tomlinson (2008) observes, there are those tutors who are working hard to make policy 'good' in practice. For Sennett (2008) tutors are practicing their craft of teaching. This, in Foucault's terminology, would be the counter-discourse existing in the neo-liberal matrix painted by Friere and others. A world of complex instructions re-written time and again to make the world make sense to those who need to learn how to live in it. Sennett (2008) also explores the quality processes within the NHS where Technical-Rational approaches to quality assurance and their associated power relations operate in one scenario to improve outcomes on a narrow, instrumental level but on another have a more damaging impact. Power relations then in this matrix become complex and free-markets potentially oppress as well free people in a paradoxical jostling for power. I take this more active stance mainly because the neo-liberal structure model curtails progress for students and this bleak interpretation of the world seems too neat and too negative for me to align with my own experience of teaching and the students who progress within.

For Wolf though there seems to be a theory of a Study Programme that is separated from government policy and perhaps there is not a consistent transition from the theory to what has been put into practice so far. One of the reasons for this is that the practice has not developed in a way that includes tutors, as Dunne explains when exploring how practice is developed. The power structures surrounding the Study Programme are not equal nor consistent, and this is also illustrated in how the Study Programme operates for other agencies involved in education.

In January 2018, I visited the BETT (British Educational Training and Technology) show. This was a powerful experience to see all of the innovative technology around for tutors but it also highlighted the problems that this research in a small part aims to address. As discussed above, there is much in the exhibitions, stalls and other activity taking place at BETT that sits in silos. For example, there was a computer science stall doing some amazing things with Lego and coding, and there was Maths area with a free book. But the idea that all of these things were linked seemed missing. For a student to understand Maths and learning a vocation and how they might be linked was limited almost to the point of absence. The process of BETT of bringing together technology was sound but these still remained in their individual stalls. At one point I asked someone whether their software could be personalised so I could change the headings of a Maths column to reflect how this could be of vocational interest. She went away to secretly confer and came back with a firm no. But happy to look into it and I hope they do. Schwab's [1964] 'extent of human knowledge' (Schwab in Golby 1975: 249) presents again as an issue that policy-makers and those responsible for its implementation and evaluation have not supported the holistic implementation of the Study Programme. Here we see examples of the enactment of Coffield's (2011) system of vocational education being revised but never truly challenged or changed. Just added to in a way that possibly fails to meet the 'needs' and 'demands' of the students. While Wolf promotes a focus on the student, the actuality of applying a Study Programme in educationally sound ways is more complex. This raises questions of the relationship between different forms of knowledge, students' lived experiences of their vocational placements, and the policy intentions as they are realised in practice in different contexts. It also raises questions about who has the power to decide what are the 'needs and demands' of the student.

Study Programmes and the student experience.

So what are students' experiences of teaching and learning on the Study Programme? Returning to Wolf's 'demands' and 'needs' of students, we might ask, what are the implications of this to the development of a 'craft' ethos for students? If there is a combination of academic and vocational approaches

being employed in practice, is this working for the students in their experience? The big challenge for Study Programmes is the multi-disciplinary facets of Study Programmes discussed previously and how these impact on the experience of the student. If they are to be put at the heart of the Programme itself, as advocated by Wolf.

The student experience therefore is a key element of the evaluation of the design, development, and delivery of Study Programmes. Wolf's model where 'No young person should be in an education or training Programme which denies them the chance to progress, immediately or later in life, or fails to equip them with the skills needed for such mobility' (Wolf 2011: 20) is a very aspirational goal. The question now is whether this model of the curriculum and the positioning GCSE resits within it, emanating from Wolf's report, is damaging to young people, and in particular those who aspire to follow a more vocational learning pathway. Raikes and Longman (2017) identify that 'Almost 80% of pupils in England who do not achieve a C grade[1] in GCSE Maths or English fail to attain this mark during their resit examinations. This suggests that incoherence and somewhat disjointed curriculum model is leaving hundreds of thousands of students stuck in a cycle of experiences of exams 'failure' with a student quoted as saying 'I've failed my Maths GCSE four times. It's horrible because you feel like you're stupid' (Raikes and Longman 2017: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-39142646). This is key, as there is now considerable discussion around the value and longer-term consequences of repeatedly sitting and failing GCSE exams. George Ryan (2018) goes further explaining that in a recent survey 'only 9 percent of college students feel 'confident' about their upcoming exams' (Ryan 2018: 1) raising the question of the extent to which there is real damage done to students who are involved in the Study Programme? This also calls into question the extent to which these curriculum models are having unintended and adverse consequences for the development of authentic inspirational 'craft' workers who can contribute to the

[1] In 2014 GCSE assessment models changed from using an alphabet system to a numerical one. A grade C is seen as equivalent to a grade 4.

economy? The possible damage of this curriculum model in action is certainly not what Wolf posited or envisaged.

The consequences for the student are important as it is the students who will ultimately be the benefactors of a well-designed educationally sound (‘good’) Study Programme. ‘Figures from the Department for Education show that 77.3% of students in England do not attain a C grade in English or Maths when they resit the exam post-16’ (Raikes and Longman 2017: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-39142646) and the achievement rates present an even bleaker picture. For learners the statement ‘I'm more of a hands-on sort of person. I've got eight out of nine distinctions in this course so far…. I find it very difficult sitting behind a desk and doing something like [studying Shakespeare]. I'd rather be outside and laying bricks, laying concrete - and I'm good at it.’ (Raikes and Longman 2017: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-39142646) illustrate the fact that for students there is a disconnect between their vocational subject and their experiences of learning Maths and English. This divide may be compounded by the curriculum design for GCSE classes and perhaps a more coherent and creative or physical approach to curriculum design and teaching might help students to gain the knowledges they need to develop the knowledge, skills and ways of thinking/traditions required for them to thrive in their area of vocational practice. If we take this to be a symptom of Coffield’s ‘broken system’, where Craft is considered to be then perhaps ‘vocational’ and Maths and English are ‘academic’, maybe the gap for Study Programmes may be more about how the model has been imposed top-down upon a system that already was not working. Framed by Technical-Rational world views of practice and world views then this suggests that there is a need to explore the curriculum design for Study Programmes from the tutors and student perspectives rather than from the perspectives of other stakeholders in vocational education including politicians, policy professionals, employers, Ofsted, awarding bodies etc. In other words, embracing perspectives of the very tutors and learners charged with putting this policy into practice in educationally sound ways!

For Hyland (2018) this issue presents itself in the way GCSE exams are planned alongside vocational learning. Craft ‘Arises from the need to constantly adapt tools and materials (and our own bodily function) to the ever-changing demands and requirements of making, altering and repairing objects’ (Hyland 2017: 312). Although Hyland is talking about craftwork here the principle can be extrapolated further because the rigid GCSE retake curriculum model in the Study Programme does not allow for/encourage adaption and modification in practice. The student experience then is one of mindless ritualistic and pointless repetition, re-sitting exams, which may have been taught in similar ways year after year due to the nature and imperatives of central, prescriptive, regimes based upon summative assessment. This requires the repetition of what Sennett describes as mindful activity to learn how to pass an exam. At least this is perhaps what is happening in practice. Wolf recognises that ‘Meanwhile qualifications for the critical labour market skills of mathematics and English have been the subject of serial redesign, especially in the case of qualifications for students on ‘vocational’ programmes (Wolf 2011: 45)’, but this led the way of further re-design of GCSEs. The problem here though is that curriculum design and delivery of Study Programme policy and its predecessors did not necessarily evolve.

Therefore, if the Study Programme structure is going to meet the ‘students’ demands and needs’ (Wolf 2011: 10) then there is a need to be acutely aware of what individual needs are not just in theory but also in practice. Students are not always well-placed to know what they need in their chosen careers. Therefore, tutors need to have the space and authority to develop the curriculum to meet these needs in context because these spaces and this support are the necessary conditions required to deliver a ‘good’ Study Programme. It is important to recognise that behind the word student is a ‘real’ person whose life matters and impacted by the education being developed, delivered and quality assured. In addition, each student is a unique individual which is a context facet to judging the success of a policy.

From my own professional experience what I find to be most ironic and surprising is that vocational tutors (whom historically I have researched in

relation to teaching students with a diagnosis of autism) are expected to respond to the emotional framework within a piece of GCSE English writing. For these SEN students, this would be a very challenging, if not wholly inadequate and inappropriate way to assess their knowledge of English. Therefore, the GCSE element of the Study Programme has another barrier to meet the 'demands and needs' (ibid) of these students. The other common comment from tutors is that the exam method does not work for all learners. Many tutors who hear of my research immediately state that for some students exams are not effective measures of knowledge or craft. This is something that the Study Programme will need to address if it is to realise its intentions to support students and enable them to contribute to the UK economy.

This may also raise opportunities to explore the learning of knowledge for assessment in an examination which Michael Eraut (2009) notes 'can be represented by that part of the iceberg that appears above the surface. This learning is explicit and well supported by textbooks and formal teaching. The further learning required to convert that codified knowledge into personal knowledge that is ready for use in a range of possible situations can be represented by that part of the iceberg which is hidden below the surface' (Eraut 2009: 15). This metaphor may provide a way of reviewing discourses impacted by the implementation and delivery of Study Programmes.

Hyland notes that for students moving into vocational learning, 'Similar non-standard and imaginative aspects of craft problem solving are described by Gates [2016]' (311-312) and this is not being fully translated into the GCSE delivery. For these students then, learning can be non-standard and possibly a JPD approach between vocational and GCSE tutors to address these issues might help explore this further. Here the multi-disciplined nature of human knowledge emerges once again because there is an assumption in practice that these disparate aspects of the Study Programme curriculum somehow magically cohere and fit together for the student. For Wolf, this combination is the result of 'the major efforts [that] should be made to provide greater access to the workplace for 16-18 year olds (Wolf 2011: 12)'. For Sennett (2008) it is the transferable skills of a craft, whereas Hyland (2018) discusses this as the

social interactions that vocational learning facilitates and not the academic notion of exams. The academic and vocational divide as explored by Coughlan (2015) demonstrates one of the main challenges for tutors in successfully delivering the Study Programme, but adding the dimension of the student into this debate allows a greater sense of the importance of getting this practice right. Following Hyland among others, I would support the argument that is no definitive distinction between academic and vocational education, especially when viewed through the lens of developing a craft as Sennett (2008) and others point out. Therefore, the research in the field of curriculum theory and design for Study Programmes must listen to, position and place the lived experiences of tutors and of students at the centre of this exploration of education.

The metaphor of the student journey can be helpful here in capturing the student experience. Few would argue that the tutor guides the student on their learning journey. Tutors join students at a point in their journey. The success of that journey is how far they continue on without us afterward. The quality of learning experience required for this journey now and beyond the educational institution is central and involves learning to lead a fulfilled life in the world, not just a qualification. Capturing authentic experiences of learning is important but it is not easy. In presenting the experiences of lecturers and students of Study Programmes, I have been influenced by Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) work where they draw attention to the potential of narrative inquiry to construct a collaborative story as part of the endeavor of capturing lived experiences. This study follows a narrative arc similar to a story structure but I do not attempt to present this as a Hollywood plot. Nor do I know how it will end. This study is about recording the journey I embark upon with my students and my colleagues. It attempts to capture how I aspire to find better ways of understanding this enduring curriculum problem through individual and collective interpretations of experiences of vocational education and Study Programme delivery. This involves tricky navigation through the rapids of educational policy, imperatives, politics and bureaucratic paperwork.

Study Programmes in my Further Education college.

The main focus of the research presented here is to explore the implementation and approaches to curriculum and pedagogy of the Study Programme in practice. The research presents a narrative structure to capture the experiences of tutors and students. As a result, it is important to acknowledge the specific context of this practitioner-research study. By sharing the background of the Further Education (FE) college I work in this provides details of the environment for the unique case studies captured in this thesis.

I first started working for my Further Education institution in 2005. The college was formed of three campuses with one site a 6th form, one a technical college and one for commercial provision. The college was previously graded 'Good' by Ofsted in 2009. I started as a technician and transitioned into teaching in 2006, first part-time and then full-time by 2008. In 2013, the government introduced funding changes, influenced by the Wolf Report, that led to a transition to funding based on Study Programme compliance. This was measured through the delivery of maths and English. Non-compliance led to funding being withheld. In 2013, our principal retired and the incoming principal shared that the college had an untenable financial position which created a period of uncertainty amongst the tutors but made getting the funding correct a priority. This exacerbated the need to ensure processes designed to set out Study Programmes were economically focused.

Under the new leadership team, the college was first inspected in 2013. In this inspection the grade awarded was 'requires improvement'. This outcome was repeated in 2014 and 2016. One outcome of the financial challenge was the resultant closure of the sixth form provision. The college was under scrutiny from Ofsted, as well as internally, where improvements to teaching, learning and assessment were also a focus. In 2014, I was offered the role of acting Programme Area Manager. In this role, I worked with colleagues to improve my area of Media and IT. My focus was on the learner journey but there was the pressure of the label of a 'failing college'. I remained perplexed about why learners were starting to show success in their vocational programmes but, with

the introduction of the Study Programme, achievement in English and Maths were not matching this accomplishment.

In the South of England, where my college is based, tutors struggle to maintain a stable achievement of 59.9% of learners achieving a grade 4 or above in 5 GCSEs including Maths and English against a national picture of 59.2%. However, this still leaves 40.1% of students, some of whom will choose a vocational pathway at 16 'out in the cold'. Additionally, my college's town has a low proportion of people with a higher education qualification at 21.5% against an average of 28%. Therefore, some of the college's students come from households in which no member of the family has a Level 4 or above qualification. The result has been a drive by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and local authorities/communities, to focus on IT and Engineering as key priorities but particularly in encouraging a greater number of young people into higher education – including higher apprenticeships. These subjects have been highlighted as a basis for the skills shortage identified by the LEP for the South of England and in my college I am a manager of subjects including Engineering and IT. In 2016/17 the government began conducting Area-Based reviews in education that looked at the structures of Further Education institutions across counties. This led another layer of review of the college's future. As a result of these reviews, in 2017, the college successfully merged with another college to create a larger group. In 2018, there was a monitoring visit from Ofsted that recorded 'significant progress' in all areas and in 2020 the college group had a full inspection that recorded a judgement of 'Outstanding'.

Within this group, my campus offers vocational teaching, learning, and assessment and since 2011, when Alison Wolf reported that 'Post-16, English and Mathematics should be a required component of Study Programmes for those without good GCSEs in these subjects' (Wolf 2011: 10-11) I have been supporting the delivery of Study Programmes. The funding for a Study Programme rather than accessing a vocational qualification resulted in students now being 'encouraged' to attend Maths and English. I wanted to study this shift to find out what I could to improve my practice and the educational experience of my learners. This led me to starting my thesis.

As practitioner-research, this allowed me access to my research population in a possibly less intrusive because I am familiar and known to both learners, tutors, and managers. It was important when planning and conducting the data collection that the research population did not interpret this as more scrutiny given the repeated external inspections taking place. From my own perspective, it was important that Study Programmes were leading to positive experiences and outcomes for learners. There was a need to understand why, as a manager, I could see so much hard work being put into planning, delivery and assessment, that did not consistently lead to learners achieving well in vocational subjects and as well as in GCSE Maths and English.

This thesis began when the college itself was in both a state of ‘special measures’, and being monitored by Ofsted, and the Area-Based Reviews. The learner population is typically from a low socio-economic background with low progression to Higher Education in local populous. This is supported by the ESFA’s (Education and Skills Funding Agency) Area Cost Allowance being 12% against other local areas of 1%. Learners attending the college from school were largely Level 1 and Level 2 and had not been successful in achieving their grade 4 at school previously. Additionally, the area has close links to an airport which provides employment to school-leavers/college learners impacting on retention and attendance. Due to low-income family backgrounds many learners have part-time work to financially support the household.

I was also conscious of the need to reduce the gap between core achievement and GCSE achievement to avoid learners being trapped into a cycle of repeating a level 2 qualification until they have achieved a grade 4 for both GCSEs. Or until their individual funding runs out at the age of 19. Funding for post 19 study has been reformed so that at this age learners are expected to take out a loan to fund their level 3 qualification. This reflects the concern that learners may become Friere’s ‘marginalised citizen’ (discussed in Lissavoy 2016). It is possible to consider that the funding methodology provided a structure where access to education was being curtailed by free-market forces.

Economic factors were structuring how education was being delivered to learners with decisions-based on GCSEs and taught hours rather than vocational competency or skill. It could be viewed then that decisions about progression is becoming an economic one not an educational one[2]. There is a 'social justice' dimension then to this research insofar as it is important that learners are provided with the best opportunities within their Study Programme. The resits, as George Ryan (2018) alluded to, did not provide a 'good' learner experience but also impacted on a learner's opportunity to progress in the vocation they had chosen to study. It is worth reflecting that this knowledge could add to the pressure that a learner feels while at college. For me, it became important to recognise the importance of trying to support progression for all learners and this returns to the question about whether restrictions to curriculum ladders are also having unintended and adverse consequences for the development of authentic inspirational 'craft' workers who can contribute to the economy.

By engaging in this research, I believed that my college offered a unique case-study that explores the idea and application of the Study Programme. The site provides an insight into practice development at a site where there is a lot of effort to improve practice. For me personally, I wanted to make sure I was providing better teaching, better leadership and better experiences for my learners. Ultimately, I wanted to explore the question of what can a successful Study Programme look like at the site of this research?

In my role, I want to understand the student's place in curriculum design and delivery so our learners can be truly successful. This ensures students have a positive educational experience and can progress. Finally that we meet policy expectations to satisfy conditions of funding, Ofsted and any other measure of achievement.

From this position, I want to explore how curriculum design and delivery can be re-thought so that 'The education community could recover some of the lost

[2] The T-level specification is also impacting on this point.

honor by setting all of its members the task of discovering to what extent they are their own men and women.' (Inglis 1974 in Golby 1975: 46). The discovery then in this research is about the importance of the process of empowering practitioners to make the Study Programme better in practice. To accomplish this there is a need to critically consider what is 'practice' and indeed what is the 'practitioner' upon which the implementation of the Study Programme depends. In addition, there is a need to look at the impact of the Study Programme upon the learners, and how the experience of learning can be made to feel more positive and holistic for those who are involved when developing a vocational craft. Most of the observations made in this chapter are about framing a Study Programme model, not based on Foucauldian governmentality, but as a holistic inter-disciplined approach to knowledges and the development of these for students as originally laid out by Wolf. Modifying this and developing practices using Joint Practice Development (Fielding et al, 2005) is going to be challenging in a college where we are trying to put the idea of Study Programmes into practice.

Chapter Summary.

In this chapter, there has been an assessment of factors that 'Impact any social policy upon practice and a discussion of why this is never a straightforward matter' (Gregson and Nixon 2015: 232). It describes how Study Programmes, an education policy introduced in the UK with the intention of improving outcomes for students in literacy and numeracy subjects alongside studying a vocational qualification, are impacting upon educational practice in adverse ways. It goes on to chronicle how policy implementation process achieved through changing funding allocation per student, not per qualification so that providers are funded for all planned hours, including non-qualification, activity such as work experience. Colleges and other providers are currently accountable for the quality of the Study Programmes they offer their students through reformed 16-19 performance tables. These public league tables are taken to be 'clear and easy measures of student achievement' (DfE, July 2017 and updated 15th May 2019). For my college, this meant changing vocational education so that it linked to Maths and English and if a student does not attend

Maths and English then funding would not be provided for this student. However, the shaping of this change and the implementation process operated to distort how the curriculum for Study Programmes were interpreted, designed and developed. A consequence of this is that the intentions of Study Programmed have not been fully realised. In this thesis, the focus is upon the nature and notion of 'educational practice' and the role it might play in supporting the realisation of a more successful implementation of Study Programme policy.

The context given in this chapter provides an insight into the case study within this thesis. The key aims of the research in terms of what I wish to find out to develop my understanding of Study Programmes. There are four key questions that underpin the methods and methodology I have chosen and discuss more greatly in Chapter 3.

1) What are learners' experiences of Study Programmes? What is happening in the classroom for them and what is their learner journey and how do they perceive the practice they are receiving?

2) What are tutors' experience of delivering the Study Programme? This question applies to all those who deliver the Study Programme so English, Maths and Core tutors. When discussing practice, is this differentiation helpful or a hinderance?

3) What are managers' experience of a Study Programme? How is practice being 'managed' and my own management position? How can this be improved?

4) What do I observe when exploring Study Programmes? From this question, there is a need to consider what critical perspective I have of the practices taking place.

This research matters a great deal to me on a personal and professional level. As an education leader, and a committed tutor, I want to feel that all of my students and my staff have good experiences of the teaching, learning and assessment of 21st Century vocational education.

CHAPTER 2: MODELS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE AND MODELS OF CURRICULUM.

Chapter 1 describes the problems which gave rise to this research and the context in which it emerged. It explains how this thesis focuses upon the problem of putting Study Programme policy into educational practice in a College of Further Education in England. This chapter explores literature in the field of policy and practice, in education in general. It discusses several key concepts, including ideas from the field of curriculum theory and design as well as contributions from the philosophy of education regarding the nature of 'practice' and the processes of educational change.

The history of concepts and the discourses surrounding curriculum theory and design, and issues surrounding the implementation of policy in practice, have a long history, often marked by spirited and contentious debates about the purposes of education and the nature of educational practice. It is interesting to note that different understandings of the purposes of education, what constitutes 'good' education, and the nature of educational practice have differed at various points in time and from place to place. Gregson and Todd (2019) and Gregson (2020) observe how these variations are partly due to the dominant cultural, social, economic and political priorities of the time, and are largely to do with ideas about the relationship between theory, practice and research that have dominated the discourse at different points in history.

Coffield (2008, 2010) observes that the issues and problems of putting education policy into practice have persisted in the Further Adult and Vocational Education (FAVE) sector in England for some time. These problems are perhaps most obvious in relation to how ideas from policy are realised in practice with reference to the curriculum models used to implement them. The work of Dunne (1993) (discussed in some detail above and later in this chapter) helps to illustrate how Technical-Rational worldviews regarding the nature of practice and how practice improves are underpinned by a particular ontological and epistemological position, which all too easily translates into curriculum models that rely almost solely upon the establishment of Technical-Rational

world views in the form behavioural objectives and the instrumental measurement of narrow learning outcomes. The ontological and epistemological position of this thesis is critically analysed and discussed extensively in Chapter 3.

In this thesis, the policy-practice problem in question focuses upon Study Programmes policy and its implementation in practice. By critically discussing key contributions to literature and comparing and contrasting their views in this chapter it is possible to explore themes and relationships relevant to the issues of Study Programmes identified in Chapter 1. By engaging in what has been written previously about education implementation, delivery and evaluation from key contributors in literature, it is possible to critique how Study Programmes are being implemented in the context of the Further Education college that forms the site of this study.

Technical-Rational Worldviews and their Impact upon Curriculum Design.

The Technical-Rational worldview presents an educational problem and its resolution in a simplified way which lays claim to rationality. The result is the generalisation of the problem that then leads to the identification of a defined solution. This solution contains an evaluative framework that can then be easily measured and quantified so that the success of the strategy can be judged with reference to the volume of ‘solutions’ achieved. For example, league tables allow policy makers to judge the impact of a policy derived from Technical-Rational worldviews to identify those schools and colleges who have or have not applied the solution effectively. It follows, therefore, that institutions can be regarded as being successful or unsuccessful, and those which can be considered to be failing can (and are in some cases) be publicly ‘named and shamed’. The policy solutions arrived at through the application of Technical-Rational logic appear to operate in a ‘clear and easy’ way which is intuitively appealing. They appear to solve problems in education in politically expedient ways which often seem not only to fix the problem, but also to fix it quickly.

For example, the Wolf Report offered a ‘technical’ solution to the perceived ‘rational’ identification of the problem of low literacy and numeracy achievements for vocational learners in post-compulsory education. The technical solution to the problem was then simply and simplistically presented in the form of Study Programmes.

From a Technical-Rational worldview, success in GCSE delivery involves ensuring that the ‘body of knowledge’ required to achieve the exam at Grade 4 or above is delivered to the students by the tutor. From this viewpoint, the tutor simply needs to provide this body of knowledge to the student so that they can successfully achieve the required learning outcomes at the required GCSE level. By changing the funding methodology, where Study Programmes are given priority, the policy aims to secure greater numbers of students of GCSE English and Maths accessing, and succeeding, their examinations.

Gregson and Nixon (2015) recognise that researching policy initiatives like Study Programmes, ‘presents policy makers, researchers and practitioners with the complex task not only of trying to make education policy effective in practice but also of understanding the extent to which a particular policy is, or is not, effective’ (Gregson et al 2015: 232). Chapter 1 refers to the work of Raikes and Longman (2017) and Ryan (2018) where they highlight the less than positive experiences of students retaking GCSEs. The same authors raise questions of the extent to which, in view of these experiences, this policy can be considered to be effective. David Hughes (2018) expresses this best when he comments that in relation to debates about why GCSE resit policy was or was not failing, ‘The two things we firmly agreed on were that the policy intent was correct – but that achieving it was complex and fraught with bear-traps’ (Hughes 2018: www.tes.com). Gregson and Nixon (2015) note that the issue and problem here is one of simplistic applications of Technical-Rational perspectives related to the development, implementation and evaluation of policy in education.

Malen and Knapp (1997) and Scott (1999) and Gregson and Nixon (2015), all explore and highlight the logical and practical shortcomings in Technical-Rational approaches to policy development, implementation and evaluation

where only certain costs are counted and a limited range of benefits are measured. A particular criticism is that this approach appears to be largely, ‘grounded in economics, and commonly looks to cost-benefit analysis to inform decision-making’ (Gregson et al 2015: 233). The same shortcomings can also be seen when looking at how Study Programmes policy is being implemented. Wolf is an economist. Her report is about addressing the quality of education as measured by the literacy and numeracy skills of young people and yet her judgements are focused only on the measurable summative outcomes of GCSE results. This is then conflated by arguments/assumptions about what employers want (or perhaps more accurately think they want or say they want at different times). What is important to note here is that these can be radically different at different points in time and sometimes the same points in time. In the Wolf Report, it is suggested that students are leaving Further Education without the literacy and numeracy skills they need in order to be successful in the workplace. Employers, the report argues, want greater emphasis to be placed on these skills. There are at least two problems here. The first is that the policy changes implemented, as a result of the Wolf Report, are clearly geared to ideas that the purpose of education is to support the economy and so it could be argued therefore that this policy is indeed ‘grounded in economics’. The second is that it is assumed that the way in which GSCEs in Maths and English are currently designed, taught, learned and assessed are educationally sound.

The Technical-Rational curriculum design solution derived from the Wolf Report resulted in timetable changes and changes in funding conditions around programmes of Maths and English. However, these did not have a knock-on effect of drawing attention to the underlying need to review curriculum design and delivery in implementing this Study Programme in practice. In addition, as Hughes (2018) points out, the focus for institutions was not on curriculum design and development, or the student experience, but on implementing the Study Programme policy as quickly as possible in order to secure funding. When considering Study Programmes as a Technical-Rational solution, Study Programmes as a phenomenon is neither unique nor new. It is therefore useful at this point to look at an older case of Technical-Rational approaches to the

development of policy and the problems such models encounter in practice. Dunne (1993) provides a useful example of this through his critique of the introduction of the Behavioral Objectives model and how Technical-Rational worldviews impacted on the teacher education curriculum.

The Behavioral Objectives Model: a case study of Technical-Rational worldviews.

Dunne (1993) cites the Behavioral Objectives model developed by Benjamin Bloom and his associates as an example of the problematic nature of Technical-Rational worldviews to educational improvement in practice. Drawing upon his own experience as a teacher educator in Ireland Dunne describes how the Behavioral Objectives model was introduced first to teacher education and then used in education more generally following the publication of 'Bloom's Model of Educational Objectives' in 1956 and how is was hailed as 'the royal road to efficiency in teaching' (Dunne 1993: 7). He explains how 'Bloom's Model of Educational Objectives aimed to provide a basis on which tutors could be made accountable for their performance, and, more fundamentally, to open the possibility of rescuing teaching from woolly-mindedness and muddle in Education and of constituting it as a truly rational practice' (Dunne 1993: 7). On a similar theme, Gregson and Nixon raise 'Questions of how 'rational' this process actually is, how appropriate the 'technological solutions' arrived at really are and how useful the means chosen to measure their outcomes are in practice' (Gregson et al 2015: 233). The same authors go on to point out that these issues are seldom raised, let alone addressed, in the public policy discourse. Applying a model that appears to provide a solution to a perceived and over simplified educational problem, without asking some of these fundamental questions, can result in the blame being laid at the feet of practitioners (when the policy reform processes fail). It is then practitioners, and their alleged shortcomings in applying the theory in practice that are perceived to be the problem, rather than the 'solution' itself.

To fully understand the challenge presented by the Technical-Rational perspective, it is useful to consider Dunne's (1993) discussion of the

importance of the work of Aristotle. He uses this to expose the foundations and shortcomings of the Technical-Rational approaches to the evaluation and improvement of practice which underpins the Behavioural Objectives Model in education, as well other policies in education, health etc., underpinned by the same logic and informed by the same world view. For Dunne, Technical-Rational approaches are limited in the ways in which they address practice. He notes that the arguments of philosophers who challenged Technical-Rational worldviews were not only presenting arguments about reason and knowledge but also arguments about the nature of practice. 'Their arguments about reason were at the same time, of course, arguments about practice. It was because practice is in their view irreducible to technique that it calls for a distinctively practical, and therefore nontechnical, type of knowledge' (Dunne 1993: 9). The result for Dunne is that practice is seen as non-technical but not non-rational in this debate. The issue for Dunne, and here he links with Arendt's concepts of the Human Condition (1958), is that from a Technical-Rational perspective 'outcomes [are and have to be] uniformed to avoid complexity, failure and "vulnerability of human affairs"' (Dunne 1993: 9).

Dunne goes on to observe how Bloom's taxonomy then provided a hierarchical model of complexity, building learning through a linear progression of action. Students can be seen to be able to progress through levels of understanding 'step-by-step' and the educational practice is to provide students with this input. With Bloom's taxonomy, the practice of teaching is reduced to the technical 'step-by-step' but this runs the risks of removing the 'human', or student, element from considerations of learning and what we mean by 'good' education. When applied to Study Programmes, the argument logically flows that the problem of poor literacy and numeracy, according to employers, is solved by having students retake GCSE examinations until they achieve a Grade 4, or leave education. As discussed in Chapter 1 however, this raises a number of educational questions including, what happens if a student does not improve on their grade in their GCSE and how do repeated experiences of failing GCSE examinations influence aspects of the human condition including confidence, a sense of self-worth, and their sense of possibilities? It is also important to consider to what extent the evaluation of success acknowledges a

students' growth in literacy and numeracy, as applied to their vocational education and the development of their craft. If the Study Programme is to meet Wolf's goal of providing students with both the 'chance to progress… [and]… the skills needed for such mobility' (Wolf 2011: 20) this needs to be considered.

Dunne comments on Bloom and his associates, that 'any reservations they had about their project related only to what they saw as the recalcitrance of tutors and the inertia of school systems, and not to any issue of principle about the nature of teaching as a practice or the type of rationality, or relationship between knowledge and action, that may be appropriate to it' (Dunne 1993: 2). Here Dunne is referring to the dominance of the Technical-Rational discourse which sees the failures of educational policy as a result of the failure of practitioners to implement the policy effectively, and not in terms of the quality of the policy decision itself or in terms of flaws in the 'solution' of the policy proposed. From a Technical-Rational perspective, therefore, the tutor is responsible for the successful outcomes, and yet, as discussed in Chapter 1, Dunne's interpretation of practice illustrates that when teachers are removed from the discussions and decisions about the development and implementation of policy, this curtails the possibility of it becoming realised fully in practice in educationally sound ways.

The critical discussion of Technical-Rational approaches to policy development, implementation and evaluation presented above highlights how taking and simplifying a complex problem, like low levels of achievement in GCSE English and Maths examinations, and then providing an overly simplified solution that aims to meet economic requirements more than educational ones is fraught with pitfalls and problems. The successful delivery of Study Programmes requires the creation of a curriculum that combines various elements rather than providing a solution of 'must-take GCSEs'. The Technical-Rational perspective, adopted to date in implementing and evaluating Study Programme policy, tends to be based upon the delivery of a body of disparate knowledge where success is measured via the number of outcomes. It is important, then, to explore the implementation of curriculum and its implementation in terms of what curriculum tutors are designing, which in the

case of Study Programmes Stenhouse (1975) would perhaps describe as a Product Curriculum. Smith (2010) identifies four approaches, or models, of curriculum, which are discussed below. However, Golby (1975) contributes to this discussion by drawing attention to the importance of context in curriculum design which informs this discussion. The next section of this Chapter explores Study Programme implementation in education by critically considering these competing curriculum models their purposes and consequences in practice.

Models of Curriculum Design.

In the Saber-tooth Curriculum (1939), Benjamin writes about how a member of a fictionalised stone-age community 'New-Fist' designs and develops the first curriculum. As the world moves on, this curriculum remains the same. Established thought is not moving with cultural changes and problems of relevance arise. Both Dewey (1933) and Benjamin (1939) allude to the need for curriculum, learning, and knowledge to change and adapt to social, cultural, and economic change, and point to how important this is for systems of education to evolve. Benjamin suggests that any curriculum design must engage in the social context it is created in or it can quickly become redundant. From this discussion, it is therefore apparent that the concept of curriculum needs to be explored carefully, but that discussion of the curriculum cannot be totally removed from its social sphere of existence. This may also expose assumptions about curriculum, highlighted in the Saber-tooth Curriculum, about the value of Maths and English in accessing other subjects and disciplines, and the question as to whether these generic or core skills are indeed 'perennial truths' which need to be taught regardless of social and cultural change, or if they should be equally subjected to the changes of our social and cultural landscape.

Golby notes that 'Curriculum' is not an easy word to define' (Golby et al 1975: 2). 'The idea of curriculum is hardly new – but the way we understand and theorise it has altered over the years – and there remains considerable dispute as to meaning' (Smith [1996], 2000: 1). Here, Smith identifies one of the main issues of the curriculum, which is that it has multiple meanings and, of course,

these meanings are also bound to their socio-historical context. Smith begins with the definition, ‘in Latin curriculum was a racing chariot; currere was to run’ (Smith 2000: 1). Stenhouse’s assertion that ‘definitions of the word curriculum do not solve curricular problems; but they do suggest perspectives from which to view them’ (Stenhouse 1975: 1) is helpful as a starting point in exploring competing perspectives in the field of curriculum theory and their impact on educational practice, without reducing the discussion to a simple dictionary definition.

In his article, Smith (2000) provides a useful overview that considers curriculum theory but, as the argument above shows, such definitions need to be socially, and culturally contextualised. He describes four models of curriculum:

1. Curriculum as a body of knowledge to be transmitted.
2. Curriculum as an attempt to achieve certain ends in students - curriculum as product.
3. Curriculum as process –curriculum as an educational experience of and in the world.
4. Curriculum as praxis – curriculum which contributes to the development of qualities of mind and character which aims to enhance improve the individual and collective human condition

Within the first curriculum model is the idea of a body of knowledge that needs to be communicated. Smith explains this model with reference to how a syllabus is used and concludes that:

> ‘a syllabus will not generally indicate the relative importance of its topics or the order in which they are to be studied. In some cases, as Curzon (1985) points out, those who compile a syllabus tend to follow the traditional textbook approach of an ‘order of contents’, or a pattern prescribed by a ‘logical’ approach to the subject, or – consciously or unconsciously – the shape of a university course in which they may have participated. Thus, an approach to curriculum theory and practice which focuses on syllabus is only really concerned with content. Curriculum is a body of knowledge-content and/or subjects. Education in this sense, is the process by which these are transmitted or ‘delivered’ to students by the most effective methods that can be devised’ (Blenkin et al 1992: 23).

With this model of curriculum design, there is at least one important and useful element for the practitioner. He or she will know what needs to be covered within the subject. Within the GCSE English and Maths, the knowledge that a student requires is listed in the syllabus and, if it were not, there would be no opportunity for (or point to) the summative exam assessment. While there can be numerous debates on the value of exams as a method of assessment, for the purposes here it is important to acknowledge their place as a summative tool in a Study Programme. The curriculum as a body of knowledge model is useful, therefore, because it supposes that there will be a body of knowledge that a student is expected to acquire. Where this is deeply unhelpful, however, is that for a student on a Study Programme there are knowledges, multiples of knowledge-based information, that they need to acquire. Some of this knowledge as Sennett (2008) remarks is acquired through the practising of a skill or craft until this it becomes advanced. New Fist, in Benjamin's analogy, however, does warn that the curriculum as a body of knowledge is limited as knowledge is culturally and historically bound. A curriculum, as a body of knowledge, is curtailed in its usefulness by the body of knowledge it purports to communicate and can only be changed through the complex agreement parodied by Benjamin. The risk with this approach is that any lecturer using only a syllabus to determine the content of a curriculum would struggle to provide the holistic teaching, learning and assessment that is an essential aspect of a Study Programme. After all, students are expected to apply their English and Maths knowledge in their future workplaces. This first model of curriculum resonates closely with what was discussed previously as part of a Technical-Rational approach to curriculum design. From this standpoint, the problem is simply framed in terms of a body of knowledge or a subject to be taught, and the solution is to simply communicate this body of knowledge to the student. What it is important to note here is that knowledge is deemed to be developed and moved forward simply by telling others what to do. The ownership of the process sits with the teacher as the expert. For Sennett (2008), while the expert should guide, they should also allow room for the apprentice, or aspiring craftsperson (those who wish to engage in the practice of the subject), to experiment and come up against their own resistances as

Dewey (1933, 1934) would describe it. The body of knowledge curriculum does not allow sufficient space for this process to take place.

The next model offered by Smith is the curriculum as product or an outcome. Stenhouse (1975), among others, argues against such models, the origins of which he traces back to Behaviourist Learning Theory. Stenhouse notes that ‘arts subjects are concerned, not to reach goals once and for all, but to develop standards of judgement, taste and criticism’ (Macdonald-Ross 1973 quoted in Golby et al 1975: 364).

As a media tutor, I understand where this analysis of the outcome model comes from. However, it is also important to recognise, as Sennett does, that in people of craft there exists ‘the intimate relations between problem-solving and problem-finding’ (Sennett 2008: 287). What Dewey, and Sennett, respectively point to is the importance of process in the learning. While Biesta (2010) might argue that the educational value of this could be limited or untestable, the concern here is that through adopting a product outcome, some recognition, and perhaps a celebration of unique and human aspects of learning is lost. Whilst an outcome is measurable and definitive, just focusing on this as a curriculum model curtails the view on the educational process and skews it simply towards the instrumental achievement of a prescribed outcome. Again, the Product Model of curriculum design can be seen to follow a Technical-Rational logic and perspective. The outcome and its achievement become the most important aspects of curriculum design because they are easy to evaluate. However, it is important to not lose sight of the outcome as this does have an importance for the learner. Taking Sennett’s argument in this direction would be to discuss the importance of a craftsperson building something that is fit for purpose. For Study Programmes, there is an inbuilt and long-standing approach to Technical-Rational curriculum design across the FE sector which lends itself to the learning outcome model. This returns us to ‘concerns about the reliability, validity and impact of summative, Technical-Rational approaches to the development, implementation and evaluation of educational policy’ (Gregson and Nixon 2015: 232 first print 2009) (not to mention the hidden costs

of such approaches). This widens the discussion to include the impact of these worldviews upon curriculum design and ultimately classroom practice.

Dewey instead invites us to compare and contrasts a curriculum of two opposing points where on one side there is the expert, and on the other a ‘child’ who goes through each lesson building bit by bit, exposed to knowledge and expertise. In contrast, he asks us to envisage a curriculum centred on the child. ‘To the growth of the child all studies are subservient; they are instruments valued as they serve the needs of growth’ (Dewey [1966] in Golby et al 1975: 153). In the case of Study Programmes the curriculum is built, not around the ‘child’ (or in the case of this thesis the student), but around an end, the learner’s achievement of a GCSE Grade 4 which is then taken to be an indication of reaching a certain mastery of Maths, English, or quantity of work experience and vocational competence. Further evidence of such Technical-Rational worldviews can be found in the Ofsted Inspection Handbook where ‘Study Programmes for each learner are planned and managed so that they fully meet the principles of the DfE’s 16 to 19 Study Programmes by providing progression, stretch, mathematics and English for all learners without GCSE legacy grades A* to C (reformed Grades 4 to 9), as well as work experience and non-qualification activities’ (Ofsted Handbook 2018: 56). This impacts upon the design, delivery, and evaluation of Study Programmes, and stifles critique of Technical-Rational curriculum design.

