Equal possibilities not restricted opportunity: A critical reflection on the experiences of ‘Vocational’ transition within the context of post-16 sports education

Submitted by David Charles Rhys Aldous to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Research in Sport and Health Sciences, December, 2010

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.......................... David Charles Rhys Aldous
Abstract

This PhD study explores the transitional experiences of working class students between institutions of Further Education and Higher Education within the field of post-16 sports education. It draws its empirical illustration from the interview and ethnographic data collected over an 18 month period between October 2007 and July 2009 from a group of six students who had enrolled on a vocational FDSce Foundation Degree qualification. The study is comprised of two interrelated parts: Part I of the study illustrates the conceptual and methodological considerations which have driven the exploration of the student experience. The theoretical approach for investigating these experiences is informed by the structurationist perspective of Rob Stones (Stones, 2005). Stones conceptualises the relations between agent and structure four interlinked areas: External Structures, Internal Structures, Active Agency and Outcomes. Conceptualising transitional experience in this manner offers possibilities for a more contextually sensitive, refined, developed and ultimately adequate ontology of structuration. In further developing the framework, the study draws upon the sociological understanding of Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu. The incorporation of these two distinguishable but related perspectives allows the framework to inform an understanding of the interconnections between the sanctioned practices of a context, the role of agents within a context and the power capacities that are derived from these relations (Mouzelis, 1991; Morrison, 2005). In doing so, it provides a number of lenses in understanding the practices and relations between Further and Higher Education and the consequences of this for agents who enter this transition. Part II critically reflects on the participants experiences. Drawing upon data collected at three institutions: Hope Further Education College (HFEC), Fawlt University-College (FUC) and Ivory Tower University (ITU), the study discusses and explores in depth how the relations between the participants and the external structures of the institutions begin to form three identifiable and conceptually distinguishable transitional experiences which are seen to be either Empowering, Fragmented or Failed. In reflecting upon such relations and experiences, the study suggests that discourses of opportunity surrounding vocational qualifications forwarded to these students prior to, and during their course, is rather more complex than previously illustrated and for some functions as more of a myth than empowering discourse. Rather than providing equal possibility, the relations and transitional experiences that are currently produced only afford restricted opportunities to students choosing this vocational pathway within post-16 sports education. In conclusion, the study begins to discuss the implications of the relations and experiences highlighted for present and prospective relations and practices, asking whether change is possible, creating equal possibilities, not restricted opportunity.

Key Words: Structuration theory; Quadripartite Framework; Transitional experience; Further Education; Higher Education.
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Abbreviations and Definitions.

BA: Bachelor of Arts
BSc: Bachelor of Science
DfEE: Department for Education and Employment
DfES: Department for Education and Skills
CAFE student: College And Further Education student
FDSc: Foundation Degree Science
FUC: Fawlty University-College
HEFCE: Higher Education Funding Council for England
HFEC: Hope Further Education College
ITU: Ivory Tower University
QAA: Quality Assurance Agency
OPF: Official Pedagogic Field
ORF: Official Recontextualising Field
Chapter 1 - Introduction.

We face a moment in which the basic rights that generations fought for and gained could, after being fatally weakened by Thatcher & Sons, be lost forever...The cuts posed by both Labour and coalition governments threaten the very fabric of Higher Education, and universities must make the case against them – renegotiate a social contract with society. Those who abandon the soul of education to save the skins of their own institutions deserve neither, and, in the long-run, will preserve neither. [Chessum, 2010: Web article]

1.1 The emergence of Foundation Degrees

In reflection of the article by Michael Chessum, the practices and rules of Higher Education have continued to blur and evolve the embedded relations and positions of post-16 education (Johnson, 1995; Dearing Report - NCIHE, 1997; DfEE, 1998; Valentine, 2003; Kettley, 2007). This has resulted in what Burke (2007) describes as ‘alternative entry’ courses. Yet the breadth and type of these courses makes the term ‘alternative’ redundant, with vocational qualifications playing an increasing role in shaping transition into Higher Education. One example of the genesis within vocational qualifications and market-orientated pedagogies is the development of Foundation Degree qualifications. Although tied towards the politics of vocationalism (see Burke, 2002) the emergence of Foundation Degrees, represent a specific form of marketed orientated qualifications which seek to provide individuals from non-traditional Higher Education backgrounds accessibility to the field of sports Higher Education and qualifications (Harris, 2004). However, despite increasingly becoming central to the commodification of post-16 sports education, the emergence and development of vocational qualifications remains controversial, representing, for some, a threat to the autonomy and quality of Higher Education; becoming ‘engines of social justice’ rather than meaningful qualifications (BBC, 2008). The outcome of such changes can be witnessed in the plethora of new and different opportunities and qualifications for working class students choosing to pursue careers within the field of sport (Ball, 1997; Jones, 1999; David, 2000; Laminiyas, 2002; Davies, 2003; Jones & Thomas, 2003; Maton, 2005; Burke, 2007; Abbas & McLean, 2007; Clayton & Humberstone, 2007; Tomlinson, 2008). This has led to the development of new practices and discourses allowing new ways of transmitting and acquiring knowledge to emerge within the field of sports education at a post-16 level where currently within the United Kingdom there are over 1,000 sports qualifications with which sports students are confronted. Paradoxically, this has created a situation where the acquisition and distribution of knowledge within sports education is now a competitive enterprise, embodying wider discourses of performativity and competition (Tomlinson, 2001; Evans et al., 2008).
For some, particularly those within the field of policy-making, the development of market driven qualifications in which relations between employment and education are reinforced provides opportunities for students who would not normally have the necessary qualifications to enter Higher Education. In addressing their own dreams and preserving their own political positions, the policy-makers have inadvertently changed the dreams of others as well. Accordingly, what continues to emerge are new dreams, new aspirations and hope for working class students who would not have had the opportunity to enter Higher Education ten years ago (Waller, 2006; Reay et al., 2001; Archer et al., 2003). However, despite a plethora of opportunities which resonate with hopeful discourses of class equality and accessibility there are those who continue to question the value of these qualifications. This is illustrated by Tomlinson (2008) who notes,

The expanded system of Higher Education may, at one level, be blurring social divisions in the acquisition of symbolic and economic goods used to maximise individuals positions in the economy. However, this may mask the fact that elite and mass Higher Education often co-exist and that this co-existence is likely to intensify positional difference. [Tomlinson, 2008: 59]

As Tomlinson highlights, the blurring of relations in which these opportunities are presented masks the intensification of positional differences. While such dreams and aspirations for Higher Education burden students from all classes within society the consequences of this (intended and unintended) are particularly profound for working class students. Following the words of Quinn (2004) students who choose Foundation Degrees are not the ‘scholarship boys’ of yesteryear’ (p.64) nor are they situated within the elite Higher Education system. The consequences of this are profoundly illustrated by Nick Danzinger (1996),

Today the students were neither inspired nor motivated; their attitude was no-matter what- i’m-probably-not-going-to-make-it. Their values as well as society’s had changed. Students no longer seek personal fulfilment, but look for financial security. Their institutions have become profit-motivated learning factories inhabited by educational consumers rather than students. Success is gauged by income or purchasing power. You are what you earn. [Danzinger, 1996: 5]

The ruminations of Danzinger are reflective of the potential problematical outcomes created by the dream of Higher Education and the new market-orientated qualifications aimed at a particular type of student with a particular background. Furthermore, as Danzinger notes, outcomes offered by these learning factories to the working classes have led to ‘The poverty of their aspirations, (to use Aneurin Bevan’s phrase), being replaced by a wealth of expectations that are rarely attainable’ (p.6). Thus, while there are increased transitional pathways created through the
development of other qualifications there is still no valued place for the working classes within Higher Education which, as Reay (2002) despairingly illustrates, ‘neither equal nor common for all’ (p. Vii). It is evident therefore, that despite an increasing opportunities in Higher Education for working class students, the possibilities that these qualifications offer are constricted, perpetuating, not removing class inequality within post-16 education.

Despite the attempts to sanitise class backgrounds within discourses of opportunity and choice, class inequalities remain within the relations, practices and discourses of Higher Education qualifications, perpetuated by the political and policy practices of a series of governments (Davis, 2003). As Evans & Davies (2008) contend, ‘class does not mean the same thing in Merthyr Tydfill as it does in Manchester’ (p. 209). Therefore, as Evans (2004) reminds us, ‘there is still compelling evidence for the salience of social class in determining a person’s choice, preferences and opportunities in sport’ (p. 102). Indeed the importance of class in transition experience is highlighted by Bates et al. (1984),

Class affects how young people enter it and where they are expected to go when they leave it. Class also shapes the process of transition itself - its length (when they decide to leave) and the sort of institutions in which it is experienced (school and university). [Bates et al., 1984: 7]

As Bates et al. (1984) highlight, contrary to government and media rhetoric, class biographies of students are still integral to the educational transitions they undertake. While more recent government practices have attempted to influence these transitions through the perpetuation of external resources such as widening participation programmes (see Archer, 2007), the working classes are in direct competition for places in the mass Higher Education system (Naidoo, 2004; Tomlinson, 2008). As such social inequalities, supposedly eradicated by the influx of external resources, are considered to be worsening, with most of the new places within Higher Education falling to those who are from more advantaged backgrounds (Bowl, 2001; Tett, 2004; Middleton, 2005). This also supports Shilling’s (1993) observation that, ‘educational, sporting and other fields in society are generally not structured in ways that provide frequent opportunities for value to be bestowed on working class bodies’ (p. 137). Thus, the new mass system of Higher Education has been sadly exposed as something of a political myth in which class boundaries, embedded within the social divisions of the Higher Education system have become reinforced.

Current research has failed to account for how these relationships perpetuate class barriers within Higher Education (see Archer et al., 2003; Reay et al., 2005; Reay et al., 2010). As Moore and Young emphasise, such tensions ‘are beginning to directly affect learning opportunities for
pupils in school and have wider consequences through the principles by which knowledge is
distributed in society’ (2001, p.446). My concerns regarding the state of post-16 sports education,
reflected by other researchers highlighted, are summarised succinctly by Fitz et al. (2006), who
comment,

Problems of educational success and failure have long been and continue to be strongly
influenced by gender and ethnicity. It may seem paradoxical; therefore, that class has
substantially disappeared from sociological discourse about educational policy. [Fitz et al.,
2006: 11]

It is evident, both through my own experiences of Higher Education and working with
students from working class backgrounds, that the issue of class has not disappeared. Rather, it has
something of an ‘absent presence’ within sports education research (Shilling, 1993; Valentine,
2003); often masked by issues such as gender and ethnicity. Yet from my experience, issues of class
are alive and, furthermore, play an integral role in shaping the Higher Educational experiences,
practices and dreams of students from differing socio-cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the
development of Foundation Degrees (FD) are indicative of government aims to make Higher
Education available to all students from all backgrounds and reflect wider discourses concerning
individualised learning, and increasing the range of options available to learners within post-16
education within the knowledge economies of today’s society (DfES, 2003; Hayward et al. 2005).
As Bates et al. (1984) have identified, while the material cultural experiences of the young act as a
powerful tool in understanding the processes that lie behind transition within education it is a ‘force
which is often absent from official accounts’ (p.2). It is, therefore, all the more remarkable that we
understand very little about these dreams and the outcomes of these for students. As Maton (2005)
notes, the new student was defined as ‘the first of (usually) his family to enter university and
typically of working class origin, new students were portrayed as bringing their own problems for
which the universities have to find the appropriate answers’ (p.692). Despite remaining highly
controversial for all agendas within education, their development and influence upon widening
access within sports education is something which often goes unheard or unnoticed (see however,
Fitz et al., 2006).

Yet, although concerns regarding the value of practices within the Foundation Degree and
the outcome of these upon students have been recognised (see DfES, 2003; DfES, 2008), there is a
paucity of empirical research within post-16 sports education which fails to account for the
experiences of students who undertake these courses or the consequences of their decisions (see
Clayton & Humberstone, 2007). Therefore, these ‘hidden Higher Education students’ remain
elusive. There is little empirical understanding of either this underlying transitional route or of the practices and experiences of this particular group of students. Consequently, while some within the field of educational research have highlighted the experience of vocational students and the array of practices and policy decisions which influence these experiences, such research remains unclear, opaque at best, regarding how both experience and structure are related (see David, 2007; Watts et al., 2007).

1.2 Understanding the vocational experience.

If further and Higher Education is to embrace the radically changing context of knowledge and learning within late modern, contemporary and globalised societies, researchers must view both structures and the individual in a more holistic manner: one which is not only affected by change but creates the parameters for change. Education research needs to seek a way of utilising concepts in such a way which will provide a unique (and at times more realistically complex) picture of the system we have constructed and the consequences of such a system for those who not only enter it, but will face its consequences in the decades to come. There is a necessity to find a way of conceptualising the origins of experience and the destinations an individual follows. Any understanding of transition requires researchers to continue to listen to the voices of those within the context, not only those of students but also of those agents and practitioners who are responsible for constructing these transitional experiences. Deplorably, as Evans (2004) contends, within the culture of individualism which currently pervades Higher Education policy, ‘voices such as these, positioned on the margins, inevitably struggle to be heard’ (p.97). This is supported by Holdsworth (2006) who reminds us, it is ‘appropriate to turn the spotlight of research directly onto to the students and their experiences of Higher Education’ (p.496). To avoid this and learn from their experiences, researchers, such as myself, must continue to pursue avenues in which experiences become illuminated. To this end, how we conceptualise these experiences plays a crucial role in helping to develop an understanding of the experience of post-16 Sports Education. Subsequently, this study has adopted a structurationist perspective from which transition is understood as being created from the interaction between the in-situ practices of individual agents and the external structures they interact with. Such an approach is reflective of the observation of Bates et al. (1984) who comment,

Life goes on, and transitions are accomplished in all the complexity of everyday life. Although this is continuously moulded and developed in part by direct official policy, it is
also achieved through the experiences, knowledge and cultures of the people involved. [Bates et al., 1984: 12]

Thus, through adopting a structurationist lens, transition becomes not a distinct moment in space or time but a series of *in-situ moments*, fluid and continually evolving due to the interaction between structure and agent practices.

Alarmingly, despite the increased number of students undertaking vocational qualifications within the specific field of sports education there remains a deficiency of research regarding the tertiary sector and the relations between and within institutions. This is highlighted by Kirk et al. (1997) who note, ‘with the exception of the work of Evans and his colleagues, few analyses have attempted to identify forces outside the physical activity field in Higher Education that have contributed to these reconstructions of the instructional discourse of the field’ (p.284). Furthermore, despite the volume of research committed to the field of education and the consequences of policy, as Bernstein (highlighted by Singh, 2001) contends, there is an overwhelming silence about the *rules* and *principles* that construct the specialised interactions that play a role in creating transitional experiences. As Davies (1994) rightly observes,

> We are surrounded by prescription about our organisational structures and given some of the pedagogical correlates of increasing student attainment without knowing why they work or without knowing how far they *transcend* the context of their initial, frequently methodically hazy, location. [Davies, 1994: 14]

Following from the thought of Davies, this thesis considers the need to create a conceptual language that further permeates the link between micro and macro levels of analysis, highlighting the fact that transition between Foundation Degrees and Higher Education are tied up within identified wider structures such as the family, education system and societal changes (Valentine, 2003; Hultberg et al., 2008). Subsequently, in Bernsteinian terms this approach is able to unearth the inequalities that lie deep within the very structure of the educational systems processes of transmission and acquisition.

### 1.3. An overview of the PhD study.

*A Short Reflective Note*

*July 2001: I knock on the door and close my eyes, ‘Come in’ bellows the authoritative yet familiar voice of my Head of Sixth Form. ‘Morning’ I stutter, eyes fixed at the ground. ‘Morning David, please take a seat’. I immediately dart for the seat in the corner, only raising my eyes to see my UCAS statement on the desk the red ink blurring my options for next year. In what seems an age, M*
engages me with my options for next year. ‘Do you still want to be a Physical Education Teacher?’ More than anything in the world I thought, ‘Yes’ I quietly stated. ‘Good, it is a good career and we have little doubt that you would be successful. ‘I see that you have put ***** down as your first choice, why?’ What a question, why? I did not know why, I had only been once but it was a proper university where the elite went and I still wanted to be the elite. I said nothing.

‘Why?’ The question reverberates around my head to this day. Like others of my generation, too young to fully appreciate the ferocity of Thatcher, university was the ‘norm’, almost an implicit aspect of our transition into a new brave world. I wanted to go to university because it was the thing to do: to go to a proper ‘red brick’ university was the only thing to do. I do not know why. Most of my peers, those who weren’t going into the forces (such delusions of grandeur had long subsided) were going to ‘proper universities’. Despite my feelings of anxiety and nervousness I went and in part it is probably why I am here, writing my PhD: something which continues to provide humour and amazement for friends, peers and colleagues, both past and present. My own experiences are the foundations for this thesis and although I have completed my own transitional journey and embark on new ones I still question the choices I made. It is these choices and experiences which have contributed to my willingness to understand other transitions and the expectations of going to university.

In some respects, this study has been developed based on my experiences; both as a student of Higher Education and more recently as a lecturer who finds himself responsible for the futures of students who display signs of an experience not so dissimilar to my own. Based on my retrospective experiences and current beliefs, I wanted to explore and understand the interwoven relations and practices that currently form the nature of Higher Education.

In doing so, the study explores the transitional experiences of six students from a Foundation Degree within sports education institution in the South-West over an 18 month period. The experiences of Jack, Lloyd, Steve, Emily, Charlie and Peter (pseudonyms) within this case study highlight the processes and consequences of this transitional pathway. Chapter Two highlights previous conceptual lenses used to develop an understanding of the nature of Foundation and Higher Education alongside the experiences of those within these fields. It is apparent that there remains a divide within educational research between perspectives interested in exploring the institutional and policy developments of Higher Education and those which seek to understand the student experience within these institutions. The methodological considerations of this conceptual approach and how it informed my research design, data collection and representation are discussed.
Chapter Three. It discusses how the development of a structuration framework highlights and addresses a number of epistemological, ontological and hermeneutical considerations. To this end, the chapter highlights the nature of data collection, and the methods adopted, interviews and ethnographic, used to understand the experiences of the participants over an 18 month period. The collection techniques advocated contribute to the sense of prospective as well as retrospective data, alluding to a more fluid sense of transitional experience. The chapter also highlights the analytical lenses and procedures which were adopted in understanding and attempting to make sense of their experiences, retrospectively and prospectively. Finally issues regarding representation and judgement of transitional experiences are addressed.

Part II focuses on illuminating the experiences of the participants through the data collected. It is important to highlight this aspect of the relationship as the mechanics of institutions have been identified as having increasing influence on the nature of transition within Higher Education. This chapter will provide for the reader a critical insight into the mechanics that shape the transition between the Foundation Degree in Sports Coaching and Development (FDSc) at Hope College and the resulting ‘Top Up’ programmes which are affiliated with this course; the BSc in Sports Coaching at Fawltly University-College and the BSc in Sport Science at Ivory Tower. To do this, this chapter draws upon the conceptual lenses of Bernstein and Bourdieu within the structuration framework outlined in Chapter Three to highlight the external structures and resources of agents within the Foundation Degree institutions and what role these play in the creation of three transitional experiences for the participants in this study. In doing so, it draws attention to three types of transitional experiences which are borne, out of the relations between agent and structure and are illustrated as being Empowered, Fragmented or Failed. The experiences and relations which characterise these three transitional experiences are explored in depth in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. Given the disparity between the short time frame of the PhD study and the relatively longer time frame of a typical transitional process in education, the study inevitably raises more questions than it addresses. Nevertheless, it offers detailed understanding of how transition occurs during the period of data collection and how this takes place through the interaction between mechanics and structures of further and Higher Education and the dispositions of the participants. Chapter Eight highlights the need for those within Higher Education to focus their critical gaze upon themselves and on how they may participate in creating the relations and positions which these students experience within post-16 education. This PhD study draws attention to these experiences at a time, as Davies (2001) notes, where ‘our politicians and those within the realms of power are only prepared to hear what they are ready for’(p.5). I hope what is conveyed is a personal and intimate
account of post-16 educational experiences. It does not provide all the answers nor does it seek to, but what I hope it does is illuminate for the reader the experiences of six students, caught within the web of hopes, dreams and aspirations that were not dissimilar of mine a number of years before.
Part One: The foundations and evolutions of thought: Literature Review and Methodology.

Part I of the study illustrates the development and considerations made regarding the conceptual and methodological elements of the study. Following from the introduction, how transition and experience are conceptualised and understood remains contested within educational and sports education research. To this end, Chapter Two discusses and highlights the approaches and perspectives developed in relation to the understanding of experience and transition. In attempting to further the discussion of what transition and experience are, the chapter focuses on the contribution structuration theory can make to any understanding. Additionally, Chapter Two begins to discuss how such understanding may be evolved so that the relations between agent and structure may be understood in greater detail. In doing so the chapter highlights and discusses the evolvement of the structurationist perspective, illustrating some the conflicting perspectives that inform its development. The limitations of these perspectives is discussed in detail and this discussion provides the foundations upon which attempts are made to build an understanding of experience and transition. More specifically, it highlights the influence of Rob Stones, whose account of structuration theory and the framework developed from it provides the foundations for the conceptual approach used within this PhD study. Stone’s structurationist approach, which attempts to account for relations between agent and structure through a focus on ontology in-situ, is discussed in detail, highlighting how the four interrelated aspects of his framework may contribute to understanding transitional experience not only retrospectively but prospectively as well. Furthermore, the chapter begins to show how the theories and concepts of Bourdieu and Bernstein have been drawn upon in developing the framework. Both Bourdieu’s and Bernstein’s work have long been central to educational research in a number of fields. Within the framework, Bernstein’s work has been used to understand the construction and transmission of external structures alongside the rules which govern the transmission, recognition and acquisition of social and educational discourse and practice. Bourdieu’s work has been drawn upon to develop and consider the role agents and their own embodied practices play in these relations and the forming of transitional experiences. While it is highlighted how the work of both theorists has evolved since their original conception, the chapter attempts, to outline how they have been integrated into the framework. This has been done in a way which acknowledge both the dangers of over theorisation to understanding students’ experience but also the benefits that such conceptual frameworks can have.

The theoretical developments highlighted in Chapter Two have a number of methodological
consequences for the design of the study. In particular, the conceptualisation of ontology in-situ necessitates a position to be taken regarding how experience is understood. To this end, Chapter Three begins the methodological discussion by considering the approaches which would illuminate student experience, retrospectively and prospectively. Furthermore, the chapter highlights a research narrative in which a number of considerations had to be made regarding data collection to ensure the concept of ontology in-situ was adhered to. Such discussions allude to a number of hermeneutical and other interpretative considerations. Following this discussion the case study approach adopted is outlined alongside the methods used to understand transitional experiences.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review


What we require today is a conceptually generated system of description through which the lower levels of past analyses can be integrated and projected on to the wide screen of contemporary change, imaginary and actual. [Bernstein, 2001: 327]

While the experiences and practices of students, policy makers, institutions have been central to debates between educational theorists for sometime such debates continue to be perforated with tensions regarding how to account for these experiences. Accordingly, there are a number of considerations to make in how we conceptualise and explore the experiences of individuals within educational institutions. To enable the considerations which are necessary to come alive through conceptual thought it is necessary to highlight how my thoughts have been formulated into the conceptual framework. The starting point of this journey is a retrospective review of how transitional experience has been explored previously within educational research. This is illustrated by Watson et al. (2009) who suggest,

Students from non-traditional academic backgrounds may experience particular difficulties in their transition into HE because of their different skills, experiences and expectations compared with traditional school leavers holding academic qualifications…. The degree of responsibility that students are expected to take for their own learning can prove surprising and difficult to adjust to, particularly where it is contrary to previous educational experiences. [Watson et al., 2009: 666]

Traditionally, the practices and processes of educational policy which are formulated at the macro level and the experiences of agents on a micro level have been conceptualised as being two distinct fields of research. Although recent developments in social theory have advanced our understanding of some of the problems regarding educational policy (see Penney & Evans, 1999), there remains considerable friction between the study of large scale phenomena such as social systems and national policy which contrive to influence everyday interactions and actions and the need to address the local particularities and interactions that occur on a daily basis (Shilling, 1992). Arguably the friction in understanding has detracted from the very complexities that the sociology of education sets out to explore and indeed needs to explore in terms of transition. One of the ironic consequences of this is the perpetuation of the sociology of education’s difficulties in accounting for class inequality reproduced between structure-agency relationships within tertiary education institutions. A partial reason for this difficulty is the mixed consensus for speaking about working
class and middle class as clearly defined entities within modern education. While there have been a number of recent attempts to overcome such problems (for example see Tett, 2000; Waller, 2006) there remain areas to develop.

The pressure upon the field of educational researchers to evaluate and measure individual experience within Higher Education has led to the polarisation of analytical perspectives in which the individual experience is drowned out by what Ball (1995) highlights as ‘implementation studies, focused issues like quality, evaluation and accountability’ (p.258). Following from Ball in coming to understand experience from this perspective, the agent is often situated within the rigorous boundaries of what Ball defines as quality, evaluation and accountability. Such closed and tightly framed analytical frameworks remain an attractive but often detrimental enticement for governments seeking to justify recruitment of working class students into Further and Higher Education, and ultimately employment. Consequently, those within educational research seeking to move beyond the ascribed parameters of performativity and metrics find themselves marginalised from the developing research game. Contrastingly, those who choose to adopt evaluative projects are becoming increasingly distant from the lives and struggles of those currently experiencing Higher Education. Under the conditions of rapid change within relations between Further and Higher Education the detachment by those following this popularised performativity culture leads to an evaluative understanding of past relations (Bernstein, 1999). As such, current gaps in the understanding of transitional experience within the various perspectives of educational research provides space from which to develop different conceptual lenses. What follows within this chapter is an attempt to understand and conceptualise how social agents interact with social structures in a more analytical manner. This approach, from where the PhD study begins is resonant with the thoughts of Bernstein (2001),

What we require today is a conceptually generated system of description through which the lower levels of past analyses can be integrated and projected on to the wide screen of contemporary change, imaginary and actual. [Bernstein, 2001: 327]

2.2. Addressing the individual experience: micro level perceptions of Higher Education

In an attempt to overcome the limitations of retrospective macro understanding of transitional experience, there has been a multitude of research which focused on the individual account of transition and experience. Many of these are reflective of Stephen Ball’s (1995) comment that ‘contemporary sociological theories in such areas as modernity, postmodernity, structuration, self-identity, the civilising process, consumption and the body have much to offer the study of
education’ (p.267). Furthermore, continuing his praise and positivity of these approaches, Ball (2004) comments that those who adopt more contemporary sociological theories within educational research have attempted to challenge, ‘a whole raft of fundamental, often clearly cherished but sometimes unexamined, assumptions in sociological practice; most obviously and profoundly the deployment of totalising grand narratives’ (p.8).

Central to all the perspectives which are labelled ‘postmodern’ (amongst others) is the question of how knowledge is produced and reproduced (Moore & Young, 2001). Postmodern theorists have embraced a number of ideas: firstly, many postmodernist perspectives enhance the agency of agents, reducing (but not diminishing) the determinism found within other approaches. Secondly, many postmodernist perspectives view knowledge as power (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). The key idea here is that power resides within knowledge and that discourses derived from such knowledge can be reproduced or contested over a number of sites and, as suggested by Skelton (1997), not held centrally by one dominating group. Thus, power and who holds power (symbolically and practically) is an ever evolving process of knowledge exchange and interaction. Such fluidity allows the individual to recognise themselves and become their ‘self’ through the text (Ball, 2004). However, within such perspectives there are as many differences as there are commodities (Smith, 2001; Ball, 2004).

Additionally, as a consequence of this fluidity, knowledge within education is increasingly becoming displaced from the legitimising grand narratives and is, increasingly, specific to a context and particular in its nature. Thus, following postmodernism the relationship between agency and structure becomes substantially more complex. It is this understanding of complex interactions between structures and agency which enable a deeper understanding of how individuals act in response to and in accordance with structures of society. Central to the postmodern approach is the use of individual experiences to focus and engage within multiple power networks that exist within localised interactions between individuals. The development of approaches that highlight relations between the individual and structures enable a number of considerations about the experience of working class students in Higher Education. For example, the research conducted by Reay (2001) highlights how there may be a difference in how this is experienced depending on the class of the individual. These considerations are invaluable as they highlight and consider the notion of class. With the ever increasing emphasis on individualism, the working classes are deemed to have failed because of their own faults thus masking the role of the institution within this apparent failure to enter Higher Education (Reay, 2001). Accordingly, following this perspective, transition becomes attributed to individual experience with little acknowledgement of the macro structures identified in
more structuralist perspectives. External from educational research Kenway (1993) adopts a postmodern perspective to highlight how large corporations have continued to shape and reshape individual and collective identities as they are exposed to cultural and economic communication networks. While Kenway (1993) addresses these at a meso-level, such considerations are important as they will inevitably affect the individual experience.

The influence of postmodernist perspective can be seen within educational policy. In prioritising and using a number of schemes and qualifications to aid transition, governments are enhancing individual choice over their transition thus accentuating the role of the individual and attributing failure to the individual and not the system. Such considerations offer considerable insight into how we might begin to consider the impact of changes at a macro level upon individual experience of Higher Education within what Stones (2005) describes as the ontic-level of ontology. While work of this nature has yet to be attempted within post-16 sports research, it has been addressed elsewhere by those considering transition within and between education. For example, Rudd (1997) notes, ‘the attempted application of postmodernist approaches to recent developments in education provides some insight into how such perspectives might view the relative influences of structure and agency in youth transitions’ (p.275). As such, this perspective lends itself to highlighting multiple transitional experiences which continually evolve in relation to the dynamism between the structures of a context and embodied discourses of gender, class and ethnicity of a context. As suggested by Fernandez-Balboa (1997) the individual identity within such a perspective is ‘not seen as fixed and constant but, on the contrary, as finite, locally determined language games, each with specific pragmatic criteria of appropriateness’ (p.5). Accordingly, following Fernandez-Balboa, individual experience is understood in relation to the structures of their specific context. Thus, experiences are constantly being created and recreated with relation to local relations and positions between individuals.

Understanding experience without acknowledgement of wider structures beyond the temporality of the individual agent has limitations which have been identified but need to be discussed and elaborated upon. As Brustad (1997) notes, the postmodern perspective ‘emphasises sociocultural and cultural analyses and the need for integrative, inclusive, and dynamic approaches to knowledge’ (p.87). The fluid nature of postmodernism causes the notion of a single identity (such as class) to become increasingly problematic for poststructuralist and postmodern theorists (Brown, 1999). Postmodernists object to class consciousness per se on the grounds that it denies or suppresses the facts of social difference (Hill, 2001). For example, some postmodernists have
argued that class analyses are outdated and that the designation of a working class is less valid in a postmodern era in which multiple and fluid identity exists. For example, postmodernism can (and has) linked with left and right wing politics. Often, within such fluidity and the acknowledgment of realist or material environment, class inequality is often drowned out by increasing concerns for individual inequalities such as gender or ethnicity. The awareness of class position can no longer determine an individual outlook on life because within the postmodern perspective such outlooks are so unstable the individual cannot be considered to be determined by them. Although the emphasis on gender or ethnicity weakens the understanding of class, there is no death of class, but a salience of class consciousness and of social class and its modern recomposition and redefinition (Hill, 2001). Thus, the issue of class does not disappear, but alters shape or evolves within the fluid nature of society existing in more individualised embodied forms (Ball et al., 2000).

While postmodernist understanding of experience may account for the influence of gender and ethnicity upon individual experience, what remains to be highlighted is how these are influenced by the material circumstances in which these positions are prescribed. This is supported by Sage (1997) who notes that any analysis of the experiences of physical education and sport must ‘historically situate modernist traditions and institutions while denouncing the social inequalities based on class.’ (p.13). Although postmodernist perspectives offer potential for the exploration of transitional experiences, researchers investing such perspectives must be wary of ‘over investment’. In attempting to understand individual experience postmodernist research is in danger of over simplifying the relationship between agent and structure in a way which structuralist perspectives have been criticised for (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). A focus on individual experience without acknowledgement of the context of that experience, or consideration of external structures, is problematical and may be contested. Accordingly what understanding is generated merely detaches the experience of the individual, as it does not situate this experience within wider relations. Consequently, their experiences remain isolated within the history of a person, unable to be connected within the time and space of class based policies within the fields of education, political policy and local government. This limits any analysis because it does no more than to expose inequalities by revealing the power relations which perpetuate inequality (Moore & Young, 2001). As Ball et al. (2002) note, ‘class still has a great deal to tell us about outlook, relations and identity’ (p.233).

While postmodernist perspectives undoubtedly play a crucial role in evolving understanding of transition, there are still significant silences in which, as Evans (2004) contends, agents are
‘positioned on the margins, inevitably struggle to be heard’ (Evans, 2004, p.97). Research must be aware of over eagerness in conforming to the beliefs of postmodernism as this may alienate others through replacing one grand narrative for another thus stagnating the ability to account for the individual experience in its entirety (Apple, 1996a; Davies, 1994). This seems unacceptable, as research must continue to seek an approach in which such voices are not only ‘heard’ but are also accentuated and reflected upon in a more holistic manner to untangle the increasingly complex and multidimensional nature of agency and structure in transition into Higher Education. We must construct a language that continues to push for a more holistic and fluid approach to understanding experience and transition; one that allows experience of class, gender and ethnicity to be understood in relation to the structures of their creation and evolution. Accordingly, the role of structuralist perspectives must not be diminished despite their evident limitations and disregard for agent practice (see Ball, 1995; Moore & Young, 2001). Any attempt to accentuate these voices must seek to avoid undermining the value of structuralist theory (Shilling, 1999) or indeed any other theory.

Like others (see Evans et al., 2004; Fitz et al., 2006) I see the need to further this discussion within Higher Education through a plurality of narratives and a polyphony of experiences. Such understanding can only be achieved through mapping a detailed description of how transition into Higher Education is constructed, reproduced and transmitted rather than merely focusing on the consequences of such transition. This is highlighted by Daniels (1995) who suggests that some work has ‘focused exclusively on the effects of interaction at the interpersonal level, with insufficient attention paid to the interrelations between interpersonal and socio-cultural levels’ (p. 517).

In consideration of this I follow from Rudd (1997) in emphasising that an approach must be developed in which ‘their [in this case students] experiences and their futures are not exclusively determined by socialising and structural influences but also involve elements of subjectivity choice and agency’ (Rudd, 1997 p.271). Developing an understanding of how experiences are constructed through relations between agency and structure requires the contribution of both structuralist and poststructuralist perspectives. This allows structures not to be a determinative influence but a living and breathing entity continually evolving and being constructed within and between the experiences of individuals. Understanding agent experience of transition in this manner necessitates a theoretical lens which may address structure-agent dichotomies. Here, my thoughts turn towards developing a reflexive sociological approach.
2.3. The contribution of structurationist perspectives to understanding structure-agent relations.

It has been identified that both student agency and the relationship to the structure of the university are important factors (see Ball et al., 2002). In developing an understanding of the relations between agency and structure the focus of this study turns to the conceptual perspective forwarded within structuration theory. Structuration theory offers the possibility of being able to relate these factors in a more cohesive manner as it allows this relationship to be explored as a central focus rather than a peripheral issue. While the theoretical power of structuration theory clearly lies within its attempts to bridge the void that exists between structure and agency within other theoretical perspectives (both structuralist and poststructuralist) its analytical focus tends towards the revealing of universal ontological relationships. The distinctiveness of this approach is encapsulated by Rob Stones,

Its distinction lies in the particular way that it conceptualises structures and agents. Firstly, it places phenomenology, hermeneutics and practices at the heart of interrelationships and interdependencies between the two. These provide the hinge between external structures and agents and is affected in large part by these things, for phenomenology, hermeneutics and practices are also at the very heart of both structures and agents themselves. [Stones, 2005: 4].

Unlike other poststructuralist perspectives, structuration theory attempts to relate both structures and agents as being co-influential. Giddens (1984) illustrates this relationship as a ‘duality of structure’ in which structures are both the medium and outcomes of agents’ practices (Giddens, 1984, p.25). In doing so, Giddens provides a deeper illustration of the role of the agent, one which is continually situated by structures but also having the ability to harness the power of structures in evolving their positions.

Within this relationship, there have been a number of perspectives that have sought to further understand this relationship between structure and agents. (see Archer, 1982; 1995; 2000; Shilling, 1997; 1999). For example, Margaret Archer’s structurationist perspective focuses on how structures must be understood from a realist perspective in that they are ‘real’ and demonstrably external to the individual agent. This contrasts with the perspective of Giddens (1979) who understands structures as being structures of knowledgeability; including structures of domination (power), signification (meaning) and legitimisation (norms). This understanding of what constitutes ‘structures’ is supported by Shilling (1991, p.77) who notes, ‘social structures are not seen as purely constraining, impersonal forces which stand above and apart from individuals’. This has been previously highlighted by Shilling (1991) who notes how structuration theory has been criticised or
not including ‘a sufficiently strong institutional dimension which would account for how certain rules and resources are more enduring that others’ (p.80). Thus, Shilling seems to support the need for Archer’s understanding of structure to be included in any exploration of agent-structure relations. Furthermore, as Stones (2005) comments, using such abstract concepts opens the nature of study here to criticism, ‘depending on where the emphasis was placed, structure or agency, it could be over voluntaristic or an overly fatalist and deterministic theory’ (p.7). Subsequently, while structurationist accounts have provided a detailed description of how knowledge is reproduced, it has failed to consider the consequences of this knowledge production. Accordingly, while it is useful to identify meso-level networks of relations and practices, it is also necessary to identify their causal significance on the situated practices and knowledge of the individual. Indeed, to attempt to understand micro interactions reinforces the suggestion of Fitz et al. (2006) that while everywhere is the same it is also different. This is also supported by Stones (1991),

Even when overlapping and mutually contributing ontologies of the two approaches are synthesised, they can still be deepened, and made more powerful, by drawing from other traditions to create a more complex account of the point of interaction between structure and agency. [Stones, 2001: 179]

Consequently, within Structuration theory, structures are sets of rules and resources which an individual can draw upon and reproduce. Yet while structures remain important within all the structurationist perspectives highlighted, the individual agent has to make personal choices regarding these structures. Giddens (1990) conceptualises such choice by discussing how individuals are able to engage with the structures of society. However, while such recognition begins to make the voice of individual experience resonate, how the individual comes to implicate, construct and recognise rules and resources is devoid of explanation. The importance of considering all of the various structurationist perspectives is summarised by Shilling,

We need human agents at the centre of social reproduction, not in the sense of merely throwing individual perceptions at policy sociology but structuration theory which recognises that action occurs through individuals implicating, and hence reproducing ‘structural’ rules and resources in their daily lives, not to mention educational policy which is concerned with how people formulate, implement, mediate and oppose policies. [Shilling, 1992, cited in Davies, 1994: 79-80]

Accordingly, while the work of Giddens begins to highlight the complexity of agent-structure relations, what is required is further levels of analytical focus in which the individual is seen as both constructor of (as carrier of pedagogic knowledge) and being constructed by the structures of a context (as an acquirer of knowledge). If experience of the individual is to be
understood furthered and related to the context in which this experience is constructed it is necessary to more adequately conceptualise the role of the individual agent dispositions and practices at the ontic-level of reality (Stones, 2005; Jary & Jary, 1997). Such a structurationist perspective would begin to overcome the limitations of macro level structurationist perspectives that often fail to address the intricacies of this relationship. Such structurationist lenses might then also be able to unmask the intricacies which lie at what Stones terms as the structural-hermeneutic core and are fundamental in reproducing and producing the class inequalities that have been identified elsewhere within educational and transitional research. What is necessary therefore, is finding a way of magnifying the conceptions of structuration theory to account for interactions on a micro level. It is to this topic that the discussion now turns.

2.4. Developing a structurationist perspective - the quadripartite framework.

The structurationist account provided by Stones represents a more refined, developed and adequate ontology of structuration. This particular structurationist perspective focuses on relations between agent and structure at the ontic-level of ontology, placing the ‘structural-hermeneutic’ core at the heart of his characterisation and understanding of the relations and practices between agent and

![Fig. 2.1 Diagram to illustrate elements of the quadripartite framework of structuration (Adapted from Stones, 2005).](image-url)
As illustrated in fig.2.1, the quadripartite framework consists of four areas which are separate yet within the duality of structure. However, it is worth stressing Stones’ (2005) intention that this should be seen as a development of rather than a departure from Structuration Theory. The framework postulated explores the interconnection between the sanctioned practices of a context, the role of agents within a context and the power capacities that are derived from these roles (see Mouzelis, 1991). Consequently, Stones’s structurationist perspective illustrates how agents practices both cause and are the result of their positioning (spatially) rationally to knowledge, self and others, something which has been alluded to elsewhere within sports education (see Evans & Davies, 2004b).

In representing these ideas fig.2.1. illustrates how the quadripartite framework is a cycle that distinguishes agent-structure relations within four interrelated components; External Structures, Internal Structures, Active Agency and Outcomes. Each of these four interrelated but analytically distinguishable aspects will now be discussed.

2.4.1. External structures

External Structures as conditions of action, which have an existence that is autonomous from the agent-in-focus, and which within structuration are conceived in terms of the structural context of action faced by that agent-in-focus in time 1. They can be thought of at the abstract ontological level, as with thinking of the notion of relevant networked position-practices at the abstract level, or they can be considered at the in-situ, conjunctural level of particular agents and structures against a substantively more concrete framework of position-practices. [Stones, 2005: 84]

Within the quadripartite framework, external structures represent the structural contexts to which an individual interacts to determine the expression of knowledge. Importantly, agent interaction within external structures determines the positions agents undertake at what Stones illustrates as the ontic-level of reality. The illustration of external structures that Stones delivers has a number of important points to discuss. Firstly, the structures Stones describes are notable for being conceptually different to those more conventional structures advocated by Archer and others (see for example Thompson, 1989). This is both a strength and weakness of the conceptualisation of structure in this manner as, by removing conventional structures from his framework, Stones is in danger of reproducing many of the analytical dualisms he works so hard to avoid and indeed has critiqued himself (see Stones, 2001). Nevertheless, his work also represents an advancement on many of the limitations of structure conceptualised by the meso-structurationist lenses in as much as
he identifies structures which exist within the immediate reality of the agent in focus. In doing so Stones (2005) highlights how ‘social structures are not refined entities devoid of human being and their irreducible qualities, just as the views and experiences that prompt the thoughts and actions of social agents are those of beings who are islands unto themselves secreted away from social environments’ (p.4).

These external structures position an individual within a context with some theoretically plausible consequences. For example, a situated agent’s sense of the normative expectations of a context field come with achieving certain positions. External structures may make an individual aware of what was once taken for granted. Consequently, an individual becomes unsettled and therefore reflective. Such reflectiveness then begins to shape the practices of the individual in relation to their current and previous experiences. If the individual is allowed to draw upon previous experiences then they may be able to embody the practices required for the context they find themselves in. Yet this assumes that the individual agent is able to become aware of the discourses and actions of others within a context. Contrary to what Stones (2005) advocates, External Structures within this framework should not be seen as being fixed, unchangeable or subject determining objects. Indeed, by considering external structures as not fixed, unchangeable or subject determining but ones which evolve and shift dependent on the practices of individuals within shifting and evolving temporalities allows for a more fluid conceptualisation of transitional experience which accounts for both structures within and beyond the immediate reality of the agent-in-focus. Secondly, while Stones accounts for structures which exist only in the ‘structural context of action’ faced by an agent, do agents draw upon previous historical structures? And if so, how? Thirdly, are they influenced, through other agents, by structures which exist beyond their immediate temporality? Moreover what enables the individual to recognise the external structures so that they may become reflective? While this particular aspect of the framework suggests what practices an individual draws upon depends on how they perceive the context of action (Stones, 2005) it fails to highlight how agents acquire knowledge and what determines whether an individual recognises the value of external structures. Thus, it may be suggested that within a context, those agents with knowledgeability of the external structures of a context will display some control over the production and reproduction of the knowledge required to produce actions for that position. However, such a perspective assumes that an individual is able to recognise and embody the practices of external structures. These are questions that further add to the depth of the analytical lens that Stones (2005) work offers by adopting a positive critical approach to using the framework in this study.
2.4.2 Internal structures

To overcome the limitations of Giddens’ work in his apparent lack of distinction within the practices of the agent and the role of agency (Stones, 2005), the quadripartite framework develops the idea of internal structures of the individual. As acknowledged by Stones (2005), conceptualisation of such dispositions is ‘Indespensible for a structuration theory dealing with ontology-in-situ’ (p.90). There exist two different types of internal structures, Conjuncturally Specific and General Dispositions. As illustrated by Stones, both sets of internal structures regulate relations between agent practice and the external structures of specific in-situ context of action at what Stones (2005) refers to as the ontic-level of reality. Such a concept represents a development of the idea forwarded by Mouzelis (1991), who makes the distinction between two kinds of internal structures, positional and dispositional, building on the concept of Habitus as outlined within Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts. Moreover, drawing upon the work of Mouzelis (1991), Stones begins to disseminate Giddens’ idea of virtual structures which exist within the agent and position them within a context. In doing so he disseminates internal structures into Conjuncturally-Specific and General Dispositions. As Stones (2005) notes, highlighting the idea of two internal structures draws attention to the possibility that ‘there are likely to be differences, despite overlaps between the ways in which these two types of structures comes to be initially constructed in the histories of how they came to be the internal structures they are’ (p.91). Following Stones, although in reality both sets of internal structures are inseparable, it is important to illustrate both separately to show their influence on agent practices, relations and positions in-situ.

Conjuncturally Specific Internal Structures are sets of specific knowledge for particular settings and contexts. As Stones highlights when identifying knowledge in context we are able to identify the relations between internal structures and external structures. This is illustrated by Stones (2005) who notes how conjuncturally specific knowledge is to focus on ‘particular details and idiosyncratic exigencies of, and hence the specific knowledge required to deal with, this building, this lecture theatre, this city, these organisational routines and these particular people’ (p. 90). For example, as highlighted by Aldous and Brown (2010) teachers practising PE in schools with differing socio-economic backgrounds will be required to interact with the particular details and specific knowledge of the school: in the case of our empirical study, a teacher in inner city Birmingham will have to engage with external structures which differ to those found in rural Devon. The knowledge of PE practice, the relations between differing pupils and their ability could be seen as conjuncturally specific knowledge which the agent-in-focus (teacher) acquires and embodies. Furthermore it is the positioning of what Archer (1995) may refer to as more realist
structures. For example, the spatial positioning of mirrors within a gym, where the weights room is separated from the running machines will vary from gym to gym but are all virtual and realist capacities from which an agent perceives a context of action. When an individual enters a particular context and is able to recognise the dispositions and practices of that context they are able to acquire knowledge for that context. Conjecturally specific knowledge is limited as it is only required for specific contexts (context specific knowledge). Thus, knowledge within these dispositions has a very specific value which has limited exchange value beyond the limits of a particular context. Nevertheless, within the field, there is a great deal to be gained from recognising and embodying dispositions at the substantive level (Stones, 2005). Importantly, understanding of these structures is built up over time and may be recognised, acquired, and embodied long before they are drawn upon. The knowledge which is conjuncturally specific can be analytically distinguished into three ontologically interrelated aspects of structures identified within Giddens structuration theory (Stones, 2005),

1. Knowledge of Interpretive Schemes;
2. Normative Expectations;

All three aspects of structure identified by Stones illustrate and identify the different aspects of positions or roles an agent will undertake within a specific context. Knowledge of interpretive schemes identifies the relations between the internal structures of the Agent-in-focus and the knowledge of other agents within a specific in-situ context. The interpretive schemes of other agents are identified by Stones as external structures. For example, as Stones (2005) notes, knowledge of interpretive schemes refers to how ‘particular positioned agents within a context would interpret the actions and utterances of others’ (p.91). Importantly, an agent draws upon these schemes retrospectively and prospectively. Accordingly, the practices an agent will eventually develop based on these schemes will invariably have unacknowledged consequences for an agent. The power capacities aspect of knowledge refers to an agents knowledge of the power capacities of both their own practices and those of other agents within contexts. As Stones (2005) notes, agents-in-focus will ‘typically consider this relationally with respect both to who they themselves rely on for power resources, and how much and what kind of power other goal-relevant actors can command’ (p.92). Accordingly, by identifying the power capacity of conjuncturally specific knowledge, what is distinguishable is the contestation of power and positions by differing sets of agents within a context. However, one question which arises is how agents come to recognise and
acquire conjuncturally specific knowledge and how these relations evolve, if they do at all. Normative Expectations refers to knowledge of how to behave based on the practices and beliefs of other agents within a context. This is illustrated by Stones (2005) who notes how ‘at times it may be more useful to think of her (agent) drawing upon the more encompassing, deeper and more detailed, appreciation of the hermeneutic-structural processes of those agents-in-context’ (p.101). Furthermore, the knowledge of normative expectations an agent-in-focus acquires is also dependent on the general dispositions they have acquired and embodied previously. For example, students who move schools or undergo forced transition will have normative expectations of a particular context based on their previous school experiences.

In analytically distinguishing the different aspects of conjuncturally specific knowledge, Stones begins to add another dimension to the agent-structure relations explored within the Quadrapartite framework, moving beyond Giddens’ abstract understanding of structure-agent relations. Moreover, rather than merely describing and illustrating how relations between agents and structures are formed, he also alludes to why agents may undertake specific practices and positions. General dispositional knowledge embedded within the general dispositions of an individual’s corporeal schemas and memory traces is unquestioned knowledge, (Stones, 2005). The concept of General Dispositions has strong resonance with the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Like with Bourdieu’s concept of Habitus, general dispositions of an agent-in-focus are situated at the unconscious level, embedded within corporeal schemas. In Bourdieuan terms, it is conceptualised on the ‘unnoticed part’ or doxa of an individual (see Bourdieu, 1990; Webb et al., 2002). Therefore, knowledge that is deemed to be ‘sacred’ within a context in-situ is embodied as general dispositions within the internal structures of the agent and is subsequently carried across to other contexts that the individual may inhabit (Stones, 2005). Thus, in relation to transitional experiences, agents’ general dispositions would act in naturalising transition, making the agent appear to act naturally. This is illustrated by Stones (2005) who notes general dispositions as,

Encompassing transposable skills and dispositions, including generalised world-views and cultural schemas, classifications, typifications of things, people and networks, principles of action, typified recipes of action, deep binary frameworks of signification, associative chains and connotations of discourse, habits of speech and gesture, and methodologies for adapting this generalised knowledge to a range of particular practices in particular locations of time and space. [Stones, 2005: 88]

The resonance with Bourdieusian concepts and literature is apparent. In identifying these general dispositions of the internal structures Stones begins to illustrate the relations between agent
and the external structures of a context and the role they play in developing unconscious (deeply socialised) actions. Furthermore, Stones identifies how the relation between general dispositions of internal structures may be dissonant. This is illustrated by Stones (2005) who suggests ‘One’s taken-for-granted mode of being can be subverted and unsettled, making one suddenly conscious of that which previously was pre-reflective’ (p.88). This contributes to the work that has continued to evolve Bourdieu’s concept of habitus. For example, Shilling (2008) begins to evolve Bourdieu’s idea of habitus in which agents existing in unfamiliar fields of practice become unsettled and consequently reflective of their positions and relations. The shift between the unconscious practice (orthodox) and the new and unfamiliar (heterodox) has a number of implications for transition, as agents-in-focus, through time, will continually negotiate this shifting line. However, what Stones and Crossley fail to identify or acknowledge is what governs this shifting line. This is illustrated by Stones (2005),

The line that does not exist between the questioned and the unquestioned habitus of doxa and the universe of discourse argument (orthodox and the heterodox) is a contingent and shifting line between an unquestioned habitus and the part of the habitus that is open to critical reflection and discussion. [Stones, 2005: 88]

As the comment highlights, it is important to reflect on the relationship between conjuncturally specific knowledge and general disposition sets of dispositions. Both internal and external structures will combine to produce actions of agents, consciously and unconsciously. Equally, the line that Stones alludes to will shift, causing the critical distance between varying degrees of critical reflection to also shift. Moreover, this relationship and its relationship to external structures is one which may develop the way transitional experiences of an agent-in-focus are conceptualised and explored. This is crucial to this study as the interaction between the two may elucidate to the role internal structures play in determining transitional experiences of Higher Education. As will be addressed later in the chapter, understanding of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is important to further developing the role of internal structures within the framework.

2.4.3 Active agency

The varying combinations and relations between internal and external structures produces what Stones illustrates as Active Agency. These combinations have been illustrated in five different aspects,

1. Shifting horizons of action;
2. Creativity, improvisation and innovation;
3. Degrees of critical distance and reflection;
4. Conscious and unconscious motivations;
5. The ordering of concerns or the sorting out of priorities into a hierarchy of purposes: Critical Reflection.

All the five aspects identified by Stones draw upon Giddens’ stratification model of agent in action (Giddens, 1984). Horizons of action refers to the process by which agents draw upon knowledgeability of social structures to produce purposive actions. This reinforces the idea that agents actions are created within a process of interaction with external structures. Consequently, the actions and conduct of an agent-in-focus are not overly deterministic allowing the for possibility of creativity. As Crossley (2001) notes, these should not be thought of as detached from context and past determinations based on a combination of both embodied dispositions and the perceived demands of the immediate context in-situ. However, as Mouzelis (1991) suggests, there is a level of critical distance between habitus and conjunctural knowledge. Such interactions have both a conscious and unconscious element to them. While it is beyond the remits of this thesis to discuss the levels of unconscious and conscious psychoanalysis (for further reading see Craib, 1989) what is important to the understanding of experience and transition is that agents conscious and unconscious emotions will affect how agents draw upon both sets of internal structural dispositions. As Stones (2005) acknowledges, the production of practice can take on many forms,

From projection and introjection through a range of kinds of attraction, attachment, distaste, repulsion, anxiety and fear, through to many group and individual forms of identification, misapprehension and denial. [Stones, 2005:103]

While Stones, drawing extensively upon the work of Craib and Giddens’, illuminates a number of actions, at this point in developing and understanding the framework there remain questions to be asked, particularly regarding the role of class upon the actions of the agent-in-focus. Indeed, little attention has been placed upon class in determining the motivation of an agent-in-focus or on the relations between the external structures of a context and the internal structures of agents. For example, do working class students have a different set of practices to those of middle class students? If so, how do the general dispositions of working class students interact with the external structures of middle class institutions? The question of class is an important one because the class of an agent will influence a plurality of statuses and role positions, or what Giddens’ refers to as a hierarchy of purposes or what Archer refers to as an ordering of concerns. Stones contextualises plurality as being influenced by morals, religious, political, economic and organisational discourses. However, again, the role of class and the discourses associated with
certain classes of society have failed to be acknowledged.

Depending on the context in-situ, agents-in-focus actions and practices may be conceived rationally, pre-reflectively or strategically and critically (Stones, 2005). It is important to remember that while an agent’s actions or conduct is dependent on their social position they are not moulded by them entirely (Mouzelis, 1991). Agents’ actions only take place in the process of interaction between agents’ internal structures and the external structures of a context. This suggests that actions, while historically situated may also be prospective in their creation. This has implications in how transition is understood, not only by exploring the practices of an agent retrospectively, but accounting for their actions in the present and remaining aware of the clues to the prospective actions an agent will undertake. While the structure of each context will either facilitate or frustrate an agent’s purpose (see Archer 2000; Archer, 1996) consideration of the active role of agency in constructing such contexts further highlight how transition into Higher Education is experienced within and between contexts. Yet, how dynamic this relationship is remains questionable, as it is dependent on how much autonomy the individual is granted by dominant established positions in expressing their existing internal dispositional structures. Again, it emphasises the importance in accounting for both the internal structures of the agent and the external structures in which actions are produced.

2.4.4 Outcomes

The fluid relationships that exist between external structures, internal structures and agency result in a number of outcomes for agents-in-focus. Stones identifies these as change and elaboration, preservation and reproduction. The impact of outcomes upon internal structures is thought of as part of the overall affect of structuration on agents (Stones, 2005). It could be that outcomes are the result of the actions of agents upon the external structures of a context. Similarly outcomes can also be the influence structure has upon the internal structures of the individual. Internal outcomes impact upon internal structures of the individual i.e. how does existing within the institution affect the habitus and conjunctural specifics of the individual?

Likewise, outcomes may not be limited to the outcomes upon the external and internal and there may exist other outcomes, the nature of which are yet to be established (Stones, 2005). These can be outcomes which are irrespective of the individual effect upon structures or what Giddens refers to as unintended consequences for an agent; those which exist beyond the agents horizon of action (Giddens, 1984). For example, as highlighted within Whitty (1977) education can have unintended consequences for the individual. While Whitty’s ideas are not a direct example of
structuration theory, such unintended consequences can be understood through relating the experience of the individual to the structures of society rather than disregarding their ideas and thoughts upon an abstract analysis of their relationship to wider institutional and societal discourses.

As has been illustrated, the framework forwarded by Stones presents a strong structurationist perspective in which the relations between agent and structure are linked within four interrelated aspects. Importantly, the quadripartite cycle of structuration Stones develops begins to make the distinction between ontology-in-general and ontology in-situ and in doing so identifies the gaps that exist between meso and micro understanding of structure-agency relations. In focusing on what Stones has described as the hermeneutical core of the duality of structure, agents are no longer passive in relation to the structures of their immediate reality but are key in shaping their experiences of a context. Accordingly, what is apparent is a shift in what structures are considered to be. Structures are no longer one dimensional, characterised as being realist, in the case of Archer’s structurationist perspective, or the overly constructivist voluntaristic position Giddens forwards. Instead, they are continually shaped and evolving in relation to the internal structures of agents and their subsequent conduct. In evolving how structures are understood and conceptualised, what Stones offers is a framework of structuration which allows transition to be seen as an evolving process with the agent situated centrally to this process. However, while the quadripartite framework acknowledges that these structures are dynamic, it is limited in its ability to provide a more conceptual detailed analysis. Thus, as advocated by Stones (2005), other theoretical lenses may be used to explore the relationship between structures of the individual and context and how this influences transition and experiences of transition. Indeed the need for other theorists and theoretical approaches to develop the framework is directly highlighted by Stones,

Framing structuration case studies of the immanent moments of circumstance and agency, of medium and making, in terms of wider, more conventional, macro and meso structures, allows one, not least, to retain that invaluable sense of how these processes intersect with the greater forces and movements of history, geography and social structure. Structuration theory needs other theories and perspectives to provide such frames, just as other theoretical approaches would often do well to call on the resources of structuration. [Stones, 2005: 6]

As Stones suggests, the framework described and discussed so far in this chapter should not be regarded as a completed theory from which transitional experience, central to this PhD study, maybe understood and explored. Indeed, the power of Stones work is its porosity and willingness to be developed further, using other theories and perspectives to frame many of the relations and positions discussed so far. It is evident that the framework does not determine how these structures
interact or evolve, and what governs their existence and how this may influence the nature of transitional experience and practice. However, rather than being a limitation and barrier to understanding transitional experience, the gaps and questions provide stimulation for developing a reflexive sociological understanding of student transitional experience.

2.5. Developing understanding of agent-structure relations within post-16 education.

It is evident that the framework provided by Stones can act as a foundation from which to begin to understand and explore the multi-dimensional nature of transitional experience. However, as acknowledged by Stones (2005), any revision and development of the framework is dependent on the ‘detail of understanding required and whether it is possible will depend on the questions to do with the existence of relevant evidence and the exigencies of gaining access to it’ (p.7). The complexities involved in conceptualising experience and transition are as difficult to describe, as they are to adequately put into practice. While structuration theory has undoubtedly laid some useful foundations for this process to take place, the development of a strong structurationist framework provides educational research with further conceptual possibilities. While there remains friction between perspectives in consideration of how structures are conceptualised, in terms of epistemology and ontology, such friction should not detract from the complexities of mapping transitional experiences within Higher Education but should continue to be the source for discussion, illumination and understanding student transitional experience. It is clear that within every perspective, the relationship between class, pedagogy and experience is neither simple nor homogenous. As the chapter has highlighted so far, the conceptualisation of individual experiences has been largely determined and based on macro-theoretical lenses, which, as Shilling (1999) comments, leads to a ‘relatively disembodied view of the agent which overemphasises cognition and neglects the importance of the emotional dimensions of interaction for human action and social structure’ (p.544). Following from Shilling’s perspective what is required is a framework in which all dimensions of human action and structure are accounted for. While Stones framework of strong structuration begins to account for this dimension, unseen within other forms of structuration there is need for further evolution.

Accordingly, Higher Education research which is concerned with exploring transitional experience needs to begin to develop frameworks that transcend the rigorous boundaries that currently shape how research views the field it so readily wants to help. This is supported by Penney and Evans (1999) who note, ‘if research is to promote a greater understanding of the complex nature of policy-making and implementation, it needs to embrace that complexity and
therefore, cannot be overly restricted or predetermined in its focus and scope’ (p.11). In doing this, such a framework may be used to help appreciate the individual as a multidimensional medium for the constitution of society. Although individual experience is paramount within debates regarding class inequality in sport and education, the adoption of a reflexive sociological framework would contribute to the understanding of the complex interactions between agents, educational knowledge and wider social locations and conditions which have been identified previously in the chapter as shaping the experience of agents. Such reflexive positioning allows the illumination of how class difference comes to influence the structures of education and consequently transitional experiences between it is different institutions. The evolvement and development of lenses is highlighted by Giddens (1990),

We have to break away from existing sociological perspectives in each of the respects mentioned. We have to account for the extreme dynamism and globalising scope of modern institutions and explain the nature of their discontinuities from traditional cultures. [Giddens, 1990:16]

While Giddens’ thoughts are focused on a dynamism at a meta-level of understanding, his words have considerations for a sociological approach in which we can explore the changing nature of transition into Higher Education and how the individual comes to experience at what Stones illustrates as an in-situ ontological perspective. This is summarised by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) who suggest,

A total science of society must jettison both mechanical structuralism which depicts agents on ‘vacation’ and the teleological individualism which recognises people only in the truncated form of an over socialised cultural dope. [Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 45]

The work of Stones (2005) provides the foundation for such an approach. However, the limitations of Stones’ framework must be addressed and overcome if we are to constructively contribute and further the voices of those who enter Higher Education. To do this a ‘palette’ of additional conceptual perspectives must be drawn upon and strategically integrated into the framework. Indeed the use of other approaches in framing and mediating structuration theory is not detracted from, but emphasised by Stones (2005). However, using established concepts in this manner, without first grasping their underlying epistemological and ontological postulations merely dilutes and blurs their conceptual and analytical ability to explore and explain the reproduction and embodiment of discourses within a particular context, reproducing many of the criticisms that have been directed at structurationist perspectives in the past. Thus, what is required is to understand these concepts in their entirety before they can be interwoven. Accordingly, the work of Bernstein
and Bourdieu will now be explored. In doing so, it will be discussed how and where these concepts may further contribute to the reflexive sociological (structurationist) framework being developed to understand and explore transitional experience.

2.6. The Contribution of Basil Bernstein’s sociology of pedagogy in understanding structure-agent relations.

Historically, the work of Basil Bernstein has frequently directed researchers’ attention to the issues of stability and change within a number of educational contexts (see for example; Morais et al., 2000; Penney & Chandler, 2000; Kirk & Macdonald, 2001; Morais & Pires, 2002; Evans & Davies, 2004b; Fitz et al., 2006). Furthermore, as Davies (2001) notes, Bernstein’s work has ‘appealed to those keen to problematise not only the crucial social categories of class, gender, and ethnicity through which pedagogic power was seen to be mediated but also the character and effects of practice’ (p.7). As a result, such work has taken the educational researcher to the heart of the processes involved within education in attempts to explain the importance of these processes (Davies, 1994; Sadnovnik, 1995; Solomon & Bernstein, 1999).

As these comments highlight, Bernstein’s work has been used in a profusion of analytic lenses by those wishing to focus upon the consequences of struggles and how struggles challenge, reproduce and change the dominant discourses of this field (Sadnovnik, 1995). As Bernstein (2000) reminds us, ‘In the same way we can speak of the acoustic of a school. Whose voice is heard? Who is speaking? Who is hailed by this voice? For whom is it familiar?’ (p.21). The focus on consequences is reflective of the traditions of European structural theory and in particular French Structuralist Durkheim (Atkinson, 1985; Sadnovnik, 1995). For example, Penney and Evans (1999) note how, ‘Bernstein’s work is particularly helpful when addressing the relations between policy and the organisation and content of pedagogical practice’ (p.117). This is illustrated by Morais’ (2001) work, in which Bernsteinian analytical lens are often directed at the micro level of pedagogic transmission, in the hope of explaining how macro processes are reproduced within the micro contexts of the classroom. For example, the study by Morais and Neves (2001) uses Bernstein’s model to show which pedagogic practices improve the learning of children from disadvantaged social groups. Their work not only highlighted the different types of curricula and their components but also explored their differing social class components, in relation to the practices they embody and reproduce within secondary education. As these eclectic examples of Bernsteinian informed research have illustrated, while Bernstein’s work has been drawn upon in different ways, there remains common themes of relation, reproduction and practice. This highlights
how no single utilisation of his work is the same as another and they all represent a constructive yet unique understanding and interpretation of the core principles underlying his work. The current use of Bernsteinian concepts highlight how his work has potential in understanding contemporary relations within Further and Higher Educational contexts, to the extent that some have highlighted how many of his original concepts (which will be illustrated) anticipated many of the changes highlighted in poststructuralist perspectives (see Solomon & Bernstein, 1999; Bernstein, 2000; Atkinson, 2005). As Evans et al. (2004) contend, ‘insights gained from the sociology of Durkheim that is reflected within the work of Bernstein can Further Educational research perceptions, knowledge and understanding of how educational practices and policies are evolving’ (preface). For example, the insights provided by the work of Bernstein allows the relationship between the society, education institutions and the ‘embodied self’ to be furthered (Evans et al., 2004).

For the purposes of this PhD study Bernstein’s perspectives offer a number of possibilities for furthering the development of a strong structurationist approach by enabling an illumination of the relations that occur between the external structures of a context and the internal structures of the agent-in-focus. However, following from other Bernsteinian perspectives (Atkinson, 1985; Daniels, 1988, cited in Bernstein, 1990; Daniels, 1995) any integration of his work within other theoretical positions must be approached with sensitivity. Following the thoughts of Atkinson (1985) any sensitive integration must account for, ‘the full complexities of Bernstein’s thought and its relationship with other theoretical positions’ (p.182). Following Atkinson, while not every aspect of Bernstein’s sociology will contribute to the conceptual framework being developed, his work regarding pedagogic theory has significance in understanding the relations between external structures and internal structures and the subsequent practices agents undertake. More specifically, in consideration of the limitations of Stones framework highlighted previously, Bernstein’s work allows for insight and understanding into what principles may govern the relations between external structures and internal structures of the agent. Importantly, Bernstein’s concepts may also allude to the power relations which dictate positions and relations within a context, illuminating the positions and agents which transmit and reproduce external structures. Such a perspective has a number of implications for understanding the relations highlighted within the structurationist approach and how they play a role in constituting experience within the context of Higher Education. These explorations will attempt to avoid simplistic adoptions of his work which fail to see their power in creating delicate descriptions of micro interactions and relate these to interaction external to their context (Daniels, 1988). Furthermore, while those who seek to utilise Bernstein’s theoretical concepts must have an understanding of and adhere to the core theoretical principles of his work,
they must at the same time, have no fear of being, as Atkinson (1985) highlights, ‘constrained with each and every aspect of his work to appreciate its scope and complexity’ (p.18). This requires (using a Bernsteinian language) the researcher to become reflexive in their interpretations so that they may become contextualised and framed within their own beliefs, perspectives and interpretations of the world they seek to explore. It is within this largely unexplored context that Bernstein’s work provides the most exciting possibilities (Sadnovnik, 1995).

2.6.1. The contribution of Bernstein’s Theory of Pedagogic Discourse in understanding the construction and transmission of external structures.

The consideration of principles enlightens the researcher to the structures and agents which determine the valid transmission and acquisition of specialised knowledge within the relations between agents and structures of education (Bernstein, 1990; Sadnovnik, 1995). Following from 2.3, Bernstein’s theory of pedagogic discourse permits a detailed analysis of the ‘relationships between meaning making processes at a range of levels within educational systems and the actual communicative processes that take place within and between the sites of production’ (Kirk et al., 1997, p. 275). This is necessary given that, as Bernstein (1999) suggests, discourses ‘operate like 9/10 of an iceberg [and] lurk invisible below the surface of the text (or practices) and interact to shape how agents of the context acquire and recognise knowledge’ (p.158). Thus, while many sociological approaches construct pedagogic discourse as a neutral relay for external power relations and regard its features as being irrelevant in the understanding of education (Maton, 2000) considering pedagogy in this manner allows researchers to disentangle the nature of pedagogy, the principles behind its construction and the role such principles play in the regulation, production, distribution, reproduction and interrelation and change of what counts as legitimate knowledge (Atkinson, 1985; Solomon & Bernstein, 1999; Morais & Neves, 2001).

Furthermore, developing understanding of the principles underlying relations has a number of implications for how we understand the process of selection, differentiation and construction of the class and cultural hierarchies which influence student transitional experience and practice. Furthermore, the pedagogic model (see fig.2.2) identifies the relations between a number of different pedagogic contexts within and external to education, including family, school and teachers’ education. All of these contexts contribute to both the embodiment of knowledge and how this knowledge comes to be embodied (Morais & Neves, 2001) and accordingly play important roles in shaping the nature of transition. From a Bernsteinian perspective, social relations refer to
‘the specific practices regulating the relationships between transmitters and acquirers, which constitute the context of acquisition’ (Bernstein, 1990, p.33).

Fig. 2.2. Diagram to illustrate the social construction of discourse (Adapted from Bernstein, 1990).

Although few applications within the field of Further and Higher Education are evident, this perspective has been drawn upon within other educational contexts such as Science (Singh, 2001; 2002; Morais, et al., 1999) and Physical Education within the Secondary Education sector (for examples see Kirk et al., 1997; Macdonald et al., 1999; Kirk & Macdonald, 2001; Penney & Harris 2004; McPhail, 2004). As fig.2.2 also illustrates within the pedagogic model, pedagogic discourses are produced, organised and relayed within three highly specialised yet hierarchically related contexts; Primary Context, Secondary Context and Recontextualising Context (Bernstein, 1990; Bernstein, 1995; Davies, 1994; Kirk et al., 1997; Singh, 2002). Before understanding what occurs on the in-situ level of transitional experience, it is necessary to outline the role of each of these identified contexts in the production and reproduction of discourse.

2.6.1.1. Primary Context.

Bernstein defines the process whereby texts and discourses are created as the Primary Context
(Bernstein, 1990; Penney & Harris, 2004). As Bernstein (1990) identifies, it is here where ‘new ideas are selectively created, modified and changed, and where specialised discourses are developed, modified and changed’ (p.191). Within the diagram, Bernstein identifies two fields that are responsible for the creation of discourses: The state, family, and community. Commonly, the creation of discourses has been state dominated, reflecting the positions and practices of government and their affiliated agencies. However, as the diagram illustrates, Bernstein is also reflective of the role of family and community in the production of discourses. As fig.2.2 illustrates, the process whereby texts are developed and positioned in the field is referred to as Primary Contextualisation. In relation to the fields of Further and Higher Education the Primary Context would be where qualifications, such as Foundation Degrees are constructed, based on the principles and beliefs of those agents and agencies situated within this context. Within the field of post-16 educational research, there have been few studies which have adopted Bernstein’s model of pedagogic theory to understand the role of agents and agencies at this level of pedagogic discourse construction. Notably, within the field of sports education, there have been studies which identify those agents and agencies in the Primary Context in secondary education (see Penney & Evans, 1999; Bailey; 2005). However, drawing upon empirical research from other perspectives allows consideration of some of the agencies and agents responsible for the construction of Foundation Degrees (see Dearing Report: NCIHE, 1997; DfEE, 1998; HEFCE; 2000; Bowl, 2001; DFES, 2003; Yorke; 2003; Watts et al., 2007). While many of those illustrated briefly here will be considered in more depth later, their illustration is indicative of the plethora of agents and agencies which play a role in construction of qualifications within the Further Education sector.

What Bernstein’s notion of the Primary Context provides is an analytical capability to identify where and why Foundation Degrees are constructed. Accordingly, by drawing upon Bernstein’s identification of a primary context, the structurationist framework is able to identify another dimension to the external structures of agent-structure relations: namely those external structures which exist beyond ontology in-situ, but still play a major role in determining transitional experiences of agents-in-focus. In relation to the structurationist framework highlighted in figure 2.4, the integration of how external structures (in this case discourses) are constructed within what Stones terms the abstract level of ontology, further reveals power relations, resources and practices which influence how an agent-in-focus construct their own practices within and between FE and HE institutions at the ontic-level.
2.6.1.2. Secondary Context.
Within what Bernstein illustrates as the Secondary Context, the discourses produced in the Primary Context are then reproduced by an array of specialised agencies, positions and practices. As Bernstein (1990) suggests the various levels within the Secondary Context contains,

Agencies, positions and practices refers to the selective reproduction of educational discourse…Within each level there may be some degree of specialisation of agencies. We shall call these levels and their interrelations, together with any specialisation of agencies within a level, the secondary context of the reproduction of discourse. [Bernstein, 1990: 60]

Following from Bernstein, this context is intwined with specialised agencies which reproduce the discourses of the Primary Context. As Bernstein (1990) identifies, this context structures the field of reproduction. Within the context of Physical Education and Sport, McPhail (2004) identifies the secondary context as an area which ‘entails the selective reproduction of educational discourse involving various levels, such as tertiary and secondary’ (p.56). Agents and institutions which have been identified within this area include schools, physical education teachers and pupils. Moreover, McPhail also identifies the degree of specialisation of agencies and agents within this context. However, the reproduction of discourses in the secondary context cannot take place without knowledge being produced nor can the reproduction of knowledge take place without first being recontextualised (Singh, 2002). Furthermore, the critical distance between the secondary context and the recontextualising context will also influence what discourses are reproduced within the secondary context and the positions and relations which are subsequently formed.

