

# Navigating the career transition from industry to academia

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**Abstract:** *Transitions from 'industry' to 'academia' represent a unique type of career change. Although such transitions are becoming increasingly common in Australian universities and beyond, there is no coherent framework for making sense of the multiple and intersecting factors involved in these inter-domain movements. This form of occupational transition challenges the traditional and increasingly outdated conception of the linear academic tenure track. Thus, in order to revise the notion of the tenure track and gain a fuller understanding of these career trajectories, we must seek to understand the motivations for such occupational movements as well as the short-term, medium-term and long-term social, emotional and professional needs and preferences of practitioner-academics having made this transition. This article presents an attempt to re-think the imagery and language that have come to characterize this type of career movement as well as the attitudes within and between industry and academia. The authors advocate that transitions from industry to academia do not require the dismantling of linkages between the two fields, but rather are made more meaningful and effective when pre-existing professional and personal linkages are maintained and encouraged.*

**Keywords:** *industry–academia transition, career transition, socialization, career support, mobility*

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In contemporary Western society there is an enduring assumption that the work of universities takes place in a vacuum, removed from the 'real world' where 'real issues' are addressed (Candy and Crebert, 2001;

Collins, 2002; Bruneel *et al*, 2010). This largely uncontested notion frames much of the debate about the transition of industry practitioners to academia. It would appear that this viewpoint emerges from a long-standing

and oppositional understanding of industry and commercial enterprise as offering ‘practical’ or ‘immediate’ solutions to problems, with universities primarily concerned with ‘abstracted’ or ‘theoretical’ matters. In relation to individuals seeking to traverse these occupational boundaries, the industry-to-academe literature tends to emphasize the ignominious aspects of these transitions. More often than not, these studies draw attention to the less rigorous or relaxed features of academic life versus the fast paced and efficient dimensions of industry. Generally speaking, the motivations for making the move to academia are considered to be offset by factors such as reductions in salary but, at the same time, substantiated by improved ‘lifestyle’ conditions and the attainment of greater credibility or prestige. The cumulative effect of these presuppositions works to damage or at least discredit the very real work conducted at universities by positioning them as ‘imagination lands’ removed from the professional industrial landscape. In order to support these work–role transitions better, we explore the emotional, cognitive and symbolic challenges of entering a new community of practice and the support provisions necessary to enable this form of trans-sector movement. These claims are supported by empirical data concerning early and longer-term career practitioner-academics who have made the move from ‘industry’ (that is, commercial and other public sector roles) to academic positions across three Australian universities (Macquarie University, University of Queensland and University of Tasmania).<sup>1</sup>

As discussed below, there is currently a limited amount of research focusing either on the movement of practitioner-academics or associated support and professional development initiatives provided to them. This is a worrying state of affairs because the increasing demand for academics and academic capability is far exceeding supply (Coates, 2012, p 4). Accordingly, there is a need both to expand the workforce and to ensure that the workforce has appropriate capabilities to support their academic endeavour. Hugo (2012) summarized the pressing needs of academic workforce planning as ‘recruitment, retention and return’. In support of this claim, Coates and Goedegebuure (2010) maintained that ‘The growing significance of the academic profession is juxtaposed, almost in perfect counterpoint, by its shrinking capacity’. They go on to explain, ‘In Australia today, fewer academic staff are available to do a growing amount of work’. In order to meet this increased demand, Southwell (2012) reported, ‘New academics are recruited from a number of channels including undergraduates, postgraduates, mid-career professionals, returning expatriates and overseas migration’ (*ibid*, p 13).

In this critical review, we aim to produce a cumulative understanding of the contexts and experiences of transition, as well as the opportunities that both attract practitioner-academics and support their induction, socialization and professional development within academia.

So who is a practitioner-academic? Bandow *et al* (2007) provided a useful, albeit technical definition of the industry-to-academia practitioner:

‘An industry-to-academia career transition typically consists of an interprofession step in a protean career wherein the incumbent undertakes an effort at an extra-role adjustment. The industry-to-academia career transition results from the development of a particular values hierarchy within the incumbent, and often results in some level of tension in the receiving institution in the form of values incongruency. In hybrid academic institutions, which feature a traditional core and a non-traditional periphery, an additional complication may come in the form of conflict between the core and peripheral culture.’ (Bandow *et al*, p 32)

For industry professionals, the decision to enter into or return to academia represents an exciting and daunting life challenge. The actual experience of academe for the uninitiated industry practitioner is reportedly marked by feelings of social isolation, ‘culture shock’ (Louis, 1980) and unmet expectations (LaRocco and Bruns, 2006). A range of factors, both varied and complex, motivates industry professionals to undertake this specific type of inter-industry transition.