It is clear that this guidance from Ofsted is not a curriculum design of any particular substance, and one defence mounted by Ofsted would be that the building of a ‘true’ curriculum is achieved by tutors, institutions and others. However, if the Technical-Rational approach that is being applied during the evaluation of Study Programmes is limiting teaching practice through promoting inappropriate curriculum design, then this could be a focus for and opportunities to work together to find ways to critique how Technical-Ration approaches to curriculum design, implementation and evaluation can distort curriculum delivery. Ofsted, and perhaps by extension policy makers, suggest how important outcomes are and refer to judgements from Wolf’s (2011) report to support this. However, this Technical-Rational evaluation methodology might

also signal a lack of a nuanced interpretation of elements of Wolf's own findings. A factor, therefore, in the problem of curriculum design in relation to the Study Programme, may reside in the specification of objectives as targets to be attained by students and then compounded by tutors designing a curriculum and course of study towards achieving those objectives. Dewey (1933) points out that for a curriculum to be truly educational, it should be able to accommodate unanticipated and unpredictable outcomes. For Wolf, this includes all the skills that enable students to move onto employment. This suggests that for a curriculum to be educational it cannot simply be outcomes-based.

This brings us back to the argument of what is a curriculum for, and looking at discussion of process curriculum might contribute to the development and implementation of Study Programmes. Clearly, Dewey (1933, 1934) recognises the social and cultural aspects of curriculum design and the importance of putting the learner at the heart of the learning experience. The issue for Study Programmes is how different bodies of knowledge, with disparate meaningful processes and outcomes, can be brought together to form an educational curriculum. In most cases, they are not. Schwab (1964), when looking at the issues of curriculum design, notes that one of the challenges facing curriculum designers is bringing together knowledges from different disciplines. Subject specialist tutors work in silos separated through perceived disciplinary boundaries. In a Study Programme, the curriculum is constructed from a vocational pathway, work experience, English, Maths and PDBW (Personal Development Behavior and Welfare). Schwab uses the example of science to explain that the 'alternative is teaching of scientific knowledge in the light of the enquiry that produced it… [and the result will be students] not only prepared to meet future revisions with intelligence but will better understand the knowledge they are currently being taught' (Schwab 1975: 267). What Schwab is discussing here is a curriculum more akin to what Stenhouse describes as a Process Model where the student experience of, and linking of, knowledge becomes the focus. For a Study Programme to be considered to be educational then all of the elements listed above would need to link together in order to form a coherent experience for the student, where 'resistance' as it is being

experienced is overcome in, and through, the 'light of enquiry' (ibid). If a Process Model of curriculum design framed Study Programmes delivery, then there might be opportunities to develop educational experiences using curriculum inquiry that provides a more holistic delivery model.

Smith's last model is curriculum as praxis. Smith uses the work of Grundy (1987) to explain the Praxis model where:

> Critical pedagogy goes beyond situating the learning experience within the experience of the learner: It is a process which takes the experiences of both the learner and the teacher as its starting point and, through dialogue and negotiation, recognizes them both as problematic… [It] allows, indeed encourages, students and teachers together to confront the real problems of their existence and relationships… When students confront the real problems of their existence they will soon also be faced with their own oppression. (Grundy 1987: 105 quoted in Smith 2000: 5)

With a praxis model approach, there is a greater emphasis on the role of the teacher in supporting the process in which the student is engaged. For Dunne, this is perhaps summed up through his discussion of Habermas who 'wanted to envisage a practice, then, that is informed not by *Phronêsis* but by critique: a critique that will have theoretical rigor and, though never without presuppositions' (Dunne 1993:18). To aid this critique you need someone with the authority to have theoretical rigour but who also allows the student, and teacher, the space to explore a topic together and gain mutual learning. However, Smith does acknowledge that 'One criticism that has been made of the praxis model (especially as it is set out by Grundy) is that it does not place a strong enough emphasis upon context' (Smith 2000: 5). In relation to Study Programmes, this argument brings back the pressures faced by tutors in my college to gain results in Maths and English GCSE as part of the measure for success. As a result, the implementation, delivery, and evaluation of Study Programmes appear to be being pushed toward a Technical-Rational worldview limiting discussion of all curriculum models.

Considerations of curriculum theory raise two key questions which require addressing in this thesis. These are the questions of what the curriculum is for and how it is experienced. What has not been fully addressed is the place of

the student in this discourse. From a Foucauldian (1972) perspective, the power structures at work in a context have authority over discourse. The policy makers have a strong voice over the curriculum design and implementation of policy ideas, and put in place evaluation methods to judge its success. However, tutors have responsibility for developing curricula from specifications and Ofsted has a role in ensuring that the evaluation of this curriculum is adjudicating successful education. There is a need to ensure that accountability for the delivery of Study Programmes is considered carefully because all contributors to the Study Programme are answerable for its success.

Added to this discussion in this chapter, is a need to address where the theory of learning intersects with concepts of practice. The Behaviourist Theory of Learning considers practice as a stimulus that supports a response from learners. In Behavioural Objectivism, Bloom's Taxonomy is seen as a ladder of complex understanding climbed by learners, from scaffolded education provided by tutors. In this model, learners can be interpreted as a passive receiver of information. In cognitive learning, students are more active in making links and the practice of teaching becomes more about the discursive practice where students share cognitive processes and problem-solving. In humanist models of learning theory, the learner is more central to the process of learning and practice develops more aligned to Dunne's (2005) model of sharing ideas. With Study Programmes, there is a need to explore the pedagogic principles underlying the curriculum models being applied in my college. The goal of this thesis is to explore ways of questioning 'curriculum' and 'practice' so that Study Programmes being experienced by learners are 'failing less'.

It is worthwhile, then, exploring curriculum models alongside concepts of practice because they often intersect with arguments about practice, and practice is sometimes seen as something that emerges from experiences of curriculum models. For Dunne, practice cannot and does not develop sufficiently in terms of the straightforward solutions presented by Technical-Rational approaches. Practice, for Dunne, is developed by its insiders in cooperation and community through problem finding, problem-solving,

discussion and critique. Sennett (2008) notes that this may require creating a space where issues of curriculum design can be considered in relation to epistemic concerns through an inherent pragmatic epistemology which may bring to light and challenge the problematic dichotomy which underpins Technical-Rational worldviews to provide clearer definitions of what is meant by practice and what makes a practice 'educational'.

The role of the tutor or master craftsperson is regarded as being crucial to the development of practice. What is key here is that practice becomes linked with how knowledge is perceived and shared beyond the tutor and therefore to have a discussion about knowledge without a discussion of practice is myopic. From this point of view, curriculum, while manifesting itself in various forms or models, is still concerned with the forms and stages of practice taking place.

Exploration of 'Educational Practice'.

This chapter has referred to how knowledge and practice are perceived, and how these perceptions are influenced by the development of government policy and curriculum design. There is, however, continued debate about the validity of aligning what happens in teaching with the word 'practice'. For some theorists, such as MacIntyre (2013) (referenced in James MacAllister: 2015) practice relates to the actual process of what occurs when a teacher and student interact. MacIntyre discusses through an illustrative example of teaching someone to play chess. In this process, the teacher could use something like sweets to entice the student, but this would be less effective than rationalising this process and making the student want to learn how to play chess. The outcome of both methods is still to learn chess, but one is seen as more embedded. This view of the practice of teaching fails to acknowledge some of the more nuanced elements that Dunne (2005) in the previous chapter helps to highlight. For Dunne, the development of practice is more 'social', cooperative and communal. He encourages us to see the:

> Coherent and invariably quite complex set of activities and tasks that has evolved co-operatively and cumulatively over time. It is alive in the community who are its insiders (Dunne 2005: 152-153).

To understand this further it is important to consider that Dunne's model borrows from Aristotelean notions of practice and *phronêsis*. This contrasts with Plato's thoughts of practice as an absolute. For Plato, there are 'pure forms' and these exist to be discovered. From this perspective, practice becomes a physical process that can be discovered and observed. However, Aristotle considers knowledge is grounded in discourse and practice from this perspective is informed by the process of talking in a way that creates the practice. Dunne (2005) offers a model more aligned with a process that is to be discussed and negotiated rather than as an absolute to be discovered.

When discussing practice, it is also useful to discuss the notion of experience. For Plato, human experience belonged to the realm of the variable which he regarded as being unreliable and subjective when contrasted with absolute truths which he argued belonged to the world of the invariable and were 'out there' waiting to be discovered. Aristotle and Plato's differing perspectives regarding the 'form and nature of the social world and how what is assumed to exist can be known' (Coe Waring in Coe et al 2017: 16) continue to frame competing discussion and debates concerning the nature of practice. This includes the processes and stages through which practice develops and improves, and the relationship between practice and theory.

In Plato's dialogues, the relation between knowledge (epistêmê) and craft or skill (*Technê*) is a complex interpretation. From this perspective, *Technê* is concerned with a craft where the crafts person is able to describe what they are doing and the steps that they are taking but is anchored by the ability to follow the techniques required to carry out the task. It also refers to the welfare of the body insofar as to what impact this craft has. In this model, practice becomes something definable and observable. A 'pure form' for Plato. Aristotle, when discussing the *Technê*, places *Phronêsis* as its antithesis.

For Aristotle, *Phronêsis* is ‘a kind of knowledge that is more personal and experiential, more supple and less formulatable, than the knowledge conferred by *Technê*’ (Dunne 1993: 13). This is where Arendt’s discussion of the Human Condition develops this perspective when she explains ‘A good system of education should enable people from all walks of life to fulfil their potential and encourage everyone to make a positive contribution to society’ (Gregson and Hillier et al 2015: 327). For Dewey, it is also important to consider environment so that the differences in students’ ‘walks of life’ or experiences of life are taken into account.

When reconsidering Bloom’s model there is a sense that it can be applied regardless of context but Sennett (2008) argues that Dewey ‘was also a pragmatist, believing that to get things done you need to understand the resistances you encounter rather than aggressively conduct war against them’ (Sennett 2008: 226). Dewey here is not battling Behavioural Objectivism but rather resisting the notion that Technical-Rational logic can and will solve all problems for all students. With Study Programmes, as with Bloom, there is a rational process from problem to solution and it is assumed that the curriculum should continue this rational journey to reach a measurable outcome. In the case of Study Programmes this has been evaluated by the achievement of a GCSE at Grade 4 or above in English and Maths. Dewey (1933) also rejects the separation of thinking and action and supports the view where he argues that the thinking is in the action and the action is in the thinking.

Sennett is also keen to highlight the process of a master ‘craftsman’ building one step at a time, with a process of learning a craft as never being complete. There is not an end goal but the refinement of a process over many days, months, and years to a state of being more crafted. Within Bloom’s model, this means moving between different levels of understanding as this is required to refine the craft. What both of these views expose are questions about curriculum design and pedagogy, the most important of these being the centrality of curriculum context to provide learning for all students and to meet their educational needs. This is the way that knowledge builds experience for Aristotle and it is what Dewey draws upon in his analysis of educational

practice. For Dewey, education is based in experience and he grounds this in the here and now for learners. He goes on to explore the importance of experiences in shaping the educational landscape for a student. Dunne draws on this further in his analysis of practice where he adds to understandings of the social perspective of experience in shaping practice and how practice should be considered. For Dunne, his analysis views experiences as not absolute or 'pure forms' but rather negotiated, evolving and incrementally renegotiated again and again. This co-operation or cooperative manner frames the idea of practice as social and knowledge as incremental. This position is also supported by Wilfred Carr (1995) in his discussion of educational practice as praxis.

Practice and Praxis.

Carr (1995) extends this debate through an exploration of the notion of *praxis* in an attempt to investigate 'educational practice'. Carr is particularly concerned with the action that *phronêsis* provides for praxis and how much of this action mirrors Dunne's own analysis of practice as a joint discursive activity. Carr (1995), in *For Education,* argues that to truly discuss educational practice it is firstly important to bring the discussion back to Aristotle. He argues that previous debates have framed 'educational practice' in the theory-practice divide erroneously. Carr explains that these debates are often looking at practice and 'its opposition to theory, its dependence on theory, [or] its independence of theory' (Carr 1995: 64). Carr expands upon this to state that by looking at the historical models of *Praxis* and *Poiesis*, where *Poiesis* is a practice to an end goal, a completed product (craft such as in the making of a shoe or a pot), *praxis* is the thought process with a worthwhile and unpredictable social end. *Praxis* for Aristotle is morally informed, progressively informed and 'it is always a matter of individuals accepting and implementing some rational account of what the 'aims' of their practice should be' (Carr 1995: 68). Action in this analysis is viewed in a more complex way. There is the action of *Poiesis* which has a defined outcome, the product, and then there is the action of praxis where thought and moral 'good' are debated and discussed to create agreed practices in a given context. For the Study Programme and the

practices to improve there may be a need for further discursive space that offers a better opportunity for problem-solving transactions. There may allow a focus on *Praxis* as well as *Poiesis* which could improve the implementation and evaluation of Study Programmes policy in practice.

In this space, Carr sees that ‘a philosophical analysis can succeed in revealing that the way in which a concept is being used is in need of major modification or revision, then it may thereby assist in the process of changing its everyday interpretation and use’ (Carr 1995: 66). The relevance of Carr’s assertion here is that it highlights one of the purposes of this thesis. By taking the concept of the Study Programme and the ‘educational practices’ that it wishes to evolve, this thesis aims to offer insights into and potential revisions to how educational practice in Study Programmes is understood and applied in a Further Education college. It is essential, however, to accept that ‘concepts are socially embedded’ (Carr 1995: 65) and as a result, might be particular to the experiences being studied. There is the risk that *Praxis* becomes interpreted as an idea that ‘solves’ the problem of Study Programmes which, it may not when scrutinised against practices.

This risks presenting another Technical-Rational solution to the Study Programme policy-implementation which is likely to over-simply the problem. This is the reason why this research focuses on narrative inquiry and authentic explanation, to capture the modification and revision of education practice during a particular time period, as experienced by tutors, managers and students. It does not purport to present an accurate modification or even a static one. As Carr rightly recognises, educational practice is not static and it changes based on its historical and contextual existence. For Carr, this is more akin to *phronêsis* which he argues is likely to provide more opportunities for action, or for things to change. *Phronêsis* then enhances both practice and praxis.

It can be argued therefore that knowledge changes and is linked more with production and manufacture, an action, but this is not a pure form as this action has a contextual facet as well as always being open to the possibility of being the wrong action. Only through effective transactions that test the solution

against the problem can better solutions be proposed. This concept of transaction is informed by Dewey's use of the term to describe the relationship between experience and knowledge. This transaction occurs when there is a disturbance in routine that requires someone to think again about something. For Dewey, this is about thinking across the action. Aristotle does not draw a distinction between action and thought but sees them as linked together meaning that a theory-practice divide is illusionary and unhelpful. As Carr argues, seeing practice in relation to theory creates conflict between the two that is not helping to provide better solutions because the problem is being misrepresented. There is however a need to acknowledge the power relations within *praxis* and the various discourses involved as all participants may not have equality to form a democratic consensus.

The challenge of these power relations in Study Programme discourses stem from the experience of education with core subject tutors working with specifications that present a defined 'theory' and 'practice' structure. This structure promotes the assumption that theory should be taught first, and thereby having a 'natural' dominance over the practical application which comes later. It is also not just the common-sense usage of theory and practice that require exposure. Within, for example, media research there has been a debate about media practitioner research. Here, Sanders et al (2018) discuss media productions as evidence of university achievement, 'In addition, written research publications yield academic merit; for other modes of expression, this is often still a hurdle' (Sanders, Everts and Vugt: 2018: 1). Sanders et al examine the range of production-based output that a university student is expected to produce, as well as academic papers. This includes making films, producing designs and so on. Sanders et al discuss 'Practice as Research [which] challenges the hierarchy of theory and the written word over practice and *praxis* (which Nelson explains as theory imbricated within practice) (Sanders, Everts and Vugt 2018). This thesis is another example of the written word intricately linked with the 'real world' practice it aims to explore and navigate. Sanders et al conclude by commenting that 'Practice, in other words, is a different way of developing knowledge. This embodied knowledge precedes theoretical knowledge' (Sanders, Everts and Vugt: 2018). This

conclusion raises two points that require further analysis. The first is that throughout Sanders et al's paper media students are subjected to both theoretical and practice-based assessment. The students within my thesis's research are also media students on a BTEC media course. It is important to note that a discourse around what is theory and what is practice permeates the specifications of the qualifications being delivered in FE colleges. Indeed, the specification for media is mostly structured as a theoretical section followed by a practical learning outcome. This contradicts what Sanders et al's conclude about a practice to theory model. Within, FE education theory and practice are linked but also assumed to have a natural order where theory is elevated over practice. This contradicts the cyclical craft model proposed by Sennett (2008), Dewey (1933), Kolb (1980) and others.

It is then perhaps possible to see another Technical-Rational solution at play here in the debate around theory and practice. In order that students are provided with theory and then practice the solution was to introduce theory first and practice second as different learning outcomes and assessed modes of thinking. This is challenged by Carr's analysis of *Praxis* and Practice and supported by Sanders et al who argue with media practice for a more sophisticated link between theory and practice. Carr argues that in praxis action takes place and then reflection happens subsequently. Sarah Gravett surmises this view as 'theories are ways of organising our world abstractly in ideas and concepts. Practice is the world that we inhabit empirically. It is a tangible world that we can see, feel, act on, act in, and so on.' (Gravett 2014: 1). There are some clear links in this assumption based on Plato and Aristotle here where a *Technê-Phronêsis* dichotomy is reinforced. The discourse then applied in practice analysis is itself carrying multiple assumptions and knowledges that impact on how it is conceptualised by academics, policy makers and tutors. From this perspective, *Phronêsis* is the practical wisdom that is acquired through experience but *Technê* is seen as the application of knowledge or *Epistêmê* as a practical outcome. In these terms, there is the sense of *Technê* being the concrete object being crafted while *Phronêsis* is about the experiential knowledge being applied and the discursive practice that takes place.

For Plato, whose worldview of *Technê* sees practice as the physical element contrasts with Aristotle's notion of practice which is about the discourse that happens around a physical element. Gravett, argues that 'both these approaches may actually be creating a chasm between what is referred to as theory ("formal knowledge", knowledge about ideas, declarative knowledge or what the Greeks referred to as *Epistêmê*) and practice (practical knowledge, knowledge of how to do the work of teaching, or procedural knowledge) by using either a theory-to-practice articulation or by foregrounding experience in schools. Implicit in both is the distinct separation of theory and practice' (Gravett 2014: 4). Gravett uses Bruner's notion of "learning to be" (savoir être) as a way of addressing this perceived divide using a praxis-based view of curriculum design. If the design combines this critique, as seen modelled by Smith earlier in this chapter, then there is a need to make sure any model employed in this research does not divide theory and practice. However, it is not just a theory-practice divide that requires critical thought here but rather its place alongside other long-held dichotomies in education that have an impact on the way Study Programmes are designed and implemented.

Dichotomies in education.

In the discussion of the context and problem framing this research in Chapter 1, and considerations of the literature above there is a recurring conceptual problem that requires some detailed analysis here. The intention is to provide some foundation upon which the Methods and Methodology underpinning this research can be discussed in Chapter 3. This conceptual problem is one that is, at the same time, not clear within itself as a lot of what purports to be 'common-sense' has diluted the usage and application of the terms surrounding its practice over time. This discussion risks being mis-directed by perceived 'educational divides'. There is, of course, the widely held view that a policy-practice divide exists. This was seen earlier in this chapter in the discussion of the Technical-Rational worldview to education wherein the Behavioral Objectives model teachers were held responsible for the failed outcomes of implementing this policy in education. However, when looking at application

there is a need to engage in a more careful discussion of the idea of an implementation ‘gap’ and whether the use of this term is suitable or even helpful in this thesis. In addition to the theory-practice divide, some also argue the existence of an academic and vocational divide.

In the practice-praxis discussion, reference is made to *epistêmê* and *phronêsis* and these have provided a framework upon which a perceived academic and vocational divide has emerged. Within the discussion of Study Programmes so far there has been the returning concept of a core programme and Maths and English. This is what the Study Programme in Wolf’s report (2011) creates in Further Education colleges such as mine. This chapter has discussed the illusory structure of disciplines through the work of Schwab and this argument again is meaningful when addressing the existence and legitimacy of an academic-vocational divide.

In the context of this thesis, supporters of the academic-vocational divide in education use post-16 routes as illustrative proof. The first is the A-level route, and the second is the vocational route. This is evidenced by BBC News articles that refer to new changes in Study Programmes in 2013 and the introduction of 'Tech Bacc' which was ‘intended to reinforce the value of technical and vocational training and qualifications taken by 16 to 19-year-olds’ (Coughlan 2013) as though the vocational education had little value previously. This can now be seen again in 2019 with the launch of T-Levels[3]. So, in terms of status in the UK, there is definitely a greater cultural capital assigned to the A-level route meaning these are seen as more academic, intelligent and therefore of greater worth. The vocational route in contrast is perceived as being of less value. Maclure (1991) refers to the 'historic failure of English education to integrate the academic and the practical, the general and the vocational' (p.28)’ (Hyland 2017: 14). This dichotomy is not a new phenomenon for those involved in the implementation of Study Programmes. At a Further Education college such as mine, there continues to be a vocational perspective to core

[3] A T-Level is a Technical Level of education offered at level 3 and the policy intent is for vocational learners to have a more substantial work-related vocational programme.

programmes and an academic one towards GCSEs and A-levels. One thing this research needs to address is the impact of the underlying assumption that core programmes are vocational, and Maths and English are academic.

Hyland's analysis of this problem addresses the fact that over time: 'Reconciliation strategies designed to bridge the divide are legion and their principal prescriptions follow from which particular form of diagnosis of the problem is favoured. An interesting early example can be found in Sir John Adams' (1933*) Modern Developments in Educational Practice* which insists that 'all education must affect our future life either adversely or favorably, and to that extent, all education is vocational, as preparing us for the vocation of life' (Adams 1933: 50 in Hyland 2017: 14).

In this analysis Hyland (2017) views this dichotomy as an unhelpful distraction leading to oversimplification of what it means to be academic and what it means to be vocational. Within the debate around Study Programmes there has anecdotally been a view that vocational students 'don't learn that way'; meaning vocational students do not learn when faced with the theory of Maths and English. Within Hyland's view, all knowledge, and as a result educational institutions, should accept the complex ways academic knowledge and practical knowledge intertwine. For Hyland, this means accepting and addressing the problem of vocational education being compared unfavourably with academic education, as though it carries less worth. One key way to ascertain this worth is exemplified is through modes of assessment.

In Study Programmes, there is a need to discuss the various methods of assessment when considering discussions about worth as different modes of assessment seem to be perceived as having more rigour and more worth. This perception continues to evidence the application of possible vocational academic assumptions. The assessment is also then seen to impact on the curriculum design where with GCSEs there might be a more outcomes driven curriculum but with vocational subjects, there might be a greater focus on a process curriculum approach. This returns us to the issues discussed in Chapter 1 of the repeated failure of some students sitting exams and suffering

exam stress. These students are at times very able achievers at coursework or output based curricula, just not exams. There is debate by Donna Williams (1996), and others, around the expectation of Autistic learners to cope with fixed assessment methods. While Autism in this discussion is fluidic and individualised, the debate highlights the potential barriers of emotional responses for Autistic students. For the Study Programme, this factor could impact on building a Study Programme that is going to meet the 'needs and demands' of these learners. This divide in assessment creates a contradiction for a single learner and perhaps promotes an arbitrary splitting of academic and vocational approaches to assessment.

For Hyland and Sennett, this model of division is unhelpful and they view academic and vocation as crocheted together. Sennett provides a discussion of craft that shows that knowledge of assessment informs knowledge of practice and the two operate in tandem. Biesta (2009) when discussing the effectiveness of education recognises that, 'The problem is, however, that effectiveness is an instrumental value, a value which says something about the quality of processes and, more specifically, about their ability to bring about certain outcomes in a secure way' (Biesta 2009: 2). Assessment is often used as a measure for effectiveness and Biesta makes the point that this is intertwined in a value judgement as well theorised by Hyland as indicative of the assumptions of academic and vocational divides. Sennett's (2008) point here is that the required knowledge skills needed to be an effective craftsman are acquired through a process of experience and trial and error rather than through the simple transmission of information. From this discussion, we can see a link with curriculum implementation and the evaluation of Study Programmes that highlights the challenge of judging a 'good' one and which curriculum model provides it.

For Stenhouse (1975), the risk is that some curriculum models are being used to support a separation of academic and vocational education. The Product Models of Curriculum designed and assessed in terms of learning outcomes appear to be at least part of the problem. For Stenhouse, there is a need to consider the Process Model of Curriculum that allows the student to actively

acquire knowledge and the knowledge controls the process. However, with Study Programmes the curriculum follows a centralised specification and this controls both curriculum design and assessment. What is useful here however to acknowledge is that Study Programmes in theory aims to operate as a coherent and holistic body of knowledges that provides a learner with knowledge, skills, dispositions and qualities of mind and character that they need in order to achieve and progress in their craft. The literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that a Study Programme could be viewed from Wolf's Report (2011) as an education policy where the boundaries between vocation and the academic become blurred. However, the implementation of Study Programmes was tied to a Technical-Rational model of curriculum design and assessment and an evaluation of knowledge as individual success. This appears to be something of the 'bear-trap' for those policy professionals, education leaders and tutors who seek to make Study Programmes 'good' in practice.

Hyland quotes Crawford (2009) whose perspective of craft 'suggests a 'cognitive richness' to skilled physical work (p.21ff) – arises from the need to constantly adapt tools and materials (and our own bodily functions) to the ever-changing demands and requirements of making, altering and repairing objects' (Hyland 2017: 12). What Crawford, and then Hyland, allude to here, is the nature of craft as a complex interaction and transaction (Dewey 1916) of theory and practice similar to the dynamics of praxis. Hyland goes on to state that 'this holistic view of knowledge – which is very similar to Dewey's (1916/1966) pragmatic epistemology employed in his attempts to break down the 'antithesis of vocational and cultural education' based on the false oppositions of 'labour and leisure, theory and practice, body and mind' (p.306) – [and] is well illustrated in the collection of accounts of craft workers edited by Marchand (2016) in which practitioners operating in diverse fields describe their activities' (Hyland 2017: 15). From this perspective, Study Programmes appropriately implemented could be viewed as having the potential to reframe and even collapse the academic-vocational divide and dissolve the hierarchy which elevates theory above practice. In this way an exploration of how Study Programmes are being implemented and experienced by tutors and learners

may off some insights into how the status and value of craft might be restored in this discourse.

When discussing the vocational perspective and its relation to practice, both Crawford (2009) and Sennett (2008) discuss the concept and practice of craft. Hyland accepts that it is important to note ‘the fact that ‘craft, crafting and crafted are commonly employed to describe or praise ideas well-conceived, activities well-executed, or things well made’ (Hyland 2017: 69). By employing the term craft, it is important to acknowledge that there is a definition here where craft is both academic, vocational, theoretical and practice imbued. Craft then could be a term that removes the above divides because as ‘Crawford questions relentlessly the standard educational distinctions between propositional/theoretical and practical/operational knowledge and – by examples drawn from the activity of chess players, firefighters and electricians – demonstrates the importance of tacit, personal and intuitive knowledge in all human activity so that ‘thinking and doing’ are inseparable not distinct processes (ibid.,pp.161ff)’ (Hyland 2017: 69). This is what Sennett (2008) calls ‘operational intelligence’. Sennett concludes that ‘the unity of head and hand...shaped the ideals of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment: it grounded Ruskin’s nineteenth century defense of manual labour’ (ibid.,p.178)’ (Hyland 2017: 69). Hyland concurs with Crawford (2009) perceptively observing: ‘Given the intrinsic richness of manual work – cognitively, socially, and in its broader psychic appeal – the question becomes why it has suffered such a devaluation as a component of education (p.27)’ (Hyland 2017: 69).

What Hyland, Crawford, Sennett are arguing above all is that the academic theory divide is a falsehood and that craft, manual labour and practice are all simultaneously theoretical and practical. From this viewpoint, discussions move from academic vocational divide to theory-practice divide. In Hyland’s paper, there are times when this is discussed interchangeably. Any investigation into Study Programmes needs to discuss assumptions about the nature of practice, forms knowledge, what it means to academic and what it means to be vocational. If Hyland’s vocational academic divide is blurred there remains a

sense from Sennett (2008) that ‘practice’ still remains in the form of craft. However, practice’s relationship with theory also remains problematic.

Hyland argues that the academic-vocational divide is too simplistic and models of craft (Sennett, 2008) support this view. However, Hyland acknowledges the deep historical entrenched views that underpin this claim regarding the existence of an academic-vocational divide. The notion that academic learning is worth more than practical learning has long roots in history. This ultimately is why talking about academic and vocational divides often leads to a discussion about the relationship between theory and practice including the historical context from which such divisions emerge. This thesis supports the view that the theory-practice divide however is a longstanding misconception and in the end deeply unhelpful in any form of education.

It is to explore these questions that a narrative-based approach has been chosen to conduct this research. As stated in Chapter 1, I do not know how this will end but the journey and the discourses taking place as it progresses are important parts of the ‘education practices’ being explored here. I agree with Foucault that this discussion should include the power relations within these discourses because while Joint Practice Development has an ideal of collective experience deliberation allowing for Dewey’s unexpected thinking, I need to capture any transactions, as informed by Dewey’s model, as much as possible. I want to capture the challenges of the discourses happening around Study Programmes rather than pretend that they are simple or easily solved. I am also keen to expose enduring educational problems encountered in the implementation of Study Programmes even if potential ways to address them continues to elude me at the end of this research.

This chapter opens with a critical analysis of Technical-Rational worldviews and how this continues to reinforce vocation-academic, theory-practice divides. In 2014, in a government speech on ‘Bridging the divide between academic and vocational education’. Matt Hancock[4], states that ‘my priority is to tackle two

[4] In the position of Minister of State for Business and Enterprise at this time.

challenges: to bridge the divide between academic and vocational education and to bring the worlds of education and work closer together' (Hancock 2014). However, this in itself could be interpreted as a Technical-Rational approach especially given the fact that he concludes by saying 'It's why we're introducing new Technical Awards – developed in partnership with employers – which are equivalent to a GCSE and will offer 14-to-16-year-olds the opportunity to learn real-life practical skills. And new, rigorous Tech Levels, to be studied alongside or instead of A levels between 16 and 19 – all of them endorsed by employers, trade or professional bodies' (Hancock 2014)[5].

As we have seen above, the very nature of assuming the existence of academic-vocational and theory-practice divides, encourages shortsightedness in relation to curriculum design and implementation as well as issues in the content and the delivery of knowledges. However, if policy makers are uncritically accepting or even promoting this divide, without questioning its very existence and focus their efforts on achieving this through Technical-Rational approaches to policy implementation and outcomes-based educational change and improvement, then this may constitute the roots of a policy-practice gap which may lock educational reform into predictable failure for the foreseeable future (Sarason 1971).

Coffield (2007) also observes that the position of the teacher within this discourse of policymaking is side-lined to a spectator or best foot soldier. He concludes that 'managers and tutors mediate national policy and translate it (and sometimes mistranslate it) into local plans and practices [and]… criticise the new government model of public service reform for failing to harness the knowledge, goodwill and energy of staff working in the sector, and for ignoring what constitutes the main finding of the research: the central importance of the relationship between tutor and students (Coffield 2007). Coffield supports the argument advanced above by Dunne which posits that practice development is

[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/bridging-the-divide-between-academic-and-vocational-education

a form of social practice and is very complex. Coffield dismisses the impact of policy to practice in the absence of social interaction. Nylund et al. (2018) go further saying that the ‘main conclusions are that contemporary policy and curriculum trends in all three countries are currently dominated by a neo-liberal discourse which stresses principles such as “market relevance” and employability. This trend reinforces claims that the academic–vocational divide is historically socially and culturally constructed and that an organisation of knowledge in VET that separates it from more general and theoretical elements’ (Nylund et al 2018: 1) is less than helpful. This idea is supported by Hancock’s statement in 2014.

As discussed previously in Chapter 1, Study Programmes’ policy is undoubtedly well-intentioned. However, evidence from my own experience and the experiences of my colleagues suggests that Technical-Rational approaches to the implementation of Study Programmes may be operating to curtail the realisation of those good intentions in practice. One reason for this may be that the Technical-Rational framing of the educational ‘problem’ which Study Programmes aim to address is overly simplistic and does not consider the powerful negative impact upon confidence and identity of students’ previous and often repeated experiences of ‘failure’ in examinations as GCSE English and Maths students. A second reason may be that the Product Model of the curriculum (Stenhouse, 1975) being adopted to implement Study Programmes, coupled with an assessment regime based on learning outcomes and written examinations may be incompatible with the very policy intentions of Study Programmes. A third reason may be that tutors’ and education leaders’ professional knowledge and understanding of curriculum theory and design may not be sufficiently well developed to enable them to grasp the nature of the curriculum problem or to design and implement an alternative and more appropriate model. What is also conspicuous by its absence are spaces and places where a meaningful discourse with tutors, education leaders and students takes place about what is really happening in practice concerning the implementation of Study Programmes. This thesis is in part an attempt to do just that.

A fourth problem may be that practice is a rich, complex and varied concept and the notion that it can be understood in Study Programme contexts in binary terms such as ‘academic’ or ‘vocational’, ‘theoretical’ or ‘practical’ is not helpful. To talk of one is to talk of the other. As Hyland notes above the concept an academic- vocational divide is perhaps too polarising to be helpful in particular in the context of this study in the complex world of Study Programmes.

Both policy makers and practitioners are aiming for the same goal, better educational delivery and improved educational outcomes for learners. It is important to assess to what extent the discourse around how theory and practice differ is warping the intentions of both and creating a context where policy is theory and what happens in the classroom is practice. Policy-makers are not ‘educational practitioners’ but this does not mean that they are necessarily external to ‘educational practice’. This argument needs to be part of the discussion but this is not within the scope of this study or a judgement which can be arrived at based on data generated by the research conducted here.

Dunne (2005: 152-153) chronicles how practice is a complex social process. He draws attention to how practice is not linear but rather multifaceted and multi-formed. The terms ‘theory’, ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’ ultimately become unhelpful as Hyland, Sennett and Crawford respectively concur above all learning processes are both academic and vocational at the same time and both involve theory and practice. Drawing on the work of Aristotle, Carr (1995) and Dunne (2005) argue therefore that all practice is vocational and theoretical. Theory in an Aristotelian model should have a practical presence insofar as it can be discussed and debated by people in a gathering, engaged in social practice for a moral ‘good’. The problem for Study Programmes is that the language of divides, whether academic-theory or vocation-practice, is rife, implied throughout and this is distorting practice in terms of both curriculum design and pedagogy.

What the above paragraphs demonstrate is that the Product Model of curriculum dominant in colleges such as mine can reinforce the theory-practice

divide in terms of the way subjects/units are being planned, discussed and taught. It is significant to acknowledge this dominance but also important to interrogate how far this is true. It is necessary therefore to explore what role the tutor has in curriculum thinking and design; how theoretical/academic or practice/vocational divides impact on curriculum design and practice and the extent to which the tutors grasp of issues in curriculum theory and practice and contributions form peer-reviewed and practice focused educational research play a part in this.

The student experience in Study Programme (and in T Levels and Apprenticeships) is framed by a specifications and assessment regimes prescribed by Awarding Bodies (ABs) a model that implicitly separates theory and practice, a timetable that separates core and Maths and English and a societal discourse that weights achievement in English and Maths against success or achievement in a core subject. Whether academic-vocational or theory-practice, the ‘system’ and discourse of teaching perpetuates this ideology.

The impact of common-sense assumptions surrounding the nature theory and practice and their relationship to each other and the legitimacy of the existence of academic and vocational divides are phenomena that this research intends to investigate. It is crucial to not present a Technical-Rational solution to the perceived causes of the problems of Study Programmes but more likely offer an insight into the ‘educational practice’ taking place in a specific context. A key issue here is to explore the language and the practices embodied and enacted by participants in this research to explore if there exists the separation of theory from practice and the vocational from the academic in the implementation of Study Programmes. The question then becomes, how does this impact the ‘student journey’ in my college? By exploring how tutors might implement the idea of Study Programmes in educational practice in their design of the curriculum and through discourse, this research aims to provide insights into how things might be done differently looking at what impact Pragmatic Epistemological approaches to curriculum design, implementation, evaluation

and improvement may have on teaching, learning and assessment in Study Programmes.

Dewey's Pragmatic Epistemology.

Given the complex nature of the twin educational problems underpinning this thesis (curriculum design and policy implementation) and other concepts related to its study including concepts of practice, the work of Dewey (1975), is important where he draws attention to the argument that 'there is no concept of any single unifying principle' (Dewey [1966] 1975). Here, Dewey is recognising that no single concept consolidates all of these issues together. In the discussion of *Praxis*, *Phronêsis*, *Technê* and *Poiesis* there is considerable debate about how practice is conceptualised and this raises epistemic issues about the nature of knowledge.

Dewey offers us a 'pragmatic' approach to educational research and the improvement of educational practice in which it is possible to anchor analysis in experience and context. For Dewey, this context and experience 'if it is to be genuine and educative, and not an external polish or factitious varnish, represents the vital union of information and discipline' (Dewey 1975: 45). Dewey focuses here on the context of knowledge and more crucially that it is important to think systematically about a problem and its potential solutions. Dewey's model of transactions discussed earlier in this chapter, are in contrast to behavioural models of stimulus and response. Educational problems, then, are viewed by Dewey as stimulus but they do not act against a passive student. Rather there are contextual factors that inform the process. When applied to Study Programmes, this approach might guide discussions on the implementation, delivery and evaluation of the policy of Study Programme informed by Wolf's report and its 'actuality' of 'practice' in a Further Education College such as mine.

Dewey's Pragmatic Epistemology begins with a 'disturbance' in our routine thinking, something unexpected which invites us to stop and think more carefully. At this point, Dewey argues we begin to think carefully about the

problem and to imagine possible solutions. Dewey describes this as ‘transaction’ where we are thinking across the action. The transaction between the problem and the solution Dewey perceives as a process whereby a particular kind of thinking is being applied. He explains that while this is not solving the problem it is where a new kind of thinking begins. This new thinking results in a dynamic transaction in the liminal thinking space between problem and solution where knowledge is more negotiated and incrementally agreed than actual. This pragmatic approach, where knowledge is incrementally agreed, tested and changed, is based on what is being experienced and observed in the light of the consequences of judgments made and actions taken. For Dewey, this represents a ‘theory of learning’ which resonates closely with Sennett’s (2008) process of problem finding, problem-solving and critique. What is crucial about both of these models of learning is that learning is about the processes of problem-finding and problem-solving not preoccupied with an outcome. From this standpoint, the role of a tutor is to create conditions that invite students to think critically, carefully and imaginatively in situations where students can engage in problem-finding and problem-solving and have access to and experiences of engaging multiple transactions individually and cooperatively rather than to pursue an individual and already known (technical) end result. How far this links to the GCSE summative assessment needs to be explored more closely. As was seen in Chapter 1 through the work of Ryan (2018), the resulting effect on the student is not always positive.

Following Dewey, exploring ways of addressing the Study Programme in context and experience involves engaging students in problem-finding, problem-solving, arriving wise judgments at and taking ‘intelligent action’ in complex and unfolding circumstances. Problem solving in so far as ‘To train the child in these operations, while paying no attention to the business realities in which they will be of use, and the conditions of social life which make these business activities necessary is neither arithmetic nor common sense’ (Dewey 1975: 45). Here Dewey is drawing attention to the fact that there is little merit in engaging students in problem-solving for its own sake. For Dewey, learning needs to involve realistic and meaningful problem-solving for the students. In a vocational experience, such as those offered by my college, there remains an

expectation that students should be presented with curricula that are relevant to their chosen career and the literacy and numeracy problems they will encounter in the course of that career. This is prescribed by the Common Inspection Framework. There has been research conducted by Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL) exploring vocational delivery and links to employability. This links with Wolf's educational problems, where she concludes that students were not being prepared for the jobs market. Problem solving then also needs to meet the needs of employers as students will be progressing from formal education to employment. The main goal of CAVTL remains consistent with Wolf with making sure that vocational education offers students the chance to progress. The Behaviourial Objectives model advocated by Bloom and his associates structure learning in a Technical-Rational worldview which is underpinned by a Behaviourist theory of learning. But these explanations are very different and come from very different ontological and epistemological starting points. Successful outcomes are measurable and with Study Programmes students are still being judged on their grades, not their learning no matter how 'unfair' this judgement may be. The reason this is important is because students need to achieve their learning aims to be seen by employers as worthy of a job. This view then offers descriptors of what they perceive as good educational models. Technical-Rational worldviews frame problems and their solutions in much simpler terms than those set out in Dewey's pragmatic epistemology.

It is useful, here, to return to Plato's concept of *Techné*, which is also discussed by Dunne (1993) while not forgetting the importance of a Technical-Rational outcome, which Plato would emphasise as equally important. This returns to the 'real-world' out there for students and links with Biesta's (2009) assertion of a need for a theory of education. For Biesta, it is important to consider education alongside learning. Learning, in this model is something done but is not necessarily linked to education. Biesta explains that 'the point of education is never that students simply learn — they can do that anywhere, including, nowadays, on the Internet — but that they learn something, that they learn it for a reason, and that they learn it from someone' (Biesta 2009: 39). There is a link

here with *Technê* insofar as for Plato *Technê* has a purpose. A ‘pure form’ that is then out there to be observed. Dewey’s Pragmatic epistemology foregrounds the importance of experience and context in the process of learning and education and Biesta supports pragmatic approaches to education. With Study Programmes, there remains a need to explore discourses around students having the skills, knowledge and behaviours to be employable and the goal of employability through achieving GCSEs at Grade 4. Just as theory and practice might not be easily separated the same may apply to learning and education.

