EdD Programme: Cohort 3
University of Stirling

"NOT AS COOL AS FIGHTER PILOTS"

An exploration of identity and learning for full-time Quantity Surveying students

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between identity and learning, in particular the concepts of 'belonging' and 'becoming' in respect of professional, vocational education.

Adopting a case study approach, the study focuses on the quantity surveying discipline and the degree programme offered by my institution, and one specific cohort on same. As they progressed through their studies, an in-depth exploration of the formation of identity (ies) and the dispositions adopted towards learning was undertaken, involving two key milestones: at Level 1 (first year) when the participants had almost completed their studies, and again at Level 3 (third year) when the participants had returned from their period of professional placement.

The conclusions of my study raise a number of issues for professional, vocational education in general, and more specifically, the provision of quantity surveying education within my institution.

The outcomes of this investigation highlight three key areas for further attention: the tensions inherent in providing discipline-orientated programmes within a semesterised, modularised, more generic-focused system of delivery; issues surrounding the provision of professional placement opportunities including the emotional aspects of same; and the resultant impacts on dispositions and identity, 'belonging' and 'becoming'.

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very fraught – although ultimately enjoyable - process:

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Irene

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CHAPTER 1   INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

"Each tribe has a name and a territory, settles its own affairs, goes to war with the others, has a distinct language or at least a distinct dialect and a variety of ways of demonstrating its apartness from others"

(Becher, foreword:1989)

Rationale for the Research

This research has its origins in my experiences as Programme Organiser for the BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying degree programme offered by my School, located within one of the post-1992 UK universities.   The programme is one of the largest undergraduate programmes in the School, with approximately 400 students enrolled across its full-time and part-time routes.   In academic session 2001-02 a significant number of students elected to leave the programme before completion of their Level 1 (first year) studies.   From a total cohort of thirty-two, eight students elected to withdraw from their studies during the first semester, a loss of 25% of the intake (data provided by the Annual Programme Analysis for BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying, Session 2001-02).   As Programme Organiser at the time, I interviewed each student to establish their reasons for leaving. Many of them commented that it was *"difficult to see the relevance of subjects"* and they were *"not sure what I was doing – or why"*. By contrast, the Level 3 (Year 3) students in the same session returned from their professional placement period commenting very positively on their experiences, and feeling that they now had a clear view of 'where they were going and how to get there'.

At this time too, a colleague undertaking his doctoral thesis conducted interviews with full-time and part-time Quantity Surveying students. As an 'ice-breaker', he asked each group the following question: "Do you view yourself as a student or a surveyor?" The full-time students responded in the majority that they considered themselves to be students who were studying quantity surveying, whereas the part-time students viewed themselves as quantity surveyors who were attending university.

While the School has given considerable thought to student retention generally, little attention has focused on the specific issue of identity, how it fits with / is reflected in learning, and the part it might play in the general student learning experience, therefore this formed the starting point for my research study. My original intention had been to investigate identity within the context of, and its possible influence on, progression and retention, with the intention of identifying possible strategies for enhancing the student learning experience and improving retention rates. However, this was overtaken by the School's decision - in light of particularly poor rates of progression by Level 1 students generally in academic session 2003-04 - to implement measures to address this. I therefore elected to shift focus, and explore identity from a different perspective, namely the issues of 'belonging' and 'becoming'. These two themes are not only discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2 but also provide the central 'thread' of the narrative. The School's promotion of programmes linked to specific career paths (disciplines) to meet the needs of industry and practice promotes the attainment of the requisite core skills and knowledge which provides entry to the

discipline (the belonging) as well as the development of the attitudes, dispositions and attributes of the professional (the becoming), and my interest lies in how this occurs. Within the School we talk of 'educating the professional', and of students developing 'a professional approach' but what does this actually mean?   How is it achieved? When students first join their programme of study, are they thinking of themselves as quantity surveyors in the making, or do other, different identities take precedence? Thus my study explores identity within the framework of the overall student learning experience, charting the experiences of one cohort of quantity surveying students as they progress through their studies.   By exploring this learning experience from students' perspective, and in particular how they construct and develop their identity(ies) within same, I hope not only to be able to contribute to the wider debate of learning, professional education and lifelong learning, but at a local level to also assist the School in determining appropriate strategies for learning and teaching to enhance the learning experience for all involved.

Outlining the Key Themes of the Study

This exploration, in particular the identity(ties) formed by the Quantity Surveying students as they progress through their programme of study, uses the concepts of 'belonging' and 'becoming' as the main framework, an approach drawn firstly from the theory of learning as communities of practice defined by Wenger (1998). Wenger proposes that learning is fundamentally a social phenomenon, where knowledge is a matter of participation and being part of a discourse community – ie an active

engagement in the world – and that to permit this engagement we need to have a sense of self, a sense of our place in this world, and a sense of the place of those around us. Learning is therefore regarded as not just an accumulation of skills and information, but the process of becoming a particular person by acquiring these skills and knowledge in the service of an identity, in other words through both 'belonging' and 'becoming'. Within a Higher Education environment, students come together to deal with the requirements of the institution, the curriculum and associated activities, forming various communities of practice on the basis of: their chosen programme of study; their areas of interest; their shared experiences. In the context of this study, therefore, students' participation is considered to be multi-dimensional.

However, as communities of practice are treated as bounded settings, unconnected to other spaces and times, to more fully explore how students connect to their chosen discipline, how they engage with and progress through their studies, I also draw from Nespor (1994). Nespor posits that learning in a discipline is not simply a matter of transforming one's psychological make-up, rather learning refers to changes in spatial and temporal organisations of the actor-network of which we are always a part. Further, he suggests that disciplines are constituted by cycles of accumulation within these networks, which organise flows of people and things through space and time. 'Closed' communities of practice are thus replaced by the more open processes which constitute disciplines, centring round incorporation of students into discipline-specific temporal and spatial representations of knowledge. Students therefore actually enter into disciplinary practices when they begin to construct worlds through discipline-

based systems of representation, and learning moves from being the transformation of the individual and how one gets to be at home on isolated islands of practice, to where identities are "crystallised in the tensions and pressures produced as different communities clash" (Nespor, 1994: p12). Selves are simply not multiplied or fragmented, they are distributed across space-time networks and different disciplinary constructions of space and time mean different constructions of self. Therefore, while Wenger's theories are not discounted or supplanted, the notion of a community of practice cannot be understood simply on its own terms, but only by looking at how its practices are enmeshed in "more expansive networks" (Nespor, 1994: p132).

Personal identity is also part of this exploration. Personal identity is defined by Chickering (1972) as development of those competencies: emotions, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, purpose and integrity, to form a solid sense of self. But identities are not constant: we can be different "I's" in different situations. It is therefore these different "I's" that the Quantity Surveying students adopt/demonstrate that form the basis for the exploration of identity and drives this study.

The 'big' questions to be answered are:

- What facets of identity(ies) are displayed / developed?

- Do these identities shift as they progress through their studies?

- What happens when they enter the realm of practice during their professional placement period?

The conceptual framework within which these questions are set is fully explored in Chapter 2, and further developed in Chapter 3, where the methodology framework adopted for this study is defined and discussed.

Chapter 2 also briefly considers the political and educational policies and practices which provide the wider background and context for my particular exploration of identity and learning. However, it is important to firstly provide some more specific context to 'set the scene'; what follows is an outline of the institutional and programme framework within which the quantity surveying students are located.

Setting the Research Context

My institution is a Higher Education Institution (HEI) which evolved from the polytechnic sector, gaining University status in 1992. As an institution whose primary aim has always been to provide vocational education, national education policy intent on aligning education with employment (see Chapter 2) is, one might argue, simply articulating the practices of such institutions over the last decade. Indeed, in 2002 the University published its "2020 Vision" policy document outlining its future direction. In this document the University defines itself as a regionally engaged, nationally active and globally involved institution, involved in:

- Preparing students for the labour market;

- Working with and meeting the needs of employers for a graduate labour supply;

- Undertaking applied research.

The University has always maintained close links with industry and the professions evidenced by its mission statement:

"working together with professional bodies, employers and others in education to support students in gaining nationally recognised qualifications, enhancing their skills and advancing their careers"

However, in academic session 2001-02, the University undertook a major restructuring exercise, with the following objectives:

- To increase the University's capability to deliver key strategic objectives;

- To improve market focus;

- To provide clarity in line management responsibility for quality;

- To enable financial delegation.

This resulted in the creation of new operational structures across the University (in operation at time of writing). Eight Schools were formed, replacing the existing three Faculties, and a new management structure implemented. The University Executive and Senate continue to be responsible for the governance of the institution as an entity. But Schools now report directly to the Executive or its 'offshoots' – Academic Practice Committee, Quality Office – which required a new management structure at School level. Each School is headed by a Dean who is supported by Heads of Division and Associate Deans, plus a School Manager. These personnel form the School Management Team. The Heads of Division are primarily line managers

for the academic and technical support staff within the School. The School Manager has considerable and wide ranging responsibilities, including line management of all administrative staff. The Associate Deans (ADs) have various tasks depending on their role: all matters relating to Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement fall within the AD Quality's remit, while responsibilities for research submissions, collaborative links, and engagement with industry and practice fall to the AD Research.

Operating a semesterised and modularised structure for programme delivery, the University has also moved towards greater commonality of delivery and maximisation of resources via the introduction of a resource-based model for Schools. In this model, Schools are allocated budgets which are determined by the University's 'Resource Allocation Model (RAM)' based on their proportionate income generation across a number of categories:

- Scottish Funding Council (SFC) income – funding provided by central government for the number of students registered on its programmes;

- Non-SFC income – funding and income generated from other sources;

- Research and Consultancy – income from the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) based on rating, and other income generated by the School.

Schools are expected to manage and adhere to their budgets, and efficiency of resource use is encouraged. This has generally led to a rationalisation of programme portfolio and the catalogue of modules offered within same. A shift towards a more business orientated and related approach within the Institution and the Schools is clear, and it would therefore appear that the institution is well placed and well

prepared to engage with and execute educational policy.   However, what is also

apparent is the effect on academic autonomy (Currie and Vidovich, 1998). The level

of accountability has increased; the University has developed numerous systems

internally to ensure compliance with external – Quality Assurance Agency (QAA),

professional bodies - and internal – Quality Office – procedures.   Internal evaluation

is required at module, subject, programme and School levels, including centrally

managed mechanisms for student and other user feedback. The introduction of more

business orientated structures has also resulted in increased levels of bureaucracy, and

increased remoteness from the decision-making process. School Board, with limited

academic representation replaced Department Board which permitted participation

from all academic staff. The new University Committees also restrict academic

representation. An increased emphasis on market forces and meeting market needs,

combined with an expansion in student numbers, has also had an impact on the

curriculum, methods of delivery and flexibility of delivery – and on resources.

Research too is regulated by the RAE, with the concern that monies may be directed

to areas that are guaranteed funding and/or meet market business priorities. This then,

is the background against and the context within which the School operates.

The School aim is to provide graduates across a wide range of disciplines within the

construction and property industry, each of whom has a specific role to play.

Provision would be defined as 'professional' education, reflected not only in the

continued accreditation from professional bodies for programmes but also in terms of

the nature of the provision, namely that it is fully vocational. It is anticipated that

graduates will enter the construction and property industry, so providing the 'next

generation' of quantity surveyors, construction managers, property managers and the like. In such a framework, professional education requires close relationships with the professions and employers, with a curriculum developed to ensure that knowledge for the discipline is delivered within the context of professional practice (I Taylor, 1997). Thus, while there are a number of areas of commonality – ie core knowledge and skills in areas such as law and contract which are required by all – there are also a number of key specialist subject areas which distinguish one discipline from another. Students are recruited to the School on the basis of their programme, ie discipline, choice. Within the School, Programme Teams are charged with responsibility for the development, structure, content and delivery of their particular programme and are themselves created by the grouping of similarly qualified staff within the discipline area. Marketing literature is prepared on a discipline-specific basis, and on completion of the chosen programme the degree award states this distinct area of professional activity. Graduates moving to employment in their chosen field are then required not only to comply with their professional organisation's Code of Practice and Professional Conduct but also to gain chartered membership (usually mandatory for practice). This requires the candidate to demonstrate competency in specific skills areas which are also defined on a discipline basis. The School's promotion of programmes linked to specific career paths (or disciplines) is designed to meet both the needs of employers in industry and to enable graduates to progress within their chosen field. Students find themselves operating within a defined discipline on commencement of their studies, with the expectation – at times more implicit than explicit – that they will not

only obtain the core knowledge and skills pertinent to the chosen discipline but also develop the approach, attitudes, dispositions and attributes of a professional recognised by industry.

For the purposes of this study, then, professional education is defined as the development of:

- Understanding and application of an accepted body of knowledge and the demonstration of professional expertise;

- Competence in generic skills;

- Reflective practice and informed ethical judgement;

- Responsibility and accountability to others;

- Engagement in CPD and Lifelong Learning;

with an increasing emphasis on the importance of development of skills other than 'pure' discipline (Katz, in Bourner et al, 2000, adapted).

Defining the Discipline

Within the surveying profession there is a range of disciplines, all with specific roles and responsibilities. Quantity Surveyors operate in the construction and property industry, and are generally employed either by:

- a client commissioning a building project,

  or

- a contracting organisation undertaking the physical construction of a building project.

When appointed by a client, the Quantity Surveyor forms part of the Design Team (comprising Architect, Engineer(s), and others as appropriate) to develop an appropriate design solution within acceptable cost limits.   Alternatively, as a member of the contracting organisation they engage with the various parties who make up the site team: Project Manager, Site Agent, Sub-contractors and other specialist firms. However, irrespective of which 'side' they operate on, the role of the Quantity Surveyor and their input to the construction process is not immediately apparent, nor easy to define.   The discipline could in fact be considered in terms of what they are not:

- ***Not designers***   *but involved in the design process*

- ***Not builders***   *but are an integral part of the construction process*

- ***Not accountants***   *but are responsible for project expenditure and budgetary control*

- ***Not lawyers***   *but are responsible for the arrangement, management, and implementation of contractual agreements*

More positively, the Quantity Surveyor has expertise in the following areas:

- ***Technical***   *an understanding of the methods of construction, materials used, and the principles of building design*

- ***Professional***   *quantifying drawn information to provide Bills of Quantities or other documentation for pricing*

- ***Managerial***   *understanding the principles and processes of management: construction, project and resource*

- ***Financial***   *undertaking the responsibility for cost control: setting budget limits at inception, financial control during construction, settlement of the final account on completion*

- ***Legal***   *advising on appropriate procurement routes (forms of contract) including the rights, obligations and remedies of each party to the contract*

This is necessarily a very broad overview of the main areas of activity of the Quantity Surveyor, but the range of activities listed above highlights the need for a holistic approach to learning and teaching.   All activities are interdependent, as the way in which a project is commissioned has implications for the design, the form of contract (ie the contract conditions) to be selected, and method of cost control to be employed. The Quantity Surveyor is appointed to provide advice, offer alternative design solutions, and take responsibility for specific aspects of a building project, which requires integration of knowledge from a range of subject areas.   Further, as the Quantity Surveyor is required to work with other professionals, good interpersonal and communication skills are essential.   But although the services provided by the Quantity Surveyor make a significant contribution to the construction process, the 'fruits of their labours' are unseen. While Architects, Engineers and Contractors have the physical evidence of their labours in the form of a completed building, the Quantity Surveyor's contribution cannot be evidenced the same way.

The route to becoming a chartered Quantity Surveyor is one largely prescribed by the professional body for all surveying disciplines, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).   Anyone wishing to practice as a surveyor must be a member of the RICS, demonstrate that they have attained the required educational qualifications and satisfy the criteria for Chartered Member status, as defined in the professional body's Code of Conduct and Practice.   The accepted norm is:

- BSc (Hons) undergraduate programme of study (three years in England, four years in Scotland);

- Full-time employment on graduation within the chosen discipline;

- Registration for Assessment of Professional Competence (APC);

- Completion of Period of Professional Experience and APC requirements resulting in:

- Chartered Membership of RICS.

Professional development and progression is determined at each stage of membership as follows:

- Student   *those undertaking an honours degree*

- Probationer   *graduates working towards APC*

- Member   *candidates who have successfully completed the APC*

- Fellow   *postgraduate study, recognition by peers*

The definition of 'professional development' here is the acquisition of the necessary skills and competencies to enable one to practice in a particular field, become a member of a professional organisation, and uphold the ethics, values and standards of same (Pring 1995). The RICS has considerable influence in defining professionalism and professionals in respect of surveyors, therefore any definition of professional identity for the Quantity Surveyor must be considered within the RICS' pre-determined framework from education to practice. To achieve and maintain accreditation, thus meeting professional body requirements, programmes of study are required to focus on developing professional competence and operational practice

(Watson 1992). Professional competence is defined by Argyris and Schon (1974) as the requirement to develop one's continuing theory of practice, technical and interpersonal theory, more succinctly defined by Kerka (1993) as two sets of skills: 'hard' (technical) and 'soft' (interpersonal, communication).

The School's programmes foster the development of professional identity through the determination of, and adherence to, the ethos and values of the particular discipline. Accreditation depends on satisfying benchmark thresholds and demonstrating that programme content and structure equips graduates to operate effectively as a Quantity Surveyor in practice. The 'hard' and 'soft' skills sets (Kerka 1993) are integrated within the modules which form the programme. As all undergraduate programmes contain a period of professional placement learning, students also have an opportunity to develop these in practice. Students are encouraged to find employment with an appropriate employer (ie within the programme discipline area), become student members of the appropriate professional body, and record their experiences in accordance with the requirements of same. In respect of the Quantity Surveying programme this is achieved via a diary and logbook which mirrors the competency-based approach of the APC. It is also worth noting that this achievement of professional competence is specifically identified for assessment by the University's External Assessors. For those who are appointed from industry and practice (currently one per programme), their External Assessor Report includes specific questions relating to 'standards' and 'fitness for practice'.

The challenge then, for the School, is to provide programmes which allow students to develop the necessary skills and competencies within the appropriate discipline framework, including within the overall educational experience development of appropriate and applicable personal / transferable and commercial / business skills. This is reflected in the structure and content of the Quantity Surveying degree programme.

The Quantity Surveying programme structure

Having had their application for a place on the programme accepted, students are expected to participate in a discipline-orientated programme of study. The structure and content of the BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying degree programme is defined overleaf.

[NB: Although the programme is offered both full-time and part-time, over four and five years respectively, it is the full-time route that is of relevance here].

Full-time Programme Structure:

Level*	Description	Content
1	**Foundation:** Development of a foundation knowledge base; Limited exposure to the specific discipline	Six taught modules: • Construction Technology 1 • Introduction to Construction Costs • Measurement &Practice 1 • Property Economics • Property Legislation • Professional Orientation and Practice
2	**Preparation for Practice:** Emphasis on preparation for professional placement; Development of core discipline skills	Six taught modules: • Construction Development Economics • Construction and Property Contracts • Construction Process Management • Construction Technology 2 • Measurement & Practice 2 • Tendering, Procurement & Contract
3	**Professional Placement Learning / Consolidation:** Practical Experience in the Workplace; Consolidation of core discipline skills	• Professional Placement Period Three taught modules: • Contract & Project Finance • Construction Technology 3 • Interact Project* • Measurement & Practice 3* (* half modules)
4	**Deepening and Broadening:** Emphasis on independent learning; Opportunity for specialisation	• Dissertation Four taught modules: two core & two options • Contract Administration (C) • Value & Risk Appraisal (C) • Project Management (O) • Facilities Management (O) • Dispute Resolution (O) • Corporate Strategy (O)

(* In my institution, years of study are known as 'levels'; therefore Level 1 equates to first year, Level 2 to second year, Level 3 to third year, and Level 4 to final Honours year)

- ***Level 1: Foundation***

Analysis of the programme structure at Level 1 reveals limited exposure to the specific discipline. Four of the six modules are delivered to all Level 1 students across the range of undergraduate programmes in the School.   The rationale for this is, in part, one of resources and the effective use of same, but of more importance is the academic rationale.

The School elected to introduce this degree of commonality across Level 1 to facilitate development of the common knowledge base, and to build-in flexibility of transfer between programmes. There are usually a number of students who decide mid-way through the first semester that they have made the wrong choice of programme; commonality of modules at Level 1 allows them to transfer without the 'penalty' of having to make up modules. Also, a number of subject areas are core to all disciplines – technology, law, economics - where the context and application of knowledge is broadly similar and where the existing knowledge base is generally limited.   The majority of Level 1 entrants are school leavers for whom most of these topics are entirely new, so development of a foundation knowledge base is required. Modules are developed, delivered and assessed by groups of staff with the requisite subject knowledge.   A variety of learning and teaching strategies are employed, from traditional lectures and tutorials to web-based student centred learning.   Where materials are delivered via mass lectures to the whole module class, contextualisation is provided through cohort-specific, ie discipline-specific, tutorial and seminar groups. Students therefore have an opportunity to engage with each other across the range of

disciplines in the wider forum, and on a more personal level with their own cohort in a more intimate setting.

All Level 1 students also undertake the Professional Orientation and Practice module, to provide them with an introduction to the construction and property industry, the professions which operate within it, and their roles and responsibilities. It highlights the ways in which disciplines interact and engage with others, reflecting the inter-disciplinary nature of the construction and property industry, and introduces students to the concepts of professional practice and ethics, including the professional bodies who determine the 'rules'.

The Professional Orientation and Practice module is an example of the way in which the School has attempted to address issues of identity and belonging, at the same time encouraging integration and interaction across disciplines. The module has an overall framework for development of generic skills - IT and personal and transferable skills - which are then applied via discipline-specific activities. Staff delivering the module do so as representatives of their discipline, ie the Quantity Surveying students have as their tutors staff from the Quantity Surveying programme team. Thus the module attempts to provide the context for the knowledge, and the way in which the discipline applies it.

- *Level 2: Preparation for Practice*

Development of discipline areas of expertise and the professional context increases as the student progresses.   At Level 2, the emphasis is on preparation for professional placement and development of the core skills required to make a contribution to industry and practice.   Thus Quantity Surveying students find themselves undertaking one module with Construction Management students, and one module with Environmental Management and Planning students, reflecting the need for different disciplines to acquire a similar knowledge base. Again, tutorial, seminar and workshop activities are undertaken on a cohort-specific basis to provide contextualisation and application.

- *Level 2 / Level 3: Professional Placement Learning*

On completion of their Level 2 studies students are required to undertake Professional Placement Learning with a recognised employer for a period of eight months. (Recognising the cyclical nature of the industry, provision is made for those students who are unable to obtain appropriate placement, either through lack of placement opportunities or other circumstances).   The placement is paid and students are expected, as employees of the organisation, to undertake professionally-orientated tasks and activities.   Although tutor guidance and support is provided, students are expected to obtain placement through their own efforts; the School plays a limited part in this process.   However, support during the placement period is provided by tutors who will visit the student and employer at least once, and act as contact in case of difficulties.

While not mandatory, students are encouraged to join the RICS as student members and enrol for their Assessment of Professional Competence, as this allows them to count the placement period as part of the qualifying period for gaining professional experience.

The student becomes a learner in practice, practising, developing and refining their professional skills. They are also exposed to the mores and cultures of professional practice and the cultures of the workplace rather than the University, which are determined and influenced by the sphere of operation. The Quantity Surveyor in private practice (usually known as the 'PQS') is quite different from the contractor's Quantity Surveyor (Contractor's QS). The nature and purpose of professional placement is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

- *Level 3: Consolidation and The Interact Project*

On completion of the placement period, students return to their studies in Semester B of Level 3. Students now focus on consolidation of the core areas of activity, and also participate in the *Interact* project. A long-established multi-disciplinary activity, *Interact* involves students of architecture, structural and civil engineering and quantity surveying working together in teams to develop a design and cost solution for a given project brief. Staff and students from four Universities participate, representing the main disciplines which make up a client's Design Team: Architect, Structural Engineer and Quantity Surveyor. The activity takes place over an eight-week period

and involves the Level 3 Quantity Surveying students. Teams are formed by self selection, and are required to work together to required to fully develop a design, supported by a structural solution and project cost, to solve the project brief. Tutor support is provided throughout the activity, but the emphasis is on inter-disciplinary teamwork and mutual peer support.

After assessment, the top eight teams are selected to participate in the final. The final is a true competition as each team must present and justify their scheme to a panel of external judges (comprising representatives of each discipline from industry and practice). This is the only activity of its kind in the UK and is highly regarded for its inter-disciplinary approach. Indeed, students themselves comment on the realistic representation of working in practice, of having to interact and communicate with other disciplines, and all the attendant difficulties of same.

- *Level 4: Deepening and Broadening*

At Level 4, the student is expected to take greater responsibility for their learning and development, primarily through the Dissertation module. Students must select, research and report on a topic, area or specific aspect of practice to produce a 10,000-15,000 word Dissertation. The emphasis is on independent learning, reflected not only through this research project but also through the learning and teaching methods employed in the honours level modules. Students are also encouraged to consider carefully and select option modules appropriate to their professional interests / career

path. The range of options available reflects the diverse nature of the industry,

provides an opportunity for specialisation, and highlights possible career paths (eg

Project Management, Facilities Management).

Professional Placement and Quantity Surveying practice

Professional Placement is an integral part of the Quantity Surveying degree

programme, which takes place between the end of Level 2 and Semester B of Level 3,

(essentially occupying the summer vacation period and Semester A of Level 3).

Students have the opportunity to gain practical experience with a recognised employer

over a period of eight months, which is assessed by both the University and the

Employer, and which contributes 60 credit points to the degree. A 'recognised

employer' is defined as an organisation who is actively engaged in construction and

property related activities as part of their day-to-day operations and who employs

quantity surveyors.   As the construction industry is cyclical, there may be times when

placement opportunities are limited or non-existent. In some instances, a student may

fail to take up a placement opportunity, but the School has in place a range of

measures to address both possibilities.

It is perhaps useful at this point to provide a brief rationale for the inclusion of such a

professional placement period within the Quantity Surveying programme.   The main

aim of the professional placement period is to provide students with a work-based

learning experience which allows them to draw on and develop their knowledge, and

to practice and further develop their skills – professional and personal – and to provide them with a learning experience which forms a mature basis for the continuation and consolidation of their studies when they return to the University (Professional Placement Guide for Students and Employers, August 2005).

The placement process essentially starts with the employer. An organisation who wishes to employ a placement student notifies the appropriate programme Placement Tutor of the vacancy or vacancies. If the organisation is "tried and tested", ie they have a history of employing both placement and graduate students, all that is required from them is a post profile or job advertisement. Where the organisation is not known to the School, they are required to undertake a pre-placement assessment using the standard School template. The essential components of this checklist focus on the organisation's structure, the range of activities undertaken, the nature of the placement opportunity, supervision and training policy, as well as statutory health and safety requirements. The objective is to attempt to ensure that the organisation can provide an appropriate placement opportunity for the student(s), including support, supervision, and involvement in appropriate discipline-related tasks. The organisation is also provided with a copy of the Professional Placement Guide for Employers, to advise them of the expectations of the School, and most importantly, the students, during the placement period.

Assuming that the outcome of the pre-placement check is satisfactory, the organisation submits details of the placement opportunity – usually by preparing a job advert – which is then lodged in the Professional Placement Register. Thus the

School acts only as a repository for opportunities, making the students aware of these; the School plays no part in the recruitment process itself. This is not to suggest that the School is entirely remote from the process; students generally canvass tutor views on particular organisations, seek advice on whether they should accept an offer, and the like. But ultimately the responsibility for securing placement employment lies with the student.

Students have open access to the range of the opportunities "advertised" in the Placement Register, and can make application to all that are of interest to them. They are responsible for responding appropriately to advertisement(s) (eg by submitting their Curriculum Vitae), attending for interview, and negotiating the terms of their contract (salary, working hours, holidays). The contract is therefore entirely between the placement employer and the student. The application process usually commences around the middle of Semester B, in early April, so that students are 'signed up' and ready to begin their placement period immediately on conclusion of the formal assessment period at the end of May. Students are encouraged to commence placement at the beginning of June and conclude same at the end of January, which provides them with the maximum eight months placement experience.

Once a student has commenced placement employment, they are legally an employee of the company and as such are bound by the rules and regulations of their employer, and are naturally expected to comply with these. This includes time management and attendance, holiday entitlement and scheduling, expected working week and overtime requirements. But beyond this there are also requirements placed on both the

employer and student by the University and School. For the employer, the student must be allocated a supervisor or mentor within the workplace, and be allocated appropriate tasks and activities that both consolidate and develop their understanding and knowledge. For the student, they must achieve the learning outcomes as defined in the module, and complete the module assessment activities.

Students can undertake their professional placement in various sectors of the construction and property industry. Generally, however, there are three key employers:

- Local Authorities
- Private Quantity Surveying/Multi-disciplinary practices
- Contracting/ Sub-contracting organisations

Local Authorities, ie the City or Town Council, traditionally employed their own surveyors to work in conjunction with their direct labour force, who undertook the project works, forming their own construction community. However, in the wake of privatisation, quantity surveyors working for a local authority now find themselves much more engaged with 'mainstream' contractors, providing similar services to those employed in private practice, the main difference is that their client is always the Local Authority. Quantity Surveyors who are involved in private practice are generally employed by clients to form part of the Design Team with Architects, Engineers and other disciplines. In the case of multi-disciplinary practices, the Design Team can be formed entirely in-house, thus providing the client with a 'one-

stop' service. Contracting organisations are those involved in the physical construction of buildings, whether new-build, alteration or refurbishment.   Current approaches to the construction process mean that the contractor generally acts as project manager, and large elements of the works are let or sub-contracted to smaller companies. This is particularly true when the works involved are of a specialist nature (eg lift installations).

Having provided the specific context and background against which my central theme of identity is explored, I next consider in fuller detail the theories and concepts of learning and identity from which an appropriate methodology was developed.

CHAPTER 2   IDENTITY AND LEARNING

"Identities construct places from which people can position themselves and from which they can speak; representation as a cultural practice establishes individual and collective identities, and symbolic systems provide possible answers to the questions: Who am I? What could I be? Who do I want to be?"

(Woodward, 1997: p14)

Educational Policies and Practices

Before commencing this exploration of identity and learning, it is useful to provide a general overview of Higher Educational policies and practices which inform and frame this study. I start with a short review of the changes which have taken place in Higher Education over the last two decades, charting the effect of same on the education sector generally, and my own institution in particular, highlighting the resultant implications for learning and identity.

During the mid-1980's to mid-1990's, countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) began to move from a welfare state ideology to one promoting economic rationalism, resulting in a number of national governments developing and implementing policies to align tertiary education and training more closely with national economic needs, steering universities away from an elite to a mass education approach. In such an economic rationalist approach, universities are regarded as business enterprises, particularly in the way they connect with economic developments in the context of "globalisation, increasing competitiveness and the creation of a mobile, flexible information and

technology society" (Jakupec, 2000: p68).   Here, 'globalisation' is defined as increased world-wide economic integration, where advances in technology influence the economy, culture and society. The term can be used to describe not only the promotion of capitalist economic systems, but also in a cultural sense the supplanting of the local culture with a media-based, worldwide one, and in a political sense the over-riding of the primacy of the nation state through the ventures of transnational corporations (Haughey, 2000).   More simply, globalisation combines "a market ideology with a corresponding set of practices drawn from the world of business" (Currie and Newson, 1998: p1). Education is the key to economic and personal advancement, with increased pressure placed on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to make more opportunities available and provide more places. Thus learning moves from a traditionally stable position to a more flexible idea of accumulation of new knowledge, made possible by rapid developments in information and communication technologies (ICT), and the overlapping of economic, political and social cultures.

It might be argued that an emphasis on providing continuous and lifelong learning opportunities to satisfy market demand for a highly skilled and educated labour force largely ignores the cultural, social and intellectual values of education.   But such a move is not inherently disadvantageous, rather it highlights the realities of the current educational 'climate' within which HEIs must operate, the ways this influences their operation and the implications such an environment has for the students who attend same. At a macro level, the challenges for HEIs in the face of globalisation can be

summarised as a growing demand for places in Higher Education which can only be filled by the development of alternative strategies to campus-based instruction, including workplace learning, to meet individual learner needs. This gives rise to a 'Martini' approach to education – any time, any place, any where - and the re-organisation of traditional disciplinary structures to relate specifically to business needs, including the soft skills of communication increasingly required of all workers (Haughey, 2000). These contextual factors impact on the way(s) learning and teaching is organised, the nature of the student body within higher education and the choices made by these students, issues explored in the course of the narrative.

Changes in national educational policy in the UK in the 1980's and 1990's were also influenced by this global shift.   House (in Altricher and Elliott, 2000) identifies the central theme of educational policy in the 1980's and 1990's (particularly under the Conservative government of the time) as one of productivity, where economic development and education were presumed to be closely linked, and better education was seen as leading to improved technological capabilities and so to increased employability. Educational aims and values were set against the economic and social realities within which these were to be achieved (Pring, 1995). The promotion of access for all primarily for economic purposes (Jakupec, 2000) placed an emphasis on encouraging commercial research and development, more business and vocational orientated curricula, and the recognition of markets and market forces including widening access and participation - in short the 'massification' of Higher Education (Ford et al, 1996).

However, while such policies were developed partly in response to global changes, they also reflected the changes taking place within the UK itself. In the last quarter of the 20th Century, the country was moving from an industrial to a post-industrial society (Slaughter, 1998), with traditional industries in decline or disappearing. This was offset by a significant rise in the service and support industries, including the development of new technologies. The traditional idea of a 'job for life' was disappearing (however unrealistic such a notion ever was) and greater emphasis was being placed on the development of flexible, transferable, skills.

