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Knowledge Creation Processes in Foundation Degree Partnership Working

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Knowledge Creation Processes in Foundation Degree Partnership Working

An investigation of knowledge creation in a case study of a partnership between a university and NHS in the delivery of a foundation degree

Anne-Marie Reid BDS MEd CertEd

T6343907

CREET
Open University

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Contents

Data analysis

Discussion and Conclusions

List of Appendices

List of Figures and Tables

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to develop an understanding of knowledge creation processes in partnership working, conditions which foster these, and their impact on longer-term sustainability. The partnership, between a university in Greater Manchester and the Strategic Health Authority, was established in 2002 to train a new role of healthcare worker through the delivery a foundation degree in health and social care. At that time foundation degrees were new, and the 'Assistant Practitioner' role was being introduced to bridge the gap between staff at registered professional level and those at support worker level. The role is intended as generic and patient-centred in crossing traditional professional boundaries, and so presents challenges in creating, sharing and embedding knowledge, which accords well with the concept of knowledge management. The study explores Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) model of Knowledge Management, and Engestrom's (1997, 2001) Activity Theory, in relation to how these constructs may provide insight into the knowledge processes in partnership working. 'Partnership' is a contested concept which is debated in the context of the policy drivers underpinning the development. The enquiry has employed a case study approach within an interpretive paradigm with data gathered through semi-structured interviews and a focus group. Thematic analysis of the interview data identifies and explores themes in knowledge creation and partnership working which raise questions of power dynamics. These questions are not fully addressed by the knowledge creation models, and so the relationship between power, knowledge and discourse is further considered through a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach to the focus group. The conclusions support the value of the knowledge creation models for developing insights into how partnership working supports innovation and may sustain it. The discourse analysis reveals the pervasiveness of power relationships, reflects on their impact on knowledge creation, and considers the consequences for longer-term sustainability of the partnership.

Chapter 1 Introduction, Rationale and Policy Context

Introduction

This thesis investigates knowledge creation processes in a case study of a partnership between a university in Greater Manchester and the Strategic Health Authority. The impetus for this study has emerged from my reflection on the learning partnership as it has evolved over the past seven years, with a view to developing insights into how it may be sustained. The partnership was established to train a new type of worker in healthcare settings through the delivery of a Foundation Degree (Fd) in Health and Social Care. Fds were introduced by the Government in 2001 as part of a strategy to meet 'Widening Participation' targets in education, and to respond to the shortage of staff with intermediate level skills identified by employers in the Dearing Report (Dearing, 1997). My role, as Programme Leader of the degree at a university in Greater Manchester, has involved designing, validating and implementing the programme in partnership with the Strategic Health Authority and local National Health Service (NHS) Trusts and Social Care organisations. This initiative was launched as the 'Delivering the Workforce Project' with the university identified by the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) as a key partner in the delivery of the Fd. Greater Manchester SHA has led the development of the Assistant Practitioner role nationally.

The project was designed to train Assistant Practitioners (APs) to perform a new role envisaged to help reduce qualified staff shortages and provide a 'patient-centred' approach to healthcare as part of the Government's modernisation agenda (DH,1998). The role was intended to be placed at Band 4 level within the Agenda for Change NHS pay scale, Band 3 being

Support Worker/Health Care Assistant level and Band 5 being the level of newly registered NHS staff. The 'patient-centred' approach demanded a generic role in which APs would develop knowledge, skills and competence across a range of disciplines including nursing, social work, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry, dietetics and speech and language therapy. To prepare APs to work in this way requires an element of role redesign which allows registered professionals to delegate tasks to APs, and in turn enables them to concentrate on more complex cases. The establishment of the role has in fact been successfully achieved, although there are ongoing challenges to generic working (Benson and Smith, 2007).

A supporting infrastructure was established consisting of project managers from the SHA, Champions (senior managers) from each of the health and social care organisations involved, the Fd university team, and practice trainers (Appendix 1). The degree programme is underpinned by a work-based learning approach which seeks to situate learning within the immediate practice context with a delivery model to support this. The delivery model is based on student attendance at the university on one day per week, with four days as employees in practice settings. Learning in practice is supported by practice trainers who attend the university on the study day to deliver the curriculum alongside the lecturing staff team. The practice trainers are health or social care professionals, seconded to the university to co-ordinate the work-based learning element. During the two years of the programme the learners have a dual identity as students at the university, but also as employees entitled 'Trainee Assistant Practitioners' in

the workplace. This at times brings tensions to the delivery of the Fd and to development of the role.

Rationale and research questions

This partnership has been innovative in designing and delivering the Fd at a time when these were new, and in the establishment of a new role in practice. The specific knowledge and skills required for APs to be competent in this role have been identified through a role redesign process in the workplace, and this has fed into curriculum developments at the university. The learning partnership involves sharing knowledge and expertise in the creation of new knowledge about the AP role, with the intention of transforming practice. This accords well with notions of 'knowledge management' which Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) assert has the potential to achieve innovation through 'continuously creating new knowledge, disseminating it widely through the organisation and embodying it' (p. 246). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) warn against losing vital knowledge through the loss of key personnel, and this concern lay behind my initial motivation for the study. Considerable time and resource was invested by the Strategic Health Authority at the outset in establishing the partnership. This included providing funding for 'Away Days', providing incentives for key stakeholders to attend regular meetings, and allocating project managers to support each of the NHS Trusts, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and social care organisations involved. This level of investment inevitably reduced over time as the 'project phase' came to an end. In order to survive beyond this, it seemed to me imperative that the partnership become self-sustaining, which necessitated

the embedding of knowledge within and beyond the core group to withstand ongoing changes.

The partnership exists as a result of education and health policy drivers coinciding at a particular point in time to provide the right conditions for its establishment. Undoubtedly the dynamic nature of the context is likely to throw up further challenges which may threaten its continuing existence. By developing a fuller understanding of the knowledge creation processes which foster innovation, insights may be gained which enable the partnership to withstand these challenges. Initial exploration of knowledge management offered promise in this respect, but also revealed limitations. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) pay scant attention to hierarchies and power relationships, arguably an inherent feature of collaborative working, and so the model offered limited insight into the complexity of competing interests. I considered other models of knowledge creation to understand these aspects more fully which led me to Engeström's (1987, 2001) Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), generally shortened to 'activity theory'.

Activity theory focuses on innovative working practices situated within a particular socio-cultural historical context which seemed pertinent to the case study. The theoretical perspectives on 'divisions of labour' and 'multiple voices' in an activity system resonated with my experience of working across professions and organisations in the partnership. Differences in professional and organisational culture highlighted differences in understanding of the purpose and value of education, which impacted on design and delivery of the curriculum. Engeström's (1987, 2001) position in highlighting contradictions in the activity system as a stimulus to knowledge creation

seemed a constructive way of viewing these challenges. The model offered a lens through which these inner contradictions, experienced as disturbances, might be conceptualised as catalysts for negotiation and development of shared understanding between partners. Viewing partnership working as a political process in which power relations serve a key purpose offered a further tool to understanding knowledge creation. Power dynamics may be valuable in the response to drivers for change, offering insights into transformation as an adaptive process which leads to sustainability, as long as a balance can be struck. The research questions arising from the rationale are outlined below, and then acknowledged as deriving from my own position in the study.

1. *In what ways might partnership working in the study be viewed as a process of knowledge creation and transformation?*

   - *Does this have features in common with knowledge management as proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)?*

   - *Does this have features in common with other models of knowledge creation and expansion such as activity theory (Engeström, 1987, 2001)?*

2. *What value might the models of knowledge creation have for the learning partnership?*

   - *Are there particular features of the partnership and its context which have influenced the knowledge creation process?*

   - *How might this impact on the long-term sustainability of the partnership?*

Position of researcher

My interest in the study has arisen from my experience of establishing the Fd at a time when these were new, and forming the partnership with the SHA and health and social care organisations to develop the new role. Having undertaken a Masters Degree in Education and considered theoretical models of work-based learning, I was fascinated by differences in understanding of Fds and their implementation in practice. In relation to the partnership, the nature of work-based learning, and how it should be achieved, were highly contested issues between stakeholders in the early days. Through partnership working a compromise was gradually reached, albeit with some ongoing tensions, and the outcomes of innovation became evident in the Fd and emerging AP role. My interest had by this point shifted to the process by which this may have been achieved, which led me to explore models of knowledge creation, the concept of tacit knowledge at the heart of Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) knowledge management model being of particular interest.

The potential for tacit knowledge to be shared, and the mechanism by which this may be achieved as a core priniciple, were clearly espoused by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). Relating this to my experience of partnership working, the vested interests of individuals and professional groups seemed a key feature but were overlooked in the knowledge management construct. The way in which Engeström's (1987, 2001) activity theory explored knowledge creation across professional and organisational boundaries, and acknowledged this as a political process, offered possibilities. Differences in language and culture were very apparent in the early days and much of my

6

time seemed to be devoted to nurturing relationships, rather than in more academic pursuits. Towards the end of the second year of my study I moved to a new post in medical education at an 'elite' university. This allowed me the space to reflect on the evolution of the partnership and the power dynamics involved, and view this in the light of my new role. The experience of becoming an 'outsider' and negotiating my way through new discourse structures led me to think deeply about the relationships between discourse and power. I came to view the emerging data as having the potential to reveal how meanings are negotiated, how these shape knowledge in practice, and the power dynamics inherent in the process. My ontological position as 'insider-outsider' researcher during the period of the study will be fully debated in chapter 8. The question of what counts as knowledge and how this may be shaped by power links back to poltical influences on education, and the policy context within which the partnership is situated.

Introduction of foundation degrees

The introduction of the Fd was driven by two policy aims, one of achieving widening participation, and the other of developing a more skilled workforce (DfES, 2000). The introduction of the new vocationally-related qualifications resulted from the policy intention of meeting the skills gap at intermediate level (Level 4) identified by employers, whilst offering wider opportunities for participation in higher academic learning. Subsequent policy documents reinforced the role of Fds in meeting these aspirations (DfES, 2003a; DfES, 2003b); making them financially attractive for universities to run, and thereby firmly establishing them. The emphasis on the role of higher education in developing 'employability skills' as well as specialist knowledge was later

reinforced by the Leitch Review of Skills commissioned by the Government in 2006;

> '......it is needed to develop new higher education
>
> opportunities...orientated strongly to the employability skills,
>
> specialist knowledge and broad understanding needed in the
>
> new economy' (Leitch, 2006)

In fact, the Review announced an increased target for the UK population to be equipped with intermediate level skills, qualified to Level 4 and above, from an original target of 29%, to 40% by 2020 (Leitch, 2006). The numbers and types of Fds offered has rapidly expanded over this period, and has been accompanied by a move away from the previous Higher National Certificate/Diploma (HNC/D) provision which has reduced greatly since the introduction of Fds (HEFCE, 2010). However, many of the programmes developed have directly replaced existing HN provision and so not all of the growth in Fds is new Level 4 provision. The drive to make the role of universities central in responding to economic needs has not been without its critics, who have warned of the danger of education becoming the 'mere instrument of the economy' (Coffield, 2002: 175).

Critique of educational policy

Arguably, the policy which resulted in the introduction of the Fd is a continuation of increasing intervention in higher education which may be traced back to the 1960s. In his discussion of higher education, Maton (2005) presents a convincing analysis of higher education policy and practice

by drawing on Bourdieu's concept of 'field' to posit 'higher education...as a distinct and irreducible object of study' (p.687). His analysis of the field examines the autonomy of higher education and the impact of policy measures in the 1960's compared to current times. Maton (2005) describes the pressure for university expansion in the 1960s as being driven by the two aims of increasing representation of different social groups within higher education, and by the economic demands for a better qualified workforce at that time. These aims resonate strongly with the more contemporary debate of 'widening participation' and the demands for higher education to serve the needs of the economy which are enshrined in the Dearing Report (1997). The difference in the enactment of these policies on higher education at these different periods is explained by a change in the ability of higher education to withstand external pressure, and maintain an internal culture dominated by educational values, as evidenced by the relatively low impact of policy changes in the 1960s.

Maton (2005) builds on Bourdieu's original theory of HE as an autonomous field by distinguishing between the 'positional autonomy' and 'relative autonomy' of the field at a particular moment in time (Maton, 2005: 697). The 'positional autonomy' he describes as the position of those who have control over the field in terms of management, staffing and funding. When this control comes from within the field, in other words, when those in control are from within HE as was the case in the 1960s, positional autonomy is strong. Relational autonomy concerns working practices and signifiers of achievement, and the extent to which these emanate from the field or are strongly influenced by other fields. Relational autonomy was similarly strong

9

in the 1960s where 'knowledge for its own sake was valorized over any social or economic impact' (p.697). The ability to maintain the status quo is attributed to the power of this autonomous field to 'refract' external influences according to the specific logic of the field (Bourdieu, 1999: 164) and thereby frame the debate through the lens of academic discourse. In the 1960s, despite the expansion in higher education, the effect of the policy was minimal in that social representation remained similar, and educational, rather than economic, values prevailed.

Maton (2005) compares this period to the situation in the late 1990s and beyond when, he argues, the positional autonomy remained strong, although not quite to the same degree as in the earlier period, but relational autonomy was weaker. This reduction in relational autonomy was a result of HE becoming increasingly inculcated with economic and commercial values which weakened resistance and has produced competing discourses. The growing influence of a utilitarian view of higher education and a managerialist discourse is clear in the Dearing Report;

> *'We must build on the expertise of our universities to ensure*
> *that the most advanced knowledge and techniques are*
> *transferred into competitive economic success'* (Dearing,
> 1997 ch 5 4.25)

Maton (2005) rightly points out the danger of commodifying education and separating 'knowledge from the knower' (p.699) through this process. He does however undermine his own argument in later work (Maton, 2009),

where in his debate on 'knowledge structures' he employs the discourse of 'knowledge-building', 'acquisition' and 'transfer' of knowledge, all of which support the idea of knowledge as a commodity. The current marketisation of education arguably undermines core educational values which may narrow the educational experience available to students, and furthermore, may only provide a short-term solution. Naidoo (2003) highlights the current position of higher education as a 'global marketplace' where social and cultural values are overshadowed by an increase in 'political and corporate influence' (p. 250). Moreover, McQuaid (2007) highlights a lack of evidence for skills utilisation and questions whether this will in fact lead to increased productivity as employers' needs change in a dynamic climate.

Within the higher education field there is now a greater degree of stratification, with universities at the lower end of the hierarchy more likely to develop 'projected identities' which reflect the market context (Bernstein, 2000: 60). Statistical evidence demonstrates that it is the growing number of newer universities, mainly in partnership with FE colleges, who have embraced the concept of Fds in contrast to the more traditional and more elite establishments (HEFCE 2010). What has emerged is a division in higher education where the older, more established universities have maintained stronger relational autonomy, being staffed predominantly by those who have come through an academic route, whereas the newer universities have higher numbers of staff with vocational backgrounds for whom economic and commercial values are less alien (Edwards and Coffield, 2007). The Fd partnership which is the focus of the study epitomises the type of 'new university' which has a history of vocational

provision, strong employer partnerships, and success in widening participation, and which has welcomed the introduction of Fd provision.

Workforce modernisation

Concurrent with the introduction of the new Fds, NHS policy signalled the aim of 'modernisation' of the NHS as promised in the White Paper, 'The New Modern and Dependable NHS' (DH, 1998). The central tenet of this promise was integrated patient-centred care, moving beyond a competitive situation, to co-operation between care agencies through partnership working;

> '...the internal market will be replaced by a system we have
> called 'integrated care', based on partnership and driven by
> performance.... The needs of patients will be central to the
> new system. Abolishing the internal market will enable health
> professionals to focus on patients, making the NHS better
> every year. Individual patients, who too often have been
> passed from pillar to post between competing agencies, will
> get access to an integrated system of care that is quick and
> reliable'. (DH, 1998: 2)

The incoming Blair Government at this time abolished the 'internal market' which had been the cornerstone of the Thatcher government approach to making the NHS more efficient. The new Government, rather than reversing the trend of marketisation, continued to drive this in the public sector with an increasing rhetoric of 'workforce modernisation', 'patient choice' and

'seamless services' (Drewry, 2007). Responding to the policy of more 'integrated care' to be achieved through NHS Modernisation, the Workforce Development Confederation (WDC) within Greater Manchester envisaged the development of a new 'patient-centred' generic health worker who would be able to carry out tasks across a number of professional roles, thereby avoiding some of the passing of patients 'from pillar to post' (DH, 1998). The introduction of this worker would be a major element in 'modernising' the workforce as it would involve a reconfiguration of other roles, allowing registered professional staff to concentrate on more complex tasks. This was part of a 'skills escalator' approach, the first phase involving the introduction of a new 'Assistant Practitioner' role, to be followed by the introduction of a new 'Advanced Practitioner' who would perform some roles normally carried out by Junior Doctors (DH, 2002). This scheme was launched under the banner of the 'Delivering the Workforce Project' with the Fd commissioned as an appropriate education and training vehicle to equip the new Assistant Practitioners (APs) to carry out the new roles. The WDC was subsumed within the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) by the time the first students enrolled on the Fd in September 2002.

These students were largely recruited from the existing local health and social care workface, and were intended to carry out a 'patient-centred', generic role which necessitated crossing traditional occupational boundaries. This proved a major challenge for the partnership at the time and arguably still does. This may be accounted for by the history of development of the professions in health and social care, and the ways in which professional status has been defined by the borders around professional roles and

responsibilities (Bernstein, 2000). The identity of a profession is closely aligned with its specialism, and any encroachment on this may be seen as undermining professional status. The smaller professions in particular have had to struggle for recognition, and so the professional bodies tend to exclude those not registered with the profession to maintain their borders. Francis and Humphries (2002) refer to this as 'professional tribalism'. Consequently, the introduction of a new practitioner who will undertake skills and tasks across a number of professional disciplines presents a challenge to these borders. The practitioners are at assistant level, below the level of registered professionals, and so in this respect present perhaps less of a 'threat' than those at advanced level who are also intended to carry out a generic role. A theoretical analysis of the challenges of introducing the generic worker will be presented through the lens of Bernstein's (2000) knowledge and discourse structures in chapter 3.

In a later policy document, (DH, 2002), the themes of 'partnership' and 'modernisation' prevailed, and the introduction of new roles in meeting these, including the Assistant Practitioner, were welcomed. The policy also indicated a change for the SHA, in that much of their role in commissioning education was to be devolved to local Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). This resulted in a restructuring of the SHA into larger regions with a huge loss in personnel. In Greater Manchester this reduced the number of SHA staff by two thirds. The Project Management team involved in the partnership to support the introduction of the AP role was reduced from eight to three people. At the same time, the reorganisation of PCTs into 'purchaser' and 'provider' arms impacted on the Fd commissioning process and presented

14

huge challenges to continuation of partnership working. Although the partnership has been sustained, albeit in a new phase of development, these factors have had immediate impact and have also influenced longer-term sustainability. The recently announced phasing out of the SHAs and PCTs (DH, 2010), and the current economic recession will undoubtedly impact further. The potential threat to reductions in funding may however be offset by the change to a minimum three-year degree for nurse training which may increase the appeal of the two-year Fd for NHS employers and students. Furthermore, this programme has a good reputation as highlighted by the first Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Review Report (QAA, 2005), and the partnership has been used as a case study example of good practice for employers (FdF, 2007). The study aims to develop understanding of how the partnership may be best placed to withstand ongoing changes in policy and funding, and continue to develop.

Summary and structure of thesis

This chapter has considered my rationale for the study, the research questions, and the policy context within which the case study partnership has become established. I have argued that the policy context reflects increasing state influence in higher education, and a continuation of Thatcher's legacy of marketisation of the public sector. The combined education and health policies of the late 1990s and onwards provided fertile soil for the learning partnership to grow and for the programme to develop. The strength of the partnership and perceived success of the programme has enabled it to continue, despite the changes resulting from later policy developments.

However, the partnership working has required a great deal of time, energy and resource in ways which are not fully acknowledged by policy makers. Chapter 2 considers this particular issue further by critiquing partnership working in relation to educational policy and practice. Chapter 3 provides a foundation for the critique of the models of knowledge creation by debating the problem of 'knowledge', the study of human knowledge, what counts as knowledge, and how it is created in human interaction. Exploration of the knowledge management model proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) in Chapter 4 considers its value and limitations in relation to the study. In order to address these limitations, Chapter 5 explores activity theory (Engeström, 1987, 2001) which considers how knowledge creation through 'expansive learning' allows insights into the role of 'multiple voices' in the partnership. The critique of activity theory concludes that the role of power is under-theorised in this model and that a further tool may be required. Chapter 6 considers how the discourse employed within the partnership may construct knowledge as the accepted 'reality' according to power relations, based on a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach. The debates covered in the literature review and the implications for the study are summarised in Chapter 7 and the methodological approach is explained and justifed in Chapter 8. Exploration of the findings and some discussion of these forms the basis of Chapter 9. Finally, conclusions are drawn and the implications for educational theory, policy and practice are debated in Chapter 10.

Chapter 2   A critique of partnership working

Introduction

Partnership is such an all-pervasive term in both the public and private spheres, and is imbued with such positive connotations (Dhillon, 2005), that it is generally welcomed. Partnerships are associated with many formal and informal connections extending across the private and public spheres, and increasingly connecting both. McQuaid (2007) highlights the support for partnership working across the political spectrum, but warns that although they tend to be endowed with positive connotations, all partnerships are subject to tensions and conflicts which permeate through interpersonal relationships, generally influenced by wider social factors. According to Huxham and Vangen (2007), the potential to withstand these difficulties, and even become stronger in the process, is likely where partners continue to be motivated by mutual benefit, or where the penalty for withdrawing is significant. They argue that this is particularly true in the private sector, but increasingly public sector partnerships which are driven by policy may be penalised for an inability to work effectively with a range of partners. This chapter will explore the complexities of partnership working in the public sector, focusing upon education, and some of the issues arising.

Policy and partnership

Partnership working between public bodies is now seen as an imperative in meeting the needs of the economy, and for competitiveness in a global market (El Ansari and Weiss, 2005; McQuaid, 2007) but arguably, the

17

challenges involved are underestimated. In education, the 'lifelong learning agenda' is closely linked to development of partnerships across the education and training sector which aim to raise the level of qualifications and skills in the workforce. As previously discussed, Fds are clearly a major plank in meeting these targets, and employer involvement is an imperative in their design and delivery (QAA, 2005). Foundation Degree Forward (FdF), who have the lead role in the development of Fds in the UK, have emphasised 'partnership' as a major strand in the delivery of this provision. Their Strategic Plan 2006-2008 includes a number of references both to 'employer engagement' and to 'partnerships' amongst the main objectives, but there is no attempt to define these terms or to distinguish between them;

'To deliver a step-change in our focus upon employer engagement in support of transforming and strengthening further and higher education partnerships for foundation degree provision'

And also,

'to seriously engage with employer demand and with creative, sustainable partnerships between employers, colleges and universities'
(FdF, 2006: 13)

The centrality of partnership working is clear in both education and health policy, but definition of exactly what this means, and how it is to be achieved, is lacking. So the nature of 'partnership working' is left open to interpretation with growing evidence of widely differing practices. Employer involvement was recognised as a strength in only 25% of foundation degree programmes reviewed in 2004-2005 (QAA, 2005) and more recent research has found significant variation in employer involvement in Fds, with particular difficulties in involving employers in assessment (Reeve et al, 2007). Potentially conflicting priorities, particularly during an economic downturn, place obvious pressure on education-employer partnerships to meet these challenges and work effectively. As competition for university places increases, the goal of widening participation is likely to prove elusive with more academically qualified younger students competing for places currently taken by mature adult returners, particularly in part-time provision. In addition, as competition for jobs increases, the perceived value of Fds in the workplace, which is already problematic, may be adversely affected by the overall level of qualifications increasing, and the currency being devalued (Harvey, 2009).

Defining partnership

Within the academic literature there are few attempts to define 'partnership', but when offered, the definitions are similar;

> *'Partnership is an interpersonal relationship between two or more people who work together towards a mutually defined purpose'* (Gallant et al, 2002: 153)

And,

> *'A partnership consists of two or more parties that share*
>
> *common goals that cannot be reached by either party*
>
> *independently'* (Barnett et al, 1999: 11).

And in relation to partnership driven by public policy;

> *'Partnership involves co-operation - 'to work or act together'-*
>
> *and in a public policy can be defined as co-operation*
>
> *between people or organisations in the public or private*
>
> *sector for mutual benefit'* (McQuaid, 2007)

So, common goals are a feature of partnerships, as is the belief that the process involved in attaining these allows participants to gain more than they could from working alone. There are many examples proposed in the literature which illustrate the benefits and attributes of partnership working, and key themes include achieving common goals, sharing skills and knowledge, efficient use of resources and increasing 'social capital' (Dhillon, 2009). This idea of 'pooling resources' is predicated upon recognition of distributed knowledge and expertise which may be harnessed for the collective good in ways which will be debated in chapter 3. Organisations may have to balance the extent to which sharing knowledge and information is beneficial, and the extent to which it may reduce organisational autonomy. Gallant et al (2002) suggest that although there is implied equality in the term 'partnership', in reality these relationships involve power sharing and

negotiation, and the locus of this power is central to the outcomes. The rapid changes in the current 'globalised society' have altered traditional forms of relationship and affected our ability to trust others, so that 'trust' is now posited alongside calculation of perceived 'risk' (Giddens, 2006). Consequently, for partnership working there is likely to be a continuing assessment of the degree of investment of trust in relationships versus the risks of 'giving away too much' to current partners who may at other times be competitors.

Huxham and Vangen (2007) also wisely caution against idealising partnership working, and suggest that the 'ambiguity, complexity and dynamics' involved may not lead to positive results (p.294). They suggest that effective partnership working results in 'collaborative advantage' but caution that difficulties in partnership working may result in 'collaborative inertia' (p.295). The authors adopt a thematic approach when considering the underlying challenges which involves managing aims, managing language and culture, and managing trust and power. Trust, however, is not automatic; it takes time to develop through effective communication which acknowledges potential differences in purpose, but reconciles these. Huxham and Vangen (2007) refer to this as a 'trust-building' loop where the initial achievement of modest goals reinforces good relationships, and this in turn allows the setting of higher ambitions (p.300). However, they fail to elaborate on what they mean by 'trust', and how it applies specifically to working relationships where the interest may be professional and time-limited, as opposed to involving enduring personal interests.

Huxham and Vangen (2007) base their theory of effective partnership working on their involvement in research projects, commonly action research, where intervention has been aimed at improving these partnerships. The substantial body of literature which they have produced (Huxham and Vangen, 2005, 2007) tends to be supplemented by informal information gathered from practitioners in addition to more formal research evidence. This has enabled them to identify the conceptual themes, as opposed to specific factors, which help or hinder partnership working. The latter could be dismissed as anecdotal evidence, but much of their discussion rings true both from a personal point of view and due to its corroboration by others (Gallant et al, 2002; Cheek, 2003; Osborne, 2007).

Partnership working

The learning partnership which is the focus of the study involves traversing professional and organisational boundaries, so issues of language, culture and underlying values are more likely to be problematic. Reeve and Gallagher (2005) suggest that employers and governments tend to focus on the outcomes of education and training, whereas educationalists tend to be more concerned with the learning process. Although these are not mutually exclusive, the complexity of negotiating differences in outlook, and the time it takes to build trust, have resource implications which are easily overlooked. In relation to the study, healthcare practitioners may have limited knowledge of the academic requirements of the curriculum, and similarly, academic staff may not grasp the complexities facing practitioners in the practice context. This may subsequently lead to feelings of frustration with partners who appear unwilling to compromise in certain situations.

The process of partnership working is contingent upon managing priorities

and managing issues around culture, trust and power as described by

Huxham and Vangen (2007). Underlying values and culture are likely to

result in the privileging of certain types of knowledge, with discourse being a

key feature. Cheek (2003) draws on Foucauldian discourse in questioning

the potential for health partnerships to be based on equality where one party

is able to 'speak with authority and conversely relegate other ways of viewing

and understanding aspects of reality to the margins' (p.121). This highlights

the relationship between language and power and the need to consider this

within the wider socio-historical context. Although Cheek (2003) is referring

to patient and health professional partnerships, where clearly the

authoritative knowledge of the health professional is imbued with power

beyond that of the lay person, educational partners may equally find

themselves dominated by a medical discourse in which they are less well

versed. The converse may also be true in relation to the academic discourse

employed by education partners. Negotiating different professional cultures

is a challenge in any such partnership or indeed any inter-professional

collaboration.

Useful insights may be gained through the exploration of partnerships which

are sustained despite serious difficulties which would be expected dissolve

them. Dhillon (2005, 2009) examines a case study of one such enduring

partnership where the stakeholders continued to work effectively in the face

of challenging circumstances and lack of funding. He explores the case over

time through the lens of 'social capital' and concludes that a 'high level of

trust and shared norms and values' among key participants has contributed to its sustainability (Dhillon, 2005, p.121). However, his study is based on the post-16 education and training sector where partnership involvement is voluntary, and shared norms and values are likely to be characteristic features. Being part of a partnership which spans organisations with different professional values is likely to involve individuals with a variety of interests and motivations, some of whom may be 'conscripts' rather than volunteers. This is likely to bring very different challenges and threats to sustainability.

Summary

This chapter has explored the somewhat ambiguous meaning of 'partnership' and the different contexts within which it has been applied. The policy drivers within education and health clearly value partnership working, but perhaps underestimate the continual challenge, huge investment in time and resources, and the utilisation of multiple strategies to influence decision making which are required. Empirical studies of partnership working have provided a framework for exploring realistic opportunities and constraints to the effectiveness of these, and Huxham and Vangen (2007) have been particularly useful in this respect. The development of close trusting relationships which they highlight resonates with the experience of Dhillon (2005, 2009) in identifying social capital as a key feature of sustainability. This work is particularly relevant to the partnership and the underlying question of its ability to withstand the impact of changes in policy and funding.

Chapter 3 Human knowledge and learning

Introduction

Knowledge is a highly contested concept much debated since the time of the early philosophers. The central problem of the study of epistemology, according to Solomon (2005), is the gap between the extent to which we can trust our senses to tell us what is real, and the extent to which we can have rational thought divorced from our senses. There are two main schools of philosophical thought which represent these opposing views; the empiricist movement founded by Locke, which has the central belief that data of experience derived from our senses is the source of all knowledge (Solomon, 2005, p.206), and the rationalist movement, which can be traced back to Descartes, founded on belief in the 'power of reason' (Solomon, 2005, p.193). The rationalist movement has been criticized on the basis of establishing a 'Cartesian split' between mind and body which denies their interconnectedness and which has influenced western culture and tradition in emphasizing individual cognition. The empiricist view is concerned with interpretation of what is experienced through our senses, thus the mind and body are inextricably linked and knowledge develops as a consequence of contact with the environment.

These differing views of knowledge have affected writers and thinkers throughout history and their imprint is evident in contemporary theories of learning. Bredo (1994) describes the symbol-processing view of cognition, where knowledge is an individual property located within the mind, as being

25

one which has dominated psychology and education until recent times. He describes this type of approach as 'a subject/object dualism….in which language and reality are treated as separate elements…as are mind and body' (p.25). Clearly this 'symbol-processing' view is derived from a philosophical rationalist view of knowledge, where the mind is considered as the site of learning, in which cognitive processes are activated and organised. The separation between language and reality, where the mind processes information from the outside which is believed to 'mirror reality', is rightly considered to be incoherent on the basis that a set of sentences could never correspond with an external 'reality' (Bredo, 1994: 26).

Social learning theory

In contrast to the symbol-processing view of cognition, Bredo (1994) describes the 'situated' view where knowledge arises in the course of everyday problem-solving activity, involving social and physical interaction. This latter resonates with a philosophical empirical approach where the mind and body are inseparably linked in the development of knowledge, through being immersed in the wider environment. The differences between the 'situated' and empirical view lie in the emphasis on the collective in the former, and the individual in the latter. Appreciation of the social signifies a move away from the emphasis on cognitive theories of learning, particularly influenced by Piaget (1929, cited in Jarvis, 2006), to growing interest in sociological theories of learning and ways of understanding knowledge. 'Situated learning' has become associated with knowledge developed through participating in Communities of Practice (COP), a construct based on

empirical work carried out by Lave and Wenger (1991). Their work

developed social learning theory and extended the focus on context from

formal learning environments to learning at work. Apprentices in the various

practices studied by Lave and Wenger are described as 'legitimate peripheral

participants' in the practice, who learn by observing, modelling and imitation

of their masters, until they become recognized as full participants in the

community (1991: 12). Through this process the identity of the apprentice

evolves as they learn the practice, take on increasingly complex tasks, and

become more immersed in a shared culture, professional identity, and

discourse with the masters. Later work in this area concerned with learning

in the workplace has included studies of formal and non-formal learning

environments (Eraut, 2000, 2007), social learning theory (Guile and Young,

2002), and learning organizations (Senge, 2002).

The Communities of Practice construct has greatly influenced social learning

theory and the understanding of knowledge as 'collective', but has tended to

present a somewhat static picture of knowledge without recognition of the

potential for transformation through re-interpretation of constructs. It

arguably presents a rather 'rosy' picture of COPs which underplays relative

positions of power. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe the 'tools' of the

practice, including language, as enabling learning to occur, but do not

emphasise the extent to which language, unlike the tailor's scissors, is value-

laden. From a sociological viewpoint, 'reality' is considered as being socially

constructed with the role of language crucial in the process (Berger and

Luckman, 1991). What counts as 'knowledge' then depends on questions of

how a particular 'reality' comes to prevail, whose voice counts in constructing this, and how identities are forged through it.

In later work Lave (1996) develops the COP theme but with a greater emphasis on the potential for transformation of the practice by focusing on the interdependence of learner and teacher, and the changing identity of both. Wenger (2002) argues that 'communities of practice cannot be romanticized' (p. 164), and similarly brings a more critical approach to considering the two-way relationship between learners and social practices and the transformation of both. Developments in thinking from the original COP construct have clearly influenced contemporary work including that of Fuller and Unwin (2010) who describe workplace environments as 'expansive or restrictive' (p.743). This concept is represented as a continuum along which the environment may be placed according to how it supports or restricts opportunities for learning, and consequently, impacts on the potential for enhancing the learner and the environment. This reinforces the findings of Billet (2006) who describes 'workplace affordances' in a similar way, as offering opportunities for full participation in learning which is in the interests of effective workplace performance and of learners. Achieving this is dependent on power relationships and how these control access to both tacit and explicit knowledge embedded in workplace practices.