2.6.1.3. Recontextualising Context.
As fig.2.2 illustrates, the recontextualising context consists of both an Official Recontextualising Pedagogic Field (ORF) and a Pedagogic Recontextualising Field (PRF) (Bernstein, 2000; Morais, et al., 1999; Singh, 2002). It is the recontextualising context which generates positions both theoretically and practically. Both sub-fields contain agents and agencies which control the circulation of knowledge through the distribution, transmission and regulation of official and localised texts and discourses (Solomon & Bernstein, 1999). As illustrated by Bernstein (1990),

The major activity of recontextualising fields is constituting the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of pedagogic discourse. The ‘what’ refers to the categories, contents, and relationships to be transmitted, that is their classification, and the ‘how’ refers to the manner of their transmission, essentially to their framing. [Bernstein, 1990: 196]

The definition of the recontextualising context provided by Bernstein is developed by Ball (2006b) who suggests ‘the fields of recontextualisation are fields of contest involving various social
fractions with different degrees of social power sponsoring different pedagogic regime’s’ (p.75). Here, Ball (2006b) alludes to the contestation of power between the two sub-fields of the recontextualising context. In relation to the structuration framework, the identification and acknowledgement of sub-categories and agencies, and their struggle over the recontextualising context, has a number of considerations for how External Structures may be transmitted and acquired by agents-in-focus. Before this can be developed further it is necessary to highlight and distinguish the varying role of the ORF and OPF.

2.6.1.4. Official Recontextualising Field.

Agents and Agencies of the ORF are concerned with transmitting and recontextualising specific domains of education practice (Fitz et al., 2006). As Fitz et al., (2006) highlight, the ORF contains agencies and agents who are responsible for the delivery of ORF discourses and the ‘creation of powerful mechanisms which produce and monitor the specific discourses of teaching and learning’ (p.99). These agents and agencies play a crucial role in the delivery of Official Discourses in England and Wales, which are then recontextualised within different institutions through vigorous rules determined by those agents who hold power within these specific institutional contexts (such as governors, head teachers and heads of department within schools or Vice-Chancellors, Principles, Deans of School within Higher and Further Education - see Penney & Evans, 1999; Singh, 2001). Within the field of Higher and Further Education agencies may include HEFCE, UCAS and other centrally governed agencies such as National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) (see Evans et al., 2008). Outside the field of Higher Education, research has identified a number of agencies which may be categorised into the ORF. These include; OFSTED, QCA and the TTA (Evans & Davies, 2004a). Within the context of Science, Singh (2002) illustrates these agencies as ‘specialised departments and sub agencies of the state and local educational authorities together with their research and system of inspectors’ (p.576). Furthermore, it has been suggested that these agents impinge on the delivery and acquisition of pedagogic discourses within the classroom and on the habitus of the pupil within that classroom (Morais & Neves, 2001; Morais, 2002). While not directly an illustration of the ORF, Lynch and O’Riordan (1998) provide some insight into the nature of this field in suggesting that the state is a ‘dynamic field which is constantly negotiating and recreating the conditions for the operation of unequal relations in education’ (p.451). Through agencies transmitting official discourses, the ORF of the education field impose suitable knowledge upon agents-in-focus to construct a legitimised pedagogic identity (Laminias, 2002). For example, Lucey and Reay (2002) highlight how working class students
entering institutions within the field of Higher Education have to make choices which are made within complex and unequal constraints. Similarly, Watson et al. (2009), illustrate various constraints on the experiences of students entering HE and how students from FE are required to adopt an officially legitimised identity which is prescribed with difficulty and frustration. External to the field of HE within the UK, Hickey and Kelly (2008) identify the influential role of agencies within the field of professional sport in Australia. Again, while this study is not a direct example of the Bernsteinian perspective, it alludes to agencies, such as the Australian Institute of Sport, which play a role in shaping the pedagogic identities of elite performers within the field of education.

Official Discourses of agencies within the ORF are transmitted through what Bernstein identifies as Instructional Discourses. Instructional discourses regulate the acquisition and communication of pedagogic discourses by dictating to agents what competencies are required of their performance through emphasising short term performance instrumentalities such as content and skills which negate individual difference (Daniels, 1995; Kirk et al. 1997; Singh, 2001). This is supported by Bernstein (2000) who suggests, ‘where official, localised knowledge is derived and used, it may silence and exclude some voices within the group’ (p.158). For example, within physical education ‘physical culture is cast as the ‘regulative discourse’ in which the ‘instructional discourse’ of school physical education is embedded’ (Kirk et al., 1999, p. 70). However, regulative discourses may also challenge and disrupt the performance modes of transmission which are evident within physical education (Fitz et al., 2006).

2.6.1.5. Pedagogic Recontextualising Field.

Contrary to the ORF, the PRF is characterised by agents and agencies that are not directly a part of the education field. Additionally, PRF agents and agencies often challenge, directly or indirectly, the officialdom which is conveyed within discourses transmitted by the ORF. Similarly to the ORF, agencies and agents within this sub-field regulate the circulation of texts and practices between the primary and secondary contexts. Specifically, Bernstein (1990) identifies the PRF as being constructed by ‘positions, agents, practices drawn from University departments of education, colleges of education, schools, together with foundations, specialised media: journals, weeklies and publishing houses’ (p.198). Additionally, agencies which have also been identified in include university departments, specialised education media along with non specialised educational fields. (Bernstein, 1996; Evans et al., 2008). ORF discourses operate not only at the level of general school objectives and rationales, but also through disciplinary practices and administrative procedures (Singh, 2001). However, Bernstein’s conceptualisation of the PRF and the agencies which are found
within this field is, at times, very abstract and requires specialisation within specific empirical research. In relation to the context of this PhD study within tertiary education there are numerous agencies and agents who challenge but also adhere to the officialdom of the ORF. For example, external but related to the field of HE and FE, Hickey and Kelly (2008) allude to how professional sports clubs in Australia may also regulate practices of professional athletes who are required to both focus on establishing and prolonging a career as an elite performer and educated for careers beyond their playing careers. Although not UK specific and a direct recontextualisation of Bernsteinian theory, their empirical research alludes to another PRF, that of professional sport industry. The agencies identified within the PRF create meaning from official discourses.

Although the influence of the PRF has been widely debated (see Evans et al., 2008), it is generally postulated that the role of the PRF has been weakened over the last 30 years, certainly within the context of the United Kingdom. Moreover, the numerous agencies and agents which have been identified within tertiary educational research as being responsible for the recontextualisation of official discourses reflects the need for post-16 competence-based training. This has become evident in the increasing influence of regulative discourses, produced within the ORF. This is identified by Kirk et al. (1997) who suggest,

> Agents and agencies who operate within it emerge as major players in the construction of pedagogic discourse, since it is in this field that the discursive practices that form regulative discourse are brought into alignment in institutions and the instructional discourses of teacher education programmes created. [Kirk et al., 1997:295]

As Kirk et al. illustrate, the PRF represents a site of contestation where regulative discourses are aligned with instructional discourses. Central to this interaction is the role of Recontextualising Agents. Singh (2001) identifies that, recontextualising agents are ‘syllabus writers and classroom teachers’ (p.253). Moreover as Singh, (2002) further concludes, agents of the PRF ‘Recontextualise discourses from the family/community/peer groups of students for purposes of social control, to make the regulative and moral discourses of the school/classroom more effective’ (Singh, 2002, p. 577). Accordingly, pedagogic discourses which are transmitted by agencies and agents within the PRF become a carrier of patterns of socio-cultural dominance with respect to class, patriarchy, gender and race (Solomon & Bernstein, 1999). Thus regulative discourses perform a crucial ideological function because they conceal the symbolic control and relations of power that are transmitted within instructional discourses (Haavelsrund (2001).

While such agents and agencies have been identified within other fields of education (see Singh, 2002) within sports education, the PRF may be illustrated as agencies or any general social
encounters in which knowledge of the body, and its performance is transmitted through the
distribution of discourses (Evans & Davies, 2004; Penney & Harris, 2004). For example, Physical
Education agencies such as Sport England and Youth Sport Trust define and allocate resources to
schools and agents within the secondary context. These agencies and agents (and others like them)
have a crucial role in the transmission, reproduction and regulation of individual practices. As a
consequence there still remains tension between sets of agencies and agents for control over the
PRF. As Singh suggests, tensions arise when there is strong detachment between the PRF and ORF.
However, as Bernstein highlights, the nature of these struggles and tensions are changing,

Today the state is attempting to weaken the PRF through its ORF and thus attempting to
reduce relative autonomy over the construction of pedagogic discourse and over it is social
contexts. [Bernstein, 2000: 65].

As the comment identifies, through the attempt to weaken the relative autonomy of how
pedagogic discourses are transmitted and acquired there exists a number of new tensions between
official pedagogic discourses of agents and agencies which exist at a localised level (Ball, 2006b).
The tensions identified by Ball (2006b) are not uncommon but result from the PRF being
continually weakened, particularly within education. Although fig.2.2 illustrates the OPF and ORF
as two distinguishable fields, what is significant is the relationship (or struggle) between these
various sets of agents and agencies for control over the distribution of discourses and consequently
control over the consciousness, identity and desires of that particular field. As Fitz et al. (2006)
illustrates,

Both cooperation and conflict of greater or lesser intensity exists between official and
pedagogic agents over exerting influence over all aspects of educational arrangements and
practices, not least the rules of order of school subjects concerning context, selection,
relation, sequence and pace as well as the theory of instruction and its model [Fitz et al.,
2006: 5].

Following Fitz et al., 2006, interactions between agents from different contexts are
influential in causing and perpetuating the struggle over control and the expression of power
relations within the Secondary Context; the outcome of which is the transmission of the dominant
values of a society (Morais 2002). Therefore, the interests of those individuals who control the
recontextualising context will be forwarded within a number of pedagogic practices within the
secondary field. The tensions between the ORF and PRF are perpetuated by the shift in emphasis
from competence (inner commitments and dedications) to performance (short term
instrumentalities) modes of transmission in which there is increasing emphasis on training, state
sponsored credentialism (Bernstein, 2000; Laminias, 2002). Specifically to the field of Physical Education, the relative autonomy of the PRF has been weakened by the ORF through what Evans et al. (2008) refer to as ‘co-option practices’. As they note, ‘although these processes have not happened without struggle and are not without contradiction, they have effectively meant privileging of particular pedagogical orientations’ (p.155). Consequently, the imposition of discourses of the OPF upon practices within institutions has resulted in the manifestation of discourses which ‘tend to be strongly attached to performance, body perfection and product’ (Evans & Davies, 2004, p.7). However, given the changing nature of the education system and the increasing emphasis on performativity, the relations between ORF and PRF continues to evolve. While the relations between ORF and PRF have been identified within the field of secondary education, the continual change in relations between performance (ORF) and competency (PRF) have a number of implications regarding students in transition from FE institutions into HE institutions. This is summarised by Fitz et al. (2008) who highlight that struggles over legitimate knowledge has resulted in discourse which ‘distinguishes between the effective and ineffective while disallowing any consideration to their linkage to the system’s organisational structures’ (Fitz et al., 2006, p.11).

While contemporary applications of Bernsteinian lenses have highlighted the field of post-16 research and continue to identify shifts in policy, the implications for the tertiary sector remain largely untouched, particularly in regards too sports pedagogy (see however, Maton, 2004). In relation to the PhD study this raises a number of questions regarding the relations between HE and FE and the production and recontextualisation of External Structures. While all three contexts are highly specialised and can be subject to analysis on their own, they are also hierarchically linked in the sense that any production, recontextualisation and reproduction of discourses and knowledge cannot take place without the influence of the other contexts. Furthermore, as fig.2.2 illustrates, Instructional Discourses are often embedded within Regulative Discourses which reflect the dominant positions of a field. For example, what agencies and agents are identifiable within the ORF and PRF of further and higher institutions in the field of post-16 sports education and how do they influence the transmission and recontextualisation of External Structures? Importantly, the relations Bernstein and Bernsteinian influenced researchers have alluded to, has a number of implications upon the nature of transition for individuals entering Higher Education. Exploring how pedagogic knowledge is produced, transmitted and received within and between the institutions of the tertiary sector will allow for further consideration on the processes of selection, differentiation and construction of social class and the cultural hierarchies that contribute to these experiences.
However, merely highlighting the institutions which structure tertiary education within the United Kingdom will not further the understanding of transition nor illuminate the experiences of those who are positioned by the relations illustrated within the ORF and OPF. As Bernstein (1999) illustrates,

> Although a theory on how pedagogic discourse is constructed, distributed and controlled (through the use of linguistic codes) has been developed, the form of these discourses and their underlying internal principles behind them have been taken for granted. [Bernstein, 1999:157]

In view of this, we must next explore how the individual comes to challenge and/or consent to the construction of pedagogic discourse which result from the relations highlighted (Maton, 2001). Accordingly, what is required is an understanding of how external structures and agent structures (internal structures) are related. In addressing this aspect of agent-structure relations, the work of Bernstein becomes useful, particularly in the focus and understanding of principles which govern the transmission and communication of discourses and practices.

### 2.7. The Concept of Code.

A Code is a regulative principle, tacitly acquired, which selects and integrates relevant meaning, forms of their realisation and evoking contexts...Code is a regulator of relationships between contexts and, through those relationships, a regulator of relationships within contexts…. Thus, if code is the regulator of the relationships within contexts, then code must generate principles for distinguishing between contexts and principles for the creation and production of the specialised relations within a context. [Bernstein, 1990: 14-15]

Following Bernstein’s definition, the concept of code is a regulative principle which defines the meaning created by agents and agencies external to the context and their subsequent realisation within contexts, illustrated as code modalities. In a similar light to the work of Foucault, the term code alludes to how (discursive) power is distributed within society (externally) and translates and is realised into code modalities within the context of education (Bernstein, 1971; Bernstein, 1995; Daniels, 1995; Bernstein & Solomon, 1999; Evans & Davies, 2004b). Therefore, those individuals which have symbolic control over a context will be able to construct the nature of the code and consequently the forms of code modalities that arise from such coding orientations (Atkinson, 1985; Bernstein, 2000). Modalities refer to the realisation and actual forms codes undertake within a particular context. This relationship between principle and pedagogical form is summarised by Evans et al. (2008),
The concept of ‘code’ and ‘modality’ (the pedagogical forms they nurture and through which they are refracted) allow us to make connections between macro-trends - for example, in health and education - influences and structures power and control and micro processes in schools. They help us trace connections between language, culture and embodied consciousness and indicate how the distribution of power and principles of control in society translate into pedagogic forms and modalities in schools when they are acquired, shape pedagogic consciousness and are ‘embodied’. [Evans et al., 2008: 95]

As the extract illustrates, the origin of codes have their basis in the dominant interests of agencies and agents responsible for the production of discourses. Previously in this chapter, these have been identified as agents and agencies which exist within what is referred to as the Primary Context and represent one level of external structures within the developing framework. However, while this illustration of code accounts for relations at the macro level of production, little attention is paid towards how social relations are embodied. Evans and Davies (2004) attempt to characterise relations and embodiment of modalities through highlighting the existence of what they have illustrated as perfection and performance codes. As noted by Penney et al. (2005) such codes ‘can combine to define and position certain students with specific roles within the school and the department’ (p.2). Importantly, both these forms of code account for and contribute to ‘lived experience’ which, is central to forming a reflexive sociological understanding of transitional experience. The differences between these codes and their modalities which arise from them will now be explored in more detail.

Within the field of physical education, pedagogic modalities derived from the Physical Education and Health Curricula (PEH) increasingly express an interaction between performance and perfection codes (Evans & Davies, 2004a; 2004b). As Evans et al. (2004) note, body perfection codes represent a shift from ‘repairing the physical body through specific pedagogical action to protecting/preserving the unfinished body by reconfiguring the body, mind and soul through intervention and prevention’ (p.129). In this context, perfection codes stress ‘autonomy, self responsibility, self-surveillance and control. Contrastingly, performance codes long established within the education system emphasise authority, discipline, hierarchy and order. These place emphasis upon specific outputs of agents, the texts and specialised skills they are expected to acquire.

The realisation of both perfection and performance codes is also influenced by a number of gender and class codes that have been identified in other areas of research (for example, see Fitz et al., 2006; Evans & Davies, 2004). The existence of other codes orientate an individual to a pattern of relationships, practices and dispositions that allow an expression of their role within a culture which
may either be restrictive or elaborate in its nature (Bernstein, 1971). Bernstein made the distinction between restrictive and elaborate code to highlight how individuals come to recognise the dominant discourses within a context. Restricted codes highlight situations where there is shared meaning among a close-knit group. Contrastingly, elaborate codes are more explicit: enabling individuals from outside a group to understand the discourses of a context without prior knowledge or experience. Consequently, while there is a distinction to be made between restrictive and elaborate code expressions, we must recognise that to a degree all codes are restricted (Atkinson, 1995). Therefore, the term elaborate code should not be characterised as an absence of code but merely restriction to a lesser extent (Solomon & Bernstein, 1999). Where the expression of code modalities is restrictive, the realisation and evaluation of pedagogic discourses is highly predictable. This causes the ability for individuals to reflect upon their practices to become limited and may be negatively sanctioned by agents and institutions (Bernstein, 1970; Atkinson, 1985). This limits innovation and change within a field, causing an unchanged system in terms of practices, dispositions and discourse. Contrastingly, where the expression of the pedagogic code is elaborate in its nature, the individual is able to select from a range of alternatives creating a sense of agency (Bernstein, 1971). Here, in line with the structurationist perspective being developed, elaboration on the relations between agent and structure becomes more evident. For example the general dispositions of an agents’ internal structures may provide access to conjunctural dispositions within a context. However, for this to happen, the individual has to have access to the deep structural principles that formulate the elaborate code (Atkinson, 1985). Here, the ability for the concept of code to understand the dynamics between sets of dispositions becomes apparent. The following section will now discuss this further.

Elaboration or restriction of modalities is dependent on the availability and distribution of discourses, controlled by those agents and agencies which produce discourses and those agents and agencies who control the realisation of modalities within the context (Bernstein, 1990). For elaboration to occur, the individual must be exposed to the principles at an early age. With relation to class, elaboration of code has been identified to occur within the middle classes (Atkinson, 1985). Consequently, middle class children will have the ability to recognise the principles of the elaborate code allowing them to recognise and embody legitimate meanings. This is supported by Haavelsrund (2001) who illustrates,

Working class children are exposed to the discontinuity of having to learn a new code whereas middle class children enjoy the rewards of the fact that the elaborated code earned at
home and in their communities is used as a standard of valid knowledge and ways of communicating in the school. [Haavellsrund, 2001: 321]

As the comment above indicates, when working class individuals enter the education system they are confronted with the elaborate code of the middle class (Haavellsrund, 2001). Accordingly, while elaborate codes give access to alternative realities, they carry the potential of alienation: of feeling from thought, of self from other (Bernstein, 1970). As a consequence, the working class child cannot easily embody the legitimate language and practices of the middle class and thus struggles to comprehend what counts as valid knowledge. Sadnovnik (1991) highlights the consequences of not being able to recognise discursive code,

If students come to school with differential access to the code then it is clear that some of them, especially those from subordinate social groups, will not be able to meet the initial requirements of the sequencing rules or to keep up with strong pacing rules. [Sadnovnik, 1991:55]

Following Sadnovnik’s observation, the nature of code and its expression will determine different transitional experiences for agents from different backgrounds. As this section has highlighted transitional experience will also be influenced by the agents’ ability to recognise, acquire and embody modalities. Drawing upon the structurationist framework, this process will contribute to the development of conjunctural knowledge of a context. Exploring the orientation of codes and their modalities in this manner benefits the structurationist approach as it allows researchers to further understand and make connections between macro structures and micro processes (Evans & Davies, 2004b). While it is suggested that codes are formed within the external structures which exist, their expression is due to the relationship between external structures and internal structures resulting in the active agency of an individual. However, are there underlying principles which govern relations between production, transmission and acquisition? If so, how might these be conceptualised within the structurationist framework? Here, the chapter considers another aspect of Bernstein’s work, that of the Pedagogic Device. The identification of existing and emerging codes would allow illumination of the inequalities and struggles that may be endemic to the practices that construct transition within sports education (see Evans & Davies, 2004; Penney & Evans, 2004; Penney et al., 2005). While the expression of the codes is related to the classification and framing of external structures in which the individual exists, by considering the internal structures of the individual, the questions now become: what codes, what distributions, what forms, what specialisations, for whom, and in whose interests? (Bernstein, 1995).
2.8 Understanding the communication of external structures.

How the rules of the pedagogic device position interactions, discourse and contexts reveals the code, the interest the code serves (or does not serve) and the resulting practices undertaken by those individuals as a consequence of this (Bernstein, 1995). This creates a number of indicators which allow researchers to explore the relationship between different contexts, their pedagogic practices and their relationship to other contexts (Daniels, 1988; Bernstein, 1990). The production, transmission and communication of pedagogic discourses within the three contexts is regulated by what Bernstein refers to as the Pedagogic Device (PD). Furthermore, the PD governs relations between the production of ‘codes’ and their expression in the form of code modalities. Accordingly, the pedagogic device illustrates the intrinsic features revolving around the construction, distribution, contextualising and evaluation of pedagogic practices and the discursive internal and external rules that underlie power, knowledge and conduct relationships between sets of agents (transmitters and acquirers) within a context (Bernstein, 1990; 1999; 2000; Morais, et al. 1999; Haavellsrund, 2001).

As such, the role of the pedagogic device within the relationship between transmission and
acquisition is instrumental in furthering the understanding of the relationship between agent and structure as it allows for the illumination of the rules which underlie this relationship. Furthermore, the Pedagogic Device considers pedagogy and pedagogic practices to be more than a ‘medium for other voices: class, gender and race’ (Bernstein, 1990, p.165) because it also illustrates how these are constructed within society. Such rules define the form education takes, whether it is traditional/conservative or progressive. What is important to recognise is that these rules have their origin in the concerns of dominant groups (Fitz et al., 2006). Thus, depending on the strength and whose agenda they emphasise, the rules of the pedagogic device determine a number of different practices (or outcomes) and identities that reproduce power relations within a specific context. Consequently, these rules are used as principles of power and symbolic control to regulate access. Bernstein (2000) considered the expression and regulation of the rules to vary, while remaining relatively stable. However, although stable, the rules of pedagogic communication are not ideologically free, remaining a crucial arena for struggle and control (Bernstein, 1990; Atkinson, 1995; Kirk et al., 1997; Solomon & Bernstein, 1999; Fitz et al., 2006). Davies (1994) supports this by suggesting, ‘there is always a struggle between social groups for ownership of the device. Those who own the device own the means of perpetuating their power through discursive means and establishing, or attempting, to establish their own ideological representations’ (p.19). In relation to understanding relations between agents-in-focus and the external structures of a context, the acknowledgement of principles, or rules, is important. Previously, while Stones’ framework alludes to relations, the PD explicitly highlights what rules are evident and how agents may acquire or internalise external structures. Finally, as fig.2.3 illustrates, the Pedagogic Device constitutes three sets of rules or principles (also described in literature as a grammar or syntax) which are responsible for structuring the relationship between social relations, practices and the context in which these are generated (Bernstein, 1999; Solomon & Bernstein, 1999; Singh, 2002; Fitz et al., 2006). As Bernstein (1990) highlights, these rules are hierarchically related (see Bernstein, 1990, p.180) in as much as distributive rules will regulate the evaluation of discourses and practices. Moreover, how these rules interact leads to the creation of specialised fields of production of discourse (external structures) and governs the control and expression of pedagogical practices (external structures) between different contexts (Atkinson, 1995; Fitz et al., 2006).

2.8.1. Distributive rules

Distributive rules of the Pedagogic Device define the relationship between power and knowledge and the dissemination of practices to different groups (Bernstein, 1990). As Bernstein (1990) notes, ‘through its distributive rules the pedagogic device is both the control on the ‘unthinkable’ and the
control on those who may think it’ (p.183). Accordingly, distributive rules define who is in control of the transmission and stratification of discourses and practices to various agents and the conditions under which this takes place. As highlighted by Laminias (2002) the late Twentieth Century the state has increasing influence over the agencies within the field of education and thus the distributive rules. This control illustrates the ‘functional logic’ of distributive rules. Furthermore, by controlling the distributive rules of a particular context, government agencies are in control of the production and reproduction of discourse and more importantly the legitimacy of discourses and the meaning derived from them by agents. Subsequently, distributive rules create a specialised field of production in which the access is regulated by specialised power controls which govern and legitimise practices, behaviour and expectations of agents-in-focus, depending on their status within the field (Bernstein, 1999; Solomon & Bernstein, 1999; Bernstein, 2000; Daniels, 2001). From a structurationist perspective, the distributive rules would control the expression of outcomes within the field. They also highlight relations between the external structures of a context and the internal structures of an agent, in as much as they illustrate how external structures are transmitted to agents from other contexts. Consequently, the nature of mechanisms such as the pedagogic device are becoming governed by functional relations between the state and localised contexts. Due to these struggles, the nature of power relations which control the pedagogic device are subject to change (Bernstein, 2000; Haavellsrund, 2001).

2.8.2. Recontextualising Rules

The recontextualising rules of the device selectively appropriates, relocates and refocuses other discourses to enable pedagogic discourse to have its own meaning. Accordingly, recontextualising rules regulate and construct specific pedagogic discourses (see Evans & Davies, 2004; Fitz et al. 2006) Recontexutalising rules are derived from distributive rules. This is emphasised by Fitz et al. (2006) who note how recontextualising rules ‘constitute specific pedagogic discourses which always embed instructional rules which govern social order, relations and identity’ (p.5). The relationship of these rules embedded within regulative discourses of a field create the social order, relations and identity of the field, thus governing the nature of acquisition of legitimate forms of knowledge. Accordingly, the highlighting of recontextualising principles tell researchers something about the nature of relations between sites of discourse production and what Evans et al. (2008) refer to as sites of practices (or, from a structurationist perspective, sites in-situ). In doing so, it illuminates the potential for gaps to appear between external structures of a context and the agent-in-focus, gaps which are influenced by antecedents such as the class culture of an agent.
2.8.3. Evaluative Rules

The expression of this acquisition within the secondary context is governed by the evaluative rules. These rules provide a criteria by which pedagogic discourses are transmitted and acquired, thus enabling a distinction to be made between sets of discourses within the secondary context. (Sadnovnik, 1995; Solomon & Bernstein, 1999; Muller, 2001). However, any discursive acquisition of the legitimate discourses within a field requires individuals to be able to recognise and comprehend what constitutes legitimate or illegitimate pedagogic practices in a field. Bernstein (2000) recognises that this recognition and acquisition may be explicit, implicit or tacit in its nature. This is further illustrated by Solomon and Bernstein (1999),

Explicit and Implicit refer to a progressive pedagogic relation where there is a purposeful intention to initiate, modify, develop or change knowledge, conduct or practice by someone or something which already possesses, or has access to, the necessary resources and the means of evaluating such acquisition. [Solomon & Bernstein, 1999: 267]

When the evaluative rules are controlled by the transmitter, the power of the transmitter is explicit in nature. Here, the expression of discourses becomes more specific and coherent to the individuals within the context (Muller, 2001). Moreover, relations of authority and conduct also tend to be explicit in their nature and become visible and clearly defined to the acquirer. As Sadnovnik (1995) notes, where the criteria is explicit, ‘the child will always know what is expected of him or her, since the rules of legitimate expectations are made clearly available to the acquirer by the transmitter’ (p.13). This allows the power relations that exist to become explicitly defined and symbolic control over the practices to be reproduced and maintained according to the social class (gender, ethnicity, sexuality or ability?) of the acquirer (Sadnovnik, 1991; Bernstein, 2006). Such explicitness determines what is to be acquired, embodied and the rate at which this takes place, forming a particular view of a cultural reality (Bernstein, 1990; Bernstein, 1999; Bernstein, 2000). Thus, there is a continual emphasis placed upon the performance of the acquirer and those recontextualising agents responsible for the distribution of discourses from the OPF (Bernstein, 2006).

Following from the structurationist framework being developed, where relations are explicitly defined, there is a reproduction of relations and positions. However, in this reproduction there is little influence of agent-in-focuses internal general dispositions on the transmission or evaluation of discourse and practice. Within education research, there have been a number of examples which highlight the nature of such explicit relations. One example is provided by Sadnovnik (1991) who notes, ‘explicit sequencing and pacing rules are exemplified in syllabi, in
curricula, and in the clear temporal demarcations of how and when both the teacher and the student should proceed’ (p.54). Within physical education, such explicit rules are often highlighted through the use of NCPE and marking sheets (Penney & Evans, 1999).

At times the relations between transmitter and acquire may become implicit. Where rules are implicit power relations between transmitter and acquirer are masked by hidden devices of communication (Sadnovnik, 1995). As Bernstein (1990) recognises, ‘in the case of implicit criteria, by definition, the child is not aware, except in a very general way of the criteria she/he has to meet.’ (p.70). Here, what we see is a reduction in the critical distance between transmitter and acquirer. The use of implicit pedagogies is the most efficient way of transmitting ‘total’ knowledge (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). For example, if a transmitter gives an instruction to an acquirer, they may not know whether this has been followed correctly as the acquirer may not recognise the practices and discourses or distinguish who is transmitting these discourses (Maton, 1999). Where this occurs, we might begin to witness individuals who are new and unfamiliar with an institution’s practice and fundamental beliefs, participating in practices in which their individual practices fail to be recognised. In addition, it is also possible for both transmitter and acquirer to be unaware of the acquisition of practices. Any reduction in the critical distance between acquirer and transmitter places more emphasis on the role of the agent in their ability to create a criteria for evaluating the practices and discourses governed by the rules of acquisition. Where such a relationships occurs, tacit pedagogic relations are formed in which the meanings of a field become non linguistic, condensed and context dependent. Furthermore, where tacit pedagogic relations occur there may be initiation, modification, development or change in knowledge. Accordingly, there may be a shift in relations where there is no critical distance with agents being able to elaborate on positions constructed by the external structures of those in control of a context. These implicit relations, if in existence, would enable agents to have autonomy and choice over transition between contexts. However, what implications does this have upon the role of agents’ internal structures within the structurationist framework? In reflection, while the PD highlights the rules governing transmission and one aspect of structure-agent relations, the framework does not account for meaning derived from such rules and their varying components.

2.8.4. Modification of the Device

We have seen how the Pedagogic Device regulates the production, transmission and acquisition of discourses and practices between the varying agencies and agents of the official and pedagogic fields and the individual agent. With relation to the structurationist framework, the inclusion of the device, in line with Bernstein’s original concept, would allow exploration and understanding into
how the practice of agents in-situ, central to their transitional experience within FE and HE, are
given meaning and, importantly, what agents or agencies are responsible for the Pedagogic Device.
The device and the three rules (distributive, recontextualising and evaluative) which Bernstein
illustrates, illuminate conscious and unconscious awareness of the external structures within a
context. However, the semiotical nature of the device is limited as it does not account for embodied
rules. Thus, in this form rules fail to transcend the agent. Given the importance and centrality placed
on the body within vocational sports education (see Chapter One), further development and
consideration of the device is required to begin to understand relations between external structures
and internal structures of agents-in-focus. Indeed, given that external structures exist at a number of
levels, this would suggest that there is more than one type of device in existence between external
structures, internal structures and agent practice. The existence of further devices is considered by
Evans et al. (2008),

Discourses are always inevitably mediated for young people through their agentic, material
(flesh and blood, thinking and feeling) bodies, their actions and those of their peers, teachers
and other adults. As a better way of articulating the lived experiences typically associated
with acquiring the attributes required by obesity discourse and ‘the actual embodied changes
resulting from this process’ (Shilling, 2007: 13), we are inclined, pace Bernstein, to talk of
the corporeal device, to focus on the body as not just a discursive representation and relay of
messages and power relations external to itself but as a voice of its self. [Evans et al., 2008:
19]

As the extract highlights, Evans et al. (2008) begin to suggest how discourses, constructed
external to the individual agent are then mediated through that agents lived experience, so that the
individual body is not only a relay of messages but has its own message or role in transmitting and
acquiring discourses and practices. While it is beyond the focus of this PhD study to explore the
complexities of these relations further, the conceptual perspective that there is more than one device
influencing relations between agent and structure provides further support for the idea of transition
as a ‘lived experience’ in which agents are not merely positioned but act as positioners within a
context. This is summarised by Allan Pred (1990, cited in Stones, 2005) who notes how people
produce places ‘not in circumstances of their own choosing but in the context of already existing
social and spatial structures which both enable and constrain the purposeful conduct of life’ (p.6).
However, to what extent agents are able to influence the PD and CD is dependent (in theoretical
terms) on the classification and framing of relations.
2.9. The Classification and Framing of Pedagogic Relations and Practices.

The nature of the pedagogic device and its expression within and between contexts (be it either explicitly or implicitly) in the form of codes is influenced by how relations between transmitter, acquirer and context are framed and classified. Both principles are integral to agent practice and their relation to the external structures of a context and therefore require further exploration and development in relation to the overall structurationist framework. Subsequently, it is necessary to not only consider the practices and interactions within each context but to explore the relationship between them. The form and expression of codes, created by external structures beyond the temporality of the agent and expressed within their reality in-situ as modalities are illustrated by Bernstein through the principles of ‘classification’ and ‘framing’. It is important to distinguish what Bernstein (1990) means by these terms. The definition of ‘framing’ refers to, ‘the principle regulating the communication of practices of the social relations within reproduction of discursive resources, that is between transmitters and acquirers’ (p.36). Alternatively, Bernstein defines the principle of classification as follows,

If categories of either agents or discourse are specialised, then each category necessarily has its own specific identity and its own specific boundaries. The speciality of each category is created, maintained, and reproduced only if the relations between the categories of which a given category is a member are preserved. [Bernstein, 1990: 23]

Dissecting the two principles acknowledge different sets of external structures and their relation to agent practices and positions. This allows, as Bernstein (1990) suggests, the ‘distinguishing features of a context’ (p.36) to be recognised. As Daniels (1995) demonstrates, Bernstein uses the ‘concept of classification to determine the underlying principles of a social division and the concept of framing to determine the principles of its social relations’ (p.520). As such, the acknowledgement of the boundaries between sets of agencies involved in transition between Further and Higher Education and their subsequent realisation within contexts allude to the struggle over student experience and the agencies and agents situated within these struggles. This is highlighted by Evans et al. (2008) who note how understanding of classification and framing principles, ‘help us to trace connection between language, culture and embodied consciousness and indicate how the distribution of power and principles of control in society translate into pedagogic forms and modalities in schools where they are acquired, shape pedagogic consciousness and are embodied’ (p.95). For example, Walford (1981) draws upon Bernstein’s principles of classification and framing to refer directly to the elements of power and control within the relations between supervisors and students within postgraduate study at university. Moreover, these concepts
contribute to the understanding of how the realisations of the pedagogic device are not ideologically free but influenced through the way dominant classes within education shape the classification and framing of contexts to maintain control over the device and how they shape the expression and transmission of pedagogic knowledge required for transition (Evans & Davies, 2004). Therefore, exploring how contexts are classified and framed allows an exploration into how power relations create boundaries, legitimise boundaries and reproduce boundaries between different categories of groups, discourses and spaces (Singh, 2001; Morais, 2002).

Although illustrated as resonating with a structuralist perspective found within Durkheim’s work (see Davies, 1994) it is possible that the concepts of classification and framing can contribute to understanding the influence of external structures upon agents’ transitional experiences between and within different contexts. This is supported by Evans and Davies (2004a) who note ‘the concepts of classification and framing are of enormous analytic value, allowing us to explore how the distribution of power and principles of control translate into pedagogic codes and their modalities and how these codes are then acquired and shape consciousness’ (p.208). Following Evans et al. (2008), identification of the principles of integration (classification) and realisation (framing) further supports the idea of transition as ‘lived experience’. The extent of the influence of the principles over transmission and realisation can be distinguished through a varying scale of classification and framing. Relations within and between contexts can either be weakly classified (C-/C--) and framed (F-/F--) or strongly classified (C+/C++) and framed (F+/ F++) (see Morais, 1999; Morais & Neves, 2001; Laminias, 2002). Within this there exists a plethora of different classification/framing relations all of which create different expressions of the transmitter/acquirer relationship. Accordingly, both principles will now be discussed further in relation to how they connect parts of the structuration framework.

2.9.1 Principle of Classification.

The classification principle depicts the shape of a context with relation to other contexts. Furthermore the classification of boundaries creates specific recognition rules by which a field is distinguished and given its position with respect to other fields (Bernstein, 1990, p.35). Where the principle of classification (C+ - C++) is strong, there is specific and strong autonomy between contexts causing domains of knowledge to remain separate. In developing the classificatory principle, it has been suggested that classification may also be discussed in vertical and horizontal dimensions (see Daniels, 2001). For example, strength of the boundary/distinction between subjects in the curriculum may be described in terms of horizontal dimension (how different they are) or a
vertical dimension (how important they are).

For example, a curricula which is strongly classified will be highly differentiated and separated into traditional subjects. This causes the level of autonomy and range of choices an individual experiences within strong classification to be reduced, maintaining symbolic control of relations and reproducing underlying class assumptions regarding the transmission of pedagogic knowledge (Atkinson, 1985; Bernstein, 2006). Daniels’ (1995) analysis of the classification principles within secondary education suggests that when the classification principle is strong (C++) it causes ‘children to realise the criteria of specific communication competences held by their teachers with respect to discrimination between subjects to a greater extent than when classification and framing were weak’ (p.527). This places emphasis on the acquisition of specialised skills (or discourse) in which the teacher controls the pedagogic context (Daniels, 1995). For example, within the context of the science curriculum Singh (2002) identifies that contexts that are strongly classified will be clearly be distinguishable to other contexts through ‘specialist identities of agents, agencies and discourses within each field’ (p.574). Similarly, within the context of secondary education, Arnot and Reay (2004) draw upon Bernstein’s concept of boundary and classification as key to the ‘specificity of voices and power relations which sustain such boundaries, and therefore establish the ‘voice’ of a category (subject, discourse)’ (p.79). This is also highlighted by Morais and Neves (2004) who used the principles of classification and framing to develop a ‘comparative analysis of, respectively, the ideas and the practices of teachers when conducting experimental work in classrooms’ (p.149). Their work regarding the specific teaching-learning contexts within science is illustrative of Daniels’ (1995) observation that there exists both a horizontal and vertical dimension within classificatory and framing principles.

In contrast, where the principle of classification is weak (C--) the rules of distribution are loosely organised. This creates a curriculum in which the boundaries between subjects are fragile causing pedagogic practices to become integrated between subjects. (Sadnovnik, 1991; 1995). An example of weak classificatory principles is evident within the work of Walford (1981) who notes how where there is weak classification there is reduced insulation between projects. Accordingly, ‘individuals may contribute to a number of linked projects and do a variety of tasks’ (p.151). Interestingly, Walford (1981) comments on where there is a weak classification the future direction of individuals roles within a context ‘may not be well known’ (see also Walford, 1986; 2007). Accordingly, this supports Bernstein’s (2000) suggestion that where central control over pedagogic practice causing symbolic control over the field weakens, the possibility for acquiring localised knowledge increases (Bernstein, 2000).
Although classificatory relations at this point of the structurationist framework will act beyond the consciousness of agents, the principle remains an important influence on not only what is transmitted but also the power relations behind this transmission of discourses. Moreover, it asks questions of the relations between sets of external structures, what relations exist and what influence they may have upon the practices and experiences of the agent-in-focus. As Haallversrud (2001) indicates, weak classification may lead to conflict (and presumably) change the types of external structures and the distributive rules which govern their transmission. However, as Daniels (1995) notes, using only the principle of classification does not distinguish between official instruction of a school and that found within the classroom. As such, it is necessary to view how relations between sets of individuals are framed.

2.9.2. Principle of Framing

The principle of framing determines the nature of control over principles of communication, sequencing, and control over the transmission, recognition and acquisition of pedagogic knowledge which create pedagogic practices within a context (Sadnovnik, 1991; Bernstein, 1999; 2000; Morais & Pires, 2002). Accordingly, the framing principle defines how pedagogic knowledge is transmitted and acquired within a context through the relations between sets of individual agents. Thus, the nature of framing establishes the power relations and symbolic control that exists between transmitters and acquirers within a field. This is supported by Penney and Evans (1999) who note how ‘the concept of frame has thus been central to our attempts to understand the inequalities inherent in the policy process in relation to ‘who has what say’ with regard to policy and the particular interests and discourses that came to be privileged, or equally subordinated or excluded from the policies and practices of physical education’ (p.112). As Bernstein (1990) notes, variations in the degree and change of framing how the individuals acquire the discourses varies, ‘according to whether the communicative context is generating physical or discursive resources’ (p.37). Where relations between individual agents are strongly framed (F++), the evaluation of relations of authority and the practices of conduct are made explicit to the acquirer (Morais, 2002). Thus, the acquirer has little knowledge of the existence of the rules that govern the transmission of knowledge. As Bernstein suggests; ‘strong framing may closely restrict how a practice is put together and developed in time, by laying down explicit rules and procedures for the construction of a particular practice.’ (Bernstein, 1995, p.10). The existence of explicit rules within strongly framed relations creates clear institutional and symbolic differences forming a smaller space for potential variations in the pedagogic practices of a field. This gives rise to particularistic orders of meaning which have a very explicit value and ascribed meaning to certain sets of speakers who have a shared
understanding of the context in which the meanings are derived (Bernstein, 2000). For the acquirer to recognise and acquire the principles of pedagogy and pedagogic practices within a particular educational context (be it classroom, sportshall, lecture theatre) requires the weak framing of rules of acquisition and evaluation (Bernstein, 1990; 2000).

Again, the principle of framing asks questions of relations between agents and external structures within the in-situ context. Importantly, framing also alludes to why agents practices may become routine or strategic, producing outcomes in which there is preservation and reproduction of relations between external structures and agents. As Bernstein (2006) notes, where this occurs, changes in the pace of recognition and acquisition will ‘entail a different temporal projection to a visible pedagogy for comparable acquisition’ (p.209). Again, drawing upon the empirical work of Walford (1981), elaboration or preservation of the framing relations between sets of agents (in this case between supervisor and student) is possible. He highlights situations in which the framing of relations between supervisor and student were weak, enabling projects to be directed by the student. However, the extent to which students had complete control is not highlighted and this raised a number of dilemmas. For any shift in the framing of a field will require a change in the rules of recognition and the ability of the agent to elaborate upon their relations with the external structures at two levels: those within their immediate temporality and those external to their immediate knowledge. While agents, drawing upon their internal structures, may be able to alter framing relations in-situ, the level to which change becomes apparent will inevitably be influenced by wider external structures. As recognised by research (Morais, 2002; Fitz et al., 2006) change which occurs on a micro level is usually unacceptable at the macro political level within either policy or practice (Morais, 2002; Fitz et al., 2006). Accordingly, to what extent agents may be able to elaborate on existing framing relations remains questionable.

Nevertheless, what has been illustrated is the potential for the classificatory and framing principles governing the boundaries between and within contexts to evolve. As such, while for discussion purposes these have been broken down, it is necessary to consider the interaction between these principles because together they integrate the different levels of external structures and agent practices. For example, outcomes of reproduction and preservation will occur when a strong framing and classification principle exists. Contrastingly, what outcomes emerge when the relations between external structures and internal structures of the agent are weakly framed? And what implications do these relations have on the outcomes for the agent? If weakly framed relations and classification principles exist, is there space for elaboration on relations and consequently different transitional experience? Such questions are founded upon my belief that relations are not
concrete or stationary. Indeed within the structurationist perspective there is increased possibility that there will be subordination between units and conflict between sets of agents over the legitimisation of knowledge (Haavellsrund, 2001). Where subordination occurs, outcomes of elaboration may become apparent. Drawing upon this principle it is possible to see its application in understanding not one transitional experience but many.

2.10. Reflection: Bernstein’s contribution to a structurationist perspective.

Within such changing times, Bernstein’s work provides educational researchers conceptual tools with which to understand how discourses and knowledge come to be constructed and reproduced within society. This is emphasised by Tyler (2004) who notes, ‘the development of Bernstein’s theories of pedagogic discourse over the last two decades therefore holds great, though largely unrealised potential for understanding of contemporary issues such as market-orientated educational reform’ (p.16). The concepts of Bernstein attempt to unravel the complex nature of these relations rather than ignore or use them to celebrate indeterminacy, uncritically something which is apparent within more popularist approaches (Whitty, 2006 p.282). While at times it is hard to discern the lineament of his conceptual ideas, Bernstein’s work offers great potential in contributing to the understanding of the nature of relations within Higher Education and how these influence and are influenced by agents within these seemingly impenetrable walls (Sadnovnik, 1991; 1995; Singh, 2001; Atkinson, 2005).

However, previous application and consideration of Bernstein’s concepts have been tainted with a number of criticisms (Davies, 1994; Fitz et al., 2006). One of the main criticisms directed towards Bernstein is the abstract nature of the distribution, acquisition and evaluation principles. Such abstraction has led to a number of misinterpretations by those who wish to utilise his work (Atkinson, 1985). Moreover, this causes a number of grey areas or gaps to emerge. Despite its potential, Bernstein’s work remains very emotive regarding the relationship between society and the influence of embodied individual resources in bringing power, knowledge and discourse into play as regulation devices (Bernstein, 1990; Bernstein, 1999; Evans & Davies, 2004; Atkinson, 2005). Some applications of Bernstein’s concepts remain disembodied, causing agents to become one-dimensional figures whose role and experience is determined by specific and rigid positions in which they find themselves (Daniels,1995; Rodriguez-Illera, 1995). As Atkinson (1985) suggests, this causes a situation in which ‘there appears to be no individuals, only process whereby ‘subjects’ are selectively created and constrained in and by the process of their creation’ (p.6). Thus, while there is an embodied self, it is a self which is merely selectively created or constrained by the
processes of their creation not as a creator for the external resources which govern these processes. These gaps provide the stimulation to develop and consider these principles so that they may inform new areas of research. To do this it is necessary to highlight from which perspective we draw upon Bernstein’s work, our reasons behind this and our intentions for it with relation to the structurationist approach forwarded.

The above concepts illustrate various facets of the mechanisms which govern the fields of symbolic control production, transmission and acquisition of discourses. Drawing attention to such mechanisms allows for the exploration of relations between sets of agents and how power within society is distributed and, in Bernsteinian terms, how these influence the expression of pedagogic relations within contexts (Davies, 1994; Evans & Davies, 2004b). Bernstein’s conceptual work raises questions regarding power relations and control over the external structures of a context and how these relate to the internal structures of the agent-in-focus. Importantly, it also identifies areas of contestation within the framework. Although it has been highlighted that such mechanisms of social reproduction and control have long been established within education, there is emerging a new arena of struggle over the mechanisms which centre on the interests of the middle classes within society through forming new types of pedagogic relations (Bernstein, 2000; Haavellsrund, 2001). The increased emphasis on performativity is causing relations which are based on forms of surveillance and self monitoring.

Thus, as research has demonstrated, the relationships between acquisition and evaluation rules are becoming increasingly non-linear. For example, Morais et al. (2000) identify situations in which there are rules of transmission governed by the acquirer. Rather than one fixed pedagogic identity, relations are comprised of a pedagogic palette with increasingly more agencies and agents seeking to influence the principles which govern these relations. Within the contexts of education and family, there emerges a new middle class in which there is an avocation for weakening classification and framing, replacing previously strong classification and framing relations. This evolvement of relations causes a conflict between old official identities and the new emerging informal identity (although this identity still has a strong collective base (e.g. class, gender) (Haavellsrund, 2001). Consequently, institutions are experiencing more autonomy in deciding what is transmitted and how this is communicated to agents in-situ. The outcome of these changing relations is the emergence of new identities, identified as being either retrospective or prospective (Bernstein, 2000). The retrospective identity draws upon grand narratives of the past whereas the prospective identity draws upon selected features of that past that provide the basis for new
motivations and values. With relation to the structurationist perspective being developed, both established and new identities represent an outcome of the interaction between external structures and internal structures. By its very nature, structuration presupposes that a prospective identity is possible but this requires the individual agent to be able to draw upon features of their past. Here the question is to what extent does the structure of a context allow this and what implications does this have upon agents present transitional experience?

2.10.1. Integration of Bernstein’s conceptual work into the Structurationist framework.

Like others before me, I believe that Bernstein’s work raises some intriguing questions regarding the relationships between the production of resources within society, their reproduction at an institutional level and the constraints these place upon the embodied self (see Bernstein, 1999; Shilling, 2004; Evans et al. 2004). Such thoughts are conducive to the principles of structuration and provides the basis for further exploration into the use of Bernsteinian concepts within a heuristic sensitising framework (see Clarke, 2004; Atkinson, 1985), such as the quadripartite framework being developed for this PhD study. While it is evident within the work of others that the adoption of the pedagogic model undoubtedly illuminates the role played by various agents and agencies responsible for production, transmission and reproduction of discourses and how these construct the differing modes of transmission, if the nature of the sector and the implications of the relationships within a context upon transitional experiences are to be furthered we must begin to consider the individual agent as an active agent who is influenced by and influences the expression of the modes of transmission. While Morais (2002) has already discussed the implications of the Pedagogic Device in providing a better understanding of the dilemmas and experiences of teachers within a continually changing education system, it is conceivable that an understanding of the Pedagogic Device may illuminate the experiences and dilemmas of students within tertiary education and their relationship to how the discourses of these institutions are constructed, transmitted and evaluated. This kind of adoption of Berstein’s principles would allow for a more robust and sensitive sociological empirical research on cultural and particularly pedagogic practices which shape transition within and between contexts and their effects of these upon the individual agency. However, while such questions are exciting in their potential to contribute to a more integrated structurationist approach there remains a number of considerations concerning the nature of sports education.

Given the central role bodily practices play in determining the nature of knowledge and pedagogic relations within sports qualifications in the fields of Further and Higher Education (see Hickey &
Kelly, 2008) there is a need to further evolve the understanding of the relationship between the embodied self and the structures in addressing the nature of relations and how these inform the experiences and practices of individuals. Currently, while research concerning the experience of students within sports education accounts for student practice, what is not understood is the dialectic role of individual internal resources (practices) as both effecting (as carrier of pedagogic knowledge) and being affected by (as an acquirer of knowledge) the structure of the institutions in which they exist. As Shilling reminds us,

> It is difficult to overestimate the importance of bodily engagements: it is through them that children begin, literally, to feel the parameters and demands of educational environments through which they pass and to associate the delivery of school knowledge with the cultivation of acceptable bodies. [Shilling, cited in Evans et al. 2004, forward xvii]

Thus, what is required is to continue to build upon the foundations that the theory of pedagogic discourse provides to allow the framework to ascertain how individuals come to recognise the external structures and how this acquisition and recognition by agents enables the varying forms of active agency which determines the nature of transitional experience. Understanding these relations would allow varying transitional experiences to become apparent, distinguishing the subtleties of student experience that are often missed within macro-perspectives. Care is needed in adhering to the core principles behind Bernstein’s work; there must be no fear in evolving such principles. While the development of the corporeal device by Evans et al. (2008) goes someway to addressing the disembodied nature of pedagogic relations of Bernstein’s work there is still space for this understanding to be developed. Any development would be complimented by further understanding how the practices of the individual agent may influence the nature of the pedagogic device and the expression of the codes and modalities which arise from it. In beginning this development, the study now considers the contribution of Pierre Bourdieu’s logic of practice.
2.11 Developing understanding of the role of Internal Structures: The contribution of Pierre Bourdieu's Reflexive Sociology.

In developing an understanding of transitional experience which accounts for both the practices and dispositions of an agent and the external structures which influence this experience, this PhD study has focused on developing the role of external structures. The chapter so far has illustrated how this aspect of structuration can be enhanced through drawing upon the work of Bernstein to disseminate what are the dominant external structures, who they are controlled by and how they are communicated and acquired by agent(s) in-situ. However, as previously identified, while the consequences of this process are highlighted, what remains to be seen is how agents and their internal structures may contribute to the relations between external structures and internal structures. The importance of understanding the role of internal structures is critical in understanding transition as ‘lived experience’ because it situates the agent as central to the process of transition, something which has not been discussed within the framework so far. Furthermore, if as Stones suggests, agent practice results in outcomes in which there is an elaboration of relations, the internal structures of the agent must be accounted for. To this end, in search of a developed
understanding of the role of internal structures, I have drawn upon the theoretical concepts of Pierre Bourdieu.

Like Bernstein, Bourdieu draws upon Marxist and Durkheimian perspectives in addressing ways in which the construction and reproduction of knowledge contributes to the objective relations and social divisions which perpetuate the class inequalities that pervade education (Atkinson, 1985; Nash, 1990; Shilling, 1993; Webb et al., 2002; Nash, 2003). Thus, while Bernstein’s sociological approach, also strongly influenced by Straussian structuralism, focused primarily on highlighting the consequences of pedagogical actions, the concepts of Bourdieu begin to shift away from this, highlighting the institutional and structural relations that lie behind the structures and resources which exist within a field.

The value of Bourdieu’s work to understanding structure-agent relations can be seen in his attempt to avoid both structuralist determinism and interpretive individualism. Thus, his theory of practice is one which is epistemologically coherent (if at times contentious) and universal in its applicability (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). By drawing upon the relations between Habitus, Field and Capital, the theory of practice distinguishes what practices an individual may choose to embody, pursue and practise and how these choices position them in terms of value in relation to a given field of practice. Here, the connections and influence of Bourdieu in Stones’ interpretation and development of structuration is evident. This is through the way Bourdieu highlights the causal significance of meso-level networks of relations and practices (see Bourdieu, 1990; Stones, 2005). Considering Bourdieu’s conceptual perspective further enhances the understanding of the embodied structures of agents and how these influence the transmission and reproduction of external structures.

The key to Bourdieu’s work lies with the symbiotic nature of the relationship between individual practice and the field in which they exist. (Brown, 2005). This relationship underlies, for Bourdieu, how symbolic power is reproduced and maintained and how this influences the types of social role and internal functioning of a particular context (Deer, 2003). Furthermore, the role of the individual as an active and knowing agent endowed with a practical sense, juxtaposes with Bernstein’s theoretical concepts where the semiotic role of the individual is reduced. The importance of an embodied agent is highlighted by Shilling (2008),

Sociology needs to account for the impact of society and culture on embodied actions, while also acknowledging that the embodied constitution of human action (an embodiment forged over the longue duree of human evolution that cannot simply be derived from current social orders) is itself consequential for these wider relationships, norms and values. [Shilling, 2008: 2]
Consequently, following from Shilling’s (2008) perspective, the contribution of Pierre Bourdieu’s work to acknowledging the wider relationships, norms and values of society must not be ignored. As suggested by Brown (2005), ‘there are very few conceptual perspectives that currently offer us more potential to study the individual-society relationships in terms of power, reproduction and change with more transparency’ (p.19). In coming to understanding the internal structures of agents in relation to the wider external structures, it is important to avoid making agents what Shilling (1997) would describe as ‘mere products of society’ (p.737). To do this, the concepts of embodied sociology that Bourdieu has developed must be considered and integrated with sensitivity to their original conceptualisation.

2.11.1 Considering Bourdieu’s Concept of Field in conceptualising external structures.

The field for Bourdieu represents the structural context in which the individual exists and relates to others. Moreover, for Bourdieu the concept of field represents an area in which class struggles are defined and developed and in which the suppression of the individual agent begins. While such fields are governed by a series of rules, it is emphasised that for Bourdieu, the nature of such rules differs slightly to those within Bernstein’s terminology. For example, for both Bourdieu and Bernstein the concept of ‘fields’ has been instrumental in attempting to accentuate structural relations as being spaces of conflict and competition (Singh, 2002). Furthermore, both highlight the existence of pockets of autonomy between components of the education system which provide space for resisting hegemonic practices of a field (Kirk et al., 1997). Accordingly, Bourdieusian fields are not governed by rules which are Durkheimian-like necessities but connections which may be altered depending on whether the individual has the knowledge to do so (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Although within Bourdieu’s work each field is conceptualised in a similar manner to Bernstein’s contexts, the notion of field identifies the sets of values and regulative principles that are associated with struggles between agents within these fields over legitimacy of limited resources (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Brown, 2005). Thus, following from Bourdieu and Wacquant a field remains a struggle over the transmission and communication of external structures. This is supported by Cohen (1989) who provides further detail to Bourdieu’s networks of relevant relationships in which a field is comprised of position-practices at vertical and horizontal levels (see Cohen, 1989). The struggles over the legitimisation of practice and positions are also identified within the context of Physical Education.

Drawing upon Cohen’s notion of position-practice relations, fields can either be weak or strongly autonomous in their structure. For example, as Hunter (2004) highlights, the field of
Physical Education is made up of a ‘Structured system of social relations between the educational authority, PE educators, PE curriculum writers, health and sport professionals, individual school administrators, PE teachers and PE students’ (p.176). As Hunter suggests the field of PE is a contested one of positions and relations comprised of both external structures situated at the macro level and external structures within the temporality of the agent. Bourdieu’s concept of field gives overall structure to the relations between these sets of external structures. Accordingly, in developing an understanding of agents transition, numerous fields will become apparent and emerge, each of which will contest control and attempt to influence agents’ practices both in the present (what Stones refers to as ontic-level reality - see Stones, 2005 p.84) and prospectively. Moreover, as the example of Hunter typifies, central to these struggles is the role of various sets of agents.

Within any field, agents exist and operate within social rules and practices that are field specific and internally determined according to their own needs. For example, Brown and Evans (2004) illustrate how dispositions brought into the field of physical education influence their behaviour within the field. In doing so they represent key players in the reproduction of dominant practices and discourses within physical education. Thus, they act as cultural conduit is responsible for the reproduction of discourses of physical education. Therefore, in contrast to Bernstein’s perspective rather than being ‘meaningless misfirings of mythical algebra’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) the embodied practices of the individual are integral to the formulation of the field. In short, agents and their practices are fields. Indeed as Stones (2005) acknowledge, ‘Bourdieu pays greater attention to the nature of particular social fields in which such capacities were originally nurtured and nourished’ (p.23). Furthermore, drawing upon Bourdieu’s notion of field, external structures will then leave ‘traces’ in the form of transposable dispositions. Such dispositions are embedded and embodied within an agent, in what Bourdieu refers to as the habitus.

2.11.2. The role of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus in understanding the role of internal structures within structure-agent relations.

As mentioned above, within the struggles that exist in the field of production, the practices of the agent are central to their expression (Brown, 2005). Central to this understanding is the concept of habitus. As Bourdieu (1990) notes,

The conditions associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce a habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured dispositions predisposed to function as structuring structures. [Bourdieu, 1990: 53]
As the comment highlights, habitus is a structuring mechanism that operates from within the agent, though it is neither strictly individual nor itself fully determinative of conduct (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This is developed by Gorley et al. (2003) who suggest, ‘the habitus of an individual is developed through tastes, dispositions and schemes of perception which help structure but not determine choices and lifestyle’ (p.441). This is also supported by Stones (2005) who illustrates the contribution of habitus to the development and understanding of internal structures by suggesting,

These leave their traces in the form of the transposable dispositions embedded and embodied within an agent as a matrix of perceptual and linguistic schemas, competencies, appreciations, typifications, morals, sentiments, know-how and so on…… Many of these capacities are ‘transposable’ in the sense that they are adaptable and adjustable to the various social conditions in which they are called upon by the agent. On the other hand, the adaptability is limited precisely because the conditionings and exercises from the past have already predisposed the agent. [Stones, 2005: 23]

Here we see the merger between Stones’ structurationist perspective and the influence of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus. Further links can be witnessed within Nash’s non-structurationist account of habitus when he suggests that the embodiment of practices may be through a number of ‘structured principles which exist within a dialectic relationship with principles of the structure (p. 434). However, in contrast to Nash, rather than a dialectic relationship, the dispositions and capacities act as a set of capabilities which agents draw upon in particular situations. Thus, the capabilities that Stones refers to have a particular role in determining agent practice, although from a structurationist perspective, these may not always be conditions under their own choosing. Nevertheless, the dispositions embodied in one context allow for transition to take place, leading to situations where agents enter into a new institution or cultural field with similar structured practices, thus facilitating the emergence of new or modified dispositions within the habitus (Bourdieu 1990; Schempp & Graber 1992; O’Bryant et al. 2000).

In exploring the role of internal structures in forming transitional experiences, the role of the body must be accounted for. In accounting for ‘lived experience’ Brown (1999) recognises a certain type of body habitus, which contains schemas relating to ‘a variety of schemes of embodied dispositions that have become ingrained into and onto the body through practice’ (p.151). As such, following from Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), the habitus may be thought of as ‘a spring which needs a trigger…depending upon the structure and stimuli of the field’ (p.135). Thus, the rules which govern relations between habitus and the field of production are dialectic in their nature (Smith, 2003),
which will generate different outcomes depending on the precise configuration of these relations. Giddens’ work regarding cultural schemas is strongly reminiscent of these interpretations of Bourdieu’s work, although they are not as ‘virtual’ as portrayed within Giddens’ work (see Sewell, 1992). It is possible that cultural schemas will influence the relations between internal and external structures, if rules of the Corporeal Device are weakened. This will then allow internal structures to evoke change, and following from Stones, result in an outcome in which elaboration of agent position and practice occurs. Therefore, the relationship between habitus and the field is that of an investment, through illusio which is simply understood as the ‘feel of the game’ in which the individual is an active entity within pedagogic and cultural relations and is drawn towards certain dispositions and practices’, to which they choose to invest (Bourdieu, 1994). As he illustrates, the feel for the game ‘is what gives the game of subjective sense a meaning, but also a direction, an orientation.’ (p.66). Thus, in this understanding, relations have the ability to evolve, causing the space surrounding them to be socialised.

2.11.3. The role of internal structures in shaping experiences of education.

The relationship between the habitus (internal structures) and the field of production can be witnessed within the education system. The dispositions which create the habitus are instrumental in shaping the individual experience of education. This is highlighted by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) who note,

> The habitus acquired with the family forms the basis of the recognition and assimilation of the classroom message and the habitus acquired within the school conditions the level of reception and degree of assimilation of the messages produced. [Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977: 44].

The comment above illustrates how relations between habitus and the conditions of the field influence agent positions within the field of education. As Bourdieu and Passeron suggest, dispositions embodied within family influence how individuals recognise classroom practices. As they suggest, agents from certain class backgrounds will be able to assimilate skills and dispositions within their habitus before they have entered the classroom and are able to recognise the legitimate practices of a particular classroom context. When this occurs the habitus of the individual then conforms with the practices of the field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). However, if the common schemes of perception, conception and action derived from the habitus (see Bourdieu, 1990) are not legitimised then the individual cannot recognise the legitimate values of the field. An example of this is illustrated by Brown (2005) who highlights that within the field of Physical Education, students and teachers with legitimised gendered masculine practices often conform to the practices
of physical education. This is supported by Ball et al. (2002) who suggest that within education the construction of the habitus is emphasised by ‘Class differences in knowledge and disposition’ (p. 69). Here what occurs is differentiation of individuals which maintains a social order in which the practices of those who have symbolic control over the field are reproduced.

Such differentiation has a number of class consequences. If the individual does not possess or recognise these dispositions, or refuses to legitimise them, struggles are perpetuated, influencing the choices an individual makes and the position in the field they will find themselves in as a consequence. Thus, drawing upon the structurationist perspective of Stones, internal general dispositions acquired outside the context of education will have an influence on the recognition and embodiment of dispositions specific to that context. As highlighted previously, it is suggested that such relations are governed by a series of principles (Pedagogic and Corporeal Device) which play a determining role in allowing what is embodied. For example, boys from working class backgrounds will be likely to have different sets of rules and principles (in the form of Corporeal Devices) which will mean that their ability to recognise, acquire and embody dispositions is more difficult. A similar theory was developed by Bernstein (1971) within his notion of elaboration and restricted code. However, this negated the idea that working class agents may have some form of valued internal dispositions, such as physical practices. Thus, the question slightly evolves when considering specific contexts in which physical practice is valued, such as in vocational qualifications. What is it about working class internal dispositions, enables them to acquire external structures in the form of practices or discourses? Is there an underlying critical distance between the internal structures of an agent and the context in which practice occurs, which prevents this from occurring?

Such inequalities have a number of implications regarding the exchange of dispositions and the type of practices in which an individual invests (Shilling, 2004). Where this occurs the individual may invest in practices which they do not agree with (Sparkes et al., 2007). Such a situation perpetuates the struggles which occur within fields. Such struggles have been identified in a variety of forms. For example, Brown (1999; 2002) has identified gendered differences within Physical Education which arise out of the social construction of the habitus. Moreover, there are a number of class differences which arise out of the construction of the habitus. As the individual embodies beliefs and values of a field, the individual will also embody the class relations of that particular field (Bourdieu, 1990; 1994). However, research has identified situations and fields in which the individual habitus can be, over time conditioned to embody the legitimised dispositions of the field.

While the role of habitus in shaping understanding of the relations between external
structures and internal structures within the structurationist framework begins to illuminate understanding of their role in shaping the outcome of forms of transmission, habitus in its original form has often been criticised for being too deterministic in its nature, negating the possibility of modification (Nash, 1990; Ball et al., 2000; Hunter, 2004). As a consequence the concept of habitus may appear to be more transparent and not sufficient to account for change and to explain other changes, in languages and perspectives (Bernstein, 1999). However, this deterministic interpretation of habitus theory is something which the structurationist framework seeks to distance itself from. Previously, there have been empirical examples of where the habitus of an individual can be modified. For example, Wacquant (2004) illustrates how the body schema can be modified within the field of boxing,

To learn how to box is to imperceptibly modify one’s body schema, one’s relation to one’s body and to uses one usually puts it to, so as to internalise a set of dispositions that are inseparably mental and physical. [Wacquant, 2004: 95].

As the comment shows, through learning a series of practices over time, the individual agent can begin to modify and recondition their body schema and how they relate to their body (Brown, 2005). This is supported by Shilling (1993) who notes, ‘the body is an unfinished entity which develops in conjunction with various social forces and is integral to the maintenance of social inequalities’ (p.126). Given that the body bears the indisputable imprint of an individuals social class, it must be central to any exploration of courses in which it is both acquirer and transmitter of pedagogic knowledge involved within the processes of transition. Furthermore, recognition of bodily schemas places a critical role on the Corporeal Device of an agent. As agents construct and modify their habitus they begin to position themselves differently: in so doing they also play an active role in constructing and constituting the field with which they are associated (Hunter, 2004). Hunter (2004) draws heavily upon the work of Bourdieu to explore ways in which discourses associated with the body create what she refers to as discursive spaces for constituting embodied subjectivities of those within the social space. While the practices already embodied within the habitus undoubtedly influence this modification, it nevertheless can be altered or ‘reconditioned’. This highlights the role of embodied practices upon recognition and evaluation of pedagogic discourses, something which Bernstein’s concepts tend to disregard. However, this does not render Bernstein’s concept of rules unusable. Indeed the development of the Corporeal Device by Evans et al. (2008) is indicative of the need to highlight the principles which act to shape the embodiment of dispositions which influence agent relations within the wider context. As Evans et al. (2008 and Shilling (1997; 2008) have suggest, we begin to see the link between external structures and the role
of internal structures in shaping experience. This is evident within fig.2.4, and supports Brown’s (2005) observation that ‘an analysis of reconditioning would therefore need to take into account both personal history, epiphany and social and institutional change and its impact upon the habitus’ (p.18). Here it is possible to consider the benefits of using Bernsteinian sociological thinking in order to understand how discourses which are incorporated into the body schema are formed something which the corporeal device begins to consider. A structuration framework would need to further illuminate how such reconditioning of habitus might occur. However, in allowing for a reflexive set of internal structures has implications for the understanding and any analysis of external structures and how these are communicated and transmitted from meso-level into in-situ levels of experience within transition. Importantly, any changes will have implications on the value of the external structures at both levels and thus influence the outcomes of an agent.

Accordingly, how external structures and internal structures are valued and changes in these value, while only a small component in understanding transitional experience, needs to be accounted for. In understanding the value of practices and discourses and the signification of these on transitional experience, I have drawn upon the final area of Bourdieu’s logic of practice, namely the principle of capital and its role within the structurationist framework being constructed. This will now be outlined.

2.11.4 Understanding the ‘value’ of external and internal structure relations through the concept of Bourdieu’s Capital.

The practices and dispositional schemes which are derived from both external structures of a context and those embodied within the internal dispositions of agents, carry certain symbolic and material value that may be converted into what Bourdieu illustrates as capital. Additionally, as Singh (2002), illustrates, Bernstein’s concept of resources is similar to that of capital in how both refer to the ‘accumulated labour on which inheres the individuals capacity to produce profits in a particular field’ (p.573). This can create distinctions between groups of individuals and their specific practices on the basis of how valued their practices are by the field. The value of practices within the structure of a field is constituted from a specific exchange between the unequal distribution of practices from the transmitter (those individuals who control and maintain power relations within a field) and those wishing (or forced) to enter the field (acquirer). Any conversion of dispositions within the habitus into capital must make practical, logical sense in relation to the field that produces it. Moreover, it raises questions regarding the role of macro external structures and the types of practices and discourses which are communicated to contexts in-situ. The rise of
new physical capital translates everywhere into a shift of modes of reproduction, from direct reproduction – power transmitted essentially with the family via economic property, to school mediated reproduction where embodiment of ‘privilege’ is stimulated and transfigured by the intercession of education institutions (Bourdieu, 1994). As Ball et al. (2002) highlight, the value associated with individual practices within the field of education are leading to a number of barriers that are derived from such investment, particularly those barriers experienced by the working classes to create a number ‘perceptions, distinctions, and the choices of Higher Education institutions used and made by students play a part in reconstituting and reproducing the divisions and hierarchies in Higher Education’ (p.52).

People from differing social backgrounds with differing fields and practices will have very different opportunities for acquiring socially accepted forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) due to the differing socio-spatial positions they occupy at the outset. As Bourdieu (1994) notes, ‘concentration of the different species of capital (which proceeds hand in hand within the construction of the corresponding fields) leads to the emergence of a specific state capital which enables the state to exercise power over the different fields, and over the different particular species of capital and especially over the rates of conversion between them’ (p.41). While Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) acknowledge forces which define specific capitals within a field, these are not emphasised. Moreover, value evolves over time i.e. the social trajectory of the dispositions is prolonged in relation to its distribution (Bourdieu, 2006). As such, this exchange process cannot be deemed to be neutral in its orientation but plays a crucial role in defining how power and symbolic control relations are reproduced over time (Dika & Singh, 2002). Moreover, the value of practices are interlinked and constrained by the individual habitus which influences the nature of capital, which can be in the form of objectified, institutional, embodied and social states (Bourdieu, 1990; Nash, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Bourdieu, 2006). Bourdieu acknowledge four types of capital which arise from the relations between structures and agents: Physical Capital, Cultural Capital, Social Capital, and Economic Capital. Each of the forms of capital are entwined with the struggle between sets of agents and agencies. To illustrate their characteristics and how they may be integrated into understanding transitional experience, each one will be considered as a separate entity and then applied collectively to the structurationist framework.

2.11.4.1. Social Capital.
Bourdieu (1996) views social capital as the ‘investment of the dominant class to maintain and reproduce group solidarity and preserve the groups dominant position’ (p.33). Such control relations exert an invisible action of structural causality which impedes on an individuals attitudes and
practices within the field. If an individual can give themselves time or be provided with time then the level of acquisition and consequently the level of capital will change. How much time is given is different for different classes, perpetuating class relations within society.

Consequently, as highlighted elsewhere, the value placed by agencies and agents within a context (illustrated as external structures within the framework) on qualifications will have consequences regarding the nature of outcomes arising from structure-agent relations. An example of this is empirically illustrated within the work of Bergeson (2007) and her work regarding social capital within Higher Education. Within the field of Higher Education, social capital influences what students know about available choices and where they get this information. Following from Bourdieu’s definition, the ruling classes in Higher Education control time, space and knowledge, thus influencing transition into Higher Education. The insights from Bergeson also support those of McDonough (1997) who highlights how social capital contributed to the sense of where students ‘fit’ which alludes to, indirectly, how students may experience Higher Education. This empirical evidence from both studies raises questions about the relations between student (agent) practice and the external structures of Higher Education, particularly those regarding whose interests are being perpetuated within the varying qualifications that provide access to the field of Higher Education and whether the agencies and agents of Higher Education value these qualifications. Within Higher Education, what are the consequences for those individuals who do not have the correct intellectual capital and their ability to acquire the right level of cultural capital? Bergeson and McDonough allude to suggestions regarding this relation in illustrating how the practices of working class students are less valued than those of middle class students in Higher Education. While this finding should not be generalised, alarmingly, such perceptions are also alluded to both within empirical research and in the media. The positions and relations and the social capital arising from them have implications for the cultural capital associated with practices.

