University of Glasgow

An exploration of business students' experiences of reflection in learning.

Brenda Helen Hughes

B.A. (Hons), PGCE, M.Sc., F.HEA

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctorate of Education

School of Education, College of Social Sciences

University of Glasgow

October 2018

Abstract

This research explores how some undergraduate students' experience reflection in their learning. The study is located within the interpretivist tradition and the research is based on two semi-structured interviews with eight undergraduate business students at two different stages in their programmes.

This study indicates that both traditional and contemporary theories of reflection can contribute to an understanding of how undergraduate business students experience reflection. For example, I found that all of these students experience reflection in ways in which the self is the object of performative development and this mirrors some of the contemporary theoretical constructions of reflection. Interestingly, whilst acknowledging the wide variety of benefits associated with reflection in learning, the participants in this study provide detailed accounts of tensions and issues that remain including performance, group work and locating reflection alongside disciplinary knowledge. In terms of reflection on employment, these undergraduates indicate that third party 'spillover effects' are a broad dimension of their reflections indicating how attuned these business students are to the needs of employers. The undergraduate students in this study accept and operationalise notions of responsibilisation, self-governance and self-discipline. I also found that, for final year students in this study, reflection is central to the process of forming pre-professional identity.

This is a small-scale study and I make no claims to generalisability or representativeness. However, this dissertation not only adds to what is known about how students' experience reflection, but also provides some evidence that might usefully be considered by curriculum designers, educators and staff developers. Primarily, I suggest that reflection should be repositioned within the higher education business curriculum. Specifically, I propose a new paradigm for business education in which reflection within the curriculum is oriented to more critical questioning of disciplinary traditions and assumptions and offers greater opportunities to critically reflect on social relations and global injustice. Secondly, I suggest, having undertaken this study, that curriculum design should

accommodate greater discussion and support for undergraduates struggling with reflection on performance, group-work or within disciplinary conventions.

Table of Contents

List of Diagrams

Acknowledgments

My primary thanks goes to the eight undergraduate students who readily shared stories and accounts of their experiences of reflective learning, often balancing this with the needs of work, university and family.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Mary Wingrave with Professor Nicki Hedge whose expertise and support were invaluable, challenging my thinking and writing yet supporting my journey. I would also like to thank Dr Alison MacKenzie for supervision and assistance at the start of this dissertation. Thanks are due to my fellow EdD cohort, who were my companions on the journey, giving me space to voice ideas and providing a much needed source of relief and humour. The journey would have been lonely and sad without you.

Finally, I would like to thank my own family. Firstly, thanks go to my mother and sister whose support for the project has been constant. Both encouraged me to 'go for it'. I also thank my two grandsons, Harrison and Ross who kept me laughing and smiling through the darker days. I hope this study is inspirational to you both. Most importantly, I wish to thank my long-suffering and much loved husband Ian, who readily shared me with this study for several years. Thank you Ian, for anchoring me and encouraging me when I needed both types of support.

Certificate of Originality

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Brenda Helen Hughes

Signature: _____

List of Acronyms Used

CMI Chartered Management Institute

CPD Continuous Professional Development

EdD Doctorate in Education

FHEA Fellow of Higher Education Academy

FHEQ Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, which specifies minimum volumes of learning for UK degree awarding bodies.

HE Higher Education

ICE Institute of Civil Engineers

L10 The fourth and final year of undergraduate study in the Scottish higher education sector

L11 Equivalent to Masters level study in the post graduate Scottish higher education sector

L7 The first year of undergraduate study in Scottish higher education sector

PDP Personal Development Planning

PPI Pre Professional Identity

QAA Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

RCN Royal College of Nursing

SCQF Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework, which specifies minimum credit volumes and levels for qualifications awarded by Scottish degree awarding bodies.

SMART Relates to setting objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely.

SWOT Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Often undertaken by individuals or organisations in order to identify and evaluate factors affecting development.

CHAPTER ONE – Introduction and Rationale

1.1 Introduction

This initial Chapter establishes the aims and objectives of the study in order to clearly explain and locate the field being researched. Having established the research aims, the structure of the dissertation is then defined in order to explain the content of each Chapter and the connection between Chapters. Next, I turn to the rationale motivating the enquiry, both in terms of the growing importance of reflection in the higher education (hereafter HE) sector, and in terms of my professional experience. This Chapter then concludes with an introduction to the concept of reflective thinking with respect to its role in undergraduate learning. As a first step, I set out the aims and objectives of the study below.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of reflection as experienced by some undergraduate business students as they progress through their four-year programme of study at a University in the West of Scotland. It would seem that the concept of reflective learning is problematic for some. For example, Finlayson (2015) and Rose (2016) each argue that definitions of reflection are complex, multi-faceted and open to interpretations for different purposes. Rose further asserts that it remains unknown whether or not students share meanings, practices and how reflection influences their learning:

> Findings suggest that a lack of clarity in the research about what reflection means contributes to challenges for both instructors and learners in understanding what is or should be expected of students when it comes to reflection (Rose 2016:786).

Given the ambiguity surrounding student understandings of reflection, this small-scale study aimed to explore understandings, processes and applications of reflection from the students' perspective in order to help deepen the understanding of the relationship between reflection, meaning and student learning in the business education context. According to Moon (2004), Knipfer et al. (2013) and Rose (2016), reflection is widely regarded as central to the

learning process and is key to continuous professional development in many professions. Although the concept of reflection is no longer a new one, MacKay and Tymon (2013) suggest it is less well studied within disciplines such as economics and business and these authors cite the relative paucity of relevant literature focussed on those disciplines. This illustrates the relevance of researching the concept within the undergraduate business education context. Consequently, the first objective of this research was to enrich my understanding of both theory and student experience of reflection in order that I could tease out complexities and by doing so, could be in a position to share my understanding with the wider community of practice in business education.

Further, there are changes in the professional landscape of business practice, which necessitate that practitioners are reflective thinkers (Cunliffe 2004, Savery 2006, MacKay and Tymon 2016). Specifically, increased complexity and risk associated with globalisation, economic and political uncertainty and technological change all require that business practitioners demonstrate capacity and commitment in responding effectively to situations of flux and volatility (Shotter 2006, Weick and Sutcliffe 2006, Davies 2012, MacKay and Tymon 2016). Nansubuga et al. detail further, arguing that:

> This ability [reflection] is practically essential especially for the managerial jobs that normally face complex problems, which cannot be addressed with a single formula solution as suggested by the accredited competences (Nansubuga et al. 2015:507).

The above quote implies that reflection is core to business and management education as it engages business practitioners in 'continuous assessment and identification of underlying assumptions of one's past behaviour to determine action that led to success in a complex work situation' (Nansubuga and Munene 2013b:161). The potential educational benefits of reflection are used to support the embedding of reflective techniques and activities throughout many business and management programmes. As Cathro et al. (2017:4) assert 'the value of reflective writing as a development tool for business students is …well established'. Consequently, the second objective of undertaking the research is to identify how business students might be better supported pedagogically to engage in reflection to transform their professional and personal development.

Additional support for the use of reflection in the HE sector has emerged from employability discourse. Wall and Jarvis (2017) argue that graduates cannot be trained for specified roles in an ever-changing world, as the future global employment landscape cannot be determined. Consequently, there is a need to encourage students to think about skills such as sense-making, adaption and using experience to create new learning and this has become one of the roles of reflection in business education. In response to graduate employability discourses, business schools have become sensitive to creating opportunities for the development of reflective capacity within curriculum design for both undergraduates and postgraduates such that, according to MacKay and Tymon:

> Reflective practice is seen as an important aspect of business education in expanding the ability to challenge assumptions (MacKay and Tymon 2016:333).

Challenging assumptions and traditional practices may be an important component in avoiding mistakes in business practices. Multiple corporate scandals in recent decades continue to negatively influence the public's trust in business (Tomasic and Akinbami 2011, De Bondt 2013). One dimension of the response of HE providers has been to charge business schools with the responsibility for promoting increased levels of ethical and critical thinking within programme curricula (Warren et al. 2011, De Lourdes Dieck-Assad 2013, Cameron and O'Leary 2015, Dion 2015). As the above discussion indicates, reflection is well embedded in business education as a central learning concept, a cornerstone of ethical practice and as an essential component of business practice in a volatile global environment. The significance of the concept within my professional context further underpins the relevance of this study.

This research unifies theory and student practice of reflection by mapping the reported experiences of some students in a particular HE institution against a plethora of diverse theoretical constructions of reflection. By comparing and contrasting theory and practice, I hoped to develop a multidimensional, refracted view of business students' experiences of reflection in order to explore competing visions of the notion, revealing confirmations and ambiguities. Despite being a small-scale study with no generalisability claims, it is intended that my research may result in a richer understanding of business students'

reflections that will be based on both theoretical concepts and student constructs of experience. This will enable the students and me to develop a 'language' for business student reflective practice in which the students have the opportunity to voice the sense they make of reflection as a concept and process. At the outset of this project, my understanding of student reflection was named in a limited sense and this provided the impetus to research how students think of and use the concept of reflection. The study sought to address my initial weak understanding by developing examples and stories of student practice. This is similar to the call made by Roessger for reflective practice to be subject to rigorous scrutiny:

> Researchers need to clarify and confirm reflective practices consistent impact on learning outcomes in instrumental learning contexts, as well as the degree to which reflective practice activities accomplish what they are intended to accomplish (Roessger 2015:84).

It is the above call that I attend to in this research. Specifically, I want the words and images business educators use to think about student reflective practice to be more grounded in student-being and -acting and the student stories of reflection contained in this dissertation may be a useful contribution to help other educators understand the associated aspects of student learning.

According to Brookfield (1995), reflection can be instrumental in avoiding assumptions by considering alternatives to produce change and this can be a useful process by which students can understand practice in relation to theory. In the HE sector, how reflective learning is defined and developed as a concept has important implications for the way in which educators and students embed the notion in practice and I present my examination of theoretical literature on reflection in the next two Chapters. Given ambiguities associated with the notion of reflection (Mackay and Tymon 2013, Roessger 2013, Rose 2016, Wareing 2017), to rely on one type of theoretical approach or narrative, would fail to give the analysis the breadth and depth it deserves. Therefore, this study analysed the concept from several distinct angles including theoretical and empirical approaches. Having established the aims of this study in terms of exploring the student experience, I explain the content of and relationships between Chapters next.

1.3 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is structured into six linked Chapters of differing intensity and focus. The opening Chapter here sets out: the rationale motivating the enquiry; explains the research focus; its aims; the structure of the study, and considers the business education context. Matters of professional confusion are highlighted as a rationale for the research. The topic of reflection is located within both narrow and broad conceptions in Chapters Two and Three. I argue that narrow conceptions of reflection tie the concept closely to discourses of continuous professional development and consequently marginalise important alternative theoretical contributions that also develop existing understandings of the concept. For me, broader views of reflection include its links to learning, experience, perspective transformation and critical thinking. Both types of theoretical developments are the subject of Chapters Two and Three which analyse the conception of reflection from a variety of approaches, including learning, professional development, transformation and critical perspectives. The fourth Chapter establishes the research methodology, including the frame of reference that guided the research and justifications for the approaches used in each phase of the research including the methods used for data collection and analysis. As this research is based on some students' experiences, it sits firmly within an interpretivist paradigm (Stahl 2007) and this particular research approach is detailed in Chapter Four. In that Chapter, ethical issues and limitations of the research are also addressed, not just in terms of compliance but also in terms of goodness and authenticity (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2007). Using Braun and Clarke's (2013) thematic approach to data analysis, the fifth Chapter presents the results and findings of the study with eight business students. The sixth Chapter concludes by synthesising and critically discussing the key findings of the dissertation, drawing out implications for curriculum design and operation and further developments of reflective practice in terms of learning and teaching strategies. This final Chapter culminates in a redefinition of reflection and the proposal of a new pedagogic framework for the revised implementations of reflective learning in the business curriculum. It is in this Chapter that I identify and discuss the contributions to knowledge this study makes. Recommendations for future studies are proposed and discussed and the

limitations of the research are acknowledged. Prior to introducing the concept of reflection, I will establish the rationale for the study.

1.4 The rationale for the study

In terms of motivation for this study, I initially turned to the increasing significance of the concept of reflection within the HE sector. As highlighted earlier in this Chapter, reflection has been developing as an important concept in business and other disciplines over the last two decades and can now be found in many HE curricula (Jordi 2011, Lucas and Tan 2013, Ryan 2013a,2013b, Leigh 2016, Wong 2016). Specifically, Jordi (2011) and MacKay and Tymon (2013) suggest that reflection has become embedded in assessment approaches to the extent that Cathro et al. (2017:1) assert 'business educators often utilise reflective learning, in which students critically reflect on their skill development' (2017:1). These authors claim there has been a movement away from the traditional model of disciplinary training to approaches involving reflection in undergraduate education. The move which Cathro et al. (2017) highlight has important implications for the design of HE business curricula and the position of reflection within it, because the purpose and role of reflection in the undergraduate business curriculum has now been identified as a complementary basis for the development of professional knowledge and competence. As both Yorke and Knight (2006) and Harvard (2014) highlight, reflection has become an important aspect of the learning process for students and this makes the concept a pertinent one to examine in order to develop and detail a professional understanding of students' experiences of learning.

Worryingly, Rose (2016) and Wareing (2017) argue that as an area of curriculum innovation in business education, reflective practice in the undergraduate curriculum is currently understudied. This is concerning given the current expectation of professional bodies that, at the point of imminent transfer to employment, students are expected to demonstrate the reflective abilities that are necessary requirements for their learning and continuing professional development (Chartered Management Institute (CMI) 2014, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) 2015, Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) 2016, Royal College of Nursing (RCN) 2017, Solicitors Regulation Authority 2017).

Recent evidence presented by Irani highlights the changing professional landscape that manifests itself in new performative expectations of business graduates and warns that:

> It's all about potential, the ability to be elastic, to do more, change things. Employers are more interested in …an ability to keep on learning, to have shown they can problem solve, open to learning and are resilient (Irani 2017:online).

The above quote suggests that employers of business graduates are increasingly focused on the ability to learn reflectively as a graduate attribute. This suggestion is further supported by the CMI claim that:

> High-performing leaders … understand the importance of self-reflection … and deliver excellent results time after time (CMI, 2014:30)

The quote above from the CMI underscores the increasing expectation of reflection as a graduate attribute. However, this assumption may be problematic if business students' understandings of the concept and the reflective process are weakly understood by educators, professional bodies and curriculum designers. Indeed, there is a plethora of researchers calling for the re-examination of reflection in HE curricula (Jordi 2011, Wear et al. 2012, Inamdar and Roldan 2013, QAA 2015, Rose 2016, Wareing 2017). Consequently, this research is a response to these calls for further research in order that I can contribute to the existing discussion of ways in which the concept contributes to student experiences of learning and in order to enhance professional understanding. As stated above, the importance of reflection in Higher Education (HE) and across disciplinary fields is widely recognised and reflection is often included in university graduate attributes, professional standards and programme objectives (Ryan 2013a, 2013b, Ryan and Ryan 2013, Barton and Ryan 2014, QAA 2015,). Both Findlay et al. (2010) and Rantatalo and Karp (2016) argue that the value of reflection is widely accepted in educational circles as a means of improving students' lifelong learning and professional practice in HE. The incorporation of reflective journals in particular, as learning and assessment tools into programmes of study, arises from the recognition of the possible positive roles that reflection may play in fostering self–reflection, critical thinking, creative writing abilities and in the demonstrable development of professional values or skills (Lew and Schmidt 2011, Rantatalo and Karp 2016).

Journal writing in particular is believed to enable students to critically review processes of their own learning and behaviours and to understand their ability to transform their own learning strategies (Cowan 2013, Woronchak and Comeau 2016). The benefits of reflection and reflexivity for business students are further argued forcefully by Cunliffe:

> If we accept that management education is not just about helping managers become more effective organizational citizens but also about helping them become critical thinkers and moral practitioners, then critical reflexivity is of particular relevance (Cunliffe 2016:748).

Despite the often-cited benefits, a number of critical issues arise from the widespread adoption of reflection in HE, including those of confusion regarding terminology and a lack of clarity in the definition of reflection (Rogers, 2001). According to Rodgers (2002:844), reflection is a 'complex, rigorous, intellectual and emotional enterprise that takes time to do well'. Despite the ambiguity regarding meaning, Ryan and Ryan (2013) suggest that reflection is commonly embedded into assessment requirements in HE disciplines often without necessary scaffolding or clear expectations for students or indeed staff. The tensions and issues students can experience because of widespread use of reflection in HE curricula are highlighted more deeply by both cohorts of students in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

Since the publication of Donald Schön's (1983) seminal work *The Reflective Practitioner,* an overwhelming quantity of literature about reflection has emerged from a variety of professional and HE disciplines. According to Moon (2004) and the QAA (2015), reflection is widely regarded as central to the learning process and is key to continuous professional development for many professions. As noted by Ryan and Ryan (2013) and Barton and Ryan (2014), notions about reflection are common in professional courses across disciplines. Further, Turner and Simon (2013), Daniels (2016) and Hordern (2016) indicate that, in terms of professional education[1], there has been a renewed recognition that courses for the professions need to seriously engage with reflection in relation to professional standards and continuous professional development.

[1] In this dissertation, professional education refers to formal education and training for the practice of a profession.

This has resulted in professional practice and professional knowledge becoming central to programme curricula (Schön 1983, Turner and Simon 2013, Daniels 2016, Hordern 2016). Consequently, discussions of professional problems frequently take place within HE and modules and courses utilising reflection are often designed and delivered to allow and to encourage learners to grapple with synergies and gaps between theoretical knowledge and practice (Schön 1983, 1987, McCarthy 2011). An important implication of the moves detailed above is that professional learning has become increasingly defined by competing and ambiguous notions of reflective learning, critical reflection and reflective practice (Ryan 2013, BPP 2013, Stenberg et al. 2016). Specifically, it is the ambiguous nature of reflection in HE that is the first premise upon which this dissertation is based.

1.4.1 A situation of professional confusion

The second reason for the study stems from a situation of professional confusion. From a more personal perspective, there have been many times in professional practice when I have come across or used terminology that is ill defined and open to interpretation. In these situations, I have wondered how students make sense of such concepts and terms. Working in the HE sector in Scotland, I became increasingly aware of the notion of reflective practice and its growing popularity within disciplinary professional development discourse. One such circumstance was the introduction of Personal Development Planning (hereafter PDP) in the university in which I work. PDP was introduced in my own workplace as policy across all departments and disciplines, arguably without the time or space for exploration of what the terms meant and how students might make sense of such a concept. Disciplinary knowledge and understanding of economics was the focus of my undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Therefore, I felt unprepared when reflection was embedded in undergraduate business learning and it was problematic at times to teach both disciplinary knowledge and reflective learning with only disciplinary knowledge to guide me. The adoption of PDP as an institutional policy meant that the terms 'reflection', 'reflective thinking', ‘critical reflection’ and ‘reflective practice’ were used pervasively in PDP literature as well as institutional guidelines and policy but it seemed to me that there was a lack of clarity about what such terms meant and

how they could be made useful for undergraduate business students. Initial engagement with the concept of reflection and that of the reflective practitioner was wholly positive. Institutional policy documentation presented the concept of reflection in learning in a favourable light, highlighting the assumed benefits to the learner in terms of increasing autonomy, empowerment and independence. My initial thoughts about the concept were therefore agreeable and supportive. After all, I did not want to be responsible for engaging students in unreflective business practice. However, my teaching at this time involved the teaching and assessment of PDP with undergraduate students and I became aware that the concept of reflection was problematic and complex from both the educator and students' points of view. As an educator, I grappled with problems of teaching reflection especially in terms of making it meaningful to undergraduate students in terms of connection with their experiences within and across modules. Students appeared confused about the purpose of reflection, questioning the role of the concept in the undergraduate curriculum. During modules in which reflection was embedded, students would regularly question what they were required to reflect on and would question the value of reflection on their learning experiences. Their confusion would also be expressed in module evaluation questionnaires, where they would note discomfort and anxiety employing the concept. Some students also struggled with the content of their reflections as a component of personal development planning. This experience unsettled me as an educator. Doubts around my professional ability to understand student engagement with the topic began to worry me and questions began to emerge around the usefulness of the notion as a learning concept. It seemed a topic that was ripe for further investigation.

My interest in the topic was stirred again when I returned to the notion of critical reflection during the first taught component of the Doctorate in Education (EdD). During the course 'Critical Reflection in Professional Learning and Practice', I had the time and space to explore the concept from different perspectives, to examine the rich literature surrounding the concept and even to use the concept in a L11 module assessment. My experience of reading and thinking about the concept made me wonder again how students made sense of learning involving reflection and specifically how the concept related to their professional development as undergraduate learners. Just when I thought I

understood aspects of the concept of reflection, another dimension would emerge and I would question how reflection was specifically related to learning, experience, assessment and professional development. I could appreciate how engagement with the concept had challenged me to examine past professional experience and insights but I wondered what use the concept would have for undergraduate business students with no repertoire of professional practice. In particular, I began to wonder what form the relationship between reflection and learning took for undergraduates in the business school. At the appropriate time, I chose this topic to explore with students and so began this journey. The first step began with exploring aspects of reflection in terms of learning and this is detailed in the next section.

In terms of my own personal intellectual journey, my engagement with the complex notion of reflection transformed my professional understanding over the course of this research. Before commencing my research journey, my main source of information about reflection was provided by institutional PDP literature which framed reflection as a measure of performance and self-evaluation and encouraged students to accept that the concept was something the student would automatically engage with during their professional career. Preliminary superficial understandings of reflection began to be broadened and deepened as I engaged with the rich literature analysed in Chapters Two and Three. In particular, the empowering connections between reflection and intellectual freedom (Dewey, 1916), perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1981) and social justice (Brookfield, 1995) led me to question the version of reflection detailed in PDP policy documentation and embedded in the undergraduate business curriculum. Initial assumptions of the wholly beneficial aspects of the concept for learning began to be challenged by the theoretical possibilities offered by the concepts of performativity and responsibilisation, which I discuss in Chapter Three. Initially I viewed reflection as a concept with a wholly favourable impact on learning, but engagement with theoretical literature began to persuade me of the political nature of the concept and my professional understanding of reflection was transformed so that I now appreciate the power of the concept to shape the very fabric of student experience of learning. Specifically, I now appreciate how narrow theoretical conceptions of reflection, together with the instrumental design and operationalisation of the business

curriculum, embed reflection in an impoverished way and in doing so reduce the capacity of learners to engage with global challenges arising from twenty first century life.

1.5 Reflection and student learning

1.5.1 The role of reflection within learning

I began my research journey by examining the role of reflection as a concept in itself, which according to Dewey (1933) linked experience with meaning and action. The term 'reflective thinking' was originally coined by Dewey (1933:3-9) to describe what he proposed as a 'better' way of thinking. Dewey chronicled a number of descriptions of reflection, including the idea that:

> Reflective thought is active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends (ibid:118).

The dominant idea in this definition is that of a thoughtful and reasoned process that leads to new evidence based on insights about an original idea. Deweyan interpretations of reflection define it as an essential part of learning through engagement with the world. Dewey, in *Experience and Education,* linked thought with experience, writing that:

> To reflect is to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings, which are the capital stock of intelligent dealing with further experiences. It is the heart of intellectual organisation and of the disciplined mind (Dewey 1938:86).

In the above text, Dewey established reflection as a tool to create meaning. However, the connection between experience and meaning is sometimes tenuous and according to Dewey (1933), one of the functions of reflection is to promote connections between what is experienced and the meaning that is derived from those experiences. In this way, Dewey (1933) positioned reflection as the way of promoting or reinforcing this connection. However, like other concepts, the meaning and theories around reflection have changed over time and analysis of literature concerning reflection in Chapters Two and Three, reveals that the concept has developed in interesting ways.

For some of the theorists identified in Chapter Two, (Dewey 1916, 1933, 1938, Mezirow 1981,1991 and Brookfield 1995, 2000, 2002), reflection remains connected to learning in a broad sense whereas for others (Schön 1983, 1987, Foucault 1982, 1991, 2002 and Usher and Edwards 1994), as I demonstrate in Chapter Three, the concept is more closely associated with responsibilisation, performativity and demonstrations of professional competence. It might even be argued that the concept has been seized by accreditation bodies and professional bodies (for example: General Teaching Council for Scotland 2017, Royal College of Nursing 2017, Chartered Institute of Management 2016 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development 2016, Engineering Council, 2017) and consequently has been narrowly defined as reflection for the purpose of meeting external professional standards. Yet I maintain that reflection has a wider purpose that includes experience, citizenship, and learning and it is, I argue, not just about continuous professional development (CPD). Through this dissertation, I will return to the roots of the concept to relocate it in the broader context of learning in a lifelong context. By doing this, I aim to create and share a clearer understanding of some students' experiences of reflection in HE so that, ultimately, educators and students might benefit. As previously noted earlier in this Chapter, Rose (2016) argues that it is often assumed in the HE sector there is accepted wisdom that reflection is widely understood by staff and students as a clear and unambiguous term, which has many benefits to student learning. My study seeks to problematise this assumption in order to disrupt and challenge ideas about students' practice of reflection in the HE setting. Step one of my journey began with an examination of reflective thinking and it is to this initial step that I now turn.

1.6 Reflective thinking

How reflection is to be understood and categorised is far from straightforward and various definitions and interpretations have followed Dewey's original work (see 3.4 for a typology of reflection). I chart some of the main theoretical contributions in Chapter Two of this dissertation in order to contextualise themes discussed by the students in this research in relation to experience, thinking and reflection. Differentiating literature on reflection in Chapters Two and Three allows me to draw a line between the original meaning of reflection

in the work of Dewey (1916,1933,1938), Mezirow (1981,1991) and Brookfield (1995, 2000) and the more critical conceptions of reflection arising from the work of Schön (1983, 1987), Usher and Edwards (1994) and Foucault (2002, 2007). Further, this also allows me to consider how reflection has been utilised and developed to become a tool for self-assessment in the professional community within which the undergraduate students will eventually work. My journey of investigating the research now turns to an examination of past and current theories of reflection by considering relevant bodies of literature, which view reflection on experience and events in order to make sense of the world.

CHAPTER TWO – Traditional Literature on Reflection

2.1 Introduction

Theoretical literature on reflection is vast which is why in this dissertation, I examine theoretical contributions over two Chapters. Specifically, theoretical literature on reflection is reviewed in Chapters Two and Three. In terms of focus, this current Chapter considers traditional literature on reflection in order to locate reflection within the wider purpose of learning for meaning making, intellectual freedom, transformation and social justice. In comparison, Chapter Three will examine the concept within a professional context. I do not intend in these Chapters to provide a full account of reflection or the history of reflection in educational literature. No attempt has been made to include an exhaustive review of all reflective approaches; instead, I chose those I found in literature that contributed to a broad and ultimately integrated understanding of the concept.

Secondly, rather than focus on all available models of reflection I have chosen to probe fundamental understandings, by which I mean I wish to consider the theoretical understandings of reflection, rather than a broad range of models of reflection. There are indeed a number of frameworks and models for students to use in order to encourage reflection but this dissertation addresses significant theoretical foundations as opposed to a comparison of models of reflection. Theories are a large part of the educational world, framing the way issues are seen, shaping perceptions of importance and thus slanting debate towards given pedagogical experiences rather than others. By analysing dominant theories of reflection, I hope to chart the ways these theories have guided differing conceptions of reflection in HE, which in turn have influenced student experiences of reflection. I turn to modern literature in order to highlight the moves and trends in the theoretical underpinning of reflection as a concept. To do this, I chart the development of the concept of reflection in this Chapter, from principal sources (Dewey 1933, 1938) that centre on reflection as a meaning making concept, including the roots of reflection in critical thinking, examining the role of reflection in challenging and transforming perspective (Mezirow 1978, 1981, 1991) and ultimately identifying its role in securing social justice (Brookfield 1995, 2000).

In contrast, Chapter Three considers reflection in a professional context teasing out more recent theoretical developments in relation to professionalisation (Schön 1983, 1987), accreditation and self-management (Foucault 2002, 2007, Usher and Edwards 1994). The movement of focus between Chapters Two and Three mirrors how the purpose and emphasis of reflection has shifted over time from the concept's arguably original purpose of social justice (Mezirow 1991, Brookfield 1995) and meaning making (Dewey 1933) to the more contemporary focus on the contexts of professional learning and development (Schön 1983).

Here I begin by seeking to clarify the ambiguity regarding the concept of reflection as it applies to teaching and learning in HE. I then follow this with an analysis and synthesis of several selected theoretical approaches in order to explore the relations between reflection, learning, critical reflection, transformation and educational democracy.

2.2 Process of literature Review

This subsection describes and analyses how and why I undertook the initial stage of the literature review. According to Torraco:

> The integrative literature review is a distinctive form of research that generates new knowledge about the topic reviewed. It reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated (Torraco 2015:404).

Conducting the literature review was a particular form of research where the main purpose was to establish a conceptual context for the study, exploring approaches taken by others and charting theoretical developments in the field. Undertaking the review informed me about influential theorists and their specific contributions to the field. Consequently, the review process has been a way of clarifying my view of the research topic by considering bodies of literature in order to gain important theoretical insights. This has been useful in locating my study in an appropriate and fruitful academic context. This is the motivation recognised by Randolph when arguing that:

> Without establishing the state of previous research, it is impossible to establish how the new research advances the previous research (Randolph 2009:2).

This stage of the research was fashioned as an iterative process involving examination of theory, approaches and insights in order to construct an analytical matrix of authors and themes (Appendix 1). The process was messy and lengthy but it allowed me to develop an in-depth understanding of established theoretical writings and to synthesise the relationships between them and my study. The themes mapped from the literature review were especially useful and were frequently revisited when I began to analyse the interview data. However, the first step of the review process began by identifying appropriate literature and it is this stage I detail below.

2.2.1 Identifying Literature

Following Torraco (2015), I mapped the terrain in order to identify key theorists to help me refine and explore my research problem. I used textbooks and online database searches to identify popular authors cited in academic papers concerning the research topic. This process was problematic, involving decisions around the formulation and definition of my research issue and the identification of central writers. References provided in journal papers were examined to determine relevant authors for follow up. This process led me to identify Aristotle (1999), Dewey (1916, 1933, 1938), Schön (1983, 1987), Mezirow (1981, 1991) and Brookfield (1995, 2000, 2010) for initial exploration. I read and reread these authors to gain an appreciation of their work around reflection and reflective thought. As I read, I took notes and incorporated these into an analytical matrix (Appendix 1) in order to compare and contrast theoretical contributions for emerging themes. This allowed me to develop some sense of the writers I wished to explore further in order to clarify how reflection was used in learning and professional education. Exploring the various literatures highlighted the need for decisions in terms of selection and it was during this stage that I decided to exclude Aristotle's (1999) literature. Despite interest, and not dismissing the work of Aristotle, I made the decision to focus on literature that is more modern.

The iterative nature of thinking, reading journal papers, writing and researching meant I tried to develop an 'ability to select literature and position it in a way that advances an argument' (Holbrook et al. 2007:345). My thinking about the purpose of the literature review changed my view of it; from seeing it as a way to accumulate knowledge, to a tool to allow me to build on previous research, to identify research gaps to currently seeing it as a continuous process of using other people's thinking to clarify my own thinking. As Hammersley explains:

> [a literature review] can involve judging the validity of the endings and conclusions of particular studies, and thinking about how these relate to one another, and how their interrelations can be used to illuminate the field under investigation (Hammersley 2001:549).

Initially, I used the different perspectives to navigate the terrain comprising meanings and definitions of reflection. It is to this I now turn, revealing issues and problems associated with different definitions.

2.3 Assumed meanings and definitions

On the face of it, reflection might appear to some to be a straightforward and uncontentious notion (Black and Plowright 2010). According to Moon (2004), Black and Plowright (2010) and Rose (2016), the term is used frequently in literature across disciplines, mostly without qualification as a metaphor for something that it is assumed everyone understands. Additionally, terms including reflection (Dewey 1933), reflective learning, reflection (Schön 1983), critical reflection (Mezirow 1981, 1991) and critically reflective practice (Brookfield 1995) are all used interchangeably within HE discourse without regard for distinction. Such distinctions are examined in greater detail at the end of Chapter Three, in a typology of the different formulations and variations around reflection. In contrast to assumed understandings, Rogers (2001:37) warns 'the impression that the concept is well understood in educational circles is hardly the case when more closely examined'. Despite the popularity of the concept, there has been a growing concern that reflection is not a unified concept (Hebert 2015) and that the concept requires rigorous scrutiny (Black and Plowright 2010, Roessger 2013). This concern resonates with my own professional experience as an educator. If true more generally, this ambiguity

has implications for how readily students and educators share their understanding of the concept and raises the issue of potential gaps in understanding, which may make applying reflection complex in a learning context.

The concepts used to describe and explain the phenomena of reflection are varied, making distinctions difficult and consequently, identifying, interpreting and negotiating literature around reflection is problematic. As Rose argues:

> Reflection is fast becoming one of … "plastic words": terms that have become stripped, through overuse, of their precise original meanings; that are used indiscriminately … in conjunction with other plastic words …that function to inhibit deep thought (Rose 2013:15).

In addition to becoming overused, it may also be that there are elements of confusion about the concept across and within disciplines and this may imply a further difficulty in determining intentional meaning when such terms are used. Black and Plowright (2010), Finlayson (2015) and Rose (2016) each draw attention to the resulting assumptions around common meanings, which may be a source of confusion, or a barrier to learning for students. It certainly appears to me that there are many definitions of reflection in the literature (see table 3.4). Indeed, Finlayson laments that the definition of reflection is sufficiently loose such that:

> Anything goes … There are no 'hard and fast' rules about what constitutes a reflective practice model nor is there a singular unified definition of reflection (2015:729).

It seems that the various theoretical and individual views of reflection appear to add to the confusion over its meanings, thus the concept appears to be clouded in diverse notions within the HE landscape. Moon (2004:7-9) agrees that some of the complications regarding discussions of reflection arise 'from problems of vocabulary' and this issue of vocabulary leads Rose to argue that:

> Research on reflection in online learning is often unclear and unreflective, replete with unthinking leaps and unproblematized assumptions…(Rose 2016:787).

The lack of clarity surrounding the concept is compounded by the findings of Kember et al. (2008:369) who, in a similar vein to Moon (2004), suggest that some of the confusion stems from the 'the disparities in terminology, frames of reference, applications and usage'. As an example of differences in terminology, Rogers (2001:40) identified in his concept analysis of reflection in HE, that 'no fewer than fifteen different terms were used to describe much the same thing'. In *Making Reflection Public*, Rocco observes that 'reflective practice by virtue of becoming "usual practice" is at risk of becoming taken-for-granted, superficial, bureaucratised and sanitised' (2010:308). Given these problems of definitional clarity, it might be argued that reflection is in danger of becoming a catch-all title for an ill-defined process. The concerns voiced by these researchers around meaning and usage become more important when combined with the expectation that undergraduate students should grapple with the complex notion of reflection and I would argue that the ambiguity discussed above calls for educators to be clearer about reflection, students' understanding of the concept and use of the concept. I return to this call in Chapter Six of the dissertation.

Despite the reported lack of clarity, there is a general agreement in the definitions from various writers that reflection is a cognitive process of thinking about and learning from experience through a series of steps that result in knowledge (Dewey 1933, Schön 1983, 1987, Mezirow 1981, 1991, Brookfield 1995, Moon 2004, Helyer 2015). Overall, these views promote the idea of a coherent, rationalised and valid educational proposition for meaningfully enhancing the students' learning experiences that are both persuasive and difficult to contest. However, contextually more grounded evidence is needed to clarify reflection using the language of student understanding rather than the uncontested theoretical assumptions from the literature that presently exists. Van Woerkom has previously argued that:

> We need to ground our conceptualizations of critical reflection in reality. Critical reflection is a mysterious concept to students… they do not recognize the abstract and neat theories on critical reflection in their own everyday ways of learning and thinking (Van Woerkom 2010:351).

It is the 'mystery' surrounding the concept I wish to explore with the students participating in the study, in order to develop a more 'grounded' and 'realistic' knowledge.

In contrast to the problems of ambiguity above, Jay and Johnson (2002:84) argue that the plethora of terms relating to reflection can be seen as advantageous, if it demonstrates that reflection is an 'evolving concept'. This approach offers flexibility in the ways in which reflection may be interpreted and, as Tummons (2007:73) affirms, it indicates that reflection is a 'lively' area of critical debate. However, the variety of different theoretical models and practical applications has led some researchers to question the use of the concept (Griffiths and Tann 1992, Morrison 1995, Ixer 1999, Rodgers 2002, Collin et al. 2013, Rose 2016) and I discuss these criticisms of the concept in section 2.4.3 of this Chapter. Despite ambiguity, reflection, as a process, seems to lie somewhere around the notion of learning and thinking. Individuals reflect in order to learn something, or individuals learn as a result of reflecting – so 'reflection' as a term emphasises the intention to learn as a result of reflection. This latter definition connects the understanding of reflection to the student experience of learning and to learner motivation and purpose. This thread forms the core of this study, as it is these interrelationships I explore. Lack of consensus regarding the meaning of reflection might be a worthwhile and necessary underpinning for an inclusive set of concepts, practices and approaches and may well be one of the very aspects of reflection that make it widely appealing and applicable. Nevertheless, Van Woerkom (2008:10) suggests it does also make it extraordinarily difficult to research and further develop the concept in more systematic ways without 'empirical in-depth studies that provide insight into the nature of higher-level learning'. In order to explore and amplify the diverse major theoretical perspectives, I move to analyse the contributions of Dewey (1933), Mezirow (1981, 1991) and Brookfield (1995) that are the modern origins of reflection in learning.

2.4 Origins: Reflection for intellectual freedom

As noted above, the origins of much work on reflective thinking are rooted in the works of the American educational philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952) who

emphasised the importance of assessing and justifying one's beliefs in the form of critical thinking developed through reflecting on experience. As highlighted in Chapter One, Dewey distinguished reflective thinking from routine thought in a variety of ways including the definition that:

> Reflective thought is active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends (Dewey 1933:118).

Further clarification of Dewey's definition has been provided by Hebert who stated that:

> This type of thinking is focused, careful and methodological; … is carried out with the aim of understanding an issue at hand; careful, as it strives to offer good justification for one's belief on the basis of evidence or proof, and distinctively sequential and methodological, in that the thinking consists of phases of reflective thinking akin to the scientific method (Hebert 2015:362).

Herbert clearly specified the features of reflection that Dewey included in his concept and noted the importance of reflection as a sequential process. Further, he reiterated Dewey's assertion that reflection is not simply thinking about what has happened, rather it distinguished reflective thinking from other types of thought by requiring that which is 'troublesome' to be considered through logical steps in the thinking about the puzzling and curious situations that demand attention (Dewey, 1933). In this way, Dewey (1933:4-9) distinguished reflective thinking from 'automatic, unregulated' thinking. In his major text: *How We Think*, first published in 1910 and then revisited in 1933, Dewey captured the essence of reflective thinking when he described not only what reflection might be, but why it was initiated. For Dewey (1933:12), 'perplexity, confusion or doubt' arising from experience was considered the trigger for reflection. Dewey explained how experience unfolded in a variety of situations so that situations were comprised of experiences. In *How We Think*, Dewey stated:

> We do not approach any problem with a wholly naıve or virgin mind; we approach it…, with a certain store of previously evolved meanings, or at least of experiences from which meanings may be educed (Dewey, 1910: 106).

In the above quote, Dewey specified the continuous relationship between prior understanding, experience and the creation of new understanding by examining how reflective thought gained its importance by moving into the circle of 'previous evolved meanings' which, in turn, engendered new meanings. He viewed reflection as a process that was used to ascertain meaning from individual experiences so that the resulting meaning could be incorporated into the beliefs of the individual. Introducing the concept of an 'indeterminate situation' or 'forked road situation', Dewey (1933:11) argued that such a situation represented a puzzle or a problem that needed to be resolved and that reflection could transform such a situation into one where that puzzlement was removed and where the solution re-established the essential unity of the situation. Providing an example of a man noting a change in temperature, Dewey outlined how the logical sequence of reflective thought might corroborate or negate the belief that a change of weather was imminent. More generally, Dewey detailed the purpose of reflection was such that the 'demand for the solution of a perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection' (Dewey 1916:11). Dewey's insight pointed first, to the importance of disruption, doubt and uncertainty acting as a stimulus to the process of reflection and second, to the significance of reflection for learners to be able to develop new knowledge and meaning.

Dewey viewed experiences as dialectical in nature: intellectual investigation would allow truth to be uncovered and learning to take place. That is to say, an experience could be examined by the learner and that through reflective thought, meaning and clarity of the experience could be achieved thus the nature of the experience could be viewed through a new lens resulting in new insights and learning. To clarify, an experience would leave a type of mark upon a person, interpreted by the stock of previous experiences and transforming how the person saw the way forward in his or her continuing activity. As the person was changed, the process changed the nature of the next experience. As Jarvis (2009:29) clarified, 'once the person is changed, it is self-evident that the next social situation into which the individual enters is changed'. Specifying further Dewey (1916:44) distinguished between mere habit and educative experience.

> Mere activity does not constitute experience … Experience as trying involves change, but change is meaningless transition unless it is consciously connected with the return wave of consequences which flow from it. When an activity is continued into the undergoing of consequences, when the change made by action is reflected back into a change made in us, the mere flux is loaded with significance. We learn something (Dewey 1916:146)

Here Dewey specified how experience could be transformed into learning. An experience, then, becomes meaningful — it "sheds light" — when reflection connects things, people, events, and provides greater control over future experience. Thus in terms of business education, this would mean that students would require experiences that would allow them as individuals with unique interests to reflect both on the consequences of engaging with the world and on how the world had responded to them. That is, students require experience which will allow them to engage in reflective thought so that they can make new meaning from their lived experiences. This also provides a model of reflection that they can then apply in future work situations.

In his writings, Dewey claimed that judgement developed from critical examination of, or reflection on, the connections between past, present and future. 'To reflect is to look back over what has been done so as to extract the next meanings' (Dewey 1938:87). Indeed, it was learning for an unknown future that Dewey claimed was the most important purpose of learning:

> We always live at the time we live, and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future. This is the only preparation that in the long run amounts to anything (Dewey 1938:49).

The above quote demonstrates that for Dewey learning was forward facing. This insight reminds me of the importance of preparing students for future lived experience. In my professional context, as a business educator, it is crucial that I prepare students to lead and manage presently unknowable future business practice. Viewing reflection as a precursor to intellectual freedom, Dewey wrote that:

> When discipline is conceived in intellectual terms…it is identified with freedom in its true sense. For freedom of mind means mental power capable of independent exercise, emancipated from the leading strings of others, not mere unhindered external operation (Dewey 1916:64).