Moves towards aligning economy and education commenced in 1985 with the Jarrett Committee. Led by an industrialist and membership comprising University Vice-Chancellors and Principals, this committee called for the adoption of more efficient managerial styles and structures within Higher Education, via its *"Report of the Steering Committee for Efficiency Studies in Universities"* (CVCP, 1985). A policy paper produced by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, *"Towards Partnership"* followed in 1987, which argued for greater access to – and more variety in – Higher Education. The intention was to increase opportunities within science and technology, particularly in the then polytechnic sector. This culminated in the 1988 Education Act; Higher Education was to serve the economy more effectively, to develop closer links with industry and commerce, and to promote enterprise.

The incoming Labour government of 1997 maintained this approach, re-iterating its objectives in similar terms. Higher Education should contribute more to the economy and be more responsive to the needs of business. Their key policy of 1997, published by the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (NCIHE) - and more commonly known as the "The Dearing Report" after its Chair - the policy document *"Higher Education in the Learning Society"* identified the following specific objectives:

- To foster the application of knowledge and understanding to the benefit of the economy;

- To serve the needs of an adaptable, sustainable, knowledge-based economy;

- To inspire and enable individuals to develop their capabilities to the highest potential throughout life.

As part of its remit, this Committee took into account the distinctive features of higher education in different parts of the UK. Publishing in 1997 what was colloquially known as "The Garrick Report", the Scottish National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education identified significant distinguishing features which set Scottish Higher Education apart from the rest of the UK. Firstly, they found there was a cultural dimension; the majority of Scots believed in the value of education for its own sake, as well as to overcome economic or social disadvantages, reflected in higher rates of participation than the rest of the UK. Secondly, the strong Further Education to Higher Education links and the retention of vocationally focused programmes in the post-1992 institutions had encouraged these high rates of participation. Finally, the well-established links between HEIs and their local

communities was considered a particular strength of the Scottish system. The Scottish Committee concluded that the future of Scottish Higher Education lay in the provision of a high quality system which met the needs not only of the individual but also those of the economy, society and industry. To do so, HEIs would need to respond imaginatively and flexibly, and ensure that their provision allowed the learner to:

- undertake learning at their own pace;

- meet their own needs for learning and advanced learning;

- develop the skills necessary for employment.

Learners were also to be encouraged to develop flexibility in the set(s) of transferable skills which would be required for the 21st century.

Against this political background, and in response to such policy changes, a number of HEIs developed approaches involving more flexible and cost effective systems of delivery: semesterisation; modularisation; greater commonality of subject choice; mass delivery. In such a system knowledge is parcelled up into discreet units or modules, and delivered via a variety of methods which may not require the student to physically be on campus. It might be argued that closer alignment with market needs has, in fact opened up opportunity: widening access and participation; encouraging commercial research and development; the delivery of more vocational-orientated curricula; all at a lower national cost.

But Polster and Newson (1998) argue that one result of such policies has been the rise of accountability – "the banner word of Higher Education policy in the 1990's" (in Currie and Newson, 1998: p173). This was to be achieved through the application of Performance Indicators (PIs), allowing the government to allocate funding differentially, and to specifically approved research and training programmes. Such PIs provided the potential for regulating HEIs and their members, internally – through on-site, in-house administration – and externally through government funding agencies and the competition of the market. PIs also provided a means of standardising aspects of academic work and, through such standardisation, producing classifications of institutions within national and international systems. Within the UK, the QAA-established benchmarks allow comparison across institutions and provide procedures for review at both institutional and (at time of writing) subject level. The RAE allows comparison between institutions and specific discipline areas of academic activity. And HEIs are also subject to the involvement of external stakeholders other than central funding agencies: partnerships with industry; collaborative agreements with other Higher Education providers (home and abroad); professional body recognition.

At this point there is a crucial question to be asked in terms of this study (S Taylor et al, 1997, p:39): "what are the consequences?" From the student perspective, the redefined context for Higher Education and the development of a credit framework and commonality of curriculum has advantages. Flexibility of delivery allows students to participate who may not otherwise have the opportunity, for

example via web-based delivery. Similarly, a wider range of students, at different stages of development, can be accommodated. A modular structure also allows students to build up credits at a pace and on a timescale that suits them. A modular approach also allows greater flexibility of choice and transfer, and as entering higher education can be a traumatic transition for many students (Kantaris, 2000) this more generic approach allows students to assimilate the practices and procedures of the institution and to participate primarily as learners, leading to the development of a sense of self through reflection, and sharing experiences and exchanging ideas with others, irrespective of any considerations of professional identity. Nespor's ethnographic fieldwork (1994) in respect of students undertaking business programs [sic] at an American institution illustrates this: what was important for a number of students across the range of different programs was that they could undertake their studies without having to commit to a specific occupation or particular field of practice. The choice of management for these students had "little to do with the field itself" (Nespor, 1994: p84), the program itself was not defining identities and interests. It was the 'looseness', the generality and flexibility of the program and its structure - allowing students to readily switch between programs - which was one of its 'main attractions', not the professional focus.

Such a commonality of delivery approach also has benefits in that students from different programmes sharing modules have an opportunity to engage with each other, share good practice and develop an appreciation of other disciplines.

Recognising differences – and similarities – in values, attitudes and roles, may allow the different disciplines to appreciate each other's contribution, in turn leading to more effective collaboration in practice (Stew, in Bourner et al, 2000).

However such a move to a more interprofessional approach to education brings its own difficulties. Research undertaken by Stew (in Bourner et al, 2000) in this area found that both staff and students participating in an inter-professional undergraduate programme emphasised the importance of identity as part of the overall educational experience. Students expressed the need for a sense of identity and of belonging to a particular discipline. Staff too raised issues of "professional socialisation" (Stew, in Bourner et al, 2000: p56) and the importance of developing this early in the course. Further, both staff and students felt that development of an understanding of their own particular profession was required – a need to learn their own language, as it were – before integration and association with others. Such an approach is also perhaps more likely to encourage delivery in a non-contextualised way and without particular professional focus. Subject isolation rather than integration may occur, with students developing an 'in the box' perspective in respect of each module. The greatest difficulty with this approach is that it presupposes students to be self-directed, self-motivated, autonomous learners. The onus is placed on the student to provide both the contextualisation and location for the knowledge and its application / relevance to their chosen programme. I Taylor (1997) neatly encapsulates this presupposition, in that students entering a professional programme of study are required to:

- Become aware of how they see themselves and others;

- Be open to revising these assumptions if not consistent with professional knowledge and values;

- Undertake independent learning.

A semesterised and modularised approach also places particular pressures on students, staff and resources, such as extended timetabling and inadequate academic and pastoral support (Opacic, 1997). Research commissioned by the National Committee of Inquiry (NCIHE) in 1997, in particular Report 2, contains the findings of research undertaken by Callender (1997) in respect of the experiences and expectations of full-time and part-time students in Higher Education at that time. Callender established that students entered Higher Education for a variety of reasons, but chief of these was for career purposes: to get a job or a better job, or to pursue a particular career which required a particular qualification. On entering Higher Education they hoped to meet new people, develop new skills, broaden their horizons and be provided with opportunities for personal development. Generally their experiences of HE had met their expectations, but there were two areas of concern highlighted by students in post-1992 institutions:

- Resource constraints on learning and teaching; while they preferred to work in small groups, the opportunities for doing so were limited due to class sizes and number of teaching staff available;

- Overall coherence of course/programme: the structure of same was too fragmented, and links between subjects were not clear.

Haselgrove (1994) too suggests that this approach to Higher Education has had negative results. The UK is now deficient in the development of the whole person culture, where the outcomes defined for students do not include consideration of values and attitudes, and an over-emphasis on delivery of knowledge as parcels of materials (Ross, 2000) misses the point of the real value of education. Graduates are required to leave Higher Education not only knowing things, but also how to deal with the outside world, and the necessary social strategies to do so cannot be delivered within the individual blocks of knowledge. In the modular approach, knowledge is held in territorial units, the province of the subject specialist (Schőn, 1987) and while students are expected to achieve successful completion of the modules, it is the integration of the technical subject disciplines and the reflective action of practitioners that creates the professional and professional identity. Professional disciplines may well have specific ethics and values which, ideally, would be integrated through the curriculum and throughout the programme of study, (Henry, 1994), but when a divergent range of disciplines and differing sets of values come together, how is this to be accommodated?

Issues of identity, participation and engagement also arise through the increased participation by learners via the internet. Where inter-action, engagement and participation occurs only on-line, the identities of students and teachers are performed solely on-line too, raising issues of authenticity of identity. False identities can be created by (Donath, 1999):

- Users adopting aspects of identity which do not correspond to their social embodiment (ie changing their age, gender, occupation);

- Users impersonating some one else;

- Users concealing a real world identity behind a fantasy identity.

To what extent can the knowledge created by this on-line learning community be considered valid, if there is ambiguity or deception about members' identities? Participation and non-participation also become important. Participation in on-line activities may be mandatory as part of the learning experience, or voluntary via the use of discussion forums. But while some students may find such activities productive and willingly engage with same, others may find it a difficult and unrewarding activity, so this does not become part of their learning community and their identity as a learner (Donath, 1999). And users of the internet may do so without a sense of responsibility or commitment, what might be described as the "plug and play model" (Brown and Duguid, 2000: p191) where learning is only recognised when it is reified into learning objects which students can download and run. More generally, placing emphasis on flexibility of access may also result in students 'dipping in and out' without fully engaging with their programme of study and/or their peers (McGivney, 1996).

It is recognised, too, that there may be other factors which prevent students from fully engaging with the learning process. Full-time students may rely on part-time work to subsidise their studies and disengagement to an extent may be unavoidable if

employer demands take precedence. Part-time students may also have to reconcile academic study with employment; if this requires attendance on a part-time basis or at a distance, opportunity for engagement with peers may be reduced / limited. In summary, then, the student experience as a learner differs by race, gender, social class, disability and a combination of personal characteristics, to which is added the diversity of programme choice, prior educational experience, aspirations and tastes, and alternative approaches to the processes of learning. This is where my exploration of identity begins, determining the impact of the foregoing on the quantity surveying students and how they 'belong' and 'become'.

Who Are We?

The concept of identity has been subjected to searching critique, in particular the notion of an integral, originary and unified identity (Hall, 1997). Such critiques have encompassed ethnic, racial, national and feminist conceptions of identity, within a variety of discipline areas, and it is therefore important to provide a definition of 'identity' here for this particular study. It must also be recognised that the extent to which individuals are able to shape their own identities and become who they are can be influenced – and even determined – by factors outwith their control. Such factors include economic, social, cultural and political matters (Woodward, 2002). Formation of a personal identity can also be defined as the development of competences, emotions, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, purpose and integrity to form a solid

sense of self (Chickering, 1972), previously encapsulated more neatly by Erikson (1959) as one having a sense of knowing where one is going.   In this study, then, my definition of identity is "a self which has particular desires, anxieties and needs" (Woodward, 2002: p2).

The social identification model promoted by Turner (1982) holds that individuals structure their perception of themselves and others by means of abstract social categories, and that the social-cognitive processes relating to these forms of self-conception produce group behaviour.   The first question determining group-belongingness is "Who am I?"   What matters is how we perceive and define ourselves. The social group comprises two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves or perceive themselves to be members of the same social category.   Social identification is therefore the process of locating oneself within a system of social categorisations, or of any social categorisation used by a person to define themselves or others. Social categorisations define a person by systematically including them with some, and by excluding them from other related categories, so stating what a person is – and is not. This concept of social identity is drawn from Tajfel's definition of social identity as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of the group membership" (Tajfel, 1972: p31). Turner hypothesises that this is one of the two major elements of self-concept, drawing from Gergen's (1971) definition of self-concept as a set of psychological processes, a cognitive structure and a system of concepts available to a person in attempting to

define himself, which falls into two main classes (based on research undertaken by

Gordon in 1968):

- Terms that denote one's membership of various formal and informal social groups (sex, nationality, religion, etc) which defines **social identity;**

- Terms more personal in nature which usually denote specific attributes of the individual – feelings of competence, bodily attributes, intellectual concerns, personal tastes, which define **personal identity.**

The issue here is whether self concept is unified, continued and consistent across

situations or whether it is multi-dimensional, transient, inconsistent and situation-

specific. Turner views self-concept as both, being a relatively enduring, multi-faceted

system which is carried about in the head from situation to situation. It has overall

coherence and organisation which produces a sense of unity and consistency, yet its

parts are structurally and functionally highly differentiated. Thus in any given

situation a different part or combination of parts could be at work. The possibility

then arises that social identity may function nearly to the exclusion of personal

identity – our self images may be based solely or primarily on our group

memberships.

Making the Transition to Higher Education

My exploration of identity therefore begins with the transition to Higher Education

and engagement with the University, School and programme. This is a significant

step for most of the Level 1 (first year) students entering programmes within the

School. Predominantly school-leavers, and used to its more controlled culture there is

nevertheless perhaps an expectation – by parents and the School - that they will have developed into mature adults during the summer vacation. Further, they carry the 'weight' of others' expectations: parents, teachers, friends and family. This is particularly true of students joining the institution, where many of them are the first in their family to go to university (see Chapter 4). And the new students themselves will also have their own expectations of what it means, or will be like, to be a student from academic and social, positive and negative perspectives.

Kantanis (2000) specifically examined this transition, exploring with students entering their first year of study in her institution how they had adjusted to university life. The profile of the student group was predominantly school leavers, on the main campus of a large multi-campus university, who had elected to join an arts degree programme. The most common expectations of these students prior to commencing university were:

- Having fun;

- Enjoying the freedom of a learning environment not regimented in the same way as school;

- Being mentally stimulated by all the new learning experiences;

- Having the opportunity to explore greater and more interesting subject choices.

The most striking feature of the research was students' emphasis on the social aspects of university life rather than academic achievement, although they did comment on unexpected complexity of some of the subjects studied, a heavier workload than anticipated and the inaccessibility of staff.

However, a degree of 'culture shock' is surely not unexpected. First year students are faced with new procedures and practices, including curriculum, organisation and administration. At the beginning of the new academic session and the first semester, students encounter a crowd of new faces, which may vary greatly from module to module. University may be the first direct contact they have had with individuals from different cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They may find that their peers hold different political views, live alternative lifestyles, have different – and higher – academic achievements and learning experiences, or have a different sexual orientation (Kantanis, 2000). Students may also experience very different pressures. For those who continue to live at home they may find restraints and pressures placed on them by parents. For those who move away from home some may revel in the independence and freedom of the university environment, while others may find it more difficult coping with increased responsibilities (eg financial). This then raises issues of autonomy: while students may be regarded as autonomous adults by their tutors at university, this may not actually be reflected in life on or off campus. Students may therefore be unwilling, or unable, to accept this transition from adolescence to adulthood, particularly where dependence on parental support – financial, residential – is increased. Students may also find this move to adulthood through enforced responsibility at university at odds with their continued role of adolescent at home and the need to conform to parents' wishes, and not all will be equipped to accept the responsibility of adulthood at this stage.

Students are also subject to a variety of influences, institutional and personal (Silver

and Silver, 1997):

- Where they are (ie the physical location);
- What is expected of them by the institution and/or programme;
- What is expected of them by their peers;
- What they themselves expect;
- Their personal, financial and other circumstances;
- The scale of the institution;
- Whether they are resident on campus or commute;
- The number of fellow students on their programme of study;
- The size of classes;
- The extent of / ability to engage with peers and socialisation;
- Sense of involvement (or isolation) resulting from the foregoing.

All of these have implications for 'belonging' and 'becoming': if a student is unable

to engage with the institution, fellow students and peers, then a sense of 'belonging'

becomes more difficult – or impossible – to achieve, which then becomes a barrier to

'becoming' (see also Chapter 4). In Silver and Silver's study (1997) the students

themselves highlighted some of the difficulties experienced in participating in Higher

Education. While the majority of them considered a University education to be

valuable for improving job prospects, they nevertheless had experienced a 'culture

shock' in attending classes with sizes of 50, 100 or more students. They also felt that

they were living a more pressurised existence, having to take part-time employment

and / or having to take out student loans to support themselves, thus leading them into

high levels of debt.

Such considerations and concerns are confirmed by the findings of Kantanis (2000)

where first year students, generally school leavers, expressed anxieties about the

unfamiliar territory and terminology, and in respect of what is expected of them;

particularly how to interact with staff and manage their time and workload. They felt

overwhelmed by the volume of work and reading to be covered, and alienated through

a failure to forge friendships and relationships with their peers. Almost half of the

students participating in her survey had not established a friendship group by the end

of the first semester, and 69% of students indicated that less than half their

expectations had been realised, due to:

- Making friends had been difficult;
- The disappointment that university had not proved to be as interesting, exciting or as much fun as they had expected – or been led to believe;
- Staff were not as accessible as expected;
- Their workload was heavier than expected;
- The unexpected complexity of some of the subjects studied.

Almost 37% of the students did not believe that they had adapted to become

independent learners, and 35% felt that they had not accommodated to the learning

styles of the university. The main reasons cited for this non-realisation of

expectations were:

- Taking subjects with large cohort numbers;
- Few class contact hours;
- Tensions between life as a student and life at home, including treatment by university staff and parents.

Kantanis' findings also revealed that it was largely an issue of *social* transition which

underpinned a successful transition to university, echoing Turner (1982) and Tajfel

(1972). The need to belong is one of the core desires that shapes human behaviour, so

establishing and maintaining friendship networks is of particular importance here;

without friends students have fewer resources to assist them in the transition process.

Developing friendship networks was critical; students who did not make friends found the transition to university life more difficult. But students at this point face a considerable challenge. At a time when increased guidance and support is perhaps most needed, these elements disappear, the infrastructure of school removed on transition to university. Adjusting to the culture of university usually takes time and effort, due to the differences in environments, but students are generally expected to make this transition without clear and explicit guidance as to how to do so. Establishing and maintaining a friendship network means having fairly sophisticated social skills – which are generally less well developed in first year students – and a relatively outgoing personality, which not all first year students possess. New students must also deal with the influences of new peers, and their different views and attitudes. And where students are engaging with large – and varying – groups, depending on subject choices, or have off-campus responsibilities, the opportunities and potential for networking may be limited and / or restricted. The additional demands of engaging with learning and teaching in different ways, and the need to become an independent learner, are also likely to overwhelm some students.

These changes in the nature of transition to Higher Education - the increased numbers of students, the adoption of a modular curricula, development of multi-site institutions, and increased pressures on staff - all affect students' attitudes towards learning (Silver and Silver, 1997). If attention to development of self, and consideration of personal and social aspects in learning approaches is ignored (Pring, 1995) then what Chickering (1972) terms redundancy is likely to occur. Redundancy

is defined as when the increase of the number of inhabitants of a setting leads to decreased opportunities for participation and satisfaction for each individual, due to the smaller proportion of total inhabitants who can actively participate, and the marginalisation of those who cannot. A typical example is large class sizes, where opportunities for participating are constrained by the time allocation (timetabling) and the student: staff ratio. This redundancy leads to disenchantment through discontinuity of learning (Wankowski, 1972) and disengagement from same.

The result is then less the forming of a community and more the creation of a commuter culture, where students come to University as they would go to work each day, highlighting the difficulty of creating and maintaining such a community, and providing opportunities for the development of an identity within same.   Identity has been identified as a key factor in student engagement / disengagement: flexible patterns of delivery and mass delivery approaches, combined with other pressures such as employment, may well result in disorientation, difficulties of adjustment and loneliness, and more importantly for this study, no sense of belonging to the learning community (McGiveny, 1996).

Being a Learner in Higher Education

Similarly the rise of what might be termed a new vocationalism in Higher Education, where the focus of educational outcomes is as much on a person's characteristics and orientations as on skills and knowledge (Chappell et al, 2003) has changed the nature

of demands placed on learners in respect of the concepts of self and identity (eg the increased emphasis on 'Personal Development' and 'Employability' attributes) and has led to a requirement for new forms of identity and the construction of self. It can, of course, be argued that the link between education and identity has always existed, in that changing learner identity is – implicitly or explicitly – a part of every form of educational practice, and that education 'invariably involves an element of self-formation and change' (Chappell et al, 2003: p5). Learning is usually regarded as beneficial – to the individual doing the learning or to the wider community – involving the acquisition of new skills, information and knowledge which in turn helps people to widen their capacities for action, individual or collective; in other words, social capital. The concept of social capital is generally used to refer to the resources that people derive from their relationships with others (Field, 2003) and may be defined as consisting of social networks, the reciprocities that arise from them and the value of these for achieving mutual goals (Schuller et al, 2000).   Different types of social capital may have different consequences for learning and identity, with types of the former linked to particular types of learning. The concept of social capital is used here as a way of defining and outlining the context for the 'learning environment' within which the quantity surveying students work, as this has implications for the 'belonging' aspect of this study, (explored in more detail in Chapter 4).   But although a 'linking social capital' concept - facilitating co-operation between people of different social classes and different positions in an organisational hierarchy - is the most appropriate contextually, it does not, of course, allow a full exploration of 'belonging' and 'becoming', it simply 'sets the scene'.

It is, however, a simplification of Wenger's (1998) dimensions of identity: we become what we are by learning how to interact and how to work together – ie how we belong and become – and it is therefore to Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning that I now turn.   This social theory of learning has four premises (Wenger, 1998):

- We are social beings – a central aspect of learning;

- Knowledge is a matter of competence with respect to valued enterprises;

- Knowing is a matter of participating in the pursuit of such enterprise, of active engagement in the world;

- Meaning (our ability to experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful) is ultimately what learning is about.

This theory views learning as social participation, the process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities: such participation shapes not only what we do, but also who we are, and how we interpret what we do. Participating in an enterprise gives us a certain focus, and sustained engagement in practices allows us to develop an ability to interpret and make use of the repertoire of our community of practice. In short, formation of identity can be considered through 'belonging', within the following categories (Wenger, 1998, summarised):

1. *engagement - forming communities of practice*
   - mutual engagement in shared activities
   - accumulation of shared experiences
   - development of interpersonal relationships
   - access to and interaction with other participants

2. *imagination - ability to disengage; look at engagement as outsider*
   - sharing stories, explanations, descriptions
   - recognising our experience in others

3. ***alignment -***   ***co-ordinate perspectives and actions; direct energies to common purpose***
   - negotiating perspectives, finding common ground
   - imposing one's view, using power and authority
   - ability to communicate purpose, needs, etc

Wenger's (1998) theory also proposes that learning is fundamentally a social phenomenon where knowledge is a matter of participation, ie active engagement in the world, and that to permit this engagement we need to have a sense of self, a sense of our place in this world, and a sense of the place of those around us. Learning is regarded as not just an accumulation of skills and information, but the process of becoming a particular person by acquiring these skills and knowledge in the service of an identity, in short, 'belonging' to 'become'. Wenger (1998) defines 'community' as our enterprises which are worth pursuing, and where our participation is recognisable as competence, ie the community of practice. Identity is defined as how learning changes who we are and who we become in the context of our communities. Wenger's model of social learning has four components:

- ***Community:***
  To which the learner belongs, where the process of belonging is one of learning;

- ***Identity:***
  A negotiated experience, a trajectory, with a history and direction produced through learning;

- ***Meaning:***
  An outcome of negotiation in the community; the community makes meaning which comes out of the experience of its members as well as helping to construct that experience;

- ***Practice:***
  The engagement with a community in a joint enterprise or activity.

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Issues of identity are therefore an integral aspect of this social theory of learning and as such are inseparable from issues of practice, community and meaning. Identity is a person's source for meaning and experience, and a produce and process of learning, while learning is transformative, enabling new ways of being and understanding (Kirkup, 2002). Thus communities of practice can be considered a social model of learning where individuals create and perform their identities through their learning. Identity in such a model has two aspects: focusing on the person as an individual from a social perspective, and an expanded focus beyond the communities of practice to the broader processes of identification within social structures. Our identity includes our ability and our inability to shape the meanings that define our communities and our forms of belonging – our participation and non-participation.

Formation of communities of practice is also negotiation of identities. Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with each other and acknowledge each other as participants. Identity as a negotiated experience requires us to define who we are by the ways in which we experience ourselves through participation, and through membership of our community we define who we are. Identity is formed through participation in the community; our membership constitutes our identity. Within the community of practice we also learn certain ways of engaging with other people, and we become who we are by being able to play a part in the relations of engagement that constitute same. Our membership of the community locates us in familiar territory, but our identities are also shaped by the unfamiliar, when we come into contact with new practices. We do not know how to

engage with these others, we lack the shared references that these participants use, and thus our non-membership shapes our identities through our confrontation with the unfamiliar: in short, we know who we are by "what is familiar, understandable and usable and who we are not by what is "foreign, opaque and unproductive" (Wenger, 1998: p153).   Identity is also something we constantly renegotiate during the course of our lives; it is fundamentally temporal, and because identity is constructed in social contexts, this temporality is more complex that simply a linear notion of time. Our identities are defined by the interaction of multiple, convergent and divergent trajectories, a trajectory defined as a continuous motion, a coherence through time that connects the past, present and future. Such trajectories can be:

- *Peripheral*: by choice or necessity; some access to a community and its practice is significant enough to contribute to one's identity.

- *Inbound*: newcomers join the community with the prospect of becoming full participants in its practices; their identities are invested in their future participation.

- *Insider*: formation of an identity does not end with full membership; evolution of practice continues and new events, new demands, new inventions and new generations all create occasions for renegotiating one's identity.

- *Boundary*: there is value in spanning boundaries and linking communities of practice although sustaining an identity across boundaries requires delicate brokering.

This temporal dimension of learning as identity means we keep negotiating our identities, always simultaneously dealing with specific situations, participating in the histories of certain practices and being involved in becoming certain persons.

Our identities incorporate the past and future in the process of negotiating the present. The foregoing trajectories provide the context for us to determine what actually becomes significant learning, what contributes to our identity becomes and what remains marginal. Being one person also requires reconciliation of our different forms of membership; different practices can make competing demands that are difficult to combine into an experience corresponding to a single identity. Therefore reconciliation of these aspects requires the construction of an identity that can include these different meanings. But our identities are not only produced through the practices / communities we engage in, but also through those that we do not. That is, our identity is constituted by what we are not as well as by what we are.

Non-participation is therefore an inevitable part of a coherent identity, in that a mixture of being in or being out simply reflects our membership of specific communities of practice and not others. But when non-participation interacts with participation to define each other it can become important to identity formation; a novice not understanding a conversation between 'old-hands' is an inbound trajectory intersecting with an insider trajectory as part of the community formation. This mixture of participation and non-participation is the way in which we define our identities, not only as individuals but also how we define and relate to the rest of the world, ie how we locate ourselves in a social landscape, what we care about and what we neglect, what we attempt to know and understand, and what we choose to ignore (Wenger, 1998).

In short, meaning, learning and identity are all constructed socially within the communities to which we belong: "one needs an identity of participation in order to learn, yet needs to learn in order to acquire an identity" (Wenger, 1998: p222). In this 'communities of practice / social model of learning', individuals create / perform their identities through their participation; we are able to define who we are by what we do and our interaction with others through a common purpose. Learning is most personally transformative when participants are engaged in activities that involve membership of those communities. Within an educational community, students are modelled as apprentice practitioners within their discipline or field of study, with a focus on the individual in relationship to this community. Identity evolves through their participation and non-participation in all the communities with which they interact. All the experiences they have with these communities contribute to their learning.

But while Wenger's theory places emphasis on the communal nature of learning and stresses the importance of situation and activity in the learning process, it does not fully acknowledge the fact that individuals actually learn in different situations. And, in education, often the learning that takes place is not that which was explicitly intended; students may be learning erroneous things, and the implicit curriculum may run counter to the explicit (Kirkup, 2002). In the traditional learning institution, eg in a university, there is an attempt to provide students with all the possible identities of participation:

- Identification with community: eg through the provision of residential collegiate living, the use of common set texts, dissemination of common collegiate ideals.

- Negotiated meaning via opportunities for specialist discourse, guided by experts and the vicarious experience of learning through listening to same.

However, the expansion in Higher Education, reductions in resources and a widening of the knowledge base included within programmes – through commonality of modules – may render these identities of participation unavailable to students, changing their participation into non-participation. There is also the issue of whether, in professional education, the programme constitutes a single community of practice, or whether it actually seeks to align two, namely the institution and the workplace, as discussed later in this study. Nor are the relationships between the identities, dispositions and lifestyles of individuals and the impact of same on the learning process and experiences addressed by Wenger. Students' dispositions to knowledge and learning are influenced by all aspects of their lives, and they change as their life experiences change. Further, these dispositions influence the strategies they adopt in response to the learning opportunities they encounter. 'Belonging' and 'becoming' are both influenced by such dispositions.

Disposition now becomes an aspect for consideration. In their report for the Further Development Agency, *"College Life: the voice of the learner"*, focused on the Further Education sector and the experiences of college students, Bloomer and Hodkinson (1999) termed a learner's disposition to knowledge and learning

opportunities as their learning career. As changes in the learner's disposition to learning are influenced by experiences outside as well as inside formal education, so experiences of formal education and dispositions to learning can, and do, sometimes change other dispositions. In these ways, dispositions to learning and the learning career form part of the evolving identity of a person. They also use the term 'studentship' to describe the ways in which students exert influence over their own personal learning careers, the ways in which they respond to the requirements and expectations of the programme and institution, and how they act upon the learning opportunities provided. Most students display changes in studentship from situation to situation, or over a period of time, and transformation from one form of studentship to another are often triggered by turning points in the students' lives. As the new form of studentship evolves, so their learning careers become transformed to accommodate this new studentship. Thus learning must also be considered with the conditions under which it occurs. Such conditions include:

- Uncertainty in planning and predicting career paths and opportunities;

- Interrelationships between cultural capital and dispositions that learners bring to their learning;

- Educational opportunity structures within which learning opportunities are located, ie the institutional contexts in which learning takes place and the broader social and political contexts;

- The impact of individuals and other social interactions on the learning career.

It is also important to recognise that the student experience is not divided into unrelated 'academic' and 'other' categories, but all are closely inter-related.

For example, attending classes and going to the library is as much related to the allocation of time on the formal timetable, the need for lunch, and other activities to be undertaken within the timeframe, (eg employment), as to the academic demands of their programme of study. In respect of learning and teaching too, the structure and content of their scheduled timetable may result in a 'busy' diary which, when coupled with their out of class activities, leaves little or no opportunity for contact with peers, tutors or others. To what extent, then, is Wenger's theory of community of practice appropriate to the Higher Education context?

At this point it is worth considering the experiences of Nathan (2005).   Professor Nathan's return to her own institution as a freshman (first year) student and her experiences of student life – albeit in a US university where students primarily live on campus – has areas of relevance for this part of the narrative.   With the caveat that one can "never really go native", and that no school or university is entirely representative of all others, she nevertheless considers that her experiences offer an insight into the student experience and, taking an anthropological view, allows the nature of the culture to be both learned and shared. Firstly, by the very act of registering for a programme a 'transactional identity' is created, ie one's default identity becomes that of a student. But Nathan stresses that the nature of this identity is different for each student, and so each student lives out their identity in different ways. As the session progresses, each student develops their own sets of contacts, relationships and responsibilities all of which make different demands on their time,

and at different times: going to classes; working (on and off campus); homework; social activities; which create distinct individual life patterns. Students create their routines within these patterns, on and off campus. As a result, opportunities for engagement with each other are necessarily limited / restricted, leading Nathan to question the concept of community itself, commenting it is hard to create when "no one is in the same place at the same time" (Nathan, 2005: p15).

So although the notion of a 'community' was promoted at institutional level, the reality at student level was that the few common activities and rituals did little to bind its inhabitants together. Students actually had little in the way of shared first year experiences to provide a common bond, and indeed, they resisted the claims that the 'community' made on their time to safeguard their individual freedom and choice. For them, 'community' was largely a world of self selected people and events, a series of individual communities each formed by a small network of people who did the same things together (Nathan, 2005). Students created their own personal communities where membership was based on: shared circumstances and interests; experiences before and during university; demographics (religion, race, ethnicity); work; or classmates. Membership was 'controlled', inclusion or exclusion reinforced via closed invitations or personal phone calls to make / confirm arrangements. Thus each student may be a member of a number of small personal networks or communities at any one time.

Nathan comments on the resultant fragmentation of experience, physically and emotionally:

- Students attend classes in different buildings around the campus and at different times;

- The diverse range and number of options available to students;

- Students resist claims on their time by the institution community in favour of individual freedom and choice;

- The ease of opting out or changing programme means the social world seems always to be in a state of flux.

The wider the range of options on offer, the greater the diversity of opportunities, the thinner the community spread, rendering the notion of one community 'contradictory' (Nathan, 2005: p56). The number of classes taken by each student meant the forging of numerous different sets of contacts and relationships, but engagement was restricted to class times or activities. And while students were not uninterested in the wider institutional community, the demands on their time (locating classes, visiting the library, doing homework, working) made it more difficult to engage more fully. The students' own individual life patterns (socialising, sleeping, shopping) also limited opportunities for crossing paths with others. In Nathan's experience, students managed their identities in and around their struggles with work, dealing with family and friends, and finding their place in peer circles.

Nespor (1994) too highlighted the ways in which communities were formed within an institution, noting that these differed with the discipline area involved. For physics students there was a clear sense of belonging to a particular group who congregated together, who had established a community to achieve their common aim (getting through the problems set by the tutors); they were set on their trajectory of becoming physicists through their belonging to and participation in this exclusive group. 'Belonging' and 'becoming' were determined and defined within the parameters of the physics student group. By contrast, management students created much looser communities, which were primarily constituted around and focused on engagement with industry and practice – the 'real world'. For these students, 'belonging' and 'becoming' centred around their movement into professional practice.