2.11.4.2. Cultural Capital

This is supported by Hunter (2004), who illustrates, ‘cultural capital marks the product of education or the academic market as connected to individuals in the form of accent, disposition or learning as connected to objects such as books, qualification or possessions’ (p.178). As Bourdieu identifies, the dominant classes within society are able to control and influence educational practices in order to objectify their domination and maintain economic and cultural capital that is later turned into power. Within the field of education, those schools (or universities) with the most symbolic power will be able to convert this into economic wealth through being able to attract the wealthiest
families. This has been emphasised by Reay (2001) who provides an account of how the middle classes power over the value of their dispositions can be converted into cultural capital,

> With the educational system all the authority remains vested in the middle classes. Not only do they run the system, the system itself is one which valorises middle rather than working class cultural capital. [Reay, 2001: 333]

Educational attainment is therefore directly related to the amount of cultural capital an individual possesses in relation to this field. It is evident that working class practices are typically less valued than middle class practices within the education system. As Bourdieu (1994) comments, ‘the educational system maintains the pre-existing order, that is the gap between pupils endowed with unequal amounts of cultural capital. More precisely it separates the holders of unlimited cultural capital from those who lack it’ (p.20). This is also supported by Thomson (2005) who illustrates how ‘a Bourdieunian approach shows policy working as a means of codification, as a doxa of misrecognition and as currency exchange within and across fields’ (p.741). As these authors illustrate, those individuals who have the ‘correct’ dispositions and practices within their habitus are able to compete as they are able to exchange this for cultural and social capital. Moreover, if they do enter the field it is often apparent that working class cultural capital has been shown to be interpreted negatively by teachers (Shilling, 2004). As such, although they may enter different fields those individuals who are part of these groups will be more likely to fail to acquire the range of meanings associated with the field in which they reside (Bourdieu, 1994). For example, Holdsworth (2006) highlights how understanding cultural capital may account for the reasons why students enter Higher Education. Therefore, although all classes of students are required to undertake examinations, those students who do not have the dispositions within the habitus are more likely to fail such examinations. Therefore, they are unable to convert their social capital into valued cultural capital. Therefore, drawing upon the definition of cultural capital, transition into Higher Education is not about reducing social inequality through the acquisition of cultural capital (qualifications) but rather highlights how those in positions of power attempt to facilitate and maintain social positions within a field. Thus, although the working class students enter, they are still not part of the elite (Bourdieu, 1996).

2.11.4.3. Physical Capital.

The properties of cultural capital are linked to the body and can be incorporated as dispositions within the body. Where cultural capital is exchanged in this manner, it becomes physical capital. Physical capital encompasses the symbolic value of the exterior surface of the body in the form of shape, physique and appearance (Hunter, 2004). Bourdieu’s notion of the body as a form of physical
capital points to the commodification of the body in which the individual possesses practices which have become embodied within the individual (Brown, 2005). Within this exchange, individuals may experience the field through their bodies (Shilling, 1993). As Shilling (1993) continues to illustrate, ‘the conversion of physical capital refers to the transition of bodily participation in work, leisure, and other fields into different forms of capital’ (p.128). This is further emphasised by Shilling (2004) who notes how the physicality of the body ‘has become a possessor of symbolically values appearances, it is additionally implicated in the prosaic buying and selling of labour power and the accumulation of other forms of capital’ (p.478). Sparkes et al. (2007) study of particular sport education institutions highlights Bourdieu’s conception of the body as a ‘bearer of value that provides differential access to various resources’ (p.313). It is this exchange which has remained central to research interests of sports education research and as such is central to this study. Hunter (2004) draws heavily upon the work of Bourdieu to explore the way in which discourses associated with the body, both within the classroom context and through Physical Education create discursive spaces for constituting embodied subjectivities. Interestingly, Hunter (2004) highlights how the external structures place value upon the body and the practices of agents. Here what we see is a consequence of structure-agent relations. A question arises: how much value do the external structures of Further Education and Higher Education sports courses place upon the body practices of agent-in-focus (students) and where and how does this value arise?

The reproduction of class inequalities through the transmission of practices is also apparent within the exchange of cultural capital into physical capital. The concept of physical capital within Bourdieu’s sociology, clearly acknowledges how different social classes place different value on the practices of the body (Shilling, 1993). This is summarised succinctly by Sparkes et al. (2007) who note,

The habitus is thus revealed by and constructed through the embodied ritual practices of everydayness that are learned over time and, as such, it has a history that links the flesh of individual actors into systems of social norms, understandings and patterns of behaviour. Different forms of embodiment are likely to predispose people to behave in particular ways as the body becomes a site of social memory and the social gets written into the corporeal. [Sparkes et al., 2007: 299]

The role the physical capital of the body plays in positioning agents is well documented within empirical research, particularly those studies concerning fields or contexts in which the body is prominent in the transmission and acquisition of knowledge (see Hunter, 2004; Brown, 1999; 2005; Evans & Brown, 2004). As such there are substantial inequalities in the symbolic values
accorded to particular bodily forms. Within the field of Physical Education such inequalities are perpetuated between the exchange of the physical capital of the body to social and cultural capital through gaze, performance, measurement and categorisation of its practices (Hunter, 2004). As identified in empirical research, the exchange between physical practice of agents and their surrounding contexts perpetuates a number of inequalities including gender and, more importantly; class (see Shilling, 1993; Brown & Rich, 2002; Allin & Humberstone, 2006). While, as Brown (2005) illustrates, ‘dispositions composing the dominantly masculine habitus comes to be considered valuable symbolic capital in Physical Education and sport’ (p.9) this produces a particular form of symbolic violence in which the physical capital of the body becomes a resource which empowers some while dis-empowering others. As Bourdieu (1998) illustrates, ‘symbolic violence, to put it as tersely and simply as possible, is the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity’ (Bourdieu, 1998, p.167). This has been demonstrated as being crucial in positions undertaken by sports students within particular Higher Education contexts. The value of the concept of physical capital, in understanding these positions is highlighted by Sparkes et al. (2008),

Bourdieu’s views on the materiality of the body, the forms of investment made in it and how its physical shape and its presentation through ways of talking, dressing, moving, bodily deportment, and general demeanour, as highly skilled and socially differentiated practical accomplishments are particularly useful given our focus on a culture that has physical performance of the body as its core feature. [Sparkes et al., 2008: 300]

In agreement with Sparkes et al. (2008) perception of Bourdieu’s analytical value, given the central role agents (and their bodies) play in transition and the importance of the materiality of the body and the specific capital derived from it in positioning agents within relations to external structures is an area which will have significant implications in undertaking exploration of transitional experience. Moreover, given the emphasis placed on rules or principles in the form of the Corporeal Device, what relations do these have and do these regulate the value placed on practices of an agent? For example, as Shilling (2004) illustrates, ‘the working classes tend to develop an instrumental relation to their bodies marked by the need to make do and forged in circumstances where there is little time to cultivate the body outside of its relation to necessity’ (p. 475). For these, the body becomes a necessity within cultural transmission; yet these practices are often not valued as highly as those of other classes (Shilling, 1993).

This highlights how the body is an integral part of the transmission-acquirer relationship in fields in which physical capital is exchanged for social and cultural capital. It has been identified
elsewhere that some groups of individuals (for example sport scientists within the study of Sparkes et al. 2008) do this to accentuate the physical capital of the body, creating purposeful distinctions between them and other agents within a context. However, what are the implications for those individuals who want to enter the same fields as these groups? This remains to be seen within other sporting educational contexts and raises a number of conceptual points which will be discussed later in the chapter.

2.12. Reflection on Bourdieu’s contribution to the structurationist perspective.

Despite a number of limitations, the applications of Bourdieu’s work within the field of Physical Education and sport (and beyond) show questions on the periphery of sociological thinking, can contribute to understanding of the relationship between agent and structure. Like Bernstein, one of the prominent features of Bourdieu’s work lies within its ability to allow researchers to think with it, not merely as a set of core rules to which we must try to fit the reality. Thus, the flexibility of his abstractness, if dealt with sensitively can contribute and evolve some of the relations forwarded by Stones’ original framework. This is supported by Nash (1990) who notes, ‘the real value of Bourdieu’s work to such materialist sociology of education is likely to reside in its thematic concerns and its breadth of attention rather than its provision of an explanatory conceptual vocabulary’ (p.444). The comments of Nash (1990) may have already been applied. Indeed in reviewing Stones’s work on structurationist frameworks, the influence of Bourdieu’s work, particularly that concerning Internal Structures, is already evident. This is particularly relevant in exploring the role of the internal structures of all agents within a context and how embodied dispositions may begin to interact and influence the acquisition of external structures and relations with other agents. Furthermore, given that transition occurs over a length of time, what changes occur to the internal structures and value of embodied practices? The possibilities for Bourdieu to further enhance any reflexive sociological perspective on transitional experiences of students are notable.

Before the final framework is outlined and discussed, a number of issues remain regarding the use of Bourdieu’s work. In contrast to the concepts of Bernstein, Bourdieu’s work does not subject education itself to an analysis of the principles whereby discourses are constituted nor of the principles of transmission (Bernstein, 1990; Haavellsrund, 2001). Thus, Bourdieu’s concepts do not specifically address the rules that shape class inequality. As Shilling (1993) highlights, ‘merely to state that the body is socially constructed does not tell us enough about what is being constructed... [it] Neglects the possibility that certain dimensions of our embodiment might be more amenable to
social intervention than others’ (p.198). This makes his concepts difficult to account for individuals who deviate from the class trajectories assigned to them. In using Bourdieu’s concepts as part of a reflexive perspective, many of these criticisms are overcome. Like Bernstein, Bourdieu’s concepts have been at times criticised for being ambiguous in their explanation and unsettling because of their ability to blend a variety of sociological styles. Indeed it is acknowledged that Bourdieu’s work does not break free from the shackles of contradiction and puzzlement that taints the application of Bernstein’s theoretical concepts, as Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) comment,

His [Bernstein’s] work is unsettling because it is a persistent attempt to straddle some of the deep seated autonomies that need social science, including the seemingly irresolvable antagonism between subjectivist and objectivist modes of knowledge, the separatism of the analysis of the symbolic form that of materiality and the continued divorce of theory from research. [Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:3]

While not well designed to handle issues of change and development (see Evans 2004), these concepts offer possibilities for how the transitional experiences of individuals within the field of Higher Education are conceptualised. However, as Wacquant (1992) notes, any integration into the structuration framework must be aware of the fine line ‘between forced assimilation and illuminating homologies, a sensitive trade off between clarity and accessibility on the one hand and faithfulness and accuracy in form, content and genealogy on the other’ (p.6). In remaining true to the complexity and detail of the theoretical concepts reviewed here we must begin to think of them in a new way and imagine new possibilities for their potential so that they may contribute to the understanding of a ‘new sociology’ which considers both agency and structure in their entirety. However, the challenge will be to weave such concepts into the framework so that they do not become abstract at the empirical level.
Fig 2.5. Diagram to illustrate the conceptualisation of transitional experience.
2.13. Towards a Reflexive Sociological understanding of Transitional Experience

The contrasting perspectives of Bourdieu and Bernstein offer powerful critiques on both the construction and consequences of how discourses and practices constructed within what have been illustrated as ‘external structures’ are produced, transmitted and reproduced and how these influence agent-in-focus practices in-situ. Indirectly, in drawing upon Bourdienian and Bernsteinian sociological perspectives the reflexive sociological framework reaffirms the usefulness of what some may portray as structuralist inquiry (see Sadnovnik, 1991) in understanding power relations and the positions agents adopt within particular contexts. However, in situating any understanding and perspective regarding transitional experience within a heuristic structurationist framework, the phenomenological nuances that the approximations of Bernstein and Bourdieu allow also come to fruition. This is evident within fig.2.5 in which the agent is central to the communication and embodiment of practices and discourses.

While the critiques highlighted in this chapter demonstrate that, despite the noblest of intentions, neither perspective or interpretation of Bernstein or Bourdieu’s original work has been able to understand structure-agent relations in their entirety. fig.2.5 shows how drawing upon both sets of theoretical lenses in what Hawking (1988) refers to as approximations, offers great potential in exploring transitional experiences of agents in a multi-dimensional manner. This acknowledges Stones’ (2005, p.6) comment that ‘structuration theory needs other theories and perspectives to provide frames, just as other theoretical approaches would often do well to call on the resources of structuration’. Following Stones, the relationship between Internal Structures and the levels of External Structures illustrated within the framework that have been alluded to, are also tentatively highlighted by other researchers influenced by the work of Bourdieu and Bernstein. For example, while from Bernstein’s perspective the concept of habitus is a more general concept (see Bernstein, 1990), the study by Morais & Neves (2001) makes a tentative suggestion regarding the nature of the pedagogic discourse and the impact upon the habitus of an individual. This is supported by Ball (2006) who suggests ‘doing sociology does not mean focusing exclusively on one or the other, choices or conditions, discourse or text - it involves developing ways of thinking about how the two work together with social practice’ (p.4). Indeed, Haavellsrund (2001) advocates the possibility of combining the concepts of Bourdieu and Bernstein within new frameworks.

If Bourdieu foregrounds power external to education and Bernstein analyses how power is translated in education, then a third contribution is needed, an analysis of how education translates into power external to it, that is, helps create new power relations. [Haavellsrund, 2001:332]
As the comment above illustrates, while there remain clear differences between the sets of concepts, the concordant use of both offers a conceptual approach which analyses the relationship between wider institutional structures and how these relate to in-situ interactions and experiences within the institutions of Higher Education in a more unified manner. Hence, developing ways of thinking does not necessitate the need to draw upon every concept both have developed. Moreover, we must not be afraid to, at times, challenge their thinking and perspectives to further our own understanding of the experiences and practices of the world we seek to explore: in the case of this PhD study, transitional experience. Before applying the theoretical model it is important to illustrate how both approximations assimilate the framework. Accordingly, each aspect of the framework will now be discussed, suggesting how it contributes to the overall understanding of transitional experience.

2.13.1 The role of External Structures (ESm/ESis)
Within the field of Further and Higher Education there are a number of different institutions which contain different relations of power and social space. Accordingly, in coming to understand one part of transitional experience, drawing upon Bernstein and Bourdieu’s concepts and principles enables the dissemination of how external structures are produced and distributed and the struggles that exist in-situ between different sets of agents which are a consequence of power relations within a context.

However, conceptually, due to the nature of these structures being so broad in their nature it is necessary to uncouple them to further our understanding of what is actually happening empirically. As the diagram shows, such relations within fields are multidimensional, with each interaction contributing to the struggles which construct the limits of the field. This struggle has been illustrated by separating External Structures into two interrelated categories. While Stones accounts for external structures on an in-situ level, within the consciousness of an agent, I believe that any consideration of experience must account for the external structures which exist beyond the temporality of an agent but which continue to play a defining role in everyday practices. Drawing upon a Bernsteinian understanding (in relation to education) these types of external structures would typically represent or construct the primary context. These have been illustrated within the framework as ESm, the ‘m’ representing of ‘macro’, or beyond the immediate temporality of an agent within transition. Furthermore, identifying the external structures in two separate but interrelated categories, reflects Mouzelis thought that elements of external structures should be distinguished as those which can be transformed by a particular agent and those which cannot (see Mouzelis, 1991). What emerges here are epistemological issues of how the framework can
distinguish (and illustrate) the relation between agent action and the broader structural changes that exist.

Broadly, ESm may be conceptualised as agencies and agents within groups like family, government, sporting bodies, all of which are responsible for the construction and transmission of discourses and practices for agents-in-focus. Specifically, at the macro level external structures, can be distinguished into resources which are formed within the Official Pedagogic Field and the Recontextualising Pedagogic Field, (part of the recontextualising context) that are transmitted by agents who are responsible for maintaining symbolic control over the relations between different sets of agents-in-focus. External structures which fall under this category are structures such as policy documents and qualifications which are created in contexts beyond that of the in-situ interaction. Understanding ESm and their role in transitional experience is crucial as this level of structure-agent relation at which the boundaries and framing of positions and relations are formed. It may be that in any specific case study, specialised institutions and agencies that have influence upon Further and Higher Education experience will emerge and be identified, specific to an agent-in-focus particular transitional experience. The relations between agencies and institutions at ESm has been defined using Bernstein’s principle of classification, as this conveys the struggle for legitimacy over practices and discourses. The consideration of how the relations between agencies and institutions at the ESm level reveals the power relations and dominant positions agencies and institutions draw upon within a context. This has influence on an agent’s practice in-situ thus strongly influencing their actions (see Stones, 2005; Giddens, 1990). These struggles are then expressed at the in-situ level through and within what has been illustrated as external structures in-situ (ESIs).

The framework identifies ESIs as those structures which exist within the same temporality as that of the agent-in-focus. External structures which constitute the ESIs are responsible for the recontextualisation of ESm and produce pedagogic modalities which agents acquire or embody. Importantly, ESIs also identifies those practices and beliefs of other agents within the same context. For example, the dispositions and practices of lecturers, coaches and other agents responsible for transmission of knowledge are identified in this context. Additionally, ESIs may also be illustrated within family agents because they too, are responsible for the construction of discourses and practices which will influence an agent’s transitional experience. However, in reality the institution of family may float between ESm and ESIs. Furthermore, the framing of external structures at the ESIs level will influence how such rules are recognised (implicitly or explicitly) shaping the internal structures of the individual agent and consequently the practices which they choose to
embody/reproduce within the context. Where the transmission of external structures in-situ (ESis) is strongly framed, the acquisition of legitimised practices will be more visible and explicit and thus more censored and controlled. For example, such a relationship exists within a traditional classroom with the relationship between teacher and pupil (Bourdieu, 2006). This is also dependent on the nature of the external resources and the nature of evaluative rules. If such rules are explicit in their nature then the individual is more likely to be able to embody the practices necessary to acquire the discourses of the field. However, if the individual does not have access to such resources the recognition of rules can cause the pedagogic principles to be implicit. Again it is possible that more than one set of ESis will be interacting with agents-in-focus and this has been illustrated on fig.2.5. Importantly, relations between ESis and agent-in-focus is governed by framing principles which will influence the expression of those principles at ESm. Thus, ESis represents a recontextualising level of structures. The relations between ESm and ESis can be expressed in the following relational principle,

![Diagram](image)

Fig 2.6. Diagram to illustrate the role of external structures (ESm/ESis) within the construction of transitional experiences.

Consequently, to explore transition and the experiences of transition, the field of university should not be thought of as one entity as in previous research regarding Higher Education experience but is the interaction between a series of external structures each of which contain their own struggles which influence transition. Moreover, the use of Bernstein’s rules within the pedagogic device highlights sets of rules which govern this transmission and distribution and indeed evaluation by agents-in-focus. Understanding external structures in this manner offers the potential to uncover
empirically the specific configurations and interconnections which shape the in-situ experiences. Doing so allows issues of participation and inclusion, which occur during the experience between and within Further and Higher Education, to be addressed. Accordingly what becomes apparent are multiple levels of external structures, some of which interact with the internal structures of the agent-in-focus but at different levels of ontology. However, as Stones (2005) highlights, it is still important to recognise any theory’s existence as ‘framing devices that can hep situate the biographical experiences of individuals and groups at the intersection of the forces of history and social structure’ (p.6). As such, while the role of external structures is prominent within the framework, the consequences of their transmission must be understood. Here the focus of the discussion returns to the internal structures of agents, and their subsequent development based on the research conducted so far.

2.13.2 The role of Internal Structures (IScd/ISgd)

As discussed above, separating dispositions into conjuncturally specific and general dispositions more specifically identifies relations to the external structures of the experience. As highlighted previously, the concept of internal structures within the quadripartite cycle draws heavily upon the concepts of habitus. While the concept of habitus has been previously utilised as a key analytical resource when analysing transition post-16 (see Ball et al., 2000), categorising dispositions as conjuncturally specific or general, begins to develop the understanding of the multidimensional nature of the habitus to understand the practices of individuals in-situ. Moreover, such a perspective forwards the idea that the practices of the individual, constituted from their dispositions within their internal structures becomes integrally involved in the construction of discourse (Shilling, 1993; Hunter, 2004). Therefore, internal structures become an entity that embodies and influences the reproduction and representation of the rules which govern the transmission and reproduction of discourses within specific contexts. This can be defined by the relational principle, illustrated in fig.2.7.

Here, IScs is representative of the conjunctural knowledge agents have of specific interactions and contexts. Contrastingly, ISgd is representative of the general dispositions an agent carries into a context which influences the acquisition and embodiment of IScs. In defining this relationship explicitly I have drawn upon the principles Bernstein discusses within his idea of integration and relation between instructional discourses of a context and the regulative discourses of individuals which, as Bernstein notes, will always influence the expression of instructional discourses. In many respects, the same principle can be applied to the internal structures of an agent in as much as the
expression and realisation of IScs sets of knowledge is dependent on the past experiences of an agent, internalised as general dispositions which are then drawn upon unconsciously (implicitly) or consciously (explicitly). Importantly, ISgd are not specific to the context and, as such, play a role in determining the evaluation of practices which form context specific dispositions in the internal structures. Thus, ISgd must be thought of as a type of Doxa: unquestioned assumptions of the values of engagement within particular fields arising from the illusio generated by the habitus, that itself was generated by the field in question.

Fig. 2.7. Diagram to illustrate the role of internal structures (IScd/ISgd) within the construction of transitional experiences.

The unconscious and conscious realisation of knowledge can be analytically interpreted through sets of rules or embodied regulations, illustrated in the framework as constituting the Corporeal Device (CD). Moreover, the relations highlighted in the relational formula are controlled and influenced by two devices: those of the pedagogic device (constructed external to the body) and those rules which constitute a corporeal device (constructed within and through the body). In doing so, the framework accounts for and draws upon an analysis of the rules of construction, circulation, contextualisation, acquisition and change (Evans & Davies, 2004) Drawing heavily upon the work of Evans et al. (2008) and Shilling (2008) the use of this concept does not replace the pedagogic device (PD) but could be used relationally within a specific context to understand the experience of an agent-in-focus.

2.13.3 Active Agency (Aa)

Although not directly highlighted within fig.2.5, the nature of the relations between the sets of external structures and internal structures produces what Stones has termed the Active Agency of an
agent-in-focus. Accordingly, the Active Agency of an agent can be expressed in the following principle,

\[
\text{Aa} = \frac{\text{ISgd/IScs}}{\text{ESm/ESis}}
\]

Fig. 2.8. Diagram to illustrate the social construction of active agency (Aa) within transitional experience.

The relations illustrated within this principle are continually evolving in relation to any new experience an agent may encounter during transition. Furthermore, following explicitly from Stones (2005) these relations may be reflective, pre-reflective or strategic and drawn upon various aspects of Active Agency as identified by Giddens and developed by Stones (see section 2.4.3, page 30). The relations which result in the variations of Active Agency shift in relation to each other depending on a framing principle. Where there is weak framing, the sense of active agency an individual experiences in defining and determining whether to embody the legitimised and dominant discourses of a field will (have to) increase. Furthermore, this level of active agency will influence how discourses are communicated, controlling the nature of pedagogic practices an individual chooses to embody and reproduce. Moreover, their expression, in the form of modalities is influenced by whether the individual recognises the normative expectations of the context, namely the modalities transmitted by ESm and recontextualised by ESis. Here, the role of internal structures in this recognition process is highlighted as the dispositions of the individual will empower them to be able to recognise the normative expectations of a context, thus creating idiosyncratic forms of transitional experience. Where there is strong framing between sets of agents the agent-in-focus may not be able to recognise the normative expectations of the ESis.
Accordingly, is the range of alternatives accessible to them considerably reduced? If so, what are the consequences for the agents transitional experience?

2.13.4 Outcomes.

Within the structuration framework, practices and experiences of the individual within FE and HE may be thought of as outcomes resulting from their perceived level of active agency. Reflecting upon the original conceptualisation by Stones (2005), outcomes within the structuration framework ‘include the overlapping but differential effects of actions and interactions on both external and internal structures, as well as other kinds of outcomes’ (p.85). This illustrates the influence of both external structures and internal structures on an agents purpose, or in the context of this study, the way they experience transition within and between Further and Higher Education contexts. Given the developments in how external and internal structures are understood and their relations between them illustrated, it is necessary to highlight how this contributes to a further understanding of outcomes. In reflection, outcomes are the result of how the contexts external structures (ESm/ESis) from which agents recognise, acquire and embody knowledge are constructed and the individual level of knowledgeability (ISgd/IScs) in how they come to recognise and acquire knowledge within the in-situ context. This can be illustrated in the relational principle, illustrated within fig.2.9. As fig.2.9. proposes, the outcomes (as a result of active agency) will never be stable as the individual continually relocates along an ontological continuum (defined by their temporality) due to their everyday interactions within the contexts. Subsequently, transitional experiences are not located in one ontological level, but represent the continuous interaction by agents, drawing upon external structures within what Stones refers to as the abstract, meso-level and ontic-level of ontologies.

2.13.5 Reflections & Research Foci.

The reflexive framework is able to conceptualise the origins and history of the specific discourses concerning widening participation and inclusion, how they interact with localised discourses within tertiary institutions and what and whose interests they legitimise or challenge (Penney & Evans, 1999). It is suggested that the meta-analytical framework forwarded is able to account for the experiences of agent-in-focus in relation too all three ontological levels. Specifically, in relation to the focus of this PhD study, the framework will be used to explore and understand a multi-dimensional transitional experience of particular students who experience transition from Foundation Degree sports courses onto sports courses within Higher Education. By conceptualising transitional experience in this manner, the study alters the foci of traditional Higher Education research, and understand experience beyond what Ashwin (2010) and Thornton (2010, p.360) refer
to as the ‘superficially impressionistic reflections of students and staff who design and participate’ within Higher Education practice. In agreement with Thornton and Ashwin I believe that the use of ‘strong’ structurationist frameworks will enable this PhD study to challenge a number of conceptual and empirical orthodoxies that have existed within educational research for sometime. However, any framework must still pay attention to the detail and rules of the individual concepts to maintain their strong analytical possibility.

This challenges what is meant by experience of transition. It views the experience of individuals as not disembodied interactions which are limited in space and time but as a series of in-situ relations over a number of interrelated contexts. Such a perspective reflects what Ball et al. (2002) note that, ‘the distribution of classes and minority ethnic groups within and across Higher Education institutions has to be understood as the outcome of several stages of decision making in which choices and constraints or barriers interweave’ (p.70). Therefore, rather than becoming mono-directional in its nature, transition becomes dialectic in its pathways, with the individual taking steps forward in the transition and also drawing upon dispositions within their general dispositions.
allowing the past self (from within the habitus) to merge within present experiences. Following from this, the experience of Higher Education and the transition between its many fields, is not an unambiguous sequential process but consists of a series of microscopic struggles between differing sets of agents and agencies occurring diurnally. Subsequently, through adopting a strong structuration framework, agents operate within an ontological continuum in which their experience is not thought of as one experience but many experiences within the particular fields that influence transition into Higher Education. This has a number of implications on how the framework is utilised. The differing contexts and struggles of each individual will generate different criteria by which we utilise the framework forwarded. As Atkinson (1985) highlights, ‘there is no such thing as a perfectly frozen, unchanging tradition, which is perfectly transmitted from generation to generation in unmodified forms’ (p.62). This goes someway to articulating the identified processes of negotiation between individuals and institutions which are in a ‘constant state of transformation’ (Brown & Evans, 2004, p.65).

While invariably such an approach can only account for a small number of the vast in-situ interactions that shape these experiences, it generates a number of key questions regarding the field of Higher Education and how individuals come to experience transition,

1. What are the dominant external structures which classify and frame the contexts of an individual’s transition from Foundation Degree level into final year BSc programmes in Higher Education?

2. How do these external structures affect the transmission and embodiment of conjunctural knowledge within and between the agent-in-focus.

3. How do students experience this specific transition and interact with the external structures in-situ of Further and Higher Education?

4. What are the implications (outcomes) of this transitional experience for students?

The above research foci reflect the various levels of the framework discussed and developed during the course of this chapter. Thus, the foci of the research attempt to explore the transition into Higher Education sports programmes as a transitional process, one that is dynamic in its nature. Furthermore, while the focus of the study places the student central to the understanding of transitional experience, a secondary consideration is the critical exploration of the current state of Further Education and Higher Education sports education. While some have alluded to the need for such critical lenses (see Fitz et al., 2006) currently, educational research has not differentiated at a subject specific experience. This will allow spaces to be created in which new experiences and pedagogies may be discussed and challenged so that the voice of those who face the consequences
of inequality become conceptually and analytically emboldened: not merely in one context but over a number of contexts at both a micro and macro level. The next stage of addressing the research foci of the study was to consider a methodological approach which would account for the differing ontological levels illustrated within the theoretical framework. Consequently, this required careful consideration of the research design and subsequent methods which arose out of a discussion on the approach to follow. To this end, Part one of the study concludes by discussing the methodology and methods utilised and developed for this study.
Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1. Some Methodological Considerations.


As we have seen, within student experiences, the issue of class inequality in Higher Education is not new to the landscape of educational research. However, the adoption of the strong structuration framework does provide refined methodological eyes from which to understand these issues of transitional experience. As Stones (2005) perceptively suggests, ‘there are always choices to make as to the path to follow’ (p.146). Accordingly, this chapter addresses the melange of challenging methodological questions that adopting a structurationist perspective has posed. However, in constructing this research design, the challenges that have arisen have in themselves highlighted a number of caveats of structurationist frameworks as a research method. Pushing the dynamics of qualitative research in this way generates a number of issues that researchers must confront to maintain theoretical coherence and epistemological innovation (Kincheloe, 2005). In what follows, the methodological chapter of this study reflects upon the conceptual and empirical procedures adopted and developed from the structurationist framework developed in Chapter Two.

Following the research foci highlighted in chapter two, the adoption of a reflexive sociological approach raised a number of methodological considerations. As has been illustrated, central to the theoretical approach for understanding transitional experience is the role of ontology. This is immediately evident within Stones’ original work regarding strong structuration theory,

The emphasis of structuration theory on the internal and external relationships between social structures and the hermeneutics of agents means that structuration studies will typically lean towards the deft and careful brush strokes of an artist intent on capturing the details of her subject. [Stones, 2005: 127]

Following from Stones, the very nature of adopting a structurationist focus on the relations between clusters of external structures at the various levels of ontology (abstract and meso) and the relation of these to the hermeneutics of an agent requires, as Stones eloquently suggests, ‘deft and careful brush strokes’. Indeed the art-like nature of methodologies and the role of sociology is also considered by Davis (2008) who, in drawing upon the work of Robert Nisbet, suggests that ‘sociology shares more with art than it does with science because art is interested in ‘throwing light upon reality, and in somehow communicating this light to others’ (p.1237). In reflecting upon the
understanding of the role of both sociology and researchers, I began to try to understand my role as a researcher and how I could begin to explore the transitional experiences of students. However, in painting this picture of transitional experience there remains a number of methodological, ontological, and epistemological challenges to reflect upon and address (Creswell, 1988; Quinn, 2004). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) consider that this challenge ‘Invites intellectuals to realise and to work to neutralise the specific deterministic’s to which their innermost thoughts are subjected and it informs a conception of the craft of research designed to strengthen its epistemological moorings’ (p.48). Following the thoughts of Bourdieu and Wacquant, I did not possess an epistemological and ontological map to understand the landscape I wanted to explore (Kincheloe, 2005). While the epistemologies and ontological assumptions of such an approach may initially appear to clash and grate, this resulting friction can be of some use and may help rather than detract from sociological thinking (Apple, 1996; Ball, 2006). However, these frictions need to be reconciled on epistemological, methodological and ontological levels before theoretical advancements can be forwarded and a number of methodological issues regarding design, data collection and analysis be made. Following from Brannen (2005) I suggest that ‘the kinds of questions we pose lead therefore not only to the choice of method but, increasingly commonly, to a complex of methods’ (p.176).

Central to the focus of the PhD study was the necessity to communicate the experience of my participants in such a way that they became prominent rather than silenced. Previously within the field of Further and Higher Education research the ‘voice of individuals have been used to provide a lens to encapsulate issues of class inequality and experience within Higher Education (see Ball et al., 2000; Archer & Leatherwood, 2003; Reay et al., 2005). This is supported by McArdle and Mansfield (2007) who note, ‘voice provides the foundations for understanding what it means to be, who one is and how change is needed and possible’ (p.485). Following from Chapter Two, the framework developed situates the voice of the student experience as central to understanding transitional experiences. Thus, the need to consider a subtle analytical framework which can explore transitional experience across a number of ontological levels is postulated by Stones (2005) (see Chapter Two). This is emphasised by Reay et al. (2005) who suggest, ‘current research indicates that it is important to desegregate crude class categorisations and develop more subtle analyses which recognise rather than gloss over increasing horizontal and vertical segmentation within class groupings’ (p.5) Following the comments of Reay et al. (2005), the increasing complexities of positions and relations requires more multidimensional methodologies that are able to highlight enduring class inequalities while preserving and locating the experiences of the
individual participants.

Furthermore, it is essential that through methodological approaches and innovative representation, researchers continue to challenge and resist the continual return to the ‘scientific standards’ replicated within positivistic performance orientated approaches which have tended to sanitise and narrow the way transitional experiences are understood and reflected upon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2006; Wright, 2006). In addressing this perspective the development of methodological approaches that positions and understands transitional experience from the hermeneutical core of agent structure relations will allow their experience to become prominent and central to understanding transitional experience within sports education within the tertiary sector. However, such experiences are extremely difficult to conceptualise and portray. Furthermore, while the voices of individuals allow me to make sense of the possibilities that lie within transitional experience (Tett, 2000) it is important to recognise that such voices do not represent an unmediated truth from which we can draw assumptions regarding every experience of transition. As such, if voices of different classes in society are particular and even idiosyncratic, then what is required is a methodology that reflects their unique perspectives while at the same time also showing how each of them are inextricably linked to wider social and cultural forces at play in the contexts which serve to classify and frame transitional experience.

While it is acknowledged that developing this type of methodological approach is not an easy task, it is by no means unreachable. The adoption of a methodological approach informed by the structuration framework highlighted within Chapter Two enables the researcher to actively listen and explore the experiences of the participants at a number of levels; from understanding diminutive interactions (for example, conversation and interaction between tutor and individual) to the perceptions of their experiences across a number of institutions, without oversimplifying this interaction and the theoretical concepts being used. Accordingly, Chapter Three highlights how experience may be understood and the influence strong structurationist frameworks can play in informing these considerations. In light of these considerations the chapter also highlights the methods chosen and the analytical processes which have been used to explore the transitional experiences of the participants. Finally, considerations of how I have represented the participants transitional experiences is also addressed.

3.2. Reflection and Consideration of the Paradigmatic Lenses.

One of the challenges in understanding the relationship between structure and agency and its influence on the way I understand transitional experience was to methodologically connect the
various aspects of the participants’ lives. Recently, the epistemological and ontological dilemmas which educational researchers face (Moore & Young, 2001; Heiman & Kariv, 2004) has led to a schematic and partial view of the understanding between student experience and the structures which influence these experiences that elsewhere have been addressed within separate epistemological and ontological standings (Shilling, 1999; Brannen, 2005; Hammerlsey, 2007). As Wright (2006) notes, this viewpoint is stimulated by ‘overt politicisation, epistemological and paradigmatic proliferation, post-posts (postmodernism, poststructuralism, post-experimentation and a new post (post-colonialism), as well as a new or renewed paradigm war’ (p.793). This has resulted in the creation of what some have illustrated as a philosophical vacuum (Kincheloe, 2005; Lingard & Gale, 2007), a more undefined space where neither structuralist or interpretive perspectives dominate the landscape of educational sociology research. Attempting to understand transitional experiences through the structurationist framework, situates this study in the centre of the paradigms debate as it draws upon realist, neo-realist and interpretive viewpoints. As Chapter Two has illustrated, transition experience is not a hermeneutically sealed field of study; nor is it a neat linear progression which can be neatly tidied using one overall methodological approach, summarised and addressed within the discourses of research in education (Wright, 2006). Rather its complex multi-dimensional nature requires multidimensional perspectives from which to understand it. Such complexity also requires multi paradigmatic views that have traditionally been separated. However, before any synthesis of paradigmatic perspectives can be attempted, it is necessary to deliberate both the contribution of structuralist and interpretive paradigms in exploring the transitional experiences of students.

Central to the realist perspective is the significance placed upon patterned systems of classification and ordering which govern the relationships between agents within a context (Smith, 2004; 2008). As such, the structuralist perspective is more aligned to uncovering the more objective conditions within the social world, negating the role of the individual as an active agent in disseminating how structures are formed and reproduced. This is illustrated by Atkinson (1995) who notes that within structuralism ‘the subject is displaced or de-centered in an attempt to overcome a dualism between subject and object, and to escape appeals to consciousness as the pre-given starting point for the start of analysis’ (p.91). Subsequently, this perspective is aligned with more positivistic perceptions of interactions and experience.

Within the field of educational research such an approach has informed a number of themes including educational management, curriculum, school effectiveness, pedagogy and the role of the political system within the field of education (Sadnovnik, 1991; Ball, 1995; Sadnovnik, 1995). In
support of this Shilling (1991) suggests that, ‘the field of educational research has become
dominated by technical approaches which take problems as given and set out to find solutions to
these problems within existing social and economical parameters’ (p.77). Within these broad subject
areas, the individual agent becomes passively detached from the reproduction of discourse,
subsequently being affected by, but not affecting, their production and reproduction (Rudd, 1997).
Consequently, structuralist accounts in education are strong on the constraints of structures yet
show little account for how these influence agency (Atkinson, 1985; Shilling, 1992; Haralambos &
Holburn, 2002). This limits the ability to see structures and practices as evolving and fluid in
relation to the practices of the agent creating a situation where research becomes ‘of’ and not ‘for’
the sociology of education.

Contrasting to the realist paradigmatic viewpoint, interpretive paradigms have been adopted
to address the purposes of people’s behaviour and how this conscious human intention constructs
and reconstructs the social world (Patton, 1990; Wolcott, 1990). Moreover, in situating the
individual central to the sociological analysis (Shilling, 1991) it focuses on the meaning of
experience at the expense of actual practices and the underlying mechanics illustrated within
structuralist accounts. Those researchers who have adopted the interpretive paradigm allow for
multi-interpretations of singular lives to emerge, providing a multi-dimensional voice for the
audience in which the assumptions of individuals are highlighted. Consequently, the role of the
individual (as both teacher and practitioner) in constructing and reproducing knowledge through
various interactions within a field is highlighted (Humberstone, 1995). While the interpretive
account presents meticulous stories, such stories of experience tend to overlook the context of
experience and continue to illustrate experiences as the consequence of differentiation. However, as
has been highlighted, those adopting a structurationist perspective (such as the position adopted by
Shilling, 1992) have attempted to bridge the divide.

From a structurationist perspective, it is evident the interpretive approach is necessary because
individuals construct a reality through interpreting the meaning of structures. Any epistemological
standpoint, which highlights individualism without consideration of the structures in which it
develops, will contain a number of flaws (Wacquant, 1992). However, without considering how the
external structures construct and influence individuals understanding of these same practices, it
must be questioned the extent interpretive perspectives can account for the relations between
structure and agent. Moreover, an idealistic and constrained approach cannot account for active
transformation (Giddens, 1993), something that the adoption of a strong structuration framework
alludes to or leans towards. While there are a number of difficulties to adopting hermeneutical
perspectives in which structure and agency are viewed as influencing each other, they do direct researchers towards new lenses from which to understand transitional experiences (Crossley, 2001).

I have argued that the field of educational research is becoming increasingly fragmented with several competing paradigms, acting in an oppositional manner, perpetuating idealisms and hindering analysis that considers the relationship between structure and agency. Although educational viewpoints are continually developing, current research perspectives may, at times, oversimplify the intricate relationship between structure and agency, potentially limiting possibilities of conceptual agreement that may exist or be developed through dialogue (Sadnovnik, 1991; Hammersley, 2007, Lawson, 2009). This simplification of relations between structure and agency within the field of HE research is highlighted by Thornton (2010) who notes how,

> The HE literature has traditionally, and too frequently, focused on limited descriptions of practice, activities and events, and the perceptions and reflections, often superficially impressionistic, of students and staff who design and participate in them. [Thornton, 2010: 359]

While the perspective of Thornton may be inadvertently simplifying the research that is undertaken within the field of Higher Education, her thoughts nevertheless shed light on the nature of current paradigmatic viewpoints. However, as Shilling has previously contended, while there have been previous attempts to overcome the paucity of attempts to integrate and reconcile levels of analysis, such approaches have not met with success. As Shilling (1991) notes, ‘in the first instance there is no attempt to trace the links between structure and action while in the second, human agency is, paradoxically dissolved into an over integrative notion of social structure’ (p.73). While the thoughts of Shilling are now somewhat historically situated, his message remains relevant, in that in attempting to understanding transitional experience within agent-structure relations it is necessary to go beyond the orthodoxies of both structuralism and interpretivism and look towards an approach which seeks to embrace the complexity of the social world.

While many of these possibilities of a structurationist approach which places the hermeneutical core of relations central to its analysis are tainted with some archaic dilemmas and dangers, they represent something to engage with. Furthermore, they are able to inform a methodological approach that is able to understand what is happening on the surface alongside the underlying structures beneath it (Smith, 2003). Such an approach constructs a far more enriched description in which the agent interacts with the structures of their context. In doing so I have considered the idea of *Bricolage* (Kincheloe, 2005) which embraces a perspective that considers the role of agents in...
shaping their own realities. As Kincheloe (2005) suggests, within the bricolage approach ‘culture is not merely the context in which the self operates but bricolage is ‘also in the self’ – an inseparable portion of what we call the self. Who we are as human beings is dependent on the nature of such relationships and connections’ (p.328). Such work, in part, resonates with the thoughts of Barthes (2000) and the idea of mythologies. While clearly influenced by structuralist ideas of Saussre and Zhdanov, Barthes argued for a close convergence between linguistics and cultural inquiry (Smith, 2003). Furthermore, the later work of Barthes has a number of resonances with Giddens’ conception of the duality of structure. As Barthes (2000) comments,

One cannot speak about structures in terms of forms, and vice versa. There is totality where structures and forms cannot be separated. But science has no use for the ineffable (indescribable): it must speak about life if it wants to transform it. [Barthes, 2000: 112]

The thoughts of Barthes insinuates that the understanding of how external structures influence agent practices cannot be undertaken unless there is an understanding of the forms of meaning these structures produce. Thus, if we want to understand the in-situ interaction between agent and structure it is necessary to understand the relationship between these and the structures that underlie their interactions in a more relational manner. Following from Giddens (1993), such an approach depends on the ‘hermeneutic task of penetrating the frames of meaning which lay actors themselves draw upon in constituting and reconstituting the world’ (p.163). In understanding how the parts influence the whole, and how the whole influences the parts, an understanding of both social structures and actors’ meanings is required. Such a perspective addresses Stones’ (2005, p. 129) belief that any ‘understanding arrives at a complex and mediated connection between what exists within the social world and what is in here, in the phenomenology of the mind and body of an individual’.

These considerations have generated a multi-dimensional perspective in which the voice of the individual goes unrestrained within a tri-dimensional relationship. Understanding the practices of individuals this way contributes to a greater understanding of how practices at a historical moment will influence the practices of an individual at a particular moment (Smith, 2003). Accordingly, following from Jacob (1987) the paradigmatic perspectives adopted within this approach are not homogenous or monolithic in their nature (Jacob, 1987) but are able to reflect and inform contrasting perspectives of the agent-in-focus.
3.3. Research Design

Designing the study to account for both experience and underlying structures also required me to explore and develop a multi-dimensional research design which was able to account for the various levels of ontology present within the agents transitional experience. At the abstract level, a design approach was needed which would identify the External Structures present within the Meso Level of ontology. At the same time, a research design needed to be developed that also accounted for the interactions and relations existing at the ontic-level of ontology. Again, the original work of Stones (2005) directs researchers towards practices and processes which may provide ‘subtle and differentiated distinctions’ between these levels and the structures and practices which exist within them. In doing so, Stones outlines a series of recurrent steps. These steps provide the foundation of the research design of this study.

The research design of the PhD study is based upon the various components of the structuration framework outlined within Chapter Two. However, while each step has been illustrated as being analytically separate reality, within the data collection process there was a degree of overlap between each step of the overall research design. As Stones (2005) notes, the four steps allow for more subtle and differentiated distinctions between the various components of structuration. However, as Stones rightly suggests, the research process based on these steps will be combined in different ways depending on the question-at-hand. In reflection on this, it was decided to swap the order of steps that Stones originally suggests. Thus, rather than starting with the identification of

Fig. 3.10. Diagram to illustrate the research design timeline.
general dispositions, the starting point for this study was the identification of the External structures which were considered as playing a role in the transitional experiences of students from Foundation Degrees into Higher Education ‘Top Up’ qualifications. Additionally, given the research topic of this study a clearly mapped external structure was already available and had provided focus for the research prior to the methodological considerations. This process is alluded to by Stones who highlights how starting with external structures is an ‘attractive starting point from which to map out, provisionally, the context in which particular processes of structuration take place’ (p.127). Each step of the research process will now be discussed in more detail.

In addressing the various levels of transitional experiences I was drawn towards the adoption of a Case Study approach. The case study approach has been adopted within Higher Education research (Browne, 2005) and those eager to explore interactions within classrooms (Zhao, 2007). In doing so it became apparent that the adoption of a case study approach of one particular cohort of students would allow for the analytical management of interactions (for example, conversation and interaction between tutor and individual) in-situ alongside analysis of the external structures relevant to the particular institution, as identified within step one of the research design (see chapter three). However, in adopting the use of a case study approach for this PhD study I was conscious of some of the criticisms which have been identified, particularly concerning the lack of scientific method and a perceived focus on process rather than product (Atkinson & Delamont, 1995 cited in Browne, 2005). Yet these criticisms, while informative, are discounted. By adopting the structurationist framework, the study needs to deliberately identify and explore relations between structure and agent through the exhaustive detail which influences the construction of meaning for an agent and subsequently their transitional experience. The value of the case study approach is highlighted by Stones (2005) who notes how case studies allow the researcher to view ‘elements of external structures that can and cannot be transformed by a particular agent’ (p.125). Subsequently, while being able to explore the most minuscule interactions the application of a case study approach also has the ability to stretch outwards (Stones, 2005). A case study approach of one cohort of Foundation Degree students within the South West was adopted. The case study may be described as being small scale, intensive and longitudinal in its nature. Therefore, within the transitional experience of the participant, the numerous small interactions that are continuously occurring at the ontic-level of ontology may be related and ‘stretched outwards’ to the inner workings and networks at the meso and abstract levels of ontology.

Central to the focus of the case study was to find a group of students who were in their final year of a course at either secondary or Further Education institutions and would initially (if they
chose to go) experience university and tertiary education for one year. Moreover, in terms of data collection, it was clear that following a group or particular class would be advantageous as I would be able to follow their experiences in a more comprehensive manner; allowing for in-situ interactions to be collected and analysed alongside interview material and documentary data from the same institution. In considering populations which would fit this criteria I looked towards secondary education and tertiary educational institutions and students who were undertaking their last year of A-level, BTEC or other courses which lead into Higher Education courses. To highlight the experiences of transition and address the research foci of the PhD study (see Chapter Two) from the perspective of students, an institution was purposefully selected based on prior knowledge of the institution and research (Schwandt, 2007, cited in Brown & Macdonald, 2008). Based on this criteria, a Further Education college was initially chosen for the study. Hope College (pseudonym) is a Further Education college which offers a range of courses aimed at students from a variety of social backgrounds. Following initial research, it became apparent that one of the key themes of the college was offering education to students from a variety of social backgrounds. Further research highlighted the widening participation aims of the college and the variety of courses being offered to students. Alongside traditional A-level sport qualifications, the college also offered students progression routes and qualifications. Of note was the introduction of Foundation Degrees in Sports coaching (FDSc) and the emergence of a sports academy. The FDSc being introduced at the college was a two year full time course. At the end of the course, students were offered the chance to ‘Top Up’ their qualification into a BSc at another Higher Education institution. It was this aspect of the course which was extremely interesting when coming to understand transitional experience. Significantly, there were a number of transitional pathways available to those students on the FDSc programme. One choice was to ‘Top Up’ their qualifications at one institution (which has been coded as Fawlty Tower University (FTU)). Another progression route available to the students was the chance to ‘Top Up’ their FDSc qualifications at the prestigious Ivory Tower University (ITU). Thus, in choosing Hope College and the FDSc qualification as the starting point for this study, a number of possible transitional experiences were emerging (as structural possibilities). Thus, Hope College presented a variety of what Ball et al. (2000) refer to as socioscapes – networks of social relations of very different intensity, spanning widely different territorial extents. Finally, the location of Hope enabled access to be ongoing: I was able to visit the institution on a regular basis and communication was more straightforward.

Once ethical clearance by the university was granted, I attempted to gain access to the field. I was fortunate that a number of my postgraduate colleagues had obtained jobs at Hope, teaching on
a number of sports courses, including the FDSc. This enabled me to use them as amenable and didactic gatekeepers,

Went with Jeremy (pseudonym) to visit the programme director at the college to discuss the college being part of the research I was conducting. Jeremy was helpful in this and had clearly earned the respect of the staff. Jeremy introduced me to the director of the course (ex rugby player Nigel) who had retired from rugby and was now lecturing at the college. Also briefly introduced me to Lucy who was teaching at the time but Nigel thought would be interested in my study as well. Went on to arrange further meetings with Nigel and Lucy on Thursday to discuss what days to go in and what students may be interested in the study. [Field Notes: 28/09/07]  

As the extract from my field journal highlights, Jeremy was a postgraduate student who had been teaching at the college and was well respected by the staff in the sports department at Hope. While his own (and other postgraduates’) own experiences of Further Education would become data in their own right, using him as a gatekeeper allowed me initial access to the staff and students. Such an approach is indicative of Rapley’s (2004) observation that researchers entering the field, ‘often rely on our friends at the start of the recruitment process’ (p.17). Through Jeremy, a meeting was arranged with the director of sports programmes at the college. Within this meeting I explained the nature of my research and outlined my research foci. Through these meetings it was suggested that I may want to talk to students who were undertaking the recently formed FDSc programme at the college. It is confessed that at the time, I had little understanding of the Foundation Degree or its potential as a transitional pathway. Focusing on these students from non-traditional backgrounds often carries the assumption that they are a distinct social category with particular shared characteristics (Tett, 2000). Although the intention at the start of the research did not consider Foundation Degree Students as potential participants the focus upon this qualification and very specific transitional route into Higher Education has opened my eyes to a path of transition that has been rarely discussed within research. More recently, as Lowe and Gayle (2007) highlight,

Higher Education students based in Further Education colleges are a distinctive group with specific characteristics. Compared with university-based Higher Education students, Higher Education students in Further Education colleges are more likely to be older, have non-traditional entry qualifications, study part time be enrolled on HNC or HND courses (most of which are vocationally orientated) and come from less advantaged backgrounds. [Lowe & Gayle, 2007: 226]  

The 2nd year FDSc students chosen for the study are reflective of the labels illustrated above. These students met the criteria of being half way through their courses with the prospect of
going onto a university course the year after. Subsequently, while the selection of these students may be seen as being opportunistic (Browne, 2005) it remains purposive, allowing for the collation of information-rich participants (Silverman, 2001; Brown & Macdonald, 2008). After more informal meetings with both Nigel and Lucy, it was agreed that I would be allowed access to the department and the FDSc lectures within Hope college. After consultations with the course leaders it was decided that this particular group of students would adhere to the aims of the PhD study as they would be undergoing transition into Higher Education within a time-frame which would allow the collection of data at both Hope College and the final year of their transition. Focusing my analytical lenses towards one particular course at Hope College had both advantages and limitations in gaining an understanding of transitional experiences. It is acknowledged focusing on one particular transitional route, with a small number of participants limits my understanding of other transitional pathways available to students wishing to enter Higher Education (e.g. A-level, or BTEC qualifications). However, research lenses have been directed to understanding these traditional pathways into Higher Education (Patiniotis & Holdsworth, 2005). Accordingly, by directing the analytical lenses towards the group at Hope College allows the prospect of gaining a deeper understanding of this particular transitional pathway. Additionally, focusing upon one group of students and lecturers within Hope enabled steps 1-4 of the research process to be conducted and allowed the access and acquisition of external structures specific to their transitional experience. For example, as is highlighted within Chapter Four, the relations developed with Nigel provided me with course handbooks, module outlines and validation documents, which would have been hard to obtain otherwise.

3.3.1. The agent-in-focus.

The group consisted of seven individuals: I admit that my assumption before I had met the group was that if they were on this course then they would have similar academic and social backgrounds. However, as my initial interactions reveal, such assumptions were to be proved wrong. Rather than being a limitation, such variation provided one line of inquiry that may be categorised as being emergent. Nevertheless, they had a number of commonalities in their perceptions of Higher Education and academic backgrounds. The ages of the participants range between 18-24 and all have part time jobs, some within the sports industry. Strikingly, two of the male participants can be classed as being within the professional sports industry: one as a referee and one as a player. Following an initial group interview, it was immediately evident that all the students came from less advantaged backgrounds, although it is highlighted here that the term ‘less advantaged’ is broad in its application (see Chapters Five, Six and Seven). For example, some of the participants have more
traditional entry qualifications such as A-levels and have entered the course from other post-16 educational institutions (see Chapter Five). Others have been at the college for the length of their post-16 education (nearly 3 years at this point) (see Chapters Six and Seven). Nevertheless, all the students were from families in which they were either the first or second member of the family entering Higher Education. However, there are a number of problems in situating individuals into prescribed categories. For example, what if the stories of the participants do not fit into these prescribed categories? Are we to discount these as worthless? In a sense, in discounting or choosing to discount some of the experiences I am reproducing the categories which situate vocational students and the value of their qualification, and which are constructed by policy and government agencies. However, in being critical of these prescribed identities, the study is able to indicate the processes of becoming positioned by these external structures. Additionally, it will also enable the study to critically highlight the outcomes of these perceptions and external structures at the ontic-level within the college.

3.3.2. Data Collection Considerations.

Before data collection with the group was started, it seemed that for reasons both ethical and epistemological, to write about transition with the field of sports education without getting a rough sociological grasp of it at ground level. I felt that to understand transition from their perspective and for the participants to elucidate these experiences, I would need to immerse myself within the field immediately allowing for a process of familiarisation. This process of initial entry into the field was facilitated by Nigel, the lecturer I had met first and who was enthusiastic about my study and research. However, gaining entry into the field this way poses a number of questions. How would they react to me being there? Could I explain the nature of my work in its entirety? Would I inform others within the departments of the nature of my work? While nervous and apprehensive of going into the department, there is little doubt that my biography and the context in which my research is undertaken shapes my perceptions and understanding (O’Sullivan, 2007). While still an ‘outsider’, through my similar interests in rugby and outdoor education I had, at the time of entry into the field, a small amount of cultural and physical capital which allowed me to become immersed very quickly and survive the initial interactions within what was a very tight knit and close group.

At first there was an air of reluctance and almost a sense of distrust among the students and it was not until the second and third visits to the college that I felt a sense of progress in developing relationships with the students. Furthermore, by being able to draw upon my experiences of FE and teaching, I immediately had some insight into the language and practices that were apparent within
the group. In essence, our shared interests in sport and similarities in age allowed me to become immersed within the field and not stand out. This is not to say I had to make some small adjustments to my appearance (wearing sports kit on days of practical) and to my mannerisms and behaviour. Such practices had been locked away within my general dispositions, but were now proving useful in gaining entry into the field. This is not to say I was entirely comfortable with conforming to this identity: I have found in the past the intensity of, and adherence to, strong masculine identities somewhat uncomfortable and these have in themselves provided moments of reflection (see ethics section). Nevertheless, in consideration of the work of Rapley (2004) and Maxwell (1996), using participants who had some knowledge of who I am and where I come from allowed for a better quality of information to be derived.

After six-to seven weeks of attending the lectures with the participants I began to experience a sense of solidarity within the group and understand their distrust of outsiders. Feeling more comfortable in my surroundings I approached the subject of doing interviews. I would not stand up at the front of the class but ask each student discreetly at opportune moments during the day. Of the seven students, six initially agreed to be interviewed at intervals within the study. The other student, Hannah (pseudonym) was often missing from lectures and was reluctant to take part in the initial group interview. While her insights would have been valued I was conscious not to pressurise the students into taking part in the interviews. Subsequently, Hannah’s thoughts and feelings emerged through my field data and later in interviews she would attend with her then boyfriend Lloyd. After the initial group interview, which was initiated in January 2008, interviews with each participant at the college occurred every four weeks until they finished at the college in June 2008. One other interview was held before they went away for the summer holidays. Thus, the first stage of data collection lasted 10 months. Such a long time spent in contact with the participants and staff caused a level of rapport to be developed. The rapport which existed became of value during data collection through the participants acting as gatekeepers (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1996). This also allowed me access to other lecturers within the department. For example, within Hope College, through Nigel and Jack, I was introduced to another lecturer, Johnno (pseudonym) who agreed to be interviewed. Similarly, when Emily entered Fawlty Tower University, she introduced me to her tutor, Laura, who was also interviewed (see Chapter Four). The experiences I had within the first institution contrasted sharply with my experience of gaining entry into the other institutions to which the participants had applied. The majority of the students chose to go to an institution, Fawlty Tower University, in which I had no initial gatekeeper (such as Jeremy) to draw upon. Initially, this development and the lack of communication and willingness by the these other institutional
gatekeepers to allow me access to the institution or be interviewed is recognised as a limitation of the study. Nevertheless, access to the institution in question was eventually achieved later, once my participants became established there. Indeed, it was their willingness to help me gain entry to the field, through asking their course tutors that proved invaluable when dealing with a busy and overworked department,

I was extremely disappointed and at the start angry with the response I had received from the university. The reply was short, abrupt and really did not give enough of a reason for me to be denied access to the field. I began to ask myself questions to why this might be the case. Reflecting back on it, I did send a letter with my institutional details plastered all over the top of it. Could this be them feeling threatened - that they did not want to be looked down upon? I am hoping that this is not the case. I looked through my letter and information letter; it did not suggest this in the slightest so that I am hoping that he O’Brien (pseudonym) did not perceive it to be like this, although if I think about it I can understand if he would think like this in which case is this an example of the symbolic divisions, threats, intimidation FE/University campuses below the higher echelons of the summit perceive and feel? [Field Notes: 1/12/08]

Nevertheless, the barriers and relations perceived by agents within Fawlty Tower University would prove problematical if I was not able to gain access to the research field and observe the transitional experiences of the participants in-situ. The rationale behind the study was to place the experience of the participants in the context of what they were saying in the interviews – if I couldn’t do this then I thought that the study would be the worse for it. After my initial disappointment I began to think laterally about the problem. Regardless of whether I was allowed into the actual teaching experiences there were ways around this. First, I would be able to go to the campus itself, and this would allow me a perception of life at the campus: what it felt like, how they acted. Interviews for this stage of the study began in October 2008. It must be highlighted that such data has enabled me to gain a better understanding of this field and by my own admission shifted my perspective regarding the nature of the Foundation Course. Towards the end of the study I was contacted by members of this particular department who expressed a willingness to help with the study. After discussions with my supervisors on how to forward the study, it was agreed that it would be interesting to gain the perceptions of these members of staff who were explicitly (and indeed implicitly) involved within the transitional experiences of the participants. The reasons for this decision are important and thus expanded upon briefly below.

From a structurationist perspective, the consideration of the experiences and interactions of the recontextualising agent is critical in exploring the experiences of the participants. The interviewing
of agents within the experiences of students has been advocated elsewhere (Reay, 2004) albeit under different synonyms such as stakeholder (see Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1993) or classroom teacher (Zhao, 2007; Morais, 2002). Essentially, these terms illustrate agents within the context who have external resources to which other agents may evaluate and acquire dispositions and practices. Additionally, they responsible for the distribution of knowledge within a specific context. Within this study Recontextualising Agents were interviewed for their particular knowledge of the course and participants and strategic significance (Quinn, 2004). The interviews with lecturers, course leaders and other recontextualising agents (members of family, coaches) in the transitional experiences of the participants have illuminated perspectives regarding the nature of the Foundation Course and the various levels of external structures which influence transitional experience. Central to this understanding is how their active agency is constructed and then influences the acquisition, distribution and evaluation of knowledge to the participants. Consequently, their role in the experiences of the participants has been highlighted as significant. This does not detract from the voice of the participant but amplifies it, allowing the audience greater insight into their experiences.

In summary, the use of a case study design approach was drawn upon as this type of approach has enabled description of the settings of the participants, something that enables the exploration of themes informed by the theoretical framework highlighted within Chapter Two. Focusing on one particular pathway into Higher Education allows the in-depth exploration of the external structures of both the institutions and of the recontextualising agents present within these institutions. Moreover, the use of a case study focuses both on individual stories and provides for the reader a level of institutional critique, necessary to address transitional experiences of further and Higher Education. However, the focus of this research is on the processes and relations which influence transition. Furthermore, using the case study approach has limited the presence of my voice within the text, leaving space for the voice of the participants to become prominent.

3.4. The Tools of Data Collection

In coming to understand the complex in-situ experiences and mechanics within the data collection sites a specific set of data collection methods were utilised. Furthermore, the methods adopted cover a number of different levels of ontology and experience, accounting for the perspectives of various agents within the contexts of college and university. By drawing upon both interview and ethnographic techniques the subtle nuances which exist within relations between agents and structures can be understood a little further. What follows is an account of what methods were adopted and how they were used.
3.4.1. Interviewing.

Central to understanding transitional experience from the perspective of the participants was the use of interviews. Previously within research focused on Higher Education experience, the use of interviews has been adopted by researchers intent on exploring the realities of student experience and eliciting accounts of what occurs within particular contexts (for example see, Ball et al., 2000; Zepke & Leach, 2007). Moreover, researchers now use interviews in a variety of ways, producing varying levels of understanding regarding the experiences of the participants. For example, Bergeson (2007) uses interviews with students to explore their transitional experience into Higher Education institutions. The methods adopted by Bergeson (2007) are indicative of Shilling’s (1991) observation that, ‘interviewing and listening to pupils and teachers talk are particularly appropriate methods of gaining a degree of access to the discursive consciousness of individuals.’ (p.82). Drawing upon Shilling’s perception of interviewing, it becomes apparent how interviews as a method of data collection allow insight into the hermeneutical core of structure-agent relations. By understanding and gaining access to ‘discursive consciousness’ we are able to understand how the experiences of participants are influenced by their realisation (or lack of it) of the external structures apparent within their reality. Importantly, it is the process of interviewing which provides access. Put differently, interviews produce situated understandings grounded in specific interaction episodes in which these assumptions collide in producing a reality from which the social history of both the participant and researcher can be viewed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lawy et al., 2009). This understanding of the role of interviews is reflected within transitional research (see Lawy et al., 2009). Lawy et al. (2009) highlight show interviews may provide some sort of transitional and transformative quality to data. Interviewing needs to be seen as an interaction between two individuals, and accordingly, the nature of interviews must be judged on a number of levels. This enables a special insight into the subjectivity, voice and lived experiences of the participant (Atkinson and Silverman 1997; Rapley, 2004).

Following from the examples illustrated, the interviews within this study have been employed to supply information regarding the participants’ particular biographies alongside the experiences they have met inside particular situations within their transition. In doing so, what was gathered were the students perceptions of the positions and relations which existed inside particular frames of time and space within each of the institutions mentioned. The use of interviews, across the 18 month data collection period, provided both retrospective, present and prospective considerations of transitional experience. These frames provide glimpses into the hermeneutical core of structuration and how the relations between the core and external structures may develop over time and across contexts. In
light of this, it became immediately apparent that one type of interview would not be able to capture the numerous frames which constituted these glimpses within the participants’ experiences. Accordingly, a variety of interviews have taken place: Group interviewing, semi-structured and informal conversational. These different types of interview were employed in an attempt to distinguish between the different levels of relations and positions. Data was collected from these participants through semi-structured interviews. These interviews were designed to gain a perception of what general dispositions the individuals brought to the field. While each type of interview represents a unique form of data collection, in using a protocol they did share some common similarities. As illustrated by Patton (1990),

Interview guides can be developed in more or less detail, depending on the extent to which the researcher is able to specify the important issue in advance and the extent to which it is felt that a particular sequence of questions are important to ask in the same way or the same order. [Patton, 1990: 283]

By constructing an in-depth interview protocol I was able to cover a number of themes I felt were essential to the aims of the study. As the extract from Patton (1990) illustrates, protocols enable researchers to specify the important issues of the research foci. As such, the interview protocol differed in the detail depending on when during transition the interviews were conducted. For example, at the beginning of the data collection process, interviews were more structured, allowing an understanding of how students came to enter Hope College and their reasons behind choosing the Foundation Degree. At the beginning of the data collection process, a group interview was conducted with all six of the students who had agreed to be part of the study. The use of group interviews is integral to the data collection process as it allowed a reality to be constructed from multi-perspectives regarding the nature of their lives and experiences within and between the field of Further and Higher Education. It also represents the interactions that occur from the (dynamic) dimensions within the group that allowed opinions to be illuminated. The initial group interview generated a number of lines of inquiry from the dimensions within the group that allow both general and conjuncturally specific dispositions to be illuminated. The use of this retrospective interview provides an analytical lens for part 2 of the research design. From this, initial life history interviews were undertaken with each of the participants. As highlighted within other areas of research, the life history interview is a site of knowledge production created out of both the narrators and listeners meaningful perspectives (Patton, 1990; Kvale, 1996; Rapley 2004; Chase 2005; Krane & Baird, 2005). This constructed a retrospective account of their experiences establishing my understanding of how their embodied dispositions shaped the reasons behind why they had chosen the foundation
course. This form of interviewing was a particularly powerful method to investigate the importance of emotions in forming self identity and for examining the relationship between agency and social structure (Howe, 2001). As the process of data collection continued and the rapport between the participants and I grew stronger, I began to rely less upon the protocols although I (implicitly) still wrote down the themes I wanted to cover. At the end of the data collection process, the interview protocol was used very infrequently. Thus, by the end of the data collection period what occurred was a shift in the experiences of the participants from a retrospective to a prospective reality.

As such the interviews became more unstructured, allowing the voice of the participant to become prominent (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In doing so, the participants experiences of transition became more prominent with the interview text: there were more frames or glimpses of their transitional experience being collated. Consequently, in a similar manner to the participant-researcher relations evident within other transitional experience studies (for example, see Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1997) the interviews became more conversational in their orientation allowing participants to express what they found to be the salient aspects of their experiences and their relation to the variety of external structures with which they were interacting. This was enabled through the developing relations between myself and the participants, which became more relaxed as the rapport and familiarity between us developed. Therefore, to echo the thoughts of Rapley (2004), I began to ‘worry less about the type of question I was asking and got on with interacting with the participants’ (p.16). Eliciting such conversations produced more enriched data which generated a more meaningful understanding of the participant’s perspective rather than merely questioning the validity of their responses. Such relationships are summarised well by the thoughts of Mishler (1986),

We are more likely to find stories reported in studies using relatively unstructured interviews where respondents are invited to speak their own voices, allowed to control the introduction and flow of topics and encouraged to extend their responses. [Mishler, 1986: 69]

Like Mishler, I found that this approach allowed participants to express what they found to be salient aspects of their transitional experiences through their own narratives, thus giving voice to their perspectives. This is reflected from an extract of my reflexive journal,

It was the 4th time I have interviewed Emily and by now it seems a very natural, unforced process. She seems more relaxed in doing the interviews and this is shown in both her body language and what and how she said what she said. When I first interviewed Emily she would sit up right with her arms folded as if to provide another barrier to what she was saying. Her answers from what I can remember (will check on transcript) were very much regimented. This contrasts with her body language today which was more engaging, fluid
and she changed body position a couple of times. This too me came across as if she was more relaxed and at ease. [Field Notes: 26/01/09]

Accordingly, as the realities created within the interviews became more prospective in their content they also became multi vocal and polyphonic in their nature (Lyons, 1992; Sparkes, 2002), empowering their understanding of experience, alongside my own assumptions and interpretations (Mishler, 1996). Collecting the data in this manner has the potential to stay closer to the participant’s own epistemological and ontological views (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) something which was essential in using the structurationist perspective. However, as illustrated by Hastrup (1992, cited in Sparkes 2002) such collaborations have their dangers in as much as researchers must be careful not to ‘blur this major responsibility of ours by rhetoric’s of ‘many voices’ and multiple authorship in ethnographic writing’ (Hastrup, 1992, p.122). Drawing on Hastrup’s point, I was aware that although the nature of the interviews became more relaxed, I was still able to exert some influence in defining the construction of this reality. To do this, I would choose the time and date of the interviews with the consent of the participant. However, as the nature of the participants’ lives dictated when interviews could be undertaken, this was not always achievable. Therefore, over time, I became aware of the need to be even more reflexive and considerate of their experiences, both within and beyond the field of education retaining a sense of flexibility where possible.

While to an extent this was achieved, some of the participants transitional experiences dictated that, at times I would play a more prominent role in deciding where the interviews would take place. For example, Emily lived some distance away from Hope College and would find having to meet at the college or my institution difficult. Later, (on a positive note) her engagement with Fawlty Tower University and the relationships she formed at this stage of her transition meant that it became further difficult for her to travel to be interviewed. In accommodating both these situations, I would go and meet her in a place that was accessible for both of us. In interviewing Jack, the collection of data also became increasingly complicated. As will become more evident within Chapter Five, Jack’s choice of ‘Top Up’ degree resulted in a context in which I was known. Accordingly, issues of where to meet to interview became prominent. This is illustrated in my field notes from this time,

We went and sat down in the corner of the bar, I became conscious of the fact that we were on his turf now and that his responses would surely be affected especially as some of his ‘Jock’ friends and peers were to appear. I think for future interviews with Jack it may be better served to be somewhere from the possibility of prying eyes, on my turf so to speak (the interview suite). [Field Notes: 10/11/08]
As the field extract identifies, the situation of the interviews elicit different responses from the participants. In Jack’s case, I felt incidences in which he was in contact with his peers while undertaking the interviews were causing him to hold back on his feelings of his transitional experience. Thus, I decided to hold the interviews in a booked, on-campus seminar room, away from interruptions or ‘prying eyes’. The secluded nature of the seminar room contributed to this sense of detachment, allowing Jack to be more open with his opinions without the ‘fear’ of being seen with me. This proved so successful that the last three sets of interviews were conducted in the designated room. Additionally, because the participants were predominantly based in the same city as I was and were commuting to Fawlty Tower University, the positioning of the university and the seminar room, provided a safe environment from which to discuss their developing experiences.

As highlighted, the use of interviews within this study has provided data regarding transitional experience and, importantly, the meaning behind such experiences over retrospective, present and prospective time frames. However, it was recognised that the use of interviews alone, does not convey transitional experience in its entirety. Following from the structuration framework, interviewing only allows glimpses into the relationship between structure and agency from the agent’s perspective. Furthermore, interviews and interactions between participants and researchers create their own realities, which may be detached from the present experience of the participants (see Hammersley, 2007). This follows recent criticisms and critical reviews of interviews, questioning the capacity of interviews to provide accurate representations, either of the self or of the world (Hammersley, 2003). However, accuracy is a complex issue: the participant conveying the representation of their experiences might indeed believe that what they are conveying is accurate. Moreover, the reasons behind any inaccuracies are themselves interesting and worth considering. Why did the participant convey a certain reality? What are they hiding? Why are they choosing to represent the experience in this way? These are all questions which, when analysed, may also reveal the nature of the transitional experience of the participant. While, in part, such insights have some truth in the sense that the researcher must be aware of possible limitations, this should not detract from the usefulness of interviews in engaging with participants and their ability to peer into the ontic-reality of the participant. It is important to recognise that, like all data collection techniques, interviews alone will only provide a limited picture, or fragmented frames of the reality of their transitional experience. Thus, in consideration of these reflective thoughts, alongside interviews, further methods were adopted in creating a more meaningful understanding of transitional experience.
3.4.2. The Use of Ethnography in forming an understanding of transitional experience.

The adoption of an ethnographic approach allowed a different understanding of the relationship between structure and agency. Moreover, it conveyed my own voice and feelings regarding these practices. As Ball (2006) highlights, ethnographic research contributes to the structurationist perspective within a case study approach because it means that ‘I work small. I am interested in events and specifics and locations, in contingencies, concentrations and contexts, in the odd as much as the typical’ (p.4). This builds a more holistic, conceptual and empirical picture of the lives of the participants and connects in situ cultural knowledge that the interviews touched upon and gave me an understanding of some of the themes that emerged within the data. Including them in the study allows more multi-dimensional pictures to be developed. This approach is further supported by Giddens (1993) who suggests,

> The sociological observer cannot make social life available as a ‘phenomenon’ for observation independently of drawing upon her or his knowledge of it as a resource whereby it is constituted as a ‘topic for investigation’…mutual knowledge is not a series of corrigible items but represents the interpretative schemes which both sociologists and lay actors use, and must use, to make sense of social activity. [Giddens, 1993:169]

As Giddens highlights, researchers, like their participants, must draw upon their own understanding and interpretation of the interactions and practices they undergo alongside those of the participant. Thus, my knowledge of these practices also becomes, in Giddens’ terms a ‘topic for investigation’ equally as important as the practices of the individual. In developing my understandings of the complex interactions and experiences I have drawn upon my own interactions, feelings and observations. Thus, rather than becoming an invisible agent during the data collection process (Berg, 1989; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) I am myself situated within this complex relationship between structure and agency. The use of ethnographic data collection within educational research in exploring working class experiences is widely recognised (Moore & Young 2001; Evans et al., 2004; Skeggs, 2004; Kettley, 2007; Williams, 2007). As Agergaard (2006) suggests, ‘ethnographic analysis of rituals can contribute to our understanding of physical education by pointing to a level of agency and practice which is not easily accessible in analysis of discourse’ (p.364). Following Agergaard (2006), the use of ethnography within the PhD study became an essential method in understanding relations between ESIs and the internal structures of the participant. Moreover, it allowed for the rules (Pedagogic and Corporeal) which governed this relation to be seen in practice, through my own eyes and experience. In doing so ethnographic data provides what Walcott (1994) and Hamilton et al. (2008) have called rich description of the myriad
of relations and interactions that occur within the in-situ context. Such an approach involves the individual embedding themselves amongst those they are studying so that we may begin to understand the myriad of relations and interactions that occur (Martos-Garcia et al., 2009). Thus, in attempting to achieve this insight I became part of the research process, accounting for my own ontological perceptions of an institution or culture.

