Pedagogic Engagement with Literature:

How a Pedagogic Journal Club became a Higher Education Community of Practice

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Thesis submitted for the qualification of Doctor of Education

University of Warwick

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March 2022

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Acknowledgements

I acknowledge here those nearest and dearest to me; they put up with minimal amounts of my time and energy during the latter stages of completion, with grace and good humour. They provided me with the support to continue despite what we have all been through. They have lived these difficult times too; any reward or recognition awarded to me owes a debt of gratitude to their selflessness.

I was also wonderfully lucky to work with the dedicated participants of the action, the staff at the University of Warwick and the supportive leadership team of WIHEA. These colleagues, some of whom I now call friends, all of whom made the action wonderfully enjoyable, gave their time and energies freely. To them, I offer my sincere thanks. Specific mention should be made of Dr John Thornby, a former colleague without whose encouragement I would not have embarked upon the EdD in the first instance. My supervisor Dr Justine Mercer joined me as the action was nearing completion; both Dr Mercer and my examiners asked the academic questions needed in order to form the final thesis, although all errors are wholly owned by me. Justine also supported me personally with care and professionalism and for this too, she has my thanks.

The submission date for my thesis was supposed to be 2020, but I took a period of temporary withdrawal, meaning that the findings, although still relevant in 2022, are published somewhat later than anticipated. My daughter Seren was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in December 2018, when she was aged just six. Our lives shattered. Her treatment continued for two and a half years, through a global pandemic, eventually ending in May 2021. I would like to thank those that research, and fund research, into childhood cancer specifically CCLG. I also wish to thank the staff at Birmingham Children's Hospital oncology department, not in relation to this thesis, but simply because their work deserves to be publicly acknowledged at any and every opportunity.

Treatment is long and gruelling, as is the process of rebuilding our lives which, in many ways is still a work in progress. I mention this not as an excuse for not completing in 2020 but to highlight this rebuilding, as a reason for completing. Seren showed huge amounts of determination and strength throughout her ordeal and together we continued somehow, to put one foot in front of the other during the darkest of times. It is because of her that I found the strength to continue, she is why this thesis exists. In Welsh, Seren means star. I dedicate this manuscript, and all my future endeavours to Seren who was and always will be, my starlight.

Declaration

I declare that the thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the impact of a pedagogic journal club (PJC) for teaching-focussed staff at a research-intensive UK university in light of sector-specific drivers such as the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) and the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). A three-year cycle of action research was undertaken and the impact of the PJC on individuals who attended examined: with reference to teaching practice; promotion and professional recognition; confidence; identity, and pedagogic engagement with literature (PedEL). The impact on the wider university community in terms of module and course design, interdisciplinary collaboration and networking, as well as how the dissemination of new knowledge affected the perceived value of teaching-focussed activity, is discussed.

Conducted within a pragmatist paradigm, data were gathered at regular intervals via memoing, mixed method questionnaires and participant unstructured interviews. Interrogation of the literature problematised 'scholarship of teaching and learning' (SoTL) and the difficulties faced when engaging staff in it. Differences between 'professional learning community' and 'community of practice' were expounded demonstrating the paucity of research concerning theoretical understanding of communities in HEIs. Professional development was explored, focusing on its often-ineffective design, as well as highlighting issues that teaching-focussed professional development can face in a research-intensive institution.

The conclusion of this thesis primarily concerns the creation of the pedagogic journal club (PJC) as a vehicle for dialogic pedagogic engagement with literature, which was found to engender an effective professional development community in an HE setting. Guidance on how to create a PJC is provided for HEIs to explore in their own settings. Conclusions are also made around the reconceptualising of SoTL with pedagogic engagement with literature (PedEL) sitting between the two established forms of SoTL: pedagogic development (PedD) and pedagogic research (PedR). Thus, creating a new definitional framework that HEIs can adapt to their own context and practices. Creation of a new context specific Higher Education Community of Practice (HECoP) is also reported on with respect to membership, leadership, organisational culture and knowledge sharing. Participants and the researcher became boundary spanners

within the institution and time is devoted in this publication to the reflexive nature of action research. Knowledge generated by the participants changes practice and policy and this publication contributes a required, robust record of action research methodology.

Keywords: higher education; community of practice; professional development; professional learning; scholarship of teaching and learning; TEF; pedagogic engagement with literature (PedEL); HECoP; evidence-informed practice; dialogic; action research.

Abbreviations

BEI	British Education Index
BERA	British Education Research Association
CPD	Continued/ing Professional Development
EIGL	Exploratory Inter-Generational Learning
EIP	Evidence-informed Practice
ERIC	Education Resources Information Centre
CoP	Community of Practice
FHEA	Fellow of the Higher Education Academy
GS	Google Scholar
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HECoP	Higher Education Community of Practice
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
NSS	National Student Survey
OfS	Office for Students
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PD	Professional Development
PedD	Pedagogic Development
PedEL	Pedagogic Engagement with Literature
PedR	Pedagogic Research
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PJC	Pedagogic Journal Club
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PLD	Professional Learning and Development
PK	Pedagogic Knowledge
SFHEA	Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy
SoTL	Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
TC	Teacher Communities
TEF	Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework
UKPSF	United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework
WIHEA	Warwick International Higher Education Academy
WoS	Web of Science

Chapter 1: Terms and values

1.1 Chapter outline

"A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (Malterud, 2001, p. 483–484)

This first chapter will provide an introduction to me and to some of the terminology regularly used in research in higher education into professional development (PD).

Kuhn suggests that specific factors, such as biography and personality of scientists, play an important role in their choice of paradigm (Firinci, 2016). This chapter provides a biography in order to give the reader an understanding of my values and history. However, a warning comes from Bridget Somekh (1995, cited in Leitch & Day, 2000) that "Too much emphasis on the importance of self in action research can distract the practitioner from the substantive focus of the study. This may be an effective form of therapy, but it is difficult to call it research" (ibid p. 348). With this in mind, I aim for brevity.

I undertook this action research (AR) as a practitioner researcher, within a higher education institution (HEI), and carried out insider research that generated a change in practice. Action research applied in professional practice settings is often reported as having a strong collaborative component and a decidedly "insider" focus to it (Herr and Anderson, 2014). Considering the methodological stance taken throughout the action research design, reflection and reflexivity are required; this includes the cycle of research and the re framing of research questions, as well as a narrative style of reporting (McNiff, 2017). I use "I" in my research writing and, in order to avoid the pitfalls of personal over involvement and object interference, aim for a transparency of reflexivity throughout. My research is not auto ethnographic, but it may in part exist as an example of "embracing vulnerability with purpose" (Denzin, 2014, p. 20) due to this reflexivity. Berger observes that reflexivity is "commonly viewed as the process of continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation" (Berger, 2015, p. 220). This account then, contains not only commentary about the process and procedures, but also an awareness of my transformation during the EdD journey.

1.2 Use of terms

This action research aims to engage staff with educational research and literature relating to education and pedagogy, awarding value to pedagogic educational research engagement, and creating an effective community for dialogic professional development. Throughout this thesis I will use pedagogic literature as an umbrella term to refer to any and all literature relating to education and pedagogy in both schools and HEIs, including research findings. The term pedagogic research will be reserved for the act of conducting or engaging in research. Pedagogic literature is also used in places as an umbrella term for engaging with literature that may not be directly pedagogic but is viewed by participants with a pedagogic focus.

It is vital that teaching-focussed staff are supported to improve their teaching in ways which benefit both themselves and the institutions in which they work. I use 'teaching-focussed' to refer to staff throughout as, similarly to Fung and Gordon (2016), I and many of the participants in this AR, view the term 'teaching only' as both limiting and pejorative. There is an awareness too, that teaching-focussed can also apply to those who aren't only teaching but are sometimes teaching-focussed and sometimes research-focussed.

Terminology around professional development (PD) is wide ranging (Saroyan and Trigwell, 2015a; Sancar, Atal and Deryakulu, 2021) and has a number of variations and terms which include continuing professional development (CPD) professional learning (PL) and many others often used synonymously. Increasingly, teaching professionals are interested in their learning, and it has been argued that PL better reflects the kinds of experiences that are effective for staff (Timperley and Alton-Lee, 2008; Stoll, Harris and Handscomb, 2012; King, 2014; Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner, 2017). Here I use PD as a general term as it is dominant in the literature and in this particular work there is career development as well as learning as a focus. This should not be seen as an unwillingness to join with many educationalists who would like to see professional learning, as the main definition, come to the fore; the term professional learning and development (PLD) may be acceptable in the future.

1.3 My values and career

1.3.1 Values

I have devoted much of my career to, and hold in high regard, the principal of co-constructing opportunities for the improvement of learning and teaching, the progress of students and the PD of colleagues.

Action research is a value laden enquiry that gives meaning and purpose to our lives as educators. It results in improvements which can be explained in immediate professional terms and is by definition insider research, with the implication that the researcher will engage in a continuing critique of their own values throughout (Hargreaves, 1995; Lomax, 2007; McNiff et al., 2011).

As someone who sees their call to educate as a vocation, value laden research is important to me but, no more important than research findings that are practically applicable.

“One of the strengths of action research as a cross cultural tool is that the research starts with the researchers own values.” (Briggs et al., 2007, p. 162)

1.3.2 My early career

I began as a positivist researcher in the field of Marine biology, specifically coral reef conservation and the effects of dynamite fishing in the Philippine archipelagos. I then completed a post graduate certificate in education (PGCE) and taught science in secondary schools for 12 years from 2002 - 2014. During that time, I completed the Leading from the Middle, National College of Teachers-accredited programme and was named lead science teacher for my local education authority. I moved from head of key stage 4 science to assistant head of sixth form, eventually joining the school leadership team as Director of Communications.

These professional accreditations and promotions involved CPD in my subject and pedagogic knowledge (PK). Indeed, I became a Chartered Science Teacher through the Association of Science Educators; positivist research is something I have worked with, and lived by, for many years. I was recognised as an outstanding teacher, both by my peers and by Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), becoming involved in leading and organising professional development for others throughout my career. I had responsibility for trainee and newly

qualified teacher development, as well as whole school responsibility for improving practice, as part of a cross-curricular staff team, regularly leading PD opportunities for 80-100 staff members. My work particularly focussed on teacher effectiveness and school improvements through implementation of pedagogic literature in the secondary education environment.

To add context, the school in which I spent a significant part of my career was judged as Requires Improvement (RI) by OFSTED for a number of years. My and my colleagues' teaching was subjected to increased scrutiny but also supported with additional funding and opportunity to engage with pedagogic literature. OFSTED placed an emphasis on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) at the time and so this was one of the primary drivers of the school improvement plan.

OFSTED scrutiny, of course, brought challenges. However, working in difficult conditions, and being responsible for teaching improvement, provided a good grounding for becoming an action researcher. I understood how easily people can feel that things are done to them rather than with them. I also knew and had experience of how transformational groups of people, can be. The action research projects I was undertaking, as part of the school leadership team responsible for evidence-informed practice, were in fact studies situated in pragmatism. They would not, of course, stand up to the scrutiny of methodology that is required for publication, but I was able to undertake action research for change, which was supported by leadership, valued by students and welcomed by colleagues. For that opportunity I am grateful.

1.3.3 Entering HEI

I expected, when I arrived in a research-focussed Russel Group HEI, that Evidence-Informed Practice (EIP) would be the norm, and that it would be significantly more prevalent than it was in schools. Evidence informed practice here used to mean "practice that is influenced by robust research evidence" (Coldwell *et al*., 2017 p.5) and I envisaged being able to easily engage in this type of PD activity and as such improve my practice further. However, as a member of teaching-focussed staff, I struggled to find any PD opportunities which embedded EIP. No doubt individuals were utilising research to deliver outstanding teaching; there were many National Teaching Fellows at Warwick when I arrived and some excellent sector leading teaching practice. However, opportunity to engage with research for PD at an institutional level, other than my own individual practice, was not available.

In 2015, the reward and recognition for engaging with literature for development was not available, with the promotion criteria at the time not recognising teaching activity at any level

higher than Senior Teaching Fellow. I had moved from a professional context, where I was viewed as an expert who was valued, to being a slightly undervalued member of a research-focussed establishment.

In 2014, it was apparent that teaching, to which I had dedicated most of my professional life, was the poor relation of research, both in terms of professional activity and academic reputation. I was awarded both the Warwick Award for Teaching Excellence (WATE) in 2015/16 and referred to by senior male academics as "that girl that teaches". This partly was a driver in my decision to complete a doctoral qualification; it also encouraged me to in 2016 join the team responsible for creating the rationale for a new promotion criterion, which now recognise teaching. In many ways, the action research for me became synonymous with my own PD (Townsend 2012) and there is no doubt that part of the professional doctorate process for me was, as Costley (2013, p. 7) describes, *"a means by which mid-to-late career learners can become accepted in professional communities as leading thinkers in their fields."* I didn't feel that teaching excellence would demonstrate my potential to the institution and many colleagues felt this limitation too. The main focus of the action research therefore, was opportunity; as Jean McNiff (2013) notes, for participants and me to not only engage in *"…action research [for] problem-identification or problem-solving, but [for] realizing human potential"* (p. 35).

1.4 Research Questions

The idea for the research came from an identified need, my contextual understanding of professional development and engagement with literature and multiple engagements with members of Warwick's teaching-focussed community during 2015/16. Additionally, the literature surrounding PLCs, CoPs SoTL, journal clubs, action research and education research in HEIs informed the development of the action over the life of the iterations, explained more fully in [4.5.1]. The action was participatory, and themes raised by participants during the course of the action led the direction of the action. Action research is often driven by *"a situation, a phenomenon, a researcher', rather than specific research questions"* (Peim 2018, p.97). Participatory reframing developed the RQs over time. The specific research questions for this thesis are recorded here as:

To what extent did the Pedagogic Journal Club engender an effective professional development community in an HE setting?

1) What was the impact, if any, of the PJC on the individuals who attended?
   Does PJC activity lead to:
   i) changes to teaching practice by the individual?
   ii) promotion or professional recognition?
   iii) increase confidence?
   iv) a change in the individual's identity?
   v) engagement with literature?

2) What was the impact, if any, of the PJC on the wider community?
   Does PJC activity affect:
   i) modules and courses?
   ii) interdisciplinary collaboration and networking?
   iii) the perceived value of teaching-focussed activity?

1.5 A brief introduction to the PJC

The Pedagogical Journal Club (PJC) is a regular bi-monthly meeting where staff, across all faculties, meet to discuss an area of pedagogical interest informed by a small number of leading publications.

The meetings are participatory and action-oriented with an emphasis on the implications for practice and understanding applicability in the differing departmental contexts. There is an emphasis on building professional learning in a community, both for staff development and to positively impact student experience.

The PJC was set up initially to:

- Facilitate debate and action on key and emerging educational issues so as to enhance the pedagogical professional development of colleagues.
- Empower colleagues to deliver changes in their own teaching and in departmental approaches and systems.
- Create a community of practice around rigorous pedagogical debate, scholarship and research.
- Connect good practice and robust research to allow colleagues to better demonstrate the rigour and effectiveness of their pedagogical choices.

- Engage colleagues in inter-disciplinary discussions which illuminate the similarities and differences between disciplines, creating enhanced opportunities for new insights and practices which enhance student experience.
- Promote pedagogic research both as an effective resource for innovation as well as an opportunity to disseminate the excellent practice already established at Warwick.

Aside from the willingly given time and energy of attendees, there were few resources required to support the PJC: a room booking for two hours (six times a year), refreshments and some minor printing costs.

The professional development approach of the PJC, was to engage staff in transformative PD (Figure 1), linking a community of practice to action research and engagement, with literature, as cited by Kennedy (2014).

> *"Instead of using 'action research' as an illustration, I have chosen to illustrate the transformative category through 'collaborative professional inquiry models'. By collaborative professional inquiry, I mean all models and experiences that include an element of collaborative problem identification and subsequent activity, where the subsequent activity involves inquiring into one's own practice and understanding more about other practice, perhaps through engagement with existing research."*(Kennedy, 2014, p. 693)

Purpose of Model	**Examples of models of CPD which may fit within this category**
Transmissive	Training models Deficit models Cascade model
Malleable	Award-bearing models Standards-based models Coaching/mentoring models Community of practice models
Transformative	Collaborative professional inquiry models

Increasing capacity for professional autonomy and teacher agency ↓

Figure 1 Spectrum of CPD models from Kennedy (2014 p.693)

The initial driver was to create a PD opportunity, led by the teaching staff, which would create a supportive environment for colleagues to meet regularly to understand more about their practice through engagement with existing research. To ensure that the topics and resources were closely linked to issues and aspirations for the group, selection of the topics was driven by participants. Over the lifetime of the group, the subject matter evolved and became more research and scholarship oriented as the participants became more interested in producing and in engaging in pedagogic research.

Papers were made available for download for a wider audience after the meetings and, where possible, a digest of the discussion was created to add context and disseminate discussion to the wider group.

1.6 Chapter summary

Having described the terms to be used, this chapter then moves onto my values as a teaching-focussed professional and a brief history of my career prior to entering HEI. Outlining my values and career, up to the point of beginning the action research, provides insight and context. Section 1.3 demonstrates how my history values and initial HEI experience generated the desire to conduct transformative action, with 1.5 providing a brief introduction to the PJC for the reader; further exposition of the PJC can be found in section 4.6.

Chapter 2: Contextual information

2.1 Chapter outline

At the University of Warwick in 2015/16, despite the drivers of awards and a new set of promotion criteria, colleagues were still reporting a lack of opportunity to engage in PD focussed on EIP in a way that was required by the professional bodies and the new promotion criteria. Many also reported being unfamiliar with educational research and, in conversation, would struggle to identify their evidence-informed practice despite in many cases demonstrating it. Many wanted to transform this situation, for themselves and for others, and the idea for action research was born. *"The first step is to examine the idea carefully in the light of the means available."* (Lewin, 1946, p. 37)

The following sections will consider the HEI in which the research was conducted, as well as the current landscape in HEIs. The aim is to demonstrate the careful examination of the idea, provide the broader educational and social context and a rationale for the development of the research questions [1.4].

2.2 HEIs, teaching staff development and the UKPSF

The publication of the Dearing Report (1997) is widely recognised as a key moment in the UK government's attempts to re-focus attention upon the nature and quality of teaching and learning in universities (Nicholls, 2005, p. 612; Trowler, Fanghanel and Wareham, 2005, p. 428; Cashmore, Cane and Cane, 2013, p. 3); it called for professional training for university lecturers, "*We recommend that institutions of higher education begin immediately to develop or seek access to programmes for teacher training of their staff, if they do not have them, and that all institutions seek national accreditation of such programmes from the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education"* (Dearing 1997, p.26)

At the time, the Dearing Report was seen as a criticism of HEI teaching standards: Cambridge University replied that *"the implication of some of the analysis in the Report that university teaching in general lacks professionalism is strongly challenged."* (Cambridge University, 1997). In 2007 nothing much had changed, and Dearing was "*disappointed that academics themselves did not seize on the idea of a professional institute, run and owned by them, awarding associate and full fellowship memberships in recognition of their own profession and their achievement within it.* (Dearing 2007, p. 178).

Currently, the body supporting staff and the development of teaching excellence in HEIs is the Higher Education Academy (HEA) which sits within Advance HE. The United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) was created in 2006 and reviewed in 2011. It is the benchmark of teaching success within HE that Dearing called for and, despite the view of some HEIs that they did not require a body to enhance the professionalism of its teaching staff, Advance HE the HEA and the UKPSF specifically contribute exactly that (Advance HE, 2011; Pritchard and Mcgowan, 2016).

However, as late as 2013 Ng & Pemberton, when looking at developing research communities in HEIs, reported the widely accepted fact that:

> *"Although teaching is often seen as the most fundamental function carried out by universities…the prestige of faculty members and the reputations of institutions, whether on a departmental or university level, rest increasingly on [research]."*(Ng and Pemberton, 2013, p. 1522)

In 2015, Jo Johnson, Minister for Higher education in the UK, began discussing a drive for teaching to be at the heart of Higher Education (Johnson, 2015a, 2015b). There was still evidence however, of HEIs discussing the importance of teaching whilst making few changes that supported teaching or teaching staff. Rewards for individuals involved in developing excellent teaching were not comparable, nor in some cases available, in the same way as they were for research. The main reward for staff is promotion (Fung and Gordon, 2016) which was still mostly dependant on research accolades rather than on teaching accolades. "*Research had become the key activity for individuals looking for job security and career progression to the highest professional grades*" (Locke, 2014, p. 4). The REF too, which determines an academics 'worth', has played a part in diminishing teaching with Cashmore *et al*, (2013) suggesting that it has further weakened the status of teaching and teaching enhancement in higher education (excluding evidence of impact teaching within the researcher's own institution).

Students in 2015/16 were citing the standard of teaching in HEIs as a concern. The HEPI-HEA Student Academic Experience Survey of 2016 concluded that HEIs must *"provide all staff involved in teaching with opportunities for initial and continuing professional development throughout their teaching careers to help them engage students as innovatively and effectively as possible"* (Neves and Hillman, 2016). Students saw value in staff who can demonstrate continuing PD in teaching and subject knowledge but weren't seeing it in many research-focussed institutions. Change was slow in terms of teaching quality, as well as recognition and reward.

It was in this environment that the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) was launched.

2.3 Measuring teaching excellence: The TEF

"The TEF is part of an ongoing and controversial raft of larger reforms of the English system of higher education" (Charles, 2018).

In May 2016, the higher education White Paper (BIS, 2016) committed the government to the introduction of a new system for recognising excellent teaching in higher education. The TEF seeks to evaluate and classify the work of teaching staff and teaching academics (BIS, 2015; DfE, 2017), requiring HEIs with undergraduate teaching to report on the excellence of their teaching. This is then graded into a gold, silver or bronze award and published for prospective students and used for ranking institutions.

The reporting of teaching quality in this way, is similar to that OFSTED requires of schools (Buchanan, 2015) and that the REF requires of research activity (Locke, 2014). Whilst the pursuit of excellence for the benefit of student experience was welcomed and supported by HEIs, government suggested that *"there is a need to provide greater clarity about what we are looking for [in the TEF] and how we intended to measure it"* and conceded, even before the TEF publication, that *"there is no one broadly accepted definition of "teaching excellence"'*(BIS, 2015, p. 18,21). Making judgements of quality, or indeed excellence, is difficult.

Dr Tim Bradshaw acting Director of the Russell Group was reported in The Guardian as saying; *"The Russell Group said the TEF was not a measure of "absolute quality". We need to recognise that developing a robust TEF that is truly reflective of the UK's excellent higher education sector will take time"* (Weale, 2017). With Sir Christopher Snowden in the same article suggesting that *"It is hard to have confidence in a teaching excellence framework which appears devoid of any meaningful assessment of teaching,"* (Weale, 2017).

Mark (2013) and Kneale *et al* (2016) report that in the evolving HE landscape, students are frequently positioned as customers; this is often referred to as the marketisation of HE (Marginson, 2016; Hall, 2017). It is becoming ever more important, in light of the policy changes which are increasing competition, that teaching quality needs to improve in order to meet demand and Botham observes that HE in the UK is increasingly focusing its attention on teaching and learning practice (Botham, 2018b, 2018a) for this reason. The TEF brings challenges with some suggesting that it is *"a landmark initiative designed to further embed a*

neoliberal audit and monitoring culture into Higher Education…unlikely to bring about teaching excellence" (Rudd, 2017, p. 59)

Coming from secondary education, I was not surprised by the backlash the TEF received; I was used to inferior metrics being used by OFSTED to judge teaching quality. However, OFSTED visit schools and, despite issues with accuracy of observations, they witness the practice of teaching in person. TEF shows no indication of following suit with Johnson (2015a) stating that the TEF required a light touch approach.

There is also an awareness that the TEF is, in fact, a hyperreal representation (Canning, 2019) of something which does not exist. Canning states that the TEF is *"detached from both reality and representation of the practice of teaching in higher education and the evaluation/assessment of that teaching"* (Canning, 2019, p. 322). When HEI leaders, and government alike, recognise that the TEF is neither concrete nor a measure of teaching excellence, it can lead to *"cognitive dissonance"* (Healey, Flint and Harrington, 2014, p. 58). There is concern that the TEF will lead neither to increased student experience nor attainment, just additional workload for staff, which may, in turn, reduce pedagogic innovation. The TEF, worryingly, may have "provide[d] a blunt instrument for discriminating the academic offer to students and cause[d] stress and potential tension for academic staff due to the requirement to be successful in both REF and TEF terms*"* (Kneale, 2018). With this knowledge, the TEF has challenges to overcome.

2.3.1 Warwick: THE rankings and the TEF

Warwick is a UK research intensive Russell group university: "Academically, the university is known for its commitment to research. Warwick maintains around 30 academic departments, organised into four faculties: Arts, Medicine, Science and Social Science" (THE, 2021) . Warwick was *ranked* 80th in the world with 18,529 students in 2015-16 (THE, 2016) and *77th in the world with 21,777 students in 2020-21"* (THE, 2021).

Metrics are often used to rank institutions [appendix 8] and these ranking tables are published annually by a number of groups using a range of metrics. A combination of the Complete, the Guardian and the Times/Sunday Times tables are compiled into the Times Higher Education Table of Tables published each year. Using the results of this published (Table 1), over the last five years Warwick has been ranked as:

Table 1 The THE Table of Tables 2015-2021

Year	2015/16	206/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Warwick's UK ranking	6	8	9	=8	10	10

The metrics for these rankings are varied [appendix 8] and issues exist too around the metrics applied particularly to measure teaching excellence. The Times Higher Education methodology uses income, staff student ratios and reputation survey data rather than assessing the quality of teaching (Figure 2) Times Higher Education, (2021).

Considering these metrics, the current rankings do little to inform potential students of the quality of teaching that they may receive at any particular HEI. The TEF then, could offer a solution.

It is not compulsory to engage with the TEF; however, the university submitted their TEF documents in 2017 resulting in the university being awarded TEF Silver. Stuart Croft, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Warwick, publicly stated his unhappiness with the metrics used in the TEF to measure teaching quality in an open letter to the Times Higher Education paper stating:

> *"On 26 January, the University of Warwick, like other English universities, put in its teaching excellence framework (TEF) submission. It was with mixed feelings – mixed because, although we agree with the fundamental proposition that universities should provide high-quality teaching, we don't believe that the TEF will measure that."* (Croft, 2017).

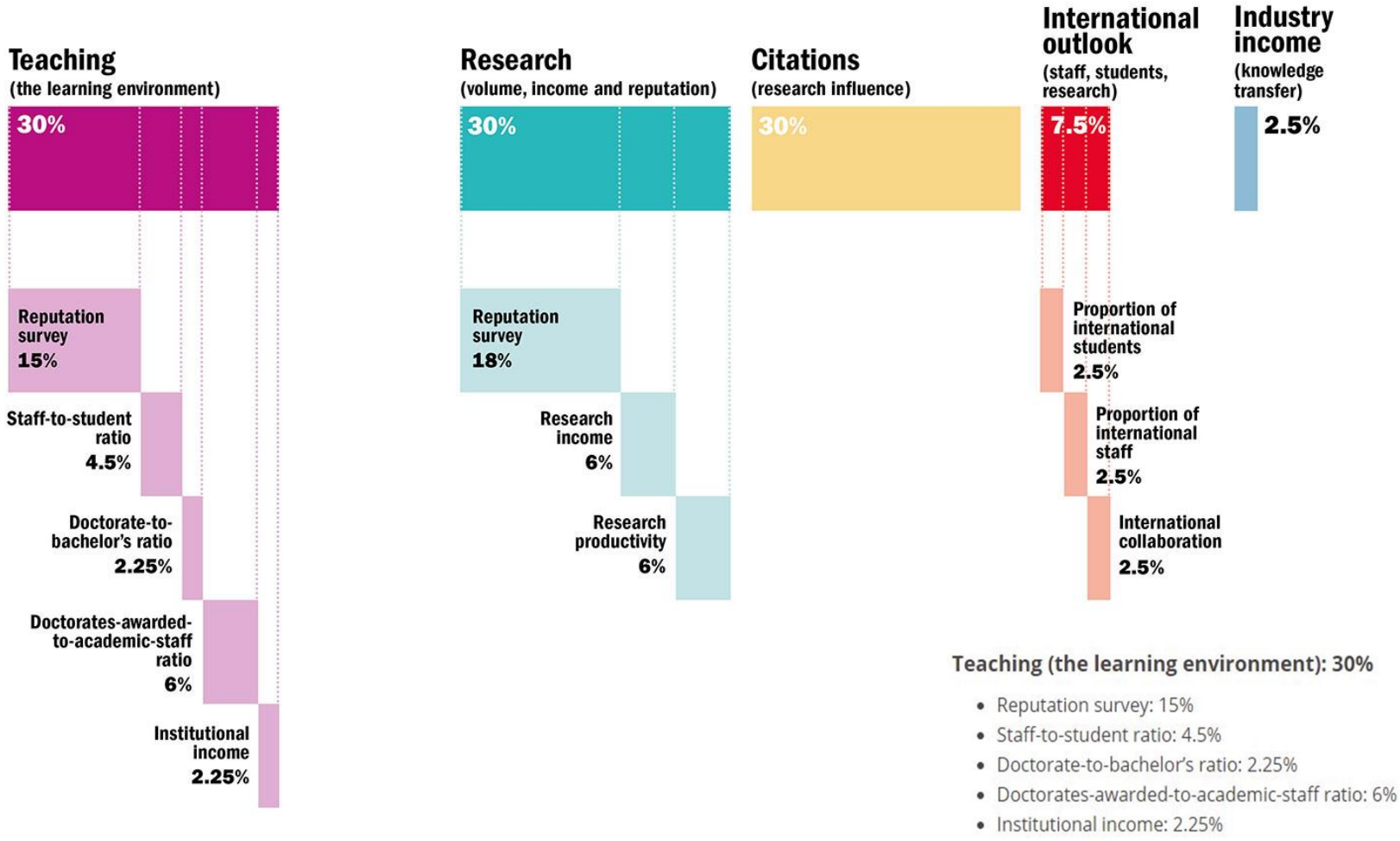


Figure 2 THE world ranking methodology for teaching 2021

2.3.2 TEF and the measurement of excellence, or not

Up until 2018 the sector had a body concerned with improving teaching: The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). However, a 2014 report into its role in the enhancement of teaching and learning concluded that there were issues with HEFCE activity which "tended to focus on innovations and educational specialists rather than developing everyday university teaching and teachers. Focussing on raising the profile of, and rewarding, teaching rather than on the strategic development of teaching and learning across the sector" (Trowler, Ashwin and Saunders, 2014, p. 4).

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 created the Office for Students (OfS), in part, to attempt to replace some of the activity of HEFCE. They produced a new regulatory framework for higher education in order to create a scheme to give ratings of quality, the Teaching Excellence for Students Framework (TEF).

The OfS state that TEF ratings are linked to *quality* rather than *excellence* of teaching, despite its title.

> ***"****Rating the quality of, and the standards applied, higher education*
>
> *(1)The OfS may make arrangements for a scheme to give ratings—*
>
> *(a)to English higher to education providers regarding the quality of, and the standards applied to, higher education that they provide where they apply for such a rating,"* (*Higher Education and Research Act*, 2017)

The 2011 White Paper on higher education, which began the call for "put[ting] excellent teaching back at the heart of every student's university experience" (BIS, 2011), references Graham Gibbs's report on Dimension of Quality. Gibbs speaks of quality in teaching measured by:

> *"Class size, Cohort size, Extent of close contact with academics, Levels of student effort and engagement, Volume, promptness and usefulness of student feedback, Proportion of teaching undertaken by full-time academics and proportion of those with postgraduate teaching qualification."* (Gibbs, 2010, p. 2).

Going even further, Gibbs says that:

> *"The process variables that best predict gains are not to do with the facilities themselves, or to do with student satisfaction with these facilities, but concern a small*

> *range of fairly well-understood pedagogical practices that engender student engagement."* (Gibbs, 2010, p. 5)

High quality teaching and learning therefore, can be demonstrated through the use of well understood pedagogical practices by staff which engender engagement. In order to provide our students with quality learning this should be our aim along with effective feedback and ensuring staff are qualified to teach. However, none of the dimensions of teaching quality identified by Gibbs are currently evaluated in the measurements for the TEF (Charles, 2018) and what is reported on by the TEF is this:

> "…*how many students continue their course from one year to the next, graduate-level employment outcomes, and students' views about their experience (gathered in the annual National Student Survey). The TEF takes into account the mix of student characteristics, entry qualifications and subjects at each higher education provider*." (OfS, 2019).

Many think that these are not effective measures, and there is concern amongst universities and students that its metrics measure neither excellence nor quality of teaching.

In their annual review 2020 the OfS themselves wrote that "We are consulting on whether our requirements for quality are sufficiently demanding to ensure that all students receive a good education and successful outcomes"(OfS, 2020).

It was announced in 2016 that the 2017 TEF metrics would also include the number of staff awarded fellowship of the HEA, as well as the numbers awarded National Teaching Fellowship (NTF). This became a significant driver in HEIs support for HEA fellowship. Interestingly, these awards also count as a teaching qualification in the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data [appendix 5] and so staff gaining fellowships became valuable to the institution. Research undertaken by Advance HE in 2017 suggested that there was a statistically significant relationship between references to HEA Fellowship and institutions awarded 'gold' and 'silver' (Savage, 2019; Matthews and Dobbins, 2021).

The TEF's appearance, some argue, is enhancing the visibility of teaching and driving reforms such as promotion criteria overhaul, and support for gaining HEA fellowship. Excellent teaching staff, their fellowship of the HEA, and the extent to which they engage with the UKPSF, can then make a difference to an institution's TEF award. Some might suggest we are returning to issues of teaching promotion over supporting teaching development, highlighted by Trowler et al (2014).

Teaching quality or excellence may not be accurately measured by the TEF but it is seen as an indicator of excellence, and whether we like it or not, the TEF is something which prospective students are engaging with (UCAS, 2021) as it directly affects student application choices. Teaching excellence now has value, it has capital. We need to remember that the "TEF itself is without scholarly underpinning and does not seek to promote pedagogic research, nor encourage scholarly approaches to developing teaching" (Canning, 2019, p. 322) but we may be able to use the TEF to our advantage. If we can capitalise on the opportunity it affords by developing quality PD opportunities for staff, with a focus on the development of excellent teaching through the UKSF and HEA fellowship opportunity, we may be able to harness recognition and reward to promote development.

In order to demonstrate that staff meet the criteria for HEA fellowship, they are required to evidence the UK Professional Standards Framework descriptors. By 2016, when this action research started, over 100 institutions had HEA accredited PD schemes in place, including Warwick. However, staff were reporting limited opportunity to engage in some of the activity required by the UKPSF. There was awareness too that

> *"The systems of promotion and remuneration are also, in most HE systems, skewed towards scientific outputs rather than teaching performance. All this results in a lack of motivation for academics to learn and innovate with regard to their teaching."*
> (Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, 2019, p. 10)

Locke (2014) had also reported that, in the UK, there were few identifiable promotions to senior positions solely on the basis of teaching excellence and, when reading Locke's 2014 report, it becomes hard to argue against the TEF as a driver for PD and professionalism. Matthews and Dobbins (2021) provide a detailed look at the TEF and the HEA fellowship programme, identifying them as significant drivers for change in HEIs and so, whilst being aware of the issues with the TEF, it is by keeping a focus on the tactical opportunity of the TEF (Charles, 2018), rather than its limitations, that this research exists.

2.3.3 Qualification, professional capital and PD

In 2015, Johnson spoke of "delivering a teaching excellence framework that creates incentives for universities to devote as much attention to the quality of teaching as fee-paying students and prospective employers have a right to expect" (Johnson, 2015b). There was a monetarising

of teaching which (Gibbs *et al.*, 2017; Perry, Boylan and Booth, 2019) suggest established the extrinsic value of teaching firmly in the consciousness of students and institutions.

Those not aware of the demands of the profession may argue that teaching is technically simple: as long as you are passionate and enthusiastic then it is actually easy teach and so anyone can do it. This along with the rise of sessional or casual teaching staff, whose PD is often overlooked (Hitch, Mahoney and Macfarlane, 2018; Hattam and Weiler, 2021), is something of a concern as is the rise of unqualified teachers, the use of untrained PhD students or those with no teaching experience or training.

The increasing emphasis on metrics and measures of teaching quality, for use as performance targets for institutions, academic departments and individuals alike, is leading to a diversification of both the research and teaching function (Locke, 2012), creating more teaching-focussed jobs in HE. The Association of University Teachers reports that of 148,275 academic positions held during 2003-4, 20% were teaching-focussed (AUT, 2005). By 2009-10, this percentage had risen to 25.5% of the UK academic workforce (HESA, 2011). 26.1% of all academic staff during the 2015/16 academic year were teaching-focussed (HESA, 2018), increasing to 32% in 2021 (HESA, 2021b). There are then, a growing number of teaching-focussed staff in HEIs (Tierney, 2020) with 10,165 more part-time teaching-focussed staff in HEIs and 9,405 more full-time teaching-focussed staff since 2015/16 (table 2), an increase far higher than research only roles.

Table 2 Numbers of full-time and part-time staff from 2015-2020 by academic function in UK HEIs from HESA 2021

	Teaching Only		Teaching and Research		Research Only	
	Part time	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time	Full time
2015/16	39,555	13,415	18,325	80,305	8,355	40,290
2016/17	40,590	15,540	18,650	81,515	8,735	40,350
2017/18	43,750	17,300	18,205	81,915	8,850	40,665
2018/19	46,430	19,925	17,720	80,880	9,085	41,775
2019/2020	49,720	22,820	17,255	80,830	9,430	42,080
Change	10,165	9,405	-1,070	525	1,075	1,790

Teachers who have teaching qualifications have been found to be rated more highly by their students than teachers who have no such qualification (Nasr, Gillett and Booth, 1996; Gibbs, 2010; Mountford-Zimdars *et al.*, 2015). Table 3 shows how many Warwick teaching staff had qualifications as accepted by HESA (2021a) in 2019/20 suggesting that 50% of the staff had either no qualification or an unknown qualification status.

In 2013 A European Commission High Level Group recommended pedagogic training for everyone teaching in Higher Education by 2020 with mandatory continuing PD (Fahnert, 2015, p. 3).

Table 3 (HESA, 2021b)*Teaching qualifications held by staff 2019/20*

HE Provider	Teaching qualification held	No teaching qualification held	Not known	Total
Total UK	89,535	44,995	19,465	153,990
University of Warwick	1,155	935	230	**2,320**

However, by 2017 the European commission found that still

> "*Too many higher education teachers have received little or no pedagogical training and systematic investment in teachers' continuous professional development remains the exception. National and institutional strategies to improve career opportunities and rewards for good teachers are becoming more common but are far from standard."* (European Commission, 2017, p. 5).

Additionally, it is reported that staff are "rarely obliged to prove their teaching competences through any formal certification*"* (Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, 2019, p. 10).

The OfS annual review 2020 reported that "high-quality teaching and learning are among the most important things students expect from their degree*"* (OfS, 2020) with 94% of students reporting that 'quality of teaching' was a very important factor when demonstrating value for money. There is good evidence too, that teacher quality is the most important factor for learning and attainment (Day *et al.*, 2006; Barber and Mourshed, 2007; Slater, Davies and Burgess, 2012).

Studies have found that many early-career academics feel ill-prepared for teaching and are unaware of its demands (Cilliers and Herman, 2010; Hancock *et al.*, 2016). Condon et al., (2016) also noted, that teachers who engage in PD become better teachers. Part-time academics need embedded and contextual PD, allowing them to exercise their agency and determine their own

needs, not drown them in “menial administrative work” (Adiningrum, Sturm and Kensington-Miller, 2019, p. 118). It is understood then, that without PD for all teaching staff, experience novice or part-time, excellence in teaching and learning is difficult to achieve. Currently in HEIs, PD for teaching excellence is limited (Fung and Gordon, 2016; Locke *et al.*, 2016). This is often due to the perceived value of teaching, “the reward for committing seriously to education and/or to education leadership is perceived to be very much less than that gained through commitment to and success in research” (Fung and Gordon, 2016, p. 6). Despite overt endorsement in all institutions of teaching as a priority (Cotton, Miller and Kneale, 2018), research capacity tends to be the main source of reputation in many global university ranking scores (Gibbs, 2016) and so the rewards for research still drive much academic activity and institution focus (Cotton, Miller and Kneale, 2018).

In opposition to the viewpoint that anyone can teach, Hargreaves and Fullan (2013) suggest that “…teaching is hard. It’s technically difficult... it requires technical knowledge, high levels of education, strong practice … and continuous improvement over time that is undertaken collaboratively” (ibid p 38). The educational landscape is changing at a scale and pace that is unprecedented, bringing the danger of attempting to drive up teaching standards without fully understanding or considering the purpose of teaching, creating a difficult situation where PD fails to offer transformative experiences (Stevenson, 2019). There is a need to create confidence in the systems of PD in HEIs by providing opportunity for activity that engages staff in evidence-informed practice, recognised and rewarded by the UKPSF.

With large amounts of part-time and teaching-focussed staff, PD must be woven into the fabric of the working lives of staff with time and resource made available. Students and teaching-focussed colleagues deserve reputational professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2013), which comes from publicly recognising teaching as a highly skilled activity that requires investment, recognition and reward. Teaching-focussed staff and their students deserve PD opportunities that engender teaching excellence, and they should be easily identifiable (Pritchard and Mcgowan, 2016).

Gibbs, in 2010, in the HE environment, drew attention to the measure of quality teaching being the extent to which informed pedagogic practice is engaged in by teaching staff. Petty, (2006) argued that *“teaching should be led less by custom and practice, or current fashion, and more by evidence from research.” (*ibid p.5) a thought echoed by Scott and McNeish, (2013) and Pritchard and Mcgowan, (2016). Indeed, in HEI settings, the UKPSF includes specific benchmarks for evidence-informed practice (table 4).

Table 4 A5, K3 and V3 from the UKPSF (Advance HE, 2011, p. 3)

A5	Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices
K3	How students learn, both generally and within their subject/ disciplinary area(s)
V3	Use evidence informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development

This action research was created with an appreciation that quality of teaching improves with engagement with literature and that current professional standards are encouraging this to some extent.

The purpose then, of the Pedagogic Journal Club (PJC), was to engage teaching staff with pedagogic literature or literature that we viewed with a pedagogical focus, providing Exploratory Inter-generational Learning (EIGL) (Brücknerová and Novotný, 2017). EIGL being where teachers at different stages of their career (as opposed to different ages) learn from one another. The learning is a type of learning that (Evans, 2019, p. 9) refers to as implicit, *"learning that the learner or developer is unaware of at the time of its occurrence, but of which s/he may subsequently become aware, after the event."* I was not attempting to teach participants anything, or engage them in a teaching learning activity, to reproduce a specific type of practice or pedagogic approach or outcome. A dialogic community of participants engaged with literature was created because the staff that I spoke to were keen to find supported opportunity to meet the UKPSF descriptors. They felt that opportunity to engage with literature with pedagogic knowledge (PK) content or PK focus, in order to improve their practice, was limited; some also reported an uneasy relationship with this literature and their concern surrounding their lack of pedagogical awareness in terms of theory and language.

Determining whether a community such as this encourages long-term sustainability of evidence-based practice is of particular interest (Borrego and Henderson, 2014; Tinnell *et al.*, 2019) to HEIs in the current landscape.

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter discusses the focus on teaching activity in HEIs from the Dearing Report (1997) through to the policy changes implemented following the higher education reforms by Jo Johnson in 2015. The UKPSF, HEA fellowship and creation of the TEF in 2016/17 as measures of teaching excellence are also discussed, as is the landscape in HEIs where increasing numbers of teaching-focussed and part-time staff work, as well as a lack of professional capital awarded to staff who teach. Research is the dominant culture and pervades rankings along with measurable outcomes such as employability or staff student ratios which, arguably, have little bearing on teaching quality. Despite these limitations to metrics in the TEF, the tacit opportunity that it presents is highlighted, as are the advantages for teaching staff that engage pedagogically. It is within this context, and the increasing recognition and requirement for qualification and teaching excellence from students, that the research questions [1.4] were devised. Although an action research methodology is used, this awareness of political context and distance from the personal experience is called for by Levin (2012). He argues that, to ensure the academic integrity of AR, critical and reflective research has to be combined with engagement at a deeply empathic and political level, positioned outside the experience of the researcher. Gibbs et al (2017 p.14) remind us that by "ensuring rigorous and transparent reasoning… Levin (2012) warns of the challenge of balancing a depth of involvement with the critical distance essential to analyse the data, reframe arguments and develop new insights."

The preceding chapters therefore, have aimed to balance my in-depth involvement with critical distance required for the creation of new knowledge [7.5] and, the chapters that follow, exemplify a rigour and robustness to the reflexivity of the action in order to afford confidence.

Chapter 3: Literature review

3.1 Chapter outline

Craig, (2009) asserted that *"given the nature of the action research process, many feel that a literature review is not necessarily due to the fact that [action research] is prompted by a practitioner's expertise and experience in a specific environment"* (p. 56). Glaser and Strauss (Glaser, Strauss and Strutzel, 1968) were originators of the thought that literature reviews in qualitative studies should be done after the data collection and analysis, in order to avoid preconceptions. However, the view that prior knowledge of the literature before embarking on action research prevents a researcher from building a theory strictly from observations has been stepped away from by many. Creswell (2014) suggests that the *"first step in any project is to spend considerable time in the library examining the research on a topic"* (2014, p. 59).

In a drive for robust educational research, Wyse *et al.* inform readers that an *"important factor in a study's originality is the extent and rigour of the review of relevant studies in the field presented in its literature review"* (Wyse *et al.*, 2018, p. 39). With Mertens (2019) adding that *"a good literature review is the basis of both theoretical and methodological sophistication, thereby improving the quality and usefulness of subsequent research"* (2019, p. 4). Therefore, significant literature reviews were undertaken at all stages of the research.

If action research is based on authentic issues, observed or experienced by the researcher, then literature effecting the preconceptions of the research is less of an issue. Peim (2018) points to limits imposed by the typical literature review when defining an object of study; he argues for more exploratory and generative approaches to literature reviews which is what is presented here.

Initially, the literature search discovered the structure and framework for a successful journal club and was used to inform my initial briefing document to Warwick International Higher Education Academy (WIHEA) requesting a journal club. As the community developed, literature was also sought around PLCs and CoPs. The iterative nature of action research meant that as the cycles of reflection, planning and action continued, successive detailed literature reviews were conducted with differing foci. In addition to the specific searchers reported here, citations and references were used to discover articles and sources which those researching the subject thought were of value or which built on work done. Although saturation point can never be fully reached, I am confident that a significant and thorough search of the literature was conducted.

3.2 Literature search: The databases

Searches were conducted using social science databases of literature Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) as well as the education specific databases Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and the British Education Index (BEI) and Google Scholar (GS).

Scopus is Elsevier's database which launched in 2004 covering nearly 36,377 titles from approximately 11,678 publishers. Of these 34,346 are peer-reviewed journals in physical sciences and health sciences as well as life sciences and social sciences.

WoS, started by Thomson-Reuters in 1997, now maintained by Clarivate, has multidisciplinary coverage, encompassing 12,000 journals, spanning multiple academic disciplines including: the sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities.

It is important to use both Scopus and WoS as research into the scope of literature databases suggests that 16% of titles, located by WoS, do not appear in Scopus and 46% of titles held by Scopus, do not appear in WoS (Gavel and Iselid, 2008; Mongeon and Paul-Hus, 2016).

Mongeon and Paul-Hus (2016) also concluded that *"the journal coverage of WoS in Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities is still quite low*" (ibid p.225). These two databases predominantly include journal articles, rather than conference papers or books or other publications, which are often used in social science and education. As a consequence, they "*introduce biases…to the detriment of Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities" (ibid p.226)*. Searches using only WoS and Scopus then, are not as accurate for Social Sciences as for Natural Sciences, Engineering and Biomedical Research (Nederhof, 2006; Hicks and Wang, 2011; Mongeon and Paul-Hus, 2016). Whilst the interdisciplinary coverage of these two major databases represents a significant strength for literature searching, it is recommended that field-specific databases are used in addition (Archambault *et al.*, 2006; Mongeon and Paul-Hus, 2016).

ERIC and the BEI were chosen as subject specific databases. ERIC includes education materials not published elsewhere, such as curriculum guides, research reports and conference papers. The BEI provides access to 350 British and selected European English-language periodicals in the field of education and training, including coverage of national report and conference literature. These additional databases provide the required depth of inquiry across a range of publication types and field specific content.

Additionally, GS was also used to search literature. Many researchers (Harzing and Alakangas, 2016; Moed, Bar-Ilan and Halevi, 2016; Halevi, Moed and Bar-Ilan, 2017; Martín-Martín, Orduna-Malea and Delgado López-Cózar, 2018) discuss the wider strengths and weaknesses of GS as an engine for literature searches and conclude that it has significantly expanded its coverage and is now a powerful database of scholarly literature, holding significant amounts of unique publications (Figure 3).