The ‘solving’ of the problem of poor literacy and numeracy by introducing compulsory GCSE retakes is the rational and practical application of education currently underpinning the implementation of Study Programmes Hughes addresses this when he says that the ‘policy intent for Study Programmes was agreed’ (Hughes 2018: 1), meaning everyone agreed numeracy and literacy were important. With Bloom, the student still needs to progress from the simple to the complex. The importance of this is that the ‘outcomes’ of education do need to be considered in the data for this thesis as qualifications form part of the ‘reason’ students come to college.

Dunne’s model resonates with Dewey’s pragmatic epistemology where practice is regarded as changing as a result of reviewing transactions and making changes as a response to what is happening in practice as a consequence of actions taken. In the context of this study, Platonic notions of practice as something ‘pure formed’ and binary remain problematic. Such positions suppose that there are simple answers to a complex educational problem, and this points to the possible limitations of Technical-Rational perspectives of education. There is unlikely to be a simple answer to emerge from this study that provides a definitive way forward for everyone. This is a small-scale study conducted in one institution and this limits the extent to which any generalisations can be drawn. Rather, this thesis aims to capture critical moments in transactions and the extent to which these might be able to inform practice in that institution. It is also hoped, however, that the trustworthiness and authenticity of the accounts presented in this thesis may be of interest and use to others in similar situations.

The method used to explore and address the problem identified in the thesis is aligned with the principles of Joint Practice Development as provided by Fielding et al (2005). These principles are themselves evolved from the work of Aristotle, Dewey and Dunne's where they draw attention to the importance of making experiences explicit and collectively sharing meaning making and deliberation. By bringing practitioners together in a mutual endeavour to address a shared problem, Joint Practice Development provides a model where collective problem-finding, problem-solving and critique (Sennett, 2008) is preferred. Aristotle 'specifically insists that we can only deliberate about what we can undertake ourselves. "We deliberate about things that are in our power and can be done" (Nicomachean Ethics 1112a). This idea is amplified in the work of (Kock 2014: 14) and Carr (1995) where they draw attention to Aristotle's assertion that collective deliberation is preferable to that of an individual.

The epistemology of Joint Practice Development is pragmatic, where the understanding is arrived at through shared discussion and the exercise of practical wisdom in context. The principles of JPD are appealing in this study because the nature of Study Programmes is about bringing different educational elements together for a student to be successful. By paying attention to the development of practical wisdom or *Phronêsis*, this allows the improvement of practice to include paying attention to the process of change. In this approach *phronesis* as 'practical wisdom is manifest in a knowledge of what is required in a particular moral situation, and a willingness to act so that this knowledge can take a concrete form' (Carr 1995: 71) is now a communal discursive activity. For Carr, the practice in the context of Joint Practice Development then is the result of phronêtic and mutual activity in which collective deliberation is undertaken, where judgments are arrived at, and actions are agreed by more than one practitioner in contexts where accountability and responsibility for improvement are shared.

An aim of this thesis is to explore the development of practice and curriculum using a Joint Practice Development model and the extent to which this may help to navigate a way through to bridging this perceived gap between the

theory and the practice of Study Programmes. The model of the Study Programme brings English, Maths and Vocational subjects together and as discussed earlier, there is an assumption here that these are different realms of knowledge. However, evidence from my own experiences and the experiences of my colleagues suggests that there are key overlaps of knowledge and there are false boundaries that need to be challenged and addressed if students are to successfully experience Study Programmes. By acknowledging the assumed existence of divides in vocation academic, theory and practice this may show that these are unhelpful divisions to the success of Study Programmes. Fielding et al invite us to consider ‘In what ways might Study Programmes be being applied in effective ways where solutions to problems involve a collective sense of practice development, and where practice is negotiated, ‘evolutionary, cooperative and temporal’. In other words, that transactions can be communal as well as individual. Fielding et al (2005) argue that the Joint Practice Development (JPD) approach to the implementation of policy and the improvement of educational practice can provide an equal status amongst participants aiming to develop practice that is consistent with the work of Dunne. This begins with questions of what is really happening in practice. In the case of this research this involves the study of accounts of what the realities/experiences of this policy implementation are in my college, and whether communities of practice can be nurtured in Further Education.

When Sennett (2008) discusses the role of a ‘craftsman’ and their relationship with an apprentice he is building a picture of people having space to make good judgements and people who have the skills and the power to make effective decisions in context. In Study Programme implementation there is the issue that just providing a space is limited if there are not the conditions and power relations for tutors to make good decisions. For Sennett, these conditions are just as important because they provide the structure and support for teachers/apprentices to engage in trial and error and learn how to apply their craft in practice. Hattie (2008) also discusses the importance of students in the evaluation of what is happening in the classroom. For Hattie, the student is equally important, and effective, in making judgements about their learning. In

this thesis, it is important to ensure that students are given an opportunity to contribute their experiences.

Following Fielding et al's (2005) Joint Practice Development this thesis aims to explore if/how 'liminal spaces' can be opened up in the context of the implementation of Study Programmes. For Richard Rohr (2016) such spaces are imbued by a theologian as 'the sacred space where the old world is able to fall apart, and a bigger world is revealed' (Rohr 2016: 1). For Rantatalo and Lindberg (2018) 'Liminality is defined as identities, sites and positions that exhibit 'inbetweenness', bordering, or passages that draw together different institutional conditions (Beech 2011; Shortt 2015; Turner 1987) (Rantatalo and Lindberg 2018: 351). Rohr theological perspective will be difficult to maintain while Rantatalo (2018) interprets it as an ambiguous and 'detached' nature, liminality can be expected to contain a multiplicity of cultural properties, overlaps of formalised and informal dimensions of practice and detachment from social structural restraints (Turner 1987) (Rantatalo and Lindberg 2018: 351). What Rantatalo and Lindberg remind us is that 'To reflect upon, and investigate one's own understanding of these practices, liminality seems to offer undeterminedness, that opens up the possibility to see practices from other perspectives' (Rantatalo and Lindberg 2018: 364).

The above authors infer that within liminal spaces there is a need to address the model of the curriculum being proposed and experienced by the student and the tutor. To do this effectively, there is a need for this space to address the nature of knowledge and critique the approach to knowledge needed to successfully communicate a craft. Within the multi-disciplinary challenges discussed earlier in this chapter, this will require a space to acknowledge the awkwardness and false barriers established between different aspects of Study Programmes. At the start of this section there was a discussion about Dewey's 'pragmatic epistemology' and the liminal space, as theorised by Rantatalo and Lindberg, suggests that there may be opportunities for tutors, students and managers to problem solve Study Programmes. The literature suggests that liminal spaces may provide a prospect to explore transactions, solve problems and offer collective deliberation. However, as Dewey (1993) cautions, the

fallibility of the human condition means that we must be mindful that the decisions we arrive at collectively will not always be the right ones, there is always the possibility that they may not achieve our intentions at all and so we must keep an open mind and be ready and willing to change our minds in the light of the evidence of the consequences of our actions.

For this research then, it is useful to acknowledge the importance of bringing curriculum staff together using the principles of Joint Practice Development to explore problem-finding and problem-solving and critique how they may potentially allow a more comprehensive discussion of practice to emerge. This will involve, however, giving up the Technical-Rational certainty of a final answer to the educational problems and questions posed in the implementation of Study Programmes. Dunne's analysis of practice presents a model where participants work together to refine and negotiate practice. A Community of Practice emerges from this conversation and to be successful it is led by the insider participants engaged in the process. Therefore, for Dunne practice does not exist outside of this social construct but its refinement, development and impact are influenced from within. If a policy such as Study Programmes is to transition from an idea to a practice, for Dunne, it should be agreed with the participants of the practice, in this case, the tutors themselves. Stenhouse (1975) recognises that 'Unfortunately, good will and the 'right' aspirations are not enough in education, yet when ideas – perhaps sound enough in themselves – are spread through a movement it is the aspiring good-will which seems to be catching' (Stenhouse 1975: 196). Habermas ([1962] 1989) might refer to this as a public sphere. A space that allows communities to gather and discuss as joint practitioners. This leads us back to Gregson and Nixon (2018) where they recognise the challenge to policy makers who are committed to improving educational experiences but are confined to doing so without critical engagement with the educational problems encountered by practitioners as policies are implemented. The result is that well intentioned policy can become locked and doomed to predictable failure (Sarason, 1971) caught in the intuitively appealing but ultimately debilitating grip of a world view underpinned by Technical-Rational logic.

Conclusion.

Is a Study Programme a curriculum? There is clear direction within this chapter to guide and justify discussion in this thesis towards the need to explore curriculum theory when investigating Study Programmes. In particular, the data collected needs to capture what curriculum, and what 'educational practices' are being experienced by students. Initially, in this chapter the discussions centred on the way educational change is thought about. The Technical-Rational perspective allows Study Programmes a sense of authority, a solution to the educational problem of apparent low literacy and numeracy in post-16 graduates. Attractive to policy makers because of its function of providing solutions that can be economically formulated, this may be at odds when looking at the complex transactions happening in education. Study Programmes when applied by policy makers may also promote a theory-practice divide that operates to restrict the role of tutors and education leaders to make policy good in practice. It is important to explore how far there is evidence that these elements exist in the narratives of this study.

Study Programmes, with their Core, English and Maths content have different assessment structures. It is possible perhaps to apply Joint Practice Development to bring together different subjects and ask, what is the purpose of these curricula and are they all equal, to the lecturers, policy makers, and perhaps most importantly the students? With starting to consider possible curricula and practices there remains a need to see to what extent the narratives repeat the social frameworks around academic and vocational divides and to what extent these may be obstructing the implementation, delivery and evaluation of Study Programmes. If, in the applications of Study Programmes there is a perception that GCSEs are academic and crafts studies are vocational, then the curriculum will amplify this perception and these misconceptions will be deeply rooted in discourse. It is then crucial to capture narratives honestly to make explicit what is happening at the site of this study.

Fielding in 2003 notes how the 'Technical-Rational approach to education reform has come to pervade the discourse of educational policy in England

through notions of ‘impact’ and its outcomes (cited in Gregson et al 2015: 235). For Gardner ‘Accounting for the wise use of public money understandably leads politicians and policy makers to give priority to the identification and measurement of summative approaches to student achievement and to educational evaluation in terms of hard measures of impact (Gardner et al. 2008). It is therefore important to investigate whether there is a divide between policy and practice and to what extent Joint Practice Development might provide some useful frameworks to develop practice. However, it is challenging then to take a complex educational problem, like the one Study Programmes aimed to address, and reduce it to a simple change of approach that will garner improved measurable outcomes, while still being economical/cost-effective. For Richard Sennett (2008) in his discussion of Stradivarius crafting violins, he makes the point that studying the final result is all good and well, but it has yet to produce results, a violin of equal comparison. The reason is that what is missing is the ‘is the absorption into tacit knowledge, unspoken and unmodified in words, that occurred there [in the workshop] and became a matter of habit, the thousand little everyday moves that add up in sum to a practice’ (Sennett 2008: 77). By exploring what is happening in the workshops of my college it is important to capture what is happening on an ongoing basis rather than being pre-occupied by the outcomes of my programmes of study. However, this does not mean that outcomes are not important.

By using Joint Practice Development so that collective experiences offer a wider perspective, and finding a liminal space to encourage this, there may be an opportunity to review curricula against the student experience so that the issues discussed in Chapter 1 in relation to exam fatigue and the possible concerns by Coffield (2011) of exam factories are critically discussed. This means applying a type of student-centred, rather than outcome-centred, approach. It does rely on the blurring of false divides between theory and practice and opening up and maintenance of liminal spaces. The time participants have to engage in Joint Practice Development within a truly inspirational liminal space is limited and present important challenges within this thesis. However, writing as a manager in a large FE college, these are issues that cannot be ignored.

While, the theory of liminal spaces is, in my view, important and useful here to address ideas of curriculum design, educational practice and Study Programme implementation, to make this ‘happen in the real world’ is challenging and these issues cannot be overlooked. As evidenced in Chapter 1, issues around Study Programmes and students retaking Maths and English are having a very negative impact on students in Further Education. The need to explore the Technical-Rational policy underpinning Study Programmes and the curriculum it invites is important. However, the space to negotiate, critique and refine the curriculum require interrogation and critical analysis. The nature of the Technical-Rational solution is that it is presented and assumed to be rational and presents a simpler and alluring ‘quick-fix’ or ‘silver-bullet; solution, which is often inviting to policy makers, as well as tutors. The literature here shows there is a risk of thinking that ‘if we just do this, or tweak that, then everything will be fine’.

What is needed is a more coherent approach that allows for a conversation about both elements of *technê* and *phronêsis* but in situations where both are considered in the light of evidence of what is really happening in practice supported by the data. After all, the master carpenter who builds a bench does not want it to collapse when someone sits on it. There are tangible outcomes but to only focus on the Technical-Rational outcomes may severely curtail an exploration of the process of learning, of making mistakes and in Dewey’s view overcoming the resistances in less than helpful ways. The language of Study Programmes has become one dominated by the Technical-Rational perspective and not balanced or moderated, or checked. Through applied liminal spaces to re-address this then there may well be the possible option to unpack Study Programmes further and explore models of educational change in context.

Throughout this chapter, it has been necessary to explore the literature engaged with educational models of change. There has been an opportunity to discover how these inform the aims of this thesis. These include, how can educational change through the implementation of policy be made more

educational in my college? How do we avoid the bear-traps Technical-Rational world views set for us? Is Pragmatic Epistemology a more impactful model for educational change? To what extent is the conceptualisation of theory and practice warping the intentions of implementation, delivery and evaluation of Study Programmes? To what extent does Joint Practice Development help to address a gap in policy and practice as a practical application of Pragmatic Epistemology? Are models of curriculum useful to develop and evaluate Study Programmes? Finally, can and should liminal spaces be opened up to support the implementation, delivery and evaluation of Study Programmes?

In the next chapter, it is useful to explore further the methodology and methods being utilised in order to begin to explore these aims and to anchor and explain the ontological, epistemological positions and the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis. The value of this brings us back to Hughes' piece in TES (2018) where there is an approach that could have value but there is a real need to carefully navigate our way through the 'bear-traps'.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Why choose an Interpretive Ontological position?

Chapter 1 of this thesis presents a discussion of the context and problem. Chapter 2 offers an in-depth discussion of key literature in this field of curriculum theory and curriculum design including contributions from the philosophy of education. This chapter anchors the above discussions to the considerations of the nature of the social world and how what it assumed to exist can be known (Coe et al, 2012). These are then connected and justified in relation to the methodology and methods employed in this thesis. This thesis focuses on an interpretive ontological position in relation to the nature of 'truth and reality' in the social world. It challenges Platonic claims as to the existence of 'ideal forms'. Instead, following Aristotle, it takes as its starting point that human beings can better understand the social world through interpretation, inquiry, critical reasoning and dialogue. The thesis aims to adopt a methodical approach that facilitates the capturing of the descriptive and qualitative accounts of experiences of the research participants in understanding and implementing the Study Programmes for which they are responsible in theory and practice. In particular this thesis offers practical insights into issues surrounding how to address the enduring educational problem of translating an idea from theory and research into practice.

It is important to acknowledge that this methodological perspective adopted in this thesis has been informed and developed by what Waring (2012) identifies as the relationships 'between the four 'building blocks' of research (ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods) (Grix, 2002, 2010)' (Waring 2012: 17). Coe (2012) further confirms that 'it is important for researchers to understand their own and others' views about the nature of reality (ontology), how we can know it (epistemology) and the different values (axiology) that may underpin enquiry' (Coe 2012: 5). It follows then that an exploration of Plato and Aristotle provides a useful ontological starting point for this thesis where it questions Plato's assertion of the existence 'pure forms'. One way of understanding Plato's perspective is Desmond Lee's (1977) translation; 'Plato

thought that the universe was an intelligible system – we can, after all, understand it' (Lee 1977:11) and this is 'initially described as the four elements, earth, air, fire and water' (Lee [Plato] 1977:10). The four elements are the 'pure forms' of Plato which exist to be discovered by research. In such research, this perspective frames knowledge as something 'out there' to be investigated, tested and proven in the pursuit of truth. However, when researching the practice of Study Programmes there is the need to consider this alongside its conceptual framework, and although the 'practice' is something out there to be captured, in Dunne's (2005) definition of practice we see a discussion of the discourses surrounding the sociological frameworks, and processes, that define 'practice'. In the literature review chapter, there is a discussion around how Dunne, in his understanding of practice, emphasises its 'co-operative' facet that leads to 'redefinition'. It is this negotiated and responsive perspective that provides a definition of practice that is far more fluidic. Further to this, if a Foucauldian analysis is introduced, this begins to explore the power relations that are contained within discourses, highlighting the importance of the social process of talking and interpreting, in the constructing reality for Study Programmes and better aligns to an Aristotelian Ontological view of the world. Albeit with a facet of power struggles. Therefore, while Study Programmes may appear to be 'out there', the way they are thought about and translated into 'practice' is far more nuanced and requires the study of the sociological contexts in which they exist.

This leads to further exploration of the Coe's epistemological 'building blocks' and, within this research, leads us back to discussions about the nature of 'practice' discussed in Chapter 2. Therefore, 'practice', as defined by Dunne, is something that requires consideration of a sociological element. In this practitioner research study, it is important to explore the conversations which define and make 'real' Study Programmes for the various participants in this research. Through conducting surveys, focus groups and reflective discussions it is thought that the conversation around Study Programmes can be captured and reviewed to explore possible solutions using the principles and strategies of Joint Practice Development to improve the experience and outcomes in the

implementation of and teaching, learning and assessment in the Study Programme.

Considering the issue of how anything is ‘known’ or ‘real’ this thesis explores conversations and accounts of experience to interpret how different participants in the study (myself included) understand. These accounts of experience and interpretations of ‘reality’ are taken to be a foundation to build a collective interpretation of ‘reality’ in the context of a particular FE college. This methodological constructivist-interpretivist methodological approach therefore is subject to human fallibility which involves a process of trial and error in making a judgment about what to do about a perceived education problem acting upon that judgement and examining the consequences of that action in practice in order to decide whether to continue with the action or modify and adapt it or abandon it altogether in order to take different action with. Sharing the information with those who share narratives allows a chance to hold the research judgements to account. Biesta (2010) refers to this as ‘Pragmatism in Education’ where the transaction between the problem and the imagined or anticipated ‘solution’ are being explored in practice. The methods employed are being used to capture this transaction and critique it are drawn from accounts of experiences of putting the imagined or anticipated ‘solution’ to the problem into practice.

It is important to acknowledge that in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of this thesis that there are discussions about what was envisioned in theory in the Wolf Report and in Study Programme policy developed in response and how it is being is being implemented at my college. Through exploring what was initially presented in the Wolf Report (2011) compared with what appears to be happening in practice in post-16 education there is clearly a disconnect. By conducting this particular practitioner research study, the aim is to address this ‘gap’ between the theory and practice. The methodological approach adopted is focusing on exploring this gap and testing ways of bridging this gap so that those learning on a Study Programme, those teaching on Study Programme and those managing the implementation of a Study Programme are more successful and fulfilled in their efforts. However, beyond this, there is the

exploration of the process of how ideas of teaching forms of knowledge are ‘transferred’ or translated into practice. Issues of knowledge ‘transfer’ and the translation of theory into practice are not new or limited to the introduction and implementation of Study Programmes. These enduring educational issues are inherent in the model of change and improvement currently at work in the education system in England and they are likely to happen again. This makes exploring this systemic social phenomenon very important in debates and discourse surrounding of educational research and improvement. It is also important to remember that in the discourses surrounding this field of study that this (Technical-Rational) model of change and improvement is based upon complex power-relations at work within it and this needs to be acknowledged. The literature review in Chapter 2 discuses about Fielding et al’s (2005) Joint Practice Development model as an alternative to the Technical-Rational model of change and improvement which currently dominates the education policy landscape. Fielding at al (2005) offer JPD and a way to begin to change the power dynamics at work within the current Technical-Rational, top-down model of educational change and improvement currently employed in the UK which is based on the assumption that decontextualised ‘solutions’ to complex educational problems can be devised centrally, imposed and from the top–down and implemented on the assumption that all that is then necessary is to tell tutors what to do, insist that they put this solution into practice and then measure outcomes and employ actions of surveillance to ensure that tutors and education leaders have complied and conformed to policy imperatives. It other words to make sure that tutors and education leaders have done what they were told to do.

When developing the methodology underpinning this thesis it is important to capture the discourses accurately but also to allow room for participants to clarify and build upon points made. Therefore, where possible, conversations will be recorded on video to allow for review and exploration. By adopting this approach there is the potential to develop discourse to test Fielding’s application of Joint Practice Development.

By using video-recording as a method for capturing the conversations there is also an opportunity for staff to be self-reflective on what was said, and develop 'practice'. The thesis here aims to develop a Joint Practice Development model through the promotion of conversation, self-reflection and focus groups. It follows then that ontologically, 'reality' is only constructed through talking, supporting Aristotle's perspective regarding the nature of reality as socially constructed rather than a 'pure form' as posited by Plato. Indeed, for Coe 'Either you believe the world exists independent of our knowledge of it, or you don't; there is no middle way' (Coe 2012: 7). However, it is important not to curtail methodological approaches and while the ontological and epistemological frameworks underpinning this study lead to the adoption of a qualitative approach, there remains a need to capture and analyse quantitative evidence as well. For example, the GCSE results and scores do exist as does the application of a Study Programme in a Further Education College, and for Plato, this might be a 'pure form'. There is a 'real' world from these quantitative approaches but in this thesis, there is a greater emphasis placed on how this data is generated, understood, discussed and applied in the development and improvement of practice.

Consequently, the methodological approach adopted in this thesis might be considered a 'new methodology in which the same study uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches called mixed methods research. The end result of mixed methods research is findings that may be more dependable and provide a more complete explanation of the research problem than either method alone could provide' (Ary et al 2010: 23). According to Ary et al, the rationale for this is that 'using quantitative methods in highly controlled settings ignored the participants' perspectives and experiences' (Ary et al 2010: 23). This thesis then aims to capture the experiences of tutors who have had to deliver the Study Programme and students who are the recipients of this learning, not just the 'hard' data. Coe does acknowledge the simplicity of the binary discussion of educational ontology where on one side 'The world is fundamentally mechanistic and deterministic, in which human behaviour is governed by general laws and is capable of manipulation [and on the other] Human beings

are active participants in the researched world, interacting with, rather than reacting to, their environment, constructing situations by bringing their own meanings and acting freely' (Coe 2012: 6). As discussed above, when considering Coe's assertion 'Either you believe the world exists independent of our knowledge of it, or you don't; there is no middle way' (Coe 2012: 7), mixed methods might appear to offer such an approach. However, referencing Gage (1989), Coe goes on to point out that 'paradigm differences do not require paradigm conflict' (Coe 2012: 8). The process employed in this study adopts a 'mixed methods' approach but framed in an epistemology where conversation and interpretation construct 'reality'. I hope that by doing this it might be possible to achieve what Biesta (2010) calls 'pragmatism in education' where a solution is tested through disturbance. Biesta here is arguing for pragmatic application of solutions grounded in what is actually happening. Mixed methods can allow a more complete picture that may not be possible through just one method approach alone.

'Pragmatism in education' further supports moving away from Plato's 'pure forms'. Lawson-Tancred (1986) draw upon in his translation; 'One of the most striking features of Aristotle's philosophy is that, while Plato seems for most of his life to have been persuaded that, what changes is ultimately unreal, the founder of the Lyceum conceived the explanation of change as being the prime task of the science of nature' (Lawson-Tancred [Aristotle] 1986: 14). It is change in practice and in particular change in education that this thesis is also trying to explore as it is aiming to provide a methodology that explores possible solutions to the educational problem of the implementation and curriculum design of Study Programmes and shrink the gap between the policy and the 'practice' of its implementation. This is what Coe describes as the 'Therapeutic approach in action research [which is] designed to address problems in context. Intervention research actively sets out to introduce some change into the educational world, then studies the reaction' (Coe 2012: 10).

Coe explains that 'it is also true that in practice many researchers are often not as consistent as the philosophers might expect them to be – although

allegiance to a particular ‘paradigm’ may be a fundamental commitment for some, others can see the merits of both sides of an argument about opposing views, and may be willing to move between positions and back again’ (Coe 2012: 7). The risks of this are that researchers need to acknowledge that ‘this is the age of “evidence” and all around are claims about the need for all to make evidence-based decisions. Evidence, however, is not neutral and critically depends on appropriate interpretation and defensible actions in light of evidence. So often evidence is called for, collected, and then analysed with little impact’ (Teo 2013: vii). Laverty (2016) warns of a real risk of collecting evidence and data through the use of surveys ‘with both open - and closed-ended questions [which] yields both qualitative and quantitative data but this does not qualify as a true mixed methods approach. The integration of methods needs to go beyond a superficial level and combine the two paradigms in meaningful ways’ (Laverty 2016: 15). It is essential then that the quantitative and qualitative evidence collected in this thesis is thoroughly scrutinised, considering the theoretical models offered and this is carefully interpreted in this thesis using an Aristotelian ontology.

Combining data with an interpretive narrative offers insights into a deeper understanding of Joint Practice Development and in particular to what extent this offers a way of improving the implementation, curriculum design and pedagogical practices supporting Study Programmes. The links to Dewey’s Pragmatic Epistemology are clear in this Therapeutic methodology as well as Dewey’s understanding of how knowledge is constructed. For Dewey, there was always the notion that as human beings we could be wrong and as educational researchers, this is also certainly true. For Dewey (1933), this problem finding, problem solving, wise judgement and intelligent action are necessary dimensions of learning from experience necessary as this approach allows for a space in which human beings can admit that they might be wrong or to be prepared to change their mind and adjust thinking according to evidence and data. However, for Biesta, there is a risk here that Dewey presents a ‘theory of learning’ and not a ‘theory of education’. Chapter 2 makes reference to Biesta’s (2010) analysis of measurements in education and their impact on practice. Biesta (2010) recognises the importance of data in

education as well as the relevance and contribution that anecdotal evidence, can make. He notes how this informs the mixed-approach methodological position such as the one proposed in this thesis. However, Dewey's theory of learning, where students are active in the learning process allows for a broader perspective on learning. This is useful when considering the design and implementation of Study Programmes because this methodological perspective attempts to transcend discipline-specific or subject specific models of education to present a more holistic view of education in which the English, Maths knowledges can be taught and assessed in appropriate ways. For Dewey, this also provides tutors with opportunities to link students' previous experiences to current learning opportunities. If then, this thesis adopts a Therapeutic approach, it is also important to record that researchers are not impartial. My aim in conducting this thesis is to improve educational outcomes for my learners both in terms of experience and grades. This is an important part of my own practice and therefore a key motivation for my engagement in this research.

What ethical decisions need to be considered?

When considering the quantitative and qualitative methods being adopted it was crucial that this should in no way impact on the teaching, learning and assessment for students. Nor should it impact on the workload of tutors. As this is practitioner research there is the added facet that I work alongside my research participants. This gives me a perspective of being involved when the information is being collected and wanting to represent this fairly. However, there is the crucial need to be honest with where my evidence leads and that the focus remains on the educational problem, not on any individuals involved in the data collection. It is important to recognise that 'ethical decision-making becomes an actively deliberative, ongoing and iterative process of assessing and reassessing the situation and issues as they arise' (BERA 2018: 2) and I have continued throughout to conduct data collection to a high standard of ethical consideration.

To maintain an ethical approach, I examined and adhered closely the BERA (2018) ethical guidelines. Key issues that impact on my data collection include

making participation voluntary and that participants understand the research process. Participants were given the right to review the research at the end and were made aware that they have a right to withdraw from the project at any time. I sought to ‘seek to minimise the impact of [my] research on the normal working and workloads of participants’ (BERA 2018: 7). Anonymity is maintained and protected throughout the study and that all data collected was stored securely. I adhere fully to data protection legislation, now and in the future, throughout this project.

I recognise in the guidelines that ‘educational researchers whose work is conducted under the auspices of an educational institution are required to seek ethical review and clearance from that institution’ (BERA 2018: 3). Before starting this research I sought permission from my college senior managers. I maintained this clearance through sharing progress with my line-manager, the group leader for English and Maths and the training support coach. This is to ensure I continue to conduct this research in an ethically sound way.

It is also useful to acknowledge here that this thesis has a pragmatic inductive approach conducted in a timeframe that needed to be realistic, manageable and with activities that involved great care and thought. However, when discussing the way this might resonate in wider contexts the limitation of the methodical window and evidence collected needs to be acknowledged as this impacts upon to what extent the perspectives presented here form coherent arguments, insights into and findings which might inform potential ways to address the perceived education problem. The social conversations taking place around Study Programmes existed before the data being collected and will exist afterwards and therefore there must be space to acknowledge how this research exists and operates in this way. By adopting a method where the discourses are being captured, and the voices of participants are being heard, then this will hopefully allow a better understanding and interpretation of the conversations and incidents presented in this study. It is also important, ethically, to be clear that participants reported in this study were and still are working to make policy good in practice before the existence of this research and after the conclusion of this study. The role of myself in this research is to

understand and appreciate my own epistemic position as one providing a framework for describing and deconstructing population-specific worldviews. This allows me to increase the opportunities to enquire about the base of knowledge and how knowledge is being interpreted with my own Further Education college. The outcome of this is that by employing a systemic approach to research I will be able to enhanced understanding of the purpose of the qualitative research captured here.

It is therefore very important that 'individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, and with dignity and freedom from prejudice, in recognition of both their rights and of differences arising from age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant characteristic' (BERA 2018: 8). This research is about capturing accounts and observations of genuine educational experiences over a period of time and it is important anybody who gives their time does so willingly and in the knowledge of exactly what the processes of data collection are being employed involve. I continue to work closely with my research population outside of the remit of this research and the collection of data do not impact on my duties as a Head of Learning. By using a letter, tailored to students, staff and managers[6], I am able to reasonably communicate the research methods and ethical safeguards. I do this to ensure that they understand about their informed consent. By doing this, I meet the requirement of BERA that 'researchers should do everything they can to ensure that all potential participants understand, as well as they can, what is involved in a study. All participants are informed of why their participation is necessary, what they are being asked to do, what will happen to the information they provide, how that information will be used and how and to whom it will be reported. They are also informed about the retention, sharing and any possible secondary uses of the research data' (BERA 2018: 9). It is also important throughout this study that I 'recognise the right of all participants to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and at any time, and participants are be informed of this right'

[6] Please see examples in Appendix 1 and 2 at the end of this thesis. This letter was used in 2018 and in 2019.

(BERA 2018: 9) from the outset. This is done in the context of this study through the questionnaire, letter and also reinforced verbally in focus group meetings.

It is also important to recognise throughout this research that all data collected is protected by General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The college has a lead GDPR administrator who has reviewed the process of data collection and storage of this research. This is so the college, and I, can store information in accordance with legislative requirements. BERA also notes the importance of keeping data secure and all electronic data was stored on college systems on a NAS drive attached to my individual login. Any hand written forms from learning walks were scanned and kept electronically with originals being shredded. When the draft of the thesis was shared this done through a shared OneDrive link to individual emails[7] to ensure documents were not shared outside of the population of research participants.

The learning walk forms that were used were the same as designed and issued by the college group to all observers. By utilising an observation process already in place this avoided placing additional workload burden on participants. The learning walk captures a walk through a collection of teaching, learning and assessment as it is taking place. It is not targeted to one individual tutor, group of learners or lesson. Only comments from participants feature in this thesis to meet the requirement that 'in which some members of a group (such as students in a class or their parents/guardians) have not given consent to participate, researchers should decide whether this was an active refusal of consent, in which case they would need to respect this and find a practical solution' (BERA 2018: 12).

It is key to note that none of the participants are related to me and no incentives were used to create the research population. All staff (including managers) were invited and there was no expectation for them to engage in the research. I spoke to managers of the area, and where this changed, I made sure that I

[7] OneDrive processes were tested prior to sharing. If a participant forwarded the email to another user access was denied. Student email accounts were used and not their personal emails to maintain a secure process was in place.

approached the new head of area to gain permission. Where staff declined to engage in the study this was respected.

The final ethical decision to acknowledge is that ‘researchers should take steps to minimise the effects of research designs that advantage or are perceived to advantage one group of participants over others’ (BERA 2018: 20). For this reason, I chose to conduct this study with all Level 2 students across my curriculum area and expanded this as my responsibilities changed. Historic data comparison is done to understand trends and whether there are any changes to achievement. It is important to recognise that this data collection captures educational change and that the outcome of this is not possible to predict.

Ethics.

As the datasets in this thesis represent the learners, the tutors and the managers I work with it was important that I reflected their comments in the most accurate way possible. It was important that narratives were captured from a range of stakeholders in the Study Programme but this had to be conducted in a caring and highly considered way. My position in this process was equally important as during the data collection, I was scruintising narratives and asking questions to ensure I understood the points being made fully. I then shared my notes with the participants to make sure that I had fairly captured their comments and perspectives. Ethically, it was essential to me that my established relationship within my organisation allowed narratives to be robustly considered but that I was held to account as a researcher who would continue to work with participants.

The Research Population.

When considering participants for this thesis, I chose learners that I have a naturalistic access to. I have chosen cohorts from subjects that I manage who appreciate that I have a vested interest in the improvement their educational experiences. It is important to admit here that I am aware of the status I hold

working as a Head of Learning. It is important that participants did not feel influenced to take part in providing data for this study by my role. It is important to stress the voluntary nature of participation and that research participants could withdraw their consent at any time. I also worked with the manager for Maths and English in case staff approached them about concerns or the desire to withdraw. It is key for me, as a practitioner researcher to explain the purpose of the research, the scope and data collection methods and how data would be shared. It was also key that staff, as well as students, felt they could withdraw from the study at any time. At the start of each focus group meeting, student meeting, I read a pre-prepared statement summarising that participation was voluntary, consent could be withdrawn and comments would be kept secure and private.

Students operated with code names and evidence was not shared outside of the researcher and supervisors. For clarity, staff were not informed of the code that identifies them nor were they informed of other people's codes. In the table below, I have illustrated the breakdown of each group over the timescale for data collection. Groups of students were chosen from IT, Engineering, Media and Music totaling 206 students. 151 of these learners were involved in focus groups over a two-year data collection period. Each student was studying a Level 2 qualification and was also studying GCSE English and/or GCSE Maths in a majority of cases[8]. As stated above, these learners were selected because I had naturalistic access to them as one of their tutors and as an education manager. These are the learners I am responsible for as a Head of Learning and monitoring their success on a Study Programme is part of my current duties.

In the table below, the timescale and research population of this thesis are tabulated to offer an oversight of the data collection. I have given an indication of learners' consent and a broad overview of the structure of each group. I recognise that the research population is predominantly male. At the outset of this thesis, I stated that I wished to consider Study Programmes for my learners.

[8] A few students (less than 2%) on these programmes studied Functional Skills at level 1.

Although efforts are made to widen participation in STEM[9] subjects at national and local levels, it was important to focus on cohorts I manage and support. I have also stated whether they are 16-18 or 19+ as this may reflect on how long they have been in education and the quantity who have barriers to learning. In this context, barriers to learning refers to where additional learning support has been formally identified[10]. This is to avoid subjective labelling of where a student may need support by a tutor.

Period of Data Collection	**Vocational pathway**	**Cohort Size**	**Sample Size -**	**Method**
March 2018 – June 2018				
			55 students in Media and IT 28 staff across Media, IT and GCSE	Online Questionnaire
	Media	28 > 20 Male 8 Female 6 = 19+ 23 = 16-18 8 learners had barriers to learning	25 written consent to take part in this data collection.	3 Focus Groups held in April/May 2018
	IT	33 > 20 Male 8 Female 6 = 19+ 23 = 16-18 8 learners had barriers to learning	30 written consent to take part in this data collection.	4 Focus Groups held in May/June 2018
	GCSE Staff		13 staff in GCSE delivery	1 focus group in June 2018
	Vocational Staff		7 staff in Media and IT	1 focus group in June 2018
September 2018 – June 2019				

[9] Science Technology Engineering and Maths
[10] Some students had an EHCP while others had profiles detailing their exam access arrangements.

	Joint Delivery Meeting August 2018	28 staff members	13 staff in GCSE delivery, 4 media staff, 3 IT, 4 Engineering and 1 music tutor.	Observation of Pre-planned curriculum meeting to share Extended Schemes of work
	Media	26 > 20 Male 6 Female 6 = 19+ 20 = 16-18 6 learners had barriers to learning	24 written consent to take part in this data collection.	4 Focus Groups held in October 2018 4 Focus Groups held in April 2019
	IT	34 > 32 Male 2 Female 2 = 19+ 30 = 16-18 2 learners had barriers to learning	33 written consent to take part in this data collection.	5 Focus Groups held in October/November 2018 5 Focus Groups held in May 2019
	Engineering	15 > 15 Male 0 Female 15 = 16-18 1 learner had barriers to learning	13 written consent to take part in this data collection.	2 Focus Groups held in November 2018 2 Focus Groups held in May 2019
	Music	12 > 9 Male 3 Female 1 = 19+ 11 = 16-18 2 learners had barriers to learning	9 written consent to take part in this data collection.	2 Focus Groups held in November 2018 2 Focus Groups held in May 2019
	Learning walk across GCSE sessions		40 learning walks conducted as part of normal college process.	Learning walk observations.
September 2019 – June 2020				

	Media	18 > 13 Male 5 Female 1 = 19+ 17= 16-18 3 learners had barriers to learning	15 written consent to take part in this data collection.	3 Focus Groups held in October 2019
	IT	33 > 29 Male 4 Female 2 = 19+ 31 = 16-18 2 learners had barriers to learning	28 written consent to take part in this data collection.	4 Focus Groups held in October/November 2019
	Engineering	18 > 18 Male 0 Female 18 = 16-18 2 learners had barriers to learning	16 written consent to take part in this data collection.	3 Focus Groups held in November 2019
	Music	20 > 17 Male 3 Female 2 = 19+ 18 = 16-18 4 learners had barriers to learning	13 written consent to take part in this data collection.	2 Focus Groups held in November 2019
	Learning walk across GCSE sessions		26 learning walks conducted as part of normal college process.	Learning walk observations.

The tutors who formed the research population for this thesis were from Media, IT, Engineering, Music, English and Maths. Tutors who were asked to contribute had direct teaching responsibility for the Level 2 learners selected. Tutors did have teaching to other levels of groups and the departments did have additional tutors who did not teach at Level 2 during the data collection of this thesis. The datasets were collected over two and half academic years from

March 2018 through to June 2020. The vocational tutors totaled 4 Media (all full-time tutors), 3 IT (2 full time and one 0.6 FTE[11]), 4 Engineering (all fulltime with one deputy head of learning for Engineering) and 1 Music (fractional member of staff). The GCSEs tutors were 8 Maths tutors (5 FTE and 3 part-time) and 5 English tutors (4 FTE and 1 part-time). 1 Media member of staff left the college in 2019 and they consented to remain part of the data set and for their contribution to remain in the thesis. I have mentioned the employment contract status as a matter of transparency and because I was considerate of this factor to ensure I managed workloads ethically.

Crucially, the tutors involved in the data sets of this thesis needed to have confidence in my integrity as a researcher. It was important that I recognise the power relationships at work as a Head of Learning and be explicit about how data sets will be collected in a way that allows staff, and students, to have confidence in my integrity as a researcher. I did this through taking time to explain the research aims, how I would treat information with respect, and the narrative inquiry approach I planned to adopt. I also listened to input throughout data collection and welcomed questions. By being approachable in my conduct this allowed greater opportunities for participants interrogate how their contribution would be used and be confident in my integrity as a researcher. This was important so that in the context of data collection and discussion, I aimed to flatten the power structures. This was most important in the classroom observations and learning walks where tutors understood that they were not being judged. I also must continue to work with colleagues and students after the data collection and thesis has been completed. As a practitioner researcher, and as a head of learning, my credibility is important to continue to support education in my institution. It is important to recognise that learning walks are a supportive measure and no information from a learning walk identifies individual lecturers. While learning walks are unannounced drop-ins, it is important that staff are not put under pressure by this process. No additional learning walks were conducted as part of this study. No information in this thesis contains reflections referring to tutors who have not given prior consent. In the

[11] FTE is Full Time Equivalent.

second year of data collection there was classroom-based peer work with GCSE lecturers. I captured this process in the chapters to follow.

As the data collection process takes place across academic years it is possible to explore whether the narratives captured in one year reflect those of another year as this may expose contradictions, or provide greater validity to the themes that emerge. Quantitative comparison is a key strategy in education and part of the college self-reflection process. This also offers comparisons with national league tables provided by the DfE. It is also important to accept that this data is distorted through the lens of being made up of Media, IT, Engineering and Music students. While this followed my naturalistic access, I accept that students in different subjects may provide supplementary insights.