Initially, the ethnographic approach was used as a way of familiarising myself with the context and to build relationships with potential participants. However, on reflection I began to witness practices and interactions and gain insightful insight into the ‘in-situ’ interactions that combine to form a more multi-dimensional understanding. Thus, implicitly, I began to enter the sometimes murky world of ethnographic research. Due to the nature of the course being studied the participants attended for two days of the week. This allowed me to go to the college on a regular basis in order to directly observe the interactions and experiences of the participants. Through direct and intensive participation within the lectures, I began to feel for myself the processes and practices that the participants underwent. The numerous interactions I witnessed and felt were recorded in a field journal and generated a number of descriptions or episodes that had to be converted into a mode that could be analysed. Being part of the context has allowed me to collate and understand the numerous external structures that are within the contexts of the participants. In doing so, my attention was drawn towards a diverse range of potential external structures such as syllabi, prospectuses and module outlines of the participants. Such sources gave an insight into the resources of the official pedagogic field from which knowledge, required for transition, was transmitted to the individuals and an understanding of how government policy strategies regarding widening participation and Further Education are recontextualised within the in-situ interactions of the participants’ realities.

During the context of the lectures I would strategically place myself within the classroom to observe the participants. Wherever I could I adopted a similar routine to the participants. In the first year of the study this would require me to turn up to the college 15 minutes before the start of the first lecture. I would then remain with the participants throughout the day, attempting to observe the practices they had adopted. This allowed me to gain a sense of the time and space issues confronting the students. For example, within the college context, there would be much ‘free time’ between lectures; I would sit and chat to the participants or watch and observe other interactions. At times it was important to distance myself from such conversations as it would collide with my ‘researcher self’ but then I was guided by the point made by Bergerson (2007) that, ‘good’
researchers do not only learn from their participants they also learn with them. The space in which the participants existed was small and intense, thus they were continually aware of my presence. Similarly, how I viewed my body and how the participants ‘surveyed’ my body practices had a key effect on the way data was collected and inevitably shaped my understanding of their experiences. As time continued within the institutions I began to immerse myself more within the lectures and became almost invisible, part of the group. This was evident in how after three weeks I was increasingly asked to participate within the session.

During the collection of data at Hope I came to experience the practical exercises that the participants were asked to undertake. This allowed me to understand the practices of the body that were valued (or devalued) within the context. While not as intense in its classification or framing over time, I felt a sense of relation between these endless physical drills and those practices that I had experienced over a number of years, both within physical education and voluntarily as a willing participant of the gym. When the participants entered Fawlty Tower University and Ivory Tower University contexts I faced problems of how I would be able to continue to collect data. It was fortunate that the majority of participants had chosen to top up their degrees at Fawlty Tower University. While initially I was not given access to the learning contexts, I felt that through travelling with the participants I would begin to gain a sense of their journeys and the initial stages of transition. As such, I began travelling with the participants to FTU and observing their practices external to the lectures. Such time spent travelling (1 hour each way) allowed me to experience the feelings that they were conveying within their interviews. For example, they often talked of being tired and it was not until I had undergone the process of travelling and then trying to concentrate, did I begin to understand and feel these processes. Unlike the college environment, the lectures themselves represented a small time spent within the institutions. Thus, I would spend the majority of the time with the participants, observing their relations with themselves and others and the type of structures they drew upon.

The ethnographic work I undertook posed a number of issues with how I collected the data. Given the practical nature of the interactions I witnessed I began to come across problems of recording the interactions I was witnessing. First, the number of interactions occurring at one time was so great that I began to feel that I was missing out on crucial interactions: interactions which would reveal a little bit more about the processes behind transition. To counter this problem, I began to record the classes that I attended to supplement the diary I had been attempting to keep religiously after each field observation and interaction. The undertaking of reflexive notes illustrates Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) necessity concerning reflexivity which allows the researcher to ‘realise and to
work to neutralise the specific determinants to which their innermost thoughts are subjected and it informs a conception of the craft of research designed to strengthen its epistemological moorings’ (p.48). This would allow me to keep a note of specific conversations and tone of voice, thus allowing my thoughts to become alive again. While enabling me to construct a judgement concerning the issues that were mentioned, it also allowed me to remain open minded to new issues.

However, paper for a sociologist can only ever complete half the job since the way knowledge was transmitted within the classroom is intensely corporeal in its nature. To overcome this I would use my dictaphone to record the lectures and play these interactions back to situate myself back within the realities I had experienced. In contrast to the structured reality of an interview between participant and researcher, using the audio-file directly allowed the nature of the interaction to remain intact while proving an invaluable source in understanding these in-situ experiences in their entirety. These notes were then added to my reflexive journal. What was produced were numerous interactions which were then made sense of within the analysis process.

The time spent with the participants over the 18 months in which data was collected were my first experiences of ethnographic data collection. Given this, the field notes allowed for the attentive reflection of unnoticed comments, allowing me to construct a reality that is more revealing in its nature. Indeed as Glesne & Peshkin (1992) emphasise, ‘memo writing frees your mind for new thoughts and perspectives’ (p.128). This also required me to inquire into the possibilities of what Macbeth (2001) describes as our own un-reflexive knowledge. Thus what was formed was a continual process of reflexivity in which the experiences of the participant were considered in conjunction with my own experiences and reading. It is recognised that there is a danger that within these notes that the voice of the participants may go missing. However, they have not been used to cloud their experiences but used in a collaborative manner in an attempt to empathise with and understand their transitional experiences. While ethnographic work has some limitations, the data collated through these interactions allowed me to elicit my own narrative, offering for the audience another lens through which to understand the experiences of the participants. Although at times exhausting, the opportunity to write what I saw and felt through my reflexive journal allowed me to feel refreshed, alive yet calm. It allowed a period of therapeutic reflection which often allowed me to let go of data collection and provided opportunity for me to feel whole again beyond the context of my PhD study.

3.4.3. A Brief reflection on Data Collection Techniques

Utilising interview and ethnographic techniques concurrently during data collection deconstructs
the divisions between retrospective and prospective realities. Through sharing their educational experiences within the interviews, the participants, through their voice are constructing and presenting a sense of self (Kehily, 1995 cited in Tett, 2004). Alongside these insightful accounts, drawing upon ethnographic accounts and reflecting upon them allows a reflection upon our own practices as a researcher and continues to illuminate the experience of Higher Education (Williams, 2007). However, there are a number of limitations to be considered. Interviews and ethnographic accounts offer only glimpses or frames into the lives of the participants and the understanding of their transitional experiences. Drawing upon the thoughts of Ball et al. (2000), frames ‘select, revise, and re-order their experiences in interviews and then we select, re-order and interpret these experiences in our analytical work’ (p.19). Such interactions are influenced by the rapport that exists between researcher and participants. Indeed, I am in no doubt of the role the interviewer plays within the construction of a reality within the interview and such roles are fraught with problems and potential limitations. However, the role of the interviewer must also be acknowledged as being positive enabling the participant to convey what they feel. Like the other methods utilised, they offer glimpses into the meaning behind the practices of the participant. Although the interviewing of students has been used to gain perceptions of Higher Education experience before (for example see Reay, 2004; Reay et al., 2005) the ability of structured interviews to inform the study of experiences which are not retrospective in their construction must be questioned. Additionally, I must be aware of what Hammersley (2003) refers to as the ‘romantic impulse’ to view open-ended interviews as being able to capture ‘genuine voices’ of the participant. Hammersley (2003) contends that the participants’ responses are so heavily influenced by the interaction with the interviewer that their responses do little to convey what occurs within contexts external to that of the interview (Hammersley, 2003).

Thus, the use of a multi-faceted approach in collecting data allowed for a perspective and understanding that is beyond that of merely a lay agent (Crossley, 2004). While it is necessary to reflect upon the criticisms and limitations of interview data, the potential for such data to expose the hermeneutical core of transitional experiences must not be ignored or diminished. Researchers also need to accentuate what interviews can provide. In retrospect, I would have liked to have continued the ethnographic work further and it is acknowledged that my ethnographic understanding of the field in places is limited. Furthermore, by contrasting these to my own interpretations of what I saw and felt, I am able to understand what occurs ‘in-situ’ more comprehensively, painting a more complex, holistic picture providing a kaleidoscope of possibility and understanding into transitional experience.
3.5. Ethical Considerations

Gathering data through the experiences of participants inevitably draws to the surface a series of ethical considerations. While the majority of considerations are focused surrounding the welfare of participants, consideration of the implications of research for relations between and within institutions and for myself must also be discussed and illustrated. Given the type of data collection methods used and the roles and positions I undertook during the PhD study the ethical issues could be considered to be complex, seeping much deeper than the surface contestations may reveal, becoming, over time assimilated within my consciousness and physical practices as both researcher and lecturer. Subsequently, it was and remains, important that these issues be subject to the same critical and reflexive lenses as the rest of the methodological instruments within the study. Accordingly, alongside outlining the ethical practices that were adopted to in relation to the participants, I have also reflected upon how the study has changed my perspectives of the field of Further and Higher Education and what effect these thoughts have had upon the way I have analysed and represented the experiences of the participants. In conveying the ethical relationships between participant, institution and researcher I have divided them into three interrelated categories: ethical practices, ethical processes and ethical consequences. However, although these have been separated it is important to emphasise that in reality, the three aspects of ethics become blurred.

The adoption of interview and ethnographic data collection techniques dictated a number of ethical practices that were followed during the study. The first ethical practice of the PhD study was the ethical approval awarded by the university and School of Sport and Health Sciences ethics committee. The ethical document produced, highlighted a series of practices which would ensure that the welfare of all participants and institutions was maintained during the course of the study. Firstly, through information sheets (participant and institutional) and consent forms, both students and staff who volunteered for the study were allowed to withdraw at anytime. The consent forms and information sheets were developed outlining the nature of the study and what the aim of the study was and their ‘rights’ as participants. An informed consent form was used to inform the participants about the overall purpose of the research. The informed consent form addresses the issue of how much information should be given and when. By allowing this I am countering potential undue influence and coercion (Yow, 1994; Kvale 1996). However, how much consent is required is hard to justify due to the nature of qualitative enquiry (Eisner, 2001). Additionally, the document highlighted how the study would use pseudonyms to ensure that their identities and sensitivities as individuals were protected and considered. I wished the interviewee to hear it from
the researcher as well to provide a sense of support and clarity. I would explain what the theme of the interview would be, reiterating their right to withdraw and the confidential nature of such interviews. Within this I made it clear to the participant the confidentiality of the subject being discussed. This practice follows from Kvale (1996) who notes, ‘it is important to maintain the confidentiality of the subject and of persons and institutions mentioned in the interview’ (p. 172). When recruiting the participants, I explicitly reiterated these points verbally, giving the opportunity for the participants to ask questions regarding what the study would entail.

To protect the identity of all agents and institutions within the study I have hidden their identity using pseudonyms. While giving assurance to the participants that they will not be identified in anyway (Mishler, 1996; Kvale, 1996) changing the names of participants, agents and institutions also allows the participants to remain hidden to the audience giving them a sense of anonymity. However, while the use of pseudonyms preserves the anonymity it means at times that the data cannot be as specific as required (Abbas & McLean, 2007) and consequently, representation of the interactions within these institutions and the overall process of transition is possibly, at times, clouded. To overcome this, at the end of data collection I arranged a group interview and individual meetings with the participants to discuss my ideas and interpretations of their transitional experiences. This practice of negotiation (Plummer, 1983) aimed to give the participants a voice in how they were going to be represented and allow them to remove any information they may not have wanted me to disclose. This ensured that while their anonymity would be protected, their voice remained central to the study. Regarding those institutions which participated in the study, a report outlining some of the findings relating to their courses will be constructed to provide feedback regarding some of the conclusions specific to their courses. During the process of data collection, consideration was made to where the participants felt comfortable in being interviewed. At the start, interviews were performed at a time and place that suited the participants. During the process of interviewing, I would allow the participants to ask questions regarding clarification of what was being asked. As Patton (1990) illustrates, if the participant is not allowed to ‘question what the interviewer is asking of them then they may feel uncomfortable, ignorant, confused or hostile’ (p. 309). Thus I encouraged the participants to be reflexive of the questions.

The process of data collection and the ethical processes associated with this stage of the study led to a number of ethical practices to be employed. The ethical processes of the study enabled participants to ask questions regarding my experiences of Higher Education. As I continued to spend time with the participants, such questions became more integral and prominent within our
interactions. In many ways I began to serve as a mirror, allowing for them to reflect upon their own experiences of Higher Education. Following from Bergeson (2007), while I hoped to shed light on some of the experiences to further my own understanding of transition, in no way did I want to plant seeds of thought or assume the role of rescuer. While continued immersion with the participants led to points where I felt myself ‘going native’ it was necessary to distant myself from such roles as I felt that it was impinging and influencing their transitional journeys and I was not able to reflect upon their experiences with clarity. Thus, I immediately became conscious of how much information I would reveal about my thoughts and opinions of the institutions and also of my own experience of Higher Education. However, given the amount of time I spent with the participants, particularly before December 2008, it was inevitable that we both learnt a great deal about our experiences of Further and Higher Education. For example, the numerous times where we all shared our tiredness, an experience we all felt having to go down to the secondary context. While this may collide with my researcher self, such collisions reveal, in a sense, a level of rapport between myself and the participants and, occasionally, during these moments feelings would be revealed which may be linked to the experience of transition. Thus, while such experiences do collide, the good researcher can only reflect and absorb such experiences in informing and understanding the experience of the participants, while still maintaining a professional ethical relationship (Bergeson, 2007).

While much has been done, through ethical practices and processes, a number of ethical consequences were encountered. Such consequences are particularly relevant to the interactions with the participants Peter and Jack. As the study progressed it became apparent that Peter was undergoing counselling within the university system of Fawlty Tower University. There would be at times when he would turn up for an interview after attending counselling or would have to cut short the interview before he went to a session. On reflecting on this, I began to arrange interviews on non-counselling days. Furthermore, I did not ask Peter what occurred during the counselling sessions but merely reiterated their usefulness and attempted to place a positive light on such sessions in helping people deal with their experiences. If Peter did mention extracts from the sessions I was prepared to stop the interview recording and express my desire to move onto a subject that was more relevant to the study. However, such moments never materialised and while I was aware of Peter’s situation it did not in anyway begin to merge within the interviews undertaken.

Contrastingly Jack ended up going to the same university that I attended and his transitional experience had a number of ethical consequences for the study. From the outset, Jack was made aware of this situation and the right to withdraw was reiterated. In light of his willingness to
continue to be part of the study, it was inevitable that his choice of institution and course to top-up his foundation degree would compromise his identity within the written text. As such, a series of ethical practices were put in place to minimise the identification of Jack. Firstly, I attempted to keep my distance with Jack while he was at the university. While occasionally we would see each other on campus, within the coffee bar, coming out of the lecture theatre, we did not discuss the project or study in these public areas. Moreover, it also became apparent that I would be in direct contact with Jack in a teaching capacity. Our relationship as participant-researcher now merged with student-lecturer and this had to be considered. I felt it would be problematical if I was to mark his work as I would not have an objective perspective, although within the school students are only supposed to put their ID number on any assignment so these concerns did not materialise insofar as I thought they might. Unfailingly, I reiterated to him that all data was confidential and in no way would I compromise his identity.

In reflecting upon the ethical practices, processes and consequences of the study, I am left with little doubt that it has had a profound affect on how I have come to understand the practices of Further and Higher Education. In many respects, through experiencing the lectures and travelling I have felt like a student again and it caused me to engage with uncomfortable feelings of my own university experience. For example, the feeling of butterflies, stomach churning and sweaty palms on entering the practical sessions and lectures are feelings I had hidden within my subconscious. However, undertaking data collection has caused me to reflect on these again, something which has been challenging. But this study is not about me or my feelings, nor am I wishing to depict any type of ‘heroic’ narrative: there will be space to reflect upon these in more detail in the years to come. Presently, I am only becoming aware of the profound effect the experiences of the participants have had on my own journey. These individuals were integral to my everyday practices for 18 months and, as time has shifted, and I have adopted different roles within FE and HE, the feelings of responsibility have intensified. After such a long time engaging with the same participants, I am acutely aware of the responsibility I have towards them and the consequences research may have (Sparkes, 1994). There is a danger of researching the participants’ experiences to an extent that the participants become a problem to be investigated and researched rather than individuals who are affected and affect the nature of transition into and within Higher Education. Thus, the issues of letting go and ending the data collection process were issues that played long in my mind. The time spent with the participants, has had a profound effect upon the way I write and represent them, not only in this particularly study but when and if I choose to use their experiences and stories within
postdoctoral research. I am in no doubt that I will be wondering how the lives of the participants transpire beyond the scope of this study.

3.6. Data Analysis

In ensuring that the hermeneutical core of experience remained prominent within the study, a number of analytical processes were adopted. These processes and steps, are a reflection of the perceived limitations by Stones regarding original structuration thinking and its’ lack of concern for the process of analysing the relationships it attempts to describe. This is highlighted by Stones,

The lack of concern shown by Giddens with respect to the bridge between ontology and empirical evidence means that the complex specificity of issues concerned with establishing the validity of research accounts and, I would add, to do with the variety of question-types and knowledge claims, have been left almost completely unremarked. [Stones, 2005: 120]

In addressing the limitations Stones directs towards the analytical capability of the conceptual-practical tool formulated within Giddens’ work on structuration, Stones framework developed the idea of methodological bracketing. As Stones (2005) acknowledges, methodological bracketing ‘provide sets of regulative and selective guidelines that can direct the researcher to some dimensions of a social object rather than others’ (p.120). While Giddens’ conceptual-practical tools also draw upon methodological bracketing to understand structure-agent relations within conduct and institutional analysis, the analytical insights generated are only appropriate for a reductionist account of structuration. In light of this, Stones elaborated, developed and used methodological bracketing to analyse relations at the core of structuration. The framework in this respect of the study acts as an evolving particular form of conceptual-practical analytical tool that was developed through the interaction between theory and data (Bernstein, 1996; Stones, 2005; Hoadley, 2008). It is this account which provided a foundation for the analytical approach developed as part of this PhD study. Drawing upon the work of Stones as a foundation to my analytical approach it was important to reflect on what I understood the process of analysis to be. Such reflection on the purpose of methodological bracketing lays an important foundation for understanding how the data was defined and redefined in relation to the aims of the study and the theoretical frameworks adopted and considered. In doing so, the study draws upon both the context and conduct analytical bracketing that Stones advocates. Accordingly, the next section outlines how this analytical approach of Stones has been adopted to understand the transitional experiences of the participants.
As Table 3.1. illustrates, before beginning the practical process of disseminating the data collected into separate context and conduct analytical approaches, the analytical process began, informally, as soon as the data was collected. Rather than merely describing what is placed before our eyes, analysis within qualitative research is a progressively creative processes which begins with the organisation of my data. Accordingly, in making sense of the experiences of the participants I would continually view the transcripts of the interviews alongside the journal and observation notes that I had collected and transcribed. This approach is highlighted by Emerson et al. (1995) who highlight how the analytical process is one of ‘reflexive or dialectical interplay between theory and data whereby theory enters at every point, shaping not only analysis but how social events come to be perceived and written up as data in the first place’ (p.167). These reflective interplays began when I had finished my initial meetings at the college and framed a number of analytical constructions in my mind. At this stage of the analytical process I began to ask myself basic questions such as: why did I include this in my fieldnotes? What do these fieldnotes mean?

Although not always transcribed such thoughts were able to transport me back into the reality from which the notes originated, evoking memories that started the analytical process. I would continually undertake moments of reflection on what I heard and felt; deriving a sense of meaning from the feelings, symbols and interactions within and beneath the words and observation of the participants practices. This process of indwelling and continual refinement (see Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Chase, 2005; Sparkes, 2002) prevented the data becoming dormant and detached

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Object of Study</th>
<th>Analytical Procedure</th>
<th>Method</th>
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| 1    | a) Identification of External Structure (ESm)  
      b) Identification of External Structures (ESis) | Context & Conduct Analysis | Discourse Analysis  
          Ethnographic Data  
          Semi-structured Interview |
| 2    | a) Identification of conjuncturally-specific internal structures  
      b) Relationship between ISgd/IScs | Conduct Analysis & Context Analysis | Semi-structured Interview  
          Ethnographic Data |
| 3    | Identification of general-dispositional structures (ISgd) | Conduct Analysis | Life History Interview  
          Semi-structured Interview |
| 4    | Outcomes (O) | Context & Conduct Analysis of Steps 1-3 | N/A |
from my prospective feelings and thoughts. This involves long periods of reflection on the numerous interactions, conversations and meetings I had, not only with the participants themselves but also with friends, colleagues and peers within their realities. Along with my own reflections and moments of indwelling, I have often collaborated with my supervisor(s) in making sense of the many interactions that I witnessed. This type of feedback as been invaluable as it has provided a series of different ontological and epistemological views; helping me to see or emphasise something I may have missed (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.146).


Context Analysis draws on the notion of knowledgeability, in the sense of conjuncturally-specific internal structures, in order to lead us more clearly outwards into the social nexus of interdependencies, rights and obligations, asymmetries of power and the social conditions and consequences of action. [Stones, 2005: 122]

Following from the definition illustrated, context analysis allows for an understanding of the external structures at the ontic-level of relations and their relationship to other structures within the social nexus of the agent. Importantly, as the definition by Stones suggests, context analysis must have the ability to stretch outwards. Furthermore, by analytically distinguishing between sets of external structures, prominence is given to the different types of active agency (see Chapter Two) of agents-in-focus. In relation to the framework developed for this study, context analysis must then have the ability to link the hermeneutics of the agent-in-focus to the identified levels of external structures, both in-situ (ESis) and at the meso and abstract level of ontology (ESm). Data Set 1 (DS1) represented data collected which reflects the external structures of the transitional experience of the participant. Drawing upon fig.3.10, data categorised within this set constitutes steps 1-2 of the research design. In reflection, the context analysis adopted within this study has been used to inform my understanding of the nature of external structures and the rules that govern the distribution, acquisition and embodiment of practices within a particular context while relating this to the practices and thoughts of the participant. As Stones (2005) suggests, this is important because,

Without agent context analysis the researched agent would be deracinated and condemned to be turned inwards upon herself, cut off from any account of her hermeneutic and practical engagement with external structures. [Stones, 2005: 122]

Again, as discussed within Chapter Two, to account for the hermeneutical core of transitional experience, it was important to analytically distinguish the various levels of external structures. Here, there is a development away from the original work of Stones, in the sense that the study has
drawn upon other analytical frameworks, again as approximations to the overall analytical strategy. For example, as fig.3.10, illustrates, step one of the research design required identification and exploration of external structures such as policy documents and discourse which classify the relations within and between FE and HE institutions. In doing so the study has drawn upon the principles of critical discourse analysis utilised elsewhere within educational research (Wooffitt, 2005, Abbas & McLean, 2007). This process allowed key discourses to be identified, while the principles of Bernstein were used to formulate codes to understand how these discourses became transmitted to the participant. At the meso-level of experience (illustrated in fig.3.10 as step two in the research design), external structures (ESis) included the syllabus outlines of the FDSc and BSc qualifications undertaken by the participants across all three institutions and government policy which constructed the FDSc qualification (DfES, 2003). The content and discourses of these various documents were then mapped, allowing an understanding of how discourses are constructed, transmitted and acquired by individual institutions. Such mapping forms the foundations from which the resulting critical discussion present in Chapter Four was generated.

In contrast to the analytical process of Stones, context analysis in this study does not merely consider documentation, formulated at the abstract level of ontology, as external resources; it also considers practices of other agents within a context external to those of the participant. It is this which further evolves Giddens’ original institutional analysis. Consequently, the practices and experiences of other recontextualising agents were included in this part of the analysis as they represent, for the participants, a number of external structures (ESis, see Chapter Two) from which a transitional experience begins to emerge. For example, interviews with agents at Hope (Nigel, Lucy and Johnno) and Fawlty Tower University (Charlotte and Percy) and the reflections of my own experience at university were analysed to understand what dispositions and practices these agents brought into the ontic-level of experience. The value of these opinions in coming to understand how discourses are reproduced in-situ cannot be underestimated. Similarly, in analysing these interviews, other sources of external structure began to emerge. As Chapter Four will illustrate in more detail, through observation and interview data from Nigel and Johnno, what began to emerge was the role of professional sports institutes and businesses in classifying and framing the transmission of knowledge and practice for students. To understand the relations between abstract and meso-level external structures, ‘follow-up’ analysis was undertaken to understand how the discourses were recontextualised into practices in-situ. This analytical approach helped to prevent agent-in-context from being seen as being fragmented objects within the field of relations.
Additionally, the importance of this approach became evident as it allowed understanding of the rules governing these relations to emerge.

3.6.2. Conduct Analysis.

Agent’s conduct analysis draws upon the ontological category of knowledgeability (as part of an agent’s internal structures) in a way that leads us back to the agent herself, her reflexive monitoring, her ordering of concerns into a hierarchy of purposes, her motives, her desires, and the way she carries out the work of action and interaction within an unfolding sequence. [Stones, 2005: 122]

As the extract illustrates Conduct analysis focuses on the practices and experiences of the agent-in-focus and the meaning of these practices at the syntagmatic level. This is emphasised by Stones (2005) who notes how conduct analysis allows the researcher to view ‘elements of external structures that can and cannot be transformed by a particular agent’ (p.125). In a similar manner to the analytical processes involved within context analysis, the process of conduct analysis distinguished between conjuncturally-specific internal structures (IScs) and the general-dispositions of the agent (ISgd). The conduct analysis is highlighted within Data Set 2 (DS2) which highlighted the experiences of the participants during the first 9 months of data collection, primarily when the students were based at Hope College. Conduct Analysis was also used in Data Set 3 (DS3), which focused on the student experience within Fawlty Tower University and Ivory Tower University. During these data collection periods, after each participant interview or observation of their context, initial dissemination of what constituted IScs and ISgd was undertaken. On reflection it is acknowledged that at times, immediate dissemination of the participants practices and experiences into these analytical categories was blurry and it was only at the end of the data collection period, once a comparison of each stage of transition was made, that it became apparent what practices constituted and reflected IScs or ISgd. The second stage of conduct analysis involved exploring the relations between the sets of internal structures and how these formed, in relation to conduct analysis, the transitional experiences of the participant. It was this process of reconciliation and negotiation which produced the agents’ conduct and the outcomes which have been defined as transitional experience. The results of the conduct analysis are central to the discussions explored within Chapters Five, Six and Seven.
Table 3.2. Table to illustrate the coding of data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Set</th>
<th>Research Design Step</th>
<th>Analytical Process</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Code (Specific to Data Set)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Policy Documents (DFEs, 2003; Dearing Report, 1997; Higher Education White Paper; Institutional Course Syllabuses: HC; FTU; ITU Module Outline: FDSc HC; BSc FTU; BSc</td>
<td>Classification Strong Classification Weak Framing Strong Framing Weak Official Pedagogic Field Pedagogic Recontextualising Field Perfection Code Performance Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3&amp;4</td>
<td>Context/Conduct</td>
<td>Interview: Nigel (HC) Interview: ****no (HC) Interview: Lucy (HC) Interview: Jeremy (ITU) Interview: Brian (ITU) Interview: Participants Focus Group Interview: Participants Observation: FDSc: ****no &amp; Nigel</td>
<td>Framing Strong Framing Weak Perfection Modalities Performance Modalities Physical Capital Cultural Capital Pedagogic Device Corporeal Device External Structure In-Situ Active Agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6.3. Coding of Data.

To explore the relationships, patterns and themes that emerged, the data analysed was coded and the relations between each code explored in relation to each other. Each data set was analysed in relation to each other. This especially applies to the data within DS1, which will inform understanding of the experiences within DS2 and DS3. Analysing the data in this way allows the exploration of how the relationship between conduct and context develops over time and space, thus painting a more complex understanding of transitional experience.

Table 3.2, illustrates some of the codes that were used to analyse the data. However, as the appendices illustrate, sixty-four codes were used in total to analyse the participants experiences. This reflects both master codes (e.g. Framing) which were constructed before the data collection process and those which emerged during the transitional experiences (e.g. Level of Framing - Strong/Weak). While the initial coding may generate a mass of confusing themes and potential avenues from which to generate discussion, focused coding begins to recognise more coherent patterns within the research, informing possibilities to represent the stories of the participants (Emerson, et al., 1995). It is these codes which distinguish the variations in transitional experience between each participant. While the final set of codes may seem large, it reflects the complexity of the approach being adopted alongside the depth to which the analytical lenses are able to explore transitional experience. Furthermore, the adoption of context and conduct analysis makes necessary separate lists of analytical codes for each data set, although given the interaction between context and conduct groups, some of these codes are amalgamated. Within DS1 a set of coding schemes was generated to highlight the mechanics and structures involved within the participants’ experiences within a number of different institutions at a number of levels. First, this language was used to analyse the role different institutions played in transition. Second, a language was derived from which to code specific lessons and interactions within each of these contexts. As with other research that seeks to elucidate the mechanics behind pedagogic transmission and the role of contexts (see Evans & Penney, 1999; Hoadley, 2008) within each context the level of classification and framing has also been coded. While such an approach has been developed elsewhere in Higher Education research (see Abbas & McLean, 2007) within this study the use of such concepts is slightly different. This was because the code of Classification and Framing were too broad in their nature to account for in-situ differences: further emergent codes were generated to distinguish interactions and external structures within and between each institution and fields. For example, following the work of Hoadley (2008) classification and framing principles were disseminated into horizontal modalities and vertical modalities. Additionally, it became apparent that the codes
‘classification, weak classification and strong classification’ did not consider the differences between discourses transmitted vertically and those transmitted horizontally, between institutions within the same context. Through the process of coding, the data no longer becomes merely events, names or memories, but takes the form of textual objects, which can be explored and represented using a number of different analytical and written techniques, such as realist tales or modified realist tales. These codes provided the starting point for the analysis of data sets two and three.

Based on the conduct analysis of data sets two and three, a number of analytical codes were generated which allowed the experiences and feelings of the participants to be analysed. As table 3.2. illustrates, within these data sets, codes were generated which reflected the practices, feelings and meanings behind the participants’ experiences within and between institutions. Subsequently, it is emphasised that while the data has been coded and categorised into three distinguishable analytical groups, they are not inseparable and inform an understanding of each other. Moreover, codes were generated in reflection of the quadripartite cycle: practices were identified and coded as illustrating active agency, conjuncturally specific or general dispositions. For example, the practices of the participants were coded as being illustrative of the practices within their habitus and whether these practices were exchanged for social, cultural of physical capital. While identifying themes born out of the conceptual framework, coding the data in this way enabled the opening up of new avenues of inquiry that may not have been initially considered (Emerson, 1995). Such emerging codes represent a myriad of possible issues and directions, used to identify incidences that may not apply to the entire data set. For example, feelings such as perceptions towards university courses (e.g. proper university, frustration) which are covered within quite individualistic ways by the participants will not be able to be applied to every participant. Furthermore, within the conduct analysis of DS2 and DS3, such codes would often overlap. For example, where an interaction or incidence would be coded for masculinity, the code physical capital would also apply. Similarly, while the display of physical capital was often explicit in its transmission there is nothing subtle about these pedagogic encounters with the body central to acquiring and reproducing knowledge essential for transition. The overlapping between codes is indicative of the structuration theme of this study, with the deep underlying mechanics (explicit transmission) informing the display of physical capital through the practices of the participant.

The organisation of data in these analytical groups highlights the myriad of possibilities and interactions that were highlighted within the data sets. However, it is noted that at times, the codes and themes appear confusing and convoluted in their organisation. In overcoming such barriers, a Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Programmes (CAQDAP) was used. The adoption of the
HyperResearch Programme (version 2.8), which represented one of many CAQDAP’s available to qualitative researchers, enabled the organisation of the cross-based analytical approach so that both contexts and conducts would inform understanding of transitional experience over a set amount of time. Moreover, the use of HyperResearch software allows the transcription and coding of multi data sources, including text files, audio files and images. In the case of this study, the ability to code hours of lecture audio without the need to transcribe the audio into a text file particularly saved a number of hours. Furthermore, as Glesner and Peshkin (1992) suggest, visual representations generated with software often allow for the exposition of gaps within the data,

Just as observing the earth from a satellite allows you to see the overall pattern of geologic structures and human adaptations to these structures, data displays help you to see the overall patterns of data without getting lost within the details. [Glesner & Peshkin, 1992:137]

Accordingly, while more traditional methods of coding and analysing data may also be used, the adoption of such software is designed to make these analytical processes more straightforward as it allows the researcher to store, code and display data in such a way which makes the collation and deciphering of numerous experiences and interactions clearer.

There are clearly some limitations and criticisms directed at using such software research programme (see Bazeley, 2002; Tsu, 2005; Hutchison et al., 2009). Some (for example, Smith & Biber, 1996) have suggested that using software programmes discourages in-depth data analysis in which the researcher firmly situates themselves within the revisited realities of the participants. However, it is neither the Frankenstein nor Muse that Smith and Biber (1996) depict. Indeed it is a tool to be acquired to by the researcher and as such is only as effective as the primary tool, namely the researcher themselves. As such, a programme such as the one being used should only be thought of as an organising tool – it does not make me interpret the data differently not does it allow me to ‘feel’ the data. Nevertheless, it does enable me to see the data differently and as such it is subtly changing the analytical process. Such feeling for the data comes from the practices of continual refinement and indwelling initiated at the start of the analytical process. It is these interactions with the data that allow me to return to the interactions and interviews. Nevertheless, there are benefits to using QDCA programmes if the researcher is willing to prepare the stage of analysis before it occurs. One disadvantage of setting the study up in this way and using the software programme is that you cannot compare study files; I would not be able to identify patterns (using software) between DS1, DS2 and DS3. Making DS2 and DS3 case units negates the very essence of using a strong structurationist approach as I would not be able to breakdown data further and be able to
relate in-situ interactions with other in-situ interactions. To overcome this limitations, exploration between DS1, DS2 and DS3 had to be completed manually. However, this would not detract from my understanding as at this point of analysis my skills as a researcher come to the fore and are my main tool in making sense of the experiences.

Overall, the use of analytical bracketing in informing the analytical approach of this study has allowed the analysis of data to inform and further contribute to the use of Case Study analysis that addresses the discursive production of individual transitional experience with consideration of the structural and cultural location of that individual (Avis, 2006). In doing so, each part of the analytical brackets enable the connections to be made between the practices of the individual (both enabling and constraining) on an in situ level and related these to the cultural structures external to their contexts. Therefore, rather than viewing the individual as a fragmented object within the field of relations, the analytical approach conveys the participants’ experience in a more holistic manner, in which they influence and are influenced by the contexts which exist.

Following from Stones (2005) it is important to remember that such an approach should only be used as a sensitising analytical tool. This allows other analytical approaches such as those of discourse analysis to be used to inform each section of analytical bracketing. Such bracketing refines the data, linking various aspects of the participant’s lives with my own ontological assumptions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Crossley, 2000; Sparkes, 2002; Chase, 2005). The benefits of such an approach are highlighted by Stones (2005) who notes how ‘the combination of relevant concepts seen in the round and the specific question, brought together within a form of bracketing provide a benchmark against which such evidence can be assessed in terms of details and coverage’ (p.121). Thus, I may want to focus on a specific area within my study while keeping the other parts within the shadows. While at times such an approach has become quite challenging, it nevertheless provides a more in-depth conceptual picture of what occurred during the 18 months. However, given the vast amounts of interactions that I have collated within the data collection period I am only able to use a number of extracts which accentuate the voice of the participant. By organizing the analytical approach in the way I have, I believe that it has informed my understanding of transition alongside illuminating the voice of the participant. Such illuminations can through how I come to represent my understandings.

3.7. Representation of Transitional Experiences.

Given the collection of experiences and interactions analysed, the forms of representation I chose shaped how these were presented and understood by prospective audiences within my thesis
Rather than reiterating my raw analytical insights, the process of representation is a creative one, in which my skills as a writer enable the audience to hear the voice of the participants. Moreover, this creative process should inspire and engage the reader to delve into the more nuanced layers of these experiences, allowing the reader to become immersed within a retrospective reality (Sparkes et al. 2003; Sparkes, 2007). This has led to research exploring ways of representing the participant through confessional tales, ethnographies, autoethnographies, poetic representation, ethnodramas, fictional representations and narrative tales (Sparkes, 1995; Sparkes, 2002). Yet, despite the cautionary tales that surround these emerging forms of representation, a number of authors have encouraged the exploration of alternative forms of writing and representation which subject the audience to a range of analytical lenses multidimensional in their nature (Tsang, 2000; Smith & Sparkes, 2005). Nevertheless, such ‘freedom’ in choosing our representational paths remains problematical for some. While it is beyond the scope of the thesis to explore the attributes and limitations of all these forms, they have, alongside the theoretical and analytical frameworks, informed my decisions on how to represent the participants within the study.

On consideration of my research foci, a number of different representational and written styles were considered in an attempt to allow the reader to have a unique vantage point from which to understand the experiences of the participants. One way considered was the adoption of Impressionist Tales within the study. As a form of representation, it constructs a more vivid and metaphorical account, allowing the audience to make multiple interpretations of the text (Sparkes, 1991). Additionally, within such tales researchers are able to convey to the audience their own ontological and epistemological assumptions and how these are influenced by those within the research field. Moreover, the use of what Van Maanen (1988) refers to as textual identity within Impressionist Tales allows the audience into the world of researcher allowing them to become immersed within these polyphonic realities. Similar to the Impressionist Tale, narratives of the self (confessional tales) seek to meet a literacy criterion of coherence, verisimilitude and interest (Richardson, 1994). The use of confessional tales as highlighted within Chapters Three, Five, Six and Seven, enabled the voice of the researcher to become prominent within the text. This highlights for the audience the importance of my own history and experiences and how these come to shape how I have interpreted and represented the participants.

Both forms of representation allow for the voice of researcher and participant to be present within the text. As Sparkes (2002) notes, within such tales there is an ‘intimacy to be established with the readers, personal characters to develop and trials to portray’ (p.59). These revelations reflect the personal nature of fieldwork and in essence the personal journey I have embarked upon.
Thus, rather than merely establishing my credibility as an author, they also go someway to explaining how I came to understand the experiences of the participants through my own dispositions and experiences of Higher Education. Through the confessional tale, I am able to highlight how these influenced my interpretations of the cultural experiences of the participants and how I came to comprehend their experiences. While allowing the researcher to appear within the text in a more holistic sense, such an approach negates the ability for the study context to be viewed on its own terms, through it is own rules and without posing a framework of our culture. Moreover, it may, if used incorrectly subdue the voice of the participant. However, totally removing or hiding my own experiences of Higher Education from the text is also limiting as it masks the role these have had in informing my understanding of the participants’ transition into Higher Education.

Subsequently, in representing the participant’s transitional experiences, there is a role for both Impressionist and Confessional Tales, albeit in a constricted way, within the written text. Following from Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), ‘the points of view of sociologists always owe something to their situation in a field where all define themselves in part in relational terms by their difference and distinct from certain others to whom they compete with. (p.39)’. Given the focus upon the voice of my participant, the adoption of such representational modes is confined to a limited number of chapters. It is hoped that the use of Confessional Tales within aspects of the discussion chapters and this chapter conveys to the audience the challenges and dilemmas I have faced along my PhD journey. While these may not be directly linked to the stories of the participants, it is useful to convey these to the audience as they allow them an insight into how the study was conducted, revealing to the audience what happened within the research process (Sparkes, 2002). Yet neither confessional nor impressionist tales truly allow the voice of the participant to become prominent within the written text. Consequently, I also turned to other forms of representation.

3.7.1. Modifying the Realist Tale.

Alongside Impressionist and Confessional Tales, Realist Tales have come to dominate qualitative research and have a number of characteristics (Van Maanen, 1988; Sparkes, 2002). One of the main characteristics of realist tales is the absence of the author from the majority of the text. The realist tale reflects my determination to allow the voice of my participant to be central to the final discussion of their experience. Following from Fine (1999, cited in Sparkes, 2002) ‘realist accounts permit us to build knowledge, comfortable in the belief that we are learning about the contours of the world’ (p.56). As will become apparent within the discussion chapters, the use of extracts from the participants experiences have paramount importance (Van Maanen, 1988). These extracts have
been used to give a strong sense of the voice of the participant and their experiences (Sparkes, 2002). However, realist tales are not without their limitations and the creation of texts in which my voice is present alongside that of the participants is problematical (Sparkes, 2002). Given that the data is constructed out of the interaction of both our views upon the realities, events and people within the participants’ lives my voice is, in part always present and never entirely removed. Therefore, rather than being a realist tale in the truest sense of the term, I have modified the realist tale so that my voice remains present, alongside and behind that of the participant.

Through modifying the realist tale my voice is not completely removed nor is it unheard within the text. As Sparkes (2002) notes, such an approach allows the author to ‘indicate their social positioning’ (p.51). Thus, within modified realist tales my voice is translucent within the text, second to the experiences of the participant. For example, in some parts of the discussion it may be necessary to draw upon my own ethnographic accounts of the context to highlight how the external structures of the context are transmitted to the individuals. Within such an approach my observations act as a guide or a conduit for the audience, guiding the reader through the formalities of the study to a place where the voice and experience of the participant reverberates. For example, my voice is present when reinforcing and emphasising the ethical issues associated with the study yet markedly absent from the discussion chapters within the study. Therefore within the study confessional tales have something of a symbiotic relationship with realist tales (Sparkes, 2002). While the symbiotic relationships within modified tales represent the boundary edge of qualitative representation, they also represent a new way of meeting the challenge of how individuals become represented within the written text. Although embracing these developments will allow increased opportunities for the use of different tales within qualitative research, it does not guarantee that the tales being produced will be of a better standard (Sparkes, 2002; Richardson, 2005). Consequently, how we come to judge these representations is important.

### 3.7.2. Representational Issues.

The choices I have made regarding representation will be judged. But how can such work be judged? What counts as successful qualitative research? Currently, the conflict between the need for explicit criteria within evidence based practice and arguments against such criteria are continuing to shape the practices of educational researchers (Hammersley, 2007). Within performance driven, evidence based practice, there is a need for ‘transparency’ within qualitative research (Hammersley, 2007) so that research may be judged in relation to other forms of research. While the thought that such work can be judged in this way is detrimental at best (see Hammersley, 2007) current influences within educational research may have an effect on how my work will be judged within
wider educational audiences. As Hammersley (2007) reminds us, ‘there are those who argue that much qualitative research is of poor standard, but more usually the complaint is that there is no clearly defined set of quality criteria available for judging it so that is of uncertain quality’ (p.288). There is little doubt that research without any sort of criteria by which it may be considered is detrimental to research and leaves the field open to limited and short-sighted criticisms.

As Hammersley (2007) rightly points out, ‘the task of judging quality in the context of a relatively complex activity like research cannot be sensibly reduced to the application of explicit, concrete and exhaustive indicators’ (p.289). Consequently, it is necessary to have a type of criteria, though in what form remains very difficult to answer. Nonetheless, I suggest that studies, which seek to explore rather than explain something as fluidic and dynamic as transitional experience need to be judged on how much they contribute in furthering the understanding of what is a complex subject. Furthermore, it should be judged on how well it illuminates the experience of the participants’ something that has been made explicitly clear at the beginning of this chapter. Such criteria emerge out of the judgements an audience makes, rather than criteria being imposed upon their understanding of the study. Alongside this, the study should be judged on how well it conveys the idea of transitional experience rather than retrospective transition. Central to this issue is how these in-situ experiences are communicated to the audience. I am in agreement with Davis (2008) in suggesting that sociology studies should be considered for the light they shed on a reality, for the elegance of their composition, and through the communication of this, whether they are able to spark the imagination of the audience. Therefore, research must be judged on whether it is able to engage and inspire researchers. This point is supported by Sparkes (2002) who notes that Ellis (2000, cited in Sparkes, 2002 p. 209) suggests that tales must evoke a response from the reader, allowing them to be reflexive in their reading and embodiment of the account presented. Also as emphasised by Leiblich et al. (1998, cited in Sparkes, 2002), research should be judged on its ability to allow the audience achieve a greater comprehension of their own experiences. While a concrete list of criteria requirements would only serve in particular context, a list of considerations, more guidelines, from which the audience can draw upon (such as those illustrated above), would go someway to allow this type of research to be scrutinised for the right reasons. Any study that attempts to explore transition within and between contexts requires multiple forms of criteria specific to time, place and social context. While this approach is not perfect, it is a step in the right direction. Given the relevance of voice to the study, such calls for this type of non-epistemic criterion must not go unheard.
3.8. Considerations of the Methodological Approach

This chapter has illustrated and discussed the methodological approach I have adopted in seeking to explore the nature of transition within Higher Education and the experiences of individuals within this educational context. Indeed, the ability of the structuration framework to open up the landscape of Higher Education transition by highlighting the role of agents within particular interactions has significantly structured the choices I have made as a researcher and the expectations I have of my theoretical framework. While previous paradigmatic perspectives within educational research have sought to understand this relationship from isolated structuralist, semiotical and interpretive paradigms, the approach I have adopted seeks to understand this relationship within a cross-paradigmatic approach that has dual epistemological properties (see Kuhn, 1970, cited in Lawson, 2009; Ball et al., 2000). Such an approach is reflective of Hammersley’s (2007) suggestion that ‘at some point an alternative paradigm will arise and take over the field, because it is able to explain all of what the previous paradigm covered and also resolve the anomalies within it’ (p.292). Indeed, the importance of paradigmatic hybrids is highlighted by Lawson (2009),

These bridges and hybrids, it should be remembered, are vital sources of innovation and even scientific revolutions. Together they provide effective ways to respond to, and help direct, rapid, dramatic social change. The question is whether researchers’ paradigms are structured to yield benefits like these. [Lawson, 2009: 99]

Undertaking such a perspective does not devalue or discredit existing paradigms but addresses the ‘anomalies’, ‘silences’ and ‘blind spots’ that often remain opaque to the adoption of isolationist paradigms (Lawson, 2009). Furthermore, while such an approach is reflective of the emerging new paradigmatic ‘war’ (see Wright, 2006) in which the ‘existence of emergent epistemologies based on difference and the diversity of approaches, genres and sub genres and continued innovation of the field’ (p.800) such an approach points to a way in which educational researchers explore their sociological imaginations to overcome these dividing lines within educational research without negating the usefulness of each perspective and independently informing an understanding of both practices and structures (Hammersley, 2007; Lingard & Gale, 2007; Lawson, 2009). While the differences in perspectives might be difficult to bridge, clearly both can, within the right framework, begin to offer greater insight into the experience of a participant and how these experiences become apparent in the first instance.

As has been illustrated within this chapter such a perspective has informed the design of this study alongside the data collection methods, analytical lenses and representational dilemmas that have
been illustrated. Furthermore, adopting a case study approach enabled an analytical lens to be cast upon an increasing, yet misunderstood, niche of students who enter Higher Education. Subsequently, by making the focus of the study small scale, yet intensive, adheres to a level of institutional critique necessary to address how students come to experience transition in education (Bergerson, 2007). Each of the six participants represents a unique experience from which to understand the nature of transition within Higher Education.

Allowing the study to be guided by this framework highlighted how the experiences of the participants were not transparent but represented a number of shifting experiences, which I have attempted to weave together to highlight their experiences of Higher Education. However, such an approach has been at times, problematical. Such problems were similar to the ones experienced by Ball et al. (2000) in which the, ‘problems of analysis and presentation were also exacerbated by the fluidity, change and instability of the life courses of many of the young people’ (p.17). Thus, as the nature of transition evolved, so did the type of collection technique. Overcoming the complexities generated by the analytical approach required me to become reflexive in deciphering the data. In doing so I followed from Smith (2003) who notes that the researcher needs, ‘to step back and look for patterns that might not be immediately apparent to either analysts or social actors’ (p.106). Furthermore, these periods of refinement and indwelling inspired to some interesting themes that were then coalesced into my writing.

As will become apparent, I have attempted to reflect this complexity within my writing, adopting different methods of representation in an attempt to present a deeper insight into the participants’ experiences. In adhering to the core theme of giving space in exploring transitional experiences, I have represented their experiences within a series of modified realist tales. Moreover, implicitly, the adoption of the modified realist tale elucidated my own feelings, misunderstandings and prejudices that had tainted my perceptions of Further Education (but without stifling the voice of the participants). While challenging, the modified realist tale is integral to communicating to the audience my perspective and how this has changed and informed my understanding of Higher Education. However, in doing so, the tales created through my writing only reflect a small number of the many interactions and thoughts that were generated during this study, and as such, only some aspects of the participants’ experiences alongside my own experiences have been represented, particularly within this chapter through the use of confessional tales and modified realist tales. Moreover, in some ways the representation of these experiences within the written form also limits the understanding of their experience. To search beyond the barriers of our understanding, entails searching beyond the realms of paper and print. While beyond the scope of this study, is it possible
to begin to utilise such software, not merely in the analytical process for our own means but so that any audiences perspective and understanding of the data may be enriched. These considerations have posed a number of considerations in how we come to judge qualitative research.

If, as Davis (2008) suggests, sociology can be an art as well as a science, then how we begin to judge sociological studies requires further discussion. While the rigor and structure of a study should be scrutinised, qualitative studies should also be judged by how they reach an audience. In evolving qualitative research and allowing the reader engage with it, it is important that discussions regarding how we judge qualitative research continues (Sparkes, 1998). This requires qualitative researchers to continue to embrace an idiographic rather than nomothetic understanding of particular social phenomena within socio-cultural contexts (Hammersley, 2007). Furthermore, evolving our epistemological and ontological understandings of experience may contribute to those who have had their voice diffused within research to become empowered. This is illustrated by Tett (2004) who suggests,

> Once we believe that our own story has value, and we share it with others who receive it positively, then we are likely to feel better about ourselves in ways that enable us to challenge the status quo so that our views can be seen, heard and taken seriously. [Tett, 2004: 193].

While this is not an attempt to situate myself as some kind of rescuer, focusing upon their stories and making them central to the research process, may allow individuals to consider possibilities about themselves they may not have done before. The only thing we can do is begin to understand in greater detail how these individuals come to experience Higher Education and situate these experiences within the context in which they are formed.
PART II - TRANSITIONAL VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF FDSc to BSc Top Up Pathways

As illustrated within Chapter Two, the interaction between structure and agent is somewhat dependent on the general dispositions of the agent and their ability to recognise, acquire and embody the discourses and practices transmitted through the external structures of the field. Part II of the study now draws attention to the experiences of those who had direct experience of transition and the challenges such transitions pose. Rather than being one overall transitional experience, what emerges through the conceptual framework is a number of experiences in-situ: identified as being Empowered, Fragmented or Failed.

Chapter Four provides a critical account regarding the External Structures that shape the transitional experiences of the participants. Drawing upon the Context Analysis approach discussed in Chapter 3, the chapter illustrates and critically reflects upon the various levels of external structures which are responsible for the production, transmission and recontextualisation of discourses and practices which influence the positions and relations of the participants’ transitional experiences. The chapter illustrates how the external structures have a transformative dimension which is interwoven with external structures from agencies external to the educational field. In doing so, this chapter discusses how the classification and framing of relations between the institutions, Hope College (HC), Fawlty Tower University (FTU) and Ivory Tower University (ITU) and other agencies, influence a series of transitional experiences which may be illustrated as being Empowering, Fragmented or Failed. In reflection, the chapter critically reflects on the current relations between the levels of external structures, emphasising the need for further understanding of this aspect of structurationist relations to be developed and many of the positions and relations which emerge as a result of these relations. This exploration and illustration of external structures provides the foundations from which the specific transitional experiences of the participants can be discussed.

Chapter Five highlights the Empowered experiences of Jack and Emily. Chapter Five highlights a transitional experience in which framing relations between agent and the external structures of a context are slowly evolved based on the ability of agents to recognise, acquire, embody and transform specific discourses and practices. The data highlights relations where there is specific recognition and acquirement of external structures in-situ (ESis), and the rules of the Pedagogic and Corporeal Devices which govern the transmission and acquisition of discourses and practices. In doing so, Jack and Emily are able to illustrate and convey a higher level of active agency, resulting in outcomes in which they elaborate upon the positions and relations from when they entered Hope, thereby, creating transitional experiences which signify empowerment. However, based on their ability to convert physical capital, Jack and Emily illustrate differing types of empowerment, derived from their dispositions across contexts into social and cultural capital of their choices of Top Up year. Drawing upon interview data and my own observations of their practices, this chapter questions what it means to be empowered within the transition from Further into Higher Education and the signification of such practices and relations for Jack and Emily prospectively.
Chapter Six illustrates the Fragmented transitional experience of Lloyd and Steve in which moments of empowerment are situated among relations and positions in which the agent does not acquire or embody specific and legitimised discourses and practices of Hope College and Fawlty University. Furthermore, Chapter Six discusses such positions and relations and the consequences of these for both Steve and Lloyd. While both Steve and Lloyd illustrate some instances of elaboration and innovation they do so within relations with external structures which are weaker than those apparent within the Empowered experiences of Chapter Five. Such isolation and critical distance from the external structures of Hope and Fawlty begins to force Steve and Lloyd to rely on their own general dispositions, preserving their identities as Foundation Degree students. What merges are fragmented transitions where experience is based on the general dispositions of the agent and strategies based on external structures beyond those recognised and legitimised by the institutions.

Chapter Seven highlights the Failed transitional experiences of Charlie and Peter. Their experiences of both Hope College and Fawlty University alluded to another type of transitional experience in which the reciprocality between agent practices and the external structures of Higher Education institutions and agents was missing. What was evident was that the framing of relations and the type of qualifications that both participants undertook before the Foundation Degree were similar to those traditionally undertaken by vocationally orientated students. The chapter highlights that students, without valued practices, become frustrated and, at times, intimidated within strongly framed relations in which their general dispositions are not valued, despite being able to recognise and acquire some of the conjuncturally specific dispositions highlighted within Chapter 4.

Chapter Eight provides a reflection of the transitional experiences of the participants, discussing many of the points that have been highlighted within Part II of the study. The chapter illustrates that while transitional experiences have been conceptually organised to highlight the in-situ characteristics of different experiences, in reality such boundaries are porous and continually evolve between the agent and their continuing positioning and relations to the external structures of the context. Accordingly, while each transitional experience has been separated for analytical purposes it is important to remember that in reality boundaries between Empowerment, Fragmentation and Failure are blurred with all the students, to some extent highlighting characteristics of all of these experiences within their own transitions. In doing so Chapter Eight forwards further considerations regarding the experiences of vocational students within Further and Higher Education and raises questions as to the current practices and policies both in-situ and wider fields of educational research and policy. Specifically, Chapter Eight begins to critically question whether the current relations and positions evident within the experiences of the participants create equal possibilities or restricted opportunities. As part of this critical discussion, I draw upon my own experiences of further and Higher Education and the current thoughts I have as both researcher and practitioner. While Chapter Eight provides closure to the data analysis and discussion chapters, it also begins to look beyond the boundaries of this project, providing suggestions for future work and research, which is required to address the evolving nature of Foundation Degrees. The chapter highlights and discusses the importance of the conceptual and methodological discussions which have been central to the study and how these may be evolved in the future.
Chapter 4 - Shaping the Transitional Experience: a critical account of the relations within and between FDSc-BSc Sport Qualifications.

The Foundation Degree has the potential to raise the skill level of our workforce, particularly in the new industries. It will forge new alliances between universities, colleges and employers. It will bring more people into Higher Education with a richer mix of backgrounds than ever before. It will fuse the academic and vocational paths to high-level qualifications. *In short, it is a new qualification for a new age.* [Blackstone, cited in HEFCE, 2000: 2].

4.1. The role of External Structures (ESm) in the creation of Foundation Degrees and Top-Up pathways.

Following from the framework illustrated in Chapter Two, it is necessary to highlight the various external structures that exist beyond the ontic-level of experience. It is here where the focus of this chapter begins. Following from chapter two, the external structures at the abstract and meso-level of ontology have been mapped and identified. Although it is recognised that there is a need for more rigorous and critical insights into the role external structures (ESm) play in qualification production, this study focuses on the meso-level structures which influence the transitional experiences of the participants. Within this case study the External Structures macro (ESm) can be broadly disseminated into institutions and agencies which are, following Bernstein (1990), responsible for the production of Foundation Degrees. Although the recognition and acquisition of these discourses and practices will differ between each participant, it is important to acknowledge the role of the external structures at this level of ontology in shaping transitional experience. As will become evident, the role and influence of each agency, institution and agent will differ depending on the context in which they are being recontextualised. Drawing upon the thoughts of Avis (2009) identifying the role of agencies and agents within the ESm ‘locates FE within wider society as well as its relational context, acknowledging intersectionality, college specificity and spatial location’ (p. 660). The ESm of this PhD study consists of institutions, agencies and agents which are responsible for the creation of the Foundation Degrees and the associated practices and discourses found within the qualification. Subsequently, this chapter begins by highlighting and discussing the role of each of these agencies and how they shape practices and discourses within FEC’s and HEI’s.

4.1.1. The role of Government Agencies in the construction of Foundation Degrees.

In order to increase attainment in Higher Education the Foundation Degree provides non-traditional students a progression route into Higher Education qualifications, through the existence of ‘Top
Up’ qualifications. As Haavelsrund (2001) highlights, such grand aims for the qualification highlight the shift within post-16 education which places ‘a greater emphasis on identity construction in which identities can be achieved through an explicitly entrepreneurial/vocational culture’ (Haavelsrund, 2001, p. 329). This is reflective of Maton’s (2005) suggestion that the new student was defined as ‘The first of (usually) his family to enter university and typically of working class origin, new students were portrayed as bringing their own problems for which the universities have to find the appropriate answers’ (p.692). Following from this, Foundation Degree Qualifications were created so that,

Every young person can learn the right subject for them, at the right level for them, learning in a style that suits them – no matter where they are in the country – and achieve a valuable qualification if they succeed. Putting that in place, together with the right information, advice and guidance and the right personal and financial support arrangements, is a key part of our drive to raise participation in learning post-16 and attainment. [DfES, 2005]

As the extract highlights, Foundation Degree qualifications have been constructed to give students the opportunity to learn at the ‘right level for them’ and achieve valuable qualifications ‘if they succeed’. The extract from the DfES also highlights the changing nature of the role of government controlled agencies in the construction and transmission of post-16 qualifications. The extract resonates with a facilitating, controlling role of government: offering advice and guidance proposes a more ‘hands-off’ approach to the transmission of qualifications. Significantly, this form of decentralisation, creates active spaces at the ESm level of production for agencies and institutions, external to the field of FE to influence the production of these qualifications. An example of this form of governance and management is reflected within the role given to industry in shaping Foundation Degrees.

4.1.2. The role of the professional sports industry in the construction of Foundation Degrees.

As highlighted, the role of industry is becoming increasingly prominent within the production of Foundation Degree qualifications. This is highlighted by the QAA (QAA, 2005) statement regarding the role of industry within established Foundation Degree qualifications,

The majority of providers have established effective working relationships with employers... The term employer is used to refer to employers, practitioners and people in the workplace who supervise the students.... Employer involvement, apart from WBL (Work Based Learning) aspects, is now increasing through the formalising of, for example, consortium and employer liaison groups. [QAA, 2005: 1]
As the extract highlights, the role of industry and employment are central to the production of the Foundation Degree qualification, in the hope of allowing individuals experience of both education and the field of employment. Accordingly, the production of qualifications, with weakly classified relations to the field of industry becomes reflective of what Camacho-Sicilia and Brown (2008) refer to as market-orientated pedagogies, which resonate with ‘official opportunities’ for students from non-traditional backgrounds, similar to those of the chosen participants. Within the context of the sports industry, relations between employment and education are already evident. For example, within the context of Australian Rules Football, Hickey and Kelly (2008) note ‘a number of sports entertainment industries have instituted player development and education programmes to educate and prepare elite performers for life after football’ (p.477). In a similar light to Camacho-Sicilia and Brown (2008), Hickey and Kelly (2008) illustrate the weakening of classification principles between the contexts of education and industry, developing education programmes for individuals so that they may contribute to the context of industry. The examples of ESm demonstrate an increasing critical distance between the practices and discourses of Further Education and Higher Education. While resonating with ‘opportunity and progression’ there remain questions and concerns regarding current relations and those being developed with the field of industry, in the case of sports education, those with professional sports bodies and private clubs. In reproducing strong classificatory principles between HEI and FEI, what is becoming evident is the increasing privatisation of Foundation Degrees as market-orientated pedagogies.

As the extracts illustrate, the production of Foundation Degrees resonate with discourses regarding meritocratic individualism and personal achievement. Thus, in constructing perfection codes, by their own admission, the ESm level of experience situates responsibility for transition as an individual problem. While non-traditional students are encouraged into Higher Education, such progression is placed firmly within their responsibility,

If we are to promote lifelong learning, it is important that full recognition be given to an individuals past achievement, whether this be through structured learning or acquisition of competencies at work. Each consortium offering Foundation Degrees should therefore agree and apply common arrangements for accrediting prior learning. This will facilitate both entry to foundation degree programmes and, for those wishing to advance further, progression to an honours degree. [HEFCE, 2000: 9]

The increased emphasis placed upon individualism is strategically set against the discourses regarding access and participation, something which was central to the creation of Foundation Degrees (see DfES, 2005; HEFCE, 2010). Such individualism within progression courses alludes to the existence of perfection codes. Codes, prominent within other fields of sports education (such as
Physical Education, see Evans & Davies, 2004) enable institutions ‘the flexibility to position their programmes in accordance with the costs and perceived returns to particular qualifications’ (DfES, 2005, p.63) and place transition success or failure firmly on the participants and generate a myriad of resources and practices for students which are reflective of the discourses of individualism and autonomy highlighted. However, while the creation of Foundation Degrees attempts to allow students more autonomy and freedom in choosing post-16 transition pathways by improving access, their remain a number of inequalities,

The social class gap in entry to Higher Education remains unacceptably wide. While many more people from all backgrounds benefit from Higher Education, the proportion coming from lower-income families has not substantially increased. It means a waste of potential for individuals and for the country as a whole…raising participation and standards in our reforms of secondary and Further Education will be the most important step in improving access. [DfES 2005:12]

The extract highlights the government necessity for qualifications to support and substantiate the UK’s economic development by creating access to post-16 education for those from ‘lower economic backgrounds’. Surprisingly, beyond creating more pathways the agencies of the Primary Context fail to highlight how such access courses may begin to slowly disseminate the class gaps identified. While the previous Labour government talked of qualifications for ‘new ages’ (HEFCE, 2000:2) what they fail to highlight is how this gap will be disseminated or what the consequences of this would be. Moreover, as identified by Greenbank (2010) ‘the problem is that the QAA benchmark standard makes it clear that FDs should meet the need of employers and provide a means by which students can progress to a range of higher-level courses’ (p.60). Thus while government discourses of equality, progress and achievement for the working classes continue to infuse and produce qualifications and new transitional pathways, it fails to propose what the consequences of this will be or how they will be recontextualised within specific institutions. Thus, private post-16 qualifications through weakening the classifications the role of practices within institutions, become paramount in the transitional experience of students. As such, drawing upon the insight of Brustad (1997), the recontextualisation of, practices and protocol within these Foundation Degrees is not ‘value free’ (p.97). Following from Brustad (1997), the increased autonomy institutions have over the delivery of Foundation Degree programmes becomes an integral part of the transitional pathway. While strong classificatory principles aim to provide continuity, every Foundation Degree constructed is tailored to the specific needs of the local context where it is redistributed within the recontextualising context. The importance of this is emphasised by HEFCE (2000),
Besides the degree-awarding body, employer representatives and the institutions delivering the foundation degree will be an integral part of any consortium. It is anticipated that Further Education colleges will play a large role in delivering this qualification since they have strong links with local employers and easy accessibility to potential learners. However, we recognise that some awarding HEIs may wish to deliver a proportion of, and perhaps all, of the Foundation Degrees. [HEFCE, 2000: 10]

The extract from the Foundation Degree prospectus developed by HEFCE (2000) illustrates the purposeful dissemination of responsibility placed on individual institutions to recontextualise the discourses and practices produced by the government and its associated agencies. It highlights the strong classificatory principles that exist at a ‘local level’ while also providing weaker classificatory principles for HEI institutions to still play a role in maintaining access routes from the Foundation Degree. Following from Avis (2009), it is apparent that colleges are becoming marked ‘by their particular histories as well as, and relatedly, the local and regional contexts in which they are placed’ (p.653). Although marked within layers of government rhetoric regarding the need to ‘progress’ and address social justice and equality issues, the brief overview of the production of Foundation Degrees by external structures at the meso-level of ontology, provide signs of a more divided system, in providing autonomy through independence. Reflecting upon the statement by HEFCE (2000) situated at the start of this chapter, it is questioned how this current production of Foundation Degrees will fuse academic and vocational pathways. While exploration of ESm relations provides a number of signs towards current transitional experiences the signification of these relations within institutions must be accounted for. Accordingly, the chapter will now illustrate how the production of Foundation Degrees and the associated discourses, practices and relations are recontextualised within one FE college: Hope College.

4.2. An Example of the Recontextualisation of Foundation Degrees: Hope College

As a consequence of the perfection codes generated at ESm, discourses concerning individualism, social justice and equality are then recontextualised in a number of Further Education institutions. Within institutions like Hope College, the multifaceted agencies and agents identified come to legitimise forms of knowledge on a micro scale, defining and allocating resources through strongly framed discourses based on performance, body perfection and product (Evans & Davies, 2004, Fitz et al., 2006) which reproduce socially ‘acceptable’ forms of practice at Hope College. In a similar light to physical education (see Penney & Evans, 1999) while the influence of the external structures identified at ESm are significant within the transition experiences of the participants it is the agencies and agents of the individual colleges which play a crucial role in determining what
constitutes the process of transition, whose needs or interests it serves and what is more important, who it ignores and excludes. Significantly for the transitional experiences of the participants within Hope, the strongly classified relationship between the Official Pedagogic Fields of UCAS, QAA and OFSTED, and the PRF’s of Physical Education and Employment begin to influence how external resources of the FDSc are distributed and acquired by the participants, thus governing the framing of transition within the College for the participants. Following Bernstein (1990) the agencies and agents and their external structures which exist within colleges may be categorised into two distinguished yet overlapping fields; the Official Pedagogic Field (OPF) and the Pedagogic Recontextualising Field (PRF) (see Chapter Two, section 2.6). Significantly, while previous research has identified a number of agencies and agents who are responsible for the recontextualisation of discourses within sports education (although primarily within Physical Education, see Penney & Evans 1999; Kirk & Macdonald, 2001) key to the participants progression and transitional experience is the interaction between these various fields that shape and transmit existing external resources while creating others. Importantly, the interactions between these fields creates a series of framing relations between Hope and other influencing agencies and agents.

As highlighted within Chapter Three, the participants of this study, all undertook a Foundation Degree in Coaching and Fitness (FDSc) at Hope College. A Further Education College, Hope is part of the University Partnership Colleges (UPC) programme which reflects the policy and discourses regarding equality and access to Higher Education institutions for non-traditional students. This is highlighted by the prospectus given to Foundation Degree students,

This course is for those with an interest and experience in coaching or teaching sport and PE. You will also study the science behind sporting activity, developing the skills and knowledge needed for careers in the rapidly expanding coaching and fitness industries. The broad perspective of the course opens up opportunities for employment at higher supervisor/lower management levels within sports centres, health and fitness clubs, in sports development, as personal trainers or in the wider areas of PE such as teaching, advising or co-ordinating.

[Hope College Course Prospectus]

As the extract from the college prospectus highlights, the FDSc in Coaching and Fitness at Hope College recontextualises a number of the discourses produced by the government agencies. For example, as the extract highlights, there is a weak classification with the field of ‘expanding coaching and fitness industries’. Additionally, the course at Hope followed HEFCE guidelines in collaborating with HEI institutions. In the case of Hope College, the FDSc had been created in 2002 in a partnership with Oceania University (pseudonym), a HEI institution which, following the
words of HEFCE (2000) collaborate with Hope in the deliverance and monitoring of the FDSc module. Accordingly, within Hope, the HEI institution of Oceania is illustrative of the Official Pedagogic Field; providing agents which validate and monitor the in-situ practices of Hope College. The significance of this relationship is highlighted by Lucy, a lecturer based at Hope College,

We wrote the FD in partnership with them, every FD has to have an awarding body. Oceania is one of the biggest, I think they are the biggest partner [and have] UPC as a separate faculty of University of Oceania. I did not know whether they’re the main people for starting FD and partner colleges but that’s the main link… It is kind of like OCR for A-levels or something, they hold and they award it. They identify an external examiner for us, or we identify one in conjunction with them, they come on and moderate our courses, they obviously help us write it and then we have to go through this strict protocol write it to meet their requirements and their guidelines. They help us with staff development, all sorts of things really, they’re kind of the main link in terms of what we do. The FD’s that are written by partner colleges are all slightly different, I did not think there are any, or I might be wrong, that have the same name. So if you went to East **** or you went to ****** College if they run sports courses through UPC, they might have similar elements to the course that we run, but they have all different titles tailored to the needs and expertise of the college staff, the needs of their area, the requirements of their learners, their facilities. But they all have to feed into that named third year. [Lucy: Interview 1]

As the extract highlights Oceania is the official awarding body for the FDSc course at Hope College. Yet, given the geographical distance of 70 miles between the institutions, the relationship and influence of the OPF Oceania must be questioned. Given the geographical location, students were unwilling to travel to open days, nor were they prepared to visit Oceania. This physical distance also translates into a natural critical distance between the practices that occur within Hope. As Lucy illustrates, these strong, hierarchical classification relationships are likened to the relationship an exam body such as OCR would have with an institution delivering A-levels. While strong classification relations may act as a barrier to student progression, they also lead to a level of flexibility in terms of the recontextualisation and delivery of external resources within the FDSc at Hope. Subsequently, these strong classificatory relations recontextualise perfection codes which were evident in the production of Foundation Degree qualifications, producing a series of modalities within Hope. As Lucy highlights, the existence of perfection codes allows the development of a course which is ‘tailored to the needs and expertise of the college staff, the needs of their area, the requirements of their learners’. However, the level of autonomy Hope College has in determining the practices within the FDSc must be questioned given the continued influence of agencies within the Official Pedagogic Field such as OFSTED and HEFCE. Within Hope College,
the existence and signification of perfection codes creates a culture of individualism, in which the participants were left to create their own transitional pathways. Indeed Hargreaves (1982) comments that education now promotes competition and individual success rather than social solidarity. This illustrates pedagogic modalities which are based on individual practices that are based on competency discourses, recontextualised from ESm. Following wider literature (Bernstein, 1996; Fitz et al., 2006), competency based modalities are characterised within Table 4.0.

Table 4.0. Examples of competency practice within Hope
Further Education College.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Characteristic</th>
<th>Example from Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme’s/Projects</td>
<td>Use of Gym, Bench Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquirers (Participants)</td>
<td>Use of Participants Practices - Steve not joining in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Level of Active Agency over selection, sequencing and pace</td>
<td>Use of Ivory External Resources (Library)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Sequencing</td>
<td>Weak Classification between modules, unclear progression routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Apparent Progression</td>
<td>Gym Lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Pacing Rules</td>
<td>Participants unclear of lesson objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control based on Individual Dispositions</td>
<td>Use of Jack &amp; Lloyds Physical Capital in distribution of Practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, in being exposed to additional conjunctural specific knowledge, power over the rules of transmission and acquisition begins to alter the nature of the pedagogic device. As illustrated by my field notes, the continued signification of these agencies within Hope is illustrated,

Students and staff at Hope College are celebrating following the publication of a glowing report from the Government’s monitoring body, Ofsted. The monitoring progress report follows a visit from the Ofsted inspectors in March which tested the teaching, learning and leadership across the college and scored the college the highest marks in seven out of the eight categories. [Hope College Newsletter, 2010]

However, despite the presence of agencies such as OFSTED, practices within Hope and the FDSc course were to be influenced by a number of agencies and agents outside the Official UPC pathway. Moreover, the existence of Perfection Codes is evident within the course outline,
 emphasising autonomy over learning, enabling ‘opportunities’ for those students wishing to enter the field of sports education (in the form of Physical Education) or sports employment. It is here where the influence of Ivory Tower University became noticeable. For example, given its proximity the participants often used Ivory College library to compensate for the lack of external resources at Hope. This is illustrated by the participants within the initial focus group interview,

CW: This year has been a bit better as well with like resources because last year we hardly had any textbooks, um for this level

LP: That’s our library there......[Pointing to the shelf in corner of the room]

DA: Why was that then??

LP: That’s going to be our new course books

CW: But I mean the sports section now...it is quite a wide range, not that big......

ER: It is loads better......

DA: So what was it like then? Like last year then...how did you feel about it last year?

CW: We all went to Ivory, we still go there...

[Focus Group Interview: 08/01/08]

As the extract highlights, despite collaborative relations existing between Oceania and Hope, the resources available to students on the course was minimal; pushing students towards finding resources at Ivory Tower University library. Thus, quite implicitly, the participants are exposed to conjuncturally specific dispositions of Ivory, making them aware of possibilities, the consequences or outcomes which were not apparent to them at Hope.

Similarly, the FDSc at Hope College recontextualises the weakly classified relations between education and industry, as outlined within the ESm (see HEFCE, 2000; 2010). Indeed the relations between educational practices within Hope and the influence of professional sport and fitness industries was explicitly evident within the module outline given to the participants. This is illustrated within the Courses module outline,

This course is for those with an interest and experience in coaching or teaching sport and PE. You will also study the science behind sporting activity, developing the skills and knowledge needed for careers in the rapidly expanding coaching and fitness industries. The broad perspective of the course opens up opportunities for employment at higher supervisor/lower management levels within sports centres, health and fitness clubs, in sports development, as personal trainers or in the wider areas of PE such as teaching, advising or co-co-ordinating.