> "*GS finds significantly more citations than the WoS Core Collection and Scopus across all subject areas. Nearly all citations found by WoS (95%), and Scopus (92%) were also found by GS, which found a substantial amount of unique citations that were not found by the other databases"* (Martín-Martín, Orduna-Malea and Delgado López-Cózar, 2018).

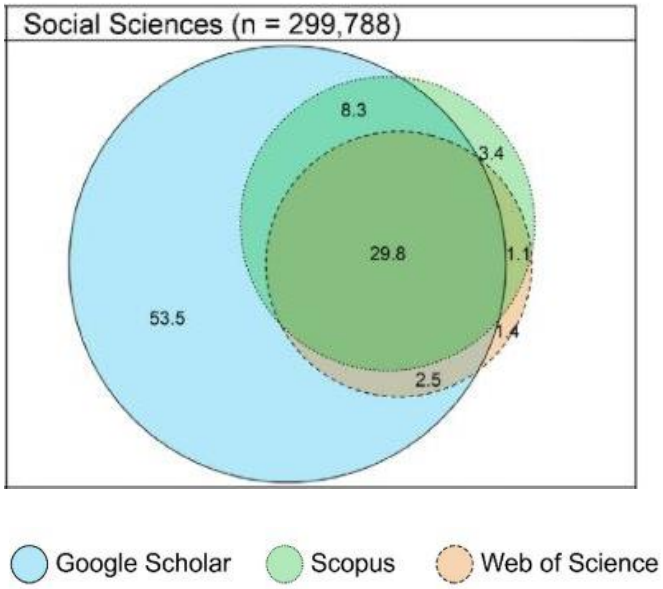


Figure 3 Overlap of journal titles between WoS, Scopus and Google Scholar (Martin-Martin et al., 2018 p.1166)

Although there is some lack of transparency surrounding citation metrics in GS, and a limited search function, Martin and Martin et al (2018) conclude that *"Google Scholar has a more comprehensive coverage than Scopus and WoS and includes the great majority of the documents that they cover"* (Martín-Martín *et al.*, 2021, p. 874). Using all five databases to conduct the literature search ensures, as fully as possible, complete coverage.

3.2.1 Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

The key term used across all databases in this search was professional learning community/ties or the acronym PLC. Within these results "HEI", "higher education" and "university" were then added, and the research category refined to remove electrical engineering (PLC is used in this field for a programmable logic controller). All searches conducted looked for terms within topic, abstract, keywords or title, except for GS, which searched the whole document, as it does not allow for a search other than within title or entire document. *"The relatively low quality of the metadata available and the difficulty to extract it make it challenging to use Google Scholar data in bibliometric analyses"* (Martín-Martín *et al.*, 2021, p. 874). Despite this difficulty, the increased coverage of GS made it worth the additional manual searching.

Table 5 Search terms for PLCs in Higher Education

Search terms	**Database**				
	SCOPUS	**WoS**	**ERIC**	**BEI**	**GS**
"Professional learning communit*" OR "PLC"	41,853	27,543	1,734	511	253,000
AND HEI OR "higher education" OR university*	698	459	955	270	158,000
Refining category where database allowed and NOT school*	145	147	74	35	204
Manual search for relevance See appendix 1 for papers	2	9	6	0	5

Table 5 demonstrates that, although there is a significant amount of well-established literature around PLCs and their effectiveness in schools, literature on PLCs in HEIs is limited. There was some overlap of results, but of the 17 unique publications found, only one was from a UK institution, namely Edinburgh University (Gray and Smyth, 2012). Two other papers, which included PLCs in HEIs, were from Canada and Malaysia. Four papers were focussed on online or virtual PLCs, and three were dissertations or thesis. Most papers based their research on seminal PLC work such as (Hord, 1997, 2004; DuFour and Eaker, 1998; Stoll *et al.*, 2006; Hargreaves, 2008; Bell *et al.*, 2010) without adding to the theory of PLC development.

The paucity of research on effective PLCs in HEIs is well documented (Blitz, 2013; Cherrington *et al.*, 2018; Mooney, 2018). Evidence suggests that PLCs may be effective at the tertiary level (Schuck *et al.*, 2013); however, despite (Bolam *et al.*, 2005) a government report into PLCs proven effectiveness in schools, and Eaker and Sells' 2016 book suggesting that PLCs are a way forward for HEIs, in 2021 the field is still lacking research on this phenomenon. The impact of PLCs, tertiary-unique characteristics, opportunities, and challenges have not been comprehensively explored in HEIs (Cherrington *et al.*, 2018).

3.2.2 Community of practice (CoP)

Far more literature relating to CoPs in HEIs was discovered than for PLCs (table 6), suggesting that this term is more commonly used within higher education settings.

Table 6 Search terms for CoPs in Higher Education

Search terms	**Database**				
	SCOPUS	**WoS**	**ERIC**	**BEI**	**GS**
"Communit* of practice" Or "CoP"	37,544	25,185	367	5,576	352,000
AND "HE", "higher education" OR "university*"	3,302	1,525	143	4,260	8,530
Refining category where database allowed and NOT school*	2,821	1,305	111	30	4,580
Restricted to social science or education fields where possible	1,462	702	111		n/a
Manual search for relevance			11	7	

After a manual search for relevance of the BEI and ERIC results, ten papers were found that discussed CoPs, their foci ranging from students to staff, as well as online and international communities (Cox, 2004; Al-Hinai, 2006; Nagy and Burch, 2009; Newswander and Borrego, 2009; Nistor *et al.*, 2015; Serghi *et al.*, 2015; Arthur, 2016; Kastens and Manduca, 2017; Luguetti *et al.*, 2019; Hattam and Weiler, 2021).

These papers discuss how CoPs can lead to *"change in professional confidence, awareness of classroom events, dispositions towards reflection, broadened views of teaching, teacher beliefs about themselves, their roles as teachers, and attitudes towards students"* (Luguetti *et al.*,

2019, p. 855) but often provide limited discussion around the CoP aspect of their work, Hattam and Weiler (2021) being an example. One paper refers to journals clubs as a CoP; the work is based on a student club and discusses the fact that *"although the benefits of a journal club are implicit, few empirical studies validate these claims or tie them to theory"* (Newswander and Borrego, 2009, p. 561).

WoS, Scopus and GS returned too many results for a manual search for relevance and so, reported on below, are additional searches with CoPs as a focus.

3.2.2.1 CoP and SoTL, PD and evidence-informed practice further searches

The following literature reviews attempted to discover work regarding the benefits of a CoP linked with SoTL, evidence-informed practice or PD. The aim was to understand the role that CoPs can play in PD of teaching staff in HEIs, with a specific focus on evidence-informed practice, bringing about long-term change through direct or instrumental use.

Table 7 Search terms for CoPs with SoTL, PD and EIP

Search terms	SCOPUS	WoS	GS
"CoP" Or "communit* of practice" AND "HEI" OR "higher education" OR university* NOT "school"	1,462	702	4,580
AND SoTL or "scholarship of teaching and learning"	16	9	387
Manual search for relevance	5	4	2
AND "PD" OR "professional development"	137	72	212
Manual search for relevance	14	11	10
	Significant overlap		
AND "education* research" OR "pedagog*" OR "evidence informed"	36	128	66
Manual search for relevance	1	10	1

For brevity, lists of papers returned from these searches, in table 7 and table 8, with some discussion of relevance, are included here before further engagement with the literatures' themes and findings in chapters 3.2-3.4.

Table 8 CoP literature search findings

Citations of discovered literature from COP search linked with		
SoTL	**PD**	**EIP**
Kahn *et al.*, 2013;Ng and Pemberton 2013; Locke, 2014; Tam, 2015; Osman and Hornsby, 2016; Stanier *et al.*, 2017; Buchholz *et al.*, 2019; Baggett, Dunn and Sondel, 2020; Tierney *et al.*, 2020; Chun and Williams, 2020; Fernández March, 2020	Koliba and Gajda, 2009; Schols, 2011; Matherson, 2012; *Kelly, 2013;* Williams *et al* , 2013; Liu and Xu, 2013; Cox, 2013; Coe *et al* , 2014a; Griggs and Cooke, 2015; Osman and Hornsby, 2016; Baker and Beames, 2016; Meijs *et al* , 2016; Krause *et al* , 2017; Roxå and Mårtensson, 2017; Warr Pedersen, 2017; van As, 2018; Bond *et al* , 2018; Luguetti *et al* , 2019; Soto *et al* , 2019; Tinnell *et al* , 2019; García Romero and Lalueza, 2019; Morrell-Scott, 2019; Rodriguez *et al* , 2019; Akinyemi and Nkonki, 2020; Matthews and Dobbins, 2020; Beatty *et al* , 2020; Teng, 2020; Tierney *et al* , 2020; Chadha, 2020; Fernández March, 2020; Brereton, 2021; dos Santos Fringe *et al* , 2021)	Griggs and Cooke, (2015), Baker and Beames, (2016) Tinnell *et al.*, (2019) Springer and Casey, 2010; Lester and Kezar, 2017; Clavert *et al.*, 2018; Sato and Loewen, 2019; Borkoski and Prosser, 2020; Cranfield and Gurteen, 2020; Woodhams, 2020; Jones and Masika, 2021

Within the search for SoTL focussed literature, Kahn et al. 2013 is an interesting article which highlights potential drivers of collaborative activity in HEIs and offers a means for others to develop the collective commitments, structures and understanding needed to mainstream SoTL. Only having been cited six times, its data comes from a three-way 60-minute discussion between its PI and two other academic staff, rather than primary research into CoPs, and so further evidence is needed. Despite having relevance, Ng and Pemberton's work is research staff focussed; Tam's work is actually about a PLC and Locke's report is, in fact, not about SoTL specifically, but it is, some suggest, the beginnings of the thinking that drove the TEF and formation of Advance HE and so still is of value here. Other more recent papers had closer links to CoPs, although all are international and not based in the UK, all lacking focus on the CoP as the main theme. Tierney has contributed significant work on SoTL in this 2020 paper and others and is considered a seminal researcher in this field.

Literature with CoPs with PD had significant overlap between databases, Matthews and Dobbins 2020 is a UK based paper on PD CoP and the HEA framework which discusses drivers for engagement in PD. This though is one of only a few papers based in the UK, written by academic developers; it shines a light on the academic divide in the UK between research in education by academics versus professional services colleagues.

In combination with pedagogy or educational research or evidence-informed practice, there were eleven papers with one overlap. (Griggs and Cooke, 2015; Baker and Beames, 2016) Tinnell *et al.*, (2019) all appeared in other searches and have relevance. The more recent papers are less so. Borkoski and Prosser (2020) discuss online commutities in HEI whilst Woodhams (2020) focusses on knowlege advisors and Jones and Masika (2021), student employablility. A lack of engagement, with the COP particularly, exists in these works and, once again, highlights the limited research in this area. The paper of interest more recently, is Cranfield and Gurteen (2020) and their work on knowledge cafes as, although the PJC created in this action is more structured, some interesting discssions around dialogue appear. In Lester and Kezar (2017), the focus is on CoP leadership which aligns with findings from Wenger (2000) and Martensson (2014).

Generally, CoP literature is lacking in the sector, in terms of a theoretical to approach, to what a CoP in an HEI should look like. There is an awareness that they are probably effective but a lack of clarity or heterogeneous lexicon surrounding them often leads to the term being widely used for any kind of community activity.

3.2.3 Journal Clubs

A literature review on journal clubs in HEIs was conducted with emphasis on papers engaged with possible frameworks for journal clubs in HEIs, and those looking into general journal club effectiveness (table 9). Also reported on here is the search relating to PD or SoTL and the bringing about of long-term change through direct or instrumental use of journal clubs in HEIs.

Table 9 Search terms for journal clubs in HEIs associated with the themes of the research

Search Terms	SCOPUS	WoS	ERIC	BEI	GS
Journal club*	2,437	1,702	1,280	178	1,730,000
AND ("HEI" OR "universit*" OR "higher education")	200	116	676	85	981,000
AND "Professional development" OR "PD" OR "SOTL"	10	4	29	6	988
Not School					131
Manual search for relevance	2	2	0	2	5

Scopus found two papers that were somewhat relevant, but both were focussed on medical students (Hammick, 1995; Grant, 2003) whilst WoS discovered two relevant articles based on science teacher education (Tallman and Feldman, 2016).

GS produced a number of results linking postgraduate education or nursing and healthcare, some of which had relevance (Kleinpell, 2002; Johnson, 2016; Elena Dragioti, 2019; Turner *et al.*, 2020). Johnson (2016) provided an interesting look at features of successful journal clubs in nursing and Turner et al. (2020), in the final search of the literature before publication, provided work discussing their experiences of running a journal club for continuing PD in higher education, beginning to explore some of the themes covered here, but focussed on an online community. The BEI returned work by McLeod *et al* (2010) which provided 12 top tips for journal clubs and despite this, and Johnson (2016) being from the medical field these, along with the substantial and often cited work of (Deenadayalan *et al.*, 2008), were used as the basis for constructing the journal club in this research.

What follows in the next four sections, 3.2- 3.5, is a detailed interrogation of the discovered literature, providing an understanding of the themes of PD, engagement with literature for evidence-informed practice (EIP) with a focus on PLCs, CoPs and journal clubs.

3.3 Journal Clubs

''A journal club has been defined as an educational meeting in which a group of individuals discuss current articles, providing a forum for a collective effort to keep up with the literature'' (Kleinpell, 2002, p. 412)

Journal clubs are not a new phenomenon. Health-based journal clubs have been in place for over 100 years (Linzer, 1987; Deenadayalan *et al.*, 2008; Topf *et al.*, 2017) for the purposes of improving practice and critical reading, as well as keeping up to date with literature. They are generally constructivist in nature and stimulate learning through the interchange between reading and discussing, and practice (Price and Felix, 2008; Newswander and Borrego, 2009). Journal clubs, used in medicine and other fields, have been shown to be effective in helping their members keep up to date with current research, to use that research to inform and improve their practice, and to promote critical and creative thinking (Price and Felix, 2008; Tallman and Feldman, 2016), similar skills called for by (Evans *et al.*, 2021) *"disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical expertise, academic practice, contextual awareness, data analytic competence, research methodology expertise and critical evaluation of practice."* The first reference to a journal club is found in a book of memoirs and letters by Sir James Paget (Paget, 1901) where, in 1875, a British surgeon, Sir William Osler, set up a small group at St Bartholomew's hospital in London (Milbrandt and Vincent, 2004). The use of journal clubs, for over 150 years in medical environments (Topf *et al.*, 2017), is well known; however, its application within multidisciplinary research and as a pedagogic tool is lacking (E. Dragioti, 2019).

Journal clubs offer practitioners the opportunity to reflect on practice from the viewpoint of formal theory (Price and Felix, 2008). They also cultivate a community that engages professionals in conversations concerning how formal theory relates to practical theory (Tallman, 2014) with (Chan *et al.*, 2015) suggesting that *"they can be considered an example of situated learning in the workplace whereby colleagues learn together via their social networks"* (ibid p.149). A journal club therefore, is a suitable vehicle for pedagogic engagement with literature in HEIs; and it is suggested that *"further research could examine how a journal club, functioning as a community of practice supports and helps teachers put into practice the concepts developed in the journal club"* (Tallman and Feldman, 2016 p.345).

This action research may go some way to providing further supporting evidence that journal clubs can function effectively in HEIs as vehicles for PD, bridging the theory-practice gap and supporting engagement with literature, promoting evidence-informed practice.

3.3.1 Creating an effective journal club

From the literature search, Kleinpell (2002) provides a very basic six step approach to creating a journal club whereas McLeod *et al* (2010) suggest 12 features that successful journal clubs should have and Johnson (2016) contributes, from her work with nurses, the successes and challenges of introducing journal clubs. These papers however, all lacked methodological underpinning when considering journal clubs and so, despite their links with CoPs, it is Deenadayalan *et al.*'s (2008) framework for running an effective journal club which is used here.

Deenadayalan et al. (2008) conducted a systemic review of journal club publications which has been cited 271 times. The paper was primarily focussed on journal clubs in the health professions and so differences exist between these and the PJC created for this AR. However, ensuring the correct set up from literature is essential and when innovations are not implemented, as recommended in the literature, it is difficult to ascertain the influence of actions on teachers' professional learning satisfaction (Boone, 2010). Ensuring an implementation in line with literature for the PJC was essential. Table 10 shows how the PJC was created and run; it is adapted from Deenadayalan et al. (2008) and aligns with their recommendations.

One of the cited benefits of being part of a journal club is a narrowing of the theory practice gap (Buchholz *et al.*, 2019; Turner *et al.*, 2020). Golde (2007) suggests that journal clubs have a goal of acquainting participants with the literature of a field, to work with the literature, socialising participants into disciplinary norms and identities. Despite their existence in schools (Sims, Moss and Marshall, 2017), teaching-focussed journal clubs in HEIs are under researched (Turner *et al.*, 2020). More so, despite the numerous benefits of journal clubs, few existed outside the fields of medicine and healthcare, limited to science teacher education (Tallman, 2014; Tallman and Feldman, 2016) graduate and post graduate education (Newswander and Borrego, 2009; Dahiya and Dahiya, 2015; Elena Dragioti, 2019), and medicine and health education (Dirschl, Tornetta and Bhandari, 2003; Grant, 2003; Li *et al.*, 2009; Honey and Baker, 2011; Gottlieb *et al.*, 2018; Wenke *et al.*, 2019).

Table 10 Features of the PJC adapted from Deenadayalan et al., (2008)

Feature	Journal Clubs Generally	The PJC
Leading a Journal Club	Train the leader/facilitator of the journal club in relevant research design and/or statistical knowledge so as to appropriately direct group discussions and assist the group to work towards its goals	Myself as the facilitator was trained in research methods for educational research. You might invite in a researcher or engage institutional educational researchers to be the expert for particular sessions
	The leader can change from meeting to meeting, however he/she needs to have the skills to present the paper under discussion and lead the group adequately.	I acted as leader for papers put forward by me for discussion. Leadership rotated in latter stages
Choosing articles for discussion	Choose relevant case-based or clinical articles for discussion. These papers should be of interest to all participants. Articles should be chosen in line with the overarching purpose of the journal club	Papers chosen were in line with the purpose of the PJC and of interest to the group. Papers were mostly around educational innovation and practice
	Identify one journal club member (either the designated leader or a member) who has the responsibility for identifying the literature to be discussed for each meeting. This person should also lead the discussion on the article at the journal club.	Responsibility for suggesting papers and leading discussions were mine originally. This changed in the latter months as confidence of participants grew
Circulating articles for discussion	Provide all participants for each journal club (in addition to the leader) with pre-reading at a suitable time period prior to the journal club (may be up to a week prior).	Articles were sent 2 weeks in advance of meetings to all participants
	Participants should agree to the time frame for pre-reading. In some curriculum-based situations, assessment of whether pre-reading has occurred may be appropriate	It was not used as a curriculum assessment and so participants pre reading was not assessed
	Use the internet as a means of distributing articles prior to the meeting, maintaining journal club resources and optimizing use of time and resources.	Used emailing for distribution of papers and articles and a web based digest page [appendix 4-6] for idea dissemination
Efficiently running the journal club	Use established critical appraisal approaches and structured worksheets during the journal club session, which leads to healthy and productive discussion	Critical appraisal of literature occurred during sessions Questions from standard worksheets were threaded through the discussion by the leader

Wyse *et al.* (2018 p.41), makes a recommendation that the British Education Research Association (BERA), should articulate strategies and PD opportunities for universities that support staff development of educational methodological knowledge. Engaging with literature within a PJC of inter-generational peers may bridge the gap between teaching and researching in such a way that prevents staff feeling disjointed, adrift or put off. Kennedy in her review of PD in 2016 suggests that one of the most effective PD activities seen was Gersten *et al.* (2010) which used research groups in schools, *"teachers were given research findings to think about, and each group had a discussion leader to pose questions and keep conversations on target"* (Kennedy, 2016, p. 972).

When practitioners engage in journal clubs, literature suggests, it can lead to PD as well as personal and political, and professional growth (Tallman and Feldman, 2016). Well-developed journal clubs have also been shown to positively impact teaching practice, student teacher attainment and the development of teachers in initial teacher education (Hord, 2004; Vescio, Ross and Adams, 2008; Lomos, Hofman and Bosker, 2011; Tallman, 2014; Tallman and Feldman, 2016). Anwaruddin (2015) suggests that teachers work in *"communities of learners in which they choose and engage with relevant research for their professional learning and development"* (ibid p.13).

Wenke *et al*, (2019) report increased motivation of participants through reading articles that are immediately applicable. They promote the use of journal clubs, with stronger guidance and direction than traditional case study journal clubs in the medical professions, when wanting to see an incorporation of the research into practice. I would therefore, act as the educational research expert in the PJC in order to help develop professional pedagogic literacy within the JC enabling the use, evaluation and incorporation of educational research into the teaching practice of members and their departments. However, it could also be an option to invite an expert into the journal club when reading specific papers or areas of literature, thus creating a cross organisational approach (Mavri, Ioannou and Loizides, 2021).

Factors that make a journal club successful include supporting club participants in developing their analytical and critical skills (Haglund, 2008). I acted as the methodological expert and attended all meetings in the first iteration. Incentives of food and drink were found to be beneficial by (Sidorov, 1995) and the journal club was funded in terms of refreshment by WIHEA. Having well defined goals and offering members autonomy, in article selection (Deenadayalan *et al.*, 2008), are also important. These ideas around guidance, direction,

incentive and goals are discussed in more detail in the iteration section of the thesis [4.3.1] and when considering the new Higher Education Community of Practice (HECoP) [7.4].

3.3.2 An expert in the field, leader or facilitator

Leadership is an important concept in any community (Wenger and Snyder, 2000) Christie *et al.*, 2007), with many arguing that although joint enterprise is important, successful communities depend on leadership within the group and that is shared across the group. The need for an expert in the field was essential in terms of interdependence, conversations with colleagues (Van Waes *et al.*, 2018), and for journal club leadership.

When having conversations with colleagues, Van Waes *et al.* (2018) found that experienced experts displayed higher levels of interdependence compared to experienced non-expert instructors. Therefore, there is a need, in any PJC, for someone to have expert knowledge of the area of topic discussion and be designated as the leader; this aligns with the literature on journal club efficacy generally (Deenadayalan *et al.*, 2008). These high-level interactions not only add to the opportunity for PedEL in HEIs but also raise the status of, and may increase reward and recognition of, teaching-focussed staff.

CoPs too, in literature, have some examples of role or leadership (Wenger, 2000), suggesting community leaders, facilitators, experts and core members (Baker and Beames, 2016). Specifically, "I manage[d] the boundary between the CoP and the formal organisation, including promoting the value of the CoP to the organisation, assessing the health of the CoP and evaluating the contribution" (ibid p.72), acting as leader. Good relationships are central to a successful community; in fact, Cassidy et al. (2008, p. 224) argue that 'the quality of relationships within a community of practice or enquiry [are likely to] determine the degree to which it achieves its desired purpose"; part of my role was to foster these relationships.

Working relationships between academics are often characterised by inequality in relation to seniority, work experience and position; these hierarchical structures do not easily fit the early conceptualisation of CoPs. Power-distance relationships too are potentially divisive, and the presence of more senior members can act to inhibit the expression of more junior staff (Pemberton, Mavin and Stalker, 2007). I was not in a position of power over anyone else and participants were able to exist as novices in this new field without threat of being seen as lesser (Morrell-Scott, 2019).

The role of a leader, or expert, is required in journal clubs for smooth operation, and this may be at odds with early versions of CoPs; however, later CoP writing shifts the original concept [3.6.2] and leadership is discussed further in further in [4.3.5].

Where professional development is effective, leaders integrate professional development with performance management and school self-review (Ofsted, 2006). They also make an important difference by establishing a culture of evidence-based enquiry, and nurturing trusting and mutually respectful relationships (Kaser & Halbert, 2009; Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Effective professional learning takes place in contexts that support teachers' positive sense of themselves as teachers, which is critical to their commitment to ongoing improvement (Day et al, 2007).

Acting as a leader of this PJC, my role was to facilitate professional learning and I did this by acting as the expert in terms of educational literature and pedagogic knowledge. At first, the assumption of this role felt difficult however, it became apparent, quite quickly to the PJC, that I had the skills in this area and as such, I was able to lead effectively; I acted as a boundary spanner. The PJC supported my own identity change through dialogue and reflection (Borko *et al.*, 2010; Hung and Yeh, 2013; Derri*.et al.*, 2015). It removed barriers to the sometimes-troublesome language of education research, spanning the boundary between research and practice for those who were part of it, but also enabling me to exist in the often-liminal space between researcher and practitioner (Hollweck *et al,* 2022). I was able to take on the mantle of 'expert' in this area. Specifically, engaging with educational literature and research opened up the world of educational theory: the language, the methods, the context, and analysis that are used to generate theory (T*allman et al*., 2016; Dragioti, 2019) for participants, and demonstrated my expertise in navigating that terrain. I acted as leader, expert and facilitator. However, over the course of the action research, I would pass these mantles to others in order to facilitate their own professional development in these areas.

3.4 Engagement with research for professional development

A survey of published educational research was presented to OFSTED (Tooley and Darby, 1998), around the time of the Dearing report in HEIs (1997), which highlighted the paucity of educational research published in academic journals and how educational research needs to be used to improve teaching. Bell *et al.*, (2010) conducted a systematic review of 25 studies of practitioner engagement with literature, concluding that there was "*strong evidence from these studies of links between teacher engagement in and with research and significant changes in practice with a positive impact on student outcomes."* (ibid p2). Evans, Waring and Christodoulou (2017) reiterate this call for research-informed practice and embed it in the new early career framework for teachers.

There has been an increase in dissemination of educational research over the last 20 years in schools. However, there is still a lack of dissemination and effective consumption of pedagogic research in HEIs. Despite in 2015, *"the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) formally linked teaching enhancement to academic staff engagement with Continued Professional Development"* (Botham, 2018b, p. 164), there was work still to be done to identify suitable PD activities linked to literature (Pritchard and Mcgowan, 2016). There has been an *"assumption that those already receiving high research income were already delivering or had the means to deliver research-based or research-led teaching"* (Healey, Jenkins and Zetter, 2007, p. 11–12). It does not need much investigation into the literature to establish that the engagement of teaching staff, with research-led practice or practice-led research, is not particularly visible (Stevenson, Whelan and Burke, 2017; Charles, 2018).

Anwaruddin (2015) suggests that attempts to encourage engagement with literature too often focus on the management of researchers' theoretical knowledge, rather than on the generation of teachers' pedagogical knowledge. He offers us the thought that one of the main failures of pedagogical research to affect practice, is that we:

> *"Treat teachers as passive consumers of research-based knowledge, with most initiatives focussed on the management of researchers' theoretical knowledge rather than on the generation of teachers' pedagogical knowledge."(*ibid p.3)

3.4.1 Pedagogic engagement with literature in higher education

Engagement with literature informs practice and raises teaching quality and PD should encourage it (Jacob *et al.*, 2019, p. 811). Fraser, Greenfield and Pancini (2017) also refer to an increasing need for university teaching staff to enhance their pedagogical skills in order to meet the needs of a changing student cohort. Many institutions of higher education do recognise the relationship between instructional quality and student success (Thurlings and den Brok, 2017; Horn, Kane and Garner, 2018). But, despite this, there is paucity of research around staff pedagogically engaging with literature for PD. *"Most postsecondary instructors have limited training in pedagogy…Moreover, the field has few documented models of scalable professional development that results in demonstrated improvements in teaching and student learning."*(Bickerstaff *et al.*, 2020). Of course, engagement with literature as an academic is something staff spent a large amount of time doing but, pedagogic engagement with literature is less visible and may need to be supported when often academics believe that *"Pedagogy has nothing to teach us"* (Anonymous, 2020). This article in THE was just one opinion, and it was robustly challenged by Cotton, Cleaver and Fung (2020) who responded with *"Pedagogy has something to teach us"* as a comment piece.

The pervasive binary divide, evidenced in anonymous comments following the article, demonstrate that many HEI staff are of the opinion that *"teaching is not the main reason we entered academia"* (Anonymous 2020) and believe that pedagogic research is of poor quality and lacking robustness; *"[pedagogic experts] cite studies supporting their beliefs regarding how teaching should be carried out, without engaging in any real debate about the weaknesses and biases of these studies (of which there are usually many)"* (Anonymous, 2020). Whilst the ephemeral nature of these articles is recognised, many HEI teaching staff often don't identify as teachers first, or value educational research (Evans *et al.*, 2021). There is wok to be done therefore, to elevate the reputation of pedagogic literature and pedagogic engagement with literature for the benefit of EIP.

3.4.1.1 Pedagogic knowledge and effective teaching

Pedagogic knowledge definitions have become broader over time with teachers' orientations towards teaching (knowledge of and beliefs about their subject and how to teach it); knowledge of curriculum (what to teach when); knowledge of assessment (why, what and how

to assess); knowledge of students' understanding; and knowledge of instructional strategies" (Gatsby, 2018) all playing a role.

In their literature review, Coe *et al.* (2014) identify strong evidence that pedagogic knowledge is a key element in effective teaching. Gatsby (2018) also suggests that empirical studies show that teachers' content knowledge must blend with knowledge of how learners respond to content in order to be effective. Further corroboration can be discovered via Timperley *et al.*, (2007) who found that professional development programmes that had beneficial outcomes, mostly included some attempt to engage with teachers' existing theories, values and beliefs (p196). Such a claim is also consistent with a view of effective pedagogy as "*consisting of more than just a set of techniques but depending on the ability to make complex judgements about which technique to use when*."(Coe *et al.*, 2014, p. 20). Whilst neither teaching effectiveness, nor teaching quality, is directly measured here, there is an understanding that pedagogic knowledge contributes to, and is required, in order to teach effectively.

It is widely regarded that teachers develop their pedagogic knowledge through prior knowledge, experience, and professional development opportunities (Major and Palmer, 2006; Abell, 2008; van Driel and Berry, 2012). However, there is often a lack of pedagogic based training for many teaching-focussed staff in HEIs, which may create a limitation. There is an assumption that staff are able to apply new knowledge from research or teaching experiences, to existing theories and beliefs they hold, in order to teach more effectively.

SoTL, or the scholarship of teaching and learning, is often referred to in HEIs as a way to increase teaching quality. Without pedagogic knowledge on which to pin this scholarship, it may be that any quality or excellence is difficult for teaching focussed staff to identify in their own practice. This limits their reward and recognition, limits replication of effective practice for repeated use and limits the sharing of good practice with colleagues for wider development of excellence or quality teaching approaches within departments or modules.

Van Driel and Berry (2012), further emphasise the fact that the research literature clearly demonstrates that pedagogic knowledge development is a complex process that is highly specific to the context, situation, and person. They suggest that professional development programmes should include opportunities to reflect, individually and collectively, on experiences. The research by Van Driel and Berry (2012), also showed that providing teachers with evidence from research literature and other resources, as specific input, can contribute to the development of their pedagogic knowledge. Communities, they suggest, can play a very

useful role in helping teachers to analyse, develop and discuss in detail, their teaching and learning.

Vare *et al.* (2021, p. 5) remind us that:

> *"despite optimistic claims that we know "what works" in education we only know what might work in some situations at some times. [PD] …needs to be understood as something that supports criticality, intellectual curiosity, pedagogic creativity and professional agency through engagement in and with research and development."*

This report was created by UCETT and, although written to support PD for staff in schools, still applies as the themes are not school specific. There is a lack of evidence in HEIs, due to a lack of research in the area of professional development for effective teaching, and this limitation in the literature is widely accepted. Often, it is suggested that teaching staff in HEIs should engage *in* educational research to identify effective teaching and, whilst I would support any colleague who wanted to do this, there is not a requirement to be research active in order to engage with research. SoTL is often seen as engagement *in* educational research and the discussion around whether this is a required activity for teaching focussed staff is continued below. To date, a reasonably well-agreed claim, arising from research, is that pedagogic knowledge provides a theoretical framework for examining and understanding teachers' skills (Abell, 2008; Kind, 2009). Pedagogic knowledge therefore, is offered here as a requirement, in order to engage with *why* one's teaching may or may not be effective.

3.4.2 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: what does it mean and what does it provide

The term scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) is ambiguous (Pritchard and Mcgowan, 2016), and has not easily entered into pedagogical discourse. It is of limited use, and in some cases off putting to many, due to its varying definition (Oliver, Nesbit and Kelly, 2013; Miller-Young and Yeo, 2015; Tierney et al., 2020). In some cases, SoTL is looked down upon by discipline specific researchers seen as something they would not be keen to engage in. SoTL has also developed differently in different countries, "being much more readily recognised in the USA than in the UK" (Norton, 2018, p. 37).

A concept originally coined by Boyer *et al.* (1990), SoTL was referred to as one of a number of ways of being a scholar in academia which transcended the binaries of *'the tired old teaching vs*

research debate' (ibid p.131). Boyer identified four domains or types of scholarship: Discovery, Integration, Application, and Teaching.

"The major principles under- pinning SoTL (the fourth domain) in higher education in general are that the academic investigates his or her own practices of teaching and/or the student's practices of learning; that the outcomes of such researched investigation are open for inspection and validation." (Osman and Hornsby, 2016). However, SoTL is not universally well understood and for many: "*the vagueness of SoTL is reflected in terminology describing it"* (Boshier, 2009, p. 3)

What constitutes SoTL is contested; Hubball, Clarke and Poole (2010) suggest it is a distinctive form of research with a broad scope of many interdisciplinary approaches. Where SoTL is linked to the *creation* of research, is often where SoTL fails to encourage engagement.

Webb and Tierney (2020) highlight that it can be problematic for teaching staff in HEIs to pedagogically engage with literature when they hold, what can be, essential paradigmatic differences in their discipline to the educational/social science discipline. (Williams et al., 2013, p. 53) offer the idea that there may also be some resistance by staff to invest in SoTL, especially if they see it as interfering with their research activity or promotion goals. Macfarlane argues that pedagogic research is "not 'proper research', unlike subject-based research which is 'serious, scholarly and well-respected'" (Macfarlane, 2011) and there is a risk of diminishing the perception of pedagogical research further by expecting all teaching staff to engage with it without support.

Tierney et al (2020) suggest that "Pedagogic research presents its own challenges, as teaching-focussed academics wrestle with unfamiliar paradigms that may be at odds with their disciplinary background, as well as a disjointed sense of identity" (Tierney et al., 2020). Many academic staff are unfamiliar with the paradigms and methodologies and sometimes, when faced with these difficulties, struggle to find ways to navigate alien epistemologies, methodologies, and concepts(Kelly, Nesbit and Oliver, 2012; Oliver, Nesbit and Kelly, (2013). Kahn et al. (2013) too, suggest that "individuals have a tendency to downplay the value of an activity of which they have limited understanding or that has not affected what matters to a social group as an entirety"(ibid p.902), often leading to the rejection of SoTL, as academics retreat to more comfortable, discipline specific 'higher' academic ground. Work then is needed to support pedagogic engagement with literature particularly concerning "disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical expertise, academic practice, contextual awareness, data analytic

competence, research methodology expertise or critical evaluation of practice" (Evans et al., 2021).

If institutions narrowly focus on SoTL as research creation (Hubball, Clarke and Poole, 2010), placing emphasis on pedagogic research rather than the combination of both research and the philosophical understanding of what it means to be a teacher (Tierney et al., 2020), the benefit of engaging with literature may be lost. The differentiation of engagement in research and with research was provided 11 years ago by Bell et al (2010) for teachers who described engaging with literature as: practitioners using publicly available evidence, interpreting it and adapting it to their own contexts. Today, in HEIs, this important distinction between *with* and *in* is not easily visible.

Asking questions and articulation of findings requires professional dialogue, and according to Kahn et al. (2013) this dialogue comprises both the process and the product of professional learning. The teaching vs researching debate, or indeed the theory practice gap that exists in HE teaching, needs to be addressed (Kreber, 2013; Harland, Hussain and Bakar, 2014). We must guard against a continuing gap between practitioners and educational research and cannot let practice and research drift further apart. Critics of isolated educational research, such as Ball (2012), suspect that students will perish while educational researchers publish their findings if we cannot find a way to effectively engage staff to become evidence-informed practitioners.

Fung and Gordon, (2016 p.7), in a Russell group review for the HE around rewarding teaching staff in HEIs, suggested that:

> *"attitudes to the importance of education-focussed scholarship, referred to in current literature as the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) (see Fanghanel et al. 2015), [were] mixed … however, it was noted that, in line with the professional values of the UKPSF, all staff making a contribution to student education need to practise in ways which are evidence-informed."*

Before assuming however, that this engagement in evidence informed practice is simple, it is important to be aware that similar issues face staff when they are asked to *engage with* literature, in terms of needing support to engage and understand paradigm and methodological issues (Hutchings, 2007; Miller-Young and Yeo, 2015; Tierney, 2020; Webb and Tierney, 2020) when asking them to *engage in* research. And so, in order to bridge the gap, there needs to be some methodological expertise and support provided for staff when asking them to engage with evidence informed teaching improvements.

3.4.3 PedR, PedD and something in-between?

Gordon *et al.* (2003) undertook an HEFCE commissioned review of the *"range and depth of pedagogic developments associated with the scholarship of teaching in higher education"* (ibid p.3). The review explored the relationship between pedagogic development (PedD) and pedagogic research (PedR). They suggested that PedD and PedR are, importantly, not seen as representing opposite poles on a continuum but as overlapping areas, used to describe features of enquiry that contribute to the field of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Although I don't disagree with the thought that *"PedD and PedR do not refer to entirely distinct and clearly demarcated areas of practice or discourse."*(Gordon *et al.*, 2003, p. 7), in the original text, the aims of PedD and PedR are separated into ideal types as shown in Figure 4.

	Ped D	**Ped R**
activity	aim to improve practice informal methodology context specific own teaching/own department aimed at local audience pragmatic, low theorisation subject focused or generic	aim to describe, analyse, conceptualise formal research proposal applicable to wider contexts independent of own teaching aimed at national/international audience based on established theory subject focused or generic
outputs	improvement to practice limited general applicability non-refereed publication guidelines on good practice for own institution use web-site publication	better understanding of practice generally applicable output peer reviewed publication analytic description/ conceptualisation results in the public domain may be reported on web-site publication

Figure 4 PedD and PedR 'ideal types' from Gordon et al. (2003 p.10)

It is suggested that PedD and PedR are not opposite ends of the spectrum; however, Gordon et al., (2003) state quite clearly on p.9 that *"much of PedD does not seek to be highly theorised because it is focussed on application to professional practice rather than using traditional academic processes."*

Suggesting that, although not on opposite ends of a spectrum, PedD and PedR should nevertheless be seen as activities which are separate in terms of required theoretical understanding. There is an inherent permission that to do PedD, you don't need to have an understanding of theory. The UKPSF however, asks that we evaluate and incorporate research as well as use evidence (AdvanceHE, 2011, p. 3). Whilst a benefit of the split approach to PedD and PedR is the removal of difficulties with educational research language and dissimilar paradigm approaches with which staff may not be expert, it limits the theoretical engagement required for evidence-informed practice. Pedagogic engagement with literature is often not seen as important (Anwaruddin, 2015, 2016; Gore *et al.*, 2017). Having separated PedD and PedR Gordon *et al.* suggest that *"The opportunity to achieve cumulative knowledge in PedD may be limited by the relative isolation of the staff, the extent of the literature search undertaken and lack of theorisation."*(ibid 2003 p.9).

In 2016, when my research and the PJC began, Pritchard and Mcgowan's 2016 sector wide study had just been published. It discussed how *"activities undertaken under the banner of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) might inform a sector-wide reflection on ways of identifying and recognising excellence in teaching."* (ibid p.3). They ask that activities be more easily identifiable as supporting excellent practice. Activities then, that demonstrate development and inform practice, which we may term SoTL, are required. It is here, with the knowledge that difficulties exist for staff without methodological understanding, (Hutchings, 2007; Miller-Young and Yeo, 2015; Tierney, 2020; Webb and Tierney, 2020) that I suggest we should support teaching staff to engage with theory, rather than give permission to those that practice PedD, to keep theory at arm's length.

3.5 Professional development for teaching staff, a definition for HE

"Professional development (PD) is known to be one of the key determinants for improving the quality and relevance of education and learning" (Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, 2019). PD programmes can encourage exchange of resources and ideas and encourage reflection in order to innovate, improve and develop teaching practice. However, PD suffers from a lack of agreed upon definition.

Recently Sancar et al. (2021) conducted an extensive review of literature relating to the definition of PD and found that *"existing studies fail to meaningfully define it"(*p.1). They do however, suggest that most studies (Pedder and Opfer, 2011; Meissel, Parr and Timperley, 2016; Coldwell, 2017; de Groot-Reuvekamp, Ros and van Boxtel, 2018; Noonan, 2019) use Desimone's 2009 definition: "*PD is a process involving the interaction of teacher knowledge and beliefs, in-class teaching practices, and student learning outcomes."* (Sancar, Atal and Deryakulu, 2021). However, DeSimone's definition is widely linked with school settings as is the excellent work of Sancar et al. A literature review by Gast, Schildkamp and van der Veen (2017) concluded that the number of articles discussing PD in HEIs was low, and what was needed was *"more in-depth qualitative studies on the topic of effects of team-based professional development interventions in higher education on teacher learning, as well as studies of success-related factors in these interventions."* (Gast, Schildkamp and van der Veen, 2017).

Malik, Nasim and Tabassum (2015) provide a broad definition of PD in HE where "*professional development encompasses all types of facilitating knowledge opportunity, ranging from university degrees to formal assignments, conferences and informal learning opportunities located in practice".* Additionally, the HEA suggest that PD in HE comprises *"any activity targeted to strengthen and extend the knowledge, skills and conceptions of academics"* (Kneale et al., 2016a). Other definitions interpret the PD of academics exclusively as the organised, structured and intentional practices of learning.

In international works, it has been put forward that PD in HE should not solely focus on the outcomes for students: *"research suggests that effective academics' PD can potentially have a positive impact on other aspects, such as a university's institutional culture and academics' career progression."* (Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, 2019) p.4). What PD is for HEI academics is inconsistent in the field.

3.5.1 The effectiveness of PD

There have been meta-reviews of the effectiveness of PD for teachers (Cordingley, 2015; Dunst, Bruder and Hamby, 2015) but these have faced criticism for being either been inconclusive or having serious methodological limitations (Sims and Fletcher-Wood, 2020). Researchers such as Opfer *et al.* (2011) and Kennedy (2016) ask us to better use theory to help identify the characteristics of effective PD. Chalmers and Gardiner (2015, p. 53) suggest that we need to *"build an evidence base that will enable researchers and practitioners to ask more complex questions on where and on whom the programs have an impact, and why they have impact."* (Chalmers and Gardiner, 2015, p. 53)

The 'Innovating Professional Development in Higher Education' analysis from the European Commission (Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, 2019), states that there is a growing need for training and PD in higher education. To keep up with the latest teaching innovations, and to move towards new pedagogical models (McKee *et al*., 2013), PD is needed. However, PD sessions in HEIs that have been reported on, tend to be predominantly brief, one-time sessions that aim to intervene on a particular teaching or curricular skill or strategy (Beach *et al.*, 2016; Mooney, 2018).

In fact, most forms of PD do not work (McNally, Challen and Wyness, 2014; Hanley, Slavin and Elliott, 2015; Worth *et al.*, 2015); (Kennedy, 2016) and traditional PD faces the criticism that the activities *"do not sufficiently focus on individual characteristics, needs, competencies, participation, and prior knowledge"* (Sancar, Atal and Deryakulu, 2021). Research on teachers' PD has generally yielded disappointing results with teacher professional learning activities often being characterised as ineffective (Borko, 2004; Timperley and Alton-Lee, 2008; Desimone, 2009). Roxå and Mårtensson (2017, p. 102) and in their honest response to the uncomfortable findings of Friberg (2015), suggest that sometimes even well-designed PD workshops or courses, fluently executed with the best intentions, become situations where *"the participants have limited power."* Excellent PD should give power and agency to the participants; frequently, the kind of PD available in HEIs does not engender this.

Kennedy suggests that the most effective PD programs should motivate, intellectually engage, and be meaningful to the teachers themselves. Kennedy's work forms much of the basis of the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCETT) 2021 discussion paper on effective PD, which states as one of its guiding principles that: *"as well as being **research-informed**, PD should **engage educators in theory** so they can adapt their learning creatively to enrich their*

own setting."(Vare *et al.*, 2021). Kennedy (2016) suggests that PD activities with a focus on subject content are least effective, and PD which emphasises practice or technique often lack theoretical underpinnings. This, inevitably, sees PD activity failing to enhance pedagogical understanding (Gibbs, 1995; Teräs, 2016).

Another reason that PD research yields disappointing results is that it fails to consider how learning is embedded in professional lives and working conditions (Pedder and Opfer, 2011; Cordingley, 2015; Admiraal *et al.*, 2019). A report is expected in December 2021, from the Education Endowment Foundation, on the characteristics of effective PD based on analysis from Sims *et al.* (2021). This appears to be the type of in-depth research needed but, it will be focussed on school communities not HE. The context of HEIs and schools are becoming somewhat similar, yet they still differ in many areas. A review of what makes effective PD in HEIs is required, despite some work having started in this area (Fung and Gordon, 2016; Gast, Schildkamp and van der Veen, 2017; Vare *et al.*, 2021).

3.5.2 Professional development and accreditation

In 2019, Eurydice published a guide to continuing PD for HEI staff. The report highlights the role of the UKPSF, the Quality Code for Higher Education, produced by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and the TEF in supporting PD in HEIs. It states that "t*here is no legal requirement for academic staff in HE to undertake professional development, though there is an expectation that they will do so."* (Eurydice, 2019).

The 'Renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education' presents an argument that *"having good university teachers is crucial for high-quality higher education* (European Commission, 2020)*."* However, the same document also states that *"too many higher education teachers have received little or no pedagogical training and systematic investment in teachers' continuous professional development remains the exception" (ibid).*

This, and other studies published at the start of this action research (Fanghanel *et al.*, 2016; Fung and Gordon, 2016; Locke *et al.*, 2016), clearly signal the need for ongoing changes to the level and nature of PD offered to academics throughout their careers, and a need to engage in PD for improving teaching quality. We have effective quality assurance in place through HEA accreditation, AdvanceHE and the UKPSF, but there are no specific suggestions of programmes

forms or mechanisms (Sims and Fletcher-Wood, 2019) that might contribute to PD which engenders excellent teaching (Stoll, Harris and Handscomb, 2012).

PD is under-researched in education generally (Perry, Boylan and Booth, 2019). They report that in HE there are a number of bodies focussed on quality assurance and that although *"the effects of quality assurance in the sector are under-researched" (*ibid p.34), the UKPSF and HEA fellowship are recognised asa reputable quality assurance mark. (Griggs and Cooke, 2015, p. 1) suggest when discussing HEA fellowship that *"The [PD] gains from creating space for colleagues to reflect on their teaching and evaluate their pedagogic practice have extended far beyond the formal accreditation they receive."* However, translating the excellent QA procedure into effective PD is difficult.

To be effective, PD requires a shift in focus from delivering PD programmes for transmission of knowledge, to understanding and supporting authentic professional learning which engenders transformative practices. PD is a critical component of support offered to departments and staff (Saroyan and Trigwell, 2015b; Tomkin *et al.*, 2019). Saroyan and Trigwell (2015) also suggest that PD support would be best offered in a community of peers. From the point of view of the HEI, PD should enhance collective capability, and this is a social matter, not merely an individual one. "Individuals learn from one another; the collective level of the conversation rises. Individuals can come back to the community, even to address the same topic, with the expectation that the discussion will be at a higher level with new ideas"(Kastens and Manduca, 2017, p. 14). PD in communities, enhances the knowledge of all members of the community (Van Waes *et al.*, 2016; Sancar, Atal and Deryakulu, 2021).

3.6 Defining the terms Professional Learning Community (PLC) and Communities of Practice (CoP)

Often definitions of terms used in education, that include communities who engage in activity for the improvement of teaching and learning, are difficult to unpack because of the different meanings attributed to them. The sometimes-synonymous use of terms which have different scopes, and the large spectrum of terms that are commonly used in the literature (Stoll *et al.*, 2006; Blankenship and Ruona, 2007; Hargreaves, 2008; Levine, 2010; Lomos, Hofman and Bosker, 2011; Margalef and Pareja Roblin, 2016; Vangrieken *et al.*, 2017) often obfuscate meaning.

At the heart of the concept, for the thesis, is the notion of community. The focus is not just on individual teachers' PD, but of PD within a community context – a community of learners, and the notion of collective learning. Two major definitional categories of learning community surface in the literature, PLC and CoP. Although both are types of teacher communities (TC), there is lack of clarity as to how they are defined and operationalised (Voulalas and Sharpe, 2005).