'Tacit' and 'explicit' knowledge

Social learning theory has highlighted the 'distributed' nature of knowledge which raises the question of how knowledge can be shared, not just through

28

spoken or written language, but also through physical participation in a practice. This indicates the existence of different forms of knowledge which may be conveyed in different ways. Polanyi (1983) distinguishes between 'tacit' and 'explicit' knowledge, describing tacit as "what we know but cannot tell' (p.4), using the example of the human ability for face recognition. He emphasises the centrality of physical experience in identifying 'our body as the ultimate instrument of all our external knowledge' (p.15). In this he echoes the empiricist view of knowledge, whilst allowing for a separate 'internal' knowledge. He describes explicit knowledge as that which is open to articulation, and tacit knowledge as personal and much more difficult to convey.

Polanyi (1983) reveals a religious conviction in his writing which may account for his initial interest in tacit knowledge, and the links with 'belief' inherent in this. He acknowledges that we shape the beliefs that we accept as 'true', but he rejects the existentialist view that this starts from nothing, implying some *a priori* 'god given' knowledge. His position, as a respected natural scientist with a high regard for the positivist tradition, who later turned to more philosophical enquiry, undoubtedly helped to earn him respect for his work. Polanyi's (1983) exposition of tacit and explicit knowledge greatly influenced Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) model of knowledge management, although others accuse them of misinterpretation. Collins (2010) develops Polanyi's categories of tacit and explicit knowledge further which brings new insights into the extent to which tacit knowledge may be made more explicit, and has implications for the knowledge management construct (chapter 4). The

importance of tacit knowledge which is difficult to convey is perhaps overlooked in contemporary discourse where 'knowledge' is everywhere.

Commodification of knowledge

The discourse of 'knowledge' is now all pervasive with the prevalence of terms such as 'the knowledge economy', 'the knowledge society', 'knowledge workers', 'knowledge brokers' and 'knowledge transfer partnerships'. This divorcing of 'knowledge' from the 'knower' is of concern in that it objectifies knowledge as a commodity which can be assigned a monetary value and exchanged. An example of this is evident from a major book retailer which promotes itself as 'the knowledge retailer' (http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk). This implies that becoming a knowledgeable person merely involves spending money rather than expending intellectual effort. It is the equivalent of buying an exercise bicycle which is stored in the garage, but allows the self-delusion that the very act of buying it induces fitness. Knowledge, like fitness then, can be bought and sold. The commodification of knowledge is clearly of concern to Bernstein (2000) who is rather cynical of the capitalist culture which has promoted this;

> *'Knowledge should flow like money to wherever it can create advantage and profit. Indeed, knowledge is not like money, it is money. Knowledge is divorced from persons, their commitments, their personal dedications'* (2000: 86).

He goes on to suggest that the dislocation of knowledge from the knower undermines the value of the human contribution, treats people as dispensable, and relates knowledge to the market values of the New Right. The perceived value of knowledge in a capitalist economy is indicated by Gibbons et al (2006) who refers to 'marketable knowledge', and whose work has been influential in organisational learning theory;

> 'The driving force behind the accelerated supply and demand
> of marketable knowledge lies in the intensification of
> international competition.' (2006: 46)

The discourse of commerce indicated by 'marketable knowledge' echoes the idea of knowledge as a commodity, to be valued and exchanged for profit according to Market needs. This separation of the knowledge from the human contribution to it implies that the latter will be valued or disregarded according to 'supply and demand'. This has implications for this study which considers the contribution of human labour in the knowledge creation process, and the value placed on this in the context of a concern for democracy. The study is premised on a social view of knowledge which considers how knowledge may be created and harnessed for the benefit of individuals, workplaces and intellectual and social advancement aside from financial profit. The rationale for the study questioned the role of power in knowledge creation processes, and so it is helpful now to begin to interrogate the relationship between knowledge, discourse and power. Links between knowledge and discourse are theorised by Bernstein (2000) to explain how relations of power and control regulate social communication, which in turn

31

shapes power relations. His primary concern was with democracy and the ways in which pedagogical relations, particularly in schooling, act through discourse to distribute knowledge in a way which reinforces inequality;

'This distribution of different knowledges and possibilities is not based on neutral differences in knowledge but on a distribution of knowledge which carries unequal value, power and potential' (Bernstein, 2000: xxi)

He presents a theoretical examination of how knowledge is transformed into pedagogic communication which constructs a model of the learner, the teacher and the relationship between them (p.35). This model will be explicated and its potential contribution to the study explored.

Knowledge structures

Bernstein (2000) refers to the different forms of knowledge which are embedded within two types of discourse, 'horizontal' and 'vertical'. Horizontal, he describes as arising out of everyday problems, being a feature of personal relationships where tacit knowledge is important, and is dependent on a local context;

'A horizontal discourse entails a set of strategies which are local, segmentally organised, context specific and dependent, for maximising encounters with persons and habitats' (2000: 157)

32

By contrast, vertical discourse is more explicit, less dependent on context, and is associated with professional and educational practices. Bernstein describes it as;

> 'a *coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure,*
> *hierarchically organised, as in the sciences, or it takes the*
> *form of a series of specialised languages, with specialized*
> *modes of interrogation....as in the social sciences and*
> *humanities* ' (2000: 157).

Within vertical discourse he distinguishes between two forms, hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures. The former are described as underpinning the type of theoretical frameworks epitomised by the natural sciences, in which existing theory is either encompassed by new developments in thinking, or is refuted by them, generally as a result of empirical evidence. These have relatively 'strong grammar', in that they use language which is quite explicitly recognized as such and has a precise meaning. Bernstein (2000) contrasts this with horizontal knowledge structures where new ideas align segmentally with existing theory and may challenge it but not absorb it within them. Furthermore, he describes horizontal knowledge structures as having either 'weak' or 'strong' grammar; the latter tend to have more explicit precise languages of description, subject to empirical criteria, for example economics or psychology, whereas those with weaker grammars tend to have more rapidly changing languages of description less subject to satisfying empirical criteria, for example, sociology (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Map of discourses and knowledge structures

Vertical discourse ◄——— Power relations ———► Horizontal discourse

(specialised) *(everyday language)*
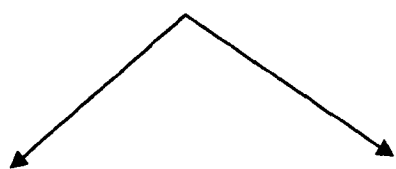
Hierarchical ◄———► Horizontal
knowledge knowledge
structures structures

(e.g. natural sciences) *(e.g. humanities, social science)*

Strong grammar
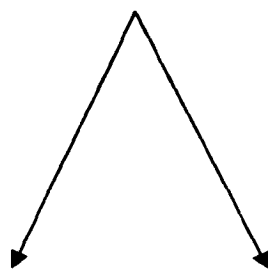
Strong Weak
Grammar Grammar

(e.g. psychology) *(e.g. sociology)*

Transmission

Explicit (principles, Tacit *(showing or*
procedures, texts explicit) *modeling precedes doing)*

(Adapted from Bernstein, 2000: 168)

34

Where the grammar is strong in horizontal knowledge structures, the rules for transmission are relatively explicit and not as context-dependent. Where the grammar is weaker, difficulty may arise for those acquiring knowledge of the discipline since in weak grammar the language is less explicit, and the rules regarding use of the language harder to grasp. Acquiring this language then, according to Bernstein (2000), requires 'tacit' transmission involving oral communication in a face to face situation. This is helpful from the point of view of the study where the Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) model of knowledge management emphasizes the role of 'tacit knowledge' in creating and sharing knowledge in innovation. Much of this knowledge is likely to exhibit relatively weak grammar, being context specific, and so close personal contact between partners is likely to be important. In addition, the APs during training are subject to academic and health professional discourse which shapes their pedagogical identity, and so ultimately the construction of the AP identity in practice.

Knowledge structures and discourse

Bernstein's (2000) work on language and identity is of value in the partnership in providing a theoretical basis to explain issues of power and control between the professional discourses. The AP role is intended to cross occupational boundaries, which requires the APs to have access to the professional discourse associated with nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, podiatry and social care. According to Bernstein (2000), the separate identity of each of these disciplines, founded on the professional knowledge base, is determined by the boundary between them, which he

designates as 'classification' (p.99). He maintains that power relations are preserved by the distance between the categories; the higher the classification, the greater the specialisation, the more powerful is the identity. Control over discourse, in other words what counts as legitimate, and who is able to determine this, he refers to as 'framing' (p.99).

Applying this to specific health professions, medicine would be expected to have a higher classification than nursing, with a much more exclusive identity, which in turn would be expected to have a higher classification than social care, which has a relatively weak identity. In practice, the discourse of medicine has a tradition of highly 'specialist' knowledge rooted in biomedical sciences with a hierarchical knowledge structure. According to the argument, this has afforded medicine a strong professional identity and a high level of autonomy with the right to self-regulation (Nettleton, 2000). In other words, medics have established a strong 'voice' (classification) and also a high level of control (framing) over the legitimate message to be conveyed. Nursing, on the other hand, has less 'specialist' knowledge with much of it rooted in horizontal knowledge structures with associated horizontal rather than vertical discourse. In Bernstein's (2000) analysis it is associated with weak grammar, where the rules are implicit rather than explicit, and much of the language associated with it is common to 'every-day 'discourse. Nursing has only relatively recently laid claim to an academic nursing discourse (McNamara, 2009), and as a profession has less autonomy than medicine, with nurses more likely to be managed by non-nurses. Social care has even less distinct professional identity, being largely associated with horizontal discourse embedded in everyday language with little associated specialist

knowledge; much of the 'caring' associated with social care is done by families and informal carers. It is entirely associated with external regulation and therefore has a weak 'voice' (classification) and weak control (framing) over the knowledge to be applied.

Bernstein (2000) describes enculturation into a new discourse as obeying the 'recognition rule' where the speciality of the context and power relations operating can be recognised. However, to be able to participate in the discourse, the individual must also possess the 'realisation rule' to enable the discourse to be employed in a credible way (p.17). Individuals may feel marginalised where they 'recognise' the discourse but are unable to participate; this is of importance for the different participants in the partnership in their ability to be included in the discourse and ultimately for the APs in developing credibility as generic workers. This issue highlights a challenging feature of partnership working as will be discussed in the findings in chapter 9.

There are inherent difficulties in using Bernstein's (2000) theory of discourse and knowledge structures, for a number of reasons. Firstly, he has crafted a whole new discourse in his thesis which has been criticized, as he acknowledges, as 'an exercise in mystification' and 'unreadable' (p.xv). Secondly, the terminology of 'knowledge structures' implies an objectification of knowledge which has led others such as Maton (2009) to expand the thesis in ways which are epistemologically flawed. His paper on knowledge-building in the curriculum debates the extent to which successful 'cumulative learning' which is context-dependent enables students to learn higher-order

principles or, conversely, is constrained by the context. His discourse is dominated by concepts which imply a commodification of knowledge including 'acquisition,' transferring knowledge across contexts' and 'building knowledge' (p.43). Arguably it is the 'objectification' of knowledge underpinning Bernstein's (2000) theory which has encouraged this.

Thirdly, Bernstein's work tends to highlight artificial polarisations between discourses e.g. vertical (specialist, official) and horizontal (everyday language) and knowledge structures. This polarisation makes it difficult to apply classification and framing to individual professional areas without making generalizations which fail to pay sufficient attention to the dynamic nature of language. Professional identities are much less stable in an arguably post-modernist era where the 'grand narratives' (Giddens, 2006) have been challenged, and the boundaries between vertical and horizontal discourses have blurred. Much language once considered as 'specialist' medical knowledge such as 'the genome', 'stem cells' and 'cloning' has entered everyday 'horizontal' discourse. Technology has greatly increased access to this 'knowledge' and challenges to its legitimacy occur more frequently with the increase in dissemination of research through the mass media. Furthermore, increasing accountability of the professions (Darzi, 2008) has arguably weakened the notion of professional identity and control over the 'legitimate' message, and the pressure from hitherto unheard voices such as the 'Expert Patient' (DH, 2001) has increased.

Despite these criticisms, the exploration of Bernstein's (2000) ideas has been helpful in sensitizing me to the links between knowledge and social divisions

of labour, and to theoretical understandings of how professional identity may be maintained through control over the boundaries. At the inter-personal level the model provides some insight into how individuals may experience multi-professional working according to their ability to be part of the discourse or excluded from it. Consequently, critical discourse theory may offer more to the analysis of issues of power and control in the partnership under study than Bernstein's (2000) work.

Epistemological assumptions underpinning study

Having debated philosophical, individual and social understandings of knowledge, it is useful to consider the epistemological assumptions underpinning my approach to the study.

1. Knowledge is a contested concept which tends to be used interchangeably with information, data, and so on.

2. This appears to be because, in discourse terms, it has positive connotations.

3. The 'knowledge economy', 'knowledge society', 'knowledge brokers', 'knowledge workers', all stem from this trend which Little and Ray (2005) ascribe to the popularity of the knowledge management concept in the late 1990s.

4. The current trend to 'harness' knowledge management as a means of exploiting the potential of new technologies (Hislop, 2010) diminishes its epistemological basis, in that knowledge belongs to the knower(s) and is linked to the context in which it is embedded.

5. Tacit knowledge can be shared through symbols, body language and representations without explicit talk. This requires a shared culture where a common meaning is derived from these representations.

6. Knowledge is embedded in practice and so cannot easily be articulated, translated or transferred. It can be generated and shared with others but not simply 'transferred'. The more common understanding of context individuals have, the more they can share collective knowledge.

7. Separation of 'knowledge' from the 'knower' and context results in a commodification of knowledge, underplaying the role of expertise and experience.

This position will provide a foundation for the critique of the conceptual frameworks underpinning the study which will be explicated in the following two chapters.

Summary

This chapter has explored the contested nature of 'knowledge' and the links with power and discourse, understanding of which is pivotal to the investigation of knowledge creation underlying the study. Knowledge has been considered from both a philosophical and a sociological perspective, and the current trend toward commodification of knowledge critiqued. The exploration of Bernstein's (2000) work regarding knowledge and discourse has highlighted the unwritten 'rules' which play a part in determining what counts as 'professional knowledge', and how professions are controlled at

the boundaries between them. The chapter has also explicitly presented the epistemological assumptions underpinning my approach to the study which are brought into play in critiquing others. Although aspects of Bernstein's (2000) work have been criticised, it has provided another 'mediating tool' in my understanding of partnership working. The theme of discourse and other approaches to it will be developed in chapter 6. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) pay little attention to discourse, but arguably there are strong links between discourse and sharing of tacit knowledge as will be discussed.

Chapter 4   Knowledge Management

Introduction

This chapter will debate Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) model of Knowledge

Management (KM), exploring its philosophical underpinnings and

development, its potential application to the partnership, and its limitations.

The model is derived from the field of management and organisational

theory, and Lipschitz et al (2007) suggest that knowledge management tends

to be used interchangeably with organisational learning. Nonaka and

Takeuchi (1995) highlight the difference by suggesting that organisational

learning tends to be bound to the past and focus on organisational adaptive

responses, rather than on innovation. Lipschitz et al (2007) highlight the

complexities in translating rhetoric into reality in organisational learning

practices, and this perhaps indicates the attraction of Nonaka and Takeuchi's

(1995) model in providing an empirically 'tried and tested' model of

innovation. It is innovation in the sense of innovative working practices,

rather than new product development, with which this study is concerned,

and so it is outwith the scope of this work to provide a comprehensive critique

of management and organisational theory. Instead, this chapter offers a

critique of knowledge management and seeks to justify the potential value it

may have for the study.

The knowledge spiral

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) construct a four stage model of knowledge

creation which is concerned with two types of knowledge, 'tacit' and 'explicit',

drawing on Polanyi's exposition of these knowledge forms to explain the

philosophical foundations of their model. 'Tacit' knowledge they describe as

personal, context specific, and difficult to communicate with others, in

contrast to 'explicit' which is more rational, theoretical and open to articulation

(Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995: 59). They describe tacit knowledge as having

a cognitive element, consisting of schemata, paradigms and values, and a

technical element consisting of know-how, in other words, practical skills. In

so doing they posit knowledge as not merely an object which is possessed or

expressed, but as an attribute which embodies action in the sense that tacit

knowledge includes the demonstration of expertise. The central feature of

the knowledge creation model is the ability to convert tacit knowledge into

explicit and vice versa. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) describe a four stage

process of conversion between the two knowledge forms occurring at

different ontological levels between individuals and the collective, and within

and beyond organisations. The four stages occur continuously and

interactions between them are shown below;

- Socialisation: individuals communicating tacit knowledge through

  shared experience which produces collective 'sympathised'

  knowledge, such as in apprenticeship, working closely alongside an

  expert.

- Externalisation: articulating tacit knowledge into explicit concepts such

  as speech, documents and electronic media involving use of

  metaphor, analogy or a model which encapsulates an idea otherwise

  difficult to articulate.

- Combination: combining different forms of explicit knowledge to produce systemic knowledge across the organisation, such as creation of a new database.

- Internalisation: explicit knowledge which has been generated and shared through an organisation is embodied into tacit knowledge by individuals. For example, an employee learning how to use a new production process.

Figure 4.1 Knowledge spiral

Dialogue

	Tacit	Explicit
Tacit	Socialisation Sympathised knowledge	Externalisation Conceptual knowledge
Explicit	Internalisation Operational knowledge	Combination Systemic knowledge
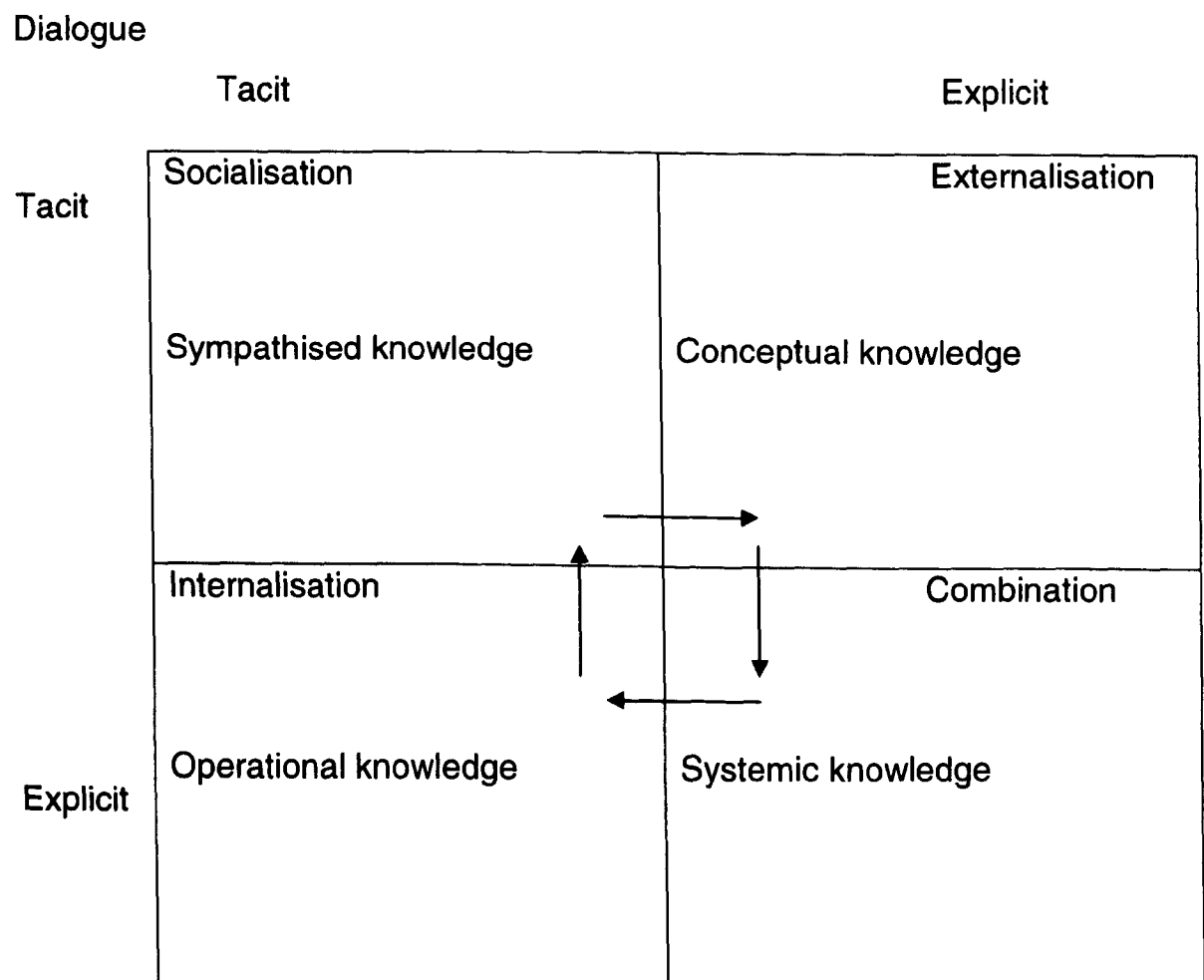
(Adapted from Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995: 72)

The authors developed their knowledge management model as a result of a number of empirical studies of industrial practices conducted by them, predominantly in Japan. At that time, (the 1990s), Japanese manufacturing and technological industries were experiencing great success globally in comparison with Western competitors. Interested in analysing the reasons for the success of the car industry and manufacturing more generally, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) undertook research to investigate the relationship between knowledge, innovation and competitive advantage, in what was rapidly becoming identified as the 'knowledge economy' (Drucker, 1993). This success at innovation they attributed to the Japanese ability to exploit 'tacit' knowledge, in creating and sharing ideas which lead to new product development within and across organisations. In substantiating their claims for innovation, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) explored the historical differences between Eastern and Western culture, asserting that Western philosophy has developed within a paradigm of Cartesian dualism, where mind and body are perceived as distinct entities, whereas Eastern philosophy is rooted within the concept of 'oneness of mind and body' (p. 29). This links back to rationalist and empiricist views of knowledge and their relative influence on different cultures. The Japanese reputation for innovation was affirmed by the literature when interest in knowledge management became widespread (Boisot, 1999; Brown and Duguid, 2002; Little and Ray, 2005).

Despite subsequent recession affecting the Japanese economy, the knowledge management model has remained influential, and there are currently four Journals devoted entirely to knowledge management. A recent study by Hislop (2010) confirms that academic interest in the topic has been

45

sustained. This study indicates that the initial prevalence of the knowledge management concept in business and organisational management literature has declined, whilst the influence in Information Communication Technology (ICT) literature has increased. The concept of knowledge management has been embraced in relation to technological systems and software where the idea of creating and disseminating large amounts of data rapidly is seductive. In this literature, 'knowledge' seems frequently to be reduced to an objectified resource, stored in computers and 'managed' in the form of documents, email and on-line conferencing (Swan and Scarborough, 2001; Quintas, 2002). This interpretation seems to separate the 'knower' from the 'knowledge' itself, and in so doing deals only with explicit knowledge, thereby ignoring the other processes inherent within the knowledge management cycle. The other main theme which has emerged is a fuller embracing of the knowledge management construct based on human resources (Serenko and Bontis, 2004) which is of particular relevance to this study, and arguably is closer to the concept underpinning the original Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) model.

Critique of knowledge management

The basic premise of converting tacit to explicit knowledge has led to criticisms of the model by Tsoukas (2003) and by Little and Ray (2005) who doubt the conversion principle, and suggest that Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) misrepresent Polanyi's original ideas. Little and Ray (2005) contend that Polanyi saw tacit and explicit knowledge as completely distinct, tacit as subjective and intrinsically linked to the 'knower', explicit as objectified,

having a potentially independent existence from the 'knower'. On this basis, they contend that there is no possibility of converting one to the other. Moreover, they cite a number of examples to challenge this but in so doing, they possibly miss some of the nuances of the debate.

I would contend that Polanyi (1983) did propose tacit and explicit knowledge as distinct from each other, but that he implied some interchange. His oft-quoted 'we know more than we can tell' (1983: 4) does not exclude the possibility of sharing personal tacit knowledge; we convey much through body language, art and music, and through bodily contact. Polanyi states that, 'we usually cannot tell how we recognise a face that we know, so most of this knowledge cannot be put into words' (1983: 4). This implies that at least some of it can be expressed in an explicit form, and the author employs the example of police 'identikits' to illustrate this. In effect, individuals are able to articulate 'tacit' knowledge about a face through picking out similar features from pictures which allow an explicit likeness to be constructed. This viewpoint is supported to some degree by Eraut (2000) in his empirical work on non-formal learning and tacit knowledge where he proposes a continuum from tacit to explicit knowledge, rather than two distinct concepts. Eraut (2000) recognizes the value of tacit knowledge 'being simultaneously both acquired and used' (p.28) in informal learning situations, but not necessarily made explicit. He suggests that there could be value in making it explicit; for example, in monitoring quality of performance, or to reveal expert knowledge in a way which benefits others. He is however sceptical in believing that this is possible to any great extent, and cautions that not all tacit knowledge may

be valuable as it may be used without being critically examined for the simple reason that it is 'taken for granted' (Erault, 2007).

Tsoukas (2003) is also critical of the discussion of Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) exposition of tacit knowledge and of how this is represented in the wider literature. He claims that if a piano player focuses on the movement made by the fingers, that this will destroy the skill playing the music, and only by this knowledge remaining 'tacit' will the skill be developed. However, Polanyi (1983) provides an example of developing athletic expertise which contradicts this. The latter suggests that if a skilled athlete studies his/her own movements frame by frame from a visual recording, although initially it may destroy the ability to perform the movement to the usual high standard, with practice, the movement can become even more skilful.

> *'The destruction can be made good by interiorizing the*
> *particulars once more [.........] Motion studies, which tend to*
> *paralyse a skill, will improve it when followed by practice'*
> (Polanyi, 1983:18-19).

Polanyi (1983) describes the process as 'tacit reintegration' and this concept suggests some exchange between tacit and explicit knowledge, thus supporting the case for knowledge conversion. It is perhaps the terminology employed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) which implies a mechanistic, rather than a sophisticated process. This terminology of 'knowledge conversion' does seem to have left the knowledge management framework open to a reductionist discourse with the proliferation of 'knowledge' terms.

However, the conversion process is not necessarily inherently flawed as a parallel example in scientific discourse suggests. Energy, for example, is described as being 'converted' from one form to another, such as in the conversion of electrical energy into heat. No-one would suggest that electricity and heat are the same entity, but scientific evidence demonstrates that each is a form of energy, and that inter-conversion is possible. In this process there is a loss of energy through dissipation, and so not all of the electrical energy is converted. In the same way it would seem reasonable to suggest that tacit knowledge can be converted into explicit knowledge, although some aspects of tacit knowledge may be 'lost' in the process, or be inaccessible to conversion.

Later work by Collins (2010) revisits tacit and explicit knowledge concepts as defined by Polanyi. Although accepting the original distinction, he extends the work in identifying three types of tacit knowledge, somatic, which is tacit knowledge 'embodied' in human body and brain, relational, which involves picking up unspoken clues from others, and collective, which is 'embodied' in society. However, he too is sceptical about some of Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) claims;

> *'They think the notion of tacit knowledge is exhausted by knowledge that just happens not to have been explicated, but could be given a bit more effort'* (Collins, 2010: 3).

He supports some instances of knowledge conversion but brings a greater degree of sophistication to the discussion, suggesting that limited forms of

tacit knowledge may be made explicit. He claims that 'somatic tacit knowledge', knowledge embedded in physical skills, is more akin to a mechanical process rather than 'true knowledge', as it may be replicated by robotic technology. Relational tacit knowledge he suggests may be made explicit in a similar way as described by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), for example, in passing on expertise through close contact. Collins' (2010) account is mainly concerned with collective tacit knowledge which highlights the importance of the individual embedded within a society;

> 'The central and mysterious domain in the map of tacit
>
> knowledge is knowledge that is located in society' (Collins,
>
> 2010: 138)

Collective tacit knowledge he feels is not open to being made explicit, but is knowledge which is shared through socialisation within a specific cultural context. His insights are helpful to the study in identifying societal structures as 'mediating' in the knowledge creation process, in that everything we learn is dependent on other people. This accords well with social theories of learning as elucidated in the previous chapter, and the role of 'mediation' identified by Vygotsky (1978). Sharing tacit knowledge and how this may be achieved in fostering knowledge creation is of most interest to the study.

Partnership working involves close human contact between individuals who share a common cultural context in the societal sense, but may differ from the perspective of professional values. Sharing explicit knowledge is relatively unproblematic given a common language, and the time and

resources to devote to this; sharing tacit knowledge presents much more of a challenge. Different professional groups do not all share a common language and culture, and so partners have to learn to understand each other before they can transcend boundaries to collaborate effectively. This requires what Edwards et al (2009) refer to as developing 'relational agency' (p.134), which will be discussed further with reference to activity theory (chapter 5). A pre-requisite of this is that individuals have sufficient motivation and interest to engage fully with the process. Hartley (2007) states that knowledge management may not be in the interests of workers, but rather in the interests of capital, as it may leave individuals vulnerable once their 'personal' knowledge and expertise has been shared. This may leave workers more dispensable, and raises issues of power which are not recognised in the model. This has implications for the partnership where a key aim is to develop a new generic type of worker who crosses traditional professional boundaries. This requires the engagement of a range of professionals who may be reluctant to share their knowledge to support the introduction of a new role of worker who takes on some of their responsibilities, possibly threatening jobs. This issue and other aspects of power dynamics in partnership working will be debated in the analysis.

Application of knowledge management to the study

The Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) model has value in exploring knowledge creation at different levels in the partnership, and in highlighting the role of tacit knowledge. The emphasis on close working relationships and the development of trust highlighted by Huxham and Vangen (2007), and the

development of 'social capital' identified by (Dhillon, 2009), seem dependent on sharing tacit knowledge through socialisation. The partnership clearly involves sharing explicit knowledge through dialogue, but the ability to be included in the dialogue cannot be assumed. Bernstein (2000) suggests that discourse conveys tacit knowledge in the form of 'recognition' and 'realisation' rules beyond the explicit language which is articulated. As previously explained, the 'recognition rule' suggests that individuals may recognize the speciality of the context of the discourse, and the operation of power relations, but may only be able to participate in it if they also possess the 'realisation' rule. Sharing the 'realisation' rule enables participants to take a credible role in the dialogue, whereas the converse may lead to exclusion from it. This has implications for knowledge creation and sharing in the study, and the power dynamics which may impact upon it.

Much of the scepticism about the possibility of converting tacit to explicit knowledge appears to emanate from widespread misinterpretation of this in the literature, and the problems evident in the commodification of knowledge. Collins (2010) is critical of the ways in which 'intelligent' machines are ascribed 'knowledge' which actually rests with the humans who design and repair them and I would support his argument. He justifiably doubts the possibility of making all collective tacit knowledge explicit, because of the unique human process of socialisation which equips human society in ways impossible to replicate through technology. Knowledge management is cognisant with social learning theory, emphasizing the distributed nature of knowledge, but also in valuing the contribution of individuals.

Summary

This chapter has considered the knowledge management construct and its value to the study. The model is premised upon conversion between tacit and explicit knowledge forms in a continuous way, spiraling knowledge through different levels. Scepticism of this knowledge conversion process has resulted in critiques of knowledge management which have been debated. The value of the model to the study has been identified as the role of tacit knowledge and potential for sharing it through close personal contact in the partnership. However, this raises questions of power relationships, the willingness of individuals to participate, and their motivations. This debate is absent from the knowledge management model but may be a more prominent feature of activity theory, given its basis in Marxist ideology.

Chapter 5 Cultural Historical Activity Theory

Introduction

This chapter will outline the development of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) proposed by Engeström (1987, 2001, and 2007) and critique it as a means of utilizing and expanding knowledge to solve problems of practice. The ideological basis of the model and concern with labour power locate it to some degree within an organisational management tradition in a similar way to knowledge management. Unlike the latter, activity theory is also strongly linked to the field of workplace learning in its pedagogical aspirations and concern with the wider community and so traverses both traditions. This chapter will consider the links between learning and labour which are relevant to the learning partnership, and thus suggest activity theory as a lens through which relationships of power, and how these shape expansive learning, may be viewed.

The model is most frequently applied as an interventionist strategy to solve complex and emerging problems in practice settings as documented by Engeström (1987, 2001, 2007, 2008), and increasingly by others (Edwards et al, 2009; Daniels et al, 2010). By contrast, it is being considered retrospectively in this study as a tool for researching and analysing collaboration across organisational and professional boundaries, and there are precedents to support this (Daniels et al, 2010). The recent publication of much of this work is slightly problematic to the study in that it introduces links which are similar to my original ideas making these appear less 'original', but

is helpful in validating my application of activity theory and in supporting further developments, particularly in relation to discourse analysis. These issues will be debated in this chapter following a critique of activity theory and a justification of how the model is being applied to the study.

Expansive learning in activity systems

Knowledge creation as described by Engeström (1987, 2001) is a process of 'expansive learning' which at its most fundamental level involves people working together to devise a solution to a problem of practice. He describes this as occurring within a human 'activity system' where the participants are the 'subject', the purpose is the 'object' of the activity, and the subject engages with the object through mediating artefacts. This mediation is premised on the 'zone of proximal activity' proposed by Vygotsky (1978) and Leont'ev (1978) which explains how human learning is enhanced through intervention and mediation involving tools and artefacts (including people). This basic model of subject - object - mediating artefact Engeström (1999) refers to as 'first generation' activity theory (Figure 5.1):

Figure 5.1 Vygotsky, 1978

Mediating artefact

Subject   Object
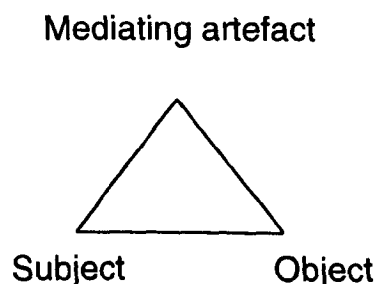
Engeström (2001) indicates the importance of this model in making an epistemological leap away from a focus on individual cognition, to Vygotsky's achievement in emphasizing the interface of the individual with the social structure through the role of mediating artefacts;

> *'The base unit of analysis now overcame the split between*
>
> *the Cartesian individual and the untouchable social structure'*
>
> *(*Engeström, 2001: 134)

In Engeström's (1987) 'second generation' activity system the concept is expanded to move the focus from the individual, to collective activity within a community with identified rules and divisions of labour. The knowledge creation process results from contradictions 'between independency and subordination', which emerge when participants with different social roles, interests and motivations come together. The individuals contribute labour to the activity system and are subordinate to it as employees, for example, in an organisation, subject to the history and rules, written and unwritten which govern this. They also have a degree of independence as individuals, with their own personal and professional history and interests which may not always coincide with those of the organisation. The fundamental contradiction lies between the object motives of individual actions which may direct activity in one way, and the object motives of the organisation which may be moving in another. The activity system is not confined to an organisation but should be viewed within the wider socio-historical context within which it operates. Engeström (1987) describes the primary contradiction in the activity system as arising from evolving differences

between the 'use value' and 'exchange value' of the object which act as a

stimulus to expansive learning in the system (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2 Second- generation activity theory model (Engeström, 1987)
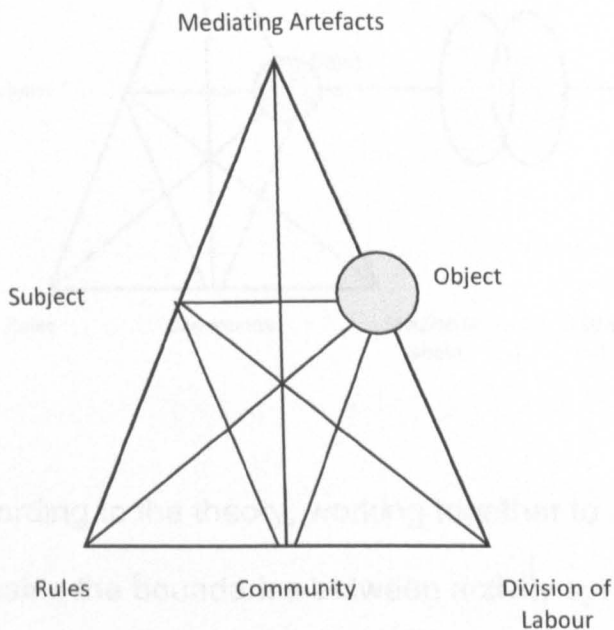
The model was further developed as a 'third generation' model involving

interaction between two or more activity systems during collaborative working

to solve joint practice problems. The view of knowledge underpinning the

model is clearly based on social learning theory where knowledge is

distributed, and learning occurs through participation in the activity system.