[FDSc, Coaching & Fitness Module Outline, 2002: 1]
As the extract from the module outline illustrates, the FDSc in Coaching and Fitness at Hope College is and the relationship with PRF agencies are reflective of the discourses constructed within ESm that emphasise the need for links with the employment sector. The importance of reconextualising agents situated within Hope, in reconextualising the relations with the context of professional sport and teaching is illustrated by Nigel,

Danny and Johnno were here before I came along, Danny came here straight from his PGCE, Johnno about a year later he had been teaching in Wales. Then the sort of newer guys....I mean they are all good at what they do I think it is very much we need someone for associate part time lecturing and does anyone know and obviously through those guys at the club there is obviously quite a number of people there and yeah it is sometimes jokingly referred to as ‘jobs for the boys’ which yeah it is in a way but we’re giving them an avenue and obviously there helping us out cos it is so hard to find people. And I think the good thing is that we’ve obviously got young guys who are still doing and especially for the students they can of sort of identify with that and relate to what they’re doing and see it as kind of an incentive in a way and I think it works well for both parties really. [Nigel: Interview 1]

As Nigel suggests, the employment of part-time lecturers who also exist within the context of professional sport, recontextualises the weak horizontal classifications with the sports industry which are encouraged and produced by agencies within the ESm. As the extract illustrates, providing ‘jobs for the boys’ exposes the students to new sets of conjunctural knowledge and rules by which these are transmitted and acquired. This supports Lundberg’s (2004) observation that reconextualising agents play a prominent role in helping students within the context make connections between their employment and their college experiences. Similarly, these links developed between Hope College and Professional Sporting Institutions are reflective of the perception of Thrugate et al. (1997) that ‘the philosophy of FDs demands this fusion of academic and vocational paths in an HE qualification, unlike traditional degree programmes and the majority of vocational qualifications, and, crucially, involves the employer’ (p.216). However, Nigel suggests, the quality of this conjunctural knowledge differs greatly between institutions,

On the whole, yeah, most have come [with a] PGCE. I mean there’s some again within FE who say you did not need to be a qualified teacher just as long as you got...... I mean in some incidences you did not even need a degree you just need relative experience but generally a degree or something in an aptitude and yeah there’s quite a few people who have come through and are just doing it basically without being qualified in terms of teaching. I mean yeah what can you say, it helps us, it helps them. [Nigel: Interview 1]

Again, the thoughts of Nigel allude to the reciprocal weakly classified relations between professional sports industry and the educational context of Hope College. Such relations reflect
Shilling’s (1993) thoughts that in ‘developing a taste for elite sporting and leisure activities is important as while these activities may always represent a direct route to a career they can lead to social situations which indirectly facilitate entry into a profession or allow business contacts to be forged’ (p.137). There is a danger with having strong relationships (within weakly classified boundaries) with professional sporting institutions which may be retrospective in their orientation, unable to keep pace with the social and contextual changes that occur within Higher Education. Similarly, the quality of the practices (at the very least, the standard of teaching), being transmitted by Hope College must also be questioned. This will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

Nevertheless, some of the lecturers within Hope did come from a Physical Education background. The recontextualisation of relations between professional sport, employment and the sports department at Hope College are also displayed through strong relations with the profession of Physical Education. The relations with the field of Physical Education in Hope was highlighted by Brian, a part time lecturer bought in from Ivory University,

It seems to be a department more focused on sort of sport and coaching and that type of environment, so they are very, very similar to PE teachers, like when I was teaching previously the staff within that department, none of us, you would not refer to us as being PE teachers or that sort of stereotype if you like. Whereby in Hope it is very evident to me that these guys all play sports outside of their workplace, they all play on a weekend, rugby etc… They obviously have a lot of experience in coaching so they are more PE teachers material.
[Brian, Interview 1]

As Brian highlights, relations and practices within Hope College are strongly framed around dispositions found within Physical Education and coaching, the body and, given the staff gender bias, masculinity. This is illustrated within my first day in the department office,

Previous meetings with Nigel had alluded to the strong dispositional nature towards his physical education background and the rest of the department also reflected this. Alongside Nigel, lecturers largely dominate the department with backgrounds in Physical Education and Professional Sport. While Nigel was in his uniform of tracksuit bottoms and rugby top, the other agents of the department were also dressed in the same uniform, all wearing medals of past sporting glories, trophies on their desks, scars on their arms and face and tops reflecting particular affiliations to external structures outside the context of the department.
[Field Notes: 19/05/08]

As the quotation from my field journal highlights, the existence of practices normally found within Physical Education, are recontextualised within Hope College by the practices and general dispositions of particular staff at the college. Such dispositions strongly frame the relationships
between participant and agent around discursive practices, normally found within the Physical Education context and classroom (see Brown, 2005) causing them to play a significant role in recontextualising and legitimising conjuncturally specific dispositions for the participants. The consequences of framing relations based on male dominated masculinity have been identified previously. For example, as Clayton and Humberstone (2007) suggest, where such relations occur there is often competition for masculine positional identities among males. Within Hope, relations framed around masculinity is accentuated by the existence of Perfection Codes between the Primary and Recontextualising field, which places increased emphasis upon the practices of those agents responsible for the transmission and distribution of discourses. For example, both Nigel and Johnno draw upon their general dispositions, constructed within the context of Physical Education to transmit conjuncturally specific dispositions of the course, namely the curricula content and practices as stipulated by the FDSc framework. Through Nigel and Johnno’s dispositions and practices, the recontextualisation of Physical Education discourses begins to shift the nature of the rules which govern the relationship between ESm and ESIs. In using their body and embodied masculine dispositions the rules of the pedagogic device are infused with rules of the corporeal device. In doing so, the normative expectations and power capacities of Further Education qualifications are also shifted, thus re-legitimising what counts as a valued qualification. In shifting (implicitly) the nature of the rules of transmission and acquisition, Johnno and Nigel are able to control the modalities of transmitting the specific dispositions of the course. This is evident from my field notes,

The lesson context was full of coaching language that Johnno would ship into the conversation and used a lot of what I would call coaching jargon. He then asked the students to apply it to a football context and asked them to devise a warm up. He gave them a set amount of time to do this. He left them to it although if he thought they weren’t working he would ‘gee them up’ asking them questions – ‘do you think you’ve finished’? It struck chords with what I would do in a PE lesson…He explained he liked to have his lessons ‘quite regimental’ and that because he spent 7 years teaching in an inner city comprehensive. [Field Notes: 28/10/07].

There are a number of similarities with the practices Johnno incorporates into his transmission of conjuncturally specific knowledge on the course with my own experiences in Physical Education. While not as intense in its classification or framing over time, I felt a sense of relation between these endless physical drills and those practices that I had experienced over a number of years, within physical education. This was reinforced by Johnno, who emphasised that he liked to have his lessons ‘quite regimental’, the experience of teaching in inner city schools still
irrefutably flowing through his veins. Every action and sentence was used to explicitly facilitate and reinforce the proper and appropriate knowledge of the body that will lead to them gaining the full marks in the end of module assessment. Thus, for the students within the Foundation Degree to embody and acquire knowledge within the classroom they must internalise the practices of the transmitter (lecturer) into their own body schema, shaping a very specific form of corporeal device.

In drawing upon his general Physical Education dispositions within his practical schema, the practices of Johnno act as mechanisms of permanent collective correction for the body schemas of the participants. In many respects, through the practices of Johnno, there is an emphasis placed on performance of physical skills but also a knowledge and understanding of the practices required to gain accreditation on the course, something which again recontextualises the relations between employment and education formed within ESm. This is similar to other sporting fields in which there is strong framing relations between practitioner and participant (see Wacquant, 2004). For Johnno, there are many advantages to framing learning in this manner,

Massively, oh massively, because I think if anything I think I was an actual better, well certainly I had more weapons in my armoury to deal with classroom situations and adaptability than when I have come here because when you get to Hope ultimately everyone tends to want to learn so perhaps you did not involve as many strategies to keep people interested in and to keep them enjoying things than you do when your in a school which is perhaps more challenging. You know, what's interesting is that some days I really miss my comprehensive teaching because there are moments of absolute clarity when you're doing that, there's a lot of things which make you think it is a terrible, terrible profession to be in and then you get a real diamond moment when you see a student or a child you know perform an action or do something and you get a eureka moment which makes you very emotional and you did not tend to get as many of them in Hope College because of course you know the students are fairly well, motivated towards what they're doing anyway and it is not really a surprise when they grasp what your talking about. [Johnno: Interview 1]

Here, Johnno illustrates an emerging critical distance between the external structures of Hope (ESis) in Hope and the external structures identified at the meso-level of Foundation Degree production (ESm). The transmission of specific dispositions required to progress onto the Top Up year is strongly framed around the ritualistic use of the body by both agent practitioners and participants alike. Johnno draws upon his general dispositions in shaping the knowledge and acquisition of knowledge within the classroom using his body and its dispositions as external structures. The strongly framed nature of this, places increased emphasis upon his practices, negating the influence of discourses from agencies within the official pedagogic field. This is illustrated within one of Johnno’s lectures,
The 2nd lecture with Johnno couldn’t have been more different in its structure or delivery of knowledge. The deliverance of knowledge within this lecture is through Johnno; it is he who has the most influence on its running, content and delivery. He runs what most would call a tight ship. This was clear from the students before the lecture had begun. Lloyd stated, ‘I wonder what kind of mood Johnno will be in?’ as if to acknowledge that if he was having a bad day then it would be a bad lecture. When Johnno walked in the room it went pretty silent, as if his mere presence commanded attention. The subject was analysis of top-level performance which was the theme of their assignment they were to analyse the performance of another individual. Johnno got straight into it. However, the manner was very different to that of NB’s in the fact that he appeared more dominant – he was closer to them, initially he sat down and then he would come and look at what they were doing and stand and move around them, rather than merely being at the front of the classroom. His delivery of the knowledge was very much centred to begin with through his experiences of top flight coaching and how ‘they do things there’. As well as using rugby as an example Johnno drew upon his teaching experience and used the example of Mohammad Ali from boxing to convey the point and aim of the lecture that was more apparent than in other lectures. There was clearly a higher level of structure and it will be interesting to see how much the students had taken on board. [Field Notes: 07/01/08]

Accordingly, the extract highlights the existence of both pedagogic and corporeal devices to recontextualise knowledge from the contexts of physical education and professional sport through strong framing of relations. Thus, what is evident is not one set of rules but, as fig 7 suggests, an interaction between pedagogic and corporeal devices. The outcome concerning progression is witnessed within the interactions between agents and participants, as illustrated in one of the practical sessions delivered by Nigel,

After the theory the guys went down to the gym to do some practical work. All but SL wore their ‘kit’ although the practical was hardly strenuous (or so I thought). The aim of the practical was to try out different ways of measuring flexibility of the body. To begin with each pair (PD left out again) took a different exercise and went away to try it out. Nigel sat down to observe but after ten mins was wanting to have a go himself – putting his body on show. As the ‘results’ were shouted out it was as if out of nothing, everyone began to compare themselves against other results even I was drawn into it – the competitive side of me being reluctantly drawn out. Everyone now was having a go, Jack writing down the results, including mine and Nigel’s. It was as if they were learning through mastering their body skills. However, not for learning but for competition – to beat the other person – a couple of times people said we’re so competitive, where does this come from? The competition then went onto the skipping rope – not directly part of the lecture, but another form of competition to which we had to beat each other. [Field Notes: 07/01/08].
Again, the extract illustrates the existence of both a pedagogic and corporeal device to shape the recontextualisation of knowledge. Unlike Johnno’s lesson, the framing of relations becomes weaker, with Nigel using his bodily practices to recontextualise control and knowledge of the body to the class. This is reflective of Wacquant (2004) who illustrates how pugilistic knowledge is,

Transmitted by mimeticism or countermimeticism by watching how others do things, scrutinising their moves, spying on their responses, copying their routine by imitating them more or less consciously outside the explicit intervention of the coach. [Wacquant, 2004:117]

Drawing upon Wacquant’s perceptions, within the in-situ interactions at Hope, the body becomes an external structure (ESis) from which participants must acquire specific dispositions to progress from the course. An outcome of this is that within Hope College, the exchange of Physical Capital of the participants body to social and cultural capital (the qualification) is strongly framed, requiring the participants to have general dispositions which have very specific physical capital. Accordingly, for some participants the in-situ processes of acquiring dispositions necessary for transition becomes an intensely corporeal affair; fraught with inequality of physical capital and general dispositions brought to the situation by the students. This is highlighted within the ritualistic practices of learning within the gym,

When I met up with the team it looked like Nigel had been doing some of the exercises already – it was his gym, we were on his turf. He briefly told me the reason behind going to the gym, they were going to see what it was to run as fast as Paula Radcliffe, meaning that the students (+ me and Nigel) were going to see how long we could run for at 18.6 km...

Finally, everyone went down to the weights room. This was out of the context of the original lesson but they wanted to do one rep max test. I began to wonder what they were getting out of this. This was reinforced by Lloyd who stated: “This is nota lecture it is just macho”. And this is exactly what it was. SL reinforced this comment by suggesting that the only thing we were learning about was testosterone. I began to wonder why I was still hanging around there. [Field Notes: 12/05/08]

As the extract highlights, to acquire specific dispositions the participants had to undertake a series of treadmill tests whereby they individually competed against each other. The practices that I was witness to in the gym are indicative of Yorke’s (2003) illustration that ‘Informal assessments are assessments that take place during events but which are not specifically stipulated in the curriculum design’ (p.479). Similarly, Clayton and Humberstone (2007) identify how a male dominated culture resonates with ‘values of competition for a masculine identity’ (p.519). Moreover, these framing relations in which participants attempt to master bodily practices vindicates Hunter’s (2004) observation that having the right physical capital leads to the
legitimisation of practices within the learning context. Such legitimisation is shaped by the discursive space of an individual who have the characteristics of competence, competition, comparison, display, skill and fitness all of which are symbiotic of the perfection codes generated external to these in-situ interactions. This is also highlighted through the bench press within the course,

After the grip test the students moved to the bench test to look at the one rep max test. The setting was less formal and this was kind of emphasised by Emily putting music on while Nigel was trying to explain the bench test. Each student had a go at doing the test and it seemed quite competitive to do. It felt that everyone had a lack of enthusiasm for the test and there were very few questions regarding the nature of the test etc… The lecture appeared to fizzle out a little with no one really interested. [Field Notes, 12/05/08]

This extract further highlights how participants were assessed, informally and formally on the excellence of their bodies. The practices within this learning context is reflective of Wacquant’s (2004) suggestion that the embodiment of knowledge is achieved through ‘endless physical drills repeated ad nauseam that it becomes in turn fully intelligible to the intellect’ (p.69). Consequently, the course represents explicit knowledge regarding the body and as such is a project, something to be worked on, something to be learned from. This is similar to the ideas proposed by Shilling (2008), in which embodied actions are consequential for the relations between external structures of society and the practices of agents. This again reinforces the recontextualising agent’s body as an external material resource, which strongly frames the transmission, acquisition and embodiment of conjuncturally specific practices, becoming both sign and signifier of the dominant discourses which strongly frame relations within Hope College. This requires an efficient relation to highly specific capital derived from their physical resources embodied within the general dispositions of the habitus. However, the transitional signification of these outcomes for each participant remains different, depending on whether they have the right dispositions to recognise the importance of these bodily practices. Such interactions are indicative of Brown (1999) observation that, ‘in PE and Sport, the conception of hegemonic masculinity currently centres on white European, mesomorphic, middle class, heterosexual males with dominant and competitive dispositions’ (p.143). However, while such interactions strongly frames the pedagogic transmission of knowledge around quite archetypal masculine practices, the outcome of which, as Participant Steve so elegantly puts it, ‘is not about learning, it is about testosterone’. In doing so, the students are learning about a sport that is configured around dominant masculine practices.
The use of the body and corporeal device of both the agent and some of the participants within these transmission-acquisition relationships in Hope allude to a communication or language beyond that of the text and written discourses of the recontextualising context, something already highlighted previously within pedagogical research of other sporting fields (see Tinning, 2004). The participants within Hope are separated by their language not only vocally but a ‘language’ which is expressed through their bodies. Thus, contrary to the cartesian dualism in which the academic (mind) is separated from the non-academic (the working class body) (Archer, 2007), within the vocational qualification degree the two are connected and influence the construction of pedagogic discourses required for transition. This encapsulates Williams (2007) suggestion that ‘bodies, as themselves, are not dumb signs but have great meaning in presence with each other’ (p.461). Following from this, within Hope the body, as an external resource, becomes inextricably linked with progression and achievement. Therefore, in a different manner to other progression routes within sports education, such as the more academically framed A-Level (although this does have some practical element), the practices and strong framing of body relations represent a significant and discursive shift in legitimate forms of knowledge.

Thus, while the recontextualisation of perfection codes within the classroom creates modalities encouraging individualism and autonomy regarding the acquisition and embodiment of specific dispositions, what are the consequences for the transitional experiences of the participants? For some participants, such as Jack and Lloyd, the value of their general dispositions enables them to recognise and acquire these discourses of individualism and competition, for others in the group, acquisition became troubling. The signification of this is felt and embodied by the students, either explicitly or implicitly depending on their general dispositions (see Chapter Five, Six and Seven),

I did wonder again how the non rugby players would engage with this – Steve was doodling when this was happening. With the discussion it was clear that Johnno was in charge and he would stimulate the direction of the conversation would go. The knowledge was built upon continually during the first hour and it continually referred to the things that were written on the board. Johnno finished by telling the students that they would do a practical next lesson and that each group would be showing the other students how to do the warm up. The warm up was based on their own knowledge of warm up techniques. [Field Notes: 28/10/08]

Accordingly, within the in-situ interactions of Hope, the group gradually became divided on the mastering of pedagogic practices of the body within the RPF’s such as the gym and the subsequent embodiment of these practices into their habitus. For those participants who did not have experience of the masculinised discourses, found within Physical Education and Rugby, engagement within Hope College became distant, as illustrated by Steve’s ‘doodling’. Such
masculinities, infused within the practices of agents, dominate the embodied delivery and signification of this Foundation degree programme and represent barriers to transition into Higher Education the implications for transition into the top up year are disturbing, for this opportunity for active agency is, at times not wanted by students who cannot recognise the discourses within the course. This strong framing of relations for the participant marginalises some of the students as learners, thus creating devalued practices. Consequently, for those who cannot master or understand the specific practices of the body they come to exist, not in autonomous fields of transition but merely marginalised contexts which shapes how they acquire and recognise and embody the dispositions of the in-situ interaction. This is highlighted by Nigel who suggests that Hope College may be selling the ‘wrong dream’,

If we’re honest I think they come, particularly with the academy to play sport, the footballers come because they very much want to play football and that’s a key reason for coming which I think is a big mistake we’re making. I always hark on when we have meetings with them that that’s secondary. A lot of them see themselves and whether we’re selling the wrong kind of dream. [Nigel: Interview 1].

The comment from Nigel resonates with the concerns of other researchers within vocational education. As Nigel highlights, institutions are trying to market a transition into Higher Education, which for some, is unattainable and unrealistic. For example, Voigts (2007) comments that ‘while many non-traditional students see Higher Education as an ‘almost mythical ticket to social mobility and a good life, for some, it may be the reverse (p.96). Additionally, Nigel’s words are also reflective of the ‘magic promises’ illustrated by Huddleston and Oh (2004) and Davies and Biesta (2007). While the FDSc at Hope aims to recontextualise and emphasise initiatives and practices aimed at reducing inequality, such recontextualisation is not equal, nor are the opportunities for all the participants. The creation of equality based on mastering the body creates an equality which is for the privileged few - those who can acquire and recognise the conjuncturally specific dispositions and practices of Hope, contributing to what Lambert (2009), drawing upon the work of Ranciere (1991), refers to as a myth of progress. This is reflective of Bernstein’s (1990) suggestion that ‘vocationalism appears to offer the lower working class a legitimisation of their own pedagogic interests in a manual-based curriculum, and in so doing appears to include them as significant pedagogic subjects, yet at the same time closes off their personal and occupational possibilities’ (Bernstein, 1990, p.87). A distinct consequence of the use of lecturers who transcend both educational and professional sport fields is the nature of the relations with the participants. In a similar light to the findings of Evans and Davies (2004), Hope College’s horizontal relations with
the context of professional sport ameliorate the relationship between some of the participants and the recontextualising agents of Hope. For example, Jack was an employee of a professional sports club, while Lloyd was also a professional referee in the same sport. However, as will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven, for other students, gaining links with employers was more arbitrary. Because other kind of employer links had not been pursued, due to interests of the recontextualising agents an experience which did not convert physical and social capital into the cultural capital of the qualification is formed. Indeed, the practices, signs and symbols which have been identified within Hope have, retrospectively played a dominant role in a number of transitional outcomes achieved within the Top Up year.

4.3. The External Structures of ‘Top Up’ institutions: The Contexts of Fawlty and Ivory Universities.

As mentioned within 4.1, students who undertake the FDSc qualification at Hope have the option of progressing onto ‘Honours’ programmes (HEFCE, 2000; Hope College prospectus, 2004). Indeed encouragement of relations between FEC and HEI causes, in some instances, explicit progression pathways to be incorporated into the design of FDSc qualifications. In choosing to ‘Top Up’ qualifications, students are entered into the final year honours programmes (providing the students have acquired enough credits). In principle, the FDSc aims to provide the participant with choice in the progression route. However, in reality, the choices available to them at the end of their course at Hope were limited to three institutions. Participants who undertook the FDSc at Hope College were able to progress onto the BSc offered at Oceania University within the UPC system. However, contrary to this official progression pathway of the UPC, all of the participants opted not to choose this pathway but opted for ‘non official’ institutions: Ivory University (which has already shown to have considerable, yet implicit, influence within Hope College) and Fawlty Tower University.

While ESm agencies such as DFES, advocate the active agency of participants in choosing their own progression routes at any secondary context institution, in reality the pathways available to the participants is narrow and strongly classified between Hope College and the Secondary context institutions of Ivory University and Fawlty University due to their embodied dispositions and the ability to recognise and acquire the practices of these institutions. Both institutions offer BSc qualifications in the field of sports science and coaching and Physical Education Teacher Training Programmes.

However, this is where the similarities between both institutions stops and retrospectively, their are a number of underlying differences which shape the transitional experiences of the
participants. The strong classification of boundaries contrasts to ESm discourse which emphasise a ‘smooth progression’ (see HEFCE, 2010). Similarly, while HEFCE states that the proportion of students who move institutions is ‘relatively small’ (HEFCE, 2010, p.44), the participants of the study all had to move institutions. This created a critical distance between sets of conjunctural knowledge and normative expectations. While the detail of both institutions will be illustrated in this section, strikingly, only one of the participants in the varying institutions, Jack opted to continue to Ivory University, the remaining participants looked towards Fawlty in hope of ‘topping up’ their FDSc qualifications. This contradicts the statements advocating access and individualism promoted by agencies within ESm which suggested that progression for participants onto honours programmes is autonomous (see DfES, 2005).

The existence of being different within Fawlty can also be explained, in part, by the differences in the prestige or value of external structures of Fawlty in relation to other institutions in the South West. Within Fawlty, the Foundation Degree qualification and ‘Top Up’ programme is readily described as being their ‘bread and butter’, causing it to gain a reputation for widening participation and access. This is illustrated by Charlotte, a lecturer at Fawlty,

What’s become apparent is that with the strength and conditioning module we’ve had a lot of interest from other students from other colleges such ***** College which is down near, I think thats near **********, that area, South ***** College, North *****., so I think we’re starting to be recognised more as a community based university that offers these progression routes and have had lots more colleges signing up. Obviously Hope College is another one with the Coaching and Fitness. But I think what’s quite nice with the way we look to prescribe students to here particularly with the progression routes is that we do this individual based mapping exercise. So even if they come from say, well originally the strength and conditioning was designed for the city college students in strength and conditioning but because we’ve got a lot of students coming in from coaching and fitness and sport science type areas we actually map their modules and stuff so there is still flexibility and stuff for them to come onto our module programme. So I guess in terms of our ability to liaise with lots of colleges it is much better than just literally having one partner based college. [Charlotte: Interview 1]

Such labels and positions are also created by Fawlty offering specific, weakly classified progression pathways, which closely relate to the FDSc at colleges such as Hope. What this relationship highlights is the differences between varying institutions and the value they place upon FDSc and Top Up progression routes. For example, as identified by Percy, another university, Ivory Tower also has significant influence upon the progression pathway, despite not being a UPC
member. The significance of this for relations between institutions is illustrated by Percy, a lecturer at Fawlty,

> I got the vibe from being here that Ivory was quite an old university with its reputation to protect and did not particularly want to play the widening participation game so their affiliation with us was ‘Well they do that, they do that at Fawlty’ but part of the issue for us was that we’ve set up FD initially they weren’t interested in validating them so Oceania University has cornered the market. [Percy: Interview 1]

As Percy’s insight reveals, the validation and creation of Foundation Degrees within the institutions and agencies is fraught with tensions which are an outcome of political and economic tensions beyond the progression pathway, situated at the abstract level of ontology (see Chapter Two). As the extracts reveal, such underlying tensions causes the classification principle between Vocational UPC institutions and other Higher Education institutions to be strongly classified. Consequently, the practices and discourses which are created by institutions begin to reflect some of their own agendas, attracting and retaining students for their own institutions, enabling some institutions within the UPC to ‘corner the market’. As highlighted by Percy’s, there is a fear within some institutions of being labelled as widening participation institutions and this may hinder their development and recognition as courses within their own right. While not quite as bad as the ‘educational ghettos’ alarmingly identified by Waller (2006), the course at best produces a number of outcomes which carry low status and value compared with other courses available to the students. Subsequently such ‘choices’ pose a number of questions regarding the structural relations within transition and why the participants were choosing these particular institutions which contradicted many of the discourses of Hope and ESm agencies such as HEFCE and QAA. Such questions can be partly addressed by highlighting and outlining the structures and interactions that I observed and have been part of.

4.3.1. Fawlty Tower University

Fawlty Tower University, is what may be described as a ‘new university’ born out of the binary divides of the early 1990’s (see Archer, 2001). Before establishing itself as a University institution, it may be argued Fawlty fulfilled many of the roles Hope College does within the current UPC system - being a satellite institution, having its courses validated and moderated by Ivory University. This is highlighted within the module outline of Fawlty Tower University,

> This programme will provide an honours level experience for students progressing from Strength Conditioning and Coaching related Foundation Degrees...The programme will offer the opportunity to consolidate and build on the student’s previous experience by providing a
modular programme that extends and develops the student and provides an opportunity to research an area of special interest...This is a science-based vocationally oriented programme including detailed study in selected areas of both the biological and social sciences. These subject areas include physiology, anatomy, kinesiology, biomechanics, psychology, strength and conditioning, exercise prescription, coaching and leadership. Accompanying laboratory and practical components assist in the delivery, understanding and application of these areas...The BSc (Hons) SCC programme will enable students to study the theoretical basis of coaching and fitness, but a salient feature of the programme, as previously indicated, will focus on preparing graduates for employment.

Therefore the programme will seek to contextualise the curriculum by embedding vocationally relevant material in appropriate modules. Some example activities at honours level include specialist practical techniques for strength and conditioning of able bodied and disabled clients/athletes. This module will be delivered by a member of the Sport and Health Sciences subject group who is fully qualified in strength and conditioning. [Fawlty Tower Programme Specification, accessed 21/05/09].

This represents a change in the pace of the transmission and acquisition of knowledge, with the experience of HE being constricted to little more than ten months, contrasting to those students who undertake the same qualification over a period of three years. However, again the institution of Fawlty resonates with the discourses of progression and inclusion, produced within ESm agencies. For example, the course at Fawlty explicitly relates the practices of the course to the context of employment. However, the empowerment and autonomy awarded to post-1992 institutions in being granted its own Degree Awarding powers and being recognised as a University institution in its own right has enabled it to offer progression routes for a number of different Foundation Degree programmes which exist within the UPC system. Contrasting to other institutions, and initially implicit to the participants, Fawlty Tower also had parallel progression routes for its own FDA programme. This alters the nature of transmission as practices and resources within Fawlty Tower are delivered by some agents who are explicitly aware of the needs and skills required on FD programmes. Accordingly, through engaging and recognising the value of Foundation Degree Courses and the level of funding such courses bring to an emerging university institution for students at Hope, Fawlty Tower University has established itself as a valued alternative to the official UPC pathway at Oceania university (see 4.1). Consequently, given the emphasis place upon Foundation Degree qualifications, a number of the participants were attracted to study on the BSc in Strength and Conditioning at Fawlty. This is highlighted by Lucy,

Most of the ones that we had graduate the last time went on to do their degree top up at *******. We can create links with any other university if appropriate so if we wanted to go onto the third year and
we just map to what they’ve already learnt to what they need to have learnt for that degree and we kind of look at the content and everything and I help develop a link with Fawlty Tower onto the BSc coaching and fitness education which was more directly linked to what they had done rather than health and fitness so we had one go to ******** to do the health and fitness and vast majority went on to do the coaching, fitness and education because it was more what they wanted, the coaching was what they wanted as opposed to the fitness. [Lucy: Interview 1].

As Lucy identifies, in mapping the course content, the relationship between Hope and Fawlty begins to become weakly classified. Such classifications were surprising given the geographical location of Fawlty and Hope and the identified barriers of travel for the participants who chose to go there.

Lucy highlights the considerable overlap in the external resources on both courses alongside the rules of distribution and acquisition (in the form of assessment). For example, the type of modules at both institutions are similar, with both placing emphasis upon Physiological modules and dissertation modules. Alongside this, within Fawlty, the participants had to engage in a lot of independent learning which is suggestive of the existence of perfection codes that frame relations. This is highlighted by one of the module outlines of the course at Fawlty,

The module provides individual tutorial guidance and mentoring for each student. Each student will work on an individual programme of study which is negotiated between student and dissertation supervisor. Research methods, data collection and analysis, reference and bibliography maintenance and time management skills will be considered on an individual basis......This module will be of value to all students in their Final year as they embark upon their search for jobs. [Fawlty Tower Module Outline: 2009]

As the extract highlights, modules at Fawlty reflect and reproduce discourses concerning individuality and competency modalities which are evident within the degree benchmarks (see QAA, 2004). Thus, in terms of external resources, both Fawlty and Hope exhibit similar resources which the participants have to acquire to gain the qualification. This reinforces Saunders (1995) suggestion that, ‘it may well be that vocational degree courses linked to HE will retain a broader knowledge component even though the logic of a competence based approach, suggests it is not needed’ (p.212). More significantly, the pedagogic practices within the course at Fawlty are illustrative of specialised competency pedagogic practices (see Bernstein, 1995). For example, as highlighted by the module outline for the course, within Fawlty, students have more autonomy in what they are learning and the time and space of this acquisition of knowledge and conjuncturally specific dispositions. Again this is illustrated within the module outlines given to the participants during their time at Fawlty,
The FD’s that I have seen offered elsewhere, they were very much a lot of work placement based hours, so the contact they had was very quite minimal in comparison to something they offered at City college and the sort of Further Education College there. But I actually got to meet a lot of the students to see their sort of views of both of these different colleges and the placements one they actually had very strong links with employers and they actually appreciated that more vocational side to their degree and yet they still came to HE for a couple of modules on their FD. [Charlotte: Interview 1]

However, despite the similarities in course content with the course at Hope, there remains some significant differences between the framing relations within each institution. This is illustrated within the relations between recontextualising agents and the participants, something highlighted within interviews conducted with Fawlty Tower lecturer Charlotte,

To be honest the main difference I have noticed with the FD’s is the, not the hand holding as such, but the support that they seem to need in terms of, and possibly what they actually expect I think in terms of, you know we’re quite keen to support students and we’re happy to look through work but some of these students will literally put together a paragraph and will want it checked and a hand full of them, they’re quite, you know they’re almost up here everyday in terms of having their work checked and I think again in terms of what they expect, in terms of, here we encourage students to arrange appointments and that did not seem to be the case and they would turn up expecting to be seen straight away. [Charlotte: Interview 1]

As Charlotte illustrates highlights, the relationships with agents and the context of acquisition, for time and spacing of modules is, from a recontextualising agents perspective, stronger to those found within the first two years of Foundation Degree programmes. At the same time participants lack the conjuncturally specific dispositions normative at Fawlty Tower for writing and the analytical skills required on a BSc qualification. As Charlotte highlights, while staff are explicitly aware of the need to support participants from UPC colleges, students struggle to recognise strongly framed relations between student and teacher within Fawlty,

The problem is that they then start to bother absolutely everyone, you know if they can’t find one lecturer then they’re next door to the next lecturer and it is not a case of, they’re very much like a case of ‘where’s *******?’ and you know ‘I need to come back and see her’ and ‘when is she going to be back?’ you know you’re sort of monitored almost. The disadvantages it is very hard, I think they sometimes merge the boundaries between what’s respectful and what is appropriate in terms of their behaviour. You need to say to them, ‘it is 24 hours’ we need at least that much notice it is not just a case of you knocking on the door and some of them did not knock on a door and walk straight into a meeting. So they could wander in right now and they would not mind so much……I’ve noticed they’ve taken that option up more and I think probably for them, they’re coming into a bigger institution and
As Charlotte illustrates, students from UPC institutions such as Hope, come to expect the weaker framing of relations that they have previously experienced. Thus, the value of the participants’ embodied dispositions has shifted, where at Hope, their physical capital was valued within the pedagogic context. Consequently, as Charlotte suggests, they begin to merge the boundaries, attempting to weaken framing relations. The outcome of this is reflected Charlotte’s thoughts. What emerges for transitional students is an increase in the critical distance between the general dispositional knowledge, acquired in college institutions and the conjunctural knowledge of staff at Fawlty Tower University. This critical distance and the inability to recognise the normative expectations and established power capacities of Fawlty, leads to pressure placed upon participants to find their own transitional experiences. However, given the strength and nature of framing relations within UPC colleges and the emphasis placed on competency practices within HEI institutions, such relations, to some extent, are to be expected.

The competency based approach, realised through strong framing relations within Fawlty, places increased pressure on the student to draw upon their own general dispositions in understanding and acquiring practices necessary to pass the course. This accentuates the differences between the participants in terms of the general dispositions and ability to convert physical capital into cultural and social capital, leading to differing transitional experiences between the participants to emerge. Those participants unable to recognise and acquire conjuncturally specific dispositions of Fawlty Tower University develops an identity based on being different and isolated within the context,

Our group was no different to the other one’s and did not really stand out as being different, although contrastingly, nobody came and spoke to us. Unlike the rest of the groups that readily interacted it felt as if someone had put a bubble around us. There were a couple of times when people did come and approach the group. One time, one of Hannah’s netball friends came over to the group. She sat behind Hannah on the edge of the conversation. She came to ask about the netball match tonight ‘What do we have to wear tonight Hannah?’ politely asked the girl. Hannah gave an abrupt answer and then continued with her conversation she was having with the rest of the group. Nobody else spoke to her and I did not have the courage or conviction to ask her name. She repeatedly asked questions to which she got short answers. She did not last long and disappeared shortly after, her leaving going barely noticed by the rest of the group. [Field Notes, 1/12/08]
As the extract highlights, the participants from Hope College began to isolate themselves from embedded student agents within Fawlty University. Such purposeful isolation reinforces Sparkes and Hodkinson’s (1997) suggestion that ‘a diverse group of individuals are positioned as a discrete entity, seemingly with specific codes of behaviour and ways relating [of] to the outside world’ (p.35). Furthermore, the extract also suggests that participants developed boundaries using corporeal practices discretely to remain diverse to the rest of the university, despite the attempts of those established at Fawlty to interact with them. This is also highlighted when the students are at the library,

We all went to the library to bash out this assignment that was due in on the Friday. LP was starting to stress out about it, ‘Not leaving until I have done the entire first section Dave, hope you understand’. This meant that none of us was leaving until he had done it. We went to the library together and all went to the 2nd floor in the corner – this was interesting as there were no other students on the floor and all of the students decided to sit together in the cubicles provided. [Field Notes: 8/12/08]

The extract is testament to the active agency shown by the students in making themselves different and diverse. We must question where this active agency arises from? Yet, following Stones (2005), while it is in part a consequence of their internal dispositions (as will be discussed later), it is also the way external structures are recognised by participants entering the context. This in turn also influences the signification of their interactions, thus shaping particular experiences for other agents. This is highlighted by the groups unwillingness to engage with the students from Fawlty and indeed other UPC colleges,

We were joined at lunchtime by two other FE students Alex and Steve who had come from ***** College. These students were a little bit older than the others in the group. Again the group kept its solidarity an inner ring with those students from Hope sitting at the table with Alex and Steve on the edge of the group. The conversation was mainly generated by Alex who was close to the group than Steve but, like the netballer beforehand, they got a series of short answers which kept the distance between the established group and the new comers. [Field Notes, 1/11/08]

The defensive nature of the group at Fawlty, and its unwillingness to engage with students who were not from Hope is reflective of Naidoo’s (2004) comment that ‘agents and Institutions individually or collectively implement strategies in order to improve or defend their positions in relation to other occupants’ (p.459). This creates an almost defensive identity, similar in its construction to the defensive self identified elsewhere in educational research (see Casey, 1996). Moreover, the defensive and embodiment of the defensive self begins to separate and distinguish
the Hope College participants. For example, it became apparent that the group had little contact with participant Emily, one of the members of the FDS group from Hope and became dwindled as she integrated herself into the practices of Fawlty.

The critical distance which the participants created between themselves and other agents represents a detachment from the rules which govern transmission of legitimised practices and discourses. This, in part, may be due to the differences between the participants’ internalised rules (CD) and the those of other agents within the context (CD). However, within Fawlty, the rules governing transmission of legitimised practices and discourses of such masculinities is different to that of Hope. Whereas masculinity and identity within Hope was reinforced and legitimised by the conjuncturally specific practices of the agents of the college, at Fawlty, masculinity is framed through student ‘jock’ practices rather than any formal type of assessments. This is illustrated by interactions in the canteen at Fawlty,

It was only us left in the hall apart from some lads trying to see who could ‘bolt’ the most water. Peter and Charlie couldn’t have been more different to these group of students in both appearance and attitude. The lads were all in sports kit and were quite loud. A performance if ever I saw one. [Field Notes: 1/12/08]

The idea of ‘bolting’ to reaffirm significance and establish identity within a sporting institution is not isolated to one type of Higher Education institution. Having experienced these myself, I was fully aware of the nature and signification of such practices. Moreover, being someone who, like the participants, did not recognise the nature of these practices I was also aware of the critical distance between how not having legitimate forms of physical or social capital at Fawlty contributes to this sense of isolation and feeling of the other. Moreover, while these informal practices and rules of transmission are similar to those found elsewhere within research (see Sparkes et al., 2008) the implication of this is that we, as researchers may have underplayed the significance of masculinity and its influence upon not only social encounters within Further and Higher Education, but on the formal acquisition and transmission of knowledge.

4.3.2. Transition into Ivory University.

Despite Ivory University not being an official partner of the UPC system and the differences which exist, its proximity to Hope and the Cultural and Social Capital of its discourses make it very influential in shaping the transitional experiences and mechanics of students from Hope. Indeed, the name Ivory and the way the participants mention it, convey this mythicism surrounding the University, something which I feel is reinforced within the practices and perceptions of the teaching
staff at Hope, some of whom were past and current Ivory students. As this illustrates, the influence of Ivory is paramount in shaping transition, bringing in a number of signs and symbols for transition. Yet beyond this, the relationship between Hope and Ivory is one in development, with no official links in place,

Um, we’ve got a link, a link that I am looking sort of reviewing with ITU because it was set up before I was in post which I believe was set up to go into the exercise studies, sport and exercise studies, I believe it was a 2nd year progression to go onto that and we need to look at how we can develop that further, its something that we need to, its right on our doorstep and we utilise the university in terms of, we got a link in terms of their facilities and obviously expertise from teaching staff and research technicians and whatever. So its something we know we want to review a little bit more. Obviously the title of the degree doesn’t really match with our own which is possibly why there hasn’t been much progression at the moment because we are doing coaching and fitness and to go into something that sounds much more science based might be something that is either misleading or frightening the students. So that is something I want to look into. [Lucy: Interview 1]

Following from the perceptions of Lucy, while no official relationship exists, Ivory University transmits and reproduces a number of what Deer (2003) refers to as substitutive strategies which reflect its own practices, values and ideologies. This frames the mythicism illustrated by the participants, strengthening its walls through weak classification of vertical discourses and making it impervious to the Foundation Degree and UPC system’s competency strategies. Accordingly, the signification of the FDSc course and its role within progression into institutions such as Ivory will depend on the determination of those within Higher Education to confront and address its cherished practices and traditions.

While the majority of the participants chose to enter Fawlty Tower University, one of the participants, Jack, gained entry into another institution, Ivory University. Although the experiences of Jack will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five, it is important to highlight ESiS structures of Ivory and how these are transmitted and acquired by agents. This is illustrated through Ivory University’s adoption of performance practices within its BSc programme.
As Table 4.1. highlights, the practices and discourses of the BSc at Ivory follow more traditional performance pedagogic practices, similar to those found within A-level and other academic orientated qualifications which have long been the dominant mode of transition into Higher Education (Fitz et al., 2006). The modules which shape the BSc at Ivory, share more traits with other sporting educational fields identified by Fitz et al. (2006) in which the transmission of knowledge is firmly based on ‘singulairs of knowledge structures with unique names, discrete discourses with their own practices and texts and rules of entry’ (p.7). As someone who is extremely familiar with the system at Ivory, I have been witness to the existence of such performance practices. Thus, relatively speaking, such differences between the qualifications of Hope and Ivory create strong classification relations between FEC and HEI institutions.

The differences in external resources between Ivory and Fawly reflect deep and embedded perceptions of the role Foundation Degrees play within progression and access to Higher Education reinforcing class position and the opportunity to pursue academic achievement and progression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Characteristic</th>
<th>Example Ivory</th>
<th>Example Fawly</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Established Dominant Model</td>
<td>BSc. Programme</td>
<td>Progression Pathway for FDSc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialisation</td>
<td>Individual modules within physiology, psychology</td>
<td>The separation of Foundation Degree (CAFE) students from level 3 Fawlty sports students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Marked Boundaries of Time and Space</td>
<td>Strong Classification between courses</td>
<td>Relationship between Agent and Participant</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Identity as FDSc students</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time and Distance of Fawly (Travelling Time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Strong and Explicit</td>
<td>Use of examination at end of each module</td>
<td>Students had to complete bridging module</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Positional Control</td>
<td>Separated year groups; Jack having to join at level 2 (finished Hope at level 2)</td>
<td>Students separated within dissertation and leadership skills module</td>
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</table>
While many of these differences are structural in terms of their underlying rules of communication, there are also some more ideological differences, originally formed at ESm but reinforced and recontextualised by the agents of Ivory. This was apparent within my interactions at Ivory,

The others looked interested and at times surprised, the surprise kind of indicated to me how little was known of the Foundation Degree Course. Ronald was the main one to ask questions and it kind of made up for Malcolms’ apathetic approach to the whole thing. Lucy continued to put her point across well, emphasising the fact that the students had already been using some of the facilities. She then was asked by ** what she thought the barriers were to entry onto the BSc – her responses were pretty standard, ‘it is a time issue’ which in part it is, but then I thought this response overlooked some of the issues such as why does it take two years to complete a Foundation Degree? So this changed the issue of the meeting – how could they be put onto a third year course? Should they? It was all agreed that it was only FAIR that they should be allowed onto the third year. I think this is what Lucy wanted to hear and in a way I felt they were ‘giving’ her what she wanted, like she wanted a bike for her birthday so they gave her a bike but it was the wrong sort of bike. So it was agreed that this would be the best decision but for some reason it doesn’t sit well with me. I did not know why, it seems all a bit false. [Field Notes: 13/02/08]

The extract illustrates moments within one of the meetings between agents from ITU and Lucy from Hope. As this meeting highlights, within Ivory University department of sport there remains perceptions from key gatekeeper agents which marginalise the participants of Hope as ‘the other’ and less academically able. Moreover, the unequal access into the secondary context is an outcome of the weak classifications that exist vertically within the UPC programme, a classification explicitly developed to protect the interests of Ivory, to empower them within wider metric discourses and competitive audit cultures that have been recognised elsewhere (see Archer, 2001; Reay et al., 2003; Ball et al., 2000; Sparkes, 2007). Sadly, within Ivory it is evident there is limited support for such progression routes, consequently, influencing the nature of transition for the participants. In some respects, given the funding awarded for students who remain on courses, the need to maintain and reinforce strong classified relations is unsurprising. Ronald makes it quite clear, students wishing to enter Ivory University have to enrol onto the 2nd year of the programme, completing another two years. Accordingly, given these difference in relations, practices and rules between Hope and Ivory, it is of little surprise that the participants see the transition into this secondary context, as beyond them and ‘dream like’.

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4.4. Reflections & Possibilities.

This chapter has illustrated the role contextual mechanics play in structuring the transitional experiences of the participants of this study. Briefly highlighted ESm requires further exploration into relations and practices at this level and the signification of these upon ontic-level transitional experiences. These relationships between each of these contexts are indicative of research elsewhere (see Aldous & Brown, 2010) which highlight that while each context can be thought of independently, in the sense that they have their own internal rules, they are also linked, with the practices and values influencing those in other contexts. The transitional pathway generated by UPC, with its fuzzy classifications and blurred edges encourages aspirations which themselves are blurry and confusing (see Davies & Biesta, 2007).

The institutions and agencies that are responsible for the creation, distribution and reproduction of the Foundation Degree Qualification have enabled agents to find a progression route into Higher Education. The existence and over investment into Perfection codes by some agencies creates practices which imply that the participants must have a correct and recognised set of conjuncturally specific dispositions to make the choices of transition, to be able to recognise, acquire, and embody the correct valued dispositions of the institutions. While this is not surprising, given the emerging influence of such codes within other sports educational fields (see Evans & Davies, 2004), what is alarming is the classification and framing relations generated by these codes; accentuated by a Pedagogic Device whose control is being contested by a number of agencies. Nevertheless, such autonomy has caused an increase in market-orientated visible pedagogies which are creating apparent independence and competition between educational institutions, at the same time these are increasingly tied directly to state regulation through devices of symbolic control (Bernstein, 2000; Fitz et al., 2006). For example, as identified by agents within the UPC institutions, practices and recruitment of agents onto the course are tied to economic metrics generated by agencies such as HEFCE. Moreover, while empowering some, the transitional pathways from Hope College perpetuates and recontextualises the existence of perfection codes, creating transitional and pedagogic modalities reflecting competitiveness and individualism.

Interestingly, what has emerged are a series of contradictory statements made at the meso-level (ESm) (see p.20, DfES, 2003) which emphasise the weakening of classificatory principles between agencies and agents within and between FEC and HEI institutions. These differences are reinforced and recontextualised within the rules which govern the production, communication and reproduction of practices within the UPC system. The differences are eloquently summarised by Moore and Young (2001) who note,
In the most successful institutions, students are encouraged to take 4 or even 5 subjects at least in the 1st year of their 16+ studies and degree programmes are being enhanced in leading universities. In contrast, students in less privileged institutions tend to face the new forms of generic aid and some would say ‘vacuous’ vocationalism such as key skills. [Moore & Young, 2001: 448]

The evidence highlighted from the institutions of the study is supportive of the findings by Moore and Young. While the positives of autonomy are reinforced by agencies at a meso-level, such classification relations have a number of consequences regarding the delivery and recontextualisation of the practices within the FDSc. The existence of strong classified relations between the transitional contexts of the FDSc and BSc programmes have important bearing on how FDSc’s are valued within Ivory. For example, as highlighted by the agents of Ivory University, due to the strong classification of relations, there is little understanding of practices within FDSc. The apparent need to isolate and not communicate, for various agendas is only having a detrimental effect on the transition pathways for students and the framing relations that play such a significant role. For some institutions such as Ivory Tower University College, the need to compete within the metricity and performance modalities that govern their agendas is preventing them in supporting these kinds of students onto the courses. As Brotherstone (2008) highlights, the dangers of these strongly classified relations create,

A two-tier system with, on the one hand, an elite aiming exclusively for prestige in the international research ‘market’ and on the other, an under-resourced sector focusing on social inclusivity’ [Brotherstone, 2008: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7435641.stm]

Although, the increase in market-orientated pedagogies has enabled the working classes to experience university and undertake other forms of learning, all of these however, maintain rather than transform a symbolic hierarchy within society. This hierarchy helps to retain the old class inequalities. As such, the ideological base of the market-orientated visible pedagogy is more complex and in some ways, more sinister (Bernstein, 2006). Therefore, while the courses provide and represent a recontextualisation of knowledge and a wider range of choice in how pedagogic knowledge is framed and communicated, it must be considered whether such changes are merely replicating old underlying class inequalities but presenting them as achievable dreams, filled with possibility and opportunity. While it has been highlighted that the mechanisms such as codes may be in a state of transformation (see Cookson & Persell, 1995) any change requires ‘changing the social positioning of acquisition from isolated, privatised, competitive student relationships to communal, collective, non competition relations’ (Bernstein, 1995, p.11). Only then can the individuals begin to place their own realisation rules. However, such space is unlikely to be
available for the working classes (Bernstein, 2006). Any change in the framing and classification principle will lead to changes in the nature of codes and code modality (Bernstein, 1990). While in the age of market-orientated pedagogies the hope of change remains scarce, such hope is necessary if we are to address their continuing influence upon the individual experiences and lives of working class students. Nevertheless, it remains, always lurking (implicitly), shaping the transition of the participants. Drawing upon the perspective of Avis (2009) ‘FE mirrors wider society, deriving as much from middle class failure as working class disadvantage’ (p.659). Given the critical distance re-emerging between institutions, the practices of agents within both FE and HE becomes increasingly significant to the transitional experiences of participants. The structural relations between contexts and their influence on the practices and beliefs of agents, begin to shape a disparity between the transitional experiences of middle class and working class students, something which is then reinforced within their understanding and practices of the body. Thus, both Nigel and Johnno, given their links with Physical Education and Professional Sport, are reflective of what Deer (2003) calls the ‘intellectual entrepreneur/academic businessman’ (p.199). While empowering some participants, particularly those from professional sporting backgrounds, the emphasis placed on masculine dispositions creates a situation in which participants upon the FDSd are controlled, quite strategically, through the practices of their bodies within the pedagogic context.

In addition, an outcome of these classification and framing relations between Hope, Fawlty, Oceania and Ivory is the emergence of what may be illustrated as transitional significations. Whilst this chapter reinforces the acknowledgement of the barriers facing working class students identified in research elsewhere (for example see Lynch & O’Riordan, 1998) it is suggested that while restraining, these barriers are also transformative, enabling opportunity for some, empowering them within the recontextualising and secondary contexts. For example, the strong classification between Hope, Fawlty and Ivory creates the sense of the other, depending on their ability to acquire, evaluate and embody the valued conjecturally specific dispositions of the context. Indeed the very word ‘vocational’ within Hope, Ivory and Fawlty creates some very powerful signs and symbols for the participants. The body practices and strongly framed relations between body and academic qualifications almost come to symbolise ‘difference’ and ‘lesser’ for them, shaping a negative perception of the FDSc and their position academically and within society. However, the level to which this active agency is creative and inventive is limited by its relation to the field in which it is created and expressed. This myriad of external resources, shaped and carried by perfection codes, create, in part, transitional significations which may be described as being Empowered, Fragmented or Failed. Contrastingly, while the majority of significations are tainted with frustrations and
alienation, for some, their dispositions, created external to the FDSc-BSc progression pathway enable the participants to become *empowered*, allowing them to recognise and acquire the conjuncturally specific dispositions of the secondary contexts. While the chapter has illustrated how the UPC progression pathway is structured and the relations which contribute to this structuring, this does not convey transitional experience in its entirety. Accordingly, my analytical lens turns towards these differing transitional experiences of the participants. These significations will now be explained in more detail in the following chapters.
Chapter 5 - The Empowered Transitional Experience

5.1 An introduction to Empowered Agents.

Jack.

Jack was the first of his family to enter Higher Education. His father had been a local farmer but had always had a ‘keen interest and love for rugby’ which, with the emergence of professionalism, had evolved into a source of employment. Indeed, such changes to the external structures within the sport of rugby, as partially alluded to in Chapter Four, are the beginning of Jack’s transitional experience between FEI and HEI. Through our initial conversations, the centrality of professional rugby discourses to Jack’s academic and social identities became apparent,

I joined ******** rugby club at eight and I had a real passion for it. My cousins have had huge success like captaining Leeds and stuff and I went down to Tonnabridge and I represent my county at U15’s and captained at U16’s, U17’s and U18’s and played at 20’s and seniors and stuff. So I did all that went and went to Tonnabridge - they’re like one of the best sporting schools in England at the moment for like a state school. With them I went to France, Ireland, twice all over England, Japan twice, playing rugby for Tonnabridge and represented the South West of England. I was part of the South West academy which is like big. [Jack: Interview 1]

The extract above illustrates the influence discourses found within professional rugby have played in structuring the acquisition of educational discourses and practices Jack experienced within secondary education. Through his own words, Jack displays the life and dream of a professional rugby career, which, while a potential reality for him, is a dream many of his peers can only aspire to. While initially coincidental in their collision, the dream and ambition to enter the context of professional sport leads Jack to many of the conjuncturally specific academic dispositions necessary to enter the context of Higher Education. Such ‘collisions’ allow Jack to acquire conjuncturally specific knowledge such as A-level qualifications while exposing him to the social practices of a middle class grammar school education and the restricted language associated within this strongly classified educational context. This is illustrated by Jack describing his experience of secondary education at Tonnabridge College (pseudonym),

Tonnabridge are like in the top 1% in the country with outstanding everything: sciences outstanding, sports outstanding... So they wanted me to do five A-levels when I went there so I had to do Chemistry, Biology, Psychology, PE and then they could make you do General Studies. I was like not very bothered about it and half the rugby kids get generalised into BTEC like National Diploma in Sport so there was only a few rugby players who did A-Levels. I did my A-levels stuff and did not do too well in my first year mainly because I was
like in Japan for two weeks like this side of the year with exams and revision. It was hard, I just wanted to play rugby so did rugby stuff. In the 2nd year it got a bit serious and and [I had to] pass PE. I did not pass biology, did not pass chemistry but I passed psychology and passed general studies so I had to do PE and Psychology as A-Levels and General Studies as an A-level as well. So I had to do that but it was still full on rugby all the time. [Jack: Interview 1]

The extract highlights how Jack had to acquire conjunctural knowledge embedded within the A-Level qualification alongside those practices of rugby, which, at this particular college, introduces the players to semi-professional practices, such as touring and rigorous training programmes. Furthermore, the extract also reveals how investment into the practices of professional sport lead him to struggle with academic life at Tonnabridge. Such failure suggests possible reasons for Jack’s decision to pursue the Foundation Degree qualification at Hope College,

Well I know, I had a massive reality check - cos I am part of the ******** Academy and stuff we had like an agents meeting and an agents talk and only 2% of all rugby players in England that are professionals will make enough money to last them for the rest of their lives and everyone else is going to have to work or do something else and if I did not pass my A-levels and stuff I would not be able to have like a reasonably based back up plan to do what I wanted to do so you know, teaching is ideal cos I have done so much coaching with tag rugby in primary schools and tournaments and secondary schools I’ve done and it fits quite well in. [Jack: Interview 1]

The extract further illustrates the weak horizontal classifications between the field of professional rugby union and Higher Education that exist within Jack’s perceptions of education. It became evident from an early stage the influence of the academy on shaping Jack’s entrance onto the Foundation Degree. Furthermore, despite Jack failing to do well on his A-levels, his physical capital generated through rugby practices enabled him to derive a cultural capital that is still valued within Higher Education institutions such as Ivory Tower. The choice of Foundation Degree at Hope resonates with Greenbank’s (2010) suggestion that students who experience failure within the middle class Higher Education system often regard the FD as ‘an opportunity to make amends for past failures and mistakes’ (p.57),

After doing my A-levels at Tonnabridge I was going straight into professional rugby so as soon as I’d finished it was already overlapping preseason training. I did not want a full time university course like here [Ivory Tower] and did not want to do like straight jump into sports sciences and be like ‘ah BUSA rugby’ and [at the sametime have] rugby at **** so I wanted to have something a bit more spaced out so I could be able to do the course quite well and do my rugby like even better and make it a bit more of a full commitment? You know it is only like a two day course and last year it was only a three day like, two and a half day so it is like I can do all the rugby and stuff and you know be able to progress quite well. But now saying that I’ll probably have to top up here [Ivory Tower] and cos of it is better
links now, like it is well integrated with ***** and the other coaches so I’ll probably be able to do it quite well here. [Jack: Interview 1]

Moreover, as the extract highlights, Jack converses in a language, structured around discourses concerning his body and a willingness ‘just to play rugby’. This alternative embodiment of the conjuncturally specific knowledge required for Higher Education transition are reflective of Bergerson’s (2007) suggestion that, ‘In a wealthy, college educational family, potential students are exposed to extensive Higher Education options. They and their families and their peers speak the language of Higher Education, understand how admissions processes work, and are aware of scholarships and financial aid options’ (p.112). It is the external resources of this field that Jack continually draws upon in his transition into Higher Education and the pursuit of a career in professional rugby,

Plans at the moment would probably be to top the course up, well turn it into a basic honours degree or whatever here, or I can put it on hold and try and play full time rugby for like the first team and stuff otherwise no fixed plans as of yet I’ve still got to like have information through from here about like course details and stuff so…I need to talk about contract things as well like, what they’re going to do with my contract as well. I am on 4,000 pounds a year cos I am seen as a young athlete that has a lot of potential for playing first team rugby but hasn’t played any first team rugby yet so it is not a very good wage at all for what I am doing at the moment, so hopefully I’ll get more money for playing next season an stuff and I’ll be kept in like a bit. I know that the other young athletes and stuff that have played that have had a run of games and stuff are on like substantially like three or four times as what I am on. [Jack: Interview 1].

Thus, as the extract illustrates, the context of professional rugby constructs a very specific transitional pathway for Jack, one in which the physical capital of Jack’s practices enable him to make specific choices regarding Higher Education. This physical capital begins to shape the early stages of his transition, enabling him to recognise and interpret many of the signs and symbols that he would encounter within Hope.

Emily.

Like Jack, exposure to valued and legitimised discourses of Higher Education within secondary education allow Emily to acquire conjunctural specific knowledge necessary for Higher Education transition. Like Jack, Emily went to an educational context external to Hope and completed A-level qualifications (psychology and PE being mentioned) recognised within literature as having cultural capital within tertiary education. In similar circumstances to Jack, Emily chose to come to Hope college based on her aspirations to continue to play sport and contrive to establish a career within the armed forces, a somewhat different (yet similar) career pathway to that of Jack’s professional sporting ambitions. During this time at school she had also developed her physical capital through
playing women’s football, although as she illustrates such acquisition of physical practices is
different to Jack’s experience,

I ended up playing for the village team where I was the only girl, no one else would play, I
think that was 6 a-side or something and then went to high school and there was no girls
football side at all and I met some other friends who played football and we were like there’s
no team we’ve got to try and make one up. And then up to here, obviously the academy.
Outside of schools and that though my mum was able to find a link with the Spartans and
then I went to ***** Colts U16’s and then I got signed for City but they folded two years
ago so we made a team called ***** Rangers. It is two below the Premiership so it is the
equivalent of men’s league two. [Emily: Interview 1]

As the extracts highlights, Emily embodies practices with very specific physical capital value.
Moreover, the external structures of ‘professional sport’ enable Emily to join Hope College on an
academy programme, thus allowing her entrance into the Further Education College,

There were people I knew who had done it before and said it was good but I came here to
open evening and it just looked just really organised and a lot of fun and they knew what
they were talking about and I was with city at the time and I was just like yeah this could
help me out. So I came here and it was great cos the 1st year [A-level] I was able to continue
with my sport. [Emily: Interview 1]

Like Jack, Emily, actively chose to enter Hope College as a means of getting into Higher
Education while at the same time being able to use her physical capital to play the sport she was
clearly passionate about. Although within challenging circumstances, Emily’s desire to play football
begins to construct her transition into Higher Education and exposes her to discourses of Further
and Higher Education. However, while Jack’s interest in professional rugby is quite explicit within
his experience, Emily’s decisions made at this time are more broad and implicit in their nature.
Thus, with Emily her decision to enter Hope College and Further Education are also shaped by the
relationship with her parents and the value they place on economic wealth and security,

That’s the other thing as well I did not want to be in debt. I just can’t stand being in debt.
Mum has always taught me how to spend half and save half as well. So every time I work I
spend that and I’ll save that and so definitely from my mum and we have always had nice
things so I want nice things as well. [Emily: Interview 2]

Similar to working families identified elsewhere in research (for example, see Reay 2001),
Emily’s decision to enter the FDSc programme is partly influenced by the acquisition of economic
capital and the avoidance of debt and dependency, but while this is an important factor, it is
sometimes over readily drawn upon by those trying to identify barriers to Higher Education.
Accordingly, Emily’s normative expectations regarding Higher Education are more explicit than those of Jack, who, as illustrated, displays a very implicit relation to the practices of Higher Education. Furthermore, where Jack was able to use the experience of recontextualising agents who were already embedded within the nexus of Higher Education and professional sport, Emily’s transitional choices appear to be more focused around family, who have no experience of Higher Education,

I am doing it because I want to get a higher pay grade in the RAF that’s the only reason. Also I would like to beat my mum, my mum hasn’t honours degree but she is clever as anything. She’s been a long light if you know what I mean and see it is weird, I would want to get an A not necessarily for myself but more for my mum, it is quite weird. [Emily: Interview 1]

As the extract highlights, Emily’s decision to go to into Higher Education is based on strong framing surrounding relationships with her family, and the need to make her mother proud. This again highlights Greenbank’s (2010) perspective that students entering FD programmes do so as a way of making amends for past failures, in this case, those of recontextualising agents external to the internal structures of the agent. Consequently, while Jack’s desire to enter HEI was implicit, Emily’s decision to continue at Hope and join the FDSc programme is more explicit,

Mainly because I did not really know what I wanted to do. I’ve always ever, I know I’ve always wanted to do activities and I can’t work behind a desk, all my summer jobs that I have had have been just been behind a desk and I cant do 9-5 behind a desk......So this gives me more time to have a bit of fun before I do anything like that and err it is great because it is coaching so if I am going into the armed forces as an officer I have got that experience of leading and telling people stuff. And I did not know, I did not think I was that ready to move out of home, I had such a nice home environment I just did not think, I was not ready, I was quite young really. I just love my home too much to leave it to be honest. [Emily: Interview 1]

As the extract illustrates, rather than elaborating upon her position, the choice of Foundation Degree is made to preserve her identity and position. Although both Jack and Emily undertook more valued qualifications in the forms of A-levels, they negate this transitional pathway in favour of a progression route in which their physical capital plays more of a significant role in acquiring and embodying the practices for transition. As these extracts highlight, while differing, the choices of Jack and Emily place a great deal of emphasis upon practices of the body and the physical capital generated from them. In many ways it is a reflection on the more instrumental relationship the working class place upon the body, which contrasts with the middle class perception of the body as a sign of distinction. Within the field of elite sport, for the working classes, the body becomes an
instrument to acquire wealth and position. It is this interaction between physical and cultural capital which begins to shape empowered transitional experience within the UPC system. However, the structures and discourses of Higher Education construe that physical capital alone will not create an empowered transition and significantly for Jack and Emily, their cultural capital created from A-level qualifications enables them to realise the rules of entry into Higher Education. Contrasting to the middle or low achievers of vocational qualifications labelled within Official Pedagogic Discourses which have been identified within Chapter Four, the experiences and history created from ESm highlight Jack and Emily’s academic identities as being greatly differentiated from the stereotyped vocational student. Furthermore, while all the participants of the group had met the weakly classified criteria to gain access onto the FDSc at Hope (see Chapter Four), the qualifications and general dispositions of Jack and Emily immediately established them as being ‘over qualified’ for the course with relation to the requirements of the FDSc and UPC system. Significantly, in choosing to undertake the FDSc as a means of entering Higher Education they had deviated from the pathway of their peers isolating themselves, and constructing a set of normative expectations which are illustrated as being empowering.

5.2. The Empowered Experience of Hope College.

Given their strong power capacities academic and corporeal dispositions formed from external structures outside the context of Hope College it was of little surprise that when I joined the group at the start of year 2 of the course, in October 2007, Jack and Emily were already showing signs of empowerment, albeit through very different practices and positions within the group. Jack and Emily are able to recognise and indeed, through their physical capital, begin to recontextualise themselves. For Jack and Emily, their ISgd, formed within secondary education contexts prior to the FDSc, enabled them to recognise a number of power capacities of relations between the agent-in-context and the participants at Hope. As such, through this recognition of the external structures in-situ (ESis) they are able to acquire and embody sets of conjunctural specific knowledge (IScs) becoming empowered within the in-situ interactions. What follows are some illustrations of how their empowered experience is created within Hope.

Within Jack’s transition it was the space and the strongly framed relations of the classroom which drew attention to his role within the group. In the small seminar rooms of Hope, Jack appeared (and was) physically bigger than the rest. Such physical capital, shaped by the external resources of professional rugby, were vividly displayed through his immaculate ‘rugby uniform’. I could tell that he was different, yet it was a different type of difference which distinguished him, not
only physically but the way he transmitted this power through his practices and language and the way he interacted with the rest of the group, addressing other members of the class and recontextualising practices and dispositions from the professional rugby context. These embodied, recontextualised general dispositions are proudly displayed by Jack as corporeal forms of difference. Such difference is also accentuated by is use of language which reproduces the dominant masculine practices embodied within his general dispositions and are used to establish his forms of empowered practice upon other members of the group,

The group was small because there were a couple of people missing this week – a right ‘Sausage Fest’ as Jack pointed out. Jack & Lloyd were clearly rugby players or in Lloyd’s case a rugby referee. This caused much conversation with Nigel to be orientated around rugby and similarly this caused Nigel to use a lot of examples from this sport – Matt Stevens (England International) being a ‘pie eater’ ‘bit chubby’ ‘not looking a typical rugby player these days’ was all trying to use somatotyping within sport. [Field Notes: 15/10/07]

As the extract from my initial interaction emphasises, Jack exuded a vocabulary which draws upon hegemonic practices created from the field of professional rugby. The term ‘Sausage Fest’ is Jack’s term, something that he has bought into the group and is empowered enough to use it within the general interactions of the classroom. Such use of language, illustrates developing power capacities, beyond his physical presence, highlights how participants with valued physical capital are able to play a prominent role in legitimising and transmitting discourses for the group.

The legitimisation of Jack’s practices are enabled through his relationship with the Recontextualising Agents, Nigel and Johnno. Because of the emphasis placed on physical capital in framing relations between sets of agents within sports qualifications (see Chapter Four) the dispositions and practices of Jack are made what Skeggs (2004) describes as being culturally essential and authenticated. This supports Haralambos and Holburn’s (2004) suggestion that ‘the closer the students lie to that of the dominant classes, the more likely the student is to succeed’ (p. 744). Accordingly, the power capacities of Jack’s corporeal device recontextualise the discourses of professional rugby, constructing conjunctural specific knowledge (IScs) within classroom activity. For example, Jack’s experiences within professional rugby were often drawn upon to recontextualise the official pedagogic knowledge being transmitted,

To stop Jack switching off Nigel would relate the information on the powerpoint back to a rugby context and on a couple of times ask Jack what kind of training he did. This was noticeable at one point when he asked Jack to bring in his own training schedule to use with the rest of the class. On other occasions Nigel would relate the information on the specific tests to someone that Jack would know from the rugby club: He emphasised that some guy
called Paddy (pseudonym) was the ‘best at what he did’ implying that he was the best at what he did. [Field Notes: 12/11/07]

As the extract implies, while Jack was initially never allowed to impose his own rules of realisation his physical capital and practices influence how IScs were transmitted to the rest of the group. As such his body practices both within the in-situ context and within professional sport acts as a cultural and social conduit, allowing other students to draw upon his practices and dispositions. This further illustrates the importance of Jack’s corporeal device in the recontextualisation and transmission of specific pedagogic practices. Such interactions where Jack’s practices and knowledge are drawn upon is reflective of Ryan’s (2007) suggestion that participants,

Often used bodily descriptors of self and or others. In some cases, own practices were used almost as a ‘yardstick’ for the practices of others, whereby the speaker was able to indicate their ‘authority’ to speak about and pass judgement on such matters. [Ryan, 2007: 252]

Accordingly, in becoming a bodily descriptor, Jack’s empowered experience within Hope is reinforced, placing specific cultural and social capital upon his physical practices. However, contrasting to the thoughts of Ryan, through his body, Jack indicates authority and empowerment without him having to speak (see Tinning, 2004). Such ‘active silences’ in which the transmission of IScs is not semiotical but corporeal, lead to a shift in the rules which govern power relations within this course at Hope and subsequently weaken the framing of relations within the classroom. Thus, a new pattern of temporarily legitimate discourses emerged, marginalising some while further empowering the interpretative schemas of Jack. Such shifts in the power capacities relations have been illustrated within other pedagogical research as ‘radical pedagogies’ (Bourne, 2004), and this is an example of another radical pedagogy in which the body becomes empowered and challenges the legitimised hierarchy of the pedagogic context. Accordingly, the normative expectations of the FDSc are shifted and elaborated upon by (and around) Jack. This is illustrated in how Jack openly considers himself as an ‘asset’ to the group,

It’s [I am] a good asset to have for the class and stuff, I can add in information about what we’re doing and stuff as a professional athlete. [Jack: Interview 1]

Jack recognises the power capacities of Hope College, constructed through interpretative schemes shaped by professional sport and his identity as a professional athlete. Thus, by drawing upon the external structures (ESm) of professional sport and embedding these within his general dispositions (ISgd, see chapter 2), the normative expectations of Hope and the FDSc course begin to be elaborated upon by Jack. This strengthens his position and opportunity to pursue academic achievement in other Higher Education institutions. Such relations, between Jack’s general
dispositions (ISgd) and the conjunctural knowledge of the FDSc (IScs) become cyclical in nature, meaning that the ability to draw upon the power capacities within a field will also allow a realisation of the normative expectations which govern the transmission of pedagogic knowledge. When this occurs Jack is able to elaborate upon his position within Hope, creating new forms of physical capital, allowing him to influence the power capacities within other pedagogic interactions.

However, at times it became apparent how fragile this empowerment was for Jack. There were times where Jack became too close to the mark and began to impede the power relations established by Nigel as lecturer on the course. However, such was the value of Jack’s physical and social capital, formed through his interpretative schemes, Jack occasionally felt empowered enough to challenge established power capacities of relations between lecturer and student. Such challenges resulted in a number of confrontations with agents at Hope,

Nigel told the students that they would be doing practical core strengths in the room. Immediately, Jack stated that he was not doing it, he had a game tonight. Nigel, clearly pissed off at this, then asked why not. Jack then said no and the mood became standoffish with Nigel wanting Jack to give a reason. ‘Aggravated Vertebrae’ was the answer given with a wry smile. You could see that Nigel did not think very much of this answer and so then publicly stated that not only he but others felt that Jack was opting in and out of stuff. Nigel, realising there were eyes watching him then backed down a little and stated if he did not want to do it that’s fine, but his mood clearly was not great and Jack refusing to participate had clearly pissed him off. [Field Notes: 5/11/07]

As this extract highlights, Jack was using his physical capital, constructed from dispositions within his ISgd to challenge existing power capacities and the authority of the recontextualising agents at Hope. Such challenges, firmly establishes Jack’s empowered identity enabling him to opt in and out of practices within the classroom.

While Jack’s empowerment was displayed through the physicality of his body and explicit forms of resistance, Emily’s empowerment is strikingly more subtle, to the point that it was unnoticed at the time of data collection. In contrast to Jack’s noticeable empowered practices, Emily’s empowerment was imperceptible within the interactions between agents, sitting at the back, speaking when spoken to, quietly and unassumingly working her way through tasks. Unlike Jack, Emily’s presence within the group was considerably removed, being very quiet and hardly ever engaging with other members of the group, or the teaching staff,

However, he would continually draw upon the experiences of the students not only of Jack and Lloyd but of the others as well. Additionally, there was more interaction between the
students and Johnno initiated by both. Emily asked a couple of questions today that surprised me as she had said very little within the other lectures [Field Notes: 07/01/08]

As the extract highlights, contrasting to Jack, Emily rarely chose to transmit her general dispositions in the same manner as Jack. This may be due to the interpretive schemes of Emily and how she perceived the value of her ISgd within Hope. Subsequently, Emily’s transition and empowerment are more subtle than Jack’s - more removed and rarely displayed within Hope College. Nevertheless, it was evident that Emily was empowered within Hope, able to recognise and embody many of the rules which governed the creation and transmission of discourses and practices. Accordingly she was able to recognise the normative expectations and positions of the course. This is evident within her opting out of some of the gym practices that were used within the FDSc programme,

All the team were there, yet only four of them did both ‘tests’. Emily had a ‘bad knee’ and Jack had been ill and was told by his club to take it easy. They both looked relieved. Before we began Nigel called them into the side room of the gym to brief the students on what he wanted them to do. [Field Notes: 12/05/08]

As the extract implies, Emily actively chooses not to participate in the course practices. However, while this would compromise the transition of other participants (see Chapter Seven) but because of her general dispositions (A-levels) acquired before the FDSc she is still able to recognise and embody the conjuncturally specific dispositions of knowledge to generate sufficient cultural capital to pass the course easily. This is highlighted by Emily towards the end of term,

I am well chuffed I got student of the year but then it is only out of seven. If it was out of the whole FD I’d be ‘fucking get in’ or if it had been out of 30 at least that would have meant something. But also which bugged me as well at the PE student ball which is basically, A-levels, everyone to do with leisure and tourism and stuff I did not go. [Emily: Interview 2].