(Vangrieken *et al.*, 2017)'s systematic review from 2017 suggests that:

> *"Several terms for TCs are used in this field of research, often without specifying the corresponding underlying theoretical model. Overall, studies tend to refer to one of two dominant theoretical frameworks: teacher professional learning communities (PLCs) and communities of practice (CoPs)." (*ibid p48)

Both CoPs and PLCs are driving forces for enhancing pedagogy, deepening knowledge and sustaining the growth of educational organisations with strong learning culture. Both treat meaning as socially constructed through collective activity, rather than by the individual absorption of knowledge and so the boundaries between them are blurred (Vangrieken *et al.*, 2017). There are differences between the two types of communities however, and so these two separate community types are discussed below: first PLC then CoP.

3.6.1 Professional learning communities (PLCs)

The term PLCs is specific to the educational context (Owen, 2015); it was proposed as the educational counterpart to the learning organisation construct introduced by Senge (1990). The concept of PLC was promoted by (Hord, 1997) and (DuFour and Eaker, 1998) and has subsequently been described as "an on-going process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve" (DuFour, Eaker and Many, 2010). Literature also suggests that a PLC is a group of people sharing, and critically interrogating, their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way (Toole and Louis, 2002; Mitchell and Sackney, 2011).

There are changes in HE concerning teaching excellence metrics, the TEF, the NSS, learning gain, league table style reporting to drivers such as OFSTED, and league tables and so, the landscape of 2021 in which HEI teaching staff find themselves is now, arguably, not as far from schools as it once may have been. There are still differences though and, as such, a PLC may not be the best or most effective type of learning community for HEIs to embrace. Differences exist in terms of leadership structure, size and disciplinary areas of focus, "higher education instructors reside in microclimates (departments) that may vary by disciplines, teaching and learning norms and expectations, and student populations."(Emery, Maher and Ebert-May, 2019, p. 470). Stoll et al, describe a PLC as a community *"with the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of* ***all professionals in the school community*** *with the collective purpose of enhancing student learning"* (Stoll et al 2006 p.145 emphasis added). Schools are generally far smaller than HEIs and the leadership structure is also significantly different. PLCs in schools can engage the whole community in a way communities in HEIs cannot.

PLCs became renowned as the answer to teacher isolation and an effective means for realising collaborative decision-making, raising teacher satisfaction, and stimulating student achievement (Hord, 1997, 2004; DuFour and Eaker, 1998; Wenger, 1998a; DuFour, 2004; Hord and Sommers, 2008; Vangrieken et al., 2017). A DfE report in 2005 reported that "*The idea of a professional learning community (PLC) is one well worth pursuing as a means of promoting school and system-wide capacity building for sustainable improvement and pupil learning"* (Bolam *et al.*, 2005). As the report was based on 16 case studies and 393 schools, it is evident that PLCs were well established in many schools during 2000-2004.

Despite this success, and awareness that PLCs reduce isolation, it is only recently that PLCs have been advocated as a promising approach in higher education (Eaker and Sells, 2016; Moser, 2018). Eaker and Sells (2016) call for PLCs in higher education, believing that PLCs show promise and significant potential for faculty development. And yet, the field is still lacking in research on this phenomenon within higher education (Hord, 1997; DuFour, Eaker and Many, 2010; Blitz, 2013; Moser, 2018). This may be because the PLC community characteristics are not quite relevant or reproducible in HEIs. From her work, Mooney (2018, p. 49) suggests that institutions can "reasonably expect transformational results from investing in and supporting emergent PLCs as one avenue towards educational innovation" Although, despite PLC appearing in the title of this work, very quickly the community is referred to as a general learning community; there is no theoretical writing about PLCs in the paper, nor a focus on the characteristics that exist in order for a learning community to be a termed PLC.

Hord (2004) defined five attributes of a PLC that are in accord with a number of other researchers, for example,Youngs and King (2002); Stoll *et al.* (2006); DuFour (2009), as: *"Supportive and shared leadership; Shared values and vision; Collective learning and application of learning; Supportive conditions; and Shared practice"* (Hord, 2004, p. 7).

Hord's model places emphasis on reflective dialogue as a vehicle for collective learning where supportive conditions enable collective learning, and shared practice, where faculty members may come together in groups as large as 30-40. This reflective dialogue is essential to quality PD and so PLCs can be effective vehicles for this kind of exchange (Mushayikwa and Lubben, 2009; Borko, Jacobs and Koellner, 2010; Hung and Yeh, 2013; Derri, Vasiliadou and Kioumourtzoglou, 2015).

Interactions in PLCs are collegial and collaborative in nature (Wheelan and Tilin, 1999; Servage, 2008) and learning within PLCs involves active deconstruction of knowledge through reflection and analysis, and its reconstruction through action in a particular context (Mitchell and Sackney, 2011) as well as co-construction through collaborative learning with peers.

Group members take responsibility for each other's growth and coordinate individual knowledge and expertise to advance the collective work of the group, what Lord (1994) refers to as "collective generativity" (p. 193). Drawing on group members' expertise, PLCs distribute the social and intellectual work and have a commitment to helping each other grow in their practice (Koellner-Clark and Borko, 2004). Through collaboration, relationships among members of the group are formed to develop and sustain the community (Louis and Stoll,

2007). Moreover, teachers recognise that there are differences in members' beliefs, knowledge, and practices, and they become resources for learning and a means to foster relationships among the group (Grossman *et al.*, 2001). At the same time, members understand that they all have a role in raising questions and concerns for the group to explore and they need to work together to define a common mission for their work (Rosenholtz, 1989). Ultimately, the PLC develops a group identity, with shared goals and interests, while at the same time, supporting individual growth and development.

Literature suggests that a PLC is a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way (Toole and Louis, 2002; Mitchell and Sackney, 2011), operating as a collective enterprise (King and Newmann, 2001).

While many of the characteristics presented above are , and should be combined in order to create a PLC that can reach its full capacity, there is no single method of establishing a PLC that can be applied to all wishing to create such a community (Schechter, 2012).

The PLC then, by definition, should change and develop with the institutional needs and drivers as well as those of the participants. However, Bryk, Camburn and Louis (1999), caution that high performing institutions might orientate professional interaction towards conserving existing practices rather than changing them. Preserving the status quo would be "likely to perpetuate substandard practice in many cases" (ibid p758). Bryk et al suggest that "if professional communities in fact foster instructional change, they do so by creating an environment that supports learning through innovation and experimentation" (Bryk et al 1999 p.771).

Seashore et al. (2003), also suggest that whilst a PLC has a role to play in changing practice, its effects may be less than those suggested by some previous studies. They concluded that a possible explanation for this, put forward by Toole and Louis (2002), was that teachers' individual mental models – the "schemas" or maps they draw on to guide their professional practice – determine whether individual teachers are actually ready to change. Thus, there is scope for the PLC to effect significant institutional wide transformation if it is able to engage enough members, across a sustained time period, to affect their schemas. This requires the dissemination of the findings to all members of the institution. However, how to achieve this dissemination is often neglected in the literature and is one reason why effective PLCs require the whole staff to be part of them.

The requirerments of a PLC to have instituional leadership, and be made up of the whole community, are ones which are not easily possible in a large HEI. With the pitfalls identified around lack of cultural change and preserving the status quo too, the term PLC has often become a meaningless label when attached to communities that don't have all the features of a PLC. Criticism of educational action research is often levelled at practitioners who conflate terms and generalise inappropriately. It is important therefore, that I do not suggest that a PLC was created. A different definition of the community that formed is required; a CoP may be a possible candidate.

3.6.2 Communities of Practice (CoPs)

> *"Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."*(Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 1)

Generally, the leading researchers who established them (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1991), define COPs as tightly knit groups that have been practising long enough to constitute a cohesive community which provides a sense of belonging and commitment (Borzillo, Aznar and Schmitt, 2011; Baker and Beames, 2016). Lave and Wenger's notion of CoP is one of the most widely cited and influential conceptions of social learning to date (Uzuner Smith, Hayes and Shea, 2017).

An important feature of CoPs is their natural development and flexibility. CoPs should be seen as organic: not created, but guided through their development by participants. Lave and Wenger originally argued that CoPs organically change their path because new members join the community allowing for growth, enabling the CoP to change its focus. Moreover, the development of a CoP should be based on the teachers' common goals and objectives, and all members should be welcomed to participate in and contribute to the creation of the CoP agenda (Leite, 2006; Shen, Zhen and Poppink, 2007; Akerson, Cullen and Hanson, 2009). The learning experiences incorporated in CoPs need to be open to personalisation, in order for the learner to be able to apply their learning in a wide context. In CoPs, the expertise of practitioners develops through engagement with community members facing similar situations. Hence, effective CoPs build on the collective experiences of their participants (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002).

The construct of CoPs is common both in the educational realm, and in varied business and healthcare organisations (Wenger and Snyder, 2000; Li *et al.*, 2009; Vangrieken *et al.*, 2017). PD

for early career teachers, is often situated in CoP literature, such as (Beatty *et al.*, 2020). However, 'early career' may not necessarily directly align with HEI teaching staff identities; newer staff may have a higher level of teaching-related training than more established HEI staff, altering the learning direction. There are issues too for a CoP in academia; (Morrell-Scott, 2019, p. 55) discusses identity and confidence and a lack of clarity about whom the novice in an academic CoP may be. However, studies of apprenticeships reveal *"a more complex set of social relationships through which learning takes place mostly with journeymen and more advanced apprentices"*(Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Recently, Wilson et al (2020) asked how the *"benefits of a CoP differ across academics according to their level of teaching experience and seniority, or indeed any other demographic characteristics"* suggesting that *"evidence on this issue remains scarce"* (ibid p.39). There is space then, for research into how a CoP benefits academic staff.

The concept of CoPs therefore is 'shifting', with evidence of some conceptual slippage (Tummons, 2012; Arthur, 2016) in the years since it was first described.

> *"Sometimes it is a conceptual lens through which to examine the situated social construction of meaning. At other times it is used to refer to a virtual community or informal group sponsored by an organization to facilitate knowledge sharing or learning."* (Cox, 2005, p. 527)

CoPs, as defined initially by Wenger, do not involve any kind of formal creation. The CoP process is not only informal, it is unintentional, unstructured and unplanned. CoPs then, in the purest sense, cannot be led, managed, facilitated or even influenced. However, McDonald et al. (2012) reported that:

> *"in his later works, Wenger correctly posits that there might be advantage to organisations should they find ways to harness this situated learning process; in effect a structural move from the pure CoP concept of the seminal authors of CoPs being a process rather than a thing."* (ibid p.10)

Wenger has moved from describing organic communities emerging organically in a single practice field (Wenger 1998) to suggesting approaches to create intentional and strategic communities (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2015). The introduction of recognised CoP leadership or facilitation means that a CoP is no longer unintentional and thus, the original CoP concept is modified.

It is agreed that the term CoP has gone through many iterations. Kimble (2006) identified three periods in the development of the theory: early (1991–1995), middle (1996–1999) and late (2000–2003) where communities of practice have *"undergone a transition from being a heuristic device to a theory and from a theory to an application"* (ibid p.230). This was before the more recent publications from Wenger (2012) and Wenger-Trayner (2015). The CoP framework however, is generally based upon social or situated learning theory and Wenger's subsequent work, aimed to develop a universally applicable theory about learning in social systems, has both illuminated and (at times) obscured the original concept.

While discussing CoPs, some mention must be made of Brown and Duguid (Brown and Duguid, 1991, 1996) who built their concept of communities of practice (CoP) from an examination of studies of workplace practices; they highlight how informal groups form to get the work done through the generation of solutions to problems. They see CoPs as not usually a part of the formal organisational structure and discuss that whilst allowing CoPs to exist, some organisations may ignore, or fail to see, the knowledge and innovation that is produced within these communities. There could be space therefore, for an integration of their and Wenger et al.'s CoP theories to suit the specific context of HEIs [7.2].

CoPs can be challenging to create (Stark and Smith, 2016) in HEIs, as higher education has a culture of individuality and isolation which can resist change (Viskovic, 2006; Warhurst, 2006; Nagy and Burch, 2009; Stonewater, Bakker and Shore, 2014). A further criticism of CoPs is that they can lead to hoarding of knowledge, clique formation and exclusiveness with regard to memberships, limitations on innovation (Blankenship and Ruona, 2007; Weatherby, 2017) and issues where the organisation does not disseminate the new knowledge create by the community (DuFour and Eaker, 1998; David *et al.*, 2003), issues which can be compounded by some characteristics of HEIs. There is also concern from Wenger, that a lack of self-criticism can prevent a community from developing and can, on occasion, hinder learning (Wenger et al., 2002). CoPs therefore, often suffer from some of the same difficulties as PLCs and research needs to be conducted (Cox, 2013; Arthur, 2016) into how communities better capture the knowledge created and how to share across institutions, the learning that comes from CoPs.

It is also argued that the notion of social practice within CoPs is largely undifferentiated across settings, creating a broad spectrum of applications. Despite being cited by most university conducted CoP research, it would appear that Wenger et al.'s CoPs are poor models for establishing communities to support situated learning within academic environments (Amin and Roberts, 2008; Nagy and Burch, 2009). Amin and Roberts (2008 p.365) suggest that this

limits the specific features of a CoP being developed for a particular workplace and noted, *"It is time that a more heterogeneous lexicon for different types of situated practice was developed".* Arthur (2016) also discusses this and, on p.232, points out the ways in which the organisations used for Lave and Wenger's original 1991 work differ from universities which are knowledge based, have a significant speed of change and suffer from a proliferation of management ideologies and a lack of time for collegiate activity.

It is difficult then, to establish that the community created during this research was exactly a CoP in the way defined by seminal literature on the subject (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002). It existed neither as an apprenticeship style community, within an organisation without any formal leadership, nor was it a managerial tool created by institutional leaders with predetermined goals to generate solutions to issues with productivity within an organisation. Ryan (2015) suggests that:

> *"[Although] CoPs are popularly defined as groups of people who share a passion for something and, together, learn how to do it better. Without further specification, this definition is of limited use in understanding intentionally established CoPs in higher education settings."*

Therefore, a new definition of a community might be required, and this discussion is continued in [6.5].

3.6.3 Communities, dialogue and learning

PD needs to be something more than an introduction to a new way of doing things, or a course or workshop with predefined outcomes. When creating PD opportunities, we need to understand that learning is accomplished through the construction of knowledge blended with dialogue, relationships, and self-directed learning (Saroyan and Trigwell, 2015a; Bedford, 2019). A dialogic approach supporting informal discussions with peers, at both high and low levels (Van Waes *et al.*, 2018) is effective. The preferences of academics to learn collegially in their own context, and with directly relevant practical outcomes, has also been documented (McDonald *et al* 2012). Collegiality across the institution, could also have benefits further than just PD; Stensaker (2017) linked a reduction in collegiality to increasing complexity and managerialism in universities and suggests that initiatives which foster collaborative working environments could counteract this. Enabling of collective modes of working echoes the work of Gibbs (2013), who highlighted that development is most usefully focussed on groups of

teachers in order to promote *'the health and vigour of the community of teaching practice'* (Gibbs, 2013, p. 7). "T*his appeal is reiterated across the contemporary literature*" (Brown and Peck, 2018, p. 233). Creating these mixed supported groups or communities could provide a fertile learning ground.

It has also been widely documented that it is possible to improve learning and teaching practices by providing PD linked to teaching staff's individual, social, and occupational dimensions in a collaborative, inquisitive, and self-directed learning environment (Mushayikwa and Lubben, 2009; Borko, Jacobs and Koellner, 2010; Hung and Yeh, 2013; Derri, Vasiliadou and Kioumourtzoglou, 2015; Kennedy, 2016). PD should be part of a teacher's lifelong learning and could, as Derri *et al.* (2015) suggest, be positively influenced by social constructivist and inquiry-based approaches.

Doppenberg, Bakx and Den Brok (2012) suggest that teachers interact with a varied network of people related to their PD. There is also significant work on teachers and their networks from those who argue that the ongoing and collaborative and dialogical activity (Williams *et al.*, 2013; Van Waes *et al.*, 2016) holds the potential to capacitate teachers' pedagogical adaptation and change (Roxå and Mårtensson, 2012); (Fataar and Feldman, 2016; Feldman, 2016); Sancar, 2021). Kennedy (2016) suggests that PD should intellectually engage to be effective and so we shouldn't shy away from challenging discussions.

The works of Van Waes *et al.* (2015,2016, 2018) and Roxå and Mårtensson (2009) are of particular interest around professional networks in HEIs and offer an approach to PD that recognises the importance of community and collaboration. Included in this thesis are the ideas of micro, meso and macro levels of community leadership and PD (Trowler, 2010; Morrell-Scott, 2019), although no direct labelling of the support in these terms occurs here.

Collaboration is a priority in PD processes; in the teaching profession specifically, "good collaboration links theory and practice, embraces peer communication and interaction, and cultivates a learning and research community that builds generative associations." (Sancar, Atal and Deryakulu, 2021). It is necessary to build exploratory inter-generative associations (Brücknerová and Novotný, 2017) in order to interact with a variety of people with whom they have different qualified relationships in a collaborative network (Van Waes *et al.*, 2016).

New developments in higher education suggest a growing need for PD activities focusing on teams (Gast, Schildkamp and van der Veen, 2017). This is not particularly new, and as far back as 1995, Jean McNiff suggested that there was an assumption in enlightened PD programs that

the professionals engaged with them are highly capable of learning and what they need in their professional learning is an appropriate form of support in teams. Many empirical studies have chronicled how these communities facilitate dialogue to help teaching-focussed professionals celebrate what they already know and generate new knowledge (de Vries and Pieters, 2007; De Vries, Jansen and van de Grift, 2013; Ion and Iucu, 2014). “Academic teachers need to talk to each other about their experiences of teaching and student learning and about their everyday life inside higher education organisations”(Roxå and Mårtensson, 2017, p. 103).

In addition to dialogue and community, motivation (Nistor *et al.*, 2015) and enjoyment are also worth considering. We work with dedicated well informed capable professional colleagues capable of learning and transformational practice. Sometimes, all they need is the opportunity to have interesting positive conversations (Kastens and Manduca, 2017) for benefits to be seen in practice. Where interactions with peers are empowering, energising, and motivating, participants are engaged; recognition or reward attached to these activities can further motivate. There is an understanding that the PJC existed as a vehicle for EIGL (Brücknerová and Novotný, 2017, p. 409) where learning was implicit (Evans, 2019). There was no requirement for assessment or qualification, but evidence of engagement may be used towards gaining HEA fellowship. Although assessment or qualification is not required for effective PD, the accreditation for which this type of activity generates evidence is of value for staff and their institutions. When engaged in this type of activity benefits often transcend any accreditation gained (Griggs and Cooke, 2015).

3.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has looked at journal clubs, the conditions needed for their creation and sustainability, as well as how they function effectively in HEIs as vehicles for PD. Time has been spent on identifying the need for a bridge between PedD and PedR with an emphasis on creating a dialogic PD activity to support pedagogic engagement with literature. Communities have been given consideration, and awareness raised of the issues around existing terminology and HE specific features which may require a new HEI specific community. In the last section, ideas about what engenders effective PD is considered within the constructivist paradigm of the social construction of new knowledge. It is my contention that: a journal club, acting as a positive, motivating, intergenerational dialogic community could be a useful vehicle for PD in HEIs. Its expertly supported pedagogic engagement with literature could bridge the theory-practice gap and promote the professional capital of teaching-focussed staff through institutional dissemination of new knowledge, bringing recognition and reward. For the benefit of the reader the research questions are reiterated here:

To what extent did the Pedagogic Journal Club engender an effective professional development community in an HE setting?

1) What was the impact, if any, of the PJC on the individuals who attended?
   Does PJC activity lead to:
   i) changes to teaching practice by the individual?
   ii) promotion or professional recognition?
   iii) increase confidence?
   iv) a change in the individual's identity?
   v) engagement with literature?

2) What was the impact, if any, of the PJC on the wider community?
   Does PJC activity affect:
   i) modules and courses?
   ii) interdisciplinary collaboration and networking?
   iii) the perceived value of teaching-focussed activity?

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Chapter outline

All research is based on certain epistemological and ontological assumptions about the nature of knowledge and reality. The choice of research methodology and paradigm are justified by the choice of philosophical, ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions underlying the research. This chapter aims to justify the choices made, aware that choice of methodology shapes the planning, implementation and outcomes of any research.

The term "methodology" is contested, meaning different things to different people. Methodology can be viewed as a narrow, technical exercise – *"the activity… of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating and justifying the methods you use"* (Wellington, 2000, p.22). Or it can encompass a broader philosophical discussion about the nature of knowledge and reality.

Similarly, implicit assumptions which underlie professional and workplace discourses shape professional practice and so, articulating the rationale of the research allows a human engagement in changing beliefs and practices (Kuhn, 1970). In this section, up to 4.3, I will adopt Cohen, Manion and Morrison's definition of the terms: *"methodology concerns how we find out about the phenomenon, the approach to be used, the principles which underpin it and the justification for using the kind of research approach adopted." (*Cohen *et al.,* 2018, p. 186). From part 4.4 onwards, methods are discussed which "*concern instrumentation: how data are collected and analysed."* (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 186)

This chapter then, is split into three main sections – [4.2] begins by discussing the constructivist and pragmatist paradigms, pragmatism and mixed methodologies. [4.3] looks at action research and its understood language and territories, and then follows with a closer inspection of action research as the methodology used in this research project. There is a look too, at the criticisms of action research and the challenges to validity, reliability and objectivity, and this section ends with a discussion of positionality. Ethics are discussed [4.4] and a more detailed overview of the iterations and methods used to collect and analyse data [4.6], including a reflection of the epistemological and ontological concepts underpinning the need for triangulation in this case.

4.2 Paradigms

It is possible to hold many beliefs throughout one's life and my historical positivist approach to research may well act as a lens through which I construct meaning in order to make sense of the world, even now. Worldviews are constructed by the researcher over time; Denzin and Lincoln (1994) in fact, define paradigms as human constructions. This section then, looks at what paradigms are and lays out the philosophical underpinnings of my selection of an action research mixed methods approach.

4.2.1 The beginnings: defining paradigms as world views or disciplinary matrices

Thomas Kuhn (1962) first used the word paradigm to mean a philosophical way of thinking, or the shared ideas and concepts that guide the members of a given scientific field. Margret Masterman (1970 published online in 2014), identified 21 possible meanings for a paradigm that Kuhn had used which led to Kuhn suggesting (in 1970, 1974, and 1977) that he had used the term too broadly initially. More recently, there is a consensus that there are two distinct definitions of paradigm.

Firstly: an inherent reflection of the researcher's beliefs about the world that they are in and want to live in (Lather 1986), where 'Worldview' has become an accepted synonym for paradigm when referring to these beliefs (Lather, 1986; Patton, 2002; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006; Creswell and Clark, 2011). Lincoln and Guba were educationalists of the opinion that paradigms were incommensurable, a term first used by (Feyerabend, 1962). Lincoln and Guba were firm in their belief that one could not be both a positivist and a naturalist/constructivist (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 2000). Donmoyer, (2008) says that *"those who assume a priori that the knowledge generated from different paradigms will be complementary ignore—or at least obscure—the fact that there may, indeed, be fundamental differences within research communities."* (ibid p594).

Secondly: the perspective, or way of thinking, that informs the meaning or interpretation of research (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Kuhn (1970) later termed this a "disciplinary matrix" bringing to the definition of a paradigm, ideas of research frameworks so that paradigms become more than just the researcher's world view. Disciplinary matrices are made up of a number of concepts such as: axiology - which encompasses beliefs about values and morals in research; ontology, to do with assumptions about the nature of reality; epistemology, which

brings assumptions about how we gain knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the known; methodology, which is the shared understanding of what are the best means for gaining knowledge about the world; and rhetoric, a shared understanding of the language of research (Creswell and Clark, 2011; Lincoln, Guba and Lynham, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). Thinking of Kuhn's second definition of a paradigm as a disciplinary matrix, the paradigm as worldview becomes a smaller element of the whole (Firinci, 2016).

Where worldviews may be incommensurable, it still may be possible to combine matrices. Philosopher Richard Bernstein has noted that incommensurability is not the same thing as logical incompatibility and so one could conceivably employ different paradigms in different circumstances to accomplish different goals (Bernstein, 1992). Donmoyer also argues that Kuhn himself never considered incommensurability as equal to logical incompatibility (Donmoyer, 2006). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) go further and suggest that to think about a paradigm as a worldview, or epistemological stance, does not preclude the cross-over of ideas.

There is an awareness then that one can employ the compatibility thesis, *"taking advantage of each paradigm's strengths as long as an awareness exists of the differences of worldviews"* (Hibberts and Johnson, 2012, p. 124). Quantitative and qualitative methods can be used together "*as long as the assumptions of both worldviews are respected"* (ibid).

4.2.2 Pragmatism as paradigm

During the 1880s in Cambridge USA, many philosophers, including Dewey, Pierce and James, began to discuss pragmatism or instrumentalism. Owing to this relatively recent appearance, a clear, agreed upon definition of the term pragmatism, is elusive. Talisse and Aikin (2008) suggest that pragmatism is *"a living philosophy rather than a historical relic"* (ibid, p. 3) and so an evolving definition may be appropriate.

Dewey suggests that to fully understand a particular concept, one would need to *"be able to apply it to fulfil some purpose or action or human conduct."* (Dewey, 1929, p. 244) and that knowledge comes about, not from experiments, but from transforming a problematic situation to its resolution through action/experience, thinking and communication. Dewey also suggests that the greater the range of applications of the concept, the more the meaning of the concept can be generalised (Riga, 2020). Dewey believed that the typical opposition between 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' approaches to problem-solving were obstacles to finding solutions. Dewey presupposes that reality is accessible and practical and that we can,

and do, act upon reality. Inquiry then, is central to Dewey's epistemology and, rather than truth, his epistemology focuses on warranted assertability or trustworthiness.

Pragmatism moves away from the epistemological construct held by positivists that reality is objective, and that of the constructivists who consider reality to be subjective. Pragmatists don't consider objectivity or subjectivity as sufficient; they consider that in the act of knowing, both the knower and what is to be known are changed by the transaction between them (Biesta and Burbules, 2003, p. 12).

Pragmatism has been viewed by some as an attack on positivism and something of little value, that softened the idea of truth. However, the subjective-objective debate becomes somewhat irrelevant as pragmatists see ontology as relational and situational. Pragmatists believe that truth is *"mutable and relative to interpretive dialogue"* (McCaslin, 2008, p. 672) which becomes epistemologically valid as it is constructed by the collective experience. Pragmatism advocates a relational epistemology where *"relationships in research are best determined by what the researcher deems appropriate to that particular study"* (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017, p. 35).

Some view pragmatism as bridging the gap between positivist and constructivist approaches, whilst some suggest that pragmatism lacks the basic characteristics of a philosophical doctrine required to be a paradigm. However, as an ontological construct, pragmatism is exceptionally informative. Pragmatism is gauged by its ability to reveal the nature of reality and so is often seen as a useful philosophical paradigm for mixed methods research (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Creswell and Clark, 2011; Hibberts and Johnson, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Morgan, 2014).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 5) write that ontology comes first, *"ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these, in turn, give rise to methodological considerations; and these, in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection".* The reality being researched in this thesis is non-singular, where all individuals involved have unique interpretations. It is conducted with a relativist ontology, a belief that the situation has multiple realities, and that those realities can be explored and meaning made of them or reconstructed through human interactions between the researcher and the research participants (Chalmers, Manley and Wasserman, 2005). This all comes together to build knowledge and a practical solution to the problem.

Meaning is inseparable from human experience and needs and is dependent upon context (Dillon et al. 2000). An acceptance of a mixed methodological approach came to the fore and if, as (Morgan, 2007) claims, the purpose of the research appropriates one or another paradigm,

then the purpose here requires pragmatism. Pragmatism offers a way out the paradigm quagmire social science researchers can sometimes find themselves in (Burke Johnson *et al.*, 2017). In this research, the purpose is to obtain an understanding of the PD that is effective for teaching-focussed staff at a research-intensive HEI, and their subjectively created social world. During the first iteration of observation and planning, other research methods were toyed with. However, action research quickly became the obvious choice "*…action research moves away from positivist research, being self-reflexive, collaborative, political and suitable for dissemination"* (Cain, 2011) p. 13–14). There is a mutuality between pragmatism, mixed methodology and AR.

4.3 Action research, its participatory language and territories

Lewin is credited with being the father of AR, being the first person to use the term 'action research' (Lewin, 1946) to refer to a specific kind of research through which the researcher generates new social knowledge about a social system while, at the same time, attempting to change it. Simply put, action research is the way in which groups of people can organise the conditions under which they can learn from their own experience, and make this experience accessible to others (Cain, 2011).

The central aim in action research is to bring about change, *"and the emphasis is on problem-solving in whatever way is appropriate"* (Thomas, 2017, p. 154). In practice, action research begins with an imperfectly understood concern and a desire to take action. In deciding where to begin making improvements, the group identifies problems of mutual concern that they wish to work together on (McIntyre, 2008; Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014).

Stringer (2007) formally conceptualises action research as:

> "*a process that provides the means by which stakeholders – those centrally affected by the issue investigated – explore their experience, gain greater clarity and understanding of events and activities, and use those extended understandings to construct effective solutions to the problem(s) on which the study was focussed"* (ibid p.20).

As discussed in chapter 2, this action research came from an observed requirement for a PD activity with a pedagogic focus for teaching staff at a research-intensive Russell group university. (Wyse *et al.*, 2020) discuss the many ways in which action research action has been

valued for its transformational potential (Whitehead, 2019; Wood, McAteer and Whitehead, 2019) and it is with transformation in mind, that this research was conducted.

Action research has evolved into a study of the continuous, participatory learning process undertaken by individuals in their usual work settings where *"…sustainable learning capacities give participants increasing control over their own situations."* (Greenwood and Levin, 2007 p. 17). It seeks transformative change through the simultaneous process of taking action and doing research, which are linked together by critical reflection. Kurt Lewin described action research as "*research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action*" that uses *"a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action*" (Lewin, 1946, p. 35).

Action research is employed when practical problems need solving but also, in order to bridge a gap between theory and practice. The assumption that, in order to change tacit knowledge, it is necessary to raise it into consciousness (Pena Trapero and Perez Gomez, 2017) and that reflection can provide access to tacit knowledge underlies all variations of AR. It differs from traditional research in ways exposed by Posch (2019) in table 11.

Table 11 How action research differs from traditional research from Posch (2019 p.497)

Academic Research		**Action research**
Knowledge to extend the academic knowledge base	**PRIMARY AIM**	Knowledge to improve professional practice
General theoretical knowledge	**TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE**	Local knowledge and practical theories
Theoretical interest	**STARTING POINT**	Interest in coping with practical situations
Guided by the interest in generalizability of findings	**SAMPLE SELECTION**	Persons affected by the investigated problem in a practice context
Methodological rigidity	**SUCCESS CRITERIA**	Characteristics of improved practice
Linear (Hypothesis – data collection – analysis/interpretation – conclusions)	**RESEARCH DESIGN**	Iterative (Plan – action – observation – reflection – plan - ...)
Influence on the investigated situation should be minimized	**INTERVENTION**	Influence on the investigated situation is a research interest
Scientific community	**PRIMARY AUDIENCE**	Practitioners and persons affected by the practice
Scientific publications and presentations	**DISSEMINATION**	Exchange of experience and findings in professional networks

AR then, is not merely about learning, it is about knowledge production and the improvement of practice in socially committed groups. Although action research draws on many theoretical frameworks and methodologies, the most fundamental worldview embraced by action research is a participatory one (Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

4.3.1 A Brief history of Action Research

Action research has been in use since the 1940s: it was a tight knit research community in the 1950s; suffered from association with radical political activism in the 1960s (Stringer, 2007) challenged on the basis that it was not 'real' research and was open to interpretation regarding its application as it lacked rigour (Smith, 2007); enjoyed a renaissance in the 80s however, publications were surprisingly limited. The number of published examples of action research amounted to less than one per year in the fifty years period from 1943 to 1993 (Ledford and Susan, 1993).

A characteristic of a good action research thesis is the identification and solution of a complex problem in the real world or workplace, involving all stakeholders, including workers often with the best knowledge of the problem. Participants identify a significant problem shared by the community or organisation. In deciding where to begin making improvements, the group identifies problems of mutual concern and the group decides to work together on this 'thematic concern' (McIntyre, 2008; Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014).

Action research has increased in popularity more recently and is used now widely by education researchers, developed by academics in higher education, such as Carr and Kemmis (1986) who saw it as a useful way of working in professional education, particularly teacher education. Action research exits as an established methodology *"seeking to change and transform 'practitioners' practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions in which they practice"* (Kemmis, 2009 p. 463). It is a *"practice-changing practice"* (ibid p. 464) where the collaborative nature of the process also means that it becomes both *"democratic and democratising*" (McAteer, 2013, p. 17). This has been further corroborated more recently with action research described as both democratising and political, able to challenge existing social norms and the structures that perpetuate inequalities (Cain and Harris, 2013; Gibbs et al 2017; Whitehead, 2019; Wood, McAteer and Whitehead, 2019; Wyse *et al.*, 2020).

A recent literature review into action research in higher education concludes that:

> *"Changes in higher education policy, driven by an explicit metrics of student satisfaction and the need for students to engage in their learning whilst registered at a higher education institution, argue for strong, practice-based evidence for what teaching can achieve. In an economic consumeristic model of higher education, an unjustified and holist concept of edification is seemingly not satisfactory. Evidence of how practice can*

> *be improved and its impact on the learning of students (and staff) is becoming critical to the changing character of higher education and its accountability to both government and students. These studies have shown how AR as both a practice and a methodology can provide this* evidence. AR has produced important changes in practice but needs to continue to evolve and respond to the limitations identified in this review." (Gibbs et al 2017 p.14)

This close to practice research therefore, is conducted with action research as the most suitable methodological approach in terms of activity but also, its validity withing the HEI community. As with all methodologies however, there are critiques, as alluded to by Gibbs et al (2017), that need addressing and accordingly, a critique of action research can be found at [4.3.3].

4.3.2 Iterations in Action Research

When first developing AR, Lewin initially created a more short-term approach defined as *"a spiral of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of action."* (Lewin, 1946, p. 38).

It is the cyclical nature of action research that ensures a level of internal consistency (Kock, McQueen and Scott, 1997), the more cycles or iterations of the AR, the more robust the results become. Action research typically cycles through phases and there have been many descriptions of these observe, act, reflect phases from many researchers (Susman and Evered, 1978; Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Stringer, 1996; Bradbury, 2016). O'Leary's (2004) cycles of action research (Figure 5) portray a cyclic process which takes shape as knowledge emerges. O'Leary's model discusses how the *"cycles converge towards better situation understanding and improved action implementation; and are based in evaluative practice that alters between action and critical reflection"* (ibid p.140). O'Leary sees action research as an experiential learning approach to change, the goal of which is to continually refine the methods, data and interpretation in the light of the understanding developed in the earlier cycles. In O'Leary's model *"cycles converge towards better situation understanding and improved action implementation; and are based in evaluative practice that alters between action and critical reflection"* (ibid p.140).

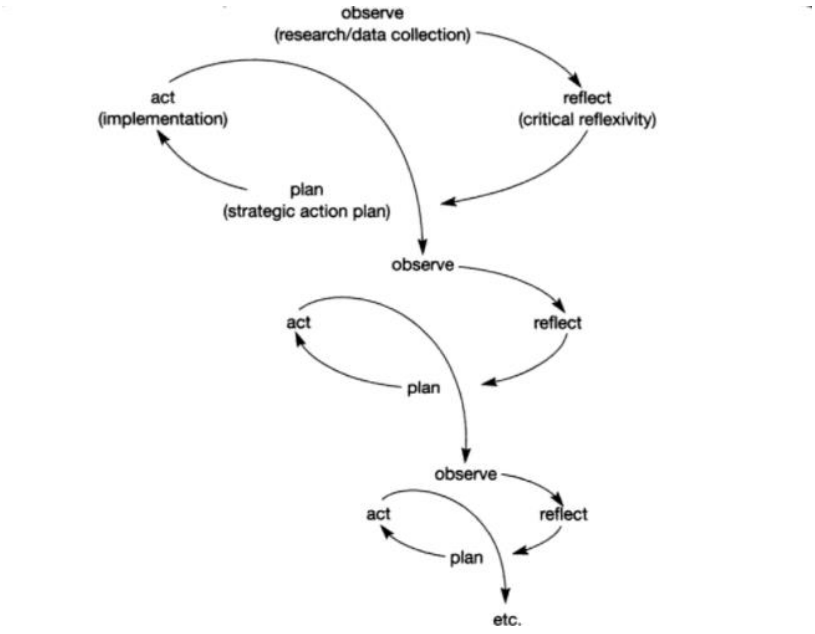


Figure 5 The action research cycle from O'Leary (2004, p. 140)

There is overlap between action and reflection to allow changes as the people involved learn from their own experience; writing too is reflective and the memoing [4.5.3] and construction of the thesis during the action research, is also an example of the reflective cyclical nature of action research. More is needed for successful action research than following a simplistic iconography for just one spiral. The more cycles one can engage in, the less heuristic the cycle becomes. By increasing the number of iterative cycles within the AR, validity can be improved. I acknowledge here the term 'validity', which in action research may not be appropriate, this is discussed further in [4.3.3.2]. This iterative nature is often cited as a key element in the practice of action research (Rowell et al., 2015) is one of its most difficult dimensions. In order for multiple cycles to be conducted, action research can sometimes benefit from an expansion of scope across iterations as discussed by Kock et al (1997) in Figure 6.

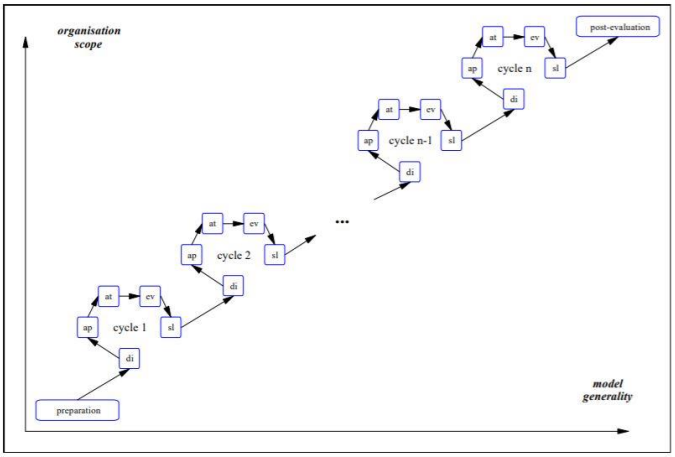


Figure 6 Relationship between scope and generality (Kock, McQueen and Scott, 1997)

Kemmis and McTaggart, (2008) suggest that the *"criterion of success is not whether participants have followed the steps faithfully but whether there is a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their practices"* (ibid p. 277). Koshy (2010) also suggests that rigidly adopting models or following stages too tightly can adversely affect the emergent flexible nature of AR.

O'Leary's model of *observe, plan, act, reflect,* was applied throughout the AR. After every meeting, in order to better understand the situation and, once each year, I incorporated a participatory reframing informed from memoing of meetings to expand the scope in order to keep the iteration of the action research going. Authentic development of the PJC occurred after every meeting with three year-long iteration cycles described more fully in section [4.5.1].

4.3.3 AR: A discussion of its criticisms, validity and objectivity

Being aware of the limitations of any chosen methodological approach is essential. It is possible to mitigate for some of the weaknesses if they are known in advance, and well-designed mitigation can generate a robust piece of work. Later in this section, I address some of the more contested critiques of action research which, rather than needing mitigation, require rebuttal. A case is made for the acceptance of action research in educational research with an awareness of its methodological limitations, seeing them less as failings but as different opportunities for learning. Firstly, though I address limitations that researchers can mitigate for.

4.3.3.1 Messy and time consuming

Action research has been described as messy, informal, structurally unformed, involving imprecise cycles of research and action which often results in a chaotic experience (Cook, 2009; Naima Mikkelsen, 2013). Unfortunately, a literature review by Wyse et al (2018), suggests that much action research is not methodologically robust as it lacks significant interrogation of methodological approach, which may come from a reticence to report this messiness. It is important though, that we report the methodological approach, despite its inherent messiness if we wish to champion action research. Nyanjom (2018) reports that it is essential to go through the messy aspects of action research in order to reach tidy research outcomes.

Action research is time consuming for the researcher and participants, it does not occur in neat time windows well suited to publication, often spanning more than one REF cycle, making it difficult to add to the institution's research reputation. To mitigate for this messiness and extended time, researchers are often tempted to reduce the cycles and keep iterations to a minimum. The amount of time action research demands then, can be a barrier to quality research if we are limited by short time frames; this can reduce AR's effectiveness and so, the researcher should be aware that plans need to be put in place to keep to deadlines to allow numerous iterations, and research communities need value research which may not fit neatly into timed cycles of required output.

4.3.3.2 Establishing validity and objectivity or not

The analysis of action research weaknesses, such as over interference with the object and the difficult issue of messiness and time, are useful insofar as they help researchers to refine the action research methods and mitigate. Other critiques levied at action research are lack of objectivity and validity; these are less mitigatable issues and more attempts by critics to undermine the methodological approach.

Some critics suggest that action research is not well suited to rigorous theory testing or scientific empirical research, nor make a contribution to causal theories of teaching and learning (Levin, 2012; Bryman, 2016), particularly when researchers are close to the action. Lindhult (2019) rebuts this with a specific focus on how to understand, and thus redefine, central concepts such as validity, reliability, and objectivity (table 12).

Table 12 Reliability and objectivity reconceptualised and expanded Lindholt (2019, p.29)

	"Normal" Research	Reconstruction in Qualitative Research	Action Research / Participatory Research
How researchers can create reliability	• Instrumental reliability • Accuracy of methods/tools • Rigour in process	• Documentation of process and choices (e.g., project log) • Data is consistent with results (dependability) • Critical reflection • Standardization and training for minimizing subjectivity	• Adaptive, goal-seeking reliability as dynamically regulated process • Effective organizing interactive and participatory learning processes
How stakeholders /external actors can contribute to reliability	• Replication of the study	• Process review • Auditability (e.g., audit trailing)	• Contribute to learning and correction in inquiry as (extended/actual) participant
Objectivity	• Neutrality • Non-biased • Detached position	• Reflexivity • Description of subjects / pre-understanding • Confirmability of findings	• Critical subjectivity • Intersubjectivity • Practical wisdom • Impartial norms of inquiry • Open democratic dialogue

Although many action researchers chose to retain or redefine the term validity in order to meet publishable requirements, these central concepts, even with redefinition, are sometimes rejected as markers of excellence not relevant in qualitative research (Herr and Anderson, 2005; Coghlan and Shani, 2014). There is a suggestion that those who insist that research maintains objectivity or reliability miss the point of the advantages of AR. And so, other ways to measure excellence have been suggested, such as the four characteristic dimensions: 1) worthwhile practical purposes, 2) democracy and participation, 3) many ways of knowing, and 4) emergent developmental forms (Reason, 2006).

Townsend (2010) alludes to issues of a lack of generalisability in context specific action research when work is published. However, he also discusses the purpose of publishing contextualised research as it offers something different. The aim of action research is often not to accumulate knowledge in the positivist way but to allow *"readers to understand the particular approaches of the writer and to then make decisions about the extent to which the outcomes of research could be transferred to their own context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)" (*Townsend, 2010 p.81).

Lindhult (2019), also suggests that a dismissal of action research because of lack of objectivity and reliability that leads to an accumulation of knowledge regardless of context is *"based on a too-limited view on the meaning and use of the concepts"* and that if we rethink the concepts in

terms of their ontological and epistemological assumptions we, *"can become open for involving actors and their characteristics in ways that can enhance, not only compromise, research quality."* (ibid p.22)

Objectivity assumes a lack of bias, meaning that claims to knowledge are not dependent on who is making them. The opposite term, subjectivity, for many includes unreliability, bias, and an incomplete personal perspective. Because the researcher in action research is not objective, the results must then be subjective (Kock, 2004). Action research has been criticised for this subjectivity (Grix, 2004) suggesting that conclusions lack rigour because of it.

However, participant involvement can significantly support objectivity (Westbrook, 1995; Lindhult, 2019), limiting the issue of power, and creating inter-subjectivity between the participants. The practice-based epistemology used in action research (Coghlan, 2016) provides ways in which the researcher can create methodologically robust research using inter-subjectivity, which limits the researchers over involvement. The movement of myself as the researcher from naïve to critical subjectivity (Herr and Anderson, 2014; Reason, 1994) enabled me, through reflexivity, and the critical examination of my own bias, to produce more objective inquiry, even whilst situated within the ontological and epistemological confines of AR. To further mitigate the issue of power over findings and declarations of truth, the use of procedures from table 12 were employed.

The concept of validity in action research is *"tentative and in flux"* (Herr and Andersson, 2014), which many would argue is the state of validity for the entire field of qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Leung, 2015; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). In action research it is wholly appropriate to use trustworthiness to indicate excellence of a fallibilistic, praxis-oriented piece of research (Biesta and Burbules, 2003; Morgan, 2007; Floyd and Arthur, 2012; Patel, 2012). The raising of trustworthiness as a measure of excellence here, elucidates the point that the pragmatic paradigm, in which this research is situated, is appropriate. The ideas of trustworthiness, warranted assertability and application (Dewey, 1929) are ways that validity is created in AR. In this work, discursive validation existed, including poster for presentation [appendix 4], education executive case study [appendix 3] and the PJC digests discussed in section [1.4]. Participants were invited to contribute to, react to and comment on, and thus validate (Herr and Anderson, 2005; Reason and Bradbury, 2008; Lindhult, 2019) the data before its inclusion in this published thesis. These activities to do with dissemination of findings aligns with principles of collectively reflexive, community and participatory imperatives (Townsend, 2012, p. 122–23).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) reconceptualised external validation as *transferability*; this shifts the responsibility for validation away from the action researcher themselves and onto the users of its created knowledge in others' situations and contexts. In order to make external validation possible, action researchers are required to give sufficient 'thick' descriptions first used by Ryle (1949) and later by the ethnographer Geertz (1973). Thick descriptions put findings into context and explain more explicitly the patterns and relationships discovered (Holloway, 1997). How transferable the data are is dependent on the diversity of sampling, thickness of the descriptions of the context and the degree of abstraction of the concepts in the data analysis.

As we drive for more robust research in education (Wyse *et al.*, 2018; Evans *et al.*, 2021), high quality education research, publishable and applicable to others, is needed. The generative mechanisms (Lindhult, 2019), used to create solutions to problems faced by teaching staff, is what is of interest to others. Action research however, tends to be rejected by the gatekeepers of mainstream international journals as it doesn't meet the quality mark of validity or objectivity, despite academics pushing for research bodies such as the British Education Research Association (BERA) to be more supportive and for the wider inclusion acceptance of action research in academic journals (Levin, 2012; Riel and Rowell, 2017; Cotton, Miller and Kneale, 2018; Wyse *et al.*, 2018; Norton, 2019; Posch, 2019; Wyse, 2020).

A recent statement from BERA suggests that as long as research has "*robust use of research design, theory and methods to address clearly defined research questions, through an iterative process of research and application."* and the process is *"well documented and the conclusions that are drawn appropriate to the strengths and weaknesses of the design, theory and methods used"* (BERA, 2018a, p. 41) it is relevant to the educational researcher and of interest to the practitioner. Evans' *et al.'s* (2021) paper speaks in detail about quality HE research including, as mentioned here, the idea of transferability as a quality mark.

Recently, Willingham and Daniel (2021) contend that educational research, which attempts to answer theoretical questions empirically, from a more positivist position, fails to engage practitioners and does not offer ways to change their practice. The use of control groups and variation-free environments, which generalisable objective studies require, makes the research appear unrealistic and lacking in authenticity. The desire of journals and the academic elite to only report a proven hypothesis, with a positive improvement for the majority, is not useful for teaching staff nor learning organisations.

Whilst aware of the critiques of AR, and the need to provide sound methodological underpinning in order to mitigate shortcomings of poor design, there, at some point, has to be

the acceptance that we need to be honest about the variations of situations. If we want to support practitioners in the use of educational research, we should provide robust research that ensures validity and objectivity in ways that align with the epistemological and ontological principles of AR. They suggest that *"nothing will change until the researchers recognise that their standard methodology is useful for answering research questions, but not for improving practice"* (Willingham and Daniel, 2021).

Action research of quality, which engenders transformation for some, does not require the production of a proven hypothesis that works for all, in all situations to, be of value. Much of the critics of action research are thus quietened once we have dismantled the positivist-based criticism. A consensus is needed about what the quality marks are in higher educational research and work by (Evans *et al.*, 2021) goes some way towards this.