This article includes a critical review of the existing literature and challenges several long-standing assumptions and theoretical models that have been used to understand the transitional experiences of industry practitioners to academia. The first concerns the uncritical hypothesis of many practitioners and theorists that academic life is somehow easier in terms of workload when compared to other commercial industries. The second challenges the myth that university research and teaching is a poor cousin of the ‘real work’ that goes on in the professional ‘real world’. The third concerns the uncontested supposition that industry professionals enter into or return to academe as ‘uninitiated newborns’, so to speak, without the necessary set of adaptive skills and competencies commensurate with the rigors of academic life.

## **Contextual factors**

To be an academic is to be a work in progress. Within the current university landscape, the term ‘academic’ is

undergoing a major redefinition. As Blenkinsopp and Stalker (2004) observed, ‘Until now we have used the term “academic” as if it was a simple, uncontested label used by individuals to identify their occupation’. Following Anderson (2009), the transition from industry to academia is a dynamic, complex and ongoing developmental process. The effective navigation of this type of career transition is best conceived of as engaging the whole person, requiring emotional, cognitive, and identity-work in order to establish oneself in the institutional and discipline-specific academic culture. The rethinking of what it means to identify with and be identified as ‘academic’ resonates with wider debates on the role of academia and the value of academic knowledge “in the real world” (Blenkinsopp and Stalker, 2004, pp 423–424). Contrary to popular opinion, the work performed in universities is in fact quite real and is vital for transferring skills, knowledge and competencies to graduates who have an impact on the world in very real ways.

As a result of the ageing academic population in universities combined with the much-publicized casualization and professionalization of the academic workforce (Boud and Brew, 2012; Coates *et al*, 2009; Brown *et al*, 2010; Hammond and Churchman, 2008) as well as the international migration of academics away from Australia (Hugo, 2005; Richardson and McKenna, 2003), universities are looking elsewhere to recruit a substantial proportion of their academic staff. However, as LaRocco and Bruns (2006) observed, there exists a paucity of literature which ‘focuses on the experiences of early career faculty (pre-tenure) who are practiced education professionals and who chose higher education as a second career’ (*ibid*, p 626). Similarly, Coates *et al* (2009) found that, ‘at an aggregate level very little is known about the people who teach and carry out research in Australia’s universities, about the characteristics of the profession, or about what is required to ensure its sustainability and development’ (*ibid*, p 4). As highlighted in the introduction, the perception that academia offers greater flexibility and independence is slowly being eroded by the adoption of commercial business models and analytics-driven decision-making to measure success and index job output. In support of this assertion, one of our research participants explained:

‘It’s a very busy job. It’s a really challenging, busy job with time constraints that I had not thought enough about, probably, before I made the change. So the teaching is exhausting and very time-consuming if you want to do a good job.’

In their UK study, Blenkinsopp and Stalker (2004) commented,

‘The academic is perceived as having a degree of independence in terms of teaching and research, and also greater flexibility in terms of hours of work, annual leave, and so on. Yet within the UK university sector there seems to be a widespread view amongst academics that performance is increasingly micro-managed, hours of work are becoming extended and a generous leave entitlement is being implicitly eroded.’

As a result, coming to terms with the underlying values of industry and academia represents another aspect of the adjustment process for recently transitioned industry-academics. A study by Thornton (2010) addressed the reconciliation of competing values, reporting that individuals coming from industry had ‘... been indoctrinated to focus on product-driven outcomes and profits. However, new instructors found it difficult to switch from productivity-driven industry models to the learning-centered values of the technical college’ (*ibid*, p 2).

### **The embodiment of mobility**

Bandow *et al* (2007) maintained that the literature concerning second career transitions had come to be dominated by description and attitudinal antecedent, falling short of integrating a broader theory that explains the interrelated processes of personal motivations, socialization and adjustment as well as overarching themes such as movement, mobility, hybridity and flow. Although a seemingly obvious point, the first step in making a career change is reaching the point where you know you need one. In discussing industry-to-academe career changes, the cognitive-affective decision-making process *and* physical action of changing jobs are of equal relevance.