In 3rd generation activity theory the cross collaboration is described by

Engeström (2001) as involving 'polycontextuality and boundary crossing'

between activity systems (p.20) as illustrated in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3 Third-generation activity theory model (Engeström, 2001)
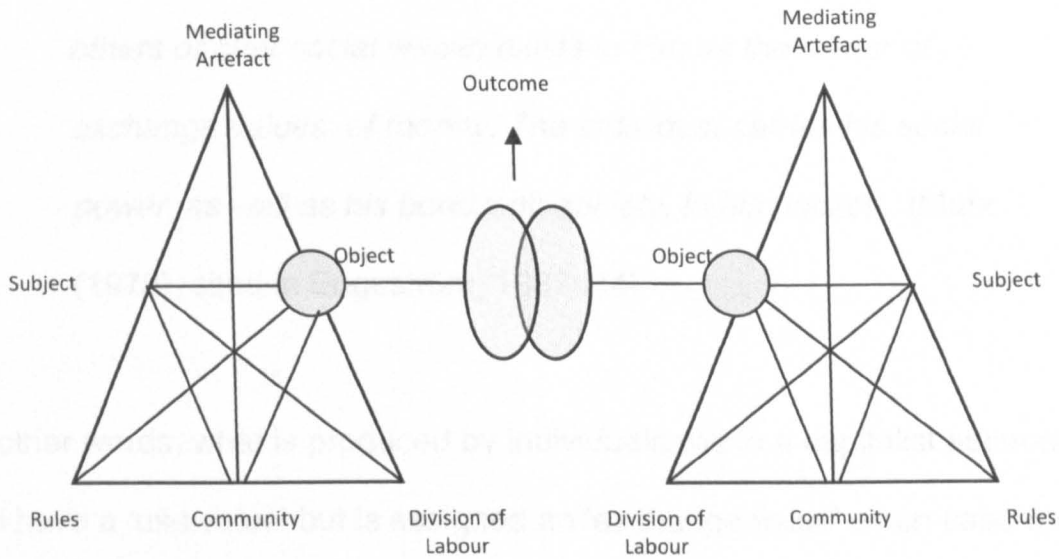
According to the theory, working together to achieve a joint solution involves crossing the boundaries between activity systems and requires participants to identify an expanded 'shared object' of activity. The contradictions which arise in this boundary crossing are the stimulus to expansive learning.

Ideological basis

In order to explain the reason for the contradictions inherent in activity systems, Engeström (1987) draws on Marxist theory;

> 'The reciprocal and all-sided dependence of individuals who
>
> are indifferent to one another forms their social connection.
>
> This social bond is expressed in exchange value, by means
>
> of which alone each individual's own activity or his product
>
> becomes an activity and a product for him; he must produce

a general product - exchange value, or, the latter isolated for

itself and individualized, money. On the other side, the

power which each individual exercises over the activity of

others or over social wealth exists in him as the owner of

exchange values, of money. The individual carries his social

power, as well as his bond with society, in his pocket'. (Marx

(1973), cited in Engeström, 1987: 14)

In other words, what is produced by individuals within a capitalist economy

will have a 'use value' but is assigned an 'exchange value' when used as a

commodity, with more powerful individuals having greater ownership of the

commodities. For example, the contribution to the workplace made by an

individual in terms of their knowledge and expertise may have use for the

organisation beyond the reward given to the individual. The 'use value' of

the individual's contribution is high because for example, it is embedded in an

enhanced product with a high 'exchange value' which subsequently

increases company profits. However, the individual may be exploited in the

process by not receiving a fair share of these. According to Engeström

(2001), these contradictions between the use value and the exchange value

present the structural tensions within an activity system which stimulate

expansive learning. The knowledge management model has been noted as

pursuing a capitalist agenda in promoting the commodification of knowledge

to protect the interests of the organisation (chapter 5). The rooting of activity

theory in a Marxist paradigm would be expected to produce a more radical

approach to transformation of practice, one which is critical of potential

exploitation and fundamentally challenges divisions of labour and rules of conduct within a wider societal framework.

Critique of activity theory

Despite this ideological stance, Engeström appears to take a more conservative approach in applying the model as indicated in this description of expansive learning,

> '*a process in which an activity system, for example a work organisation, resolves its pressing internal contradictions by constructing and implementing a qualitatively new way of functioning*' (2007, p.24).

This emphasis on 'internal contradictions', fails to acknowledge how these reflect wider societal inequality, and therefore implicitly indicates a reluctance to challenge external structures. The solutions described by Engeström (2001, 2003, 2007) are described as new ways of functioning within these structures, and so his intervention falls short of being a radical approach. This point is recognised by Avis (2007) who describes the work as a 'conservative praxis' and suggests that the transformation processes are often in the interests of capital, rather than for emancipation of the labour force. The examples identified by Engeström (2001) and Engeström et al (2003), do indeed appear to challenge practice within a local context, which assumes some acceptance of hierarchies and unequal distribution of power.

One such example provided by Engeström et al (2003) refers to a health care context where his research team intervenes to support the creation of collaborative care practice, to meet the complex needs of patients with long-term conditions. In the case study medical hierarchies and professional boundaries are discussed, and the relative powerlessness of patients is acknowledged. However, at one point in the description reference is made to the fact that 'when the patient gains a voice the object becomes a speaking object' (Engeström et al, 2003 p.309). Although in the example the word 'object' is being used as part of the terminology of activity theory, the patient does actually seem to be 'objectified' in the case study. The GP speaks of the patient in the third person despite the fact that the patient is part of the encounter. Engeström et al (2003) fail to comment on this, and so no acknowledgement of the actual 'objectification' of the patient is made. Furthermore, although the patient's views of her own past experience are sought, the modelling of the new improved care system takes place without any input from this person or indeed any other patients. This leaves the patient group as an object of power, rather than included in the 'subject' category as agentic in defining and debating solutions with others. The 'problem' is not the patient or even the complex long-term condition, but rather the inadequacy in the structure of the services in supporting patients appropriately in the management of the condition and so the object should be defined to reflect this. Otherwise the 'object' of activity is in danger of becoming the object of the new 'gaze' where 'The gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates' (Foucault 1973: 39)[1]

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[1] In the Birth of the Clinic Foucault (1973) conceives contemporary medical discourse as constituting new relations between Doctors and patients by virtue of 'the gaze', through which disease is made visible as the 'object' and the body becomes the site of observation and analysis

Edwards et al (2009) do acknowledge the exclusion of receivers of care services from much of their work which employs activity theory. They utilise activity theory in a project involving multi-agency collaboration to support the well-being of vulnerable children. The object of the activity is described as the 'child's developmental trajectory', and the professionals are encouraged to reflect on their approach and the tools which they bring to understanding this. The work provides valuable insights into how professionals learn to relate to one another, and to the process of expansive learning which transforms practice and will undoubtedly have positive consequences for the recipients of their services. Nevertheless, the exclusion of service users as co-participants from the workshops is potentially problematic in reinforcing existing power relationships between professionals and recipients of services.

Application of activity theory to the partnership

The model is put to work by Engeström (1987, 2001 and 2007) through an interventionist strategy which involves workshops where researchers facilitate discussion about collaborative practices. The workshops follow a 7-stage expansive learning cycle, and sessions are recorded and used as a stimulus in later sessions, where participants reflect on the interactions and propose innovative solutions to problems. Many of the case studies presented are funded projects where Engeström's teams are 'outsiders' who act as research facilitators, but consideration of their ontological position is limited. This highlights analogies with much of the early work done in Action Research where research into educational practice was facilitated by

'outsiders' and which raised questions of power and democracy (Kemmis, 2003). The facilitation of the workshops by 'outsiders' raises similar questions of power relations between researchers and workshop participants which are not always made explicit in the analysis.

In contrast to much of Engeström's work, the model in the case study is being employed retrospectively as a tool for analysis of the partnership working rather than as an interventionist strategy. My position is very clearly as an 'inside researcher' with implications which are fully explored in chapter 8. As such, my experience of being involved in the development of the Fd and the development of the AP role has led me to believe that the process involved fits well with the description of the expansive learning cycle as outlined below;

The 7 stages (adapted from Engeström, 2001)

1. Individuals are encouraged to question and criticise existing practice

2. They collectively analyse the situation within a historical and social context

3. Participants work together to model a potential solution

4. They explore the model through a process of experimentation to consider what might work and its limitations

5. The new model is implemented and its applications considered

6. The community reflect on the whole process and evaluate it

7. This feeds into revisions and consolidation of the practice

The stages identified resonate with my knowledge of both the process involved in the designing of the AP role in collaboration with NHS staff, and in the development of the Fd curriculum. In the initial work in the NHS, multiprofessional teams at all levels within healthcare organisations were taken on 'Away Days' which were facilitated by the SHA to consider a possible AP role. These days were intended to allow staff collectively to explore and question practice in their own setting by examining roles and responsibilities and the challenges of ensuring a 'patient-centred' service. This work was facilitated using an exercise of mapping the 'patient journey' in order to identify duplications/gaps in provision. The aim was to consider how these gaps or duplications could be avoided through a reconfiguration of current roles with the possible introduction of a new role. On the first 'Away Day' individuals were asked to consider the 'patient journey' within their service and identify ways in which patient need was not currently at the heart of the process. Two short stimulus videos were shown which presented case studies demonstrating duplication and ineffective use of staff time. Practitioners were asked to question their own practice areas and assumptions within it regarding particular roles and tasks. The use of stimulus material and sequence of following events appears to have many similarities to the workshops involved in the 'Change Laboratory' situations facilitated by Engeström (2001, 2007) and his team.

Relating this to the activity theory model, it is suggested that the multiprofessional teams at different levels in the organisation represent the subject, the object is to design a role for the Assistant Practitioner, and this is mediated through the use of the 'patient journey' mapping exercise instigated

64

by the SHA facilitators. The role for the AP which is envisaged is subject to understandings of the division of labour within the NHS, and the rules of policy and practice which impinge upon this as illustrated in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4 Activity theory model applied to development of the AP role
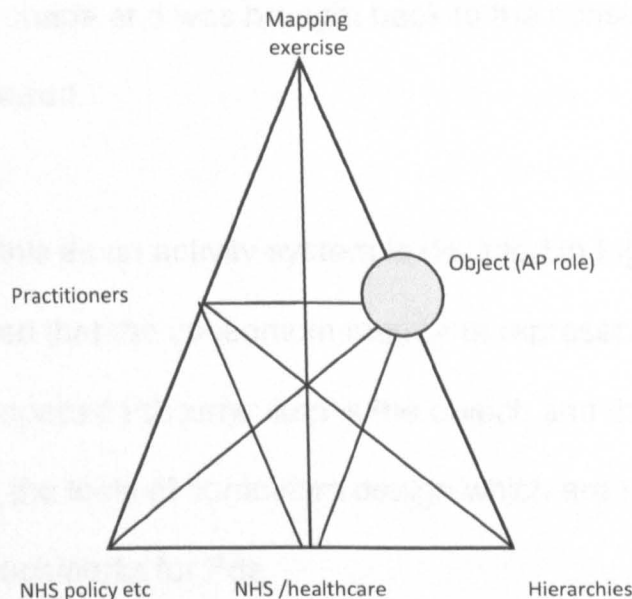
With reference to the design of the Fd programme, the framework for this was developed prior to the partnership with the SHA. This work was done as part of a consortium led by the university with representation from employers and FE College partners, as required by policy guidance (QAA, 2002). The consortium group worked together to propose a Fd model which would meet the needs of students and employers within health and social care services. The members questioned existing practice in higher education and vocational education programmes, and the extent to which this existing vocational provision might meet the required model of the degree. The criteria for the Fd to meet employers' needs, but also the required academic level,

presented some tensions between academic learning and what appeared to be 'task-dominated' employers' needs. The policy drivers for Fds and the widening participation agenda were debated in the light of the aims of higher education and meeting learners' needs. The area of consensus seemed to be in pursuing a curriculum model which would include health and social care in line with the drive for more integrated services (DH, 2000). A framework for the model took shape and was brought back to the consortium for debate and revisions proposed.

The illustration of this as an activity system is depicted in Figure 5.5 below where it is proposed that the consortium members represent the subject in the activity, the proposed Fd curriculum is the object, and the activity is mediated through the tools of curriculum design which are subject to 'rules', including QAA benchmarks for Fds.

Figure 5.5 Activity theory model applied to the Fd consortium
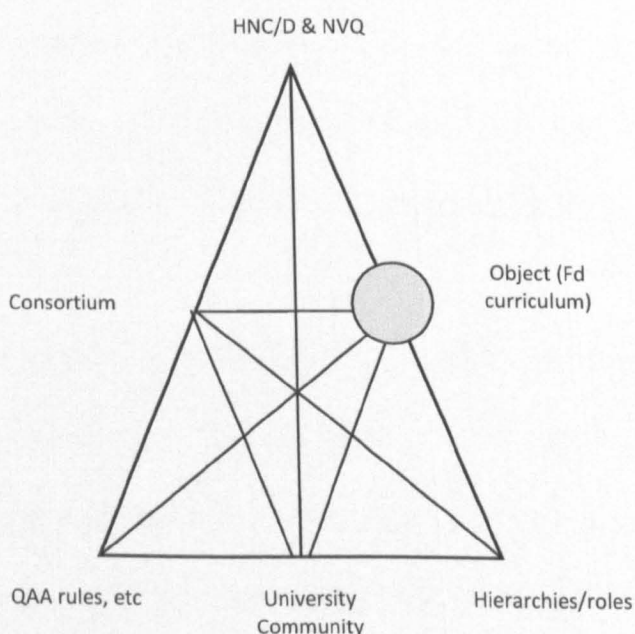
At the stage of having a draft curriculum ready, the university was approached by the SHA who had identified the Fd as potentially an appropriate qualification to underpin the training of the APs. The Fd programme was commissioned and at this point the partnership was formed. The initiative to develop the AP role was launched, and from this point onwards, the curriculum was informed by the development of the role of the Assistant Practitioner and vice-versa. The infrastructure which was set up for the partnership group involved representation from project managers from the SHA, Champions (senior managers) from each of the health and social care organisations involved, and the university programme leader (Appendix 1). The academic representation was clearly small in comparison with the number of SHA and employer representatives. The establishment of the partnership may be illustrated as the two original activity systems interacting in order to shape the Fd specifically to meet the needs of trainee APs. The resulting interacting activity system represents a further knowledge creation process with the potential for a 'snowball effect' when the two systems combine (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6 Learning partnership as an interacting activity system
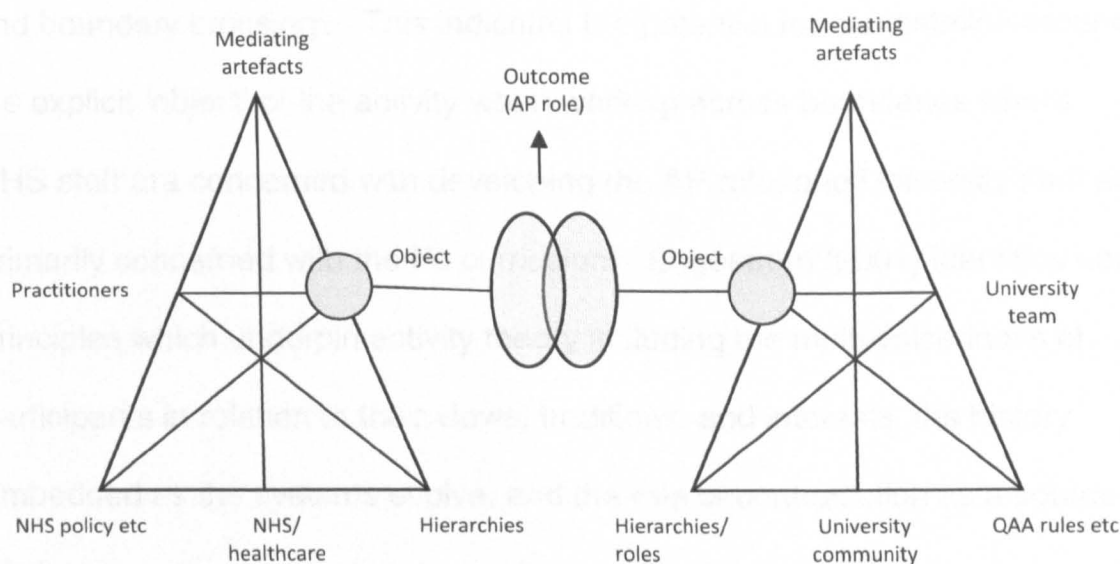
Following validation of the Fd by the university, the first students enrolled on the programme and began to work as trainee APs in pilot sites. The partnership group (named the Champion's Forum) continued to oversee the development of the AP role and the delivery of the Fd, with the explicit agenda of meeting the needs identified by employers. At a local level within each NHS Trust and PCT a Steering group was set up led by the Champion, and attended by an SHA project manager and a university link tutor (Appendix 1). These local groups continued to develop the Fd and AP role, feeding into the strategic Champion's group.

The degree of fit between the CHAT model and the initial development of the AP role and Fd curriculum, and the continuing partnership working, suggested that this model may be fruitful in understanding the knowledge creation and innovation processes. Activity theory allows the partnership working to be conceptualized as a dynamic interacting activity system,

situated within a particular socio-historical context. Engeström (2001) discusses complex inter-organisational learning in terms of 'polycontextuality and boundary crossing'. This indicates the potential for contestation around the explicit 'object' of the activity when working across boundaries where NHS staff are concerned with developing the AP role, and University staff are primarily concerned with the Fd curriculum. Engeström (2001) identifies key principles which underpin activity theory including the multi-voicedness of participants in relation to their views, traditions, and interests, the history embedded as the systems evolve, and the role of contradiction as a source of change.

As discussed, applications of the model by Engeström (2001, 2007) and Engeström et al (2003) tend to underplay relations of power. However, the model has proved valuable and has continued to be developed to good effect by others who have begun to focus on power relations to a greater extent. Daniels and Warmington (2007) highlight the position of the 'subject' in relation to the development of labour potential as an object of expansive learning in activity theory. This theme of labour enhancement is picked up by Warmington and Leadbetter (2010) as a key aspect of their utilisation of activity theory in a funded Learning in and for Interagency Working (LIW) Project. This project was driven by policy which promotes professional learning specifically to improve inter-agency working and so the object of the activity is labour potential rather than personal transformation;

'the object motive of any activity system also comprises the

social production of labour-power, or rather labour-power

potential' (Warmington and Leadbetter, 2010:.72)

This highlights the imperative in current policy to promote learning with the

explicit purpose of increasing potential in the labour market, which resonates

with a capitalist model of production (Avis, 2009). The location of 'expansive

learning' within a conservative paradigm does seem to fit well with the

development of the Fd in enhancing labour production through the

introduction of the AP role. Hartley (2007) interprets the CHAT model as one

which is dominated by hegemony of management, and suggests that it

'deploys a discourse of humanism in order to render capitalism acceptable'

(p.204). This criticism highlights the undercurrent of power relationships,

arguably not fully elaborated in applications of activity theory, and which

greater focus on the links between discourse and power may reveal more

clearly. The place of discourse has been discussed in activity theory and

(Engeström, R. 1995) analyses doctor-patient interactions within a broadly

conversation-analysis tradition, but draws on Bakhtin in acknowledging the

wider social context. She positions language in interaction as a mediating

tool in the dynamic between the individual consciousness, and the external

rules, roles and community which comprise the activity system. Engestöm et

al (2003) analyse professional discourse with a view to understanding the

work of discourse in creating new forms of activity, but do not make explicit

the discourse frameworks utilised in the analysis. Boag Munro (2004) is

primarily a discourse theorist who brings a critical discourse analysis

approach to activity theory in exploring the tensions between policy and

practice in teacher education as revealed through language. More recent work by Daniels (2010) suggests that there is still work to be done in analysing the link between cultural tools (including language) and power and authority. He considers how discourse regulates communication, drawing on the work of Bernstein (2000), and demonstrating how this shapes both the identity of individuals and of institutions. Structural relations of power and control are viewed as implicitly mediating communication and linked action, and thereby regulating personal agency. This work affirms the value of using discourse analysis as a tool to examine power relations more closely in expansive learning, and is one which will be taken forward in this study (chapter 6).

Summary

The basis of the CHAT model on Marxist principles promises a critical approach to power relationships and offers a radical challenge, through expansive learning, to the ways in which these are embedded within work practices. However, the critique of the model suggests that any transformation to work practices is most likely to occur within an existing capitalist structure, where expansive learning is synonymous with expansion of labour potential. The partnership clearly presents a context where power dynamics between individuals, organisations and professional groups are likely to present contradictions which may stimulate expansive learning, so increasing labour potential in the shape of the AP role. Activity theory draws attention to the 'different voices' in the activity system, but although the importance of discourse is highlighted, there is opportunity to develop the

71

links between discourse and power still further. This chapter has considered the insights developed by Daniels (2010) in relation to activity theory, and Bernstein's (2000) discourse structures, and a rationale has been provided for the value of a critical discourse analysis approach which will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 6   Critical Discourse Analysis in context

Introduction

Critical discourse analysis is founded on a sociological approach to language and text which seeks to reveal power relationships embedded in discourse practices. Reference has been made to Bernstein's (2000) work on knowledge structures and discourse which provides a foundation in considering how discourse conveys relations of power through 'implicit mediation'. This may be considered as an acceptance of hegemonic discourse, whereby oppressed groups unquestioningly accept dominance exerted through discourse as 'natural', as a consequence of socialisation (Hall, 2006). This theoretical perspective, associated with critical discourse theory, will be considered, together with the ways in which Foucault's work moves beyond this structuralist position. Overlap and differences between the various approaches will be debated and a rationale for adopting a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach to the study provided.

Critical discourse theory

Wetherell et al (2006) describes the origin of discourse theory in the study of linguistics, concerned primarily with language at a micro level, but its development has been enriched by influences from other disciplines including psychology, sociology, social policy and educational research. As a multidisciplinary field of study, a number of overlapping theories has emerged dependent on the disciplinary basis from which they have been derived. The

degree of overlap, the contested nature of interpretation, and the slipperiness of language itself creates difficulties on untangling the different approaches from one another (Wetherell et al, 2006). A review of the literature conducted by Rogers et al (2005) concludes that researchers are not always transparent in the approach that they are adopting, and that they tend to modify existing theoretical frameworks in addressing their own research questions. This does indeed seem to be the case and is undoubtedly a reflection of difficulties in applying a theoretical framework to real practice situations. Cheek (2003) suggests that it may actually be considered a strength from a post-structuralist point of view as it recognizes the fluidity of theory itself, as it is re-interpreted and modified in use. Clearly, new models tend to be modifications of existing frameworks which are applied in different contexts, or evolve as the author's work and thinking develops. What is important then is clarity around the framework being used, and justification of how it is being tailored to a specific situation.

The review conducted by Rogers et al (2005) into critical discourse analysis in education provides a comprehensive account of the range of approaches evident in the literature, but lacks clarity in categorizing them. Taylor (2003) does provide a very helpful classification of discourse analysis, identifying four broad approaches, whilst acknowledging the blurring between the boundaries. Firstly, she describes the linguistic tradition as being concerned with the study of the 'variation and imperfection' (p.7) of language at the micro-level of social systems. Secondly, she describes approaches concerned with the use of language within interactions, in other words, in the activity of using language between two or more people. Conversation

analysis would be included in this category where the conditions around patterns of use, such as turn-taking, and question and answer exchanges within the immediate context, are of interest. The third type of approach she identifies is concerned in a wider sense with patterns in language associated with particular social practices such as nursing, or social work. This merges into the fourth type of approach, critical discourse analysis, which investigates the social construction of reality through language and related practices over time. Critical discourse analysts are concerned with tackling structural inequality through challenging identities constructed on the basis of gender, race, age, sexuality and so on. Van Dijk (2006) suggests that these groups are subject to domination through discursive strategies adopted by elites, which maintains inequality. Critical discourse analysts adopt a political stance aimed at exposing the work done by these discursive strategies, and thereby identifying what language may reveal about social processes and hidden elements of power and domination (Fairclough, 2003:29). Arguably, this approach lacks some degree of sophistication in taking sufficient account of the role of personal agency and the diversity of individuals within any broad social grouping.

Foucauldian discourse analysis

Foucault (1972) influenced the development of critical discourse theory in extending it beyond reference to language, to the notion of discourse as a social practice which constructs the 'object' of which it speaks;

'*I would like to show that discourse is not a slender surface of*

contact, or confrontation, between a reality and a language

(langue), the intrication of a lexicon and an experience; I

would like to show with precise examples that in analysing

discourses themselves, one sees the loosening of the

embrace, apparently so tight, of words and things, and the

emergence of a group of rules proper to discursive practice.

These rules define not the dumb existence of a reality, nor

the canonical use of vocabulary, but the ordering of objects'

(1972:54)

Through his early archaeologies and later genealogies, he carefully

deconstructed the accepted 'reality' of madness, female hysteria, sexual

deviance and criminality, which he claimed represented a function of

discourse at a particular historical moment in time. He called for a critical

approach which analysed how discourse constructs that of which it speaks,

and how the version presented of the 'object', for example, the 'madman' or

'hysterical woman', becomes 'the reality' to which the individual is subject.

His accounts of the power of discourse in creating 'normality' have influenced

the development of critical discourse theory and its application (Fairclough,

2003). This displacement of the centrality of the individual human as 'the

subject', which questions the power of individual agency and intention, is a

feature Foucault shared in common with the structuralists. However, he

moved beyond the structuralist position of critical discourse theory (Hall,

2006), and an emphasis on power exerted through societal structures, to

examining power at a micro level as constituted within discourse which

permeates all relationships. Foucault (1980) highlighted what he described as the 'power/knowledge/discourse triad' and how this operated to regulate behaviour, both of others and of the self. The regulation of behaviour includes regulation of others through technologies such as surveillance, but also regulation of the self through control of desires.

Foucault's work is valuable in focusing on the dynamics of relationships between individuals where relative positions of power may change according to context. This goes beyond a meta-narrative position (Giddens, 2006) where oppressive power relations are recognized as a product of structural inequality in society, to a post-structuralist position. Structuralism is limited by 'generalities' in that a hegemonic discourse of masculinity is assumed to oppress women in a patriarchical society. However, this may disguise the complexity of individuals and relationships within groups; for example, males who may be subject to other hegemonic discourses as a function of their social status, sexuality or ethnicity. Foucault's poststructuralist approach questions these broader categories in identifying power as not merely oppressing, but being productive in the resistance of dominance. Foucault (1980) draws attention to the ways in which the greater the attempt to control, the greater the opportunities to resist. For example, increasing medical surveillance of individual lifestyles and social habits may be resisted by patients tailoring their narratives to 'what the professional wants to hear' (Nettleton, 2000:158).

At the heart of much of the debate over 'freedom to act' is the question of personal agency versus structure. Although there are examples where those

with lower status may resist professional discourse, there is a danger in underplaying the effects of socialisation on personal agency. The socialisation process determines, in Foucault's (1980) own words, '*The status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true*' (p.131). Those accorded this status in society are most likely to have access to privileged knowledge forms through education, which enables them to employ hegemonic discourses, or resist the power of others. Bernstein (2000) identifies the disadvantaged position of children in schooling who may 'recognize' the discourse of 'official pedagogic practice' in school, but lack exposure to this type of discourse in the home which means that they are not able to 'realise' it and employ it convincingly (p.20). This consequently limits their access to opportunity for educational advancement. Sociological data which records educational attainment with reference to social class would add weight to this argument (Giddens, 2006), although of course there are many other material and economic factors which need to be considered. Bernstein's (2000) theories of discourse and knowledge structures do have a sound empirical basis in primary research which is lacking in that of Foucault.

Foucault has been criticized for application of 'universal theories', and for his lack of analysis in differentiating between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' forms and uses of power (Habermas, 1987). This latter criticism is echoed by Mc Nay (1994) who suggests that Foucault promotes an 'unregulated libertarianism' by failing to explain forms of the behaviour which might violate the rights of another and of underplaying the difficulties in resisting exertion of power through discourse (p.158). A Foucauldian critical discourse is of interest to the study where the participants are professionals with relatively

similar status, although there are hierarchies within and across professional

groups. This means that this form of analysis allows the opportunity to

consider the dynamics involved in exertion and resistance of competing

professional discourses. This approach is also appropriate given Foucault's

(1972) concern with construction of the 'object', and the centrality of the

object to activity theory. The 'object' in the latter is determined by the

'multiple voices' of the subject which come to shape it (Engeström, 2007),

and in the study it is the AP role which is being shaped by these voices. The

voice of the Assistant Practitioner however is absent from the study for

reasons which will be explained in chapter 8 and further debated in the

discussion in chapter 10.

Summary

This chapter has considered Foucauldian discourse analysis in the context of critical discourse theory where nuances in different approaches have been identified. The aim of critical discourse theory in exposing discursive strategies as a function of elites is not consistent with the aims of the study, which centres on a learning partnership where there is relative equality with respect to the professional nature of the group. A Foucauldian discourse analysis approach is more appropriate in exploring the productive nature of power in being both exerted and resisted through partnership working. This allows for a more sensitive consideration of the synergy between agency and structure than that accepted by traditional critical discourse analysis approaches. The nature of the 'object' has particular significance in activity theory, and so bringing a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach to the data offers the opportunity of new insights.

Chapter 7 Summary of Literature Review

The literature review has considered the wider context within which the learning partnership has developed, and critiqued the concept of 'partnership'. Although the public sector context of the study differs from the corporate organisations within which Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have conducted their empirical work, the knowledge management model has value for the study. The increasing marketisation of public services and education driven by policy changes from the 1980s onwards has blurred the boundary between the private and public sectors, and changed much of the ethos of the latter (see chapter 1). This is likely to be reflected in a closer alignment between the partnership context and the managerially driven contexts described by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). The authors highlight tacit knowledge and the potential for sharing this and making it explicit, this aspect in particular may bring insights into the knowledge creation process in this case. Their description of the conditions conducive to knowledge creation resonates with those identified by Huxham and Vangen (2007) as supporting collaborative advantage in partnerships. Understanding how to foster these conditions will inform future partnership working and sustainability. The data analysis will consider the extent to which these are reported as a feature by participants in the study, and the wider implications for professional practice.

The knowledge management model has been criticised in presenting knowledge conversion as a rather simplistic process. I have argued that some of this may be ascribed to interpretations which pay insufficient attention to the type of conditions and context described by Nonaka and

Takeuchi (1995). However, the proliferation of the model in the Information Technology (IT) literature represents a reductionist approach to it which is also reflected in the commodification of knowledge in wider society for capital gain. The potential for exploitation of the workforce is ignored in Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) account where power dynamics are absent. This has implications for the study where the outcome of the innovation is a new type of worker within healthcare settings whose role requires reconfiguration of the rest of the workforce; this may not be welcomed by all.

Engeström's model of activity theory is concerned with contradictions arising from 'historically accumulating structural tensions' (2008, p.205) which act as a stimulus to knowledge creation in collaborative working. Engeström (2008) highlights the questioning of existing practice as a first stage of knowledge creation which is overlooked in knowledge management. He points out that even if the goal of the activity is accepted as a 'given' from management, this will still need to be 'creatively reconstructed 'by the people involved in seeking it (p.18). Empirical evidence for this claim will be explored through the case study. The learning partnership has been posited as an interacting activity system situated within a socio-historical context, where divisions of labour are closely aligned to the professional groups involved as the 'subject' of the activity. Viewing the partnership through the lens of activity theory should allow greater analysis of the workforce beyond the rather homogenous group presented in the knowledge management model. A comparative analysis of the two models is outlined below;

Table 7.1   Comparison between the models

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Engeström)	Knowledge Management (N & T)
Concerned with generation of new knowledge within public and private sector	Concerned with innovation and knowledge creation within business context
Empirical research based on application of CHAT to problem solve within largely public sector, but also some private organisations	Empirical research based in business/industry
Expressed values based on socialist democratic principles – aims to change practice for the benefit of all (e.g. service users)	Implicit values based on the needs of a capitalist economy – aims to change practice for the benefit of the company, but recognises contribution of people at all levels
Concerned with social roles and divisions of labour within a socio-historical context. Contradictions between individual action and activity system stimulates expansive learning, thus creating new knowledge	Concerned with knowledge creation processes and optimal conditions for these. Factors include developing a shared vision alongside promoting individual autonomy to achieve this
Implicit within the theory is a view of distributed knowledge, although different forms of knowledge are not highlighted	Highlights importance of both tacit and explicit knowledge, with the role of tacit knowledge central to knowledge creation
Learning occurs through collectives (the subject) with a particular purpose in mind (the object), engaging with one another through mediating artefacts within a socio-cultural context. Contradictions which emerge are seen as central to the expansion of human learning.	Knowledge conversion process based on four stages- socialisation, externalisation, internalisation, combination, spiraling through different levels in the organisation
Different professional and organisational roles give rise to disturbances which are manifestations of inner contradictions, which potentially contribute to the opportunities for expansive learning	Organisational roles seen as synergistic rather than antagonistic

The table demonstrates a polarisation of political and cultural values between activity theory and knowledge management with the socialist ideology of the former, contrasted with the capitalist aims of the latter. Knowledge management appears to have a limited use in dealing with the different organisational and professional agendas relevant to the learning partnership, which determines the type of knowledge generated, and the role of power. By contrast, the 'multiple-voices' identified by Engeström (1987, 2001) have a stake in shaping the 'object' of the activity according to power relations and the rules, written and unwritten which govern these. On the surface Engeström (1999) recognises the potentially competing demands between individual needs and the goals of the collective;

'It becomes essential to determine how the individual determines what is relevant and what is not. This has to be seen in the broader context of how human beings in activity transform the world according to their needs and their needs according to the world' (1999: 29).