I also think it is important to capture that in April 2018 my role was changed from Programme Area Manager to Head of Learning and I was given Engineering as a line management expectation. As a result, I approached this team in the period of April 2018 and September 2018 to provide reasonable opportunities for them to be involved in the data collection.

Methods of data collection.

My initial action was the hold an informal focus group with the Maths and English tutors at my college. I did this at a team meeting at the invitation of the manager for English and Maths. During this discussion, one comment which is worth particular note is that the Maths tutors felt IT and media students are different. In the findings, I have tried to respect this observation based on previous years and students but to also test its validity. I have also approached this research with a view of triangulating the information to prove impact. I have achieved this through mixed-method approaches but again focusing on the narrative being presented.

In addition to speaking to the tutors, I devised a questionnaire for tutors, students and the line manager for Maths and English to gain a deeper understanding of the situation and my starting point with this research. It is

important to note that this doesn't take place in a vacuum. There are other pressures and information being imparted to my colleagues and it was important to me to try and capture these while being sensitive to the workloads of all concerned. I spent a lot of time reviewing the questions I intended to ask the students, the tutors and the manager. To help I drew up a table in Microsoft Word with a suggested question on one side and the rationale on the other for firstly asking the question and then what I expected the answer to be. By going through this preparation, I was able to more fully understand my own thinking and make explicit my own assumptions while making sure the questions were designed fully to offer an insight.

I collected quantitative data of GCSE results in 17/18, 18/19 and 19/20. I then used focus groups to explore and capture more in-depth discussions. These were either filmed or recorded through detailed notes and evaluated afterwards. I then used self-reflection videos and paper-based and electronic forms to capture changes in delivery and details of conversations around the implementation and delivery of the Study Programme. As discussed in Chapter 1, I have been influenced by Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) study looking at the impact of narrative inquiry to construct a collaborative story as part of presenting and representing data in this research. It is useful to recognise here that in this thesis the term 'narrative' is being used to communicate the accounts of experience that the data collection methods capture. Narrative then focuses on 'human experience, perhaps because it is a fundamental structure of human experience, and perhaps because it has a holistic quality' (Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 2). As this thesis is concerned with exploring models of educational change it is important that this change is explored in a holistic manner. Narratives offer insights into the experience of each individual that is 'temporally continuous and socially interactive' (Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 4). It is so that readers of this thesis can recognise authentic experiences and compare them with their own settings and critique their validity and trustworthiness. As discussed in Chapter 1, presenting and representing authentic experiences of learning is important but not easy.

These narratives are also explorations of the stories conveyed to me as the researcher and therefore ‘the investigator and the objects of the investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds therefore the conventional distinction between ontology and epistemology dissolves’ (Waring in Coe et al 2017: 18). The variable, personal and socially constructed nature of this study suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among the investigator and participants in the research. As such the methodology underpinning the thesis is idiographic, dialectical and hermeneutical. ‘Conventional hermeneutical techniques are used in interpretations and compared and contrasted through a dialectical interchange, it is not a matter of eliminating conflicting or previous interpretations, but to distil a more sophisticated and informed consensus construction’ (ibid). I have used narrative as a way of explaining these constructions which are open to interpretation and critique. It is also key to acknowledge that any investigator risks distorting data through their own perspective and therefore it is crucial that all participants have the opportunity to review the thesis to test the authenticity and trustworthiness of the narratives presented.

By utilising qualitative data, in focus groups and questionnaires, which captures the narrative of Study Programmes and the impact of introducing a Joint Practice approach to my college, it is possible to represent the journey of this thesis. Through collecting data that is also quantitative it is then possible to combine, as Biesta does, the factual process of education (GCSE exams results) and the narratives surrounding them. However, the Aristotelian approach aims to widen this model more towards a ‘theory of learning’ as the narrative is driven by learners and is about their learning in a holistic way. After all, this is a goal through the principles and practices of Joint Practice Development employed in this thesis to address the curriculum model and pedagogical practices adopted in different disciplines (including core, English, Maths) which in Study Programme in theory is dissolved but in practice remain both prevalent and distinct.

Below I have tabulated the evidence methods used in this thesis.

What kind of data will I collect?	What do I hope to know?	Timeline
Online questionnaire	I wanted to know what participants' understanding of a Study Programme was before I started asking further questions.	March-April 2018
Meeting notes	I want to capture what communications are taking place between tutors. I need to explore joint working that is taking place and capture the discourse of this.	August 2018
Focus Groups tutors (Video and meeting notes)	I want to explore discourses around teaching, learning and assessment and how individuals perceive the Study Programme. What is their lived experience? This allows me to explore What are tutors' experience of delivering the Study Programme? This question applies to all those who deliver the Study Programme so English, Maths and Core tutors. When discussing practice, is this differentiation helpful or a hinderance? What are managers' experience of a Study Programme? How is practice being 'managed' and my own management position. How can this be improved?	April/May 2018 September to December 2018 April to May 2019
Focus groups students (Video and meeting notes)	Discussion with students of their lived experience of Study Programmes. I want to know how students understand their curriculum and the experiences they have at college as part of Study Programme. This allows me to explore What are learners' experiences of Study Programmes? What is happening in the classroom for them and what is their learner journey and how do they perceive the practice they are receiving?	April/May 2018 September to December 2018 April to May 2019
Meeting notes	I want to capture what communications are taking place between tutors. I wanted to reflect any changes from the previous year.	August 2019
Field diary	I wanted to capture my observations and interactions with tutors and students when in lesson. I completed the log immediately after the lesson. I	September 2019 to December 2019

	wanted to explore impact of joint working within a lesson.	
Learning Walks	I wanted to capture snap-shots of teaching, learning and assessment happening. I wanted to see what was happening in lessons where tutors were not aware, they were being dropped in. This allows me to explore; What do I observe when exploring Study Programmes?	September 2018 – May 2019 September 2019 – May 2020
Achievement data – PLR return.	Achievement of GCSEs and Core programmes. To see what trends in achievement existed.	August 2018 August 2019 August 2020

Using an interpretive position allows the research to further explore the social frameworks and discourses that surround a Study Programme as and when it transitions from the theoretical field to the practical one. This approach also allows and extends the scope of the study to explore the language of practice and particularly the way in which Joint Practice Development can act as a way of developing and refining existing practices and the extent to which it is capable of operating to address/dissolve the 'gap' between policy and practice.

Using a more qualitative approach to the research question, I allow for a greater discussion of the cultural context in which the Study Programme is being implemented and developed. This serves to strengthen the findings of the research by exposing the context in which the evidence is being collected and reviewed. It is also helpful to use this method as a way of exploring how the Study Programme exists as a socially constructed phenomenon through mapping of the idea of Study Programmes and how they are translated into practice in a classroom.

Interpretive positions also allow me as a practitioner researcher to draw upon my own subjective viewpoint. This is crucial as this is something that needs to be exposed and made apparent. In this research, I am not an outsider looking objectively at the issue but a subjective person of interest. I am a manager and I have a duty to support my staff and students to achieve the best results for each learner in all parts of their learning – or Study Programme – as possible. I am also deeply entrenched in the language, cultural context and mapping of

curriculum development and pedagogic practices that I wish to explore and refine. As Gardner et al (2008) argue this type of research is valuable in explaining how this social phenomenon might appear to outsiders while addressing the subjective truth of the situations under exploration. I am not, therefore, trying to simply test a theory but rather formulate a way interpreting experience and finding forward in a particular setting.

By using mixed methods, I hope to address the real-world impact of Study Programmes in practice, and this does need to have an empirical focus insofar as these are student achievements after all and the importance of this to building a career, a professional approach to learning and holistic knowledge-based to support them as they embark on their vocational careers cannot be underestimated. Alongside this is the interpretative nature of how Study Programmes operate and how people perceive them and work together to make them a reality in practice. This raises questions of how this practice operates and how JPD can support this moving forward to allow for greater 'senses of student achievement' as well as supporting actual achievement? This focus on the 'soft' skill development of, for example, confidence, is also crucially important and therefore this is why an empirical or even critical approach on their own will not suffice.

In this research, there is an ontological assumption that the gap between the theory of the Study Programme and the practice in my college exists and that it can be reduced offering a more successful experience for the students and tutors. Terry Hyland (2017) would perhaps argue that the perceived 'gap' in theory and practice is illusionary, a symptom of what he calls the 'Mind-body problem' (Hyland 2017: 307). Hyland sees the separation of the academic and vocation as a political perspective which is unhelpful because all academic activity should lead to a physical outcome. Within this research, there is a perceived 'gap' in theory and, in Chapters 1 and 2, there is a detailed discussion about this problem for Study Programmes. For Hyland, there is a suggestion that the separation of practice from the theory is only one element of the problem and he argues what might be occurring is that a new set of theories are being drawn upon in the application of Study Programmes. This assumes

that the disconnect between Study Programme theory and practice might curtail exploration and questioning/challenging of the theory and its impact on practice. For example, the discourses of Ofsted, are factors of influence in relation to how Study Programmes are evaluated in practice. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the limitation of viewing this thesis only through a Study Programme theory and practice gap. While drawing upon experience it is important to explore discourses and social constructs and it may just be more apparent this view point is flawed and unhelpful. It is also worth drawing upon Hyland's perspective that theory and practice are not two separate and discrete things but rather complexly intertwine, they change and morph and therefore a more complex understanding of the Study Programme is required where both are achieving the same outcome. The problem within this view point is that it is possible to lose sight of the impact on the learners.

The idealist aspect of this ontology is that the practice of teaching, learning and assessment can be explored within this social construct and analysed in a way to offer constructive changes which can then employed consistently to offer a different reality. By contrast, there is an assumption also that the 'gap' between theory and practice is something externally solvable through observation alone and that this develops practice. It is also important to acknowledge the epistemological assumption in this methodology of how shared knowledge can allow practice to form and be reformed to guide positive development. From a subjective ideological view point of improving practice, this factor in the design of this research may influence the student experience as well, ultimately improving the achievements within a Study Programme for students. This is the goal of this research but from a pragmatic perspective, this may require adaption through the collection of data so that this thesis continues to address the educational problem.

The position of interpretivism, with a mixed approach, within this research study, enables me to investigate the 'gap' between Study Programme policy and practice through looking at shared practice and knowledge. The research does this through interrogating narratives from a wide variety of cultural contexts including staff, students and managers to provide a cognitive structure

of the practice in my college and how this might work through a lens of Joint Practice Development. From this methodological position, it is possible to then explore the outcomes in a context without the expectation that this is definitely going to provide a positive discourse for change but rather a space to explore the nature of practice development and how this can be fostered when theoretical frameworks are introduced into a college such as mine. By moving away from a critical stance this allows the research to pose further questions about how the policy practice gap can be addressed holistically without being polarised in a discussion about power relations where the policy comes from government and therefore must be implemented. This research is more focused on the development of practice that supports holistic teaching, learning and assessment and tries to understand more fruitfully how curriculum design can overcome issues in the implementation of education policy and challenge the creation of false divisions and unhelpful gaps in education through discourse.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Chapter 3 justifies the ontological and epistemological positions underpinning this thesis. It also offers an explanation of the methodology and methods employed in this research. These include the reasons why a narrative approach, informed by Clandinin and Huber (2006) is appropriate. The intention of this thesis is to explore the extent to which Study Programmes, currently being implemented in my institution, might be reviewed and reworked to further achieve the policy intent of Study Programmes, while navigating the 'bear-traps' (Hughes 2018: www.tes.com) and improving the experience of learners within my Study Programmes. Chapters 1 and 3 indicate how the nature and scope of this research limit the findings of this thesis in particular ways. Firstly, as a small-scale research study based in one institution, the findings of this thesis cannot lay claim to generalisability. Secondly, it does not purport to offer simple solutions to the complex problems encountered by practitioners in the implementation of Study Programmes in other contexts. Finally, it does not offer a 'toolkit' or a 'one-size-fits-all' solution to the problem of implementing Study Programmes.

Instead, this thesis aims to generate knowledge grounded in accounts of lived human experience. This includes those managers and tutors responsible for implementing Study Programmes at the site of this research, as well as of their students. It is therefore important to ensure that analysis of data in this qualitative research study is conducted in a systematic, rigorous and methodical way so that it can offer meaningful and useful results. Nowell et al (2017) point out that, 'if readers are not clear about how researchers analysed their data or what assumptions informed their analysis, evaluating the trustworthiness of the research is difficult' (Nowell et al 2017: 2). This chapter presents a detailed description of how analysis of the data was conducted in order to assure readers of the credibility and trustworthiness of this research while maintaining the integrity of narratives captured as part of the data collection that took place. To ensure this is robust, the data collection chapters will also be shared with participants of this study.

This thesis uses thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) rather than Grounded Theory as a basis for data exploration. The reason for this is that Grounded Theory requires approaching data collection and analysis from an undistorted perspective. Given the nature and focus of this practitioner research; the role I have as an 'insider'; the impact of engaging with literature in Chapter 2; together with the discussion of methodology and methods presented in Chapter 3, it would be inauthentic not to acknowledge that these influence the process of data analysis. The variable and personal nature of the experiences and other social constructions elicited in this study throughout are refined in the interaction between, and among, investigators and respondents. As Waring (2017) reminds us, 'It is not therefore a matter of eliminating conflicting or previous interpretations but to distil a more sophisticated and informed consensus construction' (Waring 2017: 18). For the above reasons, the logic employed in the analysis of data is inductive, in that it begins with specific critical incidents and 'statements that are progressively categorised into themes to represent the phenomena of interest' (Nowell 2017: 6).

Thematic analysis provides a model of approaching data with awareness and reflection on the researcher's position in relation to the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis 'is a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights' (Nowell et al 2017:1). Although the literature review in Chapter 2 guides this research, space must always be allowed in the examination to admit unexpected outcomes and challenges to existing published literature. It is therefore essential to acknowledge that as a researcher, I have revisited the data many times to try to draw out, refine and confirm themes. The themes have evolved through this process as I have become more immersed in the data.

Data analysis activity conducted in this thesis began with a transcription of interview recordings. This involved reading and re-reading transcripts and field notes in order to move to the analysis of the data in which an initial coding framework was developed. This enabled the identification of potential themes. Through doing this I was able to capture narratives and group them in a way

that exposed and discussed the critical incidents, key statements, and important transactions happening within the site of this research. I recognise that ‘To be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner through recording, systematising, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible’ (Nowell et al 2017:1). Through capturing a discussion that also contextualises the data in narrative form, this research provides insights into what was happening at the site of this research at different points in time. This meets the important Credibility and Confirmability criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research identified by Guba and Lincoln (1989) (discussed in some detail in Nowell et al 2017: 3). While it is acknowledged that this research is relatively small-scale, this thesis seeks to meet another criterion identified by Guba and Lincoln, that of ‘Transferability’ in that it offers insights that may have the potential for case-to-case transfer. While it is not possible at this stage to ascertain the sites which may wish to transfer the findings of this research, it is hoped that the ‘thick descriptions’ provided in this thesis may help others to judge transferability of the findings to other contexts beyond the research conducted here.

In Nowell et al’s (2017) discussion of thematic analysis, they document how the model by ‘Braun and Clarke (2006) presented here as a linear, six-phased method… is actually an iterative and reflective process that develops over time and involves a constant moving back and forward between phases’ (Nowell et al 2017: 4). This is an important point because, although this chapter might appear to offer a more linear approach to data collection, in actuality this process occurred over time in the context of a dynamically evolving Further Education college. This involved a constant process of reflection and going back and forth through data sets. As a researcher, it has been important to keep research notes throughout detailing my own perspectives, especially given how these impact on my interpretation of the data. This has been the most transparent way to bring to the fore the process of data collection, analysis and identification of themes taking place during this study. It is also important to recognise that a,

‘theme is an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its variant manifestations. As such, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole’ (p. 362). Themes are identified by bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone (Aronson, 1994). A theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006)’ (cited in Nowell et al 2017: 4).

In their book, Nowell et al (2017) offer a way of identifying how themes can be agreed upon. Alongside this it is useful to consider Gillie Bolton’s (2010) exploration of critical incidents where she recognises that a ‘problem has arisen with the term (critical incident), leading many reflective practitioner students to think they must focus upon the dramatic, disturbing or otherwise seemingly significant. We need to be critical about incidents’ (Bolton 2010: 9). Bolton uses the work of Doyle (2004) to argue that, ‘Listening critically to the stories of those peers also enables developmental learning from their experience (Doyle 2004) (Bolton 2010: 9) [because] ‘They create narratives in relation to the stories of others and their social, cultural, professional contexts’ (Bolton 2010: 71). For Bolton, ‘stories offer a way of making human sense of contemporary de-humanised, impersonal, highly regulated and unemotional organisations’ (Gabriel 1991, 1995) (Bolton 2010: 204). Both Bolton and Nowell et al provide a structure concerning how to determine themes within the research that link back to Arendt’s (1958) concepts of the Human Condition. This is particularly important when considering that the critical incidents from which themes develop may be smaller, more context-driven, events. Critical Incidents then in this thesis are defined not by being dramatic moments but through exploration of the data looking at symbolic moments and themes that are emerging from them. The common elements of data that, when viewed together, might provide an insight into the way, in the context of this thesis, that Study Programmes are being implemented, designed, experienced and realised at the site of this research.

The data collection in this chapter has been collected in a systematic way to provide a context specific insight into Study Programmes at a particular further

education college. This provides me with a source of reflection upon my own practice, both as a tutor and as a manager, that may or not have transferability to other institutions. As discussed in Chapter 3, the epistemological position within this thesis is that knowledge is derived through the exploration of narratives and how these might reveal truth. Rather than considering truth to be something external to be observed. From this position, my own epistemic position is influenced by my 'view of the world' and this does influence my interpretation of data. As a tutor and manager at my college this allows me to conduct practitioner research that is framed by my own experiences. This allows for a unique position to capture the data here. By making my own position clear in this thesis, this provides opportunity to make my own philosophical standpoint clear and how this provides unique contributions to knowledge.

For the purposes of transparency, it is useful to identify keywords and explore their operational definition. As discussed previously, the language and discourse are key elements of discovery within this thesis especially in considering the power relationships within language. By sharing this, hopefully anyone wishing to replicate this research in their own institution can see how terms have been formed.

Study Programme	In discussing the Study Programme I have avoided offering any other definitions or explanations. This is to allow participants to tell me their experiences and knowledge of what a Study Programme. It was also important to me that I did not avoid using the term so I could explore how the term was used and understood, if at all, at my college. As a result, I didn't offer a definition to participants either to try a limit my impact on their responses.
English / Maths	In the use of this term, it was important to use something which was clear to the learners and applied to their timetable. I avoided terms such as literacy and

	numeracy to prevent limiting discussion of elements of the English and Maths curriculum. To allow for any wider discussions, I avoided using the label of GCSE so that learners were not limited in their discourse by the framing device of a 'GCSE lesson' as opposed to any other.
Subjects	I used the term 'subjects' to avoid terms such as core, vocation, GCSE and lesson. Each of these terms could lead to a distortion on providing a perception of the education being discussed and this could limit discussion by participants.
Achievement	I was aware that the term achievement carries with it for some participants a clear link to Ofsted and education measurement. However, this term continues to be important for students, staff and managers and therefore this term was retained but linked with the data to anchor its usage here.
Observation/ Learning Walk	As discussed, the learning walk scaffolded on the college's existing system. The learning walk in this sense is where a manager will visit classrooms unannounced for a short period of time. These learning walks do not focus on individual tutors and provide a broader overview of the lesson. There is a proforma provided for this in Appendix 3 which has been modified to remove identification of the institution.
Tutor	The term tutor was used instead of lecturer and teacher to try and provide a discourse that incorporated a variety of educational perspectives. Lecturer tends to suggest didactic delivery while teaching has connotations of school-based curriculums. Tutor remains wedded to discourse too around the 'personal tutor' but in this context it was

	allows discussion where some participants were also managers, Study Programme Leaders who tutored groups of students.

Analysis of the data presented in this chapter reveals a policy implementation process fraught with complexities and changes in context. The accounts presented in this thesis tell the stories of the experiences of the tutors and managers working tirelessly to improve teaching, learning and assessment at my college. The end result is also a story about my own learning journey undertaken during this research. The themes which have emerged through reflection on the context and problem, the literature, and the experiences of everyone involved in the implementation of Study Programmes policy at the sites of this study are presented and analysed in some detail in the following sections of this chapter.

The commencement of evidence collection.

To begin to research experiences of Study Programmes, I wanted to find out what others thought about the problem and context in the setting of my own institution. I was interested to see what patterns might emerge from the data at an early stage. I used these responses in focus groups afterwards to gather narratives about what was happening at my college. Through exploring these narratives, I was able to draw out initial ‘critical incidents’ at an early stage. These have been progressively reviewed and refined to offer deeper insights into the process of the implementation of Study Programme policy in the context of the research, the actions being taken and their consequences in practice. Taking this approach provided an opportunity to gather and develop an overview of the discourses around Study Programmes from managers, teaching staff and students. This included managers at my campus in charge of core subjects; the manager of English and Maths; the teaching staff that I managed personally; teaching staff from Maths and English; as well as students from my subject area. The establishment of this community was an important one for this research as in my college there is a desire, ‘to put students at the heart of everything we do’. It is important to me that this research does just that,

but also captures the complexity of educational practice and the processes and stages involved in its improvement at my college. The staff, who have given their time willingly to participate in this research have helped me immeasurably in grappling with the challenges of capturing the realities and experiences of implementing Study Programmes policy at my college. I am indebted to them for their patience and trust in allowing me to ask them questions to better understand how Study Programmes are being implemented.

The group's responses that are presented here were gathered through naturalistic sampling in that I had ease of access to this community in my role as manager for the Media, IT and Engineering area at my college. In my role, I was able to meet with and plan to gather evidence from my allocated students. This was also the group for whom their data forms part of my own role and judgments made about me as a manager at my college. After all, I am held accountable for the students' Study Programme success at college. This is judged against National Achievement Rates Tables published by the Department for Education and the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This data is also used by Ofsted to measure success and compare institutions across the UK. As clarified in Chapter 3, the students selected for the research came from a Level 2 provision across IT, Media, Music and Engineering, as these were students who were often taking two GCSE qualifications alongside a vocational subject. Some learners had progressed (68%) from Level 1 to Level 2. These groups were chosen, rather than Level 1 students, as they are usually more established in their vocational choice of study. The students were catalogued by a system of SR and number with the core course of the student identified as Media (M), Computing (IT), Music (Mus) and Engineering (E). After capturing larger scale information, I conducted focus groups with smaller groups of students and this was extended to include the student representative meetings to avoid over-loading the students. All students were volunteers and I sought their views and feedback on early drafts of this chapter. Students who did not wish to take part were removed from the data and one learner who left college before completing their programme was removed from the dataset.

Volunteers from the college's teaching community were a mixture of English and Maths GCSE tutors at my campus. Again, the staff are represented by a code and are not identified in this paper. They are coded with a TR prefix and M for maths and E for English. Voc was used to denote a vocational tutor. The reason for this is that I wanted to try to protect staff identities and capture responses without the fear of opinions being shared with managers, students and other staff in a way that might identify tutors and curtail honest responses. The focus has remained on GCSE programmes due to the high priority given in Study Programme's funding conditions to all students being required to work towards a Grade 4 in both their Maths and English GCSE. Some of the tutor participants taught functional skills as well as GCSE. The curriculum teaching staff were from Media, Computing, Music and Engineering as these are the areas for which I have a responsibility as a line manager and therefore my access to these tutors was established. The rationale for the selection of the research population in this way is that, firstly, I wanted to explore the Study Programme from the perspective of a range of vocational studies working in my college, and secondly that students in my groups attended lessons taught by a range of teaching staff. The management involved in this study began with job titles such as 'programme area managers'. However, this has evolved in the process of the research due to a merger with another college to create a larger whole college group. These managers are now referred to as Heads of Learning. The Heads of Learning for the English and Maths has been accommodating and supported this research throughout. The individual in this role has changed in the data collection of this thesis. The merger has allowed me to work with the Group Director for English and Maths and the Head of Learning for English and Maths at the other campuses providing a wider source of critical friends.

It was important that the data collected through capturing narratives was robust and considered through following practices of narrative inquiry. However, it was also crucial for me to ensure that I represented my learners and my colleagues accurately. I worked hard to create safe spaces for learners and staff to provide critical reflections through taking time to explain my research, its purpose and what would be happening to the notes I was making and who would see them.

I shared my notes with participants to check that my translations of their comments were more accurate and genuine. It was important that learners, managers and tutors, understood my position and purpose of conducting this research. By using my standing within my community as a Head of Learning, I worked hard to maintain safe spaces for contributors to share their critical reflections. I made sure to test the accuracy of my translations by sharing these with participants and used my standing in my community to build trust with all who gave me information. It was also important to me that I gathered information from a cross section of stakeholders is a caring and highly systematic way.

Alongside collecting information from students, tutors and managers, I have also conducted and recorded Learning Walks and peer lesson teaching activities. Learning Walks have provided a rich source of information and Heather Yeung notes that 'As well as a means to test ourselves, both physically and mentally, the walk also provides us with a site of memory - a concrete means by which we may interrogate a past.' (Yeung 2013: 3)[12]. It is important to recognise that learning walks are opportunities for individual staff to review and experience what is happening in a classroom with students on a daily basis. There is also a process of standardisation training that takes place to support observers and allow a more consistent approach across the college group. Yeung alludes to the process of continuous walking which allows researchers opportunities to make comparisons and links interrogating past learning walks with current ones. The learning walk allows for a more naturalised process as opposed to a formal observation, even if observations follow a supportive developmental model, such as those proposed by Matt O'Leary (2017). All of these have been written up and codes used to anonymise the tutors involved. The information gathered has provided a wealth of material collected over a two-year period that has meant working with two academic years of learners. The forms used to collect this information are those provided by the quality department at my college. By using existing forms and processes, the aim was to ensure staff were not subjected to additional checking of learning and the

[12] http://www.mikecollier.eu/sites/default/files/downloads/HHTY.pdf

tools being used captured what was happening in the classrooms in a consistent and recognisable method.[13] It is also important to note that one of the factors that these datasets are aiming to explore is the nature and quality of the student experience at the sites of this research. Learning Walks provided an opportunity to have unplanned conversations with a range of learner participants and this provided ongoing insights into what their experiences have been. It is important that these are seen in context and to admit that these comments are limited in scope. However, they have provided useful insights into what is being experienced and what is being observed.

Having chosen my body of participants, I wanted to find out initially how students experienced Study Programmes and how they felt about the Study Programme they were pursuing. To capture this effectively, I decided to design and develop a quantitative and qualitative questionnaire using Google Forms as a mechanism for delivering and obtaining the feedback. By using Google Forms, I was able to collect information in a way that was unobtrusive. I was keen to capture information that would in part reflect the viewpoints of those in my college community. The questions were drafted very carefully over a period of two weeks to avoid leading questions. I asked the manager for Maths and English to provide a second opinion on whether the questions posed could potentially influence or skew the answers. Feedback from teaching staff was that they felt the questions were useful starting points for the discussion and once I had gathered and analysed the answers, I started to hold small focus groups. I met with groups of four students at a time. I met with teaching staff and managers individually. These were recorded, with permission, to allow me to review comments made afterwards to ensure the authenticity of my reflection. I adapted the questionnaires to different groups by adding questions relevant to each subgroup. In the sections below, I have drawn out statements that inform the themes in this chapter. I have tried to evidence statements, either from written or verbal sources, accurately, using punctuation to convey meaning. For transparency purposes, I halted data collection from the 2nd of

[13] Lesson observation models used at the site of this thesis are informed by ‘Introducing and piloting a model of non-graded lesson observation: Chichester College as a case study’. Sally Challis Manning and Sheila Thorpe 2016.

March 2020 to the 6th of March 2020 as the college was the focus of an Ofsted Inspection. This is to maintain an ethical approach to my research avoiding placing additional stress on staff, students and managers. From the 23rd of March, no further qualitative data was collected due to a national lockdown. I have reflected on the impact of this towards the end of this chapter.

Theme 1: Understanding Study Programmes – issues of curriculum design and matters of subject loyalties.

Initially questionnaires went live in February 2018 and closed in March 2018, and were available for a period of three weeks. I invited participants to take part, resulting in twenty-five Media students and thirty IT students completing the initial survey. Ten English and Maths staff took part that was 77% of the GCSE teaching staff. Two managers took part in the managers' survey. One recurring theme from the questionnaires and subsequent focus groups was around defining the Study Programme. Some responses such as TR 1 M defined it as,

'core, English and Maths and everything else a student does at college'. (TR 1 M)

Multiple student responses recorded a limited response to this question and some replies were simplistically around,

'What I am studying' [SR 23 M]

'Yeah, it's what I'm doing like Engineering, Maths you know' [SR 25 ENG]

Participants were able to identify a Study Programme but variances between descriptions and their intended impact were subtly different. Most student responses at this time were limited which could indicate a lack of engagement by students with the term Study Programme or even that they did not understand it.

‘Not sure’ [SR 45 M]

‘Um, do you mean my course?’ [SR 61 M]

What was consistent in students, tutors and managers responses was the lack of an agreed Study Programme definition. This lack of an agreed description of Study Programmes in both the questionnaire and additional focus groups may be indicative of what Gregson (2015) discusses as the challenge of making policy effective in practice. If the extent to which participants have differing interpretations, as is seen in the data collected here, for Study Programmes then a consensus on what makes a ‘good’ Study Programme is more difficult to reach. Gregson concludes that it is precisely this that ‘presents policy makers, researchers and practitioners with the complex task not only of trying to make education policy effective in practice but also of understanding the extent to which a particular policy is, or is not, effective’ (Gregson et al 2015: 232).

In the responses, and subsequent focus groups, the data suggest that the managers were referencing Ofsted perspectives on Study Programmes. This included five references to the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework[14]. For teaching participants, the discussion focused more on the extent to which their aspect of the Study Programme functioned as part of a bigger concept. For example, data collected from eight members of staff listed the components of a Study Programme but they listed them in a different order, putting various emphasis on what was most importance (this was usually the first element discussed). This suggests that each tutor had developed their own definition of a Study Programme that reflected and had become embedded in the tutor’s own priorities. This discussion was framed around the element, and in what order the elements of vocation, English or Maths should be prioritised. The listed elements could be vocational subject, Maths and English; or vocational subject, English and Maths or even English, Maths and vocational subject. This

[14] During collecting data for this thesis Ofsted replaced the Common Inspection Framework with the Education Inspection Framework (September 2019).

resonates with Dunne's (2005) observation that practice has always historically been changed, challenged and improved by its insiders. However, what is important to note here is that these changes, challenges and improvements might be curtailed or even inhibited by the inconsistent internal perspectives of what we mean by 'good practice' in the context of a Study Programme as well as the purpose of Study Programmes. This is based on an underlying assumption that a Study Programme can and should have a singular meaning and shared purpose in terms of curriculum design and pedagogy.

In the responses, there were perceived to be links between a GCSE and a vocation. For example, one media tutor talked about the English application in script writing while one Maths tutor referred to,

'Why don't we get students to bring their scripts to English for you to check?' [TR 3 Voc][15]

'The Maths bit they will need in their IT course' [TR 1 M].

These statements from tutors were often additional to the Study Programme as separate elements, and there was infrequent discussion about both Maths and English and the vocational element.

In the statement above from TR 1 M where there was reference to the Maths application but not the English. This illustrated a common thread where the vocational subject, English and Maths content were rarely discussed together. It was more common for Maths tutors to discuss Maths and its relation to the vocational subject, as above with IT, or with English tutors discussing English and vocational subject overlaps. The language from tutors further reflected the perception that,

> 'They come to study with you [this was a GCSE Maths tutors talking about IT students] and have to study with us' [TR 3 M].

[15] This was rejected due to the demand of the Extended Scheme of Work in place for GCSE English lessons.

These narratives captured a sense that vocational tutors perceived there to be a core subject (the vocational subject) and that the GCSE subjects were additions to it. Although when asked directly to define a Study Programme many listed the components remaining loyal to their own subject.

For students, the Study Programme was not a concept with which they were familiar. For many students, their response was linked to the vocational subject. One student asking ‘Do you mean what do I study here, it’s IT’ [SR 16 IT]. This student also went on to discuss their tutor by name and their subject. Other students discussed Maths and English, and these were referred to after the main vocational subject. In addition to this, only five students discussed the model with reference to the components set out in Study Programme policy.

‘It’s the things we’re studying so Media, GCSEs’ [SR 32 M]

‘My teacher said it was all the things on my timetable and I do IT, and my GCSEs in Maths and English’ [SR 71 IT]

‘Yes, it’s media, English, maths, tutorial, work experience’ [SR 8 M]

The definition of Study Programmes, including the nuances of the discourses surrounding the term, suggest that they are understood by tutors and students differently, often simply in terms of their components. It is important to recognise that managers, staff and some students were aware of Study Programmes. However, from the data collected interesting and important nuances emerged. For example, the Study Programme discussed for a Media student was not always the same as for an IT student. There were discussions about how ‘IT students are good at the Maths bit’ [TR 5 E]. From these discourses, there is a sense of subject loyalty which applied when considering how practitioners develop practices from within delivering the Study Programme. It is therefore, perhaps more useful to view the Study Programme as a plural. There is not one Study Programme in the discourses captured as each participant had a different perspective and a different priority. The existence of multiple and differentiated approaches to Study Programmes in the data suggests that insiders were refining Study Programmes and practices to reflect their own subject priorities. During the process of data collection changes in course leadership were introduced by the college as a way of standardising the

monitoring of the Study Programme, perhaps in recognition of some of the difference of opinion.

Introduced in September 2018, at the site of this research, ‘Study Programme Leaders’ were given responsibility for monitoring the achievement of students on their Study Programme. This was constructed through vocational tutors being assigned these roles for groups of students. In the narratives collected there were discussions about to what extent a media or IT tutor could effectively monitor what was happening in GCSEs lessons. The Study Programme Leader role was established to create links between vocational subject tutors and the Maths and English tutors. The College’s aim is to address problems a lack of integration and connection between vocational subjects and GCSE subjects. However, from another point of view it is possible to interpret the College's response as evidence of a Technical-Rational mode of thinking, where the problem of curriculum design and lack of linking between elements of the Study Programmes was ‘solved’ through the introduction of this role, which made the Study Programme Leader responsible and accountable for making Study Programmes ‘good’ in practice. Note how this top-down approach imposed a solution immediately construed the problem in Technical-Rational terms as an operational and accountability issue rather than an educational issue or a matter of curriculum design, joint planning and shared pedagogy. The Technical-Rational consequence of this was summed up by a vocational tutor as follows,

> ‘I know I need to check on the students’ progress and attendance in GCSEs Maths and English so I put together a spreadsheet for that’ [TR Voc 4].

One GCSE tutor did feel that the Study Programme Leader role,

> ‘At least gives us someone to go to, to talk about the student’ [TR 1 E].

Nevertheless, the introduction of the Study Programme Leader role did provide a framework for tutors across a Study Programme to work more closely

together. However, the narratives collected as part of this research continue to evidence that this way of addressing the problem could not address issues of curriculum design nor subject loyalties. This is mainly because of a multitude of understandings and misunderstandings surrounding what a Study Programme is for those who are expected to implement it in practice, and from those on the receiving end of it as learners. This difficulty in reaching an agreed definition makes the Study Programme Leader role problematic at best.

However, the intended outcome of the introduction of Study Programmes remains evident within the narrative accounts presented in this thesis. There were some narratives around the usefulness of improving literacy and numeracy for vocational learners. These goals were framed, more often than not, through a focus on the qualifications designed to build the curriculum for a Study Programme. Data from this study suggests that there remains a need to explore to what extent the Study Programme can and should, be reduced to the fragmented components as defined by Ofsted and in the Wolf Report. This raises the question of what might be done to address the shortcomings, problems and issues in implementing Study Programme policy in these ways which aim make them ‘good’ in practice.

Theme 2: Funding Methodology.

As discussed above in the Theme 1 in the data, understanding of the Study Programme in relation to curriculum design was largely understood in a fragmented way, simply in terms of the components of the programme itself. There was also a recurring theme in the narratives of individuals involved in the Study Programme were working to different priorities. This underscores an aspect of the data in that the different disciplines of tutors were operating to fragment and distort the priorities of Study Programme. Some tutor responses comment on the importance of English and Maths. These responses repeatedly refer to the fact that funding is derived from student attendance in GCSE lessons. This argument is partially rooted in the importance of English and Maths funding for Further Education colleges in a time of austerity and funding cuts. The introduction of Study Programmes was accompanied with changes

in funding methodology where funding for full time programmes included evidencing where students without a Grade 4 (previously a C grade) in English and Maths were receiving Maths and English teaching. If a student did require English and/or Maths, and this was not provided to them, then funding for the whole Study Programme would be reclaimed. Throughout the data collection stage, statements from managers and tutors reveal repeated concerns with maintaining levels of funding streams into the college, and how this led to the development of a whole college rationale to ensure English and Maths remained a key component of our delivery. As discussed above, this was overseen by the introduction of the role Study Programme Leader. However, in the data collected there remain narratives around the importance placed on subjects in a timetabled structure as a result of the funding methodology. This allowed for a quick and easy judgement on whether funding for core programmes is provided because confirmation of Maths and English attendance is provided. This means that discussions of Study Programmes tended to be fragmented and focused partially on the different subjects and disciplines that make up Study Programmes, rather than considering how values between subjects and disciplines could cohere and be addressed through the collaborative development of a more a less fragmented curriculum design.

It is important to note that Study Programme policy requirements changed the funding methodology to ensure that Further Education colleges, such as in the site of this research, embedded the structure of Study Programmes in their provision, and ensured that students did receive teaching and learning around Maths and English if the GCSE results were below a Grade 4. The funding methodology changes revolved around ensuring compliance that all Further Education colleges offered Study Programmes. Ensuring compliance through funding penalties provided a discourse that meant narratives often appeared to operate in a way that reflected economic priorities and opinions rather than educational ones. Returning to Dunne's (2005) community of insiders which operates to drive practice forward through cooperation and critical dialogue, requires us to examine the dynamics of how perceived (and actual) power imbalances are an influencing factor in determining how largely instrumental

pedagogical interventions are seen to carry more educational worth than those underpinned by a concern for genuine educational values in practice. This then resonates with issues already discussed regarding the policy implementation issues brought about by the Technical-Rational approaches to addressing enduring educational issues in relation to what are regarded as the most important knowledges and skills a student should acquire and develop.

In Joint Practice Development the guiding principle that there should be an equality in the position of all practitioners involved in supporting the 'transfer' of 'best practice'. However, it is important to notice that if the insiders involved in implementing a Study Programme are submerged in a discourse and language which is divisive rather than as a community, then this may have an adverse on their impact as insiders and agents of change. This language perhaps underscores the short comings of Technical-Rational worldviews to education improvement at the policy implementation stage, where indicative limitations set by auditors, quality assurance policies, Ofsted etc., lead to micromanaged, compliant ways of behaviour where the imperatives of demonstrations of performance and compliance limit the power of insiders to do what needs to be done by inhibiting or even closes down spaces which enable them to do the things they want to do and know needs to be done in the interests of embodying and enacting good educational practice in the context of their work. The central assumption behind top-down, Technical-Rational approaches to educational change and improvement is that by linking funding methodology to curriculum components and curriculum content, colleges will provide a Study Programme that meets the educational needs highlighted by Wolf. However, in practice, this Technical-Rational approach to solving an enduring educational problem by changing funding criteria clearly did not solve the problem. Instead, it resulted in educational leaders and tutors putting a curriculum model together at some speed in an understandable, but rather instrumental, way. This model involved packaging up existing programmes of vocational education with standard GCSE English and Maths courses, each delivered in near-isolation. Perhaps not surprisingly, tutor and student experiences of teaching and learning on Study Programmes reflected the fragmented nature of this curriculum. This is quite far removed from Wolf's aspiration to unify vocational knowledge and

skills with the acquisition of literacy and numeracy in programmes of vocational education.

In relation to changing the funding methodology, there is evidence in the narratives collected that teaching staff and managers used this rationale to develop hierarchies of knowledge in Study Programmes. In the definitions of Study Programme, there was shifting agreement on the order of the components. For a Maths tutor, Maths GCSE was listed above English. In the narrative there was also a sense here of a divide and concern about the shifting of blame. Again, the introduction of the role of Study Programme Leaders allowed a focus of the achievement to be the responsibility of one staff member as a solution to the question of what constitutes a 'good' Study Programme. This recurring theme in the data provides evidence of a mechanism where the tutor is held to blame if Technical-Rational solutions fail, as noted by Coffield (2008).

The funding rationale was explained in the narratives by tutors as follows,

> 'If we don't do this then there will be no money', [TR1 M]

> 'The funding for us [Maths] means that students need to be in class' [TR3 M]

> 'They don't want to redo their English but have to' [TR2 E].