The research undertaken by Bloomer and Hodkinson (1999) further illustrates such differing networks at work and the variance of dispositions adopted. Analysis revealed differences in attitudes and behaviours adopted and in the way differing disciplines viewed identity. Students following a science or maths programme of study placed less importance on forming friendships and establishing an individual identity. By contrast, students following an arts or humanities programme considered the formation of new friendships and an identity within the group of paramount importance. Students' attitude to their studies could be classified as either 'work focused' or 'relationship focused'. Within the work focused subculture, there was an orthodoxy of values and behaviours, with learning given precedence over social

activities. These students did not participate in college or Student Union activities. They adopted a somewhat utilitarian outlook, selecting and persisting with activities which promised some tangible benefit, quickly disassociating themselves from those within the group who did not. However, students within the relationship focused subculture regarded making friends and establishing a comfortable identity within the student group as vitally important, stressing the intrinsic benefits of learning over strictly utilitarian interests. The benefits of college life and education were described by this group in terms of personal and social development as well as intellectual or practical accomplishments. But these two subcultures were not completely discreet, and many students were attracted to both. This then gave rise to problems of personal time management: either socialisation at the expense of work then trying to complete the resultant backlog without the level of attention required / desired, or abandonment of social life to focus on work.

In summary, then, identities are shifting, contested states of networking practices that seek to produce or maintain a certain configuration by excluding or restricting some people and things from participation, while recruiting and reconstructing others to fit within the network (Nespor, 1994). Lave and Wenger (1991) focus on learning as a facet of social practice, which is in turn part of the process of acquiring an identity in a community of practice, and a social model of learning (Wenger, 1998) these are treated as bounded, strictly local settings, seemingly unconnected and unconnectable to other spaces and times. But people move in and out of this version of the social world in terms of participation, and no attention is given to what brings people to

these particular communities in the first place.   Nor is the question of how such communities are structured, maintained and connected to one another across space and time addressed within this framework.

Nespor (1994) attempts to address the problem of such an approach with a focus on movement <u>through</u> the dense strands of practices that hold together worlds of knowledge, looking for a way of talking about people moving into fields of practice understood as organisations, and of ways of producing activities, spaces and times, drawing on Callon's actor-network theory (1987, 1996).   Identities, in Nespor's view, crystallise in the tensions and pressures produced as different communities or actor-networks clash. This theory therefore not only allows examination of identity and practice as functions of ongoing interactions with distant elements of networks that have been mobilised along intersecting trajectories, but it also allows consideration of the intervention of the world of work and the additional dimension (and tension) which is created. However, it is useful to explore the relationship between professional education, identity and learning prior to consideration of intervention of the work place.

Professional Education, Identity and Learning

 Watson (in Bines and Watson, 1992) defines professional education as being not only the process of education to become a professional, but also the post-experience courses and further study that justify an individual remaining a professional.

In Watson's view, professional education engenders a professional culture and identity, each profession bound up with the values to be achieved through the activities of the profession (Argyris and Schőn, 1974) – once again the 'belonging' and the 'becoming'. For Nespor (1994), students' membership and participation in their discipline realm is firstly regulated through educational requirements, ie meeting the entry standards for the programme. His exploration of how students get connected to core disciplines through becoming parts of durable and extensive networks of power has particular relevance for exploring the learner in Higher Education, requiring a rethinking of the meaning of learning or having knowledge, moving from a focus on individual minds or groups in face-to-face interaction to exploring how activities are organised across space and time, and how such organisations of space and time are produced in social practice. The processes which constitute and reproduce disciplines centre around incorporation of students into discipline-specific temporal and spatial organisations of knowledge, ie the notion of knowledge and learning, is one of products of social activity rather than isolated minds. Disciplines are constituted by cycles of accummulation within networks that organise flows of people and things through space and time, the activities of students spatialised and temporalised to connect them to disciplinary practice. Learning in a discipline is not a matter of transforming one's psychological make-up, instead learning refers to changes in spatial and temporal organisation of the distributed actor-networks that we are always part of. Students enter into disciplinary practices when they begin to move along trajectories that keep them within the narrow range of space-times and distributions that constitute the discipline; when they are mobilised

through networks of physical settings; when they begin to construct worlds through discipline-based systems of representation.   Disciplinary education depends on students moving along trajectories that keep them in contact with disciplinary networks.   But the content of network elements and structure of the ties connecting them are not fixed and static, expanding, contracting and shifting configurations over time, and redefined by the nature of the flows that animate them. Understanding these flows means not just understanding individual trajectories but also understanding ongoing social activities that enmesh the entire network. Callon (1987) again provides useful terminology for describing how identities and alliances are forged. Actor-networks in disciplines constitute themselves in part through educational practices that shape and sort would-be participants and organise their participation in disciplinary productions of space and time.   Callon suggests there are four moments of the process (which are not sequential but overlapping):

1. **Problematisation:**

The way network builders define allowable identities and interests for the actors. For the quantity surveying student, the only appropriate identity for the student is as a quantity surveyor in the making.   The programme defines itself as an obligatory passage; space and time interact so that students must move through to accomplish the defined identities and interests. Students have to be detached from the networks to which they already belong, and within which their identities have been defined, with competition from other actor-networks within the University and School trying to impose different identities.

2. **Interessement:**

The strategies network builders use to impose and stabilise the identity of the actors, including the imposition of barriers between the entities being networked and the other entities who want to define their identities otherwise. These can be material barriers – eg the walls of the classroom – or immaterial, such as the organisation of space and time to restrict contact with outsiders. Discursive barriers too can be imposed, constituted through differences of taste, style and language (eg the terminology of the discipline).

3. __Enrolment__:

The inter-relation of roles and fashioning identities into systems of alliances, eg the creation of the quantity surveying cohort within the School, the employment of the quantity surveying students by organisations during professional placement.

4. __Mobilisation__:

Where there is a definite physical reality. Students are translated into mobile practitioners of a discipline. For quantity surveying students this is initially through their entry into the programme, and subsequently via the professional placement period.

Material productions of space and time play a key role in enrolling students into the discipline. Spaces not only shape and constrain ongoing practice, but people also fashion or refashion the spatial boundaries that define an activity, determine who belongs with whom engaging with it, and where and when it can happen. Networks organise physical space as they produce and constitute the material spaces of social practice – eg classrooms – and the channels of communication and transportation that move through and across settings. Practice is not simply observable activities of individuals in local settings, it is also distributed across spaces and times, with social interactions forming intersections of trajectories that tie together distant times and spaces, and give form to social space. Students interact with others, texts, web-based data and other media. But while it is easy to see how disciplines might use such boundaries to regulate access of outsiders, it is more difficult to establish how people become insiders. Exploration is required of the kinds of transformations needed to spatialise and temporalise people in the form of disciplinary practitioners, to

redistribute them as members of the disciplinary actor-network within disciplinary boundaries, eg localised in specific regions on campus, in particular buildings, corridors and classrooms.

Representational productions of space and time are essential to the mobilisation of practice and practitioners. Programmes are 'obligatory passage points' (Nespor, 1994: p18) for people seeking their way into the discipline, but the discipline doesn't exist in the material spaces. Disciplinary practices are mobilised in representations (textbooks, lectures) and the focus is therefore on what these representations do: ie they shape a space of practice by mobilising physically distant disciplinary spaces so that they can be transported into the educational spaces of the programme. Becoming a Quantity Surveyor therefore means becoming proficient at the use of these representative technologies to the point of being able to move through, and work upon, spaces and times that are not accessible to those outside the discipline. These practices connect with those of disciplinary practitioners as these representative tools are similar to those used in disciplinary practice.

Most professional education programmes therefore follow a functionalist model where the professional knowledge base is of prime concern and where there is a structure to training and preparation for practice (Eraut, 1994):

- A period of pupillage or internship where students spend a significant amount of time learning their 'craft' from an expert;

- Enrolment at a 'professional college' outside the HE system; or

- A period of relevant study at a college or university leading to:

- A recognised academic qualification;

- A qualifying examination, normally set by the qualifying association for the occupation;

- The collection of evidence of practical competence in the form of a logbook or portfolio.

Each of the foregoing makes a distinctive contribution to the students' knowledge base and to their socialisation into the profession, and this model mirrors the current approach to Quantity Surveying education. Briefly, students undertake undergraduate degree study to achieve an honours degree which allows them entry to the professional body and registration for assessment of professional competence, part of which requires candidates to record their professional competency via a logbook and diary.

For Argyris and Schőn (1974) professional education involves two kinds of techniques: first order – the arts and skills that comprise professional practice; and second order – the techniques needed to create the settings in which first order techniques can function. The job of professional education therefore consists not only in teaching technique but also in teaching the methods by which behavioural worlds in which such techniques can work can be created. The professional's knowledge of these worlds, their certification to practice in them, their ability to understand the language spoken in them, and to negotiate in them, constitutes a great part of their

technical expertise and authority in relation to laymen. Professional education involves the integration of the two main elements of this practice into the curriculum, namely the capacity to build one's own technical theory of practice and the capacity to identify and apply interpersonal zones of practice, which are required only by engaging in practice and reflecting on the meaning of that experience - in short, learning to think and act like a professional (Argyris and Schőn, 1974).

But the division of programmes into separate credit-bearing units (modules), while allowing greater flexibility and enhancing access, affects the nature of the knowledge and the teaching. Disparate pieces of discipline-based or subject-based theoretical knowledge is at odds with professional work, which involves using several different types of knowledge in an integrated way. Linking textbook knowledge with practical experience is almost impossible where there is little continuity in the membership of the student group from module to module, and raises problems regarding the implicit and integrated nature of professional 'know-how'. Although codified knowledge is contained in texts it is very different from the intuitively used, experience-derived, 'know-how', namely professional knowledge: what kinds of knowledge, what modes of knowledge are used, and what knowledge is created. Generally the knowledge requirements of a profession are associated with the design of courses, where the syllabus prevails with the aims of the profession. Attention is focused on core topics or specialisms; and knowledge is packaged accordingly.

This gives rise to a distinction between (Eraut, 1994):

- **Technical knowledge:** capable of written codification.

- **Practical knowledge:** expressed only in practice, learned only through experiences with practice; some remains uncodified in principle.

Eraut echoes Argyris and Schön (1974); professional actions are based on implicit theories in use, and making such theories explicit is the key to professional learning. Professional learning must therefore be considered in all forms and phases; the work context dominates during periods of practical experience prior to qualification and during the formative early years of practice; there is also an interdependence of various aspects of professional learning (Eraut, 1994):

- Pre-and post-qualification;

- 'on-the-job' and 'off-the-job';

- theory and practice.

Therefore a school or institution cannot claim that they and they alone help students acquire full professional competency. The variety and realism of work experiences required to provide an opportunity for developing the full range of professional competencies cannot be accommodated within the bounded parameters of the academic session, and the teaching calendar and demands on students restrict the level of engagement with professional practice. Therefore the inclusion of simulation and field work – for the Quantity Surveying programme, the inclusion of a period of

professional placement – attempts to help build professional competence.

Professional placement is an attempt to offer actual rather than simulated practice,

although it raises some important issues (Argyris and Schőn, 1974):

- for some, engagement in the field provides an insight into the nature of work in the real world and serves to confirm or modify their career aspirations;

- for others, the meaning of fieldwork – placement – may be unclear in an educational sense; students may learn about their own incompetence, or find that work is harder than they thought, and they fail;

- students may 'attack' their coursework with new energy on return to study;

- students may be less responsive to coursework and express frustration if fieldwork – placement – has not taught them what they need to know.

Field experience should therefore not simply be designed to give students experience

in the real world; the objective should be to allow them to learn to become more

reflective under real-life conditions.

But when the world of work enters the actor-network, a further dimension – and

tension – is created. Representations of practice are real, conveyed by practitioners

active in the 'real world'. Representations of implicit practices – dress codes,

terminology, behaviours – are demonstrated as well as the explicit – guest lectures,

scenarios, explanations of aspects of practice. Nespor (1994) records the intrusion of

this 'outside' world, where management students recognised that certain behaviours,

codes and activities were 'part and parcel' of the business community, and more

importantly, adherence to same was expected. Students are then pulled between two

competing actor-networks, the programme and the world of practice, and are

mobilised physically via potential employers brought in, and textually via production of resumes and Curricula Vitae. The expansion of the network and the cultivation of contacts allows students to expand themselves across space and time, in a regionalised rather than localised way. Such engagement with the 'real world' promotes corporate identity and belonging; dress and deportment are spatialising devices that allow one to signify belonging to the business world and a legitimate player in same. Corporate spaces connected across time and space in a stable network allow students to move towards corporate practice involving 'explicitly formalised and ritualised body styles and modes of interaction' (Nespor, 1994: p124), the School becoming a practice space for corporate appearance and behaviour, and thus a site for students to mobilise within networks of corporate practice, preparing to go out into same.

So the network expands, creating links and providing a view of life in the chosen discipline, and more specifically, affording glimpses of how professional life is lived within particular organisations which make up the community of practice (critiquing Wenger, 1998). But participation in this community is not open to all; membership is determined by selection on the part of the organisations (interviewing applicants) and the novices wishing to join (making the decision to apply). Subsequently it is only those successful applicants who are able to begin engagement with the organisation and the wider community. For Quantity Surveying students, their initial application for placement opportunities to organisations operating within the construction and property community represents their first step towards membership, and gaining said employment is their entry to the community.

But again membership is selective on the part of both employer and employee. The former accepts or rejects applications / determines interview candidates / makes offers / finally enters in a contract of employment with the successful applicant, who then becomes an employee. But the applicant themselves can also elect to enter / reject the community of practice offered by the employers. The applicant may have a variety of employment offers to choose from, and is likely to make such a decision after consideration of a variety of factors (eg salary, training, role and responsibilities).

Entry to a particular part of the community is facilitated by accepting employment with a particular organisation. In the actor-network, employer organisations can influence the ways in which students prepare themselves for entry into the community of practice. Students come to understand the conventions required: wearing a suit for interview; adopting modes of dress and hairstyle that mirror those already operating in practice. Quantity Surveying students also find out the subtle differences between operating in the various sectors of the industry; those in private practice tend to be more orientated towards the world of clients and offices. By contrast, contracting organisations are more construction-orientated, even though the same conventions / requirements of time management, dress and the like may still apply. The actor-network thus becomes codified by and stratified by the actors themselves, by those who seek to engage new members in the community as well as those who wish to be considered for entry.

The 'mores' of professional life are revealed, with emphasis placed on specific aspects as appropriate / relevant. Within the School, this is most evident when students are attending interviews; the University makes available space on campus for prospective employers to promote their organisation and hold interviews, particularly for organisations who lack local offices (eg those from overseas).   Students present a very different appearance at such times, wearing suits and ties in place of their usual, more casual, form of dress. At such times too, the students' disposition is different; their focus is less about their studies and more about how they should represent and present themselves. The requirements of the workplace are paramount in terms of how they will be viewed and appraised by these prospective employers.

Employers will be considering personality and appearance as much as academic achievement and technical ability – how will the student fit within their organisation's structure and culture? Therefore real identity may well become hidden or disguised; winning the opportunity to work for the organisation may mean displaying a different persona, representing oneself in a different way, and accepting different views or opinions without challenge. Of course, there may well be an instant and immediate rapport – a meeting of minds – that negates the need for such concealment, allowing the 'real person' to be displayed.

Identity and Learning in the Workplace

The inclusion of a period of professional placement allows students to act as mediators (Tuomi-Grőhn et al, 2003), bringing new insights from work experience into university and from university to the workplace (Konkola, 2001). Students making the transfer from programme of study to work encounter differences, enter unfamiliar territory – as unqualified entrants – which requires them to interpret, modify and reconstruct the skills and knowledge transferred. Konkola (2001) includes in this process the concept of a 'no man's land', where each activity system reflects its own structure, attitudes, beliefs, norms and rules, learning and development takeing place as ideas and needs from the different cultures meet / collide; the contradiction results in learning as new meanings are formed and new opportunities for learning arise. This assumes, however, that students learn how to transfer knowledge and learning from the institution to work, and that such a transfer is one-way, ie students acquire knowledge in their vocational programme and 'apply' it relatively unproblematically in the workplace.

But such a transfer is not one-way, nor a 'simple, mechanical process', in that it generally has three dimensions (Guile and Young, 2003: p64):

- it is a process of consequential transition, involving changes in the identity of the individual involved, and the contexts between which they are moving;

- it is a form of expanded learning between different activity systems;

- it is a recontextualisation of activities between different contexts.

The programme curriculum focuses on the knowledge and skills content of the profession, knowledge is treated as a body of content to be acquired, and learning a process of transmission between programme and learner. Professional and vocational educational programmes typically include three types of content (Eraut et al, 1998):

1. disciplines which form major components of honours degrees;

2. the applied field which 'sponsors' the programme;

3. occupational practice.

The treatment of the content and its relationship to practice are significantly influenced by the academic and vocational experience of those who teach it and Eraut (1994) highlights the complexity of this relationship:

- students need to understand that tacit knowledge is necessary to perform particular work-based tasks but by itself is unlikely to be an adequate base for more broad-based workplace capability;

- students need to recognise that they are unlikely to gain access to the full range of knowledge and expertise that resides in communities of practice unless they acquire the situated knowledge that allows them to learn from and within these workplace communities;

- students and their teachers have to understand that depending on whether the purpose of codification are organisation or disciplinary, the codification of knowledge will support quite different ways of working and learning.

Performance in the workplace typically involves the integration of several different forms of knowledge and skill; it is also a different knowledge culture from that of Higher Education, including the kinds of knowledge that are acquired and used.

But as modern workplaces are extremely diverse in the demands they make regarding

learning and knowledge, it is perhaps less appropriate to think of 'knowledge' as one

single entity, but more as 'types of knowledge' (Cook and Seely Brown, 1999):

- tacit;

- explicit;

- knowledge possessed by individuals;

- knowledge associated with groups.

The knowledge involved in any activity is always a mixture of tacit and explicit, the

balance dependent on the nature of the activity involved. Learning also has a

'horizontal' as well as a 'vertical' dimension. Transfer from university to work is a

form of horizontal development, and for the student doing so there are three main

challenges (Tuomi-Grőm et al, 2003):

- the need to overcome the contradictions that manifest themselves in every day life: the conflict between positive and rewarding experiences and negative and destructive one, which shape a person's character and identity;

- to be prepared to change the course of their lives by learning to work with other people in ways that will constrain action and help shape their intellectual development;

- to have to learn how to move from immaturity and incompetence to maturity and competency.

Beach (1999) takes a slightly different stance, viewing development as a series of

transitions between different activity contexts: people's knowledge, skills and identity

change over time as a result of the relationships they develop with social institutions

and groups. For Beach, horizontal development refers to the ways people actually encounter and develop knowledge and skills in workplaces and in classrooms, and the way that their identities change over time, arguing that transfer is not simply a process of learning to reproduce pre-existing activities, rather that in the process of transfer identities and the contexts themselves change, a consequential transition (Beach, 1999). But Beach too questions the assumption that moving from university to work is relatively unproblematic provided the student has the appropriate skills and attributes. Transition is not merely a matter of 'launching' the student to learn in a workplace; workplaces are very different and learning opportunities are not equally distributed across them, (an aspect which is considered in greater detail in Chapter 4).

For Van der Sanolen and Teurlings (2003) the type of learning that occurs when boundaries are crossed results in a broader definition of competence: the organised whole of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and learning abilities that are typical of competent behaviour. Further, it is students' perceptions of the learning environment that influence how a student learns, not necessarily the context itself (Entwistle, 1991). However, transferring an idea or concept from an educational setting to a workplace setting is particularly difficult because of the difference in context, culture and modes of learning (Eraut et al, 1998), raising the question of what learning and identity development actually takes place in the workplace. In vocational education, practical training periods play an important role in development of competence.

Students are put in apprenticeship roles, confronted with authentic tasks and problems, and have direct experiences with employees and work-related events. Their codified knowledge from university is also confronted with more situated and episodic knowledge resulting from workplace experiences. But it is important to recognise that work experience places differ in respect of the learning opportunities offered, just as students differ in the learning activities they engage with, and competence development during practice periods is influenced by (Van der Sanolen and Teurlings, 2003):

- the characteristics of the work experience place;*

- person variables;*

- characteristics of the curriculum and teaching practices;

- personal relations.

(* both of these can often be negative)

This is likely to raise differences between successful and not-so-successful students in practice: for the former, their school activities will have relevance for their personal development of professional identity, while for the latter they may be confronted with their inability to apply knowledge which is not yet deeply rooted or personalised (echoing Argyris and Schőn, 1974).   Thus different conditions for learning have considerable implications for knowledge and skills transfer. Learning activities are also social processes where employees are involved in a social / cultural network. They are active participants in different social relationships at work, joined in

culture, understanding, reflection and taking action which in turn affects each individuals' development (Ellstrőm, Gustavsson and Svedin, 1996). At work, learning is an on-going process (Angervall and Thắng, 2003) where the most important task is to get people to retain a sense of the purpose of their own learning and competence development (Lyttkens, 1994). Ellstrőm (1992) also emphasises the importance of analysing interaction in daily working life, to understand the continuity of activity and learning from one changing situation to another. The pre-requisite for 'on-the-job' training and skills formation is an environment that promotes education and learning (Thắng and Warwick, 2000) where there is a link between learning opportunities and the work patterns and cultural practices of the organisation and the role of 'helpful others' in supporting the workplace learning of **novice professionals** (Eraut et al, 1994, my emphasis).

Cultural identity is also an important aspect of the workplace (Hall and du Gay, 1997). Organisations seek to represent this internally by defining the meaning of employment and the relationships employees should have with the organisation, including what employees should believe and how they should behave, value, think and relate to their employer and colleagues (du Gay, 1997). Work is represented in distinctive ways, and these representations can vary and be experienced in different ways. Understanding and knowledge is structured through shared meanings, and this shared framework is used to define and make sense of work (Hall and du Gay, 1997).

Informal learning in the workplace is also important (Eraut, 2004) recognising the social significance of learning from other people and the emotional dimension of professional work, with relationships playing a critical role in workplace learning. Learning takes place via participation in group activities, working alongside others, tackling challenging tasks and working with clients (Eraut, 2004). The main factors influencing learning are: confidence; being set challenges; support; self-efficiacy; getting feedback on and including; expectations of performance and progress. However, success in learning depends on the quality of the relationships in the workplace and the amount of learning varies significantly with the person and the context.

Summary

None of us develop in isolation, our sense of self is very much formed – and influenced – by our relationships and interaction with others, our own experiences and through the sharing of experiences with others, working together towards common aims, and through the exchange of views and ideas. Chappell et al (2003) define this 'self' as having two facets: a reflexive identity and a relational identity. Reflexive identity is the process by which a person creates for themselves a life history, the way in which they come to see themselves as unique individuals who have an identity that belongs to them; they are able to look at themselves as being outside themselves-reflexive – and in so doing, acknowledge that identity does not have an unchanging

core self (Hall, 1996). This reflexive self, this 'me' is defined in terms of socially and culturally available narrative identities and by choosing to identity, or not, with particular characteristics and define who they are in relation to others. Thus a person may identify with their profession and the profession becomes part of their identity. The relational identity is that in which the person creates a self narrative by drawing on social and cultural definitions of possible identities, ie they identify with pre-existing identities which are not of their making (Chappell et al, 2003). Both reflexive and relational identities are, of course, inter-twined; self narratives are drawn from those social narratives already available and in cultural circulation, and identity is formed in the dynamic interplay between both processes:

> "*a person may think of themselves as a teacher and claim this as part of their identity because they participate in the attendant practices, histories and relations associated with the category of teacher. But the notion of teacher must exist prior to anyone being able to use it to identify themselves, even if the associations of the category change over time. Thus it is through the (changing) practice of teaching that one can claim to be a teacher*"
> (Chappell et al, 2003: p52)

As discussed earlier, if identity is a social construct, then although a person's uniqueness may emerge via the different narratives they use to define themselves, these narratives cannot be wholly original and unique to that person, as they are drawn from existing social narratives. These are not only subject to influence by others, but particular identities may only be available to some. Although a person may have a choice in defining themselves, this is not without restriction: some narratives may be imposed (family, church, institution) or be difficult to ignore (culture, workplace). These social narratives define identity is terms of what is or is

not permitted, the 'types' of people considered acceptable or not acceptable. Identity

therefore links people to the societies in which they live and / or to each other.

In considering identity via the concepts of 'belonging' and 'becoming' it seemed

appropriate to start with Wenger (1998), and his theory of learning as communities of

practice. Our membership of a community constitutes our identity, where knowledge

is competence and knowing is participation; one needs an identity of participation in

order to learn, yet needs to learn in order to acquire an identity. And our membership

of different communities requires our negotiation of identities. This seemed a useful

framework for exploring the world of the quantity surveying student. But, as Nathan

(2005) highlights, this theory of a 'bounded community' is not necessarily reflected

in the reality of student life, which consists of a self-selected series of individual

communities created by each student, each of which is competing for their attention.

Nespor (1994) too identifies this multiple membership and connections across

networks as problematic. So while adoption of Wenger's theory of learning via

communities of practice provides an appropriate framing for analysis of the Quantity

Surveying programme it does not, per se, provide sufficient opportunity for an

exploration of 'belonging' and 'becoming'. The quantity surveying students belong

to multiple communities of practice within the programme, created around subject

areas, and resulting in clusters of communities at each level (year). If a holistic

approach is required, the question is how this is to be achieved from these numerous

clusters of communities.

For Nespor (1994) identity requires a departure from the psychological conception of the learner as a discrete entity, as an individual. Nespor challenges the idea of the learner as unitary actor; people stretch out in many directions at once, intertwine with other people and things distant with them. Learners are actors distributed with shifting boundaries and within compositions that spread across space and time. Institutional settings and activities occur in networks which construct space-time relations. Participants in one part of a network are always interacting with the other parts of the network. Students are not being prepared, or preparing themselves, to participate later in professional fields of practice, they are interacting with those fields and are elements of distributed actors or actor-networks. On entering university they begin to move along trajectories which re-organise them spatially and temporally as elements of actor-networks. The old divisions of learning, disciplinary reproduction, curriculum processes, identity construction, etc dissolve into knowledge in motion. From this perspective, learning is being able to move oneself and other things through these space-time networks. Having knowledge means participating in an actor-network that organises a field of practice such as a discipline. Participating means becoming spatially and temporally organised, in a form that moves you into the material spaces of the field, and becoming proficient at using the discipline's representational organisations of space-time. The discipline itself is, however, a stable entity in so far as it ties together spaces and times, mobilises elements and moves them across the distances to a centre where they can be combined and acted upon. Enrolment in a programme is a product of struggle amongst actor-networks

(friends, family) where materials organisation of space-time plays a critical role in organising bodies (eg timetabling classes). Therefore a community of practice cannot be understood on its own terms, but only by looking at how its practices are enmeshed in a more expansive network. Selves are not simply multiplied or fragmented, they are distributed across space-time networks; different disciplinary constructions of space and time mean different constructions of self. The student academic experience is not simply a series of unrelated academic categories and activities, it is the inter-relation and the forging together of those fragments which allows the student to form an educational 'whole' and participate in the network (Nespor,1994); for Quantity Surveying students, the holistic application of the constituent subject knowledge. Connection to the discipline is mainly via textbooks, note-taking and assessment activities within modules evaluated in terms of relevance to the world of work. Such reduction of the world to textual form allows students to construct linkages amongst the modules in the curriculum, and textual practices mobilise the disparate, widely scattered phenomena of everyday material practice, bringing them into a work setting and under the control of practitioners, in this case the teaching staff. Programmes themselves are connected to the network of practitioners via guest lectures and professional placement activities. The modular approach expands space and fragments time into segregated short-term episodes (Nespor, 1994) as modules are delivered to students from more than one programme via lectures, tutorials, workshops and seminars.

As the 'novice' quantity surveyors move to professional placement, knowledge is not simply a body of content codified in textbooks to be transmitted and acquired, it is also embedded in specific contexts and is the property of groups and organisations as much as something which is possessed by individuals (Guile and Young, 1998, Young 2000). Guile and Young (2003) also argue that learning knowledge and skills is fundamentally a social process, involving participation by learners in new contexts, so while the socio-cultural approach to learning adopted by Lave and Wenger (1991) considers how people actually learn in everyday life, learning as a process of interaction and participation in communities of practice, this is not, on its own, an adequate theory of learning. Learning in workplaces is not only a process of participation but also the acquisition of knowledge which may or may not be available in the community(ies) of practice in which people find themselves (Young, 2000).

Eraut et al (1998) also dissent from Lave and Wenger (1991) who, in their view, attempt to eradicate the individual perspective on knowledge and learning, focusing as they do on stable communities of practice and the common, rather than differentiated, features of people's knowledge. People belong to several social groups in which they both acquire and contribute knowledge, and their multi-group membership cannot, as Nespor (1994) also suggests, be 'ring-fenced'.

Research Questions

Therefore my exploration of identity through the theory of learning as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) is supplemented by the actor-network theory of Nespor (1994) reflecting the quantity surveying students' connections to learning and professional practice. Learning moves from being the transformation of the individual and how one gets to be at home on isolated islands of practice to where identities are "crystallised in the tensions and pressures produced as different communities clash" (Nespor, 1994: p12). Selves are not simply multiplied or fragmented, they are distributed across space-time networks; different disciplinary constructions of space and time mean different constructions of self. While Wenger's theories are not discounted, the notion of a community of practice cannot be understood simply on its own terms, but only by looking at how its practices are enmeshed in "more expansive networks" (Nespor, 1994: p132).

The concepts of 'belonging' and 'becoming' are therefore addressed by research questions formulated as follows:

1. How do Quantity Surveying students perceive their learning experience?

2. What is their perception of identity?

3. What and where are the opportunities for development of identity?

4. What identity(ies) are formed?

5. What dispositions are being adopted?

These require the development and implementation of an appropriate methodology and strategy for data collection, detailed and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3   METHODOLOGY

"A meritorious research project is a well-defined programme investigating a significant problem or major issue in the theory or practice of a discipline... It's worth should be evident to others and earn the respect of peers"

(Sheehan, 1994: p17)

Methodology Framework

Jacob (1987) considers the characteristics of qualitative research to be the subjective perceptions, emotions and reflective interpretations of the participants, more succinctly capturing the individual's point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). As my study explores how a particular group of students perceive their educational world and within this, the discipline and profession of the Quantity Surveyor, it can be defined as qualitative in nature. However, as there are a variety of perspectives which can be adopted for a qualitative approach, and developing an appropriate methodology, I have firstly drawn from Guba (1990) to establish an appropriate paradigm. Guba defines a paradigm as:

- A set of basic beliefs which

- Represent a world view that defines, for the holder

- The nature of the world

- The individual's place in it and

- The range of possible relationships to that world and its parts

Put more simply, a paradigm comprises three key components (Jacob, 1987):

- Epistemology   how do we know the world?

- Ontology   what is the nature of reality?

- Methodology   how do we gain knowledge of the world?

As my focus is on student experiences and perceptions, an inquiry paradigm is most appropriate, therefore an interpretivist approach has been adopted. Denzin & Lincoln (1998) provide an explanation of this approach (with acknowledgement to Schwandt) which neatly encapsulates my intentions: the goal of (the interpretivist) is to understand the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it, and to understand this world the inquirer must interpret it, and clarify what and how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of those studied. That is, a reality exists but is one which can be interpreted differently by those experiencing it; the object of the research is to reveal as many interpretations as possible. More specifically, this approach can be defined as Constructivist, the aim of the inquiry to understand the reconstruction of the reality, collecting and collating individual's reconstructions to reach some sense of consensus, where the researcher is a 'passionate participant' acting as facilitator in this multi-voice reconstruction (Guba, 1990):

- Epistimology: dialogue is valued; findings are the result of dialogue

- Ontology: reality exists in multiple forms; we all differ so we each construct the world in different ways; multiple realities are constructed

- Methodology: individual constructions elicited and interpreted; individual constructions compared and contrasted

Such a method of inquiry primarily requires the use of qualitative methods. Data

collection is by a number of approaches centering on communication, and the

researcher is interested in the experiences of those contributing Crotty (1996).

In this study the following approaches were adopted:

- Focus Group interviews

- Questionnaires

- Reflective Journals

- Feedback Interviews

- Participant observation

These allowed the exploration of individual experiences and perceptions for a specific

group of participants. The strategy employed for data collection afforded each

participant the opportunity to articulate their personal experiences and perceptions.

Collation and interpretation of these individual views provided a greater

understanding of the student experience. The emphasis was on interaction; my

understanding was enhanced via dialogue with the participant group and by the

individuals within it sharing their own individual experiences, these ultimately drawn

together to form the collective view.

In developing an appropriate 'operational' framework for my methodology, I also

drew from Eisner (2004) and his work regarding Qualitative Inquiry. Eisner posits

that Qualitative Inquiry has a far wider remit, namely that it influences the events of

everyday life, pervades day-to-day judgements and provides us with the basis for our

most important decisions (who to marry, where to live, a chosen career path). The

following proved particularly helpful in designing my approach to data collection and

analysis:

1. Interpretative character:

    a) inquirers try to account for what they have given an account of, ie the
       ability to explain why something has taken/is taking place;

    b) what experience holds for those within the situation being studied;
       what meanings do these events have for those experiencing them;

2. The use of expressive language and the presence of voice in text; an empathy
   to help readers experience the experiences vicariously;

3. Attention to particulars to allow readers to gain feeling for the distinctive
   characteristics of the case;

4. Creating a believability in the research due to its coherence, insight and an
   approach to the social world that accepts its dynamic and living quality.

This, with its echoes of Nespor and Denzin and Lincoln, provide a useful sub-

framework and guidelines for 'setting the scene', devising data collection materials

and undertaking data analysis (see Chapter 4).

Given my central theme of identity, I also considered it appropriate to draw from

Symbolic Interactionism, and in particular, from the work of Charon (2004).