4.3.4 Insiderness

Action research emerged due to the recognition that the system is more deeply understood when *"the researcher is part of the socio-technical system being studied"* (Kock, McQueen and Scott, 1997) and that change can be achieved through applying positive intervention on the system. This involvement is believed to foster cooperation between researcher and those who are being studied, information exchange, and commitment towards both research quality and organisational development. In this way, change can be affected bu,t despite the general mechanism of the PJC activity being replicable, it may not, and possibly should not, follow the same specific pathway in every institution.

Influence or drive from the researcher may well be an uncontrollable variable and, as such, in chapter [4.3.5], attention is given to the leadership of the PJC in this action research as well as a discussion around 'insiderness'. In an action research EdD thesis, the researcher's attention to their own positionality and multiple identities (Herr and Anderson, 2005; Brydon-Miller and Maguire, 2009) should form part of the methodology discussion.

Action research is pragmatic in nature (Buss and Zambo, 2016) because insiders conduct it as they work individually, or collaboratively, with others (Herr and Anderson, 2005). Action research with its collaborative, pragmatic, insider, change-orientated focus is the obvious methodological choice. Indeed the *"complexities of practice are best understood from the messy undergrowth of practical contexts, and not from the distanced position of an external researcher."* (Townsend, 2014, p. 9). There can be difficulties that exist when the researcher

gets close to or involved in the action. However, the EdD is not a traditional thesis and participation in the action sets action research apart from basic or traditional research (Posch, 2019). Researcher identity too can be examined through the concept of reflexivity (O'Boyle, 2018) and this is often employed to defend the situatedness of qualitative research, with reflexivity used to demonstrate an awareness of how subjectivity might shape the inquiry.

Action researchers concern themselves with positionality because it helps them reflect on trustworthiness, research ethics, solidarity around issues, and motivation into action (Wamba, 2017). However, the idea of positionality faces criticism. To some, positionality is reflexive self-obsession and, unless connected to the researcher's wider agenda of how the world needs to change, understanding positionality has little purpose (Kobayashi, 2003). It is essential, if we wish to act as agents for change, that we consider what we are doing as well as how and why we are doing it, not just whether we are insiders or outsiders.

There is an awareness of an oversimplification being at play between insider and outsider (Milligan, 2014; McNess, Arthur and Crossley, 2015; O'Boyle, 2018) with (O'Boyle, 2018) suggesting that *"understand[ing] how subjectivity, status differentials, positions of power, perceived or real, develop seems a more fruitful discussion to have than the researcher identifying themselves as an insider or outsider."*

With this awareness, the nominal declaration of one's 'insiderness' becomes an introduction to the more complex notions of reflexivity, power and ethics (Mercer, 2007; Katyal and King, 2011). Table 13, adapted from (Herr and Anderson, 2014), lists positionalities with reference to their tradition and implications.

When viewing table 13, I identify as an insider researcher in collaboration with other insiders (2) during the action and refer to my insiderness throughout this thesis to mean this kind of positionality. I do this not to limit fruitful discussions and not necessarily believing that I was always an insider in this way. At the interview stage, it could be argued I existed as an outsider studying insiders (6) and shifting again, in instances of production of digest materials and reports of PJC activity to the institution, where I became a reciprocal collaborator (4).

Table 13 Continuum and implications of positionality adapted from Herr and Anderson (2014, p.31)

Positionality of researcher	Contributes to:	Traditions:
(1) Insider (researcher studies own self/practice)	Knowledge base, Improved/critiqued practice, Self/professional transformation	Practitioner research, autobiography, narrative research, self-study
(2) Insider in collaboration with other insiders	Knowledge base, Improved/critiqued practice, Professional/organisational transformation	Feminist consciousness raising groups, Inquiry/study groups, teams
(3) Insider(s) in collaboration with outsider(s)	Knowledge base, Improved/critiqued practice, Professional/organisational transformation	Inquiry/study groups
(4) Reciprocal collaboration (insider-outsider teams)	Knowledge base, Improved/critiqued practice, Professional/organisational transformation	Collaborative forms of participatory action research that achieve equitable power relations
(5) Outsider(s) in collaboration with insider(s)	Knowledge base, Improved/critiqued practice, organisational development/transformation	Mainstream change agencies: consultancies, industrial democracy, organisational learning; radical change: community empowerment (Paulo Freire)
(6) Outsider(s) studies insider(s)	Knowledge base	University-based, academic research on action research methods or action research projects

The work of Herr and Anderson demonstrate the fluid relationship we have as researcher with the researched. As Mercer concludes:

> "*a researcher's relationship with the researched is not static, but fluctuates constantly, shifting back and forth along a continuum of possibilities, from one moment to the next, from one location to the next, from one interaction to the next, and even from one discussion topic to the next."*(Mercer, 2007, p. 13)

Action research as a methodology offers fluidity and flux; there were regular exchanges of position and power around the issue of pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of the institution, role and researcher knowledge when engaging with colleagues similar to that experienced by Webster-Deakin (2020). I existed often as researcher, but also as the practitioner and as Townsend (2014) suggests *"If one adopts Schön's view of practice being best understood from the murky undergrowth* (Schön, 1991)*, then a lack of clarity [between practice and research] is an indication that one is actually entangled in the important issues relating to practice*" (ibid p.17).

4.3.5 Leadership and power issues

Working relationships between academics are often characterised by inequality in relation to seniority, work experience and position. These hierarchical structures do not easily fit the conceptualisation of CoPs, power-distance relationships are potentially divisive, and the presence of more senior members can act to inhibit the expression of more junior staff (Pemberton, Mavin and Stalker, 2007). I was, relative to the other participants, the least experienced HE staff member and quite junior in job title when the action research began. I was not in a position of power over anyone else and participants were able to exist as novices in this new field, without fear of being seen as lesser, it was a safe space (Luehmann, 2007). With this, and no requirement to prove gained knowledge through assessment, the environment was hospitable and so inhibition was not a significant issue and was not reported on by participants.

The action was created in such a way to engender collaborative power amongst the participants. They were included in all decisions, drove the aims of the PJC, decided themes and chose papers. There were no participants who had power over any others in terms of line management, as leaders or supervisors or gatekeepers to recognition or reward. However, power can affect both participant and researcher (Webster-Deakin, 2020). Power can corrupt reliability by interfering with social interaction and so generate spurious trustworthiness (Lindhult, 2019). As the action became more visible across the institution, my identity, as someone who was knowledgeable and recognised for teaching excellence, grew. It would be remiss to suggest that power had no bearing on the research, some participants may have provided responses to interview questions and questionnaires which they felt would be acceptable to me, or to attempt to impress, or align with me (Lindhult, 2019), and therefore, caution is needed when collecting data. I made the conscious decision to seek out those who were more senior than myself and those whom I knew, from meetings, were dissenting voices. The memoing activity discussed in chapter 4.3.3, acting as journaling of the research process (Coghlan, 2019), also provides a check on the reliability of responses. There was a consistency of response that gives confidence that power was not at play; however, it cannot be ruled out. There should always be caution, and it is worth noting that mitigations via method are “no guarantee of equal power relations between the researcher and the researched” (Oakley, 2005, p. 187).

4.4 Ethics

Mockler (2014) argues that ethics could be regarded as a framework for quality in action research. In action research the researcher affects and is affected, ethical dilemmas are an intrinsic part of AR, it is collaborative in nature and participants hold diverse motivations, perspectives, and institutional roles (Banegas *et al.*, 2015). And so, rather than shy away from ethical dilemmas, the action researcher is required to openly discuss and even re-evaluate decisions, through sincere and respectful dialogue among all participants, as the research continues. Reflexivity in educational research by both researcher and participant helps to manage the process of research and enhance both rigour and ethics (Katyal and King, 2011; O'Boyle, 2018). Action researchers need to anticipate ethical issues and be prepared to handle them through sincere and respectful dialogue among all participants (Banegas *et al.*, 2015).

Norton (2018) suggests that *"it is the responsibility of the educational researcher to think ethically, rather than merely go through an institutional ethics procedure"* (ibid p.208). Institutional ethics procedures were followed here and so, this sentiment and those of Banegas *et al.* 2015, informed my practice. Ethics need to be at the core of our activity as qualitative researchers. I am cognisant that *"the politics and ethics of research . . . permeate every phase of the research process"*(Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). I have a responsibility to the staff, who freely gave of their time and energies both in the action and for the research, to ensure that no harm is done in terms of self-esteem nor academic confidence.

The ethical guidelines from BERA (2018b) were adhered to during the action and the research; the newer publication arriving during the creation of the thesis. The updated edition particularly looks at issues in the guidelines to accommodate and facilitate practitioner research, as well as including guidance for online research and research that takes place outside of HEIs. Most guidance relevant to this action remains unchanged between 2011 and 2018; however, the terminology used, and the awareness of the context of action research and participants in research, is more specific in the 2018 guidelines and so the 4th edition will be cited here. The research was approved by the University of Warwick Ethics Committee in 2016 [appendix 6]. I acknowledge here, the brevity of the ethical consent in 2016 which demonstrates improvements in this area which have occurred over time. If repeated today, the approval would have required far more detail and greater nuance, this increased level of demand is welcomed. The following section gives an understanding of the ethical

considerations employed during the action research in line with the BERA guidance and University of Warwick policy.

4.4.1 Responsibilities to participants

Many participants in the research were active collaborators in the research process by being part of the PJC and the data capture, as well as reviewing data for publication and co-creating materials for dissemination, whereas some engaged with the PJC but did not contribute to questionnaires or interviews. Any person involved, whether actively or as part of the context, should be treated:
"fairly, sensitively, and with dignity and freedom from prejudice," and with an awareness of *"structural inequalities – those, for example, associated with 'race', gender, LBGT+ issues and socio-economic status.* There is guidance that: "*that there is sensitivity and attentiveness towards such structural issues at all stages of research, including reporting and publication."* (BERA, 2018b).

I believe this was achieved, particularly in reference to limiting publication of meeting memos. Whilst I appreciate this may leave readers with a curiosity about memoing as a data capture tool, my commitment to ensuring no participant is left professionally exposed through publication is paramount.

4.4.2 Consent and transparency

Participants' voluntary informed consent was sought before each data collection with a participant information sheet [appendix 2a] emailed out and then consent requested as the initial question via Qualtrics [appendix 2b and c]. Steps were taken to ensure that all participants in the research understood the process and why their participation was necessary. The research I was conducting was discussed openly at PJC meetings and in correspondence; my dual role of PJC leader/member and researcher was made clear to all. Participants were also aware that publication of details of meetings would occur, and that data collected would be presented within and external to the University.
It was also made clear to participants, that I was a BERA member and would be following the Association's code of conduct during the research. Interview consent was sought via a consent

[appendix 7] form which also allowed the recording of the interview, and all participants agreed to be recorded. The research itself was approved by the University Ethical Committee in 2016.

4.4.3 Incentives

It was made clear to participants that they could withdraw at any point without needing to provide an explanation and all participants had my contact details in order to facilitate this. There was no direct incentive offered to engage with the PJC or the data collection. PJC meetings were funded by WIHEA however, with tea and coffee being available at meetings (Sidorov, 1995; Deenadayalan *et al.*, 2008), and there was an awareness that being part of something that was gaining reputation may benefit participants, especially in iteration 2.

4.4.4 Harm arising from participation in research

"In advance of data collection, researchers have a responsibility to think through their duty of care in order to recognise potential risks, and to prepare for and be in a position to minimise and manage any distress or discomfort that may arise." (BERA, 2018b)

Potential risks in this case were minimal and no unexpected harm occurred during the course of the research. Every participant was offered the opportunity to engage in data collection and so no group of participants was advantaged over any other. It is recognised however, that time and effort was given by participants, some had a long-term involvement with the PJC and willingly gave their time and efforts to engage with activity and dissemination of results. The nature of the research is such that there may be career benefits to those who engaged at a deeper level with the PJC. However, no member received negative consequences from spending time engaged with PJC activity or data collection.

4.4.5 Privacy and data storage and right to withdraw

"The confidential and anonymous treatment of participants' data is considered the norm for the conduct of research. Researchers must recognize the participants' entitlement to privacy and must accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity"(BERA, 2018b)

Questionnaire data collection was anonymous. Participants were informed that their responses would be reported on, in some cases possibly verbatim, and that the researcher would make every effort to remove, before publication, comments that may allow individuals to be identified.

The data collection was anonymised, and participants were informed that if they chose to withdraw after completing the questionnaire it would be impossible to trace their data and therefore, I would be unable to remove data once collected.

Anonymity was ensured at the interview stage through removing names from transcripts and also employing a double recording system, generating a numerical and then letter code for each script. Participants' interview transcripts were given numbers which were then randomly assigned letter codes, the key for which was not stored on the same computer as the other, nor on the same machine as the transcripts. This allowed for anonymity in reporting whilst allowing me to trace data if participants wanted to withdraw from the research. Interviewees were told that if they withdrew it was possible to trace their data and that it would be removed.

All participants were afforded anonymity; consent forms included the statement that some phrases may be used verbatim and if participants so wished they could be named as participants in the research however, all decided upon anonymity. However, the name of the institution cannot be redacted as it is obvious to readers of the thesis where this research took place, *"it is also acknowledged that anonymity may not be possible in some contexts and cases"* (BERA, 2018b). Without deliberate intention, information about colleagues in the data may lead to identification (Norton, 2018). To prevent identification by association, inference or indirect breaches of agreed confidentiality and anonymity, collaborating authors' names have been redacted and neither transcripts nor complete questionnaire data are included for publication.

Data was stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and subsequently the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation. Systems such as password protection and data encryption were used on external hard drives, as well as using portable data storage devices such as

laptops and USB sticks. In 2018, when all data was transferred to OneDrive, codes for interview transcripts were stored on fixed hard drives not connected to OneDrive.

4.4.6 Responsibilities to sponsors, clients and stakeholders in research

The research was not sponsored, there was no client; however, the university can be seen as a stakeholder in the research due to the engagement of WIHEA, the collective institutional voice on learning and teaching and the academic student experience at Warwick. WIHEA gave its support to the PJC through the funding of refreshments for the meetings, hosting the web-based meeting digests and providing secretarial support. Acknowledgement of WIHEA's involvement was publicised to participants throughout the AR.

Participants and stakeholders were made award of all interim publication of findings and all participants were invited to attend the institutional meetings where PJC data was discussed. Participants also collaborated in dissemination with digests, poster presentation [appendix 4] and contributions to presentations to the education executive [appendix 3]. Participants were sent copies of chapter 5 prior to publication and will be informed when the thesis is published. Although it is impractical to offer a copy of the completed thesis to everyone involved, it will be available online and participants and stakeholders will be provided with a link to view it when in becomes publicly available.

4.5 The Pedagogic Journal Club (PJC); its instruments and iterations

4.5.1 Iterations

The research was conducted in a Russell Group research-intensive HEI in the UK. The PJC addressed a thematic concern around PD, providing opportunity for staff to pedagogically engage with literature, in an interdisciplinary community of peers, to improve disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical expertise, academic practice, contextual awareness, data analytic competence, research methodology expertise and critical evaluation of practice. Participation in the PJC supported teaching development and provided evidence, used by members, for reward and recognition. Observations began in the academic year 2015/16 with the first meeting organised in the first term of 2016/17 academic year. The last data collection was in

2018 as this is when the action research ended, although the PJC still meets, and it is now an embedded opportunity for pedagogic focussed engagement literature.

Despite not completing the third year of data collection, there is opportunity to discuss that there were in fact, many turns of the action research cycle as suggested in [4.3.2]. The work of O'Leary 2004 provides an experiential learning approach to change, the goal of which is to continually refine the methods, data and interpretation in the light of the understanding developed in the earlier cycles whilst Kock et al., (1997) discuss increasing the number of action research iterations that are possible, by broadening the scope.

The iterations that occurred in this action research were nested. This use of nested iteration, as shown in Figure 7, enabled the meetings of the PJC to be refined (O'Leary 2004) to the needs of participants, within the individual yearlong iteration, via the cycle of observe, reflect, plan, act. It also allowed continuing action research iterations to occur by including a broadening of scope (Kock et al., 1997), by acting upon the observations and reflections from all of the PJC meetings, and the end of iteration data collections. The large amounts of data collected, and time taken by using this approach, is not unusual in action research; indeed Kock (2003) refers to lessons learned during multiple iterations of action research, "action research is not an 'efficient' approach for research. While allowing the research access to "rich" data, action research require significantly more time and effort from the researcher than other, more traditional research approaches" (ibid p.118). Kock also learned that "While in action research the researcher applies intervention in the environment being studied, he or she has very little control over what actually happens" (ibid p.111). It was unfortunate that the last planned iteration could not take place due to unforeseen circumstances, very much outside of my control; however, as Townsend suggests: if either professional or personal capacity is compromised, this may well signify a time to bring action research to a conclusion (Townsend, 2012, p. 119).

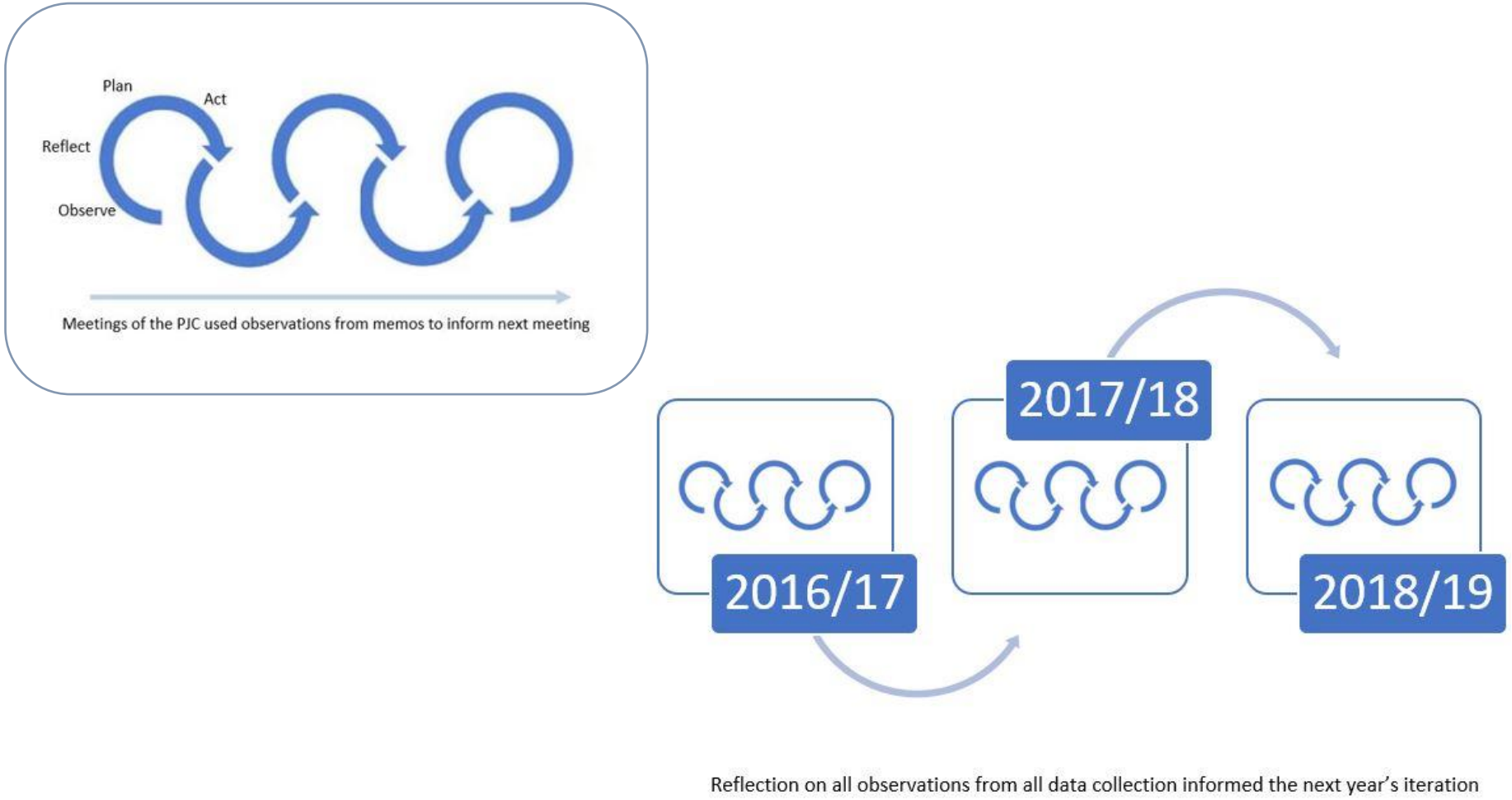


Figure 7 Nested iterations across each year and between

4.5.1.1 Initial observation 2015-2016

In 2015, I became part of a university wide initiative focussed on improving teaching. I met colleagues who were keen to engage with making improvements but who were not actively producing or consuming literature that had pedagogical focus or content.

Observe: I observed a lack of confidence in wider university colleagues concerning literature and a lack of understanding of educational theory behind teaching choices. Many colleagues had begun teaching alongside their research, or following theory PhD studies, many had no formal teaching qualifications nor had they subsequently undergone any pedagogical training or pedagogic PD. Apart from a short, supported probation offered to new teaching staff, and despite an awareness of a need for PD for HEI teaching staff, there is no specific qualification required for teaching in HEIs (Gibbs and Coffey, 2004; Roxå and Mårtensson, 2009; Parsons *et al.*, 2012; Chalmers and Gardiner, 2015).

During 2016 university leadership redesigned the promotions policy; I was part of a team of staff informing changes and we highlighted how the previous promotions criteria provided no recognition of teaching and learning activity in any role higher than senior teaching fellow. Being a research-intensive HEI, the promotion criteria was research-focussed and further still, PD opportunities to support PedEL were not available.

During the first year, I reflected on the ways in which I had successfully encouraged teaching staff to engage with literature before determining whether there was an appetite from teaching staff for engagement. Additionally, I set about looking at whether this type of activity could be used by participants to gain recognition or reward.

I set up the PJC to create a community, introducing members to literature that had a pedagogic focus or content, and supporting them in their understanding of it. The journal club would be a recognised PD activity and membership could provide evidence of engagement with literature, recognition of pedagogic awareness and possibly facilitate reward and recognition for staff.

Data collection was scheduled to occur at the end of the academic year and qualitative observations made during each meeting. The meetings would be participatory and dialogic, with an emphasis on the implications for practice in participants' departmental contexts. There would be an emphasis on building a community; the aim being that the PJC became supported pedagogical debate on established and emerging educational issues, enhancing the pedagogical PD of colleagues. The PJC was set up with these intentions:

Table 14 Intentions of the PJC

Empowering	colleagues to deliver changes in their own teaching and in departmental approaches and systems.
Creating	a community of practice around rigorous pedagogical debate, scholarship and research.
Connecting	good practice and robust research to allow colleagues to better demonstrate the rigour and effectiveness of pedagogical choices.
Engaging	colleagues in inter-disciplinary discussions which illuminate the similarities and differences between disciplines, creating enhanced opportunities for new insights and practices which enhance student experience.
Promoting	pedagogic literature both as an effective resource for innovation a well as opportunity to disseminate the excellent practice already established at Warwick.

During the first meeting participants used these intentions to create two focussed questions that would be asked at the end of each meeting:

> How could the research be translated into improved learning and teaching in our own discipline?
>
> Should the research inform our teaching practice or our departmental learning and teaching philosophy?

4.5.1.2 Iteration 1 2016-2017

At the first meeting of the PJC, the key questions to be asked at each meeting were decided by participants. The PJC had regular half-termly meetings where staff met to discuss an area of pedagogical interest, informed by educational and pedagogic publications. The club met for two hours, scheduled at various times and days, creating opportunity for a range of staff to attend. I used a mailing list to correspond with participants between meetings and provide journal articles in advance. I also created digests after each meeting which were circulated via email and published on the PJC a web space.

At each PJC meeting, rather than conduct formal observations, I used memoing [4.5.3]; the awareness this brought meant that after each meeting, I was able to reflect and act on suggestions, as well as identify emerging themes within the PJC. Members gained knowledge

and an understanding of literature through dialogue supported by key questions I would ask as the facilitator. In later meetings, many began suggesting areas they would like to discuss and, accordingly, I provided the relevant research papers to allow the development of their discussions. Occasionally staff would suggest a paper themselves and, in this case, they would lead the discussion.

Memoing captured that the club was successful in terms of sustained attendance and enjoyment and engagement. The first formal data gathering, questionnaire 1 (2017), began and the findings were shared with participants, WIHEA leadership as well as the institution's education executive. Data was shared in order to improve recognition, within the institution, of how effective engaging in literature could be for all stakeholders. Membership was opened to the whole university for the second iteration, not just to staff engaged with WIHEA. The same meeting structure was taken forward and meeting dates and times were published in advance via the mailing list. These actions ensured that the door was kept open for voluntary re-engagement of year 1 participants and also encourage new members.

4.5.1.3 Iteration 2 2017-18

The meetings ran for the whole academic year, again once every half-term, alternating days and times to allow for fullest participation digests were again created and published on the website after each meeting [appendix 3-5]. I used memoing during meetings and conducted a second tranche of data, using a questionnaire, adding questions concerning identity as this theme emerged.

After the second data collection questionnaire 2 (2018), it became apparent that more qualitative responses were required in order to understand participants' individual experiences and so I also conducted unstructured interviews.

4.5.1.4 Iteration 3 2018-19

In the next iteration 2018/19, I planned to step away from leadership of the PJC and conduct a further round of data collection at the end of the third year of meetings 2019. This would have followed up the ideas around leadership of the journal club, the beginnings of which are reported on within this thesis; it would also have included some further focus on research creation by participants, as both were themes emerging from the data collection and memos in December 2018. The PJC ran in the autumn of 2018 with me acting as observer only; however, I

had to leave the university due to unforeseen circumstances leaving some interesting work undone around leadership. The reported-on iterations and data collection used in this thesis therefore. were from 2016-2018. The PJC is still active in 2022 and continues to provide supported dialogic engagement with literature for the whole staff body. If validity of my claims to knowledge are required then the fact that the PJC is enduring today allows me to claim catalytic validity, a termed coined by Lather (1991), which speaks to the changes within the institution and its staff.

4.5.2 Data collection instruments – mixed research methods

Research methods are defined by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) as *"approaches and instruments, styles of research and ways of collecting data."* Mixed methods, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, can be employed to ensure a robust approach [4.5.6] to the collection of data and neither quantitative nor qualitative data collection is seen as better (Patel, 2012). Following the in-depth discussions [4.2], the arguments for choosing between qualitative and quantitative methods have often been seen to be spurious. However, qualitative research is a *"means for exploring the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem"* (Creswell, 2013) and this research required this focus. Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher (2007, p. 11) state:

> *"[in AR] it is more appropriate to use mainly qualitative, rather than quantitative research methods, because the aim is not to questionnaire large samples of populations or "subjects" in order to predict future trends or to make generalizations about past and present."*

Nevertheless, there is also a place for quantitative research methods: quantitative data provides the researcher with another window into the complexity of human behaviour and interactions. There can be issues when employing only one type of data, either qualitative or quantitative; data gathered through only one type of research method will undoubtedly be limited and lack triangulation affecting the robustness of any conclusions

My research design was a mixed methods design that incorporated sequential, and parallel quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, to elaborate on and expand findings of one method with another (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2015), all conducted within a qualitative methodology.

4.5.2.1 Pilots

Pilot studies are essential, as they may *"…give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated."*(Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001, p. 1)

However, pilot studies have historically had different meanings in social sciences. Pilot studies in some cases are linked to feasibility; *"small scale versions, or trial runs, done in preparation for the major study"* (Polit and Beck, 2006, p. 467). In other cases, pilot studies are the pre-testing or 'trying out' of a particular research instrument (Baker, 1994, p. 182–83). The terms pilots, pilot trials, and feasibility studies are also used by some interchangeably or synonymously (Fraser *et al.*, 2018) creating lack of clarity.

Arain *et al.* (2010) contend that the terms pilot and feasibility cannot be used interchangeably. Stating that a feasibility study determines components critical to the development of the main study, whereas a pilot study is the conduct of the main study in miniature, therefore each has differing specific goals and so are mutually exclusive. (Bugge *et al.*, 2013) tell us that feasibility studies are designed to *"ask questions about whether the study can be done"* and that pilot trials are *"a miniature version of the main trial, which aim to test aspects of study design and processes for the implementation of a larger main trial in the future".*

Eldridge *et al.* (2016) concluded that pilot studies are subsets of feasibility studies where *"all pilot studies are feasibility studies… but not all feasibility studies are pilot studies"* (para. 17). General agreement is that in order to be a pilot study, it must precede and be closely related to the larger study (Lancaster, Dodd and Williamson, 2004; Eldridge *et al.*, 2016; Fraser *et al.*, 2018) and must include: a focus on an experiment, project, or development and be undertaken in advance of a future wider experiment, project, or development (Fraser *et al.*, 2018).

I conducted pilot studies of the main research methods questionnaires prior to commencing the data collection. These pilots were carried out using members of my department team who were aware of my research and the activity of the PJC but were not participants. The pilot studies suggested that completion fatigue occurred with questionnaires being too long or too open-ended, so I constructed a short questionnaire with a larger percentage of closed question types giving rise to a 100% completion rate.

In previous pilot studies of interviews, I found structured interviews to be too limiting and semi-structured interviews although better, guided participant responses. As the aim of the interview was to achieve saturation, I chose unstructured interviews. I trialled interview questions with my department colleagues, checking for coherence of meaning but did not run a specific trial of my interview procedure in order to avoid contamination (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001).

4.5.2.2 Data Collection schedule

During the course of the PJC, I recorded attendance at meetings; noted points of interest; and captured contributions from individuals through memoing. *"Through the use of memos, the researcher is able to immerse themselves in the data, explore the meanings that this data holds, maintain continuity and sustain momentum in the conduct of research."*(Birks *et al.*, 2008). I ran two questionnaire data collections in 2017 and 2018 via a web-based questionnaire with minimal opportunities for extended open-ended responses and followed these up with qualitative interviews in an attempt to *'offset'* any limitations of the web-based questionnaire and to gather richer, more detailed data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). I conducted seven interviews in the autumn of 2018 in which participants provided very similar data possibly indicating data saturation. It could also be argued that data saturation is not possible due to the ongoing experiences of participants. However, a point of diminishing return was found after two questionnaires, with 15 and 16 respondents respectively, and seven 45-minute interviews.

4.5.3 Memoing

Memoing is a process through which:

> *"the researcher is able to immerse themselves in the data, explore the meanings that this data holds, maintain continuity and sustain momentum in the conduct of research. As a chronicle of the research journey, memos remain as an indelible, yet flexible, record for personal retention or dissemination to others"* (Birks *et al.*, 2008)

Although commonly associated with grounded theory through the work of Clarke (2005) and Charmaz (2006), all qualitative approaches can be enhanced by the use of memos (Birks *et al.*, 2008). Where interviews and questionnaires have an understood weakness "due to be being necessarily distanced from the practice"(Townsend, 2012, p. 90) memoing has the advantage of occurring alongside the action.

During PJC meetings I created memos linked to the iterative development of the AR, the interplay between researcher and data being crucial to the generation of knowledge that reflects the breadth and depth of human experience. Decisions about what the PJC looked at next and how we were going to focus our time were informed by these memos, and digests created from them were disseminated to others. Memoing continued during interviews in order for meaning to be made from data collected *"memos add to the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research and provide a record of the meanings derived from the data"* (Groenwold, 2008, p. 506).

Qualitative research requires the researcher to adopt a reflexive stance towards the research situation, participants and data; enabling the researcher to better understand their subjective influence on the collection and interpretation of data (Primeau, 2003). Personal familiarity with the field impacts all phases of the research process, including data analysis and interpretation (Berger, 2015). This interplay between researcher and data is crucial to the generation of knowledge that reflects the breadth and depth of human experience (Birks *et al.*, 2008); there was *"merging of analysis and interpretation by the simultaneity of data collection with data analysis"* (Gibbs, 2007, p. 3).

4.5.4 Online Questionnaires

"Web based questionnaires can be the most appropriate choice for data collection with certain populations, such as white-collar professionals with good computer access." (Jensen and Laurie, 2016 p.162). Participants all fell within this bracket and, as such, the choice to administer a web-based questionnaire was appropriate. I used Qualtrics as Jenson and Laurie suggest that it is the go-to online questionnaire platform for university researchers and major corporations and I had easily available access to the software as well as a familiarity with it.

Qualtrics employs Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI) including branching, piping, error and consistency checking, random question order, automatic coding, enforcement of answer requirements, an engaging interface, a range of response types, sample controls and results file creation, listed by DeVaus (2014) as essentials of a web-based system. My participants were familiar with Qualtrics, and I achieved a 100% response rate for my initial iteration 2017 questionnaire with 15 respondents and 85% for my final iteration 2018 questionnaire having 16 respondents.

Questionnaire response rates are highly influenced by interests of participants, questionnaire structure, communication methods, and assurance of privacy and confidentiality (Saleh and Bista, 2017). Evans and Mathur (2018) note the many advantages and limitations of online questionnaires and so despite an already motivated group of participants, I spent some time creating a questionnaire that used the Qualtrics functions effectively. As a result, the questionnaire had numerous examples of branching used to *"direct(s) respondents to particular part of the questionnaire depending on the way they have answered previous questions."* (DeVaus, 2014, p. 123). Piping was also used which, *"feed(s) answers from earlier questions into later questions*." (ibid p123) to make them appear personalised. These techniques kept the questionnaire size small and completion time minimal.

Putting the easier questions at the end can guard against quality of responses being affected by fatigue (Bryman, 2016). However, the final questionnaire included simple questions at the beginning, the design of the questionnaire following the broader premise of moving from general to specific questions as suggested by Jensen and Laurie (2016) in order to prepare respondents for the more detailed responses required. If fatigue had set in, as in the pilot, answers would have become very minimal however, some quality responses in the open-ended questions at end of the questionnaires were captured.

Bogan (1996) found that there is actually very little research to support the idea that shorter questionnaires are better. DeVaus (2014, p. 112) tells us, more recently, that *"we simply do not know the thresholds at which length on its own affects response rate."* And so, with this in mind I was less concerned with the time that the questionnaire would take and more concerned that the questionnaire was seen by participants to be worth their time completing. *T*oo short a questionnaire can suggest to participants that the questionnaire is trivial or superficial, and so they provide superficial responses (Dillman, 2000).

4.5.4.1 Question types

It is essential that question types are fit for purpose, suitably focussed and concrete rather than too general or abstract (Champagne, 2014a). Having designed staff questionnaires in my previous role as a PD lead in schools, I understood many of the pitfalls of poor questionnaire design. The benefits of having a well-planned, well-structured questionnaire cannot be underestimated.

The first questionnaire had 21 questions, the second had 30, and the following question types were used:

Dichotomous questions; although easy to answer and generating an unequivocal response (Cohen et al., 2018), this question type does not produce high quality data. It was therefore mainly employed to facilitate the piping of participants towards questions more appropriate to their experience.

Multiple- choice questions; this question type (*Figure 8*) reduces the need for recall and thereby minimises strain on the respondent (Champagne, 2014). It also allows responses to be grouped. Anchoring statements were used as they increase reliability (Krosnick and Presser, 2010). Examples of these in questionnaire 1 would be:

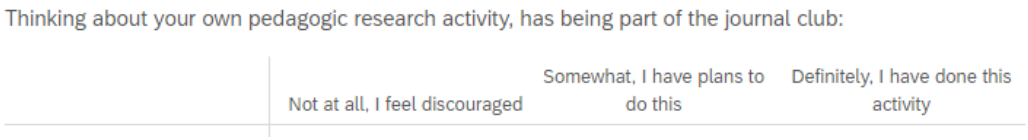


Figure 8 Question 10 questionnaire 1 demonstrating anchoring statements.

Issues with multiple choice questions also include problems of word order and statement order (Dillman *et al.*, 2003, p. 6). In order to mitigate this, questions were created with options ranging left to right rather than top to bottom to prevent bottom being perceived as the worst option effect.

Rating scales: these types of scales were used as they provide evaluative comment from participants where they can rate the effectiveness or the value or appropriateness of various dimensions. Rating scales were originally just number scales ranging between two options such as:

Agree Disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

However, anchoring statements rather than just numbers were used in order to reduce difference in perceived meaning and increase reliability (Champagne, 2014) as *"rating scales that have a verbal label for each point in the scale are more reliable than those which do not"* (Schwartz et al., 1991, p. 571; Krosnick and Presser, 2010; Champagne, 2014). Five points were decided upon as Krosnick and Presser (2010) report that reliability is lower for scales with

fewer points but, validity lowers if there are too many scale points. Additionally, there is increased validity when there a middle option is provided.

Organisation of the choices, running left to right, was designed to mitigate for issues with 'bottom choice' if options were listed top to bottom. (Hartley and Betts, 2010, p. 25) found that scales which had a positive label on the left-hand side would elicit higher scores than other orderings as categories on the left-hand side are used more frequently than those on the right-hand side. Positive responses were placed on the right-hand side of the scale to balance this and although this may engender more negative responses it allows any positive conclusions drawn to be more robust.

The use of open-ended questions is attractive because they *"invite an honest, personal comment from respondents"* (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p. 475) that might not be captured elsewhere. It also puts the responsibility for, and ownership of, the data much more firmly into the participants' hands. Support is useful in these questions so that participants know the kind of reply being sought. For example, **Error! Reference source not found.**.

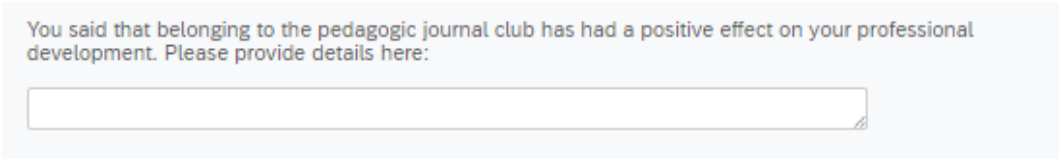


Figure 9 Example of open-ended question with support

Opened ended question were used minimally but they were included in an attempt to generate data that provided explanations as the data collection at this stage was exploratory.

4.5.4.2 Participants

There was no sampling of participants and there was no additional incentive to complete the online questionnaires. Respondents were known to me, easily accessible and were emailed a questionnaire link after agreeing in face-to-face contacts to participate. As such, a 100% completion rate was achieved meaning there was no selection bias. For the second questionnaire, leadership of the PJC had shifted, it had grown in size and new members were not as familiar as participants who joined in 2016. This may have affected the response rate and so some selection bias may be present in the second questionnaire with the possibility of certain participants being more likely to respond due to an established relationship with me. I requested completion directly via email and sent the initial email and then 3 reminders, each

time indicating to participants which reminder this was and giving a time frame for the next. I set a closure date for the questionnaire in order for there to be an identifiable time period for the gathered data.

4.5.4.3 Questionnaire 2

The second questionnaire was administered in the same way, with a repeat of questions and question type asked in the first round. Some questions were added in the second round in order to discuss identity as a theme which arose from memos taken PJC meetings in the 2017/18 cycle. This is an example of the iterative process of action research and the development of experimental design over the lifetime of the action. The questionnaires are comparable as the questions that were asked were the same in phrasing and order as in the previous version.

The additional questions considering identity and identification of themselves as novice vs expert used a new question type, the sliding scale Figure 10

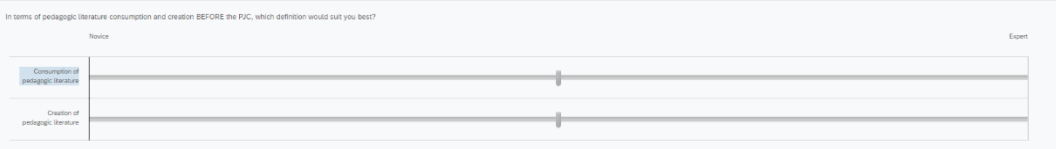


Figure 10

Example of sliding scale question 10 questionnaire 2

This scale appeared as only the two words, novice and expert. However, the data generated reported a 0-100 scale. This allows comparison of people's perceived position on this scale without the difficulties of ranking by number.

4.5.5 Interviews

Interviews were included as part of data collection as they provide an *"exploration of issues that may not necessarily be obvious from either observations or from pre-existing data."* (Townsend, 2012, p. 90). However, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) express reservations about over-emphasis on reliability for interviews because this may have implications for validity so, I conducted unstructured interviews with participant volunteers, who were all at a level of academic understanding where minimal explanation of an unstructured interview was required. Conducting unstructured interviews lent itself well to the familiarity of insider research and participants who were able to offer their thoughts and opinions without fearing reprisal. I had, within the group, a certain amount of positive professional identity and although

this gave participants confidence in my ability, there is some concern around the desire of the participants to please, concur with or impress me during the interview.

I was aware that unstructured interviews brought about *"… a looseness, lack of focus, and misplaced nonchalance about purpose method and procedure."* (Seidman, 2013, p. 39). I considered however, when the interviewer and the researcher are the same person, using a semi-structured approach may additionally compromise reliability. In a balance between looseness and lack of focus with validity, an unstructured interview was conducted to capture emergent, thick data.

Rubin and Rubin (2012, p. 38) discuss how *"the personalities of both interviewer and participant impact the questioning."* The relationship between the interviewer and participant affects the knowledge that is gathered, as the participant constructs the knowledge as the interview progresses depending on the interview process itself (Morris, 2015). So, as well as the issues of positionality, there may have been an effect on responses dependant on my relationship with the participant as this may have impacted the process. I was, though, aware of these issues and as a reflexive practitioner I employed a certain amount of *"methodological self-consciousness"* (Bryman, 2016) in order to mitigate them. *"If a researcher clearly describes the contextual intersecting relationships between the participants and themselves (reflexivity), it not only increases the creditability of the findings but also deepens our understanding of the work."*(Dodgson, 2019)

These mitigating steps included me being prepared to listen and not *"wrestle (the) participant for control"* (Rubin and Rubin, 2012, p. 37) I purposefully tried to keep my talking to a minimum and ensured as far as possible similar interview process.

4.4.5.1 Interview Sampling

Limited sampling occurred in this research as all participants were invited to take part in all data collections. I put out an open call to participants to engage in interviews and accepted any offers. I rejected no-one as selecting individuals for interview through in this way may have increased bias. Purposive sampling (Ritchie et al., 2013) was employed where I sought out participants of the PJC whom I knew from meetings might provide a more critical voice. This additional sampling is sometimes described (Robson, 2002; Creswell, 2013; Bryman, 2016) as deviant sampling. It demands that we think critically about the population choosing unusual cases in order to gain a better understanding generating responses very different from those of individuals in a similar demographic.

4.4.5.2 Recording and transcribing

I used digital recording to capture the interviews; permission was sought from participants prior to interview. They provided their consent and recordings were held in line with university policy and stored separately to the identification tables.

Recording interviews frees the interviewer to listen actively to the participant and note onto records the body language or facial expressions that the interviewee may offer when speaking. This however, leaves the job of transcription which is a long process Matheson (2007) lists the numerous issues with *"the time consuming, physically-taxing job of transcription" (ibid* p548) but technologies do exist to help, such as voice recognition software.

Voice recognition software has undoubtedly improved in recent years, with human-generated and computer-generated transcripts matching to a high degree (Halpern *et al.*, 2016; Ziman *et al.*, 2018). Although I did have access to DragonSpeak, it created multiple errors and so I transcribed all interviews manually. This was extremely time-consuming but had the added benefit of enabling me to be completely submerged in the data.

4.4.5.3 Coding and NVivo

NVivo was chosen as the computer software for data analysis because this package keeps *"theoretical and methodological decision-making clearly in the hands of the researcher, not the technology"* (Frey, 2018, p. 166). NVivo allowed for inductive code creation, called nodes, which allowed me to uncover relationships within source materials helping to generate an emerging understanding.

NVivo also allows the storage of memos in a variety of forms such as word documents, and in this case digests and memos created throughout the AR. As well as coding, the software allows text mining which provides an *"efficient way to flick through data and provide visualisations which can provide surprising insights and perspectives"* (Silver and Lewins, 2017, p. 157). The software allows for word frequency discovery and the resulting frequency count of words, including stemmed words, is shown in table 15 creating a quick understanding of the data, offering initial insight into the data that positions themes and ideas in the researcher's mind allowing for speedy engagement with the themes and encouraging further interrogation (Frey, 2018).

Care must be taken with these features however, as they do not recognise context of the counted occurrences. *"The researcher needs to be doubly sure that the software is counting 'good stuff' – not rubbish."* (Silver and Lewins, 2017, p. 157)

Table 15 Frequency word count of transcribed interviews created by NVivo

Word	Count	Weighted %	Stemmed words included
Think	409	3.23	Think, thinking
Things	251	1.98	Thing, things
People	240	1.89	people
PJC	196	1.55	

Figure 11 Word cloud created from interview transcripts using NVivo

This word cloud (Figure 11) offers some understanding of key themes but lacks context; 'think' for example could be used as a verb or a noun so its frequency in the transcripts requires further analysis.

Careful manual analysis is required in order to fully understand themes and context, the software however, encourages an engagement with the data in a more spontaneous way with

access to all of the data when themes occur to the researcher (Frey, 2018) and generates a starting point. This is arguably the feature that has served most to transform the processes of interpretive analysis.

The interview transcript is not a mirror of reality, the transcript must be subjectively evaluated. Therefore, there is always a disclaimer about the objective truth of the findings as, whilst we can reflect on and ambitiously analyse the data in sophisticated ways, there is a need to understand and disclose how the interpretation is ours and how it can never be an exact mirror of reality (Qu and Dumay, 2011). As the researcher and transcriber and coder, there is a limitation to the objectivity that I can bring to the process of coding and analysing. However, objectivity in action research is not a measure of quality in the way it is for positivist research as discussed in [4.3.3.2]

4.5.6 Reliability and Validity

Aware of the wider epistemological and ontological issues with these as concepts [4.3.3.3], a discussion follows about reliability, validity and authenticity in order to demonstrate the awareness and the mitigation that was in place through the research. Additionally, the work of Evans *et al.* (2021) is brought to the reader's attention here.

Triangulation was achieved in three ways via method, data and theory where: method triangulation includes a range of tools namely interviews, questionnaires memos. Data triangulation: different data sets are collected at different times. Respondent triangulation can be seen as one type of data triangulation (Campbell et al.,2008, p. 86). Theory triangulation is when theory is brought to bear on observations. Method and data triangulation will be discussed here, particularly the follow-up contact with questionnaire participants to increase validity.

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a measurement and is concerned with whether the results of a study are replicable (Hartas, 2010; Bush, 2016). A well-constructed questionnaire should produce the same findings even if flaws in the questionnaire mean that those findings, whilst the same, are not valid. *"A reliable item is not necessarily also valid"* (Bell, 1999 p. 104).

Scott and Morrison (2006 p.208) note that a research finding might be reliable but not valid and *"thus of no worth to the researcher".* Validity then can be brought about in a number of ways both internal and external (Table 16).

Table 16 Criteria for quality from Petty et al (2012)

Criteria for quality in qualitative and quantitative research

Quantitative research criteria of quality	Qualitative research criteria of quality	Descriptor	Strategies
Objectivity or neutrality	Confirmability	The extent to which the findings are the product of the inquiry and not the bias of the researcher	Audit trail of the process of data analysis Triangulation Member checking Reflexive research journal
Reliability	Dependability (consistency, auditability)	The extent to which the study could be repeated and variations understood	Audit trail of procedures and processes Triangulation Reflexive research journal
Internal validity	Credibility (truth value)	The degree to which the findings can be trusted or believed by the participants of the study	Prolonged engagement Persistent observation Referential adequacy materials Peer debriefing Member checking Triangulation Negative case analysis Reflexive research journal
External validity	Transferability (applicability, fittingness)	The extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other participants	Thick description Purposive sampling Reflexive research journal

Internal validity refers to the extent that research findings accurately represent the phenomenon under investigation. To add internal validity to interview transcripts, a suggested method of respondent validation could be employed (Bush, 2016) where transcripts are returned to participants for confirmation. Here I must point out that this was planned in 2018 but that circumstances beyond my control which halted my research until 2020 which meant that confirmation of transcripts two-year post interview would not add the validity that it may have done if conducted immediately following the interviews. The time and effort of participants required to undertake transcript review was determined as too onerous for limited value return. However, the data collected and analysis in chapters 5 and 6 were shared with participants prior to publication. Participants were asked to flag any content that they viewed as either non-recognisable or lacking in authenticity, being informed that this content would be removed, no removals were required. Bush (2016) also suggests that *"validity is enhanced if the survey produces a substantial response" (*ibid p.85). Validity is improved with high response rates; the research saw extremely high response rates to questionnaires and so internal validity is present.