These comments lend support to the claim that Technical-Rational approaches to the implementation of policy can be detrimental to educational practice. In this case, the funding methodology generated narratives that refer to elements of a Study Programme and the financial incentives attached to them. The problem of implementing Study Programmes in this way is that it does not encourage or provide time for the holistic application of the subjects and disciplines that constitute Study Programmes. Indeed, the funding regime almost assumes even encourages their segregation in practice. This suggests that the development of holistic and coherent Study Programme curricula and

good educational practice are unlikely to be realised by blunt changes in funding methodology and financial penalties alone.

It is important to note, however, that in the data there is also evidence that tutors understood the need to 'work together'.

For example, one Maths tutor remarked,

> 'we need to know what you guys are doing in your classes so we can create those links' [TR 3 M]

Another discussed the need for,

> 'sharing what we each do with one another' [TR 1 E].

Different discourses surrounding the Study Programme are evident in the narratives. This might, in part, emanate from Wolf's (2011) report where the development of Study Programmes was based on feedback from 'industry' that learners in Further Education did not have the literacy and numeracy skills needed for the workplace. Here the hierarchy, or preference in relation to subjects and disciplines, is linked to a business perspective rather than an educational one.

The result was that many participants in the study reported that the changes from courses to Study Programmes was 'introduced' or 'presented' to them as *fâit à complis.* This language signals the top-down application of the policy of Study Programmes from the perspective of tutors and the speed at which it was introduced operated to detract from the very aims of the policy. However, some GCSE tutors noted a more positive aspect to this where they felt the change in funding methodology and the application of Study Programmes provided greater weight to their subject, which they felt had been marginalised. The Technical-Rational approach to policy-implementation via changes to funding methodology is evident in the data generated by this research regarding how the imposition of a simple solution (Study Programmes) to the complex problem

of students failing Maths and English served to inhibit rather that support the policy intention. One respondent comments that the reason students failed their GCSEs in the past was that Maths and English were not ‘taken seriously’ [TR 4E]. The same respondent notes that now with changes to funding this was at least beginning to be recognised.

There is also evidence in the data however that this did impact on practice by making tutors more aware of the need to share curriculum content. However, to what extent curriculum changed as a result of funding methodology remains questionable. Data sets suggest that narratives around funding were more about arguing the importance of Maths and English as components defining Study Programmes. It is also important to note that wider discussions about practice development did not appear to be encouraged simply by changes in funding methodology. Data in the study points to a communication deficient around the implementation of Study Programmes reforms. More often than not, this communication deficiency could be traced back to a Technical-Rational way in which Study Programmes were introduced and the measures employed to evaluate their success. Timetables were created to ensure students had English and Maths subjects in their Study Programme. However, this rather instrumental solution did not provide opportunities for considering the necessity for collaborative joint curriculum planning to ensure the coherence of the curriculum design in Study Programmes, or how vocational and GCSE English and Maths classes on the timetable would be experienced by students in an educationally holistic way. Instead, issues of curriculum theory, curriculum design, and curriculum planning were reduced to the simple matter of coordinating the timetabling of existing courses to enable the delivery of Study Programmes. However well-intentioned, imperatives of policy and funding brought about a mechanistic solution to a complex and enduring educational problem.

The student narratives captured evidence of the funding methodology being framed in a different way. For students, there were comments such as,

> ‘I know I need to go (to English and Maths) because I can’t study just Media’ [SR 52 M]

And similarly,

> ‘My lecturer says I can’t just study engineering. I have to study Maths as well’ (SR 8 ENG).

In the focus groups in particular, there was an agreement that the reason why they had to attend GCSEs was based on the college securing enough funding to pay for the course the student ‘wanted’ to do. This was more prominent than, but did not exclude conversations about, the value of literacy and numeracy. As one student put it,

> ‘No I get it. And I need it for work anyway’ [SR 17 IT].
> ‘Why can’t I just do the maths in my Engineering lessons?’ [SR 14 ENG]

The same student went on to explain why they had to have a good understanding of Maths for the vocational route they had chosen but they felt they were getting this from their engineering lessons. The narratives from students offer insights into how the funding methodology was eclipsing discussions about the overlap of both vocational and GCSE subjects. For both staff and students this created boundaries between vocational and GCSE subjects and disciplines that were ultimately unhelpful. It was also evident in student responses that an emphasis on either literacy or numeracy meant more to a vocation. In Engineering, Maths was seen as more crucial while for Media students it was English.

Many students discussed the need to achieve Maths and or English and the value of being literate and numerate.

> ‘Well, you do need to know how to write and do maths. I get that’ [SR 20 ENG]

‘I’ll need it [to pass their GCSE Maths] for my job’ (this learner wished to progress to a programming job) [SR 88 IT]

‘It’s what employers look for’ [SR 87 IT]

‘They do judge you on how you write and spelling and…[gesturing]’ [SR 40 M]

Many tutors understood the challenge for individuals moving from school to college to pick up gaps in learning. This was particularly the case for those learners who had been demotivated by their GCSE results. This returns us to Dunne’s critique of Technical-Rational approaches to the improvement of educational practice. The discussions captured in the data uncover a recurring theme regarding issues of funding methodology and how they perpetuate boundaries between vocational and GCSE subjects and disciplines in practice. Tutors, in meetings, were repeatedly concerned with the students understanding a Study Programme insofar as the need to attend Maths and English alongside their core vocational programmes. While students understood Study Programmes as part of their timetable they did not always perceive them as a coherent programme of study. It is important to note that the implementation and definition of Study Programme progressively evolved throughout the research. This demonstrates the pitfalls of situations in which curriculum and pedagogy are not negotiated but prescribed from the outset which then remain unchallenged despite evidence of problems in practice. Data from this study suggest that simplistic, instrumental solutions to complex educational problems once set in place almost take on a life of their own. They continue to exist and are not impervious to the relays of power and complex discourses going on around them.

However, it is important to note that the power and responsibility to conduct these discourses does not reside solely with managers but with tutors as well. There was, and remains, a contextual element to the responses provided where the college senior management teams moved to make core programmes accountable for English and Maths results. A campaign called, ‘We Love Maths and English’ was introduced to address low attendance in GCSE sessions to increase student engagement in these subjects. Both of these solutions were

developed to address educational problems of attendance and raise the profile of the Study Programme. The focus was on the area seen to be in deficit in relation to student attendance. At this point there were meetings between core vocational and GCSE staff with the aim of providing a space in which to discuss and agree what the Study Programme curriculum and student experience should be.

Theme 3: Practice changed by insiders.

Students' discussions of Study Programmes did not refer to concerns of losing college revenue. Their narratives revolved around the value, or perceived lack of value in some cases, of GCSE subjects. Many comments referred to kind of activities required by the GCSE lessons and the limited links to their main subject. One way to further explore the links between vocational, English and Maths staff was to organise meetings to discuss the programmes and the naturally occurring overlaps. The model of this meeting followed what Sennett (2008) might refer to as creating a 'liminal space'. A space where staff could meet to discuss the vocational subject (Media, IT, Music and Engineering) and GCSE English and Maths with the aim of addressing the problem of achievement gaps for learners. The key question in these discussions surrounded progression where students were successful in their Level 2 vocational programme but had not achieved the Grade 4 in Maths and or English GCSE. Some of these learners were high attendees so lack of engagement was at best only a very limited factor in these cases. The main reason for creating this type of liminal space was to try to address how to enhance the student experience and outcomes for these learners. In creating this liminal space it was important to establish a community in which the blame for non-achievement was not the focus but instead it was upon practical ways in which improvements might be achieved. Discussions in this space reflected many aspects of Dewey's (1933) pragmatic epistemology. All of the tutors involved in the Study Programme recognised that we had a problem or a 'disturbance' in our practice and that at this point we did not understand the problem well enough to begin to identify potential solutions. We began to discuss holistic knowledge across subjects and natural overlapping of

knowledges between subjects. For example, media tutors identified where script, and research reports developed writing, critical thinking, and narrative story telling which GCSE English tutors were then able to link to elements of the GCSE examination.

To explore the potential of this further, I set about attending GCSE English and Maths sessions to provide a stronger link with main vocational programme and GCSE Maths and English. I also relayed my experiences of attending these sessions back to the vocational staff. Through a process of discussion prior to the lessons, observation and engagement, I was able to better experience the GCSE component of the Study Programme and to explore how this was working for students in my vocational area. This took place alongside meetings with English and Maths staff to discuss the Study Programme so that curriculum sharing and joint curriculum planning could take place. The reason for this was that a recurring theme in the narratives of tutors and managers was that the design of the curriculum of Study Programmes requires tutors to have time to collaborate and cooperative space in which they could. The desire to make sure that the Study Programme worked for our students was unanimous. One English tutor (TR3 E) provided the example of using *Anime* in her English Language GCSE planning for media students studying animation as part of their course. Another tutor explained that they were working on developing media-related topics (narratives) as part of GCSE English. In Maths there was a discussion around a session on shapes related to what is delivered in the 3D animation lessons in Media and IT. In Maths one student said, ‘I did this is music’ [SR 4 Mus] when faced with fractions.

Frequent reference was made to the importance of revisiting this space in developing discussions among tutors about how students on different programmes should be supported while attending college. Tutors repeatedly noted how the use of this space was important in helping them to address the fact that,

> ‘IT students are different from media ones. They like Maths more’ (TR 5 M).

Or as another tutor recognised,

> ‘We need to know what you do in your subjects so we can use it in our lessons’ (TR7 E).

It is important then to note while the Study Programme as a concept was still heavily linked to the funding methodology and a compartmentalised description of its components in practice we were witnessing and enacting a more coherent, collaborative and complex approach to joint curriculum planning in relation to Study Programmes.

Data in the study illustrates how staff viewed the structures of the courses they were planning differently. For English and Maths staff there was a focus on the outcomes necessary to improve a grade in the GCSE exam. This was shared in the focus groups and the meetings with vocational staff where some vocational subjects had exams while others did not. This factor was mentioned several times by both Maths and English tutors as a key feature of their subject and of course how success is being measured. However, in contrast there was also a discussion about the limitation of exams as an assessment method. One tutor (TR 7 M) referred back to a cartoon image [Fig 1] where all of the animals are given the same task.

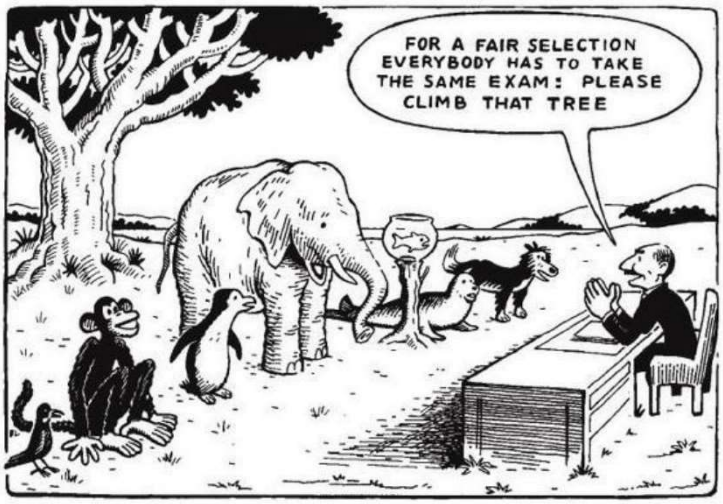

Fig 1 [16]

This analogy was used to stimulate discussion and to demonstrate the fact that while not all students were successful in exams that this lack of success in exams did not adequately reflect their literacy or numeracy competence. The main focus of discussion here became one of the *process* of learning and not learning only measured simply by *outcome*. (Stenhouse 1975). This raised comments about the usefulness of exams as indicators of different kinds of knowledge. Tutors then discussed the importance of learning outcomes but these were shared with discussions linked to the experience of the students. Tutors in the study went on to discuss measures of the student learning based upon outcome versus the learning processes and social practices involved in the actual improvement of literacy or numeracy. One tutor added, 'You just feel so sorry for them as they can do it in class but not in the exam' [TR CC 1]. Another tutor added to this discussion about mental pathways using the metaphor of a forest to describe processes involved in improving memory and cognition [TR CC 2]. Another tutor discussed that in their lesson [TR 5 E] they used Alanis Morrisette lyrics to explore language for Media and Music students as part of grammatical discussions because this was a way of engaging the students in the topics. What these narratives show that with the introduction of the Study Programme there was a much-needed space to discuss and plan the curriculum collaboratively and how this could produce a better student

[16] The Education System: "Now Climb That Tree" – This cartoon has appeared in numerous places. The lecturer who shared this with me also sent me this link.
https://marquetteeducator.wordpress.com/2012/07/12/climbthattree/

experience and change and improve learning outcomes. Data from this study lends support to Dunne's (2005) and Sennett (2008) assertions that Technical-Rational policy implementation (in this case Study Programme policy) did not immediately create or encourage meaningful discussions or educational problem-finding and problem-solving and critique in context. It also supports Dunne (2005) where he argues that practice is often most appropriately challenged, changed, and improved by its insiders, its genuine practitioners.

The narratives collected in this thesis provide practical examples of a process of practice being changed by insiders in the site of this research. However, the curriculum design of outcome verses process debate created important challenges to the context of and process of this research. This was exemplified in the narratives where teaching staff were producing extended schemes of work (ESOW) to meet the demands of a standardised (Technical-Rational) template. This ESOW Template framed classroom activity in a linear fashion and was aimed towards the delivery of a body of knowledge that would be summatively assessed by an exam. The tutors would use starters to revisit elements. This ESOW was standardised across all teaching staff, one for English and one for Maths. This was also shared with vocational tutors. The ESOW followed a structure that mostly followed a product-based curriculum design, with an element of a body of knowledge curriculum, delivering elements of learning until all of the topics required were covered. It was from this that individual tutors were expected to develop in-class activities that related back to the vocational elements the students were studying. It was against this quite rigid model that tutors adapted from the outcome-based model to something more similar to the process model of curriculum identified by Stenhouse (1975).

The process model of curriculum also demonstrated activity that was more aligned with Dewey's (1933) pragmatic epistemology where holistic knowledge and overlaps were explored and problem solving encouraged creating links back to the vocational, and sometimes, life experiences of the students. However, the outcome curriculum remained a primary foundation and was reinforced through exam preparation such as mock questions and mock exams. While there were adaptions made by tutors in their delivery to meet the

vocational needs of the students this was not consistent for all tutors and tutors were aware of this. For students also there were some areas that were more relevant than others. This matches with what vocational tutors recorded such as TR Voc1 who identified more value in certain topics. As discussed above it was not consistent what was interpreted as being useful to a vocation and what was not. For IT students, the ability to apply logic mapped with their programming tasks and activities was agreed as of paramount importance. In these discussions, knowledge at times within the GCSEs was compartmentalised by vocational subject tutors. Knowledge in these narratives became itself modulated and appeared to have a perception of useful, not useful, in a label attached by vocational and GCSE tutors.

The curriculum design overview offered by Smith (2010) illustrates the challenge of multiple and often conflicting ways of viewing a curriculum. This is compounded by different views of the purpose of what the curriculum and indeed education itself is for. In many conversations with English and Maths teams there was a frequent return to the subject GCSE exam at the end of the year. The question of linking knowledge with the vocation was generally regarded as being, ‘all well and good but did it really mean the student would pass the exam?’ The issue repeatedly returned to the question of what is the curriculum for, who owns this curriculum and at what time of the year is the curriculum being delivered? There was evidence in the narratives here of curriculum models that offer active learning opportunities, repetition of information and preparation for exam through mock exam question work.

In some narratives, there is evidence that early in an academic year the curriculum of the Maths GCSE promoted problem-solving and educational activities in which the student was encouraged and empowered to develop and test knowledge. For example, there was a case where an 800watt light was used in the classroom to discuss the angle of lighting that fits with media theory. This was in contrast to the latter parts of the year where the more outcome-based curriculum of the GCSEs prevailed. This was also in contradiction to the curriculum process model experienced by learners in non-GCSE subjects. These curricula were more aligned with Sennett’s (2008) ‘active learning’

through intellectual activity and social practice. The narratives from students and tutors explored a description of craft processes and the development of skill, that are typical in the planning and delivery of vocational subjects. Towards the end of the year the vocational subjects discussed students working on projects, such as in engineering where students produce individual projects based on problem-solving and the practical refinement of skills. The latter part of the year for vocational staff was where students were required to be inquisitive as exemplified by the end of year projects. The GCSE curriculum seemed to shift between what Aristotle described as *phronesis*, where students were applying and testing knowledge and making judgements in practice, to an approach more akin to what Aristotle describes as T*echnè* based on developing techniques to provide 'the model answers' to exam questions by following a prescribed set of approaches.

It is also worth noting that the extent to which a tutor operated in the education course being delivered mattered greatly to the narratives they produced about it. The experience of the students is therefore quite mixed. Coffield (2008) offers some insight into the phenomenon observed here where he recognises that 'if you have colleagues who claim to use student-centred methods, but peer observation reveals that they teach in conventional tutor-centred ways; if, when confronted with the latest government directive or criticism, 'they revert to drill, to lecture, or to discussions that are essentially lectures in disguise (Grubb 1999: 57), then your colleagues have need of dialogic T & L.' (Coffield 2008: 37). Coffield reminds us here of the strength of the impact of Technical-Rational policy-implementation on the proliferation of Product Models of curriculum design and how these curtail the tutor role and undervalue important tutor judgments in context. From the narratives captured in this thesis there is a sense that tutors needed to navigate a process that was adhering to the outcome of passing exams while maintaining an application of knowledge that more aligns with a process-based approach to curriculum design and the knowledge development which Dewey describes as transaction (thinking across the action). In the following diagram [Fig 2], I have illustrated the space being created between combining the two approaches. In this model, there are two chambers where tutors use their experience to deliver a more process-

centred element of teaching drawing from the left chamber whilst also drawing from the outcome chamber mixing in the middle. These chambers are in constant flux being impacted by the time of year that teaching is taking place and the ability of the tutor themselves. The experience of the tutor, the time to develop materials, the desire of the tutor to collaborate, cooperate and innovate, the support provided by vocational curriculum teams and the time of year educational activities take place. It is perhaps these contractions then can be supported and enhanced through the opening up of liminal spaces.

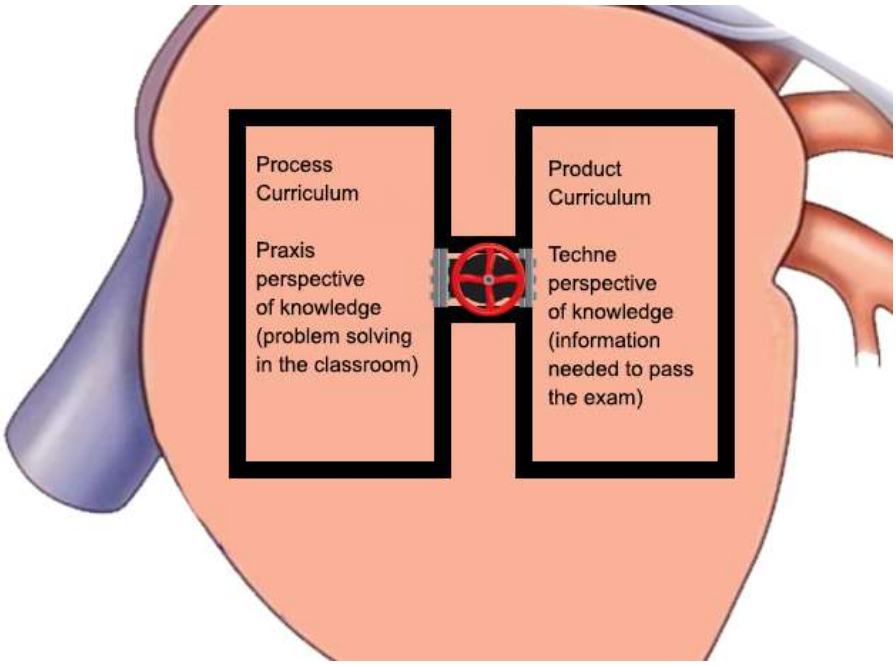

Fig 2

There was evidence in the data that tutors were allowing themselves to develop the curriculum for their students but that was only to a particular extent (depending on the tutor's 'comfort zone'). As one tutor explained, 'we still have to get them through the exams which means making them sit lots of exams' (TR 5 M). The space to develop practice seemed to be finite and controlled by a curriculum choice made in part by the structures of policy implementation and funding regimes rather than what might be considered to be 'good' educational practice. This conclusion, however, needs to be seen through the lens of the tutor who is trying to ensure that students have educational outcomes as well. One tutor commented that 'it's nice to see them achieving at the end of the year, especially, those who were a bit nervous at the start' (TR 3 M). Another commented that, 'I don't think they always get it in the first year and we spend time going over things so they feel more ready for the exam in their second

year' (TR 1 M). What these statements help to illustrate is that although there is a focus on outcomes through a product curriculum this is in a dynamic relationship with the tutors who allow space in the classroom to enable a process curriculum model of learning to exist and operate.

The Study Programme curriculum then was seen by the majority of tutors as a changeable mass in the evidence collected rather than a coherent holistic approach. Data from the study show that practice was being developed by insiders but that this was not aligned to the Study Programme as a concept. It changed over the time period of an academic year, as well as in response to the learners engaged in the process. Students were more likely to be appreciative of the changes made by their teaching by staff and many students in discussion acknowledged that they recognised themselves the challenges of teaching. However, when comparing the attendance to those who were involved in the study a core 6% of students remained persistent non-attendees. The reasons for this ranged from comments such as, 'It's boring' (SR 3 M), to 'I don't see the point' (SR 17 IT) and 'I know, I will go next week' (SR 46 IT). This last comment became a consistent way of students deflecting the conversation by promising with minimal effort to attend their class the next week. We (tutors) got the response we wanted and they (the student) was no longer asked about their attendance. The main consideration here is that the oscillation between process and outcome curriculum was changeable throughout the academic year, and across the individual tutors. This means that the space created in between curriculum models was constantly in flux and students' narratives recorded experiences that demonstrated that this was impacting on their learning experiences.

Throughout the research there have been opportunities to open up liminal spaces for vocational tutors and Maths and English tutors to meet to discuss the teaching taking place. This space resonates with the principles of Community of Inquiry (Lipman, 2003) and the importance of 'mutual engagement in a shared endeavor' which underpins Joint Practice Development (Fielding et al 2005). The opening up of this liminal space between the known and the uncertain provided opportunities to see multiple

discourses come together to address the educational problem of making Study Programmes more productive and educational in practice. Adopting the conventions of a Community of Inquiry combined with the guiding principles of JPD in this way led to a situation where collective experiences could be brought together, discussed and taken forward by practitioners. Participants across Media, IT, Maths and English were able to discuss the Study Programme and the problems they encountered in its implementation. However, in these meetings there was a limit to how far the conversations addressed the pedagogical approach to knowledge where learning is about the thinking and doing as a consistent approach. While this community worked together in a created space, Dewey's pragmatic epistemology is more about the transactions (thinking across the action) occurring within and across the classroom including unexpected aspects of learning, not captured within teaching staff meetings. ESOW remained fixed by the (Technical-Rational) outcome-based perspective dominant in the conversations. By using the classroom to explore the educational problems this did in effect create small spaces that included teaching staff across the Study Programme, and students, and opened up greater opportunities to explore naturally occurring moments of collaboration and knowledge transfer.

Reviewing then the model in Fig 2 the space between process and outcome curriculum being negotiated by insider practitioners is where a liminal space can be nurtured and a valve can be imagined to address different pressures. In this space there are opportunities to develop pedagogies that focus on the process of knowledge and the move from thinking to doing. This is evident in the process where a student's experience involves combining their subject knowledge with the knowledge of the GCSE. Returning to the evidenced in the narrative data and one session in GCSE Maths. The tutor, using support from vocational staff, demonstrated how lighting works in degrees of light beams. Students were able to measure the angle of the light to fit with the professional expectation. For this process to be truly successful though there is another theme that emerged from the data that complicates how this space works in actuality.

Theme 4: Us and Them – Exploring Vocational and Academic divides.

Realising JPD in any liminal space such as those described above allows discussions and narratives to emerge but this also exposes the 'Us and Them' aspect of the Study Programme. During meetings respondents frequently referred to their own discipline in relation to achievement and while there was sharing taking place it was difficult to establish a deliberative space where all participants were equal. This points to a need to cultivate a democratic consensus in these spaces so that when tutors talk about what is really happening in practice this is in conditions where mutual respect and trust can evolve. There was repeated evidence from contributors that referred to the outcomes of the curriculum rather than the process of learning. This could be due to the long legacy of Technical-Rational approaches the evaluation of policy in education where outcomes become the only means and measure of success. For example, participants asked, 'How do we get students to pass the exam?' (TR 8 M). For vocational tutors there were key English and Maths GCSE content that applied to the vocational subject and there was agreement on the importance of these. However, in Engineering the level of Maths taught as part of the subject specification was in greater depth than the GCSE. A further challenge came in sharing curriculum goals where content of the GCSE was not seen as applicable to the vocational course. One tutor highlighted that, 'There is no place for that [this was reference to a Maths concept for a photography tutor] in the unit I'm teaching' (TR 1 Voc). Students echoed this sentiment such as one comment in an English lesson, 'I don't really get how this is relevant you know?' [SR 15 M]

During the data collection the experience of the tutors captured demonstrated a perceived culture of 'Us and Them' insofar as there were discussions around the fact that students, 'Chose to study your course and not ours' [TR 8 M]. The narratives confirmed that a space was needed to address student concerns, issues with separate vocational and academic subjects or as one tutor responded 'The bits they do with you and the reading and thinking they do with us' (TR 1 E).

The above comments provide evidence of the challenges posed by moves towards collaborative and joint curriculum planning. It is interesting that in this narrative the tutor does not seem to talk about Maths and English as practices. These challenges then came from not the good will of those present or their preparedness to reconsider approaches to teaching, learning and assessment but in the language and discourse of practice development. The product curriculum of GCSE English and Maths was perceived to be more dominant and repeatedly led back to discussion of the issues of funding. There was an 'Us and Them' foundation based in narratives that seemed to echo the existence of a vocational academic divide as discussed by Hyland (2017).

Many participants in the study used language to identify the academic, exam-based element of GCSEs and set them in opposition to the vocational subjects. One Maths tutors explained, 'There is a need for more academic study in the GCSE Maths. They need to learn how to do the sums' (TR 3 M), this can be seen in discussions about the value of subjects that impacted on the challenge to create a community of inquiry where participants were truly equal. Maths tutors in this space referred to 'The absolute need to learn' (TR4 M) while an English tutor referred to 'The common space of spelling and grammar' (TR6 E). What these statements illustrate is that the challenges identified by Fielding et al (2005) in creating JPD through shared equal status was challenging to maintain. The academic vocational-divide was also different at different points in the year. The end of the academic year was when the divide of exam taking, being seen as academic and requiring academic skills such as revision were contrasted by participants against the coursework vocational tasks.

This was exacerbated when the curriculum progressively moved toward being even more outcome-based where students were writing 'model' answers to exams. In addition, data in the study highlighted another issue in that in the curricula were built from specifications that defined engagement. The dominant discourse of qualification specifications feeds into quality processes applied by awarding bodies and tutors are expected to deliver, and students are expected to demonstrate, what is in the specification. A result of this is that the specification operates as a Technical-Rational tool to ensure that 'measurable'

teaching, learning and assessment is taking place which is easy to measure and evaluate. The role of programme specifications, however, can be adopted and refined by tutors and this is another example of the insider operating within a system of practices to make them educationally impactful. As was seen in Sanders et al's (2018) analysis of media education, there is a specification that delivers the content and there is a restriction on what is shared with the student. The Us and Them narrative was compounded by the fact that there were different specifications that created boundaries between qualifications. The students knew that this was my subject qualification, this was my GCSE Maths and this was my GCSE English. These boundaries did not support the joint planning curriculum approach and at times tutors referred back to the delivery content in discussions as a way of anchoring their subject. For example, one English GCSE tutor referred to the topics list as, 'This is what we need to cover by March so they have time to go back and revise everything' [TR 2 E]. What was reinforced here was the difference to the vocational subject where the students revisit topics to improve their capability. The role of specifications then could be seen to limit the narratives and curriculum designs employed by tutors as they quality manage the outcomes of a Study Programme.

There remained evidence in the language of discussions which indicated an assumption that academic qualifications have more authority and status in relation to their vocational counterparts. This can be seen in discussions about the value of subjects that added to the challenge of creating a liminal space that was truly equal. Here there is a sense of value being placed on certain qualifications rather than knowledge-types. Data from this study supports the claims made by Hyland (2017) and others of the continuing perception among tutors participating in the study of the existence and legitimacy of a vocational-academic divide. There is a limit on what Carr (1995) alludes to where theory develops from practice and this is supported by Hyland. This perception that theory is separate from, precedes and should be elevated and valued above practice perpetuates the vocational academic divide today insofar as these comments are often based on the academic currency and status of certain qualifications. The nature of a Study Programme as something that singles out the English and Maths subjects as unique and academic elevates them above

their vocational equivalents supported by claims that these qualifications provide what businesses want in potential new employees. This remains a hallmark of the upholding of the vocational-academic divide in the English system of education.

In this process there is a risk that theory and practice are artificially divided and discussed as if they were antonyms in discussions amongst vocational and GCSE staff. There was a continued usage in language of the theory of GCSEs and the 'doing' of a vocational subject. When considering this alongside Carr's (1995) analysis of practice and its relationship with theory, the narratives seem to follow the structure of the presumption that theory is not only the antecedent of practice but its intellectual superior further underscoring the perception of the existence of the separation and elevation of theory over practice as well as the legitimacy of vocational academic divide. In narratives from Maths and English tutors there are occasions where the importance of English and Maths is based on the value of the subject knowledge rather than a more holistic view of knowledge as proposed by Dewey (1933). Carr (1995) offers the model of praxis as a way of addressing this split but the Technical-Rational model of Study Programmes allowed discourses within a Study Programme to exacerbate the assumption that theory practice divides have on the experience in the classroom. These narratives form around the notion that GCSEs provide a 'core' set of knowledge and skills that vocational subjects need as well as employers. The need to use the language of Ofsted[17] was also a barrier to moving discussion about practice away from the binary framing of vocational and academic subjects and the importance of English and Maths. At least part of the reason for this could be traced back to the separation in the Ofsted handbook of English and Maths from core subjects [Ofsted (2015) *Common Inspection Framework* and (2019) *Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook EIF*] and how this may be perpetuating the perspective that these in some way involve different forms of learning. They are seen as foundational upon which vocational knowledge is built upon. One GCSE tutor said, 'You

[17] Towards the end of data collection, the college was gearing up for a future Ofsted visit and therefore this became more apparent in the collected narratives.

need them (students) to know how to write proper English in your subject don't you!' [TR 2 E]. This was not a question but a statement of fact. Another tutor made the point that 'How can they progress [on to a higher level] if they don't pass their exams'. [TR 5 E]. This further illustrates the challenge in activity taking place within colleges and schools where the assumptions are evident in discourses and language that vocational practice is somehow devoid of theory and that theory is only in found in the realm of the academic. This was found to be common place in the narratives of this study.

Throughout collecting data for this thesis, there remained evidence of tutors acting as if a vocational-academic divide exists. This could be because of the Technical-Rational grip upon approaches to educational evaluation and improvement is strong and difficult to loosen. In addition, false boundaries have been constructed between subjects and disciplines for centuries and these continue to be reflected in the way subject specifications are developed and structured into curriculum models (with boundaries which are often taken to be rigid). All of this makes joint curriculum development and curriculum planning really difficult. The challenge is not the absence of the good will of the tutors, or the existence of 'insiders' but in creating spaces where aspects of learning and forms of knowledge in different subjects and disciplines can be shared and the curriculum can be planned in a more holistic and coherent manner in the interests of good education. Working in classrooms combining staff from different areas in this study has brought to the fore the importance of improving the student experience of Study Programmes by paying attention to the unified nature of knowledge acquisition and how this develops across subjects and disciplines. These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. It is also worth noting at this point that the challenges of perceived academic and vocational divides remains a limiting factor for joint curriculum planning and joint practice development as a pursuit of the improvement of educational practice in Study Programme classrooms in the site of this research.

Theme 5: Students at the heart.

The way the curriculum was experienced by the students, tutors and managers in the study also revealed a consistent goal but inconsistent application. Benjamin (1939) suggests that any curriculum design must engage in the social context it is created in or it can quickly become redundant. The data collected and analysed in this thesis points to the case of curriculum design becoming problematic because the social context, what students need to be judged as successful is artificially fixed by the Study Programme. The tutors' responses evidenced a deep-rooted desire to make the subjects of the GCSE are as relevant as possible. However, what was seen in evidence derived from Learning Walks and in discussions with students revealed a limited exploration of the value of literacy and numeracy in the acquisition of any vocational practice.

One way this is evidenced in the research conducted here is with the English GCSE. Students were repeatedly shown previous exam pieces of writing to help them 'get to know what is coming in the exam' (TR3 E). The students mostly understood this rationale also but this did not alter the fact that many students found this element of teaching 'boring'. When discussed with tutors and managers there was a sense of, 'That's way it needs to be done' [TR 5 M]. In other words, there was no perceived need to critically examine current practice despite clear evidence that standard GCSE teaching practice was not working for a significant numbers of learners on Study Programmes. Another issue discussed in one of the focus groups was that the extracts used in English GCSE exams papers were not familiar to the students and outside of the social context in which these students were living and studying. This lends further weight to Benjamin's prediction about what might happen when curriculum design ignores social context. It simply becomes redundant. One example of this is was a written short story extract used from the 1930s featuring 'some girl in a van' [SR 13 IT]. The students found this difficult to relate to while English staff recognised the challenge of motivating the students. There were numerous sounds of confusion of disengagement, 'Um…', [SR 45 IT] 'Urr' [SR 46 IT]. One learner commented regarding this exam that it was '*just* the exam' [SR 22 ENG] in a way that suggested that they had become resigned to this

experience of the exam but also the way they were being prepared for it. It is also important to recognise the challenge of emotional responses that some SEN learners experienced due to their personal experiences. This may indicate further their disconnect between the knowledge of the subject, in this case literacy as body of knowledge, and the GCSE English exam.

I discussed at the start of this chapter about putting students at the heart of what we do. This is something that individually was evidenced through the narratives and while there was a great sense of wanting to work together, and a sense of putting the 'student at the heart of what we do', this was not framed in a way that modeled bringing different practices together in joint curriculum design and joint curriculum planning but rather often underpinned by the repetition of a strong underlying issue of Us and Them culminating in tussles surrounding who 'owns' the students. Many narratives contained elements of discourse around 'We need you [vocational teaching staff] to make sure they (students) attend' [TR 6 M] while another commented that, 'It is your results that will suffer if they fail' [TR 4 M]. There is a sense of threat/blame in these statements on who is responsible for the student achieving. After all these were, for example media students, taking GCSEs. Add to this the role of Study Programme leaders making sure students attended and 'Did the homework' [TR 4 M]. There is sense in the narratives here of a discussion about outcome, achievement, which moves away from curriculum, learning and the acquisition of knowledge needed for progression (employment) for a student.

Where the Study Programme as inspired by Wolf (2011) aims to provide a coherent curriculum experience and holistic teaching, learning and assessment, the Technical-Rational implementation of Study Programmes policy in practice by managers and tutors perpetuates and lends further momentum to long-standing critiques of Technical-Rational discourses surrounding the improvement of educational practice. In this case these discourses manifested themselves in disputes about who owned and was responsible for the success, or the failure, of the student. Against this backdrop binary forces and Technical-Rational evaluation models come into play. Learning outcomes and preoccupations with arbitrary notions of summative

assessments of pass/fail come to dominate the discourse at the expense of Aristotle's more nuanced understanding of practical knowledge and its relationship to theory. The ability to 'own' the student meant who would manage the knowledge transfer process and who would be held responsible for student non-achievement came to dominate the discourse. This links backs to Coffield (2007) and his concerns about placing the blame for the failure of education reform solely upon the shoulders of tutors. This narrative was common through the data collected and there were examples of managers raising this point as well as tutors. This was also attributable to the financial aspect of Study Programmes where income is derived from their attending Maths and English lessons.

Data from the narratives explored in this research also identified an issue over whose 'practice' was being discussed as though vocational and academic learning were different. The narratives captured contained statements which quizzed the ownership of learning. This ownership shifted from learners to the tutors, to the managers, to the policymakers and finally to the awarding bodies as auditors of evidence. Concepts of practice in these discussions changed over the academic year and 'practice', therefore, became linked to the contextual discourses surrounding it. Where Benjamin's (1939) Saber-tooth analogy captures the lack of contextual shift over time, this point captures a similar lack of shift in discourse impacting on how the interpretation of a Study Programme occurs.

GCSE tutors would refer to vocational subjects as though this was not their ownership. Putting the students at the heart in this context meant the student should make vocational links not the tutor. One tutor explained; 'That's the ESOW for the course' [TR 7 M] when justifying when mock exams were held and what was taught. These discourses were assigned authority and as Foucault's analysis identifies power relations which become barriers to creating communities of inquiry in which practice can be negotiated fully.

In Foucault's analysis, there are dominant discourses that have more currency when viewed in a social context. However, Foucault does discuss the counter-

discourses that exist alongside and within these dominant ones. The issue of knowledge and power interlinking have emerged from the data. The concept of ownership of the student is one that echoes the power relationship between the tutor as agent of knowledge transfer being different from the person who judges the effectiveness of pedagogical interventions. The counter discourse through using a process model for example seems to rely partially on ownership being transferred back to the tutor. The way that Study Programmes have been developed in practice seems to be, in the site of this research, to suggest that practice can develop but only within the confines of meeting the Technical-Rational targets and outcomes. In this context, ownership of the student is a concept for gate-keeping this process.

For students, some data collected reinforced the issue of how practice was experienced. This demonstrated a far more nuanced set of narratives as many students experienced engaging lessons for both their vocational and their GCSE lessons. This largely depended on the tutors involved in both. Where students discussed, or it was observed, a session allowing for more problem-solving action from the students the better the feedback was. These narratives reflected Aristotle (Dewey's) practical wisdom taking place in lessons over a substantial period. This usually aligned with curriculum perspectives which leaned toward process rather than outcome. This was supported by the observational element of these lessons where learners were involved in activity-based learning that involved problem-solving. Through an activity, that was not linked to the exam but to a topic, there was more positive reflections from students. In learning walks, where a method of using numerical scoring to gauge a students' experience, there was similar data collected. Explicitly, using a score out of ten students are asked to rate their experience with a follow-up question. For example, if the student scored 8 out of 10 then the student would be asked to explain what would make the lesson a 10 out of 10.

The student experience of Study Programmes was something that was frequently raised throughout the data collection of this research. However, it is debatable to what extent the discourse of the student impacted on the practices taking place. Where there were moments of movement between process and

outcome curriculum the students were aware and discussed this more enthusiastically. The moments of mock exams less so but these were learners who at times had faced challenges with GCSE exams. When looking at the classroom as a space to engage and reflect on the student experience this was informative to teaching staff and managers and further supported the classroom as a space where the assumed position of Technical-Rational approaches to educational improvement and higher levels of thinking were disputed.

Theme 6: Space for Joint Curriculum Design and Joint Curriculum Planning.

In the discussions and narrative accounts reported in this thesis there have been repeated examples of policy professionals, education leaders and tutors who want, and are committed, to improving educational outcomes for learners in FAVE. This includes strategies involving the sharing of ESOW from GCSE tutors and through the sharing of vocational schemes of work with GCSEs tutors. One tutor commented that, 'It's important we share what we are doing so we can work together' [TR 1 M] while another [TR 3 M] commented on the fact that to improve exams results is about making links between the GCSE and the course being studied.

Staff continually discuss the teaching, learning and assessment in corridors, staffrooms and college coffee shops as well as in Learning Walks and Peer Observations of teaching. Throughout the college and throughout the research there was clear interest in continuing to review and make changes to improve practice. Coffield (2008) recognises the importance of dialogue between teachers and teachers, education leaders and students, teachers and students and students and students:

> teaching and learning are not two distinct activities, but intertwined elements of a single, reciprocal process, or, if you like, the two sides of one coin; perhaps they could be described as a double-sided, interactive process which transforms both tutor and learner. It is mainly due to the work of Vygotsky and his successors that we have come to celebrate the essential role of those tutors who enable learners 'to operate just

> beyond their established capabilities and to consolidate this experience as new ability and understanding' (Mercer 2000: 141) (Coffield 2008:8).