Clearly, Emily stood out from the group as being more academically able and this was evident through her marks (she averaged 67%) and ability to recognise the normative expectations of the FDSc qualification,

That either the 3rd year is going to be hard as: literally to have one year to make your whole grade is going to have [to take] some sort of a hell of a work load or something. Also like the first year meant nothing really, that’s what I thought. Really it is like a waste of two years cos all you have is a pass or fail you did not have like a 1st, 2nd or 2:1, so it all comes down to this last six months [Emily: Interview 2]

As the extract highlights, while Jack distinguishes himself from the rest of the group through the use of a corporeal device which recontextualises the physical practices of professional rugby,
Emily’s empowered position is developed through her academic achievements and her explicit recognition of what is required by the course. Accordingly, within the classroom, it was apparent she had found her niche with the field and was comfortable with the setting, able to engage and participate within the course while displaying forms of power capacities not evident in Jack’s experiences within Hope. Such subtle displays of this form of active agency are not totally within the control of Emily. For example, while Jack’s physical capital converted into legitimised forms of social capital, Emily’s physical capital created within women’s football is not so readily exchanged. This is identified by Emily and her illustration of the kudos women’s football had in the academy,

It was pretty crap cos we had to go and train across at flowerpots across the train line while every other team was up at Ivory University cos it was the first year for it, or the second year for it. So, I think it was the first year as an academy but the year before, the year my friends had all been to was the first year. So that was quite rubbish cos it was kind of in it is first year so it was kind of disorganised in a way. [Emily, Interview 2]

As Emily highlights, women’s football is less valued at Hope and the positions which this value generates are explicitly recognised by Emily. Thus, although she is able to recognise and acquire conjuncturally specific knowledge of the FDSc programme, the extent to which her general dispositions ISgd are embedded with the IScs of Hope is not as solidified as Jack’s. Accordingly, her corporeal device cannot readily use and exchange physical capital for social capital. Thus, although empowered, for Emily the outcomes from her experiences of Hope College, are tainted with themes of frustration with the course,

Well basically the first two years of college pretty much are pointless because none of your grades go onto your third year. I’m frustrated that after your two years at college you did not even get a full on grade you just get a pass or fail, and sceptical about next year because of that because the whole 3rd year is going to determine what grade you get which means that there is going to be a hell of a lot of workload and especially if its a bit of a step up because of the whole environment you’re in is totally different. [Emily, Interview 2].

This extract highlights an outcome of frustration for Emily. Such frustrations increasingly form a critical distance from the rest of the group, both academically and socially.

Such interactions and critical distance reinforced my question as to why Emily hadn’t chosen to enter Higher Education straight away. Thus, contrasting with Jack’s corporeal empowerment, her empowered position within Hope was constructed through what may be illustrated as an investment into the academic practices of the FDSc context. Accordingly, rather than being empowered through corporeal practices, Emily is empowered through her knowledge of practice contained within the
academic discourses of the course. This is evident through some of the awards she was nominated for at the end of her first year,

At the PE student ball the word was that there was an award for student of the year as well but Lloyd got it but if I had gone they think that I would have got it. Now I get it at this stage so what’s that all about? Also when they said where’s Emily? The lecturers got full on agitated thinking I might have got it but then I get it at these Higher Education awards so how can Lloyd and I get it? Its kind of like going, ‘we did not really know so we’ll give it to both’. Now that’s shite as well, that takes the piss. It should have be one or the other [Emily: Interview 2]

As the extract highlights, Emily’s empowered transitional experience is constructed through her recognising and acquiring the discourses of the FDSc qualification. Such acquisition constructs cultural capital in the form of qualifications which enable her to choose the next stage of transition.

5.3. Transformations within empowered transitional experiences.

It was evident by the end of their time at Hope College both Emily and Jack were highlighting empowered transitions, in which they were able to recognise and acquire the conjuncturally specific dispositions of the course. Following from Barthes (2000), at this stage of transition the signification upon the practices, derived through the interaction between their internal structures and the external structures of Hope college begins to shape their next stage of transition.

Towards the end of their time at Hope College, both Emily and Jack had begun to make decisions regarding the next stage of their transition. It became apparent that both had decided to ‘Top Up’ their FDSc qualifications; something which had been evident from the beginning of data collection. Towards the end of their time at Hope, Emily and Jack’s progression goes in different directions. While Emily opts to enter the prescribed secondary context of Fawlty, Jack, through his professional rugby contacts, chooses to go to Ivory University where he obtains a scholarship. Jack’s empowered experiences within Hope College leads him to apply to Ivory Tower University. As identified in Chapter Four, Ivory is a prestigious university, and, as this extract highlights, the cultural value of entering such an institution is not lost on Jack,

I know what it is like, and the standard of the degree there [Fawlty] is not as good as it is here [Ivory]. Here would be the best option for me because it is linked with the ‘Generals’ forwards coach and he could sort me out with a scholarship and stuff. I’ve looked into the course and what I need to enter and back up plans for what I want to do afters. [Jack: Interview 2].
As the extract highlights, the choice of Ivory for Jack is again centralised through a corporeal device shaped by the discourses of professional rugby and secondary education. This corporeal device leads an explicit recognition of the physical value of his practices and the ability for these to be exchanged for cultural and social capital within ITU. Again, the signification of the external structures of professional rugby are identified by Jack who recognises how these enable him to be ‘sorted’. However, while identifying recognition of an empowered position, there remain signs of a critical distance between the internal structures of Jack and the academic external structures of ITU. For Jack, this critical distance constructs a very explicit transitional position, one which is framed around discourses of the body rather than academic achievement.

It is good...It doesn’t really bother me, I probably will have to put in a bit extra sort of working behind whatever we do and it doesn’t bother me too much, at the end of the day I am here to finish off my degree as it were and hopefully propel myself into a full time professional career playing rugby. [Jack: Interview 2]

As the extract highlights, before moving to ITU, Jack displays a position which carries with it very specific meaning and is reflective of the particular perfection codes which frame their relationships. Consequently, rather than creating barriers towards transition, his legitimised physical capital is aiding his transition towards Higher Education. Following from Fitz (2007) Jack’s transitional position reflects a situation in which, ‘knowledge is seemingly acquired for possessors of this elite code who have a natural disposition that enables expertness to be acquired and performance to be executed with relative ease’ (p.275). Following from this, having the right physical capital leads to the realisation of this ‘elite’ code causing Jack to recognise and elaborate upon the power capacities he has developed within Hope. As highlighted within Chapter Four, the market-orientated pedagogies created from discourses regarding competitiveness and performance which exist within professional rugby come to empower Jack enabling him to make the choice of Ivory. It is this recognition, framed around the discourses of professional sport rather than education which facilitates Jack’s entrance into ITU.

In contrast to Jack, when Emily came to make decisions regarding transition beyond Hope, she had fewer explicit external structures from which to construct a transition into HEI. Accordingly, despite having the cultural capital to follow Jack into an ‘elite’ HEI institution, Emily invests in a transitional pathway within the UPC system, choosing to enrol onto the course at Fawlty Tower University (FTU). This is in despite of the reservations she has about the FDSce course and the value of this within society,
That really does my nut in. The only thing I have got is a Foundation Degree where like we said before a lot of people did not really know what that is. So having just it as a pass and a fail you think they could have…. I did not know…. a degree to a first, do you know what I mean? Like put some sort of A, B or C on it or something. Because it is gutting. No offence but Pete pretty much just scraped through passing all his assignments whereas I have got low A’s or high B’s but we both got passes. Because I am really competitive I want to show I worked my ass off but all I have to show for its a pass. Which is harsh. I was like ‘shit’, I really want the distinction to set myself out like make me look better than everyone else.

[Emily: Interview 2]

As the quote highlights, in a similar manner to Jack, the general dispositions of Emily’s internal structures, particularly those competitive, meritocratic individualist aspects of sporting habitus cause her to construct a negative perception of the course and its cultural value. Such negativity illustrates an explicit awareness of her position, and the value of the Conjuncturally Specific Dispositions of the FDSc course. Indeed, like Jack, it is almost as if the physical capital of her practices is so strong that it creates normative expectations in which she believes that this is her only capital worth and that this physical capital would not be easily converted into social and cultural capital beyond the very familiar context of Hope and the UPC system. The result of this very fragile position is one in which Emily becomes unsure of the choices she has made,

I dunno, going to Fawlty, people are like ‘where’s Fawlty’ and the whole way through my education people have been like ‘what the hell is a Foundation Degree’ and ‘where the hell is Fawlty,… What is that?’. So in that respect, like I said I have really high standards I would have liked to have gone to a huge shit hot university but then I would have been scared that I did not have the ability or right to be there…. I dunno, if I went to Ivory I would be like ‘shit they’re all really brainy’ and I am like I am not really brainy I just work my ass off. I think it is for sure not believing in my ability at the proper university. [Emily: Interview 2].

As the extract from the interview reveals a very different position to the one Jack found himself in at the end of the FDSc course. Emily shows a level of remorse for not going into Higher Education, namely a proper university, straight away and choosing to opt onto the FDSc programme. Such a retrospective position and her reluctance to enter ‘shit hot universities, such as Ivory institutions, despite being ‘good enough’ are constructed within external structures outside the context of education, particularly those of home and the perceptions of her parents which are mentioned at the start of this chapter. Despite this, Emily occasionally demonstrated explicit awareness of the value of her empowered identity. As the extract illustrates, due to her interactions with external structures and subsequent general dispositions, the signification she places upon her practices is considerably different to that of Jack,
The 3rd year is going to be hard as. [You (I) have] literally one year to make your whole grade [and I am] going to have some sort of a hell of a work load or something but also like the first year meant nothing really, that’s what I thought. Really it is like a waste of two years cos all you have is a pass or fail you did not have like a 1st, 2nd or 2:1, so it is all coming down to this last six months. [Emily: Interview 2].

Accordingly, despite the influence of external structures of her family and a reluctance to enter FTU, she chooses to remain within the UPC system, where she is empowered, despite identifying the system as not being worth much and frustrating. Thus, in many respects, empowerment within Emily’s transitional experience is not one formed through the elaboration of structures, as witnessed with Jack, but a preservation of internal structures which have been recognised by Emily as being valued within a very specific educational context. Consequently, at the end of the FDSc at Hope both Emily and Jack display signs of two very different types of empowered transition, the outcomes of which became evident during their experiences of the ‘Top Up’ year.

5.4. Contrasting empowered experiences of a Top Up year.

By the time I had reacquainted myself with Jack and Emily, they had been at their respective institutions for almost a term. While this may represent a short time outside the specific time and space context of Higher Education, within the FDSc-BSc qualification this represented a significant time period, to the extent both had adopted identities which were not evident in Hope College. Both Jack and Emily come to experience empowerment in different ways in relation to the differences in the external structures of Ivory and Fawlty. They had already began to adopt specific practices both socially and academically which were far removed from the experiences of the other participants. Thus, what occurs is an evolution of their specific empowered transitions, based on the different ways they come to recognise and acquire the external structures of Ivory and Fawlty,

Initially when Jack entered Ivory University he was very relaxed about the transition. While at times he reiterated to me his disappointment and frustration of having to enter the 1st year at Ivory (see Chapter Four) he was very much content for ‘things to turn as they are supposed to’I don’t really mind how things have turned out it seems to be, supposed to be this way someway along the line so’. [Jack: Interview 3]

However, the relaxed manner to which Jack approached his entrance into ITU, indicative of his personality, did not convey the complexity of the relation between Jack’s internal structures and those external structures (ESis) specific to ITU (see Chapter Four). In contradiction to his relaxed
mannerisms, at times during the interviews at Ivory Jack began to display signs of a more defensive identity than had been apparent when we met at Hope College,

I am going to be in the mixer a bit but to be honest with I am not too bothered by that because I did GCSE’s at ****** and then did my A-levels down at Tonnabridge so spent my first month of that going through teachers going ‘oh, rugby boy so and so’. So I am not too bothered by people going ‘fuck sakes you did a fucking Foundation Degree’ I am really not, I don’t have a lot of time for people like that. If they want to be arsey about it then fine, they can do that in their own time. I’ll know some of the boys that are in their second year and I know the boys that are in the year above me and stuff so, not really bothered by peoples opinion, if they have a problem with me doing a Foundation Degree then they really need to move on. [Jack: Interview 2]

This quote is enriched with some of the beliefs and positions Jack undertakes immediately after arriving at Ivory. Such an empowered yet highly defensive position, is constructed by Jack retrospectively drawing upon positions developed within relations at Tonnabridge (pseudonym). Significantly, the ‘rugby boy’ identity given to Jack by his teachers is then recontextualised to form positions within Ivory. This is reflective of Naidoo’s (2004) findings which state how ‘Agents and institutions individually or collectively implement strategies to improve or defend their positions with relation to other occupants’ (p.459). However, developing Naidoo’s findings, it is apparent within Jack’s experiences that these strategies are not instantaneous but developed and embodied, influencing experiences beyond the temporality of their construction. In recontextualising his ISgd within Ivory, Jack, strategically positions himself within the context, enabling him to acquire more conjunctural specific knowledge. In construction of this defensive position, Jack also recontextualises within Hope valued masculinised and performance shaped practices and dispositions. In a similar light to the findings of Tinning (1998), Jack begins to display very specific discourses of masculinity, such as toughness, power, aggression and the willingness to control the power relations on his terms. Because of his status as a professional player and the highly specific physical capital this generates, Jack is able to recontextualise conjunctural specific knowledge (IScs) to position himself socially within Ivory,

Did first interview with JF today since he had moved from Fawlty to Ivory. I asked to meet him in the union, the central hub of all student activity on Ivory. When I went in, JF did not stand out from the crowd like he had done at college, the outfit of tracky bottoms, green hoody (with hood up) and trainers with water bottle in close proximity all signs of Jack adopting the standard issue of most of the PE students and Sport Scientists which are often seen within Ivory, sure indications that Jack was blending into the surroundings and the only thing making him slightly stand out was his enormous size; the body of the professional
athlete placing him explicitly at the top of the Ivory’s hierarchy – maybe without Jack realising it, although I very much doubt this. I went to approach him, his giant hands dwarfing once what I thought was an impressive physique of my own, his warm, relaxed and polite manner offering some comfort against his intimidating physique. [Field Notes 10/11/08]

As the extract highlights, upon our first encounter within Ivory, Jack had adopted many of the conjunctural knowledge that were institutionally embedded within Ivory. Moreover, such knowledge are displayed on the body, the adoption of the tracksuit, water bottle and hoody all signs of recognition of a knowledge of how to act within Ivory. While, through my own experiences of ITU, the acquisition of this specific knowledge by Jack was to be expected, the speed at which Jack had managed to transform his identity was surprising. In reflecting upon this transformation, it became apparent how he was elaborating upon his identity external to the context of education, that of the professional athlete, to enter the strongly framed context of Ivory University. This is evident from the first interview I had with him, illustrated through my thoughts within a confessional tale,

We went and sat down in the corner of the bar, I became conscious of the fact that we were on his turf now and that his responses would surely be affected especially as some of his ‘Jock’ friends and peers were to appear. [Field Notes, 10/11/08]

As the extract from my field notes highlights, by the time I had met Jack he had already adopted some of the practices with which I had experienced at Ivory. Such adoption of the Jock identity and the way he practices some of the identified ‘ten commandments’ (see Sparkes et al., 2008) highlights how Jack had become empowered within Ivory University. His willingness to adopt the identity of Ivory is also evident through the way he reflects upon the other members of the group once in Ivory,

There are some ugly weirdo’s, some Charlie’s and some Peter’s and people like that but other than that people seem pretty cool, everyone willing to learn and get on with lectures and stuff. [Jack: Interview 3]

As the extract highlights, Jack, once in Ivory, begun to identify some members of group as being ‘ugly weirdo’s’ - language which was not apparent during his time at Hope. What struck me was his willingness and the natural way he had almost shed his Foundation Degree identity for that of the typified Ivory student. While further illustrating his empowered experience, the adoption of such language, also highlighted a retrospective insight into his frustrations with the rest of the group from Hope and the limited value Jack placed on the practices at Hope. Such limited regard for his experience at Hope highlights the use of the course for Jack as a stepping stone in pursuit of his professional rugby career.
Similarly, Emily also elaborated upon the practices she had acquired within Hope. As highlighted through the interviews and conversations we had (see Appendices) Emily slowly began to actively reproduce more of the conjunctural specific knowledge of Fawlty rather than those she embodied within Hope. In doing so she began to develop a Fawlty identity for herself, distancing herself from the FDSc group at lunchtimes, joining them later at lunch and in the library,

> We went to the library together and all went to the 2nd floor in the corner. We were joined by Emily who was a totally different character to the girl I had met at the start of the course. She was more confident and held her shoulders back and head high. She was instructing the others, particularly Steve and Peter. [Field Notes: 08/12/08]

I did not know. I did not think I will stay in touch with the others, I think they’re quality but I did not know really, I did not see them as really close friends if you see what I mean and yeah, you know you have friends that you’ll keep in touch with all the time and you know they ring you all the time and they act like proper friends, they’re like more acquaintances that I have attracted in my life. We obviously would try and catch up sometimes in Fawlty if we were all together and text a little bit outside, more so me and Steve because we did some of the same lectures and I get on with Steve and Peter. Yeah I know, it is weird but probably cos we were all in that same situation. [Emily: Interview 5].

Here, Emily displays signs of a critical distance emerging between her and the rest of the original group. In doing so, Emily began to display conjuncturally specific dispositions of Fawlty, conveying a sense of establishment and belonging to Fawlty. For example, within the interviews we had after Christmas of her last year, the way Emily openly displays her willingness to engage with the initiation process at Fawlty is similar to the way Jack adopted his rugby kit and uniform to be part of the culture at Ivory,

> Oh yeah, well into it, as soon as I was down there, within a week or two into it we went to this beer cellar, basically it is like this big hall, strips of tables, with water proof sheet on the floor and this German band and everyone dresses up in these white tops, braces, black shorts or trousers and has pint of beer or cider and you get absolutely soaked, beer and cider thrown at you, people spitting at you. It is like this thing they do for freshers week which is so funny. It is like you have to do this dance and it is like beer being thrown on your head. It was funny, I stained my bra because I got cider and black on it. And then the football initiation is hilarious, we had to eat sweets and flour…I was well nervous like the day before because you did not know what your going to have to do. We had to dress up in something beginning with B and I was bowler [laughs]. But yeah obviously at first, it doesn’t matter, get into the spirit of it, down your drink, it is fine. So as long as it is not ‘blue Wkd’ I am fine. [Emily: Interview 3].
As the extract highlights, Emily also acquires and embodies many of the conjunctural specific knowledge’s of FTU. Again, it was remarkable to witness how quickly the transformation from Emily’s position in Hope to the person I saw at Fawlty had taken place. However, in contrast to Jack, this initial and immediate elaboration upon her internal structures (ISgd) highlights how within the empowered transitional experience what emerges is the interaction between ISgd and IScs. However, in contrast to Jack, Emily’s transitional experience is not based on a preservation of identity but represents an elaboration on the general dispositions Emily entered Fawlty with. Nevertheless, what was evident at the end of the initial meetings with Jack and Emily was a transformative position, one in which they were able to challenge many of the established practices at ITU and FTU.


The recontextualisation and subsequent embodiment of conjunctural specific knowledge by Jack and Emily, particularly surrounding those concerning the ritualistic use of the body and the exchange of physical capital for social capital are often facilitated through interactions with established members of Ivory and Fawlty.

As the year progressed, Jack continued to embody conjunctural specific knowledge, not only adopting ways of managing his body, but also adopting a very specific language, something which was not apparent within his practices at Hope. This semiotical and corporeal elaboration of internal structures rely on Jack being able to convert his embodied physical capital into conjuncturally specific dispositions and practices within Ivory, something he did with ease and confidence. Central to this acquisition for Jack, was his continued interaction with agents within ITU. Through both interviewing and participant observation it transpired that Jack was referring to the rugby boys he had known through professional rugby but who were also students at Ivory. Initially, at the beginning of his experience at Ivory such disciples are particularly crucial with Jack’s empowered transition as they enable him to embody the established conjuncturally specific dispositions of the institution and it is established rules, signs and symbols,

I knew before coming here that there were going to be people in the year that I was going into that I knew already and we got on quite well, spent quite of time with before so I never really had a fear as such. In the biomechanics labs I did not have any of the rugby boys in there but I sort of knew, I had a couple of half rugby boys and knew of them a little bit.

[Jack: Interview 3]

Everyone knows everyone else pretty much. You know, everyone’s a lot more friendly it doesn’t take much to get hold of someone. No one is out there to be an absolute dick so,
within the rugby squad anyway and I have found I am just part of the scene. Saying that, the mechanisms for this are there so. But no, Ivory I really like it, it’s you know, really good boys, so it is good. [Jack: Interview 4]

This position is augmented through Jack recontextualising the experiences of fellow professionals who have already entered ITU. To position himself within Ivory, Jack draws upon his dispositions constructed within professional sport to form relations with rugby boys to embed himself and learn the rules of the institution: the right people to talk to, to be seen with, to build relations with. Such people, visibly present within the interactions I witnessed and interviews with Jack, could be illustrated as being ‘disciples’ of the dominant commandments/discourses. Importantly, and in a similar manner to other agents within sporting educational contexts (see Sparkes et al. 2007) Jack draws upon the experiences of other players who have been to other Higher Education institutions to recontextualise general dispositions acquired within previous contexts. As a consequence, over time Jack displays a very specific language and position, as demonstrated within his justification for not liking certain subjects on the course at Ivory,

The lads are quite good in taking you from the 3hr lecture theatres and stuff so not too bad. It is all bullshit because we will start at 10 and finish at 13.00, it is just a prolonged agony. The booklets we have got with all the, information to take us through the lessons are quite good and it is a bit of a, sort of, self learning - try and think for yourself and stuff, not too much emphasis on telling us what to do and that’s quite good because it gets the old brain ticking over. [Jack: Interview 3]

As the extract highlights, Jack begins to adopt positions within ITU based on the experiences of other agents. Importantly, the extract also alludes to a possible reason behind such relations, namely that at ITU there is an emphasis on independent learning. As such, it was of little surprise that Jack required the support of embedded agents at ITU to support his initial transition. These patterns of position and relations are also found within Emily’s experiences within Fawlty. While Jack mentions ‘the boys’ within my interviews with Emily, what emerged were the relations she developed with ‘the girls’ on her football team,

I did not start football training until two weeks ago cos I was a bit unsure and was like, I think I might want to get a really good grade and not bother.I know what I am like, I will do all of these things and not have enough time. Then I went to see one of their training sessions, cos every one of my housemates plays football and for me going to Fawlty meant playing football as well so I went to watch and I was like I want to go and play. So I wanted to go to get to know my housemates a lot more so, it is another way to know them. I think if you did not play sport it might be difficult to make friends very easily, it would be quite hard. Think you would be more of an outsider if you know what I mean. [Emily: Interview 3]
As the data highlights, whereas the acquisition of masculine practices for Jack is quite explicit, openly displaying empowered forms of challenge to the dominant social positions, Emily displays implicit recognition of the relations she develops with embedded agents at Fawlty. For example, in contrast to Jack who purposefully sought the support of other agents, Emily uses embodied general dispositions to ‘fit in’ and not be an ‘outsider’ within Fawlty. Such implicit recognition and acquisition of the discourses and practices of Fawlty are evident in Emily’s initiation experience and her willingness to adopt the practices during this event,

I got straight into the first team, ninety mins, centre mid and I am a striker, playing centre mid and I scored. And they said that I played really well and a lot of them said that I was the best player and my housemate Nigella, not being funny she is the main person and she said I will be in the starting line up straight away so I was like ‘YES!!’. It makes me feel hell of a good, for my confidence and the others might think, actually, she is really sharp, you know, it is just another way is it. My housemate who plays with me said that she thought I played amazingly. And when you say you scored to the netball girls and that then it is like, ‘well done, she must be quite good’ do you know what I mean? So yeah I am beginning to feel like a Fawlty student. [Emily, Interview 3].

As the quote above highlights, in contrast with Jack she is almost implicit to these rules and practices, simply ‘getting on with it’. Such recognition, enabled by their physical capital, reinforces their empowered identities, making transition relatively smooth and untroublesome. For Emily, this also benefits her academic identity within Fawlty,

I thought when I first go there that the level would be higher if you know what I mean. cos we’re at college the first two years you kind of think you haven’t gone up another level with writing ability and other stuff but when I went into our first special populations lecture you know she just did an overview and stuff and I kind of knew it, kind of knew bits of it and stuff, so I thought, yeah this is going to be alright and like I said we totally blitzed everyone else on the knowledge and shit so that lecture we are like pretty shit hot on. [Emily Interview 3]

As the extract from the interview highlights, Emily is able to convert her newly formed social capital into cultural capital, enabling her to seek her with her studies, making her feel less isolated. This is similar to the transitional experience of Jack who uses his ‘rugby boys’ knowledge in understanding some of the unfamiliar aspects of the course at Ivory. Surprisingly, Jack and Emily do not completely invest themselves into the hierarchies of Ivory and Fawlty. Thus part of their empowered transition was resisting some established practices and relations. However, the level to which they did this was influenced by the physical capital of their general dispositions and the
ability to exchange this for valued social capital within their institutions. For example, Jack, uses his physical capital to create forms of resistance to the practices of the rugby club,

Peers wise its quite funny, I find it funny that 3rd years are like ‘Fuck you Fresh’ - I just see it as a long line of people who have been through 1st year and have just been bullied by 3rd and 2nd years, simply because they were bullied and had to do it and stuff like that. So I find that sort of stuff a bit like…Fucking hell, I am like the same age as the 3rd year boys so it is a bit like, ‘Oh Fuck off’.I am considered a fresh pants as it were as it is my first year, even though I am in the 2nd year, I am considered as fresh because of the rugby and it is my first year at Ivory bla bla bla…Saying that I am not getting treated as badly as a fresher so it is not too bad. [Jack: Interview 3]

The above extract highlights Jack’s active agency in rejecting some of the conjuncturally specific dispositions of Ivory and the Rugby club. Jack’s rejection of conjunctural specific knowledge and practices highlights an empowered transition and a type of active agency in which Jack openly rejects the power capacities of other agents, as well as preserving his identity as a rugby player. For Jack, being able to recognise and acquire dispositions specific to the FDSc and BSc legitimises his general dispositions with relation to those of the other members of the group, enabling him, in Bourdieusian terms, to define the rules of the game, or positions and relations he forms within the rugby club at ITU. Jack’s empowered position which he forms through other agents recognising his physical capital is highlighted within the initiation process, something which other, less empowered agents find uncomfortable,

Well, basically it would be like, ‘Freshers Bolt! 2nd Years Bolt!, Freshers on the floor, fives to see you bolt, freshers go and get a jug’ - it is just stupid stuff like that…‘You’ll do what I tell you to do and bla bla bla’. They have told me to do that, like all of the boys that I like know from rugby are like ‘Fucking do it!!’ and I am like ‘Fuck off’ so yeah other than that it is just sort of standard, if you did not do it they’re fine shit lad, whatever. Trying to bully you into doing it. [Jack: Interview 3].

As the extract highlights during initiation with Ivory’s rugby club, Jack is able to refuse the social hierarchy of the club, telling the 3rd years ‘where to go’ and choosing what conjunctural knowledge to embody and which ones to reject. This illustrates a very powerful and developed corporeal device, one which is not only internalised but one which is displayed through the reproduction of physical practices. Such practices and displays of empowered practice is something which is not missed by Jack,

DA: Do you partake in it?
JF: Err, not especially. I find that if, if you do it straight away then they'll just fuck off so if they tell me to see off a pint I’ll just do it and then tell them to Fuck off. Or if they tell me to go and get a drink I tell them I haven’t got any money so. If I take a small amount of money, say a tenner, I am only going to piss away a tenner’s worth. So that way it is a bit easier, but yeah once I did not have any money and one of the boys was like, go to the cash point and get some and I was like ‘fuck off’. It is all about barriers. [Jack: Interview 3].

As the extract highlights, because of this position, Jack is explicitly aware of his empowered transition and position within one particular field within the context of Ivory. Jack also displays rejection of the dominant power relations within Ivory through his disdain towards some of the practices of his middle class colleagues, as highlighted in Jack’s perception of their living habits,

Well everyone seems pretty studenty to be honest. I have been round other people’s houses and they’re pretty grot - everyone pretty much has their thing about eating food and just putting the plate on the floor, or eating out of the pot and then putting the pot on the floor and then just leaving it and they walk back to the kitchen and then walk right back towards it and like you could have taken your plate then. They are all playing adults, well not playing but they’re all adults and sort of living as they want too. Which is slightly different because I am still at home and stuff and I can’t have like a massive opinion on it because I did not know what I would be like in that situation so I can’t say ‘fucking hell, sort yourself out for god’s sake’. If I left my plate on the floor my mum would kick my head in, I can’t exactly leave like dirty plates and stuff around which can only bode well for when I do actually move out. [Jack: Interview 4]

Although Jack discarded his class habitus in some contexts within ITU, unlike the students within other research (see Skeggs, 1997) Jack also draws upon his working class roots and causes him to look upon some middle class practices with disdain and almost bewilderment. Thus, Jack’s position resonates with the findings of Connell (1998) who highlights how working class men reject middle class values of education and establish a claim to authority through physical activity and the rituals of athletic subcultures.

Similarly, Emily is able to understand and acquire the specific dispositions of Fawlty, again both socially and academically. Such recognition and acquisition begins to empower her identity, as the field notes highlight,

The answers Emily alluded to struck me as someone who is at ease with her transition into Higher Education, so much so at times I am wondering why she chose the transitional pathway and the Foundation Degree course. She seemed calm and her voice when reflecting on her experiences generally exuded confidence and happiness. Yet I am wondering whether such happiness and contentment reflects the ‘swan like’ reality. On the surface everything appears to be going well yet at times there seems to be something more deep occurring – she
continually talks of the wish to go to a red brick Uni, how she wishes she could have done psychology at an institution more prestigious than Fawlty......When I first interviewed Emily she would sit up right with her arms folded as if to provide another barrier to what she was saying. Her answers from what I can remember (will check on transcript) were very much regimented. This contrasts with her body language today which was more engaging, fluid and she changed body position a couple of times. This too me came across as if she was more relaxed and at ease. [Field Notes, 26/01/09],

As the extract highlights, during her year at Fawlty, there is a shift in Emily’s identity, one in which she becomes increasingly confident and happy. This is highlighted within the Football initiation where she adopts many of the practices associated with transition into Higher Education institutions, ritualised within the initiation and reinforced in interactions between other sports students. Such acquisition of the important signs and symbols of Fawlty contrast to the stance of Jack, who while also showing signs of active agency, begins to distance himself from them. Similarly, while adopting some of the middle class practices particularly recontextualised around gender and football, Emily also highlights how she draws upon her class dispositions to challenge the social positions and practices of other students within Fawlty. In contrast to Jack, Emily displays forms of resistance with her stance towards money and the value of her degree qualification,

It was great having it in the first semester for making new friends, like with football and my housemates and that but just having one lecture this year, maybe not so much. At the end of the day it is a degree no matter what, so it doesn’t really matter. It kind of does in a way cos mum is always like ‘it is not redbrick’ but on the other hand she is like, you haven’t spent any money and it is a degree. [Emily: Interview 4]

The interview highlights classic class dispositions of money and work ethic strongly framed within her relations and interactions of her colleagues. It also highlights the active agency of both Jack and Emily in choosing which middle class practices to invest in and which to exclude from their habitus. Moreover, the extract from Emily’s transitional experience alludes to a fragility within the empowered transitional experience, something which also became evident within Jack’s experience of ITU.

5.4.2. The Fragility of Empowerment.

While the extracts of Emily’s and Jack’s transitional experience within and beyond FTU and ITU clearly illustrate an empowered transition, it is important to note the fragility of such relations. For example, while Jack had forged a position within the social hierarchies in Ivory, towards the end of his first year what began to emerge were his frustrations with the framing of relations within in-situ
interactions. At times Jack illustrates how he does not like the weak framing of relations within the pedagogic interactions of Ivory,

Er, well compared to last year if you were half unsure about something you could easily go, can you go over that bit again, whereas this year it is more sort of, did not quite get that, e-mail, might go and ask them again at the end of the lecture or read and see if it tells me. In terms of last year I would say last year was easy, was like an environment where you could easily ask something or you could do something in front of the class, without the pressure of 150 extra pairs of eyes on you. To be honest I liked last years learning environment because you could really get into the sort of lecture, without having to go away and do a lot of reading on your own, and you could understand it in some depth because you were there and able to ask questions and you could go off in different directions but the majority of the course and the learning year is a lot more, I am going to say sophisticated because you know, matured, what do you think, stereotypical university. I do prefer the smaller groups. I have got a seminar this Friday and I have got work to do for that so I am presuming thats going to be more like the Hope learning environment so. So that will be good. [Jack: Interview 4, emphasis by author]

Within Ivory Tower, Jack struggles to cope with the weakly framed relations between agents and students, causing increased frustration to emerge. Without the strong framing relations of Hope, Jack is forced to rely on his own general dispositions to acquire conjunctural knowledge of the qualification at Ivory. While this was something that he did with relative ease within social interactions, as the quotation illustrates, academically, Jack’s empowered transition is more fragile. Additionally, the pressure from other contexts upon Jack’s transitional experience within Ivory also became evident. For example, towards the end of our interviews, Jack mentions how he is unsure of whether he has a professional contract for next season,

JF: Well…it is a very difficult time at ******** at the moment because they’re going to cut the 52 squad down to 35 for next season so there’s a lot of boys going and you know there’s a lot of attitudes and stuff. Training is becoming quite difficult at the club at the moment because you know some boys aren’t happy with the decisions that the directors of the club have made and some boys won’t be staying, some might be staying but will be getting a pay cut. Some boys haven’t got a clue what they’re going to do. Boys like me haven’t been told if we are going to stay or not yet. I really did not know. It is very much all up in the air at the moment.

Interviewer : How do you feel about that?

Jack : A bit half pissed off because they’re being a bit harsh. I have still got another year at university and feel as if I am going to be chucked out on a limb because they want to get promotion. My development is going to hinder in not being in such a professional set up.

[Jack: Interview 4].
This episode within Jack’s transitional experience highlighted a tightrope of uncertainty his (physically) empowered transition balanced upon. As Jack’s position illustrates, while for working class athletes the rewards are great, the risks of failure are also equally significant. The uncertainty within his voice, the worry and nervousness that emerges was, at the time, shocking coming from someone who up to this point had displayed confidence and reassurance of his position within Ivory and in other contexts. While a small part of his transition, this questions the stability of empowered transitions and the fragility of it for young professional athletes encouraged into Higher Education. Drawing upon the perceptions of Reay (2005), Jack’s position at this point at Ivory is reflective of her point that ‘Middle classes can utilise class classifications and characteristics as a resource, moving from popular to elite and back again, while the working classes are literally stuck’ (p.140). Following from this, Jack, at times, finds himself stuck in the investment of his physical capital, the outcomes of which will probably not be understood in their entirety, certainly (and unfortunately) beyond the time span of this study.

Like Jack, the empowered transition of Emily must also be questioned. It, like Jack’s remains fragile and this is highlighted by her regrets about not going to Higher Education institutions, something she begins to question,

The one thing I regret is that I could of got the RAF to pay for a lot more stuff for me. I should have gone in and said I am doing this, this and this - I did not know why I just did not end up doing it, probably too laid back; I just want to get the whole course over with and get out and join the RAF. [Emily: Interview 3]

It is unorganised, it looks like a dump., Sometimes I wish I had gone to a better uni and did like another course maybe. Just like a nicer uni which was just a bit more.... cos Fawlty, nobody has heard of and it is not exactly 'redbrick'. [Emily: Interview 4].

While the risks for Emily are different to those of Jack’s, her voice still resonates with fragility. However, while the fragility of Jack’s empowered transition was uncertain, in joining the RAF, Emily overcomes some of this uncertainty by choosing a transition beyond Higher Education into a context where the physicality of her body is recognised and valued alongside her knowledge. As the extract highlights, despite Emily’s empowered experiences and success within Fawlty, there remains doubt over the value of the qualification. Questions still remain for Emily - the ‘what if’ seemingly evident in her mind. Furthermore, while the data clearly highlight the empowered outcomes for some participants within the UPC scheme, it fails to highlight why students like Emily, who achieve and embody the conjuncturally specific dispositions of HEI institutions, still carry within them barriers to more elite institutions, which are explicitly stated to carry more valued
social capital for the participants. Here, the data fails to suggest answers to such questions and remain elusive for the outsider.

5.5. Reflections and Summary

This chapter has illustrated how for some of the FDSc group, the transition from FDSc into BSc sports education programmes is an empowered transitional experience. It is one in which they display the ability, based on specific internal structures, to recognise, acquire and elaborate upon the identified external structures of Hope and then FTU and ITU. Moreover, as the experiences of Jack and Emily identify, an important element within the empowered transitional experience is the ability to recontextualise or embed general dispositions within their internal structures with those external structures of a context. In doing so, participants undergoing an empowered experience are able to recognise the power capacities which define the relations and positions of a context. As these examples of Jack and Emily’s experience identify, within sports courses, much of the recognition and embodiment of conjuncturally specific dispositions occurs through the physical capital of the practices that they have embodied within previous contexts. Following chapter two, this highlights the importance and indeed existence of what Evans et al. (2008) illustrate as the corporeal device: a set of rules that exist within and upon the body of participants. Evident within their empowered transitional experience was the ability to create space from which to acquire knowledge and practices. The development of this space highlights how students with physical capital before entering institutions are able to weaken and evolve the existing framing of relations between transmitter and acquirer. Furthermore, such empowerment highlights both structural and agent reflexivity in which the participants are able, through the value of their practices to reflect on both rules and resources of social structure and ultimately the conditions of their transition. By being able to recognise the specific dispositions of Hope, Jack and Emily are able to use the framing and transmission of knowledge through practice as an external resource, to embody. This enables them to actively position themselves within Hope, empowering their transition. Therefore, it may be suggested that because Jack and Emily’s cultural capital is valued within the FDSc programme, they are able to immediately recognise the specific practices of the FDSc course immediately allowing them to exude active agency within the practices of the learning context at Hope. However, while previous research may allude to the power of internal structures, and the physical capital produced from these dispositions in defining positions and relations within sport education contexts, what is evident from the data is the reliance of working class students on recontextualising agents and external structures of these agents in recognising the power capacities
of a context. It is emphasised that such empowerment is reinforced by the practices of different sets of. In particular it was the weakening of framing interactions between Nigel, Jack and Emily which highlighted, for me, how muscularity and the body acts as a key signifier for transition from the FDSc into HEI institutions. As Jack and Emily’s experiences and perceptions illustrate, only students who have acquired the appropriate pedagogic practices which are recognised by teachers attract positive evaluation of their performances and practices within Hope College. This is reflective of Fitz’s (2007) comment, that ‘knowledge is seemingly acquired for possessors of this elite code who have a natural disposition that enables expertness to be acquired and performance to be executed with relative ease’ (p.275). Furthermore, the weakening of framing relations, through the exchange of physical capital was not constricted to academic contexts. Indeed, of more significance were the relations between Jack and the rugby boys and similarly between Emily and the girls from the football team. These illustrated interactions allude to the importance of the need for students entering from FDSc backgrounds to socially and academically integrate into academic institutions, something which is difficult in only one year. As Emily highlights, the role of sports and sports clubs in their transitional experience cannot be undervalued and is one of the main reasons which distinguishes their transitional tales as being empowered. Such choice is not evident within other tales of Jock culture within research. Moreover, such displays of active agency, for example the challenging of authority within the classroom, through pedagogic practices, is something which is not readily discussed within research and points towards areas of further discussion. It is inconclusive, but spaces behind the language and interactions need to be revisited and investigated further, for it is these spaces of meaning which contribute so readily to the surface empowered practices that have been illustrated here.

Empowered transitional experiences challenge some embedded perceptions, created within the Official Pedagogic Field that many of these students within Further Education act like ‘cultural dopes’. Nevertheless, both these students have succeeded, beyond the capacities that some would like to convey within wider societal perceptions of class and education. The refusal to accept practices and be bound by their value represents a significant act in challenging the dominant symbolic order of transition and practice. Their empowerment leads me to question why they chose to enter the FDSc programme initially and the role physical capital plays in shaping transition. However, crucially to the empowered transitional experience, both Emily and Jack actively choose which dispositions and practices to embody into their general dispositions. While empowered within Higher Education, it has to be questioned whether such empowerment transcends beyond this specific context.
Therefore, what is actually illustrated is their perception of an empowered transition, which in reality may be more fragile than they are currently able to see. The empowered experiences of Jack and his reliance on the external structures of professional rugby is reflective of Reay’s (2001) thought that we still have an education system in which working class education is made to serve the interests of the middle classes. It might be that in his particular transitional experience, the physical capital of his body has altered his progression into Higher Education (through the gaining of a professional contract), creating empowered experiences which do not have value beyond the in-situ interaction. Contrastingly, Emily also displays practices of active disengagement with the practices in Hope but strikingly she does so through more implicit means, choosing to distance herself from the masculinised practices of Hope. The practices of Jack and Emily highlight that while Further Education has been seen predominantly to do with working class failure (see Avis, 2009), such failure is neither homogenous or endemic. There are some success stories, as the experiences of Jack and Emily (more so) suggest within this chapter. However, we must be cautious in suggesting to what extent success is sustainable beyond the quite specific contexts of the UPC system. The experiences of Jack and Emily reinforce Cantwell’s (2005) point that ‘students can, and do, progress from HND to Hons. Programmes, but it is at their request and an articulation route is not a recommendation of approval’ (p.11). Consequently, both Jack and Emily remain in a state of ambivalence, in which their futures remain uncertain beyond the transition route within the UPC. It is important not to underestimate the power of deeply embedded masculinist practices within sports education to alienate individuals as well as empower them (Wright, 1996b). In some respects, this data raises questions of what it is about masculinity which helps agents recognise pedagogic principles required for transition? Thus, empowerment, dependent on physical capital and practices, has a fragile quality to it. It is necessary now to discuss what happens when these social exchanges are apparent in the transitional experiences. In addition what the next chapters also highlight, is how such ability to acquire cultural and social capital through the body as a pedagogic tool remains very specific and dependent on the external structures available to a given student. In some cases this produced fragmented or failed transitions.
Chapter 6 - The Fragmented Transitional Experience

Alongside the empowered transitional experience illustrated in Chapter five, this chapter presents an analysis of relations between external and internal structures within FE and HEI which constructed positions and relations for the participants which are described here as fragmented transitional experiences. The fragmented transitional experience evident within the data contain moments with strong resemblance to other student experiences of vocational courses highlighted within other fields of Higher Education research (Yorke, 2005). Such studies highlight that Further Education students will experience difficulties and barriers because of their varying skills and general dispositions. As will be discussed, the experiences of two of the participants, Lloyd and Steve, illustrate signs of these documented difficulties, particularly in relation to how they recognised and acquired external structures (ESis) within the contexts of Hope, Fawlty and Ivory (see Chapter Four). Accordingly, while many of the external structures, resources and recontextualising agents are similar to those illustrated within Chapters Four and Five, the fragmented transitional experience consists of an increased critical distance between the internal structures of an agent and the external structures of a context. It is suggested that this increases inability to recognise, acquire and embody conjuncturally specific knowledge. As highlighted within Chapter Five, the background of the agent, those practices which have been embodied into the internal structures as general dispositions (ISgd) play a crucial role in the formation of normative expectations towards conjunctural specific knowledge (IScs), positions and relations which are required for transition into the ‘Top Up’ year of the FDSc qualification. As will be illustrated, what became apparent was that the backgrounds and general dispositions of two of the group, Steve and Lloyd (pseudonyms) caused their relations with the external structures of Higher Education to become more fragmented in their acquisition and embodiment. Accordingly, this chapter will illustrate some examples of the fragmented transitional experience, exploring the practices and strategies that the participants display. Finally, some of the potential consequences of this fragmented transition will be suggested.

6.1. The Creation of Fragmented Transitional Experiences.

Lloyd’s decision to enter Higher Education resonate with working class attitudes often found elsewhere within educational research (see Bates et al., 1984; Bowl, 2001; Reay, 2001). Upon our initial meeting Lloyd was keen to make such relations explicit, stating how within his family ‘we
were always taught to work hard’. The specific initial insights by Lloyd displayed illustrate a position in which the role of Higher Education qualifications are integral to success and a career,

I’ve lived in the South West all my life, well the last 10 years. I went to school near Hope, went on to college to follow my brother; He went to uni in Wales. So that was the general gist in our family: go onto college then university. My parents both work, my mum is a medical secretary and my dad is an insurance worker. So yeah I just followed. They never really went to uni, so they really encouraged me into Further Education as a way of trying to get a degree. [Lloyd, Interview 1]

Unlike the traditional vocational student identity illustrated within Further Education research (see Hodkinson et al. 1996; Bowl, 2001; Greenbank, 2010), The extract highlights how Lloyd is not the first of his family to pursue a post-16 education. Significantly, the initial interactions and conversations with Lloyd alluded to more middle class rather than archetypal working class perceptions and relations of education which were evident with the other participants of the group. These are partly shaped through the reconextualisation of his brothers experience of Higher Education, something which Lloyd was keen to display. The experience of Lloyd’s brother and the strategic benefits of going to an ‘elite’ university are underlined by Lloyd,

My brother has just become a teacher. He hasn’t taken a year out of education, cos he’s gone school, college, uni, PGCE, [and then] teaching so he’s never taken a year out. He’s a first year PE teacher so he’s just followed through. Again it is coming through my parents grew up on a council estate and it is the whole work ethic, like the Welsh family really, you got to work to get what you want. Even work now, that’s the way we’ve grown up with it really. [Lloyd: Interview 1]

Drawing upon the heuristic framework of the PhD study, it is evident that Lloyd’s normative expectations of Higher Education are constructed through the reconextualisation of external structures (ESm) particularly the experiences of his family and especially those recent experiences of his brother. Furthermore, Lloyd also highlighted his relations to the external structures of professional sport. However, in contrast to the experiences of Jack, Lloyd is not a player within professional sport but a referee. This small but integral difference to Jack’s relation to the external structures of professional sport, mean that Lloyd’s general dispositions construct a different set of general physical and social practices and discourses. The weakly framed relations to this context and its influence upon the educational and career practices of Lloyd are immediately apparent,

It got complicated at the start of last year when I had to apply for Uni’s. [Because] I got my contacts down here and I did not want to lose them and I did not want to go somewhere else and start again cos rugby is very political anyway. I was going to go to the University of
As the extract highlights, while the role of educational dispositions and family background are important to the initial creation of Lloyd’s transitional experience, like Jack, the external structures of professional sport play an important role in positioning Lloyd and influencing some of his practices and decisions regarding the importance and necessity of Higher Education to achieving a career in professional sport. Thus, in a similar manner to Jack, the role of the professional sport external structures constructs a quite implicit, pre-reflective transitional experience, one which reproduces and preserves existing power relations. This highlights that when agents produce weakly temporal practices, based on external structures beyond the immediate time and space context, there is reproduction and preservation of existing power relations within a context. This is further highlighted by Lloyd who highlights his reasons for entering onto the course,

It is difficult at the moment, there’s only six professional referees in England at the moment but my new boss wants to make it up to twelve. So there are opportunities there but obviously I could go and break my leg tomorrow or do my knee ligaments so it is all in the pot and I need something to fall back on but that’s what I really want to do. I think that’s my inspiration for doing well at Uni because [if] I have got something then that I can fall back on and because my boss and people through rugby have been saying you got to get something. After Uni we’ll look at it even closer. I think that’s why I am trying to get a good grade out of it so I can say look I have got this, offer me something that I want to do. I think that’s definitely something I want to follow onto to. [Lloyd: Interview 1]

Here the data highlights how Lloyd’s transitional experience is based on external structures of professional rugby. Indeed the practice of ordering concerns and adopting a specific set of practices, is illustrative of Bourdieu’s term, illusio. As highlighted by Garrigou, (2006) for Bourdieu, illusio,

Means to be involved, to be interested in the game, is to admit a special social game has sense, its stakes are important and worthy of being pursued. [Garrigou, 2006: 667]

Following from the thoughts of Garrigou (2006) who adopts a conventional Bourdieusian perspective, it is evident Lloyd has a very specific and defined strategy and interest in the Foundation Degree and transition (the game) so that he may pursue a career in professional rugby. Such weakly framed relations with agents from the context of professional rugby construct a pre-ordered hierarchy of prioritisation of practices regarding the purpose of Higher Education qualifications in relation to his transition into professional sport. These strategies also highlight the
ability to sort priorities into what Stones (2005) refers to as a ‘hierarchy of purposes’ (p.101). Like Jack, Lloyd uses the course as a strategic set of specific knowledge in case he is unable to pursue a career in professional sport. The construction of such a hierarchy implies the existence of explicit recognition of the rules and practices of Higher Education and the value of such courses beyond in-situ contexts. Furthermore, and more troubling, is that this recognition constructs a set of normative expectations of the course. This is highlighted by Lloyd,

To be honest I think its excellent. Because the course is new and people are latching on to the fact that you can do two years on the Foundation and then go onto something else it is good that we have got options at Fawlty and you can applies to any uni you want really and if they accept you, you can go onto the 2nd or 3rd year of the course. At the moment I am deciding between either doing a PGCE either teaching or something else, I am not really sure at the moment. Obviously to do my rugby as well it links in quite well so I did not know where that is going as yet. It gives you good options really, it is a good opener that you can do two years, because if people aren’t totally sure what they are doing at the end of A-levels it gives people something to do, not as a stop gap but you get something for it and also you get another two years to decide what you really want to do. If you decide to go onto a third year course then you can do, it is not a problem. [Lloyd: Interview 1]

The extract identified how within Hope, Lloyd has formed a set of normative expectations regarding the role of the FDSc qualification in enabling transition into professional sport or teaching. In forming such weakly framed relations within professional sport he constructs a set of distinguishable pre-reflexive strategies which Lloyd has had to acquire, embody and reproduce in order to position himself: a process that resonates with the false dreams that Nigel spoke of (as illustrated within chapter four).

Of interest as well, given the highlighted valued that was placed on control and understanding of physical practices within Hope (see Chapter Four), refereeing has similar conjuncturally specific dispositions to elite performers within professional sport (as highlighted by Jack). However, following from the words of Hickey and Kelly (2008), Lloyd, as an elite performer, has to undergo similar negotiations with the external structures of professional sport,

Elite performers are compelled to negotiate and accommodate a diverse, often competing array of expectations related to dynamic ideas about what it means to be a footballer, and the forms of work necessary to develop and maintain this identity. [Hickey & Kelly, 2008: 478]

While the above extract was written regarding players and not referees, there is a strong resonance with some of the expectations of the professional refereeing context placed upon Lloyd. However, contrasting to the dynamism illustrated by Hickey and Kelly, I would contend that the
relations Lloyd forms with professional sport construct a transitional experience and a set of practices which are pre-reflexive and hold a number of expectations before actually experiencing them. This is highlighted by the value he places upon the degree,

Massively, I know for certain that I need a degree, at least a degree, a good degree behind me before I even think about going into professional sport because like we said the professional nature of the sport, you can drop like a stone, be top one minute and then bottom the next so I know I need a good degree behind me and after next year, I’ll be motivated obviously this year, I hope to get a good one and see where it goes from there. It will be interesting to see where it goes after that, it is like do I go to work and just coast along. [Lloyd: Interview 2]

Again, Lloyd continued to display a set of normative expectations based on his perception of how the qualification will aid in his transition into professional sport and the need to have a degree in the immediate future. This is highlighted by Lloyd,

I know I am clever enough to do a full degree anyway, it is just the way it is. I chose this course myself; I did not do it because I couldn’t get into anywhere else I chose it because of my needs and what I needed to get done here and now, and what my lifestyle needs so it suit is me to the ground. [Lloyd: Interview 2]

The extract again highlights how external structures, outside the context of education (illustrated as ESm), continue to influence practices and positions agents, such as Lloyd, adopt within the immediate conjuncture of their educational experience. The data highlight how such transmission constructs very specific expectations of the qualification as something to do, which is necessary, something that ‘has to be done’. In Bourdieusian terms, Lloyd is already playing the game, or rather the game as he perceives it to be based on a pre-reflexive strategic practices, distributed by the external structures (ESm) of professional rugby refereeing. As will be illustrated, because of this pre-reflexive strategy within Hope, Lloyd reproduces a series interpretive schemes with relation to the power relations and conjuncturally specific dispositions of other agents illustrated in chapter 4. However, the outcomes for Lloyd are different to those illustrated within the empowered transitional experience.

In contrast to the quite linear progression of Jack, Lloyd and Emily, Steve’s initial entry into the FDSc programme had been constructed over a longer period of time and does not illustrate the external structures or resources found within the other participants transitional experiences. Steve displays a number of general dispositions which have been identified as characterising vocational and Further Education students. Unlike the rest of the group who had joined the FDSc at Hope straight from college or school, Steve was returning to the college having travelled for two years.
Prior to this he had initially gone from secondary education into Hope College and completed vocational qualifications in a number of courses. Accordingly, in contrast to the implicit relations to the external structures of Further Education, Steve elucidates a more explicit, strongly framed position,

I never really enjoyed college that much I thought there was too much freedom in a way from school but then I guess that’s what it is suppose to be like but I dunno, just and where I was based I was on a quite small campus, I was not at the main Hope college campus I was at a centre, which was close to the college but hidden around the corner about 10 mins away. It is quite an old shabby building, or it was I did not know if it is still used now. But yeah we were quite segregated from the rest of the college. I mean the course itself was ok it was all broken down into modules and some of the modules were really good like leadership where you know, they take you out to Dartmoor and you do all the cool stuff but then some like the Politics, transport were not so good. [Steve: Interview 1]

Contrasting to the experience of Lloyd, this embodied experience of Further Education begins to create a critical distance towards the external structures of Further Education in which transition to Higher Education becomes an explicit process. Furthermore, the extract illustrates how Steve has already embodied a previous fragmented experience of vocational and Further Education,

I got a pass in this National Diploma I just told myself I probably would not have been able to go onto Uni to do something that I wanted to do there. I was not confident in myself to go to university then and I had the money to go travelling so I did that on and off for two years. I was just in like a pretty dead end factory job and after doing that for eight months I was like, right got to get back in the education game. So I started looking at my options and at first I was getting quite worried cos I couldn’t see anything that I liked. I knew I wanted to do something in PE cos at school it was the one thing I could get my head around cos I was never like good at Maths, Science or English but I got a GCSE in PE, a B at GCSE so I knew I was quite good at that so I was looking for kind of those courses and the closest thing I could find was the same course I am on now but in *****. So I found out loads of information and accommodation and everything and I was kind of all set and I think they were really keen to get me on there as well, money and stuff for them. [Steve: Interview 1]

Here, Steve displays practices which shift in response to the past-experiences of Further Education and past determinations of Hope College. Accordingly, the past experiences of Steve construct a large critical distance between the internal structures of Steve and the external structures of Hope College and vocational qualifications in general. The critical distance between internal and external structures construct a perception that transition cannot take place, illustrated by Steve’s perception that he ‘probably would not be able to go’. Such shifts and strong critical distance between agent practice and the external structures highlight how Steve is explicitly aware of the
rules of distribution and acquisition, contained within the pedagogic device (see Chapter Four) which govern entrance into Higher Education causing him to construct a set of normative expectations regarding the value of vocational qualifications. This is highlighted within his perceptions of Higher Education,

DA: Did you have a look at University?
SL: No, no did not even look.
DA: Why?
SL: I felt like I would not be able to go, or if I could I would have to go to a poor, like a really bad one and then obviously the stereotype from your mates about going to a really poor uni. But like quite a lot of my mates went to ********, like the crappy one, UWIE? And they got quite a hard time for going there from like my other mates, so if I went to even worse one than that it would have been shocking really. [Steve: Interview 1]

In having to draw upon his own practices which have explicit perspectives to Higher Education, Steve constructs a transitional experience which reproduces an identity and is unable to elaborate upon the position constructed by the experience of vocational education. As will be illustrated, this creates a different type of fragmented experience, one in which the relationship between external structures and internal resources is continually being recontextualised habitually, forming power capacities which necessitate a myriad of pre-reflective practices embodied as general internal dispositions.

Such relations may be attributed to the immediate external structures and resources of Steve. In contrast to Lloyd and Jack, Steve highlights a disparity of recontextualising agents or support other than that of his family: Jack and Lloyd are able to draw upon external resources which are legitimised and recognised within sports education,

I think that actually thinking about it now, that was quite an inspiration for me to go on with education actually, that my mum had done that cos before that she was in a job she did not enjoy and I was doing like a job I did not want to do so I could see I did not want to get in the rut, you know I could have been stuck in that job for like 10 years working, just for working sake really. So yeah got quite a bit of inspiration from her to go back into education really and do something I knew I could be quite good at, which was PE. [Steve: Interview 1]

Thus, whereas the framing of relations between Lloyd and his external structures of family and professional sport enable the acquisition of conjunctural knowledge and create a prospective linear transitional pathway to follow, for Steve the role of Further Education in shaping his transition is unknown to him. Consequently, Steve has to rely on his general dispositions to begin transition into Higher Education. Consequently, rather than experiencing entrance into Higher Education,
Education through an established hierarchy of practices, Steve’s transitional experience is temporally related to present practices. While the other participants all identified team sports and secondary education as being a central source of information regarding Higher Education, such practices were missing from Steve’s narrative. For example, contrasting with the practices of Lloyd, Jack and Emily, Steve’s physical capital is constructed from individual sports, such as Ultimate Frisbee,

Ultimate Frisbee [is what] I love at the moment. At Secondary School, when I was in year 8, it was the first year that they had taken it on, and the coach I am coaching with now, ** ****, PE teacher, he just decided to do this club. So yeah we all rocked up, first session in year 8 and I just loved it. I was never good, never amazing at sports, not like the best so I could get into the football team, just, at right back and I could play on the wing at rugby because I was quick but I was never that good. Where as ultimate, it was perfect for me I could actually be the top dog at something. In the other sports as well, but that was kind of my thing. [Steve: Interview 1]

As the extract highlights, Steve’s general dispositions are formed through sporting practices not recognised within team sports characteristic of Physical Education or Sports Education Programmes. The practices of Ultimate Frisbee construct very specific physical and social capital which is not easily transferrable across contexts. Accordingly, Steve enters the FDSc course at Hope with a different set of general dispositions. As will be illustrated, such general dispositions construct a different educational experience that determine a different set of strategies to those of Lloyd. Accordingly, as will be illustrated there is some fragmentation within their transitional experience between the practices they undertake and the perceptions which were formed and embodied before they arrived at Hope. Such fragmented relations between the general dispositions of the participants and the practices of the Hope and Fawlty will now be illustrated. While it may be argued that this left Steve with very few dispositions which could be exchanged for cultural and social capital, his transition is one of interest as he has to begin to construct and acquire external resources to aid his transition within and through the FDSc programme. Furthermore, the relationship between Steve and the external structures shape a very different perception of further and Higher Education which contrast to those statements made by Lloyd.

6.2. Promising Beginnings: Fragmented Experiences of Hope College.

Initially, Lloyd displayed a number of practices and dispositions which have also been illustrated within Jack’s empowered transitional experience in Chapter Five. Based on a hierarchy of practice, Lloyd’s situational practices and conduct are derived from the interaction between practices and
language reproducing the same masculinised discourses of toughness that were evident within Jack’s practices. This is evident from data drawn upon from my observations of the group within Hope,

They had quite a relaxed relationship within Nigel. Lloyd was the loudest and central to most of the conversation with Nigel. Most of the conversation alternated between rugby and everyone’s weekend. [Field Notes: 15/10/07]

This was in contrast to Lloyd and Jack whose presentations exuded confidence too much sometimes and you could see the over confidence coming out when Lloyd related Lactate Threshold to Dogshit? However, the confidence was clearly acknowledged by Nigel who commented upon it and then relayed this back to the rest of the group. [Field Notes: 13/03/08]

The data illustrates the same strength of framing of relations that were evident within the experience of Jack. This is evident in the relaxed relationship Lloyd has with Nigel, something which is constructed through having recognised and legitimised general dispositions to that of the main recontextualising agent, Nigel. Furthermore, such framing of relations enables Lloyd to reproduce practices from external structures of professional rugby. Such weakening of relations between Lloyd and Nigel begin to formulate a specific set of normative expectations of the education experience within Hope,

They know the commitment I have to pay to rugby taking time for example, going to games, going to meetings, I can easily do that without a big problem and easily get my work that I have missed and they send me an e-mail saying here you go, here’s the work that you missed. And it works for them as well because they got coaches for college the watch DVDs and I am sitting with them as well so it works in both directions. That’s one of the things I really enjoy about the college they know the commitments with my sport as well, I can still get my education and play my rugby where as if I moved away then a lecturer who doesn’t know anything about rugby would not have a Scooby if I was away for some lectures or missed time for work or something like that, they did not realise the time commitment. [Lloyd: Interview 1]

The extract highlights how Lloyd identifies the power capacities of other agents within the context of Hope. In recognising the positions and relations of other agents, Lloyd begins to recontextualise a number of the practices of refereeing within the educational context at Hope. This highlights how agents, through embodied general dispositions may attempt to construct innovative practices causing exemption from the external structures of a context. While this supports the findings highlighted in Chapter Four, which illustrate the existence of weak framing of relations created through the existence of perfection codes within the UPC system, what is further evident is
the way the agent attempts to position themselves through the drawing upon the existence of external resources, namely the positions already in existence within Hope College.

Although Lloyd’s recognition of the dominant practices necessitates that he produces a number of strategic practices (formed external to the context of Hope) he does so without embodying them and making them part of his general dispositions. In contrast to Jack, whose weakening of relations with Nigel are contextualised through a corporeal device which enables the exchange of physical capital into cultural capital, Lloyd’s position is framed through the exchange of social capital (positions/relations) into cultural capital (qualification). The signification of this relation is that Lloyd reproduces a number of the practices and discourses of Hope College without embodying them into his general dispositions. Indeed as the field notes highlight, Nigel is somewhat dismissive of Lloyd’s refereeing, making humour of his lack of physical capital.

The lecture got underway. Indicative to Nigel’s style of teaching he immediately posed a question to the group ‘what is lactate’. Before this point there was noticeable banter between Nigel and Lloyd, Lloyd being the referee - everyone made reference to the fact that Lloyd was going to do his work/assessment on refereeing. Nigel joined in with this by imitating blowing a whistle and making a comment. Defending himself, Lloyd asked Nigel when the last time he had played rugby! As if to take this comment a little bit more seriously Nigel immediately defended himself by stating that he still played rugby and was a much better player than Lloyd could ever be. It was as if he had been wounded and was attempting to starve off the smell of fear and damage that was oozing out of this wound to his body. [Field Notes: 14/01/08]

As the extract highlights, Lloyd is unable to exchange cultural capital generated from practices external to Hope College to the same level Jack is able to through his body practices and physical capital. While this again reinforces many of the observations made in Chapter Four, and the emphasis placed upon physical capital within FDSc programmes, it also highlights how Lloyd’s transitional experience is not as empowering as first thought. Yet while such observations are made feasible retrospectively and habitually, to an extent such practices and relations are implicit to Lloyd, as highlighted by his perceptions of his relations indicated above.

Accordingly, unable to have the same sort of relations with Nigel, Lloyd strategically adopted a number of practices within Hope which from his perspective, are able to empower him. For example, whereas Jack uses his body and physical capital to form a transitional experience, Lloyd undertakes a different role within the group in which he exchanges cultural (academic) capital for social capital. This is illustrated through Lloyd’s alternative persona, ‘textbook’,
The rest of the group volunteered Lloyd or ‘textbook’ as he was being called. He was very confident and strolled up to the front of the class. Once again his fitness knowledge was primed around his refereeing - something to which the rest of the group seemed very familiar. They seemed to listen and gave respect to what he was saying. Steve and Emily then posed questions regarding the test which he was able to answer. Nigel would then ask questions regarding previous stuff they had learnt in order to apply it to the example given by Lloyd. [Field Notes: 5/11/07]

The construction of created academic positions, illustrates the emergence of an innovative outcome in which Lloyd attempts to influence the distribution and transmission of knowledge (a form of ESis) within the teaching context of Hope College. Moreover, the data illustrated how Lloyd uses the external structures of other agents within the class to construct a series of power capacities in relation to the masculinity of other agents’ practices, particularly Nigel. In doing so, Lloyd positions himself between the other participants and Nigel (in terms of social capital). This is illustrated by one interaction I had with Nigel in which the role of Lloyd acting as a spokesperson was evident,

Nigel had a phone call from Lloyd saying that they would not be coming in as they had too much work on; their dissertations were due Friday. I knew they weren’t bullshitting from the expressions on their faces last week (worry, panic). This highlighted the control the participants had over their learning environment. NB was willing to cancel the lecture for THEM. This also, highlighted the role of Lloyd as spokesperson for the group, when NB said ‘yeah give Lloyd a call, he’ll sort it’ he seems to be the spokesperson for the rest of the group. [Field Notes: 19/05/08]

As the extract highlights, Lloyd shifts his position and practices with relation to the exigencies of the field (Stones, 2005). Where the position Jack finds himself in is implicit to him because of how he exchanges physical capital into social capital, the position within the power relations was explicit for Lloyd who actively adopts practices to position himself within the group. These positional shifts reflect Lloyd’s attempt to weaken the framing relations between himself and other recontextualising agents (especially Nigel) through exchanging the social capital of his general dispositions (created from the experiences of his brother and those within professional sport) into recognised and legitimised conjuncturally specific dispositions within Hope. However, unlike Jack, whose physical capital makes the acquisition of conjunctural specific knowledge an explicit process, for Lloyd interaction with the recontextualising agents and the valued conjuncturally specific dispositions that framed relations was implicit in its nature. Furthermore, unlike Jack, whose general dispositions (ISgd) became infused with the conjunctural knowledge’s of Hope (see Chapter Five), within Lloyds experience, there remains a critical distance between
Lloyds general dispositions (ISgd) and the external structures of Hope (ESIs). Consequently, the positions which Lloyd constructs within his experience of Hope have what Stones (2005) illustrates as a short and limited horizon of action (see Chapter Two). For Lloyd, what is constructed is a transitional experience in which he is unable to exchange physical capital into recognised forms of cultural and social capital. This results in a perspective where Lloyd associates value of the qualification beyond that of the in-situ context,

At the end of the day it is a bit of paper, once I get a job nobody will give a shit what qualification I got or where I went and that’s what I am thinking of… The long game. I am still thinking of doing PGCE…I am not still 100% sure of teaching yet but I have been told by quite a few people, get a PGCE it is such an important qualification and it is recognised hugely and also once I have got it if I am 40 and get bored of the job I am in I can always revert back to teaching. [Lloyd: Interview 3]

Thus, as the data highlights, because Lloyd recognises this position but is unable to acquire the social capital, feelings of frustration and resentment begin to emerge, irrespective of the positions he has formed. This is illustrated through some of the frustrations he shows towards the value of the FDSc with relation to the external structures within other contexts,

People still look at you when you say you still do a FD, saying ‘fucking hell, you can’t get on a real course’ and whatever and especially doing Sports Fitness and coaching as well, with the whole ethos around that as well, people expect to be [a more] easy subject than everything else. [Lloyd: Interview 1]

As the extract highlights, towards the end of the first year at Hope, Lloyd’s transitional experience begins to evolve from quite an empowered experience into one which becomes increasingly fragmented. Here, Lloyd continues to preserve a hierarchy of purposes in which the transition into Higher Education is implicit, an experience not to be questioned, but something that has to be done to meet the outcome of employment which Lloyd had created before the transitional experience. Yet despite the emergence of signs which suggest a fragmented transitional experience, Lloyd’s position enabled him to succeed at Hope College gaining the FDSc qualification, 2:1 class. However, as Lloyd recognises, the value of such acquired cultural qualifications cannot be exchanged beyond the context of Hope,

Results were good, yeah really good, I got 68% which I was well happy with. Yeah looking back at it compared like to a normal degree, it is nothing. But except for the workload is like totally different. Like we have got one assignment, we have only got one assignment and three exams and that is semester A done. So I think the workload is not as much but like the intensity of it all is way different. I mean to pass that Biomechanics with a C, 50% I mean I
haven’t got a scooby about it and it seems a bit…Like I know if I do an exam like that at Fawlty I will fail. [Lloyd: Interview 3].

As the extract highlights, retrospectively Lloyd’s perceptions of the course and the value of the FDSc qualification continue to be influenced by external structures beyond that of the current transitional experience at Hope.

Consequently, within Lloyd’s fragmented transitional experience, what is formed is a very limited value of the FDSc qualification, one which does not extend beyond the positions and power capacities Lloyd has constructed in situ. Indeed, the ability to exchange cultural capital from one field and recontextualise these practices in an educational setting is recognised by Lloyd himself. For example, Lloyd highlights how the qualification is not ‘like a normal degree’ despite never stipulating what a normal degree qualification is,

I think because it is means less. Everything with Foundation is less than a BSc, it is two years instead of three years, it is a lower level you’re not perceived to be at as high a level and just that, I mean everything when you say Foundation you always mean something lower than something else so that’s the general perception I got.

DA: Do you feel like your at a lower level?

At the moment yeah possibly, I think when I go onto the third next year it will be a lot different I think. If I had gone to a different university, I did not think I would be a lot different person. I think other people on the course struggle because of their character and their confidence and everything else and I think the Foundation Degree really suits some of the individuals whereas if they went to normal uni they end up dropping out or something like that. But because, I mean I experience a lot of uni life anyway through my mates and stuff and it is very similar for me at the moment. [Lloyd: Interview 1]

However, despite positioning himself as someone who could enter the Higher Education system Lloyd continues with the prescribed transitional pathway of the UPC system and like Emily, illustrates a set of normative expectations regarding transition to Fawlty Tower University,

I think it would be a lot different if I was honest with you just simply because of the people who go there, the stereotype of people who go to Ivory compared to Fawlty. I did not really know, I think people paint a different picture; Ivory is up there where as Fawlty is down there but it doesn’t bother me at all. For me these days as long as you’ve got personality and as long as you can interview well and that you got an average to good average degree behind you, your foot’s in the door I think. [Lloyd: Interview 1]

The extract highlights Lloyd’s normative expectations of the next stage of transition. Furthermore, the extract illustrates the tension between Lloyd’s normative beliefs regarding HEI and the prescribed value of a degree developed from external structures (ESm) situated beyond
what Stones describes as the ‘immediate conjuncture’ of the agent-in-focus experience (see appendices). This further illustrates how within the fragmented transitional experience, agents construct their social position with relation to external structures at the meso-level of ontology which, (as illustrated within Chapter Two) exist beyond their immediate conjuncture. In so doing, HEI experience is not something which is embodied into the internal structures of an agent as general dispositions but is separated and recognised as something which needs to be done. This is highlighted by how he views the degree as something to be done, not experienced. Indeed it is reflective of a wider market-orientated pedagogy in which it is the product not the process which is central to student experience. Towards the end of data collection Lloyd had applied for the PGCE programme at Ivory University, following the transitional experience that his brother had completed before him. In many respects the practices and dispositions Lloyd acquired have allowed him to successfully complete the Foundation Degree and gain a Higher Education qualification. Worryingly though, such an implicit positioning of himself begins to unravel Lloyds the transitional experience as was highlighted during his time at Fawlty University.

Contrastingly, the transitional experiences of Steve within Hope illustrate a different fragmented transitional experience, one which is more closely aligned with failed transitional experience (see Chapter Seven). A key characteristic of Steve’s form of transitional experience are the display of silences that are indicative of the critical distance between the general dispositions of Steve’s internal structures (ISgd) and the positions constructed within Hope by other agents’ practices (ESis). Such active, almost incongruous silences had a different type of meaning to the positions and practices displayed by Lloyd. Active silences can be illustrated through some of the interviews and observations of Steve during his time at Hope. Indeed, while silences have been also illustrated as a strategy employed by Emily (see Chapter Five) for Steve, such silences are created from not being able to recognise and embody conjuncturally specific (and valued) dispositions.

One possibility for such silences is Steve’s unwillingness to adopt many of the established practices at Hope. It became immediately apparent that Steve appeared different from the other members of the group. Whereas Chapter Five highlighted the uniform of Jack, Steve displayed no such uniform indicating the difference in the general dispositions embodied within his internal structures. Accordingly, the physical capital Steve creates from these general dispositions is not recognised as being legitimate within the micro context of the group or the broader field to which the group belongs. The existence of external structures which did not have legitimised cultural or social capital reinforced the framing of relations between Steve and the key Recontextualising Agents in Hope. This causes Steve to be positioned by the external resources (ESis) of other agents.
within the classroom, through the way he dressed and the display of his identity. This is evident through one particular observation,

The lesson itself was similar in its structure to other lectures Nigel delivered. It began with him asking the guys what they thought ergogenic meant, a volley of generally correct answers followed. Unusually Steve chose to mention his weekend Frisbee tournament stating he ‘necked some energy drinks’. Nigel then asked him which one he had used to which Steve replied with some unknown brand to which Nigel replied ‘Special Brew’ as if to dismiss the type of energy drink and Steve’s sport. [Steve: Interview 1]

As the extract highlights, there is a strong framing of relations and practices between Steve and Nigel. For Steve, such framing relations make the acquisition of conjuncturally specific dispositions harder to acquire,

To reinforce his point Nigel had a go at Steve’s hair. Steve, unlike Pete, did not rise to it so Nigel brought up another thing – Frisbee. You could see him just picking away at Steve’s hobbies, asking him questions but making it sound as if Frisbee was a lesser sport or not a sport at all. This showed another side of Nigel one which we had talked about within his interview but I had never really seen it before. [Field Notes: 14/01/08]

As the extract highlights, Steve’s position within the group is controlled by Nigel’s perceptions of his appearance, particularly his shaggy hair. Consequently, there remains a critical distance between the normative expectations of Steve and the practices of Nigel,

This was out of the context of the original lesson but they wanted to do one rep max test. I began to wonder what they were getting out of this. This was reinforced by LP who stated: This is nota lecture it is just macho. And this is exactly what it was. SL reinforced this comment by suggesting that the only thing we were learning about was testosterone. [Field Notes: 12/05/08]

Because Steve has explicit awareness of the value of these practices, he acquires but does not embody many of the conjuncturally specific dispositions of the pedagogic contexts in Hope. This is in contrast to Lloyd’s sometimes implicit acquisition of masculinised practices in his attempt to position himself within the group. While Steve never directly discussed such incidences (although these were in the minority) the outcome and signification of not being able to acquire and embody such practices is an important component of the fragmented transitional experience.