Symbolic Interactionism centres on the self as social object, and as such, any

perspectives held by self are held to be social objects / constructions. It is through

these perspectives that we make sense of the world, thus our sense making devices

can also be considered social constructions, one of which is learning. Charon

defines perspectives as situational; each situation that we find ourselves in demands a

different perspective. Further, a perception can be considered to be a conceptual framework, containing a set of assumptions, a set of values and a set of ideas resulting in a bias. This influences our perception which in turn influences our actions and behaviours in the given situation. Our perceptions change as our roles change. The points of view we take are developed from our particular place in society and the groups we belong to provide the 'filters' through which we see society. As a result perceptions are products of the social world in which we move.

An individual is made up of several kinds of perspectives, and may enter any one of these in a given situation. However, once in the situation, the individual may change their perspective, or find their initial perspective(s) changed by interaction with others. In each perspective a different world is seen and a new way of looking at old things may be revealed. We change all through life, from situation to situation, because we change our roles in society, and because society itself changes. Therefore how we act in life is tied to society - in other words, our socialisation - through the various ways in which we learn to become members of society, learning the patterns of society in face-to-face interaction. Identity becomes a central concept, in that *the creation of identity arises through social interaction,* and ongoing social interaction is central to the socialisation process (Charon, 2004, my italics). Self is part of a social world; we bring our perspectives to the social world and negotiate these perspectives into the culture of a society, at the same time shaping our self – our identity – through this negotiation process. The negotiation is undertaken through the use of the established symbol systems provided by our culture.

Symbols are our reality, they form the basis for our social life, and they are central to what it means to be human. The most powerful of these symbols is language. Language allows us to name and categorise, to discriminate, differentiate and classify; it is through language that we come to know the world. Further, language does not simply just represent the world, it allows us to understand the world and construct knowledge through and with same:

> *"we name, remember, categorise, perceive, think, deliberate, problem solve, transcend space and time, transcend ourselves, create abstractions, create new ideas and direct ourselves – all through the symbol"*
>
> (Charon, 2004: p69)

Through social interaction, we communicate with and interpret one another as we go along. Human beings can therefore be considered symbolic actors: we take others into account as we act; we symbolically communicate in our actions; we interpret one another's actions. Therefore social interaction is mutual social action that involves symbolic communication and interpretation of one another's acts. What we do in a given situation depends on our interpretation of other people's actions, while their action(s) depend(s) on their interpretation of ours.

Particularly relevant for this study is the way in which social interaction shapes our identities. Identity results from the negotiation process that arises in social interaction: we label others in interaction; we attempt to shape the identities of others in interaction; we tell others who we think we are in given social interactions.

Through it all we come to think of ourself as something and an identity is formed (Charon, 2004: p156). Within a Symbolic Interactionism approach, the self is defined as a social object, an object that arises in our social interaction: others point out that we exist, they label and define this self, and they help us to understand ourselves (eg 'you're a girl').   Initially, of course, we do not have a self as such, rather we are born into a world which acts upon us.

But self-development is only one aspect. In reviewing our perspective(s) and redefining ourself(s), we must also consider what might be termed the 'internal self'. We talk to ourselves, think and reflect on our actions and adjust our future actions / behaviours in light of same – self communications. We see ourselves in situations where we recognise and understand our relationships with others in the same situation, allowing us to understand our actions in the situation and to develop self-judgement and identity – self perception. Finally, we tell ourselves what to do and how to behave in situations, ie we control ourselves and our actions – self control.

Identity is one aspect of self-concept or perception. At its simplest, this is the name we not only call ourselves, but use to introduce ourselves to others, telling them who we are as we act in situations. But we also have names for all social objects including other people; naming allows us to identify and classify our world.   Identities are part of what we mean by self, and defining or naming who that self is, is carried out in interaction with others – "as others label me, so I come to label myself" (Charon, 2004: p85).

Stryker (1980) refers to this as 'identity salience'; while we can have many identities, it is the level of importance an identity has to the given situation in defining self. Some identities are important only occasionally while others may be important and relevant to us all the time. Accompanying this is identity commitment, in other words, the degree to which a certain identity matters to the individual in relation to certain other people. This links to the issue of 'taking the role of the other'. The participants in this study engage with their social worlds via a number of identities, but they are also subject to their perspectives, conventions and 'rules': university, family, employment. The 'other' can be 'significant', where we take the role of individuals who have become important to us or 'generalised' where we use the perspective of a group, community or society to view our own situation (Charon, 2004). In essence, what we do in situations depends on taking the role of those who exist in the situation, seeing our own actions from their point of view. We act in relation to our understanding of other people's actions, we control our actions in line with our place in the group and thus we need to take the role of the group (to use its rules and perceptions) as we act. We also understand the consequences of our own actions through understanding their effects on others:

> *"through our taking the role of others who act towards us we come to recognise ourself in the first place and over time we come to act toward, evaluate, direct, identify, assess our self as we act"*

> (Charon, 2004: p113).

In short, identity is central to Symbolic Interactionism - how we form, maintain, preserve and protect our identity in social worlds.   The theory of learning as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), is one which can be situated in Symbolic Interactionism, therefore the methodology adopted for this study is one constituted around a Constructivist approach. It is framed around the concept of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), but which integrates the dynamism of same, recognising the connections and links that are made across both time and space (Nespor, 1994), and incorporating the self as social object (Charon, 2004). An exploration of how the participants' world is created by them, negotiated within the group to reach consensus / dissensus, and in doing so how an agreed (re)construction is reached to create their own community of practice allows a full exploration of identity, encompassing both the participants and their surroundings and locations (Eisner, 2004) and including the language used (inclusive / exclusive) to frame and form this (re)construction.

Data Collection

Group Interviews

Identity as a developmental process meant that the most appropriate approach for data collection was to follow one specific group, and so the participants comprised one particular cohort of students on the BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying degree programme. To chart their journey and allow them to tell their stories in a meaningful way, I identified two key milestones: during their Level 1 (first year) studies and again at Level 3 (Year 3).   At Level 1 the participants were just beginning their

studies, and I was interested to explore how they dealt with issues of identity, and whether they placed greater emphasis on personal / learner identity, as at this stage their knowledge about the discipline and the professional environment is likely to be limited. At the second milestone, having commenced their Level 3 studies, they are not only three-quarters of the way through their programme, they have also experienced a period of professional placement, and so exploration of discipline and professional identity as well as personal / learner is possible.

As the number of participants was relatively small and access to the group was also relatively straightforward, I was able to develop an approach to data collection that was both direct and detailed, focusing on 'depth' rather than 'breadth'. However, describing the type of study to be undertaken within the methodology adopted proved somewhat difficult. It would be incorrect to define it as an ethnographical study, as it does not involve my immersion in the cohort, nor does it involve close monitoring of the participants through every stage of their learning. Nor could it be described as entirely observational, as I was not monitoring the group or acting in an entirely neutral capacity, on the 'outside looking in'. However, a Case Study approach focuses on understanding rather than generalisation, in that an individual case may help to understand other cases and so, as my study involved one particular group, engaging with them and only them at various stages in their studies, this seemed to best represent my approach. Therefore, it seems appropriate to define the approach adopted as a Case Study with some participant observation.

In developing a strategy for data collection, I drew firstly from Bauer et al (2000), in that social data (ie data about the social world) is realised through communication processes, through informal and formal channels. Formal communication implies that there is a structure to be followed and a set of rules required, with greater 'rigidity' and adherence to convention. In informal communication, there tend to be few explicit rules governing dialogue; people can talk pretty much anyway they like (accepting that there are likely to be some conversational mores such as avoiding language which may be found offensive by others). The emphasis is on allowing participants to spontaneously express themselves, to talk about what is important to them, how they arrive at their opinions and how they view those of others. This was most appropriate for this study, as creating an informal environment and putting respondents at ease was important. I hoped it would generate fuller and franker discussion than in a more formal setting. Further, a relationship already existed between researcher and the researched. However, as a member of teaching staff engaging with the participants as students in my classroom, the concern was I might still be viewed in this role, raising issues of power and the risk that participants would simply tell me what they thought I wanted to hear; these considerations are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The primary method of communication between researcher and researched is generally by interview (Bauer, 2000). The purpose of the interview is an attempt to map and understand the respondents' (social) world and their reality. The objective is to reach an understanding of the beliefs, values, attitudes, values and motivations in respect of people and in relation to their behaviour in particular social contexts

(Gaskell, 2000). The research interview is a social process, an interaction with words the main medium of exchange, an exchange of ideas and meanings in which various realities and perceptions are explored and developed, leading to a sharing and negotiation of realities. An interview can therefore be defined as a joint venture, but should it be conducted on a one-to-one basis, or by group participation. In a one-to-one situation, the interviewee has the sole attention of the interviewer, avoiding the potential for individuals 'hogging the floor' in a group situation. But this unusual relationship and specific focus may make the experience more stressful for both parties. The interviewer and interviewee may both be more self-conscious, hesitant and (possibly) defensive, and unsure of the roles they are expected to take. The interviewee may have concerns as to whether they can trust the interviewer, and whether they can say what they really feel. If these concerns exist then the interviewee may be tempted to limit their responses to what they presume is relevant and informative, or adopt positions on issues that match their particular self image (Grice, 1975). Trust and confidence are important. The interviewer needs to establish a relationship, a 'rapport' with the interviewee so that they are able to respond fully, within a 'safe and secure' environment. As Bauer (2000) points out, a successful interview allows a detailed exploration of the personal worldview of the interviewee, to allow their personal construction to be elicited. The one-to-one interview can be regarded as a 'depth' interview, where the personal worldview of the participant is explored in detail to establish their personal construction of same.

By contrast, group interviews aim to stimulate participants to talk with and respond to each other, to compare experiences, and to react to what others say. There is a change in the nature of the social situation, the interviewer acting as a catalyst for interaction between the participants, resulting in, it could be argued, a more genuine social interaction (Gaskell, 2000). The meanings and representations emerging are more influenced by the social nature of the group interaction than by the individual perspective in the one-to-one interview. Groups may generate emotion, humour, spontaneity and opinions, and participants may be more willing to entertain new ideas and explore their implications, thus reaping a richer return to the researcher in terms of data. A group is, too, a more naturalistic and holistic setting, in which the participants take account of the views of others in formulating their own views and commenting on their own and others' experiences. Ultimately, the processes which occur in groups can result in the development of a shared identity.

It was therefore appropriate to undertake group interviews as one element of data collection, to allow me to explore the range of attitudes and opinions within the participant group, and to add contextual detail to my findings. Interviewing on a group basis provides participants with an opportunity to draw confidence and support from each other – the focus of the interviewer is diluted – and to allow the interviewer to elicit a wider range of perceptions, opinions and views more efficiently; time management and access to participants can be problematic. Further, it is easier to spot emerging consensus or dissensus and the ways that the participants handle these, particularly the latter. It is, of course, recognised that a group approach has

deficiencies. The loss of focus on and, by necessity time given to, each individual makes it more difficult for the researcher to elicit the particular motivations or circumstances of each; there may be a loss of individual detail and depth. And one individual participant may dominate the group and affect the level of participation by others.

But these are considerably offset by the opportunities for eliciting shared understandings and meanings, and a degree of analysis at individual level is still possible. This is particularly important where the research objective is, as in this study, to orientate the researcher to a field of inquiry which explores the range of attitudes, behaviours, and observe the processes of consensus and disagreement (Gaskell, 2000). Where the group is homogenous, as with my participants, there is likely to be a higher degree of comfortability with each other, leading to greater openness and candour (Lederman, 1990). Frey and Fontana (1993) also highlight the therapeutic effect of the group interview, where recall, opinion, elaboration and re-evaluation of previous positions can be stimulated to a greater degree.

A group interview approach is also consistent with a Constructivist approach, where multiple views or reality not only exist but also co-exist, leading to the development of a shared reality. Interaction between the interviewer and respondents, and between respondents, adds depth and dimension to the constructed reality. In research of this nature such interaction is a deliberate and intentional part of the process,

encouraging reflection by the interviewer as well as the interviewees, generating discussion, negotiation and individual reflection. The aim is the facilitation of an interactive discussion which provides a more in-depth understanding of perceptions, beliefs and experiences from a number of viewpoints and establishes the context from which these were derived (Brotherson, 1994).

Participation in the first group interview was offered to all. I invited anyone who was willing to participate to attend the session, but stated that both male and female representation would be helpful.   A total of five participated in the first group interview: two male and three female. As my study involved following one particular cohort throughout their studies, I asked if they would be willing to co-operate further and participate in the later interview sessions too, and all agreed to do so.

Individual Questionnaires

Group interviews provided one part of the research study 'jigsaw'. But this sample group only represented a quarter of the overall population, therefore to establish to what extent the views, opinions, consensus and dissensus were shared by the wider group, ie the cohort as a whole, the second approach adopted was the use of questionnaires. Munn and Drever (1995) claim the following advantages for using questionnaires for data collection:

- An effective use of time;

- Anonymity for the respondents;

- The possibility of a high return rate;

- Standardisation of questions.

But given the small population size of twenty two, one might question why I didn't simply undertake further group interviews with the remainder of the cohort. My justification for adopting an alternative approach was threefold:

- to provide greater breadth of response;

- to allow each participant an opportunity to provide responses to the specific themes and issues as identified by myself and the focus groups;

- to ensure meaningful data analysis.

Time was also a concern; it proved difficult at times to arrange mutually convenient sessions for the interview sessions, and the use of questionnaires reduced the time pressure. It ultimately proved easier to find a time and location when the cohort was together, making the data collection process more manageable, although I elected to perhaps 'sacrifice' a degree of depth for breadth. While care and attention – and hence time - was required in formulating the questions, the questionnaire was completed by respondents in their own time – albeit within an allotted period selected by me -and responses obtained from the larger group 'in one fell swoop' as Munn (in Munn and Drever, 1995) puts it.

Anonymity was also important. I wanted to ensure that all participants felt confident they could participate without 'fear of reprisal': issues of insider / outsider, existing relationships and power balances were at the forefront of my thinking here (see also the section on Ethical Considerations in this chapter). It took some time to convince the focus group that my 'intentions were honourable' and that their responses would be treated with due respect and confidence, so to engender the same degree of confidence amongst the cohort as a whole, it seemed appropriate to request their participation via a questionnaire. I was also attempting to achieve what Munn and Drever (1995) call critical distance, providing a 'barrier' between myself and the respondents. Having the opportunity to respond to a set of questions which would be collected and collated would, I hoped, encourage them to be frank and honest, to be more 'upfront'.

Achieving a high return rate was probably the least difficult aspect of the data collection process. Time pressures, and the logistics of managing the research process, meant it was easier to meet with the whole cohort during one of their scheduled classes, 'stealing' some time from same (with the approval of the colleague who was taking the class). Thus there was the opportunity for a maximum response rate, whilst recognising the participants' right not to do so. The use of standardised questions, derived from my literature review readings and the responses of the focus group, while not legislating for the way in which each respondent interprets the questions, nevertheless ensured that all respondents were asked the same set of questions and in the same order. This assisted in the data analysis process but more importantly,

removed the possibility of intervention by the researcher. There are, of course, negatives associated with such an approach; the data collected can be superficial, and respondents may be limited in their opportunities to provide explanation or discussion, resulting in descriptive responses. These can, however, be overcome to some extent by the creation of appropriately worded and crafted questions, including mixing open and closed alternatives, within the questionnaire. I therefore considered the advantages of this approach outweighed these disadvantages.

Reflective Journals

The final aspect of data collection was the use of reflective journals. Here, a 'reflective journal' is defined as a written journal (electronic or by hand) which provides, at its simplest, evidence of work accompanied by a reflective commentary (Moon, 1999). This was an activity that I had previously introduced as part of the learning teaching and assessment processes for two modules, Professional Placement Learning and the Interact Project. Both required the students to undertake a review of their activities within each module, and to reflect on their experiences. Students appeared to respond very honestly and openly in these mini journals, and did not demonstrate reluctance to engage in this activity (recognising, of course, that this work was assessable and that there was a penalty for non-compliance). I was encouraged that the inclusion of this within my research study would perhaps generate useful data in relation to students' perceptions of identity and learning, and so was disappointed that so few of the cohort ultimately completed this activity. However,

those who did appear to have taken it seriously and written it up as intended, as a diary of their experiences, feelings and opinions (discussed in Chapter 4). They provided me with their stories via a collection of anecdotes and experiences, revealing their thoughts, feelings and practice (Thomas, 1995).

Recognising that personal identity and professional identity are inextricably linked, in that each dimension can – and does – impact on the other, the most appropriate timing for this activity was during the period of professional placement learning, as the participants moved from classroom theory to situations of practice (Moon, 1999). At this point the world of work enters the participants' network, providing a view of life in the chosen discipline, and affording glimpses of how professional life is lived within particular organisations (Nespor, 1994). In devising a framework and structure for this activity, and recognising that there was a degree of imposition involved – 'you will do it this way' - I nevertheless wanted to ensure that the participants found it simple, easy to understand and non-threatening, to encourage them to express themselves freely in whatever manner they chose. Initially, my intention was to have them complete the journal on a daily basis, like a diary, but feedback from some of the participants at an early stage identified the main disadvantage of this approach. They found it difficult to reflect after comparatively short periods of time, and even to find sufficient time in their day to engage sufficiently. Therefore a more flexible approach was agreed, in that they could record events, situations, feelings, etc on a weekly basis.

I was also conscious that these journals were being written for an audience, myself and readers of the completed research, which had implications for participants' responses. Would they be influenced by these considerations in terms of the expressions and thoughts recorded and the language used? The evidence as presented by the completed journals suggest that this was not a significant issue for the participants; entries have grammatical and spelling errors, contain colloquialisms and terminologies peculiar to the surveying discipline, and appear to be accounts of their experiences as they saw it, not 'dressed up' or edited - which they might have been had assessment been involved. The purpose of the journal was to allow participants to (Moon, 1999):

- Record their experiences;

- Encourage them to reflect on their experiences; to understand, think and learn from their experiences in professional practice;

- Encourage them to develop a sense of self – through an exploration of self to determine their personal meanings and constructs and therefore how they view the world.

I hoped I would be able to 'see' the professional landscape in which the participants were working (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998), and that their accounts would help me to construct an empathetic account of their experiences. If our perception of the world is based on our experiences, and we interpret the world through these perceptions, then the use of a journal as a method of data collection offers an opportunity for the participant to record and reflect, and the researcher to interpret, same. And although the journal was constructed in a pre-determined format imposed on all, to assist in the analysis process, it was also informal in the sense that participants were free to adopt a personal style to suit their own situation, to allow free writing.

The use of reflective journals also offered a way of encouraging participants to reflect on the issue of professional and discipline identity, through the dimension of professional development. Professional development necessarily involves self-development, and journals of this type provide an opportunity to link personal and professional development; to focus on one's self, and to develop one's 'voice' (Moon, 1999: p60). Such journals provide an opportunity not only for reflection on one's attitudes and to refine / review / change these, but also to develop increased confidence in a professional role (Ashbury et al, 1993). In the context of this study, such reflective writing may also be useful in linking elements of the programme into a more coherent understanding (James and Denley, 1993) and so allow participants to make connections between academic theory and their learning experiences and personal and discipline / professional identity, drawing from Schön's (1983) notion of the reflective practitioner; reflection is not only 'in action' but 'on action'. Writing journals can also be considered 'person-making' (Hallberg, 1987: p289), in that one's attitudes, values and a sense of personal identity evolve from such activities, a view shared by Eraut (1994). In his consideration of the place of journals in personal development, the establishment of personal identity is via the development of self-awareness, self-improvement and self-empowerment. Much earlier Rainer (1978) also considered the value of keeping a journal as part of self development: the outcome of exploration of self, and knowing about one's personal capabilities enables one to better appreciate the capacities in others and thus to adapt one's behaviour towards others. Perhaps it is summed it up best, with particular relevance to this study, as:

"a way to tell our own story, a way to learn who we have been, who we are, and who we are becoming"

(Cooper, 1991: p98)

There is, of course, a caveat to this: whether the role of the respondent is compromised in data collection, via the apparent contradiction in the use of a journal for 'self-reflection' and 'self-development' – what could be considered the 'private' - when the contents are to be made public via the research study. Issues of security and anonymity – the need for self-protection - arise. I would argue that, although participants in this study were asked to convey the 'personal' it was within the context of the 'professional'. They were being asked to focus on their responses to quantity surveying practice and their experiences therein, and while it was important to elicit the participants' feelings and thoughts, it was not intended as a vehicle where it was necessary to 'bare their souls'.

Researcher's Diary

In my role as an active – and reflective - participant in this research study, I elected to keep my own 'EdD Diary'. I began at the beginning of the EdD programme and continued to write regularly as I progressed through the taught elements and onto my thesis. Initially I saw this as being primarily a support mechanism for planning my studies and charting my progress, using it as a repository for ideas and plans, particularly in respect of this thesis. But as my studies progressed I found myself using it more as a way of helping me make sense of my own experiences, and to "vent

feelings, sort out dilemmas and difficulties" (Moon, 1999: p65). It proved therapeutic at times to write down the issues that were proving problematic, and in the process of expressing these, sometimes the way forward became clearer. It was, in effect, the written equivalent of a shoulder to cry on, a 'personal support'. In this way it became more of a journal, providing me with an opportunity to reflect on my own actions and interactions, and to chart my own journey through this process of educational development, what Rainer (1978) describes as rereading myself, to identify patterns of experience and personality so leading to a better understanding of my own nature. The results of undertaking the EdD programme from personal and professional perspectives is considered more fully in Chapter 5, as keeping a research diary proved to be a mechanism for reflection on my own personal and professional identities.

Strategy for Data Collection

The overall approach to data collection is discussed more fully shortly, but it is perhaps useful to provide some further detail in terms of the rationale, the purpose and the timing of the data collection activities. Firstly, I hoped that triangulation in analysis would be more readily achievable; I would be able to compare sample group (interview) to total population (questionnaire) to individual (reflective journal), allowing me to test the validity of the data collected. A phased approach also provided the opportunity to explore issues raised by one set of participants with others. For example, issues raised by the Level 1 focus group could be incorporated into the Level 1 questionnaire; any additional issues highlighted within the

questionnaire responses could be explored with the Level 1 feedback interview group.

There were therefore three stages to the data collection process.

Phase 1

The first phase involved Level 1 students. A focus group interview was undertaken

with a sample of Level 1 students – five in total – in March 2003, and at this point

participants had almost completed their first year of study (four teaching weeks

remained). The focus group interview was intended to initially develop and explore

key themes and issues with a small group from the cohort, acting as a first opportunity

for the participants to respond to what I considered to be the key issues (through my

literature review and the outcomes of earlier informed discussions with colleagues and

students). It also allowed them to identify areas that they themselves considered

significant.   The results from these interviews, whilst forming part of the final data

analysis, also provided the framework for development of the questionnaires. These

were issued to all participants at Level 1, two weeks prior to the conclusion of the

academic session, in April 2003.   The questionnaire was designed to explore the

participants' experiences of being a learner, and all twenty-two participants completed

this element of data collection. Having analysed the questionnaire responses and the

interview transcripts, I concluded Phase 1 with a feedback interview with the focus

group in April 2003, for clarification and finalisation of points made, issues raised,

and to establish the credibility and robustness of my interpretation.

Phase 2

The first activity in Phase 2 was the development of a template for the Reflective

Journal. Having produced a draft, I enlisted the assistance of three Level 3 Quantity

Surveying students who had just returned from their professional placement period,

and asked them for their critical appraisal. The key questions to them were: "if you

had been asked to complete this during your placement, would you / could you have?"

Using their feedback – submitted in the form of annotations made on the draft – I then

developed the final template. The next step was to brief the new group of students –

the same participants as Phase 1 - who were now embarking on placement. The

request for participants in this activity was again by open invitation. All students who

were willing to undertake this activity were asked to come to a briefing session. A

total of ten students attended, and at that time, all agreed that they would be willing to

participate and keep a journal record during their placement period.   The briefing

session took place at lunchtime, where I explained the concept, the relevance and

importance to my research, and the level of participation required. I also felt it was

important to emphasise that the results of this activity would only be used for the

purposes of my EdD thesis and that any issues raised / comments made within the

journal relating to the programme, staff or employers would remain confidential. I

also shared with the group my own efforts at keeping this type of a record – my EdD

diary – as an illustration and explanation. The main concerns from the group were

issues of confidentiality and 'accountability' – how could they be sure that I would

not use the information for any other purposes?

It was initially difficult to reassure the group, but my most persuasive argument was to ask them if, as a tutor, I had ever acted 'dishonourably' towards the group or individuals within same. The group acknowledged that they had always found me to be receptive and helpful. We agreed this activity was about trust; they could be honest in the journal and I would respect this in my writing-up, and that formed the basis for co-operation and participation by the group. The template was issued to participants in March 2004, but as data collection via this method could not commence until participants had started their professional placement period, the period for Phase 2 data collection ran from June to December 2004.

Phase 3

The third phase of the data collection process commenced with an initial analysis of the reflective journals themselves. Although ten participants originally expressed interest in the reflective journal activity, only five ultimately submitted completed journals. When I asked these five why they did not submit a journal, four cited the pressures of placement and working as the main reason for their non-submission. The other had "forgotten all about it". Of those who completed and submitted a reflective journal one was female and four were male; three of them were participants in the Level 1 focus group, and two were additional respondents, both male. A full analysis, findings and commentary is provided in Chapter 4. This first analysis of the submitted reflective journals in January 2005 provided the basis for a feedback interview with journal participants and the development of a questionnaire for issue to

the cohort population. Both activities were undertaken in February 2005.

I also held a focus group interview with the Level 3 cohort, again in February 2005, to identity key issues and themes. The results of this interview were used – with journal analysis - to develop a questionnaire which was issued to all but two of the population for completion. Two students did not go to placement and so were discounted from this activity, but the remaining twenty completed this in March 2005. Analysis of the questionnaire and interview responses provided the basis for a final feedback interview with the reflective journal respondents, undertaken in April 2005.

The concluding activity in Phase 3 was an interview conducted in April 2005 with all twenty participants, to allow further exploration of the themes and issues, and to allow them to engage and to share their experiences with each other as well as with myself. Full analysis and findings are provided in Chapter 4.

Participants and their Profiles

My original intention was to contrast the experiences of a Level 1 (first year) cohort and the corresponding Level 3 (third year) cohort at a particular point in their studies during one academic session. The change in research focus from identity as a factor in progression and retention to identity as part of the learning experience led to a corresponding change in the profile of the participants, shifting the emphasis to an exploration of identity as part of a developmental process. Further, although I

initially intended to classify and consider identity within separate 'components,' – personal, learner, discipline, professional – as my research progressed it became apparent that these are not, in fact, separate mutually exclusive entities but are, in fact, facets of the whole "I", and that development of particular facets are likely to be influenced not only by our experiences but also by our personalities, characteristics and behaviours (see Chapter 2). That is, our professional identity and behaviours are likely to be influenced and defined by our personal characteristics and beliefs, as well as those held by those we encounter, and t is the development of these facets of identity that this study explores. To undertake this exploration it was more appropriate to follow one specific group, so the participants in my research comprised one particular cohort of students on the BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying degree programme. To chart their journey and to be able to allow them to tell their stories in a meaningful way, I identified two key milestones: at Level 1 (first year) and then again at Level 3 (Year 3).

At Level 1 the participants were just beginning their studies, so I was interested to explore how they dealt with issues of identity, and in particular whether they placed greater emphasis on personal/learner identity, as at this stage their knowledge about the discipline and the professional environment is likely to be limited. At the second milestone, however, having commenced their Level 3 studies, they are not only three-quarters of the way through their programme, they have also experienced a period of professional placement, and so greater exploration of discipline and professional identity as well as personal/learner is possible.

The representativeness of the participants was pre- determined as the group comprised those who were registered for Level 1 of the programme at the start of the 2002-03 academic session.   I had no input to selection in terms of age, gender, race, etc.   The cohort comprised eighteen males and four females (as fully detailed in Table 1 on Page 117).   This is typical of the entrant profile on the Quantity Surveying programme and therefore this particular cohort can be considered as a representative sample.   However, as there were four females in the cohort, gender was an important criteria for selection to ensure that their voice was represented. It is also important to state here that the composition of the cohort remained unchanged throughout the research. Although there is a facility for advanced entry to the programme, no-one joined this cohort between Level 1 and Level 3, and participant profile remained unchanged throughout the study.

Table 1 overleaf provides details of the participants' profiles and the referencing system used for analysis purposes:

Table 1   Participants' Profiles and Identification Referencing

Reference No	Gender	Age Range	Employed By	Journal Respondent	Phase 1 Focus Group Participant
QR1	**Male**	**17-20**	**Contracting organisation; site-based**	**J2**	**x**
QR2	**Male**	**21-25**	**Private QS practice**		
QR3	**Male**	**21-25**	**Contracting organisation; office-based**		
QR4	**Male**	**17-20**	**Private QS practice**		
QR5	**Female**	**17-20**	**Local Authority**	**J1**	**x**
QR6	**Male**	**25-30**	**Private QS practice**		
QR7	**Male**	**17-20**	**Contracting organisation; site-based**		
QR8	**Male**	**17-20**	**Private QS practice**	**J5**	
QR9	**Male**	**17-20**	**Contracting organisation; site-based**		
QR10	**Male**	**17-20**	**Private QS practice**		
QR11	**Male**	**17-20**	**Contracting organisation; site-based**		
QR12	**Male**	**21-25**	**Contracting organisation; office-based**	**J4**	
QR13	**Female**	**17-20**	**Contracting organisation; site-based**		**x**
QR14	**Male**	**17-20**	**Private QS practice**		
QR15	**Male**	**21-25**	**Private QS practice**	**J3**	
QR16	**Male**	**17-20**	**Private QS practice**		
QR17	**Female**	**17-20**	**Private QS practice**	**I1**	**x**
QR18	**Male**	**21-25**	**Private QS practice**		
QR19	**Male**	**17-20**	**Contracting organisation; office-based**		
QR20	**Male**	**17-20**	**Private QS practice**		**x**
QR21	**Male**	**17-20**	**No placement**		
QR22	**Male**	**17-20**	**No placement**		

NB: A simple reference coding was also employed to identify the students who submitted reflective journals (as crossed referenced in the grid above):

- J1   Female; local authority employer
- J2   Male; large contracting organisation
- J3   Male; small private QS practice
- J4   Male; large contracting organisation
- J5   Male; multi-disciplinary practice

The programme for data collection is provided overleaf.

Programme for data collection

A three phase research study was undertaken as follows:

- *Phase 1:   Academic Session 2002-03:*

    #   Initial focus group interview with a sample of Level 1 (Year 1) cohort (male and female) to explore the learning experience and personal/learner identity (5 participated)

    #   Questionnaire issued to all in the Level 1 cohort (total population 22) *(Appendix B.1)*

    #   Feedback interview with Level 1 focus group *(Appendix B.2)*

- *Phase 2:   Academic Session 2003-04:*

    #   Consultation with existing Level 3 cohort, (ie those returning from professional placement) to assist in developing a Reflective Journal template

    #   Refinement and issue of the Reflective Journal template to the new Level 3 cohort (ie those about to go to professional placement) for completion during the Professional Placement Period *(Appendix C)*

- *Phase 3:   Academic Session 2004-05:*

    #   Collection of Reflective Journals (5 submitted)

    #   Preliminary Analysis of Reflective Journals and Feedback interview with Level 3 Reflective Journal respondents

    #   Focus Group interview with Level 3 cohort on their return from professional placement (20 from total population of 22)

    #   Questionnaire issued to Level 3 cohort (20 from total population of 22) *(Appendix D.1)*

    #   Feedback interview with Level 3 cohort (twenty from total population of 22) *(Appendix D.2)*

By undertaking data collection via three different methods and in three phases I hoped to achieve breadth, depth, and triangulation of responses.   Interviews provided the depth; the data collected is sufficiently detailed to allow analysis of not only the responses themselves but also the language used, so accurately reflecting the participants' voices.   The questionnaires, while placing greater restriction on the response and providing less rich information, nevertheless provided the breadth; each participant had the opportunity to participate and ensure that their own personal view was represented.

Issues of non-response did not arise as completion of both questionnaires was undertaken in class time (recognising, of course, the group's right of non-participation). The voice of the individual was represented through the reflective journals, providing not only further depth but also allowing these participants an individuality of response, albeit there were issues of non-response which are acknowledged.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Approach Adopted

When considering the most appropriate approach to my research, I initially found the type of study I was undertaking hard to define. A 'Case Study' proved the most accurate description, given that at the centre is an exploration of identity as a progressive development, and to undertake this exploration required focusing on a

particular group of students on the quantity surveying programme at particular points in their studies. This allowed me to explore identity and learning through the collection and analysis of their particular experiences, and so establish a depth of understanding from their particular perspective. It is this depth that is the particular strength of the approach; although a small population was involved nevertheless a wealth of data in respect of belonging and becoming was produced, allowing me to establish 'how it was for them'. The progressive milestones allowed me to chart how – and when – their views, feelings, opinions changed. My focus on this particular group of participants as they progressed through their programme of study meant that I was able to develop a good research relationship with the group, and in operational terms, the study was very manageable.

But this depth of study is, of course, also its weakness. There is limited opportunity to establish breadth; while this may be 'how it is for them' there is no opportunity to explore whether this is true for others, either quantity surveying students in different cohorts, or for other disciplines. A case study approach is also, by definition, a 'bounded' study, placing limitations on the data collection and subsequent analysis.

This degree of limitation is also apparent when considering appropriate parameters and boundaries for the study. Using actor-network theory as a framework makes it more difficult to establish exactly what these boundaries should be; which of the networks are to be included and which are to be excluded? Setting boundaries in this way may not only restrict full data collection and analysis, particularly in respect of

the influences between and impacts of one on the other, but they may also be 'false' boundaries, artificially constructed for the purposes of the study itself. In my study the parameters set were the programme and learning experience and the professional placement period, discounting other networks such as family and social, although this is not to suggest these were not at work.