For Dewey freedom was not viewed an end in itself. Rather, freedom was about remaking impulses, desires, ourselves and according to his writings, it was dangerous to escape forms of authoritarian external control, if individuals were still enslaved to their own internal controls. That is to say Dewey advocated the use of reflective thought to counteract 'dogma', 'habitual belief' (Dewey 1916:149) and 'the limiting influence of sense, appetite and tradition' (1916:156). For me, this positions reflection at the heart of students developing independent critical thought. This is fundamental if future business practitioners are to escape the constraints of business models that are outmoded or ineffective for stakeholders such as clients, employees and consumers. Most importantly, Dewey stipulated that intellectual freedom could only be obtained via reflective thought:

> Thought affords the sole method of escape from purely impulsive or purely routine action. A being without capacity for thought is moved only by instincts and appetites, as these are called forth by outward conditions and by the inner state of the organism (Dewey 1916:14).

The above excerpt from Dewey's writings positions reflection as the method of mental discipline required to obtain genuine intellectual freedom:

> If a man's actions are not guided by thoughtful conclusions, then they are guided by inconsiderate impulse, unbalanced appetite, caprice, or the unreflective external activity is to foster enslavement, for it leaves the person at the mercy of appetite, sense, and circumstance (Dewey 1910:67).

Here Dewey warned against reactive impulsive thinking which resulted in a funnelled view of conditions. As a business educator, the above quote points to the inhibiting power of narrow, habitual disciplinary perspectives and the hope offered by reflection in terms of alternative interpretations of business practice. Dewey later clarified his view of reflective thinking as a particular form of problem solving having five phases or aspects that spans from a pre-reflective to an 'active experimentation' phase (1910:107) or testing out the original idea

based on evidence and his approach is presented in more detail in the next section.

2.4.1 Dewey's Staged Approach

For Dewey (1933:204-5) reflective thinking was 'the kind of thinking that consists of turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration'. By noting the differences between reflective thinking and other forms of thinking, Dewey exposed five key distinguishing facets of reflective thinking and highlighted the capacity to learn from experience.

According to Dewey, the first facet of reflective thinking began with some pre-reflective interruption or break in understanding to which individuals might respond with reflective inquiry. Dewey elaborated on this pre-reflective discomfort by arguing that

> The difficulty may be felt with sufficient definiteness as to set the mind at once speculating upon its probable solution, or an undefined uneasiness and shock may come first, leading only later to definite attempt to find out what is the matter (1916:72).

In the context of business education, dilemmas or disruptions felt by students could represent ideal conditions for both educators and students to begin to question taken for granted assumptions, to explore alternative suggestions and to learn to think in new ways. Thus pre-reflective experience transforms into an issue or problem to be resolved and the importance of 'states of perplexity, hesitation and doubt' would act as the trigger for reflective thought (Dewey, 1933:9). Such difficulties perplexed and challenged the mind so as to make belief uncertain and led Dewey to argue that 'thinking is not a case of spontaneous combustion; it does not occur just on 'general principles'. There is something specific which occasions and evokes it' (Dewey 1916:12). In linking experience, interruption and thinking in this way, Dewey rooted elements of reflection in phenomena disturbing the equilibria of experience and so argued that distress and discomfort were constitutive of learning. He then proposed that the next step would involve the learner drawing on data at hand and past experience to 'analysis' and 'synthesis' in order to substantiate and clarify facts

(Dewey 1933:126). Such moments I argue, are exemplary opportunities for both business educators and students to share positons and understandings, including those constituting dilemma or disorientation in learning, in order to establish new ways of relating to and learning from each other.

Secondly, as the next step and as a result of unexpected, disconcerted or disturbing feelings, a learner would make 'necessary observations' to clarify or set the problem at hand (1916:74). This process would define the difficulty. The step would draw the trouble or problem into the light, making visible its character. This meant a learner would work with prior knowledge drawn from previous experience to promptly select significant evidence from fertile suggestions as to the nature of the trouble, reflect and either select or reject until a final conclusion was made regarding grounds for belief. This stage could involve, a student drawing on prior experience and past interactions to consider suggestions; working 'from what is present' to something absent' (Dewey 1910:75). I believe this stage needs to be an important element in business education if students are to learn to frame complex, interconnected and global business issues in order to consider alternative perspectives.

From these conclusions suggestion would be created. A hypothesis would be generated when a suggestion was considered in terms of how it might be used and reasoning occurred when the linking of information, ideas and previous experiences were used to help expand on the suggestions, hypotheses and tests such that 'it develops the idea into a form in which it is more apposite to the problem' (Dewey, 1933:112). Arguing tacit knowledge was important in developing judgement regarding evidence to select and to discard. Dewey stressed the importance of the learner 'enduring suspense to undergo the trouble of searching' (1933:15-16). If meaning were held in suspense, he argued, pending examination and enquiry, there would be true judgement. The disruptive experience would generate suggestions which Dewey categorised as 'speculative, adventurous' (1916:75). Such suggestions would be given consideration as ideas, pending further evidence.

In the fourth phase, the learner would use reasoning to search for additional evidence in the form of new data to support or refute the solution. Reasoning

was used in order to look into an idea more thoroughly, in terms of 'developing the bearings…or…, the implications of any idea… ' (Dewey 1916:75). Finally, imaginative experimentation would corroborate an idea and form a concluding belief. Theoretical testing would result in either confirmation or negation of the hypothesis and could occur in either an overt or a covert form. Importantly, as Dewey noted, failure was not failure alone, rather it was seen as instructive as it 'either brings to light a new problem or helps to define and clarify the problem … Nothing shows the trained thinker better than the use [made of] errors and mistakes' (Dewey, 1933:112–114). To prove belief in the Deweyan sense meant testing it:

> What is important is that every inference shall be a tested inference; or …that we shall discriminate between beliefs that rest upon tested evidence and those that do not, and shall be accordingly on our guard as to the kind and degree of assent yielded (Dewey 1933:27).

Observation started and ended the process of reflection and despite the use of case study material to simulate real world complexities, this phase of Dewey's approach could remain problematic for undergraduate students coming to the process of reflection with limited professional experience of backward and forward movements in learning and experiencing difficulties in testing due to lack of professional practice opportunities (Conklin 2012, Wright and Gilmore 2012). Not until an inference had been tried could its true worth be ascertained and Dewey argued for every inference to be tested, in order to discriminate between beliefs that rested upon tested evidence, and those that did not. However, Dewey continued to specify that it did not have to be a direct account but inference that could be related to belief:

> Reflection thus implies that something is believed in (or disbelieved in) not on its own direct account, but through something else which stands as witness, evidence, proof, voucher, warrant; that is as ground of belief (Dewey 1910:8).

I argue here, that it is both the consideration of any settled meaning and understanding and consequences of that understanding that is significant if

students are to create and establish alternative modes of professional practice. For example, a student's understanding of economic theory has consequences in terms of their approach to business growth strategies and not until the full implications of the theory of costs is understood can the student claim to have a settled understanding of a business growth problem. However any understanding of the business growth strategy itself opens up new tensions and dilemmas and so the process continues. In his writings, Dewey indicated that reflective thought involved looking for grounds for belief and a way of establishing knowledge. Dewey did not believe that there was a strict order to these phases. Indeed, he described these phases as overlapping. He further specified how knowledge of the approach was insufficient for reflection, as learners additionally required certain attitudes of mind.

2.4.2 Attitudes for reflection

Dewey's (1933) argument about reflection illustrated that it is not sufficient to simply know, but there also needed to be an accompanying desire to apply. According to Dewey, the kind of thinking he defined as reflection required effort and training. Indeed, he proposed this was the role of education. Arguing for the role of certain attitudes, Dewey stipulated:

> …there must be the desire, the will, to employ them. …disposition alone will not suffice. There must be understanding of the forms and techniques that are the channels through which these attitudes operate to best advantage (Dewey 1933:30).

Dewey described how the desire to know and apply was based on attitudes that predisposed the learner to adopt thinking that was both curious and critical in implementing reflection in practice and that even predisposition was not enough – techniques needed to be applied. In *How We Think*, Dewey identified three attitudes necessary to engaging in reflective inquiry: being *open-minded*, open to new ideas and free from prejudice, partisanship, and such other habits which closed the mind and made it unwilling to consider new problems and entertain new ideas; *being whole-hearted*, fully committed to a task, throwing oneself into it with a whole heart; and Dewey's third attitude was being *responsible*, taking responsibility for what one has learned through investigation, especially

for the actions that should follow from what was learned. Dewey asserted that the:

> Intellectually irresponsible do not ask for the meaning of what they learn, in the sense of what difference it makes to the rest of their beliefs and to their actions (Dewey 1933:28–34).

In this text, Dewey identified these attitudes as the ones favourable to the use of the best methods of inquiry and testing. He stressed that experience and information about experience were central to reflection but 'readiness to consider' (1933:34) was dependent on attitudes. For me, the challenges faced by undergraduate students with limited professional experience seem relevant here. Due to a lack of professional experience, students need information about professional issues and in particular, the impact of their professional actions on others. In terms of Dewey's theory, they might need guidance on how to try out possible suggestions. Consequently, in order to call for ways of thinking that progress beyond traditional practice, I propose that educators need to use wide ranging and globally contextualised scenarios and examples as part and parcel of reflection in the business curriculum. Based on a repertoire of diverse examples, students may not require lived experiences if educators stimulate reflection through immersion in professional scenarios sensitive to the global impact of decision-making and action.

Dewey repeated his commitment to these attitudes in *Democracy and Education (*1938*).* However, here he added a fourth attitude, *directness* – believing that one's actions can make a difference. Significantly, he also enlarged the scope of these attitudes to identify them as the *methods of learning inquiry*. I argue that his writings provide a persuasive argument that reflection, as a method of critical examination and inquiry can be taught, learned and modified over time. However, this must be done in a structured and considered manner rather than assumed that students will know how to do this. Indeed, for Dewey, both immaturity and inquiry were perceived as attitudes conducive to learning whereas maturity signalled the diminution of power. I believe, this insight highlights the opportunity for educators to use reflection as a tool with

undergraduate students with limited maturity in order to think deeply about issues of social justice. Dewey celebrated limited experience of professional practice if it resulted in fresher, untainted, enquiry based attitudes. Consequently, learner curiosity can be viewed as vitally important in learning. Intellectual curiosity can be transformed into learning problems and dilemmas arising from observations. Even now, it seems that the current ideologies of reflection have changed little since Dewey's fundamental contributions. Instead, many of Dewey's pragmatic ideas have since become the basis of the works of other theorists emphasising the process of learning and the legacy of his works can be identified in accounts of experiential learning. However, despite its influence, Dewey's approach has been subject to criticism and I now consider prominent objections.

2.4.3 Criticisms of Dewey's theory of reflective thinking

According to Lyons (2010), Dewey's theory has been unjustly criticized for its overreliance on rationalism and its adherence to technical rationality. Further she warned that reflection as it was being used in professional settings and in educational programs for professional development, did not always lead to optimal learning or the intended professional development. Her writings suggested that reflection seems to be used by educational practitioners as merely a technical tool generating quick, but often ineffective, solutions to problems that have been only superficially defined. Alternatively Lyons called for educators and students to use reflection to

> Identify the political, social, and cultural dimensions of professional life and learning that need to be considered as critical contexts of professional education, with their own imperatives and ethical dimensions (Lyons, 2010: 577)

I argue here that her solution develops and enhances the use of the concept in preparing students for professional business practice.

According to Schön (1983) technical rationality maintained that all knowledge can be attained through systematic study and all propositions can be assessed for their truth-value either by way of empirical observation or through a rigid

application of rational analysis. As practical knowledge, the know-how acquired through experience does not fit neatly into either analytic or synthetic schemas – it is relegated to the role of providing instrumental knowledge; in other words, practical knowledge can merely guide people in their actions, and aid them in selecting the best means to achieve a desired end. While Dewey's rationalist formula is credited with taking practical activity into account, Herbert (2015) has criticised his method on two main grounds: firstly, it existed in an ends-based approach initiated by a problem that must be solved; secondly, it privileged rational knowledge over practical knowledge. With regard to the first criticism, reflective thinking was conducted because, in Dewey's words:

> It enables us to direct our activities with foresight and to plan according to ends-in view, or purposes of which we are aware. It enables us to act in deliberate and intentional fashion to attain future objects or to come into command of what is now distant and lacking (Dewey 1933:17).

Elsewhere, Dewey (1910:11) noted that 'the demand for the solution of a perplexity is the steady and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection'. The nature of the problem fixes the end of thought, and the end controls the process of thinking (12). Herbert argued two things are important to note here. First, reflection had an intended conclusive end: namely progress in establishing justification for a belief. While 'verification does not always follow' and the result of reflective inquiry may be 'failure to confirm' a hypothesis, failure in Dewey's theory was useful in that it was instructive, indicative of 'what further observations should be made' (1933:114) in a new reflective process. Herbert (2015) further argued that In Dewey's approach, doubt should be alleviated and conclusions should be conclusively drawn. Herbert (2015) then suggested that no room remained for uncertainty. However, more recently D'Agnese (2017:74) has refuted such criticism by arguing that Dewey 'discloses an inescapable uncertainty at the core of human thinking'.

Second, reflection began with 'a shock or an interruption needing to be accounted for, identified, or placed' (Dewey, 1933:12). Hence, the object of reflection would necessarily be something about which the reflective inquirer was not certain. Therefore, Herbert claimed important omissions from this

theory of reflection were objects or situations that neither beget doubt nor called for a moment of pause amidst the routine, such as those that adhere to societal norms and values. Therefore, Herbert argued that these norms and values themselves might never be questioned in Dewey's theory if they did not appear as 'shocks' or 'interruptions needing to be accounted for' (Dewey, 1933: 12) and it could be argued that this narrowed the use of reflection and would limit the usefulness of the concept to undergraduate students who could find it difficult to identify the problems of practice until the problem was a bigger issue. One of the implications of these criticisms would be, if the student did not recognise that there was a problem, and further did not recognise the nature of the professional problem, then reflection would not take place. However, the role played by uncertainty and the role of imagination in Dewey's writings (1910, 1929, 1933) that have persuaded me of the progressive elements of uncertainty and reflection. 'While the content of knowledge is what has happened, what is taken as finished and hence settled and sure, the reference of knowledge is future or prospective'. Imagination, in Deweyan understanding, gives a 'thinking being' the possibility '[to] act on the basis of the absent and the future' (Dewey, 1910:14). This is why 'the exercise of thought . . . involves a jump, a leap, a going beyond what is surely known to something else accepted on its warrant' (Dewey, 1910:26). Without the uncertainty entailed in jumping and leaping, the learner would not have the opportunity to create new meanings. Thus I argue, if students are introduced to techniques of reflection, they may be able to move beyond the constraints of the known to the realms of the unknown or the new.

Turning now to the second criticism raised above, Herbert (2015) argued Dewey's emphasis on the importance of a rational foundation for beliefs is indicative of a blurring between knowledge and experience. This manifests itself in two ways. Firstly, as Herbert has previously claimed, the only information worthy of the title knowledge in Dewey's theory is that which can be accounted for according to a rigid justificatory approach. Other forms of knowledge, such as that attained through experience or intuitive knowledge must then be moulded to fit this rationalist frame, or discounted entirely. Only that which can come to be known through the intellect was worthy of being classified as knowledge for Dewey. Second, from a temporal perspective, Dewey's reflective

thought was divorced from action. The reflective inquirer experienced a moment of doubt in a particular situation, and stepped back from it in order to engage in the reflective process. Only once the reflective process had been completed could the reflective inquirer return to the situation, perplexity having been replaced with knowledge. In response to the criticisms focusing on the rationalist dimensions of Dewey's writings, Saito (2018: 601) highlighted the aesthetic aspects of Dewey's 1927 work *The Public and its Problems* where he emphasized 'the significance of the aesthetic perception for democracy as a way of life'. Further, in contrast to Herbert's position, D'Agnese (2017) pointed to Dewey's statement in *Experience and Nature*, that it is 'literally impossible to exclude that context of non-cognitive but experienced subject-matter which gives what is known its import' (Dewey, 1929:23) to highlight the importance of non-cognitive knowledge.

As demonstrated in the sections above, a number of vigorous and persuasive attacks have been launched upon the assumptions on which social, scientific theories and foundational knowledge have been based, as well as on the limitations of instrumental approaches to solving problems. However despite criticism, Dewey's writings on reflection still offer exceptionally rich insights into how reflection can be used to enhance the capabilities of learners and to the connection between reflection and social justice. I return to the role of knowledge in Chapter Three, commencing with a discussion of Schön in terms of how technical rationality 'ignores or violates actual experience' (Schön, 1966: 76, Schön, 1969: 45). For the moment, I move to consider Mezirow's (1981, 1991, 2000, 2009) theory of transformative learning which viewed reflection as a fundamental concept at the heart of such learning.

2.5 Reflection for Transformative Learning

Using Dewey's approach as a foundation, Mezirow (1981, 1991, 2000, and 2009) developed the concept of reflection in relation to transformative learning by introducing critical reflection as a precursor to transformative learning. Incorporating foundations laid by Habermas (1987), Mezirow defined transformative learning as that which could lead to changes in personal understandings and, importantly, behaviour:

> This process makes frames of reference more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change. Frames with these qualities generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action (Mezirow 2006:124).

According to Mezirow (1981, 1991) transformative learning was learning that entailed a qualitatively new structure or capacity within the learner. More recently, Hoggan has described transformative learning as including:

> Processes that result in significant and irreversible changes in the way a person experiences, conceptualizes, and interacts with the world (Hoggan 2016:71).

This expression involved the recognition that learning could be something more than, and different from, the instrumental acquisition of new knowledge and skills, in contrast to what had often been the understanding of formal schooling and education. According to Stuckey et al. (2014:213), there were three dominant conceptions of transformative learning. One was the cognitive/rational perspective (Mezirow 1981, 1991) that emphasized rationality and critical reflection. The second perspective had been called an 'extra rational perspective' (Dirkx 2012, Lawrence 2012); it emphasized the emotive, imaginary, and spiritual facets of learning, those that reached beyond rationality. The third was the social critique perspective (Brookfield, 2012; Freire, 1970) that emphasized ideological critique, unveiling oppression, and social action in the context of transformative learning. Taking these perspectives together, I would argue that these elements of transformative learning are particularly relevant for HE, as HE seeks to allow learners to flourish, to develop and reach potential not merely in terms of professional persona, but in deeper terms of the inner self. Therefore, for me, my own professional context is viewed as encompassing each of the above elements of transformative learning.

According to Mezirow (1981, 1991, 2000, 2009) reflection allowed students to pause and work through discomfort in order to provide an opportunity for their thinking process to transform. More importantly, reflection also created space for paradigms or 'collective frames of reference' to potentially shift, resulting in

a reframing of the individual student's worldview and allowing the student to analyse previous habits of thinking, to avoid misconceptions in the future (Mezirow, 1981:9). According to transformative learning theories, reflection would trigger learning so that the individual became more aware and critical of the assumptions that formed their 'meaning schemes' or 'meaning perspectives.' It is the use of reflection in responding to situations of distortion and dilemma that offered the learner the opportunity to engage with the dilemma; to linger with it, to contemplate it further and examine the cause of the perplexity and so begins the process of learning. In these theories, reflection was understood as an assessment of how or why the learner had perceived, thought, felt, or acted. Triggered by the unexpected or the unfamiliar, reflective interpretation was the start of learning through the process of correcting distortions in our reasoning and attitudes so that meaning schemes could be transformed. Anomalies and dilemmas, in which old ways of knowing could not make sense, became catalysts or "trigger events" that precipitate critical reflection and transformations in meaning schemes (Mezirow, 1991:14). Meaning schemes were defined by Mezirow as 'sets of related and habitual expectations governing if-then, cause-effect and category relationships as well as event sequences' (Mezirow 1991:2). These schemes were frames of reference that define a learner's associations, concepts, values and feelings, allowing them to interpret and make sense from experiences. Malkki (2010) further specified that, meaning perspectives were the frames within which meaning making took place. This included a set or structure of assumptions and expectations a learner developed from ways of interpreting experience. So, understanding in these theories, was based on students grasping the world using assumptions and expectations which had been formed through previous experiences. This notion of previous understanding oriented and limited the student's attention, perceptions, and interpretations of learning situations. Simultaneously, the same understanding enabled the student to maintain their view of the world as well as a sense of stability, community, and identity (Mezirow, 1981, 1991, 2000, 2009). Thus, seen through the lens of Mezirow's writings, reflection could be viewed as a thinking activity triggered by disruption and which was preoccupied with scrutinising meaning making. Specifically, reflection addressed the question of the justification for the very premises on which problems were posed or defined in the first place.

According to Mezirow, learning occurred in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind (Mezirow, 1990:19). In each of these ways, critical reflection played a key role as the means by which a learner transformed their meaning frames. The learner critically reflected on problematic beliefs based on assumptions and repetitive emotional interactions and in doing so transformed the belief by 'generating opinions and interpretations that are more justified' (Mezirow 1991:20). The role of critical reflection in transformative learning theories, was to challenge assumptions and premises that define problems and in doing so, disrupt meaning frames. Mezirow admitted that the disruption could involve 'intensive and difficult emotional struggle as old perspectives become challenged and transformed (Mezirow 1990:23).

In order to clarify the reflective process, Mezirow described three domains of learning; the 'technical' which was that required to do the job, the 'practical' which included an understanding of social norms and interactions and the 'emancipatory', which referred to a critical review of power, and control relationships. In order to achieve learning in all domains, Mezirow (1991) identified seven levels of critical thinking, ranging from general awareness, to changes in underlying perspectives and assumptions. The first four stages related to a general awareness or consciousness, and the last three stages described thinking at the higher level of critical consciousness. Mezirow claimed that these understandings developed as each new experience was assimilated and transformed by past experience during a process of internalisation. Some assumptions could be acquired through cultural assimilations; others would be intentionally learned to become what Brookfield (1990:177) described as 'heuristic mechanisms through which we make account for events in our lives'. Mezirow also emphasised the importance of the influence of the emotional context in which learning occurred by suggesting that:

> ... the more intense the emotional context of learning - the more it is reinforced, the more deeply embedded and intractable to change are the habits of expectation that constitute our meaning perspectives (Mezirow 1991:5).

Further, he viewed critical reflection as crucial to the learning process such that he saw the concept as synonymous with a range of higher order mental processes including making inferences, generalisations, analogies, discriminations and evaluations as well as feeling, remembering and problem solving. However, when systematically reflecting on insights and assumptions, it was, Mezirow (1991) claimed, not sufficient to consider how or why one has experienced thought, or felt or acted in various situations. Rather, Mezirow (1991) emphasised the most important considerations were those concerning how to act in new situations based on unfamiliar experience and understanding. In such situations, Mezirow suggested that an individual should critically reflect, as this was the means by which transformative learning commenced.

Interestingly, Dewey contended that experience resulted from both continuity and interaction. 'Continuity' concerned the impact that an experience had on future experiences (1938:27) and was a process of growth. A constructive experience provided 'a desire to go on learning' (1933:48), or a positive continuity. In common with Dewey's (1938) writing, which emphasized this principle of continuity, Mezirow also stated that there was a connection and interaction between one's past, present, and future experiences. Even a significant transformational experience did not act independently of this connection and interaction. The notion of continuity, while not explicit, was manifest in Mezirow's (1991, 2000) conceptualisation of perspective transformation where meaning perspectives were formed by previous experiences in a social context. Mezirow argued such perspectives filtered the way in which an individual would make meaning of their present and future experiences, and in the process, the continuity would be realised as past, present, and future interacted in the continuous flow of experience and interpretation.

Another important feature Mezirow (1991) embedded was the crucial change which took place when the results of discourse and critical reflection were implemented in practice through different ways of acting. Specifying further, Arends (2014) noted that the process of reflection was what allowed students to move beyond overly simplistic or stereotypical notions to alternative perspectives of themselves and others and to move beyond those seemingly self-

evident assumptions governing one's thinking, feeling, and acting that had been unquestioningly internalised through socialisation and education.

Utilising the concepts of critical reflection and transformation, Mezirow (1991) then tied critical reflection to emancipatory learning. According to Murray (2013:19), this provoked sharp debate in transformative learning literature as some authors felt it was based on idealised notions of human reason and had 'little to say on the power relational context in which deliberative political processes are meant to occur'. In response, Mezirow (2000, 2009) repeatedly asserted that challenging domination, fighting for social justice, and deepening democracy were integral to adult education and to the way critical reflection was embedded in perspective transformation.

Drawing on Mezirow's theory, King and Kitchener (1994) attempted to be more precise in the way in which reflection might be conceptualised and this was outlined in their approach of sequential development in making reflective judgements. They defined a reflective thinker as one who was '… aware a problematic situation exists and is able to bring critical judgement to bear on the problem' (1994:160). They asserted that although there may be uncertainty about how a problem could be solved, reflective thinkers were able to offer judgement that brought some kind of closure to the issue, through strategies including evaluation of the evidence, consideration of expert opinion, consideration of the adequacy of the arguments and the implications of the proposed solution. King and Kitchener (1994) offered their reflective judgement approach as a means of identifying changes in Mezirow's (1981, 1991) meaning perspectives. Specifically, King and Kitchener (1994) detailed how epistemic assumptions affect the way individuals understood and subsequently solved problems. The approach, based on data gained from a longitudinal study of adult learners, identified forms of assumptions held and beliefs about the sources and certainty of knowledge evident at specific stages. Their extension of Mezirow's theory involved students moving from the assumption that all problems are solvable and looking to authority for the right answer, through various stages of uncertainty, to evaluation of varying perspectives, arguments or points of view, with some ultimately judged to be more useful than others. In the final stage, (stage 7 of King and Kitchener's approach) knowledge was viewed as uncertain

and subject to interpretation but epistemologically justifiable claims could be made concerning the better or best solutions to problems. Interestingly, King and Kitchener (1994) claimed that this latter kind of reasoning was rare in graduate students and was mostly found in highly educated adults over the age of 30 and their concept of age-related epistemic position also seems relevant to this particular research study as the study concerns the epistemic perspectives of undergraduates and offers the opportunity to explore the relevance of their concept today. In summary, King and Kitchener (1994) concluded that an individual's cognitive level was easy to identify and consistent, arguing that they found parallels across different disciplines such as science and history when students were tested on similar tasks. Their findings suggest maturation has a role to play and would require that undergraduates be presented with opportunities to think about being in practice through a repertoire of professional scenarios. They proposed the implementation of developmental instruction using their reflective approach. Students at the same stage of reflective judgement would approach most ill-structured problems with the same set of epistemic filters but teachers could help students by giving them tasks that disrupted such filters and caused students to reflect on their current meaning perspectives, with the aim of expanding their reasoning skills so that they progressed to the next stage of development.

King and Kitchener's (1994) pragmatic approach was therefore applicable to the development of reflective skills, but the fact that it was hierarchical and sequential also presented some problems in that, although not entirely age-related, there appeared to be an assumption that there was a similar pattern of thinking for most people at significant points in the age continuum. If their staged development of thinking skills is accepted however, then it should be possible to identify students moving from more dogmatic styles, through to more sceptical and reasoned approaches. Moreover, King and Kitchener (1994) claimed that in order to enhance cognitive ability the use of ill-defined problems (such as many of those seen in practice) would help facilitate this. In considering the above approaches, the part cognitive skills play in decision-making and creating judgement appears to be an important area for debate.

Returning now to Dewey's view of reflection as 'troublesome', this was further confirmed by Mezirow's claim that reflection was not an easy or purely rational process. As Mezirow pointed out:

> Our values and sense of self are anchored in our frames of reference. They provide us with a sense of stability, coherence, community and identity. Consequently, they are often emotionally charged and strongly defended (Mezirow 2000:18).

The above instance indicated that, in Mezirow's view, there was an emotional dimension to transformation, which was concerned with reflecting on one's assumptions. Malkki (2010), Dirkx (2012), and Illeris (2014), have each explored the issue more deeply and have asserted the meaning perspective in Mezirow's writings (1981, 1991, 2000), might be seen to be supported and protected by emotions. Firstly, this would be manifested in the way Mezirow emphasized the need to understand and order the meaning of experience:

> A defining condition of being human is our urgent need to understand and order the meaning of our experience, to integrate it with what we know to avoid the threat of chaos (Mezirow 2000:3).

Here Mezirow (2000) demonstrated that the threat of chaos could be seen as the reverse side of meaning making: an individual could feel anxious and experience a threat of chaos, when understanding and successful meaning making within the frame of reference was not possible, and vice versa. Secondly, emotional support for the meaning perspective was implied by the above instance, which explicated that these frames of reference were emotionally charged and often strongly defended (Mezirow 2000:18). Thirdly, Mezirow mentioned that becoming aware of assumptions and emotional responses in transformation was often an intensely threatening experience:

> Transformative learning …is often an intensely threatening experience in which we have to become aware of both the assumptions undergirding our ideas and our emotional responses to the need for change (Mezirow 2000:6–7).

Taken together I argue that the quotes above indicate that reflection might be a painful and emotional process. As such, it can then be seen that true reflection is more complex and involved than compliance with standards or benchmarks, which are easier and measurable by comparison. Specifically, Mezirow (2000) implied that learners aimed to avoid anxiety and feeling threatened by chaos, by aiming to maintain coherence within the learner's own meaning perspective. Mezirow's insights regarding the possible relationship between reflection, comfort and meaning perspective is, for me, a useful lens which I am able to use to make sense of the students' experience of reflection.

Interestingly, there was an emphasis in transformative learning theories on the use of critical reflection to assess the foundations of knowledge and understanding and how such learning was shaped. Mezirow (2006) argued that at its heart, transformative learning would involve explicit recognition of critical reflection. Following this approach, critical reflection was cast as an element of:

> a kind of "deep" learning that challenges existing, taken-for-granted assumptions, notions, and meanings of what learning is about (Dirkx et al. 2006:126).

This relationship between reflection and the unmasking of hegemonic assumptions and practices was explored further in Brookfield's writings on critical reflection (1995, 2000, and 2010).

2.6 Reflection for social justice

According to Brookfield (2010), the development of critical reflection was an important factor contributing to the ways adults learn to deal with and overcome emotional and psychological barriers to learning. Critical reflection was identified as reflection that:

> Involves us in recognizing and researching the assumptions that undergird our thoughts and actions within relationships, at work, in community involvements, in vocational pursuits, and as citizens (Brookfield 2010:216).

Indeed, Brookfield stressed how students can use critical reflection to judge the fit between learned rules and assumptions and the realities of adult life. In the ambiguity of events, adults search for meaning trying out new identities or roles

to confirm or test issues and involves 'the process by which people learn to recognize how uncritically accepted and unjust dominant ideologies are embedded in everyday situations and practices' (2010:220). Sketching out new perspectives and playing with new paths of meaning was therefore an important phase in gaining distance from one's previous ways of thinking, and enabling later readiness to step on to these paths.

Significantly, Brookfield considered that reflection by definition was not critical. He claimed that it was possible to engage with reflection and leave unquestioned the criteria of the power dynamics that frame the field of practice. In contrast to reflection, critical reflection maintained a continuous focus on:

> …analysing commonly held ideas and practices for the extent to which they perpetuate …and prevent people from realizing a sense of common connectedness (Brookfield 2010:220).

Brookfield's writings (1995, 2000, 2010) changed the conception of reflection such that critical reflection became defined by its ability to create learning that involved people detecting how the presence of capitalist dynamics (commodification, alienation, a preoccupation with exchange value) permeated all dimensions of their lives. Preskill and Brookfield (2009) described how the process of reflective practice involved judging the strengths and weaknesses of actions to extend democracy and encourage collaboration. Through critical reflection, one would examine the status quo alongside personal assumptions, encouraging an individual to take risks that may create new opportunities and ideas. In this way, critical reflection was embedded within the notion of social justice rather than inward notions of reflection that focus on the individual. Critical reflection provided a tool to recognize the importance of growth for all individuals and to examine their own practice in relation to community and society. It was learning that opened individuals up to alternative social formations. This was achieved through critical reflection's grounding in critical theories proposed by Gramsci (1971), Marcuse (1964) and Foucault (1972, 1982). Basing his conception of critical reflection on these traditions, Brookfield positioned reflection as a tool with two main purposes:

> The first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame, and distort so many adult educational processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that seem to make our lives easier but that actually end up working against our own best long term interests (Brookfield 2010:221).

The specification above binds critical reflection to an examination of power, values and 'common sense wisdom' (Ibid: 222). Primarily then, critical reflection is concerned with questioning powerful assumptions. Individuals and communities transmit taken for granted beliefs and values reflecting the view of the majority of those in power so pervasively that they become unquestioned 'common sense'. Thus, the fundamental task of critical reflection is to identify, question and if necessary, change these assumptions. As Brookfield argued the characteristic of critical reflection lay in the emphasis on dormant or hegemonic assumptions that unwittingly influence thinking. This kind of reflection Brookfield defined thus:

> For reflection to be considered critical, it must have as its explicit focus uncovering, and challenging, the power dynamics that frame practice and uncovering and challenging hegemonic assumptions (those assumptions we embrace as being in our best interests when in fact they are working against us) (Brookfield 2010:216).

Based on this insight, for reflection to be critical it would need to critique the assumptions upon which unchallenged beliefs are founded. The position demonstrated by Brookfield was that reflection by itself was not enough unless it was somehow tied to challenging power and this particular position is also supported by Fook who further added that critical reflection firstly involved:

> A critical understanding of power as being created through an interaction of the social and personal realms …and second, attention to the fundamental bases of thinking, and therefore changing these that can be experienced as transformative (Fook 2012:218).

The associations discussed above between critical reflection and power mean that for Brookfield (1995, 2000) and Fook (2012), reflection was a process of making evaluations, often moral ones, and not simply exercising judgements of a practical, technical nature. The perspectives of others were recognised by

Brookfield (1995) when he suggested that alternative perspectives should be used as crucial 'lenses' in scrutinising assumptions. According to Brookfield (1995), the most notable distinction between reflection and critical reflection was in terms of the attention paid to questioning relations between power and knowledge and the way a person's knowledge was influenced by their position in hierarchies of power and privilege. Both terms were emphasised by Brookfield (1995) who suggested that in investigating power relationships, professionals could acknowledge the considerable power they held in practice. In terms of theorists previously discussed in this Chapter, I view Brookfield's (1995) interpretation of critical reflection as similar to Mezirow's (1991, 2000) writings with respect to the ways in which systematic critical reflection can probe sociocultural distortions in thinking. Like Dewey (1916,1938), Brookfield (2010) also asserted the role of critical reflection in creating opportunities for intellectual freedom. He argued critical reflection played a part in releasing learners from falsely created needs to help them make their own free choices regarding how they wished to think and live.

Brookfield (1995, 2010) also highlighted the pervasiveness of power in learning experiences and called on critical reflection to be used to develop awareness of the oppressive dimensions of educational practices to ensure inequalities were addressed. He did this to forefront the move to more democratic and cooperative learning experiences. His view of critical reflection relied on an understanding of how knowledge and power were interlinked, how individuals participated in constructing knowledge and, therefore, power, and how individuals acted reflexively in their social worlds as agents both constructing and responding to their environments. Thus, I suggest that Brookfield's positioning of critical reflection provided a further awareness of the operation of the social in personal experience.

Critical reflection was also concerned with emancipation as part of an ideology, a set of beliefs as to how a just society might be created through reasoning which entailed both a historical and contextual perspective. I argue this aspect of critical reflection, as defined by Brookfield (2010) who worked from an emancipatory approach, is a further illustration of the concept of reflection in experiential learning theory discussed by Dewey (1916, 1938). Dewey (1910:149) focused on the way reflection offered freedom from traditional doctrinal

thinking in that 'to question the beliefs is to question their authority…' In a similar vein, Brookfield's (2010) critical reflection involved utilising multiple lenses to analyse power and control and to examine taken for granted beliefs within which the task or problem is situated. However, In Dewey's (1916,1938) experiential learning theory, in which contextual parameters were taken into account, both power and context factors were implied as merely causal contributors. The above discussion has I hope, established a variety of significant characteristics of critical reflection that theorists have drawn on in order to set it apart from reflection for technical improvement. I turn now to ways in which each of these characteristics might be embedded in the process of becoming critically reflective.

2.6.1 Becoming Critically Reflective

The process of becoming critically reflective is complex as 'to some extent, we are all prisoners trapped within the perceptual frameworks that determine how we view our experiences' (Brookfield 1995:28). To avoid a self-confirming cycle of assumptions, Brookfield called for 'lenses' that 'reflect back to us a start and differently highlighted picture of who we are and what we do' (1995:28). Engagement with autobiography, student evaluation, dialogue with peers and theoretical literature are recommended as different lenses that can be used to alert educators to distortions or incomplete aspects of assumptions needing investigation. Although useful to educators, I would argue that such lenses would need to be adapted for use by learners and I intend to explore the nature of the criticality of reflection in the empirical phase of the study.

Critical reflection from Brookfield's standpoint was reflection that enabled learners to understand the way socially dominant assumptions could be socially restrictive and thus enable new, more empowering thinking and action. Critical reflection, as positioned by Brookfield (1995, 2010) thus enabled social change at both individual and collective level. Such reflection needed to include the social aspects of reflection and critical reflection would only occur when the individual was able to understand and challenge the validity of their assumptions. Fook and Askeland (2007) also explained that critical reflection involved reflection through the lens of critical theory. Specifically, this involved

analysis of knowledge, power and reflexivity to understand how assumptions were influenced in the context of social and structural assumptions. Following Brookfield's claim, I would argue that, as both educators and students in HE are acting in a given learning context, it is necessary for both parties to become aware of the hidden power of ideas that may have been unwittingly absorbed by either party because of the social context. Once engaged in this way, Brookfield (2010) argues the process of critical reflection would then enable learners to make choices on their own terms and power. In this sense, if critical reflection is embedded in the undergraduate curriculum, both educators and learners would be free to change the operation of the social assumptions at the level of personal experience.

However, the process of critical reflection is not without risk and Brookfield outlined ways in which learners may experience deep discomfort. In particular, 'road running' was used by Brookfield (2010:229) to describe terrifying moments when learners realised that they were in a state of limbo; assumed perspectives were no longer supportive to their sense of self, yet new more coherent assumptions were not yet in place:

> There comes a moment … there is a feeling of being in limbo, of being suspended above the canyon floor …This is the time when adults crash to the floor of their emotional canyons, when they face the crises of confidence that cause them to abandon their quest for critical insight and to claw their way back to the security of the known (ibid: 229).

This particular state connects to Dewey's idea of 'suspense' (Dewey 1916:152). It was according to Dewey in such moments that we investigated doubt or uncertainty in our thinking. In order to support learners undergoing periods of trauma and discomfort, Brookfield called for further research on student experience of reflection

> …it is important that educators have the chance to gain accurate insight into the emotional and cognitive ebbs and flows of this process so that they can help adult students tolerate periods of confusion and apparent regression more easily (Brookfield 2010:230).

This call is part of the focus of this study.

2.7 Conclusion

The bodies of literature highlighted in this Chapter represent an analysis of the traditional meaning of reflection. Specifically, these writings chart significant developments in the differing views of reflection as a concept and locate reflection in relation to concepts of meaning making, critical thinking, transformation and social justice. Importantly, the insights provided by these writers have been used to make sense of the student accounts described in Chapter Five. In the next Chapter, I will discuss several theoretical perspectives that relate to more recent developments that associate reflection with professional learning, recognition, responsibilisation and professional accreditation. In contrast to this Chapter, the focus of the next Chapter shifts to argue that the educational value of reflection has changed from the promotion of critically challenging assumptions and perspectives to one that casts learners as objects of performativity.

CHAPTER THREE - Reflection in professional learning

3.1 Introduction

In contrast to the previous Chapter, this Chapter shifts focus to consider literature on reflection in current modern professional and educational contexts. In essence, the discussion charts the more recent transformation of the concept within professional learning. The Chapter begins by considering the role of reflection in professional practice using the writings of Donald Schön (1983, 1987) to direct attention to different types of 'reflection in' and 'on action'. The review then progresses by analysing competing views of professionalism in order to critique the role of reflection in creating professional selves. What is particularly interesting is the way in which the practice of reflection has become 'institutionalised, to some degree professionally branded, and sold as a technique for both learners and professionals' (Durand et al. 2015). Analysing views of professionalism and the role of reflection in creating professional selves serves to highlight associated issues of responsibilisation, performativity and self-regulation. Finally, the Chapter turns to consider how reflection has become a common requirement in undergraduate education as a tool for employability, to prepare students to enter a professional context. Once in professional practice, there will be an expectation that business graduates need to meet particular professional standards and the focus on this as the purpose of reflection has I argue, overly influenced the role of reflection in the undergraduate curriculum. Initially, I consider the role of reflection in a professional context.

3.2 Reflection as Professional Artistry

As acknowledged in the previous Chapter, John Dewey was an acknowledged master theorist of reflective thinking and the American educationalist Donald Schön (1983, 1987) drew further widespread attention to Dewey's writings on reflective thinking. In particular, his identification of the role of contexts, especially of the epistemology of institutional contexts that support or disconfirm ways of knowing, has placed practitioner research in the spotlight of contemporary research. Since publication of *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think* (1983), the concept of the reflective practitioner has continued to gain popularity across a number of disciplines, not least because of

its emphasis on reflection within the practice context. Following Schön (1983), reflection has increasingly become a central theme and an accepted orthodoxy for curriculum planners responsible for professional education in many HE disciplines such as teaching, health care and business (Webster 2008, Chartered Management Institute 2016). I begin here by establishing that Schön's work was the starting point of understanding reflection in a professional context and applying reflection relevant to learning experiences associated with professionalism and accreditation.

3.2.1 Professional mess

Schön (1983) started from the premise that most competent practitioners know more than they can say, and exhibit a kind of 'tacit knowing' (Polanyi 1966:4). That is, they exhibit a kind of knowing-in-practice, and they can reveal a capacity to reflect on their knowing in the midst of action. Viewing reflection as 'professional artistry', Schön's work epitomised the characteristics of a theory and practice of learning which was based on re-connecting ideas and experience through reflection. His elaboration of the concept of the 'reflective practitioner' brought to the fore the tacit element involved in learning and in particular, the idea that reflection is not only retrospective, but becomes an element of the experience itself. Schön described this as:

> On-the-spot surfacing, criticizing, restructuring, and testing of intuitive understanding of experienced phenomena; often it takes the form of a reflective conversation with the situation (Schön 1983:241).