Coffield (2008) is discussing something that resonates in the narratives captured in this research. That teaching, learning and assessment are intertwined and the process of teaching and learning is neither simplistic not unidirectional. Instead, there was evidence of intertwining observed through the practical wisdom and transactions as explained by Dewey. Tutors, students and managers, through using the classroom as a space for Study Programme development, are using the classroom to define the process of knowledge acquisition and development. This was done through individualised and collective, cooperative and collaborative learning such as with media students and a discussion about video game narratives linked to the narratives in a book. Or in another session, where the opening section of the novel *Jaws* was discussed in comparison to the visual imagery in the film. As already noted above, one learner enthused:

> 'I really liked the movie. I didn't even know it was book' [SR 41 M]

Tutors were continually reviewing the topics and considering how these might relate to the students in the classroom. The ongoing process of meetings with staff, students and managers provides evidence of an approach to identifying problems, discussion, solutions and reflect as a cycle of continued improvement. This mirrors Coffield's (2008) model of teaching and learning being intrinsically linked in the discourses of tutors, students and managers captured in this research as well as the importance of critique and dialogue in developing practice in all forms of education (Sennett, 2008).

However, the process of joint curriculum development and joint curriculum planning where the boundaries between disciplines was strong was very difficult to maintain. Where this did occur, there were risks of oversimplification of the elements of a Study Programme. For example, with English there was at times a focus on spelling and grammar as a link between the facets of a Study Programme but deeper understanding of Maths and English as practices

remained under-developed as result. The elements discussed in the classrooms provided the most insight into the ways curricula could be aligned and where practice could be developed amongst different teaching staff and students experiencing both the core vocational subject and the GCSE. It was the practice relating to all knowledge, whether English, Maths or a vocation, that was represented in the narratives in the classroom.

Through capturing the discourses happening around Study Programmes in my college, what was evident was the complex social transactions and interactions taking place between students and tutors. Where this was most evident was in classrooms. The transactions and interactions taking place according to the tutors, students and managers and those which were recorded through references to classroom discussions were plentiful. Many participants recognised that these transactions and interactions take place in order to problem-solve and happen when and where a problem arises. For example, when a student did not understand a concept there was a need for the tutor to link this new learning to previous learning. This was observed in using a story to the class to provide context for a GCSE English concept. Therefore, the bridging of knowledges and practices was taking place for tutors whilst they were teaching and supported what Coffield identified as teaching and learning working together.

In the culture of further education, communities of practice are challenging to nurture. Communities of practice in this context are collectives of people with shared interests in achieving the same goal. Within education the teaching bodies of schools are communities of practice in that all tutors work towards achieving a vision for their students. Putting ‘Students at the Heart’ is about creating a community of practice where tutors share situations, narratives and strategies. However, there remains a challenge insofar as the tutors are in different buildings, with different managers, and in the case of GCSE staff working across a range of managers and tutors. The culture of further education then is one where the sharing of best practice in a community becomes stifled by the structures. Using the classroom as a space for a ‘community of practice’

worked to nurture the shared aspect of the Study Programme, albeit within a lesson.

In classrooms, there were opportunities to create liminal spaces where vocational and GCSEs tutors could support and problem-solve together working with more of a process-type curriculum. However, these occurred through the partnering of vocational staff to attend GCSE sessions. In this process the deliberative space included students and the process allowed for greater discussion of the content as it was being 'taught' to students. This created immediate spaces of learning development where by practice was shaped by context and circumstance. Rantatalo and Lindberg (2018) remind us that 'To reflect upon, and investigate one's own understanding of these practices, liminality seems to offer undeterminedness, that opens up the possibility to see practices from other perspectives' (Rantatalo and Lindberg 2018: 364). Creating liminal spaces in the classroom opened up opportunities to reflect on practices and provided opportunities to see practices from other perspectives. In other words, to share in joint curriculum delivery.

Given the steer offered by Benjamin (1939) the development of curriculum should appreciate the importance of context. The data here makes it indicative here that curriculum design could be at its most impactful in its transactions when teaching *and* learning are taking place. The planning of these moments is more challenging as they rely on the input of the student as an active participant of the teaching and learning process. This could perhaps occur where a joint practice curriculum is being created and has not been created *fâit a complís* by managers and those simply responsible for timetabling prior to learning taking place. The structure of a Study Programme is perhaps lacking this aspect of the joint curriculum design and planning by the tutors who are expected to deliver the curriculum in question.

The feedback from vocational staff was that they understood how to embed English and Maths better by seeing what was happening in GCSE classes. Students were appreciative of the connection between their core vocational programme and GCSEs. However, a sense of separation based on the

academic and vocational assumptions stubbornly persisted across the sites of this study. Data from this study illustrates how problems can arise in situations where Study Programmes and the curriculum model supporting their delivery are not agreed and well understood in advance of curriculum delivery. In these circumstances false and unhelpful boundaries between subjects disciplines as identified by Schwab (1975) can present themselves.

When engaging with different disciplines, there existed a shared epistemological basis. This is that to ‘know something’ about a learner’s progress was anchored in assessment and the outcome for the learner to achieve their learning aim. Both vocational and GCSE subjects shared the summative element as a way of confirming that a student had gained knowledge. However, the learning domains and pedagogies which underpinned this were different. There were numerous types of assessment used that differed at different times of the year and in different disciplines. This led to comments focused on the differences of disciplines rather than returning to the epistemological shared part. It is also useful to reflect on Lee Shulman’s (1986; 1987) concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge insofar as the tutors were similarly working to communicate their content subject-expertise in a way that was accessible to the learner. For Study Programmes, the opportunity to make visible this process for a learner that was operating across different subject areas would allow the possibility of better Joint Practice Development. For Shulman, this is about tutors content knowledge as tutors. In this model, ‘A second kind of content knowledge is pedagogical knowledge, which goes beyond knowledge of subject matter per se to the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching. I still speak of content knowledge here, but of the particular form of content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachability’ (Shulman 1986: 9). The shared epistemological position here is that knowledge can be shared and there will be ways of measuring this has taken place through assessment for learning. If this ‘common ground’ was exposed more this may provide an important link for the student.

Data from this study suggests that even in such circumstances if liminal spaces can be created for practitioners to congregate and develop practice then important curriculum design challenges and problems in joint curriculum planning can begin to be addressed. This appears to be particularly so in cases with the implementation of Study Programme content created artificial and binary disciplinary boundaries created. The narrative data collected during this thesis suggests that joint curriculum design, joint curriculum planning, communities of practice and potentially even joint curriculum delivery can enable tutors and managers to face and address inevitable challenges in context embedded in Technical-Rational discourses and the ways in which they can distort well-intended policy in practice. The classroom becomes more negotiated as a space, but again this is not stable, consistent and requires continuous reflection and nurturing.

Trends in achievement data

	17-18	18-19	19-20
Retention (%)	95.53%	94.87%	98.10%
Vocational Achievement (%)	89.59%	78.52%	91.77%
English (%)	82.15%	83.97%	95.56%
Maths (%)	76.57%	78.20%	94.93%
Overall Achievement (inc E&M)	84.38%	80.12%	93.67%

The data presented above provides a statistical overview of the achievement in the area. It is difficult to make exacting interpretations of these outcomes without distortion and therefore only generalised observations can be drawn. In 18-19 there was the introduction of exams in some vocational programmes which impacted on achievement for these level 2 learners. There was steady improvement for GCSE programmes between 17/18 and 18/19. The most useful observation from the data is that gaps between achievement in a vocation and in GCSE reduced. This shows that where students were

successful in their vocational subject they were also successful in their GCSEs. What is also possible to observe in the data is a positive trend in outcomes for GCSE results between 17/18 and 18/19 into 19/20. This data does suggest that exam assessment impacted on overall achievement for vocational studies. It is also important to contextualise data from 2019/2020 due to the cancellation of GCSE exams which seems to support this possible interpretation.

COVID-19 impact.

Towards the end of collecting data for this thesis there was an impact from the Covid-19 pandemic. Where learning walks would have continued to May 2020 these were halted in March 2020 to avoid putting additional pressure on tutors and students. Data for achievement is presented above but for 2020 this data is limited when comparing to previous year's outcomes. The theme's identified in this chapter have emerged from data sets gathered prior to the introduction of the first lockdown and therefore remain useful representations of 'lived experiences' prior to March 2020.

Analysis.

Throughout conducting the research for this thesis, I have been conscious of my own perspective that coherent and collaborative curriculum design, joint curriculum planning, holistic learning, and a process model of the curriculum are vital in the provision of good education of all kinds in the 21st Century. I have had to acknowledge that this view, while being very admirable, can over-simplify the complexity of what holistic learning looks like in practice especially when exploring how specifications, audits, policy, and individual capability impact on teaching, learning and assessment. Holistic learning where the learner is at the heart of what we do is not simplistic and there remains in the following chapters the 'Bear-traps' of trying to resolve the challenges of holistic learning. Through conducting this research, I have been able to capture narratives from colleagues which have in turn generated themes in the data that require further analysis. In the next chapter, the themes discussed here are analysed in more detail. There is however an important element to each of

these themes which has become clear when describing each in detail. Each theme overlaps with each other and there were multiple discourses within each theme that provides a comprehensive but complex set of stories. The narratives overlap, contradict and expand upon one another. For example, the problem-solving transactions offered insights into how the curriculum discussions evolved, showing the complex transactions between tutors, students and managers. However, not all tutors engaged in the same way and the complexity of individuals, both tutors and students, together with the size and scale of this study mean that generalised claims are difficult and inappropriate to make. The events taking place for vocational and GCSE staff working together in a classroom differed greatly and while there are some core themes emerging these are neither consistent nor wholly conclusive. The approaches described in this section are explored next in relation to theoretical concepts and ideas informed further by the literature from Chapter 2. The aim here is to try to make further sense of emerging themes. However, these themes and emerging findings from the data are not intended to offer a ‘do this and the problem will be solved’, ‘one size fits all’ approach.

In this chapter, there has been a discussion of the themes that emerged from the data. In the next chapter these will be discussed in more detail but it is useful to reflect on the aim of this research and return to the aims that emerged from exploring the problem and context and key literature. One aim was to explore the implementation of Study Programmes at my college and the datasets here provide a useful foundation upon which to explore this issue further in the next chapter. There were numerous discussions that assumed the existence of a theory and practice divide and there are data that help explore the practicalities and challenges of joint curriculum planning and Joint Practice Development in real world situations in the FAVE sector. There was a specific focus in the data on models of curriculum that require further discussion in the next chapter.

There will always be participants in this study who would like a simple, clear-cut solution to the problems of Study Programmes. During the collection of this data, there have been moments and discourses captured that provide a

complex understanding of how Study Programmes are being implemented in the sites of this research, and how Technical-Rational worldviews are both incorporated and challenged by the same participants. While capturing what is happening in the crucible of the classroom this has shown a greater positive effect for managers, tutors and students but this remains a process in flux. It is not that participants want to frustrate the problem-solving process but rather the immediate relationship between the ‘problem’ and its ‘solution’ is more dynamic and less predictable than Technical-Rational worldviews suggest. This chapter offers insights into how things might be done differently in the future but this is a long way away from presenting a neat solution to the complex question, what does a ‘good’ Study Programme look like in practice.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

‘A story is an attempt to create order and security out of a chaotic world; strong stories have unique power to make sense of issues’ (Weick 1995 cited in Bolton 2010: 9). Here Bolton summarises the importance of the narratives that provided the data in the previous chapter and in this chapter, there remains the process of ‘making sense’ of these emerging themes. Bolton explains that ‘Listening critically to the stories of those peers enables developmental learning from their experience’ (Bolton 2010:9) and in this research the narratives and experiences of students, tutors and managers provide opportunities to explore the implementation of Study Programmes, their success in practice, and their evaluation. It is appropriate to draw upon the key educational issues raised and discussed in Chapter 1 and in the literature review in Chapter 2. Discussion of recurring themes in the data from the previous chapter however reveals a process fraught with complexities due to the unintended impact of policy in context.

It remains crucial in this chapter to present as fully as possible the themes emerging from the stories of the people working to improve teaching, learning and assessment at my college. These stories do not exist in a vacuum or in isolation and in this discussion, it is important to contextualise comments. The stories are also a story about my own learning journey undertaken in the course of this research and the inevitable influence which this has on the discussion in this chapter. Through immersing myself in the data, themes that have emerged, combined with careful reflection on the research problem and the context in which this research is situated offer new opportunities for meaning-making. The thematic approach used in this research is critically discussed in Chapter 4 and it is important to reiterate that this research has been conducted from an interpretivist position where social reality is constructed and co-constructed through narratives. By interrogating narratives from staff, students and managers, there are opportunities to provide insights into experiences of teaching and learning in my college. It is not possible to claim any objectivity regarding this part of the process, however, given my own role there are opportunities to capture and observe narratives in a less intrusive manner than

if conducted by a stranger or outsider to the site of this research. My own position in the research contributes to what I would argue is a more meaningful and granular discussion that looks again to the emerging themes from the previous chapter and how they relate to the literature discussed in Chapter 2. By doing this, the reader can see how the discussion and themes have been negotiated as a way of informing discussion in this chapter, and operate in lending greater authenticity to the recommendations presented in Chapter 6.

It is also important to concede that the themes discussed in this chapter do not exist in isolation but often overlap and merge with one another. The rationale for communicating this through the themes is only for the purposes of simplicity, clarity and accessibility. While concrete answers to the questions raised in this thesis are likely to be elusive, the stories here represent, in as much rich description as possible, an opportunity for readers to explore the authenticity of the stories and the credibility of the comments captured and the extent to which they help to 'make sense of issues' Study Programmes present.

Making ideas from policy good in practice: The policy implementation gap.

When exploring the data, narratives and observations discussed in the previous chapter there was a recurring theme of how the guiding principles of Study Programmes are difficult to realise in practice. As discussed in previous chapters there are a number of possible reasons for this. Firstly, the pedagogic principles underpinning the policy may not be sufficiently developed or clearly articulated. Secondly, it may be that practitioners do not understand the pedagogy well enough to implement it properly in practice. Thirdly, the existing practices, assumptions and dominant culture in the context in which the policy is being implemented may operate to distort or inhibit its realisation in practice.

Finding 1: The implementation of Study Programmes is impacted by policy intent, tutor comprehension and cultural context.

It is important to acknowledge, in the data for this study, there are narratives around how core programmes and GCSEs programmes of study were defined

under the ‘Study Programme’ construct. Indeed, many participants discussed how the nature of the definition of Study Programme was presented as though these were separate parts and each was imbued with subject-loyalty. When exploring this against Wolf’s (2011) own notion, there is a clear inconsistency. This needs to be addressed because Wolf’s model presents a more holistic educational structure and ethos for Study Programmes. However, within the Wolf Report, there was a limited exploration of the curriculum design or pedagogy required to implement Study Programmes. All of the focus was placed on the policy intent which itself was focused on outcomes. There were discussions of the need to ensure future students had higher levels of numeracy and literacy relevant to their workplaces. This was followed by the production of a Technical-Rational policy solution which dictated that all students who had not achieved a Grade 4 in GCSE English and Maths must continue to study these subjects post-16. However, the data from TES shows that requiring young people to continue to study the GCSEs in these subjects has not yielded any drastic improvement of GCSE achievement in 16-18 Study Programmes. Indeed, some authors such as Ryan (2018) have gone as far as to discuss the possible harm this policy intention has had on young people.

The Wolf Report does not offer a pedagogy or a curriculum model for improving delivering literacy and numeracy beyond the intentions. Instead the Study Programme model has been translated into policy by the government and shaped by tutors, managers into deliverable content usually borrowing from what was already in existence. Its success has been evaluated by Ofsted frameworks in the form of a list of contents (or perhaps more accurately a syllabus) setting out what students need to study. This list lacks any detail regarding the curriculum model to be adopted or kind of relationships and educational purposes that a pedagogy for Study Programmes might provide. This is similar to what Biesta (2010) recognises when he discusses the difference between learning and education. Narratives surrounding Study Programmes provide evidence that the policy provided simply adopted a Technical-Rational model as a solution to the oversimplified problem identified by Alison Wolf of the (questionable) limited employability skills in young people leaving post-16 education. Biesta (2010) might argue that this approach to the

implementation of Study Programme policy might lead to a learning outcome but not necessarily to a good education. In the data captured in this study there were narratives around the definition of a Study Programme that mirrored its compartmentalised structure in policy documents and discourses. However, it is important to note that these were conflicted and depended on the experience of the individual tutor, manager or student's perspective. The lack of a clearer understanding the curriculum theory and curriculum model necessary for the successful realisation of the policy intentions which underpin Study Programmes beyond a list (vocation, English and Maths) showed that in practice the policy remained underdeveloped in both curriculum design, curriculum planning and pedagogical terms. A counter argument to this might be that the role of managers and tutors is to adapt policy-intent into education. However, it is important to recognise here the challenge that holistic models of educational practice present to those responsible for their implementation in practice. Deceptively simplistic Technical-Rational solutions to complex educational programmes and the structures used to realise them in practice only serve to compound the problem. This is evident in many of the interpretations contributed to this study by participants in the research.

It is, therefore, crucial to explore the possibility that tutors lacked the curriculum theory/curriculum design 'know-how' to bring Study Programmes in to practice. It is important to note here that this is not about blaming tutors, or policy makers. In his analysis of the implementation of the Behavioural Objectives model of education and supporting taxonomies of educational objectives developed and promoted by Bloom and his associates in 1956, Dunne (1993) brings to the fore how this Technical-Rational worldview to the 'problem' of predicting and controlling educational practice distorted and diminished the very practice it was trying to improve. Dunne goes on to discuss how following the introduction of Bloom's Taxonomy as the royal road to efficiency and the means through which teaching could be constituted as a 'truly rational practice' (Dunne 1993) it became easy for any failures in the approach to be placed firmly at the feet of tutors. In Study Programmes there is a risk of coming to a similar conclusion when discussing how to make them 'work' in practice. The policy-makers, and Wolf, would argue that for Study Programmes to work tutors needed to take on

the educational ideas behind the policy intention and own them. Wolf's acknowledgement of this can be seen in her reference to holistic learning. Here Wolf highlights the overlaps in literacy and numeracy required by most jobs and therefore most vocations. She is drawing on the need for learners to have a deeper understanding of literacy and numeracy than was being seen in graduates from post-16 education. To make this work, Wolf perceives a model where holistic teaching takes place whose success is judged by GCSE achievement. Tutors in this study captured the fact that they were able to adapt delivery to meet student needs however the lack of understanding was clear when exploring to what extent tutors were aware of and enacting the holistic model. There was evidence of tutors doing what they had always done in delivering their content to students creating an awareness for the student of a separate set of lessons; their vocational lessons and their Maths and English lessons.

What is also noteworthy is how the narratives collected in this study operate to divide knowledge causing a problematic culture into which the holistic Study Programme model does not easily transfer. It may be that through trying to apply Study Programmes to an existing model of GCSE delivery there was limited scope to develop curriculum design and pedagogical approaches that were holistic rather than separated and fragmented. The existing discourses already position GCSEs and core subject delivery as different. One being academic and one vocational.

Data from this study suggest that it is this very impression inherent in Technical-Rational solutions to educational problems that practice and theory are different that is invested into the narratives captured in this thesis when exploring the discourses around GCSEs and vocational subjects. Here participants in this study repeatedly reported that GCSEs were 'academic' and they discussed these as being opposed to the vocational or core subjects. This line of discourse further demonstrates a foundation upon which a culture of "us" and "them" was based. The construction of a dichotomy between theory and practice, evolved by the 18th Century philosophers, appears to have nurtured a culture of 'theory-

based academic' subjects such as GCSEs which are set apart from the core vocational or practical subjects such as bricklaying or engineering today.

It is this separation that is reflected in the data collected here and this mirrors the challenges to curriculum design that Schwab (1975) discusses. In the data, there are examples where timetables are set out to show core programmes and GCSE lessons as separate. This mode of thinking is then reinforced by tutors who discuss students as 'media' students or 'IT' students and regard the GCSE as having been added to their subject rather than being intertwined with it. The discussion for tutors to review the curriculum of a Study Programme as a more holistic pedagogy is not seen frequently in the narratives in this study. This suggests that practitioners do not implement a Study Programme curriculum and the pedagogy which underpins into practice in a holistic way. This is not to say that tutors do not try hard. Indeed, sometimes they succeed, in part. However, it is clear from data generated in this research that the policy intentions of Study Programmes lacked guidance regarding curriculum design or the pedagogic principles which might support it, which would help tutors to consider the holistic nature of literacy and numeracy underpinning each Study Programme. A key example of this is in the way tutors discussed the importance of their subject showing the boundaries they perceived between core and GCSE subjects. Their frequent use of the phrase, 'it is not how they learn' [TR 3 M], was often repeated and this impacted on the way curriculum was developed. This was rife throughout the narratives. While the Wolf Report called for the development of a more holistic learning model this was not supported in the implementation stage in the form of the time and space for tutors to collaborate and cooperate in order to jointly develop and plan a model of the curriculum and the new knowledge needed to make this policy good in practice. While there was a list that inferred the structure of Study Programmes, Wolf's proposal acknowledges the need to show how the knowledge of core, literacy and numeracy are inter-linked. However, as was seen in the previous chapter, the link with funding methodologies meant that there was a separation of GCSE from vocational curriculum from the start. For colleges, there was a need to ensure that funding remained and that students were attending GCSEs. For tutors, there was the power imbalance of 'if they don't attend GCSEs you

won’t get any money’ [TR 4 E] and for the student, there was the experience where GCSEs were a condition of attending their core ‘preferred’ vocational programme.

In the discussion in Chapter 4 about funding methodology evidence was also found in the narratives of how the funding further created a policy model that prioritised GCSE attendance by making this an integral part of the funding process and that this was to be audited by policy-makers. Narrative accounts in this research show that this impacted on how practitioners interpreted the policy being introduced and diverted them away from looking at holistic practice towards something that could be more easily audited and checked. Again, this could be seen as a Technical-Rational evaluation of the Study Programme through a solution that offered a simple mechanism for checking schools and colleges were running Study Programmes in ways that appeared to comply with the prescribed model. However, rather than providing a measure of the quality of the Study Programme the funding methodology instead afforded a simplistic way of judging whether students were attending GCSEs alongside their core programmes and did not ask the key question of whether this constituted a good educational experience for learners. Practitioners were then charged with the responsibility of making sure the students were attending rather than focusing on the quality of education being delivered. The introduction of Study Programme Leaders at the site of this research were given attendance monitoring as a key objective. The narratives around funding discourses also fore-shadowed the arguments about academic and vocational subjects and in particular debates in narratives arose about which subject was worth more. Students were threatened by the stopping of their progression if they did not achieve their GCSE Grade 4. By changing the funding methodology, the holistic nature of vocational knowledge, educational practice and pedagogy were distorted and subverted through narratives where some practitioners justified the funding methodology through the GCSE being of more ‘worth’ to the learners. Conversely, some vocational tutors argued their subjects were worth more on the grounds that their subject opened up links to a professional occupation.

At this point in the research tutors often described a situation where they were trying to create a pedagogy that reflected a policy funding rule rather than one with a genuinely educational justification. It is therefore possible to view a situation where artificial divisions and dichotomies were shaping practice in Study Programmes in unintended and perverse ways. This resulted in practitioners implementing Study Programme structures based upon what already existed and what had already been delivered and the way knowledge was preceived. This distorted how Study Programmes were implemented for learners because the model was one of timetabling practicalities rather than focused on dissolving or crossing illusory subject boundaries. Due to the speed at which Study Programmes were expected to be introduced, the opportunity to reflect on the curriculum design and pedagogy of holistic literacy and numeracy was curtailed. The need for schools and colleges to quickly evidence English and Maths attendance gave greater momentum to tutors to continue to deliver GCSEs as they had done previously. This meant that funding was not put at risk. Given that this did not result in a holistic Study Programmes has meant practitioners have had a limited opportunity, and for some tutors a wish, to understand a Study Programme curriculum or how this might advance and improve their own understanding of curriculum theory, curriculum design and pedagogy.

However, in the narratives in Chapter 4 there are several occasions where practitioners demonstrated their ability to inform Study Programme practice through creating content that applied to a student's vocational discipline. There were also narratives around how core tutors worked to promote literacy and numeracy. The use of the music video lyrics to develop creative language is one example of this. These examples do show that there were, and indeed are, ways of implementing the Study Programme in ways that work for learners. Learners commented on the links and appreciated this when asked.

Finding 2: Different interpretations of a Study Programme impact on educational change.

This finding suggests that the Study Programme policy was broad enough to allow practitioners to interpret it in ways that meet learner needs. However, the extent of this was narrowed by the structures, such as funding methodology, crude measures of attendance and achievement rate monitoring. By simply measuring the outcomes, the focus in a lot of narratives for GCSE tutors was on the summative assessment and this informed the curriculum approach and informed the pedagogy being used. Support for practitioners in applying wider-ranging curriculum models were anchored, as stated by tutors themselves, by the development of curricula framed within the parameters of the summative exam. Support from managers to develop pedagogy was varied and dynamic albeit it was always wedded to the judgements of improving outcomes for learners. The resistance to the Technical-Rational worldview informed evaluation was in the form of lessons that were process-focused rather than just outcome focused.

It is important to recognise that deep in the narratives was the understanding that Study Programmes were not introduced into a shapeless void but rather into a complex mix of discourses around what is good education, what is academic and what is vocational, what is the relationship between theory and practice and what are the beliefs of participants around what elements of the Study Programme are the most important. The result is that when participants discussed Study Programmes there were lots of dialogue around the way GCSEs *had* to be delivered. The existing models for delivery towards a summative exam, the content that was required to be successful in exams and the existing practices to ensure learners covered the syllabus. Within this were the cultural discourses that distorted the delivery of Study Programmes. One example of this is where tutors discussed their own subject-specialism first and this was perceived as the most important. This was exemplified in the way Maths GCSE lecturers discussed the Maths, core and then English when asked about Study Programmes. The way that certain elements of the Study Programme were grouped demonstrated the importance placed on each part. Many recognised that this was something that existed prior to the introduction of Study Programmes but within Study Programmes the grouping was more formalised. This formalisation comes from bodies such as Ofsted which

introduced a Common Inspection Framework as a mechanism for measuring 'good' practice. This framework provides a discourse that underpins judgements for schools and colleges, tutors and managers, parents and students. The context into which the implementation of Study Programmes happened was obviously going to impact but when exploring the themes in this research the impact of the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework remained very powerful on delivery as well as evaluation. This in part could be related back to my college's history of repeated Ofsted inspections and a desire to improve this judgement.

Several debates emerge from exploring the theme of making ideas from policy good in practice. When exploring the three recurring reasons for this there is evidence in this data set to suggest that the pedagogic principles underpinning the policy were not sufficiently developed in Wolf's report and this is particularly the case when looking at the challenge in finding a consistent definition of Study Programmes. However, this could have allowed for a space for practice to be developed but these were curtailed by the existing practices. There were limited opportunities for practitioners to develop more holistic teaching, learning and assessment as was envisaged by Wolf herself where the model was more compartmentalised into a vocation, GCSE English and GCSE Maths. While all three explore the challenges of putting policy into educational practice the impact of existing practices and cultures remains incredibly powerful in the way it informs discourses around delivering education and this is something that requires further discussion in the remainder of this chapter.

Within this theme, the debate about theory being the parent of practice might contribute to understanding why the model of Study Programmes is difficult to realise in practice. It also raises issues about how far tutors were able to use their practice to test and improve the theory of Study Programmes to make them more educational. From this study, there is evidence in the way tutors explored new approaches and aligned these with core subject specialisms and interests that demonstrates that GCSE tutors were able and keen to test new ways of delivering their content. However, there also existed external pressures in the way the policy had been rendered into discourse and informed by the

funding regime supporting the policy. The culture into which the policy was introduced and where practice was being developed had a huge impact upon the extent to which the pedagogy of Study Programmes developed by insiders in cooperative ways over time.

Finding 3: There is a big impact on the implementation and delivery of Study Programmes in terms of how the relationship of theory and practice is conceptualised.

In the previous theme, as with this theme, there is a need to discuss the social, economic and cultural discourses that exist around the implementation, curriculum design and delivery of Study Programmes. This finding focuses on the context in which developments in practice take place and how context informs practice development. The data suggests that there are challenges provided by an established 'monolith of misconception' around the theory-practice divide. It could impact on how practice is defined and operates in discourse, or it could be the vocational-academic divide influencing how thinking and action take place.

As discussed above, the implementation of Study Programmes was introduced into an already existing set of discourses and practices. Chapter 4 presents one example that illustrates this strongly which is the power of the specification to mirror the theory-practice divide. Within the specifications, there is a frequent model where theory is taught before the practical. These are represented as learning outcomes where, for example, learning outcome 1 evidences a theory of a unit while learning outcome 2 moves assessment towards developing a student's practical response to the topic. The rationale being that the student learns about the topic and then produces something based on this understanding. Carr (1992) explains that 'Central to this commonsense understanding is the positivist assumption that practice is everything that theory is not. "Practice" is particular, concrete and involves doing something; "theory" is general, abstract and involves knowing something. But, in education, these appositions rarely make sense' (Carr 1992: 10). This is particularly important because of the historical weight these two terms carry. Dunne (2005) refers to

the way theory and practice operate as thought and action and it is this definition that sits behind the way theory and practice are rendered into the discourse. Within programme specifications, this is the model of delivering initial learning outcomes which deal with the theory of a subject and then focus on the practice of completing a practical task. This dichotomy is deeply seated in seventeenth and eighteenth century application of theory and practice where a particular branch of paradigms which claim to be ‘scientific’ have come to dominate the discourse around forms of knowledge and truth. In this mode of thinking, theory and practice were separated by a mechanistic world view which abstracted and elevated thinking, assumed that thinking was not a practice and relegated the practical as being an inferior form of knowledge in relation to the theoretical.

The data in this study illustrates how the curriculum model through which Study Programmes were implemented in my college reinforced the reification of the vocational-academic divide as evidenced when tutors were talking about their individual subjects. This was then repeated by structures and cultures existing in the college whereby theory and practice have been repeatedly similarly separated. The Study Programme specification structure lends further support to the notion that theory and practice are two separate things. This is exacerbated by more priority and prestige usually being given to theory. This was illustrated by the statement from a Maths' tutor about needing to complete the Maths GCSE for the student to progress in their vocational learning as though this was the required indicator of vocational competency. The challenges to delivering successful Study Programmes could be viewed through the challenge presented by this mode of thinking being so dominant. Another challenge is that the language of Study Programmes remains fixed and framed by the taken for granted academic-vocational divide. However, some tutors were operating a more craft-based model, such as discussed by Sennett (2008), providing opportunities to implement literacy and numeracy with practices working as Carr might interpret as fore-bearers to theory. This was clear in the example of the use of a red head light for media students to understand the importance of measuring angles and degrees. Or in engineering

where using correct measurements were key to understanding technical drawings in a GCSE Maths lesson.

There is perhaps a need to loosen the grip of this ‘monolith of misconception’ around the theory-practice divide in order to begin to understand any policy-practice gap. This misconception comes from the notion that theory and practice are antonyms. A better model might be to consider, as Carr does, that practice is the ancestor of theory. Theory in this model comes from a practice of thinking. In scientific models, there has been a model of theory and experiment but by expanding on the application of practice and de-coupling it from physical action to encompass all action, including thought it is possible to review educational practice as Carr does. As Carr (1992) observes, ‘Put simply, my argument is that educational practice cannot be made intelligible as a form of *poiesis* - instrumental action guided by determinate ends and governed by fixed rules. It can only be made intelligible as a form of *praxis* - action guided by ethical criteria which are immanent in educational practice itself: criteria which we tacitly use when we distinguish genuine educational practice from that which is not; good educational practice from that which is indifferent or bad’ (Carr 1992: 11). The narratives captured here, however, do evidence how Technical-Rational worldviews offer a more apparent logic, especially where implementation and delivery of policy ideas are expected to occur so quickly.

After all, many tutors in this study saw the impact of combining activity-based learning, linked to a vocation as a methodological approach to engaging learners and more importantly improving GCSE Maths and English capability. The process of planning these lessons is a process of education practice. Tutors saw themselves developing their craft however the main issue maybe that they would not have described their actions as such. It is perhaps in the discourse of education practice that there remains a challenge to developing a greater understanding of educational practice. This practice meant that the tutor had to theorise how to communicate a mathematical structure (the angle of a film light) into exploring degrees. For Carr, this would be an example of *praxis* in action and from this, it is perhaps possible to see GCSE English and Maths at the site of this research as a practice. The problem is that due to the

dominance of the divided theory-practice discourse tutors compartmentalise education through splitting it into thinking and action. In doing so the delivery of a holistic Study Programme becomes very challenging if not impossible.

The reason for this can be seen in narratives that reinforced the 'practical learning' of vocational learning and the thinking of 'academic' subjects such as GCSE Maths and English. When discussing the nature of learning with tutors there were references to 'That's the way it needs to be done' [TR 5 M] as a statement justifying education practice. One interesting narrative was with a construction tutor who felt his subject was maligned by GCSE tutors because of a perception that the students were 'only bricklayers' and yet the complex Maths equations being taught in construction were essential to success in the vocational subject. What this evidence suggests is that tutors continue to discuss theory and practice as though they are divided. This means that misconceptions about subjects are perpetuated insofar as there are theory subjects and practical subjects. Something the construction example shows that this leads to the over-simplification of complex intersecting bodies of knowledge. The reason for discussing this as a 'monolith of misconception' is the way this mode of thinking informs the discourse used to discuss education and in particular post-16 education. This can be exemplified by the description from the AoC website:

> Colleges are inspirational places to learn because education and training is delivered by expert teaching staff in industry-standard facilities. From basic skills to postgraduate degrees, colleges offer first rate academic and vocational teaching…(https://www.aoc.co.uk/general-further-education-colleges: 2020)

In this description, the vocational-academic, theory-practice divides inform the text insofar as FE colleges are technical and places where academic *and* vocational teaching takes place as though these were entirely separate things. The way language is used here is just one illustration where the misconception that theory and practice are separate can create linguistic 'bear-traps' that we all, myself included, might fall into. The notion that one subject is academic (theoretical) or vocational (practical) is by its very nature failing to recognise

that thinking and action are intrinsically and inseparably linked to forms of knowledge and understanding.

The challenge to evaluating Study Programmes might be more largely based on the difficulties of actions and outcomes. In the Study Programme policy, the holistic discussion of embedding literacy and numeracy have more similarity to the way tutors discussed adapting their teaching to ensure it met with individual student needs. However, the discussion of the broader educational aims such as achievement were more wedded to discussions around the nature of summative assessment and a solution of judging a ‘good’ Study Programme not on quality or delivery choices but based on outcomes alone.

The AoC description above, while trying to provide a positive description of Further Education remains an indication of how a dominant discourse exists where the academic always comes first. This perception further perpetuated an ‘us and them’ sense in the narratives. This separation, whether intended or not, remains to create barriers in the way holistic curricula can be introduced and so with Study Programmes there are contextual issues that still need to be addressed especially from the perspective of ‘monoliths of misconception’. The culture and discourse of this divide continues but this discourse exacerbates the challenges faced by tutors, managers and students in realising a better Study Programme.

It might useful then to agree on the definition of educational practice and consider, as Carr does, that practice is also the ancestor of theory. Theory in this model comes from a practice of thinking and lived experiences embodied in human life. What the data here suggests is that the cultural conditions into which Study Programmes were introduced and delivered featured a strongly embedded vocational and academic separation. This however may stunt holistic approaches to teaching and learning happening in the classroom. There were examples of where tutors were experimenting with different approaches to suit the needs of the learners and where this was most successful was where practice was being developed and shared. This supports Dunne’s (2005)

conclusions of practice being crafted by insider participants rather than imposed from the outside.

The theory practice divide has given credibility to the academic and vocational divide and this has become equally powerful in tutor discussion as well as in lessons and teaching observations. But here, there was a more nuanced approach. Tutors, in their desire to provide better learning experiences, took it upon themselves to develop lessons that align with subject specialisms and more looked at how to develop curriculum choices that were more about a process curriculum. This allowed a change in the way the information was presented to learners moving more towards what Sennett (2008) discusses in his analysis of craft and the development of skill. In these narratives, practice is malleable to the learners' needs.

However, where the impact of a perceived academic vocational divide was observed to being imposed was in the narratives around assessment. The discussion of specification expectations was one which linked heavily to how students would be expected to evidence learning. These expectations of summative assessment meant that tutors would use a product curriculum approach influenced by Bloom (1956) and sometimes borrowing definitions considered by Stenhouse (1975), when planning and delivering the summative aspect of delivery.

Finding 4: The data collected challenges the binary world views of curriculum.

Practice here then showed a flexible approach where tutors were operating to develop a curriculum that was both process and product focused, and this might explain why when introducing Study Programmes practitioners found it increasingly challenging to balance these two very different curriculum models into a holistic delivery.

In the narratives, and observations, collected here there is evidence that the distinction between theory and practice was not sustained when put into the

space of a classroom. Where tutors were exploring ways of working with students there was a process seen where tutors were taking action, thinking about the impact of this action and making refinements to the action within the lesson. This could be seen in the examples of using music lyrics in English with media and music students. This might demonstrate Carr's (1995) education practice through *praxis* insofar as action that leads to a discussion about action. Carr sees action and thought as more intrinsically linked and the narratives collected in this research seem to support conceptual frameworks that consider action in thinking and perhaps it is better to consider theory and practice as constantly intersecting with one another rather than as two individualised and divided concepts. The role of the student in this process however adds to Carr's model of *praxis*. One benefit of this conceptual shift might be to provide a methodology of GCSE Maths and English being seen by tutors as a practice. There were limited narratives in the data collected that seemed to conceptualise GCSE education as a practice that delivered numeracy and literacy skills. They delivered an exam result. In the Study Programme concept, there are references to literacy and numeracy rather than the GCSEs. The introduction of the GCSE model of assessment allows for a Technical-Rational economic audit of the success of Study Programmes but this may in fact be a poor indicator of the success of holistic teaching and learning practice.

The reason that this indicator is limited is, as Carr theorises, when something is 'done in isolation from practice and which then has to be "implemented in" or "applied" to practice' such as Study Programmes the result is that 'educational practice is treated as some kind of non-theorised performance to which theory can somehow be attached' (Carr 1992: 12). Carr's answer to this is an 'approach to teacher education which treats theory and practice as dialectically related so that each informs, and is informed, by the other. In such an approach, teachers would theorise their practice by reflecting critically on their understanding of their practice and the circumstances in which these practices are embedded' (Carr 1992: 13). At the site of this research there is evidence to suggest that tutors were working to reflect on their delivery as part of a Study Programme but that more time and a collaborative and cooperative space is

needed to further consider structures of specifications and assessment that are currently curtailing holistic discourses.

In the example of the practical application through links with vocational study such as the angle session with a film light illustrated it is possible to see how GCSEs are a practice that requires the same action-thought-action that models of *praxis* facilitate. However, it is important to recognise that this perspective on developing GCSE English and Maths as practices requires the discourse and space to be established that allows the isolation of theory and practice to be reworked. What is interesting is that throughout collecting the data in this research there appeared greater opportunities to co-operate inside of the classroom with the learners as an active part of cooperative process.

The research conducted here has captured evidence that shows that practice is difficult to define and is different when responding to contextual pressures of Technical-Rational informed evaluation. Tutors do work to reflect and refine what happens in the classroom, but this is not consistent nor always with success. The misconceptions of academic and vocational dichotomies are reinforced by the Technical-Rational method to judge effective Study Programmes and this has an 'academic' dominance. To counter this dominance, it is important to recognise the impact of tutors and managers, who perform what might be interpreted as the role of the 'insider', as theorised by Dunne (2005), but these remain far from sustained.

Finding 5: Policy and Joint Practice Development are faced with similar implementation challenges and are difficult to sustain in practice.

The data collected here shows that while there was a theme of practice being changed by insiders, changing practice from the inside remains difficult to sustain in certain institutional conditions and environments. Reasons for this could include the lack of time and space offered to co-operate and develop changes in practice or it could be the lack of challenge to existing curriculum models being used to deliver content. It could also be that the types of spaces being created to develop practice require refinement and support from

managers. From the data here the most important aspect has been suggested as being the support from managers and the time and space required for collective insider developments in practice to develop further. However, the context into which Study Programmes exist continues to serve to distort them in practice. This last point was also seen operating when exploring the policy implementation gap. The issue here is one of observing what might curtail the impact of insiders.

From the narratives collected in this study, there are indications that the role of Extended Schemes of Work and specifications operate to provide a rigid structure for curriculum but that this is recognised by practitioners and managers as being deficient. If it was not, then there would not be the operating discourses around how to deliver to students from different subject areas the same content. The fact that GCSE tutors are reworking delivery for Engineering, Media and IT students provides evidence of this. However, the dominant factor here remains the summative assessment practices taking place. For GCSEs, there is a mixture of process curriculum at the start of delivering content but as the students move closer to summative exam windows then the curriculum intent moves to being more aligned with a product model of curriculum. The ‘insiders’ narratives in this study seem to suggest that they have authority over curriculum but only at certain times in delivery. The challenge here then is one where a Study Programme introduces holistic literacy and numeracy as a mode of thinking, the holistic element within Study Programmes fits more intuitively with the process model curriculum and less so with the product model curriculum. The policy structure that forms part of the summative assessment practice for English and Maths GCSE delivery therefore still has a dominant role.