However, the critique of the model identifies some limitations in bringing a fully developed theoretical perspective to the relationship between the voices, and issues of power and control, internal and external to the activity system. The voice of the 'object' is often absent from activity theory which falls short of the democratic approach to change expected from its basis in a Marxist ideology. This concern has also been noted by sociologists such as Avis (2009) and Hartley (2007), but is now becoming acknowledged by proponents of activity theory (Edwards et al, 2010). The ways in which the 'object' is shaped, the absence of this voice from the activity system, and the

consequences have implications for the study in relation to the APs themselves.

This highlights the issue of whose voice is heard in the creation of knowledge in the partnership, how this is manifest and whose interests it serves. I have argued that critical discourse theory offers insights into this process which are not fully developed in Engeström's (1987, 2001, 2007) work. Understandings of discourse as a social practice which is imbued with power and knowledge are evident in Foucault's (1972) accounts of the knowledge/power/discourse triadic relationship. Employing a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach offers the possibility of exploring power relationships further as manifest through discourse in partnership working. The partnership history represents a cyclical process where new cycles of partnership working emerge as both internal and external changes impact upon it. This longitudinal aspect highlights the advantage of applying the model retrospectively, rather than as a methodological intervention tool as documented in chapter 5. Bringing a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach to activity theory allows new links to be made beyond the current body of work which should enable new insights to be developed. The implications for both the sustainability of the partnership and wider professional practice in education will be debated in chapter 10.

The literature review is not intended to present an exhaustive account of the key conceptual frameworks and issues arising, but to provide a coherent rationale for their use and potential limitations. A contextualised account of salient issues will be explicated as the findings are unravelled to ensure that

the link between the 'knowledge', 'the knower' and 'the context' is clear in the integration of theory and practice. This has been noted in the epistemological debate on what constitutes as 'knowledge' as distinct from 'information' (chapter 3). The degree, to which the conceptual frameworks considered in the literature review are appropriate in answering the research questions, is dependent upon a robust and reflexive methodological approach to the study which is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 8 Methodological appoach

Introduction

The enquiry is located within an interpretive research paradigm which has implications for the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning this. A case study approach is employed which utilises the tools of interviewing and a focus group for data collection, in keeping with qualitative enquiry. The study aims to adopt a reflexive approach, acknowledging the sensitivities and dynamics of being 'an inside researcher'. Burgess et al (2006) describe reflexivity as;

> *'the conscious revelation of the role of beliefs and values held by a researcher in the selection of a research methodology for knowledge generation and its production as a research account'* (p.88).

The extent to which my own beliefs and values impact upon the research setting and interpretation of the findings will be explored, drawing on Hellawell's (2006) continuum concept of 'insider-outsider' research. Implicit within these is the issue of power relationships and dynamics within the research setting, and consequent ethical issues. 'Insider research' brings particular challenges in separating the personal from the professional, indeed renders it impossible, and so significant critical awareness of the researcher's voice is required. Interpretation of the findings will involve thematic analysis which explores partnership working as a process of knowledge creation, supplemented by a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach to explore how

87

issues of power impact upon this as revealed by the different voices. I am aware of research as a social practice imbued with power and discourse which needs to be conducted sensitively and rigorously. The value is consequently dependent on conducting the enquiry and analysing the findings in a way which others judge ethical and plausible, and which contributes to educational theory and practice. These issues are debated throughout this chapter.

Interpretive enquiry

A qualitative case study approach located with an 'interpretivist paradigm' has been selected as appropriate to analysing the meaning of behaviour within a natural, rather than a contrived, setting. Bryman suggests that 'interpretivism' is derived from the hermeneutic tradition involving development of theory and understanding of human action in context (2004: 13). This research approach is appropriate to the study which seeks to bring a critical perspective to partnership working in the context of working life, explored from the viewpoint of participants who have lived through the experience. My interpretation is acknowledged as subjective, being contingent upon my own beliefs, values and experience. This contrasts with a positivist approach, which seeks to present 'objective' facts, separate from the people who generate these through research. The major difference between these paradigms lies in the underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions. 'Positivism' is associated with testing theory through development of hypotheses and drawing conclusions from 'objective' evaluation of the evidence (Bryman, 2004). The value of the concept of

'objectivity' in research is debated by Hammersely (2003) who rejects a rationalist view of knowledge, asserting that the researcher is always part of the process. Interpretive approaches explicitly locate the researcher within the process, thereby allowing evaluation of the conclusions and claims in the light of the researcher's perspective. Positioning the researcher clearly in the study is valuable if done with significant critical awareness and truthfulness, as will be discussed in relation to 'insider research'.

A qualitative methodology is clearly desirable in this case, and initially I considered 'action research' as a possible method of enquiry, appropriate to the research questions being investigated. As an interventionist approach with the aim of improving practice (Bryman, 2004), action research would in principle have the potential to identify and implement ways of improving partnership working. The idea of a 'participatory action research' approach involving collaboration of key partners as co-researchers appealed to me on the basis of its democratic aims (Kemmis, 2003). However, the complexity of the partnership, and ongoing changes in policy, personnel and working practices rendered this prohibitive. The impact of these changes would be difficult to disentangle from those resulting from action research intervention. The 'case study' approach seemed preferable in allowing exploration and evolution of the partnership through the eyes of those involved, and interpreting this from the viewpoint of an 'inside researcher' who can formulate useful conclusions for this partnership and wider professional practice.

Case study research

There is no single agreed definition of a 'case study' approach; different authors categorise these differently, most commonly within an interpretivist paradigm, but not exclusively so. Bassey (1999) identifies four main types of educational case study research; *theoretical* (theory-seeking and theory-testing), *story-telling and picture drawing, evaluative* and *action research,* the latter three being located with an interpretive paradigm. By contrast, Yin (2003) describes *exploratory* and *explanatory* case studies which tend to be located within a positivist paradigm. The case study in question most closely resembles Bassey's (1999) '*story telling and picture drawing'* category due to the level of description involved, but categorisation involves generalisation and so boundaries between categories are blurred. Sturman (1994) provides a useful definition of case study investigation as an in-depth enquiry of a whole system of inter-dependent parts;

> *'The distinguishing feature of case study is the belief that*
>
> *human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or*
>
> *integrity and are not simply a loose connection of traits. As a*
>
> *consequence of this belief, case study researchers hold that*
>
> *to understand a case, to explain why things happen as they*
>
> *do, and to generalise or predict from a single example*
>
> *requires in depth investigation of the interdependencies of*
>
> *the parts and of the patterns that emerge'* (Sturman,1994:
>
> 61).

This is a useful definition of the study in question, the case being the learning partnership and the people involved. The participants include SHA project managers, the Champions as the employers from healthcare settings, and the tutors and practice trainers who deliver the education and support workplace learning (Appendix 4). These different actors are mutually dependent in partnership working and the consequent development of the AP role. The case is however, 'socially constructed'; boundaries have had to be drawn in deciding who to include, and by implication exclude, and the time period allowed for the study. The partnership clearly has a life of its own outside of this, and will continue to evolve, as evident from changes which have occurred during the research process. Developing an understanding of how to maintain effective working relationship is crucial to the belief that the findings will be of benefit in sustaining the partnership, and to the APs themselves.

The inclusion or exclusion of potential participants is contingent on the research questions and the centrality of potential participants in gaining insights into these. The decision to exclude students is significant, but can be justified on the basis that they have not been involved in the decision making processes, and have little awareness of the evolution of the partnership itself. They are involved as learners for a specified period and are not party to 'behind the scenes' debates. The results of decision making within the partnership, and privileging of certain types of knowledge impact upon them, but the mechanism by which this happens is not transparent. The literature review has identified the AP role as the 'object' of the activity in relation to the activity theory framework. I have reflected on the absence of

the AP 'voice' and consequently identified the desirability of research involving the APs as a future development, as will be discussed in chapter 10.

Insider research

Having been involved in the establishment and evolution of the partnership from the outset as programme leader of the Fd, I began the study as an 'inside insider'. This brought the benefit of access, and of prior knowledge of individual backgrounds and areas of expertise. This has allowed purposive sampling of participants taking account of gender, age and length of time of involvement in the partnership, as well as reflecting the different healthcare settings. Purposive sampling in this way should provide representative data which is credible to users (Hammersley, 2003). While this 'insider' knowledge has been invaluable, there are inherent drawbacks in having a high degree of familiarity with the research setting. According to Hellawell (2006), 'ideally, the researcher should be both inside and outside of the research' (p.487). His illuminating debate contends that there is no dichotomy between the two positions, but rather researchers are likely to oscillate on a continuum between them. The place on the continuum depends on multiple factors which may affect the degree of empathy and understanding employed by the researcher. From a phenomenological perspective, no researcher can ever be 'outside' of the case they are studying. Husserl (cited in Solomon, 2005) would contend that we can only experience the world starting from the point of our own consciousness and that therefore there is no 'outside' reality. I would agree with this

epistemological perspective in that knowledge developed from an understanding of a case is always intertwined with the 'knower', and therefore subject to the individual's pre-existing thoughts, beliefs and understandings.

In relation to the continuum concept, I started at the more extreme end as an insider, although having moved post during through the study, I am now more detached. My role within the research has involved 'multiple identities' as a researcher, a colleague, a manager, a health professional, an academic, and an EDD research student. The advantages of being an 'inside researcher' have been in gaining access to participants with whom I have established relationships involving a degree of trust and mutual understanding. I know the history and development of the programme, and am able to 'switch' identity to 'colleague' or 'health professional' to participate in the discourse as required. Bernstein's (2000) rules of discourse suggest that an agent may 'recognise' a power relation through discourse, but if they are unable to 'realise' that discourse, that is, to key in and contribute to it, they feel marginalised. I have the 'recognition' and 'realisation' rule (Bernstein, 2000) to participate as an equal in both academic and healthcare discourse which has helped to put participants at ease and gain trust.

The disadvantages of such 'insiderness' lie in having preconceptions about individuals' views, making assumptions about motives, and in possibly missing clues. Similarly, participants have brought multiple identities to the research process. In consenting to be interviewed they have accepted the role of participant, responding to questions, picking up cues on when to

expand on an answer, and so on. Sometimes they have responded from a professional perspective congruent with their role as 'Champion' or 'Practice Trainer' for example. At other times more personal views seemed forthcoming, often indicated by a cue such as 'in my opinion', or by less formal speech. The two are not exclusive, and the identity of any individual is complex, and shaped though a number of competing discourses. A participant with a professional background as a 'nurse' for example, may subscribe to a professional discourse of empowerment of patients, but may enter into a personal discussion with friends about 'abuse' of services by certain categories of patient. This is likely to depend upon what is at stake in the encounter, and the identity they wish to project at that time (Wetherell et al, 2006). However, the question of motive is a moot one in critical discourse theory where 'identity' may not be 'chosen', but emerges as a result of the discourse available and how this is co-constructed (Fairclough, 2003). This has implications for the interview encounter where the identity evoked may be as a subordinate wishing to respond to me as a manager, or as a participant in response to my role as a more 'neutral' researcher. Trying to maintain a fairly neutral demeanor during data collection, not overtly agreeing or disagreeing, and avoiding 'leading' participants, is more likely to achieve the latter.

Questions of identity of both interviewer and participants indicate the complexity of the process and the skill involved in negotiating the interview terrain. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) refer to 'learning the craft' of qualitative interviewing (p.xv) through identifying the challenges in developing effective skills in listening and interpreting carefully. They draw on Lave and Wenger

94

(1991) in suggesting that these skills are best developed through working alongside and learning from experienced researchers, gradually becoming 'masters' of the craft. Fuller and Unwin (2010) identify research apprenticeship in universities as an uncertain position given dependence on research funding and short-term contracts, which means that apprentices sometimes become locked into 'peripheral participant status'. I am fortunate in having a more secure position where I have benefitted throughout the study period from the support of my supervisor and more experienced work colleagues. This has encouraged me to adopt an analytical and reflexive approach to data collection and analysis, and I would hope to justify this through the discussion. I do acknowledge that, from a post-structuralist viewpoint, my interpretation is one among a number of possibilities subject to critique by others.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are of paramount importance and the BERA (1992) guidelines have been adhered to. Formal approval for the study has been given from both the University Ethics Committee and from the Northwest NHS Research Ethics Committee. Participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 2) prior to the study and asked to return it if they wished to take part. A consent form was then given to volunteers to allow conducting and recording of the interviews, and the use of information from the focus group (Appendix 3). Responses are not attributed to individuals, but if the findings enter the public domain, by the nature of the case it is possible that links may be made to individuals or organisations.

Participants have been made aware of this possibility when giving their consent, and informed that complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Ethical considerations go beyond the procedures and extend to behaving in a moral way according to the principles of respect for persons, respect for truth and respect for democracy (Bassey, 1999). Inevitably however, there is a degree of interpretation involved in applying these principles which is understood by individuals according to their own belief system. Bryman (2004) suggests that different stances may be adopted on these issues depending on the researcher's own position. As an inside researcher, I have been acutely conscious throughout the research journey of the potential effects of the research process on future relationships, personal and professional, and of my own motives. The latter are closely linked to my own personal and professional development, but also from a genuine desire to sustain the future of the partnership, and to contribute to wider professional practice knowledge. I am aware that through the research journey I have developed a more critical stance on power relationships and educational policy and practice, aspects of which may not be welcomed by all participants if the findings are published. This has made me aware of the need to reflect continually and honestly on my own motives, actions and effects, in order to adopt a justified ethical position. I am aware that participants have given freely of their time, and am hopeful that the findings will of value to them and to the partnership, even if they disagree with aspects of the interpretation.

Data collection

The following two data collection methods have been employed:

- Semi-structured interviews with key individuals involved in the partnership, exploring their experiences of knowledge creation in the development of the programme

- A focus group to stimulate further reflection and allow exploration of naturally occurring discourse, when participants meet together. This is intended to bring further insights to the interview data.

Primary data has been gathered from interviews with a purposive sample of people involved in the planning and delivery of the programme from its inception. This makes sixteen interviews including three involving university tutors, three SHA Project Managers, four NHS managers and six practice trainers. (Appendix 4). Practice trainers work closely with tutors but support the students in practice through co-ordinating the work-based learning elements of the programme. The respective numbers of interviewees is proportional to the numbers of people involved in the stakeholder groups.

The sample was also representative in that participants came from a range of primary and secondary healthcare and social care settings across Greater Manchester. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach to allow some constraint to the topics explored to prevent digression (Bryman, 2004). The interview process aimed to probe

individuals' understanding of the innovation processes and the collaboration across the partnership. The interviews lasted between sixty and ninety minutes to allow in-depth exploration and discussion of issues, followed up by a focus group of two hours involving a sample of participants (Appendix 4). Both the interviews and focus group were recorded and transcribed as will be explained in chapter 9.

A longitudinal independent evaluation of the education and training of the Assistant Practitioners was conducted over a five year period (Benson and Smith, 2007). This focused on the training of the APs and the embedding of the new role in practice, and the findings were fed back iteratively into the partnership working. The report has not formed a key element of the study, but has provided some useful background context in guiding research questions and identifying major changes. I am aware that the evaluation may have influenced the views of participants, but this has been taken into account by highlighting where appropriate in the findings.

It may have been possible to utlise documentary evidence in the study including the evaluation report and the minutes of the regular partnership meetings. This would have required consideration of the criteria for inclusion of such material in the study such the purpose for which the document was produced, its authenticity, freedom from bias, how representative it mght be, and whether it could be corroborated against other evidence (Bryman, 2004). This secondary data may have been of interest had these criteria been fully met, especially had I been an 'outsider' in the process. However, given the limited length of the thesis, and the fact that I had such priviledged 'insider'

access to rich sources of primary data, the documentary evidence was not selected for analysis. It may also have been possible to record and transcribe the meetings as they occurred, and analyse this as data. However, my role in attending the meetings was as university representative for the Fd programme rather than as a researcher. Trying to perform both roles simultaneously would have caused some degree of role conflict and may have impacted on my relationship of trust with participants. I was explicit and open when in the role of researcher during the interviews and the focus group in a way which was clearly separate from my Fd programe role.

Interviews and interviewing

A pilot study interview was conducted and consequently the interview schedule was refined to align the stimulus questions more closely to the main research questions. As explained, a purposive sampling approach has been adopted, but inevitably there have been some pragmatic choices involved in timing of interviews due to availability of key participants. The data analysis process has been iterative which has allowed reflection on emerging findings, informed future interviews, and consequently improved my interview technique. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) draw upon the five stage model of Dreyfus and Dreyfus in mapping the development of researcher expertise from novice to expert level. Although not a complete novice at the outset, through supervision and reflection I have developed competence as the study has progressed. I deliberately planned to conduct interviews with key participants later in the study on the basis that by that time I would have gained sufficient experience and confidence to work in a more intuitive way,

and this paid off. This allowed probing of key participants on sensitive issues, such as the reduction in SHA funding, which impact on sustainability, as will be discussed in the findings.

The techniques of qualitative interviewing may involve taking a stance which challenges the assertions of the participant through questioning, or of questioning and active listening which involves a more empathetic approach. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) explore these positions drawing on the logical dialectic argument which Plato uses through his writings as Socrates with regard to the former, and the therapeutic interview characteristic of psychotherapeutic counselling in relation to the latter. According to the authors, the logical dialectic argument is directed towards eliciting *episteme*, knowledge validated through dialectic questioning, in other words, the understanding of knowledge as 'justified true belief'. Clearly, this has to be carried out from a very sensitive perspective where the interviewer is monitoring the responses and is alert for changes in body language which may signal discomfort with the questions and reluctance to answer. This is in contrast with eliciting the *doxa,* the personal beliefs, desires and opinions which may be revealed through a therapeutic approach, but which are unsubstantiated. This type of interview is typical of a 'narrative enquiry' approach (Bryman, 2004). I felt that neither of these was ideal in this study, and so I tried to adopt an intermediate position between the two. The type of knowledge produced and its value to the study will be further explored in relation to discourse analysis (chapter 9).

Focus group

The focus group was held to investigate issues of power in more detail as these had emerged as a significant feature of relationships in the interviews. The research process may be viewed as an attempt to 'manage knowledge' in the sense of encouraging individual interviewees to reflect on their experiences, and make explicit what they may feel, and know intuitively. Through the process of group interrogation, or 'productive enquiry', there is the opportunity for deeper reflection and joint construction of meaning to be stimulated (Cook and Brown, 2002:88). Consequently there is potential for new knowledge generation in making the tacit explicit, which may be important for sustaining the partnership. The focus group represented a reconstruction of 'normal' partnership working as far as possible given the contrived nature of the research setting, as will be further elaborated in the data analysis. Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest more than one focus group should be held in order to allow participants time to relax with one another, and to explore fully the topic in depth. This was not feasible within the time constraints of the study and the availability of participants. Furthermore, as the purpose was to capture partnership working as revealed through discourse, a further group would be unlikely to reveal any substantially new findings.

Many authors discuss the relative power of the facilitator in relation to the group (Bryman, 2004; Parker and Tritter, 2006), and this is clearly important to consider here. At the beginning of the study this was of particular concern as I had management responsibility for the tutors and practice trainers

involved in the Fd as discussed. By the time the focus group was conducted, I had moved to another university which reduced some of the potential tensions around power dynamics. I felt that the participants were under less pressure to maintain good relationships, so were more able to refuse to take part in the focus group and could be more open in their responses. Fortunately, the move to a new post was for positive reasons which enabled me to maintain harmonious relationships with colleagues, and subsequently participants seemed very willing to continue to support my research.

The issue of power dynamics between participants was still of concern in the focus group and this area seems more neglected in the literature. Krueger and Casey (2000) do highlight this aspect, but only to comment on dealing with potentially dominant individuals. Bryman (2004) also notes the lack of attention paid to power dynamics in the interaction between focus group participants. My focus group included members of staff who work at different levels within healthcare settings, the hierarchical nature of which means that the less powerful practice trainers could feel inhibited in airing their views in the presence of more senior managers, the champions. It may have been useful to conduct a separate focus group for practice trainers, but this would have prevented the opportunity for them to share views with the wider group. A compromise was made by inviting a greater number of practice trainers relative to other participant groups to ensure that mutual support was provided. The effectiveness of this strategy in allowing the practice trainers an 'equal voice' in the focus group will be discussed in the reflection.

Conducting the focus group

A proportionally representative sample of participants was selected for the focus group as a follow-up to the interviews. The group comprised one SHA project manager, two champions (one senior manager from a PCT and one senior manager from social care), three practice trainers (one from each of a hospital Trust, PCT and social care organisation), and two tutors (appendix 4). Six participants were able to attend on the day with two sending apologies just beforehand which meant that although all groups were represented, there was slightly greater representation from social care in comparison to health, than planned. The social care representatives had been involved throughout the partnership in working closely with health organisations in providing services. This probably resulted in more emphasis in the discussion around the perceived dominance of health discourse, and of issues of professional culture than may otherwise have happened (see chapter 9). In all other respects, the make-up of the focus group reflected that of the partnership. In reporting the findings all participants are referred to as 'she' for the sake of anonymity and have been given female names to avoid identification by role and gender, given that there are relatively few males involved. The focus group began with a brief overview of the findings from the interviews to provide a context for the discussion, and to highlight areas that I wished to discuss further. The group acknowledged the veracity of the account provided and were able to pick up on points of particular interest which were followed up in the focus group.

Trustworthiness of the findings

Lincoln and Guba (2000) refer to 'respect for truth' in the research process to ensure that the findings may be judged to be authentic. The approach taken to this qualitative enquiry is within a postmodern paradigm (Bryman, 2004), where I have declared my own position within the research, and my motivations. I have argued that I subscribe to a critical discourse theory viewpoint where knowledge claims are not 'objective truth' but created through discourse, and may be open to different interpretations. I recognise a dilemma in adopting an academic discourse which has a claim to authoritative knowledge, and in so doing appeals as convincing to the reader. However, adopting a more 'everyday' discourse would convey tacit knowledge that the text lacks authority, and in so doing undermine my arguments. It seems to me that a postmodern solution lies in framing interpretation within an academic discourse whilst making reference to personal beliefs, feelings and observations where appropriate. By so doing I intend to provide findings which are perceived as truthful and authentic to the reader.

Transferability

The case study has many unique features but there is potential for transferability to other contexts on a case by case basis, and there are certainly implications for wider professional practice. Partnership working across the healthcare and education sectors is a common feature of Fds and other professional education provision. In addition, the linking of activity

theory with a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach is a unique feature which provides a further contribution to this influential model. Hammersley (2003) and others question the extent to which policy is informed by the available research evidence and how this impacts on practice. The Fd in the case study exists as a direct result of education policy and health policy and is, in many respects, an example of good practice which is worthy of dissemination. There are issues raised about the value of Fds when these are 'exchanged', either for higher level qualifications or in the job market. This has consequences for higher education institutions and students which should be of interest to policy makers and the wider community as will be debated in chapter 10.

Chapter 9 Analysing the Findings

Introduction

This chapter will firstly present the findings from the interviews, analysing them through a thematic approach, and subsequently employing Foucauldian discourse analysis to the focus group. The process involved in developing themes is explained and justified, and this thematic analysis is used in interpretation of the interview findings. Links are made to the conceptual frameworks underpinning the study and to the wider literature. As explained previously, the purpose of the focus group was to investigate the case more fully, and to consider in particular the work done by discourse beyond that illuminated by the two models of knowledge creation. My position as an 'inside researcher' has been described, and the findings are analysed from this ontological perspective. I have indicated where I perceive limitations to the evidence and where alternative interpretations may be considered by others.

The data analysis process

The research process has involved collecting data from the 16 participants through semi-structured interviews lasting 60 to 90 minutes each, followed by a focus group of 2 hours. The Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 2), consent form (Appendix 3), a guide to participant representation in interviews and the focus group (Appendix 4), and the interview schedule (Appendix 5) are attached. Thematic analysis has been employed to explore the findings

through an iterative process involving coding the data in the light of the conceptual frameworks underpinning the study. The interviews were transcribed verbatim with hesitations and pauses and particular emphasis on words noted. I personally transcribed the first three interviews which helped me to understand the process and to refine the format. The remaining interviews and focus group were transcribed by a third party whom I briefed, using my own sample as an exemplar. The transcriptions were read through while listening again to the recordings with additional observations being noted including filling in gaps, if possible, where the transcriber had indicated difficulty in interpretation. The field notes were of some help here. I also noted some additional features including word repetitions, marked changes in tone of voice, and obvious hesitations. The transcribing did not involve close attention to linguistic detail as there was no intention of conducting linguistic analysis at the micro level. The process was helpful in developing familiarity with the data and identifying certain 'tacit' clues not evident from the transcription. The interview and focus group participants have all been given female pseudonyms for the purposes of anonymity as explained in chapter 8.

Thematic analysis

The selection of themes evolved as the emphasis on aspects of partnership working and the outcomes of this developed during the interview process. In the first interviews I spent proportionally more time on the early questions in the interview schedule, prompting participants on these and asking follow-up questions. During the initial analysis, it became apparent that I was gathering considerable data on the establishment of the partnership, the role

of different stakeholders, barriers to partnership working, and examples of how difficulties had been overcome. Much of this seemed congruent with knowledge creation as a process of collaboration where people with different types of expertise come together to create something new, through negotiation, conflict and compromise. Consequently, it was helpful in providing answers to RQ1 but less so to RQ2. As saturation point was reached on these issues, I continued to cover all questions in the schedule but concentrated more on prompting and asking follow-up questions on the latter parts of the schedule relating to outcomes and the sustainability of the partnership. In this way saturation point was reached in providing evidence for both RQs.

The data gathered in the initial stages seemed to resonate with the processes of knowledge creation described in the models underpinning the study, which led me to use the models as a starting point for the themes (Appendix 6). This gave me confidence that the models were useful in analysing how knowledge generation and dissemination seemed intrinsic to the process of partnership working. There was an element of deduction in the sense of 'testing out' the models by looking for evidence in this process of the stages of knowledge creation described by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) in knowledge management , and by Engeström (1987, 2001) in activity theory. In the light of feedback and reflection, I realised that it is important to use participants' voices as the starting point. This is a more honest approach to interpretive research which avoids tailoring the evidence to 'fit' the theory underpinning the study. Giving voice to the participants primarily, identifying themes, and then relating these back to the conceptual frameworks in the

literature review provides a more authentic approach to data analysis (Burgess et al, 2006).

As a consequence, I returned to the interviews and identified eight possible themes, paying close attention to words and phrases which seemed to resonate with all participants. The themes which recurred were **vision, learning together, barriers and bridges, relationships, compromise, change, outcomes and sustainability.** A sample of annotated interview transcript illustrates this current coding system (Appendix 7). I mapped all of the interviews against each of the themes and summarised the ones which emerged most strongly in each participant group. Bassey (1999) identifies thematic coding as a valid analytical tool where it is appropriate to make comparisons between groups of participants in a study. The themes of vision, barriers and bridges, relationships, outcomes and sustainability emerged as the most important across all interviews and all groups. A sample of the mapping process is illustrated using the theme barriers and bridges (Appendix 8). 'Vision' was a particularly strong theme in data gathered from the SHA and the Champion participants but less so from practice trainers, whilst only one tutor used the word 'vision'. As will be argued, this may have been due to the former two groups being more familiar with a managerial discourse, with evidence of this gradually extending to others in the partnership. Relationships also emerged as a particularly strong theme in data from the Champions, and this seemed to encompass ideas on how learning together happened, with some revelation of power dynamics in the process. Discussion of change arose in relation to the outcomes of partnership working and longer-term sustainability and so has

been included in that theme. Similarly, compromise was implicit in most of the discussion around relationships, and so again did not seem to warrant a separate theme. Outcomes and sustainability were intrinsically linked and so it seemed sensible to deal with these together. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe collapsing themes as a normal part of coding and categorizing, and therefore through this process four themes were eventually chosen;

1. **Vision**
2. **Relationships**
3. **Barriers and Bridges**
4. **Outcomes and Sustainability**

These themes will be considered in the light of the interview data with links made to the conceptual frameworks underpinning the study, and conclusions drawn in the later discussion. The first three themes are particularly relevant to RQ1 and the last one to RQ2, but there is a degree of overlap. This will become clear as the themes are considered in turn and links are made to the research questions, a reminder of which is provided below;

1. *In what ways might partnership working in the study be viewed as a process of knowledge creation and transformation?*

    - *Does this have features in common with knowledge management as proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)?*

    - *Does this have features in common with other models of knowledge creation and expansion such as activity theory (Engeström, 1987, 2001)?*

2. *What value might the models of knowledge creation have for the learning*
partnership?

- *Are there particular features of the partnership and its context*

  which have influenced the knowledge creation process?

- *How might this impact on the long-term sustainability of the*

  partnership?

1. Vision

Early in the interview participants were asked to describe the type of

knowledge and expertise different stakeholders bring to the partnership. The

responses to this question tended to be expressed in terms of stakeholders,

most often the SHA, bringing 'their vision' or 'a vision' of the AP role. In the

interviews I understood this as participants trying to explain how those

involved had a sort of mental picture of what the AP role might look like,

although it was at that time an abstract concept. This mental picture was

often referred to in a collective sense, rather than as an individual 'vision'.

For example, one of the practice trainers (PT) suggested that 'the *PCT had a*

quite a good kind of vision of what they kind of wanted (PT, Ann). Here, she

is referring to the staff in her PCT having particular ideas in mind of how they

might use the APs in practice. The phrasing of this as a '*kind of vision'*

implies that the ideas are not yet fully formed. The seemingly abstract nature

of the role at that point is expressed more strongly by others when they

describe the AP in terms of unknown entity. For example, another practice

trainer stated that, '*At the beginning nobody knew what it was*' (PT, Olivia)

111

and another said, *'Nobody had a clue'* (PT, Barbara). These comments may have been a reflection of personal perspectives given that the practice trainers were not in post until a few months after the partnership was established, and were not party to strategic level discussions. Certainly, different perspectives on this emerged from other participants as exemplified by this Champion who refers to a *'vision'* in her Trust;

> *'I think we had a vision of how it would fit in practice and*
>
> *what the clinical setting was all about and how it would work*
>
> *and the educational establishment was all around, you know,*
>
> *it had still a vision of the role as erm you know as somebody*
>
> *who was going to gain those skills and competencies through*
>
> *the Fd'* (Champion, Frances)

She suggests here that the people involved in the early days of the partnership could not explicitly identify what an AP would look like, but had a mental picture which could partly be conveyed to others. She describes the clinical practitioners as having some picture of how an AP role would fit into the workplace. She takes an authoritative position in speaking on behalf of others, but presumably feels justified as the lead for the project in her Trust. She suggests that the *'vision'* from the university (*the educational establishment*) may have been more concerned with developing the Fd qualification. In fact, by the time the partnership was established, the framework for the Fd had already been developed beyond a 'vision'. The development of the Fd began in Autumn 2001 through the establishment of a consortium of university, colleges and employer representatives led by

myself. The partnership with the SHA and health and social care organisations was not established until April 2002, by which time the broad framework curriculum was written. The partnership structure from this time onwards is illustrated in Appendix 1. Many of the stakeholders did not appreciate this, partly because their understanding of university curricula and processes was vague, and partly because the SHA were keen to emphasise that employers could have significant control over the design of the provision. This is indicated by the project director during an interview question about her early experience of establishing the partnership;

'I definitely thought, whatever role it was, because at that time we hadn't defined an assistant practitioner, that we wanted a proper education to underpinning it, not learning by serendipity er.....there was a new education course on the block called the Foundation degree which er quite surprised me, I didn't know what it was er and when I read about it I thought oh this sounds spot on, about par for the course, employer-led ooo great a mixture of higher education, higher education and practice' (SHA, Claire)

The participant clearly valued the involvement of higher education and perceived that this gave credibility in providing a *'proper education'*. She reflects on the 'newness' of Fds at the time and compares the concept of undertaking this qualification to *'learning by serendipity'*. She may have been referring to 'on the job training' typified by NVQ provision which would have been the alternative qualification for support level healthcare staff. The

participant sounds almost dismissive of this type of provision, but in fact the

SHA insisted on students undertaking the NVQ level 3 alongside the Fd in

the early cohorts. She also highlights the concept of the Fd as being

'*employer-led*', suggesting that although the higher education input is valued,

the role of the university is in responding to employers, not in leading the

development. This is significant in considering who determines 'the vision'

for the curriculum, as well as for the AP role which she indicates is yet to be

developed. Later in the interview she made a somewhat surprising

comment;

> '*as the role was being developed we wrote the education*
>
> *which was not always going to be the best way to do it but*
>
> *we did*' (SHA, Claire)

As previously stated, by the time the partnership was formed the draft of the

Fd curriculum had in fact already been developed, although the curriculum

continued to evolve as a result of the partnership working.

Vision in relation to knowledge management

References to the '*vision*' resonate with tacit knowledge in the way that

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) describe it as a mental model or construct

which is hard, but not impossible to convey. It is striking that the discussion of

'the vision' arose in response to a question about knowledge and expertise,

and that I did not use the word 'vision' during the interviews. The

independent use of it by participants suggests that this is a term which has

entered the common language of the partnership. It is also a term used by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) as a pre-requisite of the knowledge creation process in corporate organisations;

> '*The most critical element of corporate strategy is to conceptualise a vision about what kind of knowledge should be developed'* (1995: 74)

This partnership is clearly not operating within a corporate environment, but there are parallels suggested by the interview data which will be discussed later. A further example of a '*vision*' being described in response to a question about knowledge and expertise is provided by another SHA participant;

> '*there is erm a vision, a strategic health vision, that is about what that model was gonna look like and absolutely driven by X [SHA project director] and there was almost a bit of a well this is what it looks like and you can come along but that's where we are going'* (SHA, Megan)

The aligning of 'knowledge and expertise' with the idea of the SHA having a '*strategic health vision'* seems to have been fundamental in establishing the partnership goals. The qualification of the vision with '*health*' indicates a particular emphasis in the partnership which is, in principle, across health and social care. This was perceived as problematic by some stakeholders;

'I think for me personally, it was difficult erm initially as

project champion because of the clear focus on health and

actually my understanding of a lot of the terminology, erm,

my understanding of a lot of the models erm was limited and

I often worried that the amount of times I questioned things

and asked about things and actually reinforced the social

aspect of it was beginning to annoy colleagues' (Champion,

Janice)

The Champion refers to initial difficulties with the *'clear focus on health'* and

the marginalization of the social care agenda, but as a senior manager she

reported that she *'reinforced the social aspect of it'*. This indicates that within

the Champion's group (Appendix 1), which was responsible for steering the

introduction of APs at a strategic level, there were differences in the extent to

which individuals felt able to 'buy into' the vision. In asserting her position

she was questioning and challenging practice, although clearly concerned

about antagonising others. The stage of interrogating existing practice as an

initial stage of knowledge creation is absent from Nonaka and Takeuchi's

(1995) model, but is highlighted by Engeström (1987, 2001).