According to Lyons (2010), Schön believed that this kind of thinking occurred especially in situations of uncertainty, where there was some puzzle, some uncertainty or conflict – similar to Dewey's concept of the precipitating idea of the puzzle in a situation. Interestingly, Schön embedded reflection within the 'varied topography' of professional practice (1987:3) because in this space there was both a 'high, hard ground where manageable problems lend themselves to a solution through application of research-based theory and technique' and 'swampy lowland' where 'messy confusing problems defy technical solutions' (1987:3). It was these very 'messy, indeterminate zones of practice' (1987:3)

that Schön used to highlight the need for professional artistry in the form of a different 'kind of knowing' (1987:13).

Recognising the rigorous role of 'tacit knowledge' (Polanyi 1966:4) in professional knowledge, Schön introduced 'knowing in action' to refer to the sorts of know-how practitioners reveal in intelligent action (1987:25) throughout their daily practice. This tacit knowing in action that contributed to the professional knowledge base encompassed strategies, understandings and ways of framing a problem. It was when this daily repertoire of knowledge in action was disrupted by 'an unexpected result; an error stubbornly resists correction' or 'something fails to meet our expectations' (1987:26) that reflection occurred in professional experience. Having explained the dilemmas and mess inherent in situations of professional ambiguity, Schön elaborated on the concept of reflection by distinguishing between two types – reflection in action and reflection on action and a more detailed account of reflection in action is given next.

3.2.2 Reflection in action

I propose that Schön's approach (1987) is comparable to Dewey's in that it is the surprise of an unexpected outcome that does not fit categories of knowing in action that leads to reflection. Following Schön, reflection in action has 'a critical function, questioning the assumptional structure of knowing in action' (1987:28). This revisiting of knowledge enabled a practitioner to restructure strategies, understandings or reframe problems and the process led to 'on the spot experiment' (Ibid: 28) which bound reflection to action. This marked out one of the distinctive features of Schön's construction of reflection in action, in that reflection was embedded in the process of action, rather than as an activity undertaken subsequent to the action. He highlighted the smooth integration of reflection in action within professional performance, illuminating the seamless transition of action, surprise, reflection and in doing so he drew attention to how professionals created an artefact 'with its own meaning and coherence' (p31) in the process of reflection. The experience of reflection in action Schön suggested is akin to the creation of a metaphorical 'reflective conversation with the materials of a situation' (p31). It was the transactional aspect of reflection

in action that played such a central role in Schön's explanation of professional competence. By highlighting the transactional element, Schön argued professional practice is akin to 'world making', which is defined thus:

> Through countless acts of attention and inattention, naming, sense making, boundary setting, and control. They (professional practitioners) make and maintain the worlds matched to their professional knowledge and expertise (Goodman 1978:36).

In the process of 'world making' professionals acquire a repertoire of examples, images, understandings and actions to inform and guide their performance (Ibid: 66). Knowing, learning, and theorizing all take place while the practitioner is creating and it is the process of reflection in action that most resembled Dewey's reflective approach with its own emphasis on uncertainty, risk, experimentation and affirmation. This is explored more deeply below.

3.2.3 Reflection on Action

In his first book on reflection (Schön, 1983), Schön did not explicitly mention the distinction between reflection on and in action, and in his second book (Schön, 1987), all he said was this:

> We may reflect on action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome… Alternatively, we may reflect in the midst of action without interrupting it. In an action-present…our thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it. I shall say, in cases like this, that we reflect-in-action (Schön 1987:26).

The basis of the distinction between reflection in action and reflection on action has sometimes been interpreted in terms of the temporal relationship between the reflective process and the professional situation in which the practitioner must act. However, Clara (2015) asserted that this simple interpretation did not seem to be completely satisfactory, because reflection on action could be carried out, according to Schön in the midst of the professional situation in which the practitioner was acting. Indeed, Clara (2015) suggested that Schön

offered a clue about the distinction when he considered the implications of reflection for action:

> …what distinguishes reflection-in-action from other kinds of reflection is its immediate significance for action. In reflection-in-action, the rethinking of some part of our knowing-in-action leads to on-the-spot experiment and further thinking that affects what we do—in the situation at hand and perhaps also in others we shall see as similar to it (Schön, 1987: 29).

Following Clara (2015), the above quote implied that reflection which led to a clarified situation that entailed a decision or action by the subject, would be reflection in action; whereas reflection leading to a clarified situation that did not entail any decision or action by the subject, would be reflection on action. However, Clara (2015) also counselled against jumping to hasty conclusions regarding the distinctions between Schönian notions of reflection in and on action:

> The third point that must be assumed, to clarify the notion of reflection, is that how reflection works is largely unknown, and therefore it is fully open to research: All that we have right now are tentative descriptions and tentative explanations (Clara 2015:267).

As the quote above suggests, existing knowledge of reflective learning is dense and unknown in some areas and in Chapter One, I noted that the aim of this study is to shed some light on how some undergraduate students work with the concept of reflection in their own learning journeys. An important acknowledgement of Schön's work (1983, 1987) was that his focus is on professional learning and being. Whilst this is significant and relevant to many HE programmes, the work is less easily applied to learning contexts where undergraduate students do not have a substantial repertoire or bank of professional experience to guide them. Although widely accepted, there have been some challenges to Schön's reflective practitioner concepts and these are discussed in the next section.

3.2.4 Criticisms of Schön

Schön's (1983,1987:3) view of reflection-in-action was detailed as to experience professional ambiguity, an ability to think 'on one's feet' or meet the challenge of 'indeterminate zones of practice'--the messy bits, the unexpected, the 'swamp' rather than the 'high ground' and to engage with problem-stating or problem framing, rather than problem-solving. Schön, however, appeared paradoxical in this respect. While the spirit of his work suggested resistance to the technical-rational in professional practice, replacing this with artistry, he nevertheless provided textual illustrative examples where reflection seemed to be treated as a technique. Schön's descriptions were noticeably less detailed than those of Dewey (1916). They lacked detail of what and how to reflect, although the notion of when to reflect was apparent. However, this construct is incomplete as a full explanation of reflective practice, for its concern is too short term, neglecting questioning of the principles or theories that underpin the practice. In 1995, Morrison objected to Schön's reliance on notions of competency as individual and isolationist, rather than positioning reflection as dialogical. As a result of this objection, Morrison (1995) suggested Schönian notions were pragmatically concerned with replacing one set of routines, strategies or practices with another set of routines, strategies or practices.

Schön's approach has also been criticised for taking inadequate stock of differentials of power and how gender, race and class might mediate these. Specifically, critics have suggested that the lens that Schön used to examine professional practice produces social, political and cultural myopia in reflective practitioners and educators. As an example of this, Aronowitz (2008) has raised the issue that educators embedding reflection in professional learning rarely ask questions about how education and reflection can prepare learners to be informed citizens, nurture a civic imagination or teach them to be self-reflective about public issues and the world in which they live. In highlighting the silence regarding the questioning of what matters in education, he argued 'these unasked questions are symptoms of a new regime of educational expectations that privileges job readiness above any other educational values' (Aronowitz 2008: xii). I return to the issue of reflection, social justice and citizenship in Chapters Five and Six of this dissertation. Views like the one expressed by Aronowitz above suggested that reflection had been simply conceived and

narrowly operationalised within curriculum design. Such criticisms focused my attention on the interpretation and application of reflection in professional education and this forms the focus of the following section and is revisited in the final Chapter in which I consider the location and nature of reflection required by business graduates in the twenty-first century.

3.3 Reflection in professionalisation

The integration of the concept of reflection in professional education did not stop with Schön. If anything, professional education has embedded the concept further in response to economic change. Field (2000) has argued that global political and economic drivers have facilitated a renewed emphasis on lifelong learning and professional education in the HE sector. Specifically, Field asserted that the changing nature of work in late modernity, the new function of knowledge, a dysfunctionality of established educational institutions, individualism, and reflexive modernisation have all contributed to a 'silent explosion' (Field 2000:133) in terms of lifelong learning. He explains that changes in the nature of work due to deindustrialisation, have manifested themselves in alternating phases of work and labour market operation. Specifically, the move to portfolio careers and career switching has led to an increased emphasis on training and continuous professional development. The changes that have occurred in the structure of the economy have in turn, created new demands, challenges and opportunities for HE institutions. The HE response, Jackson (2013) and Trede and McEwan (2015) have suggested, has been that institutions have altered their provision to accommodate labour market changes and create commercial opportunities from vocational education. This has created further opportunities to associate reflection with professional learning.

Simultaneously, calls from employer lobby groups for increased professional education to service the growing demand for practitioners have also been central to the expansion of HE (Bathmaker 2003, McArthur 2011, Giannakis and Bullivant 2016) and such new demands reflect the frequent employer criticism of the graduate labour supply for the lack of 'work-readiness', business awareness and employability skills required for graduate-entry level employees to 'hit the

ground running' (Chartered Management Institute 2016:online, Higher Education Academy 2016:online). The HE response, Higdon (2016) suggested has been a growing emphasis on employability in HE curricula. Using the lens of Bauman's (2005) liquid modernity, Best has argued that:

> Educators have become over-concerned with providing an education that they feel allows people to enter labour markets that are becoming increasingly uncertain, but …at the same time self-directed, lifelong learning allows the state to abdicate any responsibility for providing education services (Best 2017:209)

Both economic change and the employability agenda have increased the use of reflection in professional education. According to Høyrup and Elkjaer (2006), reflection has played a valuable role in supporting learning in the workplace because professionals extend their knowledge through a conscious cognitive process to make sense of everyday work experiences. The process of embedding employability by utilising reflection in learning will be explored in this study, using the students' perspectives, in order to further illuminate the complexity of the concept within undergraduate curricula. Specifically, this particular use of reflection is raised by the L10 undergraduates in Chapter Five of the dissertation and I explore the implications of their accounts in Chapter Six.

3.3.1 Reflection as responsibilisation

Both Barnett (2009) and Jackson (2015) have highlighted the increasing expectation of employers and managers that employees are self-directed and motivated to learn. According to this view, ideal employees are those that reflect on professional performance in order to determine learning goals, develop reflexivity and use interactions intentionally for learning and development. However, there are other, more political interpretations of the view above in more recent positioning of reflection. Namely, these are further critiques of reflection that associate reflection with self-regulation and which conceive of lifelong learning as an individual attempt to continually adapt to the existing dominant socio-economic order. According to Foucault (1982, 1991), education and the role of reflection in it, is an essential part of governmentality and I now turn to explore this association more deeply.

Foucault (2002, 2007), in particular, argued that the shifting focus of reflection in education and professionalisation, represented a market–embedded morality that promoted and is promoted through various techniques of governmentality, such as 'responsibilisation'. Governmentality, following Foucault, refers to the managerial practices of performance evaluation and efforts to frame, regulate and optimise the life of the learner. The concept of governmentality provides a unique way of looking at the power relations within which learners are enmeshed. According to Worthman and Troiano (2016), despite professional education and assessment practices being represented as relatively neutral activities, presented in terms of allowing students to engage in the learning process as autonomous agents, reflection is simultaneously being used as a tool of governmentality. This is to say that reflection in education can appear as a facilitative process, where the learner is encouraged to explore their own practice in order to foster their own development and learning but the concept can also be interpreted as a political tool. In discourse of self-management, the language of 'empowerment' and 'self-development' positions reflection in a positive and appealing light, by suggesting that learners can employ the technique to control the analysis of their practice in order to reveal hidden needs and opportunities. In direct contrast to how Dewey (1916, 1933, 1938), Mezirow (1981,1991), and Brookfield (1995, 2000, 2002) positioned reflection, I argue the professional education agenda has renewed emphasis on self-reflection, via professional standards, accreditation and continuous professional development, in terms of the evaluation of individual understanding, branding and future proofing of the self. This repositioning of reflection is foregrounded by both L7 and L10 undergraduate students in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

In terms of the discourse of self-development, the moves to embed reflection appear to be learner driven, so consequently do not appear as governmentality because both the role of learner and the concept of reflection are constructed as appropriate and necessary. Often such moves are packaged to highlight benefits in 'empowering' learners. The idea that reflection might be a form of *governing* seems the very anathema to this representation. However, the sense in which government is used here draws heavily on Foucault's (2002, 2007) understanding of power as a productive social relation that circulates and produces knowledge, forms of order, and various personae, as opposed to a

negative or repressive activity, undertaken by identifiable 'ruling bodies'. It also relies on understanding the self as a continual construction, as opposed to a self-evident or pre-existing object. Thus, government simply denotes the more or less directed attempt to 'conduct the conduct' (Foucault 1982:237) of persons and groups. As Simons and Masschelein have explained that:

> Within neoliberal governmentality people are not addressed (anymore) as social citizens (whose freedom or autonomy is guaranteed through social normality or who have a normalised relation to the self) but as entrepreneurial selves and entrepreneurs of the self (Simons and Masschelein 2006:419).

Further support for the view expressed above comes from Brunila and Piivonen (2016) who claimed that reflection had come to play a key role in this 'entrepreneurship of the self'. These writers have highlighted the way the concept of reflection in professional education was clearly concerned with directing the conduct of learners. New practices of professional learning, individual reflection and self-management were positioned to be seen as natural and necessary. In contrast, Brunila and Piivonen have pointed out that:

> The focus of adult education has been switched to working upon oneself and displaying individual distinctiveness. This focus privileges the insights gained through self-reflection (Brunila and Piivonen 2016:64).

The above insight demonstrates that the role and purpose of reflection within professional learning might be viewed as obvious, common sense or empowering but for me, the insight also opens up the opportunity for reflection to be viewed as a tool of dominant culture whereby individuals in Brunila and Piivonen's (2016) view, are charged with 'responsibilisation'.

The concept of responsibilisation contributed to my understanding of reflection, by encapsulating how people are made responsible. Foucault approached government as 'the conduct of conduct' and as a term that encompasses 'governing of self' as well as 'governing of others' or more precisely, 'governing of how others conduct themselves' (Foucault 1982:211). In the responsibilisation process, it was often the state or in some cases a professional body, which encouraged people and communities to acknowledge their responsibility, for example, for governing their own self and the development of

that self. As Simon and Masschelein have explained 'Modern governmental rationalities and technologies seek to promote a kind of self-government or subjectivity that is of strategic importance for its operations' (2006:419). Earlier in this Chapter, I noted that the discourse is frequently masked as empowering or liberating yet through governmentality subjects can be urged to develop and self-manage their lives and learning capabilities to their fullest. The idea that reflection could be used in this way was designed to address the problem of governing from a distance. Specifically, people were considered capable of governing themselves if they took responsibility for their own choices and actions, but according to Siltaoja et al. (2015), the number of choices was always limited, and the choices were more or less delimited by laws, professional norms and codes. In this way, standards have come to politicise professional learning; using reflection as a mechanism to map professional experience to a set of bureaucratic criteria and in doing so, reflection:

> Does something 'exceptional' with the notion of professionalism, offering to stand outside and above the professional performance with a measure of its overall worth, and then to reincorporate that professionalism as an aspect of its taxonomy of worth, expressed in standards (Stanley and Stronach 2013: 293).

The above quote suggests how reflection and accreditation have been operational in reconceptualising professional learning.

According to Simons and Masschelein (2008: 397), learning is central to the process of standardisation and resides at the core of today's governmentalisation, as part of a grammar that has achieved global dominance in contemporary 'knowledge economies'. This dominance of learning extends the disciplining regime of correcting and subjugating individuals by working directly on their interests and desires (Sliwa, Sørensen and Cairns 2015). The concerted effort aims to let everyone develop and optimise himself or herself through lifelong learning as a dynamic and employable amount of 'human capital':

> Being part of society is no longer about being socialised…Instead it is an ongoing talk of managing one's learning process in order to produce human capital…in order to be included (Simons and Masschelein 2008:406).

Responsibilisation as discussed here is a means to address individuals in a certain way; it imposes new demands on individuals with respect to the regulation of their conduct – and often that of other people – to maintain their well-being. Simon and Masschelein (2008: 405) used the concept of governmentality to challenge the lifelong learning discourse which encouraged the learner to recognise themselves as a:

> learning force and as being responsible for using and managing this force to construct and reconstruct the human (and social) capital required for our individual well-being, as well as the well-being of the collective.

As previously noted and according to Foucault (2009:226), in societies in which the principles of neoliberalism are influential, responsibilisation reproduced a distinct concept of the human actor as the master of the self, or 'an entrepreneur of his or her self'. Siebert and Walsh used this notion to elaborate that 'rather than people being subject to the possibility of consistent external supervision, reflection caused surveillance to become self-surveillance' (2013:169). Persuaded by the arguments presented here, I argue the shift from external supervision to self-governance, which emphasised reflection as responsibilisation, has come to reform the purpose, nature and implications of reflection within student experience and this possibility is explored in the student accounts in Chapter Five. Having introduced the concept of 'responsibilisation' within professional education, I now move to examine the role of reflection within professional learning, to progress the discussion towards the idea of learners using reflection as subjects and performers.

3.3.2 Reflection as performativity

In addition to moves towards responsibilising reflection, there is also a renewed emphasis on reflection as a tool of self-management and performativity. Erlandson (2014:1) argued that 'reflection has been a major theme in discussions about professional skilfulness and the development of the competence of practitioners' such that many professions call for practitioners to engage in continuous professional development (CPD). The background context and rationale for the drive for continuous professional development is relentless change within the professional context. Across professions, practitioners are persuaded that the uncertain and unstable professional landscape requires

constant reflection, revision and review of the self. However, Edwards and Nicholls have argued that:

> By naturalising change, that is, representing it as a natural and thus inevitable characteristic of the world, it assumes not only a suasive force but in effect hides its own work as a speech act as well. It also hides the social practices that make certain changes happen (Edwards and Nicholls 2006:118).

I propose that the above view of professionalism mobilises professional learning in a particular way. Indeed, Edwards and Nicholls have themselves argued that this particular interpretation of professionalism has driven modern 'rituals and performances' in discourse on professional learning (2006:119). The search to position professional status and knowledge as 'expert' depends on notions of competence and performance standards in general. This repositioning of professional knowledge requires professionals to demonstrate technical expertise and capabilities through continuous professional development and a key foundational concept in the interpretation and communication of professional learning is the reflective self. As Edwards and Nicolls (2006:122) argued, 'A cognitive aspect is therefore necessary for competent performance and this is signified through the notion of reflection'. Thus, reflection has been positioned centre stage in professional development such that Lyons asserted 'There is today a new imperative to include a focus on reflective inquiry for the education of all kinds of professionals' (2010:17). As such, reflection has become the foundational concept in professional learning due to the benefits some believe it to impart to professional practice. Lyons explained that:

> Reflective inquiry, then, can reveal important valued benefits at the core of professional education and learning: uncovering needed perspectives; identifying critical moral and ethical dimensions of practice; encouraging collaborative inquiries; deliberating about underlying professional purposes (Lyons 2010:8).

Using concepts of perspective, morality and underlying purpose, Lyons noted that reflection offered learners multiple perspectives with which they could explore practice in order to question underpinning assumptions in a similar vein to Mezirow (1981,1991,2000) and Brookfield (1995, 2000) as discussed earlier in

Chapter Two. However, Lyons also acknowledged that shifting reflection from its original purpose and form to relocate it in more modern professional discourse also involved complex and contested ideas of self-creation, self-management and performativity. The different conceptions of reflection here in this Chapter, together with those detailed in Chapter Two, became useful maps to help me chart the students' reported experiences in Chapter Five.

Lyons (2010) highlighted the central position inhabited by reflection within professional learning as a move to situate reflection as the cornerstone of a new kind of professionalism. By locating the concept alongside responsibilisation and self-evaluation, it might be argued that reflection has now become the foundation stone of the creation of professional values, behaviour and development. For example, Clegg and Bradley (2006:468) noted the increased emphasis on 'reflexivity and individualisation' in society and suggested that 'the emphasis on reflection cannot be regarded simply as an isolated pedagogic devise [sic], but rather represents broader societal and policy shifts in understandings of education and the production of the self'. Thus, reflection can also be viewed as a concept and tool of self-management and self-creation. It is this interesting tension between reflection and the concept of self-governance that is the focus of the next section, which reveals the disciplinary impacts of reflection.

3.3.3 Reflection as self-regulation

As the above sections discussing responsibilisation and performativity suggest, the politics of reflection in HE is complex and subject to criticism. According to MacFarlane and Gourlay (2009), reflective commentaries provided by learners 'are often overly self-critical, guilt-ridden and aimed at demonstrating inauthentic transformation of an individual'. This suggests that there is the opportunity for learners to use reflection punitively. Indeed, when considering reflection on practice and work based learning, Jeffrey and McCrae (2004) commented that reflection was linked to economic objectives in that individuals were invited to reflect on 'how I can work harder and more effectively to meet my manager's and my organisation's goals' (2004:110). Their argument highlighted the view that reflection might be undertaken for the benefit of

external parties such as employing organisation and professional bodies. The relationship between reflection and external objectives is revisited in Chapter Five, section 5.2.1 where I discuss the students' experiences of reflection for learning in terms of self-improvement and organisational benefits.

I propose that the discussion of self-regulation through reflection conveys the image of perpetual observation from which it is impossible to escape, and thus suggests parallels with Foucault's reference to the Panopticon (Foucault 1991), Bentham's all-seeing eye. This is the nineteenth century Benthamite design for a prison in which individual cells encircle a central observation point. In this scenario, each individual was isolated from others and subject to observation, thus individual prisoners could not see who observed them, leading each to assume that they were being observed continuously. By extension, the group would end up policing and regulating itself and for Foucault, the Panopticon was the perfect metaphor for modern disciplinary power. This represents for me another alternative conception of reflection in learning.

One implication of the way Foucault positioned disciplinary power is that it then functioned through monitoring and surveillance. Subjects could become constructed in their individuality and subject to categories, like reflection, to understand and learn more about themselves. Thus, using these particular insights, reflection as a concept also can be inscribed as 'the examination that places individuals in a field of surveillance [*and*] also situates them in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them' (Foucault 1991:189). The learner using reflection becomes an individual 'case', subject to ongoing examination and record. I believe Foucault's insights regarding surveillance and regulation offers another specific and unique role for reflection. Barnett (2009) developed Foucault's insights by considering how students' selves became constructed around notions of reflection and employment:

> The student has been constructed as an acting being rather than a cognitive being…We have seen …the emergence of what might be termed 'the performative student' … replete with 'transferable skills', contemplates with equanimity the prospect of multiple careers in the lifespan, is entrepreneurial and has an eye to the main chance, and possesses a breezy self-confidence in facing the unpredictability that characterizes contemporary life (Barnett 2009:430).

Already noted above, by using the concept of governmentality, Foucault argued that people are governed, not through repression, but through 'educating people to govern themselves' (Frejes and Nicoll 2015:6) and that pastoral power works by 'people placing themselves under their own surveillance, they control themselves not through 'external' discipline but by applying disciplinary techniques of confession and self-examination to themselves' (Usher and Edwards, 1994:51). Construed this way, reflection can be perceived as a way of bringing one's actions in line with the 'government', not through compliance, but through self-discipline and through construction of the reflective self. I would argue that this conception of reflection is particularly pertinent for exploration in HE and specifically professional education, where there is a constant requirement for students to meet specified outcomes, professional standards and benchmark statements in order to validate experiences. Foucault argued that pastoral power could not be exercised 'without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets' (Foucault 1982:214). With reference to the field of education, Usher and Edwards (1995) have further argued that the shift to pastoral power through confession had been particularly noticeable in practices such as recognition of reflection on experience, portfolio-based assessment and self-evaluation where the individual had to justify performance. Such practices remain commonplace in undergraduate learning and professional landscapes where reflective activities encourage self-disclosure arising from reflection, with the proclaimed aim of facilitating personal development and empowerment. However, Usher and Edwards (1995) have pointed out the apparent illusion in such a belief:

> Thus, in confessing we feel liberated, even though we are still 'subject' to the power-knowledge formations that shape subjectivity as an entity that confesses. Confession, therefore, results in regulation through self-regulation, discipline through self-discipline (Usher and Edwards 1995:10).

I argue that viewing reflection as 'confession' above raises the issue that in the process of engaging students with self-reflection, educators are inducting them into the confession mode required for professional employment. Thus, the argument can be made that individual identification of the benefit that comes

from the experience of reflection is an illusion, and that any benefit actually accrues to an external, dominant party. Viewed in this way, reflection within the student learning experience can be repositioned to ensure compliant implementation of external directives and the reflective experience can be cast as a political tool of power and discipline in undergraduate education. With this in mind, I consider the specific role of reflection in undergraduate education later in this Chapter. However, I present a typology of reflection next.

3.4 Typology of Reflection

Given the wide variation in terms relating to reflection used across bodies of literature and in this dissertation, I have created a summary typology which acted as a frame of reference for my thinking and writing. Distinctions drawn in the typology were also useful in informing the framing and coding of data.

Table 3.4: Typology of formulations and variations of reflection

Term	Author	Focus	Themes
Reflection	Dewey (1910, 1933)	Reflective thinking: active careful sequenced consideration of belief or knowledge pertaining to making sense of experience. Triggered by some disturbance in human experience. Discomfort, perplexity or doubt orientates enquiry into chain or thread of thought.	Elements of perplexity confusion, doubt, suggestions, reasoning, hypothesis, testing, open mindedness, responsibility, wholeheartedness and directness. Sets us free from the limiting influence of sense, appetite, and tradition.

Critical Reflection	Brookfield (1995, 2000)	A particular aspect of the larger process of reflection. Reflection becomes critical when it has two distinctive purposes. The first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame, and distort processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that seem to make lives easier but actually work against an individual's own best long term interests.	Taken for granted assumptions, multiple versions of reality, ideological reinterpretation and rearrangement of past experiences, culturally transmitted values, beliefs, behaviours and ideologies, revealing omnipresence of power in hidden dimensions of thinking,
Reflective Practice	Schön (1983, 1987)	Professional practice epitomised by tacit knowing-in-action and an ability to question knowing-in-action and the underlying 'framing' of a professional situation, when confronted with complex, novel tasks and unprecedented events.	Epistemology of personal practice, theories in use, reflective conversations, reframing.
Reflective	Schön (1983,	One who can surface and	Tacit element involved in

Practitioner	1987)	criticise the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a specialised practice, and can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which they may allow themselves to experience. A researcher in the practice context.	learning, reflection is not only retrospective, but becomes an element of experience
Reflection-in-action	Schön (1983, 1987)	Central to the 'art' by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict.	Artistic, intuitive processes. Response to pleasing, promising or unwanted surprises.
Reflection-on-action	Schön (1983, 1987)	Thinking back on what has been done in order to discover how knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome.	Done after the fact, in tranquillity, or may pause in the midst of action, in order to stop and think. Has no direct connection to present action.
Reflective Conversation	Schön (1983, 1987)	The process of effort to solve a reframed problem that yields new discoveries which call for new reflection-in-	Attempts to change unique and uncertain situation, changes in an experience through the attempt to

		action. The process spirals through stages of appreciation, action and reappreciation.	understand it
Self-Reflection	Mezirow (1981)	Reassessing the way the individual has posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling, and acting.	Questioning and assessing one's own beliefs and assumptions
Reflective activities	Dewey (1910, 1933)	Mediated by intelligence and knowledge. Grows out from the inadequacy and contradictions of the habitual experience and ways of action.	Problems to be solved by reflection and experimentation and by acquiring knowledge , leading later to more specialised knowledge
Reflective Learning	Brookfield (1995, 2010)	Learning to reflect in and on the problems an individual faces every day	Exploring the assumptions that frame an individual's perception of problems and responses
Reflective attributes	Dewey (1910, 1933)	Attitudes that should be cultivated to engage in inquiry. Open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, responsibility and directness	These attitudes are the means of acquiring a reflective attitude of mind.

Critical Reflexivity	Cunliffe (2004)	Thinking about oneself from within a process recognized as being subjective	Attention to how experiences, knowledge, and social positions might impact on the self.
Reflective inquiry	Lyons (2010)	A kind of thinking, of how we think. Related to Dewey (1933). Thinking that is directed to education and student learning; rooted in belief in inquiry.	Thinking as a scientific method, that is, one not tied historically to custom, tradition, or authority but to evidence of a lived experience; and, achieved through experimentation and investigation in practice, by those acting in the world in real situations

3.5 Reflection in undergraduate education

As noted in Chapter One, students on HE programmes commonly experience the requirement for reflection as part of the curriculum, the aim of which is to encourage reflection on an individual's own learning, performance and/or achievement and planning for their personal, educational and career development (Higher Education Academy, 2016, QAA, 2015). Cameron (1999), Cottrell (2003), Bolton (2010) and Gallagher (2010) each noted that reflective skills are lauded in business education, implying it is valuable to ensure learning and teaching approaches make sense to students undertaking business programmes in HE. According to Siebert and Walsh (2013) within such modules, students were encouraged to evaluate their own practice, to become more aware of their own preconceptions and assumptions, to gain a better understanding of ethics, and to integrate theory and practice. Students are regularly asked to produce personal development plans, analyse and evaluate

aspects of their current professional practice (QAA 2015), and in some cases, these are mapped to benchmark statements of graduate attributes or professional standards in order to validate experience. Dyke (2006) has argued that the facilitation of both PDP and reflection requires both a sophisticated pedagogy and the provision of a theoretical framework that helps the learner make sense of experience and to learn from that experience. However, it has also been argued that this means that unless an experience maps against professional criteria then it is viewed as unworthy of validation. Siebert and Walsh (2013) deconstructed the theoretical framework of reflection and personal development to illustrate how the framework enabled the learner to 'intellectualise' reflection, and to translate their experience into a form of academic discourse that is assessable. Using the concepts of intellectual freedom, perspective change and social justice established in Chapter Two together with responsibilisation, performativity and self-regulation introduced earlier in this chapter, it is the purpose of this dissertation to explore how the repositioning of reflection has affected student experience of reflection.

According to Usher and Edwards (1994) and Foucault (2007), the repositioning of reflection documented in this Chapter, has occurred in ways that has disconnected reflection from broader questions about business in democratic and socially-just societies. Further, according to these authors, HE has now been cast as a site of 'discipline through technologies of the self' and reflection has become a technique for 'the continual adaptation to the needs of the dominant socio-economic order' (Usher and Edwards 1994:20). By engaging with reflection, students come to see themselves as entirely of their own making and that their educational success or otherwise reflects the 'truth' about themselves. Consequently, attitudes can form in such a way that students perceive that educational outcome is solely dependent on individual effort. In the same vein, Usher and Edwards (1994) argued that this move was yet another way of rejecting the social determinants that influence performance. I argue the importance of this repositioning of reflection within the business education curriculum becomes significant where students and educators interpret the student experience solely on individual skill sets and neglect consideration of the social conditions of learning that influence student experiences within the

classroom. In such cases, I propose the individualist bias makes it less likely business students will be able to confront and transform those structural aspects of their learning that undermine their accomplishment of their educational goals.

Arguably, the most contested aspect of reflection in education is assessment where students' reflective commentaries are often based on 'emotional performativity' (MacFarlane and Gourlay 2009:455). Rather than privately evaluating their own practice and achievement, the learner is regularly required to expose himself/herself to the scrutiny of others during the process of assessment, and this might in turn affect the authenticity of reflection. The presence of the assessor echoes Foucault's idea of the partner to whom the subject confessed. Foucault claimed that, 'one does not confess without presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority…' (Foucault 1982:261). In the university, the examining partner will usually be superior in status such as a tutor, whose power to judge means that true partnership is not possible. In such situations, as Jeffrey and McCrae (2004:108) noted 'it would indeed be a bold student who was prepared to expose a minority, or radical, set of beliefs and values to the scrutiny of assessors, a professional body, or potential employers'. Using the concepts of confession, authority and power, the university can be seen to discipline learners by requiring them to meet particular 'academic' requirements in their assessment. The requirements of an assessment can lead to a situation where the student feels the need to provide a 'right answer'. In this way, Bleakley (2000:407) proposed a learner might feel that s/he needed to present a certain image of herself/ himself and in 'baring the soul', the reflective subject of the enquiry was controlled by the image that s/he wanted to project, in other words, the subject was constructed by the image. In support of this view, Bleakley (2000) explained that selves are produced through social practices, and an assessment of reflection was one of such practices. From this perspective, academic disciplines and the assessment requirements accompanying them could be seen as an exercise of power over learners (Nicoll 2008). In the light of this, Boud and Walker (2002) claimed that a good reflective space required a level of trust appropriate to the level of disclosure, and that confidentiality needed to be respected. By exposing the content of their reflection to the scrutiny of others

who have authority over them, the learner risked a negative judgement from the academy. Any lack of trust in assessor intentions or in the support of others could hinder learning from reflection and self-censored reflective accounts might not be perceived as meaningful learning if they went against the philosophy of reflection in its original sense. I propose that this risk should be borne in mind particularly where the curriculum requires students' experiences of reflection to be assessed.

A similar situation applies to the process of engagement in PDP planning, which involves the same techniques of image management that are used in reflection. Although identifying weaknesses allegedly helps learners to recognise their 'development needs', this can also be perceived to be a euphemism for exposing deficiency and/or underperformance to a manager or a university assessor. In such a context, the reflective learner at university is likely to adapt reflective output to the requirements that will provide a successful assessment outcome, whatever that may be. It could therefore be argued that learners using reflection are disadvantaged in that they are put under pressure to meet the requirements of different discourses of power. If reflection empowers and encourages a voice, the question then arises about authorship of the learner's voice. As has been explained earlier by reference to Usher and Edwards (1994), discourse on reflection might create an illusion of empowerment and autonomy yet mask how reflection can be a mechanism of self-regulation by embedding 'good' practice or controlling learners (Jeffrey and McCrae 2004). Usher and Edwards pointed out in their discussion of the limitations of 'self-empowerment' that:

> Discourses 'empower' by creating active subjects with certain capacities...At the same time regulation can take the form of self-regulation…At one level this produces 'empowered' subjects: individuals who are empowered by learning and knowing more about themselves. However, the subjects 'disempower' themselves in the very process of 'self-empowerment', because this very power of learning about oneself is also the condition for self-regulation (Usher and Edwards 1994:97-98).

This may suggest the use of reflection within the undergraduate curriculum might not automatically support the discourse of empowerment and liberation that reflection seeks to secure. Rather, viewed through the lens of governance, performativity and self-regulation as defined by Foucault, learning from

reflection as a concept poses a significant challenge to the fundamental purpose of undergraduate education that focuses on employment or where employability has become the outcome.

The review of the literature in Chapters Two and Three, demonstrates the complex and contested nature of reflection in education. Chapter Two rooted reflection in intellectual freedom, transformation and social justice. In contrast, this Chapter has examined the more recent transformation of the concept within professional learning. In examining the repositioning of reflection, the literature raises issues about professional knowledge and practice, shifting attention to different types of reflection in and on action. Analysing views of professionalism and the role of reflection in creating professional selves has also served to highlight associated issues of responsibilisation, performativity and self-regulation. For me, these postmodern threads form an interesting lens, problematising the concept and illuminating reflection as a tool of power and discipline in education. Finally, examination of the use of reflection in undergraduate education has been fruitful in raising issues of student experience in confession, disciplinary power, and authentic authorship of selves and the limiting potential of self-empowerment.

In exploring these bodies of literature in both Chapters, I have also identified themes and gaps in the existing published knowledge of reflection. Firstly, whilst the various theorists discussed have their own views about the meaning and methods for reflection and the achievement of specified learning outcomes, little is currently known about the students' perceptions and applications of these concepts in specific disciplinary contexts and this study contributes in a limited way to addressing this gap. Secondly, shifts in the positioning of reflection in learning raise a plethora of complex issues. One such issue is that educators working with business students might not clearly understand how it is that students come to reflect on learning, on employment or how they learn to do these better. In the light of this gap, I aim to explore the concept of reflection in order to develop a more grounded understanding of how some students conceive of the notion and clarify the role, purpose and outcomes associated with student reflection. As noted in Chapter One, I do so with the aim of sharing my enhanced understanding with my own professional community.

Thirdly, business educators may not have the assessment tools to measure what students are doing when they are reflecting. This is connected to the problematic relationship between thought and action. Despite numerous studies, the problem of elucidating student experience of reflection remains a problem for educators thinking of facilitating critically reflective learning practices. If business educators adapt reflection in the curriculum to meet the employability agenda rather than reflection for criticality, then HE is in danger of claims of privileging training over critical reasoning. I revisit such dangers in Chapter Six of this dissertation where I outline a new paradigm for business education.

This research responds to these gaps identified by seeking to develop the understanding of student reflective learning in terms of nature, structure and processes. Student participants in this study detail how reflection is positioned in both learning and employment context and therefore the study sheds some light on how reflection is positioned and located by students studying a business curriculum. I addressed these gaps with a small group of business students as an example of curriculum exploration. The apparent lack of empirical research to support reflection in business education has provided one of the reasons for exploring reflection in this dissertation. Before presenting the data gathered from the exploration, the next Chapter develops the study by elaborating on the methodology and methods used to inquire into the business students' understanding and experiences of reflection in learning.

CHAPTER FOUR – Research Methodology

4.1 Positioning the Research

In this Chapter, I present the methods employed to investigate a group of undergraduate students' experiences of reflective learning in the business school at the HE institution where I work. First, I set out the framework for the methodological approach taken, explaining the congruence between the approach and the background and purpose of this research. After setting out a justification for this approach, I detail how my understanding of methodological and practical issues was enhanced through a trial study. The trial offered opportunities for learning about research design, operation and evaluation. Having briefly discussed the benefits of the trial study, I then return to the research study to explain and discuss the method of data collection and analysis and explore the associated ethical issues. The Chapter then concludes by turning to issues of quality, goodness and authenticity in order to demonstrate that this research study has considered such issues as openly as possible.

4.2 Research perspectives

This section commences by introducing two prominent approaches for investigating educational issues and acknowledges that they can be used to answer different problems or for different purposes. Comparing approaches allows me to demonstrate that there are multiple ways in which phenomena can be empirically researched. According to Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013), no one paradigm is better than another in research. Instead, as Miles and Huberman (1984) propose, the selected framework must be congruent with the background and purpose of that research. Jackson elaborates that:

> It is beneficial, within the unique context of the research, for the researcher to carefully consider the conceptual background, including ontological and epistemological perspectives, in order for informed decisions to be made regarding the methodology to be chosen in seeking answers to the research questions (Jackson 2013:49).

Following Jackson, I argue in this Chapter that my ontological assumptions about the nature of reality gave rise to certain choices I made about ways of researching and knowing reality. I outline my own position on these in section 4.2.1. Ontological assumptions (about the nature of reality) and Epistemological

assumptions (about how reality could be known), together with my own values and beliefs in turn, gave rise to methodological considerations which influenced research instrumentation, data collection and analysis. The interconnectedness of conceptual and practical assumptions noted in this Chapter sets out the foundations on which my own research study was constructed.

I begin by considering the nature of educational research as a broad concept. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), educational research has absorbed several competing views of the social sciences. Since the work of Kuhn (1962), approaches to research methodology have been thought of in terms of 'paradigms' and communities of scholars. Guba (1990:17) defined a paradigm as 'The net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premises'. Thus, paradigms were a shared belief systems or set of principles, which represented a way of pursuing knowledge of problems meriting investigation. The concept of a paradigm could be used by researchers to undertake research in alternative ways. One traditional approach to empirical research was that of positivism, which began with a commitment to the idea of a real world out there, independent of our interest in or knowledge of it. According to Denzin and Lincoln, 'proponents of the positivist version contend that there is a reality out there to be studied, captured and understood…' (2013:17). Furlong (2004) further argued that this is a reality that could be known, at least in principle, as it really was. This particular approach held that all knowledge is based on sense experience and can only be advanced by means of observation and experiment. Ellingson (2013:416) underlined the emphasis of the positivist approach in determining '…valued and reliable knowledge, as generated by neutral researchers utilising the scientific method to discover universal Truth…' Essentially according to this paradigm, the researcher was merely an observer of social reality, and knowledge took the form of laws or law-like generalisations and limited social scientists as analysts or interpreters of subject matter.

Despite success using positivism in the natural sciences, its ontological and epistemological basis as an approach in empirical research have been the focus of sustained criticism from some quarters (Harding 1991, Lather 1996). Denzin and Lincoln (2013) have objected to the world picture projected by positivism as a mechanistic and reductionist view of nature which defined life in measurable

terms rather than inner experience and excluded notions of choice, freedom, individuality and moral responsibility. Where positivism was viewed as less relevant, continue Denzin and Lincoln, was in its application to the study of 'the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry' (2013:17). Others challenged the assumption regarding truth as knowable and excludable from the focus of enquiry (Foucault 1972, Harraway 1988, Clough 1993, Furlong 2004). Yet other writers (Erickson 1986, Gage 1989) highlighted the dehumanising effects of the scientific method that depersonalised human phenomena. Such criticism implied that alternative paradigms would allow recognition of the social context of empirical research.

Bearing these issues in mind, critics of the positivist approach have established a number of alternative paradigms for researchers to consider, including interpretivist approaches. In contrast to the positivist approach detailed above, interpretive research is an umbrella term, which, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2013), is characterised firstly, by a concern for the individual and their experience. Atkins and Wallace (2012) further specify such research traditionally focuses on individual human experience, using histories and personal accounts and interactions to throw light on and develop an understanding of particular cases and situations. Secondly, approaches are used which focus on intentional behaviour unlike positivistic approaches which view human nature as rule governed. Thirdly, the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience so that such research can yield multifaceted insights and situated understandings of people's behaviour not generate a general, universal theory of laws of behaviour and action and each of the three dimensions above underpins this particular study. Thinking about the type of knowledge the study would generate, I was drawn to St Pierre's (2012:494) insight that, humans are 'deeply entangled in the world' and cannot 'discover value-free, brute facts' in the form of 'objective, rational knowledge that is true anytime, anywhere, for everyone'. The warring views of research schools made it difficult at times, for me to ground the research project in conceptual terms. In order to clarify the foundations of the study, I move now to identify the conceptual and methodological principles, which guided me.

4.2.1 Foundations of the research study

Having outlined the different approaches underlying empirical research, this section sets out how ontological, epistemological and axiological concepts were inextricably intertwined as guiding principles when selecting my own research approach. Ontology is the study of the nature of reality and, in terms of social science, it is the study of the nature of reality and how there may be different perceptions of what is known. From an ontological perspective, the researcher thinks 'about issues such as whether the world exists independently of your perceptions of it' (Greener, 2011:6). Ontological assumptions therefore began to shape my epistemological and methodological decision-making. The nature of this study, looking at the particular experiences of a small group of undergraduate business students at a specific location, required an approach that would allow participants' subjective views to be heard. The approach needed to allow me to work alongside students to explore their particular understandings of their learning experiences and I chose to take an interpretivist approach based on the tradition which accepts subjectivity, and the idea that research can result in 'multiple realities' (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Denzin and Lincoln 2005). According to Greene (2010), interpretivism assumes that the world is a lived reality thought to be constructed by social actors. Following Greene's approach, in this study, I perceived the students, and me, as particular actors, in a particular place at a particular time, fashioning meaning out of events and situations through a process of social interaction involving our personal and social histories, language, thoughts and actions. Reality and truth in an ontological sense were seen as 'individualised and multiplied aspects' of our lives (Howell Major and Savin-Baden, 2011:648). By choosing this approach, I could work alongside the students to think about how they conceived of reflective learning in individualised and subjective ways. I assumed that student experiences of learning did not exist objectively 'out there' in the world, waiting for the students to reveal them to me:

> The research process is not a mapping of some objective social reality; research involves a co-constitution of the objects investigated, with a negotiation and interaction with the very objects studied (Kvale 1992:13).