The reason for this could be the impact, as noted by Coffield (2011) and others, of the exam factory bias. The impact of policy evaluation, where exams are used as a measurement of success by government, Ofsted and society at large, offers a dominating discourse that determines what is a successful Study Programme. In this model, the achievement in exams is paramount rather than the focus on being improved literacy, numeracy or employability. This was

challenged in the narratives when tutors referred to the cartoon showing different animals climbing the tree. This analogy showed a perspective that challenged the perceived effectiveness of exam assessment. However, despite the understanding of exams being a one-size fits all model it is difficult for insiders to challenge deep seated myths of literacy and numeracy being established by GCSE exam achievement. This remained a core position even when discussing barriers to learning. The exams had a dominance over discourse insofar as all learners, regardless of barriers, were treated the same.

The time required for insiders to create change, which most tutors recognised as limited but important, showed that there was at least some time to make changes. These changes were what Dunne (2005) and Carr (1995) would recognise at *praxis* in action where problems were discussed, and change did take place, but this was not consistent throughout an academic year. These also were more successful where the support of management existed to facilitate this, and this was an important factor. Where a manager supported the taking of risks, exploring opportunities to bring vocational and GCSE knowledge together tutors showed an interest in doing so as well. The space to feel able to experiment and bring knowledges together was important for the gaining of approval from students. Where students felt these movements were tokenistic were when tutors in GCSE lacked interest in the vocational subject and where this was more successful was where tutors showed a genuine attentiveness in the learners' interest of the subject. This links back to Carr's theorising about practice being informed by one another rather treated than in isolation.

This what Carr refers to as the opportunity for insiders to influence practice and this does need to be discussed in more detail. For Carr 'When viewed as a species of *praxis* it becomes clear that the kinds of practical knowledge guiding educational practice is not technical knowledge about how to improve the effectiveness of action undertaken to achieve some specific goal. "Practical knowledge" is knowledge of how to apply general ethical and educational principles to particular cases' (Carr 1992: 11). For Carr, practical wisdom offers the opportunity for *praxis* informed definitions of education practice to prevail

where the dichotomy of theory and practice is blurred. However, the discourse around the misconception of theory and practice remains wedded to the language used to dissect it and there remains a need to consider how to empower tutors to reflect critically on their practice; so, they can think about ‘What practice is?’; ‘What makes a practice educational?’; and ‘What is best for my learners?’. This is where the role of managers and leaders becomes more urgent so that any time and space offered to tutors to reflect on practice is done in the most holistic manner. There was a greater success where managers operated holistically. The introduction and discussion of the Study Programme Leader role at the site of this study showed that this is required but to what extent this mechanism works to build holistic links remains limited while academic and vocational cultural divides remain unchallenged and its function remains wedded to a Technical-Rational worldview evaluation. The role still maintains an element of ‘us and them’ that makes implementing Study Programmes successfully, increasingly problematic.

What the narratives here show is that there are a complex group of insiders in the community operating to provide better policy delivery. This produces multiple narratives, from English, Maths, vocational tutors, managers and of course students. All of these narratives could be said to align to aim to have the best experience, but the content, and timing, of these discourses, are complex and at times contradictory. This is where GCSE tutors and vocational tutors disagree on the importance of their subjects and where subject loyalty becomes a lens through which change by insiders become skewed to the topic being taught and the time of year at which it is being taught. It could be argued that the limiting factor of sustaining this is the Technical-Rational mode of evaluation applied to Study Programmes and the pressure on tutors who are judged on their individual subject success. The role of the ‘insider’ then was always within the challenging environment where tutors were working to do what was best for the student while being judged externally as good practice. This being judged by success rates from assessments and exams. Therefore, there exists a challenge to holistic teaching by the compartmentalised way that managers, Ofsted and policy makers judge it as being a success.

The theme of the development of practice by insiders also brings us to the need to consider how the principles of Joint Practice Development (JPD) discussed in Chapter 2 can offer an understanding of how Study Programmes are delivered in relation to their curriculum design. There are a number of reasons why this might be useful however, as within this theme questions emerge about the challenges of creating effective liminal spaces which might support insiders to develop pedagogy and curricula which are capable of bringing about more holistic educational experiences. This could include the ability and expertise of practitioners to work holistically and their levels of knowledge and understanding of models of curriculum design and pedagogy. This also raises the questions, to what extent are the spaces created truly liminal and to what extent is holistic teaching and learning even possible?

What the narratives here suggest then is that tutors were working at times as communities of practice to develop holistic teaching and learning. Some had the skills to do so while others did not, but that the context of introducing holistic learning met with contextual difficulties particularly when faced with the structures of assessment regimes. When asked, some tutors showed that they embraced, through contextual decision making, the freedom to make changes to their delivery to support the students but only when they felt that they had the freedom to do so. This freedom came from the space being given and the provision of time as discussed by several participants in the research. Narratives also show that the nearing of exams and impending summative assessments worked to curtail the freedom of tutors, managers and students. This was the case for both vocational and GCSE staff where all tutors were trying to get their units/subjects completed. To what extent this was about the student's success or the tutor's own achievement remains difficult to ascertain. It is important to recognise here that it is too simplistic to state that all tutors operated as insiders in developing and improving practice as a community. Instead, their narratives suggested that they often found themselves negotiating a dynamic set of forces in flux. The skill of the tutor involved in the process, the community of insiders, the context of historical success, the nature of the learners and the support of the structure within the institution all came through in the narratives captured in this thesis. This meant that practice

changed by insiders resonated closely with the incrementalism of Dewey's Pragmatic Epistemology but that the operation of this was curtailed by external assessment expectations. Tutors would often discuss how they were basing their approaches on previous experience and comments showed a process where tutors would discuss together their elements of the Study Programme with an understanding that the knowledge of good Maths and English applied to various elements of the vocational subject and vice versa.

However, opportunities for tutors across the Study Programme to meet did raise the question about whether these spaces were truly liminal and whether there was scope to review how to improve the effectiveness of these spaces. Throughout the collection of data phases in this study, various implementation methods were being tested. This included meetings between vocational and GCSE tutors where extended schemes of work were shared to provide a sharing of practice. Here a discussion about the naturally occurring overlaps within scriptwriting, engineering mathematics and programming were raised as examples. These narratives showed that there was space created here for discussion. This space however did not support what Rantatalo and Lindberg model where 'liminality seems to offer undeterminedness, that opens up the possibility to see practices from other perspectives' (Rantatalo and Lindberg 2018: 364). To achieve this liminality requires moving to deeper cultural, social and economic discourses. But in meetings between staff, the sharing of practice was a sharing of what already existed not about practice development. It could be argued that by making the classroom a 'space' for insiders to test practice and develop curriculum, including the students, this could become more liminal, allowing a greater opportunity for seeing practices in action with students rather than as an abstract in a discursive form. This could support Hattie's (2008) findings referring to 'visible learning' where tutors see learning through the eyes of students. However, the demand on time permitted for sharing practice in this way to be effective remains greater.

In the data in Chapter 4, there was evidence that students preferred more lessons that allowed problem-solving or interaction. This aligned with Dewey's Pragmatic Epistemology. Where there were opportunities for practice to be

shared in the classroom, where practitioners are equal to one another, then the narratives suggest this provides a better experience for learners.

Wilfred Carr's conclusion about the flaws of applying theory into practice as an answer to educational problems mirrors aspects of Dunne's (2005) definition of practice being built through a social process from tutors themselves. In Dunne's analysis, practice is the '*Coherent and invariably quite complex set of activities and tasks that has evolved co-operatively and cumulatively over time. It is alive in the community who are its insiders'* (Dunne 2005: 152-153).

Dunne and Carr use the discussion of Habermas where there is 'a practice, then, that is informed not by *phronêsis* but by critique: a critique that will have theoretical rigour and, though never without presuppositions' (Dunne 1993:18). In the narratives gathered in this research, there is evidence that 'insiders' continue to form a crucial consideration when discussing how Study Programmes operate and how they can be seen to evolve through context. Especially if this 'insider action' is grounded in the space of the classroom and includes the students. This may mean that even if spaces are not truly liminal, they are more able to refine practice as active moments of crafting a lesson. The tutors, in this theoretical manner, might be considered to provide the litmus test required to understand whether the practice was successful. This happened most clearly in the classroom and where there were opportunities for multiple tutors to be involved in the classroom, the more opportunities to test education emerged. This, it may transpire, provides a more complete method of evaluating policy in practice, rather than the Technical-Rational worldview applied so far.

This, it can be argued adds weight to Habermas's social and democratic sense of the public sphere where enlightened thought can be expressed. There remains, as Nylund et al. (2018) highlight, the dominance of 'a neo-liberal discourse which stress principles such as "market relevance" and employability. This trend reinforces claims that the academic–vocational divide is historically socially and culturally constructed' (Nylund et al 2018: 1). With a 'monolith of misconception' that exists surrounding the theory practice divide allowing

centuries of positivistic perception to embed in the structures of education there remains the issue of whether consistent holistic teaching and learning is possible fits the bill. It meets Wolf's desire but is difficult to measure simply.

The way that tutors have responded in this research shows that holistic teaching and learning can and does occur in the transactions that take place evidenced through the way tutors alter lessons, plan for specific types of vocations but also how learning is adapted for individuals as seen in learning walks. The dominance of Technical-Rational modes of verifying good teaching however continues to frame a context of holistic learning that is not always helpful to tutors or students. The outcome-based, product models of the curriculum do not seem to facilitate the same interaction with student problem-solving. This might seem common-sensical, but the issue is that the way Study Programmes are developed in practice might focus too much on the product and not allow wider acknowledgement about more holistic measures used in assessments. In the narratives of tutors, there are clear examples where tutors' discussion changed the content of lessons to support learners however the challenge of addressing the exams to these students remains something that tutors do not question as part of this process. The liminal spaces of the classroom discussed above are not solely penetrated by the exam-based elements of curriculum design. There are examples in this data that holistic teaching and learning is happening and developing continually but this is curtailed by the frustration experienced when this is not sustainable.

Finding 6: Evaluating educational change requires students to be at the heart of this discourse.

One recurrent theme that emerges from the data is that students featured strongly at the heart of public sphere content involving teaching and learning decision making. These insights revolve around the student experience in developing practice and how this can inform the theory of the implementation, delivery and evaluation of Study Programmes. In this theme, there are challenges to the extent to which the ownership of practice impacts on the development of Study Programmes, how the understanding of vocational

students' limit how English and Maths are seen as practices and finally how far the student experience impacts the practice of Study Programmes.

A major underpinning of pragmatist epistemology is that knowledge is always based on experience and it is the experience of the tutors that dominate Carr and Dunne's exploration of practice. However, in this data set there is evidence that by having students involved in Joint Practice Development, a process of Habermas's socialisation is happening with the learner and the tutor, leading to the learner being an active participant in the discourse of education. This again mirrors John Hattie's (2008) research into the active relationship between learners and tutors but in particular the focus on the mindset of tutors. Who decides what the litmus test tell us if not the learners? If students are at the heart of practice, then is this going to have a bigger impact on success? For Hattie, if students are supported to evaluate practice then this enables practice to develop in more meaningful ways.

This then raises the issue of ownership of practice. The Technical-Rational discourses around Study Programme are that literacy and numeracy are improved by students achieving GCSEs in English and Maths at Grade 4 or above and that this also improves the student's employability. A successful Study Programme is one where learners are able to achieve their grades in GCSE and their core subjects and progress. This is auditable through Ofsted, achievement rates and student progression. However, the data collected in this research looks at the experience of Study Programmes as a measure of success and supports notions that for practice to develop this needs to be developed with the practitioners themselves and that this, in turn, informs theory. Where students were seen to be included in the implementation and delivery of practice the experience for students was more positive.

It is also important that GCSE tutors are provided with support to recognise and develop GCSE delivery as a set of practices. There is a need to develop further the practice and GCSE delivery towards a holistic model for literacy and numeracy development. This moves away from the Technical-Rational argument that to improve literacy and numeracy students will achieve GCSEs

at Grade 4 but rather a discourse around the development of holistic literacy and numeracy linked with vocational bodies of knowledge, as part of JPD. However, this does require a focus on addressing summative assessment as the only measure for successful programmes. Students in this research did understand the importance of exams and were resigned to sitting them and therefore accepted the need to sit mock exam papers. However, the value in developing literacy and numeracy as holistic skills was not consistently seen in the narratives here.

As a result, the narratives and experiences collected here also suggest that the evaluation of more successful Study Programmes should include the holistic learning as experienced by students. It is clear that students are key to understanding and developing practice. To determine what is good education should put the student at the heart of this discourse. Not just in the discursive sense but also in the wider sense of discourse as a mode of thinking. Where students are developing practice with tutors and managers this is being used to inform theory in a circular process.

The exploration of JPD, the elements discusses by Habermas through his model of a public sphere and Fielding (2005) regarding the principles involved in creating JPD are supported by the evidence collected in this study. If those involved in the Study Programme work as equals, then this allows discourse to develop more effectively. This would further support Dunne's analysis of practice where he presents a discussion of participants work together to refine negotiate and advance practice. The data here show however that this is far from easy. The dominant Technical-Rational approach to auditing education, the discourses around academic and vocational differences still provide a powerful context for these transactions. Contextual pressure also impacts on the extent to which the public sphere operates.

Conclusion.

Throughout this chapter, there has been the intention to delve deeper into the themes and draw out the discussions from each to try to further understand

what is happening at the site of this study. This is not about looking to blame but to understand, and in the next chapter there is a need to explore what recommendations this information might allow us to suggest. Additionally, there has been a need to accept narratives remain wedded to the fact that Awarding Bodies provide for GCSEs and vocational subjects units and descriptors that underpin the teaching, learning and assessment taking place in institutions. The specifications often reinforced the theory, practice dichotomy. Sanders et al challenge the expression of whether this way round was simply common-sensical. There is also the elevation in specifications discourse of theory having dominance over practice, something Sennett (2008) challenges through recognition of the importance for craft workers to apply practical wisdom through repetition of tasks or the creating new knowledge, or theory, from the practical actions taking place.

However, these dominant discourses show that there remains the challenge of a ‘monolith of misconception’ of theory and practice being uncoupled. There is also a dominance in discourse which is repeated in the narratives from tutors in this study. Where one tutor explains that in order to progress a student must achieve their GCSEs as though this ‘academic’ knowledge must come first. Where Sennett (2008) sees this the link between academic and craft as more intertwined, just as Carr (1995) does, the dialogue captured here suggest challenging this is not easy. In the narratives, there were several occasions where GCSE Maths and English were seen to be more important than core, and the funding methodology seemed to give legitimacy to this claim. The Technical-Rational structure of achieving better literacy and numeracy by completing GCSEs does not seem to have encouraged the development of a pedagogy that supports holistic delivery but instead offers a more compartmentalised approach to the Study Programme. Therefore, the way the policy has been implemented into practice remains fraught with challenges where practitioners are operating in dominant discourses reinforced by funding methodologies and with tools that offer to develop curriculum design and pedagogy where Study Programmes remain under-developed and under-used.

If, however, practice is indeed the ancestor of theory then there remains a need to acknowledge narratives where insiders were operating as what Dunne would see as agents of change. Within the data collected here, there was a theme of practice being changed by insiders who were invested in all parts of the Study Programme but that this remains difficult to sustain.

In the data, this was challenged through the narratives around subject-loyalty. Here tutors were concerned with the element of the Study Programme that they were employed to deliver and ultimately upon what they were being judged as professionals. There was absolutely effort by both core subject tutors and GCSE tutors to provide effective holistic teaching. These were not just tokenistic but were opportunities where tutors could address the problem that knowledge is not easily compartmentalised as proposed by a Technical-Rational worldview. The issues raised by Dunne (2005) in discussing Bloom's Taxonomy and the disservice and potential damage it does to the concept of education however remain as long as the success of a Study Programme is again linked to and measured in terms of only outcome data.

The issue of implementing Study Programmes in practice remains one of complexity and the discussion in this chapter does nothing to dismiss this. If we accept practice is the ancestor of theory, then there is perhaps more that needs to be done with this knowledge being created in schools and colleges across the country. The grip of these dominant Technical-Rational discourses which separate vocational and academic education and fracture theory and practice needs to be loosened. This will undoubtedly involve a greater sense of uncertainty but that might allow opportunities to develop better practice from the inside. However, there is also a pressing need to ensure that students accompany their tutors on this journey or we may find ourselves back on a road which returns us to a world of Technical-Rational approaches to curriculum design, assessment, educational evaluation and educational improvement which have served policy professionals tutors and students so poorly in the past.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 1 discusses the challenges of capturing authentic experiences of learning. Perhaps more importantly it explains how at the outset of this thesis that I did not know where this journey would eventually lead. In this final chapter, it is important to present recommendations that reflect the journey I have been on in a way that does not dramatise or glamorise the ending as if it were some kind finale in a 'Hollywood plot' (Connelly and Clandinin 1990). It is essential to represent the narratives of those who have contributed their time, thought, and care in the conduct of this study as accurately as possible. By exploring the themes and discussions that have emerged in Chapters 4 and 5, it is possible to draw out useful suggestions that inform how Study Programmes, and possibly other policies, can be thought about regarding their implementation, curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation in educational practice. However, it is crucially important to recognise the risks and dangers of presenting the information here as suggesting that this thesis offers a single 'one-size-fits-all' oversimplified solution to the perceived problem of the implementation of Study Programmes. Doing this would be deeply ironic and would undoubtedly pitch this thesis and its recommendations into the 'bear trap' of Technical-Rational worldviews and models of educational evaluation and improvement that offer solutions to complex problems in overly simplistic and linear terms… the very approach which has been extensively criticised throughout this thesis! It is very important therefore, that in this chapter, I do not presume to tell others what to do. Instead, the chapter offers considerations of, and insights into, the dynamics of the problem in educational practice encountered by myself and my colleagues. This thesis offers some broad recommendations, based on the data collected here, in sufficient detail which I hope might support the application of the findings of this thesis elsewhere.

It is also important in this chapter to avoid exaggeration as the journey captured here remains, after all, part of a small-scale research study that offers insights into, and analysis of, themes that emerged from the data collected at a particular site. It shares the meanings that I make of these experiences as a tutor and manager in my Further Education college. I continue to reflect upon

and be committed to becoming a better tutor and a more competent researcher through my continued engagement in systematic, practice-focused research in education. It is important therefore that the context of this research is borne in mind in considering the findings and recommendations presented in this thesis. To reiterate, the argument made in Chapter 4, trustworthiness and credibility are watchwords that have guided me in this research. As such I make no grand claims to generalisabilty. I believe however that the case studies and findings presented here might resonate with the experiences of other tutors and education leaders working in similar contexts. It is also important to recognise that as with the previous chapters, these themes and recommendations overlap and are not discrete. They are presented here in sub-headings for ease of consideration as individual recommendations. However, it is important to note that these factors often exist in dynamic interaction with one another. To reiterate, this chapter is not intended to offer a recipe or blueprint for the successful implementation of Study Programmes. Instead, it provides glimpses into current practices that appear to be obstructing the implementation and improvement of Study Programmes.

It is useful to briefly revisit the journey expressed in previous chapters before laying out the recommendations in this thesis. Chapter 1 presents a discussion, informed by Coffield (2011) about how policy-makers tend to introduce a new policy as an extension to an existing system. This is understandable when you consider that in dealing with a new policy, policy-makers, education leaders and tutors hold onto what they already know and what is already in existence. It is important to acknowledge that there are advantages and disadvantages to this strategy. An advantage is that practitioners are dealing with what is already known and what has already been tried and tested. Study Programmes were designed to develop the already existing practices. The speed at which Study Programmes were required to be implemented by changing funding rules meant that it was necessary to bring together elements and programmes already in existence in colleges and schools. The disadvantage was that being asked to implement Study Programmes as quickly as possible, and easily, curtailed serious consideration of curriculum design, the purpose of the Study Programme and its educational intentions. This inhibited the realisation of a

concerted effort for vocational and English and Maths tutors to work on it together in colleges like mine. There is a further disadvantage insofar as existing structures and practices may not be fit for purpose in relation to the ethos and rationale of the curriculum/pedagogy demanded by the new policy. This is particularly true when considering the holistic nature of literacy and numeracy as discussed in the Wolf report. Moreover, where existing practices and structures are based upon the Technical-Rational model of the curriculum and the pedagogic practices that support it, these practices can operate to distort the implementation, delivery, and evaluation of Study Programmes often diverting them away from their original purpose.

Chapter 2 discusses in some detail the Technical-Rational worldview and the literature surrounding its impact on education. There is also discussion here of the consequences of the separation of theory and practice in vocational education – an issue that is central to this thesis. In this chapter, it is also important to note the journey of reading texts and being directed from those texts of other disciplines including the sociology and the philosophy of educational which are relevant to this thesis. By adopting this approach, it has been possible to critique and test ideas at the site of this research linking back to literature when considering recommendations. I wanted this research to build upon Sarason's (1971) analysis of the same educational issue, in terms of what he describes as 'the predictable failure of education reform in the USA'. Fried (2003: 2) acknowledges that Sarason saw himself as a man 'continually adding to an individual mosaic of ideas'. Working on the other side of the Atlantic over fifty years later in a large post-16 Further Education college in England which is part of a large group of colleges, not much seems to have changed. My main motivation in conducting this research is to explore how we might know a 'good' Study Programme when we see it in practice? My interest stems not just from the perspective of improving students' exam results, but also from the perspective of improving and enhancing the student's holistic educational experience and go some way towards compensating for the problem of the negative impact of students 'stuck in a cycle of exams' captured by Raikes and Longman (2017).

The data collection stage in this thesis then required careful thought in terms of the methodology that would enhance this journey. The interpretive ontological position adopted in this thesis supports a view that knowledge and reality are made intelligible through interpretation and discourse. This is important given that the focus in this thesis is upon the lived experiences and qualitative narratives from those individuals involved in the implementation of Study Programmes. In Chapter 4, the data-sets of this thesis are explored and analysed in detail using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. Recurring themes emerge through close inspection of the data and a continuous process of moving back and forth to test their trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility. However, I am mindful of Dewey's (1933) warning that as researchers, human beings, and as tutors, we must bear in mind that it is always possible for us to be fallible and that educational research should open up spaces where the results of this research allow and invite others to respond to the data and to encourage debate from a range of perspectives.

While this thesis is concerned with the qualitative narratives from staff and students at my college, it is important to acknowledge the quantitative data of achievement in GCSE programmes. Also, at the core of this thesis, and the Wolf Report (2011), has been providing educational experiences that allow students the best opportunity to progress beyond being at college into employment, apprenticeships or higher education. It is also important to recognise that data such as league tables and other metrics have a defining impact on education in general, and across my college, as a whole. To ignore this aspect entirely would be both naïve and short-sighted. As an Further Education college in England, funded through public finance, there is naturally a need for public accountability as the Wolf Report (2011) points out. Angela Harrison (2011) discusses this in detail when concluding that 'Vocational education is not good enough, says Wolf report' (BBC News, March 2011). In this article, Harrison discusses that the review, commissioned by ministers, highlights the limited progression of vocational students into employment. Wolf, in her report, stresses the need for programmes of study to be economically appropriate meaning that students should be studying courses that allow them entry to employment. One key measure in the Wolf Report to achieve this is to

ensure that graduates from vocational education have good literacy and numeracy skills to ensure that they are able to use these to achieve and progress in their vocational studies.

It is this very reasoning that has meant that during this study, it has been important to capture curriculum design, pedagogy, and success rates in GCSEs. This is because, part of the public accountability of my college, are outcomes that are publicly judged against National Achievement in GCSE. This is an indicator of improved literacy and numeracy in our graduates. One other way to measure this is in the gap between vocational subject attainment and achievement in GCSEs. This comparison allows data to focus on those learners who remained on their core programme aim and achieved versus those who withdrew after the 42-day census. In 2017/18 the gap between vocational and GCSE subject achievement was -5.4%. Meaning that more students achieved their vocational studies by 5.4%. This improved to a positive 1.6% in 18/19 and in 19/20 this improved to 1.89%. It is important to note that this last data-set is based on teacher assessed grades rather than exam results[18]. What these data-sets help to illustrate is that achievement gaps across the whole Study Programme have reduced and improved in a way that they are becoming more appropriate to supporting progression. Even if there is an argument about grade inflation the gap between vocational and GCSE achievement remains a possible way to judge the outcomes for Study Programme elements. Overall achievement for the areas which form the focus of this study have continued to improve over the three years from a Study Programme achievement of 84% to 93%. Therefore, it could be argued that the Study Programmes have become better.

Nevertheless, Chapters 1 and 2 discuss in some detail how Technical-Rational approaches to policy development and evaluation in education can become preoccupied with outcomes-based measures of results. If exam achievement is the only evidence used to judge a successful Study Programme then this

[18] This is the result of the Covid-19 Pandemic which led to exams being postponed for GCSE students in Maths and English and a move to Centre-assessed grades.

risks limiting reflection and judgement on the more subtle aspects of what constitutes a good education. It is essential therefore that accountability is judged via more measures than just raw data-sets and this diverges from a Technical-Rational worldview that tends to regard change as an event and not a process overlooking the crucial importance through the processes or means through which educational outcomes are achieved.

It is for these reasons that this thesis discusses some of the complex transactions taking place in my college in a specific period of time. The definition of transaction here is informed by Dewey's (1975) use of the term and this is discussed in some detail in Chapter 2. The term transaction is employed by Dewey to describe the relationship between experience and knowledge. For Dewey, transaction involves the careful or 'reflective' thinking necessary which we need to engage in when events do not unfold as we expect. In other words, when something disturbs our routine way of thinking and we have to stop and think. This involves a process where perception and action are interlocked and we have to think *across* the action regarding the nature of the disturbance or problem facing us and what to do next. Subsequently this leads to a judgment about the nature of the problem and a decision on what to do. We then act and are confronted by (or in Dewey's words "suffer") the consequences of our actions. Examining the consequences in the evidence of our actions then allows us to determine if our judgment about the nature of the problem was sound and the action taken appropriate or if we need to think again. Dewey cautions us to remember that although there is an element of stimulus and response at work here, this is not a causal process nor are its outcomes construed as being 'right' or 'wrong' in a binary sense. This stands in stark contrast to Technical-Rational curriculum models and behaviourist theories of learning.

For Dewey, the transactions between experience and knowledge are as important as the outcomes. Both need to be considered and critically acknowledged. To reach a point in this thesis when I can offer recommendations then it is important for me to communicate these in a way that honours the fact that this thesis represents an education journey for me

and that journey will not stop when the thesis stops. While it would be wrong and premature at this stage to state that the improvements in Study Programme outcomes were a direct result of the interventions involved in this thesis, it is not possible to say that this thesis has had no impact. What data from this thesis and their analysis indicate is that the improvement and development of educational practice are not straightforward nor is it guaranteed to produce positive results. Therefore, the recommendations offered here extend an invitation to others to explore and develop these themes and recommendations further on the understanding that they are made in the spirit of supporting future narratives and not provide a to-do list telling others what to do.

Findings and Recommendations.

With any research, the aim is to explore what is perceived to be a problem and it is frequently experienced that in the investigation of a problem, additional issues present themselves. In discussing the recommendations below, I hope to draw out from the initial questions posed at the start of this research journey some of the additional areas for further consideration. This is the exciting part of providing recommendations because they have the potential to postulate opportunities to future researchers, including myself to test these ideas out further in the arena of practice. The initial research question of how to make policy ‘good’ in practice I believe remains key. This is because educational practice should be capitalising on ‘good intentions’ from policy makers, tutors, managers, students, and researchers who are engaged in diagnosing how to improve the educational experiences of students and move pedagogic practice forward. Teachers and education leaders do this from different perspectives and with different intentions which invite robust and critical deliberation.

Each finding from Chapter 5 is linked to a corresponding recommendation in this chapter so that the reader will be able to track the process of analysis and argument construction underpinning this research in a transparent way. This enables the reader to review the evidence to determine how the findings of this thesis may, or may not be, useful in their contexts of experience and practice. It is also important to consider how the discussions presented in this thesis

might offer insights into wider debates surrounding educational practice. A key finding for me as a practitioner has been my developing understanding of how discussions of practice are informing the implementation of T Levels at my college.

Finding 1: The implementation of Study Programmes is impacted by policy definition, practitioner understanding and cultural context.

The first finding discussed in Chapter 5 focuses on data that suggest that three factors are influencing the implementation of Study Programmes. These are that:

1a) Pedagogic principles underpinning Study Programmes policy may not be sufficiently developed or clearly articulated.
1b) Practitioners may not understand the curriculum design or pedagogic principles well enough to implement Study Programmes properly in practice.
1c) Existing practices, assumptions, and the dominant culture operating in the context in which the policy is being implemented may operate to distort or inhibit the realisation of Study Programmes in practice in educationally sound ways.

It is important to note that at the start of this thesis, there was no suggestion that the translation of Study Programmes from policy to practice was clear or easy. However, there were a lot of people, policy-makers, tutors, managers working extremely hard to make policy work in practice but with limited success in terms of consistent achievement or positive student experiences. Exploring the narratives of how staff, students, and managers experienced the implementation of Study Programmes has led to a finding that points to the complexity of the process of policy implementation. The data from this study also indicate that any one factor in the process cannot be considered in isolation. Therefore, this finding is informed by narratives that provided a complex view of the process of policy implementation where tutors were grappling with the pedagogic principles of Study Programmes as well as the bureaucratic and administrative imperatives of a Technical-Rational model of educational change and improvement.

The model offered by Study Programmes was one where GCSEs in English and Maths were delivered alongside a core vocational subject until the student had achieved a Grade 4 or above in both subjects. These activities informed a curriculum that was primarily focused on an end result and emphasised the product or outcome rather than the process. This was seen also in the narratives collected in this thesis as product curriculum models were encouraged to be delivered as outcome focused rather than process focused. It also highlights a key issue that Dewey (1966) identifies which is 'As educators our work is precisely to substitute for these superficial and casual affairs stable and well-ordered realities; and these are found in studies and lessons' (Dewey [1966] in Golby et al 1975: 256). In this statement, Dewey recognises that educators create and border subjects such as Computing, English, and Maths. This compartmentalisation creates false ideas that forms of knowledge belong to one discipline and not another.

However, the Wolf Report advocates the main principle of holistic programmes of study and it is this pedagogy that provides a big challenge for sector practitioners. In returning to Coffield's (2011) consideration of this problem, there do appear to be challenges where policy makers apply policy to existing educational structures and practices and this was indeed evident in data presented here. The curriculum that was created was built upon using existing structures but the result of this was that the pedagogic principles underpinning Study Programmes were not sufficiently well-developed or clearly articulated enough by Wolf (2011) or by subsequent policy makers or education leaders. Tutors and managers, therefore, struggled to implement Study Programmes as they often had to resort to what they knew in terms of curriculum models and established pedagogic practices. Data from this study also suggest that this is the reason for pasting Study Programmes into existing practices that were largely influenced by the dominance of Technical-Rational worldviews which frame how Study Programme policy was implemented. In other words, the assumption was that by developing Study Programmes as an addition to the system and securing the funding from Treasury to support its implementation, the policy community had 'solved the problem' of the low numbers of young

people leaving vocational education with low levels of attainment in GCSE English and Maths examinations. However, as the colleges discovered as they tried to implement the policy in vocational education contexts this laudable educational intention *lacked real-world exposure and testing*.

The implementation of Study Programmes was also influenced by the way funding methodology was altered to provide financial incentives to colleges to develop curriculum models and Study Programmes quickly or risk financial penalties. This process of implementation curtailed the time and space that tutors and managers had to work together to develop the curriculum model and pedagogic practices necessary to support the policy intentions. In the narratives, there were signs that tutors reverted to what they knew when teaching Study Programmes and this is understandable but less than optimal. There was also an issue that tracking of attendance was more urgent, as a focus than the development of good educational practice. This curtailed the development of shared knowledge and instead created a fragmented experience for students which was dictated by the imperatives of timetabling and not by an appropriate and coherent model of the curriculum. It was assumed that so long as Maths and English were on the timetable, then the Study Programme existed. The narratives also showed that embedding or promoting literacy and numeracy was largely lacking in substance. It is for these reasons that I believe that the following recommendation is useful.

Recommendation 1: Open up more opportunities for tutors and managers to collaborate in articulating and developing the curriculum design and pedagogic principles involved in translating the good intentions of education policy into good educational practice.

There remains a risk with the recommendations provided in this thesis that these could be presented as if they are easy to adopt into educational practice. The discussion in Chapter 5 indicates that this is not the case. Rather, these recommendations are mindful of the challenges faced by all participants involved in developing these principles. The already existing discourses with their various power relationships and the contexts of each setting are important. Also simply opening up opportunities for discussion and development of

curriculum models and pedagogy is not sufficient, in and of itself, to provide more positive educational outcomes for students. How these opportunities are utilised, the time and space offered in which to develop them, the power relations and discourses within them, and the contextual pressures all work to make any collaboration challenging in actuality.

To illustrate this point further, the data collected in this study suggest that everything introduced in my college needs to consider in the context of existing practices and policy expectations of having ‘measurable’ (and often immediate) improvement. The first recommendation therefore also links to data regarding how we evaluate the development of pedagogic principles underpinning Study Programmes (and potentially other policy initiatives in education) and how these might be then further developed in collaboration with practitioners.

It is useful to return to Dunne (2005) where he explains practice to be a ‘coherent and invariably quite complex set of activities and tasks that has evolved co-operatively and cumulatively over time’ (Dunne 2005: 152-153). The activities discussed here by Dunne can be interpreted as the pedagogic principles which exist in practice in a far more dynamic way than is supposed by Technical-Rational worldviews. In a Technical-Rational model, the solution is provided and adopted and its failings are commonly placed at the feet of users of a curriculum model rather than the curriculum model itself. This was the nub of the argument against Behaviourist Objectivist models developed by Dunne (1993). However, the data here suggest that the implementation of Study Programmes requires, on an ongoing basis, a complex set of activities to develop, test, adapt and refine pedagogic principles in practice.

What this recommendation focuses on is putting policy into practice in a way that actively seeks to create spaces for initial and ongoing collaborative discourses that encourage and enable tutors and education managers to (in Dewey’s terms discussed briefly above) “think across the action”. In other words, to look at what is actually happening in practice. This suggests that if tutors and managers are regularly and actively engaged in bringing policy intentions into a critical discussion in a genuine spirit of educational inquiry then

this will open up real opportunities to improve policy implementation in incremental ways. As noted above, when Study Programmes were introduced in the Wolf Report (2011) there was little discussion about how they could be holistically introduced. Instead, there was an intensive policy intervention driven by funding changes that led to a more list-based definition of what the Study Programmes curriculum was supposed to contain rather than its purpose or what it was intended to achieve. While it was recognised by Wolf that these Study Programmes would be devised by institutions to meet the needs of the students the implementation process operated to standardise Study Programmes curriculum. This was achieved through funding regulation and the Ofsted Inspection Framework.

In the narratives collected in this thesis, the dominance of the list-based curriculum content definitions further reinforced a Technical-Rational approach to the implementation of Study Programmes. This then led to the creation of Study Programmes curriculum derived from existing timetable structures and practices which restricted discussion of any considered reflection on the pedagogic practices needed to underpin the intended holistic nature of Study Programmes. In the narratives, there was a sense of following the funding guidance as a sense of the 'only way to do things'. There was a common-sense element to the definitions of Study Programmes. This repackaging of pre-existing lessons is understandable given the pressures of the 'bottom line' currently existing within education institutions but it is not excusable. This recommendation focuses on the need to support tutors to develop and improve curriculum design and pedagogic practices collaboratively allowing space and opportunities for reflecting on policy intentions to inform implementation and delivery.

It is important to reflect on Jenkin's (1975) perspective when he asks 'Have we an adequate language by which different teaching strategies and curriculum styles be articulated?' (Jenkins 1975: 16). It is useful to widen this to include pedagogic language as well. The discourse of education remains heavily imbued by the language of Technical-Rational worldviews and this has a powerful influence on the narratives collected in this thesis. This

recommendation focuses then on turning a Technical-Rational policy solution into a complex, enduring, and pragmatic discourse about good educational practice. The data from this study suggest that by opening up more spaces to discuss curriculum design and pedagogy, tutors can become more powerful agents for the testing out of policy and theory in the arena of practice. In turn, this admits the notion that policy and theory need to be informed by practitioner-research in context and that this can and should be a dynamic process. By doing this, tutors will have opportunities to develop sound pedagogic principles to support the successful implementation of education policy in a critical and contextualised way. The same approach could also enable and support tutors and managers to develop a better understanding of curriculum design and pedagogy through their embodiment and collaborative enactment of the principles of Joint Practice Development (JPD) (Fielding et al, 2005) as they work together to improve educational practice in a collaborative, cooperative and systematic way.

In this thesis, there have been opportunities to explore how Joint Practice Development (Fielding et al, 2005) can support the development of practice in my Further Education college. In this recommendation, it is important to recognise that tutors are not one homogenised mass but a collection of professional individuals each with complex experiences of acquiring and developing expertise in their subject and of being in the classroom. By recommending more opportunities to work with tutors collaboratively on translating policy into practice this must allow for the knowledge and expertise of tutors to be at the forefront of this process. The ‘public sphere’ created by opening up more opportunities for tutors and managers to collaborate is not however devoid of ideological discourses which each participant in the public sphere might bring. Where Maths tutors were putting Maths at the forefront of their definition of Study Programmes there were equally English and Vocational tutors doing the same.

As a result, it is also crucial to acknowledge that JPD is a framework that itself faces the same implementation challenges that have been found with Study Programmes. The pedagogic and epistemic principles underpinning JPD,

therefore, need to be articulated and understood well enough for tutors to engage in its principles and practices. In sum, practitioners need to understand the practice being jointly developed; be able to critically investigate and review existing practices; challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, and contest dominant discourses that impact the implementation process. In this thesis, where JPD has been applied this has involved meetings between tutors, discussions, critical debate, and most importantly respect for each other and patience. Working jointly using the principles of JPD has been more successful in the confines of the classroom than elsewhere. This may be because this is where educational practice is 'alive in the community' of its insiders (Dunne 2005) and is continually being developed. This thesis has allowed an opportunity to explore in some depth wherein the context of Study Programmes, joint practice crosses subject definitions and transcends disciplinary boundaries and it is important therefore that these boundaries are critically reviewed. As Schwab (1975) notes, disciplinary boundaries are constructed historically and in discourse, and maybe through the critical engagement involved in the collaborative development and improvement of educational practice they might be re-imagined.

Another dimension to this discussion is the role of the student in JPD. There are also suggestions in the data that by adopting a student-focus into this development then more positive interactions may take place. Looking at the research by John Hattie (2008) where students are actively involved in answering the question "what works best" in education, there remains literature supporting a more student-centred approach. Hattie explores how 'visible learning', where tutors are learning through the eyes of students and making decisions on their practice as result. This social process of developing curriculum and practice may allow for Dunne's (2005) concept of practice being developed by insiders to be truly impactful. Dewey also argues that a more complex interpretation of the adult-child interaction is needed where the 'problem of direction is thus the problem of selecting appropriate stimuli for instincts and impulses which it is desired to employ in the gaining of new experience'. (Dewey 1975: 157). It is important to note that Dewey is not promoting a behaviourist analysis but instead is arguing that a dynamic

relationship between tutor and student is needed for it to be truly impactful. Where there are opportunities through recommending the opening up of spaces for tutors to collaborate in translating policy into practice, this might also lead to deepening insights into how joint practice development with a student-centred approach may enable the improvement of curriculum design and pedagogic practice in vocational education through the eyes of students. After all, students are the ones who experience the learning in a Study Programme. This thesis argues that developing educational practice in this way might create more opportunities to address contextual changes and support the incremental improvement of teaching, learning and assessment in more authentic and realistic ways.

The recommendation to open more opportunities for tutors and managers to collaborate in developing the curriculum design and pedagogic principles is a response to the warning Benjamin‘s analogy of Newfist (in Golby et al 1975) appears to present. This is where if tutors are not developing practice there is a real risk that the mode of curriculum design and the pedagogic principles employed in its realisation in practice become ossified irrelevant and limited in their educational value. The curriculum of the Study Programme and the Technical-Rational discussion of its implementation combined with the existing pedagogic principles of what went before has impacted the success of holistic development of Study Programmes in practice. In this model of the curriculum, the timetable has become the Saber-tooth curriculum and the imperatives of timetabling have replaced discussion of curriculum theory and curriculum design.