Data Analysis

The nature of the data collected was predominantly qualitative, focusing on participants' experiences, perceptions and opinions. However, a multi-dimensional approach to data analysis was required to allow me to fully satisfy the research questions set. Firstly, to provide an overall structure for the analysis, I used the main theme of Identity and the concepts of 'belonging' and 'becoming', and my research questions as a framework. Within this framework, the data was organised and analysed via open coding to establish the emerging themes.

My broad aim was to look for shared meanings and understandings, areas of consensus and dissensus, and identify common themes emerging. But it was not my intention simply to interpret and analyse what was said, to take it at face value, I also wanted to go beyond this initial analysis to seek out the less explicit – going beyond the words. In seeking patterns and connections, contradictions and the ways attitudes and opinions develop, I moved from the macro level established by the questionnaire

responses to the more detailed view of the group interview participants, and then to the micro level through examination of the reflective journals kept by individuals.

Chapter 4 includes a full analysis of the data as part of the main narrative, but it is perhaps useful to highlight some of my considerations. Analysis of the data collected was possible on a number of levels.   The interview data was firstly analysed to identify key issues, views and opinions, establishing how these vary from person to person and/or group to group.   This data was further analysed in respect of the language and expressions used to provide these views.

Kvale (1996) highlights a potential problem when analysing group interviews, namely that group interactions reduce the interviewer's control, which may then lead to relatively chaotic data collection. However, by following the approach to analysis as determined by Brotherson (1994) it was possible to overcome this to a great extent. Brotherson's approach is, she admits, somewhat prescriptive, but its application did allow multiple methods of analysis to take place. Therefore the key steps in the process of data analysis I followed in respect of the interviews were:

- Reading and re-reading transcripts to become familiar with the data;

- Identifying topics, themes and patterns as they emerge to develop an organising scheme; data are collectively coded as the scheme is refined;

- Reflecting and recording my perceptions, interpretations and expectations;

- Developing topic themes until data saturation reached (ie no new themes, patterns are emerging);

- Applying triangulation with other data gathered by different methods.

It was also important to include the group dynamic as part of the analysis, as each group's 'personalities' are very much part of, and have an impact on, the data collection and analysis processes. In this regard, I found that the four stages of group development identified by Tuckman (1965), subsequently modified to five by Gordon and Langmaid (1998) were in evidence during my interviews:

- *Forming:*   *initial confusion and uncertainty; beginnings of development of group identity*

- *Storming:*   *conflict between group members/group as a whole and researcher*

- *Norming:*   *conflict from previous step resolved; roles defined; group established*

- *Performing:*   *where the work valuable to the researcher is done*

- *Mourning:*   *as session draws to a close, semi-private discussions take place (between group members and group members and researcher), last things are said, explanations provided and clarifications made; preparations [made] for re-entry into the real world*

A full analysis is provided within the narrative in Chapter 4, but all five stages did in fact occur during the group interview process. There was an initial reticence and apparent shyness as the group initially came together, with lots of 'fussing' around where to sit, removing coats, moving chairs.

After a brief introduction to set the context, I asked my first question: there was silence, then a response from one of the participants, without interruption from the others. Then another participant provided their response. The manner of responses at

this point are best described as hesitant and stilted, with lots of pauses and the use of "err", "umm" and the like – 'tough going' from my point of view.

However, after a few more questions, the participants became less 'reserved', and this led to discussion between participants, interruptions, and asides to each other and to me. General discussion and debate stimulated around the topics and themes introduced led to minority/majority splits re: agreement or disagreement; these coalitions and alliances did, however, change from topic to topic.

Towards the end of the interview the group began to dissolve into smaller factions, exchanging further views and opinions. Participants also wanted to make sure that I'd got all the points they wanted to make: "did I say…"; "remember that….". Finally, as I prepared to end the interview, and close off the discussion, there were physical as well as verbal signs of preparation for 're-entry'; the group started to gather up their coats, bags and the like, and say their farewells to each other and to myself, including thanks for having had the opportunity to contribute, and I departed with their best wishes for a successful outcome.

Analysis of questionnaire responses established consensus of opinion via the pre-determined sections, questions and statements of the questionnaire itself.   Therefore analysis of the responses obtained required a multi-layered approach. Firstly, all responses were analysed simply in terms of consensus of opinion; ie the number of participants who responded in the same way were collated to provide an initial set of results. However, I then undertook a second analysis to establish whether there was

consensus – or not – in the reasons for the responses. For example, two respondents

may have agreed with a particular statement but provided alternative reasons for their

response. This allowed me to 'get behind' the responses to establish the range of

opinions.   I then carried out a third analysis, this time in terms of the actual language

and terms used by the respondents. Here I was looking at the ways in which

the opinions had been expressed, to provide a contrast and comparison with the

interview responses and in particular, the reflective journal responses.

The 'milestone' approach to data collection added depth to the analysis by allowing

comparison and contrast of both interview and questionnaire responses at each level,

permitting exploration of how the participants' experience changes over the course of

their studies. A further contrast was provided via the analysis of the reflective

journals. While some guidance was provided in the journal documentation regarding

the nature of response required, participants were not bound by anything other than

themselves. They could determine how much or how little they shared with me, how

honest and open they wanted to be. Nor were any restraints placed on language: what

they said and how they said it was left entirely to the participants' discretion.   Again,

a multi-layered approach was used for analysis of the reflective journals. This proved

to be more complex, given the 'looseness' of the activity. I firstly read each reflective

journal through just as a record of experiences, not as data per se, which allowed me

to establish how each participant had dealt with the journal, in terms of the frequency

of entries and how these entries had been made.

My next approach was to analyse each reflective journal in respect of the key issues raised and provide a synopsis for each. This allowed me to compare and contrast each respondent with the others. The final aspect of analysis involved noting the ways in which the respondent had written down their experiences, ie the language and terminology used as the journal progressed.

In summary, then, three main aspects formed my approach to data analysis:

- Areas of consensus: what these were and why;

- Issues raised by the participants which were not addressed in the data collection itself: what these were and why;

- The language and terminology employed by the participants in their responses, particularly the reflective journal respondents.

The results of this analysis forms Chapter 4 of the narrative.

Robustness and Credibility

Establishing validity within a Constructivist approach is highly problematic, in that although interpretation is the basis of inquiry, multiple interpretations are possible. Validity lies in gaining a coherent view and the extent to which the researcher's observations do indeed reflect the phenomena of interest to them. In such a study then, it is authenticity that is sought, the researcher providing a reflexive account of themselves and the processes of their research, which is interpreted by both participants and researcher to establish an account of the interactions between context,

researcher, methodology and participants (Altheide and Johnson, 1998).

But as all research is fallible, in that the knowledge revealed is inevitably incomplete, and although it may help us understand why things are and allow us to be better informed, all we have at best is a glimpse of the way things are (Munn and Drever, 1995), it is essential that when presenting results to be open about the findings - to allow scrutiny and validation.

Further, the research presented should create confidence on the part of the audience (Drever, 1995), namely that:

- They can clearly see what you have been doing;

- Are satisfied that the findings have a systematic and rigorous basis;

- There are established boundaries to the work.

The main principles which guided my research are therefore as follows:

- My interpretation is based on evidence which has been systematically collected and analysed, including triangulation where appropriate;

- My interpretation of participants' responses is endorsed by the participants;

- My research methodology and findings are sufficiently robust and as such can be defended when subject to challenge;

- My research has clearly defined parameters and my conclusions are based on the evidence presented.

The van Kaam-style method (Crotty, 1996) of analysis serves to illustrate the approach I adopted:

- Initially reading transcripts to get a sense of the whole;

- Intuiting about and reflecting on each transcript;

- Identifying the meaning units in each transcript;

- Re-grouping and re-describing statements relevant to each meaning unit for each transcript;

- Intuiting about and reflecting on each meaning unit across all participants to uncover themes;

- Writing an 'exemplary narrative' to illustrate each theme;

- Validation by participants;

- Synthesising statements.

Recognising that this is a case study view of a particular group of participants at a particular time, I make no grand claims, nor 'blur the boundaries' between the facts evidenced by the data collected and my own feelings and / or interpretations, and where I can 'speak with authority' and where I cannot (Drever, 1995). Rather than seeking generalisation, I am attempting to illuminate, from which inferences can be drawn.

Ethical Considerations

All research within the School is governed by the University's Code of Ethics, which incorporates the guidelines adopted by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 1992), and my research proposal for this thesis was approved under this Code by the School Ethics Committee in 2003.   A key consideration was that the research involved a group of students I was engaged with in learning and teaching activities and the potential conflict of interest that might arise. As a researcher I was primarily interested in their experiences and perceptions and regarded this research as an opportunity for me to gain a better understanding from those actually engaged in the learning process. But during the process I was also an academic member of staff and a tutor actively engaged in the delivery of their programme of study.   Therefore while I did not encounter any significant problems when undertaking the study, my own identity(ies) initially raised an issue for the participants, who were slightly concerned about the purpose of the research, and how the findings of this study were to be utilised.

In the Phase 1 interview, participants seemed to find it difficult to distinguish between me as a researcher and me as a member of academic staff.   Issues of my identity were clearly a concern; the students knew I was the teacher and that they were the students, and that such a relationship created a space between us, invoking what might be described as the 'matter of distance central to teaching' (Allitt, 2005: p20).   As their usual engagement with me was on this basis, it was difficult for them to view me in a different way, as an 'interested outsider'. So they were either reticent in

responding to questions - they were unsure why I was asking and what I was going to do with the answer - or they responded with what could be termed a politic response.

However, my guarantees of confidentiality and my repeated assurances that my questions were for research purposes, not for dissemination to the programme team or others within the School and University, allowed things to move on.   In fact, my engagement with them as a tutor and our mutual participation in learning and teaching activities seems to have played a large part in this process of reassurance. The rapport and relationship I had built up with the participants during teaching sessions appeared to be a significant factor in their willingness to participate. They commented that as I had always been "fair" and "helpful" with them, they were happy to assist me, as they felt I could be "trusted" in respect of this particular activity. One might consider this to be them 'telling me what I wanted to hear' but the responses obtained, in my view, show 'honest participation'.

The issue here is, of course, one of identity. Participants are used to engaging with me in a particular way. They have come to learn from somebody, me as the teacher. As such I am assumed to have all the relevant knowledge of the subject involved (Allitt, 2005) and our engagement is set within the confines of the timetable and the structure of the programme. We are therefore engaged in a particular student / tutor relationship at certain times and in certain spaces / places. So for the students my identity is one-dimensional, or at least, this is the main dimension on display. Now they are being asked to consider me in a different way, to see another dimension of

my identity, that of researcher. But this is, of course, somewhat simplistic. Clearly, the students also get to 'see' other dimensions of my identity through my role as teacher – eg my sense of humour – and not just within the classroom setting, but as our paths cross in the School and elsewhere on campus. Nor are students one-dimensional; they also display their personalities in the classroom, and have interests beyond their studies which also define who they are.

So a relationship is created whereby the classroom acts as the setting for the interaction between these different identities, and as time progresses, more of the individual identities are revealed. In the first week of the semester, the students are a 'sea of faces' to me, and I am a new teacher to them. We don't know much about each other, other than they are taking the module and I am delivering it. As the semester progresses, however, more of the individual identities are revealed; as I draw on my professional and personal experiences to illustrate the themes and topics, and as they engage with activities and tasks, we get to know each other as individuals. Development of such a relationship with students, individually and collectively, is in my view, essentially a 'mutual bond of trust'.

I trust the students to engage with their studies, with the programme, and with me, in respect of the learning and teaching activities involved. Students should be able to trust me to take them and their endeavours seriously and to provide assistance and support as and when required.   My engagement with these particular students in learning and teaching activities at Levels 1 and 3, and acting as their Level 1 academic advisor to provide pastoral care, assistance and guidance, helped to forge

such a bond and elicit their participation for my research. And, of course,

participation in this study also allowed them to take on a new identity, that of

'research respondents'.

At the centre of this trust relationship are also confidentiality and anonymity. How

can the participants be sure that their responses are used only to provide data for the

study and will not be used for any other purpose? How can they be sure that they

cannot be identified within the study, and that any remarks or comments made within

the context of the study cannot be directly attributed to them? While these are issues

of concern to all participants in research, they are perhaps of greater importance to

student participants.   The onus is therefore on me to ensure that my role as researcher

does not 'overspill' into my role as tutor and member of staff, and information

provided to me as a researcher is not then used in the context of me as a member of

teaching staff.   This has, in fact, proved to be one of the most difficult aspects of the

research for me. While I have elicited useful data in respect of the study itself, it could

also be used in other ways, and by others.   I have therefore had to be extremely

careful in ensuring dissemination only occurs through this study. However, the

conclusions reached (and detailed in Chapter 5) are, of course, for dissemination to

the wider community, including informing the School's approach to learning and

teaching, and the programme team's approach to quantity surveying education in

particular.

The next chapter provides full analysis and discussion of the data collected. As the data was collected in three phases, I have elected to approach my data analysis in the same way, exploring the concepts of 'belonging' and 'becoming' within the overall central theme of identity in each phase. Each of these concepts is firstly explored through the analysis of participants' responses, then the outcomes of each phase are drawn together to provide an overall summary, considering my findings in respect of, and in relation to, the key themes drawn from the literature review in Chapter 2 and my research questions, so moving the narrative towards its conclusion.

CHAPTER 4   IDENTITY: BECOMING AND BELONGING

"the student as human being seems not to be an important concept in far too many institutions of higher education, but rather seems more appreciated as a statistic; a degree aspirant, a major, a minor, a female, a datum to report for state financial support, possessor of a good IQ, a genius, and a potential member of a discipline, among other things"

(Kowalski, 1997: p84)

The Physical Environment

Echoing both Eisner (2004) and Nespor (1994) and the importance of the field focus in educational research, my data analysis commences with a brief exploration and explanation of the physical location that the students find themselves in. The University is located on one city centre campus, and might be termed a 'commuter university' as the majority of its students – and staff - travel to and from the campus to attend classes. While a limited number of students live in adjacent university accommodation, the majority are defined as 'home' students, living within a commutable radius from the campus. They are therefore engaged in external networks and different cultures as well as those created within the institution and on their programme of study, each of which is competing for attention. Temporary friendships and alliances are formed within the networks created by the discipline (via the programme teaching and learning and associated activities) but part-time working or family responsibilities may create difficulties in joining other networks, or competition between networks (Callon, 1987).

The University has been developing its campus and facilities over the last decade to provide a single campus, most recently completing a new learning centre (January 2006). The library, IT facilities and student support services (careers, counselling, finance) have all been centralised and located in this space. Elsewhere on campus are the sports centre, the bookshop, the union, bank facilities and the refectory. The campus might be described as self-contained in that it provides students – and staff – with fully centralised facilities.

The School is located in the main building of the university. Unlike other Schools whose physical locality is dispersed across floors and between buildings, its 'operating footprint' is relatively compact, albeit split over two floors. Staff and students congregate within a clearly defined and designated space. The accommodation is a mix of academic staff offices, teaching rooms, and administrative and technical support, arranged within an 'L'-shaped corridor. The School's general administration office and the offices of the Professoriate are located at the far end of the main corridor, in the tail of the 'L'. This is generally not a well-traversed space; students – and staff - tend only to use this area if they require assistance from the office staff or a particular member of the academic staff located there. This section of the corridor is therefore generally the quietest part of the School. By contrast, the main part of the 'L' corridor is always busy and noisy. This main part of the corridor contains the majority of academic staff rooms, the Resources Room (for use by staff and students) and the IT labs. The School's technical support staff are also located

here, their room forming one half of the Resources Room to allow them to monitor use of materials and borrowing (past dissertations, journals). This part of the corridor acts as the main thoroughfare; all programme and general noticeboards are located here, as is the coursework hand-in window, so it has become a main focus point, and during term time there is constant traffic through this space. The Resources Room is regularly used by students who are working on group coursework activities and by staff for informal meetings and discussions. The School has also recently developed a room for use by part-time teaching staff, which has IT provision and kitchen facilities, although this space has also been appropriated by those full-time members of academic staff with rooms adjacent for their coffee breaks. Due to the non-availability of space on one floor, some academic staff offices are located two floors above, but this area tends to be less congested and it is unusual to meet anyone 'loitering' here during the course of the day. In fact, a number of students – and some colleagues – have commented on having to 'trek' up two flights of stairs, so staff here are generally less disturbed than those on the lower floor. The School also has its own suite of teaching rooms, and while student numbers and module demand requires utilisation of rooms elsewhere in the university, the preference of staff and students is for rooms 'close to home'.

Nespor (1994) highlights the particular effects of the physical environment on identity. The physics students in his study are bounded by and to their environment; by the actual physical environment, in that all staff are housed in the same (separate) building on campus with all classes held in this building; and by the discipline culture

where outwith classes students congregate in its spaces to work together on their assignments. This environment adds to the physical mobilising of these students within the 'insular' and 'insulated' network of the physics discipline. By contrast, the management students in his study have no similarly defined 'home', but rather move between locations depending on their subjects and classes. For them it is more the representations of professional practice in their environment – spaces which mirror offices, boardrooms, etc - that influence their mobilisation. Both approaches are evidenced in the School. While the School expresses its identity and physicality explicitly - via signage and noticeboards, room allocations and designations - so creating its boundaries, it is not entirely the 'closed community' experienced by Nespor's physics students. This is evident in the way that industry and practice also use the space – for CPD events, conferences, interviews – and engage with staff and students through same, and the ways in which the School's identity is also represented implicitly: in the ways staff engage with each other, the involvement of guest and part-time lecturers from industry and practice, and the shirt-and-tie dress code for academic staff (unwritten but adhered to by the majority, reflecting practice). This more closely resembles the environment of the management students in Nespor's study; the discipline is 'brought into' the School by these connections between those in practice engaging with students and staff. This sets the context and framework for the exploration of the Quantity Surveying students' experiences, firstly at Level 1 and then at Level 3, in terms of 'belonging' and 'becoming'.

Phase 1: Being a Level 1 Quantity Surveying Student

With only a few weeks of the session remaining, this was the most appropriate point to explore with Level 1 participants their experiences of being a student in Higher Education and on the Quantity Surveying programme. The participants in the initial focus group interview had defined 'belonging' and 'becoming' as:

- Being a student at the university ('belonging');

- Studying to be a Quantity Surveyor ('becoming');

- Being a Professional / getting a good job ('belonging' and 'becoming').

These three aspects formed the main framework for the questionnaire issued to the cohort and so are used to provide a similar framework for data analysis. Analysis of the data in tabular form is provided in Appendix A.

Of the total population, only one had attended university before, so for the remaining twenty-one this was their first experience of higher education. (The one participant who indicated that this was not their first time at university did not however, provide any information as to which institution and course they previously attended). Therefore, I firstly wanted to establish what expectations participants had of Higher Education before joining the programme. Analysis of the responses, ranked in frequency of response, revealed a variety of factors:

- **Academic:**
  - Attending classes   22
  - Sitting exams/undertaking assessments   22
  - Working with others on the same programme   20
  - Studying independently   19
  - Participating in professional/discipline-related activities   9

- **Social:**
  - o Meeting other students on different programmes   19
  - o Participating in social activities   14
  - o Other: Pubs   2

While statistically insignificant, the foregoing nevertheless provides an insight into the expectations of these particular participants and sets the context for exploring 'belonging'.   The responses show a mix of what might be considered the 'generic' aspects of being a student, both academic and social-related, and the 'discipline-specific', ie being a student on the programme. Although the questionnaire respondents did not provide reasons for their responses, I had the opportunity of discussing this in more detail with the feedback interview participants.

Linked with the decision to go to university is choice of programme. The Quantity Surveying degree had been the first choice for sixteen respondents and second choice for the remainder (although they did not specify what their first choice had been). Reasons for choice were mainly linked to qualification and employment; twenty respondents cited future employment opportunities as their main reason, while for seventeen it was also the opportunity to gain a professional qualification. The perception of education being closely aligned to and designed to provide employment (see Chapter 2) would appear to be borne out by such a majority response, although when specifically asked whether they knew about Quantity Surveying before they made their selection, only two-thirds responded positively. However, it would not necessarily be expected that Level 1 (first year) students would have a clear idea of exactly what the discipline entailed, 'knowing' at this point is more the

sense of being aware of the discipline as a career option, rather than 'knowing' in the sense of specifically knowing what the discipline actually comprises. Rather, they had joined the quantity surveying programme with the prospect of becoming full participants in the community of practice, what Wenger defines as the 'inbound trajectory' (Wenger, 1998).   This was also the case for the interview participants. The two female participants, J1 and I1, had experienced some initial pressure from family about their choice:

- *"my dad thought it wasn't a job for girls"* (I1);

- *"they couldn't understand why I wanted to do surveying and go on building sites"* (J1).

But respondents J2 and J4 had had the benefit of others' experiences to draw on when making their decisions. For respondent J2 a family connection had provided advice and guidance, as his uncle – himself a Quantity Surveyor - had suggested he should consider the degree programme as it offered *"a professional career"* . Respondent J4 had been given an insight into the discipline by a friend who was already studying on the same programme (and was a Level 2 student at that time). He had been working in an office but felt that quantity surveying offered better career options and positive feedback from his friend about his experiences had influenced his decision to join the programme.

However, articulating what they understood about the nature of the job and the skills required - in short, their perceptions of what being a Quantity Surveyor entailed –also proved problematic for the interview participants. *"Working on construction projects"* was the general consensus, amplified by respondent J2 who added that *"the Quantity Surveyor dealt with the money"*. Although agreeing with this, respondent J1 suggested that there *"was more to it, like* [sic] *legal and other things"*. Again my interpretation is that, just as the group as a whole, so the interview participants 'knew' in the sense of being aware of the discipline as a career option, rather than 'knew' in the sense of specifically knowing what the discipline actually entailed. Participants were basing their decision on a 'hunch' rather than on the basis of specific knowledge, again making their decision to join the Quantity Surveying community of practice with the prospect of becoming full participants through the process of 'belonging' and 'becoming' within the community (Wenger, 1998).

The interview respondents were next asked to articulate in specific terms what being a student meant to them. Their responses, in contrast with the first year student study by Kantanis (2000), highlighted predominantly academic aspects:

- Going to lectures / classes
- Sitting exams and being assessed
- Meeting other people (on their own programme and others)
- Field trips / going to sites

Social aspects were not highlighted as important aspects of their student experience. Prior to joining the university and the programme, respondent J1 hadn't known *"what to expect"*, particularly as she was the first in her family to go to university,

something which was also true for respondent I1. By contrast, respondents J2 and J4 had family members who either had been or were attending university, so felt that they had had *"some idea of what it might be like"* even though different institutions were involved and the programmes of study undertaken were not construction / property – related. As the discussion continued, it became apparent that participants' expectations had two dimensions: firstly being a university student and being part of the institutional community, and secondly being a student in the discipline itself. The former was constituted around what the participants termed the 'general bits' of student life; using the library, meeting up in the student union, eating in the refectory, what respondent J1 termed *"the independence of being a student"*.   Participants commented on the contrast with school, in particular the university's *"more relaxed attitude"* (J2) and having *"more freedom to do what you want"* (J4).   But what did this mean in terms of their engagement and participation?   For these participants, social transition (Kantanis, 2000) was not highlighted as a priority. While all participants agreed that they thought of the university as an entity, as one 'big' community and felt that they were members of same by being students, it was 'belonging' in an abstract way.   In terms of engagement and participation, all respondents considered that it was the quantity surveying programme that provided them with a focus, that they 'belonged' to the programme. None of the interview participants commented on the opportunities- or the need – for socialisation in the wider community (Silver and Silver, 1997), nor the need to 'belong' to same (Nathan, 2005). For these participants, their 'belonging' was centred around the discipline and the activities involved in the programme, which led to 'becoming'; the 'studying to be a Quantity Surveyor'.

The questionnaire was structured to allow respondents to consider this in the context of the modules studied in Level 1 (see also Chapter 1). All respondents selected three of the six modules undertaken as being "Very Relevant" in having helped them gain an understanding of the discipline and the role of the Quantity Surveyor: Construction Technology 1, Measurement and Practice 1 and Construction Resource Estimating. The core skills of the Quantity Surveyor do indeed involve being able to determine how a building is constructed, being able to 'deconstruct' same to measure the materials required and their quantities, and being able to price these materials – in short, technology, measurement and cost. But how had the respondents identified these modules – and why? Content, context and focus, and delivery appeared to be important factors, together with the learning and teaching strategies adopted, and the respondents' dispositions towards the learning opportunities (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 1999). Respondent QR3 commented that these had been *"the most practical subjects"* of the level. All of these modules are delivered by staff within the Quantity Surveying discipline and this, together with a 'hands-on' approach to learning and teaching, including working in groups with their cohort peers, had assisted the respondents in making the necessary connections between the subject themes and understanding the discipline - as respondent QR22 commented: *"these are all relevant, I can see how they relate to a QS's job"*. The opportunities provided for working with others in the cohort was identified by some respondents as a particular 'plus':

- Respondent QR14: *"in construction you need to work as a team so group projects sort of simulate that and also keep my interest in what I am doing";*

- Respondent QR19: *" group projects let you meet people and manage a task as a group so you can get help from others and they can get help from you".*

The three remaining Level 1 modules were highlighted as 'not relevant' by all respondents in 'becoming'. The main reasons provided in respect of the Property Economics and Property Legislation modules related firstly to the 'immediacy' of the relevance; participants' dispositions was one of future anticipation: *"will be of some help when being a QS".* A second aspect was the lack of context and focus in respect of the discipline; the onus was on the students to provide the necessary contextualisation and location for the knowledge (I Taylor, 1997). The Professional Orientation and Practice module was highlighted as being particularly irrelevant in this regard, being the *"least helpful in my understanding of QS"* (respondent QR14) and *"not relevant in gaining knowledge of CI* [construction industry] *or QS practice"* (respondent QR13). Respondent QR11 also felt that the module had little to do with either the construction industry in general or the quantity surveying discipline in particular, and therefore it *"hasn't contributed to my learning as a QS".* Content and focus was also an issue for respondent QR6 as the *"relevance of some of the subjects studied"* had proved problematic. As this module was developed and included in all programmes to provide 'educational and professional orientation' – ie identity - the apparent mis-match between academic intent and student experience is significant, and is discussed in greater detail within the analysis summary, including participants' dispositions towards the learning experience in these modules – their 'studentship' (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 1999).

Given the foregoing, only half of the respondents felt that their expectations had been 'completely' realised, while the other half that their expectations had been 'partially' realised. This might be partly explained by the initial uncertainty as to what the discipline actually entails. If you do not actually know what is involved and what forms the core skills and knowledge base, then it is obviously difficult to determine whether the learning and teaching activities undertaken are appropriate, which in turn makes it difficult to evaluate their importance and impact. None of the respondents whose expectations had been completely realised provided any further commentary, but comments were provided by some of those in the 'partially' realised category. These provided focused primarily on issues of course content, context and focus in respect of same: respondent QR9 felt the course was *"not what* [I] *expected* [it] *to be like"* while for respondent QR4 the lack of field trips and site visits *"made it difficult to see construction life"* . For these respondents in particular, 'belonging' had been particularly difficult, affecting their 'studentship' (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 1999), that is the ways in which they had acted upon the learning experience: *"boring – constantly in lectures or tutorials"* (respondent QR4).

Discussing these aspects with interview participants it became clear that communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) had been created along very distinct and discreet lines. The six modules they had taken at Level 1 fell into two categories: those which had provided an insight into the quantity surveying discipline, and those which did not. As with the questionnaire respondents, the same three modules were perceived by all participants as being particularly relevant to 'becoming': Construction Technology 1;

Measurement and Practice 1; Construction Resource Estimating. In making the connections between these modules and to the discipline the following aspects had proved important to the participants' positive disposition:

- Teaching staff were all from the discipline;

- The practical nature of the subjects involved;

- The 'hands on' approach to learning and teaching;

- The opportunity to work in groups with other students from the cohort.

The participants had been receptive to module content, they could see the relevance to the discipline – and significantly, had started to make connections between the different communities. The delivery of the modules *"by QS's"* (respondents J1 and J4) and their use of examples from their own careers within the teaching had been particularly well received, and given them a *"better idea of what being a QS is* [sic]*"* (respondent J2)*,* helping them to start to become connected to the discipline (Nespor, 1994). Further, the activities undertaken within Measurement and Practice had allowed them to consolidate aspects of the other two modules, and were thus considered to be very relevant in terms of 'studying to be a Quantity Surveyor'.   Such recognition of relevance is, of course, influenced by participants' disposition: if they are already disposed towards being a Quantity Surveyor, then this is likely to result in conformity of studentship (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 1999) and so help them in establishing relevance. This is evident in the changes in disposition demonstrated by the interview participants in respect of the other three modules. All had also found these to be *"way less useful"* (J4) in developing discipline knowledge and

understanding.   Each of these was seen as a discreet community of practice (Wenger, 1998), and participants' 'belonging' did not necessarily assist their 'becoming'. The modules in Property Legislation and Property Economics - both delivered by staff either from other Schools in the University or from a different discipline background - were, in the participants' view, less relevant at this stage. Module content and context had not provided them with a discipline focus at this time, although they felt these would be of benefit *"later on, in practice"* (J3). The Professional Orientation and Practice module was again singled out by all of the interview participants as the module which had contributed least to their knowledge and understanding of the discipline. Having to make the connections between these apparent disparate communities had proved more difficult for participants; their dispositions were therefore less positive, (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 1999) illustrating the impact of others on students' learning careers. Making connections to the discipline (Nespor, 1994) had not been possible; they had found it *"difficult to see how it helps to be a QS"* (J2 and J1).   In their view, this module had in fact been a dislocation from, rather than an orientation into, professional practice.

The final aspect of 'becoming' and 'belonging' was defined as being a professional and getting a good job. The questionnaire respondents defined 'being a professional' as:

- Having skills and knowledge in the area   100%
- Having a professional qualification   95%
- Having academic qualifications   81%
- Belonging to a professional organisation   57%

Again this data is provided to highlight the nature and level of participant responses, not statistical significance, and to illustrate a certain ambivalence of respondents in respect of professional identity. Exploring this further with the interview group, for respondent I1 a professional was someone in whom you could have confidence in their activities, a view supported by respondent J4 – *"knowing you were getting a quality job"*. However, respondent J2 felt that it was not necessarily having a qualification, nor about joining a professional organisation, it was *"more about your own ability and attitude"*, it was as much about ways of working than status alone. But all participants agreed having a professional identity was important, as it provided a focus and context for their studies. They also considered it important to be able to understand one's own discipline – being able to enter the community of practice (Wenger, 1998) - and how it related to other professionals within the construction and property industry, as it helped them *"to get an idea of what a quantity surveyor was and did"* (respondents J1 and J4). All participants felt that the development of this professional identity began at Level 1, via their cohort-specific classes. For respondent J4, *"being able to concentrate on your own discipline first, then see the relationship to other professionals"* was an important part of developing one's own professional identity, echoing Stew (in Bourner et al, 2000) and the need to learn one's own language before that of others.

The focus for participants at Level 1 is therefore two-fold: coping with being at university, 'getting to grips' with what is expected of them; and developing an understanding of the subjects involved in the specific discipline. The tension between the more generic approach promoted by Kantanis (2000) and the need for a discipline-

focused approach (Stew, in Bourner et al, 2000) becomes apparent in respect of the latter. Participants demonstrated differing dispositions in relation to the modules undertaken at Level 1: where there was a discipline focus and input from teaching staff from a quantity surveying background their studentship is positive and participants found the connections to the discipline easier to make. However, the reverse was true where the modules were delivered by those from different backgrounds, and where the link to, and context for, quantity surveying practice, was less clear. The onus on participants to provide the contextualisation and location for the knowledge (I Taylor, 1997), results in what might be termed a 'deferment of disposition'. It should, of course, be noted that where participants are disposed towards becoming a Quantity Surveyor, their studentship (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 1999) is more likely to also be positive, they are more likely to respond positively to the requirements of the programme, and the learning opportunities provided, and 'belonging' and 'becoming' more readily facilitated.

The extent to which the interview participants' general expectations had been met had been significantly influenced by these learning experiences. There were echoes of the findings by Kantanis (2000) here, namely the discrepancy between perception and reality, particularly in respect of the unexpectedness of the workload, as illustrated by respondents J2 and J4: *"thought it would be different, more easy going"* (J2) with *"not as heavy a workload"* (J4). For respondent I1 it was the extent of group working involved - *"a disproportionate amount and having to carry other group members"* – that had proved problematic. But there was no sense of disappointment or difficulties

in belonging (Kantanis, 2000); the group was unanimous in that they considered their expectations had been 'completely' met. While for respondents J1 and J4 it had been a *"variable experience"*, they now had *"an idea of what a quantity surveyor was and did"*.   Respondents J1, J2 and I1 also felt that they had started to get a *"sense of what being a QS is all about"* although respondent J2 added a qualification: *"the part-time students have a better sense of who they are"*.   Respondent J4 considered himself to be *"basically a student"* but he was starting to *"get a sense of what being a QS is"*.

Overall, then, it seems that while quantity surveying is regarded as a career option, students appear to join the programme without a real sense of what constitutes the discipline, and what functions the quantity surveyor undertakes in industry and practice. But this community is significant enough to contribute to one's identity and one joins with the prospect of becoming a full participant in the community (Wenger, 1998) through 'belonging' and 'becoming'.   And do you actually need to be sure of what being a quantity surveyor actually means before you can develop a discipline identity?   I would suggest that, on a four year degree programme, for most Level 1 students the answer would be 'no'. They would not be expected to have a full understanding of the discipline, but would be expected to develop this as they progressed with their studies. The responses from the participants at this point, although limited, are perhaps as might be expected at this point in their studies. They have a sense of the quantity surveying role, which appears to be sufficient to allow them to begin developing a discipline identity, and while they can articulate to some

extent what it means to them to be a quantity surveyor and a member of a profession, they do not see themselves as being part of this community as yet. It is the development of learner identity, the 'getting to grips' with being a student in Higher Education that is prevalent at this stage.