Using ontological and epistemological concepts to guide my thinking, I assumed that the research conversation about learning created a reality of its own; an interpretation of the experiences of some business students in HE.

According to Schwandt (1994:118), proponents of interpretivist research share the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it. The goal is variously spoken of as an abiding concern for the life world for the emic point of view, for understanding meaning and for grasping the participant's definition of a situation. The specific aims of the study influenced my choice of data collection method. In order to explore with students their individual experiences, I chose individual interviews which would allow me to deepen my understanding of 'the ways in which versions of the world (in relation to experiences of reflective learning are talked into being' (Roulston 2014:29). That is, individual research interviews would enable me to hear these students talk of their own very subjective experiences of reflection in their learning journeys.

I borrowed from Sprague (2010) in my epistemological thinking. Sprague (2010:78) defines epistemology as '…a theory of knowing'. Thinking about epistemology directs researchers in how to go about understanding a phenomenon. Given the aims of this study, I assumed any interpretation of phenomenon such as student experience would depend on individual standpoint and subjective meaning. In terms of this particular study, my and the students' experiences of learning were not perceived as objective, neutral and value free knowledge as the participants and myself were not as Ashworth (2004:149) stated 'disembodied, de-historicised and a-culturated'. Rather, both the students and I experienced learning from where we were, including our emotional history and experience. Further, for me to understand student descriptions of experiences, I needed to be able to attach meaning to their words. Thinking further about interpretation, Grondin illustrates that:

> To understand …is to articulate (a meaning, a thing, an event) into words, words that are always mine, but at the same time those of what I strive to understand (Grondin 2002:39).

In this study, it is the students' talk of experiences I was striving to understand. Such experiences form a particular kind of knowledge that I see as inter-

subjective, socially formed and created, neither fixed nor certain but in constant relationship to 'a starting point in a continuing cycle of inquiry' (Morgan 1983:398). Meaning and truth in this study were not discovered, as in the positivist epistemology, but rather meanings have been constructed through interaction between the students and myself. Sprague (2010:83) positions this kind of knowledge as 'A narrative, another text, even an act of faith …each person's interpretation of the …experience is an equally valid and equally limiting reading' and this was borne in mind by me in terms of the findings and interpretations presented in Chapter Six.

I also recognised that the lived experience of each student was more than words or accounts can say. The students' lived experiences of learning could not be studied directly, as language, speech and thought complicated the very experiences I attempted to interpret. This is why Van Manen argued that 'experience is always more immediate, more enigmatic, more complex, and more ambiguous than any description can do justice to' (1997: xvii). Accordingly, because of this insight, students' experiences as a form of knowledge cannot be constrained by language. Instead, knowledge gained in this study might be thought of as 'shimmers' of the student experience:

> The notion of 'shimmers', acknowledges the unknowable without making it familiar and engages multiplicity without making it singular. It makes the social visible without reducing it to solid certainty or endless wavering. (Kuwee Kumsa et al. 2015:430).

Like 'shimmers' in the above quotation, the insights gained from this study constructed fragments of some students' experiences and weaved them together to represent partial and situated understandings. In terms of epistemology, I worked back and forth between student descriptions of experience, my own understanding of reflection from professional teaching practice and analysis of literature and interpretation and back to student descriptions. As Luttrell (2010) and Savin-Baden et al. (2010) illustrate, this is reflective of the iterative nature of research.

In terms of axiology and following Soydan (2010), I had a practical interest in making sense of the social world from a variety of perspectives, rather than proclaiming universal 'truths'. Whilst Chamberlain et al. (2011) believe that an account grounded in polyvocality (the multiplicity of voices and views in any

given social world) will generate a more holistic truth about a specific social reality, they dispute the existence of any ultimate 'truth' or 'reality'. Similarly, Meerwald has argued 'If experiences are not depicted as having a singular fixed true version, then we can begin to validate a range of experiences as having equal legitimacy' (2013:45). According to Silverman (1993) in interpretivist research, researchers draw on their own empathy, experience, intuition and imagination to develop an insider understanding of the life world of the other. I realised that my experiences, along with those of my students, were being rewritten according to narratives and this influenced my thinking in terms of the type of knowledge generated by the study. As Gubrium and Holstein have pointed out:

> Construed as active, the subject behind the respondent not only holds facts and details of experience, but also in the very process offering them up for response, constructively adds to, takes away from, and transforms the facts and details (Gubrium and Holstein 1997:117).

I propose that, the recognition of the socio-political, geographical, gendered and historical factors informing the research experience has important implications for the kind of knowledge this study generates. I was persuaded by St Pierre's (2013:474) suggestion that interpretivist knowledge can be viewed as descriptions 'that are producing us and the world, descriptions that, over time, have become so transparent, natural and real that we've forgotten they're fictions' and this, in turn, implied careful thought in terms of the findings created by my study. Having established that the research sits firmly in the interpretative paradigm, I return to the nature and quality of the research outcomes later in this Chapter. At present, I highlight the ethical considerations associated with this study.

4.3 Ethical Issues

4.3.1 Relationships

Recognition of ethics as a central aspect of interpretative research was a necessary consequence of the choice of my approach. I acknowledged that the students represent 'the other' in my research and are agents like me allowing for a reciprocal relationship. Following Wiles et al. (2006), the relationship between me and the students resulted in my recognition of moral obligations.

The research experience affected the way I perceived these students such that I began to recognise their contribution to my development and learning as a novice researcher. More importantly, I acknowledged that the development of understanding represented by my findings was only possible through serious engagement with the student participants, recognising them as dignified human beings with rights and obligations comparable to my own. The study was not purely cognitive; it was an aspect of my professional pedagogy calling for me to show deep care, sensitivity and compassion towards the students. Consequently, for me, there was a direct link between my choice of interpretivist research and ethics as a central part of my research approach.

4.3.2 Power and status

Power and status were important considerations from the start of the study. In applying for ethical approval, I acknowledged that this study had the potential for injury in terms of student expectation, interpretation of their voiced experience and representation of 'data'. I acknowledged that the students choosing to participate in the research had more than a passing interest in the topic. I assumed they cared about their experience of reflection and this required careful consideration of my moral obligations to prevent an exploitative situation. Throughout the study, I held multiple roles within the institution, and the blurring of my role as academic, tutor, doctoral student and researcher meant there were opportunities for tensions to arise around my role, status, written informed consent and confidentiality (Holloway and Wheeler 2013). Other researchers have experienced such tensions. For example, Raheim et al. argued that the position of researcher and participants represents an:

> Inherent power imbalance between the parties and the ethical concerns pertaining to this imbalance are commonly dwelled upon, with particular attention to the predetermined asymmetric roles between the researcher and the researched (Raheim et al. 2016:1).

As a response, Raheim et al. above advocate reflexivity and thoughtful consideration of position of both researcher and participants. Following Wolgemuth et al. (2015), I sought to reduce the potential for students to involve

themselves in research without knowledge of my position, the research process and risks of harm. Given that the study was situated in an HE establishment and involved students, I gained ethical approval from both the University where I am undertaking doctoral study and my own University School in which the research was undertaken, to demonstrate the potential benefits of knowledge and to assure no risk of harm to participants. To this end, participation in this research was based on informed consent and on a voluntary basis, with students informed of their right to withdraw at any time. Following Savin Baden and Howell Major (2010), I designed and used an information sheet (see Appendix 2) for students providing information in order to ensure that students made informed choices about participation, to demonstrate respect for participants and in compliance with the university's ethics code of practice. I also prioritised voluntary consent from participants (see Appendix 3). The ethical dimensions of the study were not simply considered at the design stage of the project, but remained significant throughout data collection, analysis and presentation. In order to achieve anonymity in presenting the data, participants were allocated a pseudonym and codes attached to refer to interview instances. Such issues remain ongoing concerns. However, for the moment I move to explain data collection methods, including an evaluation of the chosen methods.

4.4 Method of data collection

According to Vogt (2008), choosing tools for research method is inherently value-laden. This study addresses subjective judgements on personal aspects of learning and professional development experience so there was a need for sensitive, subtle and caring data collection. As previously noted, by using semi-structured interviews, I could exchange views with students, recognising the centrality of our interaction for knowledge production and emphasising the social situatedness of my research. Chase (1996:45) explains that by listening to stories told by individuals and groups, researchers can 'gain deeper understandings of the social resources (cultural, ideological, historical and so forth) that they draw on, resist, and transform as they tell their stories'. Thus, a central question of my research method was how I listened to participants and interpreted and wrote about their stories. Following Chase's (2013) narrative approach, for me the experiences these students described and discussed were

not ‘facts’, ‘realities’ or ‘truths’, rather the accounts were viewed as ‘the people’s stories about everyday experience’ (2013:56) which ‘act as a window’ (2013:57) to understand how these students make sense of reflection in their learning. Following Fontana and Frey (2003), I opted to use qualitative methods drawn from established social science research in order to probe beneath the surface of student expression and to examine less overt aspects of student practice like motive, meaning and self-view. Specifically, I used two semi-structured interviews with four level 7[2] (first-year) students and four level 10[3] (fourth-year) students studying business to explore issues about the nature, process and purpose of reflection in their learning. L7 students were chosen for this study as for many of these students, reflection might be a new experience to be added to all the other new experiences of their introductory year as HE students. In addition, I was persuaded by the QAA call that ‘The first year as an area of policy and analysis needs to have the same prominence within institutions as other policy areas, such as the research agenda’ (QAA 2008:online). In contrast, L10 students were chosen in order to explore the experiences of undergraduates at the end of their chosen programme and before commencing employment. I hoped the two cohorts would offer opportunity for comparisons to be drawn.

As previously discussed in Chapter One and further detailed in this Chapter, the students’ understanding of and use of reflective concepts were key to the interview process. Individual interviews were loosely structured around the themes presented in Chapters Two and Three, that emerged from my analysis of literature and questions were created to create opportunities for responses about the life-world of the student in relation to reflective learning. This allowed me to gather deep and rich stories, anecdotes and examples of the more personal aspects of reflective learning e.g. values, assumptions, beliefs and discomfort. By recalling lived experiences, the students answered my research questions about their reflective learning. In this way, the interview process had a hermeneutic thrust; it was oriented to sense making and interpreting of the notion of student experience of reflective practice. Shopes explains that:

[2] L7 is mapped to Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework and refers to the first year of an undergraduate programme http://www.scqf.org.uk/framework-diagram/Framework.htm.
[3] L10 is mapped to Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework and refers to the final year of an undergraduate programme http://www.scqf.org.uk/framework-diagram/Framework.htm

> Interviews are hermeneutic acts, situated in time. Meaning is conveyed through language, which in turn is shaped by memory, myth and ideology…Interviews thus offer clues into narrator subjectivities (Shopes 2013:134).

According to Watson (2008), this is how interviews form texts to be interpreted by the interviewer and others. Wolgemuth et al. (2015) also claim that there is a growing body of literature pointing to the potential value of interviews as opportunities for self-reflection, catharsis, being listened to, responded to emphatically, and to being validated and this appealed to me, as it would offer an opportunity for each of the students to be heard. However, I was also aware of the limitations of this approach in terms of inconsistency of mutual trust, social distance from one interview to another resulting in 'unreliability' (Watson 2008:367). I recognised that if my questioning was too deep or uncomfortable, it might have prompted avoidance techniques from the students and that some of the meanings, which were clear to one party, might have been relatively opaque to the other. However, I argue that such factors are less inhibiting if the accounts of the students' experiences are viewed in the way I discussed above as fictions or as Gubrium and Holstein's 'assembled realities' such that:

> Respondents' answers and comments are not viewed as reality reports delivered from a fixed repository. Instead, they are considered for the ways that they construct aspects of reality in collaboration with the interviewer. The focus is as much on the assembly process as on what is assembled (Gubrium and Holstein 1997:127).

Thus, the knowledge created or assembled by this study is produced by interaction between me and the students I interviewed. All interviews were conducted on university campuses during working hours and involved me meeting with the students, in a one to one setting, to explore their personal experiences. I explore the limitations of the interview method more extensively in section 4.4.1 of this Chapter.

With these criticisms in mind and following MacFarlane et al. (2015), I worded and sequenced questions in advance to ensure all student participants were asked questions oriented to the themes identified from my literature review. In particular, the different facets of reflection highlighted by analysis of literature helped me identify ways in which I could probe student accounts of reflection. I was not expecting 'correct' answers from the students. Rather initial responses

by students to broad questions were followed up where answers resonated with my conceptual understanding of reflection. For example where students spoke about reflection as troublesome or problematic, I would follow up this aspect of experience using my understanding of Brookfield (1995, 2010) as a guide. The wording of questions (Appendix 4) was translated into the more every day, colloquial language of students in order to generate rich descriptions and authentic data (Geertz, 1973). This required me to develop skills in handling interviews to enable students to talk freely and emotionally and to have candour, richness and depth about their experiences. I believe I developed some of these interpersonal, interactional, communicative and emotional skills in my trial study discussed in section 4.5.

Initial answers were followed up by more open-ended discussion. For example, the students were initially asked about their understanding of reflection, some answered in terms of using reflection at work, others talked about experiences in the learning context, whilst others spoke about the concept in an abstract sense. The individualised responses given by the students allowed me to follow up their account of the concept in ways that mirrored the student's frame of reference and allowed me the opportunity to explore areas which resonated with theoretical insights. I believe this approach allowed the participants to share more detailed experiences. In order to provide greater clarity about the approach, an extract of interview questions is provided in Appendix 4. As a method, following up initial responses gave the interview a more fluid structure, opened up narrative accounts to readings I otherwise might have missed, served to highlight some of the nuances and hidden textures of experience, and gave me a richer appreciation for participant experiences (Hartman 2015). In order to capture responses, I sought agreement from the students to use a digital audio recorder and to take brief notes. Before moving to explain data analysis, I consider the strengths and limitations of my chosen method below.

4.4.1 Strengths and Limitations of Methods

Many qualitative research methods texts such as Luttrell (2010), Denzin and Lincoln (2013) and Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013) provide criteria for judging the quality of interviews. However, there is no consistency in the terms used in relation to the assessment of quality of qualitative interview research.

For example, Mishler (1986) cites representativeness, reactivity, reliability and replicability, Kvale (1996) discussed 'validity' and Rubin and Rubin (2005) use the terms 'credibility' and 'thoroughness'. According to Roulston, (2010b) debates surround the issue of establishing 'validity' in this kind of research method and I address this more fully in section 4.7 of this Chapter.

Critics of the qualitative interview as a method of data creation include Potter and Hepburn (2005) who challenge the 'use of the interview method as a transparent means to elicit data that will inform understandings of the meanings that participant's make of their lived experiences'. According to Pinsky (2015), interviewing is constrained by a 'positivist legacy in which the interview interaction is seen as the singular locus for data production' (2015:281). To some extent, standard procedures for interview studies are still limited by a positivist model of a distanced researcher rigidly following a predetermined research design, and thus, there may be little room for reporting on the actual messiness of methodologies. This positivist legacy leads to the assumption that interview data are pure and factual and can be abstracted from their broader context. St Pierre's (1997, 2012, and 2016) work complicates the issues of data, words and the production of knowledge. She questions the ability of language to 'secure meaning and truth? How can language provide the evidentiary warrant for the production of knowledge in a postmodern world? (1997:179). I have already intimated earlier in this Chapter, that for me, the interviews were akin to the creation of an account or stories, which students shared regarding their experiences of reflection.

According to Shopes (2013), data and the relationship between meaning and language are contextually situated; unstable and capable of infinite reinterpretation. In order to make sense of the student descriptions of experience I needed to weave between conceptual and empirical analysis regularly to interpret experience in a lively way. Having undertaken the first interviews with both cohorts of students, and following Carlsen et al. (2014), I opted to add an alternative technique for student participation, in order to delve more deeply into the context and focus of reflection.

I selected a modified projection technique (Catterall and Ibbotson, 2000) as a way of overcoming some of the response barriers associated with direct

questioning and as a way of 'involving practitioners in theorising' (Carlsen et al. (2014:294). Analysis of responses given in first interviews suggested two particularly interesting contexts for student reflection: reflection in learning and reflection on employment. I therefore decided to follow the initial interviews with a second individual session where I presented the students with the codes and themes I had created from literature and first interviews. There were 87 themes in total, created from all the first interview transcripts and these are detailed in Appendix 5. Following Carlson et al. (2014), each student was asked to select approximately 6 to 8 codes, which they associated with the contextualised reflection. According to Carlsen et al. (2014:295) the use of material artefacts (cards) in researcher–participant interactions can make research more 'co-generative'. Each of the students also commented that they found the technique involving and fun, stretching their imagination and generating new ideas and new perspectives to augment the interview discussion. In this way, the technique was used to create a deeper understanding of the nature of the student experience in the light of different contexts. Having made choices, the students were asked to analyse choices and clustering's of concepts, noting order or groupings. I invited the students to help me understand their groupings so that the research process and output became multi-faceted and multi-layered by mixing analytic techniques. Specifically, student contributions to the interpretation of data opened up interesting avenues to explore and helped me imagine individual differences in both reflection contexts. This helped solve some of the issues raised by the trial study, which was undertaken in order to enhance my research experience. The trial study mimicked methods, in order to reflect on the experience of using the same methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The study informed the dissertation in diverse ways and I discuss these below.

4.5 Learning from the trial study

The trial took place during the fourth year of my doctoral studies. In order to trial qualitative interviews regarding experience, data was collected from face to face interviews with four undergraduate business students; two from level 7 and two from level 10. Firstly, the experience of the trial study was useful in challenging any illusions of order and control and eroding my already nebulous

embryonic notions of research identity. Throughout the trial study, I realised that at times I was fixated on my self-identity to the point of forgetting at times that the research was actually about the student experience of the research phenomenon. Despite having read many texts on research methods, I was constantly drawn to different and possibly fruitful alternative approaches.

Secondly, the trial study was useful in revealing the ambiguity of terms associated with the study. It was my first experience of difficulty in identifying themes for exploration of theoretical literature. I found it difficult to create a conceptual map of the topic and I became aware of how ambiguity and dense understanding would characterise the research journey. The trial study sensitised me to the inherent complexities of the dissertation journey, particularly in relation to data analysis and I entered the analysis stage of the dissertation remaining apprehensive about how to make sense of the research data. The experience of the trial prepared me in a limited sense for the problems of data collection required for the dissertation and I now turn to discuss these.

4.6 Data transcription, analysis and interpretation

4.6.1 Data Transcription

As I have explained earlier in this Chapter, the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed for the purposes of analysis. An excerpt of transcribed data is contained in Appendix 6. I had to listen to the recordings repeatedly to ensure that transcriptions were accurate and included emphasis, pause and character, where possible. As Hammersley has pointed out transcription decisions include 'the unavoidable use of cultural knowledge and skills by the transcriber to interpret and represent what is going on, for example in judging what a significant pause is' (Hammersley 2010:558). The experience of transcription took much longer than expected and the process exposed a lack of consideration about the challenges of transcribing. As Mishler (1991:261) predicted, there were '…an endless number of decisions that must be made about re-presentation of speech as text, that is, as a transcript, which, although apparently mundane, have serious implications for how we might understand the discourse'. Questions of punctuation, multiple attempts to mine meaning from

each line, questions of 'accuracy' versus questions of keeping track of meaning, and decisions about representation revealed the complexities of making meaning from transcribing (Tilley 2003). In the end, I decided to opt for orthographic transcription, but this was not simple and, like Braun and Clarke (2013:162), I subsequently realised how 'messy' speech was in the interviews. As the data was being transcribed, I started to undertake preliminary analysis in the form of memos, blog entries and recording comments.

4.6.2 Analysis of Data

Following Braun and Clark (2013:201), I analysed the data using thematic analysis, trying to develop 'an analytic sensibility'. According to these writers, the technique can be used to analyse 'almost any kind of data' and is particularly useful for analysing 'small data sets' (2013:178). Firstly, I immersed myself in the data, becoming familiar through listening and re listening to the recordings and reading and re reading each transcription. It was not simply a case of trying to understand the words used but involved reading the transcripts 'actively, analytically and critically' (ibid: 205). The purpose of this activity was to generate initial codes and categories from the data. In order to question my interpretations continuously, I recorded 'noticings' (ibid: 204) in memos and blogs during this time. These 'noticings' helped me form some impressions of the data in order to identify possible themes for analysis and in particular, the commentaries also proved useful in developing reflexivity. I explore how my development of reflexivity contributed to the 'goodness' of the study in section 4.7.1.

According to Lee and Fielding (2009:536) 'a code is a label in the form of a word or short phrase which in some way captures the particular form and distinguishes it from others'. Through multiple readings of each student account, I codified the data, during and after the data collection cycle. An example of coded transcription is provided in Appendix 7. The codes I present were a mixture of semantic and latent codes. That is, the codes were both based on the semantic meaning in the data presented and those which mirrored my conceptual and theoretical understanding of reflection. As an example of semantic coding, I used the code *Learning from Mistakes* which directly maps to excerpts of data from interviews with both L7 and L10 students (see Appendix 10). At other

times, latent codes derived from my theoretical analysis of reflection were used to identify implicit meanings within the data. Using diagrams of complete coding trails and analysis helped conceptualise my findings and thinking. Coding was a substantial challenge but I used coding systems to note and label data. As explained above, the analysis was primarily focused on terms used by the participants themselves. That process allowed me to see how student stories could be grouped or clustered to connect to the most significant themes from the analysis of literature. I could then relate my own interpretations of student conception back to previous observations from my review of theoretical concepts arising from literature. Initial codes were useful in analysing subsequent interview transcripts and I would apply or create new codes as I continued to analyse individual transcripts and further codes emerged. In this way, I worked back and forth between different foci to allow me to make sense of student experience. According to Grbich (2013:261), this is useful in developing 'theoretical sensitivity', which links data to theoretical literature. In this stage of the process, I tried to remain open to different possible meanings for initial codes. After completely coding all individual transcripts, I collated the coded data in a matrix detailing themes, subthemes and coded excerpts. This was extremely useful in searching for recurring patterns across each cohort's data set.

Having grouped and clustered coded data, I moved to mapping ideas and recurring patterns in order to create themes to see where and how student experience of reflective practice fitted and varied from existing studies. This activity involved comparing initial code descriptions and interpreting them in different ways. Unlike initial coding this was a more imaginative and creative process. Navigating and exploring the transcripts of experiences by interpreting their meaning was an active process of insightful invention. As Braun and Clarke (2013:225) argue 'the dataset provides a material basis for the analysis…it is possible to create many different analyses from qualitative data'.

Following Braun and Clarke (2013:224), I identified candidate themes which 'captured something important about the data' in order to see how codes were related. An excerpt of codes and candidate themes created after initial interviews with L7 students is provided in Appendix 10. The relationship between initial codes and theme development was an active process of

examining codes in order to create potential patterns. The themes created, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (*ibid),* were those which I felt captured the most salient patterns in the data relevant to my research aims. These were reviewed and revised as the process of analysis continued. I tried to determine the themes as a way of capturing essential aspects that make up the students' experiences. As the data itself was the interpretation of a social encounter I made regular use of clustering, metaphors and visual sketches to bring data to life, allowing me to note practical and theoretical coherence and divergence. Following the advice of Braun and Clarke (2013), I reviewed codes and collated data in a matrix to see similarities and overlap between codes. Where several codes related to a topic or aspect of experience, I could create a theme. For example, a code relating to anxiety relating to performance, group work and locating reflection related to difficulties experienced by these L7 students and this contributed to the creation of the *This is hard* theme as a central organising concept. I then reviewed and revised candidate themes by reading them again to check the fit between the coded data and the data set. I wanted the themes to not only represent my interpretation of the student experiences but to tell a story. This meant I had to go back to the coded and collated data and reread all elements to make sure each candidate theme captured the essence of both codes and transcripts. Finally, I went back to read through the uncoded data to make sure that the themes captured the meaning of the dataset in relation to the research issue of student experiences of reflection.

Gaps between both groups' experiences suggested new connections needed to be made. An example of this emerged from analysis of L10 accounts of reflection on and for employment. Differences between L7 and L10 accounts enabled me to create the *Selling myself* theme to record how the L10 students used reflection to form pre-professional identities. I used the thematic meaning from student stories in order to tease out the web of student experiences of reflection. It meant I could then go back and follow up conversations to interpret the themes in the light of the original questions. I questioned and critiqued themes as the journey progressed and compiled a list of theme definitions stating the unique and specific aspects of each theme. This is contained in Appendix 8. Writing the theme definitions forced me to 'define the focus and boundaries' of my themes (Braun and Clarke 2013:249).

Guided by Braun and Clarke (2013), I used codes during data analysis to identify segments of the data that seemed to respond or illuminate elements of my research aims. Such segments were sentences or parts of sentences that suggested a possible connection to my research questions. In the early stages of data analysis, this proved complex and I was unsure which segments of data that would prove meaningful or insightful in illuminating aspects of the students' experiences. As the process of data analysis deepened, I began to identify segments of the data that could usefully represent essential elements of the themes created from the data. Once data segments had been organised into candidate themes, I could select evidence within the data set which I felt most strongly conveyed the aspects of the themes I had created from the data. In selecting quotes from the data, I tried to present multiple accounts giving due consideration to the voices of all participants and to ensure where possible quotes were representative of those interviewed. Quotes were weaved throughout the presentation of the data analysis in Chapter Five to balance description, analysis and interpretation. Following Erickson (2012), individual quotes were often chosen on the basis of the ability to convey particular illustrations of themes in order to highlight the basis for my interpretation.

4.6.3 Interpretation of data

Since any story is subject to multiple interpretations, the process of interpretation – the frameworks and methods qualitative researchers bring to bear upon the analysis of first person interviews – is itself an important subject of reflection. According to Mason, the interpretive stage of research involves making 'a version of what you think the data mean or represent, or what you think you can infer from them' (2002:149). This is what Geertz (1973) describes as the to-ing and fro-ing of interpretive practice that involves 'guessing at meanings, assessing the better guesses and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses' (1973:20). St Pierre asserts that:

> Most importantly, when we can judge an interpretation only against another interpretation and can no longer rely on an absolute, transcendent Truth, then ethics, power and politics enter centre stage, and we become responsible for the truths we make (St Pierre 2012:495).

In the light of St Pierre's insight above, I take ownership and responsibility for the 'truths' presented in Chapters Five and Six. There was richness and complexity involved in analysing student conceptions and this has hopefully created knowledge that is useful in the present and future. I evaluated in terms of standards of evidence, argument and critical scrutiny appropriate to epistemological status. I recognise that evaluation of my own research is a dynamic and continuing process. The 'truth' of my own research is provisional, based upon the continual accumulation of understanding and meaning and both these concepts need to be continually and critically scrutinised. As Lincoln argues, the knowledge created by a study such as this one, is different from that of randomized controlled trials but also that 'there are many questions that randomized controlled trials do not, and cannot, answer' (2009:6).

In this respect, I have tried to ensure the data, analysis and interpretation and outcome of my inquiry are rooted in the research contexts and student conceptions. The analysis of my data is open to influence by my own preconceived ideas and as the interpretation is based on a particular moment in situation and time, they are open to reinterpretation by others. The interpretations of the research knowledge have been created to correspond to student constructions of experience and the meanings the students in this study, attach to those experiences. Understanding the underlying philosophy of the dissertation design and operation is important for judging the strength and quality of the research. It is to this issue I now turn and the remaining section of this Chapter considers issues related to the issue of how quality and 'goodness' were developed and embedded in the study.

4.7 Issues about Goodness and Quality

4.7.1 My position and reflexivity

According to Luttrell (2010:3), 'the preeminent skill for conducting qualitative research is reflexivity'. The centrality of the concept for judging the quality of interpretive research is also emphasised by Pillow (2003:175) as a research method, which 'researchers can and should use to legitimise, validate and question research practices and representations'. Questions about reflexivity are part of a broader focus about ontological, epistemological and axiological

components of subjectivity and the creation of knowledge. According to Berger, reflexivity is self-appraisal in research:

> It means turning of the researcher lens back onto oneself to recognise and take responsibility for one's own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation (Berger 2015:220).

This means the idea of reflexivity challenges the view of knowledge production as independent of the researcher producing it and of knowledge as objective. Kacen and Chaitin (2006) have pointed out that researcher positioning in terms of gender, race, age, professional status, personal experience and preferences may influence research in terms of access to the 'field', the nature of the researcher-participant relationship and how research is constructed in terms of language, questions and analytical lenses. Acknowledging how knowledge from this research has been created, organised and interpreted is relevant to my understanding of students' experiences. As Pillow (2003:178) argues 'to be reflexive contributes to producing knowledge but also provides insight on how this knowledge is produced'. On this basis, reflexivity seems to contribute greatly to the study.

As a concept, it seems to be key in developing the quality of research. Schwandt defines reflexivity as a) 'the process of critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences'; b) an acknowledgement that 'the inquirer is part of the setting, context and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand' and c) a means for 'critically inspecting the entire research process' (2001:224). Reflexivity has become important to demonstrate an awareness of the research problematics and the concept is often used to potentially validate and legitimise the research precisely by raising questions about the research process. Understanding myself and my stake in the research inquiry has been crucial in knowing the limitations and strengths of the research output. However, this statement assumes that selves are knowable and such an ideology of subjectivity has been challenged by Pillow:

> Self–reflexivity that is predicated upon the ability of a researcher to know their own subjectivity and to make this subjectivity known is limited and limiting because such usages are necessarily dependent on a knowable subject and often collapse into linear tellings that render

> the researcher and the research subject as more familiar to each other (Pillow 2003:184).

The preceding discussion has placed awareness of self and position as key to reflexivity, but Luttrell (2010:4) reminds that reflexivity is more than developing self-conscious awareness; 'it is about making the research process and decision making visible at multiple levels: personal, methodological, theoretical, epistemological, ethical and political'.

With this in mind, Lather's work (1993, 2006, and 2016) has been helpful in imbuing reflexivity as a form of validity. Lather acknowledges the use of reflexivity as a methodological practice but she also attempts to work against the work of reflexivity becoming too set. As Lather (1993:685) herself states, there are 'few guidelines for how one goes about the doing of it, especially in a way that is both reflexive and yet notes the limits of self-reflexivity'. One way of dealing with such challenges has been to interrogate more closely and critically the way in which I have used reflexivity, to problematise it and make it uncomfortable. Following Pillow (2003:192), I have used reflexivity 'in a way that would continue to challenge the representations we come to while at the same time acknowledging the political need to represent and find meaning'.

Reflexivity has been embedded throughout the research process, including the formulation of the research question, collection and analysis of the data and in drawing conclusions. As an example, being self-reflective during the research process involved using memoing in order to be consciously and deliberately attuned to my own reactions to participants and to the way in which the research was constructed. This is discussed more fully below. Pillow (2015:430) argues the concept of reflexivity enhances the quality of the research by allowing researchers to 'productively question and examine innately assigned epistemic privileges' embedded 'across theoretical—ontological and epistemological—and methodological spaces of research'. Reflexivity is often understood as involving an ongoing self-awareness or vigilance during the research process that aids in making visible the practice and construction of knowledge within research in order to produce more accurate analyses of research. Reflection and reflexivity has been used to transform my own perspectives of the research. An example of reflexivity is detailed in the section below.

4.7.2 Memoing

In order to enhance the quality and validity of this research, practical strategies to attend to the balance between self-experience, participant voice and interpretation of meaning have been used. These include memoing where I had documented what participants said, what it might mean and how it related to possible interpretation (Berger 2015). This acted like an internal voice, which questioned self-motivation, behaviour and interpretation. Time lapses were also used to view material through 'new lenses' to identify where self-experience might interfere with accurate interpretation of participants.

In the context of research, the concept of quality is synonymous with rigour. Throughout the study and following Patel et al. (2016), I have used a journal record of notes and thoughts to develop a reflexive scholarly approach to research method. Initially I chose the journal to identify and chart progress. I did this to help me respond to questions relating to decisions I had taken and in order to make sense of reading and thinking. Over time, my journal writing became helpful in casting a wider intellectual and emotional net over the process. The following excerpt from my research journal (italicised in order to separate it from excerpts from literature) demonstrates the recognition of discomfort with my identity as practitioner-researcher:

> *[The] idea that educational research has been cut off from (and sometimes viewed as superior to) teaching practice strikes a chord with me. Involves me thinking about my own past (comfortable) and present (exciting but uncomfortable) identity.*

My own identity crisis involved thinking of myself in a new but opaque light and living with constant doubt as a daily companion to reading, thinking and writing activities.

Journal entries might be thought of as memos to record my thoughts, feelings, insights and ideas in relation to the research project. Because of the nature of interpretive analysis, I was anxious about how I would interpret the data. I thought the journal memos would map my thinking so that I could review the journey regularly in order to make sense of the terrain I had travelled even though I could not see where I was going. At times, I was very lucid and clear at other times foggy and dense, memos and blogging enabled me to articulate

anxieties, explore thinking and question my evolving interpretations of the research. As Patel et al. (2016) argue, memoing is a traditional method of 'articulating and challenging interpretations of data'.

Memoing became a private activity for me to take risks without fear of being criticised. Recording my ideas proved therapeutic and has helped to heighten my awareness of various interpretations of my thinking. The resulting journal and blogs chronicle my research experiences and the internal dialogue that took place during the journey. I found memoing about coding and category development was particularly useful in terms of clarifying my decision-making and unravelling layers of meaning in the research process. As recommended by Patel et al. (2016), I found that it was important in learning to trust my own scholarly development and in developing new insights into my professional practice. I also found the process useful in terms of maintaining some sort of momentum at times when the terrain was particularly confusing and difficult. As Charmaz (2012:34) argues 'doubt can generate theory', and the activity of memoing was used to 'make actions and processes visible that otherwise remain tacit' so that I could propel my thinking 'forward in unanticipated ways' (Charmaz 2012:42). Noting the significance of parts of transcribed material and reactions, at times promoted my own learning and understanding of students' experiences.

The process helped me record issues and disturbances as they arose in the research journey. As a novice, the research tasks were overwhelming and the use of reflective memoing helped me to manage the project. I concur with Watt when she argues that:

> Looking back on my struggles at each stage of my study lead to a deeper understanding of the nature of the qualitative research process, and a fuller appreciation of the vital role of reflexivity both in accomplishing a project, and in my ongoing development as a researcher (Watt 2007:98).

At times, I found it particularly difficult to articulate my feelings about the research but recent reading of the journal indicates that I was able to vent about the persistent doubt and confusion:

> *[I] need to think more about the notion of 'research imagination'. Curious about this notion. Recognise myself as creative as a teacher in*

a classroom. I am spontaneous in teaching but how to transfer this into a more liberal, innovative or less regimented researcher? Might this come with practice of research? Does this actually mean all my research will be boring, predictable, flat and poor quality?

The above excerpt from the journal also indicates how I started to develop my thinking about research quality. By reviewing my memos, I realise that over the course of the dissertation, I frequently questioned epistemological, ontological and evaluative assumptions. As Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2007), Mishler (2012), Denzin and Lincoln (2013), have argued there is no 'gold standard' for research such as this. No general, abstract rules can be provided for the relative importance of different threats to the validity of my research results. I realise from the study that these assessments are matters of judgement and interpretation. My findings were created as the investigation proceeded and this should be borne in mind when evaluating the research.

Typically, conventional criteria for judging the rigour of positivist inquiries include internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. However, Denzin (2001) and Walby and Luscombe (2016) believe such standard concepts are inappropriate for qualitative research. Despite considerable debate (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, Morse, 2015), the issue of quality criteria in interpretivist qualitative research is not completely resolved. Diverse sets of parallel criteria have been proposed for interpretivist research including trustworthiness and authenticity by Guba and Lincoln (1989), interpretive understandings by St. Pierre and Roulston (2006), 'post interpretive inexact knowledge' by Lather (2006:787) and universal criteria by Tracy (2010). It seems that the criterion to ensure quality and 'goodness' in studies similar to this one is complex and contested.

Altheide and Johnson (2013:390) have suggested more encompassing criteria for assessing interpretive validity with 'openness and engagement' as the subtext. They stipulate that qualitative research like this study should provide 'a window for a critical reading or at the very least, permit an informed reader's queries about what is being read'. Therefore, any claims to 'validity' rests on the transparency of dimensions of the research and I have tried in this study to make my own thinking, decision-making and actions explicit to examine how I come to 'understand' the experiences of students taking part in this study.

My findings need to be subject to scrutiny in thought and argument with other conflicting constructions. This leads me back to Lather's (1991) notion of catalytic validity where the research process 're-orients, focuses and energises participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it' (68). Lather more recently (2016:263) urges researchers towards work 'toward embracing constitutive unknowingness, generative undecidability, and what it means to document becoming' in an effort to resist 'regulation and standardisation' of positivism. In keeping with this approach, the findings created and subsequent discussion are open to alternative interpretations and re-interpretation by others (Holloway and Wheeler 2013). Readers may gather different meanings from this study at different times or others may hear of the study and gather different meanings. In order to build the criterion of validity and quality into the research, I have tried to attend to evaluative concerns appropriate to the paradigmatic underpinnings of my research approach (Morrow 2005). This type of research is located firmly in an interpretivist approach and therefore, I have tried to be open and dynamic in developing a personal perspective on issues of validation. As indicated above, the findings cannot be judged by one single set of criteria. St Pierre argues that:

> At this very moment, we are latched onto descriptions that are producing us and the world, descriptions that, over time, have become so transparent, natural and real that we've forgotten they're fictions. We accept them as truth (St Pierre 2013:474).

In light of this, I have attempted to embed elements of quality into the research journey. Each element of reflexivity, memoing, enacting trust, debriefing and critical examination of my perspective on their own will not ensure the quality of my research but taken together they have helped me improve the foundations of my research and findings. As Denzin and Lincoln remind researchers:

> There are multiple versions…multiple lessons. We can never know the true nature of things. We are each blinded by our own perspective. Truth is always partial (Denzin and Lincoln 2013:537).

The above quote indicates that I can develop and enhance the quality of my research through reflection on the research experience itself. For research following an interpretivist approach needs to be designed, implemented and

understood with the multiple and partial nature of truth in mind. I cannot prepare for 'good quality' research by theoretical knowledge alone. Nor can I prepare by following recipes laid down by other researchers in other situations, rather I need to critically question and revisit my thinking and practice in relation to this research. It requires experiential learning from research activity. Developing rigour in my research approach requires an understanding of my professional research practice in given research architectures; like discourses, social relations and working contexts that enable and constrain the ways I understand and interpret things, the ways I relate to others and the ways I conduct and supervise research inquiries. To do so I need to be alert to the possibility of seeing things in alternative lights as well as learning from others in the field. As Kemmis and Smith (2008) highlight learning to enhance research involves learning from experience, and learning to see how one's approach and actions are constructed in thinking, practice and relationships that are drawn from a variety of forms of knowledge and have consequences both for me and for participants and how research comes to be.

4.8 Moving Forward

Over the next two Chapters, the data is presented and discussed allowing tentative findings to be drawn. Following Braun and Clarke (2013), the process goes further than theme identification or establishing that patterns exist in the data collected. Accordingly, there are links made to theories presented in Chapters Two and Three and existing studies to demonstrate that the conclusions reached, emerged from findings in the context of other research and literature.

CHAPTER FIVE - Students' Experiences of Reflection

5.1 Introduction

In the following Chapter, the analysis, presentation and discussion of the data collected, as described in Chapter Four (section 4.3), will be presented to meet the aim of my research investigation: *An exploration of business students' experiences of reflection in learning*. The interview data that is discussed here allows arguments to be presented which provide further explanation, modification and confirmation of existing theories (Chapters Two and Three) that relate to reflection. Guided by Braun and Clarke (2013), I used codes during data analysis to identify segments of the data that seemed to respond or illuminate elements of my research aims. Such segments were sentences or parts of sentences that suggested a possible connection to my research questions. In the early stages of data analysis, this proved complex and I was unsure which segments of data would prove meaningful or insightful in illuminating aspects of the students' experiences. As the process of data analysis deepened, I began to identify segments of the data that could usefully represent essential elements of the themes created from the data. Once data segments had been organised into candidate themes, I could select evidence within the data set which I felt most strongly conveyed the aspects of the themes I had created from the data. In selecting quotes from the data, I tried to present multiple accounts giving due consideration to the voices of all participants and where possible were representative of those interviewed. Quotes were weaved throughout the presentation of the data analysis in Chapter Five to balance description, analysis and interpretation. Following Erickson (2012), individual quotes were often chosen on the basis of the ability to convey particular illustrations of themes in order to highlight the basis for my interpretation.

The Chapter commences by considering how themes and subthemes relate overall. I then begin the analysis of L7[4] student experiences. The discussion is presented in terms of themes created from student accounts then further explored by highlighting two particularly interesting and complex dimensions of student reflection; reflection on learning and reflection on employment. Having

[4] Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework L7 and L10 are equivalent to Framework for Higher Education Qualifications L4 and L6.

examined L7 experiences, the analysis moves to consider the lived experiences presented by some L10 students. This multidimensional account of reflection enables comparisons to be drawn in section 5.7. Similarities are highlighted and distinctions drawn in order to develop a deeper understanding of undergraduate business student experiences.