Following from the thoughts of Mouzelis (1991), such distancing results in the medium of his actions being characterised within sporadic moments of engagement and then the long silences and distancing himself away from group interactions and learning within Hope. Therefore, it is important to highlight that such framing of relations and the inability to exchange physical capital
of his practices into social capital does not prevent Steve from acquiring dispositions which enable transition. However, the nature of this position leads to an outcome which begins to fragment Steve’s transitional experience within the UPC system. Although Emily, within her empowered transition, displayed similar distancing of relations, she was able to construct a more empowered transition by being able to exchange physical capital for social capital. Such distancing from the group and elite Higher Education is illustrated through Steve’s perceptions of ‘normal Higher Education students’. As the extract highlights, upon entering Ivory University (which has been illustrated in Chapter Four as legitimising many of the practices and dispositions that are apparent within Hope), Steve begins to feel intimidated and ‘not one of the them’,

It depends what they look like really. If they look like a stereotypical Ivory student, you know like a girl would be in a stupid Gillet thing, big blonde hair, like Jack Wills joggers and you think ‘God!’ I always think if you were just a normal girl and you came you would think what the hell is this. I feel sorry for them cos they probably would conform and buy loads of stuff they would not buy normally. It is the same with the blokes, they have this stupid big rugby hair, jogging bottoms and Gillet. Take Jack you see he’s proper, he always wanted to be at Ivory he loves that identity. He’s completely opposite to me, he thinks it is cool and thats what he has always wanted to be whereas I just think it is a bit, dunno it is just not…. It’s rubbish basically. There’s nothing behind it, people thinking [they’re] better than others. Thats what it is mainly, just cos they think they’re better than other people. Whereas at Fawlty we did not get anyone like that really. I dunno why, there might be but I haven’t seen them. You did not see anyone around who think they’re the Mutts Nuts, whereas at Ivory everyone thinks they are. [Steve: Interview 4]

As the extract highlights, Steve reinforces critical distance between the practices and resources of Ivory and his own general dispositions. Such positions are indicative of Voigt’s (2007) comment that, ‘Where individuals think that because they belong to a certain group they will be discriminated against, for example when applying to a certain university - their subjective probabilities of success are reduced and they are for that reason less likely to apply to the institution in question’ (p.93). Furthermore, such fragmentation is not an implicit practice but one in which Steve draws upon pre-reflective perceptions of university, drawing upon external structures situated beyond the immediate conjuncture of his transitional experience. This is illustrated by how Steve continually draws upon other agents university experience to preserve his educational identity and position within Hope,

I felt like I would not be able to go, or if I could I would have to go to a poor, like a really bad one and then obviously the stereotype from your mates about going to a really poor uni. But like quite a lot of my mates went to Red-Brick Uni, like the crappy one, and they got
quite a hard time for going there from like my other mates, so if I went to even worse one than that it would have been shocking really. [Steve: Interview 1]

Here, Steve draws upon other agents’ experiences of university to create a position where he believes he is ‘being too thick’ to enter such institutions. In many respects such perceptions highlight how Steve strategically invests in external perceptions of vocational students to maintain a critical distance between the conjuncturally specific dispositions of Higher Education and his general dispositions.

Indeed, for different reasons to Lloyd, Steve’s choice of transition within the UPC pathway is an active choice not to enter elite institutions. Therefore, Steve’s transitional experience becomes fragmented through maintaining a critical distance from the practices of Higher Education without having the general disposition to construct innovative practices to overcome some of these established relations. This causes an outcome where practices and external resources of Higher Education are recognised as ‘intimidating’,

The first couple of times it was pretty intimidating cos you have everyone around here in their Ivory hoodies and ‘Tracky D’s’ and that and it is kind of like ‘yeah’. And I kind of resent them for that a bit, kind of like because they’re kind of what I want to be, that would have been my ultimate goal really, to do a sport science degree here, kind of resent them a little bit as well, which sounds a bit weird. [Steve: Interview 1]

Researcher: So what do you mean by resentment and intimidated?

Steve: It is probably just cos they, yeah they probably did just push themselves, they’ve got that natural, I dunno bit more intelligence to begin with, whereas…you know they’re some people who are naturally intelligent they did not have to work, they can do it, whereas some people actually have to work, I think I am one of those people so and just intimidating cos this is their turf and if they found out that I was from a FD student from a college you know they probably would look down at you would not they. [Steve: Interview 1]

The data highlights a fragmented experience in which, to preserve his own identity, Steve chooses to reinforce the critical distance between his internal structures and the external structures of [elitist] Higher Education institutions. Such practices are supportive of the findings of Reay et al. (2005) who suggest that ‘Students explicitly reject certain institutions based on the perception that they would not fit in, instead looking for universities that provide an environment in which they feel and expect to feel comfortable’ (p.91).

As the data highlights, Steve explicitly distances himself from the legitimised practices of Hope. Such outcomes between the agent and the external resources result in a transitional experience in which there are considerably fewer options. Contrastingly, the data highlights how Lloyd, like Jack,
attempts to weaken framing relations between himself and the external structures of Hope College. However, such relations are implicit to Lloyd, not through his own legitimised general dispositions but by drawing upon other recontextualising agents and structures, such as those of his brother and professional rugby. As the examples have illustrated, Lloyd recontextualises the practices and experiences of his brother to associate social and cultural capital to the practices of Higher Education without experiencing them himself. However, in making this transition, he also confesses to having some reservations regarding the value of the qualification,

Lloyd: I think it is recognition isn’t it, you know nobody really recognises a pass on a FD where as if you get a first it is like ‘Christ he’s got a first Hons degree’ people know and I think it is getting recognition of, because I think FD are relatively new aren’t they, there not…..I think the name needs to be changed, Foundation gives it all away doesn’t it. Like basic, where as if you call it something else I think it would have been thought of as differently. But I think it is the same with FD actual stating.

Researcher: So do you tell people you’re doing the FD?

Lloyd: I did not. I say to people I am going to Fawlty that’s why, I want the level of qualification that I am going to do. I did not want to say I am doing the FD, I got no worries about saying that but I will finish with a Fawlty degree I did not know why it is. I guess you want to be on par with your mates, I want to be on par with on what I could have done degree wise, I did not want to be lower than them. [Lloyd: Interview 2]

In a similar light to Emily’s transitional experience, Lloyd attempts to play the game of transition on his own terms, choosing a pathway where he is explicitly aware of the value of his practices and is able to exchange cultural capital of his Foundation Degree for cultural capital within Fawlty. As the extracts illustrate, the strategic practices, while preserving their identities, lead to the reinforcement of distance between the external structures of the Foundation Degree and the to feelings of frustration and being the other. Interestingly, Lloyd constructs this position in a pre-reflexive manner - even before he has undertaken the transition into the top up year and gained his BSc qualification. The pre-reflective position of themselves as the other is illustrative of the fragmented transitional experience. The outcome of this was witnessed during their experience of Fawlty.


Upon entering Fawlty, Lloyd and Steve were unwilling to embody many of its normative practices, for example, teamwork and engagement within lectures, thus reproducing a critical distance which was not evident within the empowered transitional experience. The critical distance which was
constructed by Steve and Lloyd within Hope is further developed within their Top Up year at Fawlty Tower University. However, as will be illustrated, both Steve and Lloyd’s transitional experience begins to differ based on their willingness and ability to acquire and embody conjuncturally specific dispositions within Fawlty. Examples of the continued fragmented transitional experience will now be illustrated.

It was evident from the beginning of the Top Up year at Fawlty that Lloyd had begun to recontextualise the positions and framing relations that were evident within his experiences at Hope College. In preserving practices, Lloyd increases the critical distance between his embodied dispositions and the conjunctural knowledge of Fawlty University. Such critical distance is evident when Lloyd discusses the purpose of his transition,

> At the end of the day I am just there to get a degree, nothing else, I can then decide what I want then. I would not have chosen to go to uni there, I know I am getting a qualification but I feel sorry for people who have chosen to go there from scratch and live there. [Lloyd: Interview 2]

As the quotation highlights, on immediately entering Fawlty, Lloyd displays a set of normative expectations in which he chooses to remain within the UPC system to protect the dispositions he has already embodied. However, while this relation with external structures is constructed to produce quite strategic outcomes, an unintended consequence is the feeling of being frustrated with the course at Fawlty university,

> For starters I did not feel it is that nice. It is only 15 minutes from the city centre so it’s a fair distance out. I know Ivory is top and Fawlty is at the bottom, there is no comparison, driving up the hill to Ivory, there’s everything. [Lloyd: Interview 3]

> It is all mix and match - how shit Fawlty is, it is crap. You can see why it is not seen as a proper uni. The campus is horrible. I mean if you compare it to Ivory, I mean look at those halls. Our sportshall leaks, it is just not a very nice place, gives the feel of being run down. It is nothing like Ivory, it is built on the back of the airport. [Lloyd: Interview 4]

Following from Stones (2005) such barriers and strategic positioning of himself by drawing upon embodied, pre-reflexive perceptions of the university creates tension, and frustration towards the external structures of Fawlty University,

> It is getting a bit frustrating. Especially, my girlfriend is doing netball everyday down there, scooting to and from Fawlty, thats the biggest difference from last year. Lecture wise, we have only got one lecture in a proper lecture theatre so thats the big difference, the other one’s are very much classroom based but it is run by lecturers, a lot more interactive and
there’s a lot of discipline which is good, they won’t keep telling you, they will send one e-mail out and that is it. [Lloyd: Interview 4].

The critical distance Lloyd reproduced between himself and the external structures of Fawlty is in part a result of Lloyd choosing to recontextualise dispositions formed from practices external to the course, such as those within professional sport and the experience of his Foundation Degree at Hope. The position Lloyd creates within Fawlty is reflective of Waller’s (2006) comment that the individuals who recognise discourses on the course do so because ‘They have the necessary forms of capital to ensure this, and notoriously have the loudest voices and sharpest elbows when the scramble for limited resources ensues’ (p.120). While this position has strong resemblance with the empowered transition, unlike Jack and Emily, Lloyd is unable to exchange the embodied physical capital of his general practices into recognised and valued practices within Fawlty. Thus, as Lloyd illustrates, without being able to create social capital, the critical distance of Lloyd between his internal structures and those external structures specific to the context of Fawlty leads to him feeling frustrated and disillusioned with his transitional experience,

During the journey Lloyd said how fed up he was with the course, everything – the travelling, the nature of the course and how much he was looking forward to finishing and getting out of the place. He looked and sounded frustrated as if going down all the way to Fawlty was becoming more of a chore rather than an enjoyment. I could almost feel his frustration fill the car, suffocating any hope, any ambition. [Field Notes: 1/12/08]

Earlier than I expected Lloyd walked through the doors. His face was full of anger and he provided a wry smile as he sat down at the table. ‘All that way for that fucking shit’. He was not happy and was still fuming as he took out his laptop, I did not get a chance to respond when he continued, ‘Fucking shit, all he did was go through the assignment for the 8th fucking time, two grand for that, what’s the point!!’. I sat in amazement, unable to move, contemplating my response to his anger, I looked at my watch, they hadn’t been in the lecture for more than 20 mins. ‘What’s the point’ Lloyd continued, looking for answers to unanswerable questions, ‘Coming down all that way, I tell you Dave, I am that close to quitting’. I did not know what to say, no words were going to ease his frustrations at this point. They had another hour and a half until their next lecture, an eternity if all you do is come down for your lectures. [Field Notes: 2/12/08]

The strategic critical distance Lloyd constructs, results in frustration with unfamiliar external structures of Fawlty. It is at this point where Lloyd’s fragmented transitional experience reaches a crescendo of negotiation between maintaining a critical distance and reproducing the cohesive self, formed within Hope College,
They’re saying it is a normal degree and it is a normal degree but yet the lectures are nothing like normal and what we’re getting now. Again, I think that might have something to do with the numbers again, like if they 60 people on the course they would use the lecture theatre and make it actually more university like…At the end of the day I am just there to get a degree, nothing else, I can then decide what I want then. I would not have chosen to go to uni there, I know I am getting a qualification but I feel sorry for people who have chosen to go there from scratch and live there. At the end of the day it is a bit of paper, once I get a job nobody will give a shit what qualification I got or where I went and that’s what I am thinking of…The long game. I am still thinking of doing PGCE…[Lloyd: Interview 4]

The extract is illustrative of a time within Lloyd’s transitional experience in which there is a shift in Lloyd’s normative expectations of the qualification. In many respects it may be seen as an illusory form of empowerment, preserving his Foundation Degree social capital while acquiring a qualification which will allow him, in his eyes, to seek employment in ‘the long game’.

After this crescendo, Lloyd increasingly displayed practices which maintained a degree of critical distance between himself and the external structures of Fawlty University. This was particularly noticeable when he ‘shut up shop’ and prevented himself from engaging with practices within the lectures at Fawlty, unwilling to interact with 3rd year students within classes,

Another difference is that we’re with other degree students. There is three sections; sports science people, BEd people and us. A couple of our lectures overrun, like our leadership overruns with the BEd and the BSc and so we sort of mix and match. We still sit with each other, it still happens and what’s funny is that the other FD students all sit with us anyways. I did not really have a lot of interaction with them though, only during lecture time. There’s a couple but because we are commuting to and from Hope City, we get in, do our lecture and then turn round and go home again, there is not a lot of socialising outside of that. Within lectures it is noticeable, we do tend to go to the back of the room, it is just natural I guess…[Lloyd: Interview 3]

Such practices which continued to maintain critical distance results in the preservation of Lloyd’s Hope College identity. Moreover, the illustration made by Lloyd supports the discussion within Chapter Four, highlighting that rather than attempting to integrate with the other students, he uses the external structures of the learning context, creating barriers behind desks, ignoring FTU students and trying to spend as little time as possible within the context. Furthermore, such positioning is not an implicit process (unlike Jack’s) but is explicit, displaying large amounts of active agency in rejecting the power capacities of Fawlty. Given the perceptions highlighted by Lloyd upon initial transition, it was of little surprise that Lloyd did not attempt to integrate himself within the context of Fawlty in a similar manner to Jack within his empowered transition. Indeed
this strategic self-imposed isolation, in which Lloyd rejects the relations and positions of Fawlty, is inductive of Giddens’ point that while agents may display forms of agency, they act in ‘conditions which are not of ‘their’ choosing. Thus, to protect his identity Lloyd creates strong framing relations within the CAFE students and between the ‘normal’ 1st, 2nd, 3rd year students who are established within Fawlty. In many ways his fragmented transition, splintered with these practices of disengagement, have resonance here with Casey’s (1996) notion of defensive self. This self is characterised by displays of small resistances and blockages. Given the short time and space of the Top Up year, it is understandable why they would choose such a transitional strategy.

Contrastingly, during the time I saw Steve at Fawlty, he did not display many of the frustrations Lloyd did, and in many respects made some attempt to integrate himself into the institution, constructing innovative practices which attempted to make him feel like a university student. Over time Steve began to describe practices which suggested that he began to embody rather than merely acquire some of the conjuncturally specific dispositions of Fawlty University and did not ‘shut up shop’ so willingly,

I think now there are no more moments of fitting in, I think we are just there now. Like now I did not see myself as a 3rd year progression student I think in their eyes I am just the same now. I mean there was not a huge gap to begin with I guess for me personally, it just feels personally I am on a level playing field, especially with those grades you know, it was always a bit of a worry, you weren’t sure if you were going to flunk them or not and now we have got good grades. I was a bit worried in October about the special pop’s module so yeah I was well shocked. I was literally walking up thinking over 40, as long as it is not a 3rd I will be well happy with this and came out and it was a 72 so yeah I was pretty happy and relieved. I was chuffed but Emily’s quite competitive, cos she got a 68 and she was F-ing and blinding and wanting a recount but no, she was really happy for me. So everyone was happy, things are looking up for me Dave. [Steve: Interview 4]

As the data highlights, at the beginning of his time at Fawlty, Steve displays signs of empowered transition, similar to those of Emily which shift his horizon of action to acquire and embody some of the practices of Fawlty. However, following from the words of Mouzelis (1991), while the meaning of particular practices are derived from these contexts are related to the dispositions of both agents ‘they are not moulded by them entirely’ (p.198). This is evident within the classroom context where he is able to recognise many of the conjuncturally specific dispositions and is able to draw upon external structures willingly. Moreover, as the data illustrates, through recognition of his position within Fawlty and the ease he feels with this identity, he is able to actively choose not to engage with many of the activities that Emily chooses to participate in.
I get on with everyone there, nobody seems stuck up like you know you see the Ivory Tower people sometimes, the whole, you know nobody is ‘ra’ or there because of daddy’s credit card so it is quite, good bunch of people actually yeah I have had no negative feelings to anyone really, staff or student wise. Yeah I would not mind socialising more, I have met some good lads on the course and they have been like ‘you coming out Wed’ and I am kind of like ‘I would like to’ but it is more effort than it is worth, especially if I am only there one day a week. But I dunno, I might make more of an effort come the end but then I dunno, now I have built up some friendships with those guys I probably won’t see much of them now, they might not be doing my modules and I am only in once a week so by the end of it I did not think I would have made any lifetime even good friends. Just social mates I guess. You think you would have a couple of good mates by the end of it. I guess that’s where you make your bonds, on the nights out and the casual social time in between. [Steve: Interview 4]

A reason behind this willingness to attempt to integrate himself into the practices of Fawlty may be due to the explicit recognition of his position, constructed within Hope, which contrasts with that of Lloyds implicit transition. This shift in horizon of action results in Steve elaborating upon his vocational experience to enjoy some ‘golden moments’ within the first half of the term,

Got some grades back which has been really good and I have done really well. First one was the physiology report and that was a 69, so one off a first and then special pop’s I got a 72 and then the exam we have just had the results back and I got a 60 so I was pretty happy with that as well. That was special pop’s as well, so yeah pretty happy. I have got one grade to come for physiology and it is those two modules done and dashed so touch wood unless I have done really bad in that practical I should get a 2:1 in both of those which is a good start so happy with that. [Steve: Interview 4]

Indeed, paradoxically, Steve’s fear of elite institutions, born through not being able to recognise the dominant discourses of these institutions, creates within Fawlty an identity in which Steve’s practices begin to display creativity and improvisation,

I think they were quite impressed with some of the grades, especially in physiology cos me and Emily did really well. I think we were in the top two or three which was a bit of a shock to some of them, not the more established but just some of the more lay about ones we had in our group. Like when they said ‘what grade did you get’ and we said ‘ah you know, 69-70’ they were like ‘what! How did you do that!? ’ and I was like ‘just worked’ and they were like ‘right…’ but you could tell they’re not really top class students. It was quite good for them to say ‘ah well done’ to me, it made me feel good, like proper. I think this classifies as a golden moment of fitting in. [Steve: Interview 4]

As the extract highlights, rather than preserving the identity from Hope (like Lloyd has) Steve displays outcomes which elaborate upon his established practices, constructing interpretive schemes which lead to the acquisition of conjunctural knowledge. However, in contrast to the empowered
transition of Emily and Jack, there were limits to this elaboration of practice. This is illustrated in how Steve would often prevent himself from interacting beyond the educational context,

I dunno I am not too fussed really with all that I have got to the stage now where a degree is a degree really and I am not fussed with all that other stuff. Like none of us really go and do any of the social stuff I think Pete is the only one and Hannah and Emily play in the teams but I did not do anything socially. I think that’s more because we did not live there I guess, I think if we were on campus we would do more because you have no choice but I always have my family and mates here and university has been a small part whereas for other people university means life, uni lifestyle for me it is just another thing I am doing on the side. [Steve: Interview 4]

As the data highlight, Steve chooses to position himself as the other within Fawlty, reproducing the identity as being the other and displaying an unwillingness to participate socially,

I kind of feel not part of the uni like fully although I am. I guess some of that is because I am so far away and it is one day a week and if I want to use the library I will go and use the library here at Ivory or I will work at home more. Obviously not going to get the train all the way to Fawlty to use the library but I might have to, now I am concentrating on doing dissertation work I will probably have to make more of an effort to get in two or three times a week just cos there are more resources I can use there than I can here at Ivory. [Steve, Interview 4]

This reflects the dangers highlighted within Chapter Four of how colleges may, in the words of Nigel, ‘sell the wrong dream’ to students. As such, despite acquiring a qualification, Steve’s prospective opportunities beyond Higher Education appear limited. This is something Steve is explicitly aware of,

I think you would have to do more stuff to add on to do that although I guess with the teaching I have to do the PGCE but definitely would not want to do gym work and there’s obviously no full time coaching ultimate jobs and I probably haven’t got an in-depth knowledge of any other sport. That would be the best job, to be a full time coach but I haven’t got enough knowledge in other sports, maybe athletics a bit but I dunno. But even then I probably would not have as much knowledge as others, so would be at a big disadvantage. [Steve: Interview 4]

In many ways this last quotation from Steve highlights how his transitional experience is almost cyclical as he finds himself in a similar position to when he first left Further Education. Contrasting to Lloyd’s practices which are governed by shaping his recognition of the practices and conjuncturally specific dispositions of Fawlty on external resources beyond that of the context, Steve’s defensive identity is a direct consequence of the strong framing of relations between his
internal structures and the external structures of Higher Education institutions. Thus, despite highlighting ‘golden moments’ he is not able to fully embody conjuncturally specific knowledge. For Steve, transition remains fragmented and the identity of the other is preserved. This again illustrates how agents, while wanting to shape the external structures which influence their practices are, without recognised and legitimised dispositions, victim to the conditions surrounding their agency. However, while Steve illustrates barriers to elite Higher Education institutions in a similar manner to Emily, he does not have general dispositions which enable him to construct a transitional pathway which overcomes these perceptions. Thus, while Steve’s experience may appear as a success story, questions remain regarding the fragility of their success and the longevity of their acquired social capital. Such questions step beyond the context of this chapter, and are far removed from this study.

6.4. Reflections of Fragmented Transition Experience.

The chapter has illustrated some of the transitional experiences of Lloyd and Steve which have been defined as being fragmented in their experience. As the data within this chapter highlights, initially my thoughts and perceptions regarding Steve and Lloyd were similar to those I had of Jack and Emily. Indeed, as highlighted within the diagram of positions within Hope, the difference between Jack, Lloyd, Emily and Steve regarding their social positions is minimal, yet very significant. Although both Steve and Lloyd are able to recognise the discourses shaped by the existence of perfection codes within the FDSc at Hope, how they engage and embody such discourses remains tempestuous and does not have the stability of empowered transition, illustrated by Emily and Jack. Accordingly, fragmented transitional experience is one of continued negotiation, with relation to what has been illustrated as the exigencies of the contexts (see Stones, 2005; Crossley, 2001).

The outcome of this was that the participants were forced to preserve practices that were formed beyond Hope College. Accordingly, this forces the individual agent to draw upon their own general dispositions in the construction of the transitional experience through the Foundation Degree and into the top up year. This is evident through the data where Lloyd and Steve have highlighted agents beyond those within the specific educational contexts of Hope and Fawly University. As such, while the individual agent may acquire discourses in order for transition to occur, there is little evidence of an embodiment of these as internalised, revised general dispositions. Consequently, what occurs is an opaque dynamic between general dispositions and conjuncturally specific dispositions of contexts - one which is stronger in its framing than that evident in the empowered transitional experience illustrated in Chapter Five.
The fragmented transitional experiences of Lloyd and Steve represent something of a void within transitional experiences illustrated by Foundation Degree policy. Yet, while they have obtained their degrees, the practices they undertook and the silences that arose from these practices remained unexplained and somewhat troublesome. While Lloyd’s transition may seem unproblematic, despite the frustrations he illustrates, what remains to be explored is the signification of these relations beyond these initial transitional experiences. Indeed there remains a fragility to his transition which needs further understanding. Although fragmented, the experiences of Steve and Lloyd offer some glimpses of success and hope for the future. Lloyd’s transitional story is not complete and as the data indicates such transition into employment is likely to be fragmented with moments of frustration in which he will shut up shop, protect the identity he has worked so hard to forge and maintain a critical distance from the practices of Higher Education - will this continue into employment? Contrastingly, although Steve completed his course at Fawlty, his next stage of transition remains undecided and as such cannot say where these experiences will lead him. Indeed the experiences of Steve again raises the question of how working class participants from Further Education can feel entitled to Higher Education when they have no recognition of the feelings of entitlement (see Skeggs, 2004; Reay & Ball, 1997). At a personal level, I can only hope that he overcomes these fragmentations and succeeds as he so readily wants to.

On reflection, a key sign of the fragmented transitional experience was the existence of what has been illustrated as ‘active silences’. Indeed, as I began to explore their experiences in more detail, I quickly noticed that their transcripts are tainted with active silences and barriers, unwilling to acknowledge or discuss in detail particular areas of their transition in the same manner as Jack and Emily. Thus the data gives me a glimpse of meaning which is created out of the interaction between structure and agent but is only truly understood by the participant. It is another form of resistance, one which in some ways is more interesting than those already illustrated and those which will now be discussed in chapter seven. These silences within the interviews allude to a more refined agent-structure relationship that was apparent within the interviews and observations.
Chapter 7 - Failed Transition

7.1. Prelude to Failure.

Previous discussion chapters have illustrated how relations between agents and structures of Further and Higher Education have created transitional experiences illustrated as empowered or fragmented. Along with these transitional experiences, the data also suggests a third transitional experience which has been illustrated as a failed transitional experience. Within this failed transition experience, there are signs of agents not being able to recognise, acquire and embody the conjunctural practices and knowledge found within Hope college and the HEI institutions of Fawlty Tower and Ivory University. This resonates with many of the experiences that have been highlighted within other research concerning vocational student experience (Thomas & Quinn, 2007; Reay et al., 2009; Reay et al., 2010). Like many of these illustrated experiences, the experiences of Charlie and Peter are infused with a number of challenges which are constructed outside the context of their educational experience. It is within these contexts where the origins of the failed transitional experience can be identified.

In contrast with other members of the group, the external structures within Peter’s social and educational background bear a close resemblance to those of students often classified as vocational students (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997; Bowl, 2001). Within Peter’s family, education is seen as a barrier to gaining money and position within society. An unintended consequence of this perception of education, is the distance from the practices and value of education,

  P: My mum was determined, she did not want me to go to college to be fair.

  DA: Why was that?

  P:: Because she is a greedy person and either wanted me out of the house or wanted some lodge money so there was no way I was going to get that on a part time job and college, and she still doesn’t get that. [Peter: Interview 1].

As the extract highlights, embedded within Peter’s external structures are the perceptions and thoughts of his family. These thoughts regarding the role of Higher Education construct an immediate critical distance from the context of Higher Education. Accordingly, for Peter, at this stage of his transition, the idea of further and Higher Education is a distant one, more myth than reality. This was evident within our first conversation,

  All through first school and mostly through all of middle school I was struggling to keep up big time academically. It was not until I got to high school that I sort of [changed from]
being below average to sort of getting above it. It sort of came on me quickly so going from below average in all the test scores... [Peter: Interview 1]

I did not do GCSE PE because what it was they said it was under the options, when they said for the options you get two list boundary and you have to pick two from each list so I still did not know what I wanted to do then. Everything that I wanted to do would be in one band and everything that I did not want to touch with a 10ft barge pole were put in the other one so it was a case of picking two things that I hated and having to pick two from the four that I really wanted to do. So I ended up having French as my first choice and PE as my 2nd choice. I did French and Health and Social Care but I did not pass, I did not complete all the coursework. It was a case of just turn up for a chit chat, you get to go off site quite a bit so people seem to think college and university is a doss! Trust me it is hard work compared to what that lesson was, that was the definition of what a doss lesson was. I did not hand in all the coursework. All the other ones, well I got all the grades or higher that I was expected to in every other single lecture, with every-single other GCSE so I was happy with the results I got. I mean there was one I was expected to fail, again technology did not like it, had to pick one of three things so picked the least boring one that, messed about so much in the lesson, did not do the coursework, did not make it, hardly did any of the making went into the exam with 12 points and I needed like 50 to pass, I somehow managed to get a G instead of a fail. I do not know how but I seemed to of managed it. [Peter: Interview 1]

As the extracts highlight, the experiences of Peter already illustrate a number of barriers and misrecognition of the discourses and practices of education, particularly PE. Accordingly, the data indicates that the general dispositions of Peter do not carry the cultural capital that is expected of current Higher Education students. This resonates with the thoughts of Keddie et al. (2008) who suggest,

With schools assuming middle-class culture, attitudes and values, we can see how students might lack cultural capital necessary for academic success - with regard to the explicit and implicit values, knowledge, attitudes to and relationship with academic cultures required for success in school. [Keddie et al., 2008:199]

What is evident from Peter’s transitional experience is how participants without valued practices and general dispositions, within their internal structures construct practices within an established hierarchy of educational positions which determines a transitional route for the student which is detached from the reality of their position. The failure of these external structures positions Peter into a transition which encourages him to go to college, despite his critical distance from these practices and the cultural capital of his qualifications gained at school. For example, based on his academic results Peter was positioned into classes which he found ‘boring’ and where everyone was ‘expecting him to fail’. Such positioning creates strong framing relations early within the
transitional experience which the student can do very little to weaken. This contrasts to the empowering experience of transition where there was evidence that through the acquisition and exchange of social capital to cultural capital, students are able to alter these framing relations (for example see chapter, five and six). Thus, in many respects, Peter’s early educational attainment has strong resonance with traditional thoughts of framing relations. This is supported by Bernstein (1990), who suggested that, where strong framing exists ‘the transmitter explicitly regulates the distinguishing features of the interactional’ (p.36). The strong framing between Peter and the practices of education are aptly illustrated through the following comment,

If it was school work I viewed that it had to be done within the school hours, once I got home that was my time, especially in the summer months it is spent down the fields kicking a football. [Peter: Interview 1]

As the extract highlights, the practices and perceptions of education of Peter are constructed through strongly classified relations. Such relations, in which the institutions of school and home are seen as two distinctly different contexts, mirror the traditional work/leisure practices framed by many working class people. Thus, whereas middle class students are more likely to be exposed to practices of work and education within the home, the position of Peter causes him to be unable to acquire the discourses or practices of education. This contrasts with the implicit relation to education that is evident within the empowered and, at times, within the fragmented transitional experiences of Lloyd. Accordingly, without being able to recognise or decode the legitimised and valued forms of cultural and social capital Peter lacks an orientation to the meaning of some of these practices and the ability to influence these framing relations and positions within education,

Researcher: So after you did not get your job at Argos, what did you do?

Peter: I started looking the options at college cos I had an interview at connexions, who said I liked sport and would be interested in studying it. They then put me through to Hope College and get an interview. It was like mid August when that interview happened so got an interview later for the course, for National Diploma in Sport Science? I botched up the first year and ended up not getting onto the 2nd year which is why I am still at college now. I got that and then got onto it because even though I did not think I was going to do that well in GCSE’s what I did get was better than expected and also got me into the brackets about getting on to a National Diploma, be it only just by a couple of points. You needed at least a C in English and Maths, I got a D in my English but was able to retake but I did get a B in my maths which was my highest grade actually. So having that down as one of the mandatory ones helped a bit. [Peter: Interview 1]
Without general dispositions (ISgd) which carry valued cultural and social capital, Peter becomes positioned by external structures (ESm) in the form of support agencies such as Connexions. Subsequently, Peter’s transitional experience is not shaped by embodied dispositions regarding Higher Education but a hierarchy of positions and discourses which are created by agents and their external resources. However, at no point does the data reveal what Peter wanted to do, what he needed, ‘what he would be interested in’. This illustrates the powerful influence external structures (ESm) such as support agencies have upon how students in this position come to understand the role of further and Higher Education and, subsequently, their transitional experience within and through it. Again, this differs from the empowered and fragmented transitional experiences in which education and Higher Education was valued as a means of getting out of the social positions in which the participants found themselves. Subsequently, given the porosity and weak classification of the college system, Peter is positioned into Hope College, based on his ‘interests’ rather than practices in sport. Such a position becomes extremely fragile,

I play football and cricket which have been my interests for a fair few years but due to the time my dad worked when I was younger I did not get much time, he couldn’t take us down the fields for a kick about and my mum absolutely hated sport so when everyone else around us was in competitive matches she was taking us up town so I missed out on quite a lot, well I completely missed out on youth level in football and then only got a couple of years in middle school cricket team for the cricket so I have missed out a lot on the basic training sort of thing, sort of needed. [Peter Interview 1]

The data here highlights how Peter does not have the physical capital required for the National Diploma in Sport. Consequently, without embodied sporting practices and knowledge to draw upon, Peter struggles on the course, resulting in an outcome which represents failure,

First year [at Hope] I did National Diploma in Sport Science but seriously botched that one up and did not get asked back. I then went onto a GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism so two years had gone and went back to where I started, National Diploma in Sports Development and Fitness and then onto the FD. [Peter: Interview 1]

Sadly, as the data highlight, Peter fails his first years at Hope College. The failure to acquire conjuncturally specific dispositions leads to a reproduction of previously acquired practices rather than the elaboration and development of new practices and positions. Accordingly, Peter’s transitional experience is not progressive or linear in it is direction. There are some troubling points regarding the reproduction rather than elaboration of practice for students in Peter’s situation. Although Peter has no physical capital to acquire legitimate forms of social and cultural capital, he
is still able to enter sports courses which promote practice and knowledge specific to the field of sports. This is in despite of failing one course,

I was brought in on the referral system, a fair few times so I mean I did not know how I was not kicked off beforehand in all honesty, but towards the end, like I said I did pull my finger out and actually doing the assignments but the only thing was I left it too late. So I obviously showed that I can do it, which is why they suggested, they actually gave me an option of going straight back and redoing the first year and starting again and I thought right, it is still sort of overwhelming the amount of work that I had to do so I best go onto the one year course for the time being and see what it is like afterwards. [Peter: Interview 1]

Despite Peter failing to acquire any of the specific practices and the qualifications needed, there is an apparent necessity, communicated by institutions to keep agents, such as Peter, within the college system. Consequently, before joining the Foundation Degree at Hope Peter becomes ‘part of the furniture’ at Hope College, reproducing devalued practices and positions within a number of different vocational courses at the college over a period of six years. Accordingly, Peter becomes to depend on the college and courses, creating a position in which Higher Education practices become almost normalised and implicit. However, although this has been seen to be positive for participants within the empowered transitional experience, within Peter’s experience such normalisation of practice is replaced by implicit (mis)recognition of the external structures,

Towards the end of the year, after I had done all the coursework and the exam was the last thing we did on the last day. So finding help with the coursework was great, given the assignment sheets and on the back, P1, P2, P3 and M1, M2, M3, D1, D2 sort of thing. So I got the grasp of that quite well and seeing as I did that quite well, it was exactly the same as they did on the National Diploma so I thought well, I have already grasped it so I am going to be ahead of most of the people doing it anyway. I mean there were two others in my year that went onto the National Diploma. My first year at college was a failed attempt at the National Diplomas in Sport Science, 2nd year I got a merit in Leisure and Tourism, next two years was spent doing the National Diploma in Sports and Exercise Fitness which I got, distinction, distinction, merit overall and I am now on a mandatory two year course with the option of a third year in the Foundation Degree of Sport and Fitness. [Peter Interview 1].

While such a transition is almost implicit in its (mis) recognition to Peter, his experience highlights a number of relations which are detrimental to the agent and restrict opportunity rather enabling possibility. Accordingly, this time spent within Further Education constructs a particular type of relation with the external structures of Further Education, one in which Peter is implicit to the value of his general dispositions,
Yeah you had to apply through UCAS but because it was based at the college, run by nearly all the same lecturers that did my National Diploma, they sort of all knew me which was a big advantage and they, Hope College had to send the references so they were able to know my strengths and my weaknesses before I started. Because it is a university course you have to apply for UCAS, like everywhere else so they gave us help with every step of the way on that. [Peter: Interview 1]

Consequently, Higher Education now no longer becomes an implicit mythological transition, something to be unquestioned and natural,

The FD part of it is a two year course, at the end of it you have a Foundation Degree but you [also] have the option of a top up year, which I have applied to take up, so it is just a case of getting the grades for this year and getting accepted for that top up year which is down at Fawltys, which is basically ********, as much as I hate ******** I am still going to go there. [Peter: Interview 1].

Despite Peter not being ready for university and not having the grades, he is still complicit with the external structures and the UPC System. Thus, following the words of Webb et al. (2002) such complicity with the dominant vision of the course occurs ‘not because we necessarily agree with them, or because they are in our interests, but because there does not seem to be any alternative’ (p.92). As such, the implicitness Peter demonstrates may be due to very few alternatives other than the course. However, the implications of such complicity need to be questioned and will be explored further later in the chapter.

For Charlie, Higher Education was never something he had thought of pursuing. While not as extreme as the thoughts of Peter’s family, the distance between the external structures of family (ESis) and Higher Education were still evident. This is displayed through the experiences of Charlie’s parents who had never been to university and both worked in jobs which they had gained when leaving school,

My mum used to work in Boots in the night shift so she was home during the day and then when dad came home she went off to work and um and my dad worked for BT the whole time and he used to um work on all the telegraph poles and fix things out. But he got a hand condition so he was working in an office but now he was working out but in exchanges and that so um sort of fixing things and that…He’s been there, well since he left school, he joined as an apprentice and went straight to what he’s doing now, he has been managing but he doesn’t like it, he gets stressed quite easily, he doesn’t like that sort of thing. [Charlie: Interview 1]

The prominence of family in constructing Charlie’s position and relation with the context of Further Education became immediately evident. This position and relation to external structures
(ESm + ESis) resonates with the thoughts of Patiniotis and Holdsworth (2005) who note how ‘Students with little or no family knowledge of university life, do not possess the ‘right’ kind of legitimated cultural capital, are more likely to experience HE as alien and a risky adventure’ (p.84). Within Charlie’s experience this risk became evident within our first discussions regarding his decision to go to Hope College,

When we were at high school we had a careers module and we looked at, actually we did not really look at, the teacher, basically said everyone is going to go to college if you haven’t got an apprenticeship then thats how it happens, thats how it is going to happen. She said did not worry about not getting into college, you’re [at a] primary high school in *****, basically your’re guaranteed a place so as long as you get the grades for your course you can get to go onto a course. So she sort of built it up that thats’ what you could do, it was either Hope College, modern apprenticeship or that was it. Some of my year group went out to ***** College to do animal care but the careers advisor basically said you know, Hope College or modern apprenticeship thats it. She did not say anything about ***** College so I could of done the outdoor education or things like that out there. So thats how I went from high school to college: I like sport and things like that so ticked the box, of course got my grades and yeah that’s how I got to college...When the careers lady came again, she gave us prospectus and we had a look through and we did like questionnaire type things, what we like and she had programmes where you answer like 50 questions and it comes out with all these jobs that you would be good at. Really it is interesting that none of them that came up for me, it was sort of like builder, artist, but I hated art if you see what I mean? None of them were sport or sport orientated jobs so in a way looking back at it now it is sort of interesting to see what I got and what I am now doing. But yeah I found the National Diploma in the prospectus and sort of thought, well saw the performance and excellence and the development of fitness and thought well can’t really do that as I am not very good at rugby so I’ll go and do the development and fitness. [Charlie: Interview 1]

As the extracts highlight, for Charlie transition from High School to College is an uncertain one, a risky adventure compounded by the external structures of his family. Such uncertainty, constructed in relation to the specific external structures of school, leads Charlie to become positioned into Hope College rather than displaying any choice or elaboration upon his own embodied practices within his internal structures (ISgd). Furthermore, such framing is influenced by the external structures of Charlie’s family. Such framing relations forces Charlie to recognise, acquire and embody the practices of Higher Education independently, leading to a misrecognition of Higher Education,

Again I did not really know, I think it was just the fact that I like sport and I’m not really sure what I wanted to do, not really interested in anything else, just seemed not like an easy
option but the fairly obvious one that I would enjoy. I mean from running round when I was a kid and all of school and that I thought I’m fairly active I might as well do sport. In between high school (and college) I wanted to be a chef [laughs] so I mean I did food tech at school but I mean did not really fancy doing the catering course at the college. We had an open evening at the school where all the heads of departments came to the school and sat at the table and basically said I want to do, I might want to do catering and he basically said it was like a proper restaurant if you know what I mean, so proper grilled everyone if they made a mistake. As much as that would have been alright I would not have fancied getting absolutely shouted at everyday. I did not know if it would be like that but thats how it was sold to me as being so um kind of put me off doing that. [Charlie: Interview 1].

The extract highlights similar themes that were evident within the transitional experience of Peter. The data demonstrate that without recognition of the value of qualifications, Charlie becomes positioned by the external structures of the school and college. Additionally, unlike the empowered or fragmented transitional experiences, Charlie is undecided whether he should go to university and stay in Further Education. However, he never questions the positions constructed by the college and in many significant ways is unaware to the positions and transitions he is embarking on. Consequently, this alters relations to external structures involved in transition causing the experience of Higher Education to be forced upon him, something that has to be done, rather than something that wants to be done. Thus, while the weak classification of the relations between school and college forces the embodied dispositions of the individual to become part of transition, the influence of vertical discourses creates a dependency for students who do not have valued cultural and social capital.

Such relations and dependency was also significant for Charlie because, like Peter, he did not have the physical capital which could be exchanged for social and cultural capital to empower him. This can be highlighted through the different type of physical capital in contrast to those legitmised practices illustrated in Chapters Four and Five,

My parents aren’t really sporty people if you know what I mean, they used to when they were younger but not at the moment and not really back then but they sort of encouraged it if you know what I mean because otherwise I would just be running around the house causing havoc so I think that’s why they sort of forced me, well not forced me but told me to go and play outside sort of thing…[Charlie, Interview 1]

As the extract highlights, sport is present but not important within Charlie’s general dispositions (ISgd). Furthermore, contrasting to the general dispositions of Jack, Emily and Lloyd, Charlie acquires Physical capital from embodied sporting practices which are not shaped by dominant and recognised discourses of team sport. For those students upon the course who do not
possess valued general dispositions, the transitional experience becomes somewhat different. Accordingly, while Charlie describes himself as being ‘fairly active’, playing basketball for the local club and college, his general dispositions (ISgd) do not display any of the characteristics of the valued practices highlighted in Chapter Four and Five.

Importantly, this begins to shape Charlie’s perceptions of what Higher Education might be like for him and he clearly identifies a limitation with having physical capital that is not valued within some institutions and as he suggests he ends up ‘not really knowing what I wanted to do in life’,

I went to college from High school not really knowing what I wanted to do in life and thought I am fairly good at sport, I like sport so why did not I do the sports development course. There was two to choose from, there was performance and excellence and um there was sports development and fitness I think...yeah sports development and fitness and I thought because it was performance and excellence it was the academy sports so it would be just like the football, the rugby, the women’s football, rugby and the netball. Obviously I can’t do the last two but football I was never really good at and rugby I’ve never really played [laugh] so I thought there was no point in me doing the performance and excellence group, I’ll just do the development and fitness so I went on to do that, enjoyed what I did there, joined the basketball club at the college. [Charlie: Interview 1]

Such uncertainty at the beginning of transition forces Charlie to draw upon his general dispositions, which revolve around the external structures of sport, to enter Higher Education. However, while such relations may allow students access and empowerment (such as with Jack and Emily) for Charlie, it causes him to be increasingly positioned by the external structures of college to construct a transitional experience which has little recognition of Charlie’s general dispositions,

When it came to choose what sort of university course I wanted to do I was a little bit, um...I did not know, scared not the word but sort of um shocked to think, this time next year I’ll be at university doing everything on my own and I did not think I was really ready for it so um, I found out they had this Foundation Degree course going on at the college and I thought it is two years if I did not want to do it after that I’ll drop out. [Charlie: Interview 1]

Foundation course, um, well like I said, I was not really, I thought I was ready to go to uni but I was not if you know what I mean, um, when I was at college, um, all the assignments were like only need to get a pass, well to do this, I need four passes to do this. I was a little bit lazy as well so basically, did the minimum amount and basically came out with a triple pass grade which is not enough to get into many other universities but then I could of, looking back at it worked a lot harder and got the grades but because I thought the Foundation Degree course is at Ivory then I might as just get the minimum requirements for that and just follow on to that. [Charlie, Interview 1]
The above extracts have particular resonance with the transitional experiences of Peter. Like Peter, there is a critical distance between his own practices and the external structures of Higher Education. Hence, the thought of Higher Education is shocking, something to be questioned, something that he is not ‘really ready for’. Like Peter, there are already signs of doubt regarding his position within Higher Education and indeed many of the reasons behind choosing the Foundation Degree was to enable Charlie to be able to ‘drop out’. However, as identified elsewhere in research (see Hodkinson & Bloomer, 2001) the ability of students to drop out is at times beyond their control or following Giddens, not under conditions of their own choosing.

Again, the initial experiences of Charlie highlight the unintended consequences of the weak classification of the Foundation Degree, identified within Chapter Four, and the porous nature of Further Education. Indeed, while such porosity may allow students to enter Further Education quite implicitly, it also allows them to withdraw or gives them a ‘perceived’ sense of empowerment. However, contrasting to the empowerment that was evident within Jack and Emily’s transition, because Charlie and Peter do not have embodied legitimate practices and general dispositions this choice and perceived empowerment is almost mythological. It is evident that both Peter and Charlie, under conditions not of their own choosing have, following the words of Nigel, bought the dream of Higher Education without understanding what the dream is or whether it is truly their own dream. Such mythological positions adopted by Charlie and Peter pre-dispose them to a number of transitional experiences they have within Hope.

7.2. The Mythical Investment in Hope College.

Although both Peter and Charlie had spent time at Hope College completing National Diplomas before joining the Foundation Degree, the critical distance between their practices and perceptions began to differ greatly from those of the course and other agents within the FDSc course at Hope. As has been discussed, the practices and relations within the Foundation Degree at Hope were strongly framed around discourses of competition, masculinity and toughness. While for some of the participants, the recognition and acquisition of these practices enabled empowerment, for Charlie and Peter they presented a number of problems and began to shape a very different transitional experience. Upon observing the class while the framing of relations between Nigel, Jack and sometimes Lloyd were weakened, through their implicit understanding and shared physical capital, for Peter and Charlie, the framing of such relations remained strong throughout. This is highlighted by a number of observations of the class made during my time there,
Once again the focus of the group conversation continued around Peter and in this case it was about his sexuality and his appearance: ‘Get your haircut Peter’. This comment made me feel a little uncomfortable particularly as my hair (and general chubby appearance) was as long as his yet they chose to ignore my breach of haircut length. Why was this? Are they being polite and although thinking it not saying it? If I were a member of the group would I get the same banter? It was clear that Peter was thought of being as different to the others. [Field Notes: 04/02/08]

At this point Peter joined in. I did not know why but I noticed the look of bewilderment on other people’s faces as well. To Peter it was one big joke and he was playing up to the role of being the joker of the group. ‘Who’s more likely to get to the world cup!’ shouted Peter towards Nigel. There was a sense of shock within the rest of the class – why was Peter sticking up for Lloyd? Nigel was shocked by this and his only repose was to have a go at the way Peter looked, calmly responding ‘get a hair cut’. Everyone started laughing including Peter. On the surface it was all good banter that was occurring between people who had obviously experienced this kind of thing before. Yet I couldn’t help feeling slightly sorry for Peter as he clearly did not think anything of this. [Field Notes: 14/01/08]

As the data highlights, without the legitimised haircut or dress sense, Peter is positioned on the periphery of the relations at Hope. The relationship between Peter’s embodied general dispositions and the conjunctural specific knowledge, formed between relations of the group become increasingly strong. Such relations were often constructed through the perceptions of other agents, particularly regarding his appearance and perceptions of his sexuality. The extracts above support Bernstein’s thought that where there is strong framing of relations, ‘the transmitter controls the selection, organization, pacing, criteria of communication and the position, posture and dress of the communicants…’ (p.37). Crucially, such framing of relations affect how Peter comes to acquire conjuncturally specific dispositions during his time at Hope. This again is highlighted within a practical session,

As well as this Nigel would break the writing/listening pattern by cracking a couple of jokes regarding his age and the state of his body, sometimes this was done at the expense of other people’s bodies. One example of this would be the others making reference to Peters lack of athletic prowess. It was all taken in good heart but I couldn’t help but feel that he was being picked on slightly because of his athletic prowess…After the theory the guys went down to the gym to do some practical work. The aim of the practical was to try out different ways of measuring flexibility of the body. To begin with each pair (Peter left out again) took a different exercise and went away to try it out. [Field Notes: 07/01/08]

Nigel then found a reaction test on the computer and we all had a go at doing it. Hannah and Lloyd seemed really competitive and Hannah said that she had tried something like this in Magaluf and won a few shots for having the best reaction times. This brought a laugh from
the rest of the group – they all then had a go at doing this including me and Nigel. Peter went first, he is clearly the least sporting of the group and is reminded of this constantly. The times were written on the white board and the feeling within the group turned very competitive for a while. [Field Notes: 05/11/07]

The lesson was entirely focused upon the remaining presentations for their assignments and reflection and evaluation of the assignments afterwards. Hannah, Steve and Peter were left although Steve was nowhere to be seen at the start so Charlie had to go and get him. Peter was the first to go, there was an immediate air of humour when he stood up and I felt like the naughty boy in school assembly again trying not to catch people’s eyes when Peter began his presentation. Surprisingly Peter’s presentation was okay and he delivered it in his unique fashion, he answered the questions posed to him regarding flexibility successfully. However, compared to Lloyd and Emily’s presentations last week his scientific language was not there and it clearly marked him down for it. However, he was pleased with his efforts of 55% and went and sat down with a smile on his face. After, when we were chatting I asked how he felt he had got on and he said he felt it would have gone better, this reflected upon him trying to compare himself to the other students within the group. [Field Notes: 18/03/08]

These particular extracts again reflect the strongly framed relations that existed between Peter and the discourses which construct the external structures of Hope. Furthermore, it also highlights that when participants did not have the valued general dispositions embodied within their internal structures, they are positioned within such framing relations, often under conditions which are not of their choosing. This is illustrated through the numerous times where humour constructed the relations between Peter and other agents, both student and teacher alike. Indeed the relations Peter has with Nigel and the rest of the group supports Willis’ (1994) observation that a key part of the division of gender relations is by humour and promotion of laughter. Contrasting to the previously illustrated empowered transitional experiences, attempts to challenge authority and position himself within the hierarchy are quickly and ruthlessly dismissed by Nigel. The use of humour by Peter to challenge the dominant discourses is reflective of Brown (1998) who comments,

Being on the outer is not terribly appealing and navigating the unspoken rules is not easy. For those who reject forms of masculinity or did not gain acceptance, there are many other stories to tell. [Brown, 1998: 95]

It was difficult to ascertain what Peter made of this humour, whether it made him feel wanted but reflecting on the interview data he never mentioned such moments. As illustrated within Chapter Six such silences are similar to those displayed by Steve. The consequences for Peter may indeed have been hidden to the extent that their signification for his transitional experience is one
which is placed upon him rather than being acknowledged himself. Nevertheless, I cannot help but wonder how these may have affected his experience of Further Education.

The isolation Peter experiences, through his lack of physical capital, causes him to draw upon and reproduce an almost mythical perception of his physical practices. This is highlighted within his perception of his physical capital during his time on the Foundation Degree course, something which was reproduced from previous experiences and other external structures,

In between the induction and getting to know people I actually suffered a broken toe so I was actually out injured so everyone else was like ‘yeah, I was out on the weekend, scored this many goals, this many shots’ but yeah I was injured so I couldn’t really get into those sort of conversations so it did make it a lot more difficult. It cracked right on the joint so it took longer to heal, especially when I went there got the x ray and said right you’re going to have to walk on it, can’t give you crutches for it. Four and a half months later and I was still injured. [Peter: Interview 1]

It is improved a lot. Well, obviously being injured and not being able to talk about sporting experiences made it difficult a lot cos everyone else was able to share theirs being it either refereeing or playing, the only thing I had to go on at that point was that I saw **** City stuff someone 5-0 at the weekend, so not a lot you can go on when everyone else is playing and your just paying to watch. [Peter: Interview 1]

Yet there is something almost mythical about these injuries and how Peter uses them, attempting to cleverly weaken the framing of relations and position himself within the group. However, as the data highlights, the thoughts of Peter contrast dramatically to those observations I made within the class. This highlights an implicit awareness of these relations and the value of his own practices in relation to the dominant practices and relations of Hope. This attempt at innovative positioning is implicit as he continues to develop such a position despite it being ignored and unable to generate cultural and social capital. The mythological nature of his transitional experience, in which the normative expectations are detached from the conjunctural experience of Hope is also highlighted through his continued dream of becoming a professional coach,

Because I want to be a football coach and their course is more angled towards sports coaching whereas the one in Oceania is one we’re supposed to go on is more down towards fitness side so more towards working in the gym, so there was not much point in me going down that route when I had the option of going onto a more sports coaching one. [Peter: Interview 1]

Peter: Um, I chose this course because I want to be a football coach, I want to try and get as high up the ladder as possible so to start off with it is going to be with kids but eventually the aim is to be the manager of a professional football team...aiming high!
Interviewer: set your goals high....

Peter: So sports coaching and fitness, well obviously to be a manager you’ve got to be able to coach so and for sports especially at professional level there seems to be a lot of fitness with it so it seemed to be perfect for what I wanted to do. [Peter, Group Interview]

Strange – this would have to be the weirdest interview experience I have had. What do I say about Peter? I think after this interview it is fair to say he would have to represent one end of the scale within the class. His perception of his reality is strange/bizarre and represents in some cases some sort of fairytale adventure. However, he did not tell this tale in a way I was accustomed to or expecting. His answers to open ended questions were short and sharp yet his responses he conveyed kept on giving useful inklings into his reality, one in which he dreams of being a professional football coach. He is certainly different to other students in that it would appear that he has some sort of learning difficulty (through my experiences of SEN) but I can’t and won’t ask him about this, yet how he perceives the course and how he got here was enlightening and changed my perceptions of the Foundation Degree. It was a very unique/narrowed perception of the course. PD attempted to quantify every answer, attempting to narrow and close to the reality of the world he has constructed through his fairytale. He has chosen to go further but will he go? [Confessional Tales: 04/02/08]

As the extracts highlight, the experiences that Peter has within Hope College are almost mythical in their nature. Furthermore, the mythical transitional experience Peter constructs is particularly pertinent given Nigel’s comment of how Foundation Degrees, such as the one at Hope, sell a ‘false dream’ to students (see Chapter Four). Unfortunately for Peter, investment into this false dream, through the failure to recognise the practices and rules of Hope and education cause him, not to construct a hierarchy of practice. This strengthens Stones’ (2005) suggestion that agents are continually positioned within an existing hierarchy of practices. In Peter’s transitional experience he does not have the general dispositions to influence and demonstrate active agency to overcome this transitional situation.

While Peter continued to display this mythical transition, there were a number of signs of failure becoming apparent. Such distance and implicit recognition of the conjuncturally specific dispositions of Hope resulted in outcome where Peter only passed the minimum requirements for the Top Up year at Fawlty,

I passed everything. One had to be a compensated pass because I got 39% in another unit so they took 1% from another unit but apart from that one most of the grades I was getting were low C’s high D’s sort of area, more in the low C’s. So about a 4-5% improvement on the first year results. I was a little bit annoyed with how three of the assignments went. Two were in the module that I failed which is a case of just one thing…So I was a bit annoyed about that. So I got 40% pass on one of them and I think it was a 25% fail on the other one but the 25%
was only worth about 20% of the overall grade whereas the other one was a huge chunk of it. So if the grades had been the other way round I would have been in trouble. [Peter: Interview 3]

Despite failing the some of the modules at Hope, Peter continued to display a willingness to continue with the degree programme and enter the prescribed route of Fawlty University. Thus, at this stage the mythical dreams of Peter remained alive and were not discouraged by the institutions Hope or Fawlty. This is despite many reservations of both himself, other agents and recontextualising agents,

I think he’s, he’s not saying anything, he’s not said anything but I think he’s not enjoying it and sometimes he feels like ‘shut up’ he never says it Cos he likes everyone so it is just the way I view it and his preferences I did not really, in certain things, did not really sort of help the situation, sort of adds fuel to the fire really. [Charlie: Interview 1]

Personally I did not think he’s very good at much sport um I co-ordination and understanding, he’s done really [well] from where is come on since I first met him but I think sometimes he, I did not know, he says he wants to become a football manager but in my opinion he might have the knowledge but personally I did not think he’s got the skill but then you know he tries and that but everyone rips it out of him, because he comes out with random jokes as well and it is like...you know. I mean I think as well because, with the lecturers as well, they’re quite comfortable with us and yesterday you saw it Nigel started Paul’s jokes up on the board, that’s carried on today sort of thing. [Charlie: Interview 2]

The extracts highlight some of the reservations made by Peter’s closest friend in the group, Charlie. Nevertheless Peter was adamant that he wanted to continue into Fawlty University. As the data highlights, Peter demonstrates an implicit awareness of his position, resulting in an outcome which reproduces the existing identity that was constructed before the FDSc experience. Throughout his time at Hope, Peter continued to demonstrate an implicit awareness of the position and the value of his embodied dispositions. This is highlighted by one of our final conversations towards the end of term at Hope,

The award I got the other week. It was the award for outstanding excellence. I was actually a bit surprised by that, it was at the award evening, they did not announce the nominations and for this one they did not even have nominations they went straight on to talk about the winner, it was only half way through that I realised that it was me. The award is for outstanding excellence and the reason they gave it to me was because, I was on the GNVQ but that was the last year before it split into Foundation Diplomas so basically an inspiration seeing as I have gone from right at the bottom to right at the top and moving onto university so sort of like, for those who are going nowhere, this is what you can aspire to sort of thing. [Peter, Interview 2]
Hmm, it is not as exciting as it use to be, I have been there so long, I know the ins and outs and all that. I mean people from my first year by the time I had left were actually starting to lecture there which made me start to think, right get out, get out, get out!! I have been there too long when your first year classmates are now lecturers. [Peter: Interview 2]

In the end I think I was more associated with the college rather than the college being associated with me considering that was the end of my 6th year there. It just felt like a 2nd home by the end, it did feel weird when I had to leave and it hasn’t taken long but I did have to adjust to study somewhere else… [Peter: Interview 3]

The experiences of Peter at Fawlty question the practices and weak classification of vocational qualifications such as the FDSc at Hope. Reflecting upon this time and conversation I had with Peter, I remember the feeling I had watching these events and the consequences of this experience unfolding before me. It must be questioned whether the classification of such courses is in the best interests of some of the students who are allowed onto the course. I agree with Archer et al. (2007) in suggesting that the way market-oriented pedagogic knowledge is constructed within Hope structures and reinforces the white hegemonic habitus which prevents Peter from seeking to move beyond the local context or value of his qualification,

One of the people in my physiology group asked me what the FD was like and why it was a FD. Obviously we put the word Foundation in front of it and it is more like they’re saying like it is not the same level whereas the only reason it is called a Foundation Degree is because of time. The main reason I went down that route is that I was not sure if I wanted to do the full three years. If I waited to do a full degree and dropped out after two years I would get nothing but with the Foundation Degree I got the two years so if I decide not to follow through with this year I have got the Foundation Degree but I have also got the option of topping up the degree at the end, which I have obviously gone and done and because I did not know whether I wanted to do the full three years if I could do two years at least get the Foundation Degree. It seems like from the start a long time to think ahead whereas with two years it is what we’re use to at the college courses…the college courses are normally two years, I have been on a one year course at college before but generally they’re two years. [Peter: Interview 3]

What needs to be asked regarding this type of experience is in whose interests are these qualification? For whom are they most appropriate and are they merely reproducing inequality and forming a restricted opportunity? Here I reflect upon the mission statement of the Foundation Degree programme and wonder whether Peter’s experience meet the requirements of the field.

While the data highlighted a failed transitional experience from the onset with Pete, the experiences of Charlie at Hope College alluded to a transitional experience which was yet undecided, a failed
transition which was in process. Accordingly, there were times where Charlie highlighted more of a fragmented transitional experience. However, like Peter and contrasting with the practices and positions of Jack and Emily, Charlie is unable to recognise the conjuncturally specific dispositions within Hope. As highlighted above, this mis-recognition is created through a lack of valued physical capital and is unable to interact with many of the strong framing relations that have been illustrated elsewhere,

I think the staff at the college even though they are great are all rugby and football orientated so there was not really going to happen as much as they said it would and as much as everyone wanted it. It was not really going to take off so I played for them for two seasons but I only played properly in second year, first year I did not get into the team but they said, you know come along to the training. [Charlie: Interview 1]

The extract above again highlights the strong framing of relations constructed through the recontextualisation of discourses found within team sports such as football and rugby. However, for students such as Charlie, without such practices, they are unable to recognise and acquire many of the social practices within Hope. Furthermore, the data highlights how within his transitional experience he is continually having to position himself within relations and positions of Hope. Consequently, for Charlie, existence within the context is reflective of the observations by Sparkes et al. (2007) that ‘in this competitive, elite environment, where athletic performativity is a core disposition, the exchange value of their physical capital often becomes problematic’ (p.306).

This is also highlighted within the theoretical lessons of Hope. In contrast to Peter, Charlie was explicit in his recognition of the value of the National Diploma course and his lack of cultural capital that the other students have,

I found that on the course we’re on now, the foundation degree they sort of say oh this is kind of like A-level stuff but in the National Diploma I never covered any of the A-level stuff so in a way it is sort of all new for me so I did not know what the A-level stuff is like compared to National Diploma but some stuff I’ve covered but they haven’t, people who have covered A-levels and stuff that I haven’t. [Charlie: Interview 1]

Accordingly, Charlie displays an explicit recognition of the cultural capital of his acquired practices from the National Diploma. Importantly, as Charlie highlights, many of the specific practices of Hope are ‘all new to him’. This indicates that he is unable to draw upon embodied general dispositions and lacks the conjuncturally specific dispositions required to recognise many of the practices within the Foundation Degree. This inability to recognise and acquire discourses regarding the body, practices and knowledge leads him to be positioned within the hierarchy of relations, in which agents such as Jack, Emily, and to an extent, Lloyd are able to elaborate upon.
Accordingly, Charlie became very disillusioned with the course and his position within Hope, often portraying himself as an outsider within the group, on the periphery of social and educational relations,

I’ll be talking in class trying to get my point across but I get sometimes…just Cos I am trying to think what I am saying as well, and everyone was like ‘ [tuts] oh no, not Charlie again’ I think I am not the only one in the group who’s perceived like that if you know what I mean. I think there’s some other people who sort of sit back and if they did not understand it. [Charlie: Interview 1]

I think it was the way the staff treated me last year compared to the way staff treat me this year. Everyone is equal this year. Whereas last year it was Lloyd and Jack are amazing at rugby so you know…and they kind of gave the chat a bit with Lucy, not flirting but you know it was almost felt like that if you know what I mean. Because he [Jack] was being really confident in saying things they would do more for him whereas everyone else had to sort of work a little bit harder. I might have got that totally wrong but thats how I felt about last year. [Charlie: Interview 3]

Here Charlie presents himself as the outsider, one who has not mastered the appropriate ways of acting within the classroom or institution. As the extract from the interview data highlights, Charlie feels positioned on the periphery of relations within Hope, unable to weaken the framing of relations. Additionally, at other times Charlie talked openly of being perceived as being ‘different’ and people being ‘confused’ by who he (as a pedagogic learner) was. This position he has found himself is also highlighted in the way he feels frustrated by many of the practices of Higher Education,

Because I feel like I am at college and because no one sort of recognises me and sort of looks at you, Cos they’ve got the sports section in the library there, as I see it everyone knows at least a face of someone everyone that’s on the sports course if you know what I mean or a sports course so for some random person to be walking in or a group of people that, sometimes I have gone in with Steve and we’ll walk in and be laughing and joking but we [are] quiet and respectful like the rules but we got on really well but no one recognises us you kind of feel like people are staring at you or who are you sort of thing. But yeah that’s probably why I feel a bit intimidated. But like when I say intimidated, uncomfortable is probably more of the word. [Charlie: Interview 1]

It was very evident that Charlie’s relations within the external structures were strongly framed more than what was evident within the experiences of Steve (see Chapter Six). This is highlighted through his inability to interact with the external structures or acquire any of the conjuncturally specific dispositions of Hope socially or educationally. Accordingly, unlike Peter
who was central to some of the relations within Hope, (although not under conditions of his own choosing) what became evident within Charlie’s transitional experience was the (passive) silence and lack of interaction with the group. Contrasting to the active silences illustrated within Steve and Emily’s transitional experience, the silences within Charlie’s experience at Hope were constructed out of a strong critical distance between his general practices and those specific to the context of Hope.

Rather than elaborating upon practices through his general dispositions, as done so by Jack and Emily, Charlie is forced to reproduce embodied practices from previous contexts such as those relations formed within High School. To compensate for the position he undertakes within Fawlty, Charlie draws upon external structures outside the context of the Foundation Degree to acquire cultural capital. In forming a transitional experience Charlie reproduces many of the relations formed within High School such as those with his PE teacher. This allows Charlie to create his own hierarchy of positions and practices, which are very distant to the established practices and positions at Hope. This is illustrated through how Charlie begins to spend more time at his old high school running sports clubs,

**** ****, well he’s now the assistant principal at high school so um he’s helped me out with stuff by saying ‘Right Charlie we want you to do some coaching’ but I need my first aid qualification so at the moment I am doing coaching for them but they’re paying for my First Aid course so ** ***** are paying for it. But they’re paying for it as long as I do some coaching for them so it is like they help me out I’ll help them out. But yeah through my work placement last year one of the members of staff at ***** is the school sports, he’s part of the schools sport partnership so he sort of taking me on and now I am doing um basketball clubs on my own in the primary schools, like doing multi-skill sessions so I’ll go to like primary school as well for like, I think it is like the reception year to like year 3 I think it is and we do things like parts of the body and co-ordination, bean bag. You know it is a whole scheme of work so I am now doing that for him and in then return he’s paying for for my athletic’s qualification so in the summer I am going back to do athletics coaching for them. So it is kind of networked out, just sort of knowing **** **** and doing this apprentice basketball coaching thing. cos I never really thought, I mean I like sport but I never really thought that I would do this coaching thing so it is sort of snowballed it is way along.

[Charlie: Interview 1]

While there are many examples of how Charlie reproduces practices from other contexts rather than those of Hope College, this extract highlights how Charlie uses the external structures of the High School Recontextualising Agents to begin to construct his own position and relations external to those of Hope. Importantly, as Charlie recognises, such a position has ‘snowballed its
way along’ becoming increasingly influential within Charlie’s transitional experiences of Further and Higher Education. His decision to continue into other Higher Education institutions after the Foundation Degree is a consequence of this relationship,

He did not choose my career but he’s sort of helped me, sort of not follow his path either but I am sort of, I think. I am sort of somehow following his route if you know what I mean. At the end of this term I want to go down and do the coaching and fitness course and then after that do my PGCE. [Charlie: Interview 1]

The extract illustrates how reproduction of external structures external to the in-situ transitional experience (ESm) begins to ‘snowball’ positions and relations for Charlie. By reproducing the relations with his PE teacher constructed at High School Charlie is forming a transitional experience external to the relations and positions within Hope. Such relations advocate the suggestion of Ball et al. (1999) that the positioning of students within the transitional pathway is influenced by ‘the expectations and assumptions of formal intermediaries’ (p.204). However, there are some problems with this type of transition. Although, like Peter, Charlie is attempting to create a position and relations within Hope, it is done so through weak framing of relations with recontextualising agents external to the context of Hope. The reliance upon the practices of his teacher in shaping transition brings to the front a particular form of practices that Charlie invests in, in an attempt to achieve respectability and success within the course and acquire sufficient cultural capital to enter other Higher Education institutions. As was highlighted within Lloyd’s transitional experience, there is a real danger in shaping transitional experience based on other people’s relations to the structures of Higher Education. Where this occurs there is an increased dependency upon the general dispositions of an agent. This pattern of relations is found within Charlie’s transitional experience. However, the problem exists here because Charlie, unlike Lloyd has not got any valued general dispositions, embodied within his internal structures (ISgd), from which to recognise and acquire conjuncturally specific dispositions of Hope College.

Similar to the transitional experience of Peter, Charlie becomes positioned by the external structures of a context resulting in a transition where there is no empowerment or control. Accordingly, such positions result in a frustration with himself and the position in which he finds himself on the course. Furthermore, the critical distance Charlie shows towards the practices and external structures of Hope College lead to him to become ‘fed up’ with the course,

Am sort of fed up of coming in, being a student, I want to be out there, being a teacher, coaching being sort of making other people, helping other people, I did not want to sort of come in on a Monday or a Tuesday, make notes and then go and do an assignment and then
come back and hand that in and then explain sometimes why you haven’t done homework to the people who have set the homework. [Charlie: Interview 1]

As the data illustrate, within Charlie’s transition there is no recognition of the external structures of Hope in governing his transition through Higher Education. Consequently, Charlie is positioned into the Top Up year without having the general dispositions shown within the empowered and fragmented experiences. Here, although not to the same extent as Peter, Charlie forms an implicit relation of Higher Education, acquiring but not embodying the conjuncturally specific dispositions of Hope college.

Towards the end of their time at Hope and, despite showing reservations regarding going onto the next stage of Higher Education, both Charlie and Peter feel it is necessary to go into Higher Education and follow the established transitional pathway into Fawlty. This is illustrated by Peter and Charlie, who express how they are worried about next year and Fawlty,

It was not actually advertised as an open day, it was a college day if you know what I mean so everyone knows there’s going to be college students walking around or Foundation Degree college students walking around so you know you sort of looking around feeling a bit intimidated so thats why I am worried about next year. [Charlie: Interview 2]

Here, there is evidence of a critical distance between the general dispositions of Charlie and Peter and the established practices of Higher Education. Such feelings of being the outsider, being a college student highlight how the differences between Foundation Degree and Higher Education are explicit to Charlie and Peter. This contrasts to the implicit perception of transition illustrated within the Empowered Transitional experiences of Jack and Emily (see Chapter Five). Such explicitness of being the other, a non Higher Education student begins be displayed within practices where he presents himself as an outsider, one who has not mastered the appropriate ways of acting within the institution,

You did not feel like a student of the university but you did not really feel part of the college…well I did not…[Charlie: Group Interview 1]

The statement, short but powerful in its meaning, highlights, the large critical distance between Charlie and the practices of Further and Higher Education. Thus, at this crucial stage of transition, what emerges is a particular form of defensive self in which transition is perceived to be problematical but ultimately necessary to continue to pursue his career within teaching and coaching. Such transition, one which is explicit and unwelcome, is reflective of Cartwell’s (2005) observation that ‘students can, and do, progress from HND to Honours programmes, but this at their request and an articulation route is not a recommendation of approval’ (p.11). Thus, the sense of
active agency is illusory and mythical, causing the transition into Higher Education to become problematical.

However, while Peter’s transitional experience underlines a failed transitional experience already formed, for Charlie, many of the difficulties he faced were because he was not able to construct any transitional experience into Fawlty. This is highlighted with his perceptions of transition,

Charlie: But then yeah you’ve probably done…I was going to say, well I am going to say it you’ve probably done that proper degree thing, you’ve gone through that uni thing, like that proper uni thing. Whereas I have gone to college, this is another uni/college.

Researcher: So do you see yourself as a proper uni student?

Charlie: No I think when we said joking around earlier about being a Foundation Degree Person (FDP), it is like a brand, like cows get it branded on your ass type thing but I think no matter how much you try and not kid yourself but try and pass yourself as a uni student, but the way I look at it is, we are FDP’s next year we’ll be on the degree course properly, or no we are on the degree course properly. No we are doing it, it is not a proper degree. We’ll be on the final year of a degree. [Charlie: Interview 2]

Thus, contrasting to the policy statements highlighted in Chapter Four, Charlie prospectively does not see himself as continuing into University. Accordingly, for Charlie, transition, becomes, not a way of seeing the world, but something which has to be done. Such dependency on a hierarchy of positions, formulated for them, has a number of implications for their experience and indeed final qualifications at Fawlty.