External validity means the extent to which findings may be generalised to the wider population, although *"by definition, interpretivism research is context-specific, generalisability of the findings of research conducted within the interpretivism paradigm is practically impossible"* (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). It may be possible to improve generalisability by repeating the research in a number of situations that are similar in this case other HEIs that are facing issues with identifying scholarly pedagogic activity in terms of literature for their staff. This replication of research in other contexts could add to the generalisability of the findings (Evans *et al.*, 2021). If we can engage in cross institutional research that has a wider scope, we benefit educational research rigour generally. BERA themselves suggest that they *"promote and facilitate partnerships between universities and practitioners"* (Wyse *et al.*, 2018, p. 37) in order to increase the reputation and Ref-able nature of educational research.

4.5.7 Authenticity and trustworthiness

Many have rejected the idea of validity as being of use as a quality mark for qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Wyse *et al.*, 2018; Evans *et al.*, 2021). The criteria of validity and reliability can be re-interpreted in qualitative action research and higher educational research as authenticity (Preston and Wang, 2017).

It could be said that authenticity or trustworthiness are elusive targets with an understanding that “the research could always have been better” (Lincoln and Denzin, 1998, p. 451) and, whilst there is no perfect truth, “a focus on reliability, validity and triangulation should contribute to an acceptable level of authenticity sufficient to satisfy both researcher and reader that the study is meaningful and worthwhile” (Bush, 2016, p. 87).

Leading action research advocates suggest that if “the results of the research are valid and reliable if they are recognisable and authentic to the people involved in the research.” (Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher, 2007). Action research communities also consider that a researcher’s claim to have generated new knowledge is valid if it shows how it is grounded in a robust evidence base.

The validity of any claims can further be tested by subjecting them to specific social criteria (Habermas 1987), which demonstrate that the claim is comprehensible, faithful to the situation, expresses truthful intentions, and can be reciprocally and mutually justified within the research community. Whitehead and McNiff’s (2006) more recent work on validity suggests that validation can be gained by grounding your claim in personal validation and social validation; this is considered in more detail in chapter 7.

The data used here to inform conclusions is valid and reliable, as it is authentic and trustworthy.

4.6 The action

I suggested the idea of a journal club after identifying a need for a professional development activity that increased pedagogic engagement with literature. The community of teaching-focussed professionals, with whom I had become involved, demonstrated excellence in practice but often felt that they could not articulate their best practice in order to embed it within their department or the institution. Many reported that the activity available to them as teaching-focussed staff for professional development was limited, resulting in career stalling at senior teaching fellow level, later renamed associate professor. Opportunity to demonstrate their pedagogic engagement in ways required by both UKPSK and internal promotion criteria, were difficult to identify, or often non-existent. Often the success of a PD initiative is measured by its effect on student results or outcomes however, work by Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, (2019) supports the idea that career development, and the affect institutional culture, are additional indicators of successful PD in HEIs. Staff development was the focus of the pedagogic journal club as a PD initiative. Chapters 3.3 and 4.5.1 expand on the literature that supported journal club creation and the iterations through which the club moved during the research. However, I present here a brief overview of the activity of the PJC, providing a window into the action for the reader.

The pedagogic journal club (PJC) began in 2016 and ran until 2019, spanning three academic years. The initial idea was suggested by me in a paper to the Warwick International Higher Education Academy (WIHEA), the UK's first institutional academy of educators for staff and students engaged in the advancement of learning and teaching excellence. I was a founding fellow of WIHEA in 2015 and remained a fellow until 2019, having a four-year term of engagement after which, my fellow status changed to alumni status which I still hold. Initially, members were WIHEA fellows however, in the second academic year, membership was institution wide and it is this institution wide membership that the PJC continues to operate in 2022.

Meetings occurred once every six weeks, meaning five per year, with the last six-week period used for data collection. Members signed up using an online registration form which created a mailing list, and it was via mailing list that papers were disseminated two weeks in advance of each meeting date. Meeting dates were published for the year on varying days and times to allow part-time staff, and staff with fixed teaching commitments, the opportunity to engage (Figure 1212).

Dear all,

I don't know about you but I thought that summer dragged on a bit! Thanks goodness I'm back at work ;)

Please see below dates and times for the PJC for the coming academic year. We have permission to invite interested non WIHEA fellows for this year so if you do know someone who would like to join please point them in the direction of the link to sign up.
https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academy/activities/learningcircles/pedagogicresearch/registrationform

5 October	10.30-12.30
28 November	2-4pm
25 January	10.30-12.30
6 March	2-4pm
14 June	10.30-12.30

Figure 12 Email correspondence re: dates and membership 2017/18

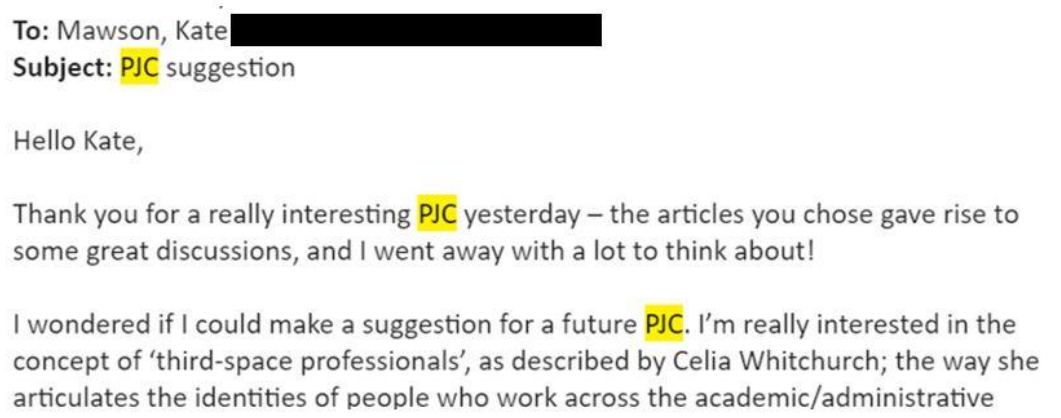
The membership sign-up pages were also open throughout the academic year, with no cut- off for membership. During the last weeks of each academic year data collection was conducted, increasing the frequency of communication during those times. Communication was often and open, and dialogue around paper selection and themes for consideration at PJC meetings (Figure 13 and Figure 144), became normalised.

To: Mawson, Kate [redacted]
Subject: Re: Feedback Journals

Hi Kate

In advance of tomorrow's reading group, I wondered whether you had come across the work of Russell Stannard on screen casting and feedback: http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/enhancing-feedback-with-technology/enhancing-feedback-with-technology.html It's a step on from audio feedback and I've found it really useful.

Figure 13 Membership correspondence around themes and papers


To: Mawson, Kate [redacted]
Subject: PJC suggestion

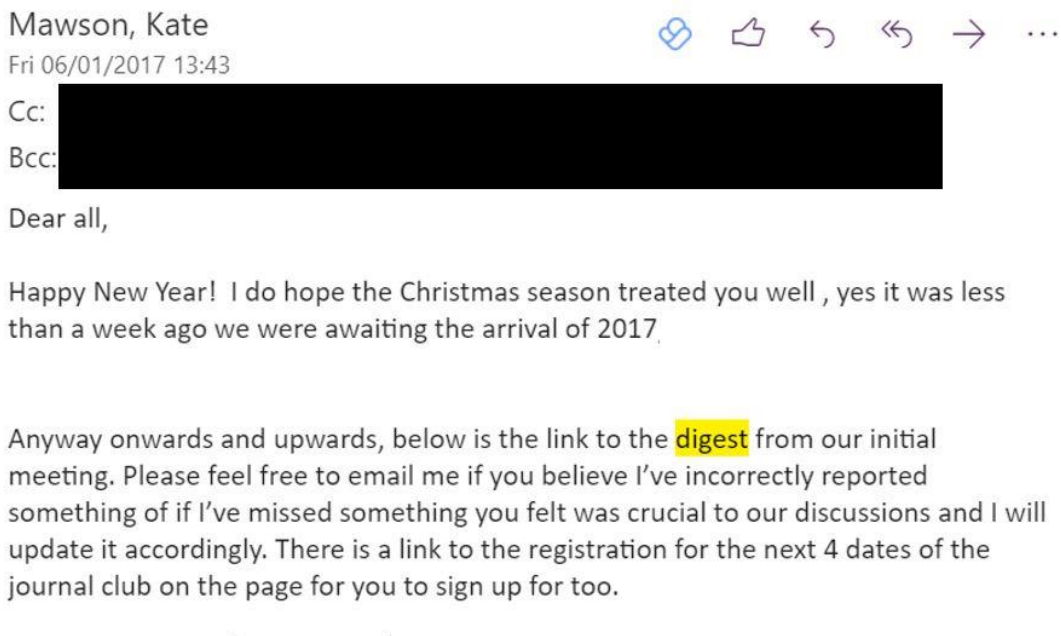
Hello Kate,

Thank you for a really interesting PJC yesterday – the articles you chose gave rise to some great discussions, and I went away with a lot to think about!

I wondered if I could make a suggestion for a future PJC. I'm really interested in the concept of 'third-space professionals', as described by Celia Whitchurch; the way she articulates the identities of people who work across the academic/administrative

Figure 14 Membership correspondence around themes and papers

Following the meeting, for the course of this action research, a digest was produced, hosted on the PJC webpages for public pursual, and disseminated directly to members. Members were given the opportunity to comment upon the digest, for accuracy, before publication (Figure 155), meaning that regular communication existed between the membership and myself, as leader of the PJC, throughout the academic year, pre- meeting, the meeting itself and digest dissemination.


Mawson, Kate
Fri 06/01/2017 13:43
Cc:
Bcc: [redacted]

Dear all,

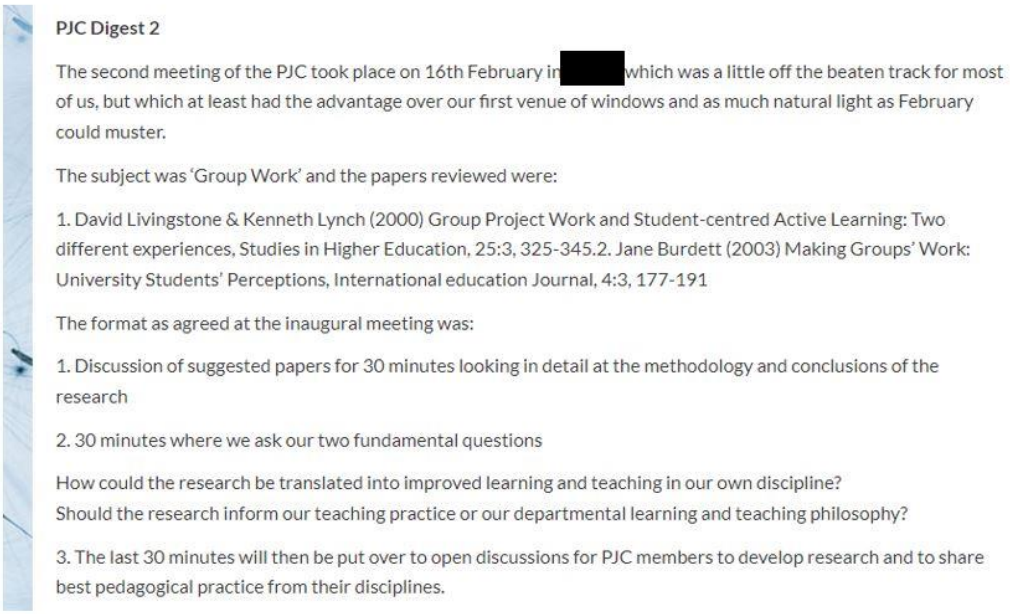
Happy New Year! I do hope the Christmas season treated you well , yes it was less than a week ago we were awaiting the arrival of 2017

Anyway onwards and upwards, below is the link to the digest from our initial meeting. Please feel free to email me if you believe I've incorrectly reported something of if I've missed something you felt was crucial to our discussions and I will update it accordingly. There is a link to the registration for the next 4 dates of the journal club on the page for you to sign up for too.

Figure 15 Membership correspondence validating digest content

4.6.1 A PJC meeting

PJC meetings lasted 90 minutes with a structure agreed on with participants in the inaugural meeting, as evidenced in (Figure 166)



PJC Digest 2

The second meeting of the PJC took place on 16th February in [redacted] which was a little off the beaten track for most of us, but which at least had the advantage over our first venue of windows and as much natural light as February could muster.

The subject was 'Group Work' and the papers reviewed were:

1. David Livingstone & Kenneth Lynch (2000) Group Project Work and Student-centred Active Learning: Two different experiences, Studies in Higher Education, 25:3, 325-345.2. Jane Burdett (2003) Making Groups' Work: University Students' Perceptions, International education Journal, 4:3, 177-191

The format as agreed at the inaugural meeting was:

1. Discussion of suggested papers for 30 minutes looking in detail at the methodology and conclusions of the research

2. 30 minutes where we ask our two fundamental questions

How could the research be translated into improved learning and teaching in our own discipline?
Should the research inform our teaching practice or our departmental learning and teaching philosophy?

3. The last 30 minutes will then be put over to open discussions for PJC members to develop research and to share best pedagogical practice from their disciplines.

Figure 16 PJC digest 2 showing meeting structure

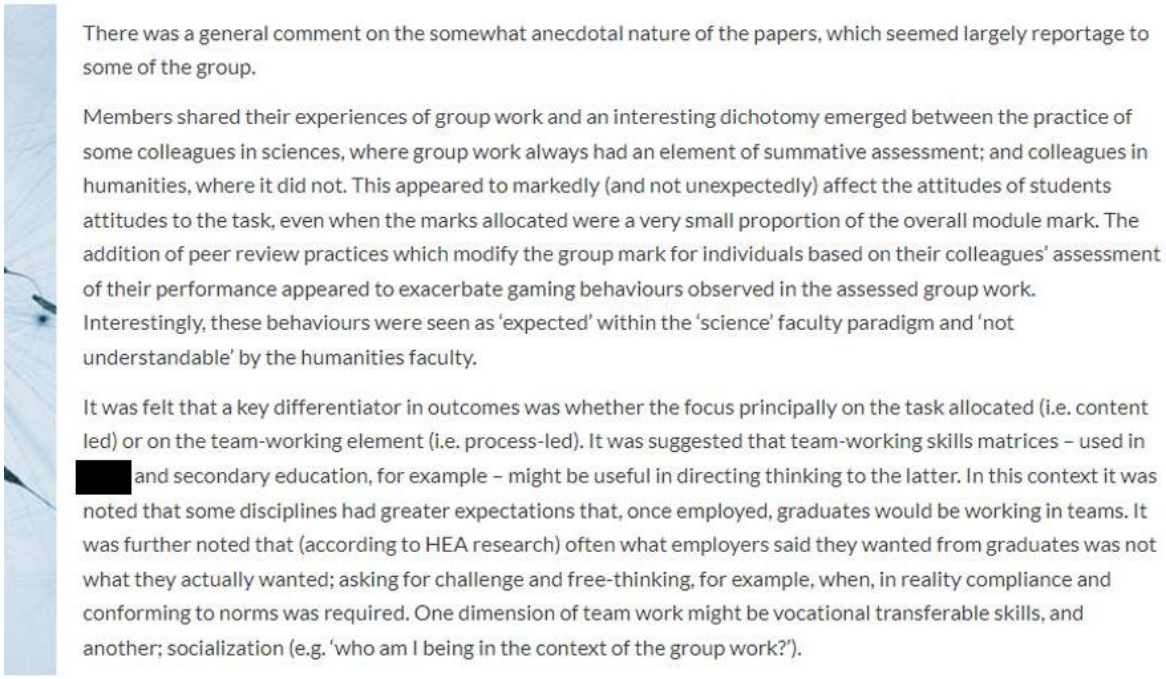
The meeting began with interrogation of papers and methodological discussions, led in the first iteration by me, as the expert. I acted in the first year as leader and facilitator of discussions however, in the following iteration, I acted purely as facilitator. In the 2018/19 academic year I stepped away from the PJC in both roles, planning to act as member and observer in year three. My leadership of the PJC is discussed in more detail in [3.3.2].

As discussions within each meeting took place, I would memo themes and ideas that came to the fore; this memoing also formed part of the data collection for the research.

No extracts from memos are provided here. The decision not to include memos in this published document was taken to protect participant anonymity.

Discussions in PJC meetings were often lively with challenge and debate and, on many occasions, vulnerable revelations around identity understanding and confidence. I would often use participant names in my memos in order to identify which participants made which comments. I appreciate this is a limitation in terms of making the data collection visible and in future work the use of codes during memoing, in order to anonymise contributions, will be

implemented. There is an understanding that, although no physical harm was brought to participants, there is always the issue of professional reputation, and it is paramount that no harm comes to those acting as participants in research (BERA, 2018b). Even with codes, or the blocking out of names, there are many identifying features captured in memos; this, coupled with the lack of anonymity around institution as well as an identified time period of action, memo publication would make identification of participants possible and so I have not included them. It was through digests that PJC meeting activity was shared, and examples are provided here in fig.17 and fig.18. Digests provided the dissemination of ideas and new knowledge which combatted the understood challenge in communities of practice; the hoarding of new knowledge (Blankenship and Ruona, 2007; Weatherby, 2017).



There was a general comment on the somewhat anecdotal nature of the papers, which seemed largely reportage to some of the group.

Members shared their experiences of group work and an interesting dichotomy emerged between the practice of some colleagues in sciences, where group work always had an element of summative assessment; and colleagues in humanities, where it did not. This appeared to markedly (and not unexpectedly) affect the attitudes of students attitudes to the task, even when the marks allocated were a very small proportion of the overall module mark. The addition of peer review practices which modify the group mark for individuals based on their colleagues' assessment of their performance appeared to exacerbate gaming behaviours observed in the assessed group work. Interestingly, these behaviours were seen as 'expected' within the 'science' faculty paradigm and 'not understandable' by the humanities faculty.

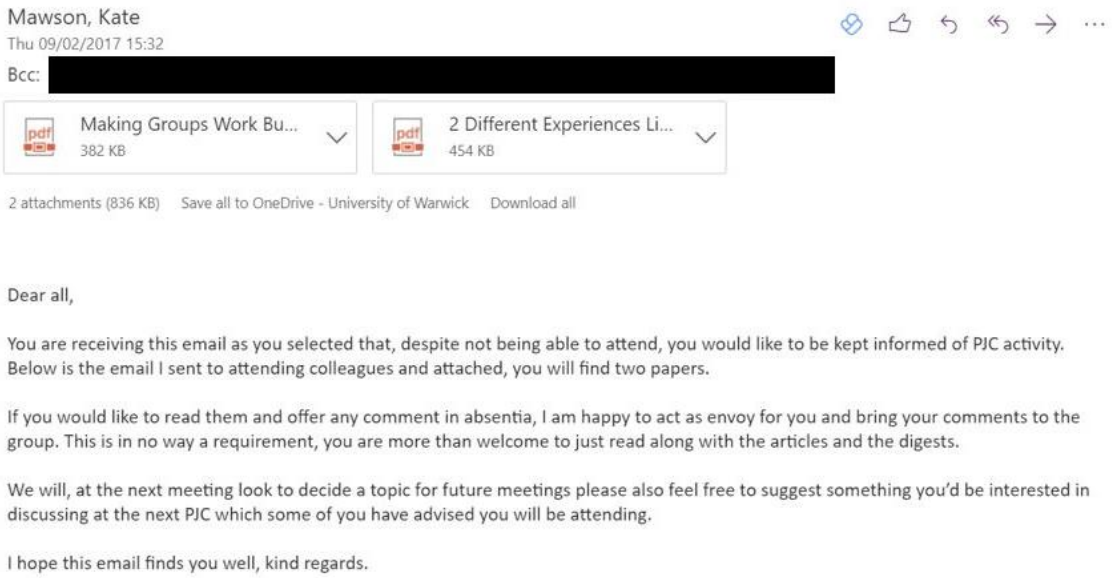
It was felt that a key differentiator in outcomes was whether the focus principally on the task allocated (i.e. content led) or on the team-working element (i.e. process-led). It was suggested that team-working skills matrices – used in [redacted] and secondary education, for example – might be useful in directing thinking to the latter. In this context it was noted that some disciplines had greater expectations that, once employed, graduates would be working in teams. It was further noted that (according to HEA research) often what employers said they wanted from graduates was not what they actually wanted; asking for challenge and free-thinking, for example, when, in reality compliance and conforming to norms was required. One dimension of team work might be vocational transferable skills, and another; socialization (e.g. 'who am I being in the context of the group work?').

Figure 17 Digest content: dissemination to the wider institution

In surroundings more conducive to growth than previous meeting places, the PJC had an hour and a half of engaging, well informed and wide ranging discussions about feedback in higher education. Of the papers we looked at, the Nicolls work was recieved warmly by the group,We discussed a range of methodological issues, as well as the value of the quantitiaitve and qualitive evidence provided by the papers and the appropraiteness of data handling technquies employed by all three teams of authors.

Figure 18 Digest content: Methodological awareness

In addition to PJC digests, I kept in contact with PJC members, who could not attend meetings, with a mailshot providing papers that would be discussed in the meeting and offering to take comments to the meeting, as well as keeping communication open for contributing ideas for themes and papers at subsequent meetings (Figure 19).


Mawson, Kate
Thu 09/02/2017 15:32
Bcc: [redacted]
Making Groups Work Bu... 382 KB
2 Different Experiences Li... 454 KB
2 attachments (836 KB) Save all to OneDrive - University of Warwick Download all

Dear all,

You are receiving this email as you selected that, despite not being able to attend, you would like to be kept informed of PJC activity. Below is the email I sent to attending colleagues and attached, you will find two papers.

If you would like to read them and offer any comment in absentia, I am happy to act as envoy for you and bring your comments to the group. This is in no way a requirement, you are more than welcome to just read along with the articles and the digests.

We will, at the next meeting look to decide a topic for future meetings please also feel free to suggest something you'd be interested in discussing at the next PJC which some of you have advised you will be attending.

I hope this email finds you well, kind regards.

Figure 19 Email correspondence with members unable to attend

4.6.2 My role as leader of the action

Leadership of PJC was nominally mine but with an understood lack of hierarchy and power. Good relationships are central to a successful community, in fact Cassidy *et al.* (2008, p. 224) argue that 'the quality of relationships within a community of practice or enquiry [are likely to] determine the degree to which it achieves its desired purpose".

I acted as a local leader (Martensson, 2014), key leader (Lester and Kezar, 2017) or community coordinator (Wenger, 2000, p. 231), without being perceived as management by the participants. Wenger (1998b) argues that a CoP should have joint enterprise and understanding, between all members, of the aims of the community, and members of that community should be able to exert a certain level of control over the agenda. For professional learning to take place within this context, membership and activity should be neither a form of accountability nor of performance management and therefore, the PJC was set up with voluntary membership and without explicit learning goals or assessment.

The aims were set during the initial meeting to ensure ownership of the PJC aims; as Wenger (1998) argues "negotiating a joint enterprise gives rise to relations of mutual accountability among those involved' (p. 81). It was made clear that any member could suggest papers for inclusion, and many did. The PJC then, was without institutional leadership but had institutional support. The agency of teaching-focussed staff, to make decisions around teaching and learning, needs to be supported at the political level (macro), institutional level (meso), and

professional communities' level (micro- and meso) (Williams *et al.*, 2013; Jensen and Iannone, 2018). This action adds to the calls in literature for more work in HEIs to be done in this area (Saroyan and Trigwell, 2015a).

Pragmatic leadership was also needed for the practical issues of rooming, timetabling and communicating that need to be in place. I established myself as the leader, in terms of being the expert in the group, and took responsibility for organising the pragmatics of meeting times and space for the life of the PJC and also for the literature selected initially. However, no set goals were created, there was no requirement of outcome. Eventually the group shared the expert leadership of the literature selection, with aims and foci being negotiated and renegotiated during the life of the PJC, although I remained responsible for the organisation and facilitated meetings until 2018.

Specific influence from the researcher may be difficult for researchers in other organisations to replicate, as can the positionality of the researcher. In this case, the PJC was led by me and, as the iterations developed, the action was driven in directions determined by the group. The specific nature of any PJC that subsequent HEIs might set up would, in order to align with the HECoP model suggested in chapter 7, take a path created by its own participants in order to answer questions specific to the institution and relevant to its own participants.

In this way the general mechanism of the PJC activity would be replicable but it may not generate the same specific outcome in every institution. It must be noted that influence or drive from the researcher may well be a variable that is uncontrollable. As such, in chapter [4.3.5], attention is given to qualities of the leadership of the PJC in this AR, as well as a discussion around 'insiderness' chapter [4.2.4]

I cannot remove my passion for the development of the PJC from the success of it as an initiative, "In addition to being a motivating factor, passion can influence learning and teaching positively by creating excitement and action"(Serin, 2017). The effect of my leadership is difficult to pin down as it was not the focus of the AR. I did plan to step back as leader, and hand over the PJC in 2018/19 data collection, to focus on this issue and although the handover occurred in December 2018, I was unable to complete the last planned cycle. McDonald et al (2012) provide a detailed look at leadership of CoPs in HEI which is of interest, as is (Southwell, 2012) and (Lester and Kezar, 2017), who look in more detail at leadership in a CoP. Leadership and its effect on a CoP would be an area for further study that I would be interested in pursuing.

4.6.3 The participants and their roles

It has been said that the most fundamental worldview, embraced by action research, is a participatory one (Reason and Bradbury, 2001). In this action, the participants were very much engaged as equals with generated thematic lines of enquiry coming from participants experiences; these were used to frame and reframe research questions across the iterations.

At the outset of the EdD process, participatory action research (PAR) was a methodology I had seriously considered. Essentially however, participatory action research requires participants to be involved in the data analysis and this was not the case here. Wyse (2020 p.12) suggests that participatory research is close to practice research that maintains focus on the group, and whilst the participants were collaborators, they did not engage with data analysis. Participants took an active role in facilitating PJC sessions, contributing to published outputs from the PJC within the institution (appendix 3 and 4), and validating data before publication, but their activity stopped short of contributing to how data collection and analysis were conducted. I, as the sole researcher, controlled this.

The group approach to the action mentioned in the sections above ensured that the research was in some ways collaborative. Kemmis and McTaggart (2005, p. 563) however, point out that *"not all theorists of action research place this emphasis on collaboration"* and although the action research undertaken here was in some ways collaborative, democratic and participative, it fell short of the requirements for both participatory action research and collaborative action research.

Levin (2012) warns against being too close to the action and so producing knowledge that lacks validity. I was the sole person responsible for the data collection, analysis and conclusions. Whilst participants were involved with many aspects of the action, including internal publication and facilitation of PJC meetings, their activity was such that this thesis remains identifiable as action research. This is not to say I object to either collaborative or participatory action research; I also don't wholly align with Levin's view that objectivity is required for validity as discussed in [4.5.6]. However, in this instance, to claim collaborative or participatory action research would be disingenuous.

4.7 Chapter summary

Questionnaire completion was 100% (16/16 reduced to 12/16 75% of participants giving full responses) in iteration 1 and 80% (16/20 reduced to 15/20 75% of participants giving full responses) in iteration 2. Although those with little experience opted out, care will be given not to over-claim as the sample size was still relatively small. The interview of seven participants, from a possible 20 members in 2018, is a high response rate and, coupled with the deviant sampling conducted [4.5.5], the data capture was enough to draw robust conclusions. Interviewees are coded here as interviewee F, G, H, P, T, K and Y.

In addition to laying out the iterations and steps taken to set up the AR, [4.5 and 4.6] and the full account of ethical considerations required in qualitative research [4.4], the aim of chapter 4 was to provide a thorough discussion of action research as a methodology so that the methodological decisions made are justified. It in no way attempts to be an exhaustive historical account of action research and its methodological underpinnings since Lewin in the 1940s. There are many excellent texts which discuss this in detail, including (Adelman, 1993), with many modern writers offering significant insight into close to practice research in education (Wyse 2020).

Within close to practice educational research, the way in which action research is utilised as a research method in HEI and educational research is often left unexplored (Wyse *et al.*, 2018). This lack of engagement with method may, in some cases, call action research into question (Gast, et al., 2017; Cotton et al., 2018). A significant interrogation of methodology [4.2-4.3], objectivity and generalisability [4.6], although not always the principal research attributes of value (Lewin 1946), were discussed in order to avoid that pitfall. This detailed discussion enables me to draw robust conclusions and produce a thesis which contributes practical knowledge, as well as scholarly knowledge, to the growing body of quality educational action research.

Sections [4.1 and 4.2], although greatly reduced in word count for purposes of submission, speak to the significant transformative process that I underwent as a researcher as my worldview realigned. There is new knowledge that has been created through the transformation of the researcher which is further exposed in section [7.5]. Indeed, this and chapter 7, both speak to the change in the knower and what is to be known (Biesta and Burbules, 2003).

Chapter 5: Summary of findings

5.1 Chapter outline

This chapter describes the findings of the research conducted from two iterations of the PJC at a research-intensive Russell Group HEI in the UK. The PJC was set up as a community of teaching-focussed staff who wanted to engage with literature in order to improve their teaching and module design, as well as engage in activity that demonstrated their SoTL and pedagogic engement with literature. The PJC was an example of a bottom-up PD initiative that I facilitated, acting as local leader, created through need expressed by the academic colleagues, not by management nor external agency. The terminology used by participants, and researchers here such as SoTL CoP, PLC and PD, have previously been discussed.

Throughout this section, I will use PJC to refer to the community created and PedEL to refer to the activity undertaken by the group, PedEL being defined more fully in [7.3]

[5.2] reports on the makeup-of the PJC as a community and summarises details of attendance, membership and the completion rates of the questionnaires. [5.3.1 and 5.3.2] discuss the sub questions of impact on the individual and on the wider community presenting evidence from: questionnaires; interviews and memos. A chapter summary is not provided as chapter 6 takes discussion further acting as a summary of evidence linked to literature which provides the evidential basis used in response the main research question **'to what extent did the Professional Journal Club engender an effective community in an HE setting?'**

5.2 The PJC

The PJC was a community of approximately 16 members of staff during iteration 1 and 20 in iteration 2 who met each half-term to discuss literature that was of interest to them, the literature either had pedagogic focus or content or it could be pedagogically engaged with when linked to their teaching and learning foci. Attendance was open to all staff: academic development, teaching and research focussed, with papers being sent out in the weeks preceding meetings. PJC meetings were attended by fewer than the entire membership, but attendees had an interest in the papers being discussed. Members in attendance decided the foci for the next meeting during the closing discussions. It could be that those who attended all

meetings found a synergy between the topics covered and themes that they were interested in which could add to issues of clique formation (Weatherby, 2017). Email correspondence to all members asked for suggestions for papers at any time and effort was made to ensure that all members could to contribute to the agenda. Ensuring participants are engaged with the journals discussed is a key area of successful journal club set up (Golde, 2007; Deenadayalan *et al.*, 2008; Tallman and Feldman, 2016; Sims, Moss and Marshall, 2017; Gottlieb *et al.*, 2018). I did this through expert interjection of themes linked to new advances and current climate in the sector or relevant to the institution.

The following sections report questionnaires provided to 16 participants in 2017 and 20 participants in 2018, as well as data from 8 interviewees. Some members were part of the PJC for two years, others only active in either year. The 2017 questionnaire included members who joined in 2016/17, the 2018 questionnaire included all members, those who joined in 2106/17 and 2017/18 (Figure 20).

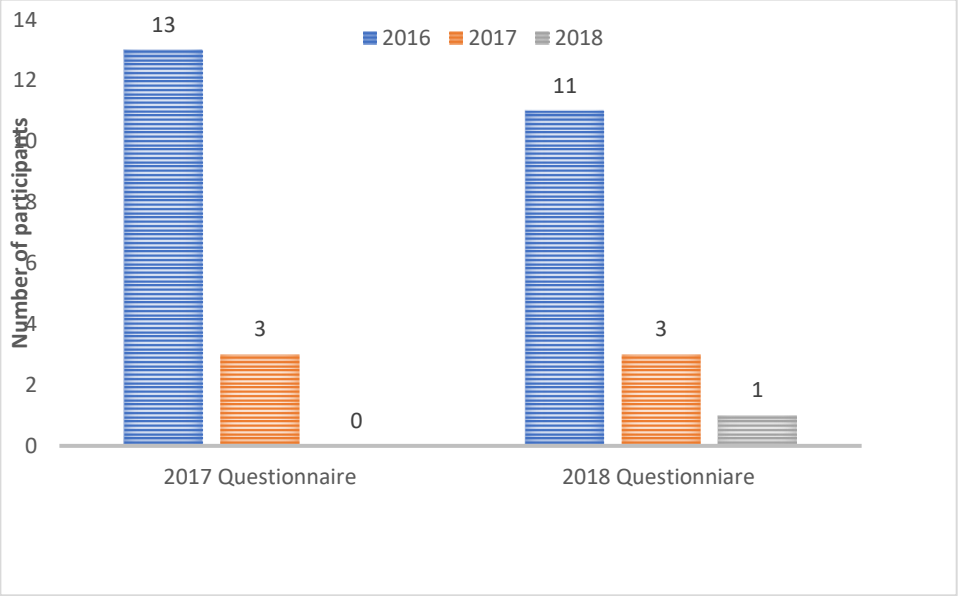


Figure 20 Year of joining the PJC

There were 16 respondents to the 2018 questionnaire. Four participants self-identified as not yet having attended a meeting and were offered the opportunity, via piping of questions, to opt out, leaving 12 full reponses from questionniare 1 (2017). One participant took this opition in 2018 providing 15 full responses from questionniare 2 (2018).

Questionnaire completion was 100% (16/16 reduced to 12/16 75% of participants giving full responses) in iteration 1 and 80% (16/20 reduced to 15/20 75% of participants giving full responses) in iteration 2. Although those with little experience opted out, care will be given not to over-claim as the sample size was still relatively small. The interview of seven participants

from a possible 20 members in 2018 is a high response rate and, coupled with the deviant sampling conducted [4.5.5] the data capture was enough to draw robust conclusions. Interviewees are coded here as interviewee F, G, H, P, T, K and Y. During interview, I decided not to ask identifying questions such as length of membership of PJC, job role and number of meetings attended in order to prevent identification of individuals through cross referencing interview transcripts with questionnaire data. However, as it was an unstructured interview, some participants volunteered this information. Transcripts are not provided here for reasons discussed in ethics [4.4].

5.2.1 Participants

The makeup of the PJC in its first iteration was predominantly principal teaching fellows (Figure 211). It is of interest that in the second survey, this had shifted, suggesting promotion of a number of participants to reader in autumn 2018, as many participants were in the PJC for both data collections. Principal teaching fellow however, was removed in 2018 as a role, replaced by associate professor.

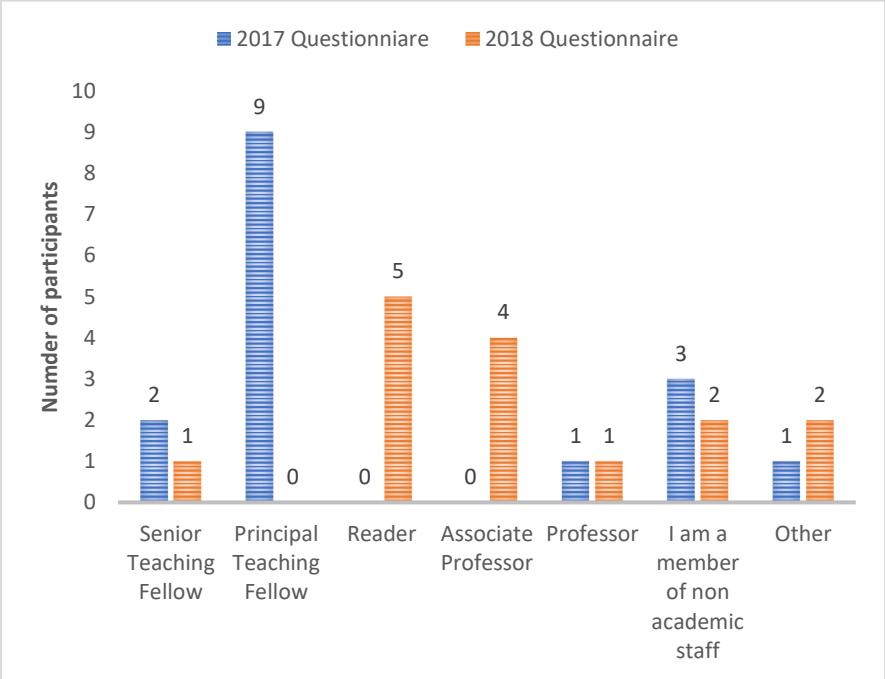


Figure 21 Self-identified job roles for both PJC cohorts

This is not to say that the PJC was solely responsible for promotion; it could mean that the PJC had a significant proportion of individuals who were actively looking for promotion and as such, this is worth considering when analysing findings. The drive for promotion and recognition

from participants may have been something that motivated engagement with the PJC. It may also have helped them to prioritise attendance to the PJC within what are recognised heavy workloads. Motivation is listed by Kennedy (2016) as one of the most influential aspects of successful PD activity as well as a feeling of agency and motivation was high in the PJC. Other motivating factors were the lack of opportunity to find PedEL engagement elsewhere, as well as a genuine wish to engage collegially with others and become more exposed to literature that had PK content or PK focus or that could be consumed by staff with a pedagogic focus.

Drivers that may have reduced engagement with the PJC were also recorded. When asked for reasons for non-attendance, a number of participants reported lack of time for PD activity; *"Workload", "Time pressures"* and *"Unfortunately too much other stuff taking up my time" and "Not for lack of interest- just time".*

There were six meetings in each academic year (i.e. one every half-term). Meetings were held on varying days at varying times for flexibility and to avoid restricting access. Memos from meetings showed that attendance ranged between 7 and 15 participants (Figure 222) with a core of 2-3 people who attended every event over the three years of iterations. Data from the questionnaires demonstrates that as the PJC developed, attendance was also an informed choice based on PJC topic.

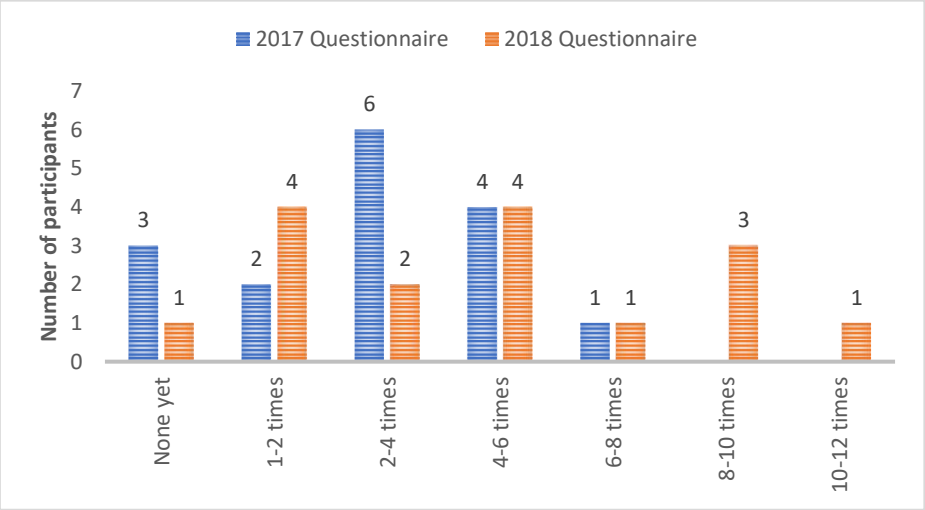


Figure 22 Number of meetings attended by participants

5.2.2 Teaching qualification

Due to the PedEL focus of the PJC, it was of interest to see how many participants held teaching qualifications; I gathered data on the qualifications held by participants: only 5 of 15 reported holding a trained to teaching qualification (Table17); only two had undergone formal teacher training, namely a PGCE.

Table 17 Verbatim replies to "What training to teach have you completed in your career to date?"

Warwick Teaching Certificate
Advance HE's 'Leading Transformation in Learning and Teaching' course
PGCE, MASTERS IN EDUCATION
Warwick Teaching Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma in technology enhanced teaching and learning, Senior Fellow of the HEA
PGCE, MA TESOL, PGA TEL, SFHEA

This data suggests that, crucially, many teaching staff are lacking in pedagogic focussed training. This, of course, is a small sample size and generalisations are difficult. However, HESA 2021 data suggests that nationally, in 2019/20, the number of teaching staff without any qualifications were 44,995, making up just 29% of all staff. When looking at the methodology provided by HESA, the teaching qualifications that count are quite varied (appendix 5). The list includes HEA fellowship at all levels, at Warwick in 2019/20, after a significant push for HEA fellowship; 40% of teaching staff are recorded as having some form of teaching qualification but deciphering which is not possible, exact qualifications are not reported.

5.3 The research sub questions

[5.2] provided data about the PJC participants and their demographics, reporting on qualification levels, job title and engagement with the PJC. What follows is a more detailed look at the data focussed on the research questions and further discussion concerning how this links to literature is presented in chapter 6.

5.3.1 What was the impact, if any, of the PJC on the individuals who attended?

Does PJC activity lead to:

i) changes to teaching practice by the individual?

ii) promotion or professional recognition?

iii) increased confidence?

iv) a change in the individual's identity?

v) engagement with literature?

5.3.1.1 Changes in teaching practice by the individual

Nine of twelve participants in the first questionnaire suggested that they were making changes, or planning to make changes, to their teaching following engagement with the PJC. Some participants gave specific examples including "making assessment criteria and processes more transparent" as well as planning "changes to how students undertake group work" and "changing presentations to development of video artefacts and using active peer review to develop teamwork".

In the second questionnaire, seven of fifteen participants reported changing their teaching practices in ways such as: "Using improved feedback processes" "Using video assignments and reflective processes" "Restructured group work activities in my module" and "Using a signature pedagogy that fits our discipline". One member also reported an "Increased awareness that I need to measure impact of changes made/increased resource and refer to literature when encountering problems".

There was not only change to practice but also, for some, an increased awareness of the need to engage with some amount of tracking of changes, referring to literature and pedagogical research for support. Increasing staff use of literature arguably helps to support excellence and the findings here are supported by numerous studies which link engagement with literature to teaching excellence (Bevan, 2006; Bell *et al.*, 2010; Bell, 2017; Berliner, 2020; la Velle and Kendall, 2020).

5.3.1.2 Promotion or professional recognition

When asked about their engagement with the PJC and its effect on their PD, a third of participants reported that membership added to evidence for the awarding of professional recognition such as fellowship of the HEA. One member of the PJC reported that "I feel that my recent award of a significant teaching award from a Professional Institution was helped significantly by my publication of my pedagogical work, which was in turn encouraged and assisted by colleagues in the PJC.". Much discussion during meetings revolved around participants now being 'seen' or 'recognised' in the university. Being recognised as having knowledge or expertise linked to pedagogical awareness was reported as a positive. Comments concerning being more able to instigate, contribute to or effectively respond in discussions about pedagogy were also heard including: "We are going to introduce more presentation-style assessments... this decision arose for a number of reasons, but my input into the discussion was informed by discussions at the journal club.".

Interviewee H reported a feeling that being involved in the PJC allowed:

> *"the opportunity to show what you could do, what you were prepared to do, the extra mile that you were prepared to go to do the teaching aspect of a university's work, as well as you possibly could, [which] hadn't been particularly available to a lot of the teaching pathway staff."*

The university's own education executive commented specifically that PJC supported excellence (Figure 23).

This supports the Education Strategy by …

This project links most closely with the staff and excellence areas of the education strategy particularly:

1.2.3 Continuous Development of Teaching Excellence - *Engage in continuous enhancement of teaching and learning through partnership with students and staff and informed by peers and teaching-related research.*

The PJC specifically -

- Provides academic and professional support services teams with the pedagogical, technical and organisational expertise necessary to review, enhance and innovate in teaching practice
- Develops leadership capacity and succession planning in the support of teaching excellence across the University
- Increases the number of National Teaching Fellows/HEA Fellowships

Figure 23 Extract from Education Executive Case Study (Mawson and Redacted, 2018)

It is of interest that advantages linked to the PJC have been highlighted by the institution. This brings possible issues of exploitation of staff engaged motivated, especially those part-time or fixed term contracts. Staff may give additional time to create developments whilst institutions wishing to reap the benefit do so without investing time and resource.

It is important to recognise the time at which the PJC existed and the drivers that were present trying to increase the number of fellowships in an institution. As interviewee G said: *"[the PJC] was at a time when there was increased prominence of Teaching and Learning in the institution."* Possibly, during this time, individuals and the institution were more aware of teaching focussed UKPSF statements and TEF metrics.

Interviewee T added, when discussing drivers for change:"

> *"Well [drivers are] obviously TEF and also tuition fees, student expectations, the acceptance that teaching matters, that that's where our money comes from. Yes, so academic identity is changing quickly as well…the PhD students and early career researchers that I work with on innovations, they take teaching seriously, which is different. They care about teaching more, and, I don't know, maybe to get a job they recognise they've got to do it, it's part of the job. It's not separate. They're not researchers who do a bit of teaching."*

The question remains as to whether this a sustained change or one that just existed in 2016-18. The TEF, its language and its consequences are still visible to and as such its effect cannot be dismissed as fleeting.

> Interviewee G "*The other external drivers – I mean things like TEF and the usual NSS thing – have risen in prominence more and more even since the start of the PJC, and all of that just pushes you, rightly or wrongly, into a student-focussed, student-impact way of thinking about things."*

The TEF, it could be argued, is acting as a generator of opportunity (Stevenson, Whelan and Burke, 2017; Charles, 2018; Kneale, 2018; Barkas *et al.*, 2019) in much the same way as my experience of a school under "Requires Improvement" status in the early 2000s generated increased investment in teaching quality and PD for staff. Whilst acknowledging the issues with the TEF metrics, the pursuit of TEF Gold or the need to maintain TEF Gold may be the justification needed for increased funding and resource in this area.

> Interviewee H: *"The fact that research became what, certainly the Russell Group Institutions regarded as the only thing that the needed to augment, and it was, for a*

while, the only thing they were particularly measured on. Now, TEF has come along and it's an opportunity to redress that balance." And *"to try and improve and address the things that TEF and so on is going to demand of this university now and certainly going forward."*

There is understanding of professional capital, external measurement of teaching excellence and the changing focus of Russell Group HEIs towards teaching excellence. This may have affected the drive of some to participate and also may be part of the reason why the PJC was successful. There was perceived value in the PD activity on offer due to the environment that participants and the institution were in 5.3.1.3 Confidence

In the first questionnaire participants were asked to think about how their knowledge of pedagogy had developed (Figure 24).