The SHA participant in the earlier quote implies that explicit knowledge about

the AP model is being shared in *'this is what it looks like'* (SHA, Megan) but

the earlier contribution by the project director (SHA, Claire) reveals that the

plan was not explicit. Rather than conveying a blueprint for the development

of the AP, the statement appears to convey a symbol of SHA authority.

Conveying knowledge about power and authority in this way suggests that

the individual tacit knowledge (of the SHA project director) is being

transmitted/shared with the stakeholder group to become collective tacit

knowledge. The communication of tacit knowledge through shared

experience to produce collective 'sympathised' knowledge resonates with the

process of **socialisation** (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995). This is the first stage

identified in the knowledge management model and when this is considered

together with the discourse of the 'vision', it seems likely that it is the SHA

vision which is being shared with partners. This resonates with Nonaka and

Takeuchi's (1995) idea of the creation of a corporate vision with a middle

management layer central to achieving this;

> 'Top management creates a vision or a dream, where middle
>
> management develops more concrete concepts that front line
>
> employees can implement and understand' (1995:129)

In the light of this, the partnership appears as a hierarchical structure where

the SHA represent 'top management' who lead the vision, with the

Champions having a 'middle management role' in seeking to achieve it.

Evidence of this is indicated by the SHA project director;

> 'We had the champions in the trust so we trained them, er we
>
> gave them some training and 'time out' about their role as
>
> champions, about communicating what we were about in
>
> their trust, about getting the ward sisters or department leads
>
> on board' (SHA, Claire)

117

It is likely that the *'training'* and *'communicating what we were about'* involved communicating the SHA vision for the AP role, and the expectations of the Champions to disseminate this successfully in their respective organisations[2]. The challenge of introducing the role in each Trust began with a series of 'Away Days' led by the Champion and facilitated by the SHA;

'if I think of running those Away Days the first time we did

them erm that was a real sort of leap into the dark because

we knew that the people we were inviting weren't even you

know for it and we were going to have to persuade them to

think about this role and bits of their job that they should give

up and bits of somebody else's job that they could take on'

(Champion, Frances)

The Champion reflects some anxiety in taking on this project with her reference to the *'leap into the dark'* when running the 'Away Days' which were designed to explore where the AP role might fit within the existing workforce structure, with consequent remodelling of others' roles. The Champion appears to be trying to realise the SHA vision in a concrete way by persuading other people to alter their job roles in making space for the new AP role when she refers to *'bits of their job that they should give up and bits of somebody else's job that they could take on'*. She notes the potential opposition to this in *'we were going to have to persuade them'*. Some of this persuasion may have involved 'buying in' to the corporate vision as clearly

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[2] Organisation is used as a generic term to cover the three types of large public sector organisations involved in the partnership, namely Acute Hospital Trusts, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Social Service Organisations.

participants in the 'Away Day' will have had different motivations depending on their role and level in the organisation. Nonaka and Takeuchi state that knowledge creation requires that 'the personal commitment of the employees and their identity with the company and its mission become indispensable' (1995: 10). This assumes the possibility of total commitment to the organisation which takes little account of differences in role, power and perspective, and how these may fluctuate.

The 'Away Day' appears to have functioned as a means of revealing tacit knowledge about the AP role in a more explicit way through engaging the workforce teams in a dialogue about the nature of it. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) refer to making tacit knowledge more explicit as the **externalisation** stage of knowledge creation. The authors emphasise the role of metaphor and analogy in making tacit knowledge explicit, and there is some evidence of this from a practice trainer;

'I mean at the beginning people always used to equate it to the SEN [State Enrolled Nurse] role which we would always say "no it's not because that's only nursing" but at least if people start off with a bit of an idea at least you are starting something and you can say "well it's a bit like that but not wholly there's more to it than that" " so that you can add on and so in their minds they've got the nursing side (.) well so it's also the therapy side and it's also the social care side'
(PT, Ann)

The practice trainer indicates that the analogy of the State Enrolled Nurse

(SEN) role was used in providing a 'mental map' of the AP concept upon

which the other aspects, including the *'therapy side'* and the *'social care*

side', could be constructed. Two stages of Nonaka and Takeuchi's

knowledge spiral have been identified; the socialisation stage of sharing tacit

knowledge and the externalisation stage of making tacit knowledge explicit.

It seems likely that the two processes may occur simultaneously during the

Away Days, the purpose being to make the AP role more explicit, but with

tacit messages about SHA power and authority being conveyed at the same

time. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) underplay relations of power and the

potential role these may play in conveying tacit knowledge messages.

Engeström (1987, 2001) makes no specific reference to a 'vision' in the

sense of corporate vision, but his concept of the 'object' in activity theory

embodies some similar features.

Vision in relation to activity theory

Engeström's (1987, 2001) empirical work involves applying the seven stage

expansive learning cycle proactively to collaboration through an

interventionist 'Change Laboratory' strategy to produce new solutions. In this

intervention researchers and facilitators observe and record the work activity

of collaborative teams and stimulate expansive learning by presenting the

recordings back to the group as a focus for dialogue and debate. In later

work Engeström (2007) describes this as 'holding a mirror up to participants'

(p.77) which allows them to observe and reflect on the 'object' of the activity

as they move towards new solutions. By contrast, in this study, activity

theory is being applied as an analytical tool of collaborative working rather than as an interventionist strategy. The justification for this is supported in Ellis et al (2010), by Engeström (2007), and with specific reference to this study, in dialogue with him (Personal communication, May 2010).

Engeström (2001) describes an activity system as a 'multi-voiced formation' (p.136), emphasizing that the object of activity is not 'a given', but that a range of views may shape how it develops. During the early days of the partnership, the object of the activity was ostensibly to identify the potential AP role. The SHA 'vision' of the role was promoted in the context of potentially competing 'visions' as is indicated here by an SHA participant;

> *'That fits as well with that fundamental understanding of the communication about the bits that your vision, your vision of what it is you are trying to develop and everybody had a vision of the role and it was you understood what your vision was and actually there's something about making sure that people could clearly articulate what it was'* (SHA, Megan)

Here the participant acknowledges that individuals had their own concept of the AP role which was difficult to articulate, and differed from that of others. As stated, the primary purpose of the 'Away Days' was to try to identify the new AP role, exploring how the current workforce could be 'remodelled' to accommodate it. This was facilitated through an exercise of 'mapping the patient journey'. Relating this to activity theory, the people involved in this exercise, represented by the 'subject' in the activity system, were the

healthcare teams at all levels in the organisation where the APs were to be based, both during training and on qualification (Figure 5.4, p.51).

The questioning of existing policy and practice is identified as the first stage in the CHAT expansive learning cycle, and questioning seemed an important feature of the 'mapping the patient journey' exercise;

> *'it's erm the journey the patient takes from their first erm*
>
> *involvement with a doctor or the hospital whether it be the*
>
> *GP or A&E or outpatient department right through to the end*
>
> *of their treatment and everybody they meet along the way*
>
> *[......] we looked at where hold ups were so where they may*
>
> *have to wait (.) was it possible for the TAP [Trainee Assistant*
>
> *Practitioner] to step in there and take that role on to make*
>
> *that journey a bit smoother?'* (PT, Geraldine)

This excerpt describes the sharing of practice knowledge, questioning of existing practice, analysis of the situation – *'we looked at where hold-ups were'*, and ideas around possible solutions – *'was it possible for the TAP to step in there?'* Expansive learning is described as 'the processes by which a work organisation resolves its internal contradictions in order to construct qualitatively new ways of working' (Engeström, 2007: 1). This fits well with the development of the AP role as part of a knowledge creation process, the first stage of which involves questioning existing practice in order to change and improve this. The AP role was intended as one which cut across

traditional professional boundaries, and this was anticipated, and indeed found to be challenging as the role was introduced;

> *'We had to spend a lot of time working with the current staff,*
>
> *...the registered professionals who a lot of whom were*
>
> *feeling confused, erm threatened some of them, [......] a lot*
>
> *of work was done in workshops with staff to you know*
>
> *explain to them, to reassure them that there was more than*
>
> *enough work for everyone and this was not about taking*
>
> *work away from people but about erm designing a new role*
>
> *and modernising everyone's roles really so that roles*
>
> *complemented each other.'* (Champion, Emily)

This Champion describes her perception of opposition to the new role which appeared to present 'internal contradictions' for existing staff. The new AP role may be helpful in *'modernising everyone's roles really so that roles complemented each other'*, but in doing so might be *'taking work away from other people'* with consequent loss of jobs. Activity theory conceptualises how the voices in an activity system arise in relation to divisions of labour and differing interests within the socio-historical context of work practice. The SHA project director explained her understanding of the context within which the role was being introduced;

> *'we've grown up in a 25 year or 30 year history of very fixed*
>
> *roles, professional roles with clear demarcations that nobody*
>
> *else should pinch or take from [.......] special protectionism I*
>
> *think'* (SHA, Claire)

She goes on to describe the challenges to the introduction of the AP role

presented during the Away Days, and subsequently as *'special protectionism'*

and suggests that this was *'limiting the ability to improve things for the*

patient because of professional barriers' (SHA, Claire). This view was

reflected by another Champion;

> *'there was a sense of reluctance em around professional*
>
> *boundaries, crossing professional boundaries'* (Champion,
>
> Janice)

This rationale reflects a discourse of 'professional tribalism' which is well-

documented in healthcare (Francis and Humphries, 2002; Netteton, 2000),

and which tends to reduce the 'different voices' in the activity system to 'one

voice'. The discourse of 'professional tribalism' is a powerful one which is

familiar to practitioners, and which seemed to become dominant in explaining

any opposition to the introduction of APs, as will become clear through the

findings.

The work done by this discourse may indicate greater complexity in the

'object' of the activity than is at first apparent. By framing challenges from

practitioners to the introduction of the AP role as 'professional protectionism',

the SHA seem to be 'managing the vision' of the AP by stifling opposition.

The identification of the AP role is then the explicit object of the activity, with

the object motive of 'managing the vision' occurring implicitly beneath the

surface. So the first stage in the expansive learning cycle, questioning of

existing practice, seems to have been occurring at the same time as

socialisation, sharing tacit knowledge about the SHA position of authority. This suggests that there is work being done by discourse which reflects power relations and shapes the object of the activity. Engeström (1987, 2001) is concerned with the ways in which the multiple voices create contradictions and shape the object through expansive learning, but attention to discourse also brings into focus the influence of what is not said but is implicitly understood.

The early consortium activity in development of the Fd has been described as a separate activity system involving the university, college and employer consortium (p.33). The work of this group is described by a tutor;

'you really were building it from the ground up because even

Fds at that point were erm were elusive, they were

something that we didn't quite understand what they were

going to be and, you know, I can remember people sort of

trying to define what a Foundation degree was' (Tutor, Linda)

The tutor reflects the novelty of Fds at that time, and the difficulty in trying to define them by using the term 'elusive'. She goes on to say;

' I can see that that part of the curriculum's probably has

come from like the HNC, HND type curriculum, I could

recognise that some of that would cross over ..... linking up

with NVQs and you know there's a kind of lot of work around

work-based learning at that point but it still had to be unique'

(Tutor, Linda)

Here she indicates tacit knowledge in using the analogy of *crossing over* Higher National (HN) curriculum with the NVQ work-based learning philosophy, to conceptualise a model for the Fd. Relating this to activity theory, the Fd model is posited as the object of the activity with knowledge of existing vocational provision acting as a mediating artefact between the subject and object (Fig 5.5, p.53). The notion of a mediating artefact resonates with Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) description of the value of metaphor and analogy- *'like HNC, HND type curriculum,'* in sharing tacit knowledge through the socialisation process. As stated, Engeström (2008) disputes 'socialisation' as the first stage of knowledge creation, proposing that questioning of existing practice is inevitably a first step before tacit knowledge is shared. The previous extract demonstrates that questioning of existing practice (appropriateness of existing vocational provision), is an important first step, but it seems to simultaneously involve sharing tacit knowledge about practice.

Once the partnership became established, further development of the Fd was influenced by the 'vision' of the SHA and the employer organizations, and this appeared to highlight a difference in priorities;

'The academic notion, I think that has gotta be the priority

because we are a University but .....we respond to what the

practice wants but we try and do that within a strong

126

academic framework so we think about it in terms of the

SHA, the Trust might have a vision of what they want to do

with their staff and we offer education to their staff but the

emphasis from our point of view should be on education'

(Tutor, Linda)

The tutor expresses concern about meeting both university requirements and the SHA and Trust needs. She denotes the university priority in a *'strong academic framework'*, acknowledging that this may not be shared. It is worth noting that Linda was the only university tutor who used the word 'vision'. This may be due to her greater exposure to strategic level working, as she was the only tutor who routinely represented the university at the Champion's group (Appendix 1) and this may account for her familiarity with the discourse. She appears to link the Trust 'vision' with the SHA when she says, *'so we think about it in terms of the SHA, the Trust might have a vision of what they want'*. She also makes reference to *'their staff,* which indicates a perception of the Trust having ownership of staff, in keeping with the mangerialist discourse already identified as a feature of the partnership. This 'ownership' of staff is almost assumed in Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) model, but is brought into focus in activity theory where 'divisions of labour' and 'use and exchange value' are highlighted as the primary contradiction. The disturbances which arise are theoretically an important stimulus to knowledge creation and this will be considered next.

Summary

Exploring the concept of the 'vision' through the lens of activity theory allows separate motivations and goals to be identified. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) are very concerned with a 'corporate vision' which resonates with the role of the SHA and recruitment of Champions in each organisation to 'realise' this vision. The knowledge management model presents a relatively homogenous view of workforce which does not allow individual voices to be heard. Although Engeström (1987, 2001) does recognise competing voices which shape the 'object' of the activity, the role of discourse and power implicit within this is not fully developed. A hegemonic discourse seems to work in reducing voices of opposition to the introduction of the APs to one voice of 'professional protectionism'. The activity system is explicitly concerned with the object of identifying the AP role, but there is an implicit object from the SHA of 'managing the vision'. Drawing on Leont'ev, Engeström (2008) distinguishes the 'object motive' from the 'object' by describing the former as the true direction of the activity. The extent to which this contradiction between the two stimulates or restricts expansive learning will be considered in relation to 'barriers'.

The evidence is limited with regard to potential exploration of the early Fd consortium development as an activity system. Only one original member of the consortium, Linda, was available to be involved in the study, and so there is little analysis of the potential for different voices to be heard in the early development of the Fd curriculum. This is not a major drawback as the study is primarily focused on exploring the partnership established to further

develop the Fd and the AP role after the programme was commissioned directly by the SHA. The partnership has been represented as two interacting activity systems with a tension in the shared object of the activity arising from different priorities (Figure 5.6, p.54). The resulting contradictions and the potential value for knowledge creation will be considered next.

2. Barriers and bridges

Participants were asked a question about perceived barriers to collaboration across the partnership, and ways in which these might have been overcome. The responses were articulated at times specifically as 'professional boundaries', and at other times described simply as 'challenges', 'obstacles' or 'barriers' (Appendix 8). The 'reluctance around crossing professional boundaries' (Champion, Janice) has been discussed, and another Champion described how inaction might also indicate a barrier;

> 'I think by just not doing anything there can be barriers and obstacles almost like a sort of a passive aggressive in a way (.) it's not about telling people what to do, it's about trying to understand why those barriers are there but not be complacent about it' (Champion, Kirstie)

Issues of difference in professional culture, language and practice were perceived as barriers which had to be overcome, 'trying to understand why those barriers are there but not be complacent about it', a process which clearly involves power struggles. The reference to behaviour as 'passive

aggressive' suggests a resistance to dominance which resonates with

Foucault's (1980) conception of power as productive in being resisted as well

as exerted. The boundaries of partnership working represent the macro level

sites of inter-professional and inter-organisational collaboration, but these are

played out at the micro level in dialogue in each practice setting. Resistance

at the micro level was perceived to be manifest implicitly rather than

explicitly, as indicated by a practice trainer who reflects back on the

introduction of the AP role;

> '*I think people sort of know what's expected of them and*
>
> *know what to do now. I think in the early days people didn't*
>
> *engage in that and almost purposely didn't engage and*
>
> *almost wanted that confusion around what they were*
>
> *supposed to do so that they didn't have to do it really... is the*
>
> *bottom line'* (PT, Hannah)

This statement came in response to a question about the types of knowledge

and expertise which different players bring to the partnership, and so the

response is in many ways unexpected. It portrays a sense that those who

did not agree with introduction of the AP role brought only negativity and

erected boundaries of non-engagement. The reduction of this to a non-

legitimate response is indicated by the discourse of '*the bottom line'* which

resonates with the findings generally, that any opposition to introduction of

the AP role was not considered legitimate. The ways in which participants'

responses reveal understandings of barriers and how these are negotiated

will be considered in the light of the two models of knowledge creation.

Barriers and Bridges in relation to knowledge management

The Champions frequently portrayed their role as one central to negotiating professional and organisational barriers to introduction of the new role, which fits with their position as the 'middle management' layer of the partnership. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) describe middle management as *the bridge between the visionary ideals of the top and often chaotic realities of business confronted by front-line workers'* (1995: 128). A Champion provides an account of her careful approach in setting up a steering group to oversee the implementation of the AP role in an NHS Trust;

> *'the steering group was the formal mechanism I suppose by which the project was led within the Trust. So, we had a membership that reflected really everybody that needed to know; the people that we needed to influence...the managers... HR ...staff side [the unions] were there, because I think we were conscious that there may be issues around er sort of inserting a new brand and a new role ....so we were quite careful with who came.'* (Champion, Frances)

The anticipation of organisational barriers to the introduction of the APs is indicated in '*we were conscious that there may be issues'*. The reference to being '*quite careful who came'* suggests the Champion's personal knowledge about the organisation and individuals within it. Later in the interview she said, '*I don't know if we were just lucky, but we didn't have any problems*

131

from the staff side [the unions] at all' (Champion, Frances). Although she

refers to being *'just lucky'*, it is more plausible that the Champion was making

informed decisions on the steering group membership as she had worked for

many years in different roles in the Trust. It is likely that she has exploited

her tacit knowledge of the organisation in controlling membership and

thereby avoiding confrontation. This illustrates how easy it is to take tacit

knowledge for granted, and underestimate its role in influencing decision

making. Another Champion who had the added challenge of leading the

development across two organisations (a PCT and social services

organisation), reflected back on some of the early difficulties she

experienced;

> *'and the things like, you know, deciding what uniform they*
>
> *were going to wear and was it acceptable to both*
>
> *organisations...small details like that actually which turned*
>
> *into quite big details'* (Champion, Emily)

As an 'inside researcher' in my role as Programme Leader of the Fd

(Appendix 1), I attended a number of steering group meetings in different

organisations, and would agree that this question of uniforms was generally

considered significant. There are undoubtedly pragmatic reasons for this; it

may be important for staff and patients to identify the appropriate person to

approach, but these issues seem to reflect more subtle power struggles as

indicated in the following exchange about titles;

'That was a funny one at the start about the title [of the

Assistant Practitioner] 'cos everybody wanted to call them

something different (laughs)' (SHA, Claire)

'What do you think that was about, that discussion over your

titles?' (Interviewer)

'I think that's about power and control and as I say I think it's

about personal identity, people wake up and think I'm a

nurse you know and it gives that credibility of who they are at

*their centres' (*SHA, Claire)

Uniforms and job titles are recognized as symbols associated with identity, status and power (Goffman, 1961). This last quote reflects both the outward symbol of a title to others in *'power and control'*, but also the inward significance to self in *'at their centres'*. The view of this participant is supported by understandings of the social construction of identity, in confirming the idea that our identity is constructed by others through social interaction, and that we both internalise and project this identity to others (Berger and Luckman, 1991). Relating this to Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) theory, it is likely that aspects of tacit knowledge are embedded in uniforms and titles which indicate professional boundaries, and negotiation over these seems to reflect a concern to protect identity through maintaining the boundary. Professional boundaries were also perceived by participants to be manifest through language;

> *'there was a lot of jargon, cos obviously the same people*
>
> *working in the same kind of organisation, [.......] but if you're*
>
> *not part of that organisation and you haven't you know had*
>
> *you know work experience in there, it is, it was difficult and I*
>
> *do remember thinking well you know that thing about better*
>
> *say nothing and they might think you're a fool but if you open*
>
> *your mouth they'll know you're a fool' (both laugh)* (Tutor,
>
> Diana)

Specialist professional language or *'jargon'* was used routinely in steering

groups and conveyed tacit knowledge to 'insiders', but not to those 'outside'

of the profession or organisation. This clearly caused some discomfort at

times as indicated by the tutor. Although both interviewer and participant

laugh, this is an attempt to 'laugh off' the discomfort which the participant

seems to have felt at the time and indicated again later;

> *'So yeah sometimes it was just difficult keeping up with what*
>
> *was going on and what was kind of their agenda and you*
>
> *know and er I don't know, it's, a lot of them are kind of huge*
>
> *employers aren't they and you know I have to accept we're*
>
> *one small, relatively small programme for them aren't we?'*
>
> (Tutor, Diana)

There is a sense of powerlessness conveyed in *'one small, relatively small*

programme' in the face of the agenda of the *'huge employers'* which

indicates the tutor's reluctance to admit to not understanding or asking for

clarification where necessary. As previously explained, Bernstein's (2000)

discourse rules suggest that an agent may 'recognise' a power relation through discourse, but if they are unable to 'realise' that discourse, they cannot contribute and feel marginalised (p.17). This reluctance to engage in open dialogue seems to have acted as a barrier to shared understanding and to bridging the gap. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) make reference to 'fluctuation and creative chaos' (p.78) which arise when change is introduced, and which disrupts normal patterns of activity, and stimulates knowledge creation. The tutor's normal pattern of activity has been interrupted by engagement outside of the university in a wider partnership. The authors suggest that this type of disruption encourages individuals to change their perspective through dialogue with others, and this create new understandings and new knowledge. In a case such as this where the tutor feels relatively powerless as an 'outsider' in the partnership group, the opportunity to bridge boundaries and develop new understandings through dialogue is lost.

In another example a tutor reflects on her perception of the type of tacit assessment of status which is a feature of multi-professional partnership working;

> '*I have been at meetings where you can see the managers*
>
> *are trying to work out whether you are the appropriate level*
>
> *or whether actually you're too junior to be speaking to them'*
>
> (Tutor, Irene)

She implies that the managers are making a judgment on status which affects their decision on whether to involve individuals in meaningful dialogue. If the individual is not deemed to be of sufficiently high status, this

restricts access to opportunities for interaction and therefore hinders knowledge creation. The boundaries created by professional status and hierarchies in collaborative working are not recognized as terrain to be negotiated by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). They recommend that project team meetings to discuss new product design are open to all employees and insist that *'the status or qualifications of discussants are never questioned'* (1995: 63). Although this demonstrates an openness to value the contributions of all, the possibility of those who are not project team members being tacitly excluded as 'outsiders', whether their status is questioned or not, is overlooked.

The evidence presented indicates the role of Champions as 'middle managers' in the partnership with delegated authority to negotiate professional and organisational boundaries in order to realise 'the vision' of the AP role in their own organisations. The knowledge management model has some value in highlighting how tacit knowledge may be conveyed through professional identity which is linked to status and hierarchy, but pays no attention to power relationships embedded within these. Knowledge management is explicitly a model developed in corporate organisations and so this omission is unsurprising. However, a perception of powerlessness clearly presents a barrier for individuals participating in the dialogue and contributing to shared understanding. Activity theory recognises issues of status and hierarchy which should be more helpful in analysing how barriers to collaboration impact on knowledge creation.

Barriers and Bridges in relation to activity theory

Participants frequently cited different priorities as barriers to collaboration, and these often appeared as disturbances at the boundaries between organisations and professions. Boundaries, in 3rd generation activity theory, are identified as the sites of 'contradiction' central to expansive learning which need to be resolved in creating new work practices (Engeström, 2007). One area perceived by participants as an area of tension was in the balance between maintaining the academic quality standards of the Fd qualification, while addressing the more pragmatic needs of employers which tended to focus on a skills agenda;

'I think that has gotta be the priority because we are a

University but we bring as well a view of practice that maybe,

we're a bit more strategic, not strategic, yeah we are

strategic in a way because we respond to practice and we

respond to what the practice wants but we try and do that

within a strong academic framework' (Tutor, Linda)

The tutor articulates a willingness to respond to the needs identified by employers in practice while also meeting academic demands and indicates a 'business-like' approach in balancing these, *'we're a bit more strategic, not strategic, yeah we are strategic'*. Her employment of the managerial discourse of *'being strategic'* and immediate denial, then affirmation of this, indicates a hesitance in choice of language. This may indicate a willingness to employ a managerial discourse within the partnership where it is important

to be recognised as a legitimate partner, able to 'do business' with employers, but perhaps not beyond this. Her affirmation of being strategic may reflect an awareness in that this discourse is 'safe' to use with me as an 'insider' experienced in the partnership, but the hesitation suggests her concern that this may be less acceptable to others in the university setting. Adopting the 'accepted' hegemonic discourse in particular settings may be important in being recognized as a legitimate participant in negotiating boundaries with others. This difference in culture is also highlighted by a Champion who refers to potentially competing demands;

'I think in terms of the em higher education contribution, a willingness to look with the employer and try and find a balance between the requirement for an HE provider in terms of standards, quality, academic frameworks, and the needs of an employer to deliver very simply a skilled and competent worker' (Champion, Janice)

The reference to '*standards, quality, academic frameworks*' by Janice demonstrates her knowledge of the HE agenda, probably acquired as a result of partnership working but also indicates her different priorities as an employer. In terms of activity theory, the partnership may be represented in the interacting activity system as two separate, but overlapping, 'objects' of activity in the '*academic framework*' and the '*skilled competent worker*' (Figure 5.6, p.54). It is suggested that the area of overlap between the two objects lies in the model of work based learning, where the Fd curriculum is operationalised in shaping the AP in practice in the workplace. This model of

delivery of the programme has been identified as a focal point of debate in the early days of the partnership;

> *'Sometimes understanding of work-based learning has been dictated by HE and not as employer-led as it should be....the student is an employee number one.. ..HE considers student status but implications for the employer are massive [.....] appreciation of this in HE outside of those running the Foundation degree may not be as good as it could'* (SHA, Penny)

The participant indicates the workplace as the site where boundaries are negotiated between what it means to be a student and an employee. This boundary reflects the cultural-historical context within which the partnership operates, where there is a tension inherent in delivery of vocational provision by universities. Initially the SHA did not want students to attend university for any structured teaching as they believed that this could all be delivered in the workplace, supported by the practice trainers. However, the university insisted that students would require some face to face teaching to support academic learning, and to provide sufficient support for the type of mature learner, returning to education, likely to be recruited. A compromise was reached by allowing students one protected study day for teaching. These differences in culture between the university and the workplace have to be continually negotiated by participants as acknowledged here in *'appreciation of this in HE outside of those running the Fd',* indicates. The debate around *'understanding of work-based learning'* appeared to be the focus of this concern;

'We've, yes we've got to adapt but we've got to say actually

no it's got to be, it can't just be a, er, an apprenticeship, it's

got to be an academic qualification so there's limits to, so

there's a negotiation of what you're doing there whereas if it

was purely a case of this, do what the provider wanted (.) this

wouldn't be an academic qualification' (Tutor, Irene)

The tension she perceives between providing *'an academic qualification'* and

providing *'an apprenticeship'* and corresponding status as *'student'* or

'employee', seemed to be at the heart of this contested area. In activity

theory this indicates a contradiction in the division of labour; a *'student'* has

limited value in the workplace in terms of their labour contribution or 'use

value', whereas an *'employee'* is justifiably expected to provide a greater

contribution to labour, and therefore has a higher 'use value'. This

contradiction has created disturbances which appear to have stimulated

expansive learning with the two positions becoming closer as indicated by a

practice trainer;

'Erm it was a lot more academic than the Trust realised at

first I think; we thought it was gonna be a lot of work based

learning, not as much academic you know written

assessments and things. Erm and I think we've grown

alongside that as well as we've understood more about it,

we've changed our entry requirements for the students and

put in more support for them' (PT, Geraldine)

She reflects an early perception that as a work-based learning programme, the Fd would be similar to NVQ provision, and therefore not require very much academic written work. She goes on to identify a shift in thinking as the programme developed, 'we've grown alongside that as well as we've understood more about it'. This reference to 'growing' indicates growing understanding of the requirements of the programme with a greater appreciation of the model of work-based learning and the demands on learners. Early cohorts of APs were required by the SHA to complete NVQ3 alongside the Fd if they did not already posses this qualification. Another practice trainer reflects on this;

'In the early days people did have to do NVQ Level 3 as well which I think caused the students a lot of stress but I think you know it was acknowledged after, and that was obviously I know that that was actually an employer-led erm thing' (PT, Ann)

The extent to which this was at the insistence of the employers is a matter of interpretation; the discourse used by the practice trainer of the programme being 'employer-led', echoes an earlier statement from the SHA project director (SHA, Claire, p.87). The requirement for NVQ3 was removed as a result of feedback from students and from the evaluation, alongside which the model of work-based learning was modified with development of a new competency framework underpinning the Fd. These ongoing changes were facilitated through face to face dialogue which seem to have 'mediated' in

141

bringing the 'objects', the AP role and Fd curriculum, closer together. This resonates with activity theory in illustrating the modeling of a solution during an expansive learning cycle, with feedback which informs revisions, and then a new cycle begins.

A key element of mediation has been the practice trainer role in 'boundary crossing' (Engeström 2001: 135) between the communities of practice. Although all key players in the partnership are involved in boundary crossing, the practice trainers have a specific role in building bridges at the interface between HE and multi-professional teams in practice settings. This requires crossing boundaries between higher education and professional health and social care cultures. However, this boundary crossing role is often an uncomfortable one;

> *'I think there's always going to be this this ...you feel like*
>
> *you're pulled in two different directions because initially*
>
> *you've come to the university as a university member of staff*
>
> *but you're still an employee of the org..of the Trust as well*
>
> *an' it's kind of ye know it's that what do I do? What do I do*
>
> *first? Do I do that or do I do that? And that has been (.) that*
>
> *was quite difficult at the beginning'* (PT, Ann)

Ann describes being *'pulled in two different directions'* in 'belonging' to both the university and to the Trust, with competing priorities, *'what do I do first?'* Engeström (2001) refers to this type of dilemma as a 'double bind' in which a solution to one problem creates a difficulty with another, and highlights this

as a stimulus to expansive learning. The practice trainer role is clearly valued by other participants;

'Erm they are you know because of their background and the experience that they bring to the role they understand what the issues are in practice so yeah, they're absolutely invaluable' (Champion, Emily)

The reference made by the Champion to *'their background'* indicates that the professional background of practice trainers allows shared professional identity with other healthcare practitioners, and insight into practice issues. Burt (1997) describes the role of broker in inter-organisational networks as one involved with increasing social capital by 'building interpersonal bridges' between those who would be otherwise disconnected (p.342). Engeström et al (1999) highlight aspects of common ground as being central to boundary crossing and the role of *'physical artefacts and body movements'* as mediating tools (p.333). A succinct example of this is provided by a practice trainer;

'if you are working with students on an Acute Ward for example that is easy an easy thing to do because you know you can go into the Clinical setting put your uniform on and work with students' (PT, Barbara)

This little excerpt summarises many key elements which seem helpful in building bridges. Going physically into the practice setting and donning her

nursing uniform signals to other healthcare staff that the practice trainer is 'an insider' who shares tacit knowledge. Working alongside the student signals her specific role as a practice trainer, but also offers opportunities for dialogue with the surrounding multi-professional team. Similarly, the practice trainers attend the study days at the university with the students;

> ' I think as the project unfolded a practice trainer, who again was physically moving between the higher education provider and the pilot site, meant that there was fluid movement of information, communication, consistently taking place' (Champion, Janice)

The physical movement of the practice trainer in accompanying the student across settings fits well with the idea of 'bridging, boundary crossing, knotworking, negotiation, exchange, and trading' which constitute 'co-configuration' (Engeström et al, 2007: 19). This mediating role in the interacting activity systems appears to contribute to expansive learning which brings the overlapping objects of activity closer together.

Summary

Barriers to partnership working have been identified by participants and attributed to different priorities as a consequence of organisational and professional cultures. The knowledge management model has highlighted the role of Champions as the 'middle managers' in implementing the AP role in practice, and thereby having a key role in negotiating these barriers.

Sources of disturbance which require negotiation seem to be associated with hierarchy and identity, as symbolised by titles and uniforms which convey tacit knowledge in practice settings. Champions are able to understand the significance of these symbols as 'insiders' in the setting and in some instances avoid confrontation, and in others successfully negotiate these with others. The difficulties for 'outsiders' engaging in knowledge creation activities across organisations and professional cultures is not acknowledged by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995).

This raises questions of divisions of labour and mediating tools in collaborative activities which are explored in activity theory. Collaborative working requires construction of a 'shared object of activity', and two somewhat separate objects have been identified in the two interacting activity systems in the partnership. At the heart of this collaboration is the inner contradiction demonstrated through different voices which call those involved either primarily students or primarily employees. The balance between the two is crucial in determining the direction and shaping the object of activity and the evidence suggests that practice trainers play a mediating role in this. Physical movement between the university and practice settings allows them to mediate activity and build bridges between the university and practice areas, thereby bringing the objects of activity closer together in tailoring the curriculum more closely to the needs of practice. Engeström emphasises the importance of object construction in expansive learning and he describes the 'formation of a shared object as a major collaborative achievement' (2007: 163). He does not fully explicate the role of power in the process, which impacts on how the 'object' is shaped through relationships, the implications

145

of which will be considered next.