Diagram 5.1 Students' Experiences of Reflection

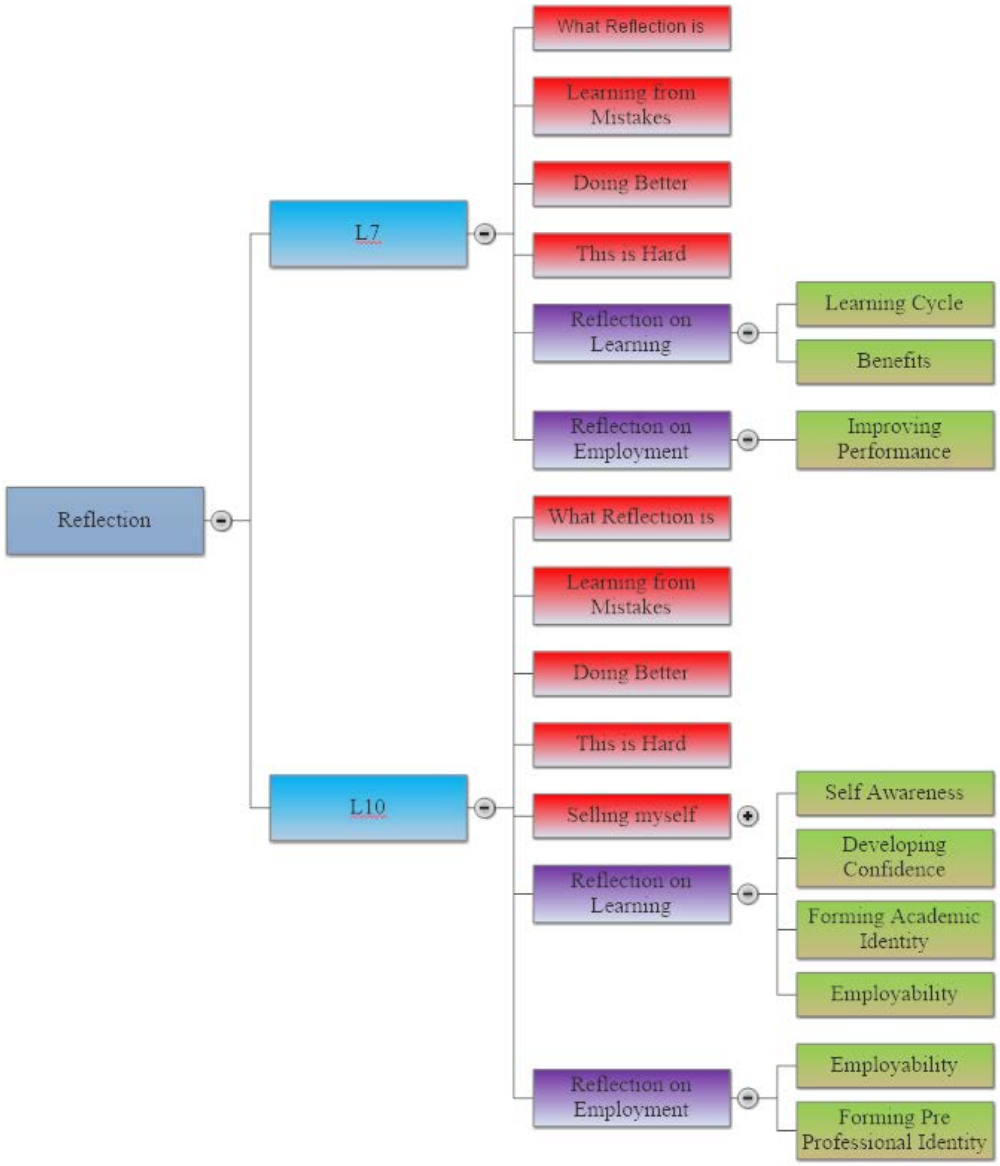
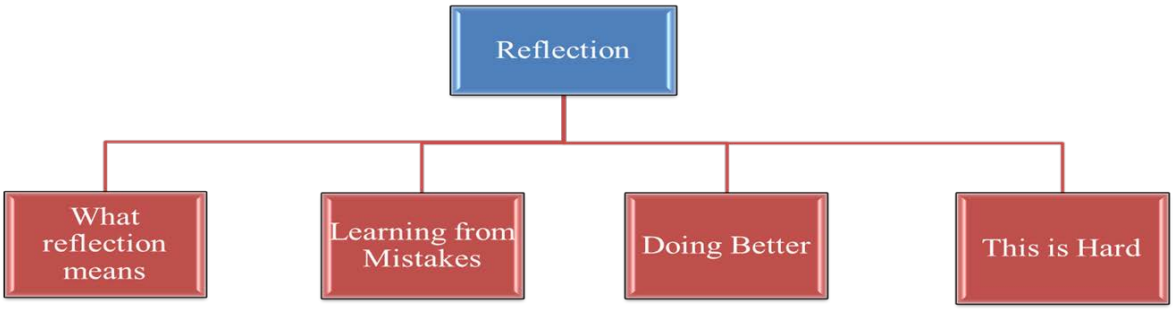


Diagram 5.1 above depicts the themes created from the data provided by the first-year (L7) and fourth-year (L10) students. The image shows the themes and subthemes drawn from each set of interviews with the undergraduate students. Red themes were created from first interviews. Two particular dimensions, reflection on learning and reflection on employment, shown above in purple, were chosen for exploration in the second interviews. This diagram suggests interrelationships exist between themes and subthemes and I present the findings for each cohort of students in turn, starting with the L7 students.

5.2 L7 Students' Experiences of Reflection

Diagram 5.2 L7 themes from first interviews



The above diagram highlights the themes and subthemes created from first interviews with the four L7 students. As discussed in Chapter Four, data was coded and a full summary of codes from first interviews with these L7 students is presented in Appendix 9. Four themes (italicised) were created from the student accounts and these are associated with *What reflection means*, *Learning from Mistakes*, *Doing Better* and *This is Hard*. Each of these themes is discussed below.

5.2.1 Discussion of L7 students' experiences of reflection

5.2.1.1 What reflection means

The first theme represented in diagram 5.2 concerns the students' interpretation of the meaning of reflection. In response to direct questioning concerning the meaning attached to reflection, these L7 students presented diverse meanings in terms of their understanding of what reflection is about. There was no precise common understanding shared between these students and this echoes the variety of meanings and associated concepts in the literature created by Dewey (1910,1916,1933,1938), Mezirow (1991) and Brookfield (1995, 2000) discussed in Chapters Two, and Schön (1983) and Foucault (2002, 2007) and Usher and Edwards (1994), cited in Chapter Three. I propose here that this might suggest that students understand the concept of reflection in unique and individual ways and that this should be borne in mind by educators and curriculum designers. Despite the lack of clarity regarding common meaning, a

shared element was the sense that reflection involved being retrospective, looking back and examining past experience with an aim of self-improvement. The lack of clarity regarding the definition of the notion of reflective learning echoes Moon (2004), Black and Plowright (2010) and Rose (2016) findings that the term reflection is used frequently in literature across disciplines without qualification, on the assumption that it is a unified concept. However, the L7 students' accounts (italicised) suggest that the assumption of shared meanings may be erroneous. The lack of shared understanding amongst each of the L7 students demonstrates the subjective construction of the concept amongst these undergraduates. In response to being questioned about experience and learning, each of these L7 students was able to articulate the relationship between past experience and future learning in meaningful ways:

> *I think even if you can look back at what you have done or…maybe I should have done this or done that way or going forward you know like see for the next time. I want to get an A [grade], so I am going to do it this way. So, I think they [past and future] are related (Ali1:198).*

The quote demonstrates, for this student, reflection on experience and particularly past performance as key to future performance. There is a long history in the literature on learning, of associating learning with increased self-knowledge and transformation of understanding. The process of making meaning from experience is deconstructed in the writings of Dewey (1933), Schön (1983), and Mezirow (1991) presented in Chapters Two and Three, which detail that an event or situation beyond the individual's typical experience must occur if the reflective process is to be triggered. For example, according to Rogers (2001), Schön (1983) stated that the reflective process is triggered by situations of complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness or values-conflict; Mezirow (1991) contended that reflection occurs only when one experiences difficulty in understanding a situation or requires guidance. Dewey (1933) also identified the presence of a triggering event but described it in terms of the response of the individual. He stated that reflective thought involves "a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity [or] mental difficulty" (Dewey, 1933:12). This represents the Deweyan notion of making an experience or environment sensible and meaningful to ourselves. Both Dewey (1933) and Mezirow (1991) indicated that

the intent of reflection is to integrate the understanding gained into one's experience in order to enable better choices or actions in the future as well to enhance one's overall effectiveness. Overall, the L7 accounts, exemplified by the one above, resemble this interpretation in terms of reflecting on experience in order to inform present choices that will influence future experiences. In addition, the student above, as did each of the others, seemed to use mistakes, weaknesses or poor performance as a trigger for reflection for improved performance and it is specifically the role of mistakes and poor performance that formed the second theme created from the L7 accounts.

5.2.1.2 Learning from Mistakes and Doing Better

In addition to the L7 students' accounts of reflection as meaning making and following the theories of Dewey (1933), Schön (1983) and Mezirow (1991), each of these L7 students shared a belief in self-improvement and identified this as the main aim of reflection. All the L7 students were familiar with and accepting of the notion of the self as an object to be evaluated, deconstructed, developed and enhanced. This was most readily identified in the themes *Learning from Mistakes* and *Doing Better*. Specifically, *Learning from Mistakes* described a process where one could seek to avoid failure and disappointment, looking back at performance in order to identify weaknesses or overcome barriers in order to seek successful strategies. In contrast, *Doing Better* it seemed to me, was about moving forward, making progress. Whereas *Learning from Mistakes* was about identifying weaknesses, *Doing Better* seemed more about taking action to combat weaknesses. *Learning from Mistakes* might have been an associated strand of *Doing Better* but *Doing Better* seemed a broader theme. It also referred to improvement, enhancement, challenging and extending a student's skills mix in order to develop oneself:

> *I know I have got a weakness and it's something that could hold me back, it's something that would massively hold anybody back…so for me that's always a weakness and a hindrance if I let it be. So, for me I always want to try and be better and get better. That's the way I've always been like… driven that way (Jamie1:130).*

The comment above suggested, and was indicative of all the others in the group, that the student acknowledged the purpose of reflection as self-improvement

and continued to relate this to the way they are 'driven'. This link between reflection and self-improvement can be found in similar studies relating to the reflective experiences of students studying sociology (Rusche and Jason, 2011) and more recently, student teachers (Meierdirk 2017). Asked about learning in a work context, another student illustrated the focus on self-improvement:

> *It [work] was all reflections. So it was all like right what went well? What do you need to do? What do you need to get better at your job? Or what are you lacking? So you were always thinking about ways to move forward… (Ali1:33).*

Interestingly both quotes go beyond pointing to self-improvement in terms of 'moving forward' as the main purpose of reflection. Both these accounts include reference to 'what are you lacking', 'weakness' and 'hindrance' indicating that the self being reflected upon is thought about in terms of both strengths and deficits to be developed. The students' accounts discussed here echo Dewey's (1933) view of drawing on experience to make sense of current experience in order to learn for future experiences. I propose that these L7 students seem to share Dewey's view that the main purpose of learning is for the future. In these L7 students' accounts I believe, it is for a future self in terms of academic performance, that reflection is undertaken. One student explained the purpose of reflection is to '*better myself and specifically what areas I would like to better myself'* (Jamie1:91).

Another student spoke of reflection as they '*strive to do better'* (Ali1:215) and yet another spoke of the motivation behind reflection being '*to get the best out of what you can do*' (MacKenzie1: 102). However, in contrast to Dewey 1933) who saw reflection as an activity to support intellectual freedom, each of these L7 students seem to link reflection to self-development in terms of understanding and skills. Interestingly, in both Dewey's theory (1910,1916, 1933,1938) and Mezirow's (2000), the unit of reflection is the experience and the purpose of reflection is to challenge taken-for-granted thinking and understanding, whereas the unit of reflection for these students is the self and the purpose of reflection is to improve or develop the self. Drawing on this difference, I would argue that the absence of examples of reflection for intellectual freedom (Dewey 1916) or for perspective transformation (Mezirow 2000) in these student accounts, alongside the presence of self-evaluation in

student examples, suggests that these L7 students experience reflection in ways in which the self of the postmodern condition, discussed in Chapter Three, is the focus of their development. This suggests that their use of reflection is more attuned to the concepts of responsibilisation and governmentality discussed in that Chapter.

Similarly, it is interesting to note that for the L7 students, improvement centred on themselves as individual learners. All students could articulate the improvements in relation to '*becoming more disciplined'*, '*broadening self-knowledge'*,' *critical thinking'*, '*improving motivation'*, '*increasing confidence and competence'* in academic tasks. This could be viewed as further confirmation of responsibilisation and governmentality of the self-suggested by Foucault (2002, 2007) and Usher and Edwards (1994) as discussed in Chapter Three. Each of the L7 students created a view of themselves using the lens of self-reflection to identify strengths, weaknesses and deficits in order to view themselves as objects or a work in progress. Having used reflection to identify the 'truth' about themselves, they all use reflection to evaluate their own performance in order to better adapt to the needs of the employer. The students' accounts are rich in examples of viewing learning as individualistic and resulting from rational reflection. Their accounts intimate that they use reflection as a monitoring and evaluative device to discipline themselves and their learning behaviours. The individual, economic nature of benefits voiced by the L7 cohort contrasts with L10 students and I discuss this later in section 5.7.

5.2.1.3 This is Hard

During the first interviews, all the L7 students acknowledged a variety of issues, which proved problematic in terms of reflective learning. These are captured in the theme *This is Hard* depicted in diagram 5.2. The theme comprises problems and tensions these students experienced around reflection. Essentially these problems were further categorised into three subthemes comprising tensions around performance, group work and locating reflection alongside disciplinary knowledge. The first subtheme included anxiety associated with dealing with embarrassing or negative performance:

> *Em…well…sometimes…if you have a presentation for example and it went really bad and you got really embarrassed and you don't want to reflect on that. You just want to push it as far back as you can and just like say next time is going to be better (MacKenzie1:190).*

Existing studies by Langley and Brown (2010) and Stewart (2012) highlight that some students experience difficulty understanding the aims of the reflective experience. In some existing studies, participants report having experienced discomfort at some point in the process due to either having to do a type of task they are not accustomed to or the demands of the learning and assessment activities. In particular, Turner and Beddoes (2007) highlight the novelty of students having to think about their beliefs and attitudes, while Bush and Bissell (2008) and Stewart (2012) emphasize the complexity of exploring emotions. In response to questions about emotions connected to reflection, each of the L7 students regularly offered examples of challenging issues. One student suggested that sometimes reflection on learning could be painful or uncomfortable for an individual:

> *I'm quite a positive person I'm really always thinking positive so I don't mind that [reflection] but I think everyone has like moments in their life when they are like no I don't want to think about that anymore. I just want to forget it and put it aside (MacKenzie1:180).*

The above quote, which is also reflected in comments made by one of the others, suggested to me that some students might be tempted to avoid reflection on negative experiences and this would be concerning if such experiences were helpful in terms of personal growth and development. According to Pennebaker and Graybeal (2001), reflection on such experiences can help individuals make sense of their emotions and actions during times of distress in order to achieve understanding of problems and self. The L7 students did provide examples of occasions in learning when they took a superficial approach to reflection because they found the process difficult. One student's answer to the difficulties is given below:

> *I know sometimes it's a case of we've got to do this. Let's just do it and that's it get it done, get it ticked. And that's basically the bottom line…get it out the way (Jamie1:236).*

This student seemed to suggest that in some instances, reflection was viewed as a necessary but unpleasant task, which was undertaken superficially in order to

move on to activities that were more palatable. This would be especially concerning if, as Pennebaker and Graybeal (2001) argue, students superficially reflect or avoid reflection on such experiences and consequently, they may miss out important insights into personal development and deny themselves improvements in wellbeing.

According to Tsai and Lau (2012), there are important cultural variabilities in responses to reflection on negative personal experience and this raises questions for me about student experiences of reflection on negative performance in different cultural domains. Both issues pertaining to student anxieties about reflection on negative performance and cross-cultural factors affecting student experiences of reflection are revisited in Chapter Six where implications for further research are discussed.

Three of the first-year students raised anxieties about what to write and how to deal with individual weaknesses. Ghaye (2000:6), referring to this phenomenon, commented that reflective practices can be 'quite threatening' as they raise 'difficult personal, professional and organisational issues'. One of the L7 students clearly voiced emotions around reflecting on weaknesses:

> *Let's be honest, who is going to say oh I'm not good at this or I'm not good at that? Nobody likes it, nobody likes to say well I know I'm rubbish at this, I'm rubbish at that (Jamie2:216).*

Quotes like this, which were repeated by a further two students, seemed to indicate that some of these L7 undergraduates interviewed found the introspective approach difficult. The struggles each of the three L7 students offered, echo earlier studies presented by Boud and Walker (2002) and I propose the struggles call for considerations of authority, trust and deep thought in assessing reflection. This is also in line with language teaching research undertaken by Gunn (2010) which previously referred to anxieties around reflecting on weaknesses. I return to this issue later in the next Chapter looking at implications for the business curriculum.

Secondly, group work also seemed a strong element of the *This is Hard* theme, with two students discussing tensions involved in reflecting on group work. Both these L7 students saw reflection on teamwork as a source of potential offense to group members and both students seemed to want to avoid drama and conflict

with other team members. This is demonstrated in the comment from one L7 student:

> *I also think that it's really hard to reflect in a group because especially if we do group work in our class obviously most of the time that's your friends or… like you don't want to offend anyone so even if I'm not happy with what the person did, I probably wouldn't say because I wouldn't want to have any drama (MacKenzie1:226).*

The second objective of the research stated in Chapter One was to consider how students could be supported pedagogically to more deeply engage with reflection and the quote above suggested that some students might need support and direction particularly in instances where they are required to reflect on group work involving colleagues and friends. The difficulties experienced by students regarding group work have been previously explored by Hillyard et al. (2011:10) who found that many educators view group work in terms of a general belief that students gain valuable experiences in groups across the curriculum. 'They [educators] seem to assume that experience alone would increase students' skills and abilities to learn in groups'. As a result, the use of group work has increased considerably in HE (Cumming et al.2015). Despite the assumed benefits, Hillyard et al. (2010) found that group work experience alone does not result in positive or meaningful learning. Lizzio and Wilson (2005), Payne and Monk-Turner (2006), Strauss et al. (2014) and MacFarlane's (2016) previous research on group work suggests that students may be troubled by multiple complexities in group activities including free-riding behaviour, workload distribution, communication difficulties and group management. The student providing the above quote clearly expresses anxiety regarding the possibility of causing offence to other students through reflection on group work. One other L7 student expressed similar worries and given these remarks I propose that assessment based on reflections on group work might be a source of additional concern for students. The issues these L7 students present about reflection on group work mirror those that are discussed more broadly in the existing theoretical literature.

As previously noted in Chapter Two, Brookfield (1995) observed that 1) *taken-for-granteds* in social groupings were functional and questioning them could bring about a sense of uncertainty, and 2) that things were complicated to a degree that makes personal or collective team work more difficult. Becoming

critically reflective, group members could find themselves more in conflict with colleagues because of critical questioning and perceive that they had lost the sense of community in group work they might have enjoyed up until then. Reynolds later elaborated that collegiate relations could be undermined if individuals were 'marginalised because they had come to be seen as disruptive or disloyal' (2011:12) and the possibility of 'marginalisation' from 'disloyalty' in reflection on group work was suggested by both the first-year students who raised the issue of reflection on group work.

A third subtheme of the *This is Hard* theme dealt with locating reflection alongside disciplinary knowledge. Three of the first-year students struggled to make sense of the relationship between disciplinary knowledge, understanding and reflective activities. In terms of theoretical literature, both Schön (1983) and Eraut (2004) have highlighted how experiences become meaningful through reflecting on these and integrating tacit or practically gained knowledge with other forms of knowledge, like propositional or conceptual knowledge, so that what has been learned can be criticised, tested and revised. However, the position and importance of the relationship between reflection and the construction of disciplinary knowledge appeared to cause some students anxiety. As one of the L7 students elaborated:

> *That was quite a big problem for a lot of us in the class because it was really hard to link the personal development planning (PDP) to the contemporary issues part in the first trimester. No one actually knew what all that was about so from my opinion the PDP that is like my personal thing and then contemporary issues is completely separate (MacKenzie1:111).*

Building on work of Laurillard (2002), Anderson and Day (2005) and Anderson and Hounsell (2007), it can be helpful to educators encouraging reflection to acknowledge that academic learning is not directly experienced but is mediated by the bodies of knowledge, world-views and specific practices of disciplinary communities. Therefore, the anxiety these three students experienced, positioning reflection alongside subject content, might reflect the distinctive discipline-specific approaches to building knowledge and literacies (Phan 2008, Freebody et al. 2008, Speight et al. 2013, Barton and Ryan 2014). Student anxieties may mirror how reflective learning has become abstract from the creation of disciplinary knowledge. In other words, some disciplines might lend

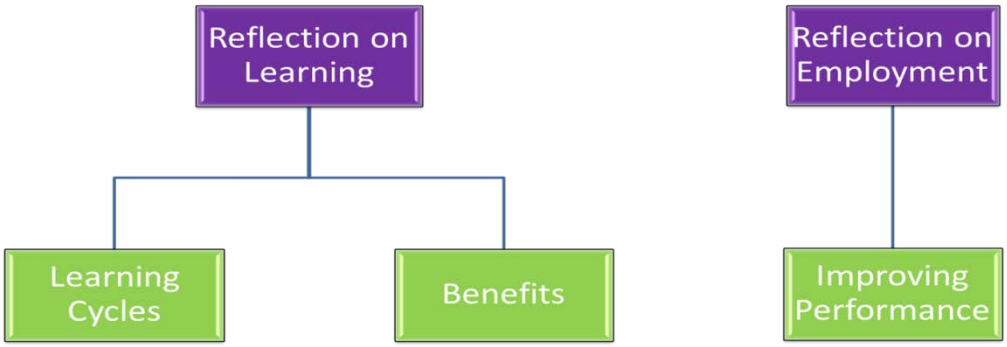
themselves more readily to the construction and support for reflective learning, whereas other disciplines might find it more difficult to scaffold (Hains-Wesson and Young 2017). This seems particularly relevant when contemplating pedagogical support to support student experience of reflection and I explore this later in the next Chapter by considering support for both business educators teaching reflection and students locating reflection within the undergraduate business curriculum. Anxieties, pain and discomfort associated with reflection are already well discussed in the literature (Dewey 1916, Mezirow 2000, Brookfield 2000) presented in Chapter Two and these L7 students' experiences support the view taken by Brookfield (1995:22) who explained the source of pain and uncertainty in terms of an 'unsettling, painful struggle in which glimpses of insight alternate with confusion, uncertainty and ambiguity'.

In summary, the L7 experiences of reflection consisted of diverse and individual conceptions of reflection associated with themes *Learning from Mistakes* and *Doing Better*. Their accounts disclosed problems associated with performance, group work and disciplinary knowledge. The student discussion and examples of reflection returned repeatedly to instances of reflection in both learning and employment contexts. Listening to their experiences, I began to formulate follow up questions around the two contexts the students spoke of - reflection on learning and reflection on employment. I wanted to explore more deeply their specific experiences of reflection in and on each context. I then followed up with a second interview.

5.3 Second Interviews with L7 students

As explained above and in Chapter Four, second individual interviews were held in order to develop my understanding of the context of student reflection. I read the L7 transcripts to identify codes and concepts I thought were present. In the second interviews, individually students were presented with 87 codes and concepts on card that they could choose from. Some of these concepts are presented in Appendix 5. The students were asked to select approximately 6 cards relating to reflection connected with learning and reflection associated with employment. Having made choices, the students were asked to explain their choices and clustering of concepts, noting particular orders or groupings.

Diagram 5.3 L7 themes and subthemes from second interviews



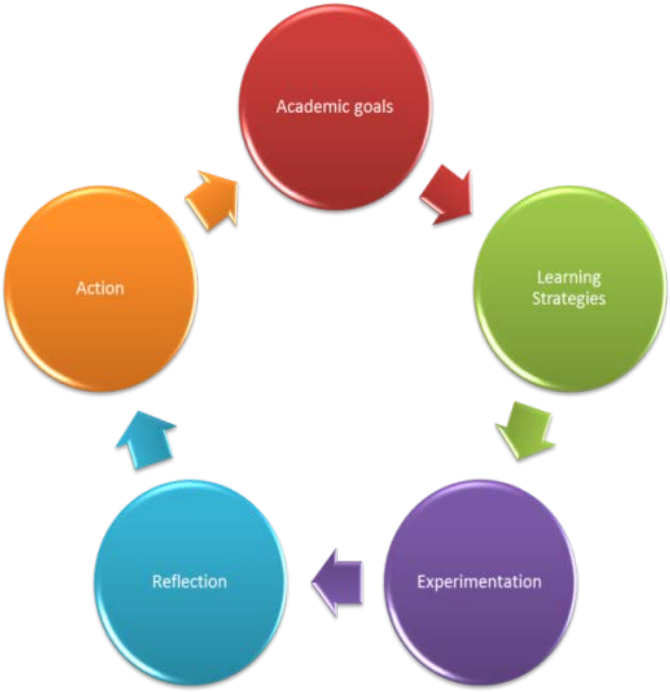
In response to questions relating to reflection in learning, the L7 students spoke of the process and content of reflection. Their discussion centred on a *Learning Cycle* including goal setting, strategic decision-making, acknowledged *Benefits* in terms of *Improving Performance*. These are shown as subthemes in the above diagram. The L7 students' experiences of reflection on employment are discussed in section 5.4.

5.3.1 Reflection in learning

As indicated in Chapter Two, there is a well-documented consensus, which views reflection as a methodology that improves learning (Dewey 1938, Mezirow 1991, Brookfield 1995). The research results indicated that this approach notably contributes to raising students' awareness of their own learning, and identifying both positive and improvable aspects of their abilities in and attitudes towards learning. Overall, the L7 students talked about reflection associated with learning as being a cycle of activity taking the form explained in Diagram 5.4.

5.3.2 Learning cycle

Diagram 5.4 L7 cycle of learning



The *Learning Cycle* created from the students' responses contained Schönian (1983) elements of reflection in and on action. According to Wilson (2008), both elements are rooted in the notion of experiential learning. That is, they both linked theory and practice in a cycle; theory informed, and was tested by putting it into practice and the practice exposed the theory to intense scrutiny, identifying those parts of the theory that worked and those that did not work. Thus, the theory was refined and improved through practical application (Dewey, 1938).

With reference to reflection on learning, all of the students spoke of the importance of academic goals which invariably included reference to 'just passing' at the beginning of the academic session, becoming more strategic and including reference to 'improved grades' and 'A grades' by the end of the academic session. For these students, the journey of self-improvement started with goal setting and this was the benchmark against which performance would be measured. Once goals had been set, learning strategies were devised to achieve these goals. Each of the students spoke of the need to identify learning

strategies that worked, identifying those that they found difficult or did not work well. For example, Mackenzie explained:

> *You try the strategies and see what works out. Which leads you to changing attitudes because you see what works best for you (MacKenzie2:142).*

It appeared to me that the logic which informed a comment like the one above, was that knowledge was viewed by students as actively determined by activities and methods employed by themselves and that learning resulted from experimenting with strategies which reflection enabled to be fed back into the goal setting process. In contrast, for Dewey, this would be a trial and error mode of experience that involved little or no reflection. The relationship between strategy and academic performance was also clearly stated by student Ali:

> *For me if I can get that [reflection] right in my head then that will improve my grades and then that will develop my confidence (Ali2:109).*

These extracts, which are similarly expressed by the rest of the group, demonstrated that these L7 students understood a simple interdependent relationship between academic performance and active independent learning activities. Joan's comment further supports this view:

> *To improve my grades, I reflect a lot on what I could do to get better. I use a lot of strategies of looking at past work and seeing what other students have produced, because I'm an evening student I don't have a big circle of people to bat off of (Joan2:286).*

Comments like these seemed indicative of the relationship students assumed between reflection and academic success. Here again students reiterated the cyclical nature of the linkages between goals, strategies, academic performance, and academic development. MacKenzie discussing learning strategies, defined the cycle:

> *All of this leads you to your new academic goals. Because you develop confidence, which is important I think and …that leads you to improving your grades, then to improving academic performance and prepares you for the future. Because you know what strategies work best for you and you know how to motivate yourself and how to change your attitude (MacKenzie1:155).*

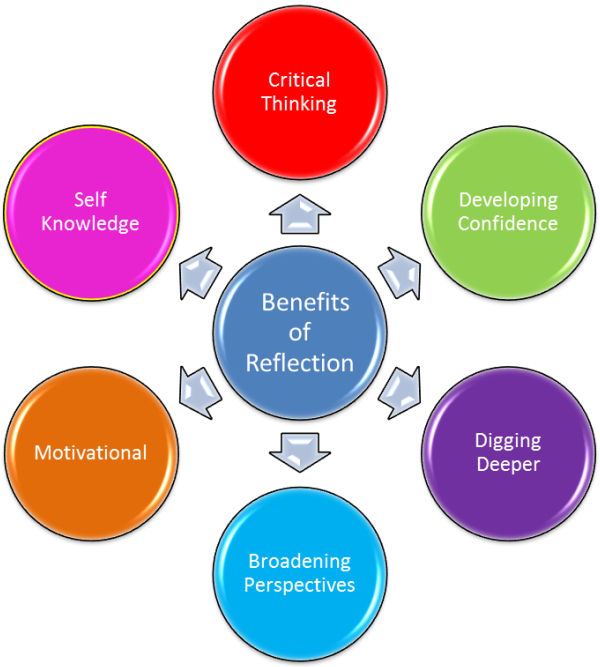
These comments reiterated the final step in most theoretical approaches; taking action based on the reflective process. Previously in Chapter Two, I noted that Dewey (1933) described this as testing and In Chapter Three I explained that Schön (1983) defined this activity as carrying out an experiment to generate new understanding of the phenomenon. Such comments illustrated for me, the personal responsibility each of the four L7 students felt in managing their own learning journeys. For me, they were indicative of approaches of autonomous, self-directed learners taking responsibility for the process of learning. However, such a cycle is not without critics. Wilson (2008) argued that cycles like the one detailed by these L7 participants, offers inadequate consideration of reflection on the future, such that the process risked limiting the participants' understanding of a natural human condition, as a means of improving future performance. He warned 'yet, if the process of reflective practice is undertaken systematically and without overt and explicit consideration of the future we are limiting the potential for the development of professionals' (183). This criticism, plus other implications arising from business practitioners lacking reflective faculties, is further explored in the next Chapter.

Both the context in which reflection takes place and the type and level of student have been found by Epp (2008) to be important factors in its success. There is a widely held perception that first-year students have poor reflective skills at this early stage. While reflection has been incorporated into professional and vocational training, supported by professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2016) and Chartered Management Institute (2016), some commentators have questioned whether reflection in education is always advantageous to learning. Specifically, Akbari (2007) doubted that there is empirical evidence of an improvement in performance. Despite this doubt, the major outcome of reflection as either stated or implied by most authors is learning. Mezirow (1991) in particular, developed this relationship further in contending that reflection could lead to transformative learning—a process he described as resulting in new or transformed meaning schemes and perspectives. As discussed earlier in Chapter Two of this dissertation, transformation theorists have written extensively explaining how reflection can lead to 'significant and irreversible changes' in learning (Hoggan et al. 2016:17). Thus, reflection can enable individuals to change their habits of

expectation and, as a result, develop perceptions that are more accurate, avoid premature cognitive commitments, and achieve greater flexibility and creativity. In short, as individuals learn through reflection, they are able to enhance their overall personal and professional effectiveness (Di Stefano et al. 2016). The next section explores the participants' accounts of the benefits of reflection.

5.3.3 Benefits of reflective learning

Diagram 5.5 Benefits cited by L7 participants



L7 participants cited the benefits of this kind of learning cycle as a mix of critical thinking, broadening perspectives, being able to adopt critical faculties and developing confidence as a learner. Ali identified the benefits of reflection as:

> *That's been like a big thing for me just to try and broaden my thinking and my knowledge and getting different perspectives and things like that (Ali2:115).*

She continued to cite reflection as the source of deeper understanding of issues:

> *I do sort of like to dig deeper and like to look at the bigger picture and get different views on things (Ali2:174).*

Quotes like the two above suggest that three of the L7 participants could identify transformations within themselves in both cognitive and extra rational domains of transformative learning theory (Cranton 2013). The benefits participants cited include reference to both rational (Mezirow 1991, 2006, 2009) and emotional aspects (Dirkx 2010) of transformation.

Participants also cited the motivational aspects of reflection on learning claiming:

It affects your confidence and develops your confidence (Joan2:337).

In the international context, different studies have focused on the educational outcomes of reflection, mostly in the field of medicine and the health sciences (Turner and Beddoes 2007, Langley and Brown 2010, Vivekananda-Schmidt et al., 2011). These existing studies have argued that students who have participated in reflective learning experiences were able to develop a greater awareness of their learning and were more critical and creative (Turner and Beddoes 2007). Research by Langley and Brown (2010) demonstrated that reflection also allowed them to identify positive and improvable aspects of their own attitudes towards learning and the profession while increasing their motivation towards learning. Vivekananda-Schmidt et al.'s (2011) study further suggested that students recognised writing as an element that helped deepen understanding of those situations, which provided the basis for reflection and considered reflective diary writing as an aid to better relate theory and practice, clarify the profession, develop coping skills for practical situations and provide a better understanding of new information. Thus, the benefits of reflection highlighted by these L7 students were similar to those already noted in existing studies.

In terms of the outcomes of thinking, Dewey (1933) clearly believed that '...education...is vitally concerned with cultivating the attitude of reflective thinking, preserving it where it already exists, and changing looser methods of thought into stricter ones whenever possible' (1933: 78). He also contended that learning included both retention of information and the comprehension of that information in terms of the relationships of the various pieces to one another. Comprehension is only possible through '...constant reflection upon the meaning of what is studied' (1933:79). This implied that the overall outcome of

reflective thinking was knowledge. Schön (1983) in his work also identified several outcomes of reflection-in-action. These included a new understanding of situations of uncertainty, more effective coping with divergent situations of practice, a new theory or frame, a change in a troublesome situation, and the acquisition of professional knowledge. These outcomes implied that learning happened through the process of reflection-in-action and the next section considers more deeply how the L7 participants identified the benefits of reflection.

Looking across the group accounts, the L7 participants discussed the benefits of reflection on learning as broadening knowledge, developing different perspectives and development of more questioning or critical faculties. Jamie's comment below demonstrated the significance of these changes:

> *I don't just pick up something and say oh that must be true. That's what I mean. I'm kind of reading things and I'm thinking what if that's true or…maybe not… in my notebook I'll write things even things youse are saying …and I'll always put question marks beside it (Jamie2:350).*

I would argue that this particular example, echoed Mezirow's (1991) suggestion that the process leads to a new interpretation involving a change in the individual's meaning schemes or a transformation of meaning perspectives. As detailed in Chapter Three, Schön (1983) also implied that a change in thinking occurs when reflection leads to new understanding or a new theory or frame. Reflection as a means of identifying, scrutinizing and reconstituting the assumptions that underlie one's thoughts and actions has also been proposed by Brookfield (1990). Using these writings as a lens, the individual student's reflection on their own learning seems, therefore, to be an important aspect of student experience and it is one that is also highlighted in research by Langley and Brown (2010), Turner and Beddoes (2007) and Williams and Wessel (2004). The L7 participants' experiences also indicated that this awareness did not occur only in relation to the process of learning itself but went further to also contribute to increasing self-knowledge and one's own competences and abilities. In this respect, the experiences of the L7 participants support earlier work by Jeffrey and McCrae (2004) who reported that student reflection was often linked with economic objectives of third parties. Interestingly, it was noticeable that none of the L7 participants could provide detailed, specific or

rich examples of having become more critical within modules. When asked about transformations participants claimed were the result of reflection, all of the participants struggled to provide specific evidence of how they had come to challenge underlying disciplinary assumptions or approaches. These results are similar to those of McKay and Dunn's (2015) research, which suggested that first-year students' developmental reflective journals were predominantly descriptions of learning rather than evidence of reflection on connections between theory and experience. The results also supported McNaughton's (2016) research suggesting first-year health students' reflections did not translate into critical reflection. The lack of specific examples of disciplinary criticality may confirm Lucas and Tan's (2013) suggestion that students are slow to author their own understandings and knowledge, hindering capacity for critical reflection. If it is true, that these students have learned to claim critical broadened knowledge, plurality of perspectives, transformative and critical thinking as the outcomes of reflection, yet remain unprepared to critically challenge disciplinary conventions and practices, this has implications for professional practice and I examine this further in Chapter Six.

5.4 Reflection on employment

Second interviews with the L7 participants were also used to further explore the dimension associated with reflections on employment. As diagram 5.3 shows, this research session was designed to capture the participant constructions of reflection in and on employment. As students of business, one might have expected these participants to be aware of the benefits reflection could bring to employers and organisations. Indeed, each of the L7 participants talked about reflection adding value to teams and individual performance in the workplace. Talking about the importance of reflection on work, Ali stated that:

> *That's something that from my own personal point of view that I would always want to strive to add something to the workplace, to my team, to a colleague, to my customers so I see it for me to be an important part anywhere that you work…(Ali2:29).*

In a different way, another participant highlighted adding value was also associated with reflection on work as:

> *Adding value because I think every job you do adds value to yourself in one kind of way and even if it's a really awful job you're still like you are still learning something about yourself. And then prepares you to your future (MacKenzie2:91).*

Comments like this one from MacKenzie imply that learning from the workplace could spill over from individual increased self-understanding to preparation for future learning benefiting employing organisations. The comments above suggest participants felt that goal setting was an important part of the process of adding value in the workplace although all stated that in their experience, targets were '*filtered down' (Ali2:27).* The goals then became operationalised via personal development planning and overall appraisal process. This was clearly seen by the L7 participants as fundamental to the process of self-improvement to add value to the organisation. Self-improvement was noted to be the type that would allow the student to achieve organisational targets. All of the L7 participants cited reflection as being the mechanism via which organisations could improve performance. There is considerable literature including that of Knipfer et al., (2013) and Nansubuga and Munene (2013a, 2013b) which argues that reflection is the driving force behind organisational learning. In particular, Knipfer et al. (2013), specifically revealed how individuals and teams 'sharing (preliminary) reflective thoughts and reflection outcomes more systematically provides the basis for developing best practice and knowledge creation within an organisation' (2013:41). In a similar vein, Nansubuga and Munene's study emphasised how the process of unlearning and relearning enabled the individual to consciously frame and reframe both complex and ambiguous problems within the work context. In terms of this particular study, participant accounts were rich in ways that individuals and teams could be advantaged through reflection. Looking across the first-year participants' examples, students cited individual benefits like *'become more disciplined' (Jamie1:350),* and '*knowing my strengths better' (MacKenzie1:52)* and detailed how these insights would '*benefit an employer' (MacKenzie1:318)* or '*contributing to targets' (Joan1:120).* Thus, noted benefits of reflection included discussion of individual and organisational benefits. Individual gains were identified in terms of becoming more confident in the learning environment, improving competence and broadening understanding.

Participants also acknowledged the importance of learning from others through sharing reflection:

> *I think it helps to talk about it because then I can actually ask for like 'oh do you know what I can do about that?' and probably that person has a really good way of he or she does it. So I can actually benefit from that (MacKenzie1:190).*

The participant response above indicates that 'spillover effects' are both accepted and widely recognised aspects of reflection for these business students. All first-year participants highlighted efficiency gains in teamwork, productivity and performance. Again, these findings were supported by some of the literature on organisational development. Specifically, Knipfer et al. (2013: 48) claim that 'reflection may lead to more flexible work routines and higher performance in a rapidly changing work context'. The spillover from individual learning to organisation became one of the most established and important elements of this dimension of reflection on employment. For example, Ali felt that self-improvement was almost a guiding factor in how to live her life:

> *I just think it's always good to set yourself goals and to try and improve what you're doing. These ones again could be management targets or sort of personal goals, motivation, achieving aspirations it's just…what I think about when I think about the future. Where I'm going to be, what I'm going to do. How I'm going to be constantly improving on where I am (Ali2:58).*

Her comments suggest that reflection on self is a perpetual cycle and this is borne out by established bodies of literature. In particular, Rogers (2001) reminded me that the process of reflection did not always have a defined beginning and end. Thus, he argued it should be viewed as continuous, much like an ever-expanding spiral in which challenging situations lead to reflection and ultimately to new interpretations or understanding. In turn, these new understandings may then lead to new challenges and additional reflection. Each new experience with reflection should lead the individual to broadened and deepened understanding, an enhanced array of choices and a more sophisticated capacity to choose among these choices and implement them effectively. Using this insight as a lens, I propose that the comments exemplified by the one above might reveal how these participants had internalised the concept of self-improvement associated with responsibilisation and governmentality referred to

in Chapter Three. L7 participants discussed concepts of self-improvement and managing oneself frequently. MacKenzie suggested that:

> *It is supposed to be the manager who says what I'm supposed to do or how I should reach my targets. But in the end I have to be able to do that myself like I have to be able to say alright I get this target, how am I going to do this? (MacKenzie2:102).*

The assumptions inherent in this quote suggested to me that MacKenzie accepted the right of managers to delegate the achievement of targets to employees and implied that this was viewed by the student as natural and part and parcel of professional practice. Joan reiterated the concept of taking individual responsibility for work performance by adding that:

> *When I feel as if I failed it's something I will find a way to, it will annoy me and I will find a way to either re-educate or get support to deal it or take some action to make it right to avoid it happening to me again (Joan2:228).*

Combining both elements of self-improvement and managing oneself might suggest how attuned these first-year business students were to the needs of employers. The responsibilisation references from the two participants above could be interpreted as evidence of Foucauldian performativity of business graduates and the implications of this for business practice are discussed in the next Chapter. The participant experiences were similar to those found previously by Edwards and Usher who suggested that HE had replaced the idea of the 'enlightened student' with that of 'autonomous/self-directed/flexible lifelong learners' (Edwards and Usher, 2000:55). Their research together with the emphasis on responsibilisation and performativity in these first-year accounts could suggest that HE has a new direction and purpose – meeting employment needs rather than learning for its own sake.

The experiences reported by the L7 participants sit comfortably within the discourse on reflection as professionalisation discussed in Chapter Three, which stresses the importance of the development of marketable skills in HE and wider employability discourse which requires graduates prioritise the ability to 'hit the ground running' in employment immediately after graduation (Arrow 1997, Clegg 2010, McEwan and Trede 2014). According to Arrow's (1997) perspective on human capital, HE had a formative role to play in providing individuals with skills

and preparing them for efficient decision-making, increased productivity and even greater capacity to enjoy leisure. Those who have adopted this perspective argue that when graduates possessed the desired human capital they would be rewarded with good jobs and a significant increase in earnings over their working lifetime (Steel and Sausman 1997). This economic argument was in itself, an elaboration of the notion that modern organisations increasingly rely on knowledge-driven business (Brown et al. 2004, Smetherham 2006). According to Brown and Tannock (2009:388), HE has been diminished to a panacea on the assumption that it provided individuals with the opportunity to 'get ahead, to secure a high wage, comfortable standard of living and quality of life'.