We can theorize movement from industry to academia occurring along two intersecting trajectories. More specifically, these movements can be understood in terms of desire and impulse to act (that is, the decision to enter academia) as well as the actual or physical movement of moving from one occupational setting to another. Creswell (2006) discussed the preconditions for physical movement, stating that, ‘Movement is the general fact of displacement before the type, strategies and social implications of that movement are considered’ (*ibid*, p 3). In relation to the career transition literature, Schwartz (1976) defined ‘a migrant’ as ‘someone who switches jobs (or intends to do so) and in the process crosses a regional boundary’ (*ibid*, cited in Linneman and Graves, 1983). The experience of transnational migrants draws some useful parallels with industry-practitioners’ transition to

academia. In both instances, movement is motivated by a complex array of push/pull factors, which may or may not involve a degree of uncertainty and excitement when crossing the respective geosymbolic boundaries. Furthermore, both populations must necessarily undergo a period of integration into the 'host' society or institution as well as define, or redefine, manage and maintain their transnational or trans-industrial livelihoods and conditions of return.

Central to the movement of people across real or imagined borders is the notion of mobility. D'Mello and Sahay (2007) referred to three interrelated 'types' of mobilities in their study of mobility, place and identity among software workers in India. These included geographical, social and existential mobilities. These authors stated that these '... movements are by no means seamless and unproblematic since they involve the interaction of different and sometimes conflicting linkages between people, technologies and practices across different time, space, and cultural conditions and boundaries' (*ibid*, p 163). The capacity of human mobility encompasses more than the simple movement from one location to another. Mobility is an active and ongoing process, which involves a complex interaction between identity, space and place. Delaney asserted that 'human mobility implicates *both* physical bodies moving through material landscapes *and* categorical figures moving through representational spaces' (cited in Creswell, 2006, p 4).

According to Posner (2009), 'pracademics' are more accurately conceived of as retaining the ability to 'switch across the boundaries in both directions'. Adding a further layer of complexity to these transitions, Posner argued that these movements vary in duration of stay and are better theorized as existing 'along a continuum, ranging from temporary or short-term switching to more permanent conversions' (*ibid*, p 19). Berman (2008) identified a number of negative industry attitudes and stereotypes towards academia that influenced the successfulness of trans-industrial movements. As one of his participants explained, 'Industry is scared of academics, they aren't confident of their understanding of the industry or that they can provide reports in a timely manner after data collection.' Practitioner-academics – or employees of both industry and university – are in the unique position of being able to provide valuable insights into the divide between industry and academia and offer useful advice for bridging the cultural divide (Berman, 2008). According to Gates and Green (2013), these individuals can also function as 'gatekeepers' between the university and outside world.

While there is a certain shorthand analytical usefulness to the 'industry-practitioner' label, we must

be careful not to reduce their individuated experiences to a particular 'kind' or 'type' (Malkki, 1995). As Creswell (2006) explained, 'Mobile people are never simply *people* – they are dancers and pedestrians, drivers and athletes, refugees and citizens, tourists or businesspeople, men and women' (*ibid*, p 4). In making the transition from industry to academe, we must also be aware of the 'irreducibly embodied experience' of doing so, as well as the renegotiation of identity or what Giddens (1991) described as 'the trajectory of the self' involved in making the move to academia.

## Navigating the transition to academia

Molho (1986) differentiated between 'speculative migration', namely the *hope* of finding a suitable opportunity, and 'contracted migration' which is undertaken after having already secured such an opportunity at the point of destination (*ibid*, p 397). Practitioner-academics would seem to fall somewhat in the middle of this distinction. While the motives for making the move to academe usually centre on lifestyle and prestige factors, newly arrived academics are faced with a series of unexpected challenges and conditions of employment in their new environments. The literature identifies 'culture shock' as a common experience of newly arrived academics. On this issue, Blenkinsopp and Stalker (2004) observed, 'The phenomenon of current practitioners moving into academia is generally welcomed in terms of addressing recruitment problems and the perceived benefit of bringing practical experience into the academic setting. Yet the individual practitioner may encounter considerable difficulties with this career transition. . . ' (*ibid*, p 418). Although industrial experience is viewed as a vital commodity in today's university system, LaRocco and Bruns (2006) reported, 'a majority of the second career academics in this exploratory study described varied levels of ambivalence about feeling prepared to teach, to conduct research, or to publish'. Accordingly, the overvaluation of professional 'real world' experience may be detracting from equipping newly arrived practitioners with the necessary teaching and research capabilities to function effectively in the organizational structure of the university.