Phase 2: Reflective Journals

As participants move to the professional placement period on completion of their Level 2 studies, it is the actor-network theory of Nespor (1994) which takes precedence. Connections are made to the discipline through the world of work, and participants construct and interact with new networks in respect of same (Callon, 1987). They make a clear shift in identity, moving from being a student to being a worker and an employee, of which cultural identity (Hall and du Gay, 1997) is a key aspect. Such a shift is demonstrated by their temporary disengagement from the networks of University, School and programme, as evidenced by their reflective journal entries, their questionnaire and interview responses (see also Phase 3 analysis). The full cohort was asked if they would assist in this study by keeping a reflective journal during their placement period. Although ten originally volunteered for this activity, ultimately only five completed and submitted reflective journals at the end of the placement period. The five participants who completed and submitted a reflective journal comprised one female and four males, as detailed in Chapter 3. A

small sample, it nevertheless yielded sufficient data for an exploration of identity

within professional placement in respect of this particular population.

All five maintained their journals throughout the full period of professional placement

but most reported and reflected on their cumulative activities at the end of each week

or month, rather than daily as originally intended. Their rationale was that they found

it easier to undertake the activity, and it allowed them to reflect *"more holistically"*

(respondent J2) on their experiences. The main questions which formed the basis for

this phase of the analysis were as follows:

- How do students engage with the placement period ('belonging' and 'becoming')?

- How does each student make sense of their experiences ('belonging' and 'becoming')?

- What types of identity(ies) are being formed ('becoming')?

- What dispositions are being adopted ('belonging' and 'becoming')?

The transfer from academic programme studies to workplace can be a difficult

transition, as the student enters unfamiliar territory as an unqualified entrant

(Konkola, 2001). As might be expected, all respondents expressed a degree of

nervousness and anxiety in the early weeks of the reflective journal; starting a new job

and meeting new people is generally an anxious time for anyone. However, for three

of the respondents this orientation took some time: only in Week 7 is respondent J1

"feeling more settled in and getting to know people a bit better".

For respondents J2 and J5 the regular transfer from project to project, while providing opportunities to meet new people and experiences is, nevertheless, preventing them from *"fully settling in"*. For these respondents 'belonging' is more difficult, given the need to frequently forge new relationships with colleagues. Connections to the network (Nespor, 1994) and mobilisation in the discipline (Callon, 1987) have been hampered. This could, of course, be interpreted as their employers attempting to provide the respondent with exposure to and experience of as wide a range of activities as possible. However, perhaps this was not fully explained, hence the resultant sense of 'dislocation' and the need for frequent re-orientation. For respondent J4 it is the emotional dimension of the workplace (Eraut, 1994) that proves problematic. For them, 'belonging' is affected through engagement with colleagues; there is a *"lack of interest people are showing in me"* to the extent that he is considering another placement opportunity. Echoing Van der Sanolen and Tuerlings (2003) too, the characteristics of the workplace and his perception of the environment for learning is that the company has little organisation and structure. This in turn has adversely affected his disposition, until the intervention of a colleague: *"starting to feel a lot more settled and a bit happier"*. But 'belonging' for this respondent is not simply his entry to the community – *"starting to feel more like a member of the team"* – it is also the terms of such acceptance – *"I feel more appreciated and respected"*.

 It subsequently transpires that this is the first year the organisation has employed placement students, so clearly there has been a learning curve for the employer too, particularly in assisting their employee's entry into the organisation and community.

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Perhaps this is why 'belonging' has taken longer and is partly why things were *"so difficult"* at first. This same sense of not belonging is also a constant theme in the reflective journal of respondent J3, to an extent not reflected by the other respondents. This respondent regularly comments on his anxiety and doubt: *"am I capable of doing the job well enough for others?";* which in turn has affected his disposition: *"they won't be expecting a lot from me, not this soon"*. This may be due to the lack of guidance and supervision provided by the employer – *"not a lot I can do about it, as I am only here for the experience and not qualified"*. Respondent J5 also finds it difficult to 'belong': *"feel intimidated and shy"*. For this respondent too, the frequent transfer to different projects – *"I'm seen as flexible and transferable"* - results in annoyance and a disjointed sense of belonging. By contrast, the appointment of a 'buddy' helped respondent J1; apparent from the journal is a sense of integration and engagement with activities and colleagues, the working environment, and recognition and appreciation of the support provided by her appointed 'buddy'.

As emphasised by Eraut (1994) the relationship to, and the attitudes of colleagues, in the workplace is an important aspect of and has an impact on, 'becoming'. Engagement with the discipline and 'belonging' to same is allied to the nature of the tasks allocated; that is, the development of a professional identity through 'learning by doing'. Thus learning in the workplace is not only significantly influenced by the characteristics of the workplace itself but also by the personal relationships within same (Van der Sanolen and Tuerlings, 2003). This also proved a problematic aspect for the journal respondents, to varying degrees.

Respondent J1's journal reflects a sense of integration and engagement with activities, demonstrated largely through the use of the terminology used. The Quantity Surveying profession, like many others, has developed its own language and terminology which are commonly used in practice. While it is acknowledged that these are unlikely to have been entirely unfamiliar to the respondents, as some inevitably creep into teaching, it is the confident way in which such terms are used by the respondent throughout the journal that clearly shows integration and acceptance of the quantity surveying role: *"cost plan"; "take-offs"; "bills".* No concerns are expressed about the nature and level of tasks allocated, nor the supervision provided, indeed when their placement tutor visits they *"seemed impressed with the variety of things I'd been given to do".*   For respondent J2 too, there are no concerns in respect of the tasks set; for him while the *"size of the learning task ahead is daunting"* he particularly likes talking to the *"older surveyors"* (whether this is in terms of age, age and experience, or experience alone, is not specified) and feels *"no worries now; feel I have truly settled in; I can relax more and be myself".*   As a novice this engagement with the 'old hands' in the community of practice (Wenger, 1998) is an important facet of 'belonging'. However, for respondent J3, under-employment is a recurring theme, and the lack of opportunities for 'becoming' prevent him from fully entering the community, leaving him as an 'outsider'. This is not uncommon in private practice, where workload can vary significantly from month to month, or week to week. Private practices are dependent on commissions from clients and so have no control over what will come into the practice – or when. This can lead to periods of under-employment which can just as quickly transform into periods of frantic activity

and overtime. Not only is this problematic for the practice itself, it also raises

concerns in respect of the placement employee, in finding them suitable tasks and

keeping them gainfully occupied when there is no 'overspill' from other colleagues.

Recognition that professional life may well involve 'doing nothing' for large chunks

of time, that work activity is not always consistent nor controllable, as appears the

case here, is important: *"sometimes it gets quiet and I haven't got much to do";*

finding a lot of the time I have nothing to do".   But the respondent is reluctant to

approach colleagues – *"felt awkward about asking if there was anything for me to*

do"; "feel awkward asking all the time" – suggesting this stems from the sense of not

belonging as previously identified.   Respondent J4 also highlights lack of opportunity

for 'becoming', partly through the lack of tasks allocated – *"persistently asking for*

things to do" – but also through non-belonging – *"feel I am constantly annoying them*

by asking". This sense of non-belonging is reinforced when the respondent and a

fellow placement employee find they are excluded from an in-house course; not only

were they not invited but were not aware of the event taking place. The intervention

of a colleague turns things around: *"starting to feel more settled; more like a member*

of the team".   For respondent J5 the nature of the tasks are an issue; these are routine

and administrative and while *"being the office junior I suppose this is to be expected"*

nevertheless he has conflicting feelings about 'becoming' – *"I've really tried hard*

and learned a lot" - and is happy to leave the placement and its professional

community to return to university. From the journal there is a constant tension

between participation and non-participation, 'belonging' or 'not belonging': *"stuck in*

a rut" but has *"only had an 8 month introduction to the job, so might give it a shot".*

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Eraut (1994) highlights this tension between knowledge and practice; the opportunities for practice may be restricted or limited, and not all knowledge gained may be used in such opportunities that are provided. And as previously highlighted, the characteristics of the workplace can lead to difficulties in 'belonging', resulting in an 'in / out' identity.

The tensions resulting from respondents' efforts to 'belong' and 'become' are also apparent in the way they address issues of identity. For respondent J2: there is a *"lot of learning and work to do before I can really call myself a Quantity Surveyor"*. But when meeting someone new, respondent J4 is *"more inclined to tell them I am a surveyor rather than a student"* and feels he is *"more than just a student"*. Reflecting on his placement experiences, there has been a change in identity; he now feels that he has learned exactly what the job entails and what his role would be. Until he went on placement, he *"did not really know what a QS did"*.

This analysis of the reflective journals identified emergent themes around concepts of 'belonging' and 'becoming' for further exploration in the feedback interviews:

- **Belonging:**

  - Engagement with colleagues in the workplace
  - Engagement with the discipline
  - Impact and influences on identity

- **Becoming**:

  - The role of colleagues
  - The nature of tasks allocated
  - The respondents' perception of self during placement

When devising the strategy for this element of data collection, I had intended to include two formal feedback interview sessions. The first session was scheduled to take place mid-way through the professional placement period; I wanted to provide an opportunity for the students to raise any concerns or queries in relation to their reflective journals and to give me an initial insight into how each participant felt their placement period was progressing. The second feedback interview session was scheduled to take place at the beginning of Semester B, once the students had returned to their studies. There were two main aims of this second session. Firstly, the reflective journals would have been submitted, and I would have undertaken a first reading of same, so I could follow up on any themes or issues identified from this first reading. Secondly it would allow the students to raise any issues they felt had not been addressed by the journal, and to add to their journal responses. Unfortunately the first feedback meeting did not take place due to a combination of circumstances. The placement locations of the student respondents and the logistics of them travelling to the University proved problematic; indeed, one of the students was not based on the UK mainland. My own responsibilities also impacted on the situation, as I was required to be overseas at the scheduled time. After telephone and e-mail discussions, we agreed that, as all were reasonably comfortable with the requirements of the reflective journals, we cancel the initial feedback session. The second feedback session did take place, in scheduled teaching time when I obtained permission from a colleague to use some of their class time. All students who submitted a reflective log participated in this interview session and analysis of their responses forms the next part of the narrative.

All five respondents regarded the inclusion of a professional placement period in the programme to be a very important part of their studies. It had provided them with an opportunity to be a novice professional (Eraut, 1994), to experience for themselves the actual activities of the quantity surveyor, not simply to hear about it *"second hand"* from lecturers (respondent J2), to *"see if it was for them"* (respondent J5). Undertaking professional placement at Level 2 was appropriate, as they had *"got the basics"* (respondent J4) which they could then *"practice and develop these further in the real world"* (respondent J1). Accepting that professional placement opportunity was a beneficial part of the programme, the ways in which it was so sparked a lively discussion:

- Able to practice skills (eg measurement) and to use the knowledge from University on real projects with supervision and guidance from real surveyors ('becoming');

- Getting to know people already working in the industry and build a network of contacts ('belonging');

- Getting a taste of what it is like to work as a quantity surveyor ('belonging' and 'becoming');

- Being more marketable on graduation – an extra for your CV* ('belonging' and 'becoming')

(* not all HEIs offering Quantity Surveying programmes include a period of professional placement)

But while the respondents felt that one of the main purposes of placement was to be *"exposed to new things"* (respondent J5), to gain experience and find out about the role of the quantity surveyor (respondents J1, J3), it was also about being *"challenged"* by the activities given to them - to be *"thrown in the deep end sometimes"* (respondent J4). Engagement with colleagues on an equal basis was

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equally important.   This theme of belonging, of engagement with colleagues and participation in the culture and activities of the organisation (Ellstrőm, Gustavsson and Svedin, 1996) recurred throughout the interview. Being involved as *"proper employees"* (respondent J4) and given tasks similar to their *"full-tim*e colleagues" (respondents J3, J5), to be treated as a bone fide member of the organisation, was extremely important for all five respondents. For them, it demonstrated that they had a purpose and a value to the organisation, that they were *"surveyors, not students"* (respondent J4). Probing a little deeper, it became clear that the respondents regarded the placement period as 'time out' from University, viewing it as an opportunity for their own professional and personal development through a shared framework of cultural identity (Hall and du Gay, 1997):

"finding out about how you feel about being a quantity surveyor" (respondent J5);

"getting to know a range of different people and having to find ways of working with them" (respondent J4);

"not knowing what others [colleagues] are like and what they think of you; being worried about not being able to do the job" (respondent J2);

"being scared at the beginning but getting more confidence" (respondent J3).

This might partly explain the dislocation from the School and University during the placement period. In attempting to construct an identity for themselves as individuals, in trying to 'belong' and 'become', amidst anxieties about being perceived as 'real'

employees, they may not welcome the intrusion of those who are associated with and know them as students. This move may also confuse identity: do they belong to the University and the School, and / or the workplace, and / or the profession?

This anxiety of belonging was regularly recorded in the reflective journals, and the interview revealed that this was largely due to issues of confidence and support from colleagues, and the relationships within the workplace (Eraut, 1994). Engagement with the discipline was significantly affected by their (non) engagement with colleagues; 'belonging' and 'becoming' were influences on, and influenced by, each other and the ease or difficulties involved in making the transition from their university studies to the workplace itself. Respondents J4 and J5 felt that placement was *"very different from Uni* [sic]*"*, they were expected to undertake new tasks and *"get to grips with them"* more quickly and sometimes without support and guidance from colleagues - *"lecturers at Uni have more patience"*. Respondent J3 commented that he had suffered from lack of confidence and sometimes had been afraid to ask for help in case this reflected badly on him; support from colleagues had not always been forthcoming. Respondent J1 added things were made easier by having been allocated a 'buddy'– she felt that she could ask *"all sorts of silly questions"* without feeling stupid. This acceptance by colleagues was the most significant issue for all of the respondents in respect of 'becoming'; it was important that they demonstrated they could cope with the tasks given to them without the need for continual support – *"using my own initiative more"* (respondents J2, J4).

This raised the issue of identity explicitly and the respondents' perception(s) of themselves. Firstly, how they had regarded themselves before going to placement: students or surveyors? All five responded emphatically that, on joining the programme, they considered themselves students. Respondent J4 commented that *"by going to Uni you automatically see yourself as a student"*, but respondent J3 felt that although he had considered himself a student at the beginning of his studies as the professional placement period approached, he began to think of himself differently, he was *"actually going to be a surveyor"*. Respondent J5 remained somewhat unsure – *"a student, I suppose"* – explaining he was still unsure that quantity surveying was a viable career option for him, and while he intended to complete the degree programme, didn't *"really feel a surveyor either"*. This sparked an animated discussion between respondents as to how they saw themselves now. Respondents J2 and J4 both considered themselves as surveyors, while acknowledging that they *"still have so much to learn"*. Respondent J3, however, pointed out that it was exactly that reason he still considered himself still a student, a rationale with which respondent J1 concurred. Respondent J5 adopted the 'middle ground'; when he was working he considered himself *"a surveyor like his colleagues"* but when he was at University he was *"totally a student"*. Asked to elaborate, he commented that at work *"you had to be professional"* because you *"had a boss to please"* but when *"at Uni, it's different, you're in charge"*. For this particular respondent, the main differences centred on time, dress, and attitude in general. During placement there was more of a regime to be followed: *" you have to go in every day, be on time, wear a suit, and you have to work"* whereas when at University, *"you can please yourself, don't have to go in to*

every class – and you can wear what you like!" The respondent was at pains to explain that he was not necessarily critical of these working practices, simply that he *"felt different"* when he was at work and when at University. The rest of the respondents agreed with this assessment, and after consideration, felt that it was largely related to concerns about how their employers – and their colleagues - viewed them. They wanted to be considered an employee on the same basis as the rest of their colleagues, which meant adopting the same attitudes, thus effecting mobilisation into the discipline (Nespor, 1994):

- Time management: *"being on time"* (respondent J2);

- Dress codes: *"looking smart"* (respondent J1);

- Working practices: *"being busy"* (respondent J3); *"speaking the same"* (respondent J4) (ie using the same terminology).

They didn't want to *"look stupid"* , as respondent J4 commented earlier, they wanted to be taken seriously and treated *"the same as everyone else"* (respondent J2). The respondents are happy to be considered as fellow surveyors by their colleagues, and indeed, are anxious **not** to be viewed as students, highlighting the importance of cultural identity (Hall and du Gay, 1997). They appear to have accepted and adopted the attitudes and behaviours of their colleagues in the workplace – dress code, language – as a necessary part of being a quantity surveyor and a professional - in fact they actually define 'professionalism' in those terms. However, what is not clear is whether this adoption is merely a 'front', given that transition was not without difficulty and reflected the tensions between knowledge and practice, particularly as

placement opportunities do not generally require the use of all academic knowledge gained to date but only specific aspects (Eraut, 1994).

The difficulties of transfer (Tuomi-Grőhn et al, 2003) are also affected by the opportunities provided for learning, which are unlikely to be equally distributed (Beach, 1999) and what takes place in the workplace itself (Eraut et al, 1998). Just as the ethos and practices differ between organisations, so employee / worker identity will vary from respondent to respondent, and the opportunities for 'belonging' and 'becoming'. The experiences of respondent J3 are very different from those of respondent J1. The latter was given dedicated support and guidance, and was perhaps more able to fit into the organisation with relative ease, in marked contrast to the experiences of the former. Reading the reflective journal completed by respondent J3 I was struck by its sense of isolation and 'apartness', and while the respondent is an employee of the organisation the same sense of belonging reflected by the other journals is absent. All the other journals also reflect a sense of integration again lacking in journal J3. This same sense of not belonging is also evident in the early journal entries of respondent J4, although the fact that the organisation had not, until this point, employed placement students might, I suggest, have had some bearing on this. Given the influence of the characteristics of the workplace itself and the personal relations within same (Van der Sanolen and Tuerlings, 2003), professional placement may therefore be viewed as a negative experience; it may not have taught participants all they need to know or its educational purposes were unclear (Argyris

and Schőn, 1974), so making a return to their studies and their development of identity as a Quantity Surveyor more difficult.

There is also 'self' to consider, namely self-interest and self-centeredness. Learning in the workplace is primarily influenced by the characteristics of the work experience place, the personal relations within same (Van der Sanolen and Tuerlings, 2003) and the opportunities for learning provided. It cannot therefore be assumed that all respondents accepted totally and unreservedly the practices and procedures of their employer, and although there is no explicit criticism in the journals, it is possible to infer that there was some disquiet from comments made therein. This is particularly evident in the journal entries of respondents J4 and J5, reflected in changes in their dispositions affecting 'belonging' and 'becoming'. Respondent J5 records his unhappiness at being moved from project to project and not being given responsibility for *"some project of my own"*. Respondent J4 notes that *"the company seems disorganised"* and that he is largely left to his own devices at the beginning of his placement. The journals submitted by respondents J4 and J5 are very candid about how they feel placement is going and how they are developing as quantity surveyors. Both have periods of doubt as to whether this is the right career for them, but respondent J4 also records that he considers himself a surveyor *"when asked"*.

So had any of the respondents retained contact with their placement employers on their return to study?

Of the five, three had done so (respondents J2, J4 and J5). Respondent J1 had not

been given the opportunity for part-time employment during term time, but had been

offered summer vacation work at the end of her Level 3 studies. As respondent J3

had taken up employment 'overseas' continued employment was clearly not possible,

but had it been available, he would not have availed himself of the opportunity. Nor

did he intend to return there for future employment.   It was perhaps surprising to

learn that respondent J5 had continued to work for his placement employers, given his

uncertainty as to whether he wanted to continue with quantity surveying, so why had

he elected to do so? His reasons were partly financial, as "I *earn more money*

working as a QS" , but he also enjoyed the work and felt that it was useful to gain the

experience and knowledge – *"even if I don't end up as a QS it won't be wasted"*.

Returning to the specific issue of identity, why did respondents J2 and J4 now feel

themselves to be surveyors?   Respondent J4 stated that there was a *"definite*

difference" in how he now regarded himself; feeling more capable and knowledgeable

he saw the rest of the degree as *"an apprenticeship"* until graduation and full-time

employment.   Respondent J5 too felt that as it was *"not too long till graduation"*

they needed to start thinking about employment, albeit with the caveat that for him it

may not necessarily be quantity surveying. This raised the issue

of professional identity and whether this was also viewed differently by the

respondents. Being 'a professional' now centres on the image and status of the job

itself and was as much about cultural identity (Hall and du Gay, 1997) as the

discipline itself.

The role of the quantity surveyor was, they felt, an important one whose contribution to a construction project was significant: *"just as important as architects and others"* (respondent J1). This translated, in their view, to taking things *"seriously"* (J2): dressing smartly; turning up to work on time; undertaking tasks diligently and as quickly as possible. For respondent J2 it was also having a degree and a professional qualification; this was what *"set the job apart from the site staff"*. Professional status was important to the respondents: it was an indication to clients of quality and standards (respondents J1 and J3). But respondents J2 and J4 considered that professional status was conferred on the quantity surveyor as *"you need a degree"* to undertake the role. For Respondent J5 it was the personal aspects, that having a degree not only *"looks good on your CV"* but also helps to generate *"a better income and salary"*. From this personal perspective, respondent J2 commented that having professional status was recognition of one's achievements.

Noting that there was no mention of the RICS in the foregoing discussion, how / where did the professional body fit into their definition of 'professionalism'? Responses were mixed. Three respondents, J1, J2 and J3, felt the RICS had input via its *"rules and regulations",* and by its *"approval"* of degree programmes. This was, for them, an important indicator for students and employers, essentially as a measure of quality and standards, which they saw as a key part of professionalism. Respondents J4 and J5 offered a slightly different viewpoint. Respondent J4 made the point that a number of the surveyors he was working alongside did not have a degree, nor had they an RICS qualification, and yet they were, in his view, *"just as*

professional" .   This was also the experience of respondent J5, who added that being

'professional' was, in his view, more of *"a personal thing"* . It was the behaviours

and attitudes of the individual that made someone a professional, ways of working

generating status as opposed to having status via qualifications; he had met colleagues

who had the qualifications but who were the *"worst colleagues to work with"*.

Professionalism was, therefore, as much a way of working as something marked by

status. After some debate, the respondents agreed that there was a need for *"rules"* so

that a standard could be developed and maintained, but that it was up to the individual

to *"act professionally"*. Respondent J1 also pointed out the disciplinary actions taken

by the RICS against members (reported monthly in the RICS' Business magazine) as

evidence of individuals who had the qualifications but did not adhere to the rules.

So, if respondents felt that RICS had a role to play in professionalism, had any of

them had registered for the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) during

their placement period. (Under current RICS membership regulations, the eight

months of professional placement experience can be counted towards the professional

experience requirement). Three of the respondents had done so: J1, J2 and J4.

Respondent J3 had intended to, but decided against it when he started placement as he

felt the *"tasks I was given wouldn't have counted for much"*.   Respondent J4 had

elected to do so as *"it looks good on the CV"* , whereas respondents J1 and J2 saw it

more as a requirement that *"employers will want to see"* , evidence that the student /

graduate is committed to this career path.

But all confirmed that they intended to complete the APC and gain chartered membership of the RICS on completion of their degree; respondent J5 with the proviso that he would "*do it if I was going to be a QS*".

For these participants recognition by the professional body was for the future; a delayed 'belonging' and 'becoming' in respect of same. The professional body, although recognised by participants as a part of the community of practice (Wenger, 1998), indeed had a significant influence on same, it was not, at this stage, part of their network. Connections were either not being made or were peripheral in nature; this was a dimension that did not have particular relevance or significance for the participants at this point in time.

Phase 3: Placement and Practicing

Having explored the main concepts of 'becoming' and 'belonging' with the reflective journal respondents, the third phase of data analysis was to establish whether their responses and views were representative of the cohort population, so the same set of questions was used to provide an initial framework for the questionnaire. Of the total cohort, two from the total twenty-two did not undertake professional placement and so are discounted from this element of data collection and subsequent analysis. Once again, analysis of the data in tabular form is provided in Appendix A.

The cohort population for Phase 3 comprised seventeen males and three females, and all twenty participants completed the questionnaire. The majority of respondents, 11 in total, were employed in private practice, while 8 undertook placement in a contracting organisation. One respondent was employed by a Local Authority. Of those who were employed by a contracting organisation, 5 respondents were site-based and involved with one particular project. The remaining 3 respondents were, however, based in the contracting organisation's regional or head office, generally providing assistance on a number of projects.

My analysis commences with a brief consideration of organisation size and operation. The size of the organisation is relevant as generally, in quantity surveying terms, the smaller the office and the fewer the staff, the more activities each Quantity Surveyor has to undertake and the more responsibility each Quantity Surveyor has to carry. The size of the organisation also has an effect on the integration and assimilation into the organisation and its practices and procedures, as well as arrangements and opportunities for supervision and mentoring. Therefore it is important to firstly establish the size of the organisation that the respondents were employed by, and how many colleagues they were working with / alongside. The majority of respondents, 14 in total, were employed in offices with 15 or more colleagues, split almost equally between private practice and contracting. Only 3 found themselves working with fewer than 5 colleagues; two of these respondents were employed by contracting organisations and were site-based while the other was employed in private practice.

The remaining respondents were employed in private practice: 1 had 5-10 colleagues and the remaining 2 had 10-15 colleagues. The working environment for most respondents therefore included a range of colleagues.

The approach to analysis of the questionnaire mirrored that adopted for the feedback interview, namely using the concepts of 'belonging' and 'becoming' as follows:

- **Belonging:**

  - Engagement with colleagues in the workplace
  - Engagement with the discipline
  - Impact and influences on identity

- **Becoming**:

  - The role of colleagues
  - The nature of tasks allocated
  - The respondents' perceptions of self during placement

Analysis of questionnaire responses revealed that, with one exception, transfer to the workplace and engagement with colleagues had not proved difficult. Almost all felt that they had made the transition from university to the workplace easily, been made to feel welcome on joining the company, and had been accepted by their colleagues as part of the workforce and the organisation itself:

"they treated me with respect and as though I had a similar level of intelligence" (QR15)

"(I) was included in all staff meetings, social events, general acceptance" (QR17)

For the one who responded negatively (QR12) their experiences had been similar to journal respondent J4: *"they didn't pay me much attention, or have any idea why I was there, or what my role was"*, making development of a cultural identity (Hall and du Gay, 1997) and entry as a novice professional (Eraut, 1994) more difficult. The importance of workplace relationships and the dispositions of colleagues were once again highlighted by Respondent QR10; there was a *"distinct clique within the older & senior colleagues"* but that this was ***"not** evident with younger colleagues"* (QR10, respondent's own emphasis). A further aspect of colleague engagement to be explored was the role of the mentor in 'belonging' and 'becoming'. As one of the aims of the placement period is to provide students with the opportunity to consolidate their knowledge and practice, and further develop their skills in the core areas of activity, each employer is required to appoint a mentor or supervisor who will be responsible for their student's professional development. Generally this mentor is the person who has day-to-day contact with and responsibility for, the student.

It should be noted that there are generally differences in structure and operational practices between private practice and contracting which determine the framework for colleague engagement and supervision. Private practices tend to have a more 'rigid' organisational structure, and although this will vary from practice to practice, staff are generally arranged into surveying teams each headed by a partner or associate of the firm. Each team has its own set of clients, and areas of operation and expertise. For example, one major local practice has several divisions: Property Management, Project Management, Cost Consultancy.

Contracting organisations tend to be more fluid and less 'prescriptive'. On-site teams are created to deliver the specific project in hand, and in the case of major projects, the same team will be based on site until completion. However, if the project is relatively small, the team may also be responsible for other projects, resulting in a 'portable' site management team. This is particularly true of the contractor's quantity surveyor; they may find themselves responsible for several projects at once, necessitating in regular travel between sites, with their base back at head office or, in the case of the large national and international companies, the nearest regional office.

The person allocated as mentor/supervisor (both terms were used by the respondents) was as expected. For respondents in private practice, this was a senior quantity surveyor, a graduate surveyor, a senior partner or associate in the firm, or an "experienced" surveyor. For those employed by contracting organisations, the site Project Surveyor, or Project Manager, undertook this role. Although Eraut (1994) highlights the importance of the 'helpful other' in the workplace, particularly for placement employees, analysis of the questionnaires revealed that only fifteen of the respondents had been allocated a mentor or supervisor. For one respondent employed by a contracting organisation a mentor was not required – it transpired this respondent is, in fact, sponsored by the organisation and has been working with them since leaving school (QR13) and so already has her support network in place. For two respondents a limited level of support was provided – *"the occasional training session"* for one (QR12), with the line manager offering the other *"very limited support"* (QR13). For the remaining five respondents no direct mentor or

supervisor was appointed. One respondent had in fact been allocated someone, but

they then left the company soon after the respondent's arrival. This loss was,

however, offset by the *"colleagues round about me"* who were *"very helpful with*

advice" (QR16). From the responses, the (non) appointment of a specific mentor did

not appear to have a significant influence on respondents' engagement with

colleagues:

- *[I] felt [I] was given responsibility and was treated as a surveyor not a student"* (QR9)

- *[I] was given work that was important and made to feel needed due to this"* (QR8)

However, when asked later in the questionnaire to reflect on their placement

experiences, a contradiction arose: almost one-third highlighted difficult or unhelpful

colleagues and the lack of support provided, although no substantive comments were

provided to establish why this might be. It may be that pressures of work led to some

colleagues being unavailable, somewhat dismissive, or remote. Deadlines have to be

met, and difficulties may have arisen where solutions need to be found quickly, and so

on. But without a 'helpful other' (Eraut, 1994) it is likely to be more difficult to make

sense of the workplace and what occurs within same (Argyris and Schőn, 1974).

The conflict between positive and negative experiences (Tuoni-Grőhn et al, 2003) can

also have a significant effect on disposition and learning. Van der Sandolen and

Tuerlings (2003) highlight 'person variables' in the workplace as a key factor

affecting learning in the workplace, and viewed from the perspective of the placement

employee it is easy to see how and why they may feel marginalised, and develop a sense of non-belonging, being an 'outsider'.

The next area of 'belonging' was respondents' engagement with the discipline via their opportunities for application of quantity surveying skills. Analysis of the responses obtained showed a clear link to 'becoming'; the nature of tasks had a significant influence. As one would expect, the main tasks set revolved around two central themes of quantity surveying:

- measurement and quantification – "taking-off "[2]
- pricing and costing – cost forecasting and cost planning

But respondents were also involved in what might be termed general administrative tasks: filing, document registration, maintaining and updating drawing registers. With only two years of study prior to placement, their contribution to their employer's organisation must necessarily be limited, and the areas identified above are those that a placement employee might reasonably be expected to cope with at this stage. However, the unequalness of opportunities for learning in the workplace (Beach, 1999) was apparent, as some respondents were also exposed to a wider range of activities.

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[2] This is QS-speak for the quantification of drawn information into items and quantities for pricing

Those employed by contracting organisations found themselves involved in the procurement process, obtaining quotations from sub-contractors, ordering materials, and preparing works packages for sub-contracted elements of work. For those employed in private practice and local authority, they attended meetings with clients, prepared valuations and calculated the cost of variations (with supervision) and assisted in contract procurement.   All respondents felt that during their placement they had been allocated a variety of tasks. The majority also felt that they were given – and expected to take – responsibility for their workload, and for the majority their level of responsibility increased as the placement progressed.   Only two respondents qualified their responses in respect of responsibility, one commenting that they were only involved in *"some tasks at the general stage"* (QR4) but conceded that their level of involvement and subsequent responsibility *"increased as the placement developed"* (QR4, QR12). Only one felt that they were *"not really"* given responsibility although they did not provide any indication as to why this was (QR15). I was also interested in whether the respondent's role and level of responsibility varied depending on how many colleagues they were working for / with, but analysis of the responses did not reveal anything of significance. The majority of respondents were either working for more than one person depending on the project/task involved (45%) or working with a wide range of colleagues (45%). Only two (10%) were working for one colleague most of the time, both in contracting, and neither of them responded negatively in respect of responsibility and range of activities.

In terms of 'belonging' and 'becoming', 80% of respondents felt that they had been given the opportunity of learning to be a Quantity Surveyor and putting academic theory into practice – *"able to apply the knowledge gained in 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ year to actual working practice"* (respondent QR5) - through their placement activities, although respondent QR15 was *"overwhelmed"* by placement itself, particularly in respect of their *"lack of knowledge"*. Respondent QR8 commented *"I felt I was learning much more than I expected; my theoretical and practical knowledge was enhanced immensely"*. For respondent QR1 it was *"the variety of jobs"* , while for both respondents QR5 and QR10 it was *"getting responsibility"*. Having the chance to attend meetings and visit sites had provided a further insight into the nature of the construction process and the roles of all parties involved for 15% of the respondents: *"gained experience, knowledge and have contacts for future employment"* (respondent QR7).