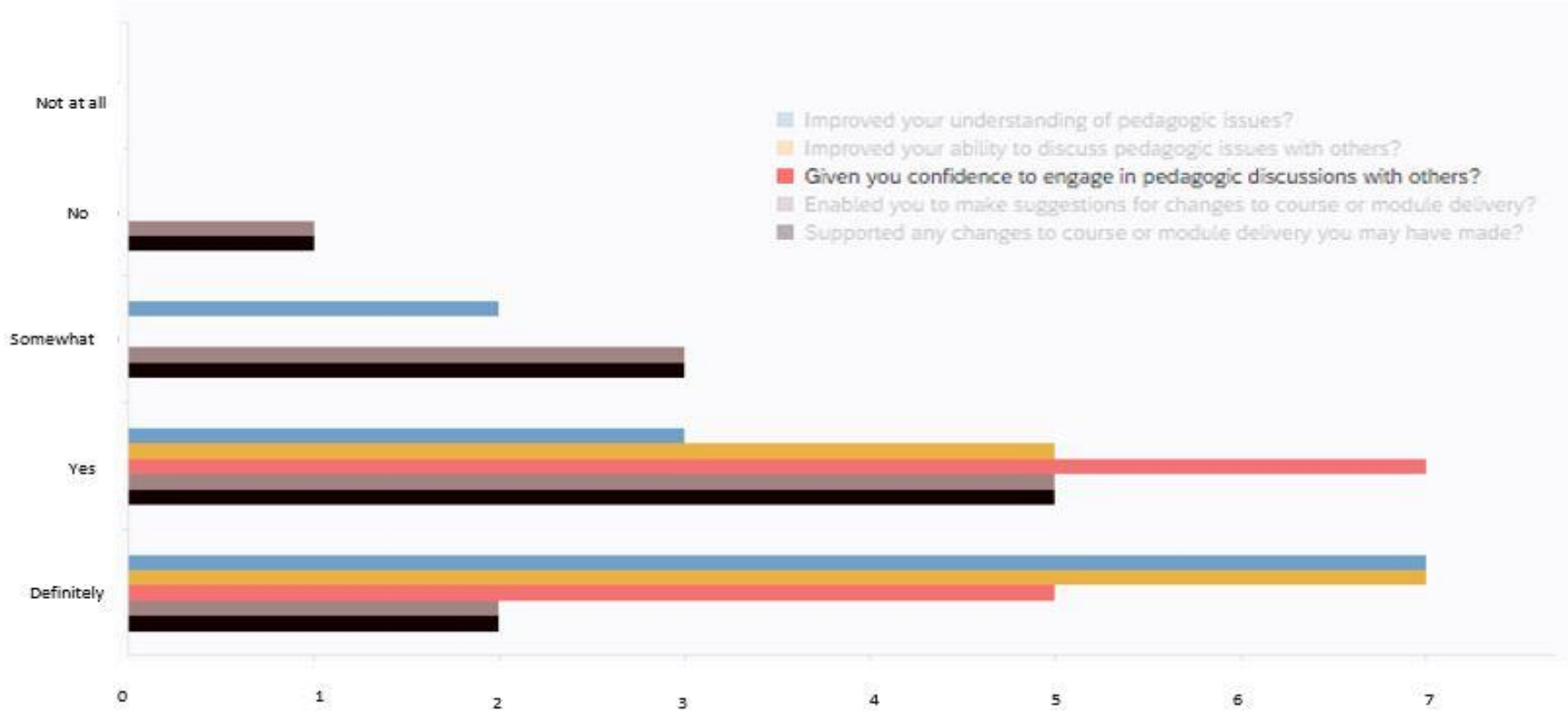


Figure 24 Questionnaire 2017 responses to: Has your knowledge of pedagogy during membership of the PJC…

Members of the PJC did increase in confidence. For example, Interview F remarked that:

> *"I've picked this up with other colleagues in one or two other places, and I guess now I might be confident enough to think, 'actually, maybe we could run this or maybe we could host this.' Perhaps I would not have done that before."*

When the questionnaires asked about the benefits of the PJC, two participants directly reported that *"It has supported confidence"* and *"increased confidence"* and a third said they had an *"increased confidence to engage in pedagogic research/ networking across university/more sophisticated consumption of pedagogic literature" and being "Confident to present at an HEA conference".*

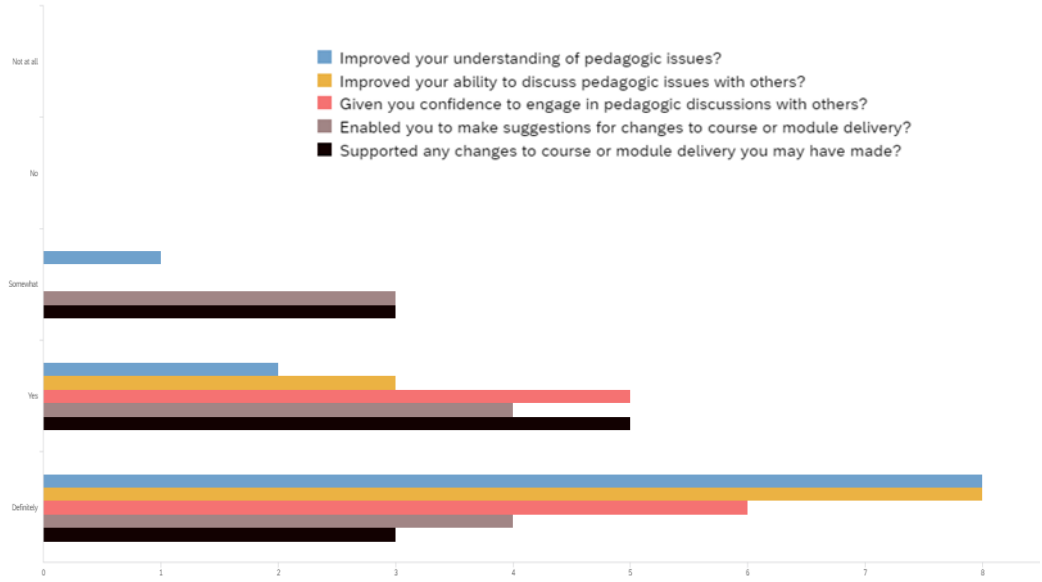


Figure 25 longest serving participants reporting on their consumption of literature after being part of the PJC for 2 years

When breaking down the data further, which is possible through Qualtrics, the 11 who had joined in 2016/17 reported in 2018 (Figure 25) far more positive responses when asked about changes to their understanding of and ability to discuss issues as well as their confidence.

PD that continues over time increases the opportunity to develop and engage in the activity (Stoll et al., 2012). Quality PD is focussed on activity that is sustained, intensive and in-depth (Opfer et al., 2008); activities need to be embedded over time to have impact beyond individuals (Bubb et al., 2009). The literature review also discusses the requirement of time, a

community *"does not just come to be and then sustain itself over time. Instead, it takes time to develop into a learning community and it is a work in progress"* (Van Es, 2012).

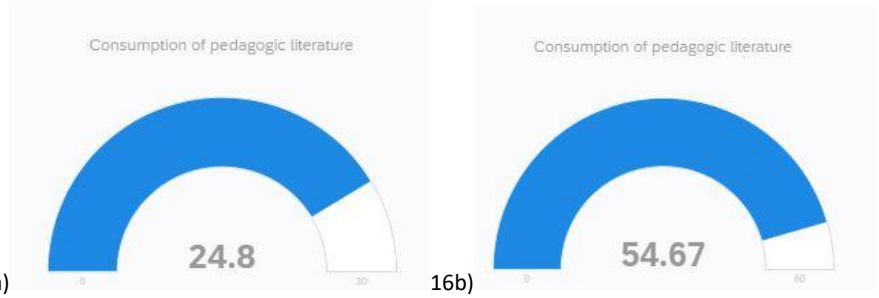
Additionally, Kelly, Nesbit and Oliver (2012) and Webb and Tierney (2020) suggest that to become an identified member of a community (here the PedEL community) at any HEI may take up to 10 years. To date, the PJC has been running for five years, providing tailored PedEL focussed activity linked to UKPSF standards A5 K3 and V3.

5.3.1.4 Identity

Identity was a theme that emerged through the iterations from participants. They moved from feeling separated from the language of educational research to having a greater affinity with it and being able to see PedEL as something that could add value to their development and to their courses. They also reported feeling a sense of belonging to the PJC *"mutual engagement, sharing of repertoires, and negotiation of the joint enterprise"* (Iverson, 2011, p. 43) arose due to their activities as part of the journal club.

Individual identity, as someone engaged with literature, changed. Memos captured during meetings included discussions around increased confidence with the language of pedagogic literature specifically. As such, the 2018 questionnaire, which was completed by 15 participants, asked participants to rate themselves from 0 novice to 100 expert in relation to a number of statements.

When asked where they would place themselves on this scale for consumption of literature, data showed that they moved away from novice over the course of the AR.



16a) 16b)

Figure 26 Novice (0) – Expert (100) rating by staff from 2018 questionnaire a) How they rated themselves before the PJC and b) their rating after the PJC

Figure 26 shows the group result which demonstrates a positive increase in identity towards expert but, what is also of interest, is the minimum and maximum response.

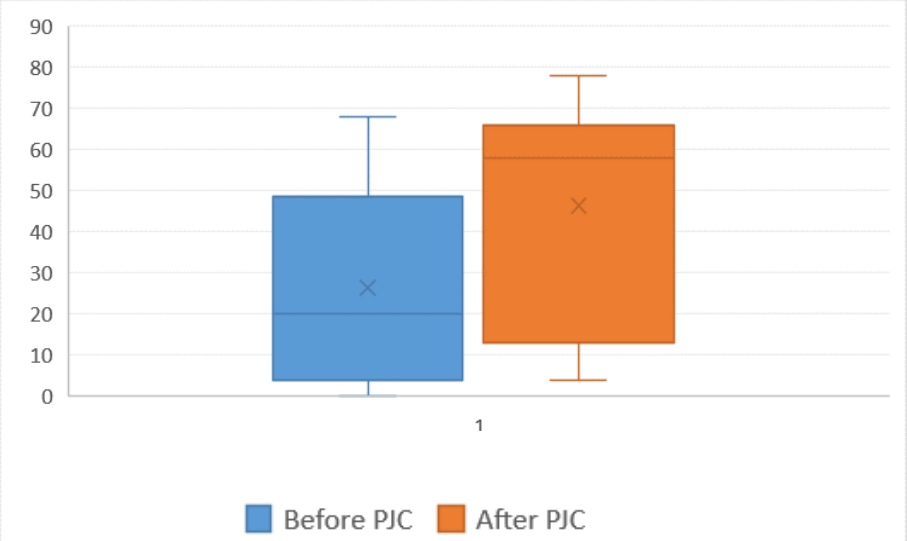


Figure 27 Box pot showing data from questionnaire 2 2018 asking participants to rate themselves from novice to expert in terms of consuming pedagogic literature

The mean response was 24.8 before the PJC activity but 54.67 after, with the medians expressed by the line on box plot (Figure 27) being significantly higher, demonstrating far more responses over 50 after the PJC activity. The PJC had an effect on how participants saw themselves and is supported in literature (McNiff, 1995; Kahn *et al.*, 2013; Derri, Vasiliadou and Kioumourtzoglou, 2015; Brücknerová and Novotný, 2017). The PJC "*raises interesting conversations and sometimes methodologies that you just wouldn't have thought of, I think. I don't think you could achieve that without doing something like [the PJC]"* Interviewee K.

5.3.1.5 Engagement with literature for change

When asked in the questionnaire about the effect membership of the PJC had on making suggestions for changes, or indeed making changes themselves, in both the 2017 and 2018 questionnaires, there is an increase in positive responses (*Figure 28*).

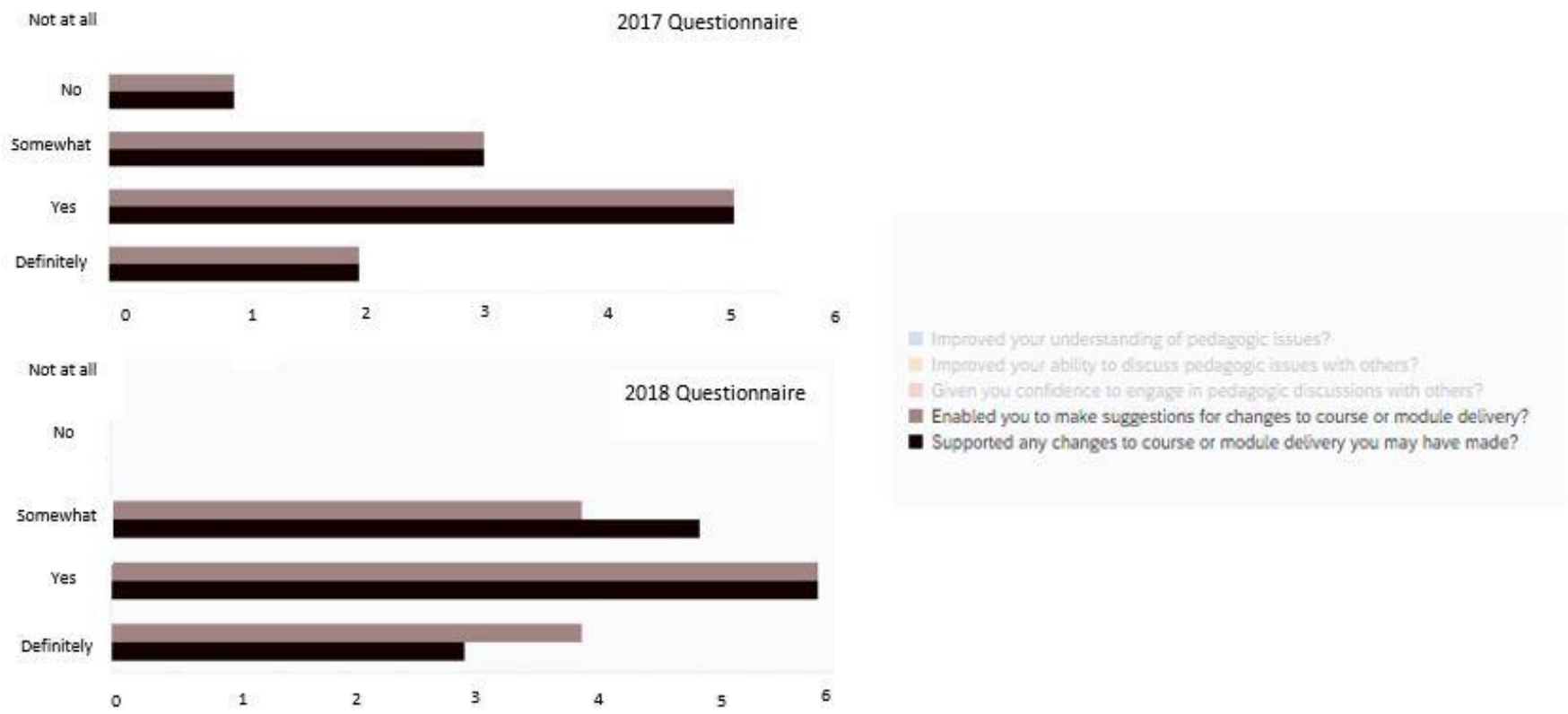


Figure 28 2017 and 2018 responses demonstrating increase in how enabled and supported PJC members felt to suggest or make changes

A participant suggested in open questions, as part of the questionnaire in 2018, that *"It has made me aware of pedagogies that, whilst I probably already practised them, I am now able to articulate them in a way that is more accepted in the pedagogical community."* This improvement in understanding and confidence after engagement with literature aligns with the findings of (Thurlings, Evers and Vermeulen, 2015; Horn, Kane and Garner, 2018; Bickerstaff *et al.*, 2020).

Participants also reported changes to their practice locally. When staff are aware that pedagogic engagement with literature alters their understanding and see it as a positive, they are willing to take the activity to their departments and use it in departments: "*Development of a pedagogy-based research cluster"* and that "*A local PJC and conference are planned".* This demonstrates a desire to increase engagement with literature outside of the PJC meetings or to recreate this practice. Many now saw themselves as able to help or mentor others after engaging with the PJC. When asked "Have you embarked on other activities either in your own department or more widely across the university as a result of engaging with the journal club?" 10 out of 15 in 2018 and 7 out of 11 in 2017 selected yes or that they had plans to do so. Questionnaire comments included *"I have gained the confidence to submit a project (now funded)"* and *"mentoring junior colleagues embarking on pedagogical research."*

5.3.1.6 Engagement with literature for creation

The questionnaires also directly asked about literature engagement in terms of participants' own creation and presentation; questionnaire 2017 reported that 10 participants (Figure 29) felt encouraged to engage with writing pedagogic literature in the future (PedR) with 27 responses of feeling encouraged to read and attend pedagogic conferences and present papers or workshops going forward. Questionnaire 2018 (Figure 29) shows the PJC encouraging reading, attending conferences and presenting papers or workshops, with 31 positive responses. There is less inclination to present posters and, when investigated further, the responder wrote in the open questions that they felt more confident to write longer pieces. Between questionnaire 1 and questionnaire 2, the activity that increased most was presenting papers at workshops or conferences. Participants did not do as much writing about pedagogy as they originally planned, time being a large limiting factor *"Lack of time is one of the most frequently mentioned issues that academics face*" (Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, 2019). Even when they are willing to take part in PD, academics often struggle to balance their workload and often simply lack time for PD (UCU, 2016).

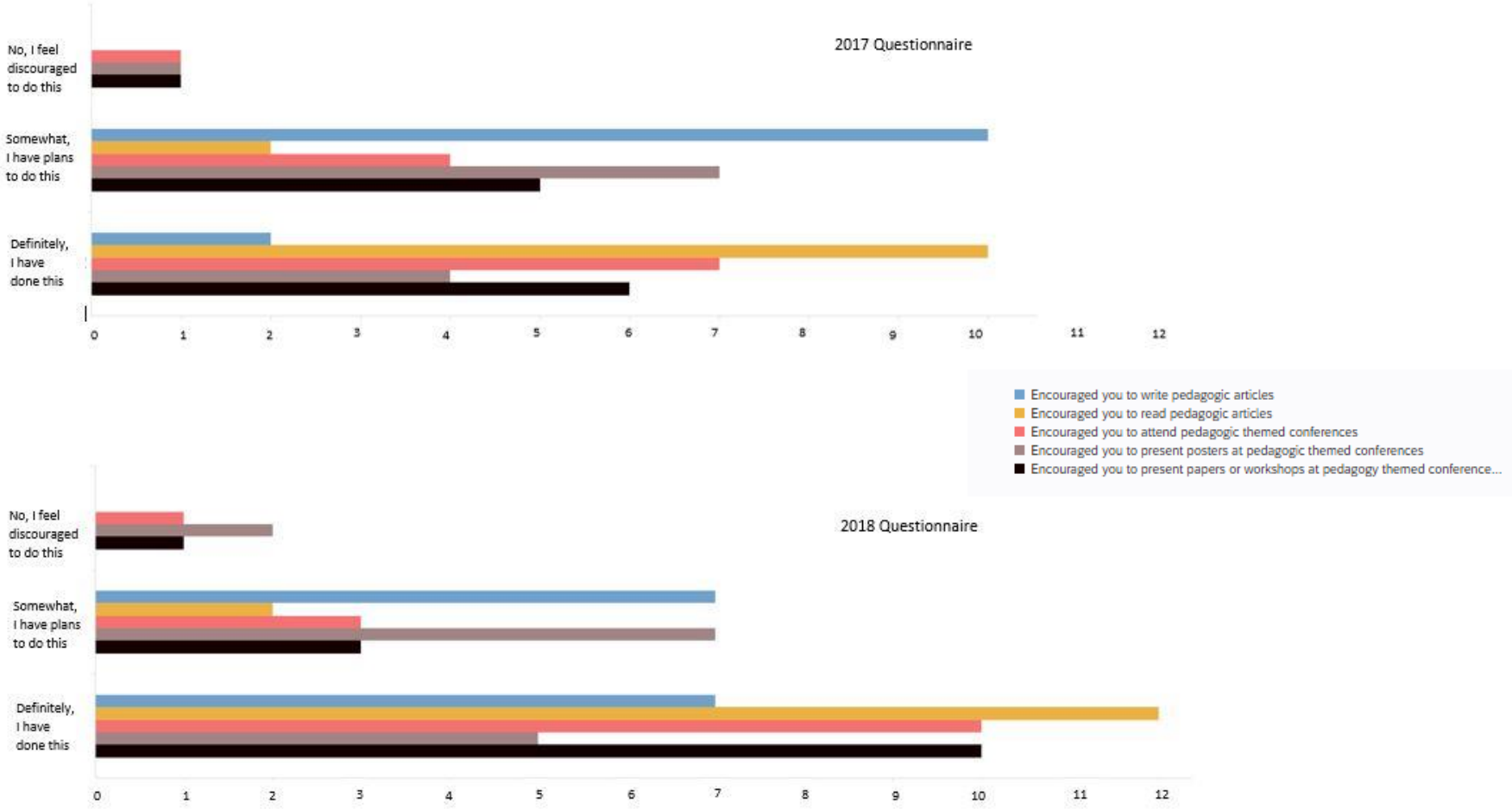


Figure 29 Engagement with pedagogic literature for creation 2017 and 2018

It is important to stress here that PJC activity did not focus on supporting staff to create research. It also did not look directly at student outcomes although [5.3.2.1] discusses changes to modules and course which can impact student outcomes. Both of these could be interesting areas of further work as it is of interest that as confidence and engagement with literature grew, and participant identity changed towards the expert rather than novice, so did their creation of pedagogic research.

5.3.2 What was the impact, if any, of the PJC on the wider community?

The second research question incorporates the following themes:

Does PJC activity affect:

i) modules and courses?

ii) interdisciplinary collaboration and networking?

iii) the perceived value of teaching-focussed activity?

5.2.2.1 Modules and courses

Participants were asked if attending the PJC had altered their module or course provision. Responses to this included: *"Development of a pedagogy-based research cluster",* that it *"Framed a significant piece of work in terms of pedagogical evidence and used to help argue for a major piece of work"* and *"Doing a huge project to revolutionise how we support teachers and students in making decisions about assessment practice.".*

Limited opportunity for developing changes to modules was expected in the first iteration as academic course structure is such that module change takes time. Fourteen responses were 'no or somewhat' when asked about suggesting or making changes to modules; in 2018 there were eighteen responses of 'yes or definitely'.

There is also a limit on the change that individual people can make to departments or modules without position or authority; *"when you get a critical mass of people that are interested in it that have a certain level of gravitas then that impacts the department, they can make those changes" (Interviewee P).* In some cases, the individual staff member without gravitas may not be enough and knowledge can become hoarded, which is why dissemination was used as fully as possible. Changes in approaches are more evident in the second questionnaire, with two

possible reasons for this: Firstly, participants now had the identity, role or gravitas to suggest, lead or support those changes. Secondly, from 2017 to 2018, as noted in the literature review there was institutionally more focus on developing teaching excellence due to the TEF.

Participants were, over time, able to point to significant changes that came about due to their engagement with the PJC, not just to their own teaching and learning activity but to that of their department, module or course. Being part of the PJC did give participants both confidence and knowledge and they felt able to contribute to department decision making. Use of pedagogic expertise also helps individuals to win grants by giving confidence to make application and informing their pedagogical approach to make those applications effective. *"I now run a blog after looking at blogging in the PJC and I've been part of a team who won a grant to change the way the department assess large scale exams.*" It must be noted that the PJC did not alter the number of grants available but that PJC participants linked their grant winning success to their engagement.

5.2.2.2 Interdisciplinary collaboration and networking

Participants frequently commented on the networking opportunities presented by the PJC. The terms "network" and "community" featuring prominently in the text mining of interviews as well as questionnaire results.

In coding the interviews, twenty-six positive references to community and or networking were identified. Responses from the first questionnaire about the effect the PJC had on PD included *"increased confidence to engage in pedagogic research/networking across university/more sophisticated consumption of pedagogic literature"* whilst Interviewee P suggested that *"By yourself, it's a bit easy to get just lost in the woods a bit"*. Interviewee G remarked that *"It's helpful when there are lots of other people of a similar mind-set to some extent, to help you make sense of that …even just hearing about what other people are doing for five minutes."*

From the 2017 Questionnaire, comments concerning networking included, *"It has helped me to engage with wider aspects of the teaching profession and notably enabled me to 'break out of my silo', having helped me join a significant network of like-minded colleagues".*

The data suggests a strong emphasis on the collaboration between individuals that was identifiable to participants as beneficial. Interviewee K suggested *"its success is about being*

able to exchange ideas, particularly, with people who are enthusiastic about different areas of teaching".

The dialogic nature of the PJC was widely commented on and consistently reported as a positive: *"it promotes discussion. Instantly you're getting a set of opinions, ideas that are outside your subject area and even your cognitive framework" (Interviewee F).*

Involvement with the PJC was reported to have been useful when understanding disciplinary differences: *"It has allowed me to become more critical in considering my practice and provided a broader context, both from a theoretical perspective, and from the perspective of practice in other disciplines"* and *"I valued the chance to discuss pedagogical issues with colleagues and the opportunity to hear from experts across the disciplines at the University. This chance to listen, share and discuss is very valuable*" (Interviewee H).

And data from questionnaires supports this: *"It has provided a stimulus to engage with pedagogic research and allowed me to engage with like-minded colleagues across the University"*. In addition, the PJC was also an enjoyable way to engage with literature and with colleagues; it allowed teaching-focussed staff to generate interpersonal knowledge. In academic communities this is as major factor in building motivation (Nistor *et al.*, 2015). Often the dialogue was enjoyable and the PJC provided a safe space for challenging discussions. In similarity to the findings of Kastens and Manduca (2017), participants mentioned that interaction with peers was empowering, energising, and motivating:

> Interviewee T: *"The PJC has been absolutely brilliant. For the first time at Warwick, I've been involved in something where people from lots of disciplines come together, and they argue over stuff. We develop deep shared understanding from which we can then develop change."* Kennedy (2016) suggests that PD should intellectually engage and in academia engagement often brings about lively debate, this dialogic focus participants saw as a key strength of the PJC.

5.2.2.3 Perceived value of teaching-focussed activity

Some members did report in the questionnaire a wider effect across the institution with one participant saying:

> *"Indirectly, as a direct result of PJC activity I have attended an HEA conference. As a result, a funded project has been initiated which aims to produce significant benefit to the assessment processes across the institution, let alone my department."*

This is an example of how this participant sees their effect on the institution being heightened by attending the PJC.

There is obviously still a way to go, teaching and pedagogical research is less well thought of institutionally, but participants are positive about the change coming and PD opportunities such as the PJC are contributing to this: Interviewee T *"…it is revolutionary to start hearing people talking about constructive alignment and authentic assessment, and all these sort of stuff that's come out of the literature and out of the research from elsewhere… so smart, intelligent stuff is happening in [the PJC]".*

How initiatives like the PJC might impact upon the value of teaching-focussed activity and evidence-informed practice is also of interest:

> *"I think the kind of turning point will come when it will genuinely not matter whether you are on the research or teaching only path. Everyone will have the same rights and the same privileges and same influence, which I don't think you do get at the moment, because if you bring in millions in research money, and you get the REF rating that is required, you I think still rule the place, and there is very little that you will not get if you ask for it, which I don't think is the case for teaching staff at the moment."* and *"I think it's fair to say that work is still primarily research led, although things are obviously changing. We've had changes in the titles and promotion criteria. But it is a first step, and it will take time to bed down."* (Interviewee Y)

It is notable that the interviewee considered time the only requirement for teaching and research to reach parity of esteem. This concurs with some thoughts about the transition of identity over time (Farnsworth et al., 2016). However, a shared repertoire in any establishment cannot be rushed (Cousin and Deepwell, 2005) and what is vital to this parity is the value which teaching is perceived to have in the institution:

> *…as long as research performance is valued more highly than teaching quality, academics are unlikely to commit more of their time for teaching improvement compared to research tasks."*(Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, 2019, p. 41)

Action by those who consider education their discipline (Wyse, 2020), and pressure from bodies such as the HEA (Fung and Gordon, 2016; Pritchard and Mcgowan, 2016) to increase the value of teaching-focussed activity in order to drive this parity, is welcomed.

Interviewees noted how teaching was of lesser importance in the institution and other similar institutions.

> Interviewee H: *"The frustrating thing is that, with all of the focus of a lot of institutions on the research output, teaching had, tangibly, got left behind in that".* They went on to say that the PJC was "*redressing that balance by making our teaching practice better by focusing attention on developing pedagogical approaches and so on"*.

Developing pedagogical approaches based in literature, is effective in increasing teaching quality (Jacob *et al.*, 2019). Often leadership and expertise are required to engender this. This then, alludes to the PJC acting as the required boundary spanner, between PedD and PedR where knowledge activity and people can cross (Townsend and Pan, 2019) but also ensuring that this is shared. For this sharing across the institution to occur, and to minimise the creation of internal boundaries which limit the spread of the new knowledge (Bugn*on et al*., 2010), an expert is needed in the community who can help to bridge the theory-practice gap, acting as a boundary spanner. This person would have knowledge of the content but also have a position in the institution to share widely, the findings of the group.

Universities could capitalise on the expertise they have within (Deenadayalan *et al.*, 2008; Van Waes *et al.*, 2018), or externally (Mavri, Ioannou and Loizides, 2021), by looking for educational research experts to help bridge the gap. Institutions giving resource to the dissemination of outcomes of the HECoP informed by literature, could also serve to raise the level of awareness of PedEL and its perceived value bringing researchers and teachers closer together in terms of parity of esteem. Much of the problem, Kemmis says, is *"not so much in closing the 'gap' between theory and practice, but in closing the gap between roles of theorists and practitioners"* (Kemmis, 2009, p. 468).

5.3.3 Limitations of the PJC

Literature concerning CoPs sometimes suggest that having knowledge that is not known by the wider organisation actually creates silos, or communities, which others don't feel able to engage with (Blankenship and Ruona, 2007; Vescio, Ross and Adams, 2008). In fact, in the first questionnaire, a participant suggested that "*We just need to make this club much bigger, more inclusive, across the whole university. Stop limiting membership, it is far too important for that."*

One participant also suggested that:

> *"there is a danger that it creates this social structure very effectively, but then people on the outside of that social structure feel excluded from it and they just look in, 'I'm*

not interested in that, because I'm not part of that". Interviewee T remarked *"I think there's some work left to be done on publicising that we're here to the rest of the university and people who are outside it. I'm still finding people go, what's this PJC then?"*

This aligns with research where the criticisms of some communities exist when dissemination does not take place as widely as necessary, especially in large organisations (DuFour, 2009).

Following the first questionnaire, the PJC digests were made more widely available and PJC activity was publicised at the institution's education conference via poster [appendix 4]. Membership was opened to all staff across the university in 2017/18 however, numbers did not significantly increase, suggesting that an open membership could ensure all feel engaged with the opportunity but may not necessarily constitute a bigger, less manageable group. Communication of the findings of the group was seen, from literature, to mitigate for the hoarding of knowledge and so new knowledge created in the PJC was shared across the institution via digests, making the PJC more visible.

To avoid cherry picking of data and researcher over involvement, a critique levelled at much AR, the questionnaire asked participants for detrimental effects of the PJC on PD and promotion. In questionnaire 1, no participants reported a detrimental effect and in questionnaire 2, one of 15 participants remarked that "… it made me miss pedagogical research work I used to do! It did however, help me reconnect with some pedagogical issues that used to be more fresh in my mind. A prompt for a refresher!"[sic]. Whilst this may not be a detrimental effect to their PD and promotion, as requested by the question, the fact that the participant cited a lack of opportunity to engage with literature is of interest.

The suggestion here is that their role removed them from engaging with literature in a way that they regretted or missed, leading to dissatisfaction after engaging with the PJC. There is therefore, a risk for institutions in supporting PedEL whilst failing to offer resource, space or opportunity for staff to develop further or engage with literature in role (Cotton, Miller and Kneale, 2018). This risk may be greater for teaching-focussed staff, or those on casual contracts, who become aware of PD opportunities such as the PJC but are not given time nor opportunity to engage with them (Hitch, Mahoney and Macfarlane, 2018; Hattam and Weiler, 2021). Subsequently, there is a need to include and foster communities open to all staff (Edwards, Smith and Webb, 2012; Nicholls, 2014; Pedersen and Warr Pedersen, 2017) including academic development staff, as well as part-time and sessional staff, where PedEL is in specifically part of contracted activity making it visible (Webb and Tierney, 2020) and part of a

"definitional framework that [HEIs] can adapt to their context and practices"(Pritchard and Mcgowan, 2016, p. 20) to counteract this risk.

There was also an awareness from participants to the plight of sessional teaching staff whose opportunity to engage with the journal club or other supported PedEL was limited. There were no casually contracted staff in this action research.

> *"…jobbing teaching fellows, who are incredibly busy, teaching 15/16-hour weeks, so haven't got the chance to go away and do some reading outside of their disciplinary area but are really jolly good in it and would still get something, I think, from the PJC.".*

Despite the availability of the journal club, those closest to students and more engaged with teaching, were less involved with it, citing time as a barrier. This is a similar finding to Cranfield and Gurteen (2020) who found that competing priorities makes an impact on staff ability to take up informal opportunities. Time availability for PD, for all staff, is not only an issue but possibly a significant barrier to those part-time staff with greater proportional teaching responsibility, whether casual or permanent (Cotton *et al.*, 2014, 2018; Hitch, Mahoney and Macfarlane, 2018; Tierney, 2020; Hattam and Weiler, 2021). Whilst institutions continue to limit the opportunity for teaching staff to engage with PedEL, by filling timetables with student facing activity and administration duties, there may always be issues with resource.

However, if we can use the TEF as a driver of excellence, it becomes a tactical opportunity (Charles, 2018; Matthews and Dobbins, 2021) to demand that institutions invest in staff PD and provide students with the excellent teaching that they require. Investment in teaching staff and their career development will increase professional capital, encourage motivation to engage in PD, and subsequently, improve outcomes for students.

5.3.4 Limitations of the data

The size of the PJC was 16 and 20 people each year, which is a very small percentage of the teaching-focussed staff in this HEI. It is then, a small data set. Questionnaire completion was 100% (16/16 reduced to 12/16 75% of participants giving full responses) in iteration 1 and 80% (16/20 reduced to 15/20 75% of participants giving full responses) in iteration 2. The opportunity to opt out of questionnaires was given when participants self-identified as not having attended many meetings. This reduced opportunity for data inclusion may have affected validity however, care will still be taken not to over claim. The interview of seven participants

from a possible 20 members in 2018 is significant and this, coupled with the deviant sampling conducted [4.5.5], suggests that interview data capture was also internally and externally valid.

As discussed in [4.3.3], Lincoln and Guba (1985) reconceptualised external validation as *transferability*. Shifting the responsibility for validation away from the action researcher themselves and onto the users of its created knowledge in others' situations and contexts. In order to make external validation possible, action researchers are required to give sufficient 'thick' descriptions to their methodology so that other users are able to understand and integrate it in their own situations or enquiries. The term thick description was first used by (Ryle, 1949), and later by the ethnographer (Geertz, 1973), and refers to the researcher putting findings into context and explaining more explicitly the patterns and relationships discovered (Holloway, 1997) chapters 5 and 6 aim to do this here.

Whilst I am cognisant of critique that may be levelled at the findings reported here, the fact that the data comes from a small set of participants, the data collected from those participants was thick. How transferable the data is, is dependent on the diversity of sampling, thickness of the descriptions of the context and the degree of abstraction of the concepts in the data analysis. Despite being a small data set, the data collected was externally and internally valid, was objective and an awareness of context is presented concurrently. The claims to knowledge relate to the practice and policies of the participants generated from their own social situations, which is what is required by action research (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988). As such I am confident in the data and claims made hereafter.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Chapter outline

The impact of the PJC varied for each member, but all those who engaged in the research data capture reported some benefits to their identity or promotion as well as an improved engagement with literature. The majority of participants improved their confidence and this, in turn, affected modules, departments and, as reported by participants, had impact on students; however, student outcome hasn't been expressly captured in this research.

This section will provide a summary of the evidence pertaining to the two research sub-questions and four main themes that emerged acting in part as summary to chapter 5. The emergent themes were: engaging with literature: its effect on practice, promotion and identity; wider communities, reputation and professional capital and the PJC for professional development. Additionally, the creation of an HECoP, that occurred throughout the action, is reported on fully, linking the initial drive to create a community to the resulting effective community that was created and how it did not align exactly with either a PLC or a CoP, providing a new contribution to scholarly knowledge. A chapter summary is again suspended as chapter 7 serves this purpose.

6.2 Engaging with literature; its effect on practice, promotion and identity

Evidence from multiple studies demonstrate that use of research to inform teaching raises standards (Bevan, 2006; Bell *et al.*, 2010; Vithal, 2018; Webb and Tierney, 2020). A recent study from Monash University (Rickinson *et al.*, 2021) highlights the issue that lack of confidence of teaching staff to use research to inform teaching often holds back innovation and development of teaching practice. The PJC raised the confidence of its members through trans-personal shared thinking (Pyrko, Dörfler and Eden, 2017) and they began to identify, as part of a group of intrinsically motivated people, who could drive the learning and teaching of the establishment forwards. They became recognised by their peers and began to make evidence-informed changes to practice.

A third of participants reported using the PJC as evidence for promotion or HEA fellowship applications or NTF awards. As these awards are measured by HEIs as part of their TEF submissions, this is of interest to those wishing to facilitate a PJC in order to support staff to

achieve these awards. There are no direct questions in the questionnaire about whether their application for FHEA or SFHEA, or indeed academic promotion, were actually successful, just that staff had felt able to apply and that job roles changed from 2017-2018. The PJC is not the only opportunity that staff had access to in order to generate evidence for their portfolios, HEA fellowships and promotion cases and so care must be taken not to over claim. However, PJC activity was not available before and was developed by a need from the staff body and continues to date; this adds to data which suggests that staff, searching for promotion, found the PJC beneficial activity to be involved in when considering promotion.

As reported in chapter 5, there are some concerns when staff or institutions are focussed on gaining qualifications rather than investing in PD. It would seem that engagement from staff is difficult to obtain in current times where workload pressures are high and resources are low (Matthews and Dobbins, 2021, p. 55). There is a possibility then, that my passion and expertise in this research may have been capitalised upon by the institution with minimal resource, or reward, as I was a part-time member of staff in a teaching only role. The PJC however, is now part of the academic development centre's offering, open to all university staff, which demonstrates the academic centre's commitment to it as a long-term transformative PD activity. In other institutions though, PJC leaders may wish to actively guard against exploitation as an issue. It could be argued that there is institutional appetite for the PDs that the PJC provided with institutional interest in staff gaining fellowships with as limited resource allocation as possible.

The historic criticism of HEFCE (Trowler, Ashwin and Saunders, 2014) as being too focussed on reward and recognition, without putting in place long-term development opportunities, is of interest here. It could be said that there are still some remnants of this drive for recognition, especially HEA fellowship, rather than embedding PD opportunities that are transformative (Kennedy, 2016). One could also suggest that staff want the fellowship more than they want to engage in transformational PD; however, experts tell us that reacting to the different needs of academics is one of the most effective tools to increase academics' motivation to participate in PD (Cordingley, 2015; Postareff and Nevgi, 2015; Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, 2019). Harland and Wald, 2018 and Chadha (2020) suggest that teaching can become perfunctory and stale if not attached to reward and recognition, which is often the case in research-intensive HEIs especially(Harland and Wald, 2018; Chadha, 2020). The combination of TEF and HEA

fellowships may, therefore, provide extrinsic motivation through reward and recognition for the institution and for staff members to develop teaching and learning.

Reward and recognition are legitimate drivers in HEIs (Locke et al., 2016). Griggs and Cooke (2015) suggest that engagement with pursuing accreditation actually opens up reflection and discussion around pedagogy. The accreditation then, is less an indicator of excellence (Savage, 2019) but an indicator of the engagement by the practitioner in activity that leads to development. PD of teaching staff linked to literature brings about excellent teaching. McLaughlin, Black-Hawkins and McIntyre (2004) reported that teachers who engage with research have better understanding of their practice and ways to improve it. Engagement with literature has been shown to contribute to teachers selecting new approaches based on the evidence of what is effective (Thurlings and den Brok, 2017; Horn *et al.*, 2018).

Fung and Gordon (2016) suggest that it is becoming common practice across the sector for HEIs to expect a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (or equivalent) and/or an Associate or full Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy as part of a probationary requirement, with many supporting junior staff to meet these criteria. In 2021 many job vacancies requested fellowship, or a commitment to achieve fellowship, for all new staff. Adding PedEL to the HEA fellowship route could be an excellent way to increase the PedEL of teaching staff in HEIs.

Offering a specific training course or requiring a specific qualification may not be the solution to a general lack of literature engagement in the teaching staff of HEIs. There needs to be an interweaving of engagement with literature into everyday activity, aligned with the UKPSF for PD that leads to fellowship status awards. There should then be an expectation that teaching-focussed staff have the opportunity to engage in regular engagement with literature for PD. Resource allocation should provide opportunity, time and funding for PedEL activity for all teaching staff and it is essential that HEIs have multiple PD offerings (Jacob *et al.*, 2019) available.

Comments that the PedEL activity of the PJC led to recognition were abundant in the data and particularly, that the PJC made their pedagogic focussed literature engagement more visible and was something that the participants could point to when aiming for reward or recognition. There are only three benchmarks for engagement currently in the UKPSF 2011 publication and it might be that the time is right for a review of the framework in light of the increased demand on teaching staff to be evidence informed. Indeed, a recent statement of intent from AdvanceHE alludes to such a review, aiming to *"facilitate the revision of the Professional*

Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE" (Marston and Johns, 2021, p. 8).

Identity and self-efficacy have been proven to improve when staff are engaged in a CoP ((Matherson, 2012; Cox, 2013; Griggs and Cooke, 2015; Baker and Beames, 2016; Osman and Hornsby, 2016; Tinnell *et al.*, 2019; Tierney *et al.*, 2020). This action research adds to the body of evidence concerning teaching staff being engaged in communities of practice contributing significantly to the currently scarce amount of research in HEIs in this area (Cherrington *et al.*, 2018).

Only one comment was received that alludes to a negative effect of the PJC on job satisfaction: that promoting engagement with literature could bring about dissatisfaction for those staff who don't have time or resource allocated to them for this activity. The majority of participants reported the activity of the PJC as a rewarding PD activity. However, there is an awareness that motivation is a key driver (Cordingley, 2015; Postareff and Nevgi, 2015; Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, 2019) and so care must be taken not to demotivate staff by highlighting a lack of opportunity to engage in PedEL.

General journal club research suggests that shared pedagogic training is required so that the journal club has a focus and effectively serves to link theory and practice (Feldman, Divoll and Rogan-Klyve, 2013; Tallman and Feldman, 2016). In HEIs, participants are often methodologically aware, although not always in education. Having a pedagogic expert engaged with the group helped to overcome the language barriers and methodological differences staff experienced. This research then, adds to the calls for expertise to be included in a journal club. Very quickly the participants became knowledgeable in a way which engendered positive outcomes and altered identity. Although not reported on here, there are opportunities in HE to engage external educational research experts who consider education to be their discipline or, indeed, practice-based experts from other institutions such as schools. Many HEIs already have these links to expertise and thus, a cross-organisational (Deenadayalan *et al.*, 2008; Van Waes *et al.*, 2018; Mavri, Ioannou and Loizides, 2021) way of working could be harnessed effectively in an HECoP.

Box and whisker plots, from the collected data, demonstrate a move away from a novice identity in terms of effective pedagogic literature consumption, with qualitative data also supporting participant's engagement with other staff as mentors and leaders in terms of pedagogic understanding. This demonstrates a positive shift in their identity stemming from their increased confidence.

In PJC meeting notes, comments such as *"I used to think that educational research just used these words to make it difficult for anyone else to understand"* pointed to the less-than-revered position of educational research held by some participants initially. It also highlighted the difficulties when becoming engaged with educational research and the possible barriers due to accessing the language. Luehmann (2007) discusses CoPs as *"safe space[s]"(ibid* p. 828) where teachers discover, construct, and try new identities (Polizzi *et al.*, 2021). This was evident in PJC meetings where participants felt comfortable to question the language and construct understanding. Simmons et al, (2013) discuss identity of the practitioner engaged in the scholarship of teaching in learning with reference to the work of Meyer and Land (Meyer and Land, 2005) suggesting that there is a liminal space which staff in HEIs find themselves. They struggle to identify as an educator, preferring to be an expert in their discipline which Simmons *et al. (2013)* suggest comes from the issues with the language of education pedagogy and educational research.

Wenger suggests that people construct and negotiate identities in order to become members of particular communities (Wenger, 1998b) and that learning is an identity process. The PJC in this instance helped to engender this identity transformation.

One participant of the PJC transitioned to the teaching-focussed track after spending some time without promotion on the research track; they citied engagement with the PJC in their professorial promotion application stating it developed their understanding of literature. This helped them to become confident in reporting the transformational approach to their teaching and comfortable with the identity of being a teaching-focussed evidence-informed member of the HEI. Inamorato dos Santos *et al.* (2019) state that across the EU, PD practices are perceived to be a major investment that academics can make for their own development to build their value in their sector. This particular participant accepted the change in their own identity to a teaching-focussed colleague with many others welcoming the opportunity to 'be seen' in this way. The identity of being a member of staff pedagogically engaged with literature now had value rather than being something lesser than the researcher that they once were. They were now seen by themselves, and others, as of equal, if not greater, value to the institution because of how they could articulate and identify their PedEL engagement.

6.3 Wider communities, reputation and professional capital

The PJC played a role in supporting staff to contribute to discussions and choices of curriculum design and pedagogic approaches within their departments. Enabling staff to engage with these discussions, through increasing their understanding, was a reported success of the group, similar to that of others (Bell *et al.*, 2010; MacKenzie *et al.*, 2010; Tam, 2015; Fung and Gordon, 2016). Engaging with the language of pedagogic research allowed participants to share experiences, share in a process of inquiry and benefit from learning with and from each other (Brücknerová and Novotný, 2017; Evans, 2019).

The fostering of links between the PJC and the institution, as well as making public the new knowledge being created, was part of the iteration development and essential to a functioning HECoP. The dissemination to improve the perceived value of evidence-informed practice, aligns with Fung and Gordon's (2016, p. 8) recommendation that *"research-intensive institutions articulate the value of the contribution made by education- focussed scholarship to the institution's evidence-base for developing practice."*

A successful HECoP allows pedagogically informed staff to make, or support changes, to practice in their departments and be seen as making a contribution. Not all HEI staff need to be part of an HECoP for it to function effectively as long as the communication of new knowledge is supported across the institution. Interviewee F suggested that being part of a community engaged in PedEL actually re-energised their own practice which they were then able to direct into developments within their department. This aligns with the work of others that participants saw as valuable: the opportunity for productive networking and interaction with their colleagues (Kastens and Manduca, 2017; Manduca *et al.*, 2017).

Networks of teachers and instructors in primary, secondary and higher education have been shown to play an important role in PD (Coburn *et al.*, 2012; Fox and Wilson, 2015; Van Waes, Van den Bossche, Moolenaar, Stes, *et al.*, 2015;Townsend and Pan, 2019), as has dialogue (Borko *et al.*, 2010; Hung and Yeh, 2013; Derri.*et al.*, 2015) and EIGL (Brücknerová and Novotný, 2017) transpersonal, thinking together (Pyrko, Dörfler and Eden, 2017). The PJC acted as a network and promoted collaboration and exchange of ideas and information about teaching. It also acted as a community that, with the support of WIHEA, fitted into a micro, meso, macro structure of support for PD as suggested by Williams *et al.* (2013) and Verwoord and Poole (2016).

The dialogue between individuals, from different departments and disciplines, gave each member an alternate viewpoint on pedagogic issues that were seen as the norm in their department. This aligns with the work of Teräs who suggested that *'promoting critical awareness of one's and other's assumptions [can] lead to a change in attitudes'* (Teräs, 2016, p. 261). Loucks-Horsley *et al*., (2010, p. 57) also suggested that PD for teaching staff is effective when it allows staff *"to monitor their own ideas and thought processes, compare and contrast them with others, and provide reasons why they accept one point of view over another"*.

The interdisciplinary nature of the PJC helped to drive change of attitude and identity as well as provide evidence which supported the way in which curriculums and modules were designed by participants in their own departments. Similarly to (Luguetti *et al.*, 2019), the PJC influenced staff members beliefs about teaching and their sense of themselves as professionals. However, it was not possible from this data to ascertain a wider increase in reputation of teaching across the HEI.

The benefit of providing opportunities for expanding the networks available to teaching staff in HEIs, by engaging with colleagues in different roles and from different departments, aligns with benefits seen by other researchers who reflect on the importance of communities of practice in shaping PD (Nixon and Brown, 2013; Vangrieken *et al.*, 2017; Turner *et al.*, 2020) and fostering positive teacher identity (Polizzi *et al.*, 2021). Webber (2016) also argues that communities of practice can be an invaluable way of breaking down organisational silos and this was seen, and reported on, by participants across the PJC spectrum of activity and was discussed openly by participants as a central, positive feature for many. The PJC was cross-organisational, interest-led and had a bottom-up approach which is supported in the literature as a way of disrupting the organisational silos that can exist in HEIs (Norton, 2019; O'Siochru *et al.*, 2020).

They were also fun and collegiate, and participants were keen to attend and maintain their involvement with the community, aligning with Cranfield and Gurteen (2020) who suggest that communities such as these form positive, informal spaces for sharing teaching experiences with the aim to add value.

When considering if the reputation of teaching had been improved by the PJC activity across the institution, it was seen that participants sometimes felt that their new knowledge was not visible. It is important therefore, that PJCs, after opening this avenue of exploration for staff, communicate the new knowledge and understanding created in the community to the wider university (Stark and Smith, 2016; Wenke *et al.*, 2019) so that developments can be capitalised on. Institutional leaders are aware of the impact the activity has had on staff, and their

practice, and resource is made available for PedEL activity to continue. There is a need to support developing staff and support the changing identities of teaching colleagues as they engage with PedEL which is why the support of leadership is essential when creating HECoPs and PJCs (Appleby and Pikington, 2014; O'Siochru *et al.*, 2020).

Following the interviews in 2018, which suggested a need for further dissemination, I attempted to engage the wider community with the work of the PJC through the use of the education executive case study forum and presented initial findings of the PJC research to senior staff at the institution. Wenke *et al.* (2019) suggest that recognition from senior staff is fundamental for the success of journal clubs in terms of participation and motivation. Many participants reported that their involvement with the PJC had been noted as a positive feature of their work which, in turn, led many to apply for reward and recognition of their PedEL activity more formally.

6.4 The PJC for professional development

The journal club that was created acted as an HECoP, an HEI specific CoP with its own set of defining characteristics (see 7.1) and, as such, was able to provide the support required for effective PD in a community. We need however, to be conscious that previous work, suggesting that collaboration is essential for PD, has been questioned. Issues with methodology highlighted by some (Kennedy, 2016; Sims and Fletcher-Wood, 2019, 2020; Sims *et al.*, 2021) create doubt over the meta-analysis findings of Cordingley (2015) specifically. Despite this, there have been previous indications that teaching staff benefit from PD that uses a community as a framework (Pedder and Opfer, 2011; Coe *et al.*, 2014; Dickson, Hughes and Stephens, 2016; Teräs, 2016; Gore *et al.*, 2017; Prenger, Poortman and Handelzalts, 2019).