Taking a similar approach, Keeley (2007) maintained that submitting to the logic that 'more education leads to more human capital leads to more growth' loses sight of the bigger picture of HE. Basing the future of HE on this narrow economic context, HE runs the risk of simply focusing on and serving the needs of specific industries. Gallagher's (2001) continued with this line of criticism by noting that the discourse implies that what is to be taught is open to negotiation with employers. More recently, Hyslop-Marginson and Sears (2006:14) maintained that as HE embeds professionalisation more deeply, the moves lead to 'narrow and instrumental teaching practices' whose sole focus is to equip students with transferable employability skills such that in their view, 'neo-liberal education policy reduces learning to a discursive ideological apparatus that encourages student conformity to the market economy' (Hyslop-Marginson and Sears 2006:14).

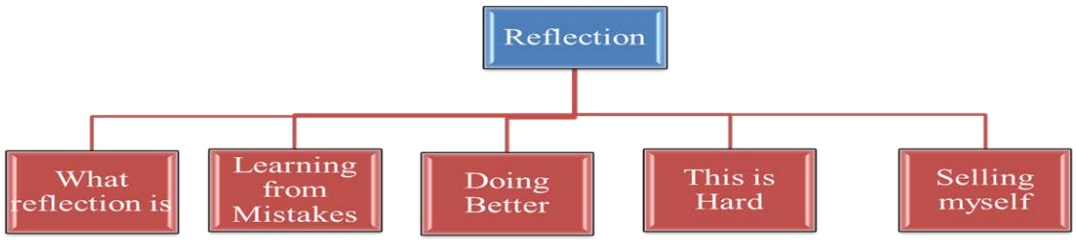
The success of these first-year students in internalising arguments regarding employability in their reflections may, as suggested by Quinlan (2016), be interpreted as supporting a cited amorality and lack of reflexivity within the business curriculum. Analysis of benchmark statements across disciplines suggested the benchmark statement for general business and management (Quality Assurance Agency, 2015) was particularly remarkable in the absence of both self-criticality as a discipline and attention to students' character. The benchmark statement described a largely unproblematised application and use of skills and knowledge. While there were fleeting, one-off references to 'sustainability' and 'corporate social responsibility' (Quality Assurance Agency, 2015:5) and 'ethical factors' these were not elaborated on. According to

Quinlan, within business and management benchmarking the emphasis seemed to be on the success of the organisation one was managing, without reflection on the purposes or impacts on society of the organisation or on an overall sense of values that the organisation or discipline might be serving (2016:1048). In terms of the empirical data, the emphasis these students placed on their own individual narrow and instrumental contribution to business performance combined with the lack of explicit consideration of the wider role of business in global society, might suggest that curriculum designers and educators have focused the business curriculum too narrowly to serve the interests of industry. Further, using the lens of Clegg's work on personal development planning, these L7 participant experiences of reflection could be seen as 'a form of continuing self-surveillance, in which reflecting backwards is harnessed to the remaking of a more serviceable performative self for the future' (2010: 354). The suggestion that business students are being educated to 'deliver to please' rather than think for themselves raises complex issues for business education in the HE sector and the implications for professional practice are addressed in the next Chapter. Having discussed the L7 participants' experiences and how they fit in terms of theoretical literature and existing studies, I now move to consider the L10 participants' experiences in order to explore similarities and differences in their approach.

5.5 L10 Students' Experiences of Reflection

The diagram below highlights the themes and subthemes created from first interviews with the L10 participants.

Diagram 5.6 L10 themes from first interviews



As discussed in Chapter Four, the data was coded and a full summary of codes from first interviews with the four L10 participants is presented in Appendix 9. Initial candidate themes, which captured something important about the data, were reviewed and revised as the process of analysis continued and in analysing the L10 transcripts, five themes were created. These comprise of the four existing L7 themes *What reflection means*, *Learning from Mistakes*, *Doing Better*, *This is Hard* and a new L10 theme referred to as *Selling myself*. Each theme is introduced and explained below.

5.5.1 Discussion of students' experiences of reflection

5.5.1.1 What reflection means

Each of the L10 participants interpreted reflection in a unique and diverse way which when analysed, comprised of reflection in relation to self-evaluation, individual learning styles and skills. One participant interpreted reflection to be concerning course content and the value of educators. In two other cases, reflection on learning was sometimes talked about in terms of enjoyment of the class or how easy or difficult a module was. However, there seemed to be more of a common element around PDP (personal development planning) and self-evaluation (SWOT, SMART goals). For these participants reflection had a detached quality or set apartness, which it seemed, was equated with self-evaluation and self-monitoring. As one L10 participant defined it:

> *So there's been like reflective learning in a sense of looking back and is that like SMART [goals] and SWOT [activities] sort of thing isn't it? Yes so like throughout since first year we have had it (Shadia1:24).*

This comment was indicative of the way these students associated reflection with examination of the self, particularly in relation to strengths and weaknesses. Similarly, another participant elaborated that:

> *…Reflective learning is personally like evaluating how you done something or rather how you feel about how you've learned if that makes sense in any way. That's how I would describe reflective learning (Eva1:52).*

The comments above emphasised how these students could relate themselves to their learning experiences. Both comments and others found in the data

appeared to suggest that these students used reflection as a tool for self-knowledge and to enhance their learning. As noted earlier in Chapter Two, this thinking back on action is akin to Dewey's (1933) notion of reflection as problem-solving, in that reflection referred to the ability to look back critically and imaginatively, to do task analysis, and also to look forward and to do anticipatory planning. In using reflection to enhance self-knowledge, and in a similar fashion to the L7 students, these participants viewed reflection as a process to help them understand their personal skills and experiences. According to Fullana et al. (2016), in-depth reflection can help students to identify positive and negative aspects of themselves in relation to learning and their learning processes. Specifically, Fullana et al.'s research suggested that reflective learning 'notably contributes to raising students' awareness of their own learning, and identifying both positive and improvable aspects of their abilities in and attitudes towards learning' (2016:1018). I suggest this was mirrored in comments made by L10 participants that reflection helped them reflect on what they already knew and relate learning to real-life experiences. One of the participants summed up this process:

> *You can know what you are capable of yourself and also what you are capable of learning and then you can apply it to a professional situation (Eva1:224).*

In this way, each of the final year students formed links between the self, learning and professional practice. Here I would argue that the focus on the self, suggested that both the L7 and L10 participants used reflection as a process that to them, authentically revealed a knowable self, and saw self-examination and self-development as the ultimate goal of their reflections. This I suggest was an interesting dimension of the study, as it seemed to support Foucault's writings as discussed in Chapter Three, which emphasised the more recent relocation of reflection as a tool of governmentality and responsibilisation.

5.5.1.2 Learning from Mistakes and Doing Better

As a theme, *Doing Better* was still present in the L10 participants' accounts but the theme *Learning from Mistakes* was less pronounced. *Doing Better* related to participants viewing themselves as objects which could be improved. This theme also related to improving learning skills, improving work performance and

academic improvement in terms of better grades. One of the L10 participants commented that doing better provided the motivation for reflection:

> *Obviously, reflection on self I feel is good because you can improve so that's my main objective for doing it (Eva1:254).*

The theme *Learning from Mistakes* concerned the assessment of learning or performance from the perspective of past mistakes. This theme defined reflection as being part of revisiting the past or weaknesses with the intention of turning things around so that success was a more likely outcome. One participant explained how learning from mistakes was positioned in terms of reflection:

> *It's so that you can look back and see where the things have went wrong, so you know how to correct them so that you can always kind of say well that went really well… I can use that method again (Sharri1:153).*

Just like the L7 participant constructs of reflection, comments like those above suggested that the L10 participants positioned reflection so that it was tied up with self-improvement and self-development. One of the participants demonstrated how reflection was associated with the ability to observe and make judgements about their own skills and learning:

> *Like you are forced to think about …how you can be better so you're constantly now in a mind-set of how can I be better at this or how can I change the way that I'm acting in this situation? (Shadia1:292).*

The comment suggested to me that both groups of students had moved toward being autonomous learners who could evaluate their performance in order to evaluate their own learning needs. This movement could be important in terms of management learning in particular, as Rigg and Trehan (2008) have explained that as managers reflect, they are likely to display less automated actions and instead evaluate the consequences of their previous actions. This practical knowing, acting and learning enable managers to think critically, evaluate their prior experiences and synthesize new modified competences every time they deliver a given task. I noted previously in Chapter Two, that Dewey (1933) referred to engagement in objective and rigorous inquiry while exploring alternative possibilities as open-mindedness. By questioning their actions, it seemed that these L10 participants were questioning their firmest beliefs and I

would argue that their accounts may be characterized as open-mindedness on their parts. However, as a learning process it also seemed closely related to the culture of performativity discussed in Chapter Three. It is worth noting that both *Learning from Mistakes* and *Doing Better* were less overtly discussed by the final- year participants. Interestingly, within this cohort of participants, there was a new theme, which centred on employability and selling yourself. The students still referred to academic progress and combatting weaknesses but unlike their L7 counterparts, it appeared the L10 participants had developed a clear focus around identifying skills and employability and I explore this new element in subsection 5.5.1.4.

5.5.1.3 This is Hard

According to Duke and Appleton (2000:1557), 'the ability to reflect is developmental and some reflective skills are harder to achieve than others'. It was therefore unsurprising, that the problems associated with reflection discussed by L7 participants were mirrored by those of the L10 participants. All the L10 students seemed to share similar anxieties around dealing with failure or embarrassing incidents. Tensions with group work and the dilemma around weaknesses and honesty was raised again. One of the L10 participants encapsulated this:

> *I don't necessarily like it because I don't think like… a lot of people have got that shyness in them where they don't want to…like pure bum themselves up (Sharri1:153).*

In light of the comment above, I would argue that this discomfort with the process of reflection demonstrated how this kind of work can still provoke anxiety and might indicate that students regardless of year of study require further support to reflect on their own experience. These L10 participant accounts resonate with the findings of Fullana et al. (2016) who claimed that HE still tends to prioritize the procedural and cognitive aspects of learning, leaving aside emotional aspects, which also form part of the experience. In a similar fashion to the L7 accounts analysed earlier, reflecting on group work also presented tensions for each of the L10 participants. One participant spoke about how the experience of reflection on group work overshadowed her reflections on learning:

> *…it just it kind of took over my reflection because I was talking about that rather than the actual module, which was a shame (Eva1:187).*

Another L10 participant spoke of the conflicts involved in group work but also acknowledged how the experience could contribute to learning:

> *I have learned facets of my own personality that I need to modify and adapt… its self-discovery you know …that's the only thing I have got out the group-work. Other than that, it has been just too stressful. But I suppose if that is the point of it… is to deal with conflict (Lacey1:299).*

This type of comment emphasised the pressures these students experienced working with peers. Such pressures were already acknowledged in existing literature. For example, according to both Summers and Volet (2008) and Strauss and Young (2011) uncertainty was created when students were required to work in groups for assessed projects, inducing anxiety which could manifest itself both cognitively and affectively. This was exemplified by a further comment by the same participant:

> *It [group work] was horrible, I was ready for packing it in because it was just a horrible, horrible experience (Lacey1:476).*

Given that both L7 and L10 students cited issues around reflection on group work, I would argue these findings suggested that this kind of reflective activity has implications for how undergraduate students are supported in professional practice and these are considered in Chapter Six.

Another participant raised the question of assumptions about student experiences of reflection:

> *…because I am older, I have reflected on many aspects of my life over the years but if you say to a 17, 18, 19 year old to reflect, you are assuming that they know how to do it and that assumption shouldn't be made. There is a huge demographic of students here you know age, sex, ethnicity … and the assumption shouldn't be made (Lacey1:227).*

The above comment, together with the previous comment, seemed to raise questions about the scaffolding and supports put in place to create learning environments conducive to reflection. The issues raised by these participants in relation to the difficulties involved in reflection are addressed in the concluding Chapter in section 6.4.1.

5.5.1.4 Selling myself

In contrast to their L7 counterparts, the L10 participants appeared to take reflection more as a given with less emphasis on a superficial approach. I would argue that these L10 participants had internalised the arguments around the need to be reflective, taking reflection and sharing reflection as a given in both learning situation and work. As one L10 elaborated:

> *I know that it is important that I have a 'can do' attitude that and that I reflect on all the good grades and all the positivity that I have had… I am full of enterprise and good ideas and stuff... I know that's important now for getting a job (Lacey1:406).*

Like their L7 counterparts, each of the L10 participants saw themselves as objects of self-improvement and enhancement, searching to fit skills and attributes around those desired by employers and in analysing their accounts, I created a new theme from their discussion. It was associated with the idea of self-promotion or self-branding and selling yourself as a package to an employer. I propose this could be seen in the narrow employability related definition of reflection provided by one of the L10 participants:

> *[Reflection] is looking at it [performance] from an academic point of view and also your life in general and what you have done to essentially make you more employable (Shadia1:35).*

The same participant also presented further evidence of reflection on the attainment of graduate skills:

> *You learn about what you can bring out of yourself to the employer and what's relevant and what's important, what kind of skill set is important for employers (Shadia1:101).*

The focus of reflection on graduate skills could have in fact mirrored the curriculum emphasis on employability at Level 10 in the business programme. As Barrie (2006) has noted, the HE sector has significantly expanded efforts to respond to employer expectations of graduate attributes. In addition, previous research by Kalfa and Taksa (2015) acknowledged that a range of factors including employers' influences on definitions of skill had an increasing impact on student learning in experiences of business HE. Here I questioned whether the issue of employability was perhaps no more than a latent assumption underpinning L7 talk of skills development, whereas the idea of selling oneself

was more clearly articulated by the L10 participants, who were more attuned to the complexities around employability. For example, all these L10 participants agreed the importance of possessing the skills needed by employers. One participant enthused about a module as:

> *It's all about your skills and your attributes and how you can put yourself forward to an employer so it is asking you to really reflect on yourself … that's all going to be stuff that you are going to use in your CV and your like going for jobs and covering letters or writing a personal statement (Sharri1:97).*

In line with employability literature (Tymon 2013), each of these L10 participants highlighted communication, self-management and interpersonal skills as important to their reflection on employment. These participants also agreed that personal attributes were an inherent part of self-development, with the most commonly mentioned being leadership, dealing with conflict, self-confidence and enthusiasm. As explained in Chapter Four, I began to formulate follow up questions around the two contexts the students spoke of - reflection on learning and reflection on employment, after listening to L10 experiences. At this stage, I had begun to understand the ways the participants conceived of reflection, what the process entailed and the issues they struggled with. However, I was struck by how often the participants would situate reflection in learning and in work. I was interested in possible differences in contexts, struggles and outcomes. I then moved to follow up these topics in second interviews with L10 participants.

5.6 L10 Second interviews

Diagram 5.7 L10 themes and subthemes in Reflection on Learning

Diagram 5.7 above suggests that different topics of reflection generate contrasting facets of learning. I explore these below.

5.6.1 Reflection on learning

Wilcox (2009:124) suggested learning provides an opportunity to 'reconsider the ways we make sense of the world, and our revised understandings inform subsequent decisions we make and actions we take'. In support of this argument, emergent data from this research project indicated that all of these L10 students rethought or reframed themselves in the light of their new understanding of what their learning had entailed. This was particularly evident in their comments that reflection had brought them a deeper awareness of themselves as learners in terms of strengths and weaknesses. One participant spoke of:

> *Acknowledging what you're good at and what you're not good at and obviously think of it in a way that means you can improve it to me is the best way for reflecting on your learning (Eva2:119).*

Similarly, another had used the acknowledgement of strengths and weaknesses to improve her self-esteem and confidence so that:

> *It's made me more aware of being articulate, doing research, putting together an argument for an essay or a report (Lacey2:87).*

All the L10 participants described the outcomes of reflection on learning as simply thinking differently about themselves and what it meant to be a successful learner. They seemed struck by their ability to improve their academic performance, meet academic targets, and adapt learning strategies. Three of these participants had previously imagined graduates to be experts, always organised, naturally gifted and inevitably successful. I would argue that at this stage in their own academic journeys, they appeared to use reflection to recognise themselves as 'becoming' successful learners:

> *Sometimes it helps you maybe if you've got to sum up the module or if you've got to think about how you, what you've learned. If you think to yourself what have I learned if you've kept a reflective log it does help and it does improve I think your grades and your learning in that sense. It just made me realise what I could do (Eva2:181).*

It seemed to me that the L10 participants used reflection to form identities as accomplished students. According to Kitchenham (2008), transformative learning involves a frame of reference that comprises habits of mind and meaning perspectives, which lead to a perspective transformation.

Transformational journeys were discussed and each of the L10 participants acknowledged how they had viewed themselves before starting their academic journey and how their self-identity had changed over time. As one participant observed:

> *Well learning is for me is coming here and its obviously helped me to develop a lot of confidence in what I'm doing and understand that I can actually do things and you know there's a lot more in me than I thought (Sharri2:96).*

I would argue that this seemed like another example of how these L10 participants would use reflection to recognise progress and form a positive academic identity. Her colleague enthused that:

> *[The journey] was like a four-year chrysalis for me. I was in such a bad place before I started and now I'm know I've got the skills to succeed (Lacey2:76).*

As with the first interviews, all the L10 participants talked about how their learning was geared to improve their employability:

> *Being at university for the last four years, my learning has improved my employability. Of course, it has. I know I need to prove that I can manage myself and my work. I know what professional practice should be. I'm more of a complete package now going into the job market (Lacey2:103).*

The comment above suggested that the participant directly linked education with employment prospects and at this stage she could translate learning into self-management and professional practice. Having explored the L10 participants' reflections on learning, I transferred the focus of the interviews to their reflections on employment.

5.6.2 Reflection on employment

Diagram 5.8 L10 themes and subthemes in Reflection on Employment

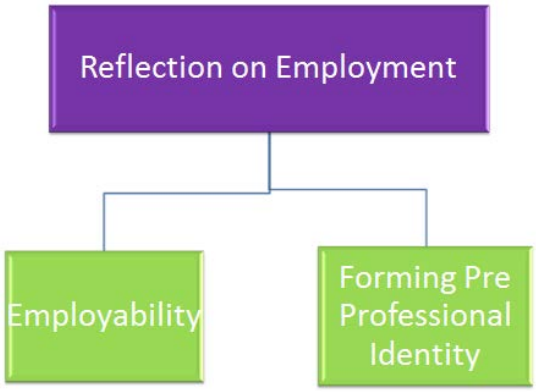


Diagram 5.8 above suggested that students' reflections on employment generated two facets of preparing for employment. I explore these below.

Within literature and the employability policy arena, there is broad consensus of the value in developing certain skills in business undergraduates as a means of enhancing their employability profile. According to Yorke and Knight (2006), employability skills are sometimes referred to as professional, core, generic, key, or non-technical skills and are inherent to enhancing graduate work-readiness. Employability skills typically considered important in developed economies are team working, communication, self-management, and analysis and critical thinking (Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council [BIHECC], 2007; Lowden et al., 2011). Governments and employers across developed economies increasingly call for HE providers to prepare graduates for the workplace (Confederation of British Industry, 2010; Wilton, 2011, 2012). Jackson (2013) has argued that universities have duly responded with considerable efforts on clarifying which employability skills are most required in undergraduates and, more recently, identifying ways of successfully embedding, developing, and assessing these skills in HE. As a result, the business curriculum has changed to accommodate such changes. According to Tymon (2013), literature on student perceptions of the importance of employability skill development in undergraduate programmes is limited but the L10 participants in this research study were able to place a high value on employability skills development. One of the students suggested that:

> *I think you learn about what you can bring out of yourself to the employer and what's relevant and what's important, what kind of skill set is important for employers. It's not just about well you know, the typical skill set where you know you've got 'I'm enthusiastic and all*

> *that' it's more like thinking about what you are and what you've done and also what your strengths are that you can play on (Shadia2:89).*

According to Jackson (2013) there appeared to be little empirical evidence of student perception of skill development in HE, which is surprising given its prominence in graduate employability approaches and the importance of achieving student buy-in to the concept of work-readiness. It was interesting to note that this was a separate dimension in contrast to L7 accounts where it was not given so much emphasis. I would suggest that this was an aspect that is developed whilst undertaking the programme. The final year student accounts suggested to me that these L10 participants were committed to the skills agenda in HE. Recognition of the importance of employability skill provision among L10 participants in this study highlighted how students could think about skills in terms of self-improvement using personal development planning:

> *It's [reflection on employment] knowing your skill sets, knowing what skills you've got and being able to identify with and also identifying what you are not doing, you're not performing that well in and then being able to plan using personal development to do better (Sharri2:9).*

The quote above seemed to exemplify the self-monitoring and self-surveillance aspects of modern disciplinary technologies explained by Foucault (2007) and discussed in Chapter Three. Sharri and others making similar comments could be interpreted as subjects accepting and manifesting the discourse of responsibilisation, self-governance and self-discipline. The extent to which such students would *'fit with what employers are looking for' or 'put yourself forward to an employer to match their needs' (Sharri2:101)* and think about *'how you need to be to get a good job'* suggested to me that these students had not only internalised the arguments around employability but they could even, as McArthur (2011) warned, represent good neo-liberal citizens that were capable of casting and recasting themselves to suit the needs of the capitalist economy. McArthur (2011) argued that a combination of related factors – neo-liberalism, globalisation, and dominant discourses of the knowledge economy – has acted in synergy to transform HE into a highly performative and marketised sector which fundamentally maps learning to the needs of the economy. With this in mind, I would argue that both the L10 participants providing the previous

two quotes assumed a shared interest between worker and employer in terms of skills. Neither participant considered the social context of work or the possible divergence of interests between employee and employer and this might have suggested that these students had accepted and enacted the neoliberal discourse of self-governance and performativity claimed by Foucault (1991) as discussed in Chapter Three.

Jackson (2016) has argued that graduate employability, which has dominated HE discourse in recent years, should be redefined to encompass the construction of pre-professional identity (PPI) during university years. The concept of PPI relates to an understanding of and connection with the skills, qualities, conduct, culture and ideology of a student's intended profession. It is defined by Paterson et al. (2002:6) as 'the sense of being a professional' and by Tomlinson (2012:409) as 'work-related disposition and identity'. Jackson maintains that achieving enhanced states of employability can bridge endemic skill gaps, raise organisational productivity and achieve innovativeness in the face of intense global competitiveness. Her claims are now widely accepted within employability discourse, and many assume that work-ready graduates who are self-assured, technically proficient and equipped with a range of non-technical skills are better prepared for rigorous recruitment processes, a seamless transition into post-graduation employment and long-term career success. Jackson's focus on learning for future career success was supported by the comment of one L10 participant:

> *Meeting targets, evaluating and recognising process are all involved in learning as well, but I personally think personal learning rather than like evaluating yourself on your progress or your achievements in the workplace is better because you're learning for future success (Eva2:40).*

The shift in the HE sector's strategic focus from the development of higher order skills, intellect and mastery of disciplinary content to skilled and vocational readiness has been challenged by McArthur (2010, 2011) on the basis that it can involve 'exile from self' (McArthur 2010:582), encourages students to understand themselves mainly in terms of their 'exchange value in the world of work' (McArthur 2011:743) and ignores the 'social and moral dimension of work' (McArthur 2011:746). Yet despite such criticisms, employability remains a broad

strategic priority and continues to influence HE business school policy and curriculum reform (Kalfa and Taksa 2015, Higher Education Academy 2017).

Trede et al. (2012) assert that the process of pre-professional identify formation for emerging professionals is relatively unexplored, therefore, this study also contributes to this call for clarity. Trede and colleagues connected aspects of PPI formation in HE with work-readiness among graduates and identified 'learning professional roles, understanding workplace cultures, commencing the professional socialisation process and educating towards citizenship' (2012:365) as key areas of overlap. Their exploration of professional socialisation and identity formation in HE was highlighted in Trede and colleagues work in terms of the broad and encompassing nature of PPI. In addition to required levels of disciplinary knowledge and non-technical skills, they drew on the work of Paterson and colleagues (2002) and argued that it is 'closely related to values, reasoning ability, clear understanding of responsibilities involved, technical skills, judgement, professional knowledge and expertise, self-directed learning, critical self-evaluation and reflective practice' (Trede et al. 2012:375). Trede et al. (2012:374) found the literature converged to highlight PPI as 'a way of being and a lens to evaluate, learn and make sense of practice'. Other aspects of PPI include self-awareness (Klenowski et al., 2006); the ability to reconcile personal values with those of his/her intended profession and being a critical learner (Trede et al., 2012); gaining a clear understanding of the responsibilities, attitudes, beliefs and standards associated with a particular profession; confidence (Nicholson et al. 2013); having a sense of purpose and self-esteem (Henkel,2005); personal development and lifelong learning (Bridgstock,2009); the capacity to transfer skills across contexts (Jackson, 2013); having a positive attitude, including a willingness to participate in new activities (Confederation of British Industry, 2010); and being able to reflect on experience (Yorke and Knight, 2006). I propose that this research study suggests these L10 participants perceived reflections as a way of forming pre-professional identity and promoting adaptability. Existing research identifies soft skills such as team working, communication, adaptability and problem solving to be key to employers (European Commission, 2010; Eisner, 2010; Huq and Gilbert, 2013) and these were the skills identified by the L10 participants reflecting on employment:

> *It's important that I now know what employers want. They want you to be self-aware, to know your own strengths and weaknesses but they also want you to be able to be flexible and adaptable so you can see how the organisation is changing and still make a contribution (Lacey2:137).*

For other students, pre-professional identity integrated reflection as part of dynamic leadership:

> *I don't think a good employee, a good staff member is a good one if they can't actually take the lead in adding value and then reflect on whether they could do it even better. Its more about how you can then use that in future to impact things so that the organisation is forward moving and not staying in the same place at any given time (Shadia2:43).*

Reflection on employment for these L10 participants was not just about preparing to enter the labour market with a clear understanding of graduate attributes and employability. It seemed more than that; it seemed that the L10 participants have also internalised the arguments around performativity. Their stories hinted at a performative shift that has worked in their constitution of professional identity (Barnett, 2000) and the implications of this are highlighted in the next Chapter.

5.7 Contrasts and Conclusions

The analysis, presentation and discussion of the interview data suggested that there were differences in the experiences of reflection between both the L7 and the L10 participants. Each individual student demonstrated different ways of conceptualising reflection. This finding is very much in keeping with some existing literature that suggests that there is no single definition of reflective practice. Both the L7 and L10 participants focused on the contribution reflection could make to examination of experiences with the aim of self-making, self-improvement and striving towards self-realisation. In particular, the L7 participants comments mirror Dewey's (1916,1933,1938) and Mezirow's (1991, 2000) concepts that the intent of reflection is to integrate the understanding gained into one's experience, in order to enable better choices or actions in the future, as well to enhance one's overall effectiveness. However, L10 participants appeared to have developed a greater emphasis on employability

and the concept of selling oneself. Although both groups still shared the themes of *learning from past mistakes* and *doing better* through reflection, the L10 participants unlike their L7 counterparts, had developed a clear focus around identifying skills and employability. This result suggested that changes in the HE business curriculum were filtering through in terms of developing awareness of graduate attributes and employability. The final-year student stories were rich in detailed examples of how reflection was being used to develop both successful learning and pre-professional identities. This supported existing studies showing how students can use reflection to make 'discoveries about their learning and practice that had led to change or the transformation of self' (Black and Plowright 2010:254).

Both groups of students suggested reflection had positively improved learning. The L7 participants claimed that reflection had resulted in them 'becoming more disciplined' as learners, 'broadening self-knowledge', thinking critically, improving motivation, increasing confidence and competence in academic tasks. Although the lack of specific examples in their accounts may also have suggested that students were slow to author their own understandings and knowledge, hindering capacity for critical reflection. The implication of this is explored in the next Chapter. In contrast, the L10 participants suggested that reflection on learning had morphed into the idea of selling oneself and this group was more attuned to the complexities relating to employability. This could be viewed as evidence of a narrow, instrumental focus of reflection in the curriculum, which prioritised reflection on the self. According to Newmann:

> The act of pondering on anything and everything gives way to thinking about the self. An open, generous mental activity that contributes to the fullness of our lives becomes a narrow concern with me, my, and mine (Newmann 2014:347).

The L10 participants' emphasis on employability raised important issues concerning the unit of analysis in reflection and these are debated in the final Chapter.

Both groups voiced similar anxieties around reflection in learning. Specifically, students raised concerns about vulnerability in undertaking reflection, difficulties in positioning reflection alongside disciplinary knowledge and the multiple complexities involved in reflecting on group work. The problems

experienced by both participant groups suggested implications for educational practice and these are highlighted in the next Chapter.

With regard to reflection on employment, both L7 and L10 participant assumptions sat comfortably within the wider employability discourse as discussed in section 5.4. Their accounts seemed to follow from a particularly dominant idea of employability and performativity, which was itself the product of political-economic factors and choices, and that then, means the idea and practice of student experiences of reflection were also politicised as discussed in Chapter Three. Both groups stressed the importance of individual self-reliance in the development of marketable skills, and the ability to 'hit the ground running' in employment immediately after graduation. However, this was most marked in the case of the final-year student group, which was able to demonstrate how reflection was used to form pre-professional identities. In Chapter Six, the implications for practice will be considered along with an awareness of the strengths and limitations of this project. The Chapter also elaborates potential areas for future enquiry.

CHAPTER SIX - Conclusions and a way forward

6.1 Introduction

This final Chapter summarises the exploration of some L7 and L10 students' experiences of reflective learning as presented and discussed in the preceding Chapters. My findings and analysis are mapped against the initial research aims and objectives in order to evaluate the relevance of the findings. The Chapter then considers the possible limitations of the study. Finally, reflection on the findings, which highlight areas for a new paradigm of business education associated with global business practice and possible research opportunities, conclude this dissertation.

6.2 The dissertation and research outcomes

This dissertation was undertaken in order to explore and map some student experiences of reflection in L7 and L10 of business programmes. The research issue as stated in Chapter One was to explore and hear 'in their own words' how some business undergraduate students thought about, used, struggled with and benefited from reflection in their learning. The data provided by both L7 and L10 students enabled me to view those experiences through the multiple lenses of intellectual inquiry (Dewey 1910,1916), transformative learning (Mezirow 1981), social justice (Brookfield 1995, 2010), professional artistry (Schon 1987), professionalisation (Høyrup and Elkjaer 2006), responsibilisation (Foucault 1982, 1991), performativity (Edwards and Nicolls 2006) and self-regulation (Foucault 1991). In the process of undertaking this dissertation I established the following research outcomes:

First, students in both years of study highlighted important differences in their experiences of reflection. Individual students demonstrated different ways of conceptualising reflection, which would suggest that there is no single definition of reflection. Although both groups shared the themes of *Learning from past Mistakes* and *Doing Better*, the L10 participants unlike their L7 counterparts, had developed a clear focus around identifying skills and employability. This research study suggested this group of final-year students perceived reflection as a way of forming a pre-professional identity and promoting adaptability. Existing

research identifies soft skills such as team working, communication, adaptability and problem solving as key to future successful employment (European Commission, 2010; Eisner, 2010; Huq and Gilbert, 2013). Interestingly, these were the skills identified by the L10 students when reflecting on employment. Reflection on employment for these L10 students was not just about preparing to enter the labour market with a clear understanding of graduate attributes and employability. I propose that it was more than that, as it appeared that these L10 students had internalised the arguments around performativity as discussed in Chapter Three. This result suggests that changes in the HE business curriculum were filtering through in terms of developing awareness of graduate attributes and employability.

Secondly, although both groups of students were able to cite numerous intellectual benefits of reflection, the data discussed in Chapter Five suggests that groups used reflection as a process that to them, authentically revealed a knowable self, and saw self-examination and self-development as the ultimate goal of their reflections. I would highlight these as interesting and important dimensions of the study, as it appears to reflect Foucault's writings which emphasised the more recent relocation of reflection as a tool of governmentality and responsibilisation.

Thirdly, both groups of students suggested reflection had positively improved learning. Citing becoming more disciplined as learners, broadening self-knowledge, thinking critically, improving confidence and competence in academic tasks, students were able to suggest a number of intellectual outcomes resulting from reflection. Although the lack of specific examples in their accounts may also suggest that students were restricted in their capacity for critical reflection.

Fourthly, both student groups voiced similar anxieties around reflection in learning. Specifically, students raised concerns about vulnerability in undertaking reflection, difficulties in positioning reflection alongside disciplinary knowledge and the multiple complexities involved in reflecting on group work. The problems experienced by both participant groups suggest the need for greater support to embed reflection within the undergraduate curriculum.

The nature of the research outcomes above has persuaded me of the need for a new paradigm for Business Education that encompasses global perspectives, social justice and truly critical reflection. I detail elements of this new paradigm in section 6.4 where I specify how business education can be transformed for socially just global business practice.

6.3 Limitations of this study

Despite the many strengths of using an interpretivist and a qualitative approach, I think it is important to acknowledge the issues that may limit the findings of this dissertation. I acknowledge and discuss two main issues. Initially I consider limitations associated with dwelling on individual experiences, which then turns to possible limitations associated with research quality.

Firstly, taking a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews and the data projection technique allowed me to focus on the students' experiences in detail. However, the social context of learning has not been explored fully in this study and the focus has been on individual experience. According to Garrison and Akyol:

> Learners do not learn in isolation and participants are not solely responsible for their own learning. Therefore, we must move beyond self –regulated student behaviour in a socially shared learning environment. ..we must consider the dynamic relationship of self and co-regulation of learning concurrently (Garrison and Akyol, 2013: 5).

The above quote implies that student experience is best understood and explored by including social dynamics. The data gathering phase of the study relied on individual accounts of learning and positioned learners as 'somehow existing independently of the field of relations that bring them into presence' (Thoutenhoofd and Pirrie 2015:74). Because of this approach, the role of the social and political context of learning and the role of educators has been underplayed and the role of the broader learning community only touched on briefly. In this study, the role of social dynamics is explored in relation to reflection on group work in the main. Consequently, the findings from the study may be usefully augmented with studies, which refer to reflection in a broader learning community (Miller and Maellaro 2016, Rantatalo and Karp

2016). This could be achieved if learning were positioned as involving 'a variegated web of social, emotional and material entanglements aimed at becoming, knowing and doing' (Ibid: 82) so that reflection in learning as a social performance can be explored.

Secondly, according to Braun and Clarke (2008:95) 'one of the criticisms of qualitative research from those outside the field is the perception that 'anything goes'. Indeed, this type of research has been subject to sustained criticism regarding meaning and evidence (Hardy and Bryman 2009, Morrow 2005). Specifically, the manner in which qualitative data is evaluated is the focus of particular criticism. Sousa (2014:212) in particular asserts that 'lack of rigour continues to exist in the development of qualitative research' and Gummesson (2005) goes as far as suggesting the very term "analysis" is not really applicable in qualitative research since it implies reliance on the pre-established formulas, processes and designs to the phenomena that are not even properly defined or sufficiently explored. According to Sousa's (2014) criticisms, similar to those presented above, are founded on tensions between general evaluative issues and specific methodological approaches. In response, some, like Lincoln and Guba (1985), have suggested qualitative research should emphasise notions of trustworthiness of the method, coherence of results, and transferability and application of results. Whereas others, like St Pierre, argue that:

> Privileging social science approaches to inquiry (e.g. positivist, interpretive, and critical social science) over those of the humanities has already damaged and limited educational research, which could be capacious, but has instead become methodical, technical, instrumental, and impoverished (St Pierre 2016:10).

In response to such criticisms, Lather (2006:52) has developed an alternative perspective, arguing for 'a 'disjunctive affirmation of multiple ways of going about educational research'. These writers indicate that there are a number of competing views of the quality of interpretive and qualitative research, which have influenced the design, and conduct of the study. For example, in an effort to ensure findings were 'congruent with reality' (Shenton 2004:64), I adopted research methods that were well established and appropriate in terms of enabling me to answer my initial research question. Shenton (2004) also recommends that the researcher develop 'familiarity with the culture' under

investigation and I believe that my twenty-five years of professional HE practice has allowed me to gain an adequate understanding of teaching and learning culture in the Scottish HE sector. In Chapter Four, I acknowledged how ethical considerations were embedded in my particular research approach, enabling participants full rights to choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time and designing systems that allowed me to check information with participants. Specifically, section 4.7 of this dissertation, explained how I used memoing and blogging to develop reflexivity in this study, in an effort to evaluate the project as it developed. Following Shenton (2004), I have mapped my own findings to existing bodies of knowledge in my discussion and analysis of findings in order to explore similarities and differences contained in my own research. Although his is a small-scale study, which makes no claims to generalisability or transferability, I have made efforts to embed rigour and trustworthiness in different stages of the study.

As discussed in Chapter Four, I chose to use thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2008, 2013) to analyse the data but other techniques could have been employed. For example, I could have used conversation (Clayman and Gill, 2004) or discourse analysis (Potter 2004) to analyse interview transcripts and these may have yielded alternative interpretations of students' experiences. However, in order to develop trustworthiness in data analysis I have shared my interpretations with participants so 'that the results produce knowledge that is methodologically and epistemologically valid, and that they are sustainable and consistent' (Sousa 2014:225). However, as Lee and Fielding (2009:543) argue no one criteria of validity or credibility suits all research. Instead, I have tried to engage with 'core conventions' of interpretivist research including making thinking and decision- making explicit. Following Lincoln and Guba (1985), I have sought to provide 'sufficiently rich and recognisable accounts' of student experiences so that readers can discern their transferability to other contexts. Overall, I have tried to construct validity within the interpretivist tradition. Having explored potential limitations associated with the research, I now move to present the research findings that have implications for practice, suggest changes to business curricula, and indicate possible areas for improvement in practice.

6.4 Contributions to professional practice

This section summarises the findings, followed by a discussion that considers possible recommendations for practice in terms of a new paradigm for business curricula, faculty development and my own practice as a teacher and as a researcher.

Although this is a small-scale study and I make no claims to generalisability or representativeness, this study has implications for the ways in which business students learn about reflection, raises questions about learning practices to support students engaging with reflection and is insightful for teacher educators in the broader community, who prepare business students to become reflective practitioners in a globalised business landscape.

6.4.1 A new paradigm for Business Education

The first objective of this research as stated in Chapter One was to tease out complexities involved in the student experiences of reflection in order to share my understanding with the wider community of practice. As a result of this study, it is my view that as educators in the HE community of practice, there is a need to indicate to students explicitly just how reflection is defined, what it is students are required to reflect upon and why. The increasingly changing nature of business practice explained in Chapter One, involves greater demand for graduate students in terms of professional knowledge and conduct and if, as university academics, educators are to prepare students adequately for future professional practice and global citizenship, then I argue that, educators will need to educate them to exercise a deliberate form of conduct, and to question why, with whom and to what end, rather than merely what and how. This suggests that narrow or instrumental views of reflection within the business curriculum should be oriented to more critical questioning of disciplinary traditions and assumptions, complemented by modules that offer students opportunity to reflect on social relations and global injustice.

Firstly, according to Ryan (2013a, 2013b) and Power (2016) reflection needs to be embedded within the business curriculum in an explicit way so shared understanding can help students engage with the process in order to improve

learning practices. Findings noted in this study suggest that more space could be created within the business curriculum to explore individual and diverse notions of reflection so that both educators and students clarify understandings and meanings. This may be particularly useful where assessment of reflection is to take place. As a result, assessment instruments could be more closely designed to assess shared understandings.

Secondly, the issues raised by students in the *This is Hard* theme suggest that the undergraduate curriculum should accommodate greater discussion and support for students struggling with reflection on negative performance. Reflection on performance, particularly negative ones, needs to be scaffolded and contextualised so that students can reflect on the emotions associated with reflection and use these emotions to reflect more deeply. Otherwise, students may avoid or superficially reflect on these important experiences.

Thirdly, findings related to reflection on group work suggest that students would benefit from greater support to address and resolve potentially difficult personal, professional, and organisational issues. Research by Hillyard et al. (2010) suggests that many educators view group work in terms of a general belief that students gain valuable experiences in groups across the curriculum yet the findings presented in Chapter Five indicate that such work affects students' skills and abilities to reflect in groups. Learning experiences involving group work in the business curriculum could attend to such issues with educators working alongside students to legitimise and help negotiate issues.

Fourthly, both cohorts of students indicated difficulties in locating reflection alongside disciplinary knowledge. As has been reported in similar studies (Laurillard 2002, Anderson, Day 2005, Anderson, and Hounsell 2007) students struggled to make sense of the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and understanding and reflective activities. In terms of the business curriculum, I would argue that the process of embedding disciplinary knowledge within programmes could usefully be developed to include reference to the object and focus of reflective activities. Students learning conceptual knowledge might find it easier to engage with reflection if it can be more clearly anchored within subject knowledge.

Finally, in terms of the curriculum, the emphasis is on reflective dialogue and conversation as pedagogical strategies rather than curriculum itself; the importance of respect in educators and students working together, community building; praxis being informed and linked to values; and the overall goal being the development of reflection that could transform global communities and lead to socially just action. Following this study, I suggest there is a meaningful role for the development of praxis or wisdom amongst business undergraduates and reflection could be repositioned within the undergraduate curriculum to support this. Bauman has argued that education should be oriented to rebuild the deserted public space:

> Where men and women may engage in a continuous translation between individual and common, private and communal, interests, rights, and duties' (Bauman 2008:189).

I suggest reflection on wider, complex issues of sustainability, rights, moral responsibility and issues of social justice would help business education to claim some of the 'deserted public space' and help recalibrate the business graduate as a global citizen.

6.4.2 Implications for student and faculty development

The second objective of this research was concerned with how business students might be better supported pedagogically to engage in reflective practice to transform their professional and personal development and I attend to pedagogical issues here. Assertions that business students may not be critically reflective practitioners are very real. There is still very little emphasis on reflection as a social practice that takes place within global communities of learners who support and sustain each other's growth. A critical element in the re-design of the reflection within the business curriculum would require privileging a specific construction of reflection that is tied to wider concerns of learning. McNaughton (2016:297) suggests curricula should relocate reflection through 'refocusing it on others as the relational context for self'. One consequence of the focus on individual student reflection and the lack of attention by many educators to the social context of learning in student experiences, has been that students can come to see their problems as their

own, unrelated to those of other students or to the structures of schooling. In this way, narrow and instrumental conceptions of reflection can distort the student experience of HE so that the concepts of terms such as 'failure', 'weakness' or 'development' direct the attention of students away from a critical analysis of learning and the structures of student experience to a preoccupation with their own individual failures and successes. Consequently, and following this study, I suggest reflection needs to be contextualised for students within wider issues of power, voice and to include reference to the social structures affecting learning and issues of global justice (Mezirow 1991, Brookfield 1995, 2010). In other words, students should work with the concept in qualitatively different ways.