To avoid falling into this ‘bear-trap’ there is a need to ask bigger questions about the type of curriculum being introduced and the pedagogic principles being continually shaped by it. However, Benjamin provides an insight into another facet of this recommendation when he discusses how ‘wise old men’ (ibid) passed judgement that leads to the continuation of Newfist’s curriculum. This judgement relates to the ‘eternal verities’ that Newfist’s curriculum offers. Indeed, Dunne states something similar when discussing the ‘Virtues of constants values’ (1993). In the discourses of a Study Programme there are

discussions about the need for improved literacy and numeracy as accepted truths. The conflict is that both ‘eternal verities’ and ‘Virtues of constant value’ suggest something that is external to be achieved and perhaps offer a platonic ‘pure form’ or ‘eternal verities’ to be discovered. Or possibly forcing us to ask the question whose ‘eternal verities’ and what virtues do we mean? Reviewing Dewey’s (1940 [1916]) interpretation of curriculum where ‘we have conditions which are necessarily related to each other in the educative process since this is precisely one of interaction and adjustment’ (Dewey 1940 [1916]) there emerges a perspective where the student’s individual peculiarities, whims and experience help to reform ‘eternal verities’ in an agreed discursive space. From this viewpoint there are agreed accepted truths that form throughout education and are reinforced through experience. When exploring this through the idea of *phronêsis* or practical wisdom, Dunne (1993) concludes that curricula in this model are ‘characterised by 'sensitivity and attunement' towards, rather than a concern for mastery or domination of, its subject-material (p. 256). Rather than being a purely intellectual process occurring before, or separable from, experience (such as we might now mean by 'theorising") it is exercised in the course of experience and involves being open to experience’ (Dunne 1993 quoted in Richard Smith (1995) The Rationality of Practice). It is important to recognise that Pedagogic Principles are also not ‘out there’ for tutors to be ‘given’ to solve their problems but rather discovered and developed in context through discourse and process.

Recommendation 2: Develop further Tutor-Leaders to implement change too.

The role of leaders in supporting tutors to implement policy into practice in the recommendation above is structured around the JPD principle of equality amongst participants. This means managers need to have opportunities to work alongside, not just instruct, tutors in developing educational practice. One of the benefits of conducting this research has been that the participants, including myself, have developed a greater understanding of the practical problems involved in implementing Study Programmes. This has allowed us to challenge our existing practices and to ask critical questions about the nature of the

approaches to the implementation of Study Programmes currently operating in the college. Data from this study point to the importance of recognising that the realisation of policy into practice must involve leaders and allow more complex opportunities for collaboration and closer and more careful considerations of curriculum theory, design, and pedagogic practice than a Technical-Rational worldview admits. By considering leaders and managers as tutors too there is an opportunity to reframe the discourses in policy implementation and possibly allow better opportunities to share narratives and allow for greater pragmatic co-operation. I found that in the course of this research tutors saw this research as indicative of me as a tutor-leader rather than a manager.

It is also useful to consider how leaders can support 'insider researchers' to implement change. Data from this study indicate that existing practices can distort or inhibit the realisation of new practices. In the study, data shows that tutors built Study Programmes based on what they knew, what had happened before, and while there were 'insiders' identified that operated to adapt pedagogy these tutors saw failings in their classrooms that were exacerbated by the college policies and structures around them. As these structures were largely informed by policy-implementation strategies, such as funding methodologies and judgements by outcome data alone. Change by insiders lacked support. A finding of this study is that by recognising the important role leaders have, as well as tutors, in supporting change from the inside there may be greater opportunities for the improvement of teaching and learning that is both practice-focused and student-centred. This allows for greater opportunities for 'shifts which may at the time seem dramatic or even subversive' (Dunne 2005: 152-153) to exist with all genuine practitioners involved including tutor-leaders.

This may help with the finding in this thesis of Finding 2: Different interpretations of a Study Programme impact on educational change. The Wolf Report (2011) introduced a discourse around Study Programmes that was quite broad and certainly aimed to provide a steer on curriculum development. The holistic nature of the Study Programme as discussed in this thesis offers opportunities to address how subject boundaries can become silos of compartmentalised

knowledge described by Dewey as illusory ‘well-ordered realities’. Instead, the delivery to students should show an understanding of the importance of literacy and numeracy in all aspects of vocation and in the wider workplace as well as in the course of leading a fulfilled life, preparing students for not only for employment but also for the pursuance of the common as well as the individual good. The Study Programme idea sought to highlight the common ground that already exists in the craft of the vocations where literacy and numeracy were essential. The narratives in this study support how delivery of GCSE English and Maths can have purposeful links with the core subjects being delivered. However, this pedagogy was formed from practitioners responding to student need rather than from the Study Programme itself. Narrow models of building a Study Programme remain prevalent across my college and possibly across the sector. Education leaders and will need appropriate CPD to support them in changing and steering the implementation of Study Programmes away from a reliance upon existing structures in order to move towards curriculum models that offer greater consideration of curriculum theory and design and the formation of more appropriate and coherent pedagogic principles.

It is important to note, however, that for pedagogic principles to develop from policy and for practitioners across multiple disciplines to work cohesively to implement them, leaders need to develop their understanding of curriculum theory, models, and pedagogy. Education leaders and managers need to also understand the pedagogic principles and curriculum theory well enough so that they can support tutors to develop robust discourses around implementation, delivery, and evaluation. With Study Programmes, this would allow for greater focus on how to make holistic programmes of study happen across multiple disciplines. This may create a discourse that is not curtailed by dominant policy implementation discourses but a ‘grass roots’ one that is grounded in what is happening in practice in the classroom. Developing the links between staff in all areas of a Study Programme and sharing practice across curricula are central here. As is developing the understand of Shulman (1986) where there are epistemological overlaps between disciplines that operate, not to distort, but to enhance knowledge acquisition. If these can be developed more in reframing practice in relation knowledges through co-operative discourses this

could support more collaboration. Education leaders are crucial in providing opportunities that facilitate and support collaborative practitioner-research to take place. This has been central given the remaining challenge of Study Programmes being compartmentalised into core, English and Maths. While increasing opportunities for tutors to put policy into practice in educationally sound ways, it is important to acknowledge systematic and organsational structures and their influence on this discourse. Data from this study lend support to the idea that education leaders must be both knowledgeable and skilled in providing time and spaces for tutor CPD so training and learning transactions can be trialed without fear of blame or failure. Data also suggest that educational leaders should be encouraged to develop their professional practice, to enable them to better collaborate with tutors in clarifying pedagogic principles underpinning curricula. For Study Programmes, this may allow a greater shared understanding of how successfully the policy is being implemented from a variety of positions.

To make this more impactful, data from this study also suggest that it is important to recognise that policy implementation requires leaders to have access to effective CPD support themselves. The benefit of conducting practitioner-based research has enabled me to better understand the educational problems and work with a range of staff across multiple sites to try and better understand how to improve the education for our students. This has shown that where leaders are asking critical questions, and willing to collaboratively inquire with tutors into ways to improve practice, this creates opportunities for Joint Practice Development. If leaders are putting tutors and students at the heart of conversations and supporting more the opening up of liminal spaces, insofar as they allow critique of the context of what is really happening in practice, then this can contribute to refining practice and advancing theory development. It is important, however, to admit that an aspect of Joint Practice Development requires the establishment of democratic spaces and relationships in which all participants in the endeavour are regarded as equal. This research shows that this is difficult to maintain especially within the context of perceived hierarchies of management. CPD needs to provide spaces where participants in the learner journey can discuss learning as equals and

the role of leaders as tutors become an important one in perceiving this discourse. If leaders are working within a discourse as tutors too then there may be greater opportunities to consider transactions more carefully. In this space, the voices of students then may transcend the problem of ownership. In the data, this was evidenced by the sense of a student being IT, Media, or Engineering. If everyone is regarded as being a tutor, then all practices and knowledges become important in the discourse, including those of leaders. It is, however, important to recognise that each craft has a uniqueness and the equality in this space needs to recognise the rich diversity in craft learning that takes place across a range of subjects and within a range of subjects. It is perhaps this complexity that Dewey playfully calls the ‘superficial and casual affairs’ (Dewey [1966] 1975: 183) in a way to note how subjects are formed as disciplines. Dewey here recognises that educators are asked to create their well-ordered reality from something that is ultimately disordered. There is a choice then about what is included and what is excluded from this reality and perhaps even goes so far as to create a new eternal verity.

There is evidence in the narratives captured here that tutors do acknowledge ethically what is right and wrong about educational experiences. For the ‘insiders’ working to improve student experience, this was common. To achieve this though GCSE Maths and English must be considered by tutors, leaders, and students as practices. Practices that require a consideration of the curriculum (what needs to be communicated) and the pedagogy (how this will be delivered) that is reflective of what has gone before but not wedded to it either. Additionally, often in the narratives captured here, there was an unhelpful separation of literacy and numeracy from a vocational craft. The development of craft in Maths and English was diminished by this discourse and this needs to be addressed. It is also important to ensure that there is a critical exploration of the curriculum models underpinning the delivery and assessment of GCSEs.

In this thesis, the space of the classroom offered opportunities, especially when linked with effective use of Hattie’s (2008) examples where visible learning informs matters of the implementation of a policy are evaluated in the classroom

and are centred upon involving the accounts of both staff and students. By doing this, it might be possible to open up new policy-practice relationships that support the introduction of a policy to an educational setting. What this finding and the two recommendations offered comes from data and themes of policy being implemented too quickly into existing systems can subsequently operate to curtail its success. Through developing tutor-leaders who are actively working tutors in spaces that allow the activities of pedagogic principles to be scrutinised, adopted and developed then there may be a greater impact on the success of Study Programmes for all concerned.

The delivery of Study Programmes has evolved since they were implemented and it is important to recognise that narratives in this study suggest that educational practice is developing continually. This was seen in the narratives around building GCSE lessons that build on vocational concepts. However, what the narratives also evidence is that discourses around curriculum theory and curriculum design are limited within the structures operating at my college. The narratives captured here suggest that managers and tutors were reflecting Technical-Rational worldviews and modes of delivery in their practice without fully critiquing the impact and value of this worldview on improving educational practice in actual educational contexts.

It is therefore important to draw attention to the fact that delivery in my college, as with many others, is also influenced by the wider Ofsted framework. For Study Programmes, and the initial part of this thesis, this was influenced by the introduction and application of the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) (2015). This framework evaluated the Study Programme and the structures by which Study Programme would be defined in its delivery. In 2019, Ofsted introduced the Education Inspection Framework (2019). The new framework presents from Ofsted a move to review delivery and evaluation with the introduction of ‘Intent’ ‘Implementation’, and ‘Impact’ as factors for outstanding teaching, learning, and assessment. I believe that this move is a positive one as it opens spaces to emerge to discuss critically how these elements can be nurtured to develop outstanding experiences for students. However, there remains a risk that these will become an additional contents list or tick-box that

fails to provide an effective discussion of education or learning. To discuss intent, implementation and impact may not enable the practice to develop.

To avoid this, data from this study indicate that it is worth considering Continuous Professional Development for Leaders that focuses on curriculum theory and curriculum design and introduces structures that facilitate discussion about the processes of policy delivery. By exploring curriculum theory and design, it may allow space to discuss how specifications can be better translated into a curriculum offering that meets the needs of auditors, Ofsted, tutors, and students. It potentially allows leaders to explore fully the *Intent, Implementation, and Impact* model employed by Ofsted and allow tutors and managers to develop sophisticated discourses of policy delivery that are grounded in reflecting upon curriculum models and their fitness for purpose. This might also allow curriculum theory and development to gain a higher status in conversations about future policy intent, implementation, and delivery. The evidence presented in this thesis strongly suggests that this lack of knowledge and expertise in curriculum design and the discourse and narratives surrounding understanding concepts and models of curriculum in the implementation of education policy has curtailed the success of Study Programmes insofar as there has been limited discussion of understanding how different disciplines are moving between process and product curriculum models (Stenhouse, 1975). It is maybe worth considering whether the curriculum models do require updating or whether new curriculum models are needed that better reflect what was captured in this data. These may also then capture the impact of critical discourses from tutors. The discussion around the cartoon of the animals in Chapter 4 clearly illustrates a critical discussion of the problem of summative assessment. The problem, however, is exacerbated by the lack of leadership in engaging in these discussions which should be grounded in critical comprehension of curriculum and pedagogic theory. In this study, there is a suggestion that this low-level grasp of curriculum theory and pedagogic knowledge from education leaders and tutors operates to distort the support tutors have in building better programmes of study. Evidence collected here also suggests that education leaders and tutors have relied too heavily upon what has gone before regarding building programmes from existing

practice. This has curtailed the discussion about whether these ‘solutions’ are actually solving the problems or creating new ones, such as the issues presented in the cartoon and the critiquing of curriculum and pedagogy from all perspectives.

There is however an important aspect of this recommendation that needs to be noted. While leaders need CPD on curriculum theory and pedagogic design, evidence in this study lend support Fielding’s assertion that ‘practice transfer is more likely to be successful when the recipient of the practice has been involved from the beginning in the process of agreeing and planning the transfer activity’ (Fielding et al 2005: 78). While leaders must be supported with curriculum theory and design this is also something that should not exclude tutors. After all the narratives presented here provide evidence that conditions of critical engagement with what curricula are already in existence and the discourses that they frame are essential starting points. It is important for leaders to understand existing practices, and why tutors remain wedded to them. From the data generated here, there is evidence that there are tutors who are operating to implement new ideas, as insiders, and by offering more CPD for leaders, this provides opportunities to open discussion and allow for further development of the Study Programme curriculum. This further development could provide opportunities for tutors to work together to understand each other’s curricula.

For this to be impactful though it is important to acknowledge the third finding of this study. In the narratives, there are discussions about the nature of a vocational IT, Media, or Engineering student who then also study a GCSE. This discourse evidences the continuation of an ‘us and them’ discourse that permeated the construction of an unhelpful dichotomy between theory and practice throughout the study. This division continues to promote a discourse weighed down by a ‘monolith of misconception’ around what it is and what it means to be academic, theoretical, practical, or vocational.

Finding 3: There is a big impact on implementation and delivery of Study Programmes by the conceptualisation of theory and practice.

Any policy implementation strategy needs to address the context into which the policy is being introduced but in this finding, data indicate that for educational policy ideas to thrive after being implemented they need to address the continued assumptions that are culturally and socially entrenched in education. Data in this study suggest that the problem of Technical-Rational approaches to the implementation and evaluation of policy insofar as offering a definitive simplified solution to a complex educational problem remains context deficient. As seen in the application of behaviourist models critiqued by Dunne (1993), Study Programmes solve the problem of low literacy and numeracy in college leavers by making GCSE resits compulsory. Thereby not addressing the key question as to why this was the case before Study Programmes. It also echoes the concept that there is a vocational body of knowledge and a separate body of knowledge offered by English and Maths GCSEs.

The consequence is that policy and government legislation in relation to further education has been linked with economic discussion. Wolf's report links the further education sector with employability and she is aiming to address what are economic issues around a skilled workforce. When considering this alongside the academic debates this presents what Lissavoy (2016) views as a Neo-liberal model of governance. As Study Programme policy was linked with funding streams when implemented and audited using Technical-Rationale measures of construction the result was educational practice informed by policy not praxis. The free-market element where Further Education is funded to provide employees rather than educated citizens seems to be a clear conclusion from this perspective. As I have stated previously, I do believe that there is a need to ensure that public money is not mis-spent but when exploring how policy is implemented in education practice there seems to be a power-relation in the discourses around Study Programmes. Where academics like Dunne (1993) argue for 'qualities of mind' these are in conflict with government policies that emphasise free-market capitalism.

The government policy of Study Programmes is not, in and of itself, negative. Indeed the holistic approach to knowledge as outlined by Wolf provides a

positive framework to identify education that is of value to learners. There is, however, a need to ensure the discourse includes perspectives around developing pedagogic practice so that theory and practice are holistically linked. Through viewing educational practice as a craft where incremental changes are taking place then this may avoid the Technical-Rational 'bear-traps' and position education as a both a social process as well as empowering learners economically.

The data in this thesis continue to show how in Study Programmes the notion of theory and practice as binary opposites persists. This is illustrated in the narratives captured in this thesis where the assumptions remain about vocational courses being 'practical' while GCSEs are regarded as 'theoretical'. It was also discussed earlier in this chapter how limited Programme Specifications are designed, and mirroring the theory-practice divide. What is problematic here is that specifications reinforce a mode of thinking wherein initial learning outcomes the theory is introduced (often first and early) in one part of the curriculum and the practical process follows. This presupposes a natural assumption that to understand something you need to learn the theory first and then put the theory into practice until you reach a point where you are ready to engage in a summative assessment. This assumption informs how educational practice develops and with Study Programmes there is the added complication that the delivery of Study Programmes is built on existing practices that echo and reinforce the theory-practice dichotomy.

The data in this thesis highlights the impact of this in narratives around delivery models where this model might suit one type of learner and not another. The notion that students preparing for the GCSE exam 'do not learn that way' emerges from an experiential assumption based on a limited approach to teaching. As Sennett (2008) highlights the use of numeracy and literacy in craft remains essential and therefore the knowledge being evidenced contradicts as students do learn numeracy and literacy in and through practical pursuits. What the data here imply is that sometimes the misconception about theory and practice is used to inform how students learn and their perspectives abound that assume certain subjects are somehow 'non-academic'. This was

evidenced in Chapter 5 in the narrative about the construction tutor and the attitude to Maths that they encountered.

This finding offers an insight into problems for policy implementation where the impact of cultural, social, and economic discourses on the endurance of any new policy is substantial. In the narratives, there is evidence of this thinking when TR 5 M comments on how different IT students were from Media ones based on their vocational choice. For Ofsted, there was added focus on judging English and Maths as 'embedded' or 'promoted' in vocational teaching as though this were new to vocational delivery. The theory-practice divide was so ubiquitous in the narratives which resonates with Carr's (1995) central concern that practice is seen as everything theory is not.

Recommendation 3: Initial Teacher Training should do more to collapse the theory-practice divide.

In Chapter 5 there was a discussion about the 'Monolith of Misconception' which exists around the theory-practice divide. In this recommendation, I want to suggest that the structures of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) could offer an opportunity to address this notion. This is important as, Terry Hyland (2017) acknowledges, it is greatly embedded into the discourse of education and carries a common-sensical authority that still needs challenging. By considering the role ITT has in developing future teachers this allows an opportunity to capitalise on training for new teachers that avoids perpetuating an unhelpful set of discourses. This is particularly important when considering delivery. Where ITT focuses largely on developing classroom activity it is important to address the paradigms of thinking and doing and where there are complex intersecting knowledges that rely on a fluctuating and dynamic process.

However, this recommendation must not give the false impression that ITT is the cause for the continuation of the misconception of theory-practice divides. By allowing opportunities for the tutor to engage in critical discourse and training for tutor-leaders to support the curriculum and pedagogic development it is necessary to explore measures to ensure the longevity of these

recommendations. As I stated at the very start of this thesis, I do believe that educational policy is well intended and it is important that policy delivery and development continue to adapt these to meet the needs of the students. There is, therefore, in this recommendation, a suggestion for looking at how to support developing discourses that are far more aligned with the actuality of what is happening in the classroom. ITT allows space to discuss the reality of teaching and possibly an opportunity to ensure that the misconception about theory and practice divides is challenged by future educators. The risk of not doing this is that, as with Newfist's curriculum, we perpetuate a discourse that is not representative of everyone's viewpoint. What ITT also offers is an opportunity to explore how the nuances of different vocational pursuits can be discussed and critically explored as well. This is perhaps a mechanism to fully reflect and change how the accepted theory-practice model is not a given and that solutions to educational problems require critical thought and engagement from the moment a tutor starts in education. The seventeenth/eighteenth-century discourses that sought to offer a more 'scientific' interpretation of knowledge which not only separated theory from practice, thought from experiment, but also elevated the academic above vocational education are deeply flawed and do little to support the realisation of Study Programmes, as holistic models of learning. This finding could offer an opportunity for us to think again about theory and practice, academic and vocational, and maybe also think again about a student's experience of 'us and them' constructs of subjects and disciplines.

Finding 4: The data collected challenges the binary world views of curriculum.

When discussing the approach to teaching, learning, and assessment with tutors and managers a narrative emerged around how different curriculum models were being applied at different points of the academic year, and these informed how the content was being delivered. Tutors were following a more process-type model of curriculum delivery at the start of the college year. However, towards the end of the year, there were exam-style mock assessments and the curriculum morphed into a more product-type curriculum.

The balancing of these models seems to oscillate throughout the academic year and there was no concern about moving between one curriculum model to the other. For the tutor, this is what was needed to reach the outcome of passing the GCSE while continuing to provide education that allowed greater transaction in the classroom. For the student experience, there were comments that they preferred the early part of the year but felt overwhelmed by the exam preparation. But they also understood the need for exam practice. However, it is important in considering this finding to avoid being wedded to or uncritically accepting the labels 'process' and 'product' models in a way that creates further binary opposites. What is key in this finding and recommendation is how Technical-Rational worldviews impact the evaluation of a Study Programme in ways that are less than helpful.

Recommendation 4: Develop Tutors and Leaders to critically evaluate curriculum design and pedagogic principles.

In Chapter 2, there was a discussion about the Technical-Rational worldview where Bloom's behaviourist approach was said to offer a 'scientific' solution to complex educational problems in the discipline of Education. With this recommendation, there appears to be a need to review CPD for tutors that allow a space to review and critique the outcome curriculum models that are anchored to the need for summative exams. In the early part of this chapter, I discussed the space for continued development of practice as an ongoing process but in this recommendation, I want to focus on the Technical-Rational models of evaluation. There remains an obvious overlap but here I want to draw out the accountability and more importantly how more discursive evaluation might support improvements in education.

Overall, this recommendation comes back to a single theme that has emerged from the data, which is that we do not talk about curriculum theory and curriculum design enough. This discussion needs to be informed, critical and honest, and time is needed to provide tutors the opportunity to develop curricula that acknowledge contextual circumstances, accountability and put the student at the heart of the discussion. Enacting this recommendation may allow us to

avoid what Benjamin predicted with Newfist's curriculum where the 'wiseman' saw no need to discuss the curriculum as it should always be done that way. These discussions may allow for reconsideration of curriculum models as well as offering opportunities to revisit interpretations of what it means by a 'process' or 'product' model of the curriculum and perhaps even dare to imagine new curriculum models.

Joint Practice Development may support this in offering evaluative tools that inform a more collaborative approach to the evaluation of a good Study Programme. It is also possible in the data sets here to see evaluation happening in the space of the classroom with input from the learners. Where staff from vocational and GCSE areas worked together in the classroom delivering and evaluating on an ongoing basis the discussion was more impactful for learners. Learners commented on this improvement as well. While it remains true that staff need to be provided with opportunities to better understand curriculum theory, curriculum design and pedagogic principles to support this evaluation. JPD also requires support from leaders and managers

A recommendation of this thesis is that Curriculum Theory and Development need to come much higher on the ITT and CPD agenda than at present as a deep understanding of these is crucial to the process of policy implementation and evaluation. Doing so may provide us with better measures of educational improvement than current systems, strategies and funding methodologies permit. Currently, there remains Ofsted's measure of 'good' Study Programmes based on an Inspection framework that explores outcomes more than processes. The move for Ofsted towards the EIF in 2019 (Education Inspection Framework) where the framework of *Intent, Implementation, and Impact* has become regarded as the recipe for successful Study Programmes, the risk remains that this may become just another Technical-Rational solution to the policy-practice deficit identified throughout this thesis. Without further consideration of curriculum theory when discussing the 'intent' this can become another tick list of contents where the evaluation of 'good' Study Programmes is judged by a tick list of factors of intent, implementation, and impact.

The final finding of this thesis returns to judgement of what we mean by something being ‘good’ in practice. Looking at the challenges faced by practitioners, policy-makers, and leaders in implementing policy and the need to address key misconceptions about theory and practice it is appropriate to conclude with a discussion of those individuals who rely upon understanding what is happening in our teaching and learning. The experience of learners on a Study Programme is crucially important here as a measure of success and a crucial component to reflect on how to improve. In this finding, tutors are using the knowledge and expertise of the learner to inform what is happening in the classroom. However, data from this thesis suggest that for Study Programmes this requires a more holistic understanding of the student experience that transcends subject boundaries.

If tutors are working with students to evaluate practice in the classroom, it is more likely that it will reflect more on what is happening in the classroom. Through, using the classroom as a space to interrogate pedagogic practice, this study shows that what is happening in practice can be questioned, explored, and considered with all participants for whom this practice is important. It is important to recognise that this includes the visual observation of what is happening as well as what is thought to be happening. It is important that from this perspective theory and practice are re-framed in the discourse away from the misconception that they are antonyms of each other. Data from this thesis suggest that tutors across a whole Study Programme need to be involved in this process if they are to be able to address and explore subject boundaries together. This is not easily achieved. However, where tutors worked together in classrooms around students, whether in vocational or GCSEs lessons this study found opportunities to build more cohesion into the Study Programme itself.

For this to be successful, Fielding et al (2005) recognise that in doing so power relationships must be equal and the expertise of all participants, managers, tutors, and students are respected and considered. It is important to acknowledge that a proportion of tutors and managers exist who perhaps perceive the students as being ‘unknowing’ about education. It is perhaps more

appropriate to consider the analogy that Sennett (2008: 249) discusses where German young bakers are weary of the IT/machine experts coming in to advise them. In this narrative, the old apprentice master was replaced. For the apprentices, this led to a feeling that the experts were not being treated with full respect and they rebelled against it. It is possible that education experts still have a lot to learn from students. From doing this research, I know I do.

Contribution to Knowledge.

The research presented in this thesis is based on my place of work and as such it provides a unique case study of how Study Programmes are operating in practice. The aims of this research were to address the social dimensions and the rights of students to access to education. If the funding changes, and changes to the expectation of having a GCSE grade 4 in both Maths and English conclude to prevent students accessing level 3 and beyond qualifications this could curtail their opportunity to develop in a craft. For students with Special Educational Needs this impact could be far more dramatic. This perspective is not intended to dilute the importance of literacy and numeracy but rather considers the knowledge, and new knowledge, provide by looking at my college that might help reframe educational debate. In particular, it is important to state that practitioner research in Further Education is not as prolific as it is with other educational providers and it is important to reflect and draw out what contributions to knowledge have emerged from the data.

The case study presented here captures data from a further education college in England that has been previously graded as ‘requires improvement’ from external inspection. Therefore, the contributions from this study are grounded by the impact this research has had on the site of this research. This has been a very personal thesis but the key themes of students’, tutors and managers experiences of policy implementation, development and assessment provide valuable insights into wider discussions of education practice development.

In the themes, there emerged discourses about how Technical-Rational applications of implementation, delivery and evaluation curtail the effectiveness of the educational change they wish to encourage. This is not to do with the misjudgment of policy-makers' intent, the ineptitude of tutors or managers, nor the fault of the students. Technical-Rational world views provide a solution to a complex problem in a way that is linear and without context impacting on outcome. This thesis may help tutors in Further Education struggling with delivering Study Programmes by offering insights and ideas of how this curriculum can be made good in practice. It goes some way to supporting those up and down the country to see how we might avoid the short-comings of Technical-Rational approaches to educational change and improvement in the future. The way that the policy of Study Programmes was implemented into a system as, Coffield (2011) discusses also, shows that for colleges in 'special measures' the Technical-Rational model limited educational practice development rather than provided a suitable structure to develop it. Within my college, the data collected here clearly supports seeing practice as communal and slippery to define.

By offering a more pragmatic model of educational change that is grounded in Dewey's Pragmatic Epistemology, through the application of Joint Practice Development, more context-aware practice develops. From this perspective, educational change focuses on incremental changes in a context. The data here captured the contradictions, within our context, that exist in the narratives and through discourse it is possible to acknowledge these inconsistencies and open spaces to debate them. However, Joint Practice Development faces the same implementation and application challenges as policies and is challenging to sustain in practice. At my college, there were examples of where JPD met the same challenges of implementation as observed with Study Programme policy. The space needed to develop practice was difficult to define and difficult to nurture. Practice in this context is something fluidic, negotiated and subject to contextual change and more importantly the need to revise the discourse of the Study Programme to acknowledge that English and Maths are practices in their own right is important too.

A second contribution to knowledge that this thesis makes is to develop Dunne's (2005) discussion of insiders by considering the role tutors managers have on this process. This is important when viewing Joint Practice Development as a 'policy' whose effectiveness can be limited by unclear communication of pedagogic principles, tutors who are not supported and a context that is domineering. Tutor-managers may go some way to supporting tutors with implementation and help nurture effective classroom-based 'liminal spaces'. Practice from this perspective needs incremental development from all participants and spaces for this to develop that recognises the value of all participants' discourse, rather than a top-down solution that is supplied by Technical-Rational models. However, as seen in the data, at my college there remained a strong attraction of the 'monolith of misconception', promoted by its insiders. In this view practice is something that everyone contributes to and as a result everyone needs support to sustain a 'better' practice.

It is also important to acknowledge the challenge to the topology of Stenhouse's model of curriculum that emerged in the narratives. Stenhouse discusses 'product' and 'process' curriculum's but there was evidence of tutors adapting both in their curriculum plans and pedagogy. The narratives here at least evidence a more dynamic approach to curriculum. I have been critical of binary framing world views and this includes the binary framing of product and process models of curriculum and the binary framing of ontological and epistemological positions as these seem to distort more complex social phenomena.

Finally, I am intrigued in the discussion around 'eternal verities' as Benjamin refers to them or as Dunne (1993) envisages 'qualities of mind and character, such as an ability for independent thought and reflection, a habit of truthfulness, a sense of justice, a care for clarity and expressiveness in writing and speech' (Dunne 1993: 6). Here both Benjamin and Dunne are discussing what education should be, such as willingness to change your mind, engaging in balanced argument and remaining open-minded. These are in essence Aristolean virtues when viewed as 'vocations of life' (Adams 1933). However, my puzzle with this is the risk that 'eternal verities' become fixed and rendered into discourse more as a 'pure form'. As something that is agreed and applied

to education from an external position devoid of context. If educational practice is interpreted as working towards ‘eternal verities’ these may become separated from context. There may be a potential risk that this leads back to creating a ‘marginalised citizen’ through the process of whose ‘qualities’ are we talking about. In the case study here, there were repeated references to the value of English and Maths as though this was an ‘eternal verity’.

Conclusion.

I am concluding this thesis in 2021, after a time of great disruption to education in the UK. This however provides a truly unique opportunity to address the weakness of academic and vocational divides. With Study Programmes, the assessment of exams was replaced by centre-assessed grades (CAGs) and this will provide opportunities to explore how curriculum and pedagogy translated policy, again at some speed, into practice. In the data sets of this study, there is evidence showing how Joint Practice Development is comparable to a policy as a set of well-intentioned ideas. These ideas however need to be tested and negotiated and there is a risk of a Technical-Rational approach in applying JPD where staff are meeting with good intentions but looking for ‘quick-fix’ solutions rather than carefully interrogating the problem in practice and the enduring educational issues they face in addressing the problem. There is also evidence that JPD outside of the classroom runs the risk of being inauthentic insofar as the evaluation of the teaching and learning does not involve the student and there is a Technical-Rational evaluation based on whether students attend and pass their GCSE rather than on the wider educational experiences being delivered as part of the Study Programme.

The recommendations in this chapter have emerged through a close investigation of the narratives generated in the study. Narrative-based practitioner research in this context has allowed me and my colleagues to access, analyse and learn from a greater body of evidence from which to better understand when and why things go wrong in our practice and to work more collaboratively and cohesively in matters of curriculum design, policy implementation and the development of educational pedagogic practice in my

Further Education college. It is always important to recognise that this is a small-scale piece of research conducted at a time when other factors are also impacting the site of this research. The introduction of Study Programme Leaders at the site of this research, the change from the Common Inspection Framework to the Education Inspection Framework, and the introduction of T Level and transition Study Programmes have all been factors of influence during the period of this study. All of this means that it is difficult, and not very useful or appropriate, to try to make over-arching statements about the recommendations offered here. Rather it is important to remember that these recommendations are suggested by the data generated in this study.

However, the changing context witnessed throughout this thesis highlights one of the key observations in these data which is that curricula are, and need to be, dynamic and respond to context. In the delivery of a vocation/craft, this may be responding to practice development to ensure the students are perfecting a skill or in the GCSE where moving between skill and outcome focus is most appropriate. Curricula that rely heavily on product models of the curriculum and long lists of centrally prescribed specifications were often seen to be less effective and the educational experience for the students engaged in education framed by this curriculum appeared to be more limited. This observation challenges what we might see as the ‘eternal verities’ of highly prescriptive specifications for programmes of vocational education. It is important here not to dismiss these eternal verities but interpret them alongside the context and discourses in which they are being applied. This is also not straightforward, easy nor the role of one practitioner.

To conclude, it is useful to return to Benjamin’s story about Newfist where the wise old men considered eternal verities in the curriculum. In this story, Newfist’s curriculum became outdated because what the young people in the tribe needed to learn had changed as the environment and the landscape that they lived in had evolved. It is also possible that the pedagogic principles may have changed as well. The data in this study suggest that while specifications offer necessary standards, it is important to recognise that tutors use their curricula to interpret these and apply certain knowledges at particular times and

where practitioners feel they are most impactful. What is also important is that further support is needed to support this process. Pedagogic principles are also formed and reformed, throughout this process and with Study Programmes there is a greater need for both curriculum design and pedagogic principles to be holistically discussed and more deeply understood by all tutors. The reality is that a huge complex mixture of discourses operate to impact policy implementation. Had the 'wise old men' changed Newfist's curriculum, if a Technical-Rational mode of delivery and evaluation is applied then this limits learning from the transactions in the classroom. In other words, you are applying a ready-made solution not continuing to test a method to refine a solution capable of addressing the problem. The policy-practice gap also highlights that policies are not just directives from the government, but there are policy implementations from researchers as well. For Sennett (2008) there is the sense that 'the complexity is that to arouse the aspiration for quality and make good on it, the organisation itself has to be well crafted in form' (Sennett 2008:242). My organisation has supported me to conduct this research and I have presented throughout to colleagues across the whole group in a culture of sharing educational research and allowing the data to inform my observation. If the college is well-crafted then there are opportunities to ask questions and explore and actively keep progressing towards quality education.

I hope the findings and recommendations within this thesis will provide a useful starting point for further discussion. I started this research, intending to try to explore making Study Programmes in my area of the curriculum better. I am concluding that I feel, at least, more equipped to do this now. The recommendations presented here are about the importance of cooperation, collaboration, and working together (policy-makers, tutors, leaders, and students) to improve educational practice for students. This means moving away from the 'blame game' that Technical-Rational models of policy development and evaluation might encourage where there is an assumption that the answer to educational problems is being presented to tutors 'from outside experts'. This is not supported by the evidence collected, analysed and reported here. This thesis offers insights into where new policy discourses need to be supported in spaces in which all practitioners, including students, can be

regarded as active participants and whose judgements are respected and taken seriously.

There is a need to address the wider context of the academic-vocational divide and the impact this misconception continues to have on policy implementation and tutor understanding of pedagogy. This divide impacts the way curricular and pedagogic practices are being developed and, in this data, there is the suggestion that this creates a false dichotomy curtailing holistic practice. Practice in this sense then is far more than simply the antithesis of theory. Returning to a fuller description Dunne's (2005) definition of practice:

> *A coherent and invariably quite complex set of activities and tasks that has evolved co-operatively and cumulatively over time. It is alive in the community who are its insiders (i.e. its genuine practitioners) and it stays alive only so long as they sustain a commitment to creatively develop and extend it – sometimes by shifts which may at the time seem dramatic or even subversive. Central to any such practice are standards of excellence, themselves subject to development and redefinition, which demand responsiveness from those who are, or are trying to become practitioners (Dunne 2005: 152-153)*

It is important that for educational practice the role of the student is crucial when considering their role in complex sets of activities and that space is needed for implementation, delivery, and evaluation of practice to remain fluidic and complex. For this to be impactful there is a need to ensure 'democratic discourse' insofar as policy implementation supports discursive practice rather than peddling a quick-fix solution to a long-standing and complex educational problem.

I wanted this study to explore my perceptions and realities of a policy-practice deficit in Study Programmes. The findings of this thesis suggest that making policy 'good' in practice cannot be achieved simply by telling tutors what to do through recipes, blueprints, or instructions. The narratives here support the conclusion that it is not the fault of policy-makers, nor tutors, nor managers. The issue is systemic and generated by the dominance of a Technical-Rational world view of policy implementation and educational improvement. Tutors, leaders, and students are active and competent, and necessary participants in

the policy implementation process. More importantly, each has narratives that can help develop both curriculum and pedagogy. This involves more than a slogan of *Intent, Implementation, and Impact* advocated by Ofsted. Findings from this thesis suggest that educational improvement is a complex and interactive process in which all stakeholders need to be involved and treated with respect. It is important that practitioners, like me and my colleagues, continue to conduct research; question 'monoliths of misconception' and recognise and admit when things are not working. Benjamin concludes his discussion of Newfist's story by describing education as 'something that endures through changing conditions like a solid rock standing squarely and firmly in the middle of a raging torrent' (Benjamin quoted in Golby et al 1975: 14). The data collected here suggest education, curriculum, and pedagogic practice are far more dynamic in context and that there should be support for tutors, managers, and students to engage and develop within this structure. Technical-Rational worldviews offer solutions to educational problems that try to create 'rock-solid' models that often cannot cope with educational transactions and unintended side-effects. There may be unwelcome trends, accidents, and disasters. This suggests that John Dewey's Pragmatic Epistemology is useful because it considers experience and the context in which education and learning take place. This experience was essential for tutors in creating curricula that balanced process and product curriculum needs and for students in creating the links between vocations and the literacy and numeracy they need to be successful. With changes in external assessment for technical qualifications moving to have external and internal components the need to explore curriculum is ever more important. It may be that the process of this is the eternal truth. What is meant here is that the eternal verity mentioned in Benjamin (1939) may be the process where practitioners work together to discuss and agree on what works at a particular time, for a particular cohort and their lives are what provides a genuinely educational outcome or 'product'. This requires unpacking the 'product' and perceiving multiple 'intents' and questioning how 'implementation' needs to include what everybody has to do when putting an well-intended and good idea from policy/research into educational practice and making it good.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Participation letter for Students

Participant Information Study

Study Programmes: the policy practice gap.

Dear Invitee,

Thank you for taking time to read this letter. My name is Dan Creed. I am a student with the University of Sunderland studying Education. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting with the working title: Study Programmes: the policy practice gap. The intention is to explore how Study Programmes are being delivered at the college and what people's experiences of Study Programmes are. The study involves completing a basic questionnaire and two focus groups throughout the academic year.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study does not require you to provide your name or any other identifying information. Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project and information will not be shared with lecturers. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study. Data will be kept secure by password protection and data encrypted.

If you would like to participate in the study please return the Informed Consent slip below with your parent/guardian consent. Your participation in the research will be of great importance to me to better understand how to support Study Programmes in our college.

Thank you for your time and participation.

It is important to state that you do not have to take part in this study and you may withdraw at any time. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please email me at dcreed@crawley.ac.uk. You do not need to provide a reason. Alternatively, please come and see me.

Yours faithfully,

Daniel Creed

Study Programmes: the policy practice gap.

Participation Consent

I hereby give permission

Name ……..…

Date……..…

To participate in a doctoral research study that I am conducting with the working title: Study Programmes: the policy practice gap

Parents / Guardians Name:

Signature:

Appendix 2: Participation letter for Tutors

Participant Information Study

Study Programmes: the policy practice gap.

Dear Invitee,

Thank you for taking time to read this letter. My name is Dan Creed. I am a student with the University of Sunderland studying Education. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting with the working title: Study Programmes: the policy practice gap. The intention is to explore how Study Programmes are being delivered at the college and what people's experiences of Study Programmes are. The study involves completing basic demographic information and two focus groups throughout the academic year.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is completely anonymous; therefore, it does not require you to provide your name or any other identifying information. Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project and information will not be shared with line managers. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by password protection and data encrypted.

If you would like to participate in the study please return the Informed Consent slip below. Your participation in the research will be of great importance to me to better understand how to support Study Programmes in our college.

Thank you for your time and participation.

It is important to state that you do not have to take part in this study and you may withdraw at any time. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please email me at dcreed@crawley.ac.uk. You do not need to provide a reason. Alternatively, please come and see me.

Yours faithfully,

Daniel Creed

Study Programmes: the policy practice gap.

Participation Consent

I hereby give permission

Name ……

Date……..…

To participate in a doctoral research study that I am conducting with the working title: Study Programmes: the policy practice gap

Appendix 3: Learning Walk form

Learning Walk

Date: _____ Area: _____

How does your area look and feel when you walk around?

Inspiring	
Engaging	
Purposeful	
Well planned	
Clear expectations	
Up-to-date	

Actions Required

What are the students doing? What is the quality of education? Are students motivated and challenged?

Active	X
Inspired	
Self-motivated	X
Supported	X
Challenged	

Actions Required

Student Feedback	Staff Feedback

(Please use questions overleaf to record feedback)

Question and Answer Toolkit

Students

Tell me about the topic you are studying at college at the moment and how it links with what you have learned already (last week and with the course overall)?

Tell me what grades you are aiming for and how you are going to make that happen, by what you do in and out of the learning area?

Tell me something you have seen, read or done to learn more about your subject out of the learning area?

What are your ambitions for the future and how will your time at College help you achieve them?

Staff

How do you meet the needs of all learners?

What are the knowledge and skills that you want your learners to acquire?

How do you plan/sequence/deliver and what are your reasons for doing this in this way?

How do you ensure that learners remember what they have been taught?

How do you introduce new topics to your learners?

Can you explain how you assess learning and provide feedback? What are your reasons for this?

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