3. Relationships

The theme of relationships, positive and problematic, emerged very strongly throughout the interview process and seemed important to all participants. Relationships were most frequently discussed in response to a question on barriers to collaborative working, but also in response to a question on evolving changes. Effective partnership working and successful outcomes tended to be attributed to regular formal and informal contact;

> 'And you know we meet on a regular basis, we communicate
>
> openly if there's any issues at all you know (.) we know we
>
> can pick up the phone or you know just drop an e-mail and
>
> we can, we can iron things out. So I think it's been easy in
>
> one respect because of the personalities involved'
>
> (Champion, Emily)

Positive relationships tended to be attributed to individual personalities;

> 'I realise actually that the quality is much more to do with
>
> individual relationships that have been built up' (Tutor, Irene)

Whilst difficult relationships were often attributed to collectives such as specific professional groups;

> 'That was one of our big ones in the outset was the Allied

Health Professionals and breaking down that barrier around

"Oh they're not going to do anything that our registered staff

do". We had a similar situation actually with the midwives as

well' (Champion, Frances)

Specific professional groups were frequently perceived to be unsupportive,
although many participants cited instances where difficulties had been
resolved. The importance of face to face communication in developing
effective relationships seemed key, and this undoubtedly allows the identity
of the person to emerge beyond that of their profession. Theoretical
perspectives on this will be considered in the light of the two models and of
the wider literature.

Relationships and knowledge management

The emphasis by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) on the centrality of close
relationships in knowledge creation has been discussed in the literature
review, and will be considered in more detail here. Although their
descriptions of close working seem to infer a naivety around status,
hierarchies and power, aspects of the model do seem helpful in bringing
insights into partnership working. Opportunities for face to face
communication seem significant in promoting effective working;

> *'by working closely with the University erm and good*
>
> *communication between us, discussing any problems [.......]*
>
> *and vice versa if the University have got problems coming to*

us. The steering groups at the beginning helped so that

management could be involved in that and we could all work

together' (PT, Geraldine)

The steering group, held within each organisation and led by the Champion, provided an opportunity for joint dialogue across the university and Trusts as indicated by the practice trainer. Another forum, the Champions' group (see Appendix 1), was led by the SHA and provided an opportunity for peer support among the Champions, and support from the SHA ;

'You always know as a champion that you know there is a

reference point and there are other people ....doing the same

job as you, you all have similar problems, you learn from

each other, share experiences, so that's really helped'

(Champion, Emily)

The atmosphere in which people are able to *'learn from each other'* describes the conditions conducive to **socialisation,** the sharing of tacit knowledge, outlined in the knowledge management model. The reference to *'sharing experience'* implies more than mere exchange of facts, but conveys a sense of the affective aspects of this which are also linked to development of trust;

'I think the fact that we met as a group and shared, gradually

got to trust each other better' (SHA, Claire)

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) emphasise close personal contact and time as

factors in the development of trust which encourages 'prolonged socialisation' and enables tacit knowledge to be shared. Huxham and Vangen (2007) also emphasise trust as a key factor in conferring 'collaborative advantage' in partnership working, which allows more ambitious goals to be achieved, building on previous success. This is in contrast to the *'mistrust'* identified in the early days of the partnership;

> *'I think it was a lot of the time plagued by mistrust in the early*
>
> *stages ...... a lot of discussion around people taking people's*
>
> *jobs erm a lot of professional tribalism in terms of people*
>
> *very reluctant to actually impart any of their knowledge to*
>
> *people they felt were a threat'* (PT, Hannah).

The initial mistrust is linked here to existing staff expressing concern about the security of their jobs following the introduction of the AP role. The practice trainer goes on to frame the difficulties in terms of *'professional tribalism'*, previously identified as recurring discourse in the partnership. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) assume that members of the workforce are keen to share specialist knowledge, and the authors recommend that the organisation should exploit this to guard against loss of key personnel. Clearly however, individuals such as the practitioners in this case who *'feel threatened'*, may have a vested interest in safeguarding their own knowledge to protect against the organisation dispensing with them.

The practice trainer goes on to describe how relationships improved over time through individuals *'knowing each other by their first names'* (PT,

Hannah). The importance of this is supported by a Champion;

> *'we'd already had the situation where we commissioned*
>
> *places on a sort of course with nameless tutors in another*
>
> *University and it didn't feel quite the same and the way we*
>
> *had the partnership with [the university] was such that we*
>
> *grew up together really (laughs) and learned, learned how to*
>
> *do it together really, you know...you know we were, we were*
>
> *making it up as we go along! We weren't really but we were*
>
> *just learning it together'* (Champion, Frances)

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) refer to extraneous knowledge exchange over and above that required for the task as 'redundancy', and claim that it supports tacit knowledge exchange. This is supported by Jarvis (2006) who describes the sense of unease we feel about lack of familiarity with a person's name which creates a state of 'disjuncture in our life-world' (p.20). He claims that we only regain harmony once we are familiar with the name and can use it comfortably. It is this sense of developing harmony which seems to foster the sharing of tacit knowledge and which is described by the Champion who employs a metaphor of childhood in '*we grew up together*'. She continues in the same vein;

> *'it was a, it was a 3 pronged, it was an SHA, Trust and er*
>
> *University sort of you know well let's all do it together holding*
>
> *hands kind of thing really, erm you know and it worked.'*
>
> *(*Champion, Frances)

There is a sense of equality implicit in this description, where the added

metaphor of childhood in *'lets all do it together holding hands'* makes the

process of partnership working sound very cosy and democratic. A

contrasting perspective is provided by a tutor;

'The partnership (.) is much more hierarchal in reality [.......] I

think the SHA feels that they have to cajole maybe the

providers to do things and the providers feel they are being

cajoled by the SHA so if you say in view of the true concept

of a partnership that there is equality and that there is a free

level of er obligation to be in that relationship I would say

those doesn't exist, there is not actually a partnership, it is an

unequal relationship and its more of a manager and a sub-

ordinate relationship' (Tutor, Irene)

This tutor articulates awareness of power dynamics and clearly feels that the

centre of power emanates from the SHA. The reference to *'a manager and a*

sub-ordinate relationship' is in sharp contrast to the *'lets all do it together*

holding hands' perception of the partnership. The tutor indicates a

perception that in a true partnership there should be equality, but Huxham

and Vangen (2007) indicate that wishing for equality is unrealistic, and that

power dynamics are much more likely to prevail. A strength of the

knowledge management model lies in the emphasis on close relationships

and emotional aspects of learning, but the complete absence of power

dynamics is significant. The extent to which power dynamics influence

151

knowledge creation may become clearer when viewed through the lens of activity theory.

Relationships and activity theory

Activity theory brings into focus the multiple voices and divisions of labour at the heart of activity systems, and so it is useful to consider relationships from this perspective. Irene's view of the SHA as the dominant partner is echoed by others;

> '*I think a clear focus from the top in terms of erm her input*
>
> *[the Director of Workforce Development in the SHA] a very*
>
> *much a "we're gonna get on with this and shift the problems*
>
> *as they come along, not identify the problems and then try*
>
> *and solve them because if we do that we won't get anywhere*
>
> *so actually we're gonna plunge headlong into this"....'*
>
> (Champion, Janice)

This perspective on the modus operandi of the SHA is interesting to consider in relation to how it may shape the object of the activity. The Champion's perception that the SHA had a '*clear focus*' links to the earlier discussion of 'managing the vision' which appeared to be an implicit object of activity in the early stages (p.67). The Champion perceives that the SHA did not intend to enter dialogue with other voices and negotiate concerns as indicated by, '*not identify the problems and then try and solve them*', but to discard the voices as in '*shift the problems as they come along*'. Accepting this interpretation,

this very direct approach may have been valuable in preventing the problem becoming the object of the activity. One possible mechanism for achieving this seems to have been in reducing the multiple voices to one voice, through establishing a hegemonic discourse of 'professional tribalism' in the partnership. Other less subtle ways of exerting authority were perceived by others as an almost ruthless top-down approach;

'it is strategic I mean that that's where they're at isn't it?

That's there and I suppose when you're being strategic you

need to be almost a bit ruthless in a way, in the way that you

do that...' (Tutor, Linda)

The tutor does not entirely view this approach as negative, but as almost inevitable in the SHA providing a strong steer at the outset of the project. Relationships with Champions were described in a more positive way;

'I would say in my case it's about the quality of the

relationship I have with what were the champions [...] if I

didn't have a reasonable relationship with them, then it might

break down so it's actually not so much about the formal

structure it's more about the informal networks' (Tutor, Irene)

Here the tutor indicates the importance of informal structures and positive relationships with Champions in sustaining the partnership once the formal meetings became less frequent. In some Trusts steering groups did not continue in the same way once the AP role was successfully implemented

and new systems and processes embedded. The reference to 'it might break down' relates to withdrawal of funding for Champions which also contributed to the discontinuation of steering groups and resulted in the disappearance of the role in some organisations. Others continued to support the Champion role embedded as part of the wider responsibility of a senior member of staff. The withdrawal of funding for Champions occurred at the same time as a restructure and a significant reduction in the SHA personnel as will be discussed further in relation to outcomes and sustainability.

<u>Summary</u>

Relationships appear from the evidence to be at the heart and soul of partnership working and a source of both fulfillment and frustration. McQuaid (2007) highlights the desirability of engaging people in multilevel relationships to promote co-operation, and this ongoing personal contact appears key to overcoming suspicion of others and to developing trust. The evidence presented supports Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) proposition that conditions which allow development of trust promote opportunities for sharing tacit knowledge. However, surface contentment with relationships may disguise the underlying power dynamics, and the extent to which this involves coercion or complicity is not illuminated by this model. Activity theory posits problematic relationships as competing voices which are manifest as disturbances which may stimulate expansive learning. It is likely that these 'competing voices' help unite others as 'insiders' who learn to speak as 'one voice' through a hegemonic discourse which permeates through the partnership. Activity theory arguably under-theorises the power

154

with which this is imbued, and the mechanism by which it occurs is not fully illuminated by the model. A discourse analysis approach to the focus group will be employed to investigate this further.

4. Outcomes and sustainability

This theme will consider the interests of the various stakeholders involved, the outcomes for the AP role and APs themselves, and the sustainability of the partnership. The rationale for the study began with the desire to sustain the programme in the face of changes in personnel at a time when personal relationships seemed key to the success of the partnership, and consequently changes to personnel seemed a threat. The extent to which this concern was valid, and the extent to which other factors may have greater influence on sustainability will be analysed. Notwithstanding that, the outcomes for the APs themselves are a major consideration as to whether or not sustainability is desirable. All of the participants gave testimony to the successful work of the APs in practice, as exemplified by this practice trainer;

> *'In practice, the value of the APs has been appreciated and*
> *it's really opened up opportunities for students [.....] new*
> *routes and pathways have developed and em they've been*
> *found to be very capable, an asset in the workplace'* (PT,
> Olivia)

Although an AP role has been successfully established as evidenced by the external evaluation (Benson and Smith, 2007), the extent to which the role

155

has become generic in crossing traditional occupational boundaries is variable;

> '*I think, I think yes in the areas where we were probably*
>
> *trying to change practice in the early days which is around*
>
> *erm rehab wards and the taking on of other professions'*
>
> *skills, has never really taken off [........] in our rehab wards*
>
> *we do have APs but they're, it's a nursing role [......] I don't*
>
> *know whether that's just down to the resistance of the AHPs*
>
> *[Allied Health Professionals] in the early days or whether it*
>
> *was just a step too far*' (Champion, Frances)

This Champion reflects again on whether the difficulty of achieving a generic role may be due to '*the resistance of the AHPs*', which relates back to the discourse of professional tribalism. A limitation of this evidence is that the professional groups who have been perceived as particularly challenging to the introduction of APs have not been interviewed, and so their voices are not included at first hand. This is because none of the key stakeholders were from Allied Health (AHP) Professional backgrounds, although they are represented on steering groups in each organisation. The way in which the role has become a reality and the perceived value of it in the workplace clearly impacts on sustainability, and will be considered in relation to the models.

Outcomes, Sustainability and knowledge management

The outcome of a successful AP role in practice through the realisation of the 'strategic vision' has been discussed, and one of the Champions explains how she perceives that the APs are now accepted by other members of staff;

> '*our first and second and third cohorts are well into their roles now [.......] there isn't that feeling erm of resentment anymore. They're very, very well accepted and welcomed within the workforce'* (Champion, Emily)

She also reflects on the responsiveness of the university in meeting the needs of her Trust in tailoring the curriculum to the AP role;

> '*Erm I think at the beginning there was slight concern that erm it was, there was gonna be some inflexibility and what the University could provide wouldn't necessarily meet what the service required. But we've worked through all of those issues and we know that basically whatever we need for a student will be provided by the University'* (Champion, Emily)

When asked what had helped with working through the issues she goes on to provide an example;

> '*well involving clinicians I think, involving managers... we've got er an assistant practitioner, trainee assistant practitioner*

157

now who works for the speech and language team. That's

quite a new role for the PCT so it's, you know, what will they

be able to do and what sort of education do they need to

underpin their new role. Erm and we've involved the

managers of the speech and language team in, you know, on

the erm university, is it the course committee?' (Champion,

Emily)

The close working between heath practitioners and university staff has

enabled synergy between the Fd curriculum and the development of specific

skills and abilities required of the APs. This Champion has continued to

perform her role, despite the withdrawal of associated funding, and the

partnership between the university and organisation remains strong.

However, she indicates that removal of funding has caused problems

elsewhere;

'I do know in some other Trusts that the champion's role has

disappeared because the funding's gone which is a great

shame and I think that's had a very negative impact on the

numbers' (Champion Emily)

The Champion explains how the loss of the role means that no-one takes

responsibility for recruitment of new APs, which clearly affects both the

development of the role, and the numbers of students enrolled onto the

programme. Another Champion reflects on the impact of changes in the

SHA;

'I think the SHA went through er a lot of change if I think

about the number of people that I dealt with, (.) our project

manager left [....] oh gosh, we must have had another four or

five over the space of a couple of years and it seemed that

I'd only just explained it to one person and, you know, they

went and I got somebody else and that didn't help...by that

time I was doing my own thing anyway' (Champion, Frances)

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) refer to loss of knowledge when key personnel are lost, but this quote indicates stability in the structure where the Champion has developed from a dependence on SHA support as *'essential'*, to a position of supporting new project managers in the SHA. This suggests that the specialist knowledge brought by the SHA has been shared with the Champion and enabled the organisation to sustain the programme in the face of change. This corresponds to the **combination** stage in the Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) model where explicit knowledge is now embedded in new systems and structures. As an individual, the Champion has **internalised** new knowledge developed as a result of her involvement with the SHA and the wider partnership. Consequently, she no longer needs the SHA support in her role, but there is an expectation to reciprocate;

'I was going to say you know that champions' meetings tailed

off but actually I did stop going to them and I know X [SHA

Project Director] did actually say "you've not been to one for

a year" you know or something like that and I said "yeah but I

159

don't need", "yes but we might need you, its not that you

need us" (.) and I said, oh yes, sorry', (Champion, Frances)

She is expected to reciprocate by sharing her knowledge and experience

with new Champions in other organisations. This has the potential for the

innovation to be continued beyond the original partnership in a process

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) refer to as 'cross-levelling' of knowledge (p.88).

There is also a sense in which Frances has almost been made to feel guilty

about non-reciprocation in,*'oh yes, sorry'* which is perhaps a subtle form of

manipulation used in order to mobilize her support, and indicates that she

has **internalised** knowledge about the power and authority of the SHA. The

continuous spiraling of innovation is suggested by the current work in

developing the AP role further to new practice areas and contexts;

> *'...as part of this partnership with erm Skills for Care and*
>
> *Foundation Degree Forward [........] to work with us on*
>
> *making some changes to the Foundation degree [.....] to*
>
> *adapt this to work with people with long term conditions*
>
> *.....that further specialisation so how can we, erm, have a*
>
> *programme of training that allows people to work with*
>
> *palliative care, with dementia, with sensory loss'* (Champion,
>
> Janice)

This Champion refers to a new extended partnership with Skills for Care and

Foundation Degree Forward which aims to develop the AP role further to new

areas including smaller private sector organisations. She makes reference to

the *'further specialisation'* required which would involve a new knowledge creation spiral involving a new set of partners. This indicates a move towards a more specialist rather than the original generic role, which is undoubtedly a response to current funding priorities, but also needs to be properly resourced;

'I think we absolutely do need that partnership working and the funding, erm, and it's difficult to see how, how it would work otherwise' (Tutor, Diana)

In terms of outcomes for the APs themselves, one of the Champions articulated concerns about the vision going too far;

'Er, I think it has I think its actually gone further than that though because now when I hear about what APs are doing that's gone a few steps beyond how I saw them really [.....] I have to take the party line on well, you know is that a step too far or is it something that you know we want them to do? And it isn't ever that that vision was erm was stunted, it was actually that people have really run with it' (Champion, Frances)

Here she echoes the general view that the vision has become a reality, but that perhaps too much may be expected of the APs as indicated by, *'a step too far'.* This reflects the belief that new knowledge has been successfully created and embedded within the organisations involved, but highlights that

161

organisational success may not always be in the best interests of employees. The knowledge management model does not offer analysis of the outcomes of innovation, and so this aspect will be considered through the lens of activity theory.

Outcomes, Sustainability and activity theory

The previous discussion highlighted positive examples of the success of organisations in utilising APs, but this did not seem to be universal;

> *'talking to the APs themselves, who are feeding back to you*
>
> *about their practice and the dilemmas they've got.....some*
>
> *areas APs are welcomed with open arms and are allowed to*
>
> *flourish and in other areas they are virtually throttled and not*
>
> *allowed to function'* (Tutor, Irene)

The tutor presents polarised positions with regard to acceptance of APs as portrayed through the metaphors used in the warmth of the *'open arms',* contrasting with the constraints of being *'virtually throttled'.* This acceptance or otherwise has been perceived through a discourse of 'professional tribalism' as previously noted;

> *'it seems to just be the kind of culture of erm the therapy*
>
> *professions are just a bit more erm territorial maybe about*
>
> *their erm you know and they've got their own protected roles'*
>
> (PT, Ann)

However it was not just therapy staff who were viewed as limiting some of the activities of the APs;

'one of the big problems we have is around the anaesthetists

and allowing the APs to collect from theatre and the only real

reason they can come up with for not letting them is the fact

that they're not registered with anybody' (PT, Geraldine)

This reference to 'registration' relates to the requirement for health professionals to be registered by their own professional bodies which gives them license to practice and dictates their scope of practice. Legitimate claim over professional knowledge and control over professional discourse which maintains boundaries have been discussed in relation to Bernstein's (2000) discourse structures. The history of the NHS provides testimony to the delay involved between a new profession/role being introduced, and a registration body taking responsibility for individuals and controlling the boundary. The APs, being new, are not registered and so have no legitimate claim to their own professional knowledge which affects the attractiveness of the AP role nationally;

'many a trust outside of the north west have said to us well

we'd do that [train APs] but actually there's no national

standard and they're getting everything mixed up. In one

sense you have, you've got a standard level of education

which we hadn't got before' (SHA, Claire)

This statement refers to the fact that there is a recognised educational qualification nationally in the Fd, but that the AP role is not yet recognised in this way. Engeström's (1987, 2001) identification of the 'rules' which govern behaviour within a socio-historical context suggest that it may take considerable time for the APs to be recognised as a distinct professional role. The SHA promised right at the beginning of the project to ensure that the APs would be registered, as they recognised the significance of this in embedding the role. However, this has not happened, which suggests that although the SHA have been powerful in realising the vision regionally, their power has not extended beyond this. Limiting the scope of practice of the AP was not viewed by all as negative;

'it's important for them as well because they shouldn't be abused, they are only being paid a band four and whilst that's a good, a good sort of reward for the post, we don't want to be in this situation where they're really acting as a band six or something and they're only being paid as a band four' (Champion, Frances)

This potential for exploitation of APs expressed by Frances was echoed by some tutors;

'I think there are still fears from other professionals that it's a way of er cheap labour it's nursing on the cheap' (Tutor, Irene)

This certainly puts a different perspective on the hegemony of professional tribalism;

'we live in that era whether we like it or not where they've gotta think about, you know, who performs best and, you know, the assistant practitioner role is about them offering more for less in some ways' (Tutor, Linda)

This raises the issue of the APs as a 'commodity' in the workplace previously discussed. Drawing on Marxist theory, Engeström (1987) makes reference to the 'use value' and 'exchange value' of the labour force within a human activity system. He suggests that internal contradictions arise around the 'price' placed on the utility of labour, and the 'price' it can be exchanged for. This raises the question of whether the utility of APs is high in comparison with their level of remuneration, as indicated in the discourse used by the SHA;

'I think it's just that greater appreciation which means you could potentially have erm some of our hospitals where they've got three or four assistant practitioners where they used to have five or six registered staff at a band 6 doing stuff they're doing' (Champion, Kirstie)

This suggests that the utility value of the APs is indeed high, which leaves questions about the 'exchange value'. A comment in relation to this is made by one of the practice trainers;

'I do think there's still a little bit of erm professional snobbery....one of our students was told if she did a diploma in nursing they'd give her a year off but if she wanted to do the degree they wouldn't and actually the first year of both is exactly the same' (PT, Geraldine)

If the student is not given credit for completing the Fd, but has to start at the beginning of the nursing degree, this indicates that the 'exchange value' of the qualification may not be as high as the 'use value' which has implications for the individuals involved. This will be debated later in the discussion.

Summary

The outcomes of the partnership working demonstrate evidence of successful innovation, which in knowledge management terms suggests that the combination stage has been reached, where new knowledge forms are embedded within the organisations involved. The model indicates the role of the Champion as 'middle manager' in having delegated responsibility to realise the SHA vision in practice, and the later stages in the lifecycle of the partnership suggest a continuing role for Champions. The sustainability of the AP role still seems partly dependent on the Champions spiralling knowledge to other organisations in the region, and possibly nationally. The

166

context seems important in explaining why the role is less successful in some areas than in others. This has been attributed in part to issues of professional and organisational culture which are neglected in knowledge management.

The findings suggest that expansive learning as defined by Engeström (1987, 2001) has occurred, as evidenced by the construction and implementation of qualitatively new ways of functioning in healthcare practice. Expansive learning in the partnership has resulted in expansion of workforce labour in the form of the APs. Many of the APs have the benefit of supportive workplaces where they are exposed to opportunities to extend their identity through crossing occupational boundaries, and are supported in fully developing their knowledge and skills. Others have more restricted environments where there is less boundary crossing and their developing skills are not fully valued. For all of them, lack of registration is identified as a 'rule' governing their behaviour which is problematic to most participants who view registration of APs as desirable. Although this has obvious merit, it could increase the potential for exploitation if it increases the 'use value' of the AP qualification, but does not correspondingly increase the 'exchange value'. Exploring this through activity theory illuminates some of the issues around this, but the power dynamics inherent in discourse structures are not fully developed in the model. The potential limitations of the model highlight the ways in which expansive learning may challenge practice within a socio-historical context, but fails to address the wider infrastructure. This resonates with the description of activity theory as 'non-reformist reform' which involves progression rather than revolution, and which underplays antagonistic relationships (Avis, 2007). If changes in social policy, for example, cause

167

problems in practice, the practitioners may resolve issues through taking on greater workload which may mitigate against the immediate effects, but maintain existing constraints. Activity theory in this instance may provide some type of solution, but does not address underlying problems of power and inequity. Exploring these further through discourse analysis of the focus group may provide greater insight.

Discourse analysis of the focus group

Thematic analysis of the early interview data highlighted the use of language in an explicit sense, but also the tacit messages conveyed through language as discourse (Appendix 7). Gradual appreciation of the work done by discourse in conveying knowledge beyond the explicit message led me to reflect on the role of this in partnership working. Reference has been made to the concept of the 'vision', and the way in which this seemed to emanate from the SHA and filter down through Champions to become shared language in the partnership. This indicated a link between knowledge, discourse and power which is central to the work of Foucault;

> 'The manifest discourse therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this not-said is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said'
> (Foucault, 1972,: 28)

The focus group setting seemed to be the logical place to employ discourse analysis as this group involves participants in a discussion forum in a similar

168

way to the regular partnership meetings. The make-up of the focus group

(Appendix 4) and consequent dynamics have been explained in chapter 8,

and a framework developed by Carabine (2003) has been chosen to guide

this Foucauldian discourse analysis approach. This guide correlates with

Foucault's claim that analysis of discourse,

> '..*is not therefore, an interpretation of the facts of a statement*
>
> *that might reveal them, but the analysis of their co-existence,*
>
> *their succession, their mutual functioning, their reciprocal*
>
> *determination, and their independent correlative*
>
> *transformation'* (1972: 32)

Carrabine (2003) captures these principles well, and this was the only such

guide offered in adopting this type of approach. As discussed in the literature

review, many people who suggest that they are employing Foucauldian

discourse analysis do so in a rather loose sense, which leaves questions of

justification of the claims made. The guide will be used as a 'mediating tool'

in helping me achieve insights beyond those I would be likely to achieve

otherwise, whilst acknowledging that different interpretations may be offered

by others. A summary of the guide followed by an explanation on my

approach to the presentation of the data follows;

1. Select the topic identifying possible sources of data

2. Know your data

3. Identify themes

4. Look for inter-relationships between discourses

5. Identify the discursive strategies and techniques that are employed

6. Look for absences and silences

7. Look for resistances and counter-resistances

8. Provide context

9. Identify the limitations

(Adapted from Carabine, 2003: 281)

Application to the study

1. The topic has been selected as an investigation into the relationship between power and knowledge as manifest through discourse, the interview data has provided some early examples. Links to policy will be made, but the policy itself will not be subject to critical discourse analysis. The focus group transcript and recording are the main sources.

2. The data has been subject to several readings with the audio recording being played alongside it and the transcript has been highlighted and annotated.

3. Two main themes have been chosen as particularly significant; a managerialist discourse and a competing academic discourse. Examples of these will be used for illustration as they emerged in the group.

4. The inter-relationship between discourses will be identified briefly with a more thorough discussion at the end.

5. Discursive techniques and strategies will also be highlighted briefly with further discussion at the end

6. Absences and silences will be noted as appropriate. The symbol (.) indicates a significant pause.

7. Numbering of exchanges will allow reference back to instances of resistances and counter resistances.

8. The context is provided in the introduction.

9. The limitations will be debated in the discussion at the end.

The findings are numbered as 'turns' in accordance with the actual proceedings; the first sample is 'turn 6'. This provides an indication of the context of each contribution in terms of the 'openings' which allow certain discourses to emerge, instances of resistance and counter resistance, and absences. The samples presented have been selected on the basis of being representative of the prevailing discourse forms. An annotated sample of the focus group is provided in Appendix 8.

Evidence of a managerialist discourse has been discussed in relation to the interview findings, together with a clear location of power in the partnership which appeared to rest with the SHA. One of the Champions explains her perception of this,

Turn 6

'for me the original group, a lot of the drive was from one

person, from X [SHA project director], and you almost had to

make a decision that you were (.) either because there

wasn't really another option (laughs), you might as well have

left the room, [......] once you've signed up it's quite

inclusive, and I think there were times I could look around the

table and think the people who were round that table did

change and if there was somebody there who wasn't

inclusive they sort of became excluded. There was that, I

think, there was, I mean you could actually see somebody,

no we don't agree with that and the chair moves back and

the person's not in the dialogue any more' (Champion,

Janice)

The explicit meaning is clear, that the project director was holding the

position of power, *'the drive'* in the group. There appears to be a hesitation

after the *'were'* in line two. This seems to convey that the Champion believes

that the decision to be part of the group involved accepting the authoritative

position of the SHA. She continues with, *'once you've signed up it's quite*

inclusive', which has connotations of a private members club where the

benefits of membership outweigh the 'rules' such as restrictions on speech or

behaviour. This notion seems to be confirmed in, *'the people who were*

round that table did change and if there was somebody there who wasn't

inclusive they sort of became excluded'. This indicates a willingness of

individuals to change in order to conform to what was expected, but the

penalty for non-conformance would be exclusion from the group. The

comment, *'the chair moves back and the person's not in the dialogue any*

more' seems to infer that the Chair of the Champions group, the Project

Director, sat back to dissociate herself from the person's comments or views,

indicating that they were not welcomed in that forum. The recall of this by the Champion from at least five or six years earlier, when the original group was established, indicates its significance. There appears to be a strong link between discourse and non-verbal clues which seem to indicate that these were employed in establishing the position of authority of the Project Director. The response to this contribution came from the SHA representative in the focus group;

> **Turn 7** *"And for sustainability, that, that sort of softening of who that original group was and the breaking down of that is how you then include those people for the sustainability because you've got those early adopters already doing it and championing it and that, that's the bit I suppose that then goes back to sharing that knowledge again.....'* (SHA, Megan)

The immediate justification of *'for sustainability'* and the reference to *'softening'* is interesting from a Foucauldian discourse perspective as it appears to be an attempt to resist and counter the claim of aggression implied in *'a lot of drive from one person, from X'*. The *'softening'* also has connotations of 'softening up' which could be viewed as a subtle form of manipulation. There is mention again of inclusion, *'you then include those people for the sustainability'*, which appears to be justifying the inclusion of only particular people and views in the interests of sustainability of the programme. The participant then seems to suggest that the role of Champion is rewarded by being included in *'sharing that knowledge'*, the link

between knowledge and power implying that the Champions will share some of the power with the SHA as a trade-off for acceptance of their ultimate authority. This appears to be confirmed in the response from the Champion again,

Turn 8 *'Is there another dynamic to that which is about that safeness of the group and that inclusivity because you were in a, almost wherever you were from, you were in a minority going back to your organisation .....if you didn't have that safeness, that comfort, that inclusivity with the group partnership, you wouldn't have been able to have sustained...'* (Champion Janice)

Turn 9 *(Tutor interjects)... ' So you needed your security there of people saying yes this is a good, a good aim (laughs) because when you go into your practice area they go "phroah, what are thinking of, we're not doing that" so you needed that group to be together because that group had to have a very clear vision.....'* (Tutor, Linda*)*

This discourse of vulnerability may indicate that the SHA offered a paternalistic protection to the 'inclusive' group, *'that safeness, that comfort, that inclusivity',* in exchange for acceptance of their dominant position. The repetition of *'safeness'* and *'inclusivity'* from the Champion is quite striking in that she is in a very senior position in a large organisation, but seems to have accepted a rather contrasting, less powerful role in this group. This suggests

174

that the trade-off was worth relinquishing power in this particular forum. The recurrence of the theme of *'the vision'* is also interesting as it comes from a tutor who was not part of this initial Champion's group (Appendix 1) although she did latterly attend meetings. She is clearly familiar with the discourse and uses it as an 'insider' here, and as indicated previously (see p.72). The way in which 'the vision' appears to represent a managerialist discourse which becomes established in the partnership has been discussed in the analysis of the interviews. The *'very clear vision'* implies a very clear vision from the 'top', in other words, the Project Director. There may be different readings of this such as that it could be taken to mean merely an explicit idea, but evidence from the interview data provides support for this interpretation as discussed (p.82)   Other examples of such discourse include reference to *'early adopters'* and *'championing it'*, the latter of course referring to the title of 'Champion'. This form of discourse continues to emerge as noted later;

> **Turn 91** *'from a pragmatic point of view, where if you're*
>
> *short of money, where are you going to develop what's giving*
>
> *you the best value for money and that's where I think the role*
>
> *of the assistant practitioners is about value for money* (SHA,
>
> Megan)

The reference to the APs as being *'value for money'* is clearly an indication of 'value' for the organisation rather than for the individuals concerned. The Champion responds;

Turn 92 *'And I would say we are well ahead of the*

Commissioners, they're behind us in an understanding of

that's what, and if the safe door shuts on them, you know,

how are we going to persuade them, in the short term they

need to invest more in me for a much more expensive

commodity because in the long run it will be cheaper'

(Champion, Janice)

The Champion is referring to the Commissioners of service who must agree to proposals for more APs in a particular practice area before she can proceed with training more APs in the organisation. Although students are generally recruited from the existing workforce and funding comes from the SHA, the APs are promised Band 4 posts on qualification. As they are normally graded at Band 3 beforehand, the organisation must commit to provide extra funding for the Band 4 posts and this must be identified in the projected budget. The Champion is implying that although extra money has to be committed in the short-term, *'they need to invest more'*, that on qualification the APs will provide a service beyond their Band 4 level of pay and so save money in the longer term by providing, *'a much more expensive commodity'.* The previous reference to the APs as *'value for money'* is now supplemented by reference to them as a *'commodity'*, continuing the managerialist theme. It seemed striking that this discourse was not challenged by the university staff, in fact a tutor joined in to air her concerns around funding and future intakes;

Turn 93 *'This is already becoming evident isn't it? From a strategic point of view the development of the role makes perfect sense. On an individual basis and looking at individual budgets, the feedback's coming, we've got a freeze on jobs, we're not taking on new jobs, we've not got the banding money so you are getting a lot of feedback where people are, basically there's panic in the public sector in some ways* (Tutor, Linda)

Through discourse, the tutor is displaying her understanding of the 'commercial decisions' to be made by organisations around investing in the education and training of more APs. She recognizes that in difficult times employers may not be prepared to commit the extra money required for the Band 4 posts when the APs qualify. This of course impacts on the university's student numbers and the future sustainability of the programme. The currency of a dominant managerial discourse and willingness of the university to accept this indicates a 'hegemonic discourse' which Fairclough (2003) asserts relies upon consent to power rather than coercion. It seems likely that this acceptance is probably a key factor in the success of the partnership as I will argue further. A practice trainer joins in to support the tutor;

Turn 94 *'There's a reduction in number of intakes as well, isn't there?'* (PT, Olivia)

The SHA representative tries to reassure the tutor about the sustainability of

the programme by suggesting that the move to an entirely degree level

training for nursing (from the current Diploma level qualification) will help;

> **Turn 95** *'In fact we might actually see a growth in assistant*
>
> *practitioners because of the knock on effect of not being able*
>
> *to train as many registered [nurses] or the introduction of the*
>
> *degree programme for nursing'* (SHA, Megan)

The continuation of managerialist discourse is evident in the Champion's

response;

> **Turn 96** *'where can I pitch my business for assistant*
>
> *practitioners and already you know I'm thinking in two years*
>
> *time I might be delivering very intense end of life care, cos*
>
> *there's a gap in the market, it sounds awful doesn't it talking*
>
> *about it like a market....'* (Champion, Janice)

This fairly long episode of reducing education to an instrumentalist discourse,

and commodification of APs, is followed by some attempt to resist this,

probably allowed permissible by the Champion's self-awareness and

reflection indicated by, *'it sounds awful, doesn't it'*;

> **Turn 97** *'I think you can't underestimate the change the*
>
> *Foundation degreehas on the individual because actually a*
>
> *lot of the time now with our staff who have gone through the*

Fd, throw anything at them now, it's like oh yeah (.) I think it

is a good way in that it does change, they have specialisms,

actually it's the way it changes the person that's more

special' (PT, Hannah)

The practice trainer seems keen to point out a function of education beyond

serving the needs of the economy in '*it's the way it changes the person that's*

more special' and this thread is picked up by one of the tutors;

Turn 98 *'And education should be transformative and that's*

why it's important and it's education not training and there

needs to be a clear distinction between what counts as

training and what counts as education' (Tutor, Diana)

This emergence of an academic discourse which resists the managerialist

discourse, and the debate over, '*it's education not training'* relates very

closely to the discussion over the 'object' of activity in the interview findings.