In the study by LaRocco and Bruns, nearly all of the participants experienced some degree of difficulty in attempting to balance their work and home lives (La Rocco and Bruns, 2006, p 636). This finding seems to contradict the normative belief that working at a university is somehow easier and more flexible than in the commercial sector. In an earlier study, Fogg (2002) explained, 'After years in another field, they [industry-practitioners] bring practical experience to the table, but

many aspects of academic life – preparation for the teaching, dealing with the academic hierarchy, the autonomous nature of the faculty – are foreign to them’ (*ibid*, p 6). In a study of 5,200 individuals in the UK who had recently made a transition between jobs, Owen and Flynn (2004) concluded that ‘. . . those with higher qualifications in between paying jobs are more likely to make positive transitions’ (*ibid*, cited in Bandow *et al*, 2006, p 26). The findings of this study suggest that for industry-professionals with higher degrees, the transition to university is more accurately conceived of as return rather than an entry. An argument could be made that the rigors of postgraduate study, even undergraduate study, prepare returning practitioners for some of the demands of teaching and research. The findings also serve to challenge the supposition, outlined in the introduction, that practitioner-academics making this transition arrive in the university system without any of the relevant skills and attributes necessary to succeed.

### **The process(es) of socialization**

In the small amount of industry-to-academe literature that does exist, the processes of socialization with existing university staff and the university structure more generally are identified as one of the most significant factors enabling the successful transplantation of the industry professional into the academic environment (Blenkinsopp and Stalker, 2004; Bandow *et al*, 2006; Thornton, 2010). Austin (2002) defined socialization as ‘a process through which an individual becomes part of a group, organization, or community’ (*ibid*, p 96). While explicating a broad definition of socialization, this description overlooks the everyday contextual acts, strategies and embodied experiences involved in becoming part of a university community – of any community for that matter – as well as the social, emotional and political interactions that occur between the industry-practitioner making the transition and an incumbent academic staff. According to Mark, a practitioner-academic who had recently made the transition to academia, his arrival at the university was met with a mixture of both welcome and indifference. Interestingly, Page and Jenks (2012) noted that, ‘the size of the university was a factor in how welcome the new faculty felt and how colleagues treated them’ (*ibid*, p 41). In becoming part of a group, the industry-practitioner must navigate a multitude of intersecting inter-professional demands and institutional expectations. For some practitioner-academics, the expectation that their previous industry experience will be valued goes largely unmet. On this issue, John, one of our participants, maintained, ‘I was unrealistic in that I

thought my experience would be considered useful.’ Louis (1980) explained that inter-professional transition involves ‘differences in language used, norms governing interpersonal interactions. . . , codes of ethics, reference group, professional self-identity’ (Louis, cited in Bandow *et al*, 2006, p 26).

Clearly, the process of socializing in any new environment or setting can produce feelings of uncertainty, anxiety and stress. For industry-practitioners having recently made the transition, stress may arise with regard to a desire to fit in, a perceived inability to do the job or an unexpectedly large workload. In her doctoral thesis, Thornton (2010) explored the socialization experiences of participants who had made to transition from industry to a new technical college faculty in the USA. According to Thornton, ‘Many of the participants experienced notable levels of stress as they transitioned from industry to the technical college. The stress seemed to be related to their lack of pedagogical knowledge of teaching and the issues of forging a new academic persona’ (*ibid*, p x). Along similar lines, Blenkinsopp and Stalker (2004) found that ‘Novice lecturers are often anxious about teaching, and central to this is anxiety is a concern to appear credible to one’s audience – that is, students’.

### **Trans-industrial potential**

As previously stated, individual motives for (re-)entering academia are many and varied. It should also be noted that a percentage of industry-practitioners are thought to retain a trans-industrial livelihood, participating in both industry and academia. According to Coates and Goedegebuure (2010), ‘Industry professionals may be less likely to engage in academic work for money, and perhaps more to make a contribution to or supplement professional practice’ (*ibid*, p 20). For this particular brand of industry-practitioner, Coates and Goedegebuure (2010) also asserted that ‘They are perhaps less likely to contribute to course development and various forms of training given their substantive other appointment’ (*ibid*, p 20). However, they also pointed out that data to support such general claims concerning the motivators and expectations of these sessional staff are sparse. As Kevin Jackson, Professor of Accountancy and former Manager of Ernst & Young, notes, ‘Academia is not a refuge for those who want to get out of corporate America . . . It’s more of a calling’ (cited in Myers, 2006, p 31).