So transfer from academic to practice was not an entirely smooth transition for these respondents either. The assumption is that students acquire knowledge in their vocational programme and apply it unproblematically in the workplace (Konkola, 2001), but it is more a process of consequential transition, requiring changes in the identity of the individual involved and the contexts between which they are moving (Guile and Young, 2003), and while tacit knowledge is necessary to perform particular work-based tasks, it is by itself unlikely to provide an adequate base for more broad-based workplace capability (Eraut, 1994). Beach (1999) too questions the

assumption that transition is simply a matter of the student entering the workplace to learn; workplaces are very different and the opportunities for 'learning by doing' are not necessarily equally distributed within the workplace or during the placement period (Beach, 1999). Indeed, over half of the respondents found themselves also undertaking high levels of general administration and repetitive tasks which was, for them, the most significant 'downside' to placement. As in many other organisations, the more routine, less interesting activities generally fall to the most junior members of staff, so this is perhaps not entirely unexpected. Employers would argue that the placement employees lack of knowledge limits to a certain degree what tasks they can be given and what they can undertake, but it is also true that, rightly or wrongly, there is an implicit hierarchy that 'all the dull jobs' are likely to fall to the most junior member of staff, or in this case, the placement student. Further, when things are quiet, or everyone else is busy and routine tasks are mounting, again it is usually they who are called upon, as highlighted by respondents QR3, QR6 and QR7: *"limited workload"* and *"lack of work"*, and expressed by respondent QR19 as *"the dullness of the office environment"*. All these respondents were employed in contracting organisations, and this is somewhat at odds with comments from previous placement students. One of the most regular comments from placement students working for contractors is how busy they have been and how difficult it was to cope. Traditionally private practices experience the 'highs and lows', leading to the allocation of the routine tasks at quiet times to keep placement employees occupied. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the placement employee, such tasks give rise to tensions

between knowledge and practice (Eraut, 1994) as the opportunities for using the former in the latter reduce. This may also affect their 'belonging'; it becomes more peripheral and their 'becoming' is marginalised as the differential between 'real' employees and 'student' employees is emphasised. Viewed more positively, being involved in administrative tasks can provide a greater sense of what is happening in the office or organisation, and the various projects in hand. Taking the time to read correspondence and interpret drawings is not necessarily unrewarding in terms of 'becoming'.

Two further aspect of 'belonging' and 'becoming' were highlighted by respondents: working hours and financial reward. The physical aspect of travelling to and from work and the working hours involved was highlighted by 30% of respondents. The normal working week for a Quantity Surveyor in private practice is at least 40 hours; the working week is generally 9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday (with an hour for lunch) but there are times when overtime is required to meet a deadline, or to deal with a crisis which has arisen. For those working in contracting organisations, the working week can be longer; some contractors operate 8am-6pm Mondays to Fridays, with others also working on Saturday mornings. This is perhaps an aspect of professional life that has not occurred to students. The majority of students live within reasonable distance of the university, so travelling to and from the campus every day is not particularly problematic or time-consuming. However a number of respondents elected to take up placement employment further afield. As they were continuing to live at home and travelling to work each day, this generally

meant an earlier start and a later finish, thus extending their working day. Two

reflective journal respondents J3 and J4 regularly commented on this aspect:

"getting fed up with the travelling" (respondent J3)

"fed up of the early starts" (respondent J4)

As professional placement is a paid employment period, it is perhaps not surprising

that 40% of respondents also identified financial reward as significant. The majority

of full-time students have to work part-time to fund themselves through their studies,

so the opportunity to earn money is perhaps just as important as the opportunity to

gain practical experience. Indeed, for a number of students work remains part of their

network on conclusion of the formal placement period (Nespor, 1994). Students

usually negotiate continued employment on a part-time basis with their placement

employers on their return to university, and clearly there are benefits for both parties

in such an arrangement. The employer retains the student which ensures a continuity

of input and provides them with an 'extra pair of hands'. The student is generally able

to give up their (usually) less lucrative part-time employment for greater security and

with a greater degree of certainty about their future career. Indeed, some students

returning to placement are offered the equivalent of a 'golden handcuffs' deal; they

commit to returning to the employer during their final summer vacation and on

graduation for an agreed period, and the employer provides financial support during

the remainder of their studies. Thus the connection to practice is maintained, and

'belonging' and 'becoming' in the 'real world' continues, an aspect considered in

greater detail in the summary section.

The last area of questionnaire analysis focused on 'belonging' and 'becoming' in terms of identity, in particular the impact and influences of the respondents' experiences of placement on identity, and how they view themselves now. For respondents, their identity as a quantity surveyor at this point is best described as 'half formed'. While they now *"understood the various roles of the QS and what they do from day to day"* (respondent QR8) and that placement *"gave me a range of knowledge involved in the QS profession"* (respondent QR17), the fact that they had undertaken placement in one particular sector of industry was significant in terms of formation of a specific identity as a quantity surveyor.

'Belonging' and 'becoming' in those terms could therefore not be clearly established; respondents had not fully made the transition from student to quantity surveyor. This was identity in waiting, a view at odds with the responses of participants in the feedback interview. The effect of placement experiences on identity (Argyris and Schőn, 1974) and the unequal opportunities for learning in the workplace (Beach, 1999) were evident. For those employed by contracting organisations, particularly those who were site-based, the quantity surveying role revolved around a standard set of activities, and so their limited exposure to, and understanding of, the wider role of the Quantity Surveyor was highlighted:

"I only worked in management contracting which is different from PQS" (respondent QR13)

respondent QR19 – *"I need to see QS'ing from a PQS point of view to get the full picture"*.

For respondent QR5 working for a local authority, the narrowness of the defined activities prompted a similar response: *"as an LA QS it differs from PQS and contractor's QS and I would like to gain experience in all fields"*.   Respondents employed in private practice also reflected on having only experienced professional life from one side of the industry: *"I do like the PQS side but would like to know more about contracting QS'ing"* (respondent QR16). And while they have *"learned a lot in practical experience"* (respondent QR6) they consider that they still have someway to go: *"I feel the role of the QS covers a lot more than I initially thought – I still have so much more to learn"* (respondent QR12, respondent's own emphasis). Most telling was the comment made by respondent QR18: *"[I am] unsure if my experience was an accurate portrayal of QS life"*.   Further analysis, however, reveals a degree of contradiction; while respondents' identity as quantity surveyors might, at this point, be considered to be 'on hold', still something to be aspired to, they were more definite about 'becoming' at a future point:

"this is what I want to do; the placement did not decide that, just gave me more experience" (respondent QR6);

"I am focused on being a QS, this is what I want to do" (respondent QR7);

"I will see how the contractor side works out" (respondent QR20)

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Respondent QR19 summed it up best: while he was still focused on *"becoming a QS"* his comment came with an interesting qualification: *"it's not as cool as a fighter pilot"*. Quantity Surveying has never, as far as I am aware, been described as a cool occupation.

The concluding element of Phase 3 data analysis relates to the results of the feedback interview with those who had undertaken the professional placement period. On completion of the professional placement period they returned to the University to complete Semester B of their Level 3 studies. One might assume they would then 'set aside' their employee / worker identity as well as their developing professional identity and revert to being a student again. After all, they are returning to a known environment, are familiar with its customs and practice, and it would be easy to resume an identity as a learner. But the majority of students re-engage with their studies in a different way. There is a two-way transfer; from university to work and then back to university, and participants bring dimensions of their cultural identity, dispositions and behaviours from the workplace to the university setting and their studies. Having had some practical experience and gained a greater understanding of what the role of the quantity surveyor entails, they are generally much less accepting of theory – *"that's not how it works in practice"* is a common response – and are more confident in challenging same. Generally too, the students are much more self-motivated in undertaking activities, including independent research. The cohort seems also to be more disposed to assisting each other, as occurs during the Interact

project. The students are more willing to share information and sources with each other, although this is a competitive activity. In the earlier levels of the programme, students can be very competitive and reluctant to help each other in case they are bested. Encouraging group work can also be difficult, particularly at Level 1, as evidenced by the lack of cohort cohesion identified in Phase 1. Reflective journal respondent J4 records his surprise on meeting a fellow employee on his first day of placement who is from his cohort: *"a boy I have never spoken to before and I didn't even know his name until now"*. Colleagues have also commented on the fact that Level 1 students are also much less likely to take responsibility for their own learning; there is an assumption that as they are the learners, their tutors will provide all necessary information and knowledge. This may, of course, be as a result of their previous school experiences, where the teacher is generally seen as the holder of knowledge to be imparted to the class. However, at Level 3 greater cohort co-operation and mutual support is in evidence, with students more willing to share information and to assist each other with problems. Working together in group activities also tends to be less problematic. Given that all the students who participated in this study commented on the importance of communication and working with colleagues, this might be viewed as tangible evidence of professional identity at work.

Secondly, the majority of students retain the workplace as part of their networks (Nespor, 1994) and maintain a link with their placement employer on return to their studies.

They usually arrange to work for the organisation at least one day per week during term time, depending on their timetable, and so are able to retain their surveyor and worker identity.   But do they merge student identity and worker identity or consider them as separate facets?   There is also the issue of 'serving two masters'. The employer clearly has a call on their employee's services, which may generate conflicting loyalties and the issue of what to be when.   Tensions may also arise between being a member of a profession, a worker, and a student. How are these issues resolved?

What is apparent is an adaptation of identities, where the participants transform their identities as they move between contexts (Guile and Young, 2003). During the interview session, three respondents who found themselves in this situation were quite comfortable in switching between identities.   The return to university had been an easy transition, although respondent J2 commented that he had forgotten *"just how much work there was at uni"*.   In effect, they all simply adapted their identities to suit the circumstances: while at work they considered themselves to be employees and surveyors *"working with their colleagues and for their boss"* (respondent J4); while at university they were students, albeit with 'added value' as they could "*use their placement experiences"* (respondent J2).   Further, their experiences of working in *"the real world"* (respondent J4) had benefits for them as students, particularly in respect of time management and organisation of workload.   None of the respondents saw any conflict or experienced any difficulty with this arrangement, other than

having to co-ordinate the demands of their employer around university assignments.

The respondents also commented that being able to call on recent colleagues for

assistance in the Interact project was particularly useful, noting that *"being back to*

being a student" (respondent J2) made asking for help easier.   It was perhaps best

explained by respondent J4 who now sees the rest of the degree programme as *"an*

apprenticeship" until graduation and full-time employment.   Respondent J5 too felt

that as it was *"not too long till graduation"* they needed to start thinking about

employment, suggesting that for these participants, their identities as quantity

surveyors are becoming more to the fore, moving towards 'belonging' and

'becoming' as novice professionals (Eraut, 1994). Expressed in those terms, then,

such changes in identity demonstrate a consequential transition (Guile and Young,

2003), where changes in context results in changes in identity; identity shifts as the

participants move between contexts.

Summary of Findings

This final section draws together key findings for consideration and interpretation

within the main research questions of the study and in the context of the main

theoretical concepts and framings discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, namely the theory of

learning as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) and the actor-network theory

posited by Nespor (1994). These are now reconsidered in light of my data analysis.

Level 1 Participants

For these participants, transition to higher education as Level 1 students had generally been effected without difficulty. Their decision to take up their place on the quantity surveying degree programme had been made on the basis of the potential career opportunities it offered at a future date; 'belonging' to the programme with the prospect of becoming full participants in the quantity surveying community of practice through 'becoming' (Wenger, 1998). Their anticipations and expectations, a mix of academic and social transitional factors (Kantanis, 2000), had largely been met, although they did not particularly consider themselves as belonging to a wider community (Nathan, 2005), ie as belonging to the university itself. These participants therefore had no need for socialisation (Silver and Silver, 1997) in the wider community of the institution; their 'belonging' was primarily through the quantity surveying programme of study and the modules / activities undertaken during their studies.

More specifically, participants' 'belonging' was manifested through their being members of multiple 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998), the series of separate communities created by the discrete modules within the Level. But membership of these communities had not, however, been entirely unproblematic, highlighting the tensions between a generic approach (Kantanis, 2000) and a discipline-focused approach (Stew, in Bourner et al, 2000). For these participants, making connections - between each of the discrete modules and to the quantity surveying discipline itself - had proved difficult, particularly in respect of modules where no clear discipline was

context provided or where the delivery of the module was by staff from a different

discipline background.   Contextualisation and location for the knowledge had to be

provided by the participants themselves, which in turn led to issues of relevance and

reduced participation – respondents felt themselves to be 'outsiders' rather than

'insiders'. Discipline identity was therefore an important factor in assisting

membership and participation. For those modules delivered by a member of the

teaching team within the quantity surveying discipline, participation and engagement

– the 'belonging' – had proved less problematic for the participants than those

modules delivered by staff from a different discipline background; the role of the 'old

hand' was an important aspect in initiation to membership and in terms of dispositions

adopted.

But even with this degree of assisted membership, 'belonging' was expressed in terms

of the future rather than the present. Being a quantity surveyor and belonging to the

discipline was something the respondents aspired to, something which would happen

at a later date. At Level 1 participants' belonging was also largely defined as being

bounded by the parameters of the modules themselves; 'overspill' between module

communities was rare, as although respondents expressed belonging in terms of

module relevance to the discipline, they found it difficult to make the connections

between the constituent parts.   Participants also defined themselves primarily as

students, which is perhaps to be expected. New to higher education, and to the

programme, and not really knowing what the discipline entailed, it is unsurprising that

their focus was on their studies, with the expectation that this would provide the framework for their development as quantity surveyors. Being a quantity surveyor was something that would happen in the future, that through 'belonging' to the programme their 'becoming' quantity surveyors would take place - 'belonging' on the way to 'becoming' (Wenger, 1998). At Level 1 there is therefore a dislocation of 'belonging' and 'becoming': the connections between modules and themes are not made nor are fused together. Their 'belonging' is influenced by the focus and context of the individual modules, particularly by the role of the tutor – the 'significant other' (Charon, 2004) – and 'becoming' is something which will occur at some future point: identity in waiting. Also as expected, there was little evidence of the actor-network and students actually being in the discipline (Nespor, 1994).

Level 3 Participants

However, as participants moved to the professional placement period, it was the actor-network theory of Nespor (1994) which took precedence. The world of work created a direct connection to practice, allowing the participants to enter the discipline as novice professionals (Eraut, 1998). But again 'belonging' was not necessarily linked to 'becoming'. Indeed, participants defined themselves as 'workers' and while they were anxious not to be thought of – nor treated as – students within the workplace, they nevertheless did not necessarily identify themselves with the discipline and their identities as quantity surveyors; what was important was their 'cultural identity' (Hall and du Gay, 1997). While the placement period had provided

an opportunity for experiencing the 'real thing' it had not led to an automatic transformation in identity. It was, instead, identity in transition, making the connections (Nespor, 1994) to the discipline and its practices.   'Becoming' a quantity surveyor was still something to be aspired to, a transition of identity yet to be completed. For some, the placement experience had actually led to a reconsideration of identity and a reservation of same – 'belonging' *without* 'becoming'. The effects of placement had influenced 'belonging' and 'becoming', particularly the one-dimensional aspect of same. For some participants, professional placement had been a welcome opportunity (Argyris and Schőn, 1974) but for others, it had led to a shedding of professional identity.

Only a few considered themselves to be 'apprentice' quantity surveyors at this stage, although the majority saw this identity transformation as a progressive development: on completion of their studies and re-entry to the world of practice 'belonging' and 'becoming' would merge. But a number of the participants had negotiated continued employment on a part-time basis with their placement employer on their return to university, ensuring continuity of 'belonging', in turn providing the opportunity for development of 'becoming'. There is no dislocation from their network of practice on return to their studies, rather their network is expanded to accommodate both. However, for one participant a dislocation from the world of work and a return to his studies where a different facet of identity would take precedence, *"being back to being a student"* (respondent J2) was in fact to be welcomed.

For these participants, identity in terms of 'belonging' and 'becoming' was influenced by their learning experiences, including those of the 'real world' of professional practice, where one need not 'become' to 'belong' and vice versa. The professional placement period therefore does not necessarily provide an opportunity for 'belonging' and / or 'becoming'. While participants are anxious to be viewed in a different way, and want to move away from their identity as 'student', this is not necessarily facilitated. And while 'becoming' involved a degree of transition, reflected in the use of 'insider' terminology, and the respondents' identification of themselves as workers, this was not necessarily also as being quantity surveyors. The role of the significant other was also important in respect of 'belonging', particularly where they were unable to assist the respondent as 'outsider' to become an 'insider', as for reflective journal respondent J3, whose colleagues were *"always too busy"*. Thus 'becoming' was significantly influenced by the professional placement experience; professional identity was put on hold pending further experience – identity in waiting. There was also a fluidity of identity; the retention of connections to the workplace on return to university resulted in respondents using dual identities – student and employee - in parallel.

This raises a number of issues in respect of:

- quantity surveying education: curricula, focus, delivery and content;

- professional education, including professional placement opportunities;

and both are considered more fully in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 5   **CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS**

"When I rummage through my wardrobe… I am not merely faced with the choice of what to wear, I am faced with the choice of images"

(Williamson, 1986: p91)

Conclusions

Students' early expectations of Higher Education are governed by who they are, the structural and cultural patterns they enter and the strengths and problems they bring with them to the new Higher Education environment (Silver and Silver, 1997). To assist first year students make the transition and develop skills as an independent learner, Kantanis (2000) argues that this must be a cumulative process, set within the context of discipline-specific requirements. Students themselves must be encouraged to negotiate any initial feelings of alienation, dislocation and the like, and to recognise the differences in culture between university and school, including the nature of learning and teaching inherent in the former (Kantanis, 2000).   Kantanis also emphasises the social aspect of university life and the need to belong to the institutional community (Nathan, 2005) which fosters same. Thus there are two dimensions to identity as 'belonging': as a member of the learning community, and as a member of the specific discipline.   The School's week-long induction programme prior to the start of the academic session – for all new students – is designed to assist transition to Higher Education and to provide guidance as to what being a student entails / requires – how to 'belong' to the learning community. But for the participants at Level 1, mirroring Nathan (2005) findings, such initiation was not a

key issue. For them, 'belonging' was defined in terms of their discipline; as quantity surveying students, not simply as students per se. Their engagement was from an academic perspective, joining the community of (quantity surveying) practice (Wenger, 1998) with a view to becoming full participants through learning.

As the majority of Level 1 students who join the quantity surveying programme are school leavers and do not generally have any experience or knowledge of the construction industry in general, nor of the quantity surveying discipline in particular, their 'belonging' and 'becoming' must necessarily commence through the learning process. For these participants the structure and content of the programme had a significant influence on this. 'Belonging' and 'becoming' were facilitated – or not – through the approaches adopted to learning and teaching, in particular where delivery was by discipline-specific staff. Where staff can draw from their own – or other's – professional experiences in the discipline as part of their teaching, although the experience is 'lived second-hand', students at this stage have an opportunity to learn what it means to be a Quantity Surveyor and formulate a view of professional identity. As Level 1 participants highlighted, this involvement of academic staff from the quantity surveying discipline in module delivery provided them with the necessary context and focus, the sense of what it means to be a Quantity Surveyor – ie in terms of 'belonging' and 'becoming'. The respondents made the links between the core areas of practice largely through the learning and teaching approaches adopted within these modules, and the discipline-specific tutors involved in the delivery of same. While they found it difficult to fully articulate what 'being a Quantity Surveyor'

actually entailed, they had been able to identify core elements. However, their

developing discipline identity was dislocated and disjointed when undertaking

modules with a more general context, where there was no discipline-specific focus.

Participants belonged to multiple communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) but without

the discipline-specific focus, the relevance of these modules in terms of identity, of

'belonging' and 'becoming' became less clear, the connections to the discipline made

more difficult.

Discipline identity at this stage can, of course, be a difficult concept for students.

They have just embarked on a new venture and they are likely to have other

considerations: being a student, dealing with the demands of the modules, getting to

know their fellow students. But it seems that the current modular approach does not

particularly foster a cohesive sense of 'belonging' nor assist in the development of

'becoming' from a discipline perspective.   The series of 'bounded' communities of

practice created by this modular approach not only places the onus on students to

make the connections and find the links to their discipline, but also assumes that they

have the skills necessary to do so – 'becoming' in order to 'belong', contrary to the

theory of learning as a community of practice, where one 'belongs' to 'become'

(Wenger, 1998).   The main issue is, of course, the tensions arising from: the need for

efficient and effective resource management; the educational rationale for inter-pro-

fessional working; and the need to provide discipline-orientated, professionally

focused programmes of study which 'service' a particular sector, in this case the

construction and property industry. Professional / vocational education requires a particular focus, a definite 'end result'; the provision of graduates 'fit for purpose' in a distinct discipline field. This is particularly true of quantity surveying and its allied disciplines; each contributes a particular set of skills and knowledge – accepting that an element of boundary crossing is inevitable in respect of shared skills sets –to the 'whole' of the project / industry and practice. 'Belonging' and 'becoming' are key to the development of this professional identity, which in turn means that opportunity to do so must be provided, but which is unlikely to be addressed via a generic modular delivery approach. Providing an appropriate discipline focus and context – and time for development - does not fit comfortably with a semesterised and modularised approach. The incorporation of discipline-specific module(s) within the programme structure would, of course, be one solution. However, it should be noted here that the School's decision to introduce a specific module to overcome this dislocation and to provide further context for 'becoming' and 'belonging' – namely the Professional Orientation and Practice module – initially proved to be, in the view of these respondents, an ineffective approach.[3]

Therefore participants did not consider themselves to be part of the Quantity Surveying community at this stage, this was something to be aspired to through the learning process, through being a student on the programme.

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[3] **As a result of feedback from students and staff the module was reviewed and redeveloped, with a new version introduced in academic session 2005-06.**

The inclusion of a period of professional placement provided a glimpse of quantity surveying life for Level 3 participants; while identity is still bound up with 'belonging' and 'becoming' there is an added dimension; being an employee, a worker, as well as a novice professional (Eraut, 1994). Thus, as participants moved to Level 3, they moved from what could be considered the bounded community of practice of the programme (Wenger, 1998), developing wider, less bounded networks (Nespor, 1994) to enter the 'real world', preparing to participate as Quantity Surveyors. Further, they entered an organisational culture, experiencing the "lived practices which enable a society, group of class to experience, define, interpret and make sense of its conditions of existence" (Hall, 1982: p7). The respondents were, in short, introduced to and inculcated with a particular organisation's culture and the dress code, language and behaviours inherent in same (Woodward, 2002) – 'being branded'. For participants, 'belonging' and 'becoming' were now defined as having the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills already gained and to further develop these in a professional and practical context, albeit recognising that they *still have a lot to learn"* (respondents J2 and J4). Exposure to professional practice also allowed the transfer of theory to applied practice (Argyris and Schőn, 1974) and development of the skills and knowledge required by the Quantity Surveyor.

However, the transition from university to workplace was not entirely unproblematic. The characteristics of the workplace, in particular the tasks allocated and relationships with others (Tuomi-Grőhn, 2003), posed difficulties in making connections to the community, and affected dispositions; tensions between being an insider and being an

outsider regularly arose. Of particular importance to participants was the specific

aspect of 'belonging', that of 'fitting in', of *"not being treated as a student"*

(respondent J4). In a professional practice culture, people mark themselves as the

same – or different – from each other through the language they speak, the words and

symbols they employ, the clothes they wear and the practices they engage in

(Woodward, 2002). Thus the 'outsider' is readily identified and participants were

anxious not to be so considered. Analysis of the reflective journals was particularly

illuminating in the ways respondents demonstrated this 'belonging' via the explicit -

the terminology of the discipline, 'QS speak' (*"handing-in take-offs"*, respondent J5)

and the implicit – dress codes (*"with my suit and riggers on*[4]*"*, respondent J2) aspects

of professional practice. While identity and image were both important – what

Holstein and Gubruim (2000) consider to be the relationship between the *personal*

and the *social*, ie what I feel inside and what is known about me from the outside – it

is the latter aspect that respondents were most concerned with. When at work *"you*

have to be professional" and *"you have to wear a suit"* but when *"you're at uni, you*

can wear what you like" (respondent J5). Both 'belonging' and 'becoming' were

significantly influenced by the characteristics of the workplace and relationships with

colleagues.

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[4] **Riggers are a type of safety footwear commonly worn on site, in compliance with Health and Safety requirements**

But again, becoming a quantity surveyor was still viewed as something to be attained in future. Indeed, the placement period had, for some, actually resulted in a 'crisis' of identity; professional identity was 'on hold' pending further experience. The nature of the placement period and the terms of engagement were significant factors in this apparent hiatus. 'Becoming' was primarily affected / influenced by the nature and level of support provided by colleagues and the extent and nature of the tasks allocated. This highlights the difficulty and dangers associated with offering professional placement opportunity. The School has deliberately avoided adoption of a prescriptive approach in its allocation of placement positions, to minimise the possibilities of mis-matches between employer and placement employees, and to give each party the opportunity to negotiate with each other directly. Therefore the responsibility for obtaining a suitable placement is given to the student. While tutors provide guidance and support – who has gone where in the past and what sort of experience they had – it is up to each student to make a decision as to which organisation and which sector of industry and practice they join. But this assumes that there will be a smooth transition from university to workplace, that opportunities for learning in the workplace will be equally distributed (Beach, 1999), and that all placement employees will have the opportunity to practice as novice professionals (Eraut, 1994). Further, it ignores the emotional aspects of professional placement, and the possible effects – negative and positive – on student dispositions towards learning (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 1999).

It also means, of course, that the student is making a decision to 'belong' without necessarily fully understanding and appreciating the likely opportunities for 'becoming', which may lead to disappointment and may hinder development of identity, having an adverse effect on 'belonging' and 'becoming'. There may be a mis-match between participants' expectations and the realities of practice, highlighted by the reflective journal respondents: the lack of work at certain times; the lack of support from colleagues; not 'belonging' with limited opportunities for 'becoming'; resulting in an ambivalence about how and what they are becoming .

These aspects of professional practice perhaps need to be more explicitly conveyed to potential placement students. Employers themselves may not necessarily fully appreciate their role in providing such opportunity. So while professional placement is intended to allow development of skills and knowledge, and encourage 'belonging' and 'becoming', it may actually have the opposite effect, and result in a negative impact on identity formation. Placement employees may choose not to 'belong' and 'become', but to remain an outsider, on the basis of their placement experiences or, in the case of these participants, put their professional identity 'on hold'.

By contrast, the return to university and Level 3 studies proved an easy transition for all participants; they had simply adapted their identities and expanded their networks (Nespor, 1994) to suit the circumstances. While at work they had considered themselves to be employees and, in some cases, surveyors; back at university they

were once again students, but with the 'added extra' of being able to *"use their placement experiences"* (respondent J2) for assignments. Further, their experiences of working in *"the real world"* (respondent J4) had benefits for them as students, particularly in respect of time management and workload. Work remained part of their networks, a number of them retaining contact with their placement employers on their return to studies and continuing to work as well as study. None of the participants saw any conflict or experienced difficulties with this arrangement, other than having to manage the demands of their employer around university assignments. Changes in identity were consequential transitions (Guile and Young, 2003) identity transforming as the context changed. For these participants, there was a fluidity of identity, of being different "I's" in different situations (Charon, 2004) – *"working with colleagues"* (respondent J4) in practice and then *"being back to being a student"* (respondent J2).   The experiences of the workplace appear, however, to have had an effect on the nature of this studentship; the rest of the degree programme is viewed as a period of *"apprenticeship"* (respondent J4) until graduation and full-time employment.

Reconsidering my research questions in light of the data analysis, it is clear that, for participants involved in the study, their identity - their 'belonging' and 'becoming' – is not only an inherent part of learning, it is also significantly affected by their experiences within, and their dispositions towards same.   'Belonging' and 'becoming' are defined in the context of the discipline itself through their engagement with the programme, rather than the institutional community (Nathan, 2005).

For participants at Level 1, 'belonging' and 'becoming' is through their participation in the programme and the learning experiences therein, entering the community of practice with the anticipation of full membership and participation through the learning process (Wenger, 1998). But both 'belonging' and 'becoming' are also influenced by student dispositions towards learning, (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 1999) as evidenced by the participants' division of the modules they studied. Some were classified as 'relevant' and 'non-relevant', the latter being dismissed as something for future use. Participants' dispositions were also influenced by the approaches adopted for learning and teaching; involvement of discipline-specific staff resulted in positive dispositions towards learning, whereas the involvement of staff from different disciplines resulted in more negative dispositions.

The opportunity for Level 3 participants to experience the world of practice and industry also significantly impacted on 'belonging' and 'becoming'. Making the transition to the workplace was not without its difficulties (Tuomi-Gröhm, 2003) nor were opportunities for learning equally distributed (Beach, 1999). Although participating as novice professionals (Eraut, 1994) participants' dispositions towards the learning opportunities provided were affected by the characteristics of the workplace itself and the relationships between colleagues (Tuomi-Gröhn, 2003). This latter was, in fact, the most significant aspect for participants. And the placement experience had, for a number of participants, resulted in 'delayed' development of identity, of 'belonging' and 'becoming'. The one-dimensional experience provided by the placement opportunity was also a key factor in this deferment.

For professional education generally, then, the question is how connections to the specific discipline are made within a semesterised and modularised structure, and how the tension between the need for resource efficiency and generic delivery, inter-professional education, and discipline-discreet knowledge with its specific customs and practice is resolved. For those institutions who offer an opportunity for professional placement, a review of its purpose as to whether it does assist participants' 'belonging' and 'becoming' is perhaps due. As not all institutions who provide vocational – and in particular quantity surveying – education include a period of professional placement, then a further question is how students participating on such programmes 'belong' and 'become' without this opportunity.

Reflections on the research study

This study was undertaken to explore identity and the learning experience for a particular group of quantity surveying students over a particular time period. The vocational nature of the programme and the fact there is a specific set of discipline skills and knowledge involved suggested a discrete, closed community of practice (Wenger, 1998). The degree programme and the 'real' world of professional practice could each be considered to be separate communities, and my exploration of identity and learning, of 'belonging' and 'becoming' could be investigated within such a framework. As my study progressed, however, it became apparent that, rather than set in 'bounded, static' communities, participants were, in fact, participating

in and making connections to, networks of communities across both time and space
(see Chapter 3). My study was concerned with charting the respondents' movements
– their 'belonging' and 'becoming' - through these networks during the course of their
programme, therefore the actor-network theory of Nespor (1994) provided a more
appropriate framework for the study, particularly in respect of respondents'
experiences in the professional placement period.

Adopting a three-phased qualitative approach to data collection and analysis allowed
me to utilise a range of different methods, and gain depth of data. The interviews
were lively sessions, and participants provided me with insights into 'how things were
for them'.   By contrast, the questionnaires were more limited in providing the same
degree of depth. A number of respondents made comments or statements without
providing further commentary, which 'left me hanging'. This is not to say that what
was provided was not useful, rather it left some loose ends; some further information
would have been helpful. Likewise, while the use of reflective journals provided me
with data of a more personal nature, it would, I think, have generated a richer and
more representative set of data if there had been more respondents.

Despite these limitations, my study has provided a snapshot view of how things were
during the research timeframe for these participants in terms of identity and learning,
their 'belonging' and 'becoming' raising a number of questions for further
investigation.

Very little research in respect of identity has been undertaken in the discipline areas which constitute the construction and property industry. My study suggests there is perhaps a need for a wider exploration around identity and learning in respect of professional education, including its connection to professional practice:

- How representative is this of other quantity surveying students' experiences on our programme?

- Are these experiences peculiar to the quantity surveying discipline or are they shared by other disciplines in the construction and property industry in the School (eg construction management, civil engineering)?

- What are the experiences of quantity surveying students at other institutions?

- Are there differences in 'belonging' and 'becoming' between students in institutions whose programme of study offers professional placement opportunities and those who do not?

The purpose of professional, vocational education is to provide opportunity for 'belonging' to and 'becoming' a member of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), which commences with participation and engagement in a programme of academic study followed by transfer to the workplace as a novice professional (Eraut, 1994). However, participants in this study suggest that this is a complex process, not simply a smooth transition (Beach, 1999).

Therefore a a broader examination and exploration of how this is facilitated across disciplines, programmes and institutions is required to establish whether reality matches expectation.

More specifically, for the School there are issues of:

- The appropriateness of commonality of structure, content and delivery across programmes at Level 1;

- The Quantity surveying programme structure, focus and content at Level 1;

- Level 1 module contextualisation, focus and content, particularly in respect of modules where delivery is generic and not discipline-specific;

- The role of non-discipline and discipline-specific staff in facilitating 'belonging' and 'becoming';

- Professional placement learning , particularly the ways in which students are prepared for and supported during, the placement period and the ways in which the School should engage with employers.

Working within the 'confines' of semesterisation and modularisation, the importance of providing a discipline-specific focus to students – the 'belonging' and 'becoming' of the discipline – should not be overlooked. This is particularly relevant in respect of the Professional Orientation and Practice module, which is intended to be the main focal point for such activities in Level 1 (although my recommendation has, in fact, been overtaken by events and a new version of the module has now been developed and introduced).

A review of the School's approach to professional placement is also required. The current approach tends to focus on preparation for placement: how to construct a Curriculum Vitae; particular interview techniques. Students are provided with guidance and support in terms of which employers are offering placement opportunities, and what terms and conditions are likely to be on offer / applied.

But perhaps insufficient attention is paid to the potential difficulties of placement: the possible lack of workload at times (the peaks and troughs); the higher level of general administrative tasks likely to be allocated to the placement employee; the likelihood of working with colleagues who are very busy and whose time is limited for support. While not advocating such emphasis on these aspects as to discourage students from undertaking placement, it is nevertheless important to convey as accurately as possible the positives and the negatives, and that there is always an element of 'downside' to professional working life.

Personal Reflections

When I commenced the EdD programme, I would have described myself as a Quantity Surveyor who taught rather than practising 'in the field'. As Programme Organiser for the BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying degree, my main role was as the 'figurehead' for the programme, providing leadership and taking responsibility for its academic wellbeing, including ensuring continued accreditation by the professional body. My engagement with industry and practice was largely one of providing information, guidance and advice on all aspects of the programme including: entry requirements; placement; student performance. I would therefore have defined my identity at this point as a Quantity Surveyor operating in the education sector, a 'professional academic' or an 'educational practitioner' (I Taylor, 1994).