This highlighted potentially competing objects in, '*the academic framework*'

and '*the skilled competent worker'*. The tutor indicates that education has a

purpose and offers benefits beyond that of training, although in reality the two

are often used interchangeably by policy makers. The discourse of

education as *transformative* is associated with the utopian ideals promoted

by Freire (1972) concerning education and empowerment, and which have

influenced the debate around the purpose of education. This debate

encapsulates the moral purpose of education in transforming the individual,

as a part of societal change which seeks to produce a free and fair society.

Jarvis (2007) supports Freire's ideals and contrasts this with training as part of a lifelong learning 'employability' agenda, which focuses on socio-economic ends and expansion of labour, rather than on achievement of personal potential (p.47). The association of professional learning with simply expansion of labour capacity is criticized by Avis (2007) as an aim of activity theory. This issue seemed so salient to the partnership that I asked whether other people agreed with the point made about the distinction between education and training. This resulted in a series of comments concerning the perceived value of the programme for the APs;

Turn 100 *'Yeah, yeah, well what I was sort of saying was I suppose, it's developed them as people so they're willing to take on anything, they're happy'* (PT, Hannah)

The reference to personal development and being *'willing'* and *'happy'*, could be viewed as being pacified, or alternatively may fit within an academic discourse concerned with self-fulfillment, as interpreted by the next contribution from a tutor;

Turn 101 *'they've become more confident, they're able to think on a different level aren't they, that's the thing about it, it's that thing again about they may have been doing things in their old role that they never questioned but maybe they should have been questioning it and that's the difference. You know if you're a more questioning practitioner, then in*

effect you know what you shouldn't be doing as well' (Tutor,

Linda*)*

Although there is reference to the students becoming more critical and questioning, it raises the issue of what may be 'ruled in' and 'ruled out' as legitimate questions. What seems to be considered 'allowable' is linked back to managerial concerns about the workplace in the, *'questioning practitioner',* rather than more radical concerns. This theme is picked up shortly afterwards by the SHA participant;

> **Turn 103** *'And I think there's a clear distinction isn't there between people doing tasks that they can repeat and do to a standard that is seen as appropriate from a practical point of view to actually understand (.) It's not just about teaching people to do more skills, it's about the understanding of the knowledge that is needed to understand what that skill is that you're doing and maybe have done for years, to a very high standard, but understanding why you're doing it so that you can progress them up, this vision of a career framework.....* *the Foundation degree does do that and it does give people that'* (SHA, Megan)

The distinction the SHA participant now appears to make is not between education and training as emphasized by the tutor earlier, but between adequate training implied in *'to a standard that is seen as appropriate'* and good training in, *'understanding of the knowledge that is needed to*

understand what that skill is that you're doing'. The vision of the benefits of

the Fd is espoused as reaching a higher level on the 'career framework',

again linked back to socio-economic interests, rather than a higher level of

personal fulfillment. From a Foucauldian perspective, there seems to be an

attempt to resist this discourse with the reappearance of a competing

academic discourse,

Turn 104 *'being a better worker's one thing but it's not just*

about that is it, it's about being a person who can see

themselves in a different position in society' (Tutor, Linda)

On listening again to the focus group and reading the transcript over, it does

seem to me that this liberal educational discourse became legitimate once

one of the more powerful participants, the Champion, provided a cue which

allowed this to occur. This was noted (turn 96) when the champion

demonstrates self-awareness of the managerial discourse in, *'it sounds awful*

doesn't it talking about it like a market 'and the practice trainer follows with

'it's the way it changes the person that's more special (turn 97). The debate

raised over pedagogic identity may be contextualized in relation to the

pedagogical identity of the institution in which the Fd is based. Bernstein

(2000) refers to *'official knowledge'* which is *'the educational knowledge*

which the state constructs and distributes through educational institutions' (p.

65). He describes this as constructing different pedagogic identities (of both

staff and students) in response to changes resulting from curriculum reform.

He compares elite universities which develop inwardly driven pedagogic

identities, essentially based on their past culture and practice, to those of

non-elite universities, as typified by that in the case study, who are more likely to develop pedagogic identities which are externally driven by responding to local markets. It is of course non-elite universities who have embraced the concept of Fds (Edwards and Coffield, 2007) which epitomize the tension between 'education and training' or, as Bernstein suggest 'the pedagogic schizoid position' (2003: 71). This may explain the apparent reluctance of tutors to challenge the commodification of the APs through a managerialist discourse. It is likely that just as Champions appeared to accept the powerful position of the SHA as a trade-off for other benefits, as discussed previously, the tutors appear to accept a managerialist discourse as trade-off for student numbers.

Later in the focus group there is evidence of the APs themselves 'finding a voice' in asserting their own position. This is explained by one of the Champions;

> **Turn 123** *'the early ones qualifying, the health and social*
>
> *care organisations were not ready for them. Now, again, that*
>
> *was another of X's [SHA Project Director] theories, we're*
>
> *doing it and we'll break the obstacles down when we get*
>
> *there and if you tried to break the obstacles down first they're*
>
> *probably too big to do, so we did end up with a couple of*
>
> *cohorts who were acting as basic grade social care workers*
>
> *(.) They hated it. Three of them ganged up and I had a*
>
> *grievance, a formal grievance, "well you've given us this*

training"; they came in and they played absolute merry hell\!'

(Champion, Janice)

The reference to '*not being ready for them'* refers to having an AP role 'on paper' but the APs not being able to perform the job in practice because the organisation had not sufficiently reconfigured the rest of the workforce around them. At the end of the Fd this group of qualified APs were clearly frustrated by still performing their previous roles. The Champion interprets the complaint from the APs as '*ganging up'*, a discourse with negative connotations which undermines this as a legitimate challenge. The validity of the AP position is supported by one of the tutors;

Turn 124 *'Good for them!'* (Tutor, Diana)

But the Champion resists this validation of the AP position and again tries to justify the organisation's position;

Turn 125 '*But trying to explain to them that behind the scenes people were working very hard to make the two organisations ready for them, "get lost, we're not bothered, we're bothered about us". We had to put some reins on them at that time (.) the other thing that I was conscious of was some of them they came out and immediately wanted to do everything they've been trained to do and I never did that, none of us did, and it was like saying hang on, there won't*

be the opportunity for all those things all the time, there won't

be' (Champion, Janice)

The reference to *'put some reins on'* again resonates with a managerialist discourse in contrast to empowering individuals through education. Although the dominance of the managerial/business discourse has the potential to construct the AP role in a particular way, this is being resisted to some extent through the academic discourse employed by tutors and practice trainers. Reference to the AP voice has been made, and clearly there is evidence here of their resistance to powerful structures. This resonates with Engeström's (2007) comment that *'objects resist and bite back, they seem to have lives of their own'*, (p.204). This insightful comment suggests that the AP as potentially the 'object', emerges here as a subject with a voice to add to the multi-voicedness of the activity system. It contrasts to some degree with some of Engeström's (1987, 2001) earlier work which tends to 'objectify' patients as discussed in chapter 5. The significance of the AP voice will be debated with regard to implications for professional practice and future work.

Limitations to the focus group findings

The findings have been interpreted from my 'inside researcher' position which provides the benefit of having actually witnessed the dialogue, listened to the recordings and read the transcript several times. This has sensitised me to a number of issues but has probably de-sensitized me to other discourse structures which would be of interest to an outsider. Undoubtedly, there is an element of researcher reflexivity where participants have been

185

careful of what they say in front of the others. There were certainly more candid observations on power relationships made in the tutor interviews than in the focus group. The tutor, Linda, who was quite explicit about the powerful position of the SHA in her interview (p.69), was clearly reticent to express this view in the focus group. It is quite likely that the tutors were sensitive to discussing power and upsetting the SHA member present when there is a reliance on their funding. Participants may also have been sensitive to me in their responses as remarks made concerning the Fd in both the interviews and focus group were overwhelmingly positive.

The type of discourse analysis conducted has also influenced the interpretation of the data. Had a non-Foucauldian critical discourse analysis approach been adopted, the whole interaction may have been considered simply as the university, and to a lesser extent, the Champions, being oppressed by a more powerful partner in the SHA. However, the Foucauldian approach has enabled a more finely-tuned analysis in examining the ways in which power is both exerted and resisted, and the acceptance of power in some circumstances as a trade-off for other benefits. By adhering closely to the words of the participants, and trying to provide a 'rich description' of the circumstances I am hopeful that my interpretation will stand up to scrutiny by others. However, analysing the focus group through the lens of activity theory, in addition to the discourse analysis approach may have been of value in considering the workplace as underprepared for the AP role in the early days. The particular emphasis on divisions of labour and resulting inner contradictions in the activity system may have revealed further

insights which it has not been possible to develop within the scope of this study, but may be in future work.

Chapter 10   Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the evidence presented and the extent to which the data addresses the questions, grounded within the context of the literature review. The discussion will address each question in turn in the light of the main conceptual frameworks employed. The implications for educational theory, policy and practice will be debated, and a reflection on the research process and my personal development as a researcher will be included. Finally, the potential for future research in the field will be considered.

Evidence to address RQ 1

In what ways might partnership working in the study be viewed as a process of knowledge creation and transformation?

- *Does this have features in common with knowledge management as proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)?*
- *Does this have features in common with other models of knowledge creation and expansion such as activity theory (Engeström, 1987, 2001)?*

The findings presented suggest that the partnership working may justifiably be viewed as a process of knowledge creation as a new AP role has emerged which embodies the knowledge created and transformed through

collaboration. The partnership has continued to generate knowledge which has transformed the Fd curriculum, tailoring it to meet the needs of employers, and to develop the new role in a range of different practice settings. The latter has been created from an abstract concept to a job description which informs the roles and responsibilities of the APs. Partnership working involves a dialectic relationship in which emerging practice knowledge informs the Fd curriculum, which in turn transforms the practice area through the work of the APs themselves. This is evident in the example of the development of a new competency framework which has transformed the curriculum, and new roles which have transformed local health and social care provision. The knowledge generated has permeated beyond the partnership as the AP role, underpinned by the Fd curriculum, has extended to organisations beyond the original 'project' partner. The extent to which the processes involved have features in common with the knowledge management and activity theory models will be considered.

Knowledge management

The stages in the knowledge spiral developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have been identified in the data, with socialisation, the sharing of tacit knowledge emerging as particularly significant. The findings suggest that the stages of knowledge conversion do not occur in isolation, but often simultaneously, with overlap between them. This is evidenced by the example of the SHA sharing explicit knowledge about the AP role with the Champions group, whilst also sharing tacit knowledge about their authoritative position as 'leaders' of that group. In his limited analysis of

knowledge management Engeström (2007) also concluded that the stages do not occur in a sequential fashion. This indicates that the knowledge management model is perhaps too instrumentalist in representing complex dynamic processes in a simple framework of stages. This may alternatively reflect a contextual difficulty in that Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) studies involve perhaps less diverse corporate teams rather than the complexity of a multi-organisational, multi-professional partnership. It may also be because the data analysis has not been sufficiently fine tuned to identify the knowledge spiral sequence as suggested by the authors.

The evidence does support Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) description of conditions for sharing tacit knowledge which has particular value for the partnership. These conditions, such as investment in opportunities for both formal and informal contact, allow trusting relationships to develop which seem conducive to sharing tacit knowledge and are congruent with wider evidence on effective partnerships (Huxham and Vangen, 2007; Dhillon, 2009). The importance of questioning existing practice in seeking new and innovative solutions seems an important feature of innovation, but this is overlooked by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). This may be for cultural reasons in that questioning existing practice may be viewed as 'criticism' in Japanese culture where traditionally this has not been encouraged (Kondo, 1990). Consequently, Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) assume ownership of innovation by corporate management, and there is evidence in the partnership that the SHA has adopted a managerialist position in owning the 'vision'.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) are particularly concerned with corporate organisations, and although the context of the partnership is the public sphere, the model has been useful in drawing parallels between the two. The partnership has been led by the SHA as part of the modernising the NHS agenda (DH, 1998) with a remit to reconfigure roles within the NHS and deliver more 'patient-centred' healthcare. Exploring the partnership through the lens of knowledge management has sensitised me to parallels between the business context and the managerial approach which the SHA appear to have adopted. A corporate top-down approach seems apparent in the way in which they have developed a vision, and appointed 'Champions' in each of the organisations as a 'middle management' layer, responsible for realising the vision. Despite the framework for the Fd curriculum having been developed before the partnership was formed, the findings suggest that the SHA were keen to promote the model as an 'employer-led' Fd and to assume 'ownership' of it.

The Champions' group has been central to sharing both tacit and explicit knowledge in relation to the corporate vision, and some of this work seems to have been achieved through discourse. Collins (2010) describes education as 'socialisation into tacit ways of thinking and doing', and this resonates with the partnership working as a process of socialisation where a new discourse has become internalised by participants. Although the knowledge management model pays no attention to discourse, the prevalence of a managerial discourse identified in the focus group indicates a partnership driven by capitalist concerns rather than utopian ideals. The knowledge management model has been useful in highlighting this value base, and the

focus on tacit knowledge indicates how this may be conveyed through discourse, despite the lack of attention paid to power dynamics in the model.

Activity theory

Engeström's (1987, 2001) approach provides a different perspective in considering partnership working across organisations, with a knowledge creation model based on more democratic principles. Activity theory highlights knowledge creation as a political process, influenced by status and hierarchies within a socio-historical context. Two initial activity systems have been identified; one concerning a vision for the AP role and the other involving development of the Fd curriculum. Engeström (1987, 2001) highlights the importance of questioning existing practice as the first stage in knowledge creation, and this stage has been clearly identified in each. The original curriculum model has continued to be transformed through feedback and evaluation which is congruent with expansive learning in modeling potential solutions, and then making revisions through new cycles of activity.

Engeström (1987, 2001) describes the role of mediating tools in reducing the zone of proximal development which helps to achieve the object of activity. The practice trainers seem to have been central to the mediating process by bringing the tools of specialist knowledge and expertise available to them in building bridges at the boundaries. In this way they have spanned boundaries between professional cultures and between the university and work practice settings. This has at times caused discomfort in dealing with different professional and organisational 'voices' which have a stake in

supporting or hindering development of the AP role. Engeström's (1987,

2001) model is useful in highlighting how voices reflect divisions of labour

within the activity system, and the written and unwritten rules of practice

which control them.

Exploring the first of these points brings into focus the part played by different

professional groups and cultures in shaping the AP role. These groups do

not all have an equal voice; the SHA has been identified as having a powerful

voice in conveying a 'strategic *health* vision' (SHA, Megan), despite the role

being promoted as providing 'patient centred health *and* social care'. There

is evidence that this voice has been resisted by social care partners who

have 'reinforced the social aspect' (Champion, Janice) of the role. Exploring

this within a socio-historical context brings to the fore a historical approach to

care which has been dominated by a 'medical model' of health (Francis and

Humphries, 2002), and which has been challenged in more recent times

(Cheek, 2003). It is perhaps ironic that the AP was promoted as a generic

model which 'joined up' heath and social care services but which could have

replicated existing divisions. Engeström (2001) identifies contradictions in an

activity system such as these as a stimulus to new knowledge. Participants

report greater understanding of the social care contribution, and development

of the AP role has taken account of this, which seems congruent with

expansive learning as a feature of the partnership.

Discourse

Other dissenting voices, those of registered professional groups such as nurses, midwives and Allied Health Professionals, have been reported as presenting opposition to the introduction of the APs. In most cases these voices seem to have been viewed through a hegemonic discourse of 'professional tribalism' and thereby have been reduced in effect to one voice which is perceived as 'protecting its own interests' (SHA, Claire). The context within which this has occurred seems to be operating at two levels; firstly, the historical development of health and social care services demonstrates the emergence of professions with distinct identities, founded on a professional knowledge base which is protected through managing the borders (Bernstein, 2000). These are controlled through a process of regulation, where only those registered to practice as part of the profession are allowed to carry out particular tasks and responsibilities. In more recent history, health and social care services have become more market driven and governments have sought to reduce the power of the professions through policy measures (Fairclough, 2003). This is manifest through a more managerial approach to health and social care practice, with managers being appointed from outside of the professions. The SHA has emerged as a body which is outside of the professions, but which has responsibility for commissioning practitioners and for 'workforce development'. Opposition to the AP role seems to have been constructed within a hegemonic discourse of professional tribalism as a consequence, masking potentially legitimate concerns. Furthermore, the SHA appear to have adopted a corporate

approach in strongly influencing the direction of development of the AP role, and of the Fd curriculum, and assuming ownership of the innovation.

Evidence to address RQ 2

The second research question considers the value of the models of knowledge creation for the partnership and its longer-term sustainability. This section similarly deals with each conceptual framework in turn.

What value might the models of knowledge creation have for the learning partnership?

- *Are there particular features of the partnership and its context which have influenced the knowledge creation process?*
- *How might this impact on the long-term sustainability of the partnership?*

Knowledge management

The findings suggest that the knowledge management model has value in highlighting the role of tacit knowledge in the partnership as a site of learning where new knowledge is created. The sustainability of the programme is evidence of embedding of this knowledge in new educational and healthcare practices, and further continuation of the knowledge spiral. The knowledge management model has been developed partly as a strategy for organisations to embed knowledge to guard against the loss of key

195

personnel. In the rationale concerns were expressed about the consequence of changes in personnel in the partnership, and how these might impact on sustainability. The findings suggest that now the combination stage has been reached, the embedded systems and processes have allowed survival of the partnership beyond the life of the individuals concerned. The lifecycle stages of the partnership reveal a smaller SHA and a changing role. Now that the initial vision has been realized, the work continues through the Champions who have become the voice for dissemination of the innovation to others beyond the partnership. This indicates future sustainability, although of course wider external factors may impact on this. The knowledge management model is not helpful in highlighting other potential threats to sustainability beyond the question of changes in the personnel involved. Consideration of threats to personnel in sharing their knowledge for the good of the organisation, with their own jobs becoming more vulnerable, is completely absent from the model. Activity theory has the potential to scrutinize issues of power and how these may influence longer-term relationships.

Activity theory

The findings suggest that the voice of the SHA has grown quieter as the initial work in driving the development has been done, and the remaining stakeholders have established relatively enduring relationships. Activity theory does not take full account of the wider structural issues which impact on activity systems and which may have the ultimate say in their future. For example, pressure in the NHS budget is likely to reduce the funding for

supporting the work-based learning of the APs which could threaten sustainability, despite the value of the role in practice and the value for the individuals themselves. Furthermore, a likely increase in tuition fees and reduction on higher education funding may impact negatively on the numbers of students able to enroll on the Fd. Activity theory offers no radical solution to this type of political problem. The powerful voice of the SHA has been revealed to be limited to a geographical region, and to have been powerless in changing the 'rules' governing professions, which to some extent limits the activity of APs. Despite the promise of registration for the qualified APs, this has never been achieved and is viewed by many people to be restricting. However, there are also concerns over potential exploitation of APs as the evidence suggests that their 'use value' as a 'commodity' in the workplace is exceeding the 'exchange value' of the Fd qualification. Activity theory has been useful in highlighting this tension by focusing on divisions of labour, and the rules governing it, which illuminate these aspects of the partnership outcomes. In order to consider more fully the role of power in the production of knowledge discourse analysis has been employed as a further tool.

Discourse

Adopting a Foucauldian discourse analysis approach to the focus group has revealed the dominance of a managerial discourse which is being resisted through a less powerful academic voice. This has implications for the outcomes for the APs and the extent to which their development is merely an expansion of labour, which has socio-economic benefits for a capitalist system, or is an expansion of the person beyond existing borders. Activity

theory promises enlightenment of these wider issues in its Marxist underpinnings, but falls short of realising them. The academic voice of resistance seeks to expand the borders for the APs in promising personal development and self-fulfillment, but is somewhat constrained at times. Despite this, the findings indicate that the academic voice is productive in empowering the APs to find their own voice. In Engeström's (2007) words 'objects resist and bite back, they seem to have lives of their own' (2007: 204). Undoubtedly the views of the APs themselves on their education and training, and the value this brings to them in the workplace and beyond, will have an important bearing on how they promote the course to others.

Implications for educational theory, policy and professional practice

Educational theory

The case study is unique in applying knowledge management to an employer-education Fd partnership, and highlighting the similarities between this public sector collaboration, and the corporate environments which are the basis for Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) empirical work. The findings support aspects of the knowledge creation stages identified in the model, particularly highlighting the value of sharing tacit knowledge and the conditions under which this is likely to be successful. Others question the possibility of making tacit knowledge explicit (Eraut, 2000; Little and Ray, 2006; Tsoukas, 2003), but some supporting evidence has been provided in the case study. Although the context differs from those on which the knowledge management model is based, parallels have been drawn. These indicate how the partnership has been driven by a 'corporate vision', and HE co-opted as a low level player within a hierarchical structure, adding weight to concerns over the 'marketisation' of Higher Education (Hartley, 2007). These aspects of partnership working have implications regarding the purpose of higher education, control over it, and implementation of educational policy.

Current policy seems to be driving higher education provision towards the short-term needs of employers according to market forces. Corporations have the explicit purpose of making profit from commodities, with the value of employees being judged on the extent to which they support this aim. The public sector in the UK has traditionally been based on a democracy which

seeks to serve the needs of people above the needs of business. However, these values are rapidly changing in an era when the 'values of global capitalism reign' (Jarvis, 2007, p.33), but higher education should be the last bastion for questioning these values through the encouragement of critical thinking which goes beyond existing Market needs. Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) model is explicitly capitalist and aims to protect the company's interests, potentially at the expense of those of the employees. The model does not theorise labour relations or competing interests, but by this very omission these issues become apparent.

Activity theory is concerned with divisions of labour and is rooted in a far more democratic ideology. The model highlights how divisions of labour in the partnership are identified through professional roles and hierarchies which shape the 'object' of the activity, in this case the AP role, which of course, impacts on the APs themselves. Activity theory illustrates the value of contradictions in the model in stimulating expansive learning, which takes the partnership through further activity cycles. This study is original in applying activity theory to an NHS employer-education partnership, and in identifying individuals with a specific role in 'mediating' between the two interacting activity systems; the practice trainers. The analysis of this role demonstrates their effectiveness in 'knotworking' (Engeström, 2007) at the boundaries of professional cultures and organisations, which will be of value to other Fds and similar vocational provision.

Activity theory highlights different voices in the activity system, but arguably employing a discourse analysis approach allows a greater focus on power

relations. Daniels (2010) considers the value of a Bernsteinian approach to analysing discourse in activity systems, exploring subject positions and identity, but recognizing that there is further work required. This study is unique in employing a Foucaldian discourse analysis approach to expose the multi-voicedness of participants, and to examine more closely how power is produced and resisted. This reveals a competing discourse through a powerful managerialist voice and a resisting, but less powerful, academic discourse, which posits partnership working as a series of 'trade-offs'. In this case the SHA provide funding to both the university and healthcare organisations but with conditions and expectations attached. The Champions appear to have relinquished some power to the SHA for paternalistic protection, and for the delegated authority which the SHA provide, and which may bring benefits within their own organisations. The university has relinquished some power over its own academic provision as a trade-off for the funding of student fees by the SHA. The analysis also highlights the ways in which the AP role is constructed as the 'object' of the activity through the discourse of others, which may have implications for APs themselves and will be discussed in relation to practice implications.

Policy

The study has added to evidence which highlights the challenges of partnership working often overlooked by policy imperatives promoting this in the public sector. It adds to the existing empirical work on Fds through a study of a long running programme, one which has the desired relationship with employers which is at the heart of policy (QAA, 2005). The findings

demonstrate the resource-intensive nature of successful partnership working, and the need to avoid any sudden withdrawal in funding to ensure sustainability. Moreover, the success of this partnership has been attributed in part to the trade-off made by the university in accepting a subordinate relationship with employers in exchange for this funding. In the context of Maton's (2005) analysis of the HE field this reveals a reluctance to challenge openly the managerialist discourse which prevails in the partnership. This appears to stem from the university position as a non-elite provider of higher education provision which has a relatively weak 'relational autonomy', (Maton, 2005), and so is more easily inculcated with economic and commercial values. This suggests that the current policy emphasis on employer-education partnerships impacts particularly on non-elite universities, and sustains the previous binary divisions between polytechnics and universities (Ainley, 2005). I would argue that non-elite universities are well-placed to deliver high quality vocational higher education, and that this can also be transformative. Education policy should reflect the value of this type of provision for students, and for the economy, by providing preferential funding. Fd students are more likely than others to be mature learners who study part-time and continue to work and contribute to the economy as students (Harvey, 2009). Policy makers should recognize this and provide more generous funding which would allow greater autonomy for the university to deliver the curriculum and would reduce the level of dependence on employers. This would allow the institution to provide vocational higher education grounded in academic values, without relinquishing control to employers. This would mean that the high percentage of 'widening participation' students who are likely to attend this type of institution are not

only prepared for employment, but are also exposed to a transformative higher educational experience.

Practice

Firstly, the findings from the study are meaningful for other practitioners engaged in Fd delivery in highlighting the conditions which have made the partnership successful over a relatively long period. The initial investment of time and energy in fostering relationships has produced benefits in sustainability, but this has been resource intensive. The study has demonstrated the value of the role of the practice trainer in mediating in these relationships and supporting students in the workplace, and I would recommend inclusion of this role in similar provision. Practitioners should be able to argue for these resources as a pre-requisite to engaging with employers in a meaningful way, if they are to tailor curriculum requirements to their needs and have sustained provision.

Secondly, the study has raised my awareness of the complexity of power dynamics, and the way in which this has been revealed through the various trade-offs involved in the partnership. This has ultimately had implications for the APs themselves with some of them now performing the roles of registered professionals, without equivalent status or remuneration. This not only suggests that they may currently be exploited, but also that the qualifications of the registered professional staff may be devalued. My concern for continuing funding from the SHA and support from the Trusts made me reluctant to challenge this situation. Although I am no longer

involved in the partnership, I feel that I should raise this issue through dissemination of the findings to the partnership, and to the wider academic community. I would hope to support registration for APs which would accord them status to justify an increase in remuneration where appropriate, and would enable them to progress more smoothly up the career ladder. There is clearly an ethical balance to be struck between 'respect for truth and democracy and respect for persons' (Bassey, 1999) in addressing inequity, but avoiding harm in the process. Dissemination of evidence needs a sensitive approach which seeks to avoid harm, but challenges the current situation in the spirit of democracy.

Finally, I intend to promote the value of activity theory as both a methodological approach, and a tool for analysis of collaborative endeavour in higher education where it is not as yet widely utilised. There is considerable scope for application not only in Fds and other vocational education, but in professional programmes where working across boundaries is essential. However, I have become aware of the potential 'objectification' of APs in the study which has sensitized me to a similar issue in current applications of activity theory where recipients of services may be objectified.

Reflections

I have taken a long 'research journey' which started during my Masters in Education study when my interest in knowledge creation developed. I was particularly struck with the knowledge management model and the opportunities it seemed to offer in understanding of the process of innovation

in the learning partnership in which I was involved. Although initially I found Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) insights into tacit knowledge very helpful, with further reading, the context of their empirical studies seemed greatly at odds with a public sector partnership. However, as I researched other models of knowledge creation and began to explore activity theory, differences in power between the stakeholder organisations became more apparent. The partnership context seemed to resonate with the corporate environments explored in knowledge management, revealing the position of the SHA as a very powerful one. Although I had been aware of this, listening to participants made me reflect on the ways in which this power was conveyed through tacit knowledge, embedded in discourse and symbols. The role of the Champions in being subject to this power, but appearing to accept it as a trade-off for paternalistic protection and a share in it, fascinated me. This sensitised me to the competing voices who opposed the introduction of the AP role and they way in which they seemed to be rendered non-legitimate through a hegemonic discourse of 'professional tribalism'.

In my role as a very 'inside insider' during the study I accepted much of the discourse of 'professional tribalism' at face value. On exploring discourse theory and taking a critical stance on what was being said, I began to consider other interpretations of this resistance. Towards the end of the data collection period I secured a new post at another university, removed from any involvement in Fds. This was valuable in providing distance to reflect on the partnership and to take a more critical approach. The experience of becoming an 'outsider' in a new work environment and becoming entrenched in a new academic and new professional discourse in an 'elite' university was

enlightening. I developed greater understanding of the perspective of participants who described their discomfort in feeling 'outsiders' in a different professional culture, and the feelings of powerlessness which accompany this. I became much more acutely aware of the power conveyed through the discourse, and the way in which this support the maintenance of hierarchies. This enabled me to develop greater critical insights into the power dynamics in the partnership and to understand the implications in the context of policy and practice.

The research process has also raised my awareness of the power dynamics between the researcher and 'researched'. During the initial data collection this was intensified as I had a management responsibility for some participants. I noted in my research diary that after interviews with a couple of university tutors that they spontaneously mentioned in conversation feeling a little anxious before the interview, but relaxing after the first few minutes. This was reassuring. By the time I conducted the focus group I had moved post which reduced the power imbalance to some extent. I was more concerned about the power balance in the focus group between participants, especially between the less powerful practice trainers and champions. I noted in my research diary that one practice trainer was very quiet during the focus group and when chatting to her later she confirmed that she was reluctant to speak too openly with the Champion present, who was the senior manager in her organisation. On reflection I should have considered this more fully in advance and arranged it differently.

At the end of the data collection period I was invited back to a meeting at the university to present the findings to the tutors and practice trainers. I provided an overview of the findings and was pleased to note that they enjoyed discussing them and confirmed my interpretation. They particularly noted the increasing numbers of APs who seemed now to be used as a 'replacement' for higher grade qualified nursing staff. They also confirmed the power dynamics between the SHA, the Champions and the university and expressed their views on this more strongly than in the focus group. Despite my critique of the marketisation of HE and the relative 'powerlessness' of the university in the partnership, I feel that the Fd has value in offering opportunities to students which they would not otherwise have had. There are many success stories of the APs in practice which testify to their increased confidence, skills and expanded role which has brought benefits to patients. Many have also progressed to degree level study and to the health professions which they would have been unlikely to do without the qualifictaion.

Future research

I would be keen to explore the outcomes as experienced by the APs themselves which would provide a further perspective. In addition, in my current role I am likely to have the opportunity to utilise the activity theory framework in medical education. Many of the principles in the study concerning partnership working and the challenge of developing workplace learning in multiprofessional settings apply here too. There is potential for utilising activity theory as an interventionist methodology in this area and

linking this to discourse analysis. There is clearly much potential for this to contribute to new knowledge in medical education where theoretical perspectives from the social science field are not as yet very well-embedded. Bringing these further into medical education would hopefully benefit professional practice and consequently bring benefit to patients.

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APPENDIX 1   ORGANISATIONAL CHART

Steering Group
NHS Hospital Trust
Chair Champion
Nursing & AHP
Leads, Managers,
SHA, PT, Link tutor,
HR, Finance, Union

Steering Group
NHS Hospital Trust
Chair Champion
Nursing &, AHP
Leads, Managers,
PT, Link tutor, SHA,
HR, Finance, Union

Steering Group
Social Care
Chair Champion,
Managers, Nursing
& AHP Leads, PT,
Link tutor, SHA, HR,
Finance, Union

Champions group
Chair Project
Director
Attended by
Champions, SHA,
University Prog
Leader

Steering Group
(PCT)
Chair Champion
Managers, Nursing
Lead, AHP Lead,
PT, Link tutor, SHA,
HR, Finance, Union

Steering Group
NHS Hospital Trust
Chair Champion
Nursing &, AHP
Leads, Managers,
PT, Link tutor, SHA,
HR, Finance, Union

Steering Group
(PCT)
Chair Champion
Managers, Nursing
&, AHP Lead, SHA
PT, Link tutor, HR,
Finance, Union

Course Committee
University
University Programme
Leader (Chair)
Attended by tutors, Practice
Trainers, Champion Rep,
SHA Rep, Student Reps

SHA team - Project Director & Project
Managers
Champions - senior managers in NHS Trusts,
Primary Care Trusts or Social Service orgs.
Practice Trainers (PTs)- registered health or
social care professionals seconded to the
university, normally for two years, to support the
learners on the foundation degree programme.

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APPENDIX 2

Participant Information Sheet

You are invited to take part in a study with regard to the delivery of the
Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care and the training of Assistant
Practitioners. Please read the information carefully before deciding whether
or not you wish to participate. A consent form is enclosed with this
information.

Part 1 of this information sheet explains the purpose of the study.
Part 2 explains in more detail how the study is being conducted.

Part 1

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is being undertaken as part of a Professional Doctorate in
Education with the title as follows:

**'Knowledge management processes across a learning partnership
between education and the NHS in the delivery of a Foundation Degree
(FdA): A Case Study'[1]**

The study aims to investigate the process of knowledge management in
relation to the learning partnership which has been established in the delivery
of the Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care to train Assistant
Practitioners.

Why have I been invited to take part?

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[1] Note that the title has now been abbreviated to a more concise form

You have been invited to participate as a member of one of the key stakeholder groups; namely university staff, Champions, SHA staff and practice trainers.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the study is voluntary. You have been asked because of the knowledge you have shared in developing the Foundation Degree and the training of Assistant Practitioners which is of value to the study. However, it is up to you to decide whether or not you would like to participate. Once you have read the enclosed information you will be asked to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

If I agree to take part what will be involved?

The involvement required is for an interview lasting approximately one hour. This will be arranged at your own convenience. Following this some participants, a sample of people from each of the stakeholder groups, will be invited to take part in a focus group lasting approximately two hours. The interviews and focus group will be audio-taped where participants agree to this. If you decide to withdraw following the interview or focus group your consent will be sought to use any of the information provided.

Will I be paid for any expenses incurred?

Where possible, the timing of the interview will be organised to coincide with meetings already occurring at the University. Where any expenses are incurred, travel, meals, loss of earnings and any other expenses will be reimbursed.

What are the potential benefits for me and other participants?