Secondly, in order to improve the students' experiences, educators might need to recognize that reflection by itself means very little. All learners are reflective in some sense. It is important to consider what educators want business students to reflect about and how. A number of different conceptual frameworks have been developed over the years in several countries to describe different ways to define the focus and quality of reflection. Connecting business education to the struggle for social justice that exists in all countries today does not mean only focusing on the political aspects of learning. Rather it is the integration of disciplinary knowledge with wider educational concepts of intellectual freedom, critical thinking and justice that could offer rich opportunities for business education to be mapped to global citizenship. Connecting business education to the struggle for social justice means that in addition to making sure that students have the disciplinary background needed to work in a way that promotes human flourishing (rejecting disciplinary business models that privilege neoclassical notions of private gain), there is a need to ensure that business graduates know how to make decisions on a daily basis that do not unnecessarily limit the life chances of others and that they make decisions in their work with greater awareness of the potential environmental and political consequences of the different choices that they make.

Thirdly, practices conditioned by a performative discourse could lead to a culture of compliance, and a concern with merely meeting the minimum

professional standards, rather than aiming for business practice informed by critical reflection and reflexivity. If not addressed, this might mean that business graduates employ reflection merely for professional accreditation or accountability, not more intrinsically worthwhile, moral reasons. If students are to be able to create meaningful practices of professional learning, then educators need to move from a compressed model of reflection to processes determined and generated by students themselves. Creating and building skills for students individually and collaboratively, to use reflection as a developmental tool exploring their learning practice, requires on the part of students, a deep understanding of the context of their learning and an awareness of themselves as learners working in global context. Eaton (2016) suggests that:

> A good starting point here would be …to offer activities that encourage students to become curious inquirers about the nature of their experiences in practice rather than be passive collectors of evidence to rationalise them (Eaton 2016:164).

I suggest this will involve exploring with business students' issues of power, class, race, gender and social injustice. In short, undergraduate business programmes should be founded on studies and action related to global citizenship alongside disciplinary knowledge of business organisations.

Finally, employability discourse within business curricula might manifest itself in self-monitoring. As Barnett (2000) indicates self-monitoring may take on a performative character, where students are asked to demonstrate publicly their powers of self-monitoring and I have argued in this dissertation that there is some evidence of this. The consequences of performativity could be serious for the business world:

> At one level, students are likely to be more adept at handling themselves in the world in the domains of performance itself but also of cognition and self-identity. At another level, however, understanding may be contained, held back at levels, which simply ensure a satisfactory performance (Barnett 2000:262).

In such a situation, society can no longer look to business professionals for informed action; what emerges instead is behaviour lacking an underpinning in moral understanding. The HE system may be in danger of producing

accomplished business technicians, able to deal with real-world problems, interweaving within and between teams and presenting themselves to effect. They may even produce transformations in their business environment. However, it may be the requirements of professional accreditation that indicate that HE create opportunities for reflection based on instrumental and technical reasons as distinct from critically reflective reasons (Eaton 2016). As McArthur (2011:582) warns, HE should not require 'exile from self'. This means reflection should not force students to 'inhabit an entirely foreign voice and identity' in order to progress. If reflection on wider issues of intellectual freedom, transformative learning and critical practice is to become part of the landscape of business education, then I argue that these have to be seen as legitimate areas for business students to explore.

6.5 Professional knowledge, understanding and practice

Implications for professional practice will be discussed from three related perspectives. The first will focus on the significance of this project for supporting student experiences of reflection within the business curriculum, where consideration will be given to approaches that embed and scaffold reflective activities to facilitate social justice. This will be followed by an examination of opportunities for faculty development in order to enhance staff supporting undergraduate students. I will then discuss aspects of my own practice, which I believe has benefited from undertaking this project. Initially I focus on what I have learned from the research process and how I can use this to support my own students undertaking research projects. Secondly, I highlight areas that I, as an early career researcher, consider may further contribute to this area of research.

6.5.1 Business education for social justice

Teachers are urged to engage in critical inquiry from several fronts. Paulo Freire reminds teachers of the foundational value of inquiry:

> There is no such thing as teaching without research and research without teaching. One inhabits the body of the other…I do research to

> know what I do not yet know and to communicate and proclaim what I discover (Freire 1998:35).

Especially persuasive is the power of critical theory 'to change the pedagogical process from one of knowledge transmission to knowledge transformation' (Leonardo 2004: 11). It is in this same vein that I can now orient my own practice as a business educator from narrow focus on disciplinary knowledge to broader concerns of social and global justice. The research experience has allowed me to work alongside students to begin to strip away at each and every layer of what is familiar and taken for granted in reflection, picking away at the encrustations of habitual thinking of myself and other educators, to begin to construct arguments, making and defending claims that employ critical scrutiny. Reflection as a concept, my own experience of reflection and more importantly, the student experience of reflection has come to matter a great deal in my professional practice as educator. In my own practice, I am now required to inquire further about thinking through and creating situations where I can design and deliver opportunities for students to engage in reflection on situations associated with global justice. Through further inquiry, I can educate and re-educate myself about reflection.

6.5.2 Reflexivity

This small-scale study was conducted to determine how some undergraduate business students understand and interpret reflective practice, and as a result of conducting this study, my knowledge on reflective learning has been challenged and deepened. This study sought to put on centre stage undergraduate students who are often not heard. However, there were many times when my own uncertainty and self-doubt as a researcher preoccupied me. My initial concern was how the students learned from their experiences and following Knott and Scragg (2007), I wanted to view the experiences of the participants through their lenses. I aimed to make sense of and explore the students' stories to gain an insight into the environment in which the students worked and I had a desire to investigate the extent of any learning from the experience. In contrast, at the end of this journey it is my own learning from research experience that occupies my mind. I am more experienced and confident as a researcher and through the

experience of this dissertation I now more comfortably accept the title of researcher. The research experience has reminded me that I more confidently admit ignorance, admit I am learning, and accept the uncertainty and discomfort of the movement between the two. Prior to starting this study, it was already my professional experience that students are knowledgeable experts in terms of pedagogy and it is now my experience that they are well positioned to inform my research practice as well. Because of this research, I am more strongly committed to the need to acknowledge the views of students and others in developing my understanding of reflection.

6.6 Contributions to knowledge

This research involved eight undergraduate students; it is therefore important to frame this research project within one institution, with two small groups of students and note the age and experience of the participants involved. These students were relatively young and it might be viewed by some that general experience of life was limited. If a similar study were completed with post graduate participants, then the age and consequent experience of the student should not be under-estimated as more mature students might have more 'emotional inheritance' or experience to affect or influence the reflection process. The influence of previous experiences should not be overlooked. Mezirow (1981, 2000), Habermas (1987) and Moon (2004) suggest there is a relationship between age and reflection with age creating a greater 'bank' of prior experiences.

The real contribution to knowledge from this research is found in the contribution to my knowledge. As a researcher and a lecturer in business and economics, I have moved closer to understanding how some students go about reflective learning and how I and other practitioners can facilitate this process. I feel the discussion and identification of reflection will enable me to justify social justice within my own professional practice and assist with pedagogy in my own disciplines of economics and business. The project has also shown me that all individuals develop the ability to reflect on experience but at different rates. The student experiences reported in this study have made me more sensitive to the individual ways in which students conceive and operationalise

reflection in their learning. I am aware that assumed narratives around the emancipatory and empowering aspects of reflection may need to be challenged within the undergraduate curriculum and in associated assessment practices. I have also realised student reflection is a complex, on-going process, which may take years to develop in a meaningful sense.

In summary, the contribution to knowledge is the recognition of different student experiences of reflection and my own transforming understandings of reflection. Zuber-Skerritt (2001) argues that such a small-scale project cannot provide generalised statements but it can show how a small number of students demonstrated something insightful and challenging which transformed the knowledge, understanding and professional practice of an experienced educator.

6.7 Ways forward

Having examined the role of eight undergraduate students' experiences of reflection, I now suggest further research to enhance and enrich future study. In particular, I call for the need to build a clearly identifiable body of research that can build on what has gone before, and identify what needs to be clarified.

6.7.1 Undergraduate and postgraduate study

This small-scale study, which looked at some L7 and L10 undergraduate experiences of reflection, has highlighted for me potential areas for development in terms of possible approaches that could enhance the student experience. Where there are practices, which do not promote student experiences of reflection, it is surely necessary to bring about change. This could be done through embedding a broader and more globally-aware practice of reflection within the curriculum, giving consideration to the suggestion business students may need to contextualise their reflections by being taught how to reflect and doing so in a way that broadens student experience of reflection from a narrow process which focuses on performativity to one which reorients reflection to its original connection with morality and the development of society. I argue that reflective learning needs to be consistently built into the holistic education of business undergraduates. This commitment could be reflected consistently in the programme/module learning outcomes and

objectives, the use of teaching methods or approaches to facilitate students' learning, and educators' practices. It seems to me that learning is about broadening perspectives, bracketing conventional wisdom, and being able to re-see in a new perspective (Mezirow 1991). Without consistent institutional commitment to reflection, educators can expect to see critical reflection taking place only occasionally and accidently in classrooms. The success of this model of business education depends on student ownership; on the role of school leadership in fostering cultures to support this and, at a system level, where learning is placed as central to the institutional agenda. Institutional commitment also means supporting more research that would help better understand reflection in business education and designing programmes for development of business educators in relation to critical reflection. However, in order that current practice can change, there may be a need for those who are currently working in the profession, to examine reflection as a discrete concern alongside disciplinary knowledge. In the crowded programmes of business education and the incessant demands of module assessment, there needs to be space created for reflection on reflection.

6.7.2 International Comparisons

Additionally, it would appear that there is scope for considerably more research to be conducted within a variety of contexts, and to draw on work from other fields, such as socio-cultural views of disciplinary contexts. Studies such as De Vita and Bernard (2011) and Hickson (2011) suggest that reflective learning can be successfully integrated in any cultural environment in which such learning is encouraged. Whereas research undertaken by Tsai and Lau (2012) found cultural variations around the student experience of reflection, more recent research by Marzban and Ashraafi (2016) suggests reflectivity is a well-organized education concept in the developed world context, where it is new in developing countries. Further research and more data, such as from conversations with international students, are needed to understand whether or not international business students conceive of reflective learning in particular ways. Such research paths would enrich knowledge and understanding of the relationship between culture and student experience of reflection. It may be that learning

and student experience particularly, are culturally sensitive issues, which could be affected by a myriad of social factors worthy of further exploration. This direction would allow researchers to explore the cultural context of reflection in learning and in work. This takes on a particular importance if business graduates are increasingly expected to work and live in a more globally integrated landscape. Further research in this direction could also guide and inform pedagogical practices in an increasingly multicultural HE context.

6.7.3 Supporting Business Educators

According to Van der Meer and Marks:

> Educators committed to giving attention to certain modes/foci of reflection, having and applying ideas and skills to stimulate and support students to engage in it and including reflection aspects in their assessments and feedback will help students to learn reflection (Van der Meer and Marks 2013:50).

This resonates with my professional beliefs and so the call in this dissertation to broaden and widen notions and practices of reflection does not simply require greater opportunities for reflection in the business curriculum, but greater dialogue about different types of reflection and different purposes would enable business educators to be more clearly supported in teaching the concept. Teaching to expand thinking around reflection may even seem irrelevant for business students and staff seeking knowledge certainties. As Asselin (2011) has argued, students and staff may struggle with the ambiguity and transience of reflective learning. Because of this, MacKay and Tymon (2013: 645) suggest 'a teaching challenge is to ensure structured activities do stimulate reflection on the ambivalences of business education'. Their work suggests that business educators have trouble in developing and teaching reflective capacities. Tigelaar et al. (2016:1) who argue 'extensive support and scaffolding from teachers is indispensable' mirror this. Consequently, I also suggest that there is a need to consider the following: deeper questioning of beliefs about teaching that underlie the practices and skills of teaching and modelling reflective learning; aligning student-teacher values about reflective learning; and exploring how the culture of performativity and quality control work impacts on sustaining reflective learning in HE. This might require greater openness and

sharing of educators' own feelings and experiences of reflection but would enable a more authentic environment in which students can develop reflective competencies. MacKay and Tymon (2016:348) suggest that an effective 'teaching approach relies on lecturers' willingness to actively facilitate peer interactions and promote reflection on work practice'. To develop this willingness, business educators may need time and space to debate and think through complex and competing notions of reflection and to consider the implications of differing theories of reflection for the development of business graduates. Business schools can offer experiential learning and spontaneous activity, but business educators may feel constrained by stakeholder expectations and instrumental outcomes in taking a risk with pedagogy (Barnett 2007, Lassnigg 2012). Reflective learning has no certain outcomes, no sure terrain for students and educators to negotiate, hence the need for thoughtful and effective support for educators embarking on embedding the concept within pedagogical practice. To support educator development, further research could be undertaken to explore business educators' experiences of teaching reflection and this particular research path could usefully explore the ambiguous relationship between disciplinary tradition, professional experience and reflective learning.

6.8 Envisioning different student experiences?

Reflection on individual and social responsibility and what it means to be responsible for one's actions is part of a broader attempt to be an engaged citizen who can expand and deepen the possibilities of democratic public life. Creating a different role for reflection in undergraduate business education is a starting point in underlining the significance of reflective learning. A move to reposition student experience of reflection, as a moral and political practice within business education could enable students to develop new capacities for globally innovative and just business practices. Embedding reflection within the curriculum in this way could produce the modes of literacy, critique, sense of social responsibility, and civic courage necessary to imbue business students with the knowledge and skills needed to enable them to be engaged critical and global citizens willing to create a sustainable and just society.

Appendix 1 Excerpt from Conceptual Matrix of Literature

	DEWEY **(1910,1933,1938)**	**SCHÖN** **(1983,1987)**	**MEZIROW** **(1981, 1991,2000)**	**BROOKFIELD** **(1995, 2010)**	**BOUD, COHEN AND WALKER** **(1985)**
Criteria					
Conception of reflection	Elements or sub - processes in reflective thinking. Implication of stages? "These are: (a) a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; and (b) an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify	Reflecting in practice 'Through reflection, (the practitioner) can surface and criticise the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a	Much of what we learn involves making new interpretations that enable us to elaborate, further differentiate and reinforce our long established frames of reference or to create new meaning schemes.	Learning from disturbing disequilibria 'One of the greatest myths that has sprung from an acceptance of the felt needs rationale is the belief that learning is always joyful, a bountiful release of latent potential in	Re-evaluating experience Association is the connecting of the ideas and feelings which are part of the original experience and those which have occurred during reflection with existing knowledge

	the suggested belief" (HWTh 1910:9) "…the origin of thinking is some perplexity, confusion, or doubt." (HWTh 1910:12) "Given a difficulty, the next step is suggestion of some way out – the formation of some tentative plan or project, the entertaining of some theory which will account for the peculiariti8es in question, the consideration of some solution for the	specialised practice, and can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which he may allow himself to experience' (Ref Pract 1995:61) 'When the phenomenon at hand eludes the ordinary categories of knowledge-in-practice, presenting itself as unique or unstable,	Important to distinguish between thought and reflection. When we look back on prior learning we might reflect on assumptions about the problem, process or procedures of problem solving or presuppositions on the basis of which the problem has been posed. This last one is critical reflection.	which the learner is stimulated, exhilarated and fulfilled…but what also the case that the most significant learning we undergo as adults results from some external event or stimulus that causes us to engage in anxiety producing and uncomfortable reassessment of aspects of our personal, occupational and recreational lives.' (p22)	and attitudes. This aspect of reflection can lead us to the discovery that our old attitudes are no longer consistent with new ideas and feelings, that reassessment is necessary and in the cognitive area that our earlier knowledge needs modifying to accommodate new ideas. It is useful that as many

	problem." (HWTh 1910:12) • Five distinct steps in reflective thought. "Upon examination, each instance reveals, more or less clearly, five logically distinct steps: (i) a felt difficulty; (ii) its location and definition; (iii) suggestion of possible solution; (iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (v) further observation and experiment leading to its	the practitioner may surface and criticises his initial understanding of the phenomenon, construct a new description of it, and test the new description by an on-the-spot experiment.' (Ref Pract 1995:62) 'The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement or confusion in a	Resonant with Schön's insistence that reflection is more about problem framing or setting. Mezirow argues for the importance of reflective learning as a way of dealing with personal bias. Is this similar to Dewey's call for reflection as a way of escaping dogma or slavish influence of feelings? A reflective thinker	'But as we are forced to undergo this re-examination of values, beliefs, behaviours, and assumptions about ourselves and those around us, we may find the activity to be an unsettling, painful struggle in which glimpses of insight alternate with confusion, uncertainty and ambiguity (22). Central to the	associations be made as possible. Integration takes place when associations can be processed into a new whole, a new pattern of ideas and attitudes develops. Integration begins the process of discrimination amongst associations. Validation takes place when we

	acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief." (HWTh 1910:72) • In more detail Starts with the occurrence of difficulty in first explaining or making sense of an event. Then we need to define the difficulty (feelings of unexpected, queer, strange, funny or disconcerting). Third factor is suggestion which is speculative in character, adventurous. Involves a leap or jump.	situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomena before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomena and a change in the situation.' (Ref	understands that there is real uncertainty about how a problem may best be solved, yet is still able to offer a judgment about the problem that brings some kind of closure to it. (Kitchener & King in FcriA P160)	reflective process is this attempt to see things from a variety of viewpoints. Significant learning and critical thinking inevitably induce an ambivalent mix of feelings and emotions, in which anger and confusion are as prominent as pleasure and clarity. (1995:21) Synonymous with critical reflection where learner develops autonomy	subject these integrations to reality tests. We are testing for internal consistency between our new appreciations and our existing knowledge and beliefs for consistency and trying our new perceptions in new situations. Appropriation takes place as learning becomes related to

	We develop implications from numerous suggestions to see if they are rational, likely and subject these to reasoning. "The concluding step is some kind of experimental corroboration or verification of the conjectural idea." (HWTh 1910:77) "…conditions are deliberately arranged in accord with the requirements of an idea or hypothesis to see if	Pract 1995:68) 'Although reflection-in-action is an extraordinary process, it is not a rare event. Indeed, for some reflective practitioners it is the core of practice. Nevertheless, because professionalism is still mainly identified with technical expertise,		for reflection.	the self. significant feelings can come attached to this type of learning and any learning experience with touches this area can give rise to strong emotions that need to be taken into account in future reflection. (85:33) • Outcome of refn It has the objective of making us ready for new experience

	the results theoretically indicated by the idea actually occur." (HWTh 1910:77)	reflection-in-action is not generally accepted – even by those who do it – as a legitimate form of professional knowing.' (Ref Pract 1995:69) Reflection can serve to correct overlearning. Practitioner is reframing the situation. May attribute inconsistencies or complexities to the			the outcomes of reflection may include a new way of doing something, the clarification of an issue, the development of a skill, or the resolution of a problem. A new cognitive map might emerge or new set of ideas might emerge. Development of new perspectives on experience or changes in

		way he has set the problem. Resonant of Dewey's making sense of new surprising events or states of doubt. This type of reflection is a process of coming to understand, new or surprising experiences.			behaviour. New links formed between previously unrelated concepts. Also might include changes in our emotional state, our attitudes or sets of values. They could include a positive attitude towards leaning in a particular area, greater confidence or assertiveness or changed set of priorities.

Appendix 2 Participant Information Sheet

Plain Language Statement

1. Study title and Researcher Details

An exploration of business student experiences of reflective learning.

Mrs Brenda Rodgers

School of Business

University of West of Scotland

2. Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

This study is being undertaken as part of a Doctor in Education programme at Glasgow University. The aim of the research is to explore student experiences of reflective learning during the course of their business studies at the University of West of Scotland.

4. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a level 7 or a level 10 student in the business school.

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form to confirm this. You will still be free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be invited to take part in two interviews about your experiences of reflective learning in your studies. The first interview will last around 90 minutes. The follow up interview is to further explore the issues raised and check that the transcription is accurate. It will last around 45 minutes. Both interviews will take place at the business school. You will then be invited to a group discussion with the other participants to review my findings and offer your views on the findings.

7. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Permission will be sought to tape record the interview. The contents of the tape will then be transcribed. In the summary of the discussion, no individual will be identified. All information will be anonymised. No participant names or addresses will be kept on any project databases. Only myself and my supervisors

and examiners will have access to the transcriptions of the interviews. All data from the interviews will be kept in locked filing cabinets.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

8. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings of the interview will be used to inform the rest of the research and written up as part of the Dissertation required to be completed for the doctoral award. The material may be used to inform teaching and learning approaches used. No participants will be identified in the findings of any presentation or publication resulting from the research.

9. Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by the Business School at the University of West of Scotland. It is organised by the person named at the top of the sheet.

10. Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been reviewed by the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow.

11. Contact for Further Information

Mrs Brenda Hughes	Dr M Wingrave
Business School	School of Education
University of West of Scotland	University of Glasgow
brenda.hughes@uws.ac.uk	mary.wingrave@glasgow.ac.uk

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project then you can contact the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Officer by contacting Dr Muir Houston at Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix 3 Participant Consent Form

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Participant Consent Form

Name of Researcher: Brenda Hughes

Please initial/check box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. ☐

3. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

4 I agree to the interview being tape recorded. ☐

Name of participant _____ Date _____

Signature _____

Researcher Brenda Hughes Date _____

Signature _____

Appendix 4 Excerpt Interview Schedule taken from a L7 interview

Q Either when you've been working before you came here, or since being at university, has anybody ever spoke to you about the idea of reflection in connection with learning?

Q When you were reflecting at your work, did somebody sit down and say this is how you go about reflecting or did they assume that you knew how to reflect?

Q When you think about learning from reflection at work, was it always related to performance? Was it always related to skills? Or was it about your career choices? Was it about goals? What were you reflecting on?

Q What do you think are the benefits to workers or the organisation as a whole, from that type of reflection in work related learning?

Q How did you feel about reflection when you were doing it? Can you describe any emotions that you remember?

Q What does that mean to say 'I struggled with reflection'? What kind of things do you mean by that?

Q Has anybody mentioned reflection in connection with learning at uni?

Q Did anyone give you a process or a model to follow or did anyone go through different aspects or stages of reflection?

Q . Can you describe the connection between your reflections in your learning and the knowledge you're developing in terms of subjects like human resource management or marketing or economics?

Appendix 5 Summary of codes presented to both cohorts in second interviews

Improving grades	Improving productivity
Learning strategies	Meeting targets
Developing confidence	Adding value
Critical thinking	Learning to challenge
Improving academic performance	Self-improvement
Academic goals	Goals
Critique	Personal development Planning
Self-image	Criticism
Self-evaluation	Developing interpersonal skills
Recognising Progress	Appraisal
Changing thinking	Motivation
Understanding theory	Overcoming Challenges
Coping with change	Group-work
Teamwork	Seeing the bigger picture
Managing yourself	Benefits to employers
Compassion	Benefits to employees
Connecting with others	Sensitivity to others
Developing as a human	Open minded
Good Citizen	Reflection in the moment
Open minded	Managing yourself
Self-Identity	Social Justice
Acknowledgement of weaknesses	Motivation
Doing Better	Understanding the world
Balanced Approach	Reflection on relationships
Employability	Overcoming Challenge
	Being happy

Appendix 6 Excerpt from transcribed L7 interview

B. How do you feel about that reflection on, how do you feel about the fact that you're completing essays or reports or giving presentations on a topic and then you've got this reflection on you're learning. Do you see them as two separate things or do you think there's a connection between them the stuff that you're writing about in your essays? Is that in any way related to the idea that you do your PDP or reflection?

ALI. I think so yes. I think just because when you're doing, even if weren't writing down like your reflecting things or different things you're learning it's always in here, you're always thinking yourself like God I wrote an essay last week and that's the first essay I've written in twenty odd years since I was at school so I was freaking out. So that was constantly on my mind going oh no so you do anything like the first time I put a PowerPoint presentation together, although I've presented I haven't actually put one so things like that so you maybe not be writing it down but you're always thinking about it in here. So I think people do it automatically without realising that they're probably doing it so I definitely think they are.

B. Does that make it easier to fill in these PDPs templates or does it make it more difficult sometimes?

ALI. No like because you could be sitting in the car or sitting at home watching the telly and you're thinking about things but you don't feel the need to get a pen and paper and write it down or have like your laptop in front of you and then when you do go to write it you have to be in the mood sometimes to write things down in your reflecting bit so it's not always, by the time I do come to get it it's like what did I think about again so.

B. How do you feel about it if you were to describe that process of completing the template and engaging in reflection, although you're saying it's normally natural and continuous with you wherever you are things will pop into your head and you're thinking about them. See the process of writing it, the process of

sharing it with somebody, is that one you're comfortable with? Do you enjoy it? Do you find it difficult? Are there any problems with it?

ALI. It doesn't bother me I'm quite eh comfortable with it. I don't put anything on it like my Mahara wall or anything like that I don't put anything on it that I wouldn't you that's too personal or anything like that but I don't mind.

B. Do you think there's a connection between that bit of your studies where you're reflecting on your learning and you're reflecting on what you're doing and how it's all going, is there a connection between that and grades do you think and performance? In exams or in tests or anything like that or do you think they are quite separate?

ALI. I don't, I think, I haven't really thought about that actually but I think they probably are definitely related because I think for your own self-development you know what you're aiming for or if you get a piece of work back and you think oh that's not what I wanted to do or I want to do better the next time. So I think even if you can look back at what you have done or maybe I should have done this or done that way or going forward you know like see for the next time I want to get an A so I am going to do it this way so I think they are related.

Appendix 7 Excerpt of coded transcription

B: Learning and development I think creativity in would have been a level 7 one and then business would have been level 8 and get into enterprise level 9

E: yes so you do get into enterprise we did but it was more I found it more of a you did do reflective learning on a weekly well I done it on a weekly basis but I wouldn't really say it was personal reflective I would say it was more learning reflective. Like it was kind of like I done it by question so it was like what did I think went well this week what didn't, what did you learn what could have been better like group work because it was in groups and because you were writing in groups. In that class I was actually unfortunate because I was in a class that it was the first time I had ever been in a group that not didn't get on but there was two people that didn't really cooperate and then me and my friend and it became really difficult because someone. she didn't do work she wasn't interested in it basically and she didn't do anything and it just it kind of took over my reflection because I was talking about that rather than the actual module which was a shame. Obviously I was still saying what I had learned and what I found interesting about it but I even said in my personal development plan that I enjoyed it and that I obviously felt that I had understood how hard it was to start a business but I felt personally like the whole conflict between everybody had took over my actual experience of the whole module and kind of ruined it. So I struggled to do it but learning and development and creativity in technology. I am sure we worked in reflection in both of them and it was more like a personal reflection so like swot analysis etc. and obviously when you make your Mahara page as well it would have been learning and development as well.

B: When you done your portfolio as well that you put together with your reflections in it. How do you find the process of reflection?

E: I don't mind doing reflection at all I actually enjoy the personal development modules like only because again I find it easy to right about because it is personal obviously there is a certain amount of it academic like the Aspiring Futures this year it has more academic content in it because it's how you are getting ready to go onto the job market obviously you are evaluating skills that you need and then you are putting your skills towards that and how you need to improve them but I do actually enjoy reflection I think it does help especially when you do it every year because obviously in first year you know what you need to develop in second year and then in second year you kind of look back and the same again and it has helped cos I feel like I have since first year improved a lot and loads of different things

Text colour	Code assigned
Pink	Self-improvement
Blue	PDP
Grey	Employability
Green	Self
Red	Emotions
Purple	Reflection on learning

Appendix 8 Excerpt of Theme Definitions

Theme Definitions: define the focus and boundaries of the themes, to distil the essence of the theme.

Learning from mistakes: This theme concerns the assessment of learning or performance from the point of view of past mistakes. The theme explains reflection as being part of revisiting the past or weakenesses with the intention of turning things around so that success is a more likely outcome.

Doing Better: Participants construed themselves as objects which could be improved. Doing better as a theme related to career opportunities, overcomng weaknesses, improving learning skills, improving work performance and academic improvement (in terms of better grades).

This is hard: Describes the problems and tensions students experienced around the process of reflection. Students made references to issues around revisiting emotive learning incidents. Reflection involving groupwork could also pose its own problems relating to offending others or creating tensions. Some students talked about anxiety regarding template completion, to the point that some said it encouraged a cliched, superficial approach. Finally the theme also refers to the issue of the relationship between reflection and disciplinary learning. Students were unsure how to locate reflection alongside disciplinary knowledge.

Appendix 9 Summary of codes from first interviews with L7 students

Personal values and professional role	Valuing experience
Learning from mistakes	Self-perception
Process of reflective learning	Emotions
Overcoming struggles	Support from colleagues
Recognition of Success	Interpretations of criticality
Performing to expectations	Age related differences in learning
Reflection on learning	Motivation for learning
Reflection in and on learning	Performance of educator
Problems with reflection	Employment related learning
Group work	Value of learning
Outcome of reflection	Personal value of learning
Self-Development	Application of learning
Reflection on relationships	Learning/Life balance
Managerial benefits	Interpretations of ref learning

Appendix 10: The relationship between initial L7 codes and candidate themes

Individual codes in columns have been colour coded and matched to the overall candidate theme

Learning from mistakes	Doing Better	This is hard	Benefits from reflection
Combating weaknesses	Self-improvement	Embarrassing performance	Becoming more critical
Identifying weaknesses	What works?	Avoiding negativity	Improving business performance
Avoiding disappointment	Challenging yourself	Avoiding drama	More comfortable and confident in learning
Learning from past mistakes	Learning from others	Relationship with disciplinary knowledge	Personal development in the workplace
How to improve?	Learning strategies	What to write?	Improving productivity
Dealing with criticism	Development of skills	Acknowledging weaknesses	Improving performance at work
Turning weakness into success	Moving forward	Superficial treatment	Improved teamwork
Early mistakes	Making progress	Stuff that is personal	Being proud of achievements
Turning things around	Improving grades	Being uncomfortable	Improved motivation
	Academic goals	Embarrassing performance	Improving employability
	Learning how to cope	Learning is a chore	Broadening my knowledge
	Proving capability	Bumming yourself up	
	Analysing academic performance	Being Self critical	

Reference List

Akbari, R. (2007). Reflections on reflection: A critical appraisal of reflective practices in L2 teacher education. *System*, vol 35 (2):192 –207

Altheide, D., and Johnson, J.M. (2013). Reflections on interpretive adequacy in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (4thed), Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE, 381-411

Anderson, C. and Day, K. (2005). Purposive environments: Engaging students in the values and practices of history, *Higher Education*, vol 49 (3):319–343

Anderson, C. and Hounsell D. (2007). Knowledge practices: Doing the subject in undergraduate courses, *The Curriculum Journal*, vol 18 (4):463-478

Arends, J. (2014). The role of rationality in transformative education, Journal *of Transformative Education,* vol 12 (4):356-367

Aristotle, (1999). Nicomachean ethics, (T. Irwin, Trans) Indianapolis, Hackett

Aronowitz, S. (2008). *Against Schooling: For an Education That Matters*, Boulder, Colorado, Paradigm Publishers

Arrow, K. (1997). The benefits of education and the formation of preferences in J. R. Behrman and N. Stacy (Eds.) *The Social Benefits of Education*. Ann Arbor, USA, University of Michigan Press,11-16

Ashworth, P. (2004). Understanding as the transformation of what is already known*, Teaching in Higher Education,* vol, 9 (2):147-158

Asselin, M.E. (2011). Reflective Narrative: A Tool for Learning through Practice, *Journal for Nurses in Staff Development*, vol 27 (1):2–6.

Atkins, L. and Wallace, S. (2012). *Qualitative Research in Education*, London, SAGE

Barnett, R. (2000). Supercomplexity and the Curriculum, *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 25, (3):255-265

Barnett, R. (2007). Learning for an Unknown Future, *Higher Education Research and Development,* vol 23 (3):247-260

Barnett, R. (2009.) Knowing and becoming in the higher education curriculum, *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 34 (4):429-440

Barton, G. and Ryan, M. (2014). Multimodal approaches to reflective teaching and assessment in higher education, *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol 33 (3):409-424

Barrie, S.C. (2006). Understanding what we mean by the generic attributes of graduates. *Higher Education,* vol 51 (2):215–41

Bathmaker, A.M. (2003). The Expansion of Higher Education: A Consideration of Control, Funding and Quality in Bartlett, S. and Burton, D. (Eds) *Education Studies*: *Essential Issues*, London, SAGE, 169-189

Bauman, Z. (2005) Education in Liquid Modernity. Review of Education, *Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, vol 27 (4):303–317

Bauman, Z. (2008) *Does Ethics Have a Chance in a World of Consumers?* Cambridge, Harvard University Press

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research, *Qualitative Research,* vol 15, (2):219-234

Bernstein, R. (1976) *The restructuring of social and political theory*, Philadelphia, USA, University of Pennsylvania Press

Best, S. (2017). Education in the interregnum: an evaluation of Zygmunt Bauman's liquid-turn writing on education, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol 38(2):203-220

Black, P.E. and Plowright, D. (2010). A Multidimensional model of reflective learning for professional development, *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 11 (2):245-258

Bleakley, A. (2000). Adrift without a life belt: Reflective self-assessment in a post-modern age, *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol 5 (4):405-418

Bolton, G. (2010). *Reflective Practice*, London, SAGE

Boud, D. and Walker, D. (2002). Promoting reflection in professional courses, in R Harrison, F Reeve, A Hanson and J Clarke (Eds), *Supporting lifelong learning: Perspectives on Learning*, London, Open University Press, 91-110

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinctio*n: *A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London, Routledge

Boyles, D. (2006). Dewey's epistemology: An argument for warranted assertions, knowing, and meaningful classroom practice. *Educational Theory*, vol 56:57–68

BPP, (2013). *Reflective Practice: A non-negotiable requirement for an effective educator, A BPP Learning and Teaching Working Paper*, available from www.bpp.com/delegate/r/.../bpp_publications_reflective_practice_march_2013.pdf [Accessed 16/02/17]

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2008). Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol 3 (2):77-101

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: a practical guide for beginner*s, London, SAGE

Bridgstock, R. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol 28, (1):31–44

Brookfield, S. (1990). Using Critical Incidents to Explore Learners' Assumptions, in J. Mezirow (Ed) Fostering *Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*, San Francisco, USA, Jossey-Bass,177-193

Brookfield, S. (1995). *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. San-Francisco, Jossey-Bass

Brookfield, S. (2000). The concept of critically reflective practice. In A. Wilson and B. Hayes (Eds.), *Handbook of adult and continuing education*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass,33-50

Brookfield, S. (2002). Overcoming alienation as the practice of adult education: The contribution of Erich Fromm to a critical theory of adult learning and education, *Adult Education Quarterly*, vol 52(2):96-111

Brookfield, S. (2010). Critical Reflection as an Adult Learning Process in Lyons N (Ed) *Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry: Mapping a Way of Knowing for Professional Reflective Inquiry*, New York, Springer,215-236

Brookfield, S. (2012). Critical theory and transformative learning. In E. W. Taylor and P. Cranton (eds.), *Handbook of transformative learning theory: Theory, research and practice*, San Francisco, USA, Jossey-Bass,131-146

Brown, P., Hesketh, A. and Williams, S. (2004). *The mismanagement of talent: Employability and jobs in the knowledge economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Brown, P., and Tannock, S. (2009). Education, meritocracy and the global war for talent. *Journal of Education Policy,* vol 24, (4):377–92

Brunila, K. and Piivonen, P. (2016.) Preoccupied with the self: towards self-responsible, enterprising, flexible and self-centred subjectivity in education, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, vol 37 (1):56-69

Bush, H. and Bissell, V. (2008). The Evaluation of an Approach to Reflective Learning in the Undergraduate Dental Curriculum. *European Journal of Dental Education,* vol 12 (2):103–10

Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council. (2007). *Graduate employability skills*. Canberra, Australia

Cameron, S. (1999). *The Business Student's Handbook: Skills for Study and Employment*, (5th ed), Harlow, Prentice Hall

Cameron, R.A. and O'Leary, C. (2015). Improving Ethical Attitudes or Simply Teaching Ethical Codes: The Reality of Accounting Ethics Education, *Accounting Education*, vol 24 (4):275-290

Campbell, D.T. (1988). *Methodology and Epistemology for Social Science: selected papers*, Chicago, USA, University of Chicago

Carlsen, A., Rudningen, G. and Mortensen, T.F. (2014). Playing the Cards: Using Collaborative Artifacts With Thin Categories to Make Research Co-Generative, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, vol 23 (3): 294–313

Cathro, V., O'Kane, P. and Gilbertson, D. (2017). Assessing reflection: understanding skill development through reflective learning journals, *Education and Training*, vol 59 (4):1-29

Catterall, M. and Ibbotson, P. (2000). Using Projective Techniques in Education Research, *British Educational Research Journal*, vol 26 (2):245-256

Chamberlain, K., Cain, T., Sheridan, J. and Dupuis, A. (2011). Pluralisms in Qualitative Research: From Multiple Methods to Integrated Methods, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol 8 (2):151-16

Charmaz, K. (2012). 'Grounded Theory: objectivist and constructivist methods' in W Luttrell (Ed) *Qualitative Educational Research: Readings in Reflexive Methodology and Transformative Practice*, London, Routledge

Chartered Institute of Management, (2016*). A Win-win-win partnership: your university, your learners and your leaders*. Available at http://www.managers.org.uk/~/media/Angela-Media-Library/pdfs/HE/Win-Win-Win-Partnership2016.pdf [Accessed 12/12/16]

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, (2016*). What is reflective learning*? Available from http://www.cipd.co.uk/cpd/reflective-learning.aspx [Accessed 07/09/16]

Chartered Management Institute. (2014). *Management 2020: Leadership to unlock long-term growth*, London, England. Available at http://www.managers.org.uk/~/media/Files/PDF/M2020/Management%202020%20-%20Leadership%20to%20unlock%20long-term%20growth.pdf [Accessed 21/01/17]

Chartered Management Institute, (2016). *Why Chartered Managers are good for Business,* available at http://www.managers.org.uk/~/media/Files/PDF/CMgr%20Report%20May%202015.pdf [Accessed 18 October 2016]

Chase, S. (1996). Personal vulnerability and interpretive authority in narrative research in R. Josselson, (Ed), *The Narrative Study of Lives Vol 4: Ethics and Process in the Narrative Study of Lives*, Thousand Oakes, CA, USA, SAGE,45-59

Chase, S. (2013). Narrative Inquiry: Still a field in the making in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, (Eds), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, London, SAGE, 55-84

Clara, M. (2015.) What is reflection? Looking for clarity in an ambiguous notion, *Journal of Teacher Education*, vol 66 (3):261-271

Clayman, S.E. and Gill, V.T. (2004). Conversation Analysis in M. Hardy and A. Bryman, (Eds*), The Handbook of Data Analysis*, London, SAGE

Clegg, S. (2010). Time future – the dominant discourse of higher education, *Time and Society*, vol 19 (3):345-364

Clegg, S. and Bradley, S. (2006), The implementation of progress files in higher education: reflection as national policy, *Higher Education*, vol 51 (4):465– 468

Clough, P.T. (1993). On the brink of deconstructing sociology; Critical reading of Dorothy Smith's standpoint of epistemology, *Sociological Quarterly* vol 34 (1):169- 182

Collin, S., Karsenti, T. and Komis, V. (2013). Reflective Practice in Initial Teacher Education: Critiques and Perspectives, *Reflective Practice* vol 14 (1): 104 –117

Collins, M. (1991). Adult Education as Vocation, London, Routledge

Confederation of British Industry, (2010). *Ready to grow: Business priorities for education and skills*. London, England. Available at http://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/ready-to-grow-cbi.pdf [Accessed 19/10/16]

Conklin, T. (2012). Making it personal: The importance of student experience in creating autonomy-supportive classrooms for millennial learners. *Journal of Management Education*, vol 37 (4):499-538.

Cottrell, S. (2003). *Skills for Success: personal development and employability*,(3rd ed), London, Palgrave MacMillan

Cowan, J. (2013). Noteworthy matters for attention in reflective journal writing, *Active Learning in Higher Education*, vol 15 (1):53-64

Cranton, P. (2013). Developing a Survey of Transformative Learning Outcomes and Processes Based on Theoretical Principles, *Journal of Transformative Education*, vol 11 (4):211-228

Cumming, J., Woodcock, C., Cooley, S.J., Holland, M.J.G., and Burns, V.E. (2015). Development and validation of the group work skills questionnaire (GSQ) for higher education, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol 40 (7): 988- 1001

Cunliffe, A. (2004). On Becoming a Critically Reflexive Practitioner, *Journal of Management Education*, vol 28:407-426

Cunliffe, A. (2016). Republication of On Becoming a Critically Reflexive Practitioner, *Journal of Management Education*, vol. 40 (6):747–768

D'Agnese, V. (2017) The Essential Uncertainty of Thinking: Education and Subject in John Dewey, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 51 (1): 73-88

Daniels, J. (2016). Professional learning in higher education: making good practice relevant, *International Journal for Academic Development*, vol 22 (2): 170-181

Davies, J. (2012). *UK Business Schools: High Impact, Inventive and Industrious in Business Schools Seizing the Future*, London, Association of Business Schools

De Bondt, W. (2013). After the crisis: How to restore trust in business and finance, *Spanish Journal of Finance and Accounting*, vol 42 (157):13-37

De Lourdes Dieck-Assad, M. (2013). Globalization and the Business Schools: Toward Business and World-Sustainable Leadership, *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, vol 24 (3-4):168-187,

Denzin, N.K. (2001). The Reflexive Interview and a Performative Social Science, *Qualitative Research*, vol 1 (1):23-46

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2005) The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds*), Handbook of qualitative research*, Thousand Oaks, California, USA, SAGE,1-42
Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2013). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, London, SAGE

Dewey, J. (1910). *How we think*, New York, USA, DC Heath

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education An introduction to the philosophy of education*, London, MacMillan

Dewey, J. (1929) *Experience and Nature*, London, Allen & Unwin

Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. Boston: D.C. Heath

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*, New York, USA, Collier Books

De Vita, G and Bernard M.J. (2011). Fostering reflective learning in Confucian Heritage Culture environments, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, vol 48 (2):183-193

Dion, M. (2015). Epistemological and Pedagogical Challenges of Teaching International Business Ethics Courses, *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, vol 26 (2):109-135

Di Stefano, G.D., Gino, F., Pisano, G. and Staats, B. (2016). Making Experience Count: the role of reflection in individual learning, Harvard Business School Technology & Operations Mgt. Unit Working Paper No. 14-093; Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2414478 [last accessed 16/02/17]

Dirkx, J.M. (2012). Nurturing soul work: a Jungian approach to transformative learning in E Taylor and P Cranton (Eds) *The handbook of transformative learning. Theory, research and practice*. San Francisco CA, Jossey Bass,116-130

Dirkx, J.M., Mezirow J. and Cranton P.(2006). Musings and Reflections on the meaning, context and process of Transformative Learning: A Dialogue between John M Dirkx and Jack Mezirow, *Journal of Transformative Education*, vol 4 (2): 123-139

Duke, S. and Appleton, J. (2000). The use of reflection in a palliative care programme: a quantitative study of the development of reflective skills over an academic year, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol. 32 (6):1557-1568

Durand, J., Hopf, M. and Nunnenmacher, S. (2015). Potentials and challenges of video-based self-reflection for the professionalisation of early childhood education and care professionals, *Early Child Development and Care*, vol. 186 (1):23- 41

Dyke, M. (2006). The role of the 'Other' in reflection, knowledge formation and action in a late modernity, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, vol 25 (2):105-123

Easterby-Smith, M, Golen-Biddle, K. and Locke, K. (2008). Working with pluralism: determining quality in qualitative research, *Organizational Research Methods*, vol 11 (3):419–429.