While some industry-practitioners are able to retain varying degrees of influence in their former industries as well as academia, Blenkinsopp and Stalker’s (2004)

participants perceived the transition to academia ‘as a career move which is not easily “reversible” – working as an academic does not add to one’s “career capital” as a manager, and participants were aware that over time their management experience became less and less “marketable” outside of academia’ (*ibid*, p 421).

Following this move, practitioner-academics may find themselves in more junior roles within the university than was the case in their industry career. This may lead to trouble in adjusting to their new status. Nevertheless, there is some truth in the words of Don Henley, ‘Sometimes you get the best light from a burning bridge’.<sup>2</sup>

## Why can’t we all just get along?

The inter-industry movement of industry professionals to academia and, in particular, the associated support provisions and professional development opportunities, is clearly an under-researched area. At the same time, we observe demand for academics and academic capability exceeding supply. This trend highlights a growing need to expand the workforce and ensure that it has the appropriate capabilities needed to make a successful transition to academia. An in-depth investigation of these transitions is of potential benefit to the wider community by providing a better and deeper understanding of the contexts and experiences of transition and the opportunities both to attract practitioner-academics and support their induction and development within academia.

Whilst the literature tends to emphasize inter-domain differences and misalignment between industry and academia in terms of expected skills and capabilities, it is worth drawing attention to the common attributes between the two. In discussing her recent transition from federal government to the university sector, Emily, a lecturer in law, observed,

‘There are parts of the public sector where a lot of research gets done . . . So, eight years with the [prominent branch of government] is really what got me over the line, in terms of being up to meeting the selection criteria [at the university].’

At the same time, we are keenly aware that the early transitional experiences of practitioner-academics are not always positive. For example, John recounted that his university provided,

‘No onboarding process, no assistance to overcome the plethora of poorly designed and integrated systems, no explanation of what to do with students in an emergency.’

A cynical explanation for this lack of informational support might be attributable to the notion of ‘boundary protection’; in particular, an implicit, unofficial strategy which obliges newly transitioned academics to ‘sink or swim’ when learning the administrative and institutional ropes. Accordingly, Posner (2009) argued that, ‘Boundary protection is an important function for those seeking to establish and institutionalize professional fields in both academic and bureaucratic worlds’ (*ibid*, p 19). It is our contention, however, that a long-term orientation towards partnership between industry and academia will outweigh the potential short-term advantages of policing these real and imagined borders.

In their study, Blenkinsopp and Stalker (2004) found ‘evidence of establishing new “merged” discourse communities with the explicit aim of creating “dialogue” among academics and professionals as peers with common areas of interest, discussed from a plurality of perspectives’ (*ibid*, p 12). By opening up channels for greater dialogue between academics and professionals, channels for promoting mutually beneficial exchanges between the two domains can be established. For Steven, the decision to enter academia was motivated by a decision to give back to the university sector:

‘Engineering as a career allowed me to not only earn a good living, travel the world, and do things I never dreamed of doing when I was growing up. I decided that I wanted to “give back” to the field for the second half of my career.’

While the idea of brokering a ‘merge’ or fundamental redefinition of industry or academia does not appear likely in the foreseeable future, it is nevertheless important to gain insight into the attitudes of industry towards academia and vice versa and, in so doing, explore ways to facilitate better career transitions and research partnerships between them. Posner (2009) supported this sentiment, arguing that the end goal is not a radical makeover of either sector but, rather, in pursuing these changes that, ‘the goal should be to promote the unique value added by each sector [industry and academia] not to transform each sector into the image of the other’ (*ibid*, p 26). A more recent example of inter-domain partnership in an Australian university involved the award of the Samsung Global Research Outreach Program grant to researchers at the University of South Australia. In partnership with Samsung, Dr Chris Sandor and the ‘Magic Vision Lab’ are aiming to develop augmented reality technology on mobile phones, with capabilities akin to and in some cases surpassing those found in the special effects in films (UniSA, 2013).