The benefits are that the findings from the study will be used to strengthen the partnership working and inform developments in the curriculum for the training of Assistant Practitioners. Participants will be afforded the time for personal reflection on their role within the partnership. It is hoped that the knowledge gained could be of use to inform similar work including the training of Advanced Practitioners.

What are the possible disadvantages or any risks in taking part?

The study is unlikely to have any disadvantages for participants as it is very much focussed on curriculum issues and sharing information. Confidentiality will be maintained and anonymity preserved as far as possible. This will be further explained in Part 2.

What if any problems arise?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any concerns will be given in more detailed information in Part 2.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Notes and recordings from interviewees will be anonymised. Interviewees will not be named but will be given a code known only to myself as the researcher. I will personally conduct the interviews and focus group and I will be the only person who has access to the data. Confidentiality will be ensured through adherence to the Data Protection Act (1998). Anonymity will be guaranteed as far as possible. Further details are provided in Part 2.

If you think you might like to take part please read through the further information in Part 2 before signing the consent form.

Part 2

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time and do not have to provide any reason for doing so. Your consent will be sought to use any information already provided.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information collected from your interview will be kept confidential. Notes and recordings from the interviews and focus group will be anonymised. Interviewees will not be named but will be given a code known only to myself as the researcher. I will personally conduct the interviews and focus group and I will be the only person who has access to the data.

- You will have the right to see any notes made from your own interview. Confidentiality will be ensured through adherence to the Data Protection Act (1998).

- Audio tapes and notes from interviews and the focus group will be stored securely at the university.

- Electronic data in the form of word-processed accounts of interviews and the focus group will be stored in electronic files on a secure area of the university intranet. Files will only be accessible to myself through a secret password.

- The study is being conducted according to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines (1992) and has been given approval from the University Ethics committee and NHS Ethics approval.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The research study is being undertaken as part of the requirements for a Professional Doctorate in Education and therefore the findings will be published as part of the final thesis. It is hoped that the findings will also contribute towards publication in peer-reviewed journals and conference presentation. In addition, the findings will be presented to the Champion's group and to University staff through seminar presentation. No individuals will be identified but complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed due to the small number of people involved in the study and the fact that they are known to one another.

Who is organising and funding the research?

As previously stated, the research is being undertaken as part of the requirements for a Professional Doctorate in Education. The research is not funded, although my employers at the University have granted me time devoted to undertaking it.

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed by my educational supervisor , by the University Research Ethics Committee and by the NHS Research Ethics Committee.

You will have a copy of this form to keep and a copy of your signed consent form.

APPENDIX 3

CONSENT FORM

This study is being undertaken as part of a Doctorate in Education with the following title:

'Knowledge management processes across a learning partnership between education and the NHS in the delivery of a Foundation Degree (FdA): A Case Study'

I would be very grateful if you would give your consent to being interviewed for the purposes of the study. The interview questions will be seeking to explore the types of knowledge which have been important in the delivery of the foundation degree and the training of Assistant Practitioners. It is not anticipated that any of the questions will be of a sensitive nature and confidentiality will be maintained. The information provided will be anonymised as far as possible with codes used for any information recorded. It is hoped that the findings of the project will be of use in the long-term sustainability of the partnership.

Approval for the study has been given from the University Ethics Committee and from the NHS Research Ethics Committee. The author will adhere to the guidelines on ethics provided by the British Educational Research Advisory group (BERA, 1992). It is intended to write up the research findings as a Doctorate thesis which will then be available in the public domain. This means that although no individuals or organisations will be referred to by name, by the nature of the stakeholder groups in the partnership, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

The interview will be recorded with your consent and you will have access to the transcript if desired. Participation in the project is voluntary and so you are under no obligation to take part. Please feel free to ask any questions.

I am happy to take part in this interview yes/no
I consent to having it tape recorded yes/no

Signed:
Witnessed:
Dare:

APPENDIX 4

The data has been gathered from sixteen interviews and one focus group. The representation from each stakeholder group is given below and the type of organisation to which each participant belongs is explained in the table. The total numbers form the potential pool of people is not provided because this fluctuated throughout the study. Please note that all of the names are pseudonyms which are used consistently for that particular individual. The names used are all female, irrespective of actual gender due to the small minority of males.

Interview participants

Total Interviews – 6 Practice Trainers (PTs), 3 Tutors, 3 Strategic Health Authority (SHA) staff, 4 Champions. Participant role and organisation represented:

Ann (PT NHS PCT)
Barbara (PT NHS Hospital Trust)
Claire (SHA Project Director)
Diana (Tutor, University)
Emily (Champion, PCT)
Frances (Champion, NHS Hospital Trust)
Geraldine (PT, NHS Hospital Trust)
Hannah (PT, Social Care and PCT)
Irene (Tutor, University)
Janice (Champion, Social Care and PCT)
Kirstie (Champion, PCT)
Linda (Tutor, University)
Megan (SHA Project manager)
Norma (PT, PCT)
Olivia (PT, PCT with previous experience as PT in Hospital Trust)
Penny (SHA Project manager)

Summary of the types of organisation to which each participant belongs:

Three SHA representatives as listed below	Four Champions as listed below	Six Practice Trainers as listed below	Three University tutors as listed below
Project director	1 NHS Hospital Trust Director of Nursing	2 from NHS Hospital Trusts	1 (now Programme Leader of the Fd)
2 Project Managers	2 PCT Workforce Managers	2 from PCTs	2 Lecturers
	1 Director in Social Care Services	2 from Social Care	

Focus Group Sample

This table illustrates the purposive sampling for the focus group – two people, one Practice Trainer and one Champion sent apologies just beforehand

Three SHA representatives	Two Champions	Three Practice Trainers	Two University Tutors
		1 Hospital Trust (*sent apologies*)	
1 Project Manager (Claire)	1 PCT Workforce Manager (*sent apologies*)	1 PCT Trust (with previous experience of being a practice trainer in the Hospital Trust)	1 now Programme Leader of the FdA
	1 Director in Social Care services	1 Social Care	1 Lecturer

- ➢ **Champions are senior managers in NHS Trusts, Primary Care Trusts or Social Service organisations**
- ➢ **The SHA team consists of the SHA Project Director and Project Managers (later changed to Workforce Development Managers)**
- ➢ **The Practice Trainers are registered health or social care professionals seconded to the university, normally for two years, to support the work-based learning on the foundation degree programme**

APPENDIX 5

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your involvement and role in the partnership to deliver the foundation degree and training of assistant practitioners?

2. What kind of knowledge and expertise do you think each stakeholder has brought to the partnership?

3. Can you identify any barriers to collaboration experienced across the partnership?

4. What are the main changes you can identify in the way the foundation degree is delivered and assessed since the programme started?

5. Thinking of each of these, what factors do you think have influenced these changes?

6. Are there any particular views which have influenced this?

7. Can you identify any changes in the nature of the partnership over the past few years?

8. What do you understand now about the foundation degree that you didn't know early on in the programme?

9. How have you gained this knowledge?

10. What do you understand about the assistant practitioner role that you didn't know early on?

11. How have you gained this knowledge and understanding?

12. Do you think the assistant practitioner role has changed practice? If so how? What has been important in influencing this?

13. Can you identify any barriers to development of the assistant practitioner role? If so, what are these? How do you see things developing in the future?

14. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX 6 – EARLY CODING SAMPLE

Key to annotation
Discourse – underline
Nonaka and Takeuchi link –highlight yellow
Engestrom - highlight green
(RQ1) - link to research question 1
(RQ2) – link to research question 2

I'm not convinced it was sold, marketed, properly communicated to operational managers so there was a sense of reluctance erm around professional boundaries, crossing professional boundaries, crossing professional and clinical skills and competences (RQ1) was that. But I think during the partnership gave us an opportunity and a framework to start to break those down in the wider context erm I think for me personally, it was difficult erm initially as project champion because of the clear focus on health and actually my understanding of a lot of the terminology, erm, my understanding of a lot of the models erm was limited and I often worried that the amount of times I questioned things and asked about things and actually reinforced the social aspect of it was beginning to annoy colleagues. Erm, it also was .. interesting to try to understand the partners in terms of the delivering the workforce programme to understanding the input from NHS Northwest as is, from the education provider and the stakeholders back at the pilot site was I think fundamental to looking at how we'd work and go forward (RQ1).

Comment [amr1]: Discourse managerial- sold, marketed

Comment [amr2]: Engestrom - boundaries

Comment [amr3]: Engestrom- boundaries

A   How did erm, what kind of reaction did you get then when you were trying to see your way through this terminology and try and understand things?

P   Erm, I think there was a great deal of support and acknowledgement (RQ1) from the erm NHS Northwest erm key staff and I think similarly from the University there was a clear acceptance of a er the first sort of social care provider erm and an acceptance to work with us and work around some of the differences that we were bringing to the table (RQ1) cos clearly you know the medical model and the social model are different erm but a consistent willingness to work with us as part of an organisation.

Comment [amr4]: Building relationships Nonaka and Takeuchi

Comment [amr5]: Acceptance – tacit understandings? Nonaka and Takeuchi

Comment [amr6]: Boundaries Engestrom

A   Yeah. And how do you think that changed through time?

P   Erm, I think I felt I had to, I consistently had to stand the social care corner if you like, it's not a great way of describing it but erm to hold the line in terms of how social care was looking at delivering a support people to maintaining and promoting independence, erm, looking very much at a person centred approach as opposed to a patient clinical pathways erm so understanding the social model of disability, how we were gonna support people and a continued willingness to work with us

Comment [amr7]: Discourse – battle – hold the line

Comment [amr8]: Diff voices

on that. I think also as other social care providers in the longer term came on stream you felt there were better partnerships (RQ2) and also some of the other health providers but with a community focus came on board. I think once there was a slight shift away from a very acute set of partners there was a shift in, I felt there was a shift, in emphasis on the delivery in the workforce programme and a better understanding. (RQ1)

A   So what, I mean I think what you're describing is quite a dynamic situation really and a lot of sort of different contributions really from different people. What kind of knowledge and expertise do you think the different partners brought?

P   Erm, I think the NHS Northwest erm, if you ask me for examples of things that struck me that it was bringing to the partnership, erm, workforce reengineering and redesign would be the one I said about NHS Northwest. *(mechanical type of discourse)* So to have a structured programme of work that it brought into a pilot organisation and work with key people around changing the workforce, reengineering the workforce, looking at the skill mixes required, looking at the barriers, obstacles, obstructions (RQ1) , looking at the potential, and giving you a clear framework on which to move forward and that actually time out for people, dedicated time, taking people out of the job rather than just hourly meetings, steering group meetings, were people acknowledged the work (RQ1) and then went back to the day job *(exciting new challenge, outside of the every-day experience?)*so I think it was that for me. I think, in terms of the erm higher education contribution, a willingness to look with the employer and try and find a balance (RQ1) between the requirement for a higher education provider in terms of standards, quality, academic frameworks, and the needs of an employer to deliver very simply a skilled and competent worker at the front line erm so I think you know education providers who were clearly willing to make that sort of connection and work with us whilst clearly retaining a requirement to remain a higher education academic provider erm.   *Discourse – recurrence of 'battleground' themes – Engestrom links?*

A   What kind of conditions do you think enabled that to happen for that kind of oversight, almost what you are describing seems to be kind of appreciation of the other organisations' needs or the partners' needs. What kind of conditions do you think enabled that to happen?

P   Erm, I think a strong, I think making links between the various elements was very strong, erm, (RQ1) I actually can't remember the title now, er in terms of erm NHS Northwest as is providing a project officer from them to link to the pilot site includes a project officer, so somebody who was consistently moving, physically moving, between NHS Northwest and the pilot site looking at the work you were doing, talking to the education provider and bringing back. - *Knowledge brokering*

Similarly, I think as the project unfolded a practice trainer, who again was physically moving between the higher education provider and the pilot site, meant that there was fluid movement of information, communication, consistently taking place,- **knowledge broker between COPs**

erm, but probably you would struggle to have replicated in meetings that actually on an ongoing basis that you know there was somebody moving from the strategic health authority of into the pilot site and out again so it's that three way movement of a, almost a <u>facilitator.</u> Does that make sense?

A   Yeah, so you're saying that and a lot of that sort of took place outside of formal meetings?

P   Yeah, but the formal meetings potentially <u>set goals, set targets, set work streams, terms, clear terms of reference for groups that did exist so setting up clear terms of reference</u> – **managerial discourse**

for the champions erm group. I think it's fascinating that the champions group is nothing like what it was,(RQ2) erm, and I think there is an emphasis now erm from the NHS Northwest to try and <u>support staff sites to be freestanding.</u> (RQ2) That clearly wasn't the focus and the emphasis then, it was, there was a clear dependency that almost was encouraged - **power relationship**
between you know the champions have a terms of reference and can <u>move and shift and shake</u> (**3ʳᵈ Way discourse??**) Erm, requirements from each, from NHS Northwest to have very high level sponsors in pilot organisations I think was crucial because as a champion whilst I never had, never ever I don't think used it, it was clear that I could approach two very senior players as project sponsors to <u>move obstacles and hurdles</u> (**powerful position**) and I actually never had to use it but I think the fact it's there is of benefit to the organisation and I think our experience erm showed that where pilot sites hadn't got that sponsorship, high level sponsorship, or got the sponsorship in the right place, that they weren't as successful in lieu at breaking down quite structural barriers to the work taking place. Erm I think a clear focus from the top in terms of erm X's input (SHA lead) <u>erm very much a we're gonna get on with this and shift the problems as they come along, not identify the problems and then try and solve them because if we do that we won't ever get anywhere so actually we're gonna plunge headlong into this and we're gonna resolve the issues as they come up</u>
- **position of power- 'plunge headlong' – aggressive tone**
which, personally for me, was a way of work I could get on with, it probably fits with the way I work anyway so I think there was some synergies around I'm quite happy to go back and be <u>a bull in a china shop</u> in terms of we are gonna do this **(telephone interruption).**

A   You were saying you were quite happy when you had to be <u>a bull in a china shop.</u>

Comment [amr19]: Practice trainers as mediating artefacts - Engestrom

Comment [amr20]: Explicit knowledge Nonaka and Takeuchi Multiple voices- Engestrom Power??

Comment [amr21]: Hierarchy Nonaka and Takeuchi. Champions – middle managers

Comment [amr22]: Managerial Nonaka and Takeuchi. Tensions, contradictions, Engestrom

Comment [amr23]: Discourse- plunge headlong – aggressive? N & T Contrary to sharing tacit knowledge!

Comment [amr24]: Discourse e-aggressive

P   Yeah, and I think, I think there was a need for tact, diplomacy and sensitivity *(retraction)* because you were having to come back and acknowledge people had worked in silos for many, many years and to actually look outside that and for people to each give-up elements of their traditional place, work, workforce, all those things, it was difficult.

A   The way you describe the partnership's really interesting because it comes across to me like something very dynamic but where there's quite a lot of sort of things happening at different levels but quite a lot of sort of power shifts as well.

P   Mmm, mmm, yes I think so and I think erm......(*taking care in phrasing?*) people taking the lead where not necessarily you were looking to have overall control but looking to people to take leads on particular things and to lead on actually looking at what that generic worker was going to need to do, looking at what that generic worker needed to do in terms of study via the education provider looking via the strategic health authority as to what structural changes needed to be made in terms of HR, finance, job descriptions, pay, gradings and evaluations, so you were able to look at, to break the whole model down (RQ1) into various elements and to give people jobs to go and look and shift and change and to move what had traditionally been the place. I mean, I think the NVQ3 alongside the foundation degree is a fascinating example of that where I think to most of the contributors it appeared to be a ridiculous thing to be having to do but to actually shift and move that involved contributions from a lot of people and a lot of people giving and moving and shifting to allow us to be able, at the end of the day, to say we can take away the NVQ3 from this and we lose no value in what we're doing (RQ1), it's the, it leaves a stand alone degree (**RQ2 – value/recognition?**) that fulfils all the requirements that were there before, why are we doing this, so I think that was a useful example for me of having to shift in organisations and break down.

A   Was that strongly embedded particularly in your organisation ?

P   Yeah, yeah and you know enshrined (*religious discourse?*) in the regulations and standards that we worked to as well which was another partner that we needed to consider. Erm, I also think in terms of the partnership erm one of the things that was very interesting was we, social services, had been used to consistently, in terms of the education and training of our workforce, going through a staff development section, so actually working directly with the education provider was new for the key players within that organisation, erm, and actually was a very positive thing to do because I think what I felt was we'd almost detached ourselves from that education provision (RQ1) in one way that you went through a broker and therefore you know we need infection control training voila there it was and therefore you didn't actually engage with the provider it was brokered which for me you

know I think all of us in terms of this service as it is, have very much enjoyed the direct partnership with the education provider, erm it's been a very positive relationship (RQ1), we haven't at any point had any real or significant disputes erm and I think that's interesting to use the word dispute because whilst you might have expected that this partnership and programme threw up lots of disputes, I don't think it has (*discourse?? Denies degree of tension?*) , it's brought tensions and it's brought up interfaces that were rubbing up (RQ1) but if you use the word dispute *(I didn't*!), and I take dispute as a strong word, I can't recall there being any great number of disputes. Erm potentially here for us, getting therapists to absolutely, unequivocally sign up and join us was traumatic but it still wasn't ever a dispute, it was a tension but I think it helped me to find, to also go back and find, that wasn't just the case here...........

Comment [amr33]: Positive relationship – sharing tacit knowledge? N & T

Comment [amr34]: Tensions and contradictions Engestrom

Comment [amr35]: AHP resistance

Comment [amr36]: Denial of 'dispute' ??

APPENDIX 7 - CURRENT THEMES Thematic coding (revised)
(Champion Frances sample)

Aims – Red
Vision – Green
Learning Together- Orange
Barriers and Bridges – Brown
Relationships – Blue
Compromise – Pink
Outcomes and Sustainability – Purple

A   This is participant no 6 for the purposes of confidentiality who is one of the champions. OK.

P   Ok, yes.

A   So, we've said the study is about looking at the development of the foundation degree in training assistant practitioners and how the partnership has developed. So, I wonder if you could just tell me about what your role has been in that, which is looking back sort of 6, 7 years almost, if you can remember the early stages!

P   Yes, I can remember them! Erm my role at the very beginning was as champion. Well, I think actually at the very beginning we weren't even called champions! I think I was sent along by my Director of Nursing, er.. at the time, to find out about this delivery in the workforce project and then I became a champion. So my role was really to lead and champion (laughs), to drive the project within the Trust and of course in those early days, because this was 2002, we were one of the first Trusts to start it and it was only assistant practitioners, so that was my role, and I think er, I think certainly talking to other champions as we did, because we used to have champions meetings. Mine was always fairly clear from the outset that I would lead it, that the Director of Nursing at, er to start with wanted to be involved obviously because it was her name as the executive sponsor but actually fairly early on because of my role in the Trust she just sort of let me get on with it really and I know in the early days she wanted to chair the delivery in the workforce steering group but actually she only came for about 2 or 3 meetings and then I just ran with it after that.

A   And what was the purpose of the steering group?

P   Erm, the steering group was the sort of formal mechanism I suppose by which the project was led within the Trust. So, we had a membership that reflected really everybody that needed to know; the people that we needed to influence, the managers who we wanted to have assistant practitioners, er right down to, we had finance there, we had HR there, erm we had somebody from staff side there, because I think we were conscious that there may be issues around er sort of inserting a new brand and a new role and you know what impact that might have on some of the other, the rest of the workforce, so we were quite careful with who came. I have to say that erm, I don't know whether we were just lucky, but we didn't have any problem with the

Comment [amr37]: Champion terminology – vision?

Comment [amr38]: Champion role – drive – authority from SHA- Aims- vision

Comment [amr39]: Delegation for Manager, implementation- Aims/vision

Comment [amr40]: Influence – power, relationships

Comment [amr41]: Aims, Barriers

Comment [amr42]: Relationships – informed decisions??

staff side at all and fairly early on that group became the nub of a much more erm working group than a steering group and, in fact, I think in the very early days we were going to have a steering group and a working group and they soon merged and became the same group. We had also representation from B and again in the early days somebody from the SHA used to attend as well.

A   And is the steering group still continuing?

P   No, no.

A   And in terms of that wider partnership initially, who would you sort of identify as the key stakeholders within that?

P   Erm, I think, er well the SHA certainly because they were, well not only, erm, leading on it from a regional point of view and stumping up the cash, but they were keen obviously to make it a success. Erm, erm, [university], you know and of course that was you in the early days, erm, had the the point of view that you were running the course and wanted it, wanted the programme itself to be a success and I think, I think, without that, without that relationship that would have been a very difficult thing to do because we'd already had the situation where we commissioned places on a sort of course with nameless tutors in another University and it didn't feel quite the same and the way we had the partnership with was such that we grew up together really (laughs) and learned, learned how to do it together really, you know. Yes of course you designed the course and you put it on but a lot of what was done in the early couple of cohorts you know we were, we were making it up as we go along! We weren't really but we were just learning it together.

> **Comment [amr43]:** Relationship importance of names, personal contact

> **Comment [amr44]:** Grew up together – metaphor of childhood?

> **Comment [amr45]:** Learning together

A   Yeah, yeah.

P   So I think you had to have that relationship otherwise it would have been awful. If I felt that the HEI was somewhere nameless just putting things on, erm and they weren't working in practice that would have been awful. Whereas I'm sure I was on the telephone saying this has happened and can we do it this way and can we start then.

> **Comment [amr46]:** Positive relationships

> **Comment [amr47]:** Personal contact, informal, relationship building

A   So, what were the things do you think that allowed it to work that sort of supported that kind of working?

P   Erm, having a link person that we saw fairly often. Er so I would see you at steering, at our steering group, at Trust steering group, but I'd also see you at the champions group at the SHA, which I thin k were monthly probably to start off with, so it was quite, you know we were having our steering groups monthly we were having champion meetings so that was quite frequent and then of course we had the same link mirrored in the practice trainers and the tutors on a Tuesday, erm, you know they'd get together and not only teach the programme but obviously talk as well about the future and the different modules and everything else so it felt joined up even though I know at the beginning it felt like stepping out into the unknown really.

> **Comment [amr48]:** Bridging Trust and University

> **Comment [amr49]:** Learning together
>
> And bridges – joining-up

A   Yeah, there was that wasn't there when it was all new at the beginning and of course the foundation degree was all new and the assistant practitioners were new.

P   Yes they were.

A   So, what, do you think there were differences then in the kind of knowledge and expertise that those different stakeholders brought to it.

P   Oh yes, definitely. Erm…. I mean I think (drilling noises). Is this going to be alright?

A   Yeah I think so.

P   Although I was officially the champion from a trust point of view whenever you are leading a project you identify champions you know with a small c if you like in other areas so you know who they're going to and its funny because we're doing this session tomorrow and I was just talking to M, because I was just asking her about numbers and what people are doing and erm I said I'd done a slide called overcoming challenges and she said (laughs) the physios (laughs) and I said well I wasn't quite going to be that personal but I mean (laughs)…. That was one of our big ones in the outset was the allied health professionals and breaking down that barrier around Ooh they're not going to do anything that our registered staff do. We had a similar situation actually with the midwives as well so you ask me about expertise around the group and it was, I suppose, at a very early stage finding out who the resistors were and who the champions were going to be and I know we, our first group that we had, that we did have awful trouble with, you know (laughs) they were mostly erm medical on our sort of medical books and even though we had all that trouble it still has remained the area that has most of the APs, isn't that funny, because they just ran with it and said yes this is something we want to do, its something we think is important and I have to say the other, the resisting areas we've since broken down but that's been the constant so…

Comment [amr50]: Barriers – AHPs, professional tribalism?

Comment [amr51]: Barrier – registration?

Comment [amr52]: Discourse - resistors, Barrier

Comment [amr53]: Barriers – breaking down, power?

A   Yeah, I'll come back to that a little bit later some of those challenges because what you're saying to me is similar things to other people in other trusts as well. I was interested in you saying we were actually learning together, I'm almost thinking of what we learnt from each other was what kind of knowledge and expertise was the Trust brining what was the University bringing that was different?

P   Erm, I think it was that meeting of er of the role really wasn't it, the role of the assistant practitioners, I think we had a vision of how it would fit in practice and what the clinical setting was all about and how it would work and the educational establishment was all around, you know, it had still a vision of the role as erm you know as somebody who was going to gain those skills and competencies through the foundation degree. Erm and I think the only time, and you might come back to this, the only time that I felt that we were kind of either clashing or going apart whichever way, was around you know sort of passing at all costs you know and I know we had issues with some of the students with erm learning difficulties and there was a time when it appeared that oh well we'll help them through that and I think that was a learning point for me and I didn't see it like that, I'm not looking at it like an educator, I'm looking at it as an employer

Comment [amr54]: Vision- Aim

Comment [amr55]: Vision

Comment [amr56]: Multiple views- Aims, developing understanding- compromise

APPENDIX 8

Thematic analysis sample- Barriers and Bridges theme as example

Tutors	Practice Trainers	Champions	SHA
Diana	**Ann**	**Kirstie**	**Claire**
p. 6 prof culture	p.1 prof culture	p.2 prof culture	p.1 SHA role
p. 7 employee vs student	p.2 priorities	p.3 employee vs student	p.2 prof barriers
p.8 student v employee	p.5 prof culture	p.11 prof culture	p. 3 hierarchies
p.9 NHS hierarchy	p.6 prof culture	p.12 prof culture	p.4 workplace
p.10PT bridge	p.7 organisational	p.13	p.5 prof
p.10 language	p.9 PT bridge	p. 14 SHA, PT	p.8 SHA bridge
Irene	p.18 accountability	**Emily**	p. 10 HEI culture
p.2 HEI link	p.19 PT bridge	p.2 organisational	**Megan**
p.4 PT bridge	p.24 PT bridge	p. 3 PT bridge	p.2 PT bridge
p.5 PT bridge		p.7 prof culture	p. 2 prof culture
p.10 culture	**Barbara**	p. 8 PT bridge	p. 5 PT bridge
p.12 PT bridge	p.1 prof culture	p.9 prof culture	p. 5 power SHA
Linda	p.4 expectations	**Frances**	**Penny**
p. 3 SHA control	p.5 prof culture	p.2 PT bridge	p.1 PT bridge
p. 3 power SHA	p.6 jargon	p.3 prof culture, HE	p. 2 prof culture
p. 6 bridgng	p.7 roles and responsibilities	p.4 prof culture	p. 3 language
p. 12 funding	p.8 PT bridge	p.5 resolution	p. 3 HEI culture
p.14 PT bridge	**Geraldine**	p. 9 prof silos	p.4 orgs
p.15 funding	p.1prof culture	p.10 language	p.6 prof culture
p. 16 roles and responsibilities	p.3 prof rules	**Janice**	
	p.4 PT bridge	p.2 prof culture	
Practice Trainers	p.6 jargon	p.3 SHA, PT bridge	
Norma	p.7 PT bridging	p.4 prof silos	
p. 2 prof culture	p.8 expectations	p.4 power	
p.7 PT bridge	p.9 expectations	p.5 resolution	
p.10 prof culture		p.6 SHA	
p.12 roles	**Hannah**	p.10 prof culture	
Olivia	p.1 struggle		
p.1	p.2 prof tribalism		
p.3	p.4 prof culture		
p.4	p.5 bridge		
p.5	p.6 PT bridge		
p.6	p.7 language		
p.9	p.9 prof culture		
	p.15 progression		

APPENDIX 9   FOCUS GROUP SAMPLE

Megan. That fits as well with that fundamental understanding of the communication about the bits that your vision, your vision of what it is you are trying to develop and everybody had a vision of the role and it was you understood what your vision was and actually there's nothing about making sure that people could clearly articulate what it was because the term AP means different things to different people in the same way the understanding of academic learning means different things to different people and actually getting people to understand what our perceptions of foundation degree and what the academic perception of the foundation degree is really important and it is often about, especially when we meet people, going back to the basics again to reaffirm what everybody's understanding is and what it is you are trying to develop and you do assume that everybody knows.

Comment [amr57]: Vision

Comment [amr58]: Competing visions

Comment [amr59]: Diff understanding of Fd – 'our perceptions' and 'academic perceptions'

Hannah Well I think one of the dangers you can get into though as you become comfortable and familiar with the terminology in other organisations, you start slipping in to that as well and so you start using their abbreviations assuming now everyone else knows because you've become comfortable and familiar with the language spoken in that organisation or the language spoken in education and its quite funny actually, it's nothing to do with the foundation degree but it is about what you were saying before, we've moved to [organisation] and we work with a lot of our colleagues in [organisation] and we're having to try and tell them what we do and that's quite difficult because you assume they know what social care does but actually they haven't got a clue what we do and that is quite difficult cos we're now finding ourselves in meetings and they're going you're gonna have to explain to me what a home support worker does or you're gonna have to explain to me what an AP is erm so we're back to that fundamental thing in a different arena, does that make sense? So it's quite interesting really because we're now sitting with people who haven't got a clue what our service does and you just assume everyone does. But I think that is one of the dangers because actually I've kind of dipped my toe in all of them now, like education, working with health and social care and one of the things as I said that I need to be aware of is that I start then becoming comfortable with the jargon and the abbreviations and I start using them and then assuming everyone knows what I'm on about.

Comment [amr60]: Professional discourse

Comment [amr61]: Diff discourses

Interviewer So has it triggered memories for you as you've started this programme again?

Diana. For me one of the big issues I think has been about not always feeling safe and in the beginning I think there were certainly meetings that I attended where I felt in an absolute minority of one because the very idea really of FD and health and social care, course you're gonna know loads about health and social care, well actually no I don't and

Comment [amr62]: Discourse – safety/vulnerability

xxii

you have to be, unless you feel very safe you have to be quite a brave person to admit that, and I think that, obviously over time you feel a bit more confident over time, more safe, but if anything that impressed upon me for the students coming here how kind of like a fish out of water they would feel and how important it would be to make them feel safe in a classroom situation and to kind of put their ideas forward and so on so yes there's been a lot of times where they've not gone away, completely, sometimes I do still feel a fish out of water and quite uncomfortable and it is about that kind of safety.

Comment [amr63]: Safety in contrast to feeling like a 'fish out of water' discourse if vulnerability

Comment [amr64]: Vulnerability

Janice. And I think there's something about group dynamics in that as well, for me the original group, a lot of the drive was from one person, from X, and you almost had to make a decision that you were, either because there wasn't really another option (laughs), you might as well have left the room, because it was gonna happen anyway, whatever that was, that was the sense of drive that I got, now that impact on group dynamics almost makes it quite an inclusive group once you've signed up, once you've signed up its quite inclusive, and I think there were times I could look around the table and think the people who were round that table did change and if there was somebody there who wasn't exclusive they sort of became excluded. There was that, I think, there was, I mean you could actually see somebody, no we don't agree with that and the chair moves back and the person's not in the dialogue any more.

Comment [amr65]: Power

Comment [amr66]: Inclusion or Exclusion?

Comment [amr67]: Discourse conveyed through non-verbal signals

Megan. And for sustainability, that, that sort of softening of who that original group was and the breaking down of that is how you then include those people for the sustainability because you've got those early adopters already doing it and championing it and that, that's the bit I suppose that then goes back to sharing that knowledge again and it's how you can get yourself back into that mindset of as you're saying people feeling vulnerable and going back to starting the basics again because for some that's where you're starting from and, you know when I look at proposals that are from social care I automatically assume unconsciously they're gonna be very similar to yours, whereas actually that's one, even with health roles it's how you constantly go back to that starting point if you like with new people that are coming on board.

Comment [amr68]: Softening or softening up??

Comment [amr69]: Managerialist – championing, early adopters,

Comment [amr70]: Vulnerability

Janice. Is there another dynamic to that which is about that safeness of the group and that inclusivity because you were in a, almost wherever you were from, you were in a minority going back to your organisation to talk about developing a foundation degree within an educational establishment, to talk about it within a clinical team somewhere, talk about it, you quite often felt you were banging your head against a brick wall when you went back and said this is what oh really, we don't know what it is, we don't know what you're talking about, what's it gonna do, what's it gonna deliver, on and on and on, that if you didn't have that safeness, that comfort, that inclusivity with

Comment [amr71]: Inclusivity, power dynamics

Comment [amr72]: Resistance from others

the group partnership, you wouldn't have been able to have sustained....

Linda. So you needed your security there of people saying yes this is a good, a good aim (laughs) because when you go into your practice area they go "phroah, what you're thinking of, we're not doing that" so you needed that group to be together because that group had to have a very clear vision of what it wanted cos I was thinking then it's about the role that's being developed, the assistant practitioner role as a generic role, is cutting across boundaries and that's challenging isn't it because we're not good at that and, you know, social care and health care are not good at, at linking together sometimes but different professionals are not good at linking together, so in a way we're saying we're gonna develop a role and that role's gonna be generic and it's gonna cut across the boundaries and that is, it challenges people that doesn't it really.

Hannah. But I think that's another thing though as well X with that basically the idea of generic worker differs from whatever you are.

Linda. Yes, course!

Hannah. So actually you know our interpretation, you think that everyone thinks a generic worker's the same and gonna, but actually erm in terms of our colleagues from health, like if someone does OT or Physio they see that as generic whereas we don't really, we would see it health, so your idea of genericism is different depending on where you are as well really. I mean from our point of view I think as an organisation one thing it has done, I think, is they're almost in terms of, we had a bit of a culture thing, but I think actually the staff who work for us now are more in tune with colleagues in health and actually do understand about education and there's almost like erm this erm bond between our staff and the University now and you know it's of, it's changed things because like nurses now come into our offices for meetings and in the old days I think a lot of the staff just bumped into the district nurses from S but now it is someone that they're working alongside and someone actually who's mentored them so I think it's actually built a bit of a cultural shift for our organisation of that er we sit in the same room and we discuss the same things.

Interviewer So it is that thing about compromise.

Janice. If I was honest about what my baggage was coming to that table, it was I need to be careful and assured as an employer that there's a compromise between the University requirements for academia and mine as an employer and I, that was a risk to me, was if I can't reach a compromise with The university around will this degree fulfil both requirements, I can't do business with them because the, you can't have it that those two things are exclusive now what we've

Comment [amr73]: Safeness, inclusivity

Comment [amr74]: Security, paternalistic protection??

Comment [amr75]: Vision

Comment [amr76]: Boundaries, voices

Comment [amr77]: Boundary challenges

Comment [amr78]: Discourse of genericism

Comment [amr79]: Organisational culture, professional discourse

Comment [amr80]: Emotional discourse- bonding

Comment [amr81]: Cultural shift – overcoming boundaries

Comment [amr82]: Baggage- personal agency limited

Comment [amr83]: Compromise

Comment [amr84]: Managerial discourse- doing business