But the start of my EdD studies coincided with a change in my role within the School, and my appointment to a new post. I moved into a more managerial role, charged with a wider remit and undertaking a range of activities which were not discipline-focused but carried School-wide responsibilities. As my new role developed, and my EdD work progressed, I therefore found myself moving away from this earlier definition. Although still involved with the students, primarily those on the Quantity Surveying programme, and still teaching core aspects of this discipline, I found that I was starting to see myself in a different way. Relinquishing my role as Programme Organiser meant a lessening of the connections to those in industry and practice, and I was obviously no longer involved with the students, colleagues and practice in the same way.

My new range of activities necessarily meant a disengagement from the programme and the discipline, as my experiences as a Quantity Surveyor were of less relevance. This manifested itself particularly strongly when participating in the data collection aspect of this thesis. I felt removed from things and not just in the sense of being the researcher; participants were discussing issues which were very familiar to me but I didn't feel so involved, I experienced a sense of apartness rather than a sense of sharing experiences. In essence, my discipline identity was supplanted; I was now an Associate Dean, with the remit for Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement (ADQ) for the School, and, as part of the ADQ Group, for the University. My new role required me to work with colleagues in a different way, not just in the School but

across the University, and their perceptions of me changed too; "quality police" was one of the less pleasant 'labels'. A wider vista of networks revealed itself as I got involved in my new role and activities, and started to make new sets of connections. Further, being exposed to new ideas, views and approaches – and a range of different disciplines – I found that I was now regarding myself as a member of a different community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

My relationship with the professional body, the RICS, also altered. While still a (fee-paying) member, and still involved in RICS activities, I was participating as a representative of the School, not of my discipline. Involvement with other professional bodies in my role as ADQ generated a review and reflection of who I was from my own - and other's – perspective. Acting as the link between industry and practice, including a number of professional bodies, and the School on a different basis, led to an altering of my own views and perceptions of my own institution. I also found myself looking at the quantity surveying discipline with new eyes, moving to be a more critical observer, less of a 'passive participant'.

So who am I now? As I complete my EdD studies, I find I have moved away from the 'narrowness' of the Quantity Surveying discipline; I don't feel the same sense of shared identity and alignment in that I have found new ways to represent myself. This is not that I consider my previous identity(ies) to be of no worth, I recognise that they have made me who I am (was) and which allowed me to enter the academic community of practice. But as Programme Organiser, there was a sense of identity

limitation, being bound up with and tied to the programme. My new appointment

provided me with new experiences, and an opportunity to reconsider who I was.

Keeping my own diary / reflective journal proved to be a key element of this

reconsideration. Recording my experiences provided an opportunity for self-

reflection and exploration of my own identity (Moon, 1999); re-reading the diary

entries from the earlier entries to the most recent (it is still a regular activity) I can

chart the changes in myself, most significantly that I have gained confidence in my

abilities, I have been able to develop and participate in different actor-networks

(Nespor, 1994), and to operate outside my 'comfort zone', not just in my role as ADQ

but also by being a student on the EdD programme.

Being presented with a range of new challenges by both has allowed me to develop /

enhance my skills and have allowed me to explore new dimensions to my identity. I

have a new sense of myself, of who I am – and who I am not.   I used to define myself

solely as a Quantity Surveyor but now that is only one – less dominant – dimension of

my identity. Now I would probably define myself as an academic with an interest in,

and remit for, learning and teaching who hopes to develop a profile as an educational

researcher.

So although I might not be *"as cool as a fighter pilot"*, quantity surveying was a

worthwhile career – and identity - for me, and for participants in my study, clearly

still is.

APPENDIX I: LIST OF REFERENCES

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EdD THESIS   APPENDIX A

TABULAR PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS: PART 1

LEVEL 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

<u>Part A</u>   <u>General</u>

This section relates to your decision to join the Quantity Surveying programme.

1.   Responses to Statements provided:

        a)   I have been to University before

Yes	No
1	21

        b)   I knew about Quantity Surveying prior to joining
           the programme

Yes	No
15	7

        c)   <u>Quantity Surveying was my first choice of</u> programme

Yes	No
16	6

        d)   I intend to have a career as a <u>Quantity Surveyor</u>

Yes	No
18	4

2.   Why did you choose Quantity Surveying?

a) Want to work in construction/property industry	b) The range of subjects seemed interesting	c) For future employment opportunities	d) To achieve a professional qualification	e) Other
12	6	20	17	#Comfortable lifestyle (1) #Seems practical and not just academic (1) #Money (1)

Part B   The Level 1 Learning Experience

3.   What did you expect to experience at University?

a) Attending classes, eg lectures	b) Sitting exams and other assessments	c) Studying independently	d) Working with others on the programme	e) Meeting other students and participating in social activities	f) Participating in professional / discipline-related activities	g) Other
22	22	19	20	19 14	9	# Pubs (2)

4.   How well have your expectations been realised?

Completely	Partially	Not at all
11	11	0

[NB: Comments in respect of this question are provided in the narrative of Chapter 4].

5.   You have now almost completed all Level 1 modules.
How relevant do you think each of these was to your programme of study?

Module	Very Relevant	Quite Relevant	Not Relevant
BNEC101 Construction Technology 1	22		
BNEP120 Property Legislation		9	13
BNEP122 Property Economics		10	12
BNEP122 Measurement & Practice 1	22		
BNEP123 Construction Resource Estimating	22		
BNES140 Professional Orientation & Practice		3	19

7.   **To what extent do you think these modules have contributed to your <u>development as a Quantity Surveyor</u>?**

Module	A lot	Some	None
BNEC101 Construction Technology 1	**20**	**2**	
BNEP120 Property Legislation		**10**	**12**
BNEP122 Property Economics		**9**	**13**
BNEP122 Measurement & Practice 1	**22**		
BNEP123 Construction Resource Estimating	**15**	**7**	
BNES140 Professional Orientation & Practice		**5**	**17**

NB: Responses and Comments provided in respect of Questions 6, 8, 9 and 10 are highlighted within the narrative in Chapter 4.

11.   **Overall, how would you rate your Level 1 learning experience?**

	Agree	Disagree
a) I have found the experience enjoyable	**17**	**5**
b) I have found the experience worthwhile	**19**	**3**
c) I know more about my chosen profession	**19**	**3**
d) I am developing professional skills	**20**	**2**

Part C   **Professional Identity**

The B Sc (Hons) Quantity Surveying degree is part of a suite of programmes within the School accredited by a professional body.   In this section you are asked to consider the relevance of professional identity and accreditation in respect of your studies.

12.   **The Quantity Surveying programme is accredited by the main surveying body, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.**

	Yes	No
a) Did you know this prior to joining the programme?	**10**	**11**
b) Was this a factor in selecting the programme?	**8**	**13**

[NB: One nil response to this question]

13.   **Do you think recognition by professional bodies is important?**

Yes	No
22	**0**

NB: Responses and Comments provided in respect of this question are highlighted within the narrative in Chapter 4.

14.   **What do you think defines a professional?**

a) Having skills and knowledge in a specific area	b) Providing particular services to clients	c) Belonging to a professional organisation	d) Having academic qualifications	e) Having professional qualifications	f) Other
22	**3**	**13**	**18**	**21**	**# Cool car (1)** **# being punctual and reliable (1)** **# money – high salary (1)**

15.   **Which do you consider to be most important?**
        Rank the following on a scale of 1-5, (1 being not so important and 5 being very important).

	1	2	3	4	5
a) Having skills and knowledge in a specific area	0	1	4	5	12
b) Providing particular services to clients	1	6	6	3	6
c) Belonging to a professional organisation	4	4	6	4	4
d) Having academic qualifications	3	1	4	6	8
e) Having professional qualifications	3	1	3	5	1
f) Other:	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL

16.   **Consider the following statements and rate each by circling as appropriate.**

	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree*	Disagree
a) Developing professional identity is important	20		2
b) Developing a professional identity is part of the overall learning experience	17		5
c) Developing a professional identity begins at University	13		9
d) Developing a professional identity helps provide a context for academic studies	13	1	8
e) Developing a professional identity helps determine core topics from modules	11	1	10
f) I feel I am developing an identity as a Quantity Surveyor	15	1	6

* Column added by respondent

<u>Part D</u>   <u>Personal Details</u>

This is the final section of the questionnaire, and is simply for record purposes.

17.   **Gender:**

Male	Female
19	3

18.   **Age:**

18-20	21-25	25-30	Over 30
16	5	1	

TABULAR PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS: PART 2

LEVEL 3 QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A   GENERAL INFORMATION

1.   **Where did you undertake your placement?**

Local Authority	**1**
Private QS Practice	**11**
Contracting Organisation	**8**
Sub-contractor	**0**
Other:	**0**

2.   **If you were working for a Contractor or Sub-contractor, were you:**

Site-based	**5**
Office-based	**3**

3.   **How many other colleagues were in the same office as you?**

1-5	5-10	10-15	More than 15
3	**1**	**2**	**14**

4.   **Did you feel you were initially made welcome by these colleagues?**

Yes	No
19	**1**

Comments highlighted in narrative in Chapter 4.

5.   **Was a mentor / buddy / key colleague appointed to provide you with help?**

Yes	Who was this?
15	**Private Practice: Graduate Surveyor or Partner** **Contracting Organisation: Line Manager (not always QS)**

No	What support was provided?
5	**Other colleagues as available***

* One respondent sponsored by company so network of support was in place

SECTION 2   THE PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

6.   **During placement did you feel you were accepted as a workmate by your colleagues?**

Yes	No
20	0

7.   **What were the <u>FOUR MAIN</u> tasks that you were given during your placement?**

General Administration	20
Measurement	15
Procurement	8
Costing: planning / pricing	7
Valuations	6

[Listed in terms of frequency of response; other activities were also identified as discussed in narrative in Chapter 4]]

8.   **Which of these best describes your role in the organisation?**

Working for / with one colleague most of the time	2
Working for / with more than one colleague depending on project or task	9
Working for / with a wide range of colleagues depending on project or task	9

9. **Were you allocated a variety of tasks during your placement?**

Yes	No
20	0

10. **Did you feel you were given responsibility for the tasks you were allocated?**

Yes	No
19	1

NB: *Responses and Comments provided in respect of Questions 9 and 10 are highlighted within the narrative in Chapter 4.*

11. **Do you feel the level of responsibility you were given increased as your placement progressed?**

Yes	No
19	1

No comments provided to support "NO" response.

SECTION 3   REFLECTION AND REVIEW

12.   What were you hoping to gain from the placement period?

A better understanding of the QS role	**19**
Gaining "hands-on" experience as a QS	**19**
Building on my academic knowledge	**18**
Meeting new people and making useful contacts	**15**
Having the opportunity of future employment	**17**
Other	**Nil**

13.   How well do you think your expectations have been met?

Fully	Partially	Poorly	Not at all
9	**9**	**2**	**0**

NB: *Responses and Comments provided in respect of Question 13are highlighted within the narrative in Chapter 4.*

14. **What are the three things you most enjoyed about placement?**

Learning to be a QS	16
Meeting new people	13
Money – getting paid	8
Going on site	3
Variety of job	2
Break from University	2
Getting responsibility	2
Weekends	1

NB: *Responses reflect frequency of response.*

15. **What are the three things you liked least about placement?**

Amount of general admin	11
Lack of support / unhelpful colleagues	7
Working five days	6
Early mornings	6
Travelling	5
Limited workload / lack of work	3
Break from University	2
Getting responsibility	2
Weekends	1

NB: *Responses reflect frequency of response.*

16. **Do you feel you now have a clearer idea of what being a Quantity Surveyor involves?**

Fully	Partially	Poorly	Not at all
5	13	2	0

17. **Do you still intend to be a Quantity Surveyor?**

Definitely	Possibly	Definitely Not
5	13	2

NB: *Responses and Comments provided in respect of Questions 16 and 17 are highlighted within the narrative in Chapter 4.*

SECTION 4   PERSONAL INFORMATION

18. **Age:**

18-20	21-25	25-30	30+
14	5	1	0

19. **Gender:**

Male	Female
17	3

EdD THESIS   APPENDIX B.1

DATA COLLECTION: LEVEL 1 QUESTIONNAIRE   APRIL 2003

Research Topic:
"Professional Identity and its development at Level 1 of the Quantity Surveying degree programme"

Please answer all questions in accordance with the instructions provided.   Your responses are confidential and will only be used in relation to the research project.

<u>Part A</u>   <u>General</u>

This section relates to your decision to join the Quantity Surveying programme.

1.   Please answer the following statements by circling "Y" or "N"

a)   *I have been to University before*   Y   N

b)   *I knew about Quantity Surveying prior to joining the programme*   Y   N

c)   *Quantity Surveying was my first choice of programme*   Y   N

d)   *I intend to have a career as a Quantity Surveyor*   Y   N

2.   **Why did you choose Quantity Surveying?**
(tick all that apply)

a)   *I want to work in the construction / property industry*   ☐

b)   *The range of subjects seemed interesting*   ☐

c)   *For future employment opportunities*   ☐

d)   *To achieve a professional qualification*   ☐

e)   *Other: (please state)*   _____   ☐

Part B   **The Level 1 Learning Experience**

You have now almost completed your first year of study on the Quantity Surveying programme. In this section you are being asked to reflect on your initial expectations and how well these have been realised.

3.   **What did you expect to experience at University?**
   (tick all that apply)

   a)   ***Attending classes, eg Lectures***   ☐

   b)   ***Sitting exams and other assessments***   ☐

   c)   ***Studying independently***   ☐

   d)   ***Working with others on the programme***   ☐

   e)   ***Meeting other students & participating in social activities***   ☐

   f)   ***Participating in professional/ discipline-related activities***   ☐

   g)   ***Other (please state)***   _____   ☐

4.   **How well have your expectations been realised?**
   (circle as appropriate)

   Completely   **Partially**   **Not at all**

   If you answered "Partially" or "Not at all", please provide the reasons for your response below:

5. **You have now almost completed all Level 1 modules.**
How relevant do you think each of these was to your programme of study?
Please rate each module by placing a tick in the appropriate column:

	Relevant		
	Very	**Quite**	**Not**
BNEC101 Construction Technology 1			
BNEP120 Property Legislation			
BNEP121 Property Economics			
BNEP122 Measurement & Practice 1			
BNEP123 Construction Resource Estimating			
BNES140 Professional Orientation & Practice			

6. **If you rated any module(s) in the "Quite" or "Not Relevant" columns, please provide the reasons for your response(s) below:**

7. **To what extent do you think these modules have contributed to your development as a Quantity Surveyor?**
Please rate each module by ticking the appropriate column:

	Contributed to Development as a Quantity Surveyor		
	A lot	**Some**	**None**
BNEC101 Construction Technology 1			
BNEP120 Property Legislation			
BNEP121 Property Economics			
BNEP122 Measurement & Practice 1			
BNEP123 Construction Resource Estimating			
BNES140 Professional Orientation & Practice			

8.   If you rated any module(s) in the "Some" or "None" columns, please provide the reasons for your response(s) below:

9.   What aspects of your Level 1 studies have you particularly enjoyed? Why?

10.   What aspects of your Level 1 studies have you not enjoyed? Why?

11.   Overall, how would you rate your Level 1 learning experience?
        (please rate the following statements by circling as appropriate)

a)	*I have found the experience enjoyable*	agree	disagree
a)	*I have found the experience worthwhile*	agree	disagree
b)	*I know more about my chosen profession*	agree	disagree
c)	*I am developing professional skills*	agree	disagree

Part C   Professional Identity

The B Sc (Hons) Quantity Surveying degree is part of a suite of programmes within the School accredited by a professional body. In this section you are asked to consider the relevance of professional identity and accreditation in respect of your studies.

12.   **The Quantity Surveying programme is accredited by the main surveying body, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.**

     a)   *Did you know this prior to joining the programme?*   **Y**   **N**

     b)   *Was this a factor in selecting the programme?*   **Y**   **N**

                                   (circle as appropriate)

13.   **Do you think recognition by professional bodies is important?**
         (circle as appropriate)

                                   Y   **N**

         Please provide reasons for your response:

14.   **What do you think defines a professional?**
         (tick all that apply)

     a)   *Having Skills and knowledge in a specific area*   ☐

     b)   *Providing particular services to clients*   ☐

     c)   *Belonging to a professional organisation*   ☐

     d)   *Having academic qualifications*   ☐

     e)   *Having professional qualifications*   ☐

     f)   *Other (please state)*   _____   ☐

15. **Which do you consider to be most important?**
Rank the following on a scale of 1-5, (1 being not so important and 5 being very important).

 a)   *Having Skills and knowledge in a specific area*   ☐

 b)   *Providing particular services to clients*   ☐

 c)   *Belonging to a professional organisation*   ☐

 d)   *Having academic qualifications*   ☐

 e)   *Having professional qualifications*   ☐

 f)   *Other (please state)*   _____   ☐

16. **Consider the following statements and rate each by circling as appropriate.**

 a)   *Developing professional identity is important*   **agree**   **disagree**

 b)   *Developing a professional identity is part of the overall learning experience*   **agree**   **disagree**

 c)   *Developing a professional identity begins at University*   **agree**   **disagree**

 d)   *Developing a professional identity helps provide a context for academic studies*   **agree**   **disagree**

 e)   *Developing a professional identity helps determine core topics from modules*   **agree**   **disagree**

 f)   *I feel I am developing an identity as a Quantity Surveyor*   **agree**   **disagree**

Part D   Personal Details

This is the final section of the questionnaire, and is simply for record purposes.

17.   *Gender:*   **Male**   **Female**   (circle as appropriate)

18.   **Age:**   **18-20**   **21-25**   **25-30**   **0ver 30**
                    (circle as appropriate)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

EdD THESIS   APPENDIX B.2

DATA COLLECTION: LEVEL 1 INTERVIEW   APRIL 2003

Research Topic:
"Professional Identity and its development within the Quantity Surveying degree programme at Level 1"

It would be helpful if you would answer all questions.   Your responses are confidential and will only be used in relation to the research project, and your identity will not be disclosed.

<u>Part A</u>   <u>General</u>

1.   *Have any of you been to University before?*

    If yes, where and why changed?

2.   *Did you know about Quantity Surveying prior to joining the programme?*

    If yes, how?   *If no, what prompted choice?*

3.   *Was Quantity Surveying your first choice of programme?*

    If no, what was?

4.　　　*What made you choose Quantity Surveying?*

5.　　　*Do you intend to work as a Quantity Surveyor?*

Part B   The Level 1 Student Experience

You have now almost completed your first year of study on the Quantity Surveying programme. In this section I am going to ask you to reflect on your initial expectations and how well these have been realised.

      6.   *What did you expect to experience at University?*
               (eg *attending classes, sitting exams and other assessments, studying independently working with others on the programme*

      7.   *How well have your expectations been realised?*

8.   *You have now almost completed all Level 1 modules.*
How relevant do you think each of these was to your <u>programme of study?</u>

BNEC101 Construction Technology 1

BNEP120 Property Legislation

BNEP121 Property Economics

BNEP122 Measurement & Practice 1

BNEP123 Construction Resource Estimating

BNES140 Professional Orientation & Practice

9.   *To what extent do you think these modules have contributed to your*
<u>development as a Quantity Surveyor?</u>

BNEC101 Construction Technology 1

BNEP120 Property Legislation

BNEP121 Property Economics

BNEP122 Measurement & Practice 1

BNEP123 Construction Resource Estimating

BNES140 Professional Orientation & Practice

10. **What aspects of your Level 1 studies have you particularly enjoyed? Why?**

11. **What aspects of your Level 1 studies have you not enjoyed? Why?**

12. **Overall, how has Level 1 gone? What is your view of the total experience?**
    (eg *enjoyable, worthwhile, know more about my chosen profession, developing professional skills)*

Part C   Professional Identity

The B Sc (Hons) Quantity Surveying degree is part of a suite of programmes within the School accredited by a professional body.   In this section I am going to ask you to consider the relevance of professional identity and accreditation in respect of your studies.

13.   **The Quantity Surveying programme is accredited by the main surveying body, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.**

      a)   *Did you know this prior to joining the programme?*   **Y**   **N**
             (number in group for each)

      b)   *Was this a factor in selecting the programme?*   **Y**   **N**
             (ditto)

14.   **Do you think recognition by professional bodies is important?**

15.   **What do you think defines a professional?**
      (eg *having Skills and knowledge in a specific area,providing particular services to clients,belonging to a professional organisation, having academic qualifications, having professional qualifications)*

16.   **Which do you consider to be most important?**
            Why?

17.   **Do you think that developing a professional identity is important?**

18.   **Is it part of the overall learning experience? Does it begin at University?**

19.   **Does developing a professional identity help you to provide a context for**
            academic studies / determine core topics from modules?

20.   **Do you feel that you are now developing an identity as a Quantity Surveyor?**

Part D   Personal Details

This is the final section of the interview, and is simply for record purposes.

21.   *Gender:*   **Male**   **Female**
             (no in group)

22.   **Age:**   **18-20**   **21-25**   **25-30**   **0ver 30**
             (no in group)

Thank you for participating in this interview.

EdD THESIS   APPENDIX C

Reflective Journal

June To December 2004

Name:

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL
June-December 2004

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to help me with my research. My research theme is how Quantity Surveying students develop their professional identity, exploring whether this process starts at University and the contribution professional placement period makes.

As a Quantity Surveying student who is about to take up placement employment in the profession, your thoughts and views on your experiences will make a valuable contribution to this research.

The task I am asking you to undertake in this regard is straightforward and will not be difficult to achieve. I'd like you to keep a personal diary – what I'm calling a "Reflective Journal" – during your time in employment. You will see from the information issued to you regarding placement that you are required to record your professional experiences week-by-week, namely the tasks and activities that you have undertaken. I am mirroring this approach by asking you to keep a journal which focuses on your experiences from a <u>personal perspective</u>, rather than a practical one.

I should stress at this point that this is an entirely separate activity, unconnected with anything you have to complete to successfully pass the module. Anything you write in your Reflective Journal is solely for the purposes of my research and will not be used in any other capacity, nor disclosed to any other parties without your consent.

Therefore, your participation is entirely voluntary, and if you decide not to complete your Reflective Journal, that's OK – just let me know as soon as possible.

In Section 2 overleaf, you'll find information which I hope will help you complete this activity, but if you have any problems or difficulties, remember that I am only a phone call or e-mail away – my contact details can be found at the bottom of this page.

Meanwhile I hope that you find your placement an enjoyable and worthwhile experience, and thank you again for agreeing to help me.

Irene

Contact Details:

Phone: **0141 331 3631**
(direct line/answering machine)

e-mail: **ibo@gcal.ac.uk**

Mailing Address: **School of the Built and Natural Environment**
                                        Glasgow Caledonian University
                                        Cowcaddens Road
                                        GLASGOW
                                        G4 0BA

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2. Guide to Completion

2.1 The purpose of this activity

The central question at the heart of this activity is:

What does being a Quantity Surveyor mean to you?

What I am interested in is your interpretation of what being a Quantity Surveyor means and the reasons for this. We all create our own unique, individual, personal and professional identity based on our experiences, including forming our own view on what it means to be a Quantity Surveyor. The focus of my research is what this means to YOU as an individual, and how you view your own development at this point in time.

2.2 Timetable for activity

You will see that I am asking you to complete your Reflective Journal from June through to December 2004, to fit with my overall research programme. However, if you take up your placement later than June, or intend to work until January 2005, don't worry. Just complete as many weeks during the given timeframe as possible. It is the content I am interested in, not how much there is.

The timetable is as follows:

- April 2004   Issue of Reflective Journal Information
- June 2004   Begin Reflective Journal
- September 2004   Feedback Session 1
- December 2004   Complete Reflective Journal
- January 2005   Feedback Session 2
- March 2005   Final Round-up

<u>NB: Actual dates will be issued as a separate timetable.</u>

With this type of activity it is helpful for us to meet as a group at key milestone points. The purposes of these meetings is to see how things are working, to discuss approaches, and for me to provide guidance in case of difficulties.

The first of these milestone meetings will take place in September 2004, where we will be mainly concerned with how things are going generally and if you are managing to complete your journal. I will arrange a get-together – after work or over a lunchtime, depending on people's locations – for an hour or so.

This will be followed by a second milestone meeting in January 2005. I'll have had a first look at your submitted journals and identified areas I'd like to discuss in more depth with you. It also gives you the chance to give me further feedback and raise any further issues or points that you think would be useful to my research. Again I'll try to schedule this session so that as many of you as possible can attend.

We will then round things off with a final meeting in March 2005. At this point I will have considered your journals in more depth, and will be able to provide you with my outline findings.   We will also have the opportunity to discuss issues arising from these. As we will be in the middle of teaching, it should be easy to find a suitable date and time for us all to meet.

2.3 What is a Reflective Journal?

It is probably a good idea before we go much further to explain exactly what a "Reflective Journal" is.

The easiest way is to think of your Journal as a diary which you can use to record your personal thoughts, views, and concerns – in this case weekly – on the experiences you've been through. It differs from the diary of professional placement experience in that you are recording the "personal" dimension rather than the "professional". To illustrate, let's say your employer has asked you to prepare an Interim Valuation.   Your professional placement diary entry would probably be something like:

Friday 16th July 2004	Interim Valuation No 4 for Anytown Business Centre	3 hrs	Level 2

You record the date, the activity, the time spent and the level of competency involved, all of which are professionally-orientated details that build up to provide an overall record of your professional achievement.

However, for a reflective journal, the entry will be much more personally-orientated and focus on the emotions and feelings associated with the activity, as shown overleaf.

> *Friday 16th June*
> *Asked to prepare an Interim Valuation for the Business Centre. Was a bit panicked, first time I've had to do this on my own. Wasn't sure exactly where – and how - to start! Bob said it was to be completed by lunchtime, which added to the pressure. Was worried that I made a complete pig's ear of it, so asked Jill which left me more confused – wish they'd speak English instead of QS-speak, there's a whole new language to be learned! Felt a bit stupid really.*
> *However, calmed down, had a look at the project file and dug out last month's – it didn't fully make sense but I managed to muddle through, and I now know what MOS means! Bob checked things over and pointed out a couple of things for future which helped.*
> *After work, our team went for a couple of drinks – this is a regular Friday night thing and I feel I'm now getting to know them a bit better.*

Hopefully you see the difference between the two entries. While the activity being recorded is the same for both entries, the first focuses on simply recording the task undertaken, while the second focuses on the feelings generated by the request and the worries and concerns experienced.

It is this second approach that I am asking you to adopt:
- **How did you feel about the things you were asked to do?**
- **How did you feel about working in this environment?**
- **How difficult did you find it to deal with what was asked / expected of you?**
- **What upset / worried you?**
- **What gave you confidence?**
- **How did you view the experience in respect of professional development?**

What I am trying to establish is how you as an individual reacted and responded to the professional environment you were working in, and how you view your own professional – and personal – development.

I would also emphasise the importance of the social aspects of placement. Professional placement is not only about the professional environment and work, and how you are expected to behave, dress and interact with colleagues. It is also about developing friendships and going-out socially, as these also play a large part in, and have a huge impact on, professional and personal development.   So please don't forget to reflect on these things too when you are completing your journal.

2.4 Writing your Journal

You will see that I have provided a template to use for creating your Journal pages. You can replicate these as many times as are necessary to give you a page per week for the number of weeks involved – I am just saving effort by only providing one!

Each week you should consider the questions provided on the template, and respond to these as best you can. What I am looking for is your individual, personal, emotional response- your feelings and anxieties in other words – what could be considered the "how" of the "what". Remember that this is not an academic piece of work to be assessed or shared with School tutors. It is something personal to you which will be used by me solely in the context of my own research.

This means that I am not concerned about *how* you write (grammar, spelling, proper sentences and the like) as much as <u>what</u> you write. It is your thoughts, concerns, and your reactions to the experiences you have undergone that I am interested in.   Just make sure you write them down legibly and sufficiently clearly for me to read!

2.5 Submission of your Journal

You can submit your completed Journal on the CD provided, as a paper copy, or as an e-mail submission. Whatever approach you are most comfortable with is fine with me, as long as I can access the information and your Journal is complete and submitted by the due date.

Again, I would stress that your Journal will not be shared with anyone else, and that it will only be used in respect of my research project, so there is no need for it to be of "professional" quality.   You don't have to worry about presentation, "messiness" or whether it all makes perfect sense.

The important thing is that you've responded as requested and I can read what you've written.

3. Reflections on Placement

Once you have completed your placement period and produced your Reflective Journal, I'd like you finally to consider three key questions before submission. Please provide a response to each as best you can. I've provided space after each question but if this is not sufficient then insert a new page so that you answer fully:

1. What have you learned about being a Quantity Surveyor?

2.What was the most important thing you learned?

3.How do you feel about being a Quantity Surveyor now?

4. From Start to Finish

It is sometimes easier to express our feelings or views using metaphors and we do so every day, probably without giving much thought to it.

For example, if I was angry about something I might say I was "hopping mad". Or say a meeting was "about as exciting as watching paint dry" to express my boredom. Metaphors therefore act as a kind of visual/verbal shorthand to express feelings which everyone understands immediately.

When you are completing your reflective journal, please use these types of phrases if they allow you to best encapsulate your own feelings and experiences.

4. Journal Pages Template

WEEK NO:

What were the most important things that happened to me this week?	
What worried me most this week?	
How do I feel generally about the way things are going?	

EdD THESIS   APPENDIX D.1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEVEL 3 FEBRUARY 2005

SECTION A   GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Where did you undertake your placement?**
    (tick as applicable)

Local Authority	□	**(Go to Q3)**
Private QS Practice	□	**(Go to Q3)**
Contracting Organisation	□	**(Go to Q2)**
Sub-contractor	□	**(Go to Q2)**
Other (please state):		
_____	□	**(Go to Q3)**

2. **If you were working for a Contractor or Sub-contractor, were you:**

    Site-based   Office-based   (circle as appropriate)

3. **How many other colleagues were in the same office as you?**
    (tick as appropriate)

    1-5 □   5-10 □   10-15 □   more than 15 □

4. **Did you feel you were initially made welcome by these colleagues?**

    YES   □   NO   □

    If NO, please state why you felt this:

5. **Was a mentor / buddy / key colleague appointed to provide you with help?**

    YES   □   Who was this?

    NO   □   What support was provided for you?

SECTION 2 THE PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

6. **During placement did you feel you were accepted as a workmate by your colleagues?**
   (circle as appropriate)

   YES   Why did you feel this?

   NO   Why did you feel this?

7. **What were the <u>FOUR MAIN</u> tasks that you were given during your placement?**

   ■   _____

   ■   _____

   ■   _____

   ■   _____

8. **Which of these best describes your role in the organisation?**
   (tick as applicable)

   Working for/with one colleague most of the time   □

   Working for/with more than one colleague
   depending on project or task   □

   Working for/with a wide range of colleagues
   depending on project or task   □

9. **Were you allocated a variety of tasks during your placement?**
   (circle as appropriate)

          YES   **NO**

   If NO, please provide the reason(s) for your response below

10. **Did you feel you were given responsibility for the tasks you were allocated?** (circle as applicable)

          YES   **NO**

   If NO, please provide the reason(s) for your response below

11. **Do you feel the level of responsibility you were given increased as your placement progressed?** (circle as appropriate)

          YES   **NO**

   If NO, please provide the reason(s) for your response above?

SECTION 3   REFLECTION AND REVIEW

12. What were you hoping to gain from the placement period?
(tick all applicable)

A better understanding of the QS role   ☐

Gaining "Hands-on" experience as a QS   ☐

Building on my academic knowledge   ☐

Meeting new people and making useful contacts   ☐

Having the opportunity of future employment   ☐

Other (please state)   ☐

- ■ _____

- ■ _____

- ■ _____

13. How well do you think your expectations have been met?
(circle as appropriate)

Fully   **Partially**   **Poorly**   **Not at all**

Please provide the reasons for your response below:

14. What are the three things you most enjoyed about placement?

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

15. What are the three things you liked least about placement?

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

16. Do you feel you now have a clearer idea of what being a Quantity Surveyor involves?

    Fully   **Partially**   **Poorly**   **Not at all**

    Please provide the reasons for your response below:

17. Do you still intend to be a Quantity Surveyor?

      Definitely   **Possibly**   **Definitely Not**

      Please provide the reasons for your response below:

SECTION 4   PERSONAL INFORMATION

18. Age   **17-20**   **21-25**   **25-30**   **30+**
                                        (circle as appropriate)

19. Male   **Female**   **(circle as appropriate)**

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. It will only be used for the purposes of my research and your responses will not be disclosed to any other party for any other purpose.

If you would be willing to participate in a further interview session, please complete the box below:

Yes, I would be willing to participate in a short interview:

    Name:

    e-mail:

Irene Bonnar   **February 2005**

EdD THESIS   APPENDIX D.2

<u>**INTERVIEW : LEVEL 3 FEBRUARY 2005**</u>

- **Do you think Level 2 is an appropriate point to undertake professional placement?   Why (not)?**

- **Do you feel the professional placement experience has contributed to your learning?**

  YES

  NO

- **Why?   In what ways?**

- **What were the positives you took from the experience?**

- **What were the negatives?**

- **Have you retained links with your placement employer on return to University?   If so,   Why (not)?   And in what ways?**

- **How did you see yourself before you went to placement? (eg as a student?)**

- **How do you see yourself now? (ie as a student or a surveyor?)   Why?**

- **If you now see yourself differently, what do you think are the reasons for this change?**

- **Did you register with RICS for APC during placement?   Why (not)?**

- **Do you intend to take the APC and gain corporate membership of RICS? Why (not)?**

- **Do you think the QS has/should have professional status? Why (not)?**

- **Is professional status important?   Why (not)?**

- **Any other observations/comments/views?**