## Institutional support provisions

Part and parcel of the socialization process for industry-practitioners is the quality and quantity of support offered by the respective institution and staff therein. Support is a wide-ranging and provisional term and can include a range of overlapping efforts and strategies aimed at delivering emotional, social, and professional help. According to Bandow *et al* (2007), the traditional provision of support in universities is geared towards recent graduates making the transition to academic careers:

‘Indeed, there are support structures in academia for resident faculty, but in traditional settings these structures seek to meet the needs of very young faculty members who have often just left graduate school and who have yet to acquire significant work experience.’ (Bandow *et al*, 2007, p 23)

Importantly, Bandow *et al* (2007) pointed out, ‘For the older faculty member who has transitioned from industry, the traditional support system is likely to be inadequate’ (*ibid*, p 23). In contrast, a ‘more seasoned’ academic at one of our partner universities having made the transition noted that ‘there was a tremendous amount of encouragement to take on the tasks I had set for myself’. Adopting a similar entrepreneurial attitude to his university work to the one adopted during his time in industry, Steven commented, ‘Many of them told me I was working too hard, too, but if you want to be a successful entrepreneur you need to put in the time/effort to get established’.

Bandow *et al* (2007) explained that practitioners transitioning into academia have very different needs and preferences to other staff. Blenkinsopp and Stalker (2004) pick up on this point, observing that newly transitioned academics tend ‘to prefer to teach post-experience graduate students working toward their MBA or a similar program’ (Blenkinsopp and Stalker, cited in Bandow *et al*, 2007, p 24). This finding was supported in our research by Steven. When asked about what concerns he had prior to his transition, he responded:

‘The biggest was whether I would make a good teacher to students just learning the topics that I was asked to teach . . . I was fairly confident that I could teach HDR [Higher Degree by Research] and fourth year students as that’s pretty much the level of people I would deal with in industry if I had to give any sort of training.’

In addition to the size of the university as a determinant of adjustment (Page and Jenks, 2012), Donohue (2006)

observed that ‘career transitioners do in fact tend to pursue careers that are more compatible with their personality profiles that were their previous careers’ (in Bandow *et al*, 2007 p 27).

## Mentoring: a key ingredient

Several studies have identified mentoring as a key component in successful industry–academic transitions. For Thomsen and Gustafson (1997), ‘. . . the induction process is the most effective under the direction of a seasoned and concerned mentor, who is capable of guiding the new teacher through the rigors of class preparation, research expectations, and demanding promotion and tenure requirements’ (*ibid*, p 24). According to them, effective mentoring ‘leads to greater job satisfaction, teaching competence, and research productivity, as well as a greater sense that these former practitioners have effectively and successfully made their transition into academe’ (*ibid*, p 24). Reflecting a similar sentiment, Steven reflected,

‘. . . importantly, it would probably be useful to make sure that the practitioner academic has a university mentor at the same level or higher and that the mentor has the practitioner-academics put together a plan for the first three-plus years.’

As Billings (2003, p 100) stated, ‘Excellence in teaching is not intuitive’. Rather, it requires early and ongoing support in the form and practice of learning styles, classroom practices, assessment and evaluation.

## Conclusions

The transition from industry to academia involves a range of complex interior and exterior, personal and social processes. The specific type of occupational movement challenges the linear occupational trajectory shaped most notably by the influential notion of the ‘tenure track’. The increasing commercialization and casualization of Australian universities is leading to a redefinition of long-standing beliefs about what it means to be an academic. Given the closer alignment of universities and commercial industry business modeling, inter-domain transitions from industry-to-academia and academia-to-industry will undoubtedly become more commonplace in the future. In order to support industry-practitioners, the pre- and post-arrival processes and mechanisms of adjustment, socialization and mentoring need to be treated as simultaneous and ongoing concerns. With greater collaboration and openness between industry and academia, it is hoped that the ‘all or nothing’ mentality of these career transitions will

begin to be eroded, thereby allowing more open dialogue and multiple back and forth journeys between these sectors without the unhelpful metaphor of the ‘burning bridge’. Universities need to be thought of as places where people can replenish and accumulate their imaginative and creative capital, which is then transferable into the so-called ‘real world’. So it is to be hoped that the current waves of industry-practitioners making the move to academia hang a rope that is so firmly secured as to become long forgotten, assisting future cohorts considering the practice- to-academy transition.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Pseudonyms have been used for all participants in this study in order to protect the identities of and sensitive information provided by participating staff.

<sup>2</sup>The words are from the song ‘My Thanksgiving’ by Don Henley; see, for example, <http://www.songlyrics.com/don-henley/my-thanksgiving-lyrics/> (lyrics © Warner/Chappell Music, Inc).

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