(Loucks-Horsley *et al.*, 2010) argued that PD programmes ought to give teachers the time to interact with one another and with ideas. Tallman et al (2016 p.344) found that a journal club provided opportunity for teachers to engage with "*educational theory: the language, the methods, the context, and analysis that are used to generate theory*" and this was also true of this research. Participants responded to questionnaires and interviews suggesting that the activity of the PJC doesn't just motivate staff involved in the PJC to make use of the new knowledge, but also sets up motivation to continually engage with the journal club.

Results from this action research in chapter 5 also concur with evidence from (Price and Felix, 2008; Newswander and Borrego, 2009; Tallman and Feldman, 2016) who suggest that effective

PD takes into account practitioners' prior knowledge, provides situations for the construction of new knowledge and incorporates experiences of the group.

> *"New ideas about teaching and possible ways to implement changes came not just from reading the studies, but because the teachers were all engaging in discussion which prompted reflection upon a theory's value to their own teaching situation*" (Tallman and Feldman, 2016)

This PD instilled new insight around literature engaged with in a pedagogic way and participants referred to the new knowledge they had gained by being part of the PJC. The research conducted here also aligns with findings from (Goodyear and Casey, 2015; Oliver *et al.*, 2018; Luguetti *et al.*, 2019) which suggest that CoPs improve teachers' pedagogy. Although no direct measurement of student outcomes was made, improvements were reported by staff after they made changes to their own, and departmental, practices. Although the goal of this PD was not to improve student outcome, this was seen as a by-product of the changes to practice. There may be an opportunity to conduct further work which includes monitoring of outcomes for students as an indicator of successful PD for HEI teaching staff.

6.5 PLC nor CoP: creation of an HECoP

When previously discussing what constitutes a PLC and a CoP, there is an awareness that these terms are often used interchangeably in literature despite them having distinct conceptual developments. Chindgren and Wiswell (2006, p. 1) pointed out that, "both scholars and practitioners have used different labels to describe the same phenomena…and refer to different typologies" (pg. 1). There is also a lack of clarity as to how these concepts are operationalised (Cox, 2005; Chun and Williams, 2020; Tierney, 2020; Turner et al., 2020; Mavri, Ioannou and Loizides, 2021) with many educational research papers using these terms without expressly defining them; an example of this being Polizzi et al. (2021, p. 15) who openly admit that their study is "limited by the nature of the analytical approach used for understanding a CoP"

Much research that claims to be about CoPs in HEIs makes little attempt to engage with the theory. Baggett, Dunn and Sondel (2020, p. 161) who write that "…we find value in the theorizing around communities of practice as a way to capture what our collaborative work looked like" include just three paragraphs of writing dedicated to the CoP. Christie (2016) refers

to FLCs in her work; FLC is an American term for a faculty learning community "a special type of Community of Practice (CoP) in higher education." (Cox, 2013 p. 18).

Christie conducted a literature review in her work and reported that the:

> *"Studies reviewed failed to provide a rationale for their initiation approach, and none of them examined the impact of the initiation strategy on faculty recruitment and participation, or on the outcomes of the FLC. Thus, it is difficult to draw any evidence-based conclusions about the most effective approach for initiating a FLC."* (Christie, 2016, p. 15)

There is debate then about what higher education CoPs are and what they mean (McDonald, Star, *et al.*, 2012). Some work already exists around reimagining the CoP for use in higher education in Australia, specifically Nagy and Burch (2009). They discuss CoP-iAs as an answer to how we could increase knowledge building capacities in corporate universities. However, they focus predominantly on the differences between HEIs and commercial settings. Their work has been minimally cited and this may be because there is a lack of clear guidance about how to create these CoP-iAs.

McDonald, Nagy, *et al.* (2012) offer a selection of varying features of CoPs that exist in HEIs; however, many are quite far removed from a CoP as put forward by Wenger and others. McDonald et al.'s work predominantly focusses on developing CoP leadership resources and was funded by the Australian government. It includes, as authors, Nagy, Burch and Cox: all leading academics in the field. A more recent piece of work by Cox and McDonald (2017) compares the CoPs which they created in American and Australian settings, FLCs and USQs respectively. This work is of value but does not address the specific requirements for a UK HEI and stops short of suggesting an outline of the required characteristics of a higher education-based CoP that could serve all institutions well.

There is also an issue in the literature, for both PLCs and CoPs, of limited analysis of the specific ways members engage in the knowledge development cycle (Blankenship and Ruona, 2007). There is an understanding that community and shared practice are required, and in some cases, exists in successful groups. However, exactly what this looks like and how knowledge sharing actually occurs within these communities is ambiguous.

In the literature, PLCs require the whole staff body to be engaged and be led by the leadership of the organisation making them an un-useful framework for HE. Generally speaking, COPs have less external leadership than PLCs and the community created is often smaller than the

organisation. Community, within CoP literature, refers to a collection of individuals working together for a common purpose within the organisation, bound together often through "mutual engagement, sharing of repertoires, and negotiation of the joint enterprise" (Iverson, 2011, p. 43). PLCs are focussed on leadership and culture whereas CoPs highlight the social aspect of the learning and the trans-personal process of thinking together, which is necessary for knowledge creation (Pyrko, Dörfler and Eden, 2017).

It could be argued that elements of PLCs and some of CoPs could combine to produce a more effective framework for communities in HEIs; indeed, (Blankenship and Ruona, 2007) suggested that work needs to be done to:

> *"construct a more complete framework for professional learning communities that acknowledges and supports both the formal and informal learning that takes place at the individual, group, and organization level" (ibid p7).*

There have been calls for a new CoP that supports professional learning, as well as calls for one more appropriate for staff in HEIs (Amin and Roberts, 2008; Nagy and Burch, 2009; Iaquinto, Ison and Faggian, 2011). This research aims to provide a framework for this new community; first termed here as an HECoP, reported on in [7.2].

Chapter 7: Contribution to knowledge

7.1 Chapter outline

"It is the responsibility of the action researchers' professional peers from the same cultural milieu to judge whether the desired outcome is achieved" (Briggs and Coleman, 2007, p. 162). The legacy of effective action research is an alteration in practice. The staff who participated in the action altered their practice, and the opportunity now exists for all staff to join a PJC to develop their PedEL. The pragmatic outcome of the action research project is that the PJC existed as an established community of engaged, pedagogically informed colleagues who transformed their own, and the institution's, learning and teaching. This has occurred over time and through multiple iterations. The robustness of action research is influenced by the number of iterative cycles which it goes through. The structure of this research was such that numerous iterations were possible, and numerous 'turns' of the action research wheel occurred.

This chapter then, reports on the establishment of a PJC undertaking PedEL, which acted as an HECoP. This section of the thesis includes a report on my unique contributions to knowledge for doctoral award and also detailed information to enable other HEIs to create, imbed, and develop a PJC conducting PedEL in their own contexts. Detail, too, is provided to encourage the establishment of HECoPs as effective UK HEI-specific communities of practice. Defining the characteristics of an HECoP may also contribute to the cumulative theoretical knowledge surrounding situated learning. I offer a more heterogeneous lexicon, as called for by (Amin and Roberts, 2008).

HEIs and teaching academics, across the globe, are interested in building teacher capacity and excellence in order to support increased student achievement. This thesis explains how teachers and policy makers in HEIs can use PJCs for informal PD and also makes a contribution to action research methodological awareness in educational research, nationally and internationally, by detailing how each contribution is linked to action research concepts and literature.

The thesis makes three specific contributions to knowledge by offering:

1. A PJC that demonstrates how dialogic professional development in an HECoP can bridge the theory-practice gap for HEI teaching-focussed staff, improve confidence, change identity and bring reward and recognition.
2. A new awareness of PedEL as an area of activity and, its position as a middle ground between PedR and PedD. PedEL, acts as a bridge between research and practice, creating the definitive framework, requested by Pritchard and Mcgowan (2016), to replace the much contested and ill-defined term 'Scholarship of Teaching and Learning' (SoTL).
3. A new type of learning community, cognisant of the nature of UK HEIs, and its differences compared to, on the one hand, schools that traditionally employ PLCs and, on the other, commercial workplaces that use CoPs. These communities are termed a Higher Education Community of Practice (HECoP).

Carr and Kemmis (1986 p.165) suggest that action research generates new knowledge by "...firstly, the improvement of a practice of some kind; secondly, the improvement of the understanding of a practice by its practitioners; and thirdly, the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place." These three contributions to knowledge therefore, suggest a significance of the work for the participants, for others interested in SoTL and PD, and for a wider community of researchers engaged with both study of, and activity of, communities of practice in HEIs.

7.2 PJC: Pedagogic Journal Club

Communities that focus on dialogue and implicit inter-generational learning can create new knowledge or develop a new understanding. With increasing focus on the TEF, and use of the UKPSF dimensions for recognition and reward, HEIs need to ensure that teaching-focussed staff, at all levels of seniority, have effective, embedded, dialogic PD which allows for informal learning through effective PedEL which can transform practice (Buchholz *et al.*, 2019). As Lewin, the father of action research, reminds us "Research which produces nothing but books will not suffice" (Lewin, 1946 p.35). Reported on here are the claims to knowledge linked to the PJC itself. I cannot claim the PJC I set up was distinctive; it followed the suggestions in Deenadayalan et al. (2008) and I also adopted many of the features of effective journal clubs laid out in (McLeod et al., 2010; Johnson, 2016) [3.3.1]. Where this work adds new knowledge to the sector is in its use of journal clubs as a PD activity, to span the research practice gap for

teaching-focussed staff and to support evidence-informed practice in terms of policy at the university and the practice of the participants.

My research suggests that setting up a journal club to provide supported opportunity for teaching-focussed staff to engage with literature adds value to the PD offering of HEIs. It acts as a vehicle for teaching-focussed staff to access literature, with expert support, in order to become evidence-informed practitioners, coming together to address pedagogical issues in order to work together to develop pedagogical research literacy (Evans *et al.*, 2019, 2021). The PJC also supported positive identity change through dialogue (Borko *et al.*, 2010; Hung and Yeh, 2013; Derr*i et al.*, 2015). It removed barriers to sometimes troublesome educational theory: the language, the methods, the context, and analysis (Tallman and Feldman, 2016; E. Dragioti, 2019), spanning the boundary between research and practice (Evans, Waring and Christodoulou, 2017). Walker (2010) describes boundary spanners as those who "…live in the thinking world of observing, reflection, questioning, criticism, and seeking clarity while also living in the action world of pragmatic practice, doing, experiencing, and coping"(p. 2). I acted as a boundary spanner in my role as leader of the PJC and over the course of the action the participants also became boundary spanners for others.

Hollwecket al., (2021 p.3), suggest that as boundary spanners we "characterise the plurality of spaces, and the space itself, occupied by those interacting within, between, and beyond the domains of practice and academia, and involving the three key components of identity, community and engagement". AS the PJC still exists in the 2022 academic year, it demonstrates the change to practice that occurred through its development.

*A*cross Europe it is reported that "HEIs often lack the skills (e.g., pedagogical expertise) and capacity (e.g., technology, evidence base) necessary to implement effective PD programmes. They especially tend to have insufficient knowledge of which practices work and which do not" (Inamorato dos Santos et al., 2019, p. 10). With the exception of Fung and Gordon (2016) and Pritchard and Mcgowan (2016), research focussed on what constitutes effective PD in HEIs is lacking. The PJC supported career development and affected institutional culture, these are additional indicators of successful PD in HEIs (Inamorato dos Santos et al., 2019). These changes align with the primary claims to knowledge that action research makes; change of policy and practice.

Cox and McDonald (2017, p. 58–59) suggest the communities they developed did not quite fit with the traditional CoP definition because of cultural, professional and institutional differences

in their countries. I suggest that Warwick's PJC functioned as an HECoP in the UK context and that it existed in 2016-18 with the defining features listed in table 18, created for comparison to the work of Cox and McDonald (2017).

The PJC success is an addition to the literature surrounding journal club effectiveness in other fields. It adds to emerging knowledge about how to judge effectiveness of PD activity in education and what types of activity are effective. The dialogic nature of the PJC and its inter-generational learning created a successful environment for transformative PD (Jensvoll and Lekang, 2018; Evans, 2019). It is my contention that formal PD, with required outcomes, is less appropriate in HEIs than dialogic engagement with peers. The PJC's specific focus on literature made it an ideal vehicle for PedEL. The sustained changes to practice by the institution by embedding this type of PD speaks to its success.

Table 18 Defining features of Warwick PJC adapted from table 3.2 Cox and McDonald (2017 p.58-59

Defining features	FLC—Miami University—now U.S. model	CoP—USQ Australia	Warwick PJC – A HECoP
Initiation by	Academic and/or professional who usually facilitates the FLC	Academic and/or professional who usually facilitates the CoP, occasionally management	Academic and/or professional who usually also facilitates the CoP
Institutional support	Usually teaching and learning centre or other professional unit; sometimes provost, deans	Usually learning and teaching centre or other professional unit; sometimes management, research office, deans	Institutional body engaged with teaching and learning, support of a Pro VC or Dean.
Centralised management	Teaching centre; provost and/or deans; units such as Library	N/A	N/A
Champion/s and sponsor/s	Teaching Centre; FLC Program director; proposer; facilitator	Learning and teaching centre, management, research office, deans	Teaching and learning body (macro), facilitators (meso)
Cohort or topic based	Both	Both	Both
Time frame membership	One academic year voluntary	No time limit voluntary	Voluntary membership, not time limited
Membership process	By application	By invitation	Voluntary but membership requires support from department/faculty
Member status	Academic and/or professional	Academic and/or professional	Academic and/or professional
Meeting scheduling	Every 3 weeks for 2 h recommended, but members can adjust	Members decide, usually monthly, 1–2 h	Determined by members; 6 meetings per year 2hrs
Meeting structure/agenda	Determined by members; coordinated by facilitator	Three CoP elements, community, sharing practice, building domain knowledge	Determined by members; coordinated by facilitator dialogic focus
Goals and objectives determined by	Goals by facilitator; objectives by members	Visioned by facilitator, negotiated by members	No specific goals or objectives
Agenda decisions	Determined by members	Determined by members	Determined by members

Defining features	FLC—Miami University—now U.S. model	CoP—USQ Australia	Warwick PJC – A HECoP
Meeting leadership	Facilitator or co-facilitator as full participant in FLC; models behaviour	Facilitator, not leader; with co-facilitators, distributed leadership approach	Facilitator as full participant, local leadership, expertise required
Program leadership	Three roles: investigator, implementer, program director	Informal coaching and facilitation role	Pragmatic leadership from institutional body
Impact assessment	3 areas: member development, FLC components engaged, and related student learning	Funded CoPs evaluated	Funded CoP evaluated by members, facilitator, teaching and learning body
SoTL component	Learning, teaching, or institutional project, assessment, and refereed presentation on campus and beyond	Informal, some research, presentations and publications, on campus and beyond	PedEL; informal dialogic engagement with literature, presentations or publications institutionally or wider
Community building and social aspect	Food at meetings; inclusion of family at some events	Dedicated community time for refreshments and conversation	Dedicated community time for refreshments and conversation, published digests
Rewards/thank you for members	Varies from nothing to $1000 USD; Usually available as professional expenses, not stipend	Informal, sharing and profiling member activities	Informal, sharing and profiling member activities. Linking activity to UKPSF reward and recognition
Budget for entire year	Varies $0–$10,000 USD funded by Centre via Central Administration	Not centrally funded	Cost of rooming and refreshments
Student involvement	Associate member; provides student perspective on projects	Research CoPs only	N/A

7.3 PedEL: Pedagogic Engagement with Literature

There is an acceptance that evidence-informed teaching improves teaching quality (Bevan, 2006; Bell *et al.*, 2010; Vithal, 2018; Webb and Tierney, 2020; Rickinson *et al.*, 2021). PD develops teaching and HEA fellowship and the UKPSF benchmarks are generally seen as successful schemes to support this (Inamorato dos Santos *et al.*, 2019). However, effective PD, which provides an opportunity to engage with literature, is lacking in HEIs (Fanghanel et al, 2016). Similarly, teaching-focussed staff are not given the time and resources to engage with PD or literature relating to teaching and learning (Botham, 2018a). With limited time and resource, staff find it difficult to engage in PD of any kind, especially for those under pressure to engage with the more valued research activity.

When engagement with research, not based around a subject discipline, is labelled SoTL, it becomes a hard sell (Boshier, 2009). In the institution in which this research was conducted, the staff found difficulty identifying PD activity with which they could engage. This research, after exposing benefits both to practice and reward and recognition staff, calls for a new area of pedagogic literature engagement for academic teaching-focussed staff. While these professionals may not be engaged directly with PedR, they want more than PedD. It has been argued too, that staff should be more aware of the theoretical underpinnings of pedagogical developments in order to understand the complexities involved in using, incorporating and evaluating educational research before embarking upon PedD. “Placing higher education teaching on a more professional basis *requires* a strong foundation of theoretical and practical research into learning and teaching processes” (Dearing 1997 p.126 emphasis added).

Fung and Gordon, (2016) suggest that we may not want to require educational research from all staff and that “engagement with education literature and scholarship…should therefore be clearly distinguished from extended education-focussed scholarship”. Considering this, there is room for a third term, not to increase a false dichotomy (Gordon *et al.*, 2003) between research and practice, but to offer opportunity.

In creating the terminology PedEL, I returned to the literature, “PedD and PedR have a common focus or content [which is] the relationship between teaching, learning and the learner and subject matter, within the context of higher education.”(Gordon et al., 2003, p. 7) and so PedEL is defined as pedagogic engagement with literature where there is a focus on pedagogy driving the engagement for “disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical expertise, academic practice, contextual awareness, data analytic competence, research methodology expertise or critical

evaluation of practice."(Evans et al., 2021). This engagement can be with many different types of literature, hence PedEL rather than EPedL. PedEL could, I suggest, offer something of a lifeline to those adrift in the liminal waters (Simmons et al., 2013) of their SoTL identities.

The idea of SoTL having a 'muddy' meaning in the sector (Pritchard and Mcgowan (2016) has been frequently reported, and the full report into defining SoTL by (Pritchard and Mcgowan, 2016) suggests we need not add further definition (ibid p.20). Thus, I provide PedEL as part of a 'definitional framework' which allows for institutional adaptability of their activities (Table 19).

Table 19 PedD PedEL and PedR activity and output descriptor framework

	PedD	PedEL	PedR
activity	aim to improve practice; informal methodology; context specific; own teaching/own department aimed at local audience; pragmatic, low theorisation; subject focused or generic	aim to develop conceptual and theoretical understanding of PedR in order to inform PedD; applicable to wider contexts and own teaching; aimed at local and wider audiences including national and cross institution; subject focussed or generic	aim to describe, analyse, conceptualise formal research proposal applicable to wider contexts independent of own teaching; aimed at national/international audience based on established theory; subject focused or generic
outputs	improvement to practice; limited general applicability; non-refereed publication guidelines on good practice for own institution use; web-site publication	Engagement with pedagogic literature and research; understanding of practice and education innovations; results for use by individuals departments institutions and cross institutionally	better understanding of practice generally applicable; output peer reviewed publication; analytic description/ conceptualisation; results in the public domain may be reported on web-site publication
UKPSF benchmarks of success	K1 K2 K4 K5 K6 A1 A2 A3 A4 V1 V2 V4	K3 A5 V3	Activity not defined in the UKPSF. I suggest using the REF to benchmark success

PedEL would aim to span the gap between PedD and PedR. It is vital that we do not separate the roles of teaching and research too far; Cretchley et al. (2013) cited by Cotton, Miller and Kneale (2018) warn that "Despite recent efforts to embed research-teaching links across higher education, in the minds of many academics, research and teaching remain as competing rather than complementary activities" (ibid p.1633). Promoting PedEL by giving staff time, resource and opportunity to engage with the theoretical underpinnings of educational research, could encourage this much needed complementarity.

PedEL is pedagogic focussed engagement with literature, in order to effectively incorporate, use and evaluate research into teaching within HEIs. Currently this aligns with benchmarks K3, A5 and V3 of the 2011 UKPSF, added here for completion. PedEL as a boundary spanning definition between PedD and PedR with an emphasis on creating a dialogic professional

development activity to support PCK engagement. It is my contention that a journal club, with an educational research expert acting as a boundary spanner leading it, could be beneficial for HEIs who wish to offer staff a PD activity which helps to bridge the theory-practice gap, increase PK, and professional capital. Academics need PedEL so that they can begin to proactively alter their practice and develop their professional capital and benchmark their success. The PJC engendered a community through which their sense of identity and agency could be heightened. It is important to remember that "learning involves the construction of identities … identity, knowing and social membership entail one another" (Lave and Wenger, 1991b, p. 53). Although they work with school staff networks, Townsend and Pan (2019) suggest that the development of practitioner research communities can provide a potentially useful form of boundary crossing which can result in relational agency. Here again then, the idea of boundary spanning or pedagogically engaged practitioners acting as boundary spanners occurs. The practical theories of practitioners are the most powerful and appropriate forms for dealing with contemporary social issues; and these are located in and generated from everyday practices, inspired by tacit intuitive forms of knowledge as much as by cognitive forms (McNiff, 2013).

The recognition of staff who teach, but who are also pedagogically engaged with literature, is beginning. Considering the substantial changes relevant to teaching in HEIs since 2011, and discussion that the TEF may be decreasing teaching quality (Evans, Howson and Forsythe., 2018), I suggest that it may be time for a review of the professional standards, providing an emphasis on engagement with literature, to drive teaching excellence forward. Those staff who in their everyday practices generate knowledge that can develop PedEL in order to provide solutions to contemporary issues should be highly valued. I welcome the recent AdvanceHE 2021-24 strategy document which sets out that a review of the UKPSF may be about to take place (Marston and Johns, 2021). We need to link the drive for accreditation with activity linked to PedEL in order to capitalise on the tacit opportunity (Charles, 2018) of the TEF and the tacit intuitive knowledge our pedagogically engaged staff.

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7.4 HECoP: Higher Education Community of Practice

Although there are pitfalls in attempting to define yet another term for a professional community within HEIs focussed on learning and teaching, there is a recognised need for a CoP that has a more specific HEI focus (Amin and Roberts, 2008; Nagy and Burch, 2009; Iaquinto, Ison and Faggian, 2011) and one that can support meso-level development (Saroyan and Trigwell, 2015a; Jensen and Iannone, 2018). A deeper investigation of CoPs' potential is required as "The disparity between theory and practice and the urgent need for more relevant forms of professional learning in HE means that CoPs cannot be ignored." (Mercieca, 2017, p. 4).

There is space for a defined learning community which has many of the characteristics of both a PLC and of a CoP but that is cognisant of the issues of organisational structure, membership and power associated with HEIs, as well as the situational learning, identity and time pressure. The organisation should recognise the value that this new type of CoP adds through dialogue and new knowledge creation. It should also support the CoP to report results and hold it accountable to the wider institution (Caro-Bruce and Klehr, 2015).

Acknowledging previous work by Blankenship and Ruona (2007) and Nagy and Burch (2009), this thesis attempts to construct a definition of a learning community for use in an HEI; it establishes a specific lexicon which removes ambiguity from the terms COP and PLC, often used incorrectly or synonymously, in much HEI learning community research.

Table 20 uses criteria headings from Blankenship and Ruona (2007) in order to compare and contrast the HECoP with the main features of other types of learning communities namely, the PLCs described by Hord (2004) and Dufour and Eaker (1998) and the CoPs described by Brown and Duguid (1991) and Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002). It provides a breakdown of the characteristics in each of the four areas relevant to the new HECoP. This comes from evidence generated from this action research [5.3] as well as selected characteristics of PLCs and CoPs. Requirements are identified for effective learning in HEIs, specifically the dissemination of new knoweldge and being able to demonstrate impact on policy and practice (Pritchard and Mcgowan, 2016).

Table 20 Comparison of characteristics of PLCs and CoPs adapted from Blankenship and Ruona (2007, p.4)

Characteristic / Theory and Model	Membership	Leadership	Organisational Culture	Knowledge sharing
Brown and Duguid (CoPs) *Situated Cognition, Social Learning*	Membership is voluntary; informal group of workers doing the same job	Informal structure the community is egalitarian in nature	Culture is not necessarily supportive of informal structures Informal structure;	Narrative; collaborative; socially constructed; occurs within community
Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (CoPs) *Social Learning*	Membership is voluntary; membership can either be self-selected or assigned by the organization; based on expertise or passion for a topic	Distributed; leadership comes from both formal and informal leaders, within and outside the community	Organization values innovation and knowledge sharing;	Occurs mainly within the community; however, exchange across and at community boundaries occurs when appropriate
Hord (PLCs) *Learning Organisation*	Membership is a forgone conclusion by virtue of status as a faculty member; size of learning teams varies (few people to whole faculty);	Provided by principal; should provide supportive conditions within the school	Shared mission vision and values drive the work; collaboration is achieved through shared practice; cultural shift is paramount to becoming a PLC	Teachers participate in reflective dialogue; peer coaching and feedback are also ways knowledge is shared
Dufour and Eaker (PLCs) *Learning Organisation*	Membership is a forgone conclusion by virtue of status as a faculty member; teachers are assigned to a collaborative team to work on substantive school issues	Provided by Principal; shares decision-making; provides staff with information and training; model behaviours congruent with vision and values; results - oriented	Shared mission, vision and values drive the work; collaboration is key; innovation, experimentation and a focus on results are vital aspects	Discussion is limited; team members collaborate, but how teams create new knowledge and share it with the whole organization is not discussed at length

The literature review exposed that PLCs and CoPs have previously been researched minimally in educational settings and, in the UK within HEIs, almost not at all. There are difficulties with the generalised and misapplied terminology of both PLC and CoP which leads to an uncertainty in the literature (Stoll *et al.*, 2006; Blankenship and Ruona, 2007; Hargreaves, 2008; Levine, 2010; Lomos, Hofman and Bosker, 2011; Margalef and Pareja Roblin, 2016; Vangrieken *et al.*, 2017) when researching communities in higher education.

> *"Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situation in which these practices are carried out"* (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p. 5).

This thesis creates a new understanding of the theoretical and heuristic requirements of a community in an HEI focussed on improving teaching practice. It does this as a reflexive enquiry where the understanding of what a COP is in the situation specific to HE. The Higher Education Community of Practice (HECoP) is further explained below:

7.4.1 Membership

Table 21 Membership: HECoPs in comparison with PLCs and CoPs

Community of Practice (Corporate sector)	**HECoP (Higher Education)**	**Professional Learning Community (School sector)**
• Voluntary and informal • Self-selected or assigned by the organisation based on expertise or passion for a topic • Members have similar jobs	• Voluntary, interdisciplinary and collaborative • Based on passion or expertise rather than job role or assigned task. • Size of HECoP is variable and flexible, not being predetermined by HEI structures • Membership should be supported by department/faculty as PD • Not limited to a time period	• Foregone conclusion • Size of learning team varies • Members are assigned to a collaborative team to work on a directed issues

Membership of an HECoP should be (Table 21) voluntary, collaborative and based on passion or expertise rather than job role, disciplinary belonging or assigned task. HECoP size is variable and flexible, not predetermined by HEI structures nor limited to disciplinary areas of expertise. The size of this HECoP was approximately 18 people, which is a very small percentage of the teaching-focussed staff in this HEI. Further work could be carried out with larger HECoPs to generate evidence around the maximum number of participants for an effective HECoP.

Intrinsic motivation is key to staff engaging with initiatives (Botham, 2018a) and, as such, membership must be voluntary, without requirement or expectation. Any member of staff, teaching, research or academic support focussed, can be included in the community which is significantly different to PLCs which require every member of staff within the school to be involved. With membership being varied, and not based on job role or assigned task, EIGL (Brücknerová and Novotný, 2017) occurs.

Experts from within the institution may be invited into an HECoP for the benefit of the community (Deenadayalan *et al.*, 2008; Van Waes *et al.*, 2018); external experts may also come from a completely unrelated organisation or from a partner (Akinyemi and Nkonki, 2020). HEIs often work cross organisationally and including external partners in the HECoP (Mavri, Ioannou and Loizides, 2021) can generate benefits and opportunities, although it is not a requirement. Belonging comes about through "mutual engagement, sharing of repertoires, and negotiation of the joint enterprise" (Iverson, 2011, p. 43). As long as there is joint enterprise, membership can, and should, be varied across the disciplines and voluntary. Membership of the HECoP should also be supported by the participant's department or faculty lead in order to aid recognition of activity and increase professional capital.

7.4.2 Leadership

Table 22 Leadership: HECoPs in comparison with PLCs and CoPs

Community of Practice (Corporate sector)	**HECoP (Higher Education)**	**Professional Learning Community (School sector)**
• Informal structure • Egalitarian in nature • Distributed leadership from both formal and informal leaders • Leaders can be from outside or within the community	• Staff led informal shared enterprise and facilitation • institutional formal pragmatic leadership • expert knowledge from within or external to community • Institutional supportive conditions • No specific output or result requirements	• Led by the head • Supportive conditions • Shared decisions making • Provides information and training • Congruent with visions and values • Results orientated

With respect to leadership (Table 22), McDonald et al. (2012) contains resources for introducing leadership into COPs for HEIs and, although their work is minimally cited, it has value. Leadership of an HECoP should be a combination of informal shared enterprise and formal pragmatic leadership, and there should be expert knowledge present, either from within the

HEI, or external to it. Institutional support for the members and the activity of the community, will help to ensure success (Wenke *et al.*, 2019), as will visible recognition for the work carried out. The institutional leadership should be publicly supportive of the HECoP which will be congruent with the institutions values but have no requirement for specific outcomes or results from the HECoP.

The leader of an HECoP needs institutional support: HECoPs are more than ad-hoc groups of practitioners or departmental focus groups and, as such, institutions might consider creating a body to facilitate the generation of HECoPs or creating HECoPs within an already existing learning and teaching-focussed institutional body. This body could ensure pragmatic leadership support, such as providing time and space resourcing as well as secretarial support, plus incentives such as refreshments at meetings. Institutional support minimises issues such as lack of communication of created knowledge and lack of recognition of efforts; both of which can contribute to unsuccessful communities in HEIs (Stark and Smith, 2016).

Expertise is also important and, as research and learning organisations, if we engage educational researchers to join these communities in HEIs as experts, where they can share dialogue with teaching staff, we could create an organic and unmediated exchange of knowledge which is likely to yield a variety of positive outcomes. Notably, as Anwaruddin (2015, p. 12) suggests, the opportunity to directly interact with research will "enable teachers to become informed and critical consumers of research-based knowledge".

HECoPs are not led by heads of department, Deans or Pro Vice Chancellors. Rather, leadership can come from any staff member; passion and motivation being more important than position or time served. Care must be taken not to exploit staff who are willing to contribute to leadership of HECoP. PD and the linking of HECoP activity to the UKPSF benchmarks could allow recognition, and reward of involvement, with or leadership of HECoPs and so limit exploitation.

7.4.3 Organisational Culture

Table 23 Organisational culture: HECoPs in comparison with PLCs and CoPs

Community of Practice (Corporate sector)	HECoP (Higher Education)	Professional Learning Community (School sector)
• Culture is not necessarily supportive • Informal structure • Organisation values innovation and knowledge sharing	• Collaborative focus and shared vision among members • Innovation and knowledge sharing are valued by the institution • Informal and valuable collaboration - Professional recognition and reward available • Impact on policy or practice possible but not required	• Shared mission visions and values with institution • Collaboration through shared practice • Cultural shift is paramount • Collaboration is key • Innovation and experimentation focussed on results are vital

The organisational culture of an HECoP (Table 23) should promote a collaborative focus and a shared vision: HECoPs work well when innovation and knowledge creation and sharing is valued by the institution. Senior management of the institution, in which the HECoP sits, should support the informal structure and allow the HECoP to demonstrate impact on policy and or practice, where applicable. Brown *et al*.,(1991, 1996) suggest that some CoPs can exist purely 'to get the work done' and this should be avoided. Institutions wishing to create HECoPs should provide reward and recognition for staff who engage in these communities, but there should be no requirement for any specific output. Such a requirement takes away from the informal learning and dialogic nature of HECoPs. In this research, the HECoP created was supported in its evolution by WIHEA and I would point institutions towards creating a similar body in order to replicate the organisational culture of innovation, knowledge creating and knowledge sharing.

7.4.4 Knowledge sharing

Table 24 Knowledge sharing: HECoPs in comparison with PLCs and CoPs

Community of Practice (Corporate sector)	HECoP (Higher Education)	Professional Learning Community (School sector)
• Narrative • Collaborative • Occurs mainly within community • Exchange across and at community boundaries when appropriate	• Reflective, collaborative dialogue • Socially constructed new knowledge within • Disseminated across institution, discussed and promoted when appropriate • Critical interrogation and discussion	• Collaborative • Teachers participate in reflective dialogue • Knowledge shared via peer coaching and feedback within • Discussion is limited • No significant discussion of how knowledge is created or shared with the whole organisation

With respect to knowledge sharing (Table 24), members of the HECoP should participate in reflective collaborative dialogue: knowledge should be socially constructed between peers and shared within the community; new knowledge should be disseminated across the institution, discussed and promoted when appropriate. A community is effective when people share and critically interrogate their practice in a way that is ongoing, reflective, collaborative (Jensvoll and Lekang, 2018), inclusive, learning-oriented and growth-promoting (Toole and Louis, 2002; Mitchell and Sackney, 2011). HECoPs will come to life due to the trans-personal process of thinking together within the group (Iverson, 2011; Pyrko, Dörfler and Eden, 2017), and where members are mutually engaged in dialogue (Coe *et al.*, 2014; Dogan, Yurtseven and Tatık, 2019), EIGL (Brücknerová and Novotný, 2017), with joint enterprise and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998a).

In HEIs, cross-institution knowledge sharing is rare, due, in part, to their size and the existence of disciplinary silos (Trust, Carpenter and Krutka, 2017). A concerted effort needs to be made to disseminate the new knowledge created and this too, needs institutional support. In this research, digests were created which were publicly available and an institutional case study was conducted with the PJC as focus; all staff were able to access these. Such dissemination is vital; in HEIs, there are barriers to whole staff communication, including disciplinary separation and size. Effective dissemination is needed to overcome these barriers when setting up an HECoP.

7.4.5 Overview

This research suggests that HECoPs are effective when they are informal: membership is voluntary, and members are not subject to particular expectations. The community must include some expertise, but this can come from any member, regardless of role or time served. Leadership of the HECoP should come from within the community and can vary, but the institution should support it by making time and resources. Although no specific results should be required, any generated impact that is visible, in terms of practice or policy, should be supported and promoted in order to avoid issues of isolation for both the members of community and the new knowledge created. The HECoP improved the situation in which our practise took place (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988). The four characteristics which, according to this research, give rise to this new situation the Higher Education Community of Practice (HECoP) are summarised in Figure 30 below.

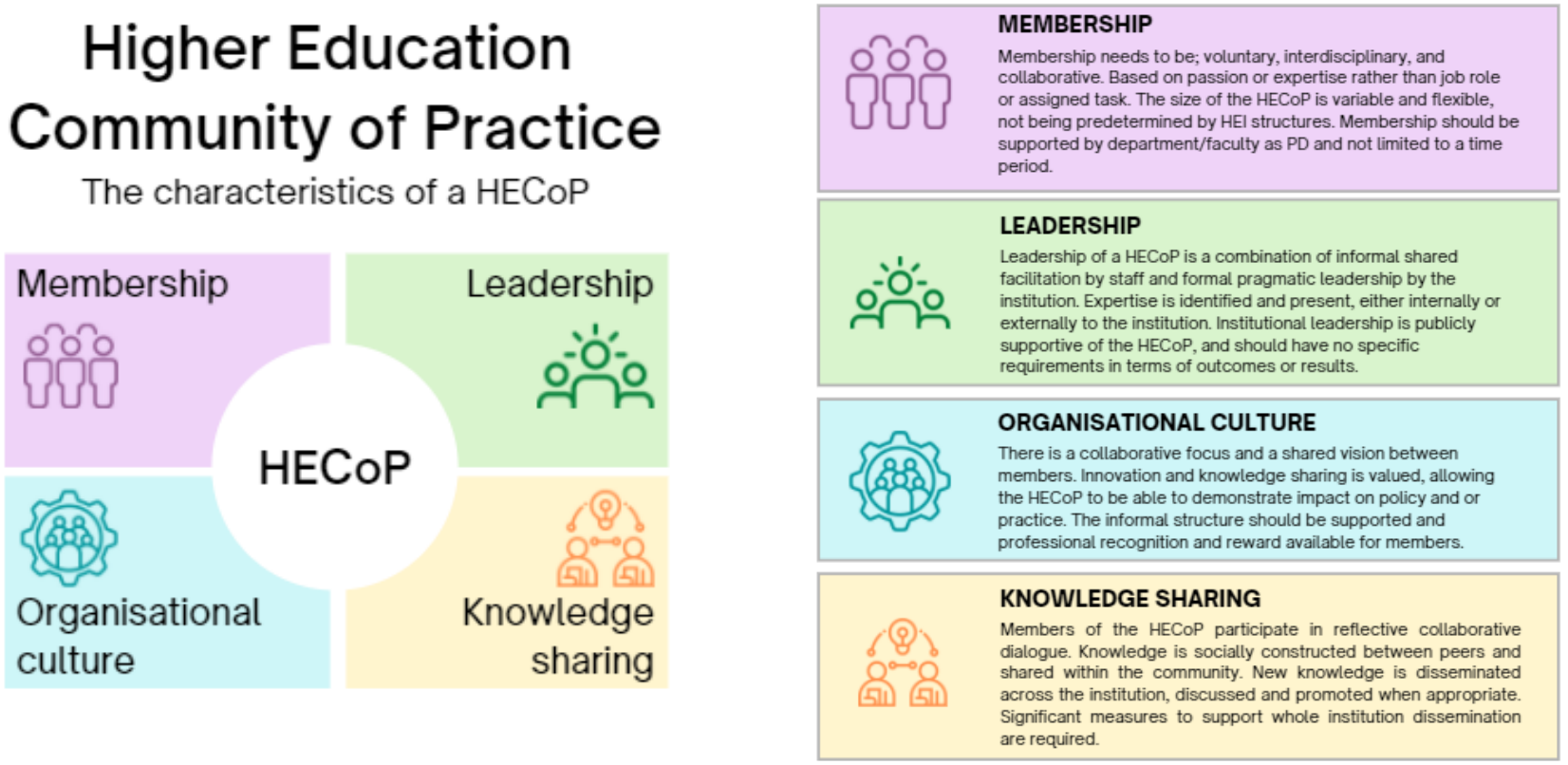

Figure 30 Characteristics of an HECoP

7.5 Conclusions and claims to knowledge linked to action research concepts and literature

Much of the initial chapters [1 and 4], make reference to the fact that, for most of my career, I have been engaged in positivist research. This changed when I reached higher education, with my engagement with the work of Bourdieu Freire and Gramsci particularly. I became aware that often, I was not a positivist researcher and the conflict that I often felt came from my reflexive way of researching and practicing. Whilst I was cognisant of these conflicts within my activity, it was not until engaging with the EdD process that I transformed my worldview with the academic understanding to sit comfortably in the discipline of education. There is still however, in traditional methodology, an insistence on published knowledge. An initial publication from my EdD journey (Mawson and Abbott 2017), spends much time on issues of identity for those of us who are candidates for doctorates, as well as professional educators. Knowledge claims then, are of interest, especially in the action research methodology, as whether improvement, transformation or publication of gained knowledge is required in order for changes generated by the practitioners, to be valid. Objectivity, validity, authenticity and critical distance of action research as a methodology, have been covered in sections [2.4 and 4.5.6. This section considers knowledge claims and how these are linked to action research concepts.

Habermas (1971) maintains that knowledge is generated through the interest of the mind and, as a result, knowledge and interest are forever linked. Herr and Anderson (2014) report that Habermas presents three distinct interests of the researcher in the pursuit of knowledge generation: technical, practical, and emancipatory. Habermas's knowledge interests were adapted by Carr and Kemmis (1986) to create three types of knowledge specific to action research, discussed earlier in section [7.1]. They suggest that action research generates three types of emancipatory knowledge "...firstly, the improvement of a practice of some kind; secondly, the improvement of the understanding of a practice by its practitioners; and thirdly, the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place" Carr and Kemmis (1986 p.165). As Gibbs et al (2017) discuss:

> *"Carr and Kemmis call for AR to focus on 'the development of practitioners' own practices' (1986, 202), not in a technical, instrumental sense but in a personal, existential and authentic approach, producing research findings that meet the conventional standards and need not be mutually exclusive. However, Kemmis (2009) is*

clearer that the context is the change in three things: 'practitioners' practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions in which they practice. These three things – practices, how we understand them, and the conditions that shape them – are inevitably and incessantly bound together with each other' (2009, 463)," (Gibbs et al 2016 p8-9)

Even with this knowledge, the goal of action research is often debated at great lengths as to whether it is, on one hand, improving practice and developing individuals or, on the other, transforming both practice and participants (Herr and Anderson 2014).

Here, in an attempt not to conflate these goals, it could be said that three of my claims to knowledge exist as: improving practice and developing individuals in a practical sense (the PJC 7.2 and PedEL 7.3), with 7.4 (the generation of a HECoP framework) and the methodological rigour of the action being scholarly knowledge, contributing to improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place.

Whilst, at the same time, the process of engaging in action research was for me, and for many of the participants, transformational, this may appear to further muddy the already muddy waters of the action research methodological debate: if we wish not to unreflectively reproduce current positivist practices it is important that we discuss knowledge in these terms.

7.5.1 Practical knowledge for improvement and development

The action research generated a research question that came from participants:

'To what extent did the Professional Journal Club engender an effective professional development community in an HE setting?'

The literature around journal cubs openly calls for collaborative explorations of how journal clubs can reimagine researcher– teacher relations (Tallman and Feldman, 2016). This thesis goes some way to providing that required exploration. It produced for its participants, improvement and development. Improvement of their own practice and also the understanding of their practice to produce development.

Gibbs reminds us that "evidence of how practice can be improved and its impact on the learning of students (and staff) is becoming critical to the changing character of higher education, and its accountability to both government and students" (Gibbs et al., 2016). It is

accepted that “current strategic initiatives require a framework for faculty members to engage with scholarship in teaching and learning to support institutional programme changes and high-quality educational experiences for students” (Webb et al., 2020, p. 614) which, in this case, is the professional standards framework published in 2011 (UKPSF). However, the new knowledge here, leads me to ask whether the UKPSF is as fit for purpose as we, the community of teaching-focussed staff, become cognisant of PedEL and the advantages that acting as boundary spanners provides us professionally and to the institutions and communities of which we are a part. This research contributes knowledge for discussion towards a possible new framework of professional standards that harness PedEL in order to bridge the gap between PedD and PedR; terms first suggested by Gordon et al (2003).

Sections [7.2 and 7.3] exemplify practical and professional knowledge that action research can produce both for individuals and their institutions.

The PJC engendered an effective community; it existed under the conditions of the new HECoP framework created here, being a combination of features of PLCs and CoPs, suited to the HEI environment. The HECoP then, was the improvement of our situation. The PJC acted as a community where dialogic transformational PD took place without requiring assessment, mandatory membership or goals imposed by leadership. For those involved, the implicit inter-generational learning that occurred moved their identity as consumers of literature, away from novice, towards expert and instilled new insight. The new knowledge created in the community was used by members in their own teaching, modules, and departments to change practices and develop techniques (Sims *et al.*, 2021). Many also used their PedEL activity in the PJC to enhance promotion applications and gain recognition and reward, enhancing their professional capital. Teaching staff believed the activity was relevant to the UKPSF and institution promotion criteria. In addition, the visibility of the PJC increased the perceived value of teaching staff through wide dissemination of outcomes. The PJC is still in existence at the time of publication, which demonstrates PedEL is embedded within the institution.

Chapters 2 and 3 discuss the current issues facing teaching staff in HEIs, as well as literature around PD and SoTL. It is clear that PD for teaching-focussed staff is required in order to deliver teaching excellence. The criteria that engender excellent PD have been interrogated and the PJC aligned with current thinking about effective PD for teaching staff (Kennedy, 2016; Pritchard and Mcgowan, 2016; Sims *et al.*, 2021; Vare *et al.*, 2021). The PJC was research-informed and engaged educators in theory, dialogue and reflective practice; moreover, it was sustained over time. It has improved practices.

Examples from chapters 5 and 6 provide data and analysis that support the presence of an effective community that began in 2016 and existed through to 2018. The PJC that existed was an example of an HECoP which engendered effective PD for its members and increased their dialogic pedagogic engagement with literature, termed here PedEL. The PJC helped to reduce the gap between roles of theorists and practitioners, not just between theory and practice. The PJC engendered an effective learning community in an HE setting whether this is measured by participants' reward and recognition, or their increased confidence or identity. It speaks to both improvement and transformation.

Herr and Anderson (2005) suggest that:

> *"By going public with our work, we learn from and inform each other, pushing our respective fields of study as well as the methodology itself. By publishing, we come full circle: In the documenting of the change effort, academe too is potentially challenged to encompass methodological progressions and breakthroughs."(*ibid p.128)

Indeed, although the writing up of action research is, according to Lewin, subordinate, Townsend (2010 p.82) suggests that "there might be implications for individuals working in similar contexts from action research conducted by others." The writing up of action research enables the transfer of practices and perspectives and encourages collaboration, as well as exemplifying the action researcher's reflexivity.

7.5.2 Scholarly knowledge

My action research, in addition to practical professional knowledge, makes a valuable scholarly contribution to our understanding of action research and the value-laden axiology of conducting research that benefits people. Action research is committed to principled social change in various settings and thus to *"bring a different world into existence"* (Stern *et al.*, 2014, p. 1). This action research noted that teaching-focussed staff, including those working part-time and those on sessional contracts, have been regarded as lesser than their research-focussed colleagues, often oppressed (Freire 1972). In reconceptualising SoTL, and creating the HECoP, this action research has highlighted the value that teaching-focussed staff bring to an institution when they are supported to pedagogically engage with literature.

Action research is criticised for lacking generalisability [4.3.3]. However, the greater the range of applications of the concept, the more the meaning of the concept can be generalised (Riga, 2020). "Outcomes of action research cannot be applied generally automatically, but there might be implications for individuals working in similar contexts from action research conducted by others" (Townsend, 2010, p. 84). Enough methodological information is provided here to contribute to the creation of similar PJCs or HECoPs by practitioner researchers, teaching-focussed staff or those responsible for PD in other HEIs; I welcome their creation, as it adds to the literature on their effectiveness. However, the responsibility for determining transferability is with those who might apply the findings to their own setting (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and so, it is up to you, the reader, as to whether anything can be learnt from this action research when transferred into your own context.

Wyse *et al.* (2018 p.34) suggest that:

> *"There is a need to ensure that close to practice research outcomes have relevance beyond the local. Wider relevance is necessary to make the outcomes of [close to practice] research more likely to be judged by academic peers as high quality."*

I welcome interest from colleagues who want to establish a research project on PJCs in their institutions, or nationally, as well as interest from those engaged more widely with PedEL and HECoPs. I anticipate my thesis will be read by professional peers who wish to emulate the successful PJC initiative and provide sustained effective, peer-led PedEL for a group of teaching-focussed staff. Additionally, educational researchers with an interest in the theoretical underpinning of PedEL and the creation of an HECoP, combining features of PLC and CoP with a specific HEI focus, may also be interested to read it.

7.5.3 Transformational knowledge

Each of the three stated contributions to knowledge [7.2-7.4] have been considered in detail. However, action research can be said to be aimed not at generating knowledge in the positivist sense at all, but that of improving the practice of the researcher (Dewey, 1933; Lewin, 1948). There is knowledge that I have gained about myself, through the conducting of action research, which has transformed me.

McNiff (2017) suggests that the gaining of a higher degree gives one the authority and institutional legitimacy to challenge discourse and influence troublesome areas. I perceived a

troublesome area and found other oppressed individuals who felt the same and, together, we generated thematic areas of research interest. The knowledge generated by this action research was enough to alter the practice of those involved. However, a need for legitimacy, in terms of my own identity and my recognised identity within the institution, was in part, a driving force at the beginning of my EdD journey. My EdD journey therefore, became more than the pursuit of knowledge to improve practice. The reframing (Schon and Rein 1994) that occurred through my reflections about the action research and the completion of an EdD, including making the findings public, helped me to create new intellectual ways of dealing with problematic situations. The somewhat profound and unexpected new understanding of truth and knowledge that I gained, altered how I approached not just the research, but my teaching and also my interactions with both opportunity and others. It has also undone some of my fear of judgement:

> *"Speaking and writing is an ever-renewed struggle to be both apposite and intelligible, and every word that is finally uttered is a confession of our incapacity to do better; but each time we have finished saying something and let it stand, we tacitly imply also that this says what we mean and should mean it therefore also to the listener or reader. Though these ubiquitous tacit endorsements of our words may always turn out to be mistaken, we must accept this risk if we are ever to say anything*" (Polanyi 1958, p. 207).

As part of the action, I was required to regularly publish digests, create academic posters (Mawson 2017 appendix 4) and evaluative reports which were presented to the institution (Mawson 2018 appendix 3). I did these in collaboration with participants; however, this thesis is mine alone. The publication of knowledge gained, contributed to the ways in which participants saw themselves; the visibility of what we were doing also affected the themes arising and so, although not the aim, writing about action research has improved and transformed me.

Part of validity of knowledge from action research comes from the making public of both the findings and also, one's own transformation; in this respect, I have created not just this thesis but have exposed my journey towards calling myself an action researcher; evidence of this commitment can be seen from the BERA spotlight of me as a new practitioner researcher (Mawson 2021). This journey, although specific to me, may well offer something to others embarking upon EdD study as action researchers: hope. The undervalued notion of my own self-worth, that speaks out loudly in the initial chapters, is a notion I no longer hold; I am

transformed. And, as others engage on an EdD or action research project, and all the messiness that creates, there is hope that they too will be transformed even if, as yet, they may still feel lost. I now know that theory is not solely produced by 'intellectuals' or experts who claim the right to generate valid knowledge; educational action research allows participants and researchers to define their own forms of valid knowledge and present them as educational theories (O'Hanlon 2002). The hegemony of academic knowledge can be challenged, and we can emerge as knowledgeable actors rather than passive bystanders. As action researchers, we bring practice-based ways of thinking and knowing to our institutions, improving the practices of others and transforming lives.

There are then, many ways of knowing, all of which have value. However, when deciding whether this action has been successful: "It is the responsibility of the action researchers' professional peers from the same cultural milieu to judge whether the desired outcome is achieved" (Briggs and Coleman, 2007, p. 162). And so, I leave you with the words of one PJC participant:

"The PJC is quite simply the best thing I've been involved in since becoming a member of staff at Warwick."

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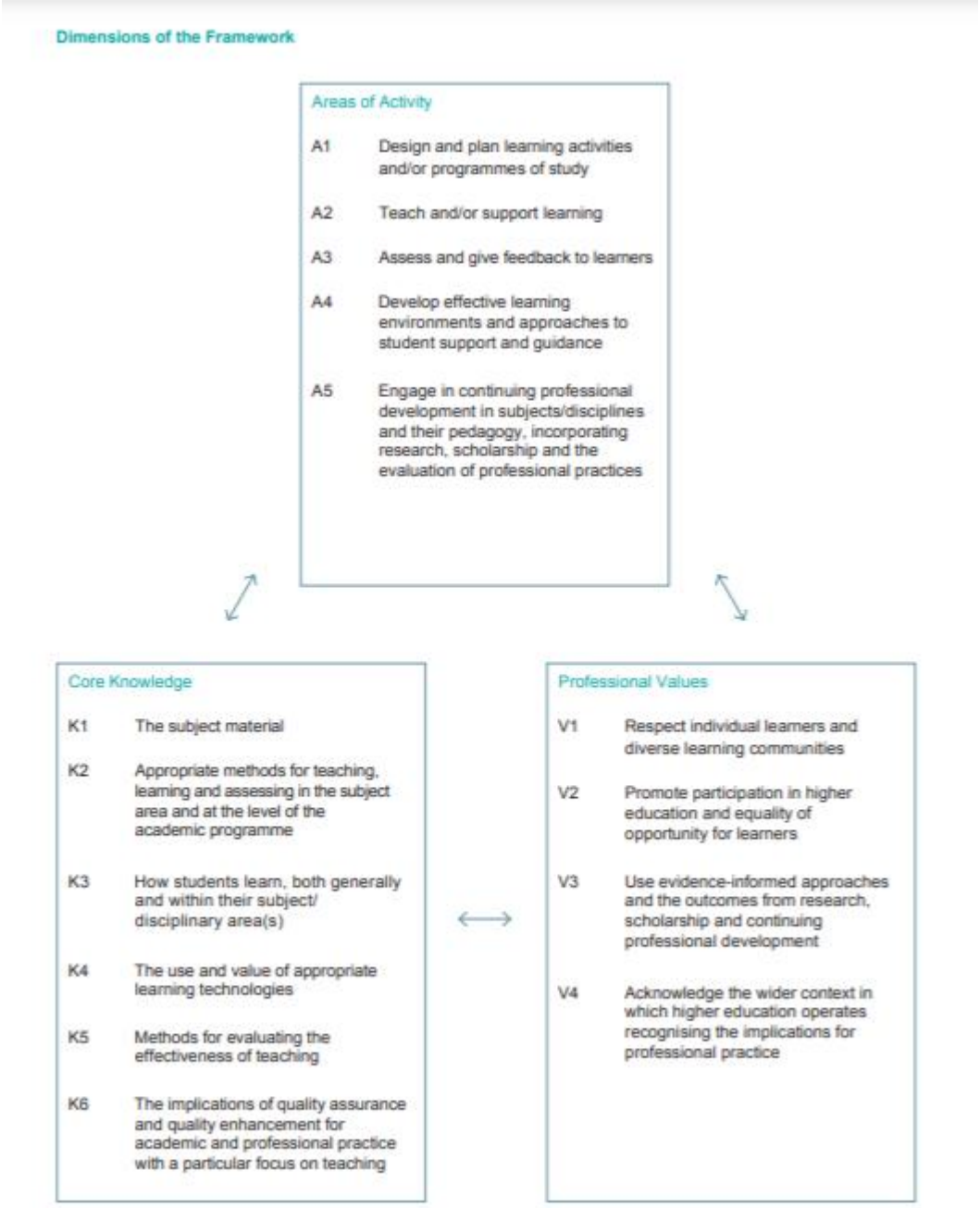
Appendices

1. UKPSF benchmark statements (AdvanceHE 2011 p.3)



2. Research Methods

2a Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: PJC – A journal club functioning as a CoP in a research intensive HEI

Investigator(s): Kate Mawson

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study conducted by a Postgraduate Research Student. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who is organising and funding the study?
The study is organised by Kate Mawson for doctoral research and is not funded
What is the study about?
The study is looking at whether a PJC acts as an effective community of practice when looking to increase awareness of pedagogic literature amongst teaching staff
What would taking part involve?
Taking part involves completion of this questionnaire and a follow up questionnaire. Participation in the PJC does not require participation in this research.

- Data collected will be analysed by only the researcher
- There are no plans for focus groups but the researcher may contact you to request an interview separately from this questionnaire and so no identifying data will be collected.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and choosing not to take part will not affect you in any way. You can also choose to withdraw your participation at any time, without giving a reason by contacting k.mawson@warwick.ac.uk. Further details about withdrawing from the study are provided below in this document.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?
There are no direct benefits to participants of taking part in this research however benefit to the institution and other institutions may follow from publication of findings.
What are the possible disadvantages, side effects, or risks of taking part in this study?
There are no disadvantages to the participant in taking part in this study.
Expenses and payments
No payment will be made for participation in this study.
Will my taking part be kept confidential?

- No identifying data will be collected via questionnaire
- Data will be confidential
- Data will be stored securely during the data collection and for the duration of the research project and beyond in line with current university guidelines
- Access to the data will only be given to the researcher and their supervisor
- No data will be transferred or shared to other organisations outside of the University for this project

- No data will be transferred outside of the EEA
- Direct quotes will be used in the research and subsequent reports and publications, every attempt will be made to anonymise comments fully so that individuals can not be identified indirectly

What will happen to the data collected about me?

As a publicly-funded organisation, the University of Warwick has to ensure that its use of personally-identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in research is in the public interest. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, such as this one, we will use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research study.

We will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. We are committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with data protection legislation. Information about you will be kept for 5 years after the end of the study
No identifiable data will be collected from you during this questionnaire. This means that once your responses have been submitted to the research team, it will not be possible to withdraw this data as your individual responses cannot be identified.
Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. The University of Warwick has in place policies and procedures to keep your data safe.

This data may also be used for future research, including impact activities following review and approval by an independent Research Ethics Committee and subject to your consent at the outset of this research project.

For further information, please refer to the University of Warwick Research Privacy Notice which is available
here: https://warwick.ac.uk/services/idc/dataprotection/privacynotices/researchprivacynotice or by contacting the Information and Data Compliance Team at GDPR@warwick.ac.uk.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on being part of the study?

You can withdraw for the study at any time and this decision would not negatively affect you n any way. Participation is entirely voluntary and not a requirement of being a member of the PJC. Please note withdrawing participation is separate to withdrawing data that has already been collected during the study. To withdraw please contact k.mawson@warwick.ac.uk
If you withdraw from the study it will not be possible to withdraw your data which has already been collected via questionnaire after it has been anonymised. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible and keep the data secure in line with the University's Information and Data Compliance policies.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of this study will be used for a doctoral thesis and may be published in journals or relevant publications in the future.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the University of Warwick's CES Ethics Committee.

Who should I contact if I want further information?

k.mawson@warwick.ac.uk

Who should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to the person below, who is a senior University of Warwick official entirely independent of this study:

Head of Research Governance
Research & Impact Services
University House
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 8UW
Email: researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk
Tel: 024 76 522746

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact the Data Protection Officer, Information and Data Director who will investigate the matter: DPO@warwick.ac.uk.

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information

2b Questionnaire 1

PJC - Professional Learning Community

Start of Block: Personal Information

Q38 After reading the information emailed please provide consent.

- [ ] 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. (1)
- [ ] 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. (4)
- [ ] 3. I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by other qualified individuals from The University of Warwick . (5)
- [ ] 4. I consent to use of verbatim quotations. (6)
- [ ] 5. I am happy for my data to be used in future research. (7)
- [ ] 6. I agree to take part in the above study. (8)

Q1 Are you:

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ I prefer not to say (3)

Q2 What is your main job title

- ○ Teaching Fellow (1)
- ○ Senior Teaching Fellow (2)
- ○ Principal Teaching Fellow (3)
- ○ Research Fellow (4)
- ○ Senior Research Fellow (5)
- ○ Principal Research Fellow (6)
- ○ Reader (7)
- ○ Associate Professor (8)
- ○ Professor (9)
- ○ I am a member of non-academic staff (10)
- ○ Other (11) _____

Q3 I joined the pedagogic journal club in

- ○ 2016/17 (1)
- ○ 2017/18 (2)

Q4 There are six meetings every year. How many times would you say you have attended meetings?

- 1-2 times (1)
- 2-4 times (2)
- 4-6 times (3)
- 6-8 times (4)
- 8-10 times (5)
- 10-12 times (6)
- Not yet managed to attend (7)

Q22 What reason would you give for not attending any meetings?

- I wanted to but dates were not convenient (1)
- I didn't find the topics of interest, so I chose not to attend (2)
- Other, please give your reason (3) _____

End of Block: Personal Information

Start of Block: Questions about impact on your scholarship of teaching and learning

Q6 Thinking about the pedagogic content of meetings, has attending journal club:

	Not at all (1)	No (2)	Somewhat (3)	Yes (4)	Definitely (5)
Improved your understanding of pedagogic issues? (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Improved your ability to discuss pedagogic issues with others? (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Given you confidence to engage in pedagogic discussions with others? (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Enabled you to make suggestions for changes to course or module delivery? (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Supported any changes to course or module delivery you may have made? (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Q7 Thinking about your professional development (PD), do you consider that attending the journal club has:

	Yes (1)	Possibly (2)	No (3)	Not relevant at this time (4)
Provided evidence towards academic promotion? (1)	○	○	○	○
Provided evidence for teaching awards or nominations? (2)	○	○	○	○
Provided evidence used towards FHEA of SFHEA application? (3)	○	○	○	○
Added to your portfolio of PD activity? (4)	○	○	○	○
Improved your networks with other colleagues? (5)	○	○	○	○

Q8 Do you think belonging to the pedagogic journal club has had any detrimental effect on your professional development?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q9 You said that belonging to the pedagogic journal club had a detrimental effect on your professional development. Please provide details here:

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Q15 Do you think that belonging to the pedagogic journal club has had a positive effect on your professional development?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q16 You said that belonging to the pedagogic journal club has had a positive effect on your professional development. Please provide details here:

_____

End of Block: Questions about impact on your scholarship of teaching and learning

Start of Block: Question about your engagement with pedagogic research

Q10 Thinking about your own pedagogic research activity, has being part of the journal club:

	Not at all, I feel discouraged (1)	Somewhat, I have plans to do this (2)	Definitely, I have done this activity (3)
Encouraged you to write pedagogic articles (1)	○	○	○
Encouraged you to read pedagogic articles (2)	○	○	○
Encouraged you to attend pedagogic themed conferences (3)	○	○	○
Encouraged you to present posters at pedagogic themed conferences (4)	○	○	○
Encouraged you to present papers or workshops at pedagogy themed conferences (5)	○	○	○

Q11 Have you made any changes in your department following your engagement with the journal club?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Changes are planned but not yet visible (3)

Q13 Please give details of the changes

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Q12 Have you made any changes to your teaching following your engagement with the journal club?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Changes are planned but not yet visible (3)

Q14 Please give details of the changes

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Q23 Have you embarked on other activities either in your own department or more widely across the university as a result of engaging with the journal club?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Activities are planned but not yet visible (3)

Q24 Please give details of the activity

_____

End of Block: Question about your engagement with pedagogic research

Start of Block: Final questions

Q17 If you would like to, please feel free to add any comments about your experiences of the pedagogic journal club and its effect upon you or your teaching here.

_____

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_____

Q18 Finally, how likely are you to recommend attending pedagogy journal club to your colleagues?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Somewhat likely (2)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
- Somewhat unlikely (4)
- Extremely unlikely (5)

End of Block: Final questions

2c Questionnaire 2

PJC - Professional Learning Community - 2nd round

Start of Block: Personal Information

Q38 After reading the information emailed please provide consent.

- ☐ 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. (1)
- ☐ 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. (4)
- ☐ 3. I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by other qualified individuals from The University of Warwick . (5)
- ☐ 4. I consent to use of verbatim quotations. (6)
- ☐ 5. I am happy for my data to be used in future research. (7)
- ☐ 6. I agree to take part in the above study. (8)

Q1 Do you identify as:

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ Other, you can specify if you would like to (3) _____
- ○ Prefer not to say (6)

Q2 What is your main job title

- Teaching Fellow (1)
- Senior Teaching Fellow (2)
- Principal Teaching Fellow/Assistant Professor (3)
- Research Fellow (4)
- Senior Research Fellow (5)
- Principal Research Fellow/Assistant Professor (6)
- Reader (7)
- Associate Professor (8)
- Professor (9)
- I am a member of non-academic staff (10)
- Other (11) _____

Q3 When did you join the pedagogic journal club?

- 2016/17 (1)
- 2017/18 (2)
- 2018/19 (3)

Q25 Are you still an active member of the pedagogic journal club?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q26 You said you were no longer an active member of the journal club, can you give reasons why?

_____

Q29 There are six meetings every year. How many times would you say you have attended meetings?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

How many meetings have you attended? ()	

Q22 What reason would you give for not attending any meetings?

- ☐ I wanted to but dates were not convenient (1)
- ☐ I didn't find the topics of interest so I chose not to attend (2)
- ☐ Other, please give your reason (3) _____

Q21 As you have not yet managed to attend a journal club meeting you can

- ○ choose to continue out of interest (1)
- ○ choose to end the questionnaire (2)

End of Block: Personal Information

Start of Block: Block 4

Q30 Consider your consumption and creation of pedagogic literature BEFORE attending the PJC. Consumption being reading or discussing either in isolation or with others. Creation being engaging in research of your own or others teaching practice either in isolation or with others. How regularly would you:

	Never	Minimally - every couple of years	Some- yearly	Regularly - termly	Consistently - Half termly or more
	0	1	2	3	4
Consume pedagogic literature ()					
Create pedagogic literature ()					

Q32 Consider your consumption and creation of pedagogic literature AFTER attending the PJC. Consumption being reading or discussing, creation being engaging in research of your own or others teaching practice. How regularly did you:

	Never	Minimally - every couple of years	Some - yearly	Regularly - termly	Consistently - half termly or more
	0	1	2	3	4
Consume pedagogic literature ()					
Create pedagogic literature ()					

Q33 In terms of pedagogic literature consumption and creation BEFORE the PJC, which definition would suit you best?

	Novice	Expert
Consumption of pedagogic literature ()		
Creation of pedagogic literature ()		

Q34 In terms of pedagogic literature consumption and creation AFTER the PJC, which definition would suit you best?

	Novice	Expert
Consumption of pedagogic literature ()		
Creation of pedagogic literature ()		

Q35 In terms of your academic standing and other academic/professional activity (NOT pedagogic research consumption or creation) What definition would suit you best?

	Novice	Expert
At this institution ()		
Nationally ()		

Q36 What training to teach have you completed in your career to date? Please name ANY qualifications gained or ANY courses completed, whether internally or externally provided or whilst employed at another institution.

_____

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_____

Q37 In any of this training, did you consume or create pedagogic literature?

- Consumption of pedagogic literature - Yes (1)
- Consumption of pedagogic literature - No (2)
- Consumption of pedagogic literature - Unsure (3)
- Creation of pedagogic literature - Yes (4)
- Creation of pedagogic literature - No (5)
- Creation of pedagogic literature - Unsure (6)

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Questions about impact on your scholarship of teaching and learning

Q6 Thinking about the pedagogic content of meetings, has attending journal club:

	Not at all (1)	No (2)	Somewhat (3)	Yes (4)	Definitely (5)
Improved your understanding of pedagogic issues? (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Improved your ability to discuss pedagogic issues with others? (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Given you confidence to engage in pedagogic discussions with others? (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Enabled you to make suggestions for changes to course or module delivery? (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Supported any changes to course or module delivery you may have made? (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Q7 Thinking about your professional development (PD), do you consider that attending the journal club has:

	Yes (1)	Possibly (2)	No (3)	Not relevant at this time (4)
Provided evidence towards academic promotion? (1)	○	○	○	○
Provided evidence for teaching awards or nominations? (2)	○	○	○	○
Provided evidence used towards FHEA of SFHEA application? (3)	○	○	○	○
Added to your portfolio of PD activity? (4)	○	○	○	○
Improved your networks with other colleagues? (5)	○	○	○	○

Q8 Do you think belonging to the pedagogic journal club has had any detrimental effect on your professional development?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q9 You said that belonging to the pedagogic journal club had a detrimental effect on your professional development. Please provide details here:

_____

_____

_____

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_____

Q15 Do you think that belonging to the pedagogic journal club has had a positive effect on your professional development?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q16 You said that belonging to the pedagogic journal club has had a positive effect on your professional development. Please provide details here:

_____

End of Block: Questions about impact on your scholarship of teaching and learning

Start of Block: Question about your engagement with pedagogic research

Q10 Thinking about your own pedagogic research activity, has being part of the journal club:

	Not at all, I feel discouraged (1)	Somewhat, I have plans to do this (2)	Definitely, I have done this activity (3)
Encouraged you to write pedagogic articles (1)	○	○	○
Encouraged you to read pedagogic articles (2)	○	○	○
Encouraged you to attend pedagogic themed conferences (3)	○	○	○
Encouraged you to present posters at pedagogic themed conferences (4)	○	○	○
Encouraged you to present papers or workshops at pedagogy themed conferences (5)	○	○	○

Q11 Have you made any changes in your department following your engagement with the journal club?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Changes are planned but not yet visible (3)

Q13 Please give details of the changes

_____

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Q12 Have you made any changes to your teaching following your engagement with the journal club?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Changes are planned but not yet visible (3)

Q14 Please give details of the changes

_____

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_____

Q23 Have you embarked on other activities either in your own department or more widely across the university as a result of engaging with the journal club?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Activities are planned but not yet visible (3)

Q24 Please give details of the activity

_____

End of Block: Question about your engagement with pedagogic research

Start of Block: Final questions

Q17

If you would like to, please feel free to add any comments about your experiences of the pedagogic journal club. Particular areas of interest of are:

Your professional development

Your teaching

Your engagement with pedagogic research

Any other comments are also welcome

_____

_____

_____

_____

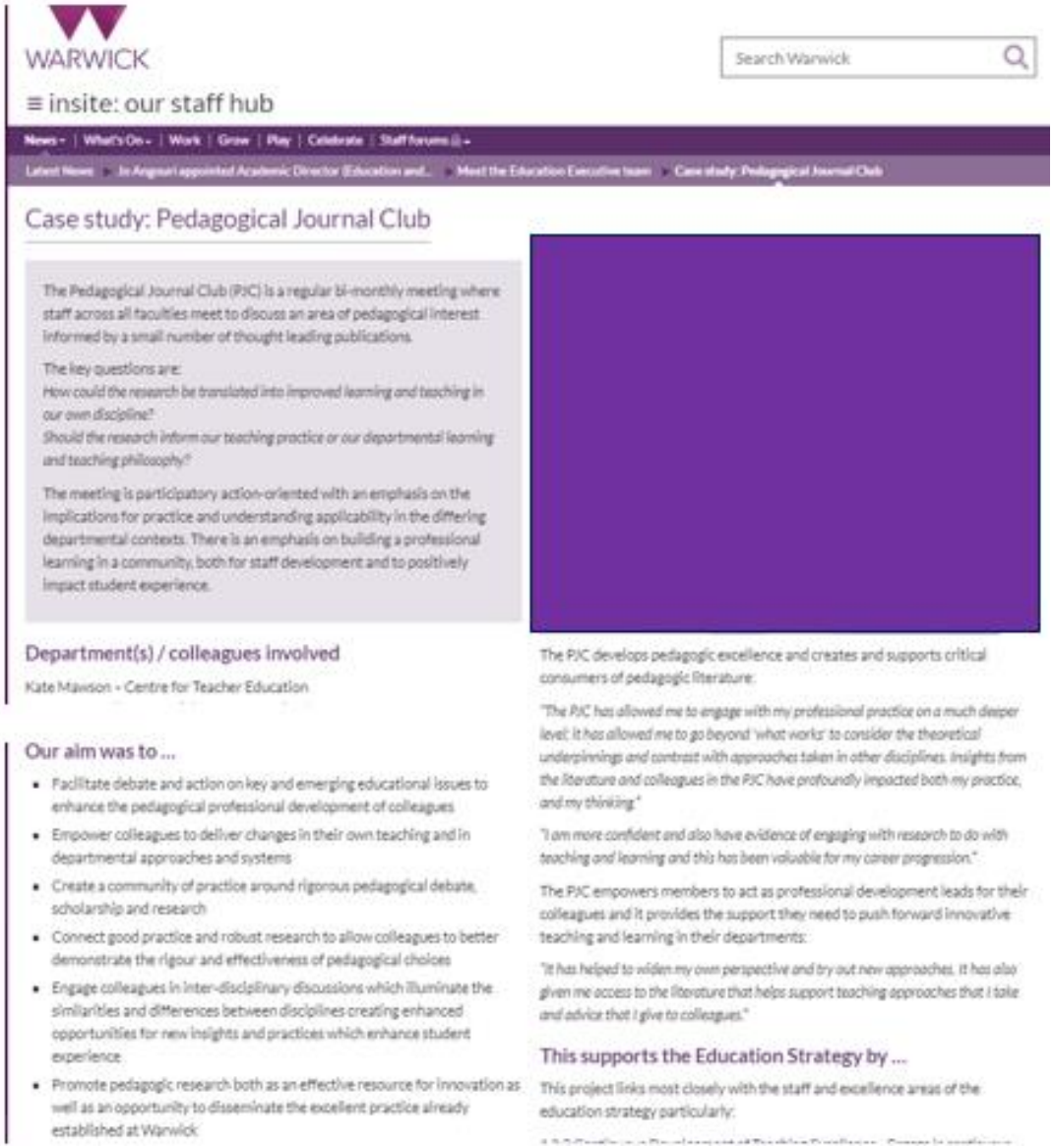
_____

Q18 Finally, how likely are you to recommend attending pedagogy journal club to your colleagues?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Somewhat likely (2)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
- Somewhat unlikely (4)
- Extremely unlikely (5)

End of Block: Final questions

3. PJC as Education Executive Case Study (Mawson and Redacted, 2018)



WARWICK

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Latest News ▸ [redacted] appointed Academic Director (Education and... ▸ Meet the Education Executive team ▸ Case study: Pedagogical Journal Club

Case study: Pedagogical Journal Club

The Pedagogical Journal Club (PJC) is a regular bi-monthly meeting where staff across all faculties meet to discuss an area of pedagogical interest informed by a small number of thought leading publications.

The key questions are:
How could the research be translated into improved learning and teaching in our own discipline?
Should the research inform our teaching practice or our departmental learning and teaching philosophy?

The meeting is participatory action-oriented with an emphasis on the implications for practice and understanding applicability in the differing departmental contexts. There is an emphasis on building a professional learning in a community, both for staff development and to positively impact student experience.

Department(s) / colleagues involved

Kate Mawson - Centre for Teacher Education

Our aim was to ...

- Facilitate debate and action on key and emerging educational issues to enhance the pedagogical professional development of colleagues
- Empower colleagues to deliver changes in their own teaching and in departmental approaches and systems
- Create a community of practice around rigorous pedagogical debate, scholarship and research
- Connect good practice and robust research to allow colleagues to better demonstrate the rigour and effectiveness of pedagogical choices
- Engage colleagues in inter-disciplinary discussions which illuminate the similarities and differences between disciplines creating enhanced opportunities for new insights and practices which enhance student experience
- Promote pedagogic research both as an effective resource for innovation as well as an opportunity to disseminate the excellent practice already established at Warwick

The PJC develops pedagogic excellence and creates and supports critical consumers of pedagogic literature.

"The PJC has allowed me to engage with my professional practice on a much deeper level: it has allowed me to go beyond 'what works' to consider the theoretical underpinnings and contrast with approaches taken in other disciplines. Insights from the literature and colleagues in the PJC have profoundly impacted both my practice, and my thinking."

"I am more confident and also have evidence of engaging with research to do with teaching and learning and this has been valuable for my career progression."

The PJC empowers members to act as professional development leads for their colleagues and it provides the support they need to push forward innovative teaching and learning in their departments:

"It has helped to widen my own perspective and try out new approaches. It has also given me access to the literature that helps support teaching approaches that I take and advice that I give to colleagues."

This supports the Education Strategy by ...

This project links most closely with the staff and excellence areas of the education strategy particularly:

similarities and differences between disciplines creating enhanced opportunities for new insights and practices which enhance student experience

- Promote pedagogic research both as an effective resource for innovation as well as an opportunity to disseminate the excellent practice already established at Warwick

What we did …

Aside from the willingly given time and energy of attendees, there were few resources required to support this activity – a room booking for 2 hours, 6 times a year, refreshments and some minor printing costs.

Time commitments were approx. 2 hours preparation and 2 hours attendance for all attendees and an additional 3 hours per meeting for the facilitator. Obviously over a year with an average of 8 to 10 attendees this is a significant amount of effort. Effective PD requires an investment of time.

The key thing was to create the discipline and supportive environment so that colleagues met regularly and were committed to take action. Part of this was to ensure that the topics and resources were closely linked to issues and aspirations for the group (which included crowd-sourcing the topics). Over the lifetime of the group, the subject matter has evolved and become more research and scholarship oriented as the participants became more interested in producing and in engaging in pedagogic research.

Papers were made available for download for a wider audience after the meetings and, where possible a digest of the discussion was created to add context.

The outcome has been …

A robust learning community has evolved around the PJC with colleagues continuing the dialogue outside of the meetings and developing their thinking through experimentation and review.

Members of the PJC are leading innovations in their departments which directly effects student experience and outcomes:

" [the PJC] readings influenced policy making within dept., ideas from discussions informed my own teaching. Now in the process of establishing a pedagogic reading group within my own department."

and advice that I give to colleagues.

This supports the Education Strategy by …

This project links most closely with the staff and excellence areas of the education strategy particularly:

1.2.3 Continuous Development of Teaching Excellence - *Engage in continuous enhancement of teaching and learning through partnership with students and staff and informed by peers and teaching-related research.*

The PJC specifically -

- Provides academic and professional support services teams with the pedagogical, technical and organisational expertise necessary to review, enhance and innovate in teaching practice
- Develops leadership capacity and succession planning in the support of teaching excellence across the University
- Increases the number of National Teaching Fellows/HEA Fellowships

1.3.2 Student Experience Consistency - *Demonstrate commitment to the provision of a consistent high-quality education experience for all students*

The PJC explicitly exchanges good teaching practice across the disciplines and all levels of study and embraces academic and pedagogical differences between disciplines and departments.

2.1.1 Strong Disciplinary Identities and Excellence in Pedagogies - *Develop and articulate research-informed and sector-leading disciplinary identities and 'signature pedagogies'.*

The PJC specifically empowers staff to communicate their sector leading pedagogies and produce this pedagogic research.

The response of students / staff has been …

This has been predominantly a staff development project but the PJC is an open group and students are welcome to attend. Staff highly rate the PJC
The PJC offers pedagogic research support and challenge which that feeds into department teaching and learning innovations and impacts upon both student experience and staff development. It is cross disciplinary whilst also respecting discipline specific needs, its developmental and supportive and can be given as a specific example staff can provide when asked about their engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning. It is *"quite simply the best thing I've been involved in since becoming a member of staff at Warwick."*

The outcome has been …

A robust learning community has evolved around the PJC with colleagues continuing the dialogue outside of the meetings and developing their thinking through experimentation and review.

Members of the PJC are leading innovations in their departments which directly effects student experience and outcomes:

" [the PJC] readings influenced policy making within dept., ideas from discussions informed my own teaching. Now in the process of establishing a pedagogic reading group within my own department."

"I now run a blog after looking at blogging and I've been part of a team who won a grant to change the way the department assess large scale exams."

"After the discussion of 'sustainable assessment' (following the article on that topic which we read at the club and which I later discussed with [dept.] colleagues) and the question of transferable / employability skills. We are intending to make those skills more transparent on our web pages and in our discussions with students."

At a professional development level, eight members used their involvement with the PJC as evidence for HEA applications.

The benefit/impact has been …

At an individual level, there have been significant impacts on confidence, both in producing and consuming pedagogic research:

"It has provided an excellent chance to allow those of us who are not naturally 'comfortable' with the language and practice of educational psychology to gain some initial experience in a friendly, peer-supportive environment."

"It has provided the means and incentive, via collaborations with colleagues in the PJC to engage with pedagogical journal-paper production."

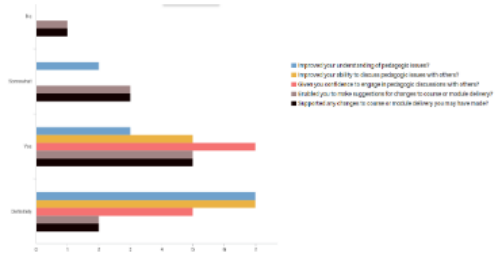
"It has allowed me to become more critical in considering my practice and provided a broader context, both from a theoretical perspective, and from the perspective of practice in other disciplines."

""I have gained the confidence to submit a WIHEA project bid (now funded) and am investigating collaborations with Monash."

"Gained confidence in engaging with pedagogic literature. Allowed me to discuss ideas with colleagues from other departments, giving me a wider but still Warwick-specific perspective."

The response of students / staff has been …

This has been predominantly a staff development project but the PJC is an open group and students are welcome to attend. Staff highly rate the PJC
The PJC offers pedagogic research support and challenge which that feeds into department teaching and learning innovations and impacts upon both student experience and staff development. It is cross disciplinary whilst also respecting discipline specific needs, its developmental and supportive and can be given as a specific example staff can provide when asked about their engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning. It is *"quite simply the best thing I've been involved in since becoming a member of staff at Warwick."*



Our next steps will be …

More of the same! We have some interesting new topics lined up for the 2018/19 academic year and hope to welcome new colleagues as well as established members. The PJC is now open to anyone at Warwick, you don't have to be a WIHEA fellow.

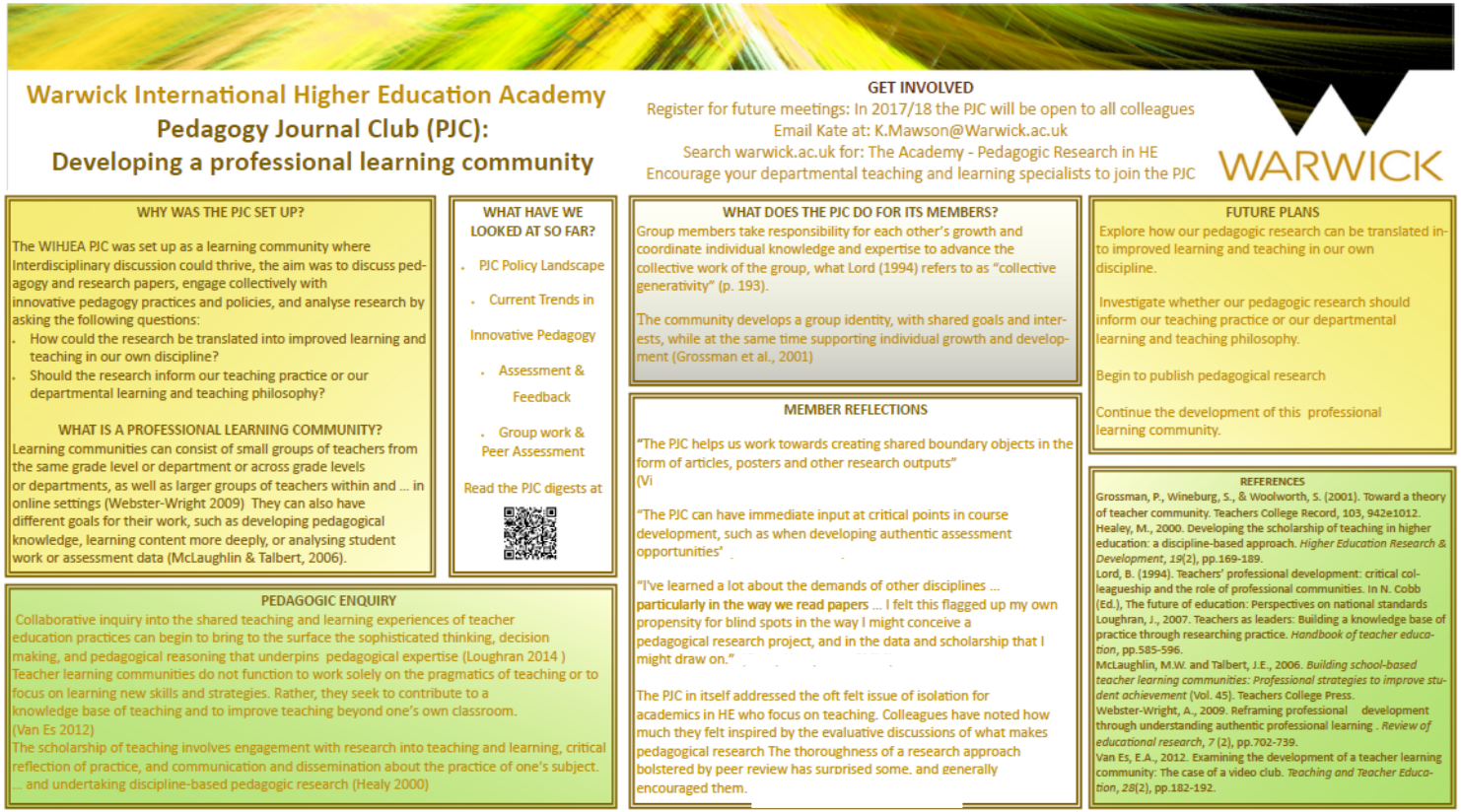
We are also thinking of experimenting with the format, just a little, to see if we can further enhance the impact and just in the spirit of fun. We thought it might be interesting to pair up attendees from different faculties for pre-reading to try to further develop inter-faculty learning, and also maybe to start each session with comments from colleagues on what had happened with respect to their learning and plans from the last session.

We'll also look to crowd-source ideas from the group.

To find out more, you can contact …

Kate Mawson (CTE) – k.mawson@warwick.ac.uk

4. **PJC Poster:** (Mawson, Redacted and Redacted, 2017)



Warwick International Higher Education Academy
Pedagogy Journal Club (PJC):
Developing a professional learning community

GET INVOLVED

Register for future meetings: In 2017/18 the PJC will be open to all colleagues
Email Kate at: K.Mawson@Warwick.ac.uk
Search warwick.ac.uk for: The Academy - Pedagogic Research in HE
Encourage your departmental teaching and learning specialists to join the PJC

WARWICK

WHY WAS THE PJC SET UP?

The WIHJEA PJC was set up as a learning community where Interdisciplinary discussion could thrive, the aim was to discuss pedagogy and research papers, engage collectively with innovative pedagogy practices and policies, and analyse research by asking the following questions:

- How could the research be translated into improved learning and teaching in our own discipline?
- Should the research inform our teaching practice or our departmental learning and teaching philosophy?

WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY?

Learning communities can consist of small groups of teachers from the same grade level or department or across grade levels or departments, as well as larger groups of teachers within and ... in online settings (Webster-Wright 2009) They can also have different goals for their work, such as developing pedagogical knowledge, learning content more deeply, or analysing student work or assessment data (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006).

WHAT HAVE WE LOOKED AT SO FAR?

- PJC Policy Landscape
- Current Trends in Innovative Pedagogy
- Assessment & Feedback
- Group work & Peer Assessment

Read the PJC digests at

PEDAGOGIC ENQUIRY

Collaborative inquiry into the shared teaching and learning experiences of teacher education practices can begin to bring to the surface the sophisticated thinking, decision making, and pedagogical reasoning that underpins pedagogical expertise (Loughran 2014) Teacher learning communities do not function to work solely on the pragmatics of teaching or to focus on learning new skills and strategies. Rather, they seek to contribute to a knowledge base of teaching and to improve teaching beyond one's own classroom. (Van Es 2012)
The scholarship of teaching involves engagement with research into teaching and learning, critical reflection of practice, and communication and dissemination about the practice of one's subject. ... and undertaking discipline-based pedagogic research (Healy 2000)

WHAT DOES THE PJC DO FOR ITS MEMBERS?

Group members take responsibility for each other's growth and coordinate individual knowledge and expertise to advance the collective work of the group, what Lord (1994) refers to as "collective generativity" (p. 193).

The community develops a group identity, with shared goals and interests, while at the same time supporting individual growth and development (Grossman et al., 2001)

MEMBER REFLECTIONS

"The PJC helps us work towards creating shared boundary objects in the form of articles, posters and other research outputs" (Vi

"The PJC can have immediate input at critical points in course development, such as when developing authentic assessment opportunities"

"I've learned a lot about the demands of other disciplines ... particularly in the way we read papers ... I felt this flagged up my own propensity for blind spots in the way I might conceive a pedagogical research project, and in the data and scholarship that I might draw on."

The PJC in itself addressed the oft felt issue of isolation for academics in HE who focus on teaching. Colleagues have noted how much they felt inspired by the evaluative discussions of what makes pedagogical research The thoroughness of a research approach bolstered by peer review has surprised some. and generally encouraged them.

FUTURE PLANS

Explore how our pedagogic research can be translated into improved learning and teaching in our own discipline.

Investigate whether our pedagogic research should inform our teaching practice or our departmental learning and teaching philosophy.

Begin to publish pedagogical research

Continue the development of this professional learning community.

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5. HESA accepted teaching qualification codes

Code	Label
1	Successfully completed an institutional provision in teaching in the higher education sector accredited against the UK Professional Standards Framework
2	Recognised by the HEA as an Associate Fellow
3	Recognised by the HEA as a Fellow
4	Recognised by the HEA as a Senior Fellow
5	Recognised by the HEA as a Principal Fellow
6	Holder of a National Teaching Fellowship Scheme Individual Award
7	Holder of a PGCE in higher education, secondary education, further education, lifelong learning or any other equivalent UK qualification
8	Accredited as a teacher of their subject by a professional UK body
9	Other UK accreditation or qualification in teaching in the higher education sector
10	Overseas accreditation or qualification for any level of teaching
11	Recognised by Advance HE as an Associate Fellow against Descriptor 1 of the UKPSF
12	Recognised by Advance HE as a Fellow against Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF
13	Recognised by Advance HE as a Senior Fellow against Descriptor 3 of the UKPSF
14	Recognised by Advance HE as a Principal Fellow against Descriptor 4 of the UKPSF
15	Recognised by SEDA against Descriptor 1 of the UKPSF
16	Recognised by SEDA against Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF
90	Not known

6. Ethical Approval

WARWICK
CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STUDIES

Application for ETHICAL APPROVAL for Postgraduate Research Projects

If you are doing engaging in empirical work for your dissertation, there will be a range of ethical issues that are raised. These include matters such as informed consent and confidentiality. All students engaging in such research are required to complete an application for ethical approval. Please consult your supervisor when completing the form. **Your supervisor must approve and sign your completed form before it is submitted and before empirical data collection begins. Please see additional guidance for more information.**

Forms should be submitted as soon as your research topic has been agreed.

Name of student: Kate Mawson

Degree programme: EdD Educational Leadership

Dissertation/Project title: Creating a pedagogic journal club for engagement with educational literature in a higher education institution

Supervisor/Tutor: Ian Abbott

Participants: Adults within teaching profession from late early career stage to Headship

Consent - will prior informed consent be obtained?

From participants? YES/NO

From others? YES/NO

Explain how this will be obtained. If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reason:

Consent will be requested via a paragraph outlining the study under which their response to the questions sets out that they consent to being a participant in the study on the online questionnaire. A consent form for interviews and the recording of interviews will also be used.

Will participants be explicitly informed of the student's status? YES/NO

Confidentiality
Will confidentiality be assured? YES/NO

How will confidentiality be ensured?

Identifying information will be requested as this is of value to the data collection however I will comply with the legal requirements in relation to the storage and use of personal data as set down by the Data Protection Act (1998)

While discussing my findings in writing I will not add any level of detail that would enable specific staff to be idetified, a code for participants will be devised to keep interview comments anonymous.

Protection of Participants

How is the safety and well being of participants to be ensured?

Any participant has the right to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and at any time, and they will be informed of this right.

Is information gathered for participants of a sensitive or personal nature? YES/

If yes, describe the procedure for
a) ensuring confidentiality
I recognise the participants' entitlement to privacy and will accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity. Anything related to professional development can have issues if comments are made public people feel open to professional judgement and so no transcripts or completed questionnaires will be published.

b) Protecting participants from embarrassment or stress

Ensuring confidentiality

I also recognise that some individuals may name other colleagues or institution policy or approaach within their narrative and may feel stress when discussing personal issues of performance. Confidentiality will be maintained for all named individuals and schools, and confidentiality of the issues discussed will be guaranteed unless it is superseded by a safeguarding concern

Observational research
If observational research is to be carried out **without** prior consent of participants, please specify
N/A
a) situations to be observed
meetings will be observed and memos taken but no formal observations conducted

b) how will privacy and cultural and religious values of participants be taken into account?
Warwick dignity at work will be adhered to

Signed (Student): Kate Mawson Date:25/04/2016

Approved
Signed (Supervisor): Date:

Action: Once your supervisor has approved this form please hand it in to Reception so that it can be processed according to department policy. Please also keep a copy for your own records.

7. Interview Consent Form

Interview Recording Agreement

Project: ***Warwick Pedagogic Journal Club***

This interview will be conducted on a one to one basis and recorded in order gather your thoughts about being part of a pedagogic journal club within University of Warwick supported by WIHEA. You have answered an open call to participate in the interview which will last about 45 minutes and will be unstructured, the data gathered will be used in addition to questionnaire data already collected and will be reported on anonymously and will not be linked to questionnaire responses.
The interview transcripts will be used to collect qualitative data and in some cases verbatim quotations may be used.

This recorded interview will be part of a collection of interviews completed as part of my educational professional doctorate at the University of Warwick. The interview will be recorded and transcribed in line with Warwick data protection policy and stored separately to any transcript. This agreement ensures that the interview meets with the wishes of both interviewer and interviewee.

Interviewee name.....

Please answer each of the following statements:

I understand the purpose of the interview and have been given adequate information	YES/NO
I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time, without giving an explanation	YES/NO
I agree to the interview being audiotaped	YES/NO
I would like to impose terms regarding anonymity or access (give details below):	YES/NO

Both Kate Mawson (the interviewer) and ..... (the interviewee), confirm that we have consented to take part in the interview.

Date: .....

Interview number for Office Use Only:.....

8. Ranking Table Metrics

The Complete University Guide

is compiled by Mayfield University Consultants and was published for the first time in 2007.

The ranking uses ten criteria, with a statistical technique called the Z-score applied to the results of each. The ten Z-scores are then weighted (as given below) and summed to give a total score for each university. These total scores are then transformed to a scale where the top score is set at 1,000, with the remainder being a proportion of the top score. The ten criteria are:

"Academic services spend" (weight 0.5) – the expenditure per student on all academic services (data source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA));

"Degree completion" (weight 1.0) – a measure of the completion rate of students (data source: HESA);

"Entry standards" (weight 1.0) – the average UCAS tariff score of new students under the age of 21 (data source: HESA);

"Facilities spend" (weight 0.5) – the expenditure per student on staff and student facilities (data source: HESA);

"Good honours" (weight 1.0) – the proportion of firsts and upper seconds (data source: HESA);

"Graduate prospects" (weight 1.0) – a measure of the employability of graduates (data source: HESA);

"Research quality" (weight 1.0) – a measure of the average quality of research (data source: 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF));

Research intensity" (weight 0.5) – a measure of the fraction of staff who are research-active (data sources: HESA & REF);

"Student satisfaction" (weight 1.5) – a measure of the view of students on the teaching quality (data source: the National Student Survey); and

"Student–staff ratio" (weight 1.0) – a measure of the average staffing level (data source: HESA).

The Times/The Sunday Times

The Times/The Sunday Times university league table, known as the Good University Guide, is published in both electronic and print format and ranks institutions using the following eight criteria:

"Student satisfaction (+50 to −55 points)" – the results of national student surveys are scored taking a theoretical minimum and maximum score of 50% and 90% respectively (data source: the National Student Survey);

"Teaching excellence (250)" – defined as: subjects scoring at least 22/24 points, those ranked excellent, or those undertaken more recently in which there is confidence in academic standards and in which teaching and learning, student progression and learning resources have all been ranked commendable (data source: Quality Assurance Agency; Scottish Higher Education Funding Council; Higher Education Funding Council for Wales);

"Heads'/peer assessments (100)" – school heads are asked to identify the highest-quality undergraduate provision (data source: The Sunday Times heads' survey and peer assessment);

"Research quality (200)" – based upon the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (data source: Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE));

"A-level/Higher points (250)" – nationally audited data for the subsequent academic year are used for league table calculations (data source: HESA);

"Unemployment (100)" – the number of students assume to be unemployed six months after graduation is calculated as a percentage of the total number of known before completing their courses is compared with the number expected to do so (the benchmark figure shown in brackets) (data source: HEFCE, Performance Indicators in Higher Education).

Other criteria considered are:

"Completion" – the percentage of students who manage to complete their degree;

"Entry standards" – the average UCAS tariff score (data source: HESA);

"Facilities spending" – the average expenditure per student on sports, careers services, health and counselling;

"Good honours" – the percentage of students graduating with a first or 2.1;

"Graduate prospects" – the percentage of UK graduates in graduate employment or further study (data source: HESA's survey of Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE));

"Library and computing spending" – the average expenditure on library and computer services per student (data source: HESA);

"Research" (data source: 2008 Research Assessment Exercise);

"Student satisfaction" (data source: National Student Survey); and

"Student-staff ratio" (data source: HESA).).

(*Rankings of universities in the United Kingdom*, 2021)

(Times Higher Education, 2020)

The Guardian's ranking

Nine different criteria, each weighted between 5 and 15 per cent. Unlike other annual rankings of British universities, the criteria do not include a measure of research output. A "value-

added" factor is included which compares students' degree results with their entry qualifications, described by the newspaper as being "[b]ased upon a sophisticated indexing methodology that tracks students from enrolment to graduation, qualifications upon entry are compared with the award that a student receives at the end of their studies". Tables are drawn up for subjects, with the overall ranking being based on an average across the subjects rather than on institutional level statistics. The nine criteria are:

"Entry scores" (15%);

"Assessment and feedback" (10%) – as rated by graduates of the course (data source: National Student Survey);

"Career prospects" (15%) (Data source: Destination of Leavers from Higher Education);

"Overall satisfaction" (5%) – final-year student's opinions about the overall quality of their course (data source: National Student Survey);

"Expenditure per student" (5%);

"Student-staff ratio" (15%);

"Teaching" (10%) – as rated by graduates of the course (data source: the National Student Survey);

"Value added" (15%);

"Continuation" (10%)

(*Rankings of universities in the United Kingdom*, 2021)

(Times Higher Education, 2021)