7.3. The Outcomes of Failed Transition.

Unsurprisingly, on entering Fawlty, both Charlie and Peter begin to invest in their own mythical transitional experience, something which is distant and unrelated to the reality before them. As the data highlight, mythical transitions become reproduced by both students being able to acquire enough credits to pass onto the final year at Fawlty. Indeed both Peter and Charlie illustrate an implicit perception and positions of the practices specific to the educational and social contexts within Fawlty,

It is not a huge amount of difference but apart from the travelling obviously, it is not a huge difference in the amount of time compared to the Foundation Degree. Especially the first year, we’re only in three days a week and that was the same for our first year of our Foundation Degree when we were in three days a week. [Peter: Interview 3]
My results were okay, I got 58 overall so I was well chuffed with that. 2% off a 2:1 is isn’t? So I was really chuffed with that. So I have just got to pull my finger out a bit more this year and hopefully try and get a 2:1 or above. You know what they say, aim high then fall. I am aiming for a 1st but realistically I think I will try and get a 2:1. [Charlie: Interview 3]

I expected it to be like a proper uni degree. I was not expecting the organisation and efficiency of handing in work, I thought that would just be e-mails and I was not expecting how confident I would feel. I was not expecting to feel I did not really care I’ll do whatever, but I am finding it quite easy to do that if you know what I mean. Thats the only expectations I have had. [Charlie: Interview 3]

Upon joining Fawlty, both Charlie and Peter display a very mythical perception of the external structures in-situ within Fawlty. This is highlighted by Peter stating there is not a huge amount of difference within the practices and time compared to the Foundation Degree. Such perceptions regarding their position and value of the degree is also highlighted by how Charlie reproduces the value of the Foundation Degree and exchanges it for the value of the degree at Fawlty, something which in reality was very different. Indeed, Charlie highlights some disappointment in it not being a ‘proper uni degree’. Such statements, similar to those of Peter highlight how both participants begin to reproduce many of the acquired practices of Hope without acquiring the conjuncturally specific dispositions of Fawlty. This is highlighted by how both participants fail on the bridging module,

I have had to change my dissertation this year though. They marked our bridging work where we say what we’ve got to try and do so I went on about the football hooliganism and he totally ripped that apart just saying ‘is that accurate?’ you know just really ripping into it. So I have changed it to look at how a Nintendo Wii can be used within a high school environment with non active pupils. So I will be doing that at the high school I have been working at so that should be good fun...When I got it back I was a little bit disappointed if you know what I mean. I got a 64 for the one I did at college so I thought I did quite well but yeah he did not like it. When we first started we had five lectures on how to write a dissertation but it was not aimed at us, it was aimed at the 3rd year and at the end of it he did say where there were several areas that the staff were researching in…So they say you either got to pass or fail it but I got my bridging work back and they said you have to pass it to get onto the course and I only passed the referencing bit. The rest of it was sort of in-between like not failed outright just sort of good but not good enough to pass. It was a bit of a shock, like it was our first bit of work like within the first two weeks of getting here. That and the proposal all had to be done immediately. So like we got our bridging work back on the first week and then we had to proposal in a week after that so we were kind of like woooohhhhh!! But then all the other people who have come from the different colleges and that they have struggled as well. I think it is the whole step up from the Foundation to the degree and the
different marking schemes and things like that so it is slightly different and that. [Charlie: Interview 3]

My dissertation is looking at the Wii. I’ve just got to find a golf course so I can compare them all, be like comparing their styles and scores and actually look at them playing and so on. The main reason I decided to do this study was because the way they teach us to do the research project at college is different to the way they want us to do it at uni so it was literally a case of I failed everything on that including the minimum references cos they wanted 10 different sources, not 10 different quotes. So obviously there was a different structure and method and protocol. To be honest Dave it was a bit of a relief because my original study was going to be a bit more of a challenge. It was a bit of a relief that I could write it off and start again fresh. [Peter: Interview 3]

This data again highlights the critical distance between the participants’ general dispositions and the external structures of their new educational context. This stage of their transition reinforces observations by Davies and Biesta (2007), that ‘opportunities for such experiences are potentially fragile, vulnerable to the effects of change within the institution’ (p.21). As a consequence of their fragility, both participants are positioned (and position themselves) as outsiders, on the periphery of many of the in-situ interactions. This contrasts to those empowered experiences (see Chapter Five) where participants were able to alter the framing of relations, weakening them through their embodied practices within their internal structures (ISgd/IScs). Indeed, throughout their experiences at Fawlty, both Peter and Charlie demonstrated the continuation of strongly framed relations with the recontextualising agents of Fawlty,

They haven’t really changed that much. As I said contact time is a lot less and the only one I have really had to get in touch with was the one in charge of coaching and children module for the reasons of clashes and my dissertation and work experience tutor who happens to be the same person. Other than that I haven’t really had to get in contact with my tutor so that hasn’t really been much of a change. We did not have any tutorials last year or any contact time with our tutor last year which is exactly the same as it is this year. [Peter: Interview 4]

We’re only in for a Tuesday, an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon but that hour clashes with the work experience. So I haven’t got many contact hours, 3 hours literally that’s it and for one of those hours I am going to be elsewhere. I haven’t really felt part of the university when we’ve been coming down and we haven’t really had much contact with it. It is almost like how people would describe the Open University only none of us want to be at the Open University. I was expecting it for it to be more spread out…we thought it would be 2x2 one hour sessions more spread across the week. We haven’t really been able to get into university enough to form a perception of it really…I did not really feel like a university student. If anything I would say I’m a part timer. [Peter: Interview 5]
Yeah I just generally feel...It is separate from everything, down there really. It just doesn’t feel...Cos like I said earlier because we’re down there such a short time I did not have sort of get to know anyone and our timetable has changed and we’re only down there one day a week. So from going in two days a week to one day a week I am going to have less opportunity to know everyone. [Charlie: Interview 4]

But yeah going back to this whole Fawlty thing, it does sort of feel, you did not feel part of it and what I did feel part of the group but as that is spreading out now you kind of just feel, you know, you’re only in it, well you are, you’re only in it for your own benefit. [Charlie: Interview 4]

The extracts from the conversations with Charlie and Peter highlight some of the emerging outcomes of their transitional experience. Contrasting to the empowered and fragmented transitional experiences illustrated in previous chapters, the failed transitional experience highlights how critical distance between internal structures and external structures are reproduced. Furthermore, as a consequence of their critical distance, agents who experience failed transitional experiences are unable to grasp power relations between themselves and the recontextualising agents within the horizon of their own interpretative schemas. Consequently, without the consolidation of embodied general disposition, agents do not feel part of the context. This again contrasts with those experiences of the other participants, who while also experiencing, strong framing relations with the external structures of Fawlty, were able to elaborate upon them slightly through drawing upon their own general dispositions. This highlights the importance of the embodied general dispositions of agents in shaping relations with the external structures of a context. Without valued dispositions which can be exchanged for valued cultural capital agents are positioned by external structures of the context.

One of the consequences of these strong framing relations can be seen within the relations Charlie and Peter have with the recontextualising agents of Fawlty. This is evident within Peter and Charlie’s perceptions of some of the tutors on the course,

With our Work Based Learning module that I got my placement advisor changed and he said to me ‘you’ve got to come and see me’ though e-mails, and I said ‘as I am commuting from ***** I can only see you Monday and Friday’ because it is so expensive for me to come down any other day and too,‘it is really difficult for me’ and he e-mailed back saying come and see me Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and I was like, I have already told him I can only come down Monday and Friday and then, because I hadn’t seen him, he started saying that he would kick me off the module and things like that. And then I said I couldn’t help it if I couldn’t make it in on those days and besides, you’re not even in on a Friday so why can’t you make an effort if you live in *********. I actually said that to him. He actually started
listening to me then and knew I was not just trying to get away with it, if you know what I mean, I actually said I can’t make it down on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. [Charlie: Interview 4]

My relationships with the staff have been slightly negative, especially with this work based learning, he’s been really negative, especially with this. It seems to me that he really can’t be bothered with us but then that might be the way he is with all students but as well, because he has got all of us from Hope in his group he might be annoyed that he’s got to come up to us. [Charlie: Interview 4]

Oh, he just seems like one of those that I suppose the best way to describe him would be old fashioned Headteacher, that sort of not approachable, you did not feel he is as compassionate as the other ones. I have tried to stay clear of him really. [Peter: Interview 3]

The extracts highlight how the framing of relations between participants and the recontextualising agents within Fawlty were not elaborated upon by Charlie and Peter. This highlights the predicament of the participants who needed (but failed) to recognise the new rules (within the pedagogic and corporeal device) which governed relations at Fawlty (see Chapter Four). Furthermore, the data highlight how such framing relations were reproduced by the participants, drawing upon similar relations that they found themselves positioned in within Hope College. While such relations do not constitute a failed transition in itself, what it does is highlight the unintended consequences of the transitional experience for particular participants. Unlike the other participants at Fawlty, particularly Emily (see Chapter Five) and indeed Jack in Ivory University (see Chapter Five) both Charlie and Peter do not have the general dispositions or the physical capital to begin to elaborate on the positions they find themselves situated at Fawlty. This is highlighted by both interview and field notes,

I am not playing any sport, I was going to play basketball because they’ve got the whole academy thing there but I worked it out cost wise, having to get down there and looked at the train times and stuff. Hannah is doing the netball down there and the basketball is on the same time as that. She is training on a Monday down there 7-8 in the morning and then again 7-9 in the evening. Tuesday she has got an hour, Wednesday she has a match and Thursday she has an hour so once I have found that out and I have got so much work on this year and hopefully I can get a job as a technician at the high school which will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, so I am playing ‘Mickey Mouse’ basketball and stuff around Exeter, I thought I would leave it like that for now. If I want to play I’ll play up here, I’m not going down there to train where I can train in a similar way here. I signed up for trials but I did not turn up. The standard is quite good, I mean Hannah was saying in her first training session there was loads of people being sick because they were pushing them so hard so by the sounds of that they are really switched on and want the best from everyone. I think the
standard is quite high - the netball team is one below the premier league. The fifth team football train on a little crumby playground where you have got a bin at either end and that’s the goal, you have to hit the bin. There’s not two bins or jumpers for goal posts so I think if I did that for basketball and it was literally a basket and you have to get it in the end, I would not even bother. I would rather be at the top and be part of the academy. [Charlie: Interview 3]

I joined at the beginning of October and the first match was a week later which is when my ban started so I haven’t had a chance to play for them since. I would have had a chance last weekend but I was still banned, I was supposed to be starting as well so it was slightly annoying. I am playing for the 5ths, at that level it is more of a social thing anyway but apparently when you first join at Fawlty the established players tend to be absolute ‘cunts’ towards the new people, to quote other people. Basically no matter what the talent is, if a fresher starts or comes on ahead of the 2nd or 3rd year they go up to the manager and say ‘what the hell are you doing putting on a fresher ahead of me’ you’re a fresher, there’s the door cheerio, we’re not going to let you join in with us. It makes me feel annoyed but there is nothing you can do. I sort of see myself as a 3rd year but because I have only joined for a year from a Foundation Degree I am technically classed as a fresher but in the 5ths it is really social anyway so most of them are freshers anyway. We did not have any interaction with the other football teams, so I’m not really treated as a fresher, there doesn’t seem to be any picking on the freshers to go and pick the balls up that have been kicked out of the cage or whatever or the freshers have to bring the equipment, there doesn’t seem to be any of that in the 5ths. [Peter: Interview 5]

The above extracts highlights Peter’s and Charlie’s positions within the established hierarchy of Fawlty. Both Peter and Charlie do not have the physical capital which can be exchanged for social and cultural capital and therefore weaken the framing relations that exist. Because they are not able to do this they are unable to position themselves within the hierarchy at Fawlty. By not being able to elaborate upon positions and relations, the transitional experience of Further and Higher Education begins to slowly unravel, causing both Peter and Charlie to become even more distant from the conjunctural specific positions and practices of Fawlty (illustrated within Chapter Four). Because of the increased critical distance between the participants’ practices and the external structures of Fawlty, both begin to reproduce practices from other contexts beyond the in-situ context of Fawlty. Accordingly, transition becomes a failed experience for both. Yet, even at this stage, both display very different positions regarding this failure.

Immediately within Fawlty it was evident that within Charlie’s transitional experience the feelings of being the other, formed within Hope are reproduced within Fawlty. This is evident with how
Charlie continues to draw upon the external structures of his High School where is employed as a coach three days a week,

I am doing all my coaching at *********. They said if you can get paid, get paid so… I am getting paid for it. I just got to keep a little diary of what we did and the assignment is handing in the diary and they have to come and see us for one of our sessions so I will get the guy who was my placement advisor. [Charlie: Interview 5]

Through ********* they’re going to try and make me, basically an unqualified teacher if that makes sense. So basically I go in and do loads of coaching as a coach but I’ll be doing it in lessons as well, paid. In the end I did not apply for the sports technician post because I had the interview and everything like that and spoke to them about it and because at that time I could only offer three days a week and then this is before the timetable changed and ideally they would want someone four or five days a week and then my timetable changed and I could have done it but they’ve hired someone else now but they’ve got, from that, they’ve got me in to do loads of coaching which is what I am doing now, I do three days a week and it works out to be ten hours a week, so it is like £150 a week so it is not bad really. But yeah so I get 10 hours a week in which I do the majority of it at school but I do community basketball clubs. I’ve got my community sports coach, schools sports coach top, you know badge on the front. I’ve ordered myself some jogging bottoms with CW on it, you know just to look a bit more professional really. That side of things is going well, I suppose everything is going smoothly, I just, just want to finish it now. [Charlie, Interview 5]

As Charlie’s experiences highlight, towards the end of his Top Up year he is spending increasingly less time within the context of Fawlty and more time within other contexts such as his high school. Through doing this, Charlie continues to preserve and reproduce practices from this stage of transition after failing to acquire the practices of Fawlty which would enable transition and acquisition of specific discourses and practices. Thus, this illustrates how transition is not linear for some students but cyclical in its nature. Spending more time within the work environment gives him little opportunity to acquire conjuncturally specific dispositions of the course and to elaborate upon the rules of the context within his final year. It also highlights how Charlie is prospectively looking towards future contexts and possibly the career of teaching. While such positions and relations are not unexpected within the final year of degree programmes, for most students’ transition, this stage is that the final year of a three year degree programme. Charlie highlights how without the space afforded to students upon the three year course he is unable to acquire and learn the rules of the pedagogic device, specific to the context of Fawlty, and is partly forced to rely upon his general dispositions and embodied relations with the High School context. Subsequently, by this stage students have acquired enough cultural capital to progress and elaborate upon their position.
In Charlie’s situation, having only been in at Fawlty for a matter of months, he is unable to position himself and acquire conjuncturally specific dispositions required for teaching.

Contrastingly, while Charlie displays some recognition of the critical distance between himself and the external structures of Fawlty, Peter continues to display signs of his mythical understanding and recontextualisation of practice. These mythical signs fail to illustrate any awareness of his position, despite struggling on the course in the final few months,

It has been different but I was expecting it so I have prepared myself for it really so it was like you knew it was coming so I had to just sort of grit your teeth and hope for the best sort of thing…So far it has been good, especially for the physiology one even though it happened a bit too late for me because I had two other assignments due for the same week. They said to hand in what we had done so far so they could amend it but they sent it back so late that I actually said that, it is passed the deadline I set myself to complete it Cos otherwise I was never going to complete the other two and would have ended up failing the module. So I took it upon myself not to complete the work, I did not have enough time. Cos that deadline came first that’s why I set the deadline to do that one before and then do the other two which were in the day after. So even though there was still technically time between being told and handing in date, if I did digress onto that one I would have to miss out on handing in one of the other two other assignments for the module. It was just bad timing everything came at one time for me really whereas the others got it separated out for them in the modules that they chose. I would have preferred it, especially for the module I had two assignments in for the same day I would have preferred it, Cos one was a case study and one was actually assignment so if I could have done one first then the other it would have been easier workload cos I went from having nothing to hand in before the last couple of days before Christmas and then I found myself having to hand in 7,500-8,000 words in a 24hr space.

[Peter: Interview 4]

The experience of Peter highlights how he becomes increasingly detached from the reality of Fawlty reproducing a mythical hierarchy of positions, choosing when to hand in work, irrespective of the deadlines and practices transmitted by the external structures of Fawlty. Such a situation highlights, in a different sense, the consequences with participants when there is total failure to recognise practices and no general dispositions to be able to challenge these positions. The critical distance that continued to emerge between the practices of Charlie and Peter and the external structures of Fawlty finally resulted in what can only be described as a failed transitional experience. The signification of this transition came to the fore at Christmas time during the final year,

I did not, I did not feel like I am at uni. Like I said I just feel like I am going down to Fawlty just ticking a box, doing the lessons and then coming back really. But then it is weird I did
not feel at uni when we were doing the Foundation degree just because we were in a room at college and you’re labelled for doing a Foundation Degree but I did not really feel like I am at uni when I am at Fawlty so, not very often. It’s weird. I did not really know, this is weird.

[Charlie: Interview 5]

I did not really feel like a university student. If anything I would say I’m a part timer. The only thing that has got university hours is the work placement. I spend more time at home than anything else, I probably spend more time down here for football than for actual contact time within the module. It is 2 days for football, 2 days for contact time and one hour lecture.

[Peter: Interview 5]

While the signs and symbols of this failed transition had been apparent for sometime during our interactions, the practices and experiences of both participants only became significant at the final stage of transition, in the final months of the final year of the final context. The failed transitional experience supports the findings of Morais et al. (1992), who suggest that ‘disadvantaged children (social class, race, gender) are those who experience greater difficulty in applying knowledge to new situations (p.248). At this stage when I met with the participants, both Charlie and Peter were in real danger of failing the course completely at a point where the reality of the situation is too late to be retrieved. Such feelings are summarised well in these final extracts from the last interviews with both Charlie and Peter,

I did not know much about their marking in a way I was just glad to pass so I am happy with the leadership one so if I get the chance to I would like to upgrade. But there’s a chance, because I still haven’t got the results from the practical there is still the possibility that I could end up with a pass overall anyway. It is a bit nervy because you’re still trying to settle in when you’re supposed to be already settled in in your final year. I am still trying to settle in when I am supposed to be doing all this work. I feel at times like that famous screaming picture...a little bit like that screaming picture like the pressure sometimes can get too much. Like that week before Christmas I had three assignments due in on the last two days that was pulling your hair out stress time. I am not used to it, I am more used to the assignments being spread out like at college. At college we were given the modules and we weren’t able to choose them. I still feel pressured, the pressure now is focused on the work placement module and I am going to be struggling to make the hours of it. [Peter: Interview 4]

Well I finished in February, well yeah I kinda of went downhill a little bit, did not really cope with the work. I haven’t been back yet but I am not expecting a great amount and possibly might have to retake it, that’s how bad it was, it went. I dunno, everything I handed in just did not feel right if you know what I mean. I was handing it back to lecturers but they weren’t getting back to me in time, or if they did they were giving me a day to sort of fix it, and I was sort of panicking…But yeah it is just, disappointed in myself if you know what I mean, disappointed…gone off the pedal, gas came off. But can’t do anything about it now,
just got to wait and see what happens like if I have to retake it, I have to retake it but I know, I would have grown, made me have to do the work if you know what I mean...I came over a bit relaxed because once we handed in the stuff before Christmas we literally had nothing for four months, literally, nothing to do and then all of a sudden we had all this pressure and things and I thought I had it under control but obviously I did not think I did so, like I said I get the results next week but I am not expecting a great deal. Positively the best I can get is a 3rd class, all I know so far is that I got 55 and I failed leadership as well, which is a 38 but I can’t retake them this summer, I got to retake them all next year in September. I was speaking to O’Brien [pseudonym] about it and he said if I could retake the one module if I wanted but if I fail more than one then I have to retake the whole year if I wanted the degree. [Charlie: Interview 5]

The positions and perspectives illustrated by Peter and Charlie are alarming. The data continued to show the outcomes of what happens when agents are unable to recognise and acquire the conjuncturally specific dispositions of Fawlty. The agency Peter displays in saying how he will continue to progress within Higher Education is almost mythical in its creation. Consequently there is a reproduction of this identity and dream, one which does not lead to an alternative pedagogic identity which is valued by other agents and institutions.

The extract from Charlie’s final interview highlights the feeling of disillusionment and the unintended consequences of the critical distance that existed between the practices of Charlie and the external structures of Fawlty. Such positions contrast to the empowered and fragmented experience in which there are signs of hope for the participants and a prospective experience beyond their Degrees. Again, it also highlights how although Charlie felt that he was doing okay, the positions in which he finds himself are, again following Giddens, ‘not under conditions of their own choosing’. While such remarks based on meso-level theory have some resonance, more important, are the signification of such positions, not only for Charlie but for his family as well. Sadly, it feels appropriate to finish this discussion with these final remarks by Charlie,

They were so pleased that I did the progression route and I thought I was doing okay, so they’re pleased with that. Basically I think I did not tell them because I did not want to disappoint them. Also my sister is doing really well at uni, so you know she is getting 1st in her assignments and she has gone away and is doing really well so if I just suddenly turned around and went ‘I’m not coping with the work’ I would have been scared that they would have been disappointed with me if you know what I mean. Basically with my sister and her difficulties, she did not go past college basically and struggled to find work and that so she’s finally found work and she was happy with that. So I was the first one to go from college to uni if you know what I mean and because I did quite well, I thought, in the Foundation Degree I did not want to suddenly turn round and say I was struggling. But then thinking on
it, if I had they would have tried to help me which would have been okay but to explain it to them it would have wasted more time trying to explain it to them, for them to understand it and then for them to work it out than it would have for me to sort it out. They would not have understood, my dad’s not got a clue about anything like sport related or anything like that. My mum is a classroom assistant, a hired classroom assistant so she knows a lot about teaching so the only thing she could really help me on was like my session plans and that but because I had been coaching myself they were fine it was just the written work and my mum has done courses where she has had to write assignments but they are not the same style as the one we had to do. So I think if I had told them it would of...Yeah okay it would have been out in the open but it would not of been able to help me. It would probably have added a little bit of pressure on me to do it as well if you know what I mean. I did not know if that’s right or wrong. [Charlie: Interview 5]

As Charlie illustrates, the feelings of despondency and letting his family down highlight the signification and expectation Higher Education practices and qualifications place upon agents. Moreover, Charlie’s orientation towards external structures of his family highlight the reproduction of positions and practices which have been characteristic throughout his failed transitional experience. Indeed as Langa-Rosado and David (2006) emphasise, ‘Their physical and social detachment from their social class origins through Higher Education involvement and their dependence on educational success for their social mobility leads to a greater anxiety during their academic career’ (p.360). However, the position of Charlie highlights that without the valued general dispositions to recognise and acquire the conjuncturally specific dispositions of a context, agents are unable to exchange embodied cultural and social capital for capital valued within and beyond the final stage of transition. This choice or failure is constructed as a failure to be enterprising or to be reflective, or importantly, a failure to recognise and acquire the conjuncturally specific dispositions required to pass the course (Skeggs, 2004). Indeed, this is supported by Langa-Rosado and David (2006) who highlight, ‘Working class young people are less likely to study but when they do, they feel more economic and academic pressures than their middle class counterparts’ (p.345). The signification of such positions are alarming for agents such as Charlie who have invested so much but achieved so little.

7.4. Reflections on the Failed Transitional Experience.

The chapter has highlighted the experiences of two of the remaining participants Charlie and Peter. Sadly, like other vocational students (see Hodkinson & Bloomer, 2001), the transition of Peter and Charlie seemed doomed from the outset. Contrasting to the experiences of other participants, the chapter illustrates a different pattern in relations between the structures of sport education and the
embodied practices and dispositions of agents. Following from Ball et al. (2002) the consequences of such implicit recognition may result in students finding ‘themselves in the wrong place or on the wrong course’ (p.69). While the empowered experiences of Chapter Five and the fragmented experiences of Chapter Six highlighted how agents, with valued general dispositions, are able to weaken framing relations within their transitional experience; such reciprocal relations are missing from the experiences of Charlie and Peter. The data strongly suggests that for Peter and Charlie relations to the external structures of Hope College and Fawlty University become inequitable.

The unequal balance between the general dispositions of Charlie and Peter and the external resources of Further and Higher Education shapes a transitional experience which leads to an outcome where there is continual reproduction of past practices, some of which have no value within the institutions of Hope and Fawlty. The backgrounds of Charlie and Peter were characteristic of many of the participants highlighted within other vocational research (see Patiniotis & Holdsworth, 2005). Such backgrounds, in which Further and Higher Education is seen not as an inevitable transition, forces Charlie and Peter to become reliant on the external structures of colleges and support programmes which position them within a transition pathway. This supports the observation of Reay et al’s (2010) that the ‘type of Higher Education institution these working class students attend exerts a powerful influence on how they see themselves and are seen by others in terms of their learner identities’ (p.115). While there is some resemblance to the experiences of the other participants, the failed transition emerges because both Charlie and Peter do not have valued general dispositions from which they are able to generate valued forms of Social and Cultural Capital. As such, they are unable to embed their general dispositions (ISgd) within the conjunctural specific knowledge of a context (IScs). The consequences and signification of the framing relations between agents who do not have the recognised and valued general dispositions within their habitus are very much displayed through the experiences of Charlie and Peter.

The failed transition is characterised by a number of struggles in which both Peter and Charlie attempt to position themselves in relations which are formed beyond conditions of their own choosing but are forced upon them. Thus, throughout their post-16 educational experiences, there are continual moments in which both participants are positioned within colleges and university practices without any signs of recognition or embodiment. Subsequently, the strong framing of relations which exist between the participants and the external structures of Hope and Fawlty force Charlie and Peter to become reliant on and reproduce external structures which have a weak classification with the in-situ practices of Hope College. This highlights potential problems within a transition system which is reliant upon the general dispositions of the agent to acquire and
reproduce expected practices. Where this occurs it was evident that participants were unable to access the cultural capital of the dominant relations that existed within Hope and in Fawlty (see Mills & Gale 2007; Keddie et al., 2008). Within the failed transition it is evident how relations become cyclical in their nature, with agents (such as Peter and Charlie) returning to where transition experiences are created, namely in the Primary Context. Such preservation is partly a defensive reaction against the existence of perfection codes which encourage individualism and enterprise upon the course. For example, Charlie continues to draw upon practices and dispositions acquired within the context of high school. However, sadly within Peter’s transition there is no reproduction of embodied practices and relations. Consequently, there is an almost mythical relation with the practices of Higher Education.

The data also further questions practices of the implicated institutions, vocational qualifications more generally and the signification of changes for students like Charlie and Peter. The experiences of Peter and Charlie illustrate that for some of the participants, the practices and relations of Hope College almost normalise marginalisation making the alienation and subvercation of the participants so strongly classified that they are unable to recognise and legitimise alternatives (see Muller, 2001). Indeed while we have seen glimpses of hope and success within the empowered and fragmented transitional experience, the failed experiences of Peter and Charlie bring a sobering reality to bear on vocational qualifications within sport. Furthermore, the weak classification of these courses, allows students with very specific practices to be able to position themselves and gain a degree of success. However, where agents do not have valued dispositions, the possibilities of weak classification turn into very real restricted opportunities.

The experiences of Charlie and Peter bear little resemblance to what Ball et al. (1999) describe as the individualists consumer rationale which is found within official texts of the Foundation Degree. The restricted opportunities presented to Peter and Charlie illustrate the consequences of the existence of perfection codes for students who are not able to recognise, acquire and embody conjuncturally specific dispositions. The data highlights how agents within a context whose general dispositions are not valued by institutional practices and discourses are positioned within a hierarchy rather than being able to position themselves, creating rifts and potential disjunctures. Such critical distance, constructed between a weakly framed relation between agent and structure results in outcomes in which there is a reproduction of inequalities, despite attempts to overcome them (as illustrated in the experiences of Peter). Such relations and critical distance created between agent and external structures construct outcomes at best which produce an identity which carries low status and value compared to students from more conventional
backgrounds (see Field, 2003; Waller, 2006). This follows others within educational research in continuing to question how working class participants can feel entitled to Higher Education when they have no recognition of the feelings of entitlement (Skeggs, 2004; Reay, 1997). Charlie and Peter’s transitional experiences resonate with the dangers of vocational qualifications, such as the Foundation Degree pathway as highlighted by Bernstein who notes how ‘Vocationalism appears to offer the lower working class a legitimation of their own pedagogic interests in a manual-based curriculum, and in so doing appears to include them as significant pedagogic subjects, yet at the same time closes off their personal and occupational possibilities’ (Bernstein, 1990, p.87). Unknown at this stage was their final transitional experiences: what qualifications they gained. At the time of our departure I had left both participants hoping for a pass and fear of an unexpected future. While my fear and concern for these participants is evident through this chapter, my greater fear is that many other failed transitions are unaccounted for, masked within rhetoric of short-term performativity and market-orientated ‘success’.
Chapter 8 - Conclusions & Reflections.

Hi Dave,

Sorry for the delay in replying - Things with me are good thanks rugby and work are going pretty well. Thoughts and reflections on last year so far: I've very much enjoyed the last year so far and have been achieving what I'd want to achieve in my work, 67% for the 1st assignment on body and identity, still waiting for second assignment back. 79% for nutrition coursework, still waiting for exam result but I expect it wont be very good because I was not very confident after exam as was a lot of others! Work load is starting to build up however and I am starting to see how much out of lecture work is expected.

What grade am I hoping to get: 2:1 or a 1st would be nice.

My plans for next year: I have a few options that I am currently going over; a Masters in Business Management or Sports science (your thoughts on sports science masters would be great!), depending on rugby contracts offered another year playing rugby at professional level, or go to southern hemisphere to play rugby for a season and then see what happens, but it is probably looking like masters at the moment! [Jack e-mail: 08/02/10]

Hey,

Ok well after I finished uni I went travelling 4 2 months to the Ecuadorian Amazon jungle and Peru to complete the Inca Trail. I am now living in ******** with a football m8 and have started my RAF application. I got a 2.1 am happy with that for sure but bit gutted with some of my coursework results and kinda wanted a 1st but I have high standards!! hehe I was well happy to finish uni but funny enough I am now living down plym and have re-kindled me friendships with some of the footy girls and know them so much better now...am loving it!!!lol!! [Emily e-mail: 30/1/10]

Hi Dave

I got a 45% 3rd after a resit in the summer. I now have 2 part-time jobs, the same warehouse job I had last year plus coaching for Premier Sport at afterschool clubs in east Devon. Annoingly I am still living at home with my parents, but hope to be able to go full-time at coaching by the end of the year and earn enough to move out.

Cheers,

Peter
Hi Dave

Hope you’re well. Looks like you’ve got yourself a job too!!

As for Fawlty; It went ok. The biggest difference I felt was the pressure of the 3rd year in comparison to the 1st and 2nd. The importance was far higher as we all knew that we had six modules to get things right. I ended up getting a 2:2, I was relatively happy with although I feel as though if I put more of an effort in during the early months of the course, then I could have received a better classification. I think around February/March time of last year, all six of us who went to Fawlty were working extremely hard. Whereas in October/November, we were still in coasting mode from Hope College!

I am now taking a year out to concentrate on my rugby; I am now refereeing at the Championship level and due to this commitment, I work the remaining time for my dads insurance brokers. This keeps me busy all of the week, and gets some money in until I can know for sure how far my rugby is going to take me. If nothing comes of rugby, then I plan to take the PGCE in PE, either at Ivory or Fawlty, and then from there go on to teaching.

I hope this is ok for you mate, please do let me know if you’re back down here at some stage and we can all meet up for a beer.

Cheers

Lloyd

[Peter E-mail: 28/01/10]

8.1. Towards a Utopian vision of post-16 sports education.

In applying the heuristic conceptual and methodological frameworks outlined in Chapter Two, the study has illustrated the transitional experiences of the participants up to the end of the last months within their ‘Top Up’ year at Hope and Ivory. The above e-mails have been included to highlight transitional experiences in progress and elucidate to some of the signs of the participants’ experiences beyond education. The inclusion of these final thoughts also highlight how temporality within the transitional experience has been an important part of how their experiences have been constructed and experienced. In doing so they provide a link between retrospective thoughts regarding the transitional experience between FE and HE and provide a prospective insight at the future and the realities they are continually creating with relation to the external structures (ESm/
ESis) of their individual experiences.

Alongside providing signs of prospective transitional experiences, the last correspondence also reinforces the position of the participants as one which contradicts the homogeneity which often characterises accounts of vocational qualifications and those students who choose to complete them. It highlights the benefits of using a theoretical and methodological framework focused on understanding experience from the in-situ or ontic-level of ontology, reinforcing the belief that while all vocational students share many similarities, the interaction with the external structures of education result in unique and often complex experiences.

Accordingly, in writing this last chapter, there has been a realisation that the experiences of the participants and the outcomes of their educational experience have not ended but are ongoing. This has reinforced the perspective of transition as a complex, contested and fluid process: one in which relations between structure and agency are continually evolving positioning and repositioning students. As such, this chapter represents a link between my reflective thoughts on the use of the theoretical and methodological framework and the analysis it has generated while also highlighting how such research may inform developments of relations within the field of post-16 sports education at the various levels of ontology.

In providing this connection, the aim of this chapter is to highlight many of the utopian possibilities the nature of such research can make to furthering relations both within and between institutions in post-16 sports education. As Davis (2008) rightly suggests, ‘the very idea of utopia is one that suggests a steadfast refusal to accept the limits of the ‘is’ and instead reaches beyond the present into the realm of the ‘could’ and the ‘should’ (p.1242). Following this, the final chapter will firstly reflect on how the use of structurationist frameworks may contribute to the construction of spaces from which practices and discussions regarding the future of post-16 education may take place. If Higher Education is to offer equal possibilities to individuals it must be done with understanding of the complexity of the contexts in which this transition is formulated. This requires a critical reflection on current practice and relations alongside some consideration of the conceptual approach which has informed my considerations and reflections. To this end, this chapter will conclude the study by outlining and establishing a number of recommendations for the field of post-16 sports education within a model of post-16 sports education development (see fig.8.0, fig. 8.1). This allows research exploring transition into Higher Education to become a transformative and positive discussion which are not, as Gibson (2009) notes, respected ideas but enacted practices. Doing so allows this study to begin to reach beyond the present and into the realm of what Davis illustrates as the ‘could’ and ‘should’ of educational research.
8.2. Towards understanding transitional experience - some theoretical and methodological considerations.

The sociological imagination should feed into this sphere, informing it and raising the quality of social understanding within it, as much in terms of general sensibilities, orientations and intuitive methodologies for grasping the social as in terms of specific facts about particular scenarios [Stones, 2005: 194]

The complexity of relations that have been illustrated by the study highlight the benefits of constructing a conceptual and methodological approach that connects agent practice to the external structures of their experience. Yet although the benefits of this perspective are evident within the discussion chapters, there remains a need to further develop the framework and consider how this development may evolve beyond the boundaries of this study.

The framework illustrated within Chapter Two has developed a perspective in which agent experience is not one dimensional but affects and is affected by the structures of their in-situ ontology. The heuristic nature of the framework has enabled an analytical approach which was continually able to move between and within different levels of ontology. For example, Chapter Four has highlighted how the framework developed can be used to explore how external structures at both the meso and ontic-levels of ontology are produced and then recontextualised within institutions through the internal structures and practices of agents. As Shilling (2008) reminds us ‘it is the interaction between, as well as the existence of, the external and internal environment that is vital to our understanding of embodied action’ (p.11). This has allowed the study to illuminate what Maton (2005) refers to as ‘missing fields’, or fields which transits both Higher Education externally and internally to policy. As part of the development of this conceptual framework, rules of the classification and framing principle are not only external to the agent but are constructed and evolved within embodied dispositions as part of the process of social rule/resource acquisition. Consequently, where some structurationist perspectives may see relations from either a meso or ontic-level, the construction of this framework highlights relations that are in a constant state of fluidity. Here the work of Bernstein, particularly the principles of classification and framing have been central to understanding sets of external structures. For example, Chapter Four illustrates the connection between external structures at a meso-level (ESm) and those structures situated within the ontic-level of experience (ESis). The data within this chapter suggests how structures at a meso-level of ontology contribute to the production and transmission of practices and discourses within institutions. The strength of this classification directly relates to the framing of relations within a context.
Thus, rather than separating levels of ontology, the framework has allowed the study to explore relations between structure and agent in such a way that it alludes to a deeper, more subtle and dynamic interaction between agent and structure that is often missing from other forms of structuration, such as the realist perspective adopted within Archer’s work (see Archer, 2000).

By doing this, the study follows Stones’ understanding of the need for a structuration framework to outline the external structures of an agent in-situ experience. This has been illustrated as External Structures in-situ (ESIs). However, as illustrated by fig 2.5 (see page 87), by drawing upon approximations of Bernstein’s conceptual work regarding the pedagogic device and code modalities, the study has also sought to understand and develop the spaces between sets of external structures. In developing the understanding of the spaces between external structures (ESm/ESIs) and the internal structures (ISgd/IScs) of an agent the study points towards the contribution of both the pedagogic device developed by Bernstein and conceptual developments of the device; such as the corporeal device forwarded and developed within the work of Evans et al. (2008). The data highlights that while previously both devices have, quite rightly, been illustrated as distinctly separate, it is also the interaction between the two sets of rules which enable the recontextualisation and embodiment of practices.

The way rules of the pedagogic and corporeal devices are conceptualised must continue to develop to include the internal mechanisms between each space/context of the individual that link their sets of dispositions within the habitus to external resources. Accordingly, the study and the framework highlight how rules should be understood as being more embryonic than within Bernstein’s original concepts. While this evolution of how rules are conceptualised has been started (see Evans et al., 2008; Shilling, 2008) the use of the strong structuration framework and focus on experience at the ontic-level of ontology highlights how, through general dispositions, there are many variations of devices which influence the transmission and acquisition of knowledge. Thus, both sets of rules are instrumental in the understanding of the relations between structure and agent and the meaning constructed as a result of their continued interaction. In problematising transition and the practices of Further and Higher Education there is a danger that research may fragment the experience of the participant and student, causing experiences to become lost within a sea of multiple interpretations which prevent clarity and focus (see Gibson, 2009). Moreover, if relations between Further and Higher Education are to be developed, then consideration needs to be made of the framework used, not only conceptually but its practical implications for these relations. As the study illustrated changes in the pedagogic devices controlling the transmission of discourses and practices between
ESm and ESis are necessitated by the internal structures of those agents responsible for the recontextualisation and transmission of discourses and practices.

For this reason, the framework contributes to a wider understanding (such as that outlined within Bernstein, 1990) that the principles behind structure agency relations should be not only a medium for other voices such as class or gender, but integrated within the fabric of an agents in-situ experience. Indeed, seeking to understand the relationship between external structures and internal structures through sets of rules and principles reinforces Sadnovnik’s (2006) thought that, ‘Bernstein’s project sought to link microprocesses (language, transmission and pedagogy) to macroforms - to how cultural and educational codes and the content and process of education are related to social class and power relations’ (p.202).

In doing so, the study highlights the continued contribution of Bernstein’s sociology to the understanding of individual experience with relation to wider structures and power relations. For example, Chapter Four illustrates how the use of Bernsteinian principles has informed a consideration of the pedagogic principles behind how student experiences are constructed but also evolve with relation to the external resources of a context (IScs). Such a perspective and utilisation of the concepts of framing and the pedagogic/corporeal device makes some quite distinctive differences to transmitter and acquirer relations, highlighted elsewhere within Bernsteinian orientated research (see Bourne, 2003; Arnot & Reay, 2004). This has been illustrated throughout the study as the interaction between sets of internal structures (ISgd/IScs). Much like Bernstein’s work regarding regulative and instructional discourses (see Bernstein, 1990; 2000), the study has shown how sets of dispositions may act in the same way. For example, within Chapters Five, Six and Seven, the study has highlighted how, if recognised, agents integrate sets of conjunctural dispositions (IScs) into already developed sets of general dispositions. Much like finding pieces of the jigsaw puzzle which fit, where this occurs, there is a sense of empowerment felt by the agent. However, as Chapter Seven highlights, a critical distance forms, when the general dispositions (ISgd) of the agent fail to correspond with those of the conjunctural sets of dispositions of other agents (ESIs). In doing so, there remains a friction or detachment between sets of internal structures contributing to a failed transitional experience.

The role of internal structures highlights the importance of situating the agent central to relations between structure and agency. Within fields of contestation and experience, the framework developed centres the individual as someone who simultaneously constructs and is affected by the external resources of a context. As highlighted by Aldous and Brown (2010), within the context of sports education, the consideration of Bourdieu’s ideas allows the articulation of ‘how, through
continued practice, discourses become a part of what a person is, and how they feel, rather than merely a part of what they think’ (p.418). Whereas the original quadripartite framework points towards the importance of external structures in developing this approach, this study has sought to situate the individual agent central to the construction and recontextualisation of structures within in-situ experiences. The understanding of the importance of the internal structures of an agent has highlighted how Bourdieu’s sociological perspective can be integrated to understand how the individuals’ internal structures play an intricate role in shaping the interactions and communication of discourse within specific conjunctures of space and time. Furthermore, in positioning agents central to the relations between agent and structure, the principles of classification and framing continue to evolve. Here the notion of cycle becomes important.

The use (while informing my own structurationist perspective) within this study of such interactions raises a number of considerations regarding agent-structure relations,

i) What are the consequences of situating the agent at the centre of agent-structure relations?

ii) What is the significance of agent practices upon the rules which govern relations between external structures and internal structures?

iii) In relation to the practices of agents, how do classification and framing principles evolve over time and space?

While the study has explored these research foci throughout the previous chapters, there remain a number of considerations regarding how the relations between external structures of agents construct specific experiences. As Stones (2005) rightly identifies, the power and vitality of the framework would be enhanced ‘by a more extensive and systematic integration’ of signification and meaning behind many of the practices and experiences illustrated here. Thus, while the data has alluded to some aspects of the participants’ experience, there remains a mystification around many of their relations: the silences beyond the practices. Although the study has partly explored many of the spaces which are so critical to understanding the relations between structures, it is these which may further enhance understanding of the positions and relations formed by and through student practice.

In attempting to find the missing pieces of the jigsaw, I have begun to look beyond the original theorists that informed this study. However, the use of Barthes’ ideas, much like Bernstein and Bourdieu, may offer a way of continuing to demystify the signs, signals and symbols that lie within and between structure and agency relations. Barthes, like the other theorists that have
informed my interpretations of the relations between structure and agency, seems to ask class ideology based questions of the seemingly obscure and abstract kind, focusing on the very mundane elements of everyday cultural life. Mythologies celebrate both the depth (structure) and surface (practice) of meaning. As Barthes notes,

Mythology, since it is the study of a type of speech, is but one fragment of this vast science of signs which Saussure postulated some forty years ago under the name of semiology…. Myth is not defined by the object of its message but by the way it which it utters this message. [Barthes, 2000: 111]

Following from Barthes’ unique and innovative perspective, the conceptualisation of transitional experiences as being the consequence of a series of interactions between (class based) structure and agency, encapsulates and enhances the idea that working class students’ interaction with middle class practices and discourses are a ‘lived experience’ one which continually evolves over a number of temporalities.

Attempting to understand transition as a lived experience has raised a number of methodological issues. One of the problems encountered was attempting to link the various facets of lived experience in a meaningful manner within the data collection and analysis. In reflecting upon this challenge, the study has drawn heavily upon the prescribed context/conduct analysis framework illustrated by Stones (see Chapter Three). This form of methodological bracketing provided a set of regulative and selective guidelines from which the significance of various external structures and internal structures within the experience of the participants could be analysed. Furthermore, rather than separating them, it was evident that both conduct and context analysis continually overlapped. While this overlapping was challenging it provided more subtle and differentiated distinctions than broader bracketing would have accomplished. The benefits of this methodological approach to research is illustrated by Stones,

Armed with it is panoply of concepts, ranges and potential alliances of approach, structuration has great potential. It can, to paraphrase Bourdieu, focus in on any set of surface appearances and make our understanding of them richer and more meaningful by elaborating upon the structures and agents involved. [Stones, 2005: 192]

As Stones rightly suggests, the methodological approach of context and conduct analysis does focus on sets of relations, revealing their surface appearances. Furthermore, as the study has demonstrated by adopting a research design which accounts for both approximations with relations, it also is able to focus on the individual role of sets of structures and respect the hermeneutics of the agent in relation to the external structures both within and beyond the context of education. Thus,
phenomenologically, the research design has provided insight into how structures, both internal and external, interact within the immediate experience of an agent.

The methodological approach enabled such hermeneutics to be related to what Stones illustrates as the surface experiences. However, where the study has developed this methodological framework is in the focus of agents’ practices (conduct analysis) and the relating of these to the external structures of a context (context analysis). A consequence of this approach is that, unlike the research steps advocated by Stones, the research design adopted within this study sought to understand the external structures as being ever-changing- continually evolving in relation to the experiences of the agents. An example of this would be in how the experiences of Lloyd, through professional sport, begin to shift his recognition and perception of the external structures of Higher Education (see Chapter Six). As such, while the study has adopted and recognises the value of strong case studies, the relations within the definable methodological boundaries of conduct and context analysis are continually shifting and evolving. As Stone rightly highlights, it is this interaction and uncertainty which has the greatest potential for case studies within educational research.

The potential of this methodological framework provides the foundation for the pursuit of a number of research interests: theoretically, methodologically and practically. The conceptual and methodological framework used highlights the benefits of accounting for the dynamic interplay between agency and structure. It is this core endeavour which needs to be developed and considered beyond the parameters of this study. While this development is continuing to take place, it is the contribution of the theoretical and methodological frameworks to the field of post-16 sports education which is providing the foundation for this development.

8.3. Reflections on the relations between and within the institutions of post-16 sports education.

The methodological and conceptual considerations illustrated so far highlight that further discussions are required regarding the role of the external structures within the transitional experiences of the participants. The adoption of the conceptual framework has highlighted how relations between the external structures of the meso-level (ESm) influenced the production and transmission of practices and discourses between and within the three institutions within the participants experiences. Despite the intentions and statements made within what Bernstein would illustrate as the Official Pedagogic Field (1990), the context analysis highlighted there existed a strong classification principle between the practices and discourses of the Foundation Degree at
Hope College and the Universities of Fawlty and Ivory Tower. The outcome of this strong classification results in institutions such as Ivory and Fawlty retaining autonomy over their selection of students and guarantees preferential and speedy access to positions too those students who are able to recognise, acquire and embody the discourses and practices transmitted from ESm level structures. The strongly classified relations illustrated throughout the study reinforces the ideologies and prescribed roles for institutions, dictated by institutions which are increasingly becoming detached from the in-situ experiences of students. Subsequently, this places increasing emphasis on the relations within institutions and the internal structures of agents. Here the outcome relations between ESm and ESis become visible in how discourses constructed within the ESm are transmitted via a performance code generated to increase the number of educational consumers. The outcome of this is a series of modalities which are recontextualised within institutions as external structures in-situ (ESis).

Here, another problem emerges. While the Foundation Degree has been developed to allow students active agency in their transition from Further to Higher Education (see DfES, 2003), the study shows these options to be limited by economic and geographic modalities. However, more troublesome are the barriers to transition caused by a disparity and conflict between in what is taught within FE and what is required in other institutions such as Ivory. As the data highlights, at an in-situ level, classification between contexts was maintained through selecting students who were able to recognise and acquire specific practices and, in doing so, convert physical capital into social and cultural capital. The external structures and relations between institutions reflect Maton’s (2004) comment that ‘By constructing new students as the wrong kind of knower and in the form of the new universities revalorising the fields existing legitimation code, the managers of expansion (universities) maintained their control over the epistemic device and thus, a key underlying structuring principle of the field’ (p.219). The relations between Hope and Fawlty, while seemingly weakly classified at an abstract level, at the ontic-level of transitional experience they become strongly classified. Significantly, such reinforcement and classification raises a number of concerns regarding whether the notion of a truly ‘free’ and independent choice is possible, something which is advocated within previous government’s policy regarding the future of Higher Education (DEfS, 2003). While the relations between Hope, ITU and Fawlty are ‘sold’ to the participants as being weakly classified to allow the impression of progression, it is questioned how far the Foundation Degree are progressive and what current opportunities they allow for agents. A consequence of the strength of vertical relations was the position colleges such as Hope have taken in forming new relations horizontally.
On reflection, such relations seemed quite paradoxical given that Fawlty strongly positioned itself within the Higher Education market as an institution which aided the construction of FDSc within the UPC programme and that these are also the institutions which students aim to enter for their 3rd year (see Chapter Four). Hope College’s forged alliances with feeder universities such as Fawlty University has resulted in the course being locked within the heteronomous sector, thus reproducing strongly classified relations between institutions.

As the vertical classifications between further and Higher Education institutions shift, it is likely that institutions within Further Education will seek new relations beyond the context of education. Subsequently, the horizontal classifications between FE and professional sport are likely to become more significant in funding and delivering qualifications. Beyond the boundaries of external structures at a meso-level, the study highlighted how, within the ESIs, practices and discourses of professional sport are slowly becoming more blurred and infused within sports education courses within both further and Higher Education institutions. Within all three institutions, such infusion directly influences the framing of relations between sets of agents. Indeed, as highlighted by Chapter Four, the strength of classification vertically and the independence of colleges to create their own programmes within wide and broad parameters encourages the influence of sporting institutions and clubs which seek to form relations with local education institutions.

The increasing influence of professional sport upon relations within institutions was clearly highlighted within the data analysis of this study. For example, all the experiences of the participants highlight what is considered to be valued knowledge, emerging from the practices of Nigel and Johnno who, as Chapter Four suggests, played a key role in the production and maintenance of framing relations. The internal structures (ISgd), developed in contexts previous to FE played a prominent role in the recontextualisation of external structures and the subsequent shifts in the conjunctural knowledge of the participants (IScs). Indeed, the importance of the internal structures of recontextualising agents is highlighted by one of the recontextualising agents, Brian;

At Hope, it again it seems to be that whilst the assessments are verified or checked by the university with regards to the course, the actual delivery of the teaching is very much down to the individual member of staff teaching in the classroom. [Brian: Interview 1].

The quotation illustrates the importance of the internal structures (ISgd) of recontextualising agents to the recontextualisation and transmission of discourses and conjuncturally specific knowledge within Hope College. Again, this illustrates the integration of internal structures (IScs/ISgd). This integration reflects Bernstein’s (1975) observation that valid knowledge is socially
constructed and emerges from the values, attitudes, opinions and ideas of the dominant social group (in this case the practices of Nigel and Johnno). In particular, the physical capital of those recontextualising agents prominent within the experiences of the participants influences the transmission and recognition rules of the students within the in-situ interactions of the context. While highly implicit, such relations reflect previous teacher recruitment strategies in which practical knowledge, contextualised as physical practices, was deemed more valuable than academic ability (see Aldous & Brown, 2010).

The outcomes of similar framing relations have been highlighted elsewhere. For example, as Hickey and Kelly (2008) highlight, there is a ‘gulf between the interests, motivations and expectations of first year undergraduates, and the academics who teach them - many of whom think students lack purpose, application and ability’ (p.490). The influence of embodied dispositions of agents on the framing relations clearly requires further consideration and development within the structuration framework developed. Given the relationships between contexts and institutions, the role of the recontextualising agent in the mechanics within transition are worthy of more in-depth consideration; central to any developments regarding the relations between institutions is the influence of framing relations between transmitter and acquirer. Another potential danger of weakly classified relations horizontally is that it exposes those students who do not have embodied dispositions which are recognised and legitimised by the dominant structures in-situ (ESis). The study illustrates how strong framing of relations may only be weakened when the agents have legitimised conjuncturally specific and general dispositions, which enable them to recognise and reproduce discourses of the context. This recognition of external structures is only enabled when the sets of internal structures (IScs/ISgd) become integrated. For example, as the interactions within Hope highlight, students from non-professional sport backgrounds were often marginalised as a result of their inability to exchange physical capital into cultural capital.

For those agents with embodied dispositions and valued physical capital such ritualistic use of the body is implicit and therefore they are positioned differently within Hope College. Such positions in which so much emphasis is placed on the physical capital of the body requires young athletes to make a series of negotiations regarding their position within this field, again restricting opportunities. There is a danger that in seeking to develop relations with the field of professional sport that many of the students who are dependent on this type of qualification will become further marginalised. Moreover, the weak classification of these horizontal relations highlights what some have described as the blurring of boundaries between different fields (see Lamnias, 2002) in which the power relations are not restricted to Further Education. The study highlights that through active
agent practice, the effectiveness of the rules of transmission and the pedagogic device continue to be weakened due to the complexity of interests and ideologies which currently influence the relations between structure and agency within Further and Higher Education. As the study shows, while the weakening of classification between professional sports teams and vocational courses have enabled students to gain qualifications, the experience of this for participants is neither equal or certain. Thus, while this may empower students in the short term, such relations are shifting the position of students and making their transitional experiences more fragile. In many respects, such relations between sport and education reflect Apple’s (1996: 18) suggestion that relations as they stand, ‘legitimises the inequality’. This does not give equal possibilities for these students but restrict their opportunities later on, limiting their futures; something that a utopian system of further and Higher Education should not do.

However, the extent to which framing relations change or alter is questionable, as the other experiences, (fragmented and failed) support. Another question to raise would be whether framing relations ever evolve or does the institution, (those who hold power) attempt to bring equilibrium back to relations? For example, within Hope, there were at times where Nigel and Johnno integrated their general dispositions (ISgd) to control the transmission, recontextualisation and distribution of external structures.

Finally, the relations between and within institutions highlighted within the study question whether the current relations in Higher Education have led to the three pedagogic rights highlighted by Bernstein (2000) of Enhancement, Inclusion and Participation. Each of the transitional experiences illustrated highlights that current relations do not completely address any of the areas Bernstein highlights. Currently the framing and classification of various sports education courses and qualifications is resulting in an outcome in which pedagogical practices contrive to promote and support inequalities. These outcomes were illustrated with the experiences of the participants. However, following from Stones (2005) without time and the ability to create space for acquisition, such development is limited.
Fig. 8.0 Diagram to illustrate the transition between Further and Higher Education.
8.4. Reflections on the transitional experiences of agents within vocational qualifications.

In coming to understand the role of external structures within the participants’ transitional experiences, the study has highlighted how the choices and experiences of students have to be made within complex and unequal contexts of constraints. In exploring this complexity, the study highlighted the existence of three transitional experiences: Empowered, Fragmented or Failed. Within these experiences, the study highlighted that transition into Higher Education is a process of negotiation in which outcomes are created from the interaction between agents’ internal structures (Isgd/IScs) with specific sets of external structures (ESm/ESis) within the institutional spaces (temporality) in which they find themselves. Accordingly, the data is illustrative of the transitional principle proposed within Chapter Two (fig.2.9, p.96). However, given the complexity of the interactions highlighted within the diagram, it may be the case there will be more types of transitional experience to be identified. Additionally, as the e-mails have identified, the study has only partly highlighted the experiences of the participants. For some, the experience of FE and HE represent a small fragment in a longer transitional journey. As such, it is likely that many of the outcomes suggested will continue to evolve beyond a temporality documented within the study. Nevertheless, as with the exploration of the relation between external structures, the focus on the participants internal structures and their agency has raised a number of considerations within the three transitional experiences.

Jack’s empowered experience and position within ITU reinforces how, for young professional athletes, transition into Higher Education institutions can be ritualised through the exchange of Physical Capital for specific institutional forms of social capital. He has acquired respectable forms of masculinity while continuing to achieve success academically. Jack is indeed living the dream Nigel illustrated (see Chapter Four). His story and the investment he places within his body allow him to succeed and moved beyond his class boundaries and are indicative of many of the ‘empowered transitions’ that exist within the field of sport. As Jack’s e-mail suggests, prospectively, the boundaries between sport and education continue to be weakened and blurred, allowing a continuation of the empowered transitional experience. The empowerment he demonstrates highlights how agents with particular dispositions may be able to alter the framing of relations between transmitter and acquirer. The positions he acquires and constructs demonstrates the importance of the body physical capital in developing a corporeal device which is able to transcend and diffuse many of the rules which govern relations within ITU. Indeed, following from the
thoughts of Ball et al. (2002) Jack’s continued emergence into the institution of ITU resonates their thought that in understanding transition we must not give the impression that every working class student ends up at a new university.

Despite the consequences of this empowered transition remaining unknown, as Jack has revealed, there remains a fragility to the empowered transition. Yet despite the fragility of his empowerment, for athletes within post-16 education, the choices are far reaching, particularly within the fields of physical education and coaching. Increasingly, post-career physical capital alongside acquired post-16 qualifications continue to provide a number of possibilities for agents. As such, it is important to consider the possibilities constructed around the legacy of physical capital for agents. Similarly, Emily’s empowered transitional experience showed and continues to show outcomes which slide between possibility and opportunity. Interestingly, the relations and positions she began to develop within Fawlty during the final year of her transition have continued and indeed been elaborated upon. Her prospective RAF career highlights how opportunities may be constructed through the exchange of physical capital into accepted forms of cultural capital in a context where there are definable relations between the internal structures of the agent and positions required and expected by the external structures of the context. While the final e-mail highlights the success Emily achieved, it also illustrates the pressure she places herself under. The ‘high standards’ she sets herself were a continuing force throughout her experience and highlight how working class students continue to be positioned by sets of external structures within and between the field of education.

Contrastingly, the last conversations I had with Steve illustrated a transition which remains in a state of ambiguity and fragmentation. For Steve, such fragmentation is developed over a longer temporality than that of the empowered transitional experience. As a consequence of this increased time and distance away from the structures of FE and HE, he was able to acquire some of the rules that govern the transmission of practices and discourses. This is highlighted in how Steve continually revealed signs of recognition, namely the value of particular courses and the importance of attending what he perceived to be reputable institutions. Thus, in some respects, Steve’s experience is empowering, as he has acquired conjunctural knowledge of some external structures. However, while this may present a degree of success, he still displays the signs of detachment and, as the data has highlighted, he infrequently refers to himself as the other, not part of the system. Although Steve has gained a qualification and a good degree and empowerment there is still uncertainty and the signification of his qualification seems very implicit to his sense of self. To this end, Steve’s transition strikes me as one of an agent wandering through the wilderness of education,
trapped between working class aspirations and middle class barriers - an experience in which there is acquisition without embodiment.

The transitional experience of Lloyd has also resulted in an outcome where there is a reproduction of practices rather than innovation, acquisition without embodiment. Chapter Six ended with Lloyd becoming deeply frustrated with the position he found himself at Fawlty, but determined to carry out his strategy and progress onto the PGCE programme at Ivory Tower University. Again, Lloyd’s experience highlights a fragmented experience in which he was continually attempting to position himself within the context, in relation to the external structures within the meso-level of experience, namely those within professional sport. Again, Lloyd’s fragmentation is resonant with the attempts of some working class students to elaborate on their positions through the use of their body and the exchange of physical capital for social and cultural capital. However, Lloyd’s dream is not an embodied dream and, as Chapter Six highlights, he relies heavily on positions developed by external structures (ESis) within the dispositions and experiences of others: namely those experiences of his brother and Nigel (among others). Again, Lloyd’s experience suggests that while male working class students may learn to acquire the recognition rules of the legitimised pedagogic device, they may lack the practices or embodied dispositions to shift these relations. Accordingly, Lloyd’s experience highlights that within the fragmented transition, the critical distance between the sets of devices increases.

Such distance becomes even greater within the failed transitional experience. The e-mail from Peter highlights continued attempts to overcome the failed transition and, after his re-sit, his achievement of a pass should be seen as a small sign of success. However, the e-mail also continues to demonstrate outcomes in which there is a reproduction of practices and positions. Peter finds himself in the same position as when he started the Foundation Degree. The job he has and the coaching experiences he is accumulating resonate with our very first interviews and discussions. As such, within the failed transitional experience the critical distance between internal and external structures is so great that the agent is unable to recognise the rules of the pedagogic device. However, this then places more importance on the embodied dispositions (ISgd). As Peter’s experience highlights, where this occurs, the experience constructed by the agent is almost mythical; void of the external structures which influence the empowered and fragmented experiences.

For Charlie, failed transition continues to haunt his transitional dreams and his present reality. When we last met he was in the process of appealing against the mark awarded to him. During the last interview I sensed that he felt frustration and anger towards the system and the
external structures which have been highlighted within Chapter Four. Charlie’s failed transitional experience highlights the reproduction of practices which exist beyond the in-situ experience of Higher Education. This reproduction of practices acquired from external structures (ESm) is highlighted through his continued work for the High School that provided so much support and hope for him during his transition. The signification of this reproduction of embodied practices to the failed transitional experience cannot be over-emphasised. In many respects, Charlie’s experiences highlight the need for further consideration of practices within FE and HE and how students within this particular transitional route into Higher Education are positioned and what provisions are provided.

While the transitional experiences of the participants have been defined within three analytically distinguishable frameworks, there is a degree of congruency among the three types of transitional experiences - particularly in the way they negotiate transition and power relations and positions within each of the contexts. Furthermore, the data and extracts from the experiences of the participants highlight how the type of student entering Foundation Degree courses is beginning to shift. Alarmingly, what the study and my experiences beyond the study continue to illustrate is that the system is still directed towards middle class values, practices and opportunities rather than working class possibilities (see Reay, 2001). As Watson et al. (2009) note, ‘It is increasingly evident that many of the challenges faced by students from non-traditional backgrounds stem from its long established culture, which generally remains orientated towards the traditional white middle class student population’ (p.666). However, it has also been highlighted that while the barriers for some working class students remain, some are empowered through the challenges and strategies that all the participants faced and constructed. As suggested elsewhere (see Penney et al., 2005), differences highlighted within each of the participants experiences need to be acknowledged and promoted as a rich resource and not as a sign of deficiency. However, such variation in transitional experience is largely overlooked by both policy and research initiatives which do not account for variation within the working class experience of Higher Education (see Archer, 2003; Lynch O’Neil, 1994). Therefore, while on the surface the opportunities and possibilities for students may have changed, the experiences of the participants reinforces and illuminates the increasing critical distance between meso-level practice and in-situ experiences. Unless further attention is directed at developing structures from the bottom up, sports education within the context of post-16 education will continue to remain highly insulated, wary of developing practices, values and weakening the relations it has developed and which it cherishes. In maintaining the barriers and insulation between institutions, Higher Education continues to transform new students into marginalised students.
8.5. Future Research Directions: implications for practices and relations within the fields of post-16 sports education.

Thus far, the focus of this study has provided considerable insight into the relations between differing institutions and their experiences and interactions. As mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter One of the outcomes of this study is the development and conviction of the need to continue to understand the experiences of agents in a way which acknowledge the complexities of their transitions. Furthermore, based on this understanding, any conceptual development must then translate into practices which may inform practices and relations in current fields. To accommodate and create a context where equal possibilities are more than a utopian idealistic vision, requires evolution of current practice. Furthermore, the study postulates a case for institutions adopting a more in-situ approach. Such an approach would place the focus on developing relations within and between institutions, working closely with the sets of agents highlighted in this study. Developing a ‘bottom up’ approach would evolve thinking away from consumer market pedagogies currently being manifested in the light of the current economic situation. In doing so, spaces may be created which move away from what Clawson and Leiblums (2008) highlight as ‘knowledge or learning for its own sake...[but] whether or not an activity can bring in revenue’ (p.16). I believe that the conceptual and methodological frameworks may contribute to the foundations for this development of relations to take place.

In following the methodological approach outlined within the study, further understanding of the relations between FE and HE may be developed by following the context/conduct bracketing approach,

- Outline of current relations (exploration of the external structures ESm)
- Understanding and development of External structures in-situ (ESis)
- Understanding of current agent practices (IScs)
- Development of agent practice in line with previous experiences (IScs/ISgd)
Fig. 8.1 Diagram to illustrate a development model of relations within the context of post-16 sports education transition between further and higher education.
The model illustrated, has been constructed from the interwoven conceptual, methodological and empirical chapters of the study. The model reflects the beginning of a process to consider, develop and enhance relations between FE and HE institutions. It is hoped that by allowing the space for researchers, practitioners and students to address and reflect upon the signification of their roles (ESis) in relation to wider changes within post-16 education, together, we may develop pedagogical practices (IScs), that enhance not ignore the internal structures of their students (ISgd). Following the outlined process for developing FE/HE relations and practices, the model will now be disseminated and discussed in more detail, illustrating how each of these steps may be developed, providing some thoughts and considerations which may allow this process to begin.

8.5.1. Step 1: Understanding and Developing relations between institutions and professions (exploration of the external structures ESm).

It is evident that the role of vocational qualifications within post-16 education will continue to be at the forefront of any wider developments of HE and FE and its role within our changing society. The challenges which confront institutions are indeed transforming the very fabric and soul of the relations, practices and resources of post-16 sports education institutions. Policy development of vocational courses continues to market courses at those classes on the periphery of society. While this may appear be breaking down homological transition, it must be done so in a way which benefits agents, providing them with a number of possibilities not restricted opportunities. The first step in developing FE/HE relations and practices within sports education is to address the relations between institutions and professions both within and between the context of education. In doing so, the classification between these needs to be understood and weakened. Nevertheless this does not detract from the necessity of having greater communication and coherence between institutions as, currently, the strongly classified relations which exist lead to fragmented and, at times, failed transition within and between institutions. To this end, this study points towards the need to consider the communication and development of relations between institutions. One approach to this would be to understand and then enhance relations between institutions, allowing the sharing of good practice and resources. Secondly, there needs to be increased communication and engagement with those structures and agents beyond the context of the in-situ developments. As Gibson (2009) notes, ‘by encouraging dialogue between pupils, families, schools, education authorities and other related professionals, which is both flexible and transparent in it is processes and responsive in its outcomes, the ‘culture of silence’ acting as barrier to inclusive education may be exposed and potentially broken’ (p.316). Any evolution in relations and positions within Higher Education necessitates that the role of vocational courses, such as the Foundation Degree explored in this
study, become realised and evolved within all fields of Higher Education. The first step to such an approach would be to overcome some of the stereotypes that vocational qualifications are tainted with. While some of these have some value, the fear of vocational qualifications which exists within Higher Education creates identities for students which are detrimental and not progressive towards their own transition into the field. It is a fear which must be overcome, not through isolation, but through communication between and within colleges, universities and schools.

The study has highlighted how by exploring both classificatory and framing principles which underlie the relationship between structure and agent, allows for a consideration of more effective pedagogic modalities at Foundation Degree level. The outcomes of this weakening have previously been highlighted by Bernstein (1990) who states that, ‘for there to be a change in perfection codes (and thus a change in cultural reproduction) the classification relations between contexts must be fundamentally weakened’ (p.43). However, any evolution in the classificatory relations between institutions should not only be understood within the confided boundaries metrics of attainment, participation and recruitment. Any change in the classification between courses requires a change in how relations between sets of agents are framed. As the study has highlighted there remains a large distance between the practices and values of each of the institutions involved within transition.

In the current educational and economic climates in which the attainment and consumption of qualifications supersede educational experiences it is questionable how much time will be allocated to institutions and pedagogic development. The study highlights that more needs to be done to ensure that students who are positioned within strongly framed relations are given more time, more skills and exposed to external structures beyond the context in which they are situated. For equal possibility, agents must be given the space and the resources to form framing relations beyond those imposed by the context and recontextualising agents. Thus, boundaries evolve and reflect the principles and embodied practices of those agents who maintain control over the principles of transmission, distribution and evaluation. Such meaning which involves the constant surveillance and reflexivity of practice causes new power relations which must be understood (see Lambert, 2009). Accordingly, more must be done to understand the complexity of relations and transition through the experiences of agents who face the outcomes of these relations.

8.5.2. Step 2. Understanding and development of External structures in-situ (ESis).

Development of the relations between further and Higher Education must begin with the reclassification of relations between institutions, both vertically and horizontally. Understanding these modalities will open up a space for pedagogic change which, in turn, will open up a path of
transition and empower the participants upon this pathway. A starting point would require a review of practices within institutions and an exploration of how relations within different institutions are framed. As Arnot and Reay (2006) suggest, ‘weak framing of the sort implied by individualised learning arguably could lead to a change in classifactory relations’ (p.91). Change and development occurring between institutions and professions, require Higher Education institutions and individual practitioners to become reflective of their own current relations, practices and resources. The need for Higher Education institutions, particularly those similar to Ivory Tower of this study, has been previously highlighted within research. For example, as Shiner and Modood (2002) note, ‘If, as is often supposed, education is to provide the basis for greater equality, old universities must examine seriously the evidence of bias and consider how it is effected and how it may be eliminated’ (p.220). However, alongside this, FE colleges also have a responsibility to consider and develop the practices and positions which they adopt and transmit. If Higher Education and Further Education is going to provide students with possibility not restricted opportunity, then it requires that the power be given to individual institutions to create their own rules and practices which are specific to the needs of the participants.

However, such independence should be guided, not under the pretence of any one government policy or political position but for the students, who have been promised so much but are so readily removed from such considerations. What is required are more formal relations to allow communication of various external resources to be done prospectively rather than depend on students present understanding. Change requires not a change ‘in’ but a change ‘of’ class relations. Such a position requires changes in the underlying devices which govern such relations. From my current experience, there is increasingly a tendency for colleges to seek advice and resources from affiliated universities without a willingness to develop practices in-situ. Following from Clayton and Humberstone (2007), the challenge remains ‘to create change through teaching; a whole institute approach, which is open to change and welcomes critical dialogue’ (p.530). There is also a need to implement more effective modalities at Foundation Degree courses. While it would be detrimental to dictate to institutions, in-situ practices, support and communication by those institutions at the end of the transitional experience must be developed further. Such relations, based on equality not on dependency, require a delicate balance of negotiation and diplomacy.

8.5.3. Understanding of current agent practices (IScs).

Through enhancing the framing of external structures in-situ, the role of current agents’ internal structures needs to be integrated in to the development of practices and resources. The first state of this step would be to understand what relations exist and how this influences the current practices of
agents. The study has highlighted the importance of these conjunctural knowledge to the recontextualisation and transmission of practices. One practical application of this approach would be to provide opportunities for FE agents to discuss what practices and knowledge students require within BA and BSc courses. This would allow the normative expectations of courses to become explicit. Additionally, any development through continuous reflection and discussion would also weaken power relations between FE and HE. In coming to understand current agent practices, specific to the institution and qualification they have chosen, students and practitioners would be enabled to recognise the practices and positions of Higher Education through their own lenses, not lenses dictated to by our own practices. This is highlighted by Bernstein (1990), who notes that if pupils (in the case of post-16 students/FE lecturers) are to challenge the code ‘it cannot be done by one pupil. It requires changing the basic unit of acquisition, which is that of an isolated, privatised, competitive pupil to communal, non-competitive classroom relations’ (p.39). Following from Bernstein, for this to happen, there needs to be more co-operation and development of communication between institutions in the type of resources and experiences of the students whom they teach and support.

8.5.4. Development of agent practice in line with previous experiences of students and practitioners (IScs/ISgd)

In focusing on the experiences of agents (ISgd) within institutions, a number of resources can be developed which empower the individual and aid the recognition of the external structures (ESis) required for transition into HE institutions. Following Avis (2009: 654), the beginning of such evolution in practice and resources requires all institutions and profession within FE to overcome their ‘form of amnesia and stop constantly reinventing the past’. The practices developed must provide students and practitioners from all backgrounds the ability to create spaces that allow for the reflection and understanding of their own experience and acquisition of discourses and practices. Such possibilities, developed through recognition, would create equal possibilities not restricted opportunities. The understanding and integration of agent dispositions in framing relations is alluded to by Lambert (2009) who suggests that institutions need to ‘explore the possibility that a focus on the resources offered by students intellectual participation in Higher Education, combined with a necessary reconfiguration of the teaching relationship, provides a more hopeful basis from which to critically and productively intervene in the question of what the university is, and what we might want it to be’ (p.296). Through developing relations students should encouraged to come to an understanding of their own position in society by coming to an understanding of the relations and positions of a context and of their ability to change their own
practice (see Bernstein, 1990; Bourne, 2003; Arnot & Reay, 2006). Only then would equal possibility not restricted opportunity become a reality.

8.6. Final Thoughts.

In helping to facilitate relations, the transition into university must not be thought of as being implicit or for everyone, something to do rather than something that is needed. Critical distance must be constructed so that students are able to make informed choices regarding Higher Education. This would enable equal possibilities without restricting their opportunities. Here I draw upon Bernstein (2000) who notes, ‘The right to be included may also require the right to be separate, to be autonomous. Inclusion is a condition for communitas and this right operates at the level of the social’ (p.xx). While Stones’ sphere concerns broader societal and political spheres, I have interpreted such a perspective in how my work and study may inform the practices and relations of education practitioners both FE and HE within the context of post-16 sports education. Relations must be developed to enable equal possibility for students and not many of the restricted opportunities which were evident within this study. Thus, more needs to be done to explore the relations between professional sport and sports education contexts and the consequences of this for those students wanting to enter the sports and teaching industry. However, at the time of writing, the possibilities and challenges for relations between institutions remain precarious. As Naidoo (2004) reminds those willing to challenge and explore an evolution of Higher Education practice, ‘Alternative strategies may inadvertently entrench the hierarchy between privileged and disadvantaged students by conferring on students a qualification that is not recognised as sufficiently academic by other universities or by employers’ (p.466).

Many of the points I have discussed and explored are becoming increasingly real and lived experiences in my own temporality and conjunctures. In many ways, there are a number of consequences for my own pedagogic practices which require me to elaborate not reproduce many of the positions, practices and relations that students who enter Higher Education are often drawn towards through not being able to acquire the practices required of them. I am becoming the recontextualising agent, the stakeholder, responsible for transmitting the discourses of sports education.

To evoke real change requires time to reflect and recontextualise some of the findings to new challenges and relations. As Yorke (2003) suggests, ‘Higher Education can and should be emancipatory in its nature’ (p.477). However, again drawing upon the thoughts of Friere (1975; 1985) and Gibson (2009) actual practical implications of the study cannot be alluded to until the
first step is taken and space is created for dialogue with these colleges and students in which their voices become central to our understanding and development of pedagogic practices and discourses. The first step of change is reflected in the words of Nathan (2006) whose ethnographic perceptions provide a timely reminder in suggesting,

In the end, the paths taken by Higher Education may be out of all our hands, but understanding our stake in these messages, as students and teachers, and making those stakes known, is our only chance of affecting the way the story of the modern university will unfold. [Nathan, 2006:156].

The study and its understanding of the transitional experiences of students from FE to HE can still open up space for pedagogic change and the integration of practices of participants, raising the possibility of empowerment. However, such a position requires continued understanding of the subtle complexities which exist within such relations. All institutions and practitioners need to continue to work towards developing curricula and pedagogical practices which are intended to produce positive and worthwhile experiences for all young people. As the study has highlighted, if we do not understand such complexities then change may become detrimental rather than progressive. Such an approach would provide students entering final years of courses further equal possibilities rather than restricted opportunity.
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