Eaton, C. (2016). "I don't get it", the challenge of teaching reflective practice to health and care practitioners, *Reflective Practice*, vol 17 (2):159-166

Ecclestone, K. (1996). The reflective practitioner: Mantra or model for emancipation? *Studies in the Education of Adults*, vol 28:146–161

Edwards, R. and Nicolls, K. (2006). Expertise, competence and reflection in the rhetoric of professional development, *British Educational Research Journal,* vol 32 (1):115–131

Edwards, R. and Usher, R. (2000). *Globalisation and Pedagogy: Space, Place and Identity*, London, Routledge

Eisner, S. (2010). Grave new world? Workplace skills for today's college graduates. *American Journal of Business Education*, vol 3 (9):27-50

Ellingson, L.L. (2013). Analysis and Representation Across the Continuum, in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, (4th ed), London, SAGE,413-446

Engineering Council, (2017). available at http://www.engc.org.uk/professional-development/continuing-professional-development-cpd/ [Accessed 09/04/17]

Epp, S. (2008). The value of reflective journaling in undergraduate nursing education: A literature review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, vol 45, (9):1379–1388

Eraut, M. (2004). Informal learning in the workplace. *Studies in Continuing Education,* vol 26, (2):247–273

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching in M. C. Wittrock, (ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed), New York, USA, Macmillan

Erickson, F. (2012). Qualitative research methods for science education in B. J. Fraser, K. Tobin and C. J. MacRobbie (Eds), *Second International Handbook of Science Education*, New York, USA, Springer,1451-1469

Erlandson, P. (2014). Reflection and Perception in Professional Practice, Indo-Pacific *Journal of Phenomenology*, vol 14 (1):1-11

European Commission. (2010). *Employers' perception of graduate employability*, Flash EB Series, Available at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_304_en.pdf [Accessed 19/10/16]

Field, J. (2000*). Lifelong Learning and the New Educational Order*, Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham Books

Findlay, N., Dempsey, S. and Warren-Forward, H. (2010). Validation and use of the Newcastle Reflective Analysis Tool: A three-year longitudinal study of RT students' reflective journals. *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 11 (1):83–94

Finlayson, A. (2015). Reflective Practice: has it really changed over time, *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 16 (6):717-730

Fontana, A. and Frey, J.H. (2003). The Interview: From neutral stance to political involvement in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (2nd ed), Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, Sage,695-728

Fook, J. (2012). The Challenges of Creating Critically Reflective Groups, Social Work with Groups, vol 35 (3):218-234

Fook, J. and Askeland, G.A. (2007). Challenges of critical reflection: 'Nothing ventured, nothing gained', *Social Work Education*, vol 16 (2):1–14

Foucault, M. (1972). *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*, C Gordon (Ed), New York, USA, Pantheon

Foucault, M. (1982). the subject and power, in H Dreyfus and P Rabinow (Eds), *Michael Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Brighton, Harvester Press,208-228

Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*, London, Penguin

Foucault, M. (2002). Governmentality. In *Power: Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984, Vol. 3*, in Faubion, J.D (Ed) London: Penguin,201-222

Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*. (G. Burchell, Trans.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Freebody, P., C. Maton, and J.R. Martin. (2008). Talk, text, and knowledge in cumulative, integrated learning: A response to 'intellectual challenge', *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, vol 31 (2):188-201

Frejes, A. and Nicoll, K (2015) *Foucault and a Politics of Confession in Education, London*, Routledge

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, New York, USA, Continuum

Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of Freedom: ethics, democracy and civic courage*, Oxford, Rowman and Littlefield

Fullana, J, Pallisera, M., Colomer, J, Fernández Pena, R. and Perez-Burriel, M. (2016). Reflective learning in higher education: a qualitative study on students' perceptions, *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 41, (6):1008-1022

Furlong, J. (2004). BERA at 30. Have we come of age?, *British Educational Research Journal*, vol 30 (3):343- 35

Gage, N.L. (1989). The Paradigm Wars and Their Aftermath: A "Historical" Sketch of Research on Teaching since 1989, *Educational Researcher* vol 18 (7):4- 10

Gallagher, K. (2010). *Skills Development for Business and Management Students*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

Gallagher, M. (2001). *Lifelong learning: Demand and supply issues - some questions for research.* Paper presented at the Business/Higher Education Roundtable Conference on The Critical Importance of Lifelong Learning, Sydney, Australia, Available at http://www.deetya.gov.au/highered/otherpub/lifelong/default.htm. [Accessed 19/10/16]

Garrison, D.R. and Akyol, Z. (2012). Toward the development of metacognition construct for communities of inquiry, *The Internet and Higher Education*, vol 17: 84-89

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*, London, Hutchinson

Ghaye, T. (2000). Editorial: Into the reflective mode: bridging the stagnant moat, *Journal of Reflective Practice* vol 1, (1):5–9

Giannakis, M. and Bullivant, N. (2016). The massification of higher education in the UK: Aspects of service quality, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, vol 40 (5):630–648

Goodman, N. (1978). *Ways of Worldmaking*, USA, Hackett Publishing

Gorard, S. (2010). Fostering Scepticism: the Importance of Warranting Claims, *Evaluation and Research in Education*, vol 16 (3):136-149

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks* in Q Hoare and GN Smith (Eds), London, Lawrence and Wishart

Grbich, C. (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis: an introduction*, (2nd ed), London, SAGE

Greene, J.C. (2010). Knowledge Accumulation in W Lutterell (Ed) *Qualitative Educational Research: Readings in reflexive methodology and transformative practice*, London, Routledge, 63-77

Greener, K. (2011). *Designing Social Research – A Guide for the Bewildered*, London, SAGE

Griffiths, M., and Tann, S. (1992). Using Reflective Practice to Link Personal and Public Theories, *Journal of Education for Teaching,* vol 18 (1):69 –84

Grondin, J. (2002). Gadamer's basic understanding of understanding. *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, *2002*, 36-51 {available at http://mapageweb.umontreal.ca/grondinj/pdf/gadamer_understanding.pdf} [Accessed 05 October 15]

Groundwater-Smith, S. and Mockler, N. (2007). Ethics in practitioner research: an issue of quality, *Research Papers in Education*, vol 22 (2):199-211
Guba, E.G. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialogue in E.G. Guba (Ed) *The Paradigm Dialogue*, Newbury Park, Ca, USA, SAGE

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, London, SAGE

Gubrium, J. and Holstein, J. (1997). The active interview in D. Silverman (Ed) *Qualitative Research*, London, SAGE

Gummesson, E. (2005). Qualitative research in marketing: Road-map for a wilderness of complexity and unpredictability, *European Journal of Marketing*, vol 39 (3-4):309-327

Gunn, C. (2010). Exploring MATESOL student resistance to reflection*, Language Teaching Research*, vol 14 (2):208-223

Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action: Volume two, lifeworld and system – a critique of functionalist reason*, Boston, USA, Beacon Press

Hains-Wesson, R. and Young, K. (2017). A collaborative autoethnography study to inform the teaching of reflective practice in STEM, *Higher Education Research & Development*, vol 36 (2):297-310

Hammersley, M. (2001). On 'Systematic' Reviews of Research Literatures: a 'narrative' response to Evans and Benefeld, *British Educational Research Journal*, vol 27 (5):543 -554

Hammersley, M. (2010). Reproducing or constructing? Some questions about transcription in social research, *Qualitative Research* vol 10 (5):553-569

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge? Thinking from women's lives*. Ithaca, New York, USA, Cornel University Press

Hardy, M. and Bryman, A. (2009). *The Handbook of Data Analysis*, (2nd Ed), London, SAGE

Harraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledge, the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective, *Feminist Studies* 14:575- 599

Hartman, T. (2015). 'Strong multiplicity': an interpretive lens in the analysis of qualitative interview narratives, *Qualitative Research* vol 15 (1):22-38

Harvard, (2014). *The Value of a Liberal Arts Education*. Available from http://www.admissions.college.harvard.edu/about/learning/liberal_arts.html [Accessed 060317]

Hebert, C. (2015). Knowing and/or Experiencing: a critical examination of the reflective models of John Dewey and Donald Schön, *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 16 (3):361-371

Helyer, R. (2015). Learning through reflection: the critical role of reflection in work-based learning (WBL), *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, Vol. 7 (1): 15 – 27

Henkel, M. (2005). Academic identity and autonomy in a changing policy environment. *Higher Education*, vol 49 (1 – 2):155 –76

Hickson, H. (2011). Critical reflection: reflecting on learning to be reflective, *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 12 (6): 829-839

Higdon, R. (2016). Employability: The missing voice: How student and graduate views could be used to develop future higher education policy and inform curricula, *Power and Education*, vol 8 (2):176-195

Higher Education Academy, (2016). https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/workstreams research/themes/employability/current-issues [Accessed 12/12/16]

Higher Education Academy, *Embedding Employability into the Curriculum*, available at *https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/enhancement/frameworks/framework-embedding-employability-higher-education*, [Accessed 17 September 2017]

Hillyard, C., Gillespie, D. and Littig, P. (2011). University student's attitudes about learning in small groups after frequent participation, *Active Learning in Higher Education*, vol 11 (1):9-20

Hoggan, C. (2016). Transformative learning as a metatheory: Definition, criteria, and typology. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 66:57-75

Hoggan, C., Malkki, K. and Finnegan, F. (2016). Developing the Theory of Perspective Transformation, *Adult Education Quarterly*, 1-17

Holbrook, A., Bourke, S., Fairbairn, H. and Lovat, T. (2007). Examiner comment on the literature review in Ph.D. theses, *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 32 (3): 337-356

Holliday, A. (2007). *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*, (2nd ed), London, SAGE

Holloway, I. and Wheeler, S. (2013). *Qualitative research in nursing and healthcare*, (3rd ed). West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons Limited

Hordern, J. (2016). On the making and faking of knowledge value in Higher Education curricula, *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol 21 (4):367-380

Howell Major, C. and Savin-Baden, M. (2011). 'Integration of qualitative evidence: towards construction of academic knowledge in social science and professional fields', *Qualitative Research,* vol 11 (6):645-663

Høyrup, S. and Elkjaer, B. (2006). Reflection – taking it beyond the individual. In D. Boud, P. Cressey, and P. Docherty (Eds.), *Productive reflection at work: learning for changing organizations*, New York USA, Routledge,29-42

Huq, A., and Gilbert, D. (2013). Enhancing graduate employability through work-based learning in social entrepreneurship: A case study. *Education and Training,* vol 55 (6):550-572

Hyslop-Marginson, E.J., and Sears, A.M. (2006). *Neo-liberalism, globalization and human capital learning: Reclaiming Education for Democratic Citizenship*, Dordrecht, Netherlands, Springer

Illeris, K. (2014). Transformative learning and identity, *Journal of Transformative Education*, vol 12 (2):148-163

Inamdar, S.N. and Roldan, M. (2013). The MBA Capstone Course: Building Theoretical, Practical, Applied, and Reflective Skills, *Journal of Management Education*, vol 37 (6):747-770

Institute of Civil Engineers, (2016). *Thank you and key learnings from this year's CPD audit* available from https://www.ice.org.uk/news/key-learnings-from-this-years-cpd-audit [Accessed 17/02/17]

Irani, Z. (2017). *Do business schools really understand what employers want from their graduates?,* Chartered Association of Business Schools, available from https://charteredabs.org/do-business-schools-really-understand-what-employers-want-from-their-graduates/ [Accessed 07 March 2017]

Ixer, G. (1999). There's No Such Thing as Reflection, *British Journal of Social Work*, vol 29 (4):513 –527

Jackson, D. (2013). Business graduate employability – where are we going wrong? *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol 32, (5):776 –790

Jackson, D. (2015). Business undergraduates' perceptions of their capabilities in employability skills, *Industry and Higher Education*, vol 26 (5):345-356

Jackson, D. (2016). Re-conceptualising graduate employability: the importance of pre-professional identity, *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol 35 (5):925- 939

Jackson, E. (2013). Choosing a Methodology: Philosophical Underpinning, *Practitioner Research in Higher Education Journal* 7(1) October. Available at: *http://194.81.189.19/ojs/index.php/prhe* [Accessed 15 October 2013]

Jarvis, P. (2009). Learning to be a person in society in K. Illeris, (ed) *Contemporary Theories of Learning*, London, Routledge

Jay, J. K., and Johnson, K. L. (2002). Capturing Complexity: A Typology of Reflective Practice in Teacher Education, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol 18:73–85

Jeffrey, G. and McCrae, M. (2004). Are your managers your main clients? Reflective Practice the critical self and learning organisations in *Constructing the Future: Reflection on Practice*, in H. Reid and J. Bimrose,(Eds),Stourbridge, Institute of Career Guidance

Jordi, R. (2011). Reframing the concept of reflection: Consciousness, experiential learning, and reflective learning practices. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 61(2):181-197

Kacen, L. and Chaitin, J. (2006). The times are a changing: understanding qualitative research in ambiguous, conflictual and changing contexts, *The Qualitative Report,* vol 11 (2):209-228

Kalfa, S. and Taksa, L. (2015). Cultural capital in business higher education: reconsidering the graduate attributes movement and the focus on employability, *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 40 (4):580-595

Keeley, B. (2007*). Human capital: A revolution*? The OECD Observer, *http://oecdobserver.org/news/archivestory.php/aid/2233/Human_capital:_A_revolution_.html* [Accessed 19/10/16]

Kember, D., McKay D., Sinclair, K. and Kam Yuet Wong, F. (2008). A four-category scheme for coding and assessing the level of reflection in written work, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol 33 (4):369-379

Kemmis, S. and Smith, T.J. (2008). Conclusions and Challenges in Kemmis and Smith (Eds), *Enabling Praxis: Challenges for Education*, Rotterdam, Sense

King, P.M., and Kitchener, K.S. (1994). *Developing Reflective Judgment: Understanding and Promoting Intellectual Growth and Critical Thinking in Adolescents and Adults,* San Francisco USA, Jossey Bass

Kitchenham, A. (2008). The Evolution of John Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, *Journal of Transformative Education*, vol 6, (2):104-123

Klenowski, V., Askew, S., and Carnell, E. (2006). Portfolios for learning, assessment and professional development in Higher Education. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education,* vol 31, (3):267–286

Knight, P., and Yorke, M. (2006). *Learning, curriculum and employability in higher education*, London, Routledge Falmer

Knipfer, K., Kump, B., Wessel, D. and Cress, U. (2013). Reflection as a catalyst for organisational learning, *Studies in Continuing Education*, vol 35 (1):30-48

Knott, C., and Scragg, T. (2007). *Reflective Practice in Social Work*. Exeter, Learning Matters

Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, USA, University of Chicago Press

Kuwee Kumsa, M., Chambon, A., Chung Yan, M. and Maiter, S. (2015). Catching the shimmers of the social: from the limits of reflexivity to methodological creativity*, Qualitative Research*, vol 15 (4):419-436

Kvale, S. (1992). *Psychology and postmodernism*, London: Sage
Kvale, S. (1996) *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, SAGE

Langley, M. E., and Brown, S. T. (2010). Perceptions of the Use of Reflective Learning Journals in Online Graduate Nursing Education. *Nursing Education Research* 31 (1):12–17

Lassnigg, L. (2012). 'Lost in Translation': Learning Outcomes and the Governance of Education, *Journal of Education and Work*, vol 25 (3):299 –330.

Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*, New York, USA, Routledge

Lather, P. (1993). Fertile obsession: validity after poststructuralism, *Sociological Quarterly*, vol 34 (4):673-693

Lather, P. (1996). *Methodology as subversive repetition: Practices toward a feminist double science*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association New York

Lather, P. (2006). Paradigm proliferation as a good thing to think with: teaching research in education as a wild profusion, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol 19 (1):35-57

Lather, P. (2016). Top Ten+ List: (Re)Thinking Ontology in (Post)Qualitative Research, *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, vol 16 (2):125-131

Laurillard, D. (2002). *Rethinking university teaching: A framework for the effective use of educational technology,* (2nd ed), London, Routledge Falmer

Lawrence, R. (2012). Transformative learning through artistic expression: Getting out of our heads. In E. W. Taylor & P. Cranton (Eds.), *Handbook of transformative learning theory: Theory, research and practice*, San Francisco, USA, Jossey-Bass,471-485

Lee, R.M. and Fielding, N.G. (2009). Tools for Qualitative Data Analysis in M. Hardy and A. Bryman (eds) *The Handbook of Data Analysis*, (3rd ed), London, SAGE,529-546

Leigh, J. (2016). An embodied perspective on judgements of written reflective practice for professional development in higher education, *Journal of Reflective Practice; International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 17 (1):72-85

Leonardo, Z. (2004). Critical Social Theory and Transformative Knowledge: The Functions of Criticism in Quality Education, *Educational Researcher*, vol 33 (11): 11-18

Lew, D.N.M., and Schmidt, H.G. (2011). Writing to learn: can reflection journals be used to promote self-reflection and learning?, *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol 30 (4):519-532

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Beverly Hills, CA, SAGE

Lincoln, Y.S. (2009). "What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been": Twenty-Five Years of Qualitative and New Paradigm Research, *Qualitative Enquiry*, vol 16 (1):3-9

Lizzio, A. and Wilson, K. (2005). Self-Managed Learning Groups in Higher Education: Students' Perceptions of Process and Outcomes', *British Journal of Educational Psychology* vol 75, (3): 373–390

Lowden, K., Hall, S., Elliot, D., and Lewin, J. (2011). *Employers 'perceptions of the employability skills of new graduates*. London, Edge Foundation.

Lucas, U. and Tan P.L (2013). Developing a capacity to engage in critical reflection: students' 'ways of knowing 'within an undergraduate business and accounting programme, *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 38 (1):104-123

Lutterell, W. (2010). *Qualitative Educational Research: Readings in reflexive methodology and transformative practice*, London, Routledge

Lyons, N. (2010). *Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry: Mapping a Way of Knowing for Professional Reflective Inquiry*, New York, Springer

MacFarlane, .B and Gourlay, L. (2009). The Reflection Game: enacting the penitent self. *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol 14 (4):455-459

Malkki, K. (2010). Building on Mezirow's theory of transformative learning: Theorising the challenges to reflection, *Journal of Transformative Education*, vol 8 (1):42-62

Marcuse, H. (1964). *One dimensional man*, Boston, USA, Beacon

Marginson, S. (1989*). Human capital theory and education policy*, Public Sector Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia Available at http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv:7649, [Accessed 19/10/16]

Marzban, A. and Ashraafi, N. (2016). Assessing reflective thinking skills in EFL/ESL instructors based on differences in graduation degree and nationality, *Reflective Practice International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 17 (6):681-693

Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd ed), London, SAGE

McArthur, J. (2011). Exile, sanctuary and diaspora: mediations between higher education and society*, Teaching in Higher Education*, vol 16 (5):579-589

McArthur, J. (2011). Reconsidering the social and economic purposes of higher education, *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol 30 (6):737-749

McCarthy, J. (2011). Reflective Writing, Higher Education and Professional Practice, *Journal for Education in the Built Environment*, 6:1:29-43

McEwan, C. and Trede, F. (2014). The Academisation of Emerging Professions: Implications for Universities, Academics and Students, *Power and Education*, vol 6 (2):145-154

MacFarlane, B. (2016). The performative turn in the assessment of student learning: a rights perspective, *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol 21 (7):839-853

MacFarlane, M.D., Kisely, S., Loi, S., Looi, J., Merry, S., Parker, S., Power, B., Siskind, D., Smith, G. and MacFarlane, S. (2015). Getting started in research: research questions, supervisors and literature reviews, *Australasian Psychiatry*, vol 23 (1):8-11

McKay, F. H., and Dunn, M. (2015). Student reflections in a first year public health and health promotion unit. *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives,* vol 16, (2):242–253

MacKay, M. and Tymon, A. (2013). Working with uncertainty to support the teaching of critical reflection, *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol 18 (6):643-655

MacKay, M. and Tymon, A. (2016). Taking a risk to develop reflective skills in business practitioners, *Journal of Education and Work*, vol 29 (3):332-351

McNaughton, S.M. (2016). Critical reflection: scaffolding social responsiveness for first year students, *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Practice*, vol 17 (3):296-307

Meerwald, A.M.L. (2013). Researcher/Researched: repositioning research paradigms*, Higher Education Research and Development*, vol 32 (1):43-55

Meierdirk, C. (2017) Reflections of the Student Teacher, *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 18 (1):23-41

Mezirow, J. (1978). *Education for Perspective transformation, women's re-entry programmes in community colleges*, New York, Centre for Adult Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

Mezirow, J. (1981). A critical theory of adult learning and education. *Adult Education*, vol 32 (1),3–24

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco, America, Jossey Bass

Mezirow, J. (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*, San Francisco, USA, Jossey Bass

Mezirow, J. (2006). An overview of transformative learning. In P. Sutherland and J. Crowther (eds.), *Lifelong learning: Concepts and contexts*, New York USA, Routledge,24-38

Mezirow, J. (2009). An overview of transformative learning. In K. Illeris K. (ed), *Contemporary theories of learning: Learning theorists in their own words*, New York, USA, Routledge,90-105

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1984). *Qualitative Data Analysis*, London, SAGE

Miller, R.J. and Maellaro, R. (2016). Getting to the Root of the Problem in Experiential Learning: Using Problem Solving and Collective Reflection to Improve Learning Outcomes, *Journal of Management Education*, vol 40 (2):170-193

Mishler, E.G. (1986). *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*, Cambridge, MA, USA, Harvard University Press

Mishler, E.G. (1991). Representing discourse: The rhetoric of transcription, *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, vol 1:255-280

Mishler, E.G. (2012). 'Validation in Inquiry-Guided Research: the role of exemplars in narrative studies' in W. Luttrell (Ed) *Qualitative Educational Research: Readings in Reflexive Methodology and Transformative Practice*, London, Routledge,288-312

Moon, J.A. (2004). *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning*, London, Routledge

Morgan, G. (1983). Toward a more reflective social science in G Morgan (ed*) Beyond Method: Strategies for social research*, Beverly Hills CA, USA, SAGE ,368-376

Morrison, K. (1995). Dewey, Habermas and Reflective Practice *Curriculum ,* vol 16:82– 94

Morrow, S.L. (2005). Quality and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research in Counselling Psychology, *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, Vol 52 (2):250-260

Morse, J. (2015). Critical analysis of strategies for determining rigor in qualitative inquiry*, Qualitative Health Research*, vol 25(9):1212–1222

Murray, M. (2013). What happens in the classroom stays in the classroom: The limits to the transformative approach to education for political citizenship, *Adult Learner*,15-28

Nansubuga, F. and Munene, J.C. (2013a). "Reflecting on competences to increase role clarity during service delivery in a third world setting", *Journal of Workplace Learning*, vol 25 (4):231-246

Nansubuga, F. and Munene, J.C. (2013b). "Adaptability to the turbulent work environment through reflection", *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*, vol 16 (3): 160-175

Nansubuga, F., Munene, J.C. and Ntayi, J.M. (2015). Can reflection boost competences development in organizations? *European Journal of Training and Development*, vol 39 (6):504 - 521

Newman, M. (2014). Transformative Learning: Mutinous Thoughts Revisited, *Adult Education Quarterly*, 64(4):345-355

Nicoll, K. (2008). Discipline and e learning. *In Foucault and lifelong learning: governing the subject*, (ed) A. Fejes and K. Nicoll, London, Routledge,164-177

Nicholson, L., Putwain, D., Connors, L., and Hornby-Atkinson, P. (2013). The key to successful achievement as an undergraduate student: Confidence and realistic expectations? *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 38, (2):285–298

Patel, K., Auton, M.F., Carter, B., Watkins, C.L., Hackett, M., Leathley, M.J., Thornton, T and Lightbody, C.E. (2016). Parallel-Serial Memoing: A Novel Approach to Analyzing Qualitative Data, *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 26(13) 1745 –1752

Paterson, M., Higgs, J., Wilcox, S., and Villenuve, M. (2002). Clinical reasoning and self-directed learning: Key dimensions in professional education and professional socialisation. *Focus on Health Professional Education*, vol 4 (2)

Payne, B. K. and Monk-Turner, E. (2006). Students' Perceptions of Group Projects: The Role of Race, Age, and Slacking, *College Student Journal* vol 40 (1):132–9.

Pennebaker, J.W. and Graybeal, A. (2001). Patterns of Natural Language Use: Disclosure, Personality, and Social Integration, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, vol 10,(3):90-93

Phan, H.P. (2008). Predicting change in epistemological beliefs, reflective thinking and learning styles: A longitudinal study. *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* vol 78 (1):75–93

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol 16 (2):175-196

Pillow, W. (2015). Reflexivity as Interpretation and Genealogy in Research, *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, Vol. 15(6):419 –434

Pinsky, D. (2015). The sustained snapshot: Incidental ethnographic encounters in qualitative interview studies, *Qualitative Research* vol 15 (3):281-295

Polanyi, M. (1966). *The tacit dimension*, New York (USA). Anchor Books

Popkewitz, T. (1990). Whose future? Whose past? Notes on critical theory and methodology In E Guba (Ed) *The Paradigm dialog*, Newbury Park, CA, USA,SAGE,46-66

Potter, J. (2004). Discourse Analysis in M. Hardy and A. Bryman (eds), *Handbook of Data Analysis* (3rd ed), London, SAGE,607-624

Potter, J. and Hepburn A. (2005). Qualitative Interviews in Psychology: Problems and Possibilities, *Qualitative Research in Psychology* vol 2 (4):281-307

Power, J.B. (2016). Has this begun to change the way they think? Moving undergraduate learners' level of reflection from where it is to where it needs to be, *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol 21(3):235-248,

Preskill, S., and Brookfield, S.D. (2009). *Learning as a way of leading: Lessons from the struggle for social justice*, San Francisco, USA, Jossey Bass

QAA, (2008). Curriculum design for the first year, Quality Enhancement Themes: The First Year Experience available from http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/docs/publications/the-first-year-experience-curriculum-design-for-the-first-year.pdf?sfvrsn=18 [Accessed 27/04/17]

QAA, (2015). Subject Benchmark Statement: Business and Management, UK Quality Code for Higher Education, available from http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-business-management-15.pdf [Accessed 27/02/17]

Quinlan, K.M. (2016). Developing student character through disciplinary curricula: An analysis of UK QAA subject benchmark statements, *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 41 (6):1041-1054

Raheim, M., Magnussen, L.H., Sekse, R.J.T., Lunde, A.Jacobsen, T. and Blystad, A. (2016). Researcher–researched relationship in qualitative research: Shifts in positions and researcher vulnerability, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, vol 11 (1)

Randolph, J.J. (2009). A Guide to Writing the Dissertation Literature Review, Practical Assessment, *Research and Evaluation*, vol 14 (13):1-13

Rantatalo, O. and Karp, S. (2016). Collective reflection in practice: an ethnographic study of Swedish police training, *Reflective Practice*, vol 17 (6): 708-723

Reynolds, M. (2011). Reflective Practice: Origins and Interpretations, *Action Learning: Research and Practice*, vol 8 (1):5-13

Rigg, C. and Trehan, K. (2008). Critical reflection in the workplace: is it just too difficult?, *Journal of European Industrial Training*, vol 32 (5):374-384

Rocco, S. (2010). Making reflection public: Using interactive online discussion board to enhance student learning. *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 11 (3):307–317

Rodgers, C. (2002). Defining Reflection: Another Look at John Dewey and Reflective Thinking, *Teachers College Record*, vol 104 (4):842– 866

Roessger, K. (2015). But Does it Work? Reflective Activities, Learning Outcomes and Instrumental Learning in Continuing Professional Development, *Journal of Education and Work*, vol 28 (1):83-105

Rogers, R.R. (2001). Reflection in Higher Education: A Concept Analysis, *Innovative Higher Education*, vol 26, (1):37-57

Rose, E. (2013). *On reflection: An essay on education, technology, and the status of thought in the twenty-first century*, Toronto, Canada, Canadian Scholars' Press

Rose, E. (2016). Reflection in asynchronous online, postsecondary courses: A reflective view of the literature, *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 17 (6):779-791

Roulston, K.N. (2010a). *Reflective Interviewing: A Guide to Theory and Practice*, London, SAGE

Roulston, K. N. (2010b). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing, *Qualitative Research* vol 10 (2):199-228

Roulston, K. N. (2014). Interactional Problems in research interviews, *Qualitative Research* vol 14 (3):277-293

Royal College of Nursing, (2017). Revalidation requirements: Reflection and reflective discussion available from https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/revalidation/reflection-and-reflective-discussion [Accessed 17/02/17]

Rubin, H. J. and Rubin, I. S. (2005*). Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (2nd Ed) Thousand Oaks, London, SAGE

Rusche, S.N and Jason, K. (2011). You Have to Absorb Yourself in It: Using Inquiry and Reflection to Promote Student Learning and Self-knowledge, *Teaching Sociology*, vol 39 (4):338-353

Ryan, M. (2013a). Conceptualising and teaching discursive and performative reflection in higher education, *Studies in Continuing Education*, vol 34 (2):207-223

Ryan, M. (2013b). The pedagogical balancing act: teaching reflection in higher education*, Teaching in Higher Education*, vol 18 (2):144-155

Ryan, M. E. and Ryan, M. (2013). Theorising a model for teaching and assessing reflective learning in higher education, *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol 32, (2):244-257

Saito, N. (2018). Criticism of Criticisms, *Educational Theory*, vol 67 (5): 599-604

Savery, J.R. (2006). Overview of problem-based learning: Definitions and distinctions. *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem Based Learning* vol 1(9):20

Savin-Baden, M., Gourlay, L., Tombs, C., Steils, N., Tombs, G. and Mawer, M. (2010). Situating pedagogies, positions and practices in immersive virtual worlds, *Educational Research*, vol 52(2):123-133

Savin-Baden, M. and Howell Major C. (2013). *Qualitative Research: The essential guide to theory and practice*, London, Routledge

Schön D. A. (1966) The fear of innovation, *International Science and Technology*, 27:52–66

Schön D. A. (1969) The diffusions of innovation**.** *Innovation*, vol 6:42–53

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*, Hants, Arena

Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Towards a new design for teaching and learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Schwandt, T. (1994). Constructivist, Interpretivist Approaches to Human Inquiry, in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds*) The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, Thousand Oaks, Ca, USA, SAGE,118-137

Schwandt, T. (2001). *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, London, SAGE

Shenton, A.K., (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for information*, vol *22*(2):63-75.

Shopes, L. (2013). Oral History, in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, London, SAGE,119-150

Shotter, J. (2006). Understanding Process from within: An Argument for 'Withness' Thinking, *Organization Studies*, vol 27(4):585–604

Siebert, S. and Walsh, A. (2013). Reflection in work based learning: self-regulation or self-liberation? *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol 18 (2):167-178

Siltaoja, M. Mallin, V. and Pyykkönen, M. (2015). We are all responsible now': Governmentality and responsibilized subjects in corporate social responsibility, *Management Learning*, vol 46 (4):440-460

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, London, SAGE

Simons, M. and Masschelein, J. (2006). The Learning Society and Governmentality: An introduction, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol 38, (4):417- 430

Simons, M. and Masschelein, J. (2008). The governmentalisation of learning and the assemblage of a learning apparatus, *Educational Theory*, vol 58 (4):391-415

Sliwa, M., Sørensen B.M. and Cairns G. (2015). You have to choose a novel: The biopolitics of critical management education, *Management Learning*, vol 46 (3):243-259

Smetherham,C. (2006). First among equals? Evidence of the contemporary relationship between educational credentials and the occupational structure of social entrepreneurship: A case study. *Education and Work*, vol19 (1):29-45

Solicitors Regulation Authority, (2017). available at http://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/cpd/tool-kit/identify-learning development.page [Accessed 07/03/17]

Sousa, D. (2014). Validation in Qualitative Research: General Aspects and Specificities of the Descriptive Phenomenological Method, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol 11 (2):211-227,

Soydan, H. (2010). Politics and values in social work research in I. Shaw, K. Briar-Lawson, J. Orme and R. Ruckdeschel (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Social Work Research*, London, SAGE

Speight,S., Lackovic, N. and Cooker, L. (2013). The Contested Curriculum: Academic learning and employability in higher education, *Tertiary Education and Management*, vol 19 (2):112-126

Sprague,J. (2010). Seeing through science: Epistemologies, in W. Lutterall,(Ed), *Qualitative Educational Research: readings in reflective methodology and transformative practice*, London, Routledge,78-94

Stahl, B.C. (2007). Positivism or non-positivism—tertium non datur: A critique of ontological syncretisim in IS research. In R. Kishore, R. Ramesh, and R. Sharman (Eds.), *Ontologies: A handbook of principles, concepts and applications in information systems*, New York, Springer,115-142

Stanley, G.E. and Stronach, I. (2013). Raising and doubling 'standards' in professional discourse: a critical bid. *Journal of Education Policy*, vol 28, (3): 291–305

Steel, J., and Sausman,C. (1997). *The contribution of graduates to the economy: Rates of return*, Report 7, National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, Higher Education in the Learning Society, London, HMSO

Stenberg, K., Rajala, A. and Hilppo, J. (2016). Fostering theory–practice reflection in teaching practicums, *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, vol 44 (5):470-485

Stewart, J. (2012). Reflecting on reflection: increasing health and social care students' engagement and enthusiasm for reflection, *Reflective Practice*, vol. 13, (5):719–733

Strauss, P. U. and Young S. (2011). 'I know the type of people I work well with': student anxiety in multicultural group projects, *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 36 (7):815–829

Strauss, P. U., Mackey, A. and Crothers, C. (2014). They drag my marks down! – challenges faced by lecturers in the allocation of marks for multicultural group projects, *Intercultural Education*, vol 25(3):229-241

Stuckey, H.L., Taylor E.W. and Cranton, P. (2014). Developing a Survey of Transformative Learning Outcomes and Processes Based on Theoretical Principles, *Journal of Transformative Education*, vol. 11(4):211-228

St Pierre, E.A. (1997). Methodology in the fold and the irruption of transgressive data, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol 10 (2):175-189

St Pierre, E.A. (2012). Another postmodern report on knowledge: positivism and its others, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, vol 15 (4):483-503

St Pierre, E.A. (2013). Post Qualitative Research: The critique and the coming after, in N.K. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, London, SAGE,447-480

St Pierre, E.A. (2016). Untraining educational researchers, *Research in Education*, vol 96, (1):6–11

St Pierre, E.A. and Roulston, K. (2006). The state of qualitative inquiry: a contested science, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol 19 (6):757-768

Summers, M. and Volet, S. (2008). Students' attitudes towards culturally mixed groups on international campuses: Impact of participation in diverse and non-diverse groups. *Studies in Higher Education,* vol 33, (4):357–70

Thomas, N. and O'Kane, C. (1998). The ethics of participatory research with children*, Children and Society,* vol 12 (5):336-348

Thoutenhoofd, E.D. and Pirrie, A (2015). From self-regulation to learning to learn: observations on the construction of self and learning, *British Educational Research Journal*, vol 41(1):72-84

Tigelaar, D., Sins, P., and Van Driel, J (2016). Fostering students reflection: examining relations between elements of teachers knowledge, *Research Papers in Education*, vol 0 (0):1-23

Tilley, S. (2003). Challenging Research Practices: Turning a Critical Lens on the Work of Transcription, *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol 9 (5):750-773

Tomasic, R. and Akinbami, F. (2011). The Role of Trust in Maintaining the Resilience of Financial Markets, *Journal of Corporate Law Studies*, vol 11 (2): 369-394

Tomlinson, M. (2012). Graduate employability: A review of conceptual and empirical themes. *Higher Education Policy*, vol 25, (4):407 –431

Torraco, R.J. (2015). Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Using the Past and Present to Explore the Future, *Human Resource Development Review*, vol 15 (4): 404 –428

Tracy, S. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol 16:837-851

Trede, F., and McEwen, C. (2015). Critical thinking for future practice. In M. Davies and R. Barnett (Eds.), *Palgrave handbook of critical thinking in higher education*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Trede, F., Macklin, R., and Bridges, D. (2012). Professional identity development: A review of the Higher Education literature. *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 37 (3):365-384

Tummons, J. (2007). *Becoming a Professional Tutor in the Lifelong Learning Sector*, Exeter: Learning Matters

Turner, S., and Beddoes, L. (2007). Using Reflective Models to Enhance Learning: Experiences of Staff and Students, *Nurse Education in Practice* vol 7 (3):135–40

Turner, K., and Simon, S. (2013) In what ways does studying at M-level contribute to teachers' professional learning? Research set in an English university. *Professional Development in Education*, vol 39 (1):6–22

Tsai, W. and Lau, A.S. (2012). Cultural differences in emotion regulation during self-reflection on negative personal experiences, *Cognition and Emotion*, vol 27 (3):416-429

Tymon, A. (2013). The student perspective on employability, *Studies in Higher Education*, 38 (6):841-856

Usher, R. and Edwards, R. (1994). *Postmodernism and education: Different voices, different worlds*, London, Routledge

Usher, R. and Edwards, R. (1995). Confessing it all? A 'Postmodern Guide' to the guidance and counselling of adult learners. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, vol 27(1):9-23

Van der Meer, F.B. and Marks, P. (2013). Teaching and learning reflection in MPA programmes: Towards a strategy, *Teaching Public Administration*, vol 31 (1):42-54

Van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*, London, The Althouse Press

Van Woerkom, M. (2008). Critical Reflection and Related Higher-Level Conceptualizations of Learning: Realistic or Idealistic? *Human Resource Development Review,* vol 7 (1):3-12

Van Woerkom, M. (2010). Critical Reflection as a Rationalistic Ideal, *Adult Education Quarterly*, vol 60 (4):339-356

Vivekananda-Schmidt, P., M. Marshall, P. Stark, J. Mckendree, J. Sandars, and S. Smithson. (2011). Lessons from Medical Students' Perceptions of Learning Reflective Skills: A Multi-institutional Study, *Medical Teacher* 33 (10):846–850

Vogt, W.P. (2008) The Dictatorship of the Problem: Choosing Research Methods, Methodological Innovations Online, vol 3 (1):1-17

Walby, K. and Luscombe, A. (2016). Criteria for quality in qualitative research and use of freedom of information requests in the social sciences, *Qualitative Research*,1-17

Wall, T. and Jarvis, M. (2017). Business schools as educational provocateurs of productivity via interrelated landscapes of practice, Chartered Association of Business Schools, available from *https://charteredabs.org/business-schools-as-educational-provocateurs-of-productivity-via-interrelated-landscapes-of-practice/* [Accessed 16/02/17]

Wareing, M. (2017). Me, my, more, must: a value based model of reflection, *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 18 (2): 268-279

Warren, B., Sampson S.D., and McFee, E. (2011). Business schools: ethics, assurance of learning, and the future, *Organization Management Journal*, vol 8 (1):41-58

Watson, C. (2008). Unreliable narrators? 'Inconsistency' (and some inconstancy) in interviews, *Qualitative Research*, vol 8 (3): 367–384

Watt, D. (2007). On becoming a qualitative researcher: the value of reflexivity, *The Qualitative Report* vol 12 (1):82-101

Wear, D., Zarconi, J., Garden, R. and Jones, T. (2012). Reflection in/and Writing: Pedagogy and Practice in Medical Education, *Medical Humanities*, vol 87, (5):603-609

Webster, H. (2008). Architectural Education after Schön: Cracks, Blurs, Boundaries and Beyond, *Journal for Education in the Built Environment*, vol 3 (2):63-74

Weick, K. and Sutcliffe. K. (2006). Mindfulness and the Quality of Organizational Attention, *Organization Science*, vol 17:514–524.

Wilcox, S. (2009). Transformative education development scholarship: Beginning with ourselves. *International Journal for Academic Development*, vol 1, (2):123–132.

Wiles, R., Charles, V., Crow, G. and Heath, S. (2006) Researching researchers: lessons for research ethics, *Qualitative Research*, vol 6, (3): 283–299

Williams, R. M. and Wessel. J. (2004). Reflective Journal Writing to Obtain Student Feedback about their Learning during the Study of Chronic Musculoskeletal Conditions. *Journal of Allied Health* vol 33 (1):17–23

Wilson, J. P. (2008). Reflecting-on-the-future: A chronological consideration of reflective practice, *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 9, (2):177-184

Wilton, N. (2011). Do employability skills really matter in the UK graduate labour market? The case of business and management graduates. *Work Employment Society*, vol 25, (1):85–100.

Wilton, N. (2012). The impact of work placements on skills development and labour market outcomes for business and management graduates*, Studies in Higher Education*, 37, (5):603- 620

Wolgemuth, J. R., Erdil-Moody, Z., Opsal, T., Cross, J. E., Kaanta, T., Dickmann, E. M. and Colomer, S. (2015). Participants' experiences of the qualitative interview: considering the importance of research paradigms, *Qualitative Research* vol 15 (3):351-372

Wong, A. (2016). Considering Reflection From the Student Perspective in Higher Education, *SAGE open*, vol 6 (1)

Woronchak, M. and Comeau, G. (2016). The value of reflective journaling with advanced piano students, *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, vol 17 (6):792-805

Worthman, C. and Troiano, B. (2016). Capillary discourses, fissure points, and tacitly confessing the self: Foucault's later work and educational research, *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, vol 22 (1):46-67

Wright, A.L. and Gilmore, A. (2012). Threshold concepts and conceptions: Student learning in introductory management courses, *Journal of Management Education*, vol 36 (5):614-635

Yorke, M. and Knight P. (2006). *Embedding employability into the curriculum*. York, Higher Education Academy

Zeichner, K. and Lui, K.Y. (2010). A Critical Analysis of Reflection as a Goal for Teacher Education, in N. Lyons (Ed), *Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry: Mapping a Way of Knowing for Professional Reflective Inquiry*, London, Springer

Zuber-Skerritt, O. (2001). Action Learning and Action Research: Paradigm, Praxis and Programs in Sankara, S., Dick, B. and Passfield, R. (Eds), *Effective Change Management through Action Research and Action Learning: Concepts, Perspectives, Processes and Applications*, Australia, Southern